

## Management of Thai Local Wisdom Related to Pandanus: Learning, Inheritance and Conservation for sustainable

### การบริหารจัดการภูมิปัญญาการสานใบเตย: การเรียนรู้ การสืบทอด และการอนุรักษ์สู่ความยั่งยืน

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#### Abstract

Local wisdom is at risk of being lost because of changes in lifestyle as a result of modern development. Fewer people in communities around Bangkok have the time and motivation to practice traditional crafts and as a result local wisdom is diminished when skills fail to be passed on to coming generations. This paper explores the local wisdom associated with pandanus mat and pillow weaving in a village on the Nakhon Chai Si River in Bangtoei, Sampran District, Nakhonpathom Province. The data are based on interviews and observation with the aims to 1) study Thai local wisdom related to Pandanus in Bangtoei, Sampran, Nakhonpathom 2) study the process of knowledge management of pandanus in Bangtoei, Sampran, Nakhonpathom 3) study conservation, restoring and development of Thai local wisdom related to Pandanus in Bangtoei, Sampran, Nakhonpathom.

The results indicate that 1) Thai local wisdom related to Pandanus in Bangtoei, Sampran, Nakhonpathom inherited from generation to generation because harvesting and weaving the pandanus are difficult, the local people are forced to cultivate pomelos and some people have to go outside the community to trade which has resulted in fewer households continuing to weave pandanus; 2) the process of knowledge management in Bangtoei, Sampran, Nakhonpathom includes Tacit Knowledge and Explicit Knowledge. Bangtoei Elderly Club encourages elders to volunteer their skills and share their knowledge with the elder in Elderly Club and the teacher at Wat Donwai local school has invited local speakers to transfer knowledge to teachers and students. The teacher has prepared handbooks about the method of pandanus leaf mat and pillow weaving and displays it on the school website; 3)

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Bangtoei Elderly Club preserves this local wisdom by seeking out new markets for pandanus products produced by members of the Elderly Club. Furthermore, the President of the club encourages elders to volunteer their skills and share their knowledge to students at Wat Donwai local school. Wat Donwai school is the only school in the area that has been teaching the wisdom of pandanus leaf weaving in a subject “home working and technology” in Matayom Suksa III. The teacher and students apply the methods used to weave mat, pillow, shoes, tissue paper boxes, fans and saucers for preserving the wisdom.

The study also found that other children of the community have not inherited the wisdom of pandanus weaving. The local government should make determined effects to preserve this wisdom. Otherwise, it is likely to be lost from Bangtoei in the near future.

**Keywords:** local wisdom, pandanus weaving, Nakhon Chai Si River way of life, inheritance, conservation

#### บทคัดย่อ

การเปลี่ยนแปลงวิถีชีวิตจากการพัฒนาไปสู่ความทันสมัย ทำให้ภูมิปัญญาท้องถิ่นเริ่มสูญหายไป ชาวบ้านขาดแรงจูงใจในการทำงานหัตถกรรมพื้นบ้านนับว่าเป็นสาเหตุให้ภูมิปัญญาท้องถิ่นสูญหายและขาดการถ่ายทอดสู่คนรุ่นต่อไป บทความนี้เป็นการศึกษาภูมิปัญญาท้องถิ่นการสานหมอนเตย และเสื่อเตยของประชาชนในกลุ่มแม่น้ำนครชัยศรี ตำบลบางเตย อำเภอสสามพราน จังหวัดนครปฐม ใช้วิธีการศึกษาโดยการสนทนากลุ่ม การสัมภาษณ์ และการสังเกต และบทความนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อ 1) ศึกษาภูมิปัญญาท้องถิ่นการสานใบเตยของตำบลบางเตย อำเภอสสามพราน จังหวัดนครปฐม 2) ศึกษากระบวนการจัดการความรู้ในชุมชนตำบลบางเตย อำเภอสสามพราน จังหวัดนครปฐม 3) ศึกษาแนวทางการอนุรักษ์ พัฒนาภูมิปัญญาท้องถิ่นการสานใบเตยของตำบลบางเตย อำเภอสสามพราน จังหวัดนครปฐม

