

## Developing a Community-Based Participatory Model for Managing Tai Yai

## Cultural Capital to Reviving Traditions in Mueang Mae Hong Son

การพัฒนารูปแบบการมีส่วนร่วมของชุมชนเพื่อจัดการทุนทางวัฒนธรรมไทใหญ่  
สู่การรื้อฟื้นประเพณีในเมืองแม่ฮ่องสอนThat Sriratanaban  
ธรรต ศรีรัตนบัลล์Nilobon Wimolsittichai\*  
นิโลบล วิมลสิทธชัยSiriporn Khuenmamuang  
สิริพร คีนมาเมืองSomsak Phromchak  
สมศักดิ์ พรหมจักร

Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, Chiang Mai Rajabhat University, Thailand

Phuttachat Yommakit  
พุทธรชาติ ยมกิจPhudit Aksorndit  
ภูดิท อักษรนดิษฐ์

Mae Hong Son College, Chiang Mai Rajabhat University, Thailand

## Corresponding author\*

e-mail: nilobon\_kun@cmru.ac.th

Received 08-08-2025

Revised 15-03-2026

Accepted 19-03-2026

Doi: 10.69598/artssu.2026.5614.

## How to Cite:

Sriratanaban, T., & Others. (2026).  
Developing a Community-Based  
Participatory Model for Managing  
Tai Yai Cultural Capital to  
Reviving Traditions in Mueang  
Mae Hong Son. *Journal of Arts  
and Thai Studies*, 48(1),  
E5614 (1-23).

## Keywords:

cultural revitalization,  
Tai Yai traditions, participatory  
cultural management, Mueang  
Mae Hong Son Heritage,  
community-based research,  
social return on investment  
(SROI)

**คำสำคัญ:** การฟื้นฟูวัฒนธรรม,  
ประเพณีไทใหญ่, การจัดการ  
วัฒนธรรมแบบมีส่วนร่วม,  
มรดกเมืองแม่ฮ่องสอน, การวิจัย  
โดยใช้ชุมชนเป็นฐาน, ผลตอบแทน  
ทางเศรษฐกิจและสังคม

## Abstract

**Background and Objectives:** The decline and the gradual disappearance of Tai Yai traditions, including the Poi Loen Sip Song festival, the Tang Som Tor Luang ritual, and the pilgrimage to Phra That Doi Kong Mu, reflect the significant vulnerability of the processes through which local cultural heritage is transmitted. This situation highlights the urgent need for systematic study and revitalization in order to preserve and sustain these important traditions for the future. This research aimed to study the history of Mueang Mae Hong Son and Phra That Doi Kong Mu, develop a community participation model for managing Tai Yai cultural capital, revitalize local traditions, and assess socio-economic impacts.

**Methods:** This study employed a mixed-methods research design. The qualitative component involved data collection through documentary research and field research conducted in Chong Kham Subdistrict and at Wat Phra That Doi Kong Mu in Mae Hong Son province. In addition, the research design integrated a research and development (R&D) process to develop prototypes and related activities. The data were collected from 20 selected Tai Yai villagers through in-depth interviews, observations, and focus group discussions. The data were analyzed using descriptive analysis. To ensure the credibility and validity of the data, data triangulation was employed. Subsequently, the research findings were utilized to develop local knowledge, learning media, exhibitions, cultural databases, and festival revitalization initiatives in order to promote the sustainable and participatory management of Tai Yai cultural heritage. The stakeholders were interviewed to assess the economic impact on the academic service project. In addition, for the quantitative component, two questionnaires were used to evaluate the satisfaction of local people who participated in the revival of the "Tang Som Tor Luang" (rice cooking and stirring ceremony) in 2023 (n=300) and 2024 (n=250), as well as their opinions on the "Poi Loen Sib Song: Walking Up Phra That Doi Kong Mu" event (n=250). The quantitative data were analyzed using mean, percentage, and standard deviation.

**Results:** The study found that the historical development can be categorized into four distinct periods: pre-1874, 1874–1910, 1910–1957, and post-1957. Moreover, local people lacked knowledge and understanding of their local history and traditional rituals, such as the nearly forgotten "Tang Som Tor Luang" ceremony. The annual festival at Phra That Doi Kong Mu, once spiritually meaningful, had gradually become just an annual event. From that situation, the research team developed a participatory cultural revitalization model comprising three phases (Pre-festival, Festival, and Post-festival activities). Phra That Doi Kong Mu Temple served as the central site for learning and practice. The revival of Tai Yai traditions, including the Poi Loen Sip Song festival, the Tang Som Tor Luang ritual, and the pilgrimage to the temple, helped developed an awareness of the value of cultural capital, a sense of ownership, and a readiness to transmit it to younger generations, which contributed to fostering pride in Tai Yai identity. These activities also generated economic and social returns at a rate of 3.76 times, and the outcomes were extended to eight communities.

**Applications of this Study:** Mae Hong Son Municipality has adopted the research outcomes to further develop and plan city-level activities for the fiscal year 2025. Meanwhile, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), Mae Hong Son Office, has promoted and publicized these activities at both local and national levels. This reflects the strength of community and network collaboration in driving sustainable cultural development.

**Conclusion:** This study developed a community participation model for managing Tai Yai cultural capital to revitalizing the traditions in Mae Hong Son. It successfully revived key traditions, fostered cultural pride, and generated economic benefits at the local level. At present, the Mae Hong Son Municipality has adopted this model and expanded it to the city level in order to promote the sustainable management of cultural heritage.

### บทคัดย่อ

**ที่มาและวัตถุประสงค์:** การลดบทบาทและการเลือนหายของประเพณีไทใหญ่ อาทิ เทศกาลปอยเหลินสิบสอง พิธีกรรมต่างชอมต่อหลวง และการเดินขึ้นสักการะพระธาตุดอยกองมู สะท้อนให้เห็นถึงความเปราะบางของกระบวนการถ่ายทอดมรดกทางวัฒนธรรมของท้องถิ่นอย่างมีนัยสำคัญ สถานการณ์ดังกล่าวชี้ให้เห็นถึงความจำเป็นเร่งด่วนในการศึกษาอย่างเป็นระบบและการฟื้นฟู เพื่อธำรงรักษาและสืบทอดประเพณีสำคัญเหล่านี้ให้คงอยู่ต่อไปในอนาคต งานวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาประวัติศาสตร์เมืองแม่ฮ่องสอนและพระธาตุดอยกองมู พัฒนารูปแบบการมีส่วนร่วมของชุมชนเพื่อจัดการทุนทางวัฒนธรรมไทใหญ่ ฟื้นฟูประเพณีท้องถิ่น และประเมินผลกระทบทางเศรษฐกิจและสังคม

**วิธีการศึกษา:** การวิจัยนี้เป็นการวิจัยแบบผสม โดยการวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพรวบรวมข้อมูลจากการวิจัยเอกสาร (documentary research) และการวิจัยภาคสนาม (field research) ในพื้นที่ตำบลจองคำและวัดพระธาตุดอยกองมู จังหวัดแม่ฮ่องสอน ทั้งนี้การออกแบบการวิจัยยังบูรณาการกระบวนการวิจัยและพัฒนาเพื่อใช้ในการพัฒนาต้นแบบและกิจกรรม โดยเก็บข้อมูลจากชาวไทใหญ่ในพื้นที่จำนวน 20 คน ผ่านการสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึก การสังเกต และการสนทนากลุ่ม การวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลใช้วิธีพรรณนาวิเคราะห์โดยตรวจสอบความน่าเชื่อถือด้วยการวิเคราะห์สามเส้า (data triangulation) เพื่อความเที่ยงตรงของข้อมูล จากนั้น จึงนำผลการวิจัยนำไปพัฒนาองค์ความรู้ท้องถิ่น สื่อการเรียนรู้ นิทรรศการ ฐานข้อมูลวัฒนธรรม และการฟื้นฟูเทศกาล เพื่อส่งเสริมการจัดการมรดกวัฒนธรรมไทใหญ่อย่างยั่งยืนและมีส่วนร่วม นอกจากนี้ ยังมีการสัมภาษณ์ผู้มีส่วนได้ส่วนเสียเพื่อประเมินผลกระทบทางเศรษฐกิจของโครงการหลังจากเสร็จสิ้นกิจกรรม ส่วนการวิจัยเชิงปริมาณใช้แบบสอบถามแบบกึ่งโครงสร้างเป็นเครื่องมือเพื่อประเมินความพึงพอใจของผู้เข้าร่วมกิจกรรมฟื้นฟูพิธีปอยต่างชอมต่อหลวง (กวนข้าวมรปูยาสา) ในปี 2566 (n=300) และปี 2567 (n=250) และประเมินความคิดเห็นต่อรูปแบบงานประเพณี "ปอยเหลินสิบสอง ขึ้นดอยพระธาตุกองมู" (n=250) ซึ่งข้อมูลเชิงปริมาณวิเคราะห์ด้วยค่าเฉลี่ย ร้อยละ และส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน

