

The Attributes of a Person Participating in Arts and Cultural Heritage Conservation in the Multicultural Context of the Southern Border Area, Narathiwat Province, Thailand

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Abstracts: The objective of this research is to study the attributes of a person participating in arts and cultural heritage conservation in the multicultural context of the Southern border area, Narathiwat province, Thailand, by using the qualitative method. Data were collected from both documents and in the field from the three districts of Narathiwat province with distinctive Thai, Chinese, and Melayu art and culture. An in-depth interview was applied to the 41 main informants, including (1) 30 Thai, Chinese, and Melayu of the arts and cultural worker group in the three districts of Narathiwat province, (2) 6 academics of arts and cultural heritage, and (3) 5 community leaders. Data source triangulation was used to test the reliability. The result of the descriptive analysis was that the attributes of a person participating in arts and cultural heritage conservation is a person who (1) loves his locality, (2) is open-minded, (3) sees common interests first, (4) is educated or knowledgeable, and (5) has leadership skills.

Keywords: Personal Attribute, Arts and Cultural Heritage Conservation, Multiculturalism, Southern Border Area

1. INTRODUCTION

In the Southern border area of Thailand, many communities have local arts and cultural heritage handed down. Some communities have Muslims and Buddhists living together in a multicultural society. These arts and cultural heritages have different values for different religious groups. It is in part because of the different religious beliefs, ethnic conflict, or the lack of minority arts and culture care from the Thai state. There is less promotion of cultural heritage conservation and no awareness-building in the value of people from various cultures. For example, the International Security Operations Command [1] reported that the situation of Melayu architecture in the three Southern provinces is in critical condition, lacking conservation, restoration, repair, and promotion of knowledge inheritance. This causes the loss of knowledge and understanding of Melayu architecture in the three Southern provinces by both state agencies and local people. It is hoped that there will be cooperation from all parties to help in saving the situation and continuing local arts and cultural heritage development.

Narathiwat province is located in the Southern border area of Thailand. Most of the population is Muslim Thai, with Buddhist Thai and Chinese Thai as minorities. Cultural heritage is diverse, especially in the three districts bordering Malaysia: Tak Bai, Su-ngai Kolok, and Waeng. Interestingly the three districts have different distinctive arts and culture: Tak Bai is dominated by Thai culture, Su-ngai Kolok by Chinese culture, and Waeng by Melayu Muslim culture. Each group expresses their arts and cultural forms inherited from ancestors. Sometimes these different arts and cultural forms were perfectly blended, reflecting the area of various cultural identities with a mutual perceptual base. The research results of Malisuwan, Keawlek, Pukdee, and Tamasha [2] concluded that many handicraft product patterns in Narathiwat province have blended the cultures of Thai, Chinese, and Melayu. An important example is the local kolae boat model, which is an important work deserving conservation. Its significance is helping in strengthening the relationship of Thai, Chinese, and Melayu Muslim cultures. This research reflects those arts and cultural heritage-oriented people see the value of multicity and cooperation in arts and cultural heritage conservation in the context of a multicultural community.

However, Narathiwat province has the problem of cultural conflict between Muslim Thais and non-Muslim Thais, leading to an unrest situation for more than two decades. This situation divided the maintaining and saving of the arts and cultural heritage for each group, lacking mutual arts and cultural heritage conservation by neighbors.

Subsequently, the Thai state launched a policy for reconciliation, creating mutual recognition of cultural heritage through knowledge and activity in a community, and a school curriculum for mutual understanding leading to cooperation in the cultural heritage conservation of the community. This issue is related to the concept of Agarici, Scarlat, & Lorga [3] that in understanding the dynamics of conflicting cultures, meaning can be found at the organizational and individual level. Administrators must address cultural complexity and promote cooperation between the parties. This is similar to the research of Hamzah et al. [4] who studied multiculturalism in Malaysia and found that cultural differences affect conflict. The state's conflict resolution often uses socializing perception, background expression, and utilizes the ideas of one's own and others. They saw that the Malaysian government's resolution had invisible characteristics, but was slowly absorbed by the people. This research also reflected that resolution to the problem of multiculturalism, if one understood the diverse characteristics of people the resolution will be to the point.