ผลการศึกษา พบว่า 1) ภูมิปัญญาท้องถิ่นการสานใบเตยของชาวตำบลบางเตยเกิดจากการสั่งสม สืบทอดต่อกันมาจากรุ่นสู่รุ่น แต่เนื่องจากการเก็บใบเตยมีความยากลำบาก การสานใบเตยมีความยุ่งยาก และชาวบ้านต้องประกอบอาชีพทำสวนเป็นหลัก ชาวบ้านบางส่วนออกไปค้าขายทำให้เหลือเพียงไม่กี่ครัวเรือนที่ยังคงสานใบเตยเป็นอาชีพเสริม 2) กระบวนการจัดการความรู้ในชุมชนตำบลบางเตยมีการจัดการความรู้ทั้งความรู้ที่ฝังอยู่ในตัวบุคคลหรือความรู้ที่อยู่ในสมองของมนุษย์ (Tacit Knowledge) และความรู้ที่ชัดแจ้งหรือที่บันทึกไว้แล้ว (Explicit Knowledge) มีการแลกเปลี่ยนเรียนรู้จากพ่อแม่ ญาติพี่น้อง และในชมรมผู้สูงอายุบางเตยสร้างสรรค์มีการเชิญวิทยากรมาสอนเทคนิคการสานหมอนเตย เสื่อเตย ให้กับสมาชิกในชมรม โรงเรียนวัดดอนหวายมีการเชิญวิทยากรในท้องถิ่นมาถ่ายทอดความรู้ให้แก่ครูและนักเรียนในโรงเรียน และมีการจัดทำคู่มือ สื่อต่างๆ เพื่อบันทึกภูมิปัญญาท้องถิ่น 3) ชมรมผู้สูงอายุบางเตยสร้างสรรค์มีการอนุรักษ์ภูมิปัญญาท้องถิ่นการสานหมอนเตย และเสื่อเตยโดยการหาตลาดสำหรับจำหน่ายหมอนเตย เสื่อเตยที่ผลิตโดยสมาชิกของชมรมผู้สูงอายุ และสนับสนุนให้ผู้สูงอายุเป็นวิทยากรให้กับนักเรียนโรงเรียนวัดดอนหวาย ซึ่งเป็นโรงเรียนในท้องถิ่นเพียงแห่งเดียวที่

มีการเรียนการสอนกลุ่มสาระการเรียนรู้การงานอาชีพและเทคโนโลยี วิชาภูมิปัญญาท้องถิ่นหมอนเตย และเสื่อเตย (ง33202) สำหรับนักเรียนชั้นมัธยมศึกษาปีที่ 3 อาจารย์ผู้สอนได้จัดทำชุดฝึกปฏิบัติการสานหมอนเตย และเสื่อเตย และนำมาแสดงในเว็บไซต์ของโรงเรียน อาจารย์และนักเรียนมีการประยุกต์การสานหมอนเตย และเสื่อเตย เป็นผลิตภัณฑ์ที่หลากหลาย เช่น รองเท้า กล่องใส่กระดาษทิชชู พัด และที่รองแก้วที่ทำจากใบเตย เพื่ออนุรักษ์ภูมิปัญญาการสานใบเตยให้ดำรงอยู่ต่อไป

ปัจจุบันลูกหลานในชุมชนส่วนใหญ่ไม่ได้รับการถ่ายทอดภูมิปัญญาการสานใบเตย หน่วยงานในท้องถิ่นควรช่วยกันอนุรักษ์ภูมิปัญญานี้ไว้ มิเช่นนั้นภูมิปัญญาการสานใบเตยมีโอกาสสูญหายไปจากตำบลบางเตย

**คำสำคัญ:** ภูมิปัญญาท้องถิ่น, การสานใบเตย, วิถีชีวิตกลุ่มแม่น้ำนครชัยศรี, การสืบทอด, การอนุรักษ์

## Introduction

The present paradigm of development has resulted in people in society changing their way of life in line with modernity. People want comfort from materialism. Social today focuses the development of industry that emphasizes maximum production to meet the unlimited consumption demands of the people. People do not realize about the loss of natural resources and environment and those from rural areas leave their homes to find work in the city in hope for a better life. They forget the local wisdom that their ancestors have accumulated from experience and handed down from generation to generation.

