

**The Evolution of Cultural Landscape and Built Environment Through  
Thai Food and Way of Living: The Case Study of Central Region of Thailand**  
วิวัฒนาการของภูมิทัศน์วัฒนธรรมและสิ่งแวดล้อมสร้างสรรค์สร้างผ่านอาหารไทยและวิถีชีวิตริม :  
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## **Abstract**

The purposes of this research were 1) to draw conclusions from characteristics and structures of Thai houses more focus in kitchens from traditional to modern styles, including equipment in the kitchen 2) identify different types of Thai food, the origin of Thai food, the structure of Thai food, eating culture and other aspects of the topic 3) to sequence the evolution of Thai food and study the influences of factors, and 4) to find suitable strategies and policies to create a Thai food conservation context. The study may be relevant to conservation strategies and plans that already exist. This research needs to summarize how environmental become the main factor to characters of Thai house, kitchen and food in the Central Region of Thailand.

The research instrument were divided into 2 parts. First, it focused in collecting detail of Thai built environment such as Thai house, Thai kitchen, Thai cooking equipment and Thai food from many academic papers, historical documents and Thai culinary books in both Thai and English while in-depth interview with Thai cuisine experts such as Thai culinary instructors in universities and colleges and Thai chef in hotels helps to understand the detail. Second is field trips to many Central province of Thailand such as Bangkok, Samut Sakorn, Ayutthaya, Uthai Thani, Suphanburi and other that need to see and take pictures of Thai house and kitchen.

The results of this research are: 1) Environment becomes an important key to influence fabric of Thai house and Thai kitchen while design and layout of kitchen both have similar affect to characters of Thai food. 2) Changing the location of house from near river to road is the beginning of evolution process as well as agricultural society migrated to urban society. 3) Reducing size of house affects Thai people's living pattern specifically the reduction of the size kitchen or cooking area. 4) Conserving original Thai way of life, built environment and food by using the concept of Slow Food Movement is a suggestion strategy because this concept focuses on going back to our origins and ensuring environmental sustainability.

**Keywords:** Culture, Intangible Cultural Heritage, Environment, Thai House, Thai Kitchen,

Thai Cuisine

## บทคัดย่อ

วัตถุประสงค์ในการจัดทำงานวิจัยนี้ขึ้นมาเพื่อ 1) ศึกษาลักษณะเฉพาะและโครงสร้างอันเป็นเอกลักษณ์ของบ้านไทย ครัวไทยทั้งแบบดั้งเดิมและแบบสมัยใหม่ รวมทั้งรายละเอียดของอุปกรณ์ที่ใช้ในการประกอบอาหารไทย 2) การจำแนกลักษณะของอาหารไทย แหล่งที่มาและลักษณะดั้งเดิมของอาหารไทย โครงสร้างของอาหารไทย วัฒนธรรมในการรับประทานอาหารไทยและหัวข้ออื่น ๆ ที่เกี่ยวข้อง 3) วิัฒนาการของอาหารไทย รวมทั้งประดิ่นอื่น ๆ ที่เกี่ยวข้องกับอาหารไทย 4) ศึกษาลัญช์และแนวทางที่เหมาะสมในการดำเนินการและอนุรักษ์รังสีลักษณะของอาหารไทย เป้าหมายของงานวิจัย ชิ้นนี้คือ สามารถนำข้อมูลที่ได้ไปใช้ในการพัฒนาและต่อยอดแนวทางในการสนับสนุนมาตรการในการอนุรักษ์อาหารไทยที่มีอยู่แล้วให้มีประสิทธิภาพมากขึ้น โดยที่งานวิจัยชิ้นนี้จะแสดงให้เห็นว่าสิ่งแวดล้อมเป็นปัจจัยหลักที่ส่งผลกระทบต่อลักษณะของบ้านไทย ครัวไทย และอาหารไทยในเขตภาคกลาง

แหล่งข้อมูลและเอกสารอ้างอิงในการทำงานวิจัยชิ้นนี้แบ่งออกเป็น 2 ส่วน ส่วนแรก คือ การเก็บข้อมูลมาจากเอกสารทางประวัติศาสตร์ งานวิจัย และตำราอาหารไทยทั้งภาษาไทยและภาษาอังกฤษ รวมทั้งมีการ

สัมภาษณ์ผู้เชี่ยวชาญด้านอาหารไทยจากสถาบันการศึกษาและพ่อครัวในโรงแรม ส่วนที่สอง คือ การออกแบบชุดข้อมูลนอกสถานที่ในจังหวัดต่างๆ ในเขตภาคกลางของประเทศไทย เช่น กรุงเทพฯ สมุทรสาคร อุบลราชธานี และสุพรรณบุรี เพื่อให้ได้ข้อมูลที่จำเป็นต่อการทำงานวิจัย