**ผลการศึกษา:** จากการศึกษาพบว่า พัฒนาการทางประวัติศาสตร์สามารถจำแนก ออกเป็น 4 ช่วง คือ ก่อนปี พ.ศ. 2417, พ.ศ. 2417-2453, พ.ศ. 2453-2500, และหลังปี พ.ศ. 2500 อีกทั้งยังพบว่า ชุมชนยังขาดความรู้และความเข้าใจเกี่ยวกับประวัติศาสตร์ท้องถิ่นและพิธีกรรมดั้งเดิม เช่น พิธีหุงข้าวและกวนข้าวมรปูยาสา หรือ "ข้าวชอมต่อหลวง" ซึ่งแทบเลือนหายไปจากความทรงจำ งานเทศกาลนมัสการพระธาตุดอยกองมูซึ่งเคยมีความหมายเชิงจิตวิญญาณ กลับถูกลดทอนเหลือเพียงกิจกรรมประจำปี จากสถานการณ์ดังกล่าว คณะผู้วิจัยได้พัฒนารูปแบบการฟื้นฟูประเพณีวิถีไทอย่างมีส่วนร่วมใน 3 ระยะ (ก่อน-ระหว่าง-หลังเทศกาล) โดยใช้วัดพระธาตุดอยกองมูเป็นศูนย์กลางการเรียนรู้และลงมือปฏิบัติจริง การรื้อฟื้นประเพณีไทใหญ่ เช่น เทศกาลปอยเหลินสิบสอง พิธีหุงข้าวและกวนข้าวชอมต่อหลวง และกิจกรรมเดินขึ้นพระธาตุดอยกองมู ส่งผลให้ชุมชนเกิดความตระหนักรู้ในคุณค่าของทุนวัฒนธรรม รู้สึกเป็นเจ้าของ และพร้อมถ่ายทอดให้คนรุ่นใหม่ ซึ่งเป็นการสร้างความภาคภูมิใจในอัตลักษณ์ไทใหญ่ กิจกรรมเหล่านี้ยังนำไปสู่ผลตอบแทนทางเศรษฐกิจและสังคมในอัตรา 3.76 เท่า และเกิดการขยายผลสู่ 8 ชุมชน

**การประยุกต์ใช้:** เทศบาลเมืองแม่ฮ่องสอนได้นำองค์ความรู้ไปต่อยอดในการวางแผนกิจกรรมระดับเมืองในปีงบประมาณ 2568 และการท่องเที่ยวแห่งประเทศไทย (ททท.) สำนักงานแม่ฮ่องสอนได้นำกิจกรรมดังกล่าวไปเผยแพร่ ประชาสัมพันธ์ทั้งในระดับท้องถิ่นและประเทศ ซึ่งสะท้อนให้เห็นถึงพลังของชุมชนและเครือข่ายในการขับเคลื่อนการพัฒนาวัฒนธรรมอย่างยั่งยืน

**บทสรุป:** การศึกษานี้ได้พัฒนารูปแบบการมีส่วนร่วมของชุมชนเพื่อจัดการทุนทางวัฒนธรรมไทใหญ่สู่การรื้อฟื้นประเพณีในเมืองแม่ฮ่องสอน โดยสามารถฟื้นฟูประเพณีสำคัญ สร้างความภาคภูมิใจในวัฒนธรรม และก่อให้เกิดประโยชน์ทางเศรษฐกิจในระดับพื้นที่ ขณะนี้เทศบาลเมืองแม่ฮ่องสอนได้นำรูปแบบดังกล่าวไปขยายผลในระดับเมือง เพื่อการจัดการมรดกวัฒนธรรมอย่างยั่งยืน

## Introduction

Contemporary global society is shaped by accelerated economic, social, and technological transformations, requiring continuous adaptation to shifting global dynamics. Cultural capital serves as a vital foundation for national development, encompassing knowledge, values, and creativity rooted in local art, culture, traditions, and wisdom. It reflects the distinct identity of communities and support progress across economic, social, environmental, and resource dimensions (Janklab, 2020; Office of the Permanent Secretary for Culture, 2019).

Cultural capital management involves the collaborative governance and strategic utilization of cultural resources through the active engagement of both government and private sectors for societal and national benefits. The government facilitates this process by allocating budgets, promoting initiatives, and providing infrastructure, while communities contribute through the preservation, organization and innovation of cultural expressions, thereby enabling the transformation of cultural capital into economic value (Kosol, 2018).

Mae Hong Son province is home to a diverse range of ethnic groups, such as Tai Yai, Tai Lue, Yuan Thai, Karen, and Yunnanese Chinese. Within this multiethnic province, Mueang district serves as the administrative and cultural center, with the Tai Yai community forming the dominant group. This community has significantly contributed to the province's cultural identity through traditional attire, architecture, festivals, performance arts, and cuisine. This cultural heritage is especially evident in their twelve-month traditional calendar, which embodies a synthesis of ancestral animistic beliefs and Buddhism. These cultural features have been recognized as the core identity of Mae Hong Son (Mae Hong Son Province, 2022).

Currently, government agencies in Mae Hong Son promote Tai Yai culture through events such as the annual "Mueang Tai Opening Festival" organized by the Provincial Administrative Organization, as well as the weekend walking street market at Nong Chong Kham and "Pok Kad" market, organized by the Mueang Mae Hong Son Municipality. However, these initiatives primarily highlight well-known traditions like Poi Sang Long (novice ordination ceremony) and Poi Loen Sip Et (The End of Buddhist Lent Day), while other important local traditions receive less attention. These overlooked traditions include Poi Para (a ceremony to pay homage to sacred Buddha images and relics) and Tang Som Tor Luang (a Buddhist lent festival involving the cooking of Mathupayas rice), both of which historically played vital roles in Tai Yai community life.

The Poi Para ceremony has gradually received less attention because it is organized at many temples simultaneously, making it appear routine rather than distinctive. As a result, it has been overshadowed by other traditions that attract greater public interest. In addition, participation from the public has declined overtime. Meanwhile, the Tang Som Tor Luang tradition involved numerous ceremonial steps and is typically conducted between 2:00 a.m. and 9 a.m., making it difficult for many people to participate. Consequently, these traditions have often been simplified, with some original elements reduced or removed to shorten the ceremonies. As a result, many people no longer fully understand the deeper meaning and culture significance.

Historically, Wat Phra That Doi Kong Mu served as a central spiritual hub for the Tai Yai communities, deeply rooted in their beliefs, lifestyles, and traditions. It was a focal point for cultural activities such as Poi Loen Sip Song, which drew extensive community participation. However, over the past two decades, this tradition has declined in popularity, especially among younger generations, due to insufficient education and documentation regarding the history, beliefs, and narratives connected to the temple and its sacred Buddha images. Consequently, practice once widespread, such as the pilgrimage to the mountaintop temple have gradually diminished.

