



## A Development of the Logistic Creative Community Economy for the Promotion of Participatory Cultural Tourism: A Case of Cultural World Heritage, Thailand

Patcharin Sirasoonthorn<sup>a\*</sup>, Gwyntorn Satean<sup>b</sup>, Wittaya Khamunee<sup>c</sup> and Jirawat Pirasan<sup>d</sup>

<sup>a,b</sup>Faculty of Social Sciences, Naresuan University, Phitsanulok 65000

<sup>c</sup>Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Kamphaeng Phet Rajabhat University, Kamphaeng Phet 62000

<sup>d</sup>Faculty of Architecture, Naresuan University, Phitsanulok 65000

\*Corresponding author. E-mail address: patcharins76@gmail.com

### Abstract

This article aimed to strengthen community participation for cultural tourism. The authors highlighted 3 cultural World Heritages in Thailand including Sukhothai and Associated Historic Towns, Ayutthaya Historical Park, and Ban Chiang Archaeological Site. The mix-methodology was adopted. 1,120 samples were interviewed individually. Then, in-depth interview guideline and participant observation checklist were applied. Data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics and content analysis. Two crucial results were presented:

First, socio-demographic background of the target community was revealed. The target residents were mostly poor farmers, low income labors, in debt, and low education. Nonetheless, they had distinctive cultural identity. The communities had tourist attraction spots and yearly tourist activities. However, they had different standard level of community products. Those surrounding Sukothai and Srisatchanalai Cultural World Heritage Sites were able to rival the national standard. The Kamphaeng Phet struggled with unpreparedness. Limitations included low quality community products, insufficient basic infrastructure, and no systematic management. The Ayutthaya Historical Park was surrounded by migrated labors working in factories and service sectors nearby. The Ban Chiang Archaeological Site were facing the greatest difficulties. However, having a strong family and clan network allowed them to preserve their cultural identity. Second, five tourist routes based on 6 major categories of local wisdom were designed using Geographical Social Information Maps (GSIMs). To bring cultural tourism from below, it was crucial 1) to increase community participation within cultural preservation process; and 2) to carry on research and development for creative cultural innovations.

**Keywords:** Participatory Cultural Tourism, Cultural World Heritage, Creative Cultural Innovation, Geographical Social Information Maps (GSIMs)

### Introduction

Tourism has been most crucial service industry in Thailand since 1998. In 2015, arrivals increased to 26.86 million (Department of Tourist, 2015). This touristry provided more than 706,552.26 million baht for the country's revenue. The increasing number of tourists emerges as a result of an economic recovery of some nations such as China, India, Russia and Southeast Asian countries. Moreover, it is the strength of basic factors such as infrastructure, natural resources, and

cultural diversity of Thailand (Department of Tourism, 2012a, 2012b).

In 21<sup>st</sup> century cultural tourism emerges as a part of lifestyle learning between tourists and local residents. The most common destination are World Heritage site, historical park, museum, ethnic community, cultural attraction and human-made socio-cultural attraction site. The three cultural sites were inscribed by UNESCO as World Heritage lists including 1) Historic Town of Sukhothai and Associated Historic Towns, 2) Historic City of Ayutthaya, and 3) Ban Chiang Archaeological



Site. As a result, Thailand has gained popularity from tourists around the world. In 2013, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) announced in the International Cultural Tourism Committee Workshop and Sukhothai Cultural Tourism Expert Symposium that the country achieved at least 44% of the growth (ICOMOS, 2013).

At the national level, problems remain Thailand's poor policy planning, lack of good and long term policy designation, uncooperative structure of involving organizations, and insufficient funding. Limitations include bad quality public facilities such as public toilet, information center, accommodation, restaurant, and security system. At local level, problems include lacking of managerial skill in tourist industry of local administrative, deterioration of tourist attraction sites and thieves illegally excavated antiquities. At individual level, problems concern lack of public awareness, misunderstanding of conservation, and insufficient people participation. Merely few benefit goes to surrounding communities located in the buffer zone. Studies revealed that cultural tourism in Thailand has long been limited within the boundary of World Historic Sites. There is only few community participation from local residents. Not much social enterprise nor creative community innovation have been made. This leads to ignorance of deterioration of cultural World Heritage (The Fine Arts Department of Thailand, 2009; Manager Online, 2013).

