

# CULTURAL TOURISM MANAGEMENT VS AUTHENTICITY OF SAEK ETHNIC GROUP IN THAILAND

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## Abstract

This article aims to study the cultural tourism management and the authenticity of the Saek Ethnic Group in Thailand. The objectives are: 1. to study cultural tourism management related to the Saek Ethnic Group in Thailand, and 2. to propose recommendations for Saek cultural tourism management based on authenticity. The research methodology included a fieldwork survey for data collection, as well as interviewing. After that, the researcher analyzed the content using descriptive statistics. Preliminary results have shown that the Saek Ethnic Group continues to preserve their authenticity, and cultural tourism management is focused on homestays and souvenir products. Finally, a discussion of the results and recommendations for cultural tourism management in the context of authenticity of the indigenous group are presented.

Keywords: Cultural tourism management, authenticity, Saek.

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## INTRODUCTION

Cultural heritage tells mankind's story; it tells our story. Carefully managed, tourism can protect and enliven this heritage, generate new opportunities for local communities, and foster tolerance and respect between peoples and nations (UNWTO, 2015). The deterioration of cultural heritage may result from social, cultural, or economic changes. It can also be caused by conflict from traditional beliefs. If cultural heritage is poorly planned and managed, humankind may lose their precious heritage (Hitchcock *et al*, 2009). Previously, the target of the tourism industry was to increase the number of visitors, but it is now focusing on quality and sustainability for environmental, social, and economic conditions. In order to promote and develop tourism sustainably, cultural heritage must be well preserved. The lives and social conditions of local people who live around tourist attraction areas should also be promoted, and economic benefits should be equally distributed to relevant sectors (UNWTO, 2015). Tourist attractions in Thailand are popular around the globe; in 2011 Thailand received the Stockholm Grand Travel Award for Best Tourist Country for the ninth year in

a row (Thai-AEC, 2012). There are a large number of ethnic groups in Thailand; each ethnic group has their own culture which is different from the country's culture. Their existence in Thailand is mostly associated with immigration. The word "Tai" is put in front of their ethnic group, such as Tai-Phuan, Tai-Saek, and Tai-Dam (Mekong Responsible Tourism, n.d.). "Ethnic group" refers to a group of people who share culture, values, thoughts, ideology, traditions, worshiping practices, symbols, and a variety of other cultural aspects (Leepreecha, 2005). The Saek Ethnic Group originally came from Sipsong Panna, Southern China and immigrated to Hue, Vietnam. They are currently settled in Ban Atsamart, Nakhon Phanom, Thailand, and their unique culture includes their clothing form and design, food, beliefs, worshiping practices, recreation activities, and language. The meaning of "Saek" is "bright" (Schliesinger, 2001). The 2011-2015 ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan put an emphasis on creating tourism experiences (ASEAN, 2011). Tai-Saek cultural tourism can offer new valuable experiences and knowledge which will increase the quality of life of local people and build their awareness towards their local environment and culture. Tai-Saek people should be involved in sustainable tourism management (Ministry of

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Tourism and Sports, 2013). The development of ethnic group tourism can increase the income of local people through retail of traditional Saek Ethnic Group products, guided cultural tours, the provision of homestays and local food experiences, etc. (Thuy *et al*, 2012) For this reason, the researcher is interested in examining cultural tourism management in the context of authenticity of the Saek Ethnic Group in Thailand. This research can lead to recommendations for cultural tourism management based on authenticity.

## **OBJECTIVES**

1. To study cultural tourism management in the context of authenticity of the Saek Ethnic Group in Thailand.
2. To propose recommendations for Saek cultural tourism management based on authenticity.

## **SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

### **Content**

This research focuses on cultural tourism management and authenticity.

### **Population and Sampling**

The research sample for this study was selected by using purposive sampling. The research sample consists of relevant sectors and individuals who are involved in Saek cultural tourism, including one officer from the Tourism Authority of Thailand, one officer from the Office of Tourism and Sports, one officer from the Cultural Office, one officer from Atsamart Sub-District, and two business owners directly involved in the Saek ethnic group tourism industry.

### **Area**

This study focuses on the Saek Ethnic Group of Atsamart Sub-District, Maung District, Nakhon Phanom Province, Thailand.