Local wisdom means the culture wisdom that humans have learned from the environment referred to as morality wisdom, local wisdom, and social wisdom. His Majesty the King Bhumibol Adulyadej (King Rama IX) used the word "social wisdom". (Prawet Wasi, 2004: 5-6). Local wisdom is a valuable knowledge that people in the community have learned to develop into good wisdom, a way of life in harmony with nature, and in balance with the environment.

In the past, local people who lived in the Nakhon Chai Si River basin in Bangtoei, Sampran District, Nakhonpathom Province followed a way of life that depended on the river, including using boats for transportation, bathing in the river, using river water for cooking, gardening, farming, and fishing. As the Thai proverb says: "There are fish in the river; and rice in the paddy fields".

On both sides of the Nakhon Chai Si River basin, especially in Bangtoei district, there are many pandanus growing wild, which in Thai are called "Toei" hence the name of the district Bangtoei. Local people in Bangtoei district possess local wisdom related to pandanus leaf mat and pillow weaving which they do for supplementary income and use in the household. Nowadays, the local wisdom related to pandanus leaf weaving around the Nakhon

Chai Si River basin is diminishing. The way of life of the local people is changing, due to the growth of industry, and some local people who were formerly farmers have changed their occupation to be traders at Don Wai market located across from Bangtoei sub-district. Others now work in factories that have sprung up in the area. At present, there are fewer pandanus as people prefer to grow morning glory instead, because they can earn a better income from it. So, descendants of these former pandanus farmers will likely not learn of this local wisdom, and not appreciate its value and importance.

Thai local wisdom related to Pandanus leaf mat and pillow weaving in the Nakhon Chai Si River basin in Bangtoei, Nakhonpathom Province is a local wisdom that reflects the way of life, social capital, cultural capital, and the abundant natural resources available to the people in Nakhon Chai Si River basin. But the way of life is changing in line with modernity; and ignoring this valuable local wisdom. It is essential, there, that local people and all sectors of society make every effort to conserve and revive this Pandanus leaf mat and pillow weaving tradition so that the young generations can know this local wisdom, and preserve it for perpetuity.

### **Objectives**

1. To study Thai local wisdom related to Pandanus in Bangtoei, Sampran, Nakhonpathom.
2. To study the process of knowledge management of pandanus in Bangtoei, Sampran, Nakhonpathom.
3. To study conservation, restoring and development of Thai local wisdom related to Pandanus in Bangtoei, Sampran, Nakhonpathom.

### **Discussion/Conclusion**

Field trip studies related to the local wisdom surrounding pandanus leaf mat and pillow weaving in Bangtoei, Sampran, Nakhonpathom, explore the experiences of locals, and how they learn from the environment, their way of daily living, and the passing down of traditional knowledge through the generations. Wisdom is a knowledge system; that responds to the needs of those living in the local area and is inherited through the generations as a form of intellectual property created by the local people. (Udom Pejarasangharn, 1997: 76).

### Sample Group

The samples used in the group discussion and interview were: the Bangtoei Elderly Club's Chairman, members of the Bangtoei Elderly Club, members of the Subdistrict Administrative Organization, local people who still weave pandanus leaf mats and pillows, and a teacher and students of Wat Donwai School, a total of 14 people.

### Social and cultural, way of life of Bangtoei sub-district community

The Nakhon Chai Si River has many regional names. After it splits from Chao Phraya river at Chai Nat, it is called Makhom Thao River; while passing Suphan Buri it is the Suphan River and; while passing Nakhon Pathom it becomes the Nakhon Chai Si river. Only near its mouth at Samut Sakhon does it become the Tha Chin River, named after the former name of Samut Sakhon. The name Tha Chin is the convention used in most scientific documents. Nakhon Chai Si River is a fertile plain of the river suitable for agriculture.

**1. Location** Bangtoei sub-district located in Sampran District, Nakhonpathom Province. The north border is next to Nakhon Chai Si district. The south border is next to Rai Khing sub-district, Sampran District. The east border is next to Bang Krathuek sub-district, Sampran District. The west border is next to Song Khanong sub-district, Sampran District. The area is 10,725 square kilometers.