In response, the researcher sought to develop a participatory cultural capital management model to revive Mae Hong Son's traditional Tai Yai ways of life. This model integrates cultural dimensions to reinforce a shared local identity and strengthen the grassroots economy. Centered around Phra That Doi Kong Mu, the approach fosters collaboration among youth, residents, and public and private sectors. It supports the revival of traditional cultural activities, the creation of local curricula to nurture community pride, and the establishment of a cultural calendar to promote festivals and related tourism products. Ultimately, this model seeks to enhance cultural awareness, stimulate local income, and ensure sustainable community development.

## **Research Objectives**

1. To study and analyze the history of Mae Hong Son city and Phra That Doi Kong Mu.
2. To develop a participatory model for managing Tai Yai cultural capital through public spaces in Mae Hong Son.
3. To revive traditions associated with Phra That Doi Kong Mu based on Tai Yai cultural capital.
4. To evaluate the economic and social impacts of the revival and management of Tai Yai cultural capital in Mae Hong Son.

## **Research Methods**

This study employed a mixed-method approach, integrating qualitative and quantitative research methodologies and incorporating a research and development (R&D) process for prototype development. The qualitative component included documentary research and fieldwork in Chong Kham subdistrict and Wat Phra That Doi Kong Mu, Mae Hong Son, conducted between 30 April 2023 and 29 September 2024. Primary and secondary sources were systematically reviewed and analyzed to provide historical and cultural context.

Field research explored contextual data on geography, environment, events, time periods, and individuals related to Tai Yai cultural traditions. Ethnographic methods included participant and non-participant observation, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions. Participant observation involved engaging in rituals such as the “Payasam” or “Mathupayas rice” offering ceremony, while non-participant observation was used when direct involvement was not possible. Twenty key informants were purposively selected, including monks, local scholars, and community elders with knowledge of Tai Yai history and traditions. Focus group discussions further verified and enriched the data from documentary and field sources. Participants were required to reside in Mueang Mae Hong Son district, be aged 18 years or older, and be willing to participate in the research study.

The fieldwork was conducted in selected communities within Chong Kham subdistrict and neighboring areas in Mueang district, Mae Hong Son. A purposive sample of 20 Tai Yai residents were selected for in-depth, unstructured interviews. Data credibility was ensured through triangulation across sources, time periods, and informants, followed by descriptive analysis. The findings were synthesized into a comprehensive report to inform the development of local knowledge resources, educational media, cultural exhibitions, and the revitalization of tradition festivals. These initiatives contribute to sustainable and participatory heritage management strategies.

The quantitative component used questionnaires to assess public satisfaction and perceptions. Four surveys were conducted: two measured the satisfaction with the revival of the “Tang Som Tor Luang” or rice cooking and stirring ceremony in 2023 (n=300) and 2024 (n=250) using a 5-point Likert scale; one gathered community opinions on the “Poi Loen Sib Song Walking Up Phra That Doi Kong Mu” event (n=250); and another assessed the social and economic impacts of these cultural revitalization activities. Questionnaire reliability was high (Cronbach’s  $\alpha=0.989$ ; standardized  $\alpha=0.990$ ). Respondents were selected through simple random sampling from people who participated in the activities, and data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, percentage, and standard deviation).

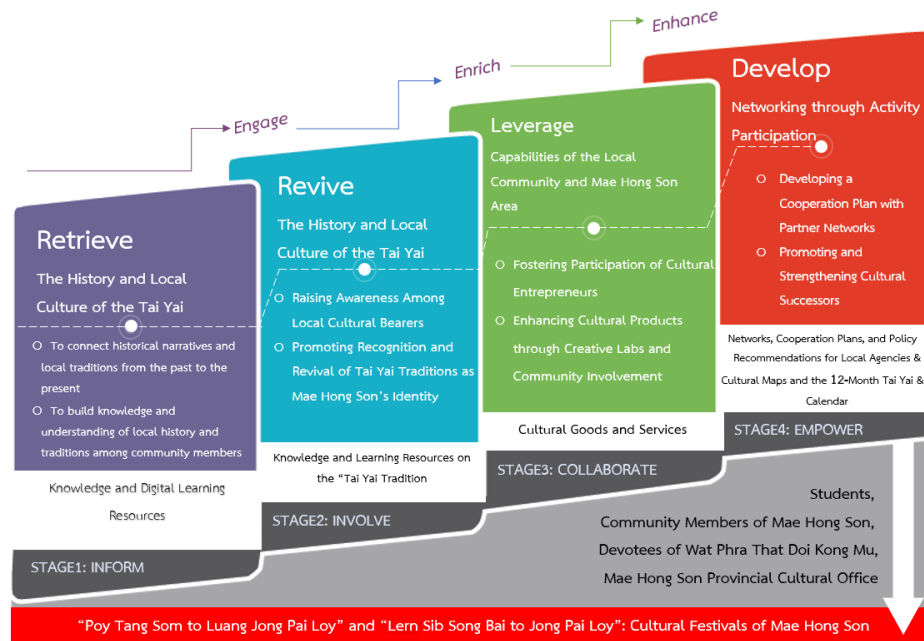


Figure 1 Research Framework Diagram Illustrating the Objectives, Outputs, and Indicators of the Research  
(Source: Sriratanaban et al., 2024a)

## Research Results

### 1. History of Mae Hong Son City and Phra That Doi Kong Mu

This study, grounded in the analysis of primary and secondary sources alongside qualitative interviews, delineates the historical trajectory of the Tai Yai community in Mueang Mae Hong Son, primarily focusing on Chong Kham subdistrict and its adjacent localities.

#### 1.1 History of Mae Hong Son City

The historical development can be systematically categorized into four distinct periods: pre-1874, 1874–1910, 1910–1957, and post-1957.

##### 1.1.1 Pre-1874 (B.E. 2417)

Before 1874, Mae Hong Son and surrounding regions were borderlands with indeterminate borders, inhabited by diverse groups including Tai Yai, Karen, Burmese, Yuan, Mon, Kachin, Chinese, and Pa O, attracted by its strategic location along trade routes connecting Chiang Mai with China, Shan states, and Luang Prabang (Maung Tin Aung, 2005; Winichakul, 2013; A. Surinta, personal communication, 2024). Chinese and Tai Yai traders expanded networks here, with fertile valleys, waterways, and forests supporting settlements and economic activities, notably teak and padauk logging. Ethnographic records and Tai Yai manuscripts indicate a pluralistic population, with Tai Yai forming the demographic majority and cultural influence pervasive, shaping local governance and social norms. Early settlements like Pang Mu, Mae Hong Son, and Mae Sanga emerged along riverbanks, led by political elites such as the “Phaka Mong Group,” whose descendants held administrative roles, including Shan Ka Le, who became the ruler of Mae Hong Son in 1874.

##### 1.1.2 1874–1910 (Mae Hong Son as a Frontier Town)

In 1874, Chiang Mai’s King Inthawichayanon designated Mae Hong Son as a frontier town, and appointed Shan Ka Le as Phaya Singhanatracha, its ruler, in recognition of the area’s strategic importance arising from the expansion of the teak industries and migration driven by conflicts in Burmese border (Ongsakul, 2023). The establishment was further supported by treaties between Siam and Britain (1874) and the expansion of logging industries since the 1830s, which

attracted settlers and facilitated trade. Migration from border conflicts led to the formation of new communities, with Tai Yai and other groups settling along rivers and forested areas, shaping Mae Hong Son's development as a key frontier outpost.

#### 1.1.3 1910–1957 (Mae Hong Son as Provincial Capital)

Mae Hong Son evolved into the administrative and economic hub, characterized by a fortified settlement (“Wiang”). The town's layout included the Hua Wiang area, established by 1863, serving as the core community center, with landmarks such as Wat Hua Wiang and the “Klang Wiang” intersection. The town expanded westward and southward as population grew, with physical and administrative structures like the “Ho Chao Mueang” (City Shrine) and local temples forming the center of community life (Ministry of Education, Department of Religious Affairs, 1990). Over time, environmental changes and urban expansion led to shifts in place names and perceptions as Mae Hong Son became a provincial capital, and the original layout grew less prominent.

