

Klin Concubine's Resident the Memory of the Mon Community at Sutthapotch Temple Area for Cultural Heritage Preservation

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Abstract

Klin was the name of King Mongkut's concubine (King Mongkut was the king of Thailand during the year 1851-1868). She was Mon ethnic (Mon was the name of ethnic group that was migrated from Myanmar) and she was the granddaughter of the Mon leader. By the reason of her family and her concubine status, she had a role as a leader of the Mon in Thailand at that time. The Mon Community in Ladkrabang has a memory with her as an important person in the history of the community, because she had a small house in community area. She donated for building Sutthapotch temple. When she made a merit at that temple, she stayed at small house. Klin's residence was a proud memory of the community people. Nowadays, they try to restore a local history for empowering the community.

The objective of the research is to acquire the building shape of Klin's residence from the memories of the people in the community. The method of research was collected data by interviewing elder people in the community who have memories and saw the building. The research had redrawn the house from the memories.

The result of research found the Klin's residence is a Thai traditional style. The house is a small building with 3 rooms but no kitchen. From the activities of the research that empower the people in the community want to restore their cultural heritage to the new generation

Keywords: Cultural management, Local History, Community empowerment

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Introduction

The study about local history is a process to empower local community. The process can bring the community to self-review for know their own history and the story of the ancestors. When they know the own history, the people in community can be proud and try to preserve cultural heritage and memories for next generation. The community can use a valuable history as a lesson in developing their own community in the future.

Suthapot temple community is the Mon ethnic group that was migrated from Myanmar on the late 18th century. In the history, the Mon people came to stay in the Southeast Asia before Christ era around 200 years. The Mon ethnic group had culture relation with Daravadee culture in Thailand. The Mon ethnic group was established the city name “Hongsavadee” as a capital on the kingdom near the Bago River. Nowadays, Hongsavadee is still exists and change the name as Bago city that locate on the south region of Myanmar. In the past, Mon and Burmese had a war between each other in order to overcome the greatness of the region. The war between Mon and Burma ended in 1757 by Burma to win, that was the time of the King Alaungpaya of Myanmar. In the year 1767, King Alaungpaya came to war with Ayutthaya and destroyed Ayutthaya successfully. People from Ayutthaya have recovered independence and built Thonburi to be the center of the Kingdom of Siam on the same year. After 15 years which Thonburi was established, King Rama I of Chakri dynasty was established Bangkok by move the city to the other side of Chaopraya River. When the Kingdom of Siam was able to establish the city firmly, it was the reason that Alaungpaya of Myanmar wanted to war to expand his power. King Alaungpaya enlisted the Mon to be a soldier in the war with the Kingdom of Siam. Mon people escaped the military and migrated to Siam. This Mon group has become an important group that has the right to live in the Kingdom of Siam. Some Mon people have served as government officials. The Mon leader, Phraya Damrong Ratchapolkhan, the governor of Khuean Khan city (Samut Prakan Province nowadays) was dedicated his daughter “Klin” to the King Rama IV’s concubine. Klin concubine had a prince with the king so it brought her as the Mon leader in Siam.

The Mon population settled in central region of Thailand such as Bangkok, Nonthaburi, Samut Prakan, Ratchaburi etc. In Ladkrabang area, Sutthapotch temple community is the community of the Mon who was migrated from Myanmar and settled their community in suburb area of Bangkok around 160 years. The current environment in which the surrounding area of the Sutthaphot Temple community has been developed from an agricultural area to an industrial area, institution of higher education and international airport. This situation has caused more people to move into the Ladkrabang area. The Mon community at Sutthapotch temple began to adjust and change the way of life according to the changing social conditions. A new generation in the Sutthapoch temple community began to forget their history. The group of adults in the community therefore needs to revive the memories of the past for pride in their ethnic and ancestors. During the time when the concubine was still alive and had a status as a concubine in the King Mongkut, she traveled to Sutthapotch temple to make merit every year as the leader of the Mon community. She had a house to live in the community when she traveled to the community, but now the house has been decayed and demolished. The purpose of this research is to study the characteristics of the Klin concubine’s house that had been built in the

community. The study uses the interview method from the memories of the elderly who have seen or have memories from the hearsay of people who had seen the Klin concubine's house.

Research Objective

In order to acquire the characteristic of the Klin concubine house that had been in the Sutthapoch temple community from the memory of the people in the community.

Research methodology

This research uses qualitative research methodology. The data collections were used structured interviews. Interview 3 key informant person who have seen or have memories from the hearsay of people who had seen the Klin concubine's house. The data analysis process, the study was organized information from all key informants. The study was analyzed and interpreted the data to summarize.

Klin concubine's history

Klin concubine was the daughter of Phraya Damrong Ratchapolkhan (Mr.Chui Kotchaseeni), the ruler of Khuean Khan City (Prapadang distric in Samut Prakan Province nowadays). She was born in the year 1844 in the reign of King Rama III. She entered the royal court as a concubine in King Rama IV. She gave birth to a son for the King Rama IV in 1855. Her son is Prince Kritsadapinihan. Klin concubine when she stay in the royal court, she was studied English from Miss.Anna Leonowens whom was hired by the royal court to teach English to the king's sons and daughters. Klin concubine studied English and she was was able to translate novel "Uncle Tom's Cabin", which was written by Harriet Beecher Stowe. Klin concubine is the first Thai woman to translate western literature into Thai language.

