

Community Way of Chinese People in Nabon: Learning, Conservation and Adaptation Talad Nabon Community, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province

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Abstract

The research of Community Way of Chinese People in Nabon: Learning, Conservation and Adaptation, Talad Nabon Community, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province is Qualitative Research emphasized on field study in Talad Nabon Community. Objective of research is studying process of social change, cultures, and lifestyle of Chinese people in Nabon Community, Nabon District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province.

The research indicates that:

Community Way of Chinese people in Nabon: it is seen that Chinese people in Nabon still spend their lives by emphasis on traditions and rituals in the same way as Chinese older generations by being Chinese identity intensely and continuously, having kinship relations, emphasis on cultures and traditions which are harmonious combination of Chinese people in Nabon. Older generations had transferred self-action through believe and traditions, socialization, learning real life spending in the community, transferring cultural way of the community from one generation to another in order to maintain the identity of Chinese descent in Nabon clearly.

Keywords: Nabon Community, Way of Life of Chinese People in Nabon, Learning Process, Role of Leader in Conservation and Adaptation.

Introduction

Nabon Community is a small community located around Nabon Railway Station where Chinese descent have settled and trading rubber from local people to export to other countries by train for more than 80 years. The location of Nabon Community where rubber products are distributed to Rubber Authority of Thailand (formerly called Rubber Plantation Organization) which is the major organization of Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives. Growth of rubber business is constituted the expansion of Nabon Community after Asia Highway has been built and linking roads are developed as road transportation network which is very convenient, therefore, Nabon Community starts reducing its role as rubber business expands and rubber trading can be made rapidly, conveniently and being more complex, Nabon Community, once used to be rubber trading center, reduces its role significantly.

Adaptation due to social conditions: the rapid transportation and communication plays an important role towards the community in changing according to modernity. Lifestyle in the society has been adjusted but group of people still adhere to the way of overseas Chinese in Nabon which is still binding believe and traditions in connecting people in the family (central pool), kinship, cooperation network, economic and social assistance, adhering to believe and traditions which have been transferred continuously from one generation to another generation, being abiding oneself in doing according to various festivals which are continually transferred. Forms of contact and communication, participation in activities, socialization, activity organizing system may be changed or adjusted but members of family, lineage still to abide by traditions and learning to develop and adjust oneself in accordance with dynamics of Chinese people (in Nabon strictly).

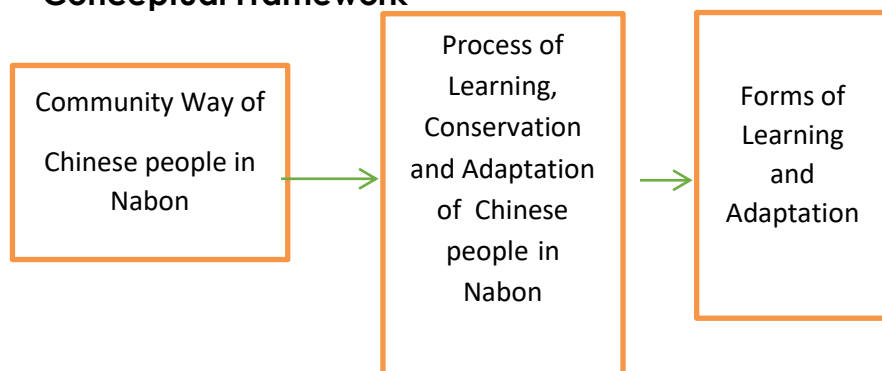
Physical appearance of Chinese people in Nabon Community are old shop houses lined up in length, they are both conventional wood shop house and two-storey concrete building. The entire shop-house community is divided into residential area, Chinese restaurants, Chinese baking shops, teahouses, general shops, grocery stores, markets, shrines, Chinese Association and offices of Rubber Company. The community is surrounded by rubber plantation which is an important occupation of people in this community for such long time by having way of life and living in Thai society under learning, conservation and adaptation in Chinese style via community way process, the actions reflect connection, closeness, gratitude and unity of the community (Patchari Thongruang 2018) which are deemed as spiritual anchor and the core of living. Many years ago, Chinese Community in Nabon had changes their way of life and adjusted themselves to get along with Thai society in various forms as well as cultural dimensions, therefore, the society and traditions of Chinese people in Nabon have become the remarkable points of them.