#### 1.1.4 Post-1957 (Mae Hong Son after the 1960s)

Between 1960 and 1963, Highway No. 108 was constructed, connecting Chiang Mai to Mae Hong Son, initially as a dirt trail later paved with asphalt (1987–1990). Highway No. 1095 further linked Mae Hong Son with Chiang Mai, boosting regional connectivity. Prior to this, trade relied on oxen, mules, and river transport with Burma (P. Pradit, personal communication, 2023; S. Wannasiri, personal communication, 2023). These infrastructural developments transformed Mae Hong Son into an accessible region, fostering economic growth and tourism. Mae Hong Son municipality has a population of approximately 6,837 (2024), with an estimated 15,000 residents including unregistered individuals (Mae Hong Son Municipality Registry Office, 2024; M. Jeenakham, personal communication, 2024). The town serves as the provincial government center, hosting administrative offices, educational institutions, hospitals, markets, and transportation services, making it the social and economic hub of Mueang Mae Hong Son district.

### 1.2. A Historical Study of Phra That Doi Kong Mu

Located west of Mae Hong Son town, Doi Kong Mu rises to an elevation of approximately 1300 meters above sea level, about 300 meters higher than the town itself. The Tai Yai people refer to the mountain as “Loi Kong Mu” or “Doi Kong Mu,” with “Kong Mu” meaning pagoda, derived from the Burmese language. During the late nineteenth century Buddhist era, as Tai Yai settlements expanded, the summit of Doi Kong Mu became a strategic vantage point. Bandits frequently used the site for raids, prompting the community to clear trees on the mountaintop to deter criminal activity (Phra Sumon Sasanakit, personal communication, May 6, 2023). A photograph from 1939 confirms the pagoda's visibility due to the absence of large trees.



**Figure 2** Doi Kong Mu

(Source: Sitthiwet, 1939)

The initial founding by timber merchant Chong Tong Su established Mae Hong Son's significance as a sacred urban space. This significance was further shaped by the contributions of the lay devotee Chao Sala Mai Hung and its role as a symbol of Thai national identity within the Tai Yai cultural landscape. Although Chong Tong Su's original name is unknown, he was a timber merchant of the Tong Su ethnic group, identified as Pa O or Black Karen. After marrying Lek, a Tai Yai woman, he settled in Wiang Mae Hong Son and began constructing the pagoda in 1860. The chosen site contained a massive rock, which was integrated into the structure (Phra Sumonthasannakit, personal communication, September 5, 2023). Before construction, Phra Upandita was invited to reside on the mountain during Buddhist Lent, establishing a temple locally called Wat Plai Doi. Chong Tong Su intended the pagoda to enshrine relics of Phra Maha Moggallana and other sacred objects from Mandalay and the Shan State (Phra Khru Anusanasakorn, 1987).

Due to a lack of written records and annual wildfires, the precise date of construction remains uncertain. Secondary sources suggest the project began around 1860. However, after Chong Tong Su's death in Bangkok during a legal dispute, the pagoda remained incomplete for over ninety years. His wife retained the pagoda's spire but lacked resources to complete the consecration. Later in 1874, Phaya Singhanatracha, the ruler of Mae Hong Son, led people in constructing a second pagoda in Tai Yai-style pagoda to enshrine relics of Phra Saributta beside the first pagoda. Therefore, both pagodas have come to symbolize the cultural identity of Mae Hong Son.

A 1939 photo by Prasan Sitthiwet documents an eastern brick vihara, teakwood carvings in Burmese style, and a functional pond. These features demonstrate (1) community reverence despite the pagoda's unfinished state; (2) Mandalay-style craftsmanship reflecting economic and devotional investment; and (3) infrastructure, such as a pond, supporting long-term monastic use.



(a)



(b)

**Figure 3** (a) The Eastern Vihara of the Main Pagoda, Photographed in 1939;

(b) The Pond on the Western Side of Phra That Doi Kong Mu, With a View of the Main Pagoda in the Background

(Source: Sitthiwet, 1939b)

This early phase of Phra That Doi Kong Mu's history reflects the intersection of ethnic diversity, religious devotion, and regional craftsmanship in shaping a landmark that continues to serve as a spiritual and cultural emblem of Mae Hong Son.

## 2. Development of the Revival Model for Tai Cultural Traditions and Festivals in Mae Hong Son

This study aimed to develop a model for reviving and creatively renewing Tai cultural traditions and festivals in Mae Hong Son, focusing on the historical and contemporary significance of events such as the Poi Tang Som Tor Luang, Poi Loen Sib Song, and the Phra That Doi Kong Mu pagoda worship ceremony. The research involved documentary analysis, interviews, and fieldwork, forming a three-stage framework: pre-festival planning, festival implementation, and post-festival evaluation.

In the pre-festival stage, archival research and community informed co-design revival strategies aligned with local traditions. The implementation phase featured participatory events highlighting cultural values, rituals, and identity, co-managed by community members. Post-festival evaluation used interviews, observations, and feedback to assess outcomes and refine the model for broader application. The second stage, the festival implementation stage, focused on organizing and managing the festivals in collaboration with the community. This included the defining the formats of the Poi Tang Som Tor Luang, Poi Loen Sib Song, and Doi Kong Mu pagoda worship festivals, and ensuring active local participation in traditional events and related activities. The third stage, the post-festival stage, involved evaluation and improvement. This includes assessing the festival through observation, interviews, and formal evaluation tools, analyzing the findings for refinement, and applying the results to benefit local partners and promote effective use of the research outcomes.

### 2.1. Revival of the Tradition of Cooking Rice and Making Tang Som Tor Luang among the Tai Yai

Tang Som Tor, meaning the offering of rice to the Buddha, is a longstanding Tai Yai religious tradition. “Tang,” denotes offering, while “Som Tor” refers to rice cooked for the Buddha (Chiang Mai Rajabhat University, 2013). Each morning, households present rice, water, flowers, incense, and candles on home altars, symbolizing devotion and the wish for prosperity, health, and family harmony (A. Waidee, personal communication, May 5 2023). A notable variation is Tang Som Tor Luang, involving the offering of Mathupayas rice. The revival and creative adaptation of the Tang Som Tor Luang ceremony took place at Wat Phra That Doi Kong Mu during October 7–9, 2023. Traditionally observed during the twelfth lunar month, the ceremony had diminished and shifted to the tenth month due to logistical constraints. Its recent restoration combined academic research and community participation to reconstruct lost rituals and ceremonial elements. Fieldwork at Wat Hua Wiang in Chong Kham revealed that the traditional rice stove setup features symbolic representations of Garuda, Singha, and Naga, aligned with the Taksa principle. Originally crafted from sacred clay, these figures are now crafted from wood or plaster for durability. A ceremonial ceiling cloth inscribed with yantras is believed to be empowered by rice steam. A new ceremonial space was constructed using local materials and aesthetics, including a stainless-steel stove and ceiling structure. Yantra patterns were created by Phra Worakot Khanti Ko, while sacred animal sculptures were modeled after local carvings by researchers, Somsak Promjak and Siriporn Khuenmamuang.



**Figure 4** (a) Garuda, Singha, and Naga: Traditional Clay Sculptural Models in Ancient Style, and (b) Garuda, Singha, and Naga: Sculptural Models Cast in Cement

(Source: Sriratanaban et al., 2023a)

The preparation of Tang Som Tor was guided by local culinary expert, Mae Kru Anchun Waidee, who provided a ritual-specific recipe. A documentation initiative, “Photographing Hang Lee,” aimed to preserve Tai Yai attire and ceremonial practices while promoting cultural pride. With around 200 participants, the project also served as the ethnographic record of Tai Yai lifeways in 2023 and 2024.

Formally a private event, the rice stirring ritual was reimagined through participatory collaboration with monks, elders, municipal representatives, and cultural bearers. The revived ceremony featured site decoration of banana and sugarcane, the newly crafted paddles, and a schedule sequence beginning with rice stirring at 3:09 a.m., followed by molding Mathupayas rice at 4:09 a.m. This revitalization not only preserved a fading tradition but also facilitated intergenerational knowledge transfer and strengthened community identity.