**2. Population** The number of population in Bangtoei is total 4,014 people, men about 1,948 people, women about 2,066 people. The average density was 375 persons per square kilometer. There are 1,571 households.

**3. Occupation** The main occupation of the people is agriculture. Economic crops include pomelo, rice, jackfruit, betel nut, orchid, and mango. Supplement occupation is trading and employee in factory. Most people can earn their living and good income.

**4. Way of life of Bangtoei people** In the past, the most area of Bangtoei consisted of rice fields. On both sides of the Nakhon Chai Si River pandanus grew wild in copious numbers; hence the district was named 'Bangtoei'. When local people have free time from farming, they like to cultivate Pandanus leaves to make mats and pillows to earn extra income. Tambon Bangtoei is also famous for its betel nut and yellow jack fruit products. The way of life of Bangtoei people is inherently linked with Nakhon Chai Si River, because it is the river that feeds the local communities providing them with transport routes to travel and visit neighbors as well as water for bathing, drinking, cooking, and gardening. Moreover, people are also fish the river for food eat and to sell at the market.

### **Pandanus as the identity of Bangtoei sub-district**

Pandanus's scientific name is *Pandanus kaida* Kurz, it belongs to the Pandanaceae family. It is a plant that grows wild and can be used for many purposes such as to protect the banks of the river, for weaving, fuel, herbal medicine, and also eaten as a fruit.



**Figure 1 Pandanus is a plant that grows wild along Nakhon Chai Si River**

**1. Pandanus along Nakhon Chai Si river basin** Local people have different names for Pandanus leaves in their local language such as Pandanus leaves that are not too young or too old are called “Paesalad”. Little Pandanus leaves are called “Karaked”. Bangtoei is a source of thorny Pandanus.

**2. Pandanus is used for weaving** The pandanus used in weaving has spiny leaves. Local people use the boats to cut pandanus, and need to be careful of the spikes. They load them onto the boats in stacks of 20 or so leaves and tie them on both sides. (Tem Smitinand, 2001: 393)

**3. Crisis of Pandanus in Nakhon Chai Si River basin** In the past, local people use pandanus for weaving so as to earn extra income. Dried pandanus leaves can be used to tie things and local people could also make money cutting pandanus leaves and selling them to merchants from Nakhon Pathom province. Today, local people do not appreciate the value of pandanus, due to the modern lifestyles which don't recognize its utility, people today prefer modern accessories. Many people cut down the pandanus and replace them with other plants such as morning glory and water mimosa which can be sold at a better price. The younger generations are hardly known Pandanus. It is a loss of original natural resources, environment and local wisdom of local area. From focus group discussion with the local people who do Pandanus weaving as the second career. A member of the local community who still weaves

pandanus leaf pillows to supplement her income, and is also a member of Subdistrict Administrative Organization said:

“In the past, there were a lot of Pandanus along the river, but the people cut the Pandanus leaves in front of the house, because the villagers don’t see the benefits. Some people changed to grow morning glory, because it can be sold at Don Wai Market.”



Figure 2 Field trip study to a family, who weaves mats and pillows in Bangtoei

She reflects on the impact of development as local wisdom begins to be lost. Natural environment resources are also affected by modernity and if local people do not appreciate the value of pandanus, there may no longer be pandanus weaving for young generation to inherit.

### Value and perception

Every society has its own capital, which represents the unique, spiritual values that exist in each locality, which appear in the way of life and the context of the community. From the field study, it was found that;

**1. Social and cultural capital** Pandanus weaving local wisdom is a wisdom that reflects the local history of Bangtoei people who have a way of life related to the rivers where natural resources are abundant. Pandanus represents are social and cultural capital that reflects the uniqueness of the Bangtoei sub-district.

**2. Human capital** This is inherited from generation to generation, whereby parents and, grandparents transfer the knowledge and methods of Pandanus weaving to the children, and there are the local expert about Pandanus mats and pillows weaving. Local people are invited to teach at the school. In the past, almost all households in Bangtoei could make mats and pillows, but nowadays, there are only 3-4 households still weaving for supplementary occupation.