Under a multicultural context, it must build people with multiculturalism to cooperate in mutual cultural heritage conservation, seeing the social and economic interests of the community as a whole. If Buddhists see the value of cultural heritage and keep it for themselves, or Muslims also see and do the same, then the conservation of mutually inherited art and cultural heritage is without unity. Thus, the development of people who see the value of various art and cultural heritage is important. So, this research would like to search for the knowledge that people in the multicultural community in the area of Southern border area, Narathiwat province, what the attributes of local Thais, Chinese Thai descendants, and Muslim Thais who will participate in mutual art and cultural heritage conservation.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

This research has the objective to study the attributes of a person participating in art and cultural heritage conservation in the multicultural context of the Southern border area, Narathiwat province, Thailand.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a report of the Secretariat of the Cabinet [5] that determined the Standard Thai People 4.0; emphasizes human development in maintaining religion, art and culture. Thai people must have quality, morality, living together happily as follows: (1) a person who is proud of national identity: the state supports art and cultural creativity, and Thai wisdom, to stimulate Thai culture in popular trends, to develop and create proper economic and industrial value added; (2) a person who has trust in religious institution with good teachings, and promoting cooperation in development of living and spiritual qualities, and developing society to be harmonious, compromise, and sustainable; (3) a person with knowledge and understanding in custom, tradition, and culture; accepts and respects tradition and culture of various ethnic groups and foreigners, living together in plural society. The last one will see that Thai people must accept multiculturalism, that is, accept the art and cultural heritage of each other. On characteristics of desired person in a multicultural society, there is the research result of Thitadhammo, Pangthrap, and Kamol [6] studying the principle of living together in multicultural society at Chiang Mai, specified that (1) people who accept differences in culture, tradition, and religion; race, language, sect, belief, and art, (2) people who have religious principle; Buddhists with the five precepts: nice speech without causing division in the community, being helpful; Christians with open-mind allowing every community equally included into society, everyone understands differences, and cares to develop new knowledge different from the old one. This research also has the sense that accepting different cultural, traditional or religious values will sustainably facilitate cooperation in art and cultural heritage conservation.

Angelina & Glivetić [7] mentioned art and cultural heritage conservation for sustainability and to support changing society. Human beings should be developed to have the following characteristics: (1) Receiving continuous knowledge through various activities to build awareness of valuable cultural heritage. (2) Having new technology as a tool in the conservation and interpretation the meaning of cultural heritage. (3) Accepting social

change and knowing the method to design innovation to solve problems sustainably and adaptable. (4) Participating in projects creating awareness of cultural heritage that they have cultural and economic potentials, exchanging experience; transmitting knowledge between specialists, government officials, and local people. (5) Knowing to improve or develop new art and cultural heritage according to the need of the community and sustainability. In conclusion, art and cultural heritage conservation in the multicultural context, the important thing is people, who are the condition to conservation. Attributes of people is thing to consider because people have individual characteristics, different lifestyles according to their environment.

4. MATERIEL AND METHODS

This research was done with the qualitative method. There were two methods of data collection: (1) documentary data collection; to survey concepts, theories, and related research works; to analyze the result and to understand the problem. (2) Field data collection; by in-depth interview with 41 key informants from purposive sampling of the three categories: (2.1) 30 persons from the arts and cultural worker group in three districts of Narathiwat province; including 10 persons each with Thai, Chinese, and Muslim cultures. (2.2) 6 persons who are arts and cultural heritage academics, including a teacher, lecturer, local independent scholar, and district cultural officials. (3) 5 community leaders: local leader and Islamic and Buddhist religious leaders. Data source triangulation method was used to test validity and reliability of the data, with different informants on one topic. Then the data were analyzed to build conclusion by descriptive analysis.