สรุปผลที่ได้จากการวิจัย คือ 1) สิ่งแวดล้อมเป็นปัจจัยสำคัญที่ส่งผลกระทบต่อลักษณะโครงสร้างของบ้านไทยและครัวไทย ในขณะที่การออกแบบและการกำหนดลักษณะแผนผังห้องครัวจะส่งผลกระทบรูปแบบของอาหารไทย 2) การเปลี่ยนแปลงสถานที่สร้างบ้านจากวิธีเดิมๆ เป็นรูปแบบใหม่ คือ จุดเริ่มต้นของกระบวนการเปลี่ยนแปลง รวมทั้งการเปลี่ยนแปลงจากสังคมเกษตรไปสู่สังคมเมือง 3) การลดขนาดของตัวบ้านส่งผลกระทบต่อวิถีชีวิตและความเป็นอยู่ของคนไทย โดยเฉพาะการลดขนาดของพื้นที่ครัวหรือพื้นที่ประกอบอาหาร 4) การนำแนวคิดของสโลว์ฟู้ดมาประยุกต์ใช้ในการอนุรักษ์วิถีชีวิตและสิ่งแวดล้อมสร้างเป็นกลยุทธ์ที่เหมาะสมเนื่องจากแนวคิดหลักของสโลว์ฟู้ด คือ การกลับไปหารากเหง้าและภูมิปัญญาของอาหารท้องถิ่นและไม่ทำลายสิ่งแวดล้อม

**คำสำคัญ** : วัฒนธรรม มรดกทางวัฒนธรรมที่จับต้องไม่ได้ สิ่งแวดล้อม บ้านไทย ครัวไทย อาหารไทย

## Introduction

UNESCO (2013) explained the cultural landscape as “embraces a diversity of manifestations of the interaction between humankind and its natural environment. Cultural landscapes often reflect specific techniques of sustainable land-use, considering the characteristics and limits of the natural environment they are established in, and a specific spiritual relation to nature.” Culture is the outcome of human activities forced by the environment. The relationship between people and their environment is deep and people’s lives depend on their environmental surroundings.

According to the definition of Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO (2013), it showed that it thrives on its basis in communities and depends on those whose knowledge of traditions, skills and customs are passed on to the rest of the community, from generation to generation, or to other communities. Therefore, culture represents the characteristics of each community that differ from others. It includes both tangible and intangible objects such as food, dance, music, clothing and specific aspects of a way of life.

Food is a part of culture related with peoples’ way of life, as quoted by French gastronome Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin in The Philosophy of Taste (1825) as “Tell me what you eat and I will tell you what you are” that is the beginning of topic. Food is a one of local intellectuals that transmits from past to present. It shows a lot of detail of local community such as

geography, climate and way of life. Food is not just a meal to consume but it is the outcome of environment where people had to know how to choose, how to grow and how to cook. Inventing cooking equipment based on local material and knowledge. Cooking ingredients also depends on type of cooking equipment. These are local intellectuals and becomes the eating culture.

If food is a key to study, the kitchen is an important place as an area for cooking. Focusing on a house's structure is the first step. A house is the smallest unit in social life and the way of life starts there. The environment is a factor that dictates what specific forms houses and kitchens in Thailand have. The importance of the house and the kitchen is not only focused on the building but there are beliefs, prohibitions, worship and other to consider. A house consists of varies parts such as bedroom, kitchen, living room, terrace and others. The style and layout related to the environment because the objectives are to build a house that protects people from hazards weather and to live comfortably.

This research choose Thai house, kitchen and food in the Central region of Thailand as a case study because this area represents Thai culture from the past to present. Since Sukkhotai period, there were many Thai kingdoms located in this area, especially Ayutthaya kingdom. Thai culture both for royal and local started from it.

Cultural change affects characters of Thai house, kitchen and food respectively. Knowledge of original Thai culture is quickly destroyed or in some case are unexpected changes from its original, especially characters of original Thai food. Objectives of this study are focused on connection between local environment with structure and layout of house and character of Thai food including Thai food equipment. It will help the researcher understand pattern of changes in people's lifestyle and culture. Identifying environmental factor that affects to people's living is another key because people always adapt their behavior following with dwelling and house's facilities and space so creating conserving policies for Thai culture should be planned from this factor.

## Research Objectives

1. To draw conclusions from characteristics and structures of Thai houses and kitchens from traditional to modern styles, including equipment in the kitchen.
2. Identify different types of Thai food, the origin of Thai food, the structure of Thai food, eating culture and other aspects of the topic.

3. To sequence the evolution of Thai food and study the influences of factors.
4. To find suitable strategies and policies to create a Thai food conservation context. The study may be relevant to conservation strategies and plans that already exist.

## Scope of the Research

1. The area of study is the Central Region of Thailand because it presents the representative characteristics of Thai culture. In the past, capitals of the Sukhothai Kingdom and the Ayutthaya Kingdom located in this region and they were center of Thai culture.
2. This research needs to identify characteristics of original and modern Thai house, Thai kitchen and Thai food. Finding relationship between them is done by using concepts of Cultural Landscape. Environment is a key to control patterns of them so studying geography in the area is go together.
3. Source comes from documents about Thai culture, Thai architecture, cuisine and other, Thai cuisine instructors and chefs. In addition, observing original Thai house and Modern houses and dwellings in Bangkok and other provinces are necessary to fulfill detail.
4. Timeline of this research divided into 3 parts:
  - Studying and collecting related documents about 6-9 months
  - Field trips about 8 months
  - Writing about 12 months

## Literature Review

All human behaviors and actions have reasons and causes. This research focuses on patterns of cultural changes through the relationship between cultural landscape and built environment. Thus, there are 3 theories and concepts such as culture, Intangible Cultural Heritage, and Cultural Landscape.

### Culture

Many researchers explain the definition of a culture as interesting, especially the British anthropologist Edward Tylor, who said “Culture...is that complex, whole which includes knowledge, belief, arts, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (Tylor 1871/1958,1 quoted in Kottak (2002:62)). It was supported by Utai and Yuth (quoted in Chaweewan (2012:4)) who explained that culture is a standard of human behavior and proper conduct that includes thoughts transmitted by communicating and symbols.

