

Rattanakosin Cultural Goldsmith at Wat Koh Community in Phetchaburi: * Transformation and Safeguarding Strategy

ชุมชนวัดเกาซ่างทำทองวัฒนธรรมรัตนโกสินทรีในจังหวัดเพชรบุรี:
การเปลี่ยนแปลงและกลยุทธ์การอนุรักษ์

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Abstract

The appealing beauty of nature, cultural diversity, and heritage of Thailand are well known features in the tourism industry globally. Heritage places are visited by many tourists each year. With the aggression of industrialization on the other hand, intangible cultural heritage and the crafts culture goes into a transformation whereby the craftsmanship tradition appears to have turned to commercial, mass production and the adoption of modern techniques. Under these circumstances, the craftsmanship tradition may be replaced and finally some of its traditions and skills vanish.

In the great Thai heritage, the goldsmith has played a significant role throughout its history. The creativity of innovation began more than 200 years ago that still continue to influence the movement of the arts and crafts in Thailand today. The heritage has presented and explored the meaning of life force and the way of living in a Thai context. As gold has always been representing prosperity, wealth, art and culture, crafting gold was subject to exquisite craftsmanship in the ancient tradition. The broad aim of the research reported here is to engage with the dilemma of the decline of the great tradition of Thailand's arts and crafts, thereby the fading of significant aspects of the nation's heritage and, indeed, of the nation's identity linked to that heritage. This task will be pursued through an in-depth study of what may be the impending demise of an emblematic component of the heritage, namely the Rattanakosin goldsmiths' craft and its surviving traces in the Wat Koh community of Phetchaburi city.

* This article is part of Ph.D. dissertation – Cultural Goldsmith: The Strategy of Safeguarding Rattanakosin Ancient Goldsmith at Wat Koh Community in Phetchaburi

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This study seeks to analyze the transformation of the goldsmith craft, propose a community approach to the idea of preserving and re-interpreting its tradition in a contemporary context. The tradition will be evaluated through a diversity of sources and forms of data, to yield insights which can be a benefit to the community.

Keyword: Cultural Goldsmith Community, Heritage, Modernization, Safeguarding

Introduction

Gold was often sought and saved for the future because of the stability of its value remaining or even increasing. In the palace of Ayutthaya Kingdom (1350-1770), several first-rate craftsmen specializing in various handicrafts were in authority's list in case they were needed to be called to serve the monastery. The luxurious of gold artifacts were used in tax collection, in tributes received from its neighbor states as well as quantities of plunder from states defeated in battle. The use of gold in the decoration expressed the kingdom's opulence as well as technical advancement in the arts. In 1957, grave robbers found a crypt of gold objects and artifacts after excavating the pagoda of Wat Racha Burana, Ayutthaya that was genuine. Then, the Fine Art Department excavated the remaining gold pieces which were retrieved with weight between 100-200 kilograms. The findings revealed gold and its function in historical context of Thai goldsmith for the first time.

At present, Thais possess a strong sense of national identity as citizens of a country that survived colonialism. Through the nation may encounter rapid-paced modernism, political and environmental problems that are a threat to the wellbeing of the country, a time of peace and material progress has nonetheless been achieved. With the guidance of King Rama IX, the unique identity of the society is still maintained cultural tradition and beliefs that form Thai cultural heritage. A hand craft piece is a key element of the artifacts that best represent the nation in all characteristics. This captures the intellectual knowledge that leads to individual and finally national pride.



ICOMOS (2002) has stated: “Cultural Heritage is an expression of the ways of living developed by a community and passed on from generation to generation, including customs, practices, places, objects, artistic expressions and values.”

Figure 1 Goldsmith Shop Houses (Kongpradit, 2016)

From tangible to intangible heritage, the acknowledgement had an impact far beyond the conservation of monument. Human Being is an integral part to the construction of meaning and the ongoing creation of material culture. Consequently, intangible heritage is always in associations with tangible structure. This issue shape the way that Wat Koh goldsmith community and its heritage is perceived. The study follows on from the significance assessment to examine the present setting of the community and its intangible cultural heritage of goldsmith. With this contextual background, it illustrates the strong link of intangible heritage associations that is still seen. Under its definitions, Australia ICOMOS (1988: 2) published that “Cultural significance is a concept which helps in estimating the value of places. The places that are likely to be of significance are those which help an understanding of the past or enrich the present, which will be of value to future generations.” Although the significance is mainly affirmed by the community, cultural heritage significance assessment may be obstructed as it is seen as confidential within the area. It was kept by earlier generations and most of them have passed away. Only very few may now maintain links with the past of the community.