### **Timing**

August 2014-september 2105

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Cultural Tourism Management**

McDougall & Vines, Conservation and Heritage Consultants (n.d.), describes cultural tourism management as a model for “tourism management in heritage cities and towns in Asia conducted for local governments and community stakeholders.”

### **Fiscal Management**

Fiscal Management can increase the fiscal outcome of relevant sectors or communities. It can also raise accountability and predictability, especially if it helps in reducing fiscal deficit and deficit bias and in solving time inconsistencies (Mbedzi & Gondo, 2010).

### **Sustainable Cultural Heritage Tourism & Heritage Resource Base**

Cultural tourism includes the following principles related to sustainability and the heritage resource base. Principle 2: The relationship between heritage places and tourism is dynamic and may involve conflicting values. It should be managed in a sustainable way for present and future generations. Principle 3: Conservation and tourism planning for heritage places should ensure that the visitor experience will be worthwhile, satisfying, and enjoyable. Principle 6: Tourism promotion programmes should protect and enhance natural and cultural heritage characteristics (ICOMOS, 1999).

### **Community Education & Skills Training**

Principle 1 from the cultural tourism charter relates to community education and skills training. It reads: Since domestic and international tourism is among the foremost vehicles for cultural exchange, conservation should provide responsible and well managed opportunities for members of the host community and visitors to experience and understand that community's heritage and culture at first hand. (ICOMOS, 1999)

### **Building Community Consensus**

Principles from the cultural tourism charter related to building community consensus include the following. Principle 4: Host communities and indigenous peoples should be involved in the planning for conservation and tourism. Principle 5: Tourism and

conservation activities should benefit the host community. (ICOMOS, 1999)

The stakeholders in cultural tourism management (Millar, 2008) consist of

- 1) community groups, such as amenity societies, special interest groups, and conservation societies;
- 2) local partnerships, such as those related to marketing and promotion, as well as tourism associations and schools and colleges;
- 3) experts, such as archaeologists, conservationists, and interpreters;
- 4) visitors and tourists – including local, regional, national, and international;
- 5) commercial businesses, such as heritage attractions, theatres, shops, hotels, guest houses, and restaurants;
- 6) public sector planning managers, such as museum directors, tourism officers, heritage site managers, and planners;
- and 7) tour operators, such as coach companies, special interest tourism businesses, and tour guides.

### **Authenticity**

There are two definitions of authenticity: 1) authenticity implies something is original, of antiquity, and natural as perceived physically or emotionally; and 2) authenticity can be proven with evidence of continued existence (Fridgen, 1991). In the tourism context, authenticity refers to instances where a people’s way of life, clothing, products, and genuine activities can be seen. It can also refer to the purchase of cultural products from the source of production. Accordingly, when authenticity is applied to the tourism context, it has a broad meaning. It can also refer to the mood or feeling one gets concerning places or objects, including experiences that tourists bring back home. (Timothy and Boyd, 2003). It can be concluded that the meaning of authenticity varies according to the context. Its meaning has been developed over time, originating considering only the physical descriptions of objects or places and expanding to aspects that can be perceived or experienced, as shown in Table 1.

*Table 1: Authenticity Criteria*

Operational Guidelines for the World Heritage Committee (1977)	The Nara Document on Authenticity (1994)	Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (2005)	Hoi An Protocols (2009)	Summary of Studies
- Design	- Form and design	- Form and design	- Form and design	- Form and design
- Materials	- Materials and substance	- Materials and substance		- Materials and substance
- Workmanship	- Traditions, techniques, and workmanship	- Traditions, techniques, and management		- Traditions, techniques, and management
- Setting	- Location and setting	- Location and setting	- Location and setting	- Location and setting
	- Use and function	- Use and function systems	- Use and function	- Use and function
	- Spirit and Feeling	- Spirit and feeling		- Spirit and feeling
			- Immaterial qualities	- Immaterial qualities
		- Language and other forms of intangible heritage		- Language and other forms of intangible heritage
		- Other internal and external factors		

Adapted from Watanasawad (2012) and Chusakul (2015)

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A summary of the research methodology for the current study shows that the research population includes relevant sectors and individuals who are involved in Saek cultural tourism, such as the

Tourism Authority of Thailand, the Office of Tourism and Sports, the Cultural Office, the Atsamart Sub-District Municipality, and businesses directly related to the Saek Ethnic Group tourism industry. Samples were selected using purposive sampling. The research methodology for this study is shown in Table 2.

