

เส้นทางท่องเที่ยวเชิงชาติพันธุ์ ณ ชุมชนกะเหรี่ยงคอยาว จังหวัดแม่ฮ่องสอน
The Route of Ethnic Tourism in the Kayan communities at Mae Hong
Son Province

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บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์ 1. เพื่อศึกษาความเป็นมาของชาวกะเหรี่ยงคอยาวในภาคเหนือของประเทศไทย 2. เพื่อวิเคราะห์การจัดการการท่องเที่ยวชาติพันธุ์ในจังหวัดแม่ฮ่องสอน ตลอดจน 3. เพื่อกำหนดเส้นทางท่องเที่ยวชาติพันธุ์ กลุ่มตัวอย่างทั้งสิ้น 35 คน ได้แก่ ผู้ใหญ่บ้านทั้ง 3 ชุมชน ปราชญ์ชาวบ้าน ผู้มีส่วนเกี่ยวข้องกับการจัดการการท่องเที่ยวในชุมชน ชาวกะเหรี่ยงคอยาว หน่วยงานภาครัฐ และผู้มาเยือน เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการวิจัย คือ แบบสัมภาษณ์แบบกึ่งโครงสร้าง ทำการเก็บข้อมูลโดยการสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึกและการสังเกตอย่างมีส่วนร่วม ทำการตรวจสอบความเที่ยงตรงเชิงเนื้อหาแบบสามเส้า

ผลการศึกษา พบว่า ภาพลักษณ์ที่เด่นชัดของกลุ่มกะเหรี่ยงคอยาว คือ ภาพของผู้หญิงชนกลุ่มน้อยที่สวมใส่ห่วงทองเหลืองไว้ที่คออาศัยอยู่บนเขาในภาคเหนือของประเทศไทย และรัฐบาลในท้องถิ่นสังเกตเห็นว่าชาวกะเหรี่ยงคอยาวมีศักยภาพในการเป็นจุดดึงดูดความสนใจของนักท่องเที่ยว จึงเป็นที่มาของการตั้งถิ่นฐานถาวรของชนกลุ่มนี้ได้

ในมุมมองด้านการท่องเที่ยวนั้น พบว่า สิ่งดึงดูดใจทางการท่องเที่ยวของชุมชนกะเหรี่ยงคอยาวสามารถจำแนกออกได้เป็น 3 ประเภท ได้แก่ 1) ลักษณะเด่นทางธรรมชาติ 2) เอกลักษณ์ทางวัฒนธรรม และ 3) เหตุการณ์พิเศษ ซึ่งในปัจจุบันเส้นทางท่องเที่ยวชาติพันธุ์ ณ ชุมชนกะเหรี่ยงคอยาวสามารถจำแนกได้เป็น 2 เส้นทาง คือ บ้านเสือเฒ่า-เส้นทางแห่งกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ที่หลากหลาย และบ้านห้วยปูแกง-เส้นทางแห่งทัศนียภาพและวิถีชีวิต

คำสำคัญ: กะเหรี่ยงคอยาว การท่องเที่ยวเชิงชาติพันธุ์ การท่องเที่ยวทางวัฒนธรรม การท่องเที่ยวโดยชุมชน

Abstract

The objectives of this research are 1. to study on the Kayan way of life including the situations of ethnic tourism in cases of the Kayan communities in Mae Hong Son province and 2. to analysis ethnic tourism management in Mae Hong Son province. 3. In order to define of the route of ethnic tourism.

The data collection is In-depth interviews and participatory observation. A total of 35 qualitative interviews were conducted from the headman of the villages, local sages, stakeholders, Kayan people, the governmental officials, and visitors. After detailed analyze, as people perceived about the image of the Kayan, the first feature is the indigenous woman wearing the brass collar rings, lives in the hill of the northern region of Thailand. The initial reason that takes the Kayans come to Thailand, is to encourage tourism business in Mae Hong Son province.

In aspects of tourism, the tourism attractions within the Kayan communities can be classified into three main categories as features within the natural environment, human-made features (cultural attractions), and special events. Currently, the available route of Kayan ethnic tourism can be classified into two routes based on the components of tourism potentials as Ban Huay Sua Thao – The route of integrated tribe and Ban Huay Pu Keng the natural scenic route of Kayan way of life.