Klin concubine was the famous people of the Mon people in Thailand. She often goes on to maintain or build temples in the area where Mon people are located, such as Chana Songkhram Temple, Khongkaram Temple, Don Krabueng Temple and Koh Temple, Ratchaburi Province, Sutthapoch Temple, Ladkrabang, Bangkok. She died on November 14, 1925, aged 91 years.

Ladkrabang district and Sutthapotch Temple

Ladkrabang District is located on the east side of Bangkok. Ladkrabang District has areas adjacent to Samut Prakan Province and Chachoengsao Province. In the past, the area in Ladkrabang District was a large lowland area after Thailand made the Bowring Treaty between the Great Britain, that result the expansion of the rice growing area in Ladkrabang District. His Majesty King Rama V has allowed the excavation of Prawet Burirom Canal to be used as a route for transporting agricultural products from the eastern cities to the inner city areas of Bangkok.

Ladkrabang District is currently being developed as an important area, which is the location of industrial estates, educational area and close to Suvarnabhumi International Airport. The development of the city has caused many people to migrate to live in Ladkrabang District. The Mon communities that live in the Sutthopotch

Temple at present have tried to revive the Mon culture in order to show their identity and self-esteem through activities such as alms-offerings on the Buddhist Lent day, the establishment of local museums.



Figure 1: Klin concubine. (Sopon Nichaiyok,2007 :48)

Klin Concubine’s Resident the memory of the Mon community

From field data collection by interviewing 3 elderly people who gave the appearance of the house, each of which provided information on the characteristics of the house as follows.

Table 1: Data analysis from interviewing informants

	Mr. Suwan	Mr.Chow	Mr.Chad
Structure material	Wooden House	Wooden House	Wooden House
Roof material	Hip roof with white tiles	A gable roof with terracotta tiles and a long awning, close to a balcony.	A gable roof with terracotta tiles and a long awning, close to a balcony.
Wall	Wooden stacked sheet	Wooden sheet joint	Wooden sheet joint
House size	-	4.00 – 5.50 x 8.00 m. 3 Colum set ,wide span 3.5 m.	6.00 x 8.00 m. 3 Colum set ,wide span 3.0 m.
Colum	Square Column	Round column	Round column
Door	Wooden door and wooden folding door	Folding door	Wooden door on front and wooden folding door in inner.
Window	Wooden double open window	Wooden double open window	Wooden double open window
House high	3 steps from ground, 1 meter high, The basement is the water surface	7 steps from ground, 2.5 meter high from the ground,	7 steps from ground, 1.6 meter high from the ground,

Based on interviews with elderly informants who had seen the Klin Concubine's Resident found that there was some inconsistent information. The researcher therefore uses data that has a consistent direction in summary to know the style of the house of the concubine. Characteristics of the Klin Concubine's House seem to be a Thai tradition house, made of wood. The size of the house is not large, which is between 6.00 X 8.00 meters. The wide span range is about 3.00 – 3.50 meters per span. The columns are round wooden columns. The entrance to the house should look like a folding door. The interior door is probably the Thai traditional style open door. The height of floor level of the house is between 1.50-1.80 meters from ground. The house has a lower terrace. The roof of the house is a Thai traditional gable roof with terracotta tiles. The house has a roof to prevent rain splashing into the building around the house.

The house of Klin Concubine, from the interviewer who provided information about the location of the house that is located near the canal, which at that time was the main transportation and had a port near the house. The house doesn't have a kitchen in the house. The researcher assumed that the emperor and his followers should be staying at this house in short times so there may be people who care about the food in the community or there may be a separate kitchen.



Figure 2: Klin Concubine's resident assumed by researcher

Conclusion

Information from interviews with older people who still remember the characteristics of the Klin Concubine's resident, have some conflicting information as it is a long past event and the informant was interviewed by the key informants who are not construction worker or architect so they cannot explain in clear. However, we can imagine the house of her it was a small house with only three column sets. The house has a traditional Thai house style, but it is a single house. Normally, the Thai house for those who have social status will be a group of houses, with each building having different function, such as a sleeping room, a sitting room, a pray room and a kitchen. The researcher considers that the cause of the house of the Klin Concubine is a small house due to the objective of requiring being a temporary residence during the time when the she came to make merit at Sutthapoch Temple.

In the past, there was no hotel and traveling to make merit in the outskirts of the city, could not travel within one day, therefore, the building was to be used as an overnight stay for her and the followers. That cause the building was not built to be fully functional but built as a small building for sleeping and staying for a short time.

However, this traditional building has a meaning and value to the villagers in the community. Because it is a symbol that links with the leaders of the Mon people in the past and shows the history of their ancestors. Local histories therefore contributed to the community's social strength and empower the people in community try to maintain their local culture which are the wisdom of their ancestors, which is the beauty of diversity in the same world. This is the beauty of cultural diversity in the same world.

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