Studies revealed that long time destructive tourism of Thailand was not only destroyed international competitiveness but also diminishing community identity and power (Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand, 2011). This situation calls for resignation a new community creative cultural tourism approach namely "community-based tourism". The term refers to touristy that benefits both travelers and the destination.

### Study Methods

Two major objectives included 1) to strengthen community power for sustainable cultural tourism and 2) to provide examples of cultural innovation based on local wisdom and community participation in the forms of five cultural tourist routes.

The researchers applied mix-methodology. These included survey, qualitative research and action learning appraisal. By using Digital orthophoto including 574-003 Kamphaeng Phet Historical Park; TH-576 Historic City of Ayutthaya; and TH-575 Ban Chiang Archaeological Site, target communities located in the buffer zone were identified, target communities surrounding the 3 Thai cultural World Heritage Sites were investigated. These included Sukhothai and Associated Historic Towns, Ayutthaya Historical Park, and Ban Chiang Archaeological Site.

First, questionnaire survey was adopted. Data was collected from participants living in surrounding communities located within 1.5 kilometers of the 3 World Heritage Sites. Sampling came from the use of Taro Yamane's sampling table. 1,120 samples were interviewed individually. 390 samples from Sukhothai and Associated Historic Towns were investigated. These included 53 samples from Sukhothai, 158 samples from Srisatchanalai, and 179 samples from Kamphaeng Phet World Heritage Sites. Then, 390 samples from communities surrounding Ayutthaya Historical Park and another 340 samples from those surrounding Ban Chiang Archaeological Site were interviewed. The data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics.

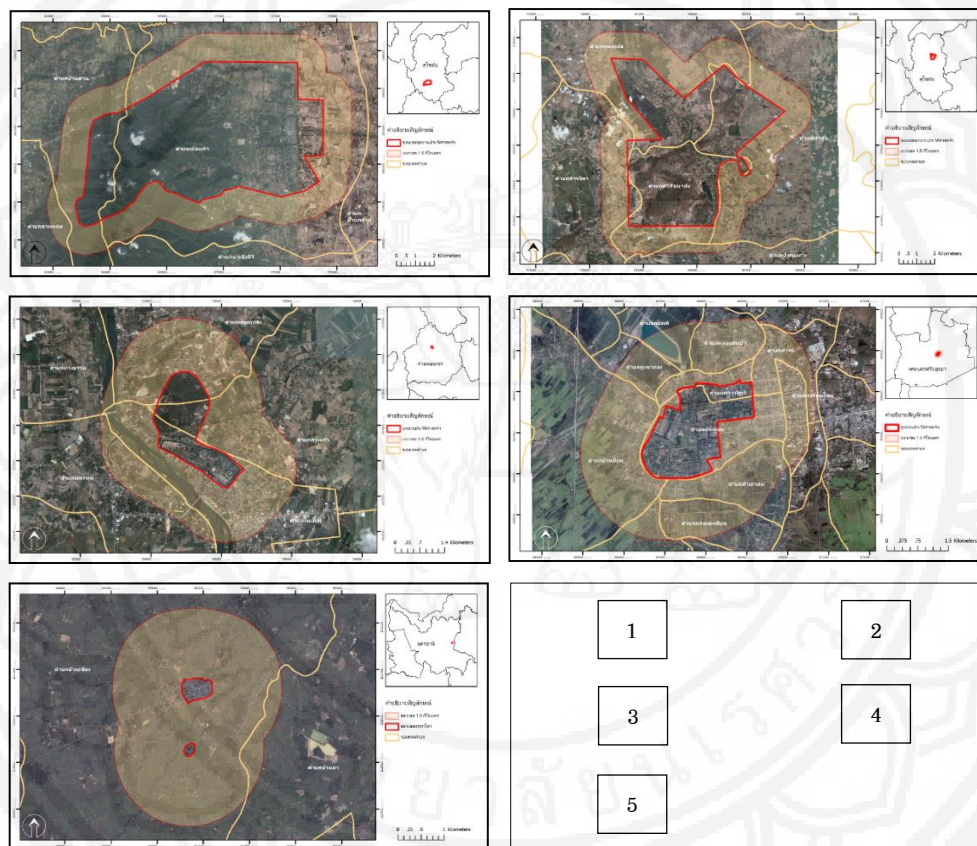
Second, purposive selection was applied for in-depth interview and participant observation. Data concerning community context, life style, cultural identity, and community products was systematically conducted. 6 categories of culture based on the classification of the



Department of Cultural Promotion, Thailand were investigated. These included 1) literature and folk tale, 2) performing art, 3) social practice and ritual, 4) knowledge and practice concerning nature and universe, 5) traditional craft, and 6) traditional sport. The data was analyzed by using content analysis.