5. RESULTS

The study found that people in three cultures (local Buddhist Thai with Thai culture, Chinese Thai descendant with Chinese culture, and Muslim Thai with Melayu Muslim culture) who participated in arts and cultural heritage conservation in the Southern border area, Narathiwat province, had the following important attributes:

1) Love homeland. People who love their homeland are people who were born in the locality of the three districts of Narathiwat province. They grew up in a multicultural society, saw changes to the land, and love their homeland. People who love their homeland have two characteristics: First, people who love cultural heritage cherish and care to conserve arts and culture of the community and want to maintain a traditional life style. This group often gives importance to their arts, tradition, and culture. Second, people who love their locality, but are interested in development, see the importance of arts, tradition, and culture less than the first attribute, and allow the arts and culture of the community to change or develop to satisfy the needs of consumers and to create revenue for the community. Most have the second attribute, that is, the basic awareness to conserve arts and cultural heritage and then consider bringing this heritage to be useful in community development, whether they are local Thai, Chinese Thai, or Muslim Thai. The local culture consists of many types. People who love their homeland must have the basic capital that is the love of arts works and are ready to listen to opinions, apply art with community identity to catch up with innovations, and create a good economic result. :One respondent said "One should love one's homeland. If one loves homeland one can do anything, loves to conserve local culture, and also loves art." (Kayoh, pseudonym, interview, July 14, 2022) "People who have conservative mind must love their homeland, care to see their locality to develop more and more, not stand still and miss the trend. Most of the people only care for themselves." (Son, fake name, interview, August 15, 2022)

The love of the homeland influences the conservation and development of the community. This group of people are proud of their identity with distinguished arts and cultural products of their community. People who love their homeland are proud of their selves and are proud to spread this point to the public. An example is a local artist who composed a song in his local dialect. Someone suggested that he mix in some other languages to help other people to understand his song. He insisted on showing his local identity only, expressing ownership of this art and culture, and to use art to grow awareness in others to love their homeland the way he does.

2) Have an open-mind. People who participate in arts and cultural heritage conservation must be open-minded

people. If they are narrow minded, they could not listen to others' opinions, especially one that is opposite to their opinion. Open-minded people are tolerant. Arts and culture in the Southern border area are diverse. The differences is not held as strange; if thinking it is strange to oneself, one should tolerate the strange thing; not try to escape or eliminate it. If one group holds that they are more important than another group, by building their own kingdom without knowing the outside world, they will find it difficult to work with people who think differently. In contrast, if open-minded people are with others, they will open their eyes widely and not to look only for weakness. One condition which helps to enhance this attribute is the respect of human dignity; whatever religion or ethnicity, all deserve to be honored. Open-minded people always recognize "to forgive" when the other party misunderstands and appreciate when something is done right. However, recognizing others' value requires prior accumulated experience. If Buddhists are not accustomed to Muslims or another group, it is hard to see others' value. Open-minded people in multicultural communities in the Southern border area often have a common moral stand-point, such as not causing harm to others and avoiding intoxication. People like this are easy to get along with and able to solve problems of conflict with compromise. :One informant said "(He) must be open-minded, adaptable, not divide people into Thai, Chinese or Muslim, understands that all are the same human being, your faith is your affair, accepts difference in the other's self, does not say that the other's idea is wrong." (Jit, pseudonym, interview, August 14, 2022)

Open-minded people respect other people and are humble to people with high status, even with a different belief or culture. As in a Buddhist traditional event, Buddhists and Muslims participated activity in the event. A Muslim went to pay respect to a monk. His Muslim friend questioned him for this behavior. He explained that prostration was not only performed by Buddhists; it is a Thai social mannerism. He prostrated to the senior monk because he respected the senior monk for a long time. In the Southern border area, open-minded people often understand the way of life for all three cultural groups: Thai, Muslim, and Chinese. There is a probability that people may understand their own arts and culture more than others', and may be biased to what one knows and understands. For this reason, the community sees that open-minded people must have neutral thinking and a fair mind. There are three broad characteristics of neutrality: attitude, practice, and religion. :A participant said "Open-minded people must be neutral. This type of people must have knowledge and understanding on religion and culture of the three groups, having social, ready to participate, to share." (Lin, pseudonym, interview, August 15, 2022)