Community Way of Life: older generations of Chinese people in Nabon have transferred their community way by being Chinese identity intensely and continuously, older generations transfer cultures, foods, believe, traditions by means of socialization and learning from closeness. Teaching Chinese cultures and being Chinese are made continuously through interactions between group of Chinese descent, therefore, the identity of Chinese descent is still stable.

Objectives

1. To study community way of Chinese people in Nabon.
2. To study process of learning, conservation and adaptation of Chinese people in Nabon.

Conceptual Framework



Research Methodology

This research is Qualitative Research emphasized on field study in the community's area which is relevant to way of life, foods, cultures and traditions (Willie Tan, 2018 :) related to lifestyle, family's roles, groups of kinship, organizing learning activities for new Chinese generation by organizing activities and participating in holding traditional activities. Data collection is made by retrospective study, phenomenon in the community, analysis, lesson learned and conducting theoretical synthesis with eyewitnesses, knowledgeable people and experts in learning and transferring community way of Chinese people in Nabon, conducting analysis and synthesis in social process of the real learning and adaptation in the community. Stages of research are as follow:

Documentary study: studying related document, text books, related researches, articles from academic journal utilized as guidelines in studying, planning, collect data in the area, preparing questionnaire, observation, in- depth interview, guideline meeting with people relevant to the activity, discussion guideline, searching community research to comprehend thinking method, learning method and adaptation process of the participated people in the community (Gillian Symon and Catherine Cassell, 2012).

Field Study: studying learning process and conservation transfer, behavioral way in the community and activities, believe and Chinese traditions, learning process and adaptation of new generation of Chinese people in Nabon, accepting process of new idea and knowledge in order to adjust forms of activity, behavior and believe, learning attempt to take over way of life and cultures which are the Chinese identity of new generation. There is adaptation in accordance with social factors and context which lead to social changing by conducting both non-participatory observation and participatory observation in all direction periodically (Preecha Samakki and Panya Lertgrai, 2014), making informal conversation in normal lifestyle with key informants and eyewitnesses of the phenomenon, organizing focus group interviews and focus group discussions), making conservation with key informants regarding activities of leaders and activities of Chinese groups, knowledgeable people and specific Chinese people in the community, people who used to participate in the activity, being relevant to the event, lifestyle, traditions and rituals of Nabon Chinese. In order to obtain complete data in various dimensions, Researcher has utilized concept, theories as guidelines in design this research, social and environmental context and roles of ethnic group and relatives group of Chinese people in Nabon. Data collection is made by observation of physical and social context, conducting in-depth interview with key informant, group interview in term of Ex-post facto approach relevant to Chinese lifestyle, behavior, believe and identity, annual traditions and rituals and special occasions, utilizing related evidences accompanying the conversation and taking pictures of the past events and activities.

Learning process and adaptation of new generation; in this stage, Researcher has emphasized on in-depth interview, conducting participatory observation in lifestyle, participating in traditional activities and foods which are deemed as Chinese identity. The meeting is mainly used as lesson learned and bringing the obtained date to analyze in term of participatory theory and assess the actual activity or event both in formal and formal method.

Data Validation

Researcher will conduct Triangulation Test by inspecting data collected from different sources of data at least 3 types; source of data, data investigation and searching process, related guideline theory and data searching method. Data validation is conducted by Triangulation (Ann R. J. Briggs 2012) by collecting data in various methods and making comparison.

Selection of Key Informants

Researcher has searched for key informants by utilizing Theoretical Sampling from functional structure who is Chinese 60 years old or more, new generation of Chinese, age 20-40 years old who are grown and living in Nabon Community and being used to participate in activities, rituals and tradition relevant to the identity of Chinese people in Nabon, traders and restaurant owners who sell foods which are the identity of Chinese people in Nabon.

Data Collection Method

This research emphasizes on collecting field data by means of observation, conducting informal conversation and interview, holding group meeting to make lesson learned, participating both in non-participatory and participatory observation, participating in traditional activities of Chinese people, collecting actual empirical phenomenon, conducting in-depth interview with key

informants and related persons, conclusion of focus group meeting and inspecting data validation by triangulation method from the phenomenon and theoretical inspection.