**3. Intellectual capital** New products made from pandanus can be invented based on the creativity that comes from experience Intellectual capital is applied to create numerous products such as shoes, tissue boxes, coasters, and bags. For example, by putting herbs together with pandanus produces fragrant and relaxing scents. It is the integration of existing natural resources to the maximum benefit and appropriate to the era.

**4. Resources capital** Thai local wisdom related to Pandanus weaving reflects the abundance of natural resources. The abundance of water and soil, as mentioned in Thai proverb “There are fish in the water, there is rice in the fields.” There are a lot of Pandanus growing along both sides of Nakhon Chai Si River. Pandanus can protect river bank from tides.

**5. Money capital** Pandanus leaves mats and pillow can be traded for supplementary income. Wat Don Wai School brings the products made from pandanus to exhibitions at many local events, and also sells pandanus products to increase school funds for students and the schools.

The value of Pandanus wisdom is affected by modern technology. These days, people prefer synthetic materials instead of Pandanus material because they believe it to be more beautiful, and more durable. As a result, the wisdom of Pandanus leaves is diminishing. Local wisdom related to pandanus weaving is considered of intellectual value as it was created by the local themselves and does not harm the environment.

### **Management of Pandanus weaving wisdom in learning and inherit**

The study found that the management of pandanus weaving wisdom in learning and inheriting is as follows;

**1. Family and relative learning management** Learning and inheriting pandanus wisdom from parents, grandparents, from generation to generation. The children watched their parents, grandparents, or neighbors weaving mats and pillows since child and helped their parents. From the focus group discussion, a local people who still weaves pandanus leaf mats to supplement her income, and is also a member of the Elderly Club in Bangtoei said that;



“When I was young, in the evening, after my mother returned from the garden, she would weave padanus leaf mats and pillows for use in the household and for sold at Nakhon Pathom. I thought they were very beautiful, so I wanted to make them also. When I grew up I became a farmer, feeding the fish, and weaving padanut mats and pillows for the house and sale for more income.”

**2. Community-based learning management** This involves the learning process and inherited wisdom of pandanus weaving in the community. In Bangtoei sub-district, the operation of the Bangtoei Elderly Club promotes learning to pass on the wisdom of pandanus weaving by invited lecturers to teach the weaving technique to the members of the elderly club. It is a benefit for the elderly in their free time. Moreover, elderly people also feel that they have values, and importance for the children in the local area. It motivates and encourages the elderly and provides support for the members in elderly club who are experts in pandanus weaving, which they teach at Wat Donwai school.

**3. School learning management** This is a process of learning and passing on pandanus weaving wisdom to young people. From the study it was found that, there was only one local school, namely Wat Donwai, located in Bang Krathuek sub-district opposite Bangtoei sub-district, that taught the local wisdom related to pandanus leaf weaving to students in Mathayom 3. It encourages the students to know and inherit the local wisdom of the district. One student, who was interviewed at Wat Donwai school said that;

“When I was young, I saw my grandmother weaved pandanus leaves mats to sleep on at home. I liked them very much, and I want to do the same. I was glad to know that this school taught this subject. I will do it for my parents. When I pass to Mathayom 4, I have to do it for my project.”

From the focus group discussion with a teacher, local lecturer, and students, it was found that unfortunately, the majority of students at Wat Doiwai school are not locals. They are poor children who came with their parents from other provinces, or the children of migrant workers who migrated to Thailand for work. Most of the local families in the area send their children to study at famous private schools.



Figure 3 Focus group discussion with a teacher, local lecturer, and students at Wat Donwai school

### Knowledge management process of Bangtoei people

From the study of the knowledge management process in the community, it was found that efforts are being made by local people, the elderly club, and schools in knowledge management. Such efforts support Jatuporn Juyjingam (2015) who studied the Benefits toward Knowledge Management of Thai Social Entrepreneurs and found that knowledge management is an important mechanism for improving productivity and cutting costs. Knowledge content, process and context all need to be carefully managed in order to preserve or create value for an organization. Furthermore, according to Narisara Intasiri (2015), who studied the Knowledge Management of Role-Model Farmers in Premium-Grade Beef Production, knowledge in the form of an individual's perceptions may be stored as new experience (Tacit Knowledge) and also in the form of written notes (Explicit Knowledge), which corresponds to knowledge embedded in the human brain (Tacit Knowledge), and knowledge available from documents (Explicit Knowledge).

