



IDENTITY OF THAI-CHINESE IN MUEANG DISTRICT, LAMPANG PROVINCE

อัตลักษณ์ของชาวไทยเชื้อสายจีนในอำเภอเมือง จังหวัดลำปาง

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The research aimed to study Thai-Chinese identity in Muang District, Lampang Province, regarding ethnicity, history, traditional and cultural expression, and behavioral expression. Used a qualitative methodology that included studying-documents, interviews, and focus group discussions on studying a sample of experts and Thai-Chinese families. The data were analyzed by content analysis.

The result was summarized as follows: 1) Cause their migration from China to Muang District, Lampang Province was poverty and escaped the war. 2) Their migration routes were two routes. The first route from Hainan Island, Koh Samui in Surat Thani Province, Other Provinces (such as Bangkok, Nakhon Sawan, Chai Nat, Nakhon Ratchasima), Lampang Province. The Second route from Guangdong and Fujian, Vietnam, Khlong Toei (Bangkok), Lampang Province. 3) Their ethnicity divided into three ethnics were Hainan, Cantonese-Chaozhou, and Hakka. 4) Traditional and cultural expression, namely, constructing shrines, worshipping ancestors, a ritual in respecting and worshipping the Chinese and Buddha deities, changing the cremation ceremony from burial to cremation, usage Thai as the mother tongue, and embellishing Chinese lanterns and characters in various places and signs. (4) Behavioral expression divided into personal expression, namely, cultivating Chinese beliefs, traditions, and cultures for descendants, giving a red envelope to the offspring, gathering relatives on the Chinese New Year, and burning the Chinese offering papers to devote to the dead relatives, and social

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expression, namely, setting-up the Thai-Chinese foundations, associations, and societies, giving scholarships and participating in activities to help communities and societies with the provincial agencies in return for the merit of the Thai nation.

Keywords: Identity / Thai-Chinese

บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาอัตลักษณ์ของชาวไทยเชื้อสายจีนในอำเภอเมืองจังหวัดลำปางเกี่ยวกับประวัติศาสตร์ชาติพันธุ์ การอพยพย้ายถิ่นฐาน การแสดงออกทางวัฒนธรรมและประเพณี และการแสดงออกทางพฤติกรรม วิธีการวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพ ประกอบด้วย การศึกษาเอกสาร การสัมภาษณ์ และการสนทนากลุ่ม ถูกใช้ในการศึกษากลุ่มตัวอย่างที่เป็นผู้เชี่ยวชาญจำนวน 15 คน และสมาชิกในชาวไทยเชื้อสายจีน จำนวน 15 ครอบครัว วิเคราะห์ข้อมูลโดยการวิเคราะห์เนื้อหา ผลการวิจัยสรุปได้ดังนี้ (1) ชาติพันธุ์ แบ่งได้เป็น 3 ชาติพันธุ์ ได้แก่ ไหหลำ กวางตุ้ง-แต้จิ๋ว และฮากกา (2) การอพยพย้ายถิ่นฐานจากประเทศจีนมาอาศัยในอำเภอเมืองจังหวัดลำปาง มีสาเหตุมาจากความยากจนและการหลบหนีจากภัยสงคราม เส้นทางของการอพยพ มี 2 เส้นทาง ได้แก่ เส้นทางที่ 1 จากเกาะไหหลำ เกาะสมุยในจังหวัดสุราษฎร์ธานี จังหวัดอื่น ๆ (เช่น กรุงเทพมหานคร นครสวรรค์ ชัยนาท นครราชสีมา) จังหวัดลำปาง และเส้นทางที่ 2 จากกวางตุ้งและฝูเจี้ยน ผ่านเวียดนาม คลองเตย (กรุงเทพฯ) จังหวัดลำปาง (3) การแสดงออกทางวัฒนธรรมและประเพณี ได้แก่ การสร้างศาลเจ้า, การบูชาบรรพบุรุษ, การทำพิธีกรรมการเคารพและบูชาเทพเจ้าจีนร่วมกับพระพุทธศาสนา, การเปลี่ยนพิธีมาปนิกิจจากการฝังศพเป็นเผาศพ, การใช้ภาษาไทยเป็นภาษาแม่ และการตกแต่งโคมไฟและตัวอักษรจีนในสถานที่และป้ายต่าง ๆ (4) การแสดงออกทางพฤติกรรม แบ่งเป็นการแสดงออกส่วนบุคคล ได้แก่ การปลูกฝังความเชื่อ ประเพณีและวัฒนธรรมของชาวจีนให้ลูกหลาน การให้อั่งเปาแก่ลูกหลาน การรวมญาติในวันตรุษจีน และการเผาของเซ่นไหว้เพื่ออุทิศให้กับญาติที่ตายแล้ว และการแสดงออกทางสังคม ได้แก่ การจัดตั้งมูลนิธิ สมาคม และชมรมชาวไทยเชื้อสายจีน การมอบทุนการศึกษา และการมีส่วนร่วมในกิจกรรมต่าง ๆ เพื่อช่วยเหลือชุมชนและสังคมกับหน่วยงานของจังหวัดเพื่อตอบแทนบุญคุณของคนไทย