Key words: Kayan, Ethic tourism, Cultural tourism, Communities-based tourism

Introduction

Presently, there are many tourists interested in travelling in the North of Thailand and there are many tourism businesses that are allocated to support local economy. Ethnic tourism is one of tourism categories related to cultural tourism, is concerned by tourism industry of Thailand. From the basic principle of the ethnic tourism which are discussed as part of cultural tourism that motivates tourists' searches for exotic cultural experiences including visiting ethnic villages and minority homes, watching traditional dances or ceremonies, or shopping for indigenous handicrafts and souvenirs (McIntosh & Johnson, 2005; Yang, 2011). As for the ethnic tourism in the northern part of Thailand, that hill tribe communities are the great representations of ethnic traditions especially Karen living. Simultaneously, overseas tourists are paying attention to ethnic tourism in the northern part of Thailand as community – base on tourism and traditional tourism. Due to ethnical diversities in Thailand, there are many local minorities especially in the northern part of Thailand such as Karen, Hmong, Mien, Lahu, Akha, and Lisu (The Human Rights Council of Australia, 1997). The Karen community also is one of the minority villages, which is famous to travel especially in Mae Hong Son and Chiang Mai Province. Hill tribe trekking has become a very popular tourist activity. Treks take people into tribal villages to experience the

traditional cultures of hill tribes. The kayan tribe (or Thai people call them as Long-Neck Karen) is a sub-group of the Karenni that has a vital influence on ethnic tourism in Thailand because they attract people with their costume and ornamental accessories with the unique feature of the female Kayans. The brass collar rings are the most attractive identity.

However, while tourism is consecutively growing, the following movement of this happening is an inevitable changing. Even though ethnic tourism has the potential to generate incomes and bring economic and social benefits, it can also adversely impact the culture, way of life and sense of identity of ethnic groups (Oakes, 1998, Picars & Wood, 1997; Smith, 1989). Some Karens change their aims of occupation towards tourism therefore this encounter will gradually change the Karen's traditional way of life. Actually, the Karen is not settled in one place makes them vulnerable to exploitation by tourism investors and stakeholders. The interesting issue of tourism management in Karen community poses the question of 'What is the factor that makes Karen market themselves as a tourism product?' Meanwhile, visitors and tourists also have aspects of the visual tourism images of Karen traditional tourism are only traditional costumes, taking a photo with Karen Children and paying a fee for their photo, and trying to taste local food. Some villages are decorated to support tourists. However, these do not reveal important traditions and the significances of cultural geography of Karen people.

Despite a seemingly, Karen people play significance roles in the image of the hill tribe minority in Thailand, however it is so necessary to find out the outstanding universal value, authenticity, and intactness of the Karen. In order to rightly conserve the uniqueness of ethnicity and Karen way of life including the aesthetic of rural landscape. Most of the studies of ethnic tourism have concentrated on the impact of tourism on ethnic communities, hosts and guest, and commoditization including the politics of ethnic tourism (Vaddhanaphuti & Phonpoke, 1987; Namsaeng, 1993; Toyaya, 1996;). Regardless of some studies, also have fewer fields of cultural heritage and landscape. The greatest challenge in these fields should have based on the question of sustainability of ethnic identity, tradition, and culture. Therefore, the challenge of setting a conservation protocol, protecting the cultural geography, natural heritage, and landscape feature of Karen community are important objectives of this research. Moreover, this research primarily concerns the original Karen's way of life including their culture and tradition that reveal as Karen cultural landscape. The study will also address the authentic cultural landscape and ethnic tourism management of Karen community especially in cases of Paduang (Long-Neck Karen) in Mae Hong Son Province, the northern part of Thailand, in order to sustainably plan to preserve indigenous culture.