At the level of practice, the preservation of the goldsmith craft in the face of ongoing modernization is the driving motivation for this project. At a more conceptual level, the concern is with understanding community practices and identity in the context of rapid social change linked to modernization. In this study, the underlying concern is to preserve the Rattanakosin ancient goldsmith community by re-creating the perception of the traditional ancient goldsmith by means of narrative interpretation in contemporary context.

To create an understanding of cultural significance, interpretation can work as a tool for preserving intangible elements of a heritage place and assisting people to appreciate something that is special like places. Tilden (1977: 173) wrote: “through interpretation, understanding; through understanding, appreciation, through appreciation, protection.” If the way interpretation could get people to understand the significance of the place, they would appreciate it more. If they appreciated it more, their behavior would change in relation to it, therefore finally feeling responsible for protecting it. However, it is argued that not only visitors but also the local community is regarded as crucial to promote and sustain a heritage. To make connections by interpretation, it needs to react to the dynamic and constantly changing of heritage tourism. The purpose needs to be to encourage people and the community to focus on the interest of preserving their own heritage. A space may become a place when it carries cognitive meaning.

Approach and Methods

The approach or methodology adopted for the study was in part historiographic and in part ethnographic. It is historiographic in its broad framing, in that the study has needed to trace the transformations of the goldsmith tradition in the face of migrations and cultural colonization with their inevitable effects in new technologies, tastes and market forces, and then the more global forces that might be summarized as modernization. The methods here are relatively conventional, with a strong reliance on secondary sources including cremation volumes and similar records, where the original contribution is to place the trajectory of the Siamese gold tradition in the framework of broader change.

The project has been ethnographic in its finer focus, on the skills, practices and memories of the present Wat Koh community. The methods have included direct observation of goldsmith practices and the spaces of those practices, also in-depth interviews with Wat Koh community members with a focus on surviving memories. The subsequent task has been to interrogate how these skills, practices and memories were transformed in the face of the historical forces of cultural colonization, globalization and modernization.

The methodological ‘problem’ confronting the project is this task of bringing local memories and traditions into that wider framework of historical change – marrying the historical with the ethnographic – also the inevitable mismatch of history and memory. There is a very practical objective that lies behind this study, namely to propose a safeguarding strategy for the Wat Koh goldsmith community and its crafts in the face of its seemingly immanent disappearance. Related discussion and controversies will be presented.

A special focus here is on the issue of memory – how is the past constructed in the memories of the community?

Modernization

Modernization seems to be an unavoidable factor in any traditional society. While comparing its traditional and modern values, the effect of modernization and its changes have involved both negative and positive outcomes. Though modernization is commonly seen as a Western process, Asian countries like Japan have had development in the name of modernization. In the 20th century, Japan led the world in automobile manufacturing, electronics and ranks the world highest in life assurance. Industrialization and economic development was the leading factor in Japan's modernization that shaped the world. Thus, the world would come to be seen differently such as in the transformation of traditional ways of doing or seeing things in relation to old customs, culture and religion. As today's world has advanced in technology, sharing information to a wider social world is faster, speedier than ever. Culture is also changing in such ways.

Fundamentally, the culture of Thailand is developed and clustered around Buddhism in its arts, literature, social systems and customs. However, there have been changes in the culture due to Western influence and modernization. Phraya Anuman Rajahon (1968:40) noted that "Whatever cults and beliefs are adopted by the Thai are readily modified to suit their temperament and surroundings". The aggressiveness of the new materialistic force has developed through time to meet every new need to form ideals and conceptions. Meanwhile popular culture surrounds our lives by its most immediate and contemporary aspects, these elements are generally subject to rapid change in a realm of highly technological media. It allows a massive group of people to identify on the acceptable forms of behavior and enhances a sense of identity that binds a person as individual to the prestige of the greater society and peers. Popular culture is always a key part in the formation of urbanization which was one of modernization's processes. Rural people left their villages and migrated to the city in search for a better living. As a result, they brought in a great cultural diversity that marked the collectivity of common, popular culture as a form of expression.