*Table 2: Research Methodology*

Objectives	Population	Samples	Research Tools
1. To study cultural tourism management and the authenticity of the Saek Ethnic Group in Thailand.	Tourism Authority of Thailand	One Tourism Authority of Thailand officer was selected using purposive sampling	Interview
	Office of Tourism and Sports	One Office of Tourism and Sports officer was selected using purposive sampling	Interview
	Cultural Office	One Cultural Office officer was selected using purposive sampling	Interview
	Sub-district	One Atsamart Sub-District officer was selected using purposive sampling	Interview
	Businesses directly related to the Saek Ethnic Group tourism industry	One business owner was selected using purposive sampling	Interview
	Saek Ethnic Group	The village headman of Atsamart Sub-District, Maung District, Nakhon Phanom Province, Thailand, was selected using purposive sampling	Interview
	Saek Ethnic Group Area	Saek Ethnic Group, Atsamart Sub-District, Maung District, Nakhon Phanom Province, Thailand	Survey
2. To propose recommendations for cultural tourism management based on authenticity	Academic documents, journals, magazines, research papers, theses, and annual reports of relevant sectors	Academic documents, journals, magazines, research papers, theses, and annual reports of relevant sectors were used to study cultural tourism management and authenticity of Saek Ethnic Groups in Thailand.	Secondary Sources
	Academic documents, journals, magazines, research papers, theses, and annual reports of relevant sectors	Academic documents, journals, magazines, research papers, theses, and annual reports of relevant sectors were used to propose recommendations for cultural tourism management based on authenticity.	Secondary Sources

Table 2 shows that the instruments used to conduct this investigation were: 1) a survey was used in surveying the Saek Ethnic Group living in the prominently Saek area of Thailand, and 2) interviews were used to collect data from relevant sectors and individuals involved in tourism. The Content Validity Index (CVI) was verified by 9 specialists, where CVI = 0.981-0.989. The CVI showed that the instruments were qualified and could be used in data collection (Rohwer, 2010).

In terms of data compilation, while primary data was collected from surveys and interviews, secondary

data was retrieved from academic documents, journals, magazines, research papers, theses, and annual reports of relevant sectors.

Data was analyzed using content analysis and descriptive analysis. Data from objective 1, which focuses on cultural tourism management and authenticity of the Saek Ethnic Group in Thailand, was analyzed and synthesized in order to achieve research objective 2, which proposes recommendations for cultural tourism management based on authenticity.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Authenticity and Cultural Tourism Management of the Saek Ethnic Group in Thailand

#### *Authenticity of the Saek Ethnic Group in Thailand*

The results of this study on the authenticity of the Saek Ethnic Group in Thailand, gathered through interviewing and data analysis of the Tourism Authority of Thailand, the Office of Tourism and Sports, the Cultural Office, the Atsamart Sub-District Municipality, businesses directly related to the tourism industry, and the Saek Ethnic Group community, showed the following:

#### *Form and Design*

In terms of Tai-Saek clothing form and design, in the past, cloth made from local cotton was used for making shirts, pants, and tube skirts. Colors were extracted from natural plants, such as indigofera spp. Tai-Saek clothing, made from materials such as woven Thai silk, was normally dyed in two colors, white and blue indigo (Srisantisook & Chaipanya, 2000) Traditional Tai-Saek clothing consists of a short, tight-fitting blouse with straight long sleeves, a long tube skirt, a breechcloth or belt made of the hem of the traditional tube skirt, and a red shawl with accessories like necklaces and earrings, as shown in Figure 1. Currently, members of the Tai-Saek Ethnic Group tend to buy ready-to-wear clothing, because some of them are tailors (Schliesinger, 2001).