Last, participatory action learning appraisal approach was applied. To evaluate reliability of field data and of

appropriated social innovation, public dialogues were arranged at the community level. All socio-cultural capital were participatory selected. GSIMs was developed based on existing local wisdom, social enterprises, tourist attraction spots, and community infrastructure. Five tourist routes were displayed. Checking validity of these cultural innovations has been done by exchange learning among involving actors.



**Figure 1** Surrounding Communities of the 3 Thai World Heritage Sites

**Note:**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | Sukhothai Historic Towns and the Target Community            |
| 2 | Srisatchanalai Historic Towns and the Target Community       |
| 3 | Kamphaeng Phet World Heritage Sites and the Target Community |
| 4 | Ayutthaya Historic Park and the Target Community             |
| 5 | Ban Chiang Archaeological Site and the Target Community      |



## Research Findings

### 1. Socio-Demographical Context

Three cultural World Heritage Sites showed similar socio-economic characters of local residents. They were poor farmers and unskilled labors, in debt, and low level education. They have confronted problems such as lacking of community funding, insufficient experience in tourism management and degenerated tourist attractions. Apart from poverty and low education, the communities surrounding Ayutthaya Historical Park were migrated labors working from nearby factories and service sectors. Among the 3 historical World Heritage Sites, those communities surrounding Ban Chiang Archaeological Site confronted the worst situation. They had moving to aging society. The major populace was Lao Phuan who were small scale farmers immigrated from Xiangkhoang in Laos. They had outstanding traditional culture and life style. Most of them had small family size (under 5 persons), low level education (graduated merely primary level) and Buddhism. They were sinking in debt. Their monthly income per family was less than 9,000 baht. Nonetheless, they had a very strong family and clan network. These allowed them to have high level of cultural capital; strong social network, and unique cultural

identity. However, poor policy planning of involving organizations and local administrative led to low investment within this area.

### 2. Cultural Identity and Local Wisdom

There were 240 cultural items from 6 categories of cultural heritage items found in the target communities. These included 36 items from category 1, literature and folk tales; 41 items from category 2, performing art; 105 items from category 3, social practices and rituals, 98 items from category 4, knowledge and practice concerning nature and universe; 112 items from category 5, traditional crafts; and 12 items from category 6, traditional sports.

Most communities had strong cultural identity in category 3, 4 and 5 except those communities surrounding Sukhothai Historic Towns. However, the qualitative study showed insufficiency and ineffectiveness of some communities in terms of accessibility, community facilities such as tourist guide service system, community network, promotion and public communication, as well as creative cultural innovation for sustainable tourism. Furthermore, limitations in terms of inconsistency were found in category 6. This obstruction prohibited the community to be promoted as tourist attraction activity.

**Table 1** Six Elements of Local Wisdom and Cultural Identity in Target Communities

No	Cultural World Heritage	Local Wisdom and Cultural Identity						Total*	Percentage
		1	2	3	4	5	6		
1	Sukhothai and Associated Historic Towns	14	19	36	41	40	5	155	64.58333
1.1	Sukhothai Historic Town	9	4	6	1	14	1	35	22.58065
1.2	Srisatchanalai Historic Town	1	1	5	9	15	1	32	20.64516
1.3	Kamphaeng Phet World Heritage Sites	4	14	25	31	11	3	88	56.77419
2	Ayutthaya Historical Park	4	1	12	8	11	–	36	15
3	Ban Chiang Archaeological Site	4	2	21	8	12	2	49	20.41667
<b>Total</b>		<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>100</b>

**Note\*:** number of community enterprises

- 1) literature and folk tales, 2) performing art, 3) social practices and rituals,  
4) knowledge and practice concerning nature and universe, 5) traditional crafts, and 6) traditional sports



Table 1 showed 6 categories of local wisdom. The communities surrounding the Sukhothai and Associated Historic Towns had the biggest number of local wisdom. The Kamphaeng Phet have struggled with unpreparedness at the community level. Limitations included low quality products, unpreparedness basic logistic, and low community participation. Those surrounding the Sukhothai and Srisatchanalai Historic Towns were able to rival the national standard. The target communities surrounding Ayutthaya Historical Park showed distinctive cultural identity, however the fast moving to urbanization and poor policy planning obstructed community enterprises to participate in touristy. Those surrounding Ban Chiang Archaeological Site have confronting the worst situation. Although they showed outstanding cultural capital, they needed a better effective tourism management.