Data Analysis

As this is qualitative data, therefore, there are many methods during conducting field research (Keith F. Punch), it is emphasized on the actual phenomenon in each period of each stage which affects continuously and linking each other theoretically as guideline, analyze the outcome, bringing the phenomenon and the actual traditional activities and rituals to conduct lessons learned in terms of Action Learning Model until the form of dynamics is concluded as well as conducting focus group analysis by expert or academic anthropologist.

Research Results and Data Analysis

Environmental context of Nabon Community: the area is approximately 4 square kilometers (Nabon Sub-district Municipality 2020) and there was Nabon Railway Station as the center, most people of the community are Chinese descent. In Nabon Railway Station during 1962-1972, there were bogie container parking on Rail No. 3 and Rail No. 2 waiting for unloading goods such as rubber (rubber sheet), rice, consumer goods, agricultural equipment and other supplies for unloading at Nabon and loading rubber back in return. It was the era when Chinese people from Thung Song, Khlong Jung, Chan Dee and other provinces travelled to settle and run food businesses and necessary goods as well as purchasing and making wholesale rubber sheets from agriculturists. Activeness of the community came from Pull Factor and Rubber Plantation Organization was the big center of rubber plantation which there were rubber plantations in thousands of Rai located in the north east of Nabon Market (community center), people came here to work in rubber plantation and being labor in loading-unloading goods, selling foods at the railway station, therefore, the economy of Nabon Community rapidly expanded.

Educational Factor: the school where Chinese descent popularly sent most of their children to learn was Sahamit Bamrung School where 80% of the students were children of Chinese people in Nabon, the rest were students from other districts or provinces whom their relatives were staying at Nabon. **Government Sector Factor:** Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives had sent many Government Officers and Officers under supervision of Rubber Plantation Organization. Therefore, Nabon society consisted of multi-cultural groups of people but they cooperated in doing social activities of all groups in the community (Punya Lertgrai Lunjakon Nillakan Nilrat Navakijpaitoon and Krittaporn Sae-NGae Sai-Jun.2020). Later the government had established Nabon Sub-district, therefore, there were more numbers of Government Officers and Officers in district level staying Nabon Community.

Later many migrated Chinese people gradually travelled to settle in Nabon area, it constituted Chinese people network who entered to develop rubber plantation, Nabon Community was wealthier. Approximately in 1957, the road linked between Thung Song and Nakhon Si Thammarat was built, economic base started moving from Nabon to Thung Song and Trang Province. Although Nabon and Thung Song was not so far, the economy of Nabon Community gradually turned to recession until it became the closed town but local Chinese people still propelled rubber business continuously all the time.

Nabon Community is divided into 2 parts after Nabon Sanitary District has been changed its status to Nabon Sub-district Municipality which constituted changing in society, economy, politics and administration as well as the establishment of Sub-community the municipal as it is divided according to the boundary line of the Southern Railway to be Talad-Bon Community and Talad-Lang Community in accordance with the railway boundary line.

Although it is divided by the Administrative District, both communities still contact each other closely as if they were one. Both communities still maintain many original cultures of their ancestors particularly in foods and way of life which are adhered to original cultures continuously.

Push Factor: the arrival of government sector which has been developed and growing from Sub-district to be medium size district, many people come to stay in the community, cultures of Chinese people in Nabon is gradually adjusted to be multicultural. Roads are built linking the main road for transportation which constituted convenience in transportation both agricultural goods and consumer goods. Therefore Nabon Railway Station reduces its role drastically from being the important center of communication and goods transportation. Due to the convenient transportation, Government Officers and Officers can travel back and forth from their home in other districts conveniently, therefore, size of the community is smaller accordingly.

Social Value Factor: the convenient transportation and the establishment of Nabon District Government Center as well as rubber business center is also spread, Chinese people in Nabon support their children to study and working in big cities or doing business in other provinces. Therefore, some part of their children study in schools in big cities, there are merely the elderly staying in Chinese people in Nabon Community as most of children and more young people prefer studying and working in other provinces.