Safeguarding Cultural Heritage

UNESCO (2003:3) stated that safeguarding “means measures aimed at ensuring the viability of the intangible cultural heritage.” and “protection, promotion, enhancement, transmission, particularly through formal and non-formal education, as well as the revitalization of the various aspects of such heritage”. Due to the rapid transformation of arts and crafts with globalization, Department of Cultural Promotion plays an important role in promoting and presenting Thai arts and cultures. Although Thailand is not yet a party of the intangible cultural heritage Convention, the operation of International Cultural Cooperation under Multilateral and Bilateral Agreements has formed.

The draft constitution 2016 also establishes the role of government in the protection of cultural heritage. Under Section 57 “the state shall be [responsible for] (1) preservation, rehabilitation and promotion of local wisdom, art, culture, customs and traditions of the local and national [levels]. A public space must be provided for associations as well as promoting and supporting people, community and local state authority to formulate the cooperation”. It is clear that the role of authorization played an important part in the protection of cultural heritage as identified within policy documents and legislation. In Thailand, February 24 has marked the annual celebration of National Artist Day in Thailand since 1985. Distinguished Thai artists will be selected by a steering committee which in turn reports to the Department of Cultural Promotion. The National Artist is an honorary title given annually as a highest recognition of artists for their significant contributions to the cultural heritage of the nation.

Wat Koh Ancient Goldsmith Community

The community is located on the lower east side of the Phetchaburi River in Amphor Muang, Phetchaburi Province. The distinguishing locational character of a Buddhist temple *Wat Koh* itself is that it originally looked somewhat like a floating island in the middle of the Phetchaburi River. During the flood and high tide season, the water flooded around the area. (Department of Environmental Promotion, 2003) At present, the current geographic setting has changed as a result of the changing direction of water from dam construction. In the past, water was the main access means in daily lives. The merchant class flourished by shipping on the river trade route from Ayutthaya to Bangkok, then to Phetchaburi. Several wealthy settlements have become prosperous trading centers. Evidence of this prosperity can be observed in some buildings and fine teak traditional houses. Most social activities have been centered in temples where people were establishing wisdoms and knowledges. Although Buddhism is deeply rooted in the community, it does not have an aspiration to attract people

from practicing other faiths. As a result, there are adherents of different faiths and religions scattered throughout the area. For example, Chinese migrants have boosted a different faith, as can be seen from their shrine at the corner of Panich Charoen Street, closed to where the Chinese have settled. Subsequently, people were mixed and blended freely.

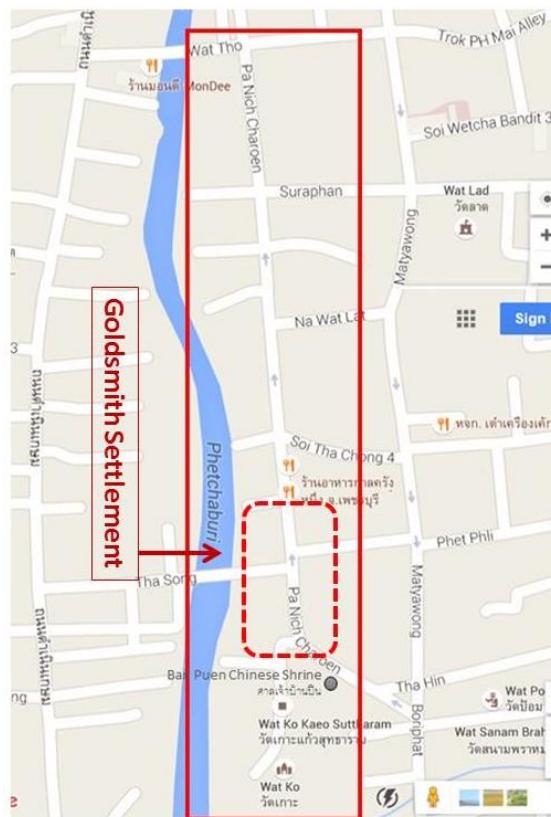


Figure 2 Map of Wat Koh Community (Google Map, 2015)

Wat Koh community was a home of a great Rattanakosin goldsmith living in four reigns of Thai Kings, Nuaeng Fangseekam. Over almost 80 years of her expertise, her commitment to passing down elaborate Phetchaburi's styles and techniques had never failed. One of her famous design was *Luke Son*. She was selected as an outstanding craftsmanship in goldsmith by the Thai Cultural Heritage Committee in 1988. Eventually, she was granted the title, National Artist of Applied Arts in 2012. Her works have become collectible treasures after she passed away in April, 2015 at the age of 100 years 7 months 7 days.