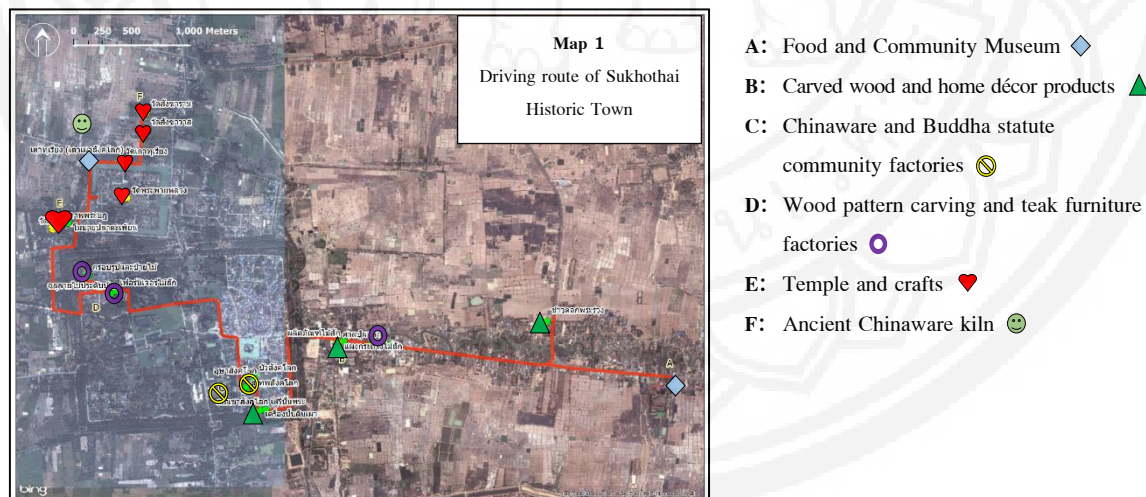
### 3. Cultural Innovation

To provide examples of cultural innovations for sustainable tourism, the authors presented 5 tourist

routes based on distinctive cultural characteristics of communities surrounding the World Heritage Sites. These routes were designed based on 6 grounded factors including 1) socio-cultural connectivity of small business enterprises, 2) six elements of local wisdom, 3) outstanding cultural identity, 4) available community transportations, 5) basic infrastructure, and 6) connectivity with tourist attraction spots.

These cultural innovations highlighted the most attractive tourist spots. An overall goal of the routes were to increase tourism in the surrounding communities through which the roads run. The routes covered 1) walking route (1.2–3.4 kilometers), 2) bicycle route (3.4–10 kilometers), 3) driving route (6.4–22 kilometers), and 4) public transportation route, including rent a motorcycle, tram, and local designed vehicles (7–17.4 kilometers). The following maps contained activities and selected tourist attractive spots recommended by involving actors.

**Map 1** Driving Route, the Sukhothai Historic Town

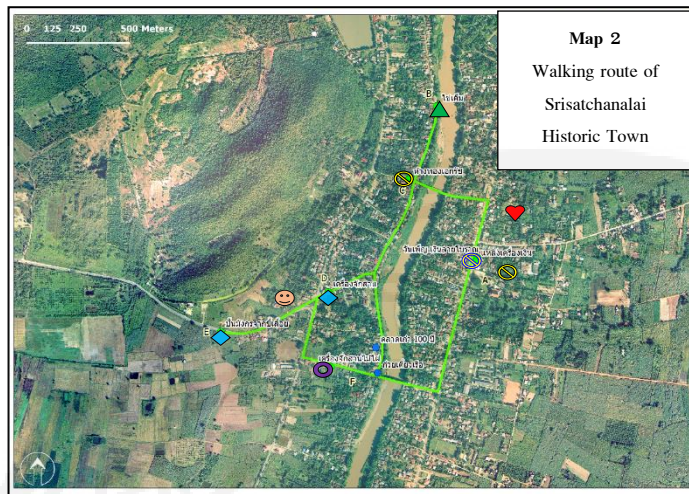


Map 1 comprised of a 9.8 kilometers driving route. It highlighted 16 tourist spots in communities surrounding the Sukhothai Historic Town. These included A) tasting well-known Thai rice noodles with curry and visiting community museum; B) visiting carved wood and home décor products; C) visiting Chinaware and Buddha

statue community factories; D) visiting wood pattern carving and teak furniture factories; E) experiencing ruins of Srichum Temple and shopping community crafts; and F) visiting ancient Chinaware kiln and archaeological sites in the Sukhothai Historic Town.