Similarly, Kornblum (2008: 45) clarified that culture is defined as all the modes of thought, behavior, and production that are handed down from one generation to the next by means of communicative interaction-language, gestures, writing, buildings, and all other communication among humans rather than by genetic transmission, or heredity. If human activities are culture, Yod (2013:14) commented that the definition of culture here emphasizes belief systems and social values. He claimed that human behavior is controlled by these. However, culture is not the same as basic instincts because it is refined and improved over a long period.

Characteristics of culture are illustrated by Yod (2013:14-16) Niyaphan (2007:40-41), Bjelland *et al.* (2013:35) and Chaweewan (2012:14-15) summarized basic characteristics of culture as: First, culture is the result of human cognitive systems that are influenced by biological, environmental, and physiological factors. Second, culture is learned from experience and being members of communities. Last, culture is a dynamic that can change, develop and end.

Leslie White (quoted by Yod (2013:43)), who described culture as consisting of three subsystems: “technological” include natural resources and human’s inventions while “ideological” that refers to a human’s beliefs, values, and attitudes. Finally, “sociological” subsystem that refers to incorporation of people as social organization and human behavior in groups.

Kottak (2002:68-69) explained that there are three levels of culture: first is national culture that refers to the beliefs, learned behavior patterns, values, and intuitions shared by citizens of the same nation. Second is international culture that is the term of cultural traditions that extend beyond and across national boundaries and last is subcultures that are different symbol-based patterns and traditions associated with particular groups in the same complex society. His concepts are influenced by the size of the culture but he rearranged from small to big groups.

### **Intangible Cultural Heritage**

UNESCO (2003:4) said that “intangible cultural heritage” means:

“The practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history,

and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.”

The Intangible Cultural Heritage consists of five domains such as: oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage; performing arts; social practices, rituals and festival events; knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; and traditional craftsmanship.

Intangible cultural heritage was also a part of tangible cultural heritage such as Ito (2003) who agreed that intangible cultural heritage is the skill or technique necessary to construct buildings and places, and that this should be recognized. The same for Pocius (2002:1) who commented that within the realm of intangible heritage, there is a wide range of knowledge and activities (both intangible) associated with things; houses, clothing, gardens, pottery, for example, are all tangible things that require a complex mix of intangible knowledge and skills to make and use.

Intangible culture heritage is not “old” but it is the living heritage occurs in communities so finding right methods to protect them is very challenge. Pocius (2002:9) explained four challenges of Intangible cultural heritage such as:

First is culture that is a shared responsibility of both the federal and provincial governments not merely individuals. Safeguarding policy should be supported seriously because it needs many resources to run the project successfully. Both organizations should cooperate to plan the process carefully.

Second is grassroots participation that refers to local people and community. Most intangible cultural heritage is comes from this source so the best way to collect data about certain skills and knowledge come from studying them by using many methods. However, choosing expert grassroots examples in each type of heritage is very important because choosing specific and well-known community and grassroots’ organizations helps to write manuals of correct knowledge.

Third is to set series of standards to estimate the value of data. Grassroots’ organization may not enlist experts or even professionals to run the process. Data collecting to systematic is requested so training all parts for a working professional is a necessary strategy to consider.

Last is national focus and regional sensitive. National focus is necessary for running the conservative program as same as cooperation between governments and local communities.

## Cultural Landscape

Before discussing the details of cultural landscape, we need start with a speech by Nich (1994:34) that firstly, people build a city but that city will build people later. This idea shows the importance and influence of environment to human activities and culture. In 1992, UNESCO announced the definition of cultural landscape officially, as it reflected specific techniques of sustainable land-use, considering the characteristics and limits of the natural environment they are established in, and a specific spiritual relation to nature. Natural resources are necessary to support the human way of life so relationship between culture and landscape consists of:

First, landscape is a foundation of culture. Knox and Marston (2014:162) mentioned landscape in cultural geography, as it is the way space, place and landscape shape culture at the same time that culture shapes space, place, and landscape. Landscape is a factor to guide and control human behavior to respond basic human needs.

Second, landscape as text that can be read and written by groups and individuals (Knox and Marston, 2014:162) as same as Bjelland *et al.* (2013:221) who agreed that all landscape can be read, interpreted and challenged to understand the culture that produced it.

Third, landscape is an evidence of people's activities and way of life as it appears on the physical environment, and that is supported by Olwing (1996 quoted in Kaya, 2002:55). He stated the substantive meaning of landscape is a place of human habitation and environmental interaction that could be considered as a nexus of community, justice, nature, and environmental equity, a contested territory.

In 1925, Carl Sauer, one of the most influential geographers, defined the cultural landscape as a natural landscape that has been modified by a cultural group. He believed that the cultural landscape is fashioned from a natural landscape by a cultural group; culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, and the cultural landscape is the result. Under the influence of a given culture, itself changing through time, the landscape undergoes development, passing through phases (Carl Sauer, 1925 quoted by Plumwood, 2006:121).

Suthinee *et al.* (2014:59-68) explained examples of cultural landscape:

1. Settlement patterns refer to the form of buildings such as shelters, community places, shops, schools, religious places and transportation routes.
2. Land-use for agriculture activity refers to patterns of farming form. There are three forms such as disperse farming, referring to small farms spread over an area, long lot farms that close

with a road or a river for ease of transportation, and grid patterns that occurs in developed countries as a measure to support commercial cultivation.