Figure 1. Form and clothing design of Tai-Saek ethnic group

#### *Materials and Substance*

Household weaving in the Tai-Saek Ethnic Group exists for both household and commercial use. Basketry products are also produced, such as round wicker baskets with a square bottom, bamboo baskets for sticky rice, threshing baskets, fishing equipment made of woven bamboo, vase-shaped basketwork creels, crates made of loosely woven strips of bamboo, bamboo fish traps, various other baskets, and walls of plaited bamboo strips (Schliesinger, 2001). Moreover, other economic activities include screening for gold along the Mekong River, drawing patterns on silver and golden wares, producing small metal balls used for loading fishnets, and producing red lime paste (using rock from Laos PDR) (Srisantisook & Chaipanya, 2000). A variety of these products are shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Materials and products of Tai-Saek ethnic group

### ***Traditions, Techniques, and Management***

A traditional Saek Ten Sak performance is held on the second or third day of the waxing moon during the third lunar month as part of the Tet Ritual Ceremony. On this day, members of the Saek Ethnic Group bring flowers, incense and candles, and food to the Ong Moo shrine, Ong Moo being one of the ancestors that they truly respect. For the occasion, Tai-Saek people normally pray at the Ong Moo shrine first. After that, they provide food and there is a Saek Ten Sak performance by 10 pairs of Tai-Saek men and women, as shown in Figure 3. This is to appease the spirit at the Ong Moo shrine (Popai, 2000). The traditions or rites involved in showing gratitude to Ong Moo symbolize the harmony of the Tai-Saek community and their respectfulness towards spirits and their benefactors. Moreover, this tradition is also representative of their beliefs in superstition. Similar to other Isaan people, the Tai-Saek Ethnic Group believes in ghosts. They weave baskets made of bamboo strips and put them in a corner of the house since they believe that a ghost lives there. If someone in the family is not well, besides herbal treatment, a shaman leads a ceremony, such as Lum Phob Phi Fah or Lum Phi Fah. Currently, the lifestyle of the Tai-Saek is similar to other Isaan people (Srisantisook & Chaipanya, 2000). The main ingredient used for traditional foods of the Tai-Saek Ethnic Group is fish since they live along the Mekong River. The main fish species used include the Basa Fish, Soldier River Barb, Black Shark Minnow, Mekong Giant Catfish, and Red Tail Mystus (Popai, 2000). The management and lifestyle of the Saek Ethnic Group has changed throughout time. Houses, as well as their way of life, have changed according to developments in society and technology. Some Saek members live in developed communities where their children go to school in the district and teenagers wear fashionable clothing. However, some of them still preserve the cultural and traditional way of life of the Saek Ethnic Group, relying on their cultural norms and belief system (Schliesinger, 2001)



Figure 3. The Saek Ten Sak performance of Tai-Saek ethnic group

### ***Location and Setting***

The Tai-Saek Ethnic Group immigrated from Sipsong Panna, Southern China to where they are currently settled in Ban Atsamart and other areas of Nakhon Phanom Province, Thailand. Some members of the Tai-Saek Ethnic Group immigrated to Laos PDR. Members of the Tai-Saek Ethnic Group live in houses with doors and walls made of bamboo strips, as shown in Figure 4 (left). Wooden nails are also used to hold pillars and beams together, as shown in Figure 4 (right) (Srisantisook & Chaipanya, 2000).





Figure 4. Tai-Saek housing style

#### ***Use and Function***

Tai-Saek weave baskets made of bamboo strips, as shown in figure 5, and put them in a corner of the house since they believe that a ghost lives there. Musical instruments used in Saek Ten Sak performances are the drum and small and large cymbals. There is also a Throwing Coin custom. Old Coins or one-satang coins are used in the Tet Ritual Ceremony. After the coins are colored white on one side, a shaman throws them to ask permission from the spirit to take photos during the ceremony and to ask whether the spirit is happy with the ceremony. If the coins fall on the same side, it means that the spirit is not happy with the ceremony, so the ceremony will be held again. On the other hand, if the coins fall on different sides, it means that the spirit has given its permission to takes photos and is happy with the ceremony (Srisantisook & Chaipanya, 2000).