**Map 2** Walking Route, the Srisatchanalai Historic Town

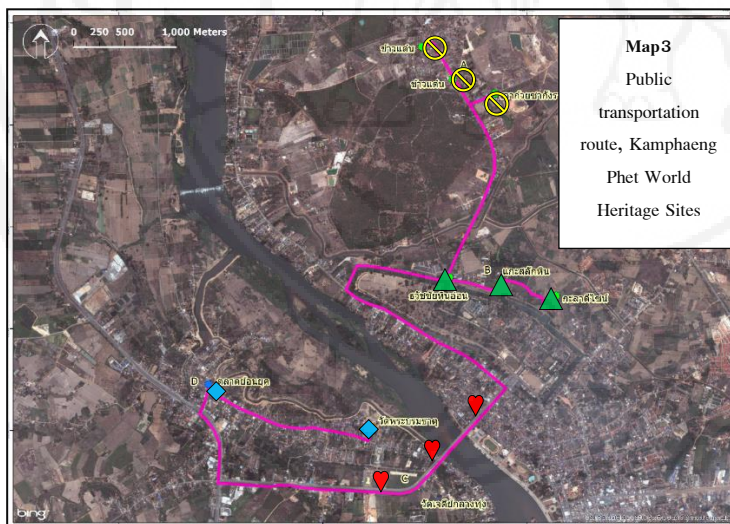


- A: Silver and gold factory 🏭
- B: Food preservation ▲
- C: Gold factory and handy craft ❤️
- D: Craft ◆
- E: Lifestyle of riverside villager 😊
- F: Ancient market & local food tasting 🍷

Map 2 comprised of a 2.5 kilometers walking route. The route included 10 tourist attraction spots in surrounding communities of the Srisatchanalai Historic Town. The most recommendations of this route were silver and gold factories, handicraft, and homemade

souvenirs. Then, a century old community market was recommended. There were numbers of food tasting such as the well-known Sukhothai rice noodles and preserved eggs.

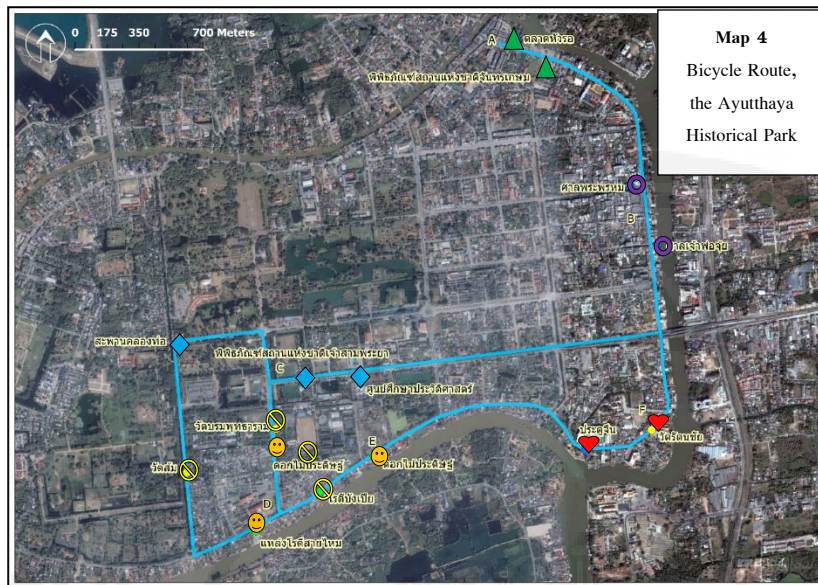
**Map 3** Public Transportation Route, the Kamphaeng Phet World Heritage Sites



- A: Food and souvenir 🍷
- B: Marble craft and home decors ▲
- C: Sightseeing Ping River ❤️
- D: Ancient market and temples ◆