Research objectives

1. To study the history of the Kayan in the northern part of Thailand
2. To analyze the ethnic tourism management in Mae Hong Son
3. To define outline of ethnic tourism management along with conservation of the fascination of Kayan identity

Scope of study

The Kayan communities can be founded in 10 communities of the northern part of Thailand, however, this research aims to the Kayan villages settled in Mae Hong Son province where is the origin place after immigrating from Burma. It is nearby the boundary of Burma in the North and West of Thailand. Mae Hong Son is a site of great ethnic and ecological diversity. In terms of tourism, there is much important alternative tourism in Mae Hong Son such as ecotourism, ethnic tourism, traditional tourism, or community – based tourism (CBT). The community-based ecotourism (CBE) has been operating among some highland ethnic communities since the 1990s when it was introduced by some local NGOs (Kazuhiro, 2010). Huay Pu keng village, Ban Huay Sua Thao, and Ban Nai Soi are defined for this study area.

As for the scope of content, the researcher chooses ethnographic research to conduct this study by using participation observation enables researchers to understand the real social action of Karen in Mae Hong Son. Besides, the other methods of ethnography can support this project to achieve the goal objectives and describe the research questions correctly.

Literature reviews

1) Cultural tourism

Cultural tourism is a type of tourism that involves communities, tradition, culture, way of life, and architecture. It has many benefits especially positive economic and social impacts because revenue is generated by the cultural tourism business and business support. Moreover, cultural tourism is an important subject of history and sociology and it belongs to the areas nearby the cultural geography and to and to analyze cultural identities, and the relationship between societies at different levels of development (Brooker, 2003). Cultural tourism leads to improvement and development of overall infrastructure and quality of life. It is not only undertaken tourism purposes, but also for the local community.

2) Ethnic tourism and management

According to Li (2000), ethnic tourism have often been associated with cultural landscape. Ethnic tourism generally refers to tourism motivated by a tourist's search for exotic cultural experiences, including visiting ethnic villages, minority homes and ethnic theme park being involved in ethnic events and festivals, watching traditional dances or ceremonies, or merely shopping for ethnic handicrafts and souvenirs Today, ethnic tourists are not only a special type of tourist who travels to observe the exotic cultural expressions

and life-styles of ethnic peoples in remote villages, but also include tourists who consume ethnic products at cultural parks in metropolises as well as ethnic reunion travelers who are motivated by reunion with their cultural roots.

Methodology

The main method of this research is the ethnographic methodology. As a tool for interviewing, the researcher found the secondary data about ethnic tourism, the Kayan life, and community-based tourism and define the semi-structure interviewing form. The data collection are participatory observation and in-depth interviewing. The samples were chosen by snowball sampling. 35 informants consist of the headmen of three Kayan communities, tour guides, the Karens, the governmental officials, and tourists. Moreover, Triangulation is used for data reliability checking. As for data analysis, the main method is a content analysis and SWOT analysis is used for assessing the tourism potential of the Kayan communities. The output of this analysis primarily took the form of verbal descriptions and explanations.

Results

1 The Kayan: Identity and Genealogy

Originally, the Kayan is one of the Karen groups living in eastern Burma. The Kayan mainly settled in Karenni State around Dimawso and Loikaw in 739AD (Khon, 2004). As a part of anthropology and language relationship according to Ywar (2013), the Kayan people in Thailand are classified as Lahwi – Paduang (Thai people call them as Long-Neck Karen). For the physical characteristics of the Kayan, normally, the Kayan people are medium height. Their color skin varies from the range between Burman and Chinese as a light olive complexion to a dark coffee brown. However, the unique identity of Kayan physical feature is the amazing of the female Kayan's neck which seems to have a long neck as same as a giraffe neck underneath their brass collar rings. This attractive physical feature and their accessories are a distinctive uniqueness of the Kayan tribe. Besides wearing the brass collar rings, they also wear the brass around their arms and legs as figure 2.



Figure 1 Wearing the brass collar rings and silver bangles of the Kayan woman

Sources: Tuntates Unchun (left), Kirdchot Montian (right) 2017

However, there is an important result of Roekeghem's research cited in Chawanaputorn et.al. (2016) that the elongation of the neck was only an illusion because of the heavy weight of the brass and the tension between their head and shoulders, therefore, these effect the ribs of the Kayan women, who wore the brass collar coils, were pressed down. It does not cause any damage to the neck skeleton and is not a bizarre body. It is just only an illusion.