3) See common interest first. The three main groups in the Southern Thai border area must prioritize their common interests to conserve arts and cultural heritage. Self must not be the center of righteousness or to be used as standard to evaluate others. In the study area, there are many persons who are devoted to save local arts and cultural heritage. For example, one Muslim who is well educated and graduated from Malaysia with good job. Sometimes he was invited to television show in Bangkok. He was also the narrator to the background of the show. The reason was to publicize the arts of the show outside the locality for the sake of community tourism. This resulted in performers having more income. Another example is the Muslim owner of a batik factory who opened the area for children, youth, or people of all religions to try making batik cloth in his production center. He paid all the expenses for dye, cloth, and candles and devoted his time to teach rather than doing his own work. He saw that it will be a benefit in the long run. People will have knowledge and understanding to save local arts and culture and it will pave the way for those interested in this career and to continue this heritage. :One interviewee said "In helping to conserve art one must sacrifice, generous, thinking about the whole first." (Kaning, pseudonym, interview, July 24, 2022) "People who conserve art heritage are those who sacrifice, see common interest first, not too religious, no problem in the area, know various cultures." (Somphot, pseudonym, Chinese descendant, interview, July 24, 2022) This interview also reflects that the people who see benefit will not strictly adhere to a religious framework. Some Muslims see only benefit for their own faith's followers. Some hold the religious principle that every Muslim must be united because all are brothers as the son of God. This belief is also embedded in the feelings of Buddhist Thais. Thus, if one wants to participate in arts and cultural heritage conservation, selfishness or thinking for the sake of religious fellows must be eliminated to see the whole picture. Those who see common benefit first must be frank, serious, sincere, and work consistently. Serious people have the foundation from trying to understand a multicultural community. Sincere people have the foundation from reaching to the core of community. People who work consistently have the foundation from the love of development.

4) Be educated or knowledgeable. Local people agree that an attribute of people who participate in arts and cultural heritage conservation should be people with a good education, especially people who passed the state educational system. These people will have knowledge of multicultural society cultivated from textbooks, the teaching system in the educational institution, outdoor activity, and the ability to meet diverse people. Educated people are more open-minded because of their current knowledge of the outside world-tend to be more open. They see their own culture as a part of many other cultures in the world and understand the impact from acculturation. Moreover, they understand universality because sometimes arts and cultural heritage conservation must survive changing values of society. Educated people will universalize knowledge; community building, government system building, communication through language, social organization, and arts and cultural expression. The universality of local Buddhist, Chinese, or Muslim Thais is the ability to know the differences and similarities to others. For each group, if they have no universality, it is hard to understand and communicate with others. Universal expression may be in art, society or behavior. Educated people are successful and also admired by people in society, and ready to guide others in society. In the three districts, participants who join multicultural activities held by the state usually are children, educated youth, or state school pupils. Educated adult Muslims are keen in religious and secular knowledge and would like to develop knowledge differently. One participant said "People who care for conservation must be knowledgeable people, not adhering to the old, ready to go to outside world, not a frog in the well." (Usana, pseudonym, interview, August 15, 2022) "Educated people, knowledgeable people, will open their mind, with universal knowledge." (Chu, pseudonym, interview, August 13, 2022)

In the perspective of Islamic religious leaders, they will add some attributes for people participating in arts and cultural heritage conservation. At least they must know their religious foundation, because religion plays a role to support and refine arts and culture. Then they must connect to other religions. The principle of every religion stresses non-violence; that is to build love and unity. People who have real religious knowledge will see that religious and cultural differences are things created by God and see that unity and harmony of every human is the will of God.