คำสำคัญ : อัตลักษณ์ / ไทยเชื้อสายจีน

Introduction

Thailand is a country located in Southeast Asia, a continent known as a land of ethnic diversity. There are people of many ethnicities who spread to live throughout the country, e.g., Tai Yai, Burmese, Malay, Chinese, etc. In the amount, Thai-Chinese is the most number. They diffuse live in every region of Thailand and have beliefs, traditions, cultures, and languages passed down a long time (Preecharatcha, n.d.). In the past, Thailand had many overseas Chinese immigrants.

In 2019, Thai-Chinese born in Thailand and are still to descend the Chinese language, traditions, and beliefs were approximately 9.4 million or 14% of Thailand's population. Their ethnicity is Chaozhou, with 56%, followed by Hakka 16 %, Hainan 12 %, Cantonese 7%, and the other 2% (Wongsurawat, 2019). However, it may be a complicated matter in identifying a number of them because Thai-Chinese people have already identified themselves as Thai citizenship and Thai nationality, so it cannot be determined precisely how many they are. These Chinese descent people are a minority of Thailand and Southeast Asian countries. Still, they are a group of people who play an essential role in the economy and are the business owner with a combined value higher than other groups in that country. Such as Malaysia that has 26% Chinese descent people of the total population. They are a group of business owners in the stock market, with a combined value of 39%, which is a value that is higher than people of other groups in the country. In the Philippines has only 1% Chinese descent people of the total population. Still, they control 60% of the private sector's economic value, like Indonesia, with only 3% of Chinese people. Still, they control 70% of the private sector's economic value in this country (Charoenwongsak, 2012; Chuensuwimon, 2000; Wongsurawat, 2019).

The reasons above show that Chinese descent people play an essential role in various countries' economic development. Therefore, many nations' governments have set policies to promote this role and use Chinese descent people in commercial links with China. (Suwimolwan, 2015). In Thailand, these Chinese descent people were an essential part of driving the country's economic mechanism since the past, because when they migrated, some came to trade, some came to be laborers. Nowadays, many companies, stores, and businesses are invested by Chinese descent people, and it results in establishing Chinese foundations, associations, and societies that are different according to ethnic groups in various areas of Thailand. In addition to studying the economic role, It also has a study about Chinese descent people in different regions of Thailand from multiple perspectives, both in traditions, cultures, and education.

Lampang is one province that has a traditional and cultural inheritance of Thai-Chinese people. There are study reports about the Thai-Chinese communities appearing in the Lampang History Hall (Pum Lagon Hall). Still, only the role and insertion of the content in a short note, such as having more than 100,000 Thai-Chinese people living in Lampang, have Chinese ethnic differences such as Hainan,

Chaozhou etc. Some of them have also been pioneers in making pottery in which a crucial product to create fame and value for Lampang Province. Besides, have Thai associations of Chinese descent people, shrines of Chinese deities, and inheritance of the cultures and traditions (Lanna Post, 2015). However, the study about a Thai-Chinese in Lampang Province is still unclear, and no empirical evidence to compile and study in-depth. Some of the available Information comes from hearsay, and no connection between the data. Importantly, there is no official record for research, which may be forgotten over time.

Therefore, to obtain the information and knowledge about Thai-Chinese that are collected systematically and clearly. This research aims to study Thai-Chinese identity in Muang District, Lampang Province, for identifying ethnicity, history, traditional and cultural expression, and behavioral expression. The results will give knowledge that leads to learning the Thai-Chinese society and studying the Thai-Chinese people in other areas or people in other ethnic groups.