Figure 3 The National Artist, Nuaeng Fangseekam & Luke Son Gold Work vs Actual Pine Cone (Fangseekam, 2016)

Like others small communities in Thailand, Wat Koh's identity links to the distinctiveness of its heritage. The significant of what is special that sets Wat Koh apart from every other small community in Thailand, giving it a sense of place where differentiated from other towns and villages. A ship-gallery carved base structure of late Ayutthaya architecture can be seen here. Evidence of its date to 2277 B.E (1734) was inscribed in the mural painting inside the ordination hall, which is without windows. Miracles from the previous lives of Lord Buddha were painted in a composition of dramatic triangles, and accounts of various foreigners were told in the story of the painting which was rendered by color powders mixed with glue on the side wall. Especially interesting is a group of foreigners, dressing in a Buddhist monk's robe to try to earn the local people's respect. The ordination hall was registered by the Fine Arts Department on January 5, 1953.



Figure 4 A Ship-Gallery Carved Base Structure of Late Ayutthaya, Wat Koh (Kongpradit, 2016)



Figure 5 Mural Painting of Wat Koh in Ayutthaya Style (Kongpradit, 2016)

The existing social fabric of Wat Koh community, its street environment, functions and activities have very little been altered to become more socially-oriented. A space becomes a place when it holds specific meaning that contributes to a sense of place of a particular landscape. Panich Charoen Street neighborhood is bounded by a central market of Phetchaburi province where a morning market is located to serve the daily needs of local residents. The street pattern appears to form a strong identity that links significant places in the map, thereby having a great influence on residents' daily routine within the community. Long-term residence also contributes to the image of place, especially in building sentimental attachment and sense of place. Duration of residency not only enhances local social ties, but it also provides a moral context for its sentimental, personal meaning and sense of belonging. The image of a place indicated significance by an individual's placement in the society. One may have experience and knowledge about the community's environment and place that results individuals to perceive it differently. Wat Koh community is allowing people to shape their own meanings, experience the local atmosphere and culture. People build their memories to embrace feelings of security, comfort and ownership. The community reflects the unique characters of authentic livelihoods and layered histories from the Ayutthaya Period to recent urbanization.

Although the community still maintains pride in their heritage, it has been slowly affected by modernization, with a shortage of apprentices and finance to keep the businesses ongoing. Though the goldsmiths' heritage of Wat Koh in particular is in danger of slowly disappearing, current goldsmiths have no interest in transmitting their skills to anyone else except those who are related. However, the absence of a younger generation, especially in local goldsmiths' families, is providing cause for serious reflection. Within the management of government programs, there are specialized institutions and activities that can co-operate to

promote the community as a heritage place for tourism; however, that is not at present happening.

The interview survey has revealed only limited contacts in the community, either for logistical or operational purposes. Community leaders do not exist. There is neglect of what is happening at the local level. Documentation and information of Phetchaburi goldsmithing are not updated as an archive that can present as an extremely valuable historical resource. Regarding financial procedures, a governmental budget is allowed to execute and safeguard the heritage as well as the goldsmith community, though only for a certain period. Part of this budget is for relevant institutions to implement a development plan. Lacking sustained financial support is clearly expressed as a problem from local people. Some goldsmiths have become fed up with the system and have quit from being part of any activities.

After the crucial political turning point in 1932, the first written constitution was issued. The economic reform resulted in inflation of the gold price. The cost was increasing while the number of goldsmiths was less. A variety of gold products were sold in the market at cheaper price. Therefore in 1950, the peak of Phetchaburi gold began to decline. Most goldsmiths aged and quit due to their eyesight. The community struggled to survive through this difficulty. Some goldsmith family left to other places. At present, only several households are still working as goldsmith, receiving wages equal to those of 20 years ago. In 2009, the ancient goldsmith craft of Wat Koh community in Phetchaburi was registered as National Cultural Heritage by the Intangible Cultural Heritage Committees of Thailand. It was announced as the technique of Rattanakosin gold. Techniques have specific characteristics that demonstrate cultural identity and self-image of the community that depicts the character of Phetchaburi. The elaborate gold works were the combination of goldsmith technique and art in proper proportions as they were made with knowledge, personal feeling, passion and creativity. Ancient goldsmith craft of Wat Koh is represented through both its practice and its gold work. The technique has survived in a new form, not as craft but as an art object to collect. Therefore from the study, documentation is a key to preserve the community and its craft.