Time	Activity	Group of People	Place
04.00-05.00 Hrs.	Rubber slit		Rubber plantation
06.30-07.30 Hrs.	Meeting and conversation at tea house	Children, teenager, adult, the elderly	Teahouse
07.30.09.00 Hrs.	Doing shopping to cook food at home	Children, teenager, adult, the elderly	Market

Community Way of Chinese People in Nabon Time Process

Community Way of Chinese People in Nabon: People in Nabon Community start doing their activities at 04.00-05.00 Hrs. of each day as Chinese People in Nabon gradually travel from their home for doing activities, therefore, they are mainly busy in the morning until at noon and the movement in the community gradually reduces until the evening. Identity foods, learning and adaptation: Chinese People in Nabon in the period of making their fortunes during newly settlement in Nabon Community, they tried to economize on spending life, they produces most of food by growing vegetables, making fermented foods and processing their produce for family consumption as they mostly planted vegetables in rubber plantation. Meat could be consumed merely in festivals and auspicious events. Later after they are wealthier, Nabon Chinese people start to renew their traditional foods by opening restaurants with menu of Chinese foods in the market, Chinese bakery, selling noodles, opening teahouse, selling deep-fried dough stick (Patongo), dumplings and steamed buns as well as other supplies.

The main menu of Chinese people in Nabon are noodles particularly yellow noodle which is made from wheat flour produced by the process of Chinese people in Nabon which is big, round and soft and is popularly used for stir fry. In the community at present, there is still yellower noodle producer, apart from yellow noodle, Chinese people in Nabon still produce seasoning used in daily cooking likewise as well as other snacks etc.

Activity/Event	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Chinese New Year												
Qingming Festival												
Dragon Boat Festival												
Ghost Festival												
Moon Festival												

Chinese New Year Tradition

Chinese New Year Festival is the tradition to celebrate the beginning of new year which is the most importance for Chinese people, it falls on 1st date of the first month (according to Chinese lunar calendar) or it is defined on the end date of the twelfth month which is 1st, 2nd, 3rd of the

first lunar month and it is approximately at the end of January until early February. During the Chinese New Year, relatives of Chinese people in Nabon will be gathering to do activities concurrently as well as cleaning house, decorating house beautifully, preparing foods and offerings to worship guardian spirit and late ancestors. Chinese people in Nabon will stop working for 1 day on Chinese New Year Day for relaxation or travelling to tourist attractions or taking family members to worship Gods in shrines for propitiousness and prosperity and they popularly wear new clothes. Moreover, senior people always give Red Envelope to their children, if any children who are successful or having permanent work, they will give Red Envelope to their parent to repay gratefulness and gratitude. Nabon people will make an appointment with their senior persons in each group of relatives and making the appointment in participating in the activity.

Qingming Festival

Qingming Festival or ancestor's graveyard worship which falls on 5th April of each year, it is deemed as an important tradition influenced by believe and instruction of Confucianism which all Chinese people adhere to carrying on for long period of time.

Before performing ancestor worshipping ceremony in Qingming Festival, younger generations will prepare the area for worshipping the late ancestors by cooperating in cleaning graveyard or tomb of the late ancestors and decorating with color paper color flags beautifully first and then bringing offerings such as flavor foods, sweet and fruits to worship guardian spirit and the late ancestors.

In this Qingming Festival, all children of Chinese people in Nabon will be gathering and going to worship graveyard or tomb of their ancestors in Nabon District, Nakhon Si Thammarat. Some families start worshipping their ancestors from the end of March until early April which depends on the readiness and convenience of children of Nabon Chinese in travelling to worship their ancestors. In this Qingming Festival, it is an opportunity for Chinese people in Nabon's children to meet their relatives and friends after they do not meet each other for long time. Some children of Chinese people in Nabon work in other provinces, this is the opportunity for them to meet relatives and friends during performing ancestor worship ceremony at the graveyard or tomb. Some people do not know each other, this is the chance for them each other by conversation about the story of their ancestor and becoming relatives or friends which constituted the concurrent awareness of being Chinese people in Nabon.

Dragon Boat Festival

Dragon Boat Festival falls on 5th of the fifth month of Chinese lunar calendar, this tradition has been adhered to carrying on by Chinese people for such long time in order to commemorate persons who conducted good deeds for the country during the ancient time. However, the worship of this festival is perform in accordance with the tradition rather than the commemoration. The purpose of the worship is making wishes from Gods to protect family and happiness. Offerings for worshipping guardian spirit and ancestors are consisted of rice dumpling, fruits and Chinese tea.