Research Objective

To study the identity of Thai-Chinese in Muang District, Lampang Province

Research Methodology

Conceptual framework of research

The research used a qualitative method to study Thai-Chinese identity in Muang District, Lampang Province, by studying the identity in ethnicity, history (migration causes and routes), traditional and cultural expression, and behavioral expression. These features were assigned as variables in a conceptual research framework that is shown in Figure 1 (Im-urai, Upavanich, Homcha-em, Limtrakul, 2019; Hall, Gay, 2011; Sriprasert, 2011; Tangwongchareon, 1999)

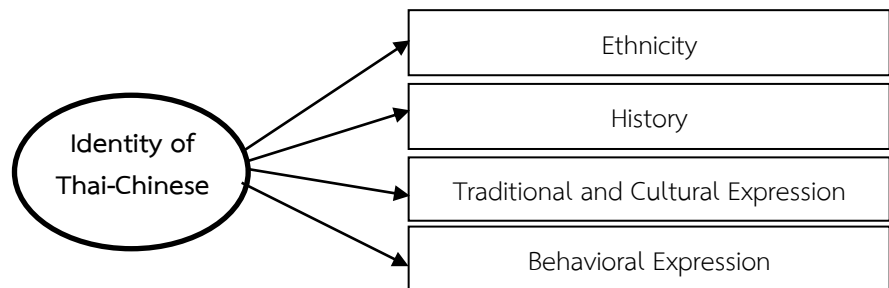


Figure 1 A Conceptual Research Framework

Key Informants

1. Experts were 15 qualified experts selected by purposive sampling from persons related to Thai-Chinese in Lampang Province and have a position accepted by society, namely, Chinese shrine administrators, Chinese school administrators, chairman of the Thai-Chinese foundations and associations.

2. Thai-Chinese family members were members of 15 Thai-Chinese families living in Muang District, Lampang Province. These families were selected by purposive sampling from different ethnicities included Hainanese, Chaozhou, and Hakka, by having five families in each race.

Instruments and quality inspection

1. The document analysis form is the form for managing the essence of the content from documents about Thai-Chinese in Lampang Province. The recorded list consists of the source, reference code, keywords, issues, and papers' content. It was then summarized that the contents bypass the document selection evaluation criteria to check the content validity and accuracy and save it to a computer for easy searching. The quality was inspected by letting three research project consultants considered and improved the structure and format's correctness in recording significant conclusions.

2. The interview form is a semi-structured interview created by the researcher with the analysis/synthesis of documents to collect information about identity from experts and Thai-Chinese family members. The quality was inspected by letting three research project consultants considered and improved the content and language's accuracy.

2. Focus group discussion recording form is a form for notes and recordings in a group conversation with a sample of experts and 10 Thai-Chinese people from members of Thai-Chinese families in Muang District, Lampang Province. The quality was inspected by letting three research project consultants consider and improve the content and language's accuracy.

Data Collection

1. Document research is a compilation of information from the study of documents, notes, articles, journals, chronicles, books, annual reports, researches, dissertations, and electronic media related to Thai-Chinese in Lampang Province. In which the researcher studied the information through the evaluation of the credibility and accuracy of the information.

2. An in-depth interview is an interview with experts and Thai-Chinese family members. In this, the researcher made an official document from the Office of Research and Academic Services, Lampang Rajabhat University to the informants to request cooperation in interviews, and contact the informants themselves to make an appointment time, location for the meeting. Before interviewing, the interviewer explained interview purposes and details and asked permission to take notes and audio recordings. While talking, I requested permission to review the summary from time to time so that the informants could edit at any time. This method is a cumulative summarization technique for obtaining accurate and reliable information.

2.4.3 Focus group discussion is a group discussion with experts and 10 Thai-Chinese people in Muang District, Lampang Province. In this, the researcher contacted themselves directly to make an appointment of date, time, place in group discussion, and request permission to take notes and audio recordings in the group discussion.

Data Analysis

1. The information from the study of documents, notes, articles, journals, chronicles, books, annual reports, researches, dissertations, and electronic media related to Thai-Chinese in Lampang Province were analyzed by using the content analysis method as follow:

1.1 Checked all documents with criteria to assess the reliability and accuracy of the documents

1.2 Analyze data to classify issues according to the conceptual research framework. After that, it was checked the content validity between contents and a conceptual research framework by research project consultants.

2. The information from expert interviews was analyzed with content analysis by preserving the informants' language, theme, and idiom. It was checked, the correctness of information from the interview as follows:

2.1 The first inspection, when interviewing, the interviewer will summarize the issues and repeatedly ask about the accuracy of the information, which is cumulative summarization resulting in reliable data and confirms their knowledge that they told with direct experience or referenced.

2.2 The second inspection, information was classified and reduced to make manifest following a conceptual research framework.

3. Information from the focus group discussion: analyzed the content from discussion transcripts in each topic according to the research framework. Using symbols instead of each speaker's information, then considered the data obtained following the research framework by using content analysis according to the studied issues by examining the similarities and differences of information obtained from the group discussion participants' opinions and compiling the summary.