As for the Kayan population, there is no statistical record about the number of whole Kayan people living in Thailand, however, the current estimates of the total Kayan population approximately 300–500 persons. The Kayan dialect is described as a language of Tibeto-Burman language. Nowadays, the Kayan people in Thailand usually use Kayan, Thai, and English for daily communication.

For religious and beliefs, the Kayan's religious beliefs are a curious mix such as Buddhists, Christians, and Animists (with the exception of Islam). For Animism, the Kayan believe that the World is inhabited by spirits that are usually invisible to humans. These spirits may live in trees, in rivers, in mountains, in the natural surroundings, in houses, or special statues. Most of the Kayan rituals and ceremonies involve customary practices and religious beliefs which form an ethical basis for the conduct of their daily lives. The important ritual ceremonies of the Kayan communities related to the Karenni and Karen communities. It can be founded as Poy Ton Tee (means T-Tree Ceremony), Dee Ku festival, and Christmas festival.

2 Ethnic tourism management and conservation

Overall, the ethnic tourism in Mae Hong Son is usually offered to tourists by many tour operations. At the same time, traveling to ethnic villages is the one of primary

destinations of backpackers when they visit Mae Hong Son province. Hence, the first image of ethnic tourism in Mae Hong Son is so important in terms of the hill tribe community, especially the Kayan village. Some coffee shops and cafes in Pai (one of districts in Mae Hong Son province) also use the Kayan illustration as a logo of their shops. Some tour agencies operate their package by adding the Kayan and Karen villages within their one-day program and promoting their package tour include an adventure trip in Chiang Mai and Mae Hong Son province. The Kayan villages are always in the top five as choices of destination. Therefore, these are the familiar images and unofficial symbols of ethnic tourism and eco-adventure tourism in Mae Hong Son province.



Figure 2 The Kayan statue and logo at Coffee shop and new tourist attraction in Mae Hong Son

Furthermore, the trend of sports tourism is continuously growing, especially marathon running in the remote area or trail running, meanwhile, Mae Hong Son province is also one of destination area of the sport event. Many events of marathon running have been set in Mae Hong Son and nearby districts such as Pai or Pang Ma Pah district and some trail routes now pass through the Karen villages. Besides, the logos of some events are designed by using the illustration of the Kayan (see for example figure 3. Sometimes, the image of the Kayan, especially the female Kayan is also the initial image of indigenous people if people firstly think of ethnic groups in the northern part of Thailand although there are many tribes settling in the area. ‘Brass collar ring’ and ‘Karen blouse’ seem to be the unique initial impressions that the public automatically recognize.



Figure 3 The marathon running event in Mae Hong Son

Source: MSHcountry (2018) and Jatelaveechoye Jatemerin (2018)

From the searching on the social network, especially Instagram and Facebook by defining the location as The Long Neck Karen Ban Huay Sua Tao, Mae Hong Son province, Long-Neck Karen Huay Pu Keng, or Ban Nai Soi almost 85% of pictures, which are posted on Instagram and checked in the place since 2013 (most often posted pictures are in 2017), are the pictures of tourists taking a photo with the Kayan within the village approximately 56%. Moreover, the results from social network observation found that all pictures, which were posted by checking in the places and set a privacy as public, were categorized in to three groups as 1) The scenery in the Kayan villages, 2) The Kayan way of life, and 3) Photo taking with the Kayan and Selfie photo.

2.1 Type of tourists visiting in the Kayan villages

For the tourist classification, there are many types of tourists who visit in the Kayan villages. In terms of tourism types, traveling at the Kayan villages can be classified as alternative tourism, ecotourism, ethnic tourism, natural tourism, cultural tourism, and rural tourism. . As for types of tourists in the Kayan villages, they can be classified into four groups based on the theory of Cohen (1972) as follows: 1) Organized mass tourist, 2) Individual mass tourist, 3) Explorer, and 4) Drifter.

In parts of a duration of trip, all tourists and visitors are a day-trip tourist. Although, some of tourists are international visitors or non-local communities but they also do not stay overnight within the Kayan villages and they choose to stay at Mae Hong Son city instead.