**1. Tacit Knowledge** is the knowledge held in a person's brain. It is based on action and experience. Bangtoei sub-district community offers learning exchanges within the family, community and through networks. There is learning exchange in the Elderly Club of Bangtoei whereby local lecturers are invited to teach the techniques of mat and pillow weaving to the members of the club and furthermore, Wat Donwai school invites local speakers from the Bangtoei elderly club to teach the knowledge to teachers and students at the school. The school connects with the local people by taking boats to practice cutting pandanus in the

area. Students bring pandanus mats from home that their grandmothers made and teach the teachers how to make them thus creating a learning cycle at all levels.

**2. Explicit Knowledge** This is knowledge that can be gathered, transmitted by various methods such as written notes, theory, handbook, and sometimes referred to as concrete knowledge. In Bangtoie sub-district, prepared handbooks and are used to record local wisdom such as at Wat Donwai school, which has published the wisdom of pandanus leaves through various media such as practical instruction on pandanus leaf weaving in handbooks available on Wat Donwai school's website. There are television programs broadcasting the news about this local wisdom and the Bangtoei Elderly Club has also prepared a pandanus leaf mats and pillows weaving handbook. All of this is a systematic accumulation of knowledge and is published as local knowledge available to all.



Figure 4 Practical training Pandanus leaf mats and pillows weaving handbooks

### Guidelines for the conservation, restoration, and development of local wisdom

Local wisdom created by people in the community is part of lifelong learning. Everyone should work together to find ways to help conserve this wisdom so it is not lost does from this area. From the study, it was found that;

**1. Setting up Pandanus leaf mat and pillow weaving group** Local people who can do pandanus leaf mat and pillow weaving are few these days. Unfortunately, this wisdom is at risk of being lost from Bangtoei sub-district. From the focus group discussion with local people who still maintain this weaving tradition, they are of the opinion that a pandanus leaf mat and pillow weaving group should be established to preserve, revive, and further develop this wisdom.

**2. Finding market for selling Pandanus products** From the field study, it was found that there are no specialized shops for selling pandanus products. Local people who weave pandanus have no time to sell because they work as pomelo farmers as their main occupation. Local people do weave pandanus products to order, but this business needs to be managed in terms of marketing, customers, and new product innovation for the wisdom attached to pandanus to become better known and popular.

**3. Applying Pandanus wisdom in the school curriculum** At present, Wat Donwai school is the only one to teach local wisdom related to pandanus leaves mats and pillows weaving in the school curriculum. Other schools in this area should add the subject of local wisdom to their school curriculum for continue preserve it.

**4. Supporting from local organizations** Bangtoei Elderly Club help to find markets for members of the club, and supports who are experts in pandanus weaving to teach this local wisdom and preserve it. The president of Bangtoei Elderly Club said;

“Bangtoei Elderly Club tries to preserve the local wisdom of pandanus weaving, because this local wisdom is the source and name of Bangtoei sub-district, and this local wisdom has been part of this area for a long time. I want to preserve this wisdom so that later generations will know the local wisdom of our district.”

## Conclusion

Pandanus wisdom weaving is a valuable local wisdom, shows the local identity, local culture, geography, social characteristics, and the way of life in the local district of Bangtoei. Pandanus weaving wisdom uses local resources to maximize the benefits. The local wisdom subject taught at Wat Don Wai School is integrated into the local education and knowledge system which is developed from its foundations, contributing to sustainable local development leading and ultimately national development. Therefore, the study of local wisdom helps for learning and is part of a knowledge-based society that encourages further study and development.

Local wisdom is the foundation of the local community, reflected in the foundation of society and local cultural. Pandanus wisdom also reflects the roots, the way of life, social capital, culture and economic direction of the people of the Nakhon Chai Si River basin. Everyone in the local area, including outside organizations, should help to preserve, and revive this wisdom, for the reason that the local wisdom of each area makes us more aware of and appreciated the foundations of local capital. It can be used as a capital for sustainable local development as well as future development for the benefit of generations to come.

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