Results

The vital information can be synthesized as follows:

1. Ethnicity-The ethnicity of Thai-Chinese living in Muang District, Lampang province, was divided into three ethnic groups, namely Hainan, Cantonese-Chaozhou, and Hakka.

2. History

2.1 Causes of Migration-Incoming and migrating to Thailand of the Chinese occurred a long time ago. The Sukhothai period found evidence of growing relations with China, such as exchange of goods and silk is evidence that Chinese people immigrated to Thailand for a long time ago and a close relationship with the Thai Royal. Over time, China and Thailand had many social changes, especially the revolution in China due to a change in the government of the country, which causes of war in China. Therefore, the Chinese in the latter started to search for livelihood areas outer Chinese for survival from war. Also, famine is one of the main reasons why Chinese people emigrate from their homeland to other lands. Not only Thailand, but the wave of Chinese migration still spread in various regions, both nearby and far away. Some of their families had nothing to bring with them except their own lives. They crossed the sea to survive only. After they could get to living, they would try to contact the families to persuade relatives to enter to make a livelihood and became citizens of that country by default.

Like the Thai-Chinese people living in Muang District, Lampang province at present. In the past, they traveled to trade at Lampang Province because Lampang is the province of northern that the hub of connecting with other areas in the north, which is a reason that they can distribute the product and contact with the merchants from many places that came to sell their products at Lampang Province. Although Lampang Province is not the main target

of direct migration, when the Chinese arrived, it is found that Lampang Province is suitable for trade, livelihood, and agriculture. In the past, Lampang had many licensed wood trading companies that need many workers. Therefore, they could make a living, some of them also received help from overseas Chinese, making them felt warm, therefore sent news to inform relatives to come living together.

In addition to famine, escaping the war is another reason that Chinese immigrants migrated to live in Lampang Province. China has many wars, both the civil war and international war with countries in West and Asian countries. Therefore, to survive, they need to go astray and wander to various countries, as well as Thailand. Until the war in China calmed down, they could contact relatives, but some have lost contact to this day.

2.2 Migration Routes: The migration routes of Chinese people living in Lampang Province were two routes as follows: The first route from Hainan Island, Koh Samui in Surat Thani Province other Provinces (such as Bangkok, Nakhon Sawan, Chai Nat, Nakhon Ratchasima), Lampang Province. The second route from Guangdong and Fujian, Vietnam, Khlong Toei (Bangkok), Lampang Province. Chinese immigrants migrated from Hainan, Guangdong, and Fujian mainly migrated by boat because of these counties' terrain adjacent to the sea. However, some immigrants traveled to Hong Kong first, then moved to continue by boat. When they arrived in Thailand, they would get up land at different ports. If they traveled from Hainan, most of them would get up land at the pier in Koh Samui because the Chinese who have arrived previously tend to get up land at Koh Samui Pier, which causes Chinese immigrants who migrated to following later would do this again. After that, they began to travel to find a livelihood place continuously until they moved to arrive in the north of Thailand, and when they saw that it was stable, therefore, settled down in Lampang Province. Chinese immigrants who traveled from Guangdong and Fujian were mostly got up land at Khlong Toei Port because It is known that they were cared for by the Thai-Chinese in various clans who living in Bobae and Yaowarat, Bangkok nowadays. They were cared for in sending news to relatives and recommending travel to other provinces. Later, when they made a living until to have sufficient money, they traveled up the north to get a livelihood and settle in Lampang Province.

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2.3 Occupation-Most of the Thai-Chinese whom their ancestors migrated to Thailand have an occupation is a trader. Nowadays, they become a significant business owner in Thailand and are also an essential part of driving the national economy to develop rapidly. Like Thai-Chinese in Lampang that in the past, they played a significant role in the economic development of Lampang province. Notably, the expansion of the commercial neighborhood from the old market district to Prasan Maitri Road, which caused to have many shops and businesses that Thai-Chinese people were an entrepreneur and operate until now. Besides, another important role of them was to be the originator of pottery from white clay by Qin Sim Yu and another group of Thai-Chinese. They brought knowledge from China to develop Kaolin resources in Lampang province by finding out the sharpening stone and traveling to search for white clay to make pottery that was products gave fame to Lampang province. Nowadays, even though the country's economy faces many problems, the businessmen in the next generation also continue to develop and inherit the spirit of their ancestors. It makes pottery or ceramics become a popular product and an income-generating product of Lampang Province.