Figure 5. Tai-Saek basketry handicrafts

#### ***Spirit and Feeling***

The Tet Ritual Ceremony is a ceremony in which members of the Tai-Saek people pay respect to Ong Moo, who they believe is their ancestor. It is believed that Ong Moo protects the village from harm and oversees the fulfilling of vows. Guan Jum leads the ceremony. If people did something bad or did not follow through on a vow, harm will occur in their family. This is to remind Tai-Saek people to do good things. If they follow through on a vow, Ong Moo will turn bad things into something good. This custom continues to be carried out in the present (Srisantisook & Chaipanya, 2000). An Ong Moo shrine for the Tet Ritual Ceremony is shown in Figure 6.



Figure 6: Ong Moo shrine for Tet ritual ceremony

#### ***Immaterial Qualities***

Tai-Saek people pay respect to their parents. The youngest child is traditionally assigned to look after their parents. Relationships between groups of people within the community play an important part in traditions, ceremonies, beliefs, and religion. For

example, in a wedding ceremony, relatives of the groom and the bride are introduced so as to know the relationships among them. In a funeral, similarly, if someone in the family passes away, news should be passed on to all relatives. As for ceremonies, in the 10<sup>th</sup> lunar month there is a ceremony called Bun Khao Sak where food and supplies are dedicated to making merit to deceased relatives (Srisantisook & Chaipanya, 2000) as show in figure 7. When calling other people by name, it is polite to put a pronoun in front of their name to show respect. It also represents the relationship, gender, age, and roles and responsibilities of elder relatives, such as mother, father, grandchild, great-grandchild, uncle, aunt, grandmother, or grandfather (Popai, 2000). The main occupation within the Tai-Saek community is farming. They grow rice, corn, and flowers (marigold, zania, and globe amaranth). They also produce home-grown vegetables and fruits, such as banana, sugarcane, mango, mariam fruit, santol, jackfruit, coconut, star fruit, eggplant, chili, yardlong bean, cabbage, spring onion, garlic, tomato, job's tear, sugar pea, lime, and so on (Srisantisook & Chaipanya, 2000). Fishery is another occupation found among Tai-Saek as they live along the Mekong River. In the past, supplies used for fishing were fishing nets, fish hooks, bamboo fish traps, and a coop-like trap for catching fish (Schliesinger, 2001)



Figure 7. Tai-Saek altar table set

### ***Language and Other Forms of Intangible Heritage***

Tai-Saek has their own spoken language (no written language or alphabets). Tai-Saek in Thailand or other countries are able to communicate using the Saek language. It should be noted that the Saek Ten Sak performance cannot be shown to people who do not belong to the Tai-Saek group. People interested in

studying this performance need to ask permission from Ong Moo (Srisantisook & Chaipanya, 2000).

### ***Cultural Tourism Management Related to the Saek Ethnic Group in Thailand***

Results of interviewing and surveying the sub-district municipality officer and the Saek local community and of a survey distributed to the Saek Ethnic Group area about the current situation of cultural tourism management related to the Saek Ethnic Group in Thailand revealed the following:

#### ***Fiscal Management***

There is no fiscal management in the Tai-Saek Ethnic Group; hence, there remains a lack of effective fiscal management.

#### ***Sustainable Cultural Heritage Tourism & Heritage Resource Base***

Because of a lack of tourism management, there is no cultural heritage management or sustainable cultural tourism development related to the Tai-Saek Ethnic Group. Only defensive strategies have been used and no offensive strategies to attract tourists and to develop tourism relating to the Tai-Saek Ethnic Group.

#### ***Community Education & Skills Training***

The Tai-Saek Ethnic Group still lacks community education and skills training in terms of cultural heritage management and sustainable cultural tourism. It can be observed that the Tai-Saek population under the age of 40 cannot speak the Tai-Saek language. As a result, they are at risk of losing their culture as time goes by.

#### ***Building Community Consensus***

The level of participation by the Tai-Saek Ethnic Group in tourism planning is low. There are also political conflicts between community leaders and local government sectors. Policy set by government sectors is not truly needed by the community (Harvey, 2013) such as the construction and designation of a Tai-Saek multipurpose building meant for presenting Tai-Saek cultural exhibitions, which is currently used for meetings only.