**Figure 5** (a), (b), (c), and (d) Revival of the “Som To” Rice-Cooking and Stirring Ritual in 2023

(Source: Sriratanaban et al., 2023b)

## **2.2. Survey Results on Satisfaction with Participation in the Revival of the “Tang Som Tor Luang” in 2023**

The survey on “Tang Som Tor Luang” or rice cooking and stirring ceremony (Som Tor) in 2023 aimed to assess participant satisfaction with the event’s objectives and implementation. Data were collected from 300 participants and analyzed accordingly.

### **2.2.1 Basic Information of Respondents**

The majority of respondents were female, (n=224, 74.67%) and male respondents totaled 76 (25.33%). Most of them were aged over 60 years, (n=119, 39.67%), followed by those aged 41–50 years with (n=54, 18.00%), and those aged 21–30 years (n=53, 17.67%). Regarding education, most respondents had education below or equivalent to high school level, (n=114, 47.00%), followed by bachelor’s degree holders (n=132, 44.00%), and those who did not specify (n=24, 8.00%).

2.2.2 Satisfaction Level with the Organization of the Revival Event of the “Tang Som Tor Luang” or Rice Cooking and Stirring Ceremony (Som Tor) in 2023

Respondents gave their opinions based on a Likert scale with five satisfaction levels: Highest satisfaction = 5 points, High satisfaction = 4 points, Moderate satisfaction = 3 points, Low satisfaction = 2 points, and Lowest satisfaction = 1 point. The average satisfaction scores were calculated and interpreted according to the following ranges: 4.21–5.00 means respondents are most satisfied, 3.41–4.20 means respondents are highly satisfied, 2.61–3.40 means respondents are moderately satisfied, 1.81–2.60 means respondents are less satisfied, and 1.00–1.80 means respondents are least satisfied.

**Table 1** Satisfaction With Participation in the Revival of the “Tang Som Tor Luang” or Rice Cooking and Stirring Ceremony in 2023 ( $n=300$ )

| Satisfaction Aspect                                                   | Mean ( $\bar{X}$ ) | Standard Deviation (S.D.) | Interpretation |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Objectives of the Event                                            |                    |                           |                |
| 1.1 To revive the tradition of cooking Mathupayas rice                | 4.56               | 0.583                     | Most satisfied |
| 1.2 To revive the tradition of stirring Mathupayas rice               | 4.48               | 0.586                     | Most satisfied |
| 1.3 To raise awareness about the history and origins of the tradition | 4.52               | 0.585                     | Most satisfied |
| 1.4 To create awareness of the value of history, art, and culture     | 4.51               | 0.597                     | Most satisfied |
| 1.5 To promote learning of Buddhism, morality, and ethics             | 4.48               | 0.603                     | Most satisfied |
| Overall                                                               | 4.51               | 0.591                     | Most satisfied |
| 2. Event Implementation                                               |                    |                           |                |
| 2.1 The venue was appropriate                                         | 4.52               | 0.619                     | Most satisfied |
| 2.2 Promotion of the event                                            | 4.46               | 0.602                     | Most satisfied |
| 2.3 Timing of the event                                               | 4.48               | 0.631                     | Most satisfied |
| 2.4 Format of the event                                               | 4.50               | 0.592                     | Most satisfied |
| 2.5 Interest in participation                                         | 4.45               | 0.606                     | Most satisfied |
| Overall                                                               | 4.48               | 0.606                     | Most satisfied |

Table 1 shows that the overall satisfaction among 300 participants in the 2023 revival of the “Tang Som Tor Luang” ceremony was most satisfied. Participants were most satisfied with the event’s objectives ( $\bar{X}=4.51$ , S.D.=0.591), followed by the event’s implementation ( $\bar{X}= 4.48$ , S.D.=0.606). In terms of objectives, the highest satisfaction was with the goal of reviving the tradition of cooking Mathupayas rice ( $\bar{X}= 4.56$ , S.D.=0.583), followed by raising awareness of the tradition’s history and origins ( $\bar{X}= 4.52$ , S.D.=0.585) and raising awareness of the value of history, art, and culture ( $\bar{X}= 4.51$ , S.D.= 0.597), respectively. For event implementation, the appropriateness of the venue received the highest satisfaction ( $\bar{X}= 4.52$ , S.D. = 0.619), followed by the event’s format ( $\bar{X}= 4.50$ , S.D. = 0.592) and event’s timing ( $\bar{X}= 4.48$ , S.D. = 0.631).

### 2.3. Development of Ritual-Based Products

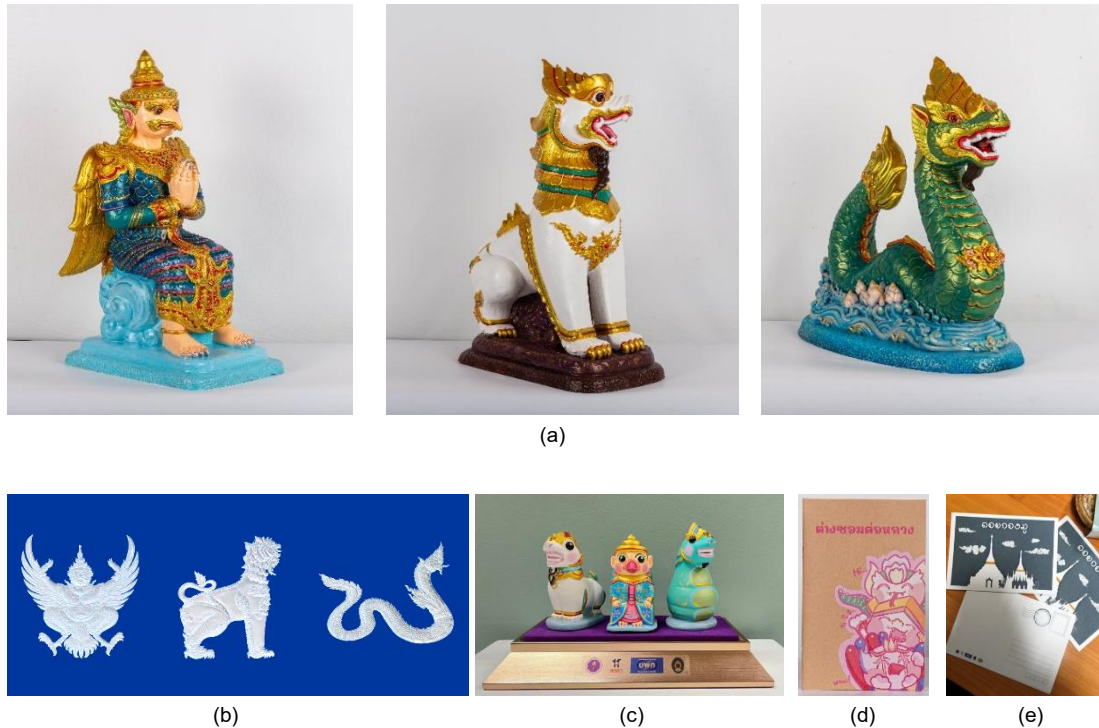
Following the revival of the Som Tor Luang or rice-cooking ceremony, the initiative led to the creation of products inspired by symbolic forms reintroduced during the revival. One key form is the “Kon Sao,” featuring three auspicious animals; Garuda, Singha (mythical lion), and Naga (serpent deity), which had largely vanished from Tai Yai society. Research and community dialogue revealed strong local interest in these symbolic figures due to their meaningful representations. This interest prompted the development of products in four categories.

2.3.1 Cement-cast “Auspicious Kon Sao” figures featuring Garuda, Singha, and Naga were created for use in future Som Tor Luang rituals or as symbolic cultural items.

2.3.2 Metal embossed souvenirs depicting the three auspicious animals were designed using motifs inspired by traditional Tai Yai “Pan Soi” pierced zinc patterns. These were crafted by local wisdom master, Thongsuk Khongkaew.

2.3.3 Illustrated merchandise featuring Phra That Doi Kong Mu and cartoon-style Garuda, Singha, Naga was developed for items such as notebooks, tote bags, T-shirts, pencil cases, and phone pouches blending cultural symbolic with modern lifestyles.