3. Traditional and Cultural Expression-Lampang province has a population of Thai-northern that has traditions and cultures of Thai-Lanna. When the Chinese came to live here, some married the natives. It makes them get to learn about the culture and traditions of the natives by default but still practice the traditions of the Chinese as well. It can be seen from constructing a shrine, ritualizing respect, and worshipping the Chinese deities combined with Buddhism, Changing the cremation ceremony into a funeral instead of burial, using Thai as a mother tongue, decorating Chinese lantern and characters in various places and signs. These all represent the identity of the Thai-Chinese in Muang District, Lampang Province. The texts of the interview that supported the information were as follows:

“...There is an inheritance in paying respect to the Chinese deities, Cing-Ming, Chinese New Year but not strictly, inherited the Characteristics of paying respect through telling by succession...” (Informant No. 13: Interviewed on May 3, 2019)

“... In our family, it is always cultivated a being Chinese for the children, such as if we respect the Chinese deities, we will go to pay respect at Pun-tao-gong shrine; if have a person died, he was buried at the mausoleum ...” (Informant No. 5: Interviewed on March 15, 2019)

“... at my home, we are honoring the shrine of goddess Thapthim, the goddess Nia, which was brought from China. In those days, immigrants had to seek sacred things to become an anchor for the soul. Just like Thai people, wherever they go, they carry hanging Buddha amulets...” (Informant No. 6: Interview on March 20, 2019)

4. Behavioral Expression

In this behavioral identity, the researcher uses the theory studied to analyze it. It is divided into individual and Social Behaviors

4.1 individual Expression Behaviors-expression behaviors of individual ways of life, namely, decorating the signs and pictures of Chinese clans or Chinese language in a house or shop, cultivating Chinese traditions, beliefs, and culture for children, giving a red envelope (Ang-Pao) to the offsprings, going to the shrine to worship the deity, gathering relatives on the Chinese New Year, Burning of Chinese offering papers to devote to the dead relatives. This clear expression of individual identities, it can be shown that Thai-Chinese people in Lampang still maintain their Chinese identity with strong stability.

4.2 Social Expression Behaviors-expression behaviors of participating in essential activities of foundations, associations, and societies they established, some driven these agencies at the level of chairman/directors, inheriting the spirit and purpose of helping the society, caring for those in need, and providing educational support. Thai-Chinese have been cultivated that when they were living in a land that is not their own, they must repay the land as well. Therefore, they had always gathered to repay society.

Discussion and Conclusion

In the study of Thai-Chinese identity in Lampang Province, some complexity of documents and information is provided in part. The researcher has tried to study from extensive experience and record. Most of the information

shows in the same direction, and it was concluded that Chinese ethnicity in Lampang Province was divided into three ethnics: Hainan, Cantonese-Chaozhou, and Hakka, cause of their migration was to escape war and famine in the homeland. They mainly migrated out of the country using transportation or fishing boats because the sea mostly borders their terrain. Some of them were not prepared to migrate or were children that their parents carry on the boat. Therefore, when they left the country, some go to make a living in nearby countries first and then move to Thailand. When they arrived in Thailand, they started to find a place to make a living, with the help of Chinese who arrived earlier, both in food, shelter, and contacting relatives. After beginning to make a living, they began to search for a place to go far away.

Chinese ancestors who migrated to Lampang did not have a direct destination to settle in Lampang Province, but they came to trade and use labor as an employee of Chinese businesses. Before the train was built, they mainly traveled by boat to trade in Lampang. Some of them have been settled, built a position and family around the old market road (Chinese market) (Hengsadikun, 2009). Later, when the train built finished, a lot of other Chinese came to Lampang. It made Lampang's commercial area expand to the area of Prasanmitree Road. During this period, Lampang Province had great prosperity. Chinese migrants began to settle down, construct many houses, stores, warehouses, shops, and markets. Many roads were built to extend routes to nearby provinces for greater convenience in their goods (Lanna Post, 2015).

In addition to the essential roles of economic driving, the Thai-Chinese also established a group of Chinese foundations and associations, which were passed down from generation to generation, therefore called overseas Chinese or Thai-Chinese, to gather relatives of the same homeland into one group. In the present, They also communicate with family members in China, but some cannot connect. According to those days' government policy, they changed the surname from Chinese to Thai (Intharaphirom & Sibunruang, 2004). Later generations acquired Thai citizenship, became Thai citizens of Chinese descent. Although it was later, they were affected by some government policies that caused Chinese as a mother tongue to change to Thai as a mother tongue. However, the inheritance of Chinese intentions, concepts, beliefs, culture, traditions, and way of life in other areas is still inherited to this day (Chuensuwimon, 2000; Tangwongchareon, 1999).

The study of Thai-Chinese identity leads to knowledge and learning in various societies of different groups in Thailand. The findings can develop spatial potential and conduct a study to get more insights and require a more extended study period to get complete and all-around information.

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