The stakeholders in cultural tourism management consist of:



- Community groups: Tai-Saek community food and drink businesses include nine restaurants, which are called Phutawan Restaurant, Kru Renu Restaurant, Yai Mun Restaurant, Un Ai Khong Restaurant, Tai-Saek Pla Jum Restaurant, Panitta Restaurant, Khun Tim Restaurant, Ran Pen Pla Pen Restaurant, and Fang's Coffee.
- Local partnerships: The Tourism Authority of Thailand and local administrations promote tourism by encouraging the Saek Ethnic Group to join the annual tradition of the province. Government sectors provide a budget for Tai-Saek to participate in the annual tradition, where members of the Tai-Saek group decorate a booth and present Tai-Saek culture and traditions.
- Experts: Experts and researchers visit the Tai-Saek community in order to study Tai-Saek cultural tourism; however, there is a lack of serious participation and a lack of sustainable development.
- Visitors and tourists: Most tourists that visit the Tai-Saek community are Thai. They are interested in trying Tai-Saek traditional foods, which are mostly made from ingredients made from fish from the Mekong River, such as Basa Fish, Soldier River Barb, Black Shark Minnow, Mekong Giant Catfish, and Red Tail Mystus. These are called Chim Chum Fish. In terms of accommodation, since the Tai-Saek community is located near the Nakhon Phanom city center, most tourists tend to stay in the city rather than in the community.
- Commercial businesses: There are three homestay businesses, nine restaurants, a souvenir shop, and a tour operator in the community.
- Public sector planning managers: There are no public sector planning managers.
- Tour operators: There is one tour operator business in the Tai-Saek community which represents Tai-Saek cultural tourism, including demonstrations of Tai-

Saek lifestyle, clothing style, food and drink, housing style, traditions, the Saek ten Sak performance, and the Tai-Saek language.

### **Proposed Recommendations for Cultural Tourism Management Based on Authenticity**

A literature review of academic documents, journals, magazines, research reports, theses, and annual reports of relevant sectors led to the following proposed recommendations for cultural tourism management based on authenticity.

#### ***Fiscal Management***

Effective fiscal management would lead to stability for the Tai-Saek community and preparedness for Tai-Saek tourism management. Government sectors should provide knowledge related to fiscal management for the Tai-Saek community. Fiscal policy and other social policies should be set to prepare for rapid change (Rugchatjaroen, 2014 and in order to solve the root of the problem (Bliss & Everett, 2015). Effective fiscal management (McDougall & Vines, n.d.) consists of the following components: 1) funding for conservation and tourism, including from international agencies, government agencies, and nongovernment/private sources, 2) revenue capture through tourism, including direct revenue and indirect revenue, and 3) non-dollar contributions. Effective fiscal management conducted by the Tai-Saek Ethnic Group should be set for the following four aspects (Rugchatjaroen, 2014: 1) organizational alignment and leadership, 2) policies and processes, 3) personnel management, and 4) information. In addition, government sectors should support long-term human resource development and training in fiscal management for effective fiscal management in tasks such as (Ranade & Kumar, 2014) calculating the breakeven point and predicting expenditures and income that may occur in the future (Martell & Teske, 2007).

#### ***Sustainable Cultural Heritage Tourism & Heritage Resource Base***

Government sectors and public organizations should support cultural management. Providing knowledge or workshops on cultural management, traditions, art, and the Tai-Saek lifestyle can promote sustainable cultural tourism of the Tai-Saek (Sofield & Lia,