2.2 The tourism attractions of ethnic tourism in Kayan communities

The result of attractions within the Kayan communities, applied by Swarbrooke's the typology of tourism attraction (2012), can be classified as follows:

1) Features within the natural environment

- The mountainous sceneries
- The aesthetic of Pai river
- The harmony between human living and forest
- Blooming Dok Bua Tong festival

2) Human-Made Features (Cultural attractions)

- Traditional costumes and the physical condition of the Kayan people – brass collar ring, cloth ornaments, and colors of the Kayan tribe (white and red)
- Folklore of the descendent of dragon and the story of long-neck Karen
- Kayan ways of life (rural life)
- Kayan song and instruments
- Vernacular houses
- Kayan crafts (such as weaving blouses and scarfs, souvenirs, and wooden decoration etc.)
- Traditional food and local vegetable
- Traditional dance
- Religious and spiritual centers – Ton Tee ceremony and Christian church

3) Special events

- The Kayan New Year Ceremony (Poy Ton Tee Ceremony)
- Dee Ku festival
- Forest spiritual faith
- Life and family ceremony

2.3 Ethnic tourism management

The overall situation of the Kayan ethnic tourism in Mae Hong Son province is one of the favorite attractions which is the primary destination of tourists visiting to Mae Hong Son province. Moreover, the feature of logo and illustration of the ethnicity in Mae Hong Son is the identity of long-neck female tribe as ‘the Kayan’. Nowadays, there are only two villages such as Ban Huay Sua Thao and Ban Huay Pu Keng that have tourism management obviously. From the result of comparison between three Kayan villages, it expressed that Ban Huay Sua Thao and Ban Huay Pu Keng have more suitable potentials to support ethnic tourism management than Ban Nai Soi, however, they still have not the best sustainable practice for ethnic tourism management. Currently, the available route of Kayan ethnic tourism can classify into two routes based on the components of tourism potentials as below:

- 1) Ban Huay Sua Thao – the route of integrated tribes and,
- 2) Ban Huay Pu Keng – the natural scenic route of Kayan way of life

As for Ban Nai Soi, the readiness of tourism components of Ban Nai Soi is not available for being a tourist attraction due to lack of the facility development and human resources for support tourism management within the area.

The sustainable plans to develop ethnic tourism management are purposed for development plans as below:

1) Involvement of the Kayan people

- Promoting and encourage the Kayan people to take an action in awareness of their values and take part in some activities as same as local residences
- The Kayan people should take part in sharing of their information.
- Local communities including the Kayan people should be involved in conserving natural resources.
- The Kayan people should fairly get benefits from tourism.
- Setting the methods for ensuring that young or later generation of the Kayan has learned the skill to perform in the future
- Cultural durability would be necessary to enable the venture to withstand the pressures of acculturation (including the demonstration effect), modernization, irreversibility, and commercialization.

2) Rural landscape management and area development to support ethnic tourism or hill tribe tourism

- Meaningful signs or interpretive signs should be put up at major location and sacred and ritual place where tourists and visitors can see them clearly and easily.
- The sustainable ethnic tourism should be focused in order to promote awareness of conservation of the tangible and intangible values of the Kayan rural landscape, including invaluable vernacular architectures that should be conserved for the later generations.
- The tourism activities should be managed effectively to enhance the development of the community, however, they should not be threats to the Kayan's way of life.
- The Kayan ceremonies and annual ritual events should be promoted to the public by all stakeholders not only government agencies but also local partners.

3) Increasing knowledge about tourism management to the Kayan people

- The local government or tourism authority agencies should support training to raise awareness among local communities including the Kayan people in order to educate them about tourism.
- The local government including the village authority should support trainings on how to communicate with visitors and tourists and how to greet them.

4) Safety management for both local communities and visitors

Discussion

According to Cohen (2001), ethnic tourism in northern Thailand has developed commercially as it has simultaneously been absorbed into the lowland political, economic, and cultural system, however, it is so necessary to undertake in parallel with the conservation of cultural significances of the heritage. Generally, the limit effect of the Kayan

or other indigenous people in Thailand is the people without nationality that affect them unable to free living. They are set to be a part of the attractive tourism resource for ethnic tourism. The findings of this study concern what are the significances of the Kayan rural landscape and how the Kayan people and all stakeholders can contribute to sustainable tourism to secure a social mechanism and cultural values that can lead to conserve the fascination of the indigenous living.

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