5) Have leadership. People who have the characteristic of a leader when enhanced with any knowledge or idea will persuade others to follow easier. A leader is of many types: secular leader to govern, spiritual leader, and natural leader. For the Muslim community, a spiritual leader will encourage people to be aware of the value of arts and cultural heritage more than another type of leader. If one studied the process of arts and cultural revivals, there must be a leader first. The conservation of shadow play heritage of local Buddhist Thais in Tak Bai district began with one person who started the conservation and after that people followed. Also, in Waeng district, a person initiated the revival of Tari Ina show. The show was on the brink of distinction and the only one in Thailand. The person was also a spiritual leader. He had the idea to inherit this art form continuously by training children in the community. In participating in activities, people with leadership must listen to different ideas and respect the majority's voice, especially activity to promote multiculturalism. For example, in the Tari Ina show, some saw it as exposing the female body too much. This was not according to Islamic principles. Some called for the show to be abandoned. But the majority didn't because in every show the body was fully covered. The leader listened with consideration and made the decision. The interview said "The leader group, whether religious, community, or local, those with good idea we acquired half of them, but also they are leaders who listen to the other's opinion." (Jurai, pseudonym, interview, July 25, 2022)

People with leadership characteristics will see the value of arts and cultural heritage more than others. It is better if leadership is latent in the local leader. As in one community, a Muslim village head initiated to manage his house compound as meeting place for people who love art, inducing new generations to join the discussion to further their knowledge and was able to form a mixed Melayu band with its own identity; banor drum, mouth organ, percussions, and publicize it through online media. In another example, a Muslim village head led a negotiation team to talk with Buddhist religious leaders on building a pier on the river bank, so people may visit temple and ancient remains and travel conveniently to their village on the island. He will raise a fund together with Chinese businessmen. This project was to increase the income of ferry boats and to connect tourism between Muslim and Buddhist communities, but it faced the problem of the COVID-19 event. Later, the village head changed and the project was forgotten. This condition reflects the attribute of leadership. If the new head had leadership attributes and was not

biased by religion, he will be admired and persuade more multicultural people to participate in arts and cultural heritage conservation.

6. DISCUSSION

The result of this study addressed the following issues: The study result indicated that people who participate in arts and cultural heritage conservation are people who love their homeland. People of this type are aboriginal people who have their own language and culture, who settled down since their ancestors, including those who believed that they could live in this area safely and for a long time, including Chinese descendants and Muslim Melayu. For Muslim Melayu, they love their homeland more overtly than other groups. They believe that they are the real citizens of historical Patani state. This is in line with Wantana [8] who saw that motherland is a spiritual relationship the individual has toward the place where one was born and grew up. This love of homeland comes before the feelings or ideology of nationalism. Nationalism always reminds us not forget to express cultural nationalism.

People who love homeland are people who care to participate in arts and cultural conservation more than people who do not love their homeland or are going to move to another place. This is because they believe that saving arts and cultural heritage provides them with a standpoint in the area. This issue is similar to the idea of UNESCO [9] which saw that cultural heritage passes to later generations through value that is not replaceable; that cultural heritage gradually expands to living culture and contemporary expression. However, as the source of identity, cultural heritage is a valuable factor in promoting strength for the local community and lets minority people participate fully in social and cultural life.

The study result showed that people who participate arts and cultural heritage conservation are open-mind and accept cultural differences. This is aligned to the research result of Thitadhammo, Pangthrap, and Kamol [6], studying the principle of living together in multicultural society in Chiang Mai. It indicated that people must open their mind to accept cultural and traditional differences and racial, linguistic, religious, doctrinal, belief, and artistic differences. Sairatthong, Tantinakhongul, Saleemad, and Yoonisil [10] found that people in a multicultural society must have the open-mind attitude to accept other's feelings and perspectives and show respect to different cultures. When facing different cultural situations, they must be flexible to adapt. When accepting differences, they welcome diversified ideas and cooperate in each other's arts and cultural heritage conservation.