3. Agricultural landscape is defined as the visual result of land uses and management systems in an area (Kizos and Koulouri, 2005). It demonstrates a rich cultural, landscape diversity, sustainable land-use systems, and in some cases people's daily struggle for survival under extreme climatic and environmental conditions (UNESCO, 2013).

4. Religious landscape that refers religious buildings and surrounding. Religious is a basic tradition of people and control people behavior lifetime. Gender and status are conditions to design areas to separate from other. Normally, a religious place is a center of community so its size and location are important to consider.

Concepts of Culture, Intangible Cultural Heritage and Cultural Landscape helps a researcher to understand structure and relationship between them. This thesis's objectives focus on 3 main keys: first is to understand linkage between Thai cultural landscape and Built environment. Second is to identify environmental factors influence characters of Thai house, kitchen and food. Last is to name factors make Thai food and way of life changes.

People create culture from environmental surrounding by learning process, from experience, that takes time to practice and follow up. This process refers to local knowledge or intellect that is the first step to create material objects. This concept leads to next topic of Literature Review, Intangible cultural heritage.

Intangible cultural heritage is the mother of culture because it refers to specific local practices and traditions to create material objects. Food and house are parts of Intangible Cultural Heritage and they fall in dynamic movement. Both require a complex mix of intangible knowledge and cultural knowledge to build or to cook. If culture refers to tangible objects that people can use touch, intangible culture heritage is another key to fulfill it. Human uses environment sources to support way of life and they create impacts to nature as well. Impacts are called as a way of life's patterns of this local community. Studying a location can make people to understand their cultural root because it focuses on people, activities and environment.

People cook in a kitchen that is a part of house. Building a kitchen is important as like as other parts because it affects to human's activities and food habits. Food refers to style of meals, cooking technique, equipment and eating habits while food ingredient such as plants

and meat for cooking are growing and feeding around the house area as like as water for cooking and cleaning

## Research Methodology

This research is qualitative research. It focuses on studying the changes in Thai cuisine because of factors such as environment surroundings and architecture style. The research instruments consist of documents and interviews. Documentary study is in form of literature reviews, historical documents and Thai culinary books from universities' libraries and governmental libraries. These papers help to understand specific characteristics of Thai built environment such as Thai house, Thai kitchen, Thai food of the Central region of Thailand.

Moreover, in – depth interviews with many Thai cuisine's instructors and Thai chef in Thai restaurant are necessary to gather more information to complete detail of Thai cuisine such as characters of food, cooking technique and cooking equipment. The interviewer's questions will be based on documentary information, which focuses on in – depth information about each subject. Field trips in many provinces of the Central of Thailand for take photos and visit Thai houses, kitchen and farms help the researcher to understand the influence of environment to Thai culture both tangible and intangible objects.

## Research Results

### 1. Characteristics and structures of Thai houses and kitchens

A house is a part of folk culture in that it combines material and non-material culture. Rawiwan (2013:18-21) summarized some of the characteristics of a house in Southeast Asia, such as building houses over the ground and on water, popular materials such as wood, palm and grass, and settlement patterns consisting of the sedentary, temporary and nomadic. The significance of a house is more than just being a shelter or place to live. There is intellect hidden within that can be considered folklore. The environment for settlement must be considered carefully because it affects many human activities such as hunting for food, cultivating, building houses, transportation, farming, trading and other activities.

For Thai people, the house is a symbol of family, the basic building block of a local community. The house is a learning center for newer generations received from older members, such as parents and grandparents, who always teach and transmit knowledge about local culture, beliefs, morals and habits. The house is a center of folklore and local wisdom that carries on the traditions between old and young.

Yanin (2003:49) discussed the fact that geography and climate are factors control the style of a house for many reasons. Thus, there are 8 specific characteristics of Thai house in the region such as:

- 1) It is tapering shape structure house.
- 2) A high and airy basement allow people to walk and do activities under the house and doesn't have any partitions to allow free air flow.
- 3) A Steep or gable roof helps to reduce heat in the house.
- 4) There are long eaves covering all sides of the house.
- 5) It is built from local materials such as woods and grass that can shrinkage.
- 6) It is prefabricated or "Ready to build" house.
- 7) A Thai house has a transfer zone, which refers to a space used to reduce the temperature between the outside and inside of the house.
- 8) It is ventilated house.

A kitchen is an area for storing, preparing and cooking meals, including dining. It is a necessary space for every house and family. Strong smells, smoke and noise from cooking activities are reasons to build a kitchen unit separate from the main house. In a Thai house, air will flow from the front to the back of the house. Thus, the position of a kitchen should be stable for 2 reasons: first is to protect air flow to inhabitants or in the house and keep bad smells from flowing in other rooms. Second is to control fire in the stove. Ruethai and others (2002:50) discussed that being well ventilated is an important detail of a Thai kitchen. The structure of a kitchen consists of:

- 1) Kitchen walls are open panels that can either be "fa samruad" (split bamboo) or "fa khat thae" (woven bamboo).
- 2) Kitchen floors are made of woven bamboo matting or use wooden planks as floors.
- 3) The kitchen gables are also designed for rapid smoke exhalation, having ventilation slats in a radiating "rasami phra arthis or sunray" pattern. Pallegoix (2009:144-145) documented cooking equipment and tools such as a baked clay stove, two handle steel pot, clay pot for Thai curry, brass pan, small pan, brass and pearl ladle, coconut shell ladle, coconut shell scale (Tha Nan), brass and wooden tray, chopsticks, ceramic bowl, steel pot, ceramic bowls and saucers. A mortar and pestle were kitchen tools to make Nam Prik, a Thai spicy dip.