2011). Tai-Saek cultural heritage tourism and management should be focused. The community will benefit as a result of management and development, which will also increase the community's economic and sustainable development (Lozano-Oyola *et al*, 2012). Sustainable cultural heritage tourism and developing a heritage resource base (McDougall & Vines, n.d.) consists of 1) heritage resource base identification and protection, 2) conducting tourism activities, 3) development of a tourism strategy, and 4) identifying tourism investment opportunities and responsibilities. Learning resources should be developed from cultural heritage to make an impression, as well as to promote the participation of the community in cultural preservation and to promote the identity of the Tai-Saek community (Wang & Xu, 2014). According to this study's first objective concerning the authenticity of the Tai-Saek community and tourists' behavior, there should a variety of activities provided for tourists in the Tai-Saek community. For example, 1) Tai-Saek clothing should be provided for tourists to wear and take photos of; 2) there should be an opportunity for tourists to learn how to make basketry handicrafts; 3) tourists should be able to participate in the Saek Ten Sak performance; 4) tourists should have the opportunity to study the history, migration, and settlement of the Tai-Saek; 5) homestays should be designed in the spirit of original Tai-Saek housing; 6) tourists should be encouraged to try Tai-Saek traditional food; and 7) since the Tai-Saek have their own language, their language should be promoted by encouraging tourists to learn the Tai-Saek language during tourism activities. Tourism management would benefit Tai-Saek cultural heritage preservation. It would be a key factor in building awareness of cultural preservation in the community, from planning to systematic management. Achieving success in tourism management would also support the community's economy (Jamal & Camargo, 2014). The community would become a learning resource for creative and sustainable development (UNESCO,

#### ***Community Education & Skills Training***

Providing education and skills training in cultural heritage management and sustainable cultural heritage tourism for local communities is a part of tourism promotion, including decision making, planning, focusing on sustainable development and

drawing true benefits for the community (Le-Klähn & Edwards, 2014). Components of tourism promotion that could occur in the future include cultural preservation, form and design of clothing, household handicrafts, basketry, traditions, beliefs, and history of the Tai-Saek Ethnic Group, immigration and housing style, the cuisine of the Tai-Saek Ethnic Group, main occupations, and language identity (Cohen, 2014). Mechanisms for tourism management should be created and the local community should be able to link tourism with community development. There should be fair income distribution and community funding for the benefit of economic and social development, such as education. Tourism activities should have characteristics that build awareness and create understanding of different cultures and lifestyles. These activities should be systematically managed in order to create a learning process between the Tai-Saek Ethnic Group and tourists. An awareness of cultural and environmental resources preservation should be built for both the Tai-Saek local community and tourists so as to increase a feeling of acceptance towards cultural and environmental tourism resources (Albrecht, 2012). Community education and skills training (McDougall & Vines, n.d.) should consist of 1) stakeholder participation, 2) awareness raising mechanisms, 3) tourism skills training, 4) academic skills training, 5) technical skills training, and 6) employment opportunities.

#### ***Building Community Consensus***

Government sectors and private organizations should support and promote the participation of the Tai-Saek Ethnic Group. The local population should be involved in tourism development, which should draw benefits for the community (Hawkins et al, 2012). The Tai-Saek population should participate in every part of the process, from planning tourism development to putting the plan for building and developing tourism into practice, especially by providing materials, techniques, and Tai-Saek local wisdom and knowledge (Iwamatsu & Iwai, 2001). The Tai-Saek Ethnic Group should study and record what history of theirs remains, including clothing design, housing and village styles, agriculture and economics, social characteristics, rituals, legends, beliefs, art, handicrafts, drawing, music, performance, language and literature, educational systems,

lifestyles, foods, traditions, and culture and festivals. These aspects of Tai-Saek history should be applied to Tai-Saek cultural tourism development in Thailand. Basing cultural tourism development on authenticity will increase the community's motivation to preserve their culture. Doing so can also distribute more income to the community and increase the quality of life of the local Tai-Saek community (Jamal & Getz, 1999). Building community consensus (McDougall & Vines, n.d.) consists of 1) the involvement of stakeholders, 2) the preparation of a heritage vision, and 3) defining the role of a non-partisan mediator/facilitator.

## SUMMARY

Overall, the results of this research, "Cultural Tourism Management and the Authenticity of the Tai-Saek Ethnic Group in Thailand" reveal that various aspects of authenticity still remain in the Tai-Saek Ethnic Group in Thailand, including form and design, materials and substance, traditions, techniques and management, location and setting, use and function, spirit and feeling, immaterial qualities, and language and other forms of intangible heritage. Preliminary results show that the Saek Ethnic Group continues to preserve their authenticity, and cultural tourism management is emphasized through homestays and souvenir products. This current study suggests that authenticity of the Tai-Saek Ethnic Group in Thailand should be promoted in the areas of fiscal management, sustainable cultural heritage tourism and its heritage resource base, community education and skills training, and building community consensus.

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