The study foundt that people who participate in arts and cultural heritage conservation are people who see common interest first. This conforms to the principle and reason of the Fine Arts Department [11] that arts and cultural heritage conservation is done for the whole because it causes feelings, harmony, unity of the nation, and national security. If arts and cultural heritage is spread with popularity of foreigners, it will help economic development and create income for the country. However, this issue is sensitive to the people who are against the Thai state and have the idea of ethnocentrism. The attitude of people who think differently must be adjusted to be aware of Thai citizenship with common root culture and find common ground. Pasnak [12] said that if people of every culture understand the origin of some attitude towards arts and cultural heritage conservation, it will be easier to find a proper solution. .There is more than one way to participate in conservation Each conservation project has its own identity. It is not only an alternative between security and beauty. Sometime it is an alternative to reduce conflict at the same time.

The study result indicated that people who participate in arts and cultural heritage conservation are those who love education or are knowledgeable, because most of them had passed at least the state compulsory education, went through the teaching system, and have friends in a different culture. So, they understand the universal way of life and accept other people's value. This is in accordance with research result of Thitadhammo, Pangthrap, and Kamol [6] who found that in living in a multicultural society one must be a person who understands, accepts, and respects the custom, tradition, and culture of various ethnic groups and foreigners. In a multicultural society, if people do not have knowledge of various cultures, this will diminish making relationships with others. This is in consistence with the idea of Beirachi [13] who saw that conflict situation was concerned with the cultural resource management of the government. One factor was lack of public awareness of the value of cultural heritage and the

law to protect the state cultural heritage property. Thus, if the state will promote the cooperation of cultural heritage conservation under the multicultural context, awareness must be built to every diversified cultural group. Angelina & Glivetić [7] said that cultural heritage conservation promotes sustainability and supports a changing society. People must be developed to receive knowledge continuously through activities to build awareness of the valuable cultural heritage.

The study found that people who participate in arts and cultural heritage conservation are people who have leadership, because people with leadership will coordinate every diversified cultural group, lead them to a determined destination, and cause change. That means a leader must accept cultural differences. This is in line with research result of Sairatthong, Tantinakhongul, Saleemad, and Yoonisil [10] who found that the attribute of multicultural leadership is to perceive and understand the cultural difference and diversity of people in society. They will have knowledge of local custom, art, and language. Leadership is of many levels from national to local. For the community, the main thing is to build local, rather than upper-level leadership. This is accordance with the data of Gerstenblith [14] specifying that cultural heritage conservation originating from the participation of community, rather than the state sector, will be more successful.

Finding the attributes of people of three cultures to participate in arts and cultural heritage conservation is a very challenging task for the Thai Southern border area, because of long-term accumulated conflict. But it is not beyond the ability of the state to build knowledge, understanding, and awareness to the value of each other's arts and cultural heritage. The most important thing in the view of the researchers is the building of cross-cultural or multicultural learning processes in the community area widely and be earnest with this method. By seeing the value of diversity, the participation of arts and cultural heritage conservation will be a reality. So, Religious leaders have great influence in the southern border area which should participate in arts and cultural heritage conservation in the Multicultural Context of the Southern Border Area, Thailand. In addition, should disseminate accurate information about the right way to arts and cultural heritage conservation, especially building cross-cultural or multicultural learning processes in the community area widely, and be earnest with this method.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding the attributes of people of three cultures to participate in arts and cultural heritage conservation is a very challenging task for the Thai Southern border area, because of long-term accumulated conflict. But it is not beyond the ability of the state to build knowledge, understanding, and awareness to the value of each other's arts and cultural heritage. The most important thing is the building of cross-cultural or multicultural learning processes in the community area widely and is earnest with this method. By seeing the value of diversity, the participation of arts and cultural heritage conservation will be a reality. So, Religious leaders have great influence in the southern border area which should participate in arts and cultural heritage conservation in the Multicultural Context of the Southern Border Area, Thailand. In addition, should disseminate accurate information about the right way to arts and cultural heritage conservation.

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