Kochpong (2012:3-4) explained that there are 4 typical types of Thai kitchen equipment: first is a mortar and pestle for pounding ingredients used in various Nam Prik, Thai dips and curry pastes. They are made from wood and rock rather than ceramics. Second is a stove. A brazier was popular in the past and used firewood as fuel. Third is a wooden cupboard, used to store meals and food. These are still used in Thai houses today. All of the legs of the cupboard have small baked clay bowls filled with water. This protects ants from swarming up the legs to the food. Last is a big stool, like a low height large table, for sitting on to prepare food.

However there are 2 specific equipment in Thai kitchen. First is Mae Tao Fai, a wooden square container, about 6-7 inches high, filled with compacted soil to provide heat insulation from the floor. Second is a coconut grater or Kra Tai Khude Ma Prow. This tool consists of 2 parts: a wooden seat and steel grater.

## 2. Types of Thai food

Food is a part of our life from birth until death. Ingredients come from plants, water and other sources. Most can be harvested, hunted and collected for cooking but people must learn how to eat, where to find food and how to cook. This knowledge is passed to the next generation, combining folk wisdom and the intelligence of later generations.

The definition of Thai food refers to food originating from and consumed in Thailand. Thai food is often served as a set consisting of rice, meat and desserts or fruit served at the same time. However, there are also snacks, light meals, and other styles, originally received from abroad, that have become known as Thai food. While Thai food has a reputation for being spicy, it is actually based on a balance between different flavours including spicy, sour, sweet, salty, and bitter.

Thai meals can be divided into 4 main types such as appetizers are dishes such as Thai Salad, Yam and Light meal. Main dishes are usually stir-fry, deep-fried, and nam prik, Thai curry and soup, then desserts. In addition, there is much local food, seasonal food and food for festivals.

The specific characteristics of Thai Food consist of: first is using local ingredients found in the surrounding environment. Second is taste and flavour. Strong and smooth tastes come from different ingredients and components. Combinations of various tastes, flavours and fragrances are a specific characteristic of Thai food. Third is beautiful presentation in shape and

colour from many cooking techniques that is a key distinction of Thai cuisine. Fourth is health and medical benefits. Fifth is serving as Sam Rab, set of bowls with lids for filling rice and meals or Kam Kao in a large tray.

There are 4 types of Thai food such as

1. Original Thai food, it is thought to be the 'real' local food that Siamese people ate daily. Loubère (2009:119) explained that the main source of food was rice and fish. Siamese people did not like to eat fresh fish. Fermented fish was popular as much as spicy Thai dip or Nam Prik. While Pallegoix (1845: 145-147) mentioned that Siamese food consisted of rice, fish, fruits and vegetables. He claimed that there was a well-liked dip, consumed by kings and slaves alike. The dip was made from pounding dried chilis, shrimp paste, peppercorn, garlic and shallot until fine, then seasoning the mixture with fish sauce and lime juice. He explained that the production method of Pla Ra, or fermented fish, and this food was eaten with young vegetable leaves. The taste of Thai food was spicy and pungent.

2. Adapted Thai food is the kind of food which used foreign ingredients, cooking techniques and methods combined with original Thai ingredients, cooking techniques and methods. The combined process might have occurred for a long time, with many thinking they are Thai food such as Kang Karee, Thai curry, received from India, and Kang Jued, or Thai clear soup, received from China. An example of Thai food that came from foreign influences is pork. A popular meat in Thailand now, it arrived in Siam from the Chinese and new cooking methods from China were also introduced to Thais, such as using a wok for stir-frying and deep-frying. Pickled fish, Pla Ra, was received from the Mon and Cambodian cultures (Kuekrit and Mom, 2005:1220). Rice, non-glutinous rice, was received from India. Khoa Chae is an original Mon food made in Mon New Year festival and known as Royal Thai cuisine. It spread to the Thai people in King Rama IV period (Ong, 2007:6 and 2009:73). Thai desserts made from eggs, such as Tong Yib, Thong Yod and Foi Thong originally came from Portuguese desserts.

3. Regional Thai food refers to food of each region or community in different areas of the country. It may differ in many ways, such as ingredients, taste, presentation and others. Environmental factors or basic physical elements of the ecosystem are very important for people to adapt themselves. People develop skilled to find and cook in different environments, leading to different food styles (Kamoltip, 2002:2). Regional Thai food can be divided generally into 4 groups: the Northern or Lanna, the Northeast or Isan, the Southern and

the Central. The borders of the kingdom connect with other countries such as Myanmar, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos and Malaysia. These locations were ancient kingdoms such as Lanna, Lan Chang, Malaca, Kmar and Nam Viet. In the past their food culture was also transmitted and blended with Thai food in the each region. Thai food, by region, has its own specific culture and its own characteristics.

4. Royal Thai food refers to food cooked for royal families and their members. It is not so different in terms of taste, but rather refers to the refined cooking methods in terms of choosing ingredients, preparation, cooking and presentation. Nicolas Gervaise and Simon de La Loubère discussed that food of the Siamese people was not substantial; rice, fish, fruit and vegetables. The food of the upper class was not much different, just more luxurious with more various types than the lower class. Food for royal families is more meticulous than for ordinary people. Thanadsri Svativas (2010:26) explained that food for royal families have 3 important regulations: no shells from seafood, such as shrimp being peeled completely, no fishbone in fish and no bones, such as in chicken meat.