2.3.4 Postcards and stamp activity featuring Phra That Doi Kong Mu allowed tourists to stamp auspicious animal figures on postcards. Initially piloted at the temple, the activity gained popularity and was later adopted by both the temple and municipality.



**Figure 6** (a), (b), (c), (d), and (e) Products Inspired by Symbolic Forms Reintroduced During the Revival

(Source: Sriratanaban et al., 2023c)

#### **2.4. Revival and Creative Enhancement of the Rice Offering Ritual (2024)**

Following the success of the first-year activities and strong community support, Wat Phra That Doi Kong Mu, in collaboration with the Mae Hong Son Provincial Cultural Office and Mae Hong Son Municipality, proposed the continuation of the project into a second year. The continuation fostered the expansion of networks among communities and temples committed to reviving Tai Yai traditions. In 2024, two key events were organized: the casting of Garuda, Singha, and Naga figures on August 13–14, and the “Tang Som Tor Luang” ritual on September 24–26.

##### **2.4.1. Garuda, Singha, and Naga Casting Activity**

The 2024 casting activity expanded the ritual figures introduced the previous year, drawing design inspiration from Wat Hua Wiang and Wat Nai Soi. Community feedback emphasized larger Tai Yai–style figures, lighter materials for easier handling, and casting rites aligned with local beliefs. As a result, the figures were produced in cement for ritual durability and fiberglass for portability and educational use. Interest expanded to eight temples that requested Garuda, Singha, and Naga figures for their “Tang Som Tor Luang” ceremonies. On August 27, 2024, the temples of Wat Hua Wiang, Wat Pang Mu, Wat Pha Ang, Wat Thung Kong Mu, Wat Sop Soi, Wat Pa Pu, Wat Pha Bong Tai, and Wat Huai Khan incorporated the figures into their rituals, reflecting wider participation in the revival of Tai Yai cultural traditions.

#### 2.4.2. Survey Results on Satisfaction with Participation in the Revival of the “Tang Som Tor Luang” or Rice Cooking and Stirring Ceremony in 2024

The 2024 survey on opinions in the revival of the “Tang Som Tor Luang” or rice cooking and stirring ceremony aimed to assess and analyzed participant satisfaction with the event. The evaluation focused on two primary dimensions: the alignment with event’s objective and the effective of its implementation. Data were collected from 250 participants and analyzed in accordance with the objectives.

##### 1) Basic Information of Respondents

Most of the 250 respondents to the questionnaire were female (n=157, 62.80%), while 93 were male (37.20%). The majority of respondents were over 60 years old (n=112, 44.80%), followed by those aged 21–30 years (n=71, 28.40%), and those aged 41–50 years (n=22, 8.80%), respectively. The satisfaction of the target group toward their participation in the revival of the Hung Khao Som Tor and Kuan Khao Som Tor rituals in 2024, based on 250 respondents, was found to be very high overall with a mean score of 4.56 and a standard deviation of 0.579.

**Table 2** Satisfaction With Participation in the Revival of the “Tang Som Tor Luang” or Rice Cooking and Stirring Ceremony in 2024 (n=250).

| Satisfaction Aspect                                                   | Mean ( $\bar{X}$ ) | Standard Deviation (S.D.) | Interpretation |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Objectives of the Event                                            |                    |                           |                |
| 1.1 To revive the tradition of cooking Mathupayas rice                | 4.68               | 0.508                     | Most satisfied |
| 1.2 To revive the tradition of stirring Mathupayas rice               | 4.58               | 0.547                     | Most satisfied |
| 1.3 To raise awareness about the history and origins of the tradition | 4.60               | 0.544                     | Most satisfied |
| 1.4 To create awareness of the value of history, art, and culture     | 4.61               | 0.557                     | Most satisfied |
| 1.5 To promote learning of Buddhism, morality, and ethics             | 4.58               | 0.562                     | Most satisfied |
| Overall                                                               | 4.61               | 0.545                     | Most satisfied |
| 2. Event Implementation                                               |                    |                           |                |
| 2.1 The venue was appropriate                                         | 4.58               | 0.596                     | Most satisfied |
| 2.2 Promotion of the event                                            | 4.46               | 0.607                     | Most satisfied |
| 2.3 Timing of the event                                               | 4.48               | 0.608                     | Most satisfied |
| 2.4 Format of the event                                               | 4.52               | 0.595                     | Most satisfied |
| 2.5 Interest in participation                                         | 4.47               | 0.614                     | Most satisfied |
| Overall                                                               | 4.50               | 0.606                     | Most satisfied |

The highest satisfaction was related to the activity’s objectives ( $\bar{X}$ =4.61, S.D.= 0.545). Within this aspect, the respondents reported the greatest satisfied with the objective of reviving the traditional Som Tor Luang rice cooking ritual ( $\bar{X}$ =4.68, S.D.=0.508), followed by the objective of raising awareness of the value of history, arts, and culture ( $\bar{X}$ =4.61, S.D.=0.557), and the objective of promoting understanding of the background and origins of the tradition ( $\bar{X}$ =4.60, S.D.=0.544). Regarding satisfaction with the implementation of the activity, the mean score was 4.50 (S.D.=0.606). Participants expressed the highest satisfaction with the suitability of the event venue ( $\bar{X}$ =4.58, S.D.=0.596), followed by the format of the activity ( $\bar{X}$ =4.52, S.D.=0.595), and the event’s timing ( $\bar{X}$ =4.48, S.D.=0.608). These results suggest that the overall reception of the event was highly favorable, particularly in relation to its cultural objectives and organizational appropriateness.

**2.5. Development of Learning Media and the Phra That Doi Kong Mu Exhibition Based on research on Mae Hong Son and Phra That Doi Kong Mu**, an exhibition and tourism promotion activities were developed. In collaboration with Wat Phra That Doi Kong Mu, a 5×7 meter pavilion beside the pagoda was designated as a space to present historical information and tourism-related content. The exhibition included the history of Mae Hong Son and Wat Phra That Doi Kong Mu, key sites within the temple area, important religious and cultural activities, and sacred offerings associated with Phra That Doi Kong Mu. These offerings represent the Four Elements in Buddhist worship. In addition, visitors could participate in a hands-on activity by stamping postcards featuring images of the Garuda, Singha, and Naga, symbolic creatures rooted in local belief and tradition.



**Figure 7** (a) and (b) Phra That Doi Kong Mu Exhibition and Stamping Postcards Activity

(Source: Sriratanaban et al., 2024b)

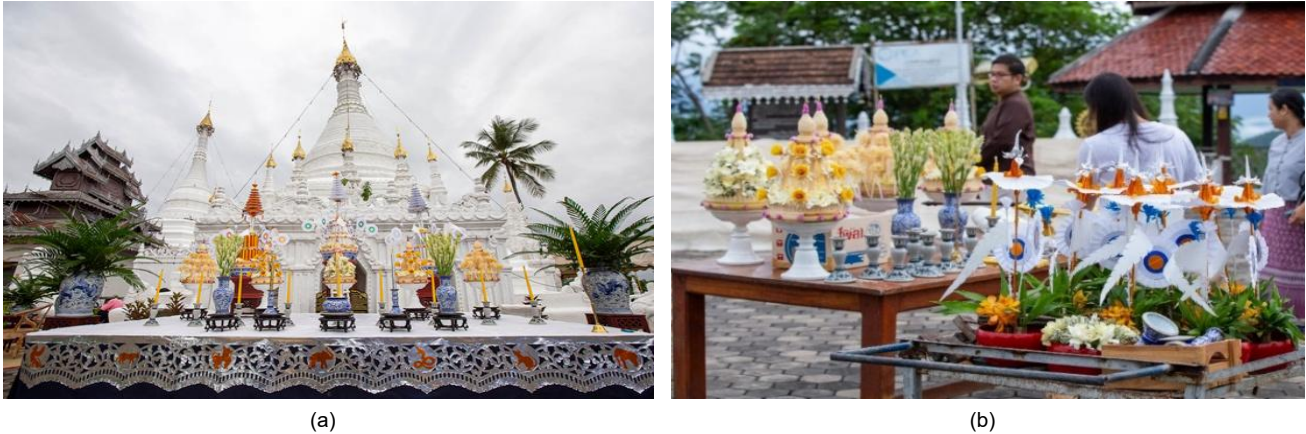
## **2.6. Revival of Knowledge and Creation of Phra That Offering Sets by the Tai Yai People**

Knowledge and creation of Phra That offering sets were defined through a focus group discussion conducted with 20 local experts, community members, and monks. These discussions provided insights into the festival management practices, communities roles in maintaining traditions, and mechanisms of collaboration among different stakeholders. In addition, participants shared perspectives on challenges encountered in festival management, including coordination among community networks, the transmission of ritual knowledge, and the need to balance tradition practices with community development contexts.