Analysis of the Present Situation

The first question to be considered is: **How do ancient goldsmith tradition and its narrative underpin the broader narrative of the community and its significant of the place?**

There are references to a nostalgic ‘little Ayutthaya’ as well as the ancient goldsmith crafts. Ancient goldsmith’s jewelry traditions reflect the extraordinary diversity of historical and cultural experiences of the people. From the gold pieces, it is possible to trace back the technique deriving from the gold pieces found in Wat Ratcha Burana’s crypt in Ayutthaya. Variations in gold jewelry demonstrate participation in the complexity of the loyalties and obligations that bound people together, and to the King and court. All these skills demonstrated and advanced the ancient goldsmith technique of the Phetchaburi style. Cultural goldsmiths can be identified as they are symbols of social class and title. Certain kinds of jewelry were meant to be owned only by royals. The society was divided visibly by dress and fashion at that time. The historical stories and the people involved manifest social linkages within the place. The uniqueness of place is reflected through presently living people and their life styles, including socio-economic and cultural aspects of their way of life. They refer to the quality of life and identity of the place and its surroundings.

The relationship between social value and place is experienced through memory of the community which draws from traditional culture that creates a sense of place. Within an architectural setting, it is important to establish a sense of place in the community that occupies the space. It is not only for its surroundings but also for experiences within the place. Memory and sense of place are closely connected that influenced by the integrity of the memories formed in the space. The trail of memory leads to identification of intangible heritage elements of the traditional gold craftsmanship. The process is to be identified as a living form of heritage that shall be preserved through strategies of safeguarding. The inherited crafts from Ayutthaya plus the development of individual skills have influenced distinctive styles of Phetchaburi that are clearly differentiated from others. Even though patterns, motifs and techniques are derived from ancient gold design, some have transformed in function or otherwise been invented by the goldsmiths themselves.

Raids and wars conquest among the neighbors’ countries leaded the migrations by time to time with their own belief and cultures. These intermixed with the natives of their adopted lifestyle. The way of life has been taken up after several generations into one as a

whole. The ethnic issues of the race are clearly a mix of combination in Wat Koh community especially Chinese and Thai. The cultural heritage of goldsmith is therefore, due to discussed facts which formed into one unity. However, the diversities are still present in each individually details. Through the influences by each other that forms the uniqueness character of living harmoniously of the place.

Modernization is always associated with urban and industrial development. When modern technologies made it possible to produce and sell in mass quantities, handicrafts were being produced by machines faster than by hands. Thus, modernization may cause a loss of cultural heritage. It drove younger generation of Wat Koh community into the cities in search of better jobs. The extension of Western culture has caused young minds from non-Western societies to abandon traditional customs and values. Spiritual beliefs and the ceremony of Ancient Goldsmiths begin to merge into the rush of urbanization. Modern technology has revolutionized the pace and accuracy of work. Progress has mattered more than traditions and heritage. Urban construction begins to transform the community landscape. Increased urbanization has led to demolition of heritage constructions. The change of water direction in the Phetchaburi River resulted in transformations of the cultural landscape. Agriculture products such as rice and palm sugar had disappeared from the community. The outcome of modernization in transport and communication has made the world much smaller and accessible. Advantages are far greater than the disadvantages while as in culture, it may seem to be threatened. So, to develop such strategies for safeguarding traditional culture, technology shall be the great advantage in such a way that it will benefit mankind.

A question of the community's preservation: How do the local stakeholders presently share responsibility for the sustainable preservation of both tangible and intangible heritage?

Numerous stakeholders have shared the responsibility of safeguarding both the tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Unfortunately, the issue has led to a conflict for an ineffective system in managing the outcome, which causes some misunderstanding of the preservation concept. Although the community still maintains pride in their heritage, it was slowly affected by modernization, with a shortage of apprentices and finance to keep the businesses ongoing. In order to reach the aim of sustainability, involved parties must overcome

the obstacles and co-operate with each other, with a shared vision and an open-minded approach.