### **Modern Thai Food: Street Food**

Street food is identified as a type of informal food sector that is explained by Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2007) that includes small produce, manufacturing enterprises, traders and service providers, involved in legal as well as unrecognized activities related to food. Street food is always moving and set to sell food at public places such as a roadside or walkway. It is called informal food factor because it lacks the formal legal status that would facilitate improvement in food hygiene and access to credit.

In Thailand, street food is often in a “market”, which refers to a place for merchants to sell or offer their products to customers. The beginning of street food comes from three factors: people, place and activity. There are 3 reasons why street food is important. First, it is a symbol of real local food. Second, is the main source of people’s meal. Street food is easy to reach and people can buy it at cheap cost. Last, this activity is to support the local economy.

The characteristics of street food in the Central Region of Thailand consist of: it started from floating markets. Vendors often sell in many public areas and in front of office buildings. The vendors are mobile or semi-mobile but their routes may focus on overcrowded areas. Customers are interested in the food rather than the environment. Having a limited menu is a

key to successful street food vending. Cheap price is an interesting factor for customers. It is often a family business or operated by an individual.

### 3. Evolution of Thai food

These conditions are influenced changing patterns of Thai food now however character of buildings, house and kitchen, affect patterns of Thai food as well.

#### Type

Thai cuisine is always eaten as a set, Sam Rub, consists of rice and dishes including desserts and seasonal fruit. Thai like to eat as a group and all meals are shared together. While, the size of a set is large enough for all to be satisfied at each meal. Most Thai people live alone so they will cook only small portions and limited types. They reduce the number of courses and size of portion so it is adequate for them to consume. Thus, a popular type of Thai dish today is Ar Han Jan Deaw, one main dish, refers to a plate with rice and a dish such as chicken rice, noodles, and barbequed red pork in sauce with rice.

The “plastic bag wives” refers to people who buy meals or Kab Kao from shops. In the shop, customers can order a plate of rice topped with 1-3 kinds of dishes for eating in the shop or buying to eat at home or office. Dishes always popular are Thai salads, clear soups, Kang or curry, stir-fried vegetable and meat fried. Many people buy these meals and store them in a refrigerator for their next meal.

In the past, eating a meal with another dish for balancing the taste and texture was a specific character of Thai cuisine, like eating seasonal dishes. Now, these concepts are ignored because some ingredients are rare or difficult to cook.

Regional food in the central region of Thailand has not changed too much but accepting foreign food culture such as style and ingredient has affected the characters of Thai dishes. The spreading of foreign fast food restaurants in Thai society and changing food tastes of new generation create new type of Thai food now.

#### Ingredients

The names of Thai food ingredients can be organized into many groups such as:

Carbohydrate such as rice and non-glutinous rice are major groups' consumed and they are divide into two groups: white and brown. In the past, white rice was a popular dish, but now brown rice is more popular than white rice because of its nutritional value.

However bakery products such as bread, pastry and sandwiches have become a source of carbohydrates of Thai people in urban areas especially for breakfast and snack times. Many vendors sell bakery products such as sandwiches and buns as a meal at a cheap price. These products are long lasting, easy to carry and storables.

Protein from freshwater fish, meat and poultry was the most popular protein of Thai. Increasing imported products give people the new choices of protein. These products are various in term of quality and price. Dolly fish, lambs, specific species of meats, salmon, and other products have become popular for Thais while consuming local products has declined.

Using imported products and buying from vendors include vegetables and fruits. In the past, Thais grew them in their backyard garden within their house territories and they could pick them in small portions, enough for cooking each time. This is the important part of Thai Cultural Landscape, the kind of plant depends on their topographical location. At present, this kind of cultural landscape still exist in the suburb of the Central Region.

### **Taste**

The tastes of Thai cuisine come from the natural ingredients such as salty from fish sauce, spicy from chili, sour from lime and tamarind and sweet from sugar cane. For example, the sweet taste, there are many types of sugar used in Thai cuisine such as sugar cane, coconut sugar and palm sugar that differ in taste and cost.

The first problem of taste is using the wrong seasoning or ingredient in Thai dishes. Each seasoning has a specific taste and each dish uses specific seasonings or ingredients. For example, Thai meals that use coconut milk often are seasoned by coconut sugar, an expensive sugar, but many restaurants use granulated sugar to save on cost and storables. Using substitute products is the main problem making Thai cuisine change.

## **4. The Evolution of Cultural Landscape and Built Environment**

People create culture to fulfill physical, mental and social needs and it is transmitted to new generations. However in some situations, people have been forced to change their original behavior patterns and adapted themselves to a new environment and society. This is the starting point to build a new pattern of culture. Change is an essential process for cultural existence and humans are crucial in carrying forward these traditions to the next generation.

Still, to preserve culture, people have to adapt and changed some aspects following environmental conditions.

The evolution of Thai house and Thai kitchen can be summarized as:

### **1. Evolution of Thai house**

1. Changing location from near river to road. The settlement pattern changed from linear settlements following rivers to road side settlements. People focused on locations that could allow easy access to daily life needs and service. Living near main roads is comfortable and safe to transport and it closes with public utilities and transportation service.

2. Changing house style. Settlement inland caused the number of raft houses in the Central region to drop dramatically while two-story houses are replaced single-story houses with a high basement. High-rise condominium becomes a popular choice for people in urban areas as like as townhome.

3. Changing layout and function of a house. Decreasing space in a house is a result from the high cost of land in many big cities. Many people have to live in small rooms of high-rise buildings so some areas in dwellings are combined and changed flowing size of houses.