Ghost Festival

Ghost Festival or Midyear Merit Making Tradition falls on 15th of the seventh month of Chinese lunar calendar, it is the merit making to donate merit to strayed souls or ghost and there are 3 places of worship namely worshipping guardian spirit, the late ancestors and strayed souls. In this Ghost Festival, some families of Chinese people in Nabon popularly worship Gods in shrine s in this day or participating in donating money or foods to the poor in order to donate merit to strayed souls.

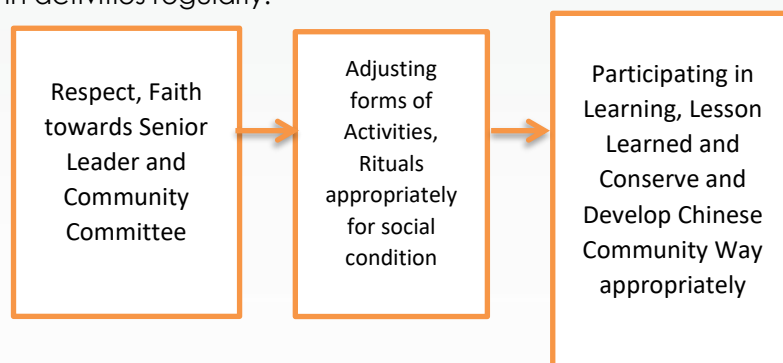
Moon Festival

Moon Festival of Chinese people originated more than 2,000 years ago, in ancient time, this festival was held for praying and making wish from Gods as China was a tremendous agricultural society. This festival falls on 15th of the wax moon of the eighth month of Chinese lunar calendar which was the harvest time in autumn. Normally during this period, the sky was is clear and good weather, it is the time which the moon shines brightly. Chinese people celebrate by holding the party after harvesting in order to respect and thanking Gods. For the connection between the moon and agriculture, Chinese people believe that there is a rabbit in the moon and it is deemed that the rabbit is an inspirer of rice and plants while the moon is the symbol of power to define human life and death. Therefore, the moon and the rabbit are very important for living in accordance with the Chinese's believe and Moon Festival has become the believe among Chinese people due to the agricultural society.

Moon Festival 15th of the eighth month of Chinese lunar calendar (Normally being in September of each year), it is the tradition which Chinese people have been performed for such long time in order to worship the Goddess in the moon which has an influence in human living and making a wish for abundant agricultural produce. Offerings are prepared to worship guardian spirit, the late ancestors and the moon, in accordance with the original believe, the worship will be made during the night but nowadays some families do not make worship during that time due to their inconvenience.

Learning, Transfer and Adaptation

Society of Chinese people in Nabon respects and focusing greatly on the importance of senior people, roles of the elderly and kinship system will support traditional activities, Chinese lifestyle is important significantly. When there is any traditional activity, most of Chinese people will stop working to participate in the activity, obeying suggestions, leadership in activities will be transferred from one generation to another and leader of the activity will coordinate both network in Nabon Community and Nabon people who stay in other provinces to acknowledge and participating in activities regularly.



Demonstration, Learning Process and Adaptation

The way of life of Chinese people in Nabon : their lifestyle is kinship relations and spending life in term of connection with the lifestyle transferred from their ancestors, loving their identity, focusing on cultures, traditions which is a harmonious combination of Chinese people in Nabon that caused love and confidence in power of Chinese group, physical appearance, attire, way of talking and social etiquette indicate being Chinese clearly (Lunjakorn Nillakan 2018) which is the personality being proud by Chinese people in Nabon.

Conclusion and Discussion

Believe, respect and faith in senior people according to the Chinese's believe is one of the most important factor constituted initiative in adaptation, adjusting form of community way to be consistent to social changing continuously which make community Chinese's culture stable (Panya Lertgrai Mitri Chandra and Vichien Thaicharoen, 2018: P 104-166). The unity of association constitutes confidence and reliability among government organizations and external organizations in supporting traditional activities of Chinese people in Nabon to be existed.

Suggestions

1. Local organization, government organization and private sector should support traditional activities and initiative activities of community groups in the area to strengthen and participating in assisting public activities of the local.
2. Community organizations, external organizations should support and coordinate traditions and activities of community groups, transferring wisdom obtained from traditional activities leading to the development.

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