The study found that the Tai Yai people maintain a unique tradition of worshiping pagodas through offerings that symbolically represent the four elements of earth, water, air, and fire, which reflect both Buddhist cosmology and Tai Yai beliefs. These four-element offerings are central to pagoda worship at Wat Phra That Doi Kong Mu and to festivals such as the Sand Pagoda Festival and the Poi Mang Ka Pa Festival. However, the original symbolic meaning of these offerings has gradually diminished, and is often reduced to simplified forms for tourism. In response, a research project was undertaken to revive the tradition's deeper significance. Through collaboration with local artisans and cultural practitioners. Two prototype sets were developed, including a full version and a simplified version in order to maintain symbolic integrity while enhancing practical use. Elements such as sand, water, fans, and candles were retained and reconfigured into portable formats.

The prototypes were first introduced on August 28, 2023, during a ceremonial event attended by approximately 200 participants, making a significant moment in the cultural revival of the Tai Yai community. Positive feedback

underscored the importance of broader promotion, hands on workshops, and developing the offerings into meaningful souvenirs. The sets were later officially integrated into the 150th anniversary celebration of Mae Hong Son on January 19, 2024, during the citywide ritual honoring Phra That Doi Kong Mu. To support long-term cultural transmission, the project also produced educational materials covering the history of the site, the symbolism of the offerings, and related traditions. This initiative demonstrates how cultural heritage revitalization can foster local pride, enrich tourism, and preserve traditional knowledge for future generations.



**Figure 8** (a) and (b) Two Sets of Phra That Offering Prototypes

(Source: Sriratanaban et al., 2024c)

### **2.7. Creative revitalization of the tradition “Poi Loen Sib Song walking up Phra That Doi Kong Mu”**

The “Poi Loen Sib Song” or “Poi Pai Loy” pilgrimage festival, a longstanding Tai Yai tradition in Mae Hong Son, has experienced a decline in recent years, partly due to its overlap with the Thai-adopted Loy Krathong festival. Historically, devotees would walk along a zigzag trail behind Wat Muay Tor to reach Phra That Doi Kong Mu pagoda, with resting points along the way (S. Wannasiri, personal communication, September 5, 2023). The festival occurring between the eleventh and fifteenth days of twelfth lunar month, once attracted participants from surrounding villages. However, the construction of the road allowing vehicles access to the pagoda reduced the practice of walking. Oral histories and temple records trace the tradition back to the 1940s and 1950s (S. Nimsakul, personal communication, August 25, 2023; S. Panyamulwongsa, personal communication, September 5, 2023; S. Wannasiri, personal communication, September 5, 2023), with a significant revival in 1974 following the restoration of the pagoda (Phra Kru Anusan Sasanasakon, 1988). The festival included religious offerings, cultural performances, and lantern ceremonies, but overtime, traditional practices such as lantern lighting and walking rituals have faded.

In response to this cultural erosion, renewed efforts have emerged to revitalize the pilgrimage tradition. Inspired by the success of the Doi Suthep walking pilgrimage in Chiang Mai, community members and local authorities collaborated to reintroduce walking rituals as part of the festival. A key development is the creation of the “Phah Sang Kan Hom Kong Mu,” a ceremonial cloth wrapping of the pagoda. Supported by six community networks, this initiative was launched in October 2023, involving ceremonial cloth from village temples to the pagoda. These developments culminated in the revitalized activity called “Poi Loen Sib Song: Walking Up Phra That Doi Kong Mu,” which aimed to restore cultural pride, strengthen intergenerational ties, and establish a renewed community tradition rooted in Tai Yai heritage.



**Figure 9** (a), (b), and (c) Revitalization of the Tradition "Poi Loen Sib Song: Walking Up Phra That Doi Kong Mu"

(Source: Sriratanaban et al., 2024d)

## 2.8. Survey on Opinions Regarding the Event Format of "Poi Loen Sib Song: Walking Up Phra That Doi Kong Mu"

A survey of 400 participants assessed opinions on the "Poi Loen Sib Song: Walking Up Phra That Doi Kong Mu" event, focusing on experiences gained from the activity and satisfaction levels across five organizational aspects. Respondents were 184 male (46%) and 213 female (53.33%), with the largest age groups being 21–30 years old ( $n=132$ , 33%), and under 21 ( $n=128$ , 32%). Most had completed high school ( $n=121$ , 30.33%) or held a bachelor's degree ( $n=97$ , 24.33%). Students made up the majority ( $n=137$ , 45.67%), and most resided in Mueang Mae Hong Son district, ( $n=349$ , 87.33%). The average spending in the activity per participant was 203.56 Baht.

Regarding participation in the activity, 260 people (65%) participated, while 140 people (35%) did not. The experiences gained from participating in the activity "Poi Loen Sib Song: Walking Up Phra That Doi Kong Mu" were mainly cultural tourism, reported by 148 people (37.04%). This was followed by participation in activities that preserve arts and culture by 112 people (28.10%), and development of creative knowledge and skills to advance arts and culture work by 100 people (25.06%). Sharing experiences gained from the activity accounted for 40 people (9.80%). The cultural and artistic capital used in this activity impacted experiences in various ways. The highest was gaining new experiences in arts and culture reported by 118 people (29.55%), followed by creating memorable arts and cultural experiences by 114 people (28.51%), alignment and suitability with local wisdom by 93 people (23.14%), and creating uniqueness for the local area by 75 people (18.80%).

**Table 3** Experiences Gained From Participating in the Activity "Poi Loen Sib Song: Walking Up Phra That Doi Kong Mu"

| Data                                                                                                           | People (N) | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------------|
| 1. Participation in the activity "Poi Loen Sib Song: Walking Up Phra That Doi Kong Mu"                         |            |                |
| 1.1 Participated                                                                                               | 260        | 65.00          |
| 1.2 Did not participate                                                                                        | 140        | 35.00          |
| 2. Experiences gained from participating in the activity "Poi Loen Sib Song: Walking Up Phra That Doi Kong Mu" |            |                |
| 2.1 Cultural tourism                                                                                           | 148        | 37.04          |
| 2.2 Participation in activities preserving arts and culture                                                    | 112        | 28.10          |
| 2.3 Development of creative knowledge and skills advancing arts and culture                                    | 100        | 25.06          |
| 2.4 Sharing experiences gained from participation                                                              | 40         | 9.80           |
| 3. Impact of cultural and artistic capital used in this activity on experiences                                |            |                |
| 3.1 Gained new experiences in arts and culture                                                                 | 118        | 29.55          |
| 3.2 Created memorable arts and cultural experiences                                                            | 114        | 28.51          |
| 3.3 Consistent and appropriate with local wisdom                                                               | 93         | 23.14          |
| 3.4 Created uniqueness for the local area                                                                      | 75         | 18.80          |

From Table 3, it can be summarized that 65% of respondents participated in the activity “Poi Loen Sib Song: Walking Up Phra That Doi Kong Mu” while 35% did not. The experience most gained was cultural tourism at 37.04% , followed by participating in activities that preserve arts and culture at 28.10% , and developing creative knowledge and skills to further arts and culture work at 25.05%. The cultural and artistic capital used in this activity affected the experience, with the highest being gaining new experiences in arts and culture at 29.55% , followed by creating memorable arts and cultural experiences at 28.51%, and being consistent and appropriate with local wisdom at 23.14%.