4. Changing in building material from wood to modern technology materials such as concrete, glass, parquets, artificial wood, piles and others this comes from the lack of sufficient wood, a natural material. However some materials absorb heat from the sun and allow light to shine directly into a room this causes the inside temperature to very hot and restrictive.

5. Installing electric equipment to adjust the house's environment such as air conditioning or electric fans is a necessary for house today, especially houses in urban areas. There are two reasons for using this. First is reducing the hot temperature and second is protecting noise pollution.

### **2. Evolution of Thai kitchen**

1. Changing the dimensions of cooking from sitting on kitchen's floor to standing and having a working table in kitchen were the beginning of the process.

2. Having a pantry kitchen, a type of Western style kitchen, in the house. In Thai families, cooking is a popular activity of owners' families and they need a modern style kitchen separate from the servants' kitchen. Thus, house owners decided to build two kitchens: a hot

kitchen in back of the house for maids to cook and a pantry kitchen in a house for family's members to cook occasionally.

3. Reducing kitchen's space from a kitchen (Fully-equipped) to a kitchenette. It depends from 2 factors: first is type and size of accommodation such as kitchens in apartments and condominiums become a small space for heat up meals, by using microwave ovens, a small sink for washing and a refrigerator that occupier has to buy themselves. Second is the size of families. Single people and employers like to dine out or buying convenience meals because of cheap and save time. Having a kitchenette is suitable with their lifestyle.

4. Moving a kitchen from back of the house to front of the house. It often finds in many condominiums. Moving a kitchen to near a front door is comfortable for occupiers to carry things for storing but this area has low ventilation. The smell of cooking will diffuse into the rooms. Installing a cooking hood would solve this problem but cooking food with strong smell meals in a narrow space affects the occupiers.

5. Using and installing modern equipment in the kitchen. There are modern kitchen equipment and tools installed in Thai kitchen such as: using gas and electric stoves, a cupboard, a refrigerator, a microwave oven, air-conditioning and a cooking hood. Occupiers will choose some in their dwellings.

## Research Discussion

### Conclusion

1. Environment influences human culture both tangible and intangible materials. People use environmental resources for supporting their life and characters of local culture depend on it. Changing environment affects to cultural patterns directly.

2. Migration is the beginning of cultural change. Living in new environment forces people to change their origin behavior. As like as living alone without elders makes people to receive new culture and way of live.

3. Conservative programs should focus on Intangible cultural heritage or living heritage because lacking right knowledge of practicing and using tangible objects will destroy local intellectuals.

4. Characters of Thai house and Thai kitchen are influenced by environmental factor while Thai food is an outcome of environment and structure of Thai kitchen.

## How Thai Cultural Landscape links to the characters of the Thai kitchen and Thai food

If environment is a factor that influences the Thai house, it will have an effect to characters of the Thai kitchen and Thai food. In the past, most houses had a kitchen area because people did not regularly dine out due to the limitation of restaurants. However the structure of kitchen differs from other parts because of the environment in a kitchen was unattractive and smelly. Thus, the location of the kitchen was mostly at the back of the house and located on the leeward to preventing smoke and smell flowing back into the house. Although the temperature outside is hot, the temperature in the kitchen when cooking can be higher. Thus, decreasing the level temperature in a kitchen was the first step.

Airy structures using split bamboo as kitchen walls, sunray style of kitchen gable for ventilating hot air through the ceiling and wooden bamboo matting or wooden planks were used for kitchen floor the methods. Gaps between boards and split bamboo allowed the wind to flow in while heat, smoke and smell can be blown out. At the center of a kitchen was the Mae Tao Fai with stoves. Firewood and charcoal was the popular fuel so people needed a space for storing brushwood and charcoal. Smoke and soot from the fuel forced people to set the Mae Tao Fai close to windows allowing the smoke to flow out. Original cooking equipment such as pot and pan were made from clay, one of the local material in the region. They were fragile when compared with metal. So, basically Thai cooking techniques consisted of boiling, blanching and grilling. While other techniques such as frying, steaming, baking and others imported from Chinese and Western cultures.

For Thai food, it is a product from the combination between local wisdom, raw material and devising cooking equipment. Sam rub or a set of Thai dishes consists of rice, fish, vegetable and fruit as a dessert. For Thai food ingredients, soil fertility made agricultural activities successful. Inland fisheries were a source of good protein for Thais however they liked to make dried and fermented the products. Nam Prik was an original meal for Thai people that was served with various types of vegetables and proteins. Many documents mentioned salt, as one of the food seasoning and preserving ingredient, which was produced by seaside villages in the region and became an important product for exporting and consuming. Seasonal ingredients and dishes became one of the strong Thai food characters because they are related to the quality of food and its medical benefits. Matching a meal and condiments makes Thai cuisine

very interested because of the different tastes and textures. While foreign and imported ingredients were popular with the upper class, merchants and foreigners rather than local people before eventually spreading to the local people.

A character of the Thai Cultural Landscape in the Central Region of Thailand is agricultural society in river basins. Located in a tropical area means it is hot, has high humidity and heavy rains, so flooding often occurs in some areas, especially in the river basins of this region. Building a house for comfortable and safe living is essential so people focused on house structure and using the right types of materials. Open ground floor and many ventilators are a specific patterns. Climate becomes the first linkage between the Thai Cultural Landscape and the built environment as it affects the temperature in the house and position of each room. Materials used to build the house, kitchen and making cooking equipment were from the natural resources in the region and Thai people understood where to find and how to use them properly.