Map 3 showed 17.4 kilometers, a public transportation route of the Kamphaeng Phet World Heritage Sites. 11 cultural tourist attraction spots were highlighted. These included: A) tasting delicious rice biscuits and grass jelly; B) visiting marble craving and

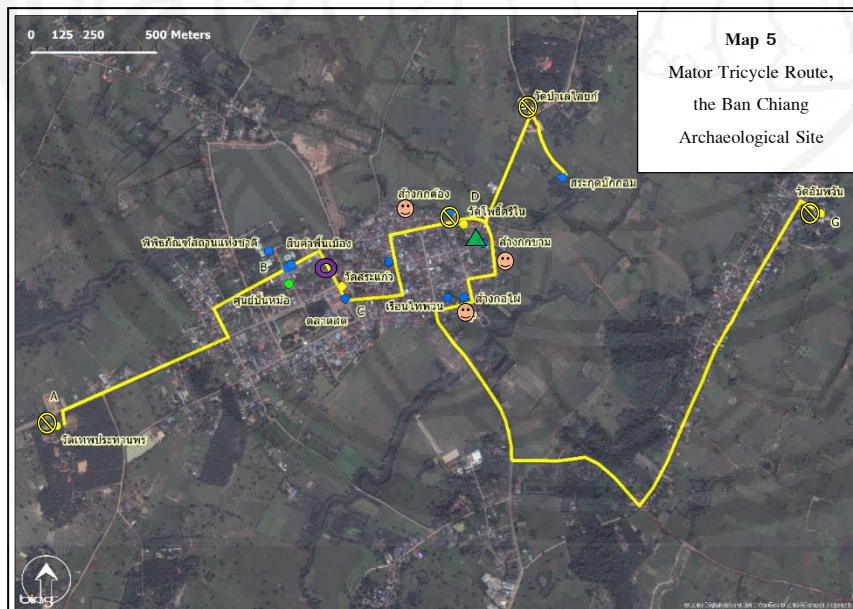
coconut shell products; C) scenic waterfront of Ping River and visiting Nakornchum ancient city; and D) buying local products from ancient market and worshipping 9 relics at Burmese style temple.

**Map 4** Bicycle Route, the Ayutthaya Historical Park

- A:** Local market and museum ▲  
**B:** Community shrine ●  
**C:** National museum, Historical learning center ◆  
**D:** Food tasting, temples ☹  
**E:** Roti factories and handy crafts 😊  
**F:** Chinese temples ♥

Map 4 showed 9 kilometers of a bicycle route in surrounding communities of the Ayutthaya Historical Park. 15 attraction tourist spots were highlighted. These included A) visiting local market and museum; B)

worship community shrine; C) visiting National museum and Historical learning center; D) visiting temples; E) tasting delicious Roti at Roti factories and shopping handy crafts; and F) visiting beautiful Chinese temples.

**Map 5** Motor Tricycle Route, the Ban Chiang Archaeological Site

- A:** temples, worship Buddha's relics ☹  
**B:** National Museum of Ban Chiang, pottery factory, handy Crafts Local market and museum ◆  
**C:** folk museum, mural of Buddha's biography ●  
**D:** archaeological excavations outdoors  
**E:** Thai *Puan* traditional houses, ancient wells ▲  
**F:** Chinese temples 😊

Map 5 showed 7.4 kilometers of a motor tricycle route in surrounding communities of the Ban Chiang Archaeological Site. There were 18 attraction

tourist spots. The area has long been well-known as the road of memorable Buddha. These included A) visiting ancient temples, worship Buddha's relics; B) visiting





National Museum of Ban Chiang, pottery factory, handy crafts; C) visiting folk museum, mural of Buddha's biography; D) visiting archaeological excavations outdoors; and E) experiencing Thai Puan traditional houses, lifestyle, and ancient wells.

### Conclusion and Discussion

This article provided a normative model of an argument for participatory cultural tourism. To attract public attentions from tourism scholars, decision-makers, policy planners, and practitioners; the authors adopted two major approaches. These included community participatory tourism development and creative innovation for cultural tourism. To achieve tourism from below, the development of cultural tourism in the 3 World Heritage sites should consider fair distribution of costs and benefits among social development actors, satisfaction of locally-felt needs, and strengthening democratization process in local tourist destinations.

To present examples of cultural creative tourism, the authors designed 5 tourist routes. These routes connected outstanding cultural identity, local wisdom, community enterprises, and popular tourist attraction spots in the target community. The routes presented the best practice of cultural innovation based on community participation and cultural capital.

This article outlined the cultural power of the poor. To empower the target community, it should be best focusing on their existing socio-cultural capital. Two types of cultural tourism were identified. First, the social tourism based on activities such as participation in local life style and community product creation. This type supported the previous study of Kitcharoenpaisal (2010) named "The study of Mon community cultural tourism resources to develop ecotourism in Pathumthani province". Second, the cultural tourism based on

activities such as tourists' participation in rituals, ceremony, and sharing experiences with local residents during cultural activities. By doing these, tourists were able to share and experience belief, values, and perception of local people which might later lead to a share vision of sustainable development. This finding was supported by the work of Singyabuth (2008).

The outstanding characteristics of cultural tourism from below based on two major elements. First, it was the participation of all development actors, especially local residents. This finding supported the previous study of Srisunakrua (2008) which focused on concept, method, participation and expectation of local populace. It also supported the study of Kongkoon (2009) which highlighted the most crucial factor of successful tourism based on strengthening local management. Without people participation, the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of UNESCO in the buffer zone might not be achieved. Although the buffer zone might not be part of the inscribed World Heritage property, well-designed buffer zones could enhance sustainable use of the property (UNESCO, 2011). Second, the authors highlighted crucial successful factors concerning a better cultural management. These included 1) an integration of local tourism plan with national plan, especially between the policy of Fine Arts Department and Local Administration, 2) improving function and responsibility of local administrative organizations; 3) increasing involvement of cultural experts and professional cultural managers; and 4) enlarging cooperation and a better understanding between involving organizations.

By applying cultural tourism from below concept and approach, the authors pin pointed the significance of improving roles and function of local administrative offices. Simultaneously, they stressed an increasing role of local residents. By strengthening local roles and





functions of all actors involving in cultural tourism, more benefits could be generated to local communities. By doing this, the authors had a strong belief that a better protection and participatory management of the World Heritage sites would be improved.

The authors highlighted a strong capacity building for local communities in the buffer zone. By increasing roles of local residents and expanding engagement of surrounding community into the cultural touristy, farm land, food outlets, handicraft and local entrepreneurs could take part in tourism support activities. To support this idea, the authors offered 5 tourist routes based on participation of local residents, local wisdom, and readiness of public facility. These were walking route, bicycle route, driving route and varieties of public transportation routes.

Apart from the empirical data from this article, these assumptions were supported by numbers of studies. These were the work of Ingram (1955) named "Economic Change in Thailand Since 1850"; Satapanawattana (2003); Nartsupha (2003); Wittayasakphan (2002); Chaisingananon (2006); Brown & Tandon (1994); McGregor, Glass, & Clark, (2006). The authors highlighted an important of community participation from communities surrounding the World Heritage Sites. These key success factors could lead to long term protection system and socio-economic sustainability of local residents living in the buffer zone. The findings were supported by numerous studies worldwide (The University of Melbourne, Faculty of Business & Economic, 2004; Wilmsen et al., 2008; Islam & Morgan, 2012; Sriruksoongnern & Pumipuntu, 2012).

### Suggestion

This article identified two major approaches for cultural tourism from below: community participatory tourism and implementation of creative cultural tourism.

To achieve community participatory tourism, first the author suggested that involving local actors and local administrative organizations should put more consideration on the following issues:

- 1) Improvement and upgrading community public facilities including signs and map for a better accessibility,
- 2) Caring capacity and evaluation should be regularly revealed and improved especially at the cultural tourist spots,
- 3) Increasing roles of local residents in the buffer zone,
- 4) Providing cooperative funding for empowering community culture,
- 5) Increasing multi-cooperative network of local administrative organizations, state departments and non-government organizations,

Second, policy planners involving national tourism should put more efforts on integration the national cultural tourism into local implementations. To achieve long term creative cultural tourism, it is crucial to:

- 1) Regularly improving and evaluating creative cultural tourism plan and strategy,
- 2) Integration research and development to the implementation process,
- 3) Designing good quality local products and sufficient souvenirs based on community's cultural identity,
- 4) Providing spaces for displaying community products, cultural lifestyle and traditional integrity,
- 5) Preparation and training young and elderly local tour guides,
- 6) Providing a better protection and management system in the target areas.

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