**Table 4** Satisfaction Level of Respondents Regarding the Overall Organization of the Activity Across Five Aspects

| Context                                              | $\bar{X}$ | S.D. | Satisfaction |
|------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------|--------------|
| 1. Step before the activity organization             | 4.38      | 0.66 | Highest      |
| 2. Steps and channels of service during the activity | 4.25      | 0.71 | Highest      |
| 3. Service staff                                     | 4.36      | 0.62 | Highest      |
| 4. Facilities                                        | 4.34      | 0.65 | Highest      |
| 5. Benefits and value of the activity                | 4.34      | 0.64 | Highest      |
| Overall                                              | 4.33      | 0.66 | Highest      |

Table 4 presents the overall satisfaction level of respondents regarding the organization of the activity across the five aspects, which is at the highest level ( $\bar{X}$ = 4.33, S.D.= 0.66). When considering each item, the highest satisfaction was for the steps before the activity organization ( $\bar{X}$ = 4.38, S.D.= 0.66), followed by the service staff ( $\bar{X}$ = 4.36, S.D.= 0.62), and the benefits and value of the activity ( $\bar{X}$ = 4.34, S.D.= 0.64). The aspect with the lowest average satisfaction score was the steps and channels of service during the activity ( $\bar{X}$ = 4.25, S.D.= 0.71). Suggestions include increasing the promotion of the event, enhancing security measures, and providing a more organized, convenient, and faster transportation service for participants attending the event.

### **2.9. Process of Applying Research Results Through Network Partners**

The creation of the “Poi Loen Sip Song: Walking Up to Phra That Doi Kong Mu” tradition on November 26, 2023, received strong support from civil society and network partners. As a result, Mae Hong Son Municipality adopted the research outcomes to develop an annual event, allocating a budget for the 2025 fiscal year. The second event was on November 13, 2024, in collaboration with six local communities, and various agencies, including the Mae Hong Son Provincial Cultural Office, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Mae Hong Son Office, Chiang Mai Rajabhat University, local schools, and Vocational College Mae Hong Son. The event, titled “Blanket Procession for Phra That Doi Kong Mu and Buddha Statues,” expanded the use of the research results. The research team also participated to collect further data for continued development.

The research was applied in two key areas. First, two blankets for Phra That Doi Kong Mu were produced using the traditional “Jum Lai Kham” stamping technique, each featuring 28 Buddha images, created in collaboration with the research team. Second, a ceremonial blanket procession was organized, leading from the municipality to the temple, and included a formal offering ritual presided over by Governor Chuchip Pongchai. The event drew approximately 1,000 participants. Now in its second year, the event has been refined and is scheduled for 2026 fiscal year, two to three days before the Loy Krathong festival. Additionally, the research findings were incorporated during General Prayut Chan-ocha’s visit on November 21, 2024, when he presented the “Jum Lai Kham” blankets as offerings to the pagoda.

## 2.10. Evaluation of Economic Impact Resulting from the Academic Service Project

The project “Reviving the Tai Yai Way” aimed to restore cultural traditions in Mae Hong Son through collaborating among Wat Phra That Doi Kong Mu, researchers, the community, and government agencies. Key inputs included the temple, the researcher, and the government. Five main activities were implemented which included researching Mae Hong Son city and Wat Phra That Doi Kong Mu history, reviving 12-month Tai Yai, reviving the Mathupayas rice called the Poi Tang Som Tor Luang Chong Pai Loy festival, the pilgrimage tradition of walking up to the temple called Poi Loen Sip Song, and media dissemination and permanent exhibitions. Outputs included new knowledge, media, exhibitions and tradition revival. Outcomes benefit stakeholders by fostering cultural awareness, strengthening Tai Yai identity, enhancing local participation, and encouraging sustainable tourism. The municipality plans to increase support due to the project’s cultural value.

For the Economic and Social Impact Assessment, the calculation of Social Return on Investment (SROI) in this study considered benefits occurring within a five-year period. This duration was chosen as the basic timeframe in which various outcomes are likely to occur, based on a guide to social return on investment (Lingane & Olsen, 2004). This finding aligns with in-depth interviews where participants expressed that the expected impacts would generate benefits within five years. The changes resulting from the project are expected to produce economic and social benefits, which are categorized by stakeholder groups as follows.

**Table 5** Summarized Economic and Social Benefits by Stakeholder Group

| Stakeholders                                   | Benefit Value | Ratio |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------|
| 1. Community near Wat Phra That Doi Kong Mu    | 580,060.03    | 7.3   |
| 2. Committee of Wat Phra That Doi Kong Mu      | 3,490,486.38  | 44    |
| 3. Vendors within the temple area              | 271,278.28    | 3.4   |
| *4. Mae Hong Son Municipality                  | 2,452,438.13  | 30.9  |
| **5 Entrepreneurs participating in the project | 1,133,766.00  | 14.3  |
| Total benefits generated                       | 7,928,029.53  |       |
| Present value                                  | 5,544,151.09  |       |
| Costs                                          | 2,012,000.00  |       |
| Social Return on Investment (SROI) ratio       | 3.76          |       |

\*The budget expected to hire private contractors for researching and revitalizing culture will occur only in year 0.

\*\*The costs or willingness to pay for acquiring information and the contracted hiring from the project by entrepreneurs involved in the project are calculated only for year 0.

Stakeholders include the community near Wat Phra That Doi Kong Mu with a benefit value of 580,060.03 baht, accounting for 7.3 percent. The temple committee of Wat Phra That Doi Kong Mu gains the highest benefit of 3,490,486.38 baht or 44 percent. Vendors within the temple area have benefits totaling 271,278.28 baht or 3.4 percent. The Mae Hong Son Municipality is allocated 2,452,438.13 baht or 30.9 percent. Participating entrepreneurs in the project gain 1,133,766.00 baht or 14.3 percent. The total benefits generated equal 7,928,029.53 baht.

The present value of these benefits is 5,544,151.09 baht. The total cost of the project is 2,012,000.00 baht, resulting in an SROI ratio of 3.76. Preliminary evaluation of the economic and social impacts shows the project generates total benefits of 7,928,029.53 baht. The greatest benefits accrue to the temple committee of Wat Phra That Doi Kong Mu, representing 44 percent of the total.

The SROI assessment indicates that impacts occur and persist over five years (from 2024 to 2028) using a discount rate of 2.85 percent, based on the five-year government bond yield during the project period, which represents the opportunity cost of invested funds. The study's results show an SROI ratio of 3.76, meaning every 1 baht invested returns 3.76 baht in economic and social benefits. The benefits adjusted to present value amount to 5,544,151.09 baht, with operational costs of 2,012,000 baht.

The study found that the research project titled "Reviving the Tai Way: The Restoration and Management of Tai Yai Cultural Capital in Mae Hong Son" yields an economic and social return at a rate of 3.76 times. Although this figure may not be considered very high, it confirms that the project generates worthwhile benefits. Interviews with stakeholders confirmed that five community groups applied the project's knowledge to develop activities and generate income, enhancing their economic and social well-being. Participants expressed high satisfaction, noting that without the project, key traditions might have been lost. The project not only preserved cultural heritage but also empowered communities to build sustainable futures, leading evaluators to foresee lasting economic and social benefits.

## **Conclusion and Discussion**

### **1. Conclusion**

#### **1.1. History of Mae Hong Son City and Phra That Doi Kong Mu**

Mae Hong Son City, located in Chong Kham subdistrict of Mueang district, has its roots as Tai Yai settlements dating back to the 24th Buddhist century. It was officially recognized in 1829 AD with the appointment of Saen Kom as village leader. In 1874, King Inthawichayanon unified the region's communities to form Mae Hong Son as a western frontier town of Chiang Mai. Predominantly inhabited and governed by the Tai Yai, the city has long served as a cultural center of Tai Yai identity within the Lanna region.

Positioned at the crossroads of the Pai and Salawin Rivers, Mae Hong Son became a key trade and cