

The Revitalization of the Old Floating Market Identity in Western

Bangkok Area, Thailand

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Abstract

The revitalization of the place identity is truly necessary for a cultural heritage community in Thailand. The goal of this research is to provide guidelines for revitalization and conservation of the identity of the old floating market called *Ta Lad Pu* in Western Bangkok, Thailand. The market comprises of many historical and traditional values which have impact on a long continuous way of living and which have made the market and the surrounding community become consequently unique. The research has revealed 4 major aspects of identities and values of *Ta Lad Pu* such as (1) local traditional ceremonies and wisdom, (2) vernacular arts, (3) authentic food, and (4) way of life:

- (1) Local traditional ceremonies and wisdom include the religious rituals practiced in this community. In addition, there exists a ritual which depicts Chinese and Thai culture and ways of life particularly a ritual of worshipping former kings and gods.
- (2) Vernacular arts are activities of local wisdom including performance, painting, and sculpture such as Chinese Lion dance and Thai dance. However, due to the urban development, these kinds of arts have been reduced gradually.
- (3) Authentic food in this area has been influenced by Chinese for a long period of time, like for example, pan cake, Thai desserts, and traditional crisp fried noodle which existed since the reign of King Rama V,
- (4) There are numerous Chinese shrines and old temples which have brought many sacrificial offering shops for the gods and among which is a Chinese god. Furthermore, a Chinese-Thai traditional herbal shop that is more than 100 years old in business represents as a symbol of the bi-cultural life here.

Having a long historical record, Ta Lad Pu keeps unique architecture and extensive continuous ways of living within its community. However, even in such many old places, there are issues related to the retention of authenticity and core identity of the place which must be considered. Different ethnic people have lived here and have made this community a variety of social and creative activities, distinctive ways of living, and beliefs. In addition, most of them are not transformed into tourist places in response to the growing trend of cultural tourism.

The challenge of revitalization aims to generate the actions and underlying processes that would be necessary to deliver and recommend how to improve the identity and value strategically in terms of sustainable development to realize social, economic and environmental benefits for Ta Lad Pu.