The cost of gold and the time consuming nature of the work draw people away from the field. The hierarchy has taken away inhabitant from the community. The way of life and the local inhabitants have shifted and transformed through what is now often seen as a post-modern era which there is no single defining source for truth and reality beyond individual preference. The individuality became profoundly important in the society. Temple and Buddhism used to be the mainspring of various knowledges of life forces. At present, it has blurred in a modification of form and developed through times to meet contemporary lives, ideals, conception and safeguard. Although gold craftsmanship can refer back from Ayutthaya to Rattanakosin, fewer people are interested in that fact. Under these circumstances, Phetchaburi's style would seem unique in still representing the Rattanakosin skill of goldsmith work. Tangible heritage is recognized by its own history. The identification of a sense of place can link the ancient gold craft of the community to the spiritual value of a place. To refer to Rattanakosin's craft, ancient goldsmith of Wat Koh community in Phetchaburi has played a significant role through history, as is widely accepted as a national intangible heritage.

A further question of strategy: **What are possibly outcomes from the present path of community behavior?**

Modern Thai education is a vehicle to transfer modern culture in order to reduce the gap in intellectual skills and values. Traditional know-hows become less passed on that may be creating a generation and cultural gap. Through the influence of the West, younger generations have significantly lost the sense of pride for their home town. Assumedly, the different of parenting may be the cause of all changes. Because of the hard life during WWII, older parents tried to educate their children by recommendation of what they believe it is an easier way to lead to success. Therefore after returning to the community, there are no jobs available in the local area. This situation leads to social complication that more people would abandon their home town, seek to live in the city, and finally lose the sense of belonging to the community. Goldsmith and local career are considered old fashioned. Modernization changed most people by having alienated from their own roots.

Safeguarding Strategy

Today's perception of cultural heritage is transiting toward sights and images from the interactive media. At present, globalization is rapidly enabling more exchanges of information through websites which may lead to greater creativity in the shielding of cultures through the acknowledgment of their differences. So the question is: **How to enhance the value of the ancient gold community as cultural heritage to be safeguarded and interpreted, thereby to build cultural understanding in the age of globalization.**

Cultural heritage is no longer only about concrete things but also attaches to values, knowledge, cultural communities or nations. The interviews with local people in Wat Koh suggest how memory has been an immensely important part in the preservation processes. The linkage between people who still live in memory kept alive by its environment and the more tangible objects of memory is subtle. The significance of this point cannot be over-emphasized. Wat Koh continues as a “living” community, of long duration in a *milieu* where memory remains vividly alive. People recall their ancestors, also those ancestors’ crafts, actions and stories, albeit enhanced and distorted through oral tradition. This *milieu* or environment of memory is reinforced and enriched on a daily basis through the things that surround them. So, activities of a preservation strategy can be divided into different tasks or roles as below:

1. Role of Local Community - Within this particular cultural strategy, preservation projects should be carried out seriously. These can relate to a site survey, collecting a database, restoring and enlisting the significance of a national site. In order to achieve the goal, the community should continuously co-operate with relevant organizations while, at the same time, sustainable incomes should be returning to the community itself.

2. Role of Government Authorities - The relevant authorities should plan the direction of policy and regulatory procedures for safeguarding Rattanakosin goldsmiths of Wat Koh community. The establishment of cultural network should be organized nation-wide and eventually co-operate with international networks. This cultural network could be established among groups of communities and relevant authorizations to exchange management information and practices in order to reach the aim of being sustainable in the future.

3. Role of Education – Through education system, the curriculum for learning can be informed through local knowledge, wisdom and culture in vocational local colleges, as training can become a process of ensuring the recognition, respect and enhancement of goldsmith culture and practice. The transmission process should be developed by the goldsmiths and practitioners themselves, who would rather learn by doing than reading from written lessons. By using mass media, It could also be a channel to promote cultural festivals and cultural knowledge to the public.

4. Role of Interpretation: Shop House Gallery - Inventory of the goldsmiths' heritage and the community can be done by documentation in various formats. The gallery should recognize the need to support sustainable livelihood development in the community, which may bring the young back to their home town as well as nurture the more long-term goal of cultural heritage pride and the identity of community's buildings.