While the climate factor becomes a key to control house and kitchen's structure, the settlement area influences the type of house. One specific form of Thai house is the raft house that floats on rivers. It was very popular in the past because Thais liked to settle near river basins/banks. However the increasing population numbers forced people move inland to settle, roadsides became another choice. People prefer to settle near the roadside or main land transportation route because of safety and easy access. Built environment in the region started from building houses for living to trading and storing goods. Many communities in estuaries and junctions developed markets and floating markets if these areas were connected to the sea or other communities. Trading occurred the built environment changed. Houses for living were transformed to shops for trading.

#### **Cultural changed: what factors and how it change?**

Recently, Thai society changed from an agricultural society to a consumer society for many reasons. The numbers of people who migrate from rural to urban areas is rising quickly. Economics becomes the first factor that encourages people to move for a better life, an opportunity for a better education and better paid jobs. Living in a new community forces people to adjust themselves to the new social patterns as quickly as they can. Living alone without elders, they ignore homelands' way of life because the wisdom is out-of-date. The built environment, house and kitchen in urban areas changes in term of patterns and functions

of house. The high cost of living affects people to find suitable temporary accommodation or rental properties. Modern dwellings such as condominiums and apartments have become a popular choice for workers because they cheaper than buying a house.

For people who live alone or are in a single family, the size of house will decrease to reduce cost. Limited space forces houses owners to reduce needless areas such as a fully-furnished kitchen are transformed to kitchenettes or a small pantry for warming meals. This decision making is influenced by their busy way of life. Therefore, many people choose to dine out before going home or buying a cooked meal. These patterns affect the young generation because they lack the knowledge of Thai food and the cooking techniques because they are only acquainted with the taste and composition of convenience meals, adapted Thai food and foreign food.

The buying of cooked meals has allowed street food to grow quickly in urban areas. Street food has becomes an important part of Thai society although it creates many negative impacts on Thai food today such as the low quality of food safety, the change in taste and character of Thai food and the use of substitute ingredients for reducing cost.

#### **The Slow Food Movement: An interesting strategies to conserve Thai food**

Presently, Thai food now is in a critical condition because of the changing Thai way of life. Cooking at home is replaced by buying convenience meals and dine out. Imported ingredient and frozen meals have become popular because they save cost and are readily available. These are destroying the concept of Thai food slowly and the younger generation misunderstands or is confuse about what is real Thai food. Although the Thai government announced many policies to conserve Thai food intellect, motivating Thai people to study and do is very essential.

If we find the right principles to conserve Thai food, there is an interested answer from Duangporn Songvisava (Lau, 2015) who said that “The future of food depends on going back to our origins and ensuring environmental sustainability. We must change our attitudes towards food if we are to make the right choices, learn about produce and producers and pay for its real value”. The statements shows how important it is to the people as an essential key to conserve the Thai food heritage by studying and collecting knowledge of Thai food ingredients, Thai cooking equipment and techniques. Thai food intellect is logical and related with using the natural environment without negative impact.

The concept of the slow food movement is a very interesting philosophy because its primary objective of the production of traditional, local food, preserve the culture of food, its preparation and dining (Lackovia and Rogovska, 2015). This movement was announced by Carlo Petrini in 1986 and there are three main nucleuses which are good, clean and fair. Moreover, it mentioned three obligations of the right of food as to respect, to protect and to fulfill (The Central role of Food: Congress Paper 2012-2016 (2012:6). An important key of the movement is encouraging people to avoid eating fast food. It promotes local food and supports local and small-scale food production. The Slow Food Movement emphasize on the pleasures of traditional ingredients and preparation (Abend, 2010).

The Slow Food Movement states four principles to support the conservation program. First is to encourage young people to return to farming that helps to restore pride and dignity to farm work. Second is to fight against food wastage by encouraging people to consume food in adequate quantity that is good for their health and the environment. Third is to support local procedures and economic. Last is to create educational action constantly. Education makes the future (The Central role of Food, 2012:21). It should not be limited to school only.

For Thailand, an example of the Slow Food Movement is food4change campaign supported by Thai Health Promotion Foundation of Thailand, Biodiversity & Community Rights Action Thailand and other organizations. The idea of campaign is eating activity can change the world and it can start from the people. Food4change aims to empower effective nutrition and environmental sustainability by supporting people to have home cooking meals, using natural seasonings, eating local products for medical benefit, good nutrition and consuming the correct quantity. People should turn back to original Thai food by purchasing local products from local markets and created food recipes from these.

## Research Recommendations

Suggestions to conserve the original patterns of Thai house, Thai kitchen and Thai food are:

- To promote these intellects to new generations by educational programs. Culture can live on if there are successors. Creating a specific curriculum of Thai cuisine and preparing instructions and media will help learners to receive the correct information.
- To motivate the new generation to be interested in Thai culture. Youth may think that these cultural patterns are out-of-date and very boring. Adapting and developing some aspects to be modern is another choice to be considered.

### **Suggestion for future study**

1. This research focuses on the Central Region of Thailand only because this region is presented character of Thai culture from past to present. However studying other regions of Thailand is necessary in the future because each region of Thailand has own characteristics in term of environment and culture.
2. Collecting more detail of original Thai kitchen and cooking equipment will help to draw characteristics of them. For now, origin Thai cooking equipment starts to disappear because young people like to buy meal rather than cook at home. Many electronic cooking equipment are replaced original equipment because of more convenience and fast.

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