5. Role of Tourism: Marketing and Promotion - A tourist route to attract Cha- Am and Hua Hin tourists for a day or a half day visit to Phetchaburi can be developed to promote the place. This may provide a great opportunity to reconnect with more ancient memories. Thus, Wat Koh can be reconnecting with the story of King Rama IV when Phra Nakhon Khiri palace was constructed by his order, or with King Rama V's travel route to Phra Ram Racha Niwet. There are other strategies that might be considered. Tourism activities could be arranged to focus on sightseeing to the actual places from the story, although these cannot match the power of popular culture. Through this, the interpretation can restored the pride, also increase the awareness of heritage among locals and wider public. Most of the people who have experienced a place's popular portrayal want to visit the site and learn more of its history. It is such awareness that drives interested people to the actual place. The intention to visit of the present case is mainly to experience the pride and to absorb the beauty of the Thai history of gold. The task is to bring the sense of engagement achievable through popular-culture drama to bear on the scholarly, reflective interpretation 'high' culture. A great opportunity to promote tourism in Phetchaburi arose from this incidence of Thai pop culture. TAT should be encouraged to affect such links to the Phetchaburi goldsmith tradition to introduce special tour programs for historically interested tourists.

Conclusion

The study of Wat Koh ancient gold community has found evidence that Wat Koh was built in the Ayutthaya period while its goldsmith skills of the Phetchaburi style clearly present the authenticity of the traditional ancient goldsmith that derived from Ayutthaya gold techniques. Present practitioners are aware that their wisdom, skills and knowledge derive from previous generations. The community members still retain a high level of pride in their ancestors, their goldsmith heritage and their stories. The community was also well informed by government authorities and academia through several relevant promotional projects. However, absence of a younger generation in the culture emerged as an issue during interviewing. The hope to bring back young people to their hometown was mentioned, so the pride of the community could be re-installed to the future generation.

In Phetchaburi, the greatest importance of Wat Koh ancient gold community and its surroundings as a heritage site of outstanding value comprises both tangible and intangible values. Not only is Phetchaburi famous for its history, but other associated heritage sites around the city are especially worth exploring. Although effects of modernization as well as intrusions of popular culture have seemingly caused the younger generation to overlook their goldsmiths' tradition and intellectual heritage, cultural associations linked with the community's history and knowledge were found to be significant as intangible cultural heritage of the nation. The main lesson that can be drawn from the study is a conclusion that demands an effective co-operation in achieving a sustainable state.

The impacts on the goldsmith heritage are simply a result of the modern world, whereby goldsmiths' perceptions, transformations and daily activities are all gradually deteriorating. Traditional knowledge of the goldsmith craft remains with only several people. Goldsmiths are still practicing their ancient technique, to produce the traditional motifs and designs for their gold works. These precise techniques come with unique limitations to the process of product development and better productivity. The pace of life has changed into a rush so that artistry is not quite of the same quality as in the past. However, elaborate gold works are still purchased as collectible pieces.

As modernization took over, the rise of democratic consciousness collapsed a traditional social system. Since then, the royal court-preferred style as representative of the traditional was introduced formally. The traditional mode constituted within the family indicated the decline of inherited skill. We face the reconstruction of the traditional identification in the arts and crafts, but in a transitional era. The crisis is a product of the industrialization period. Thus, modernity in the form of post-WWII capitalist industrialization and urbanization is seen in the decline of gold as wearable jewelry to collectible art. Goldsmith craft deviated from a viable economic activity to an expression of cultural heritage.

The controversy not only lies in how the community of aging people can continue to survive in the modern world. Moreover, political changes have created uncertainty in government budgeting. Nevertheless the involvement of regulations and organizations has generally occurred in parallel with the local community. Tourism infrastructure has also been developed. Civil organizations and public authorities have promoted the cultural gold heritage of Phetchaburi, although most activities are not sustained due to a lack of financial assistance. Accordingly, for all these reasons, Wat Koh community has increasingly faced trauma and pressure from modern society.

The study of the protection of Wat Koh community's heritage has highlighted the need for a safeguarding strategy and its implementation. The research into protection measures for the goldsmith community at Wat Koh provides important lessons regarding the application of updated safeguarding strategies for other heritage places. The government authorities might encourage increasing pride in the goldsmiths' heritage in the younger generation by adopting an appropriate strategy for the future, to safeguard the goldsmith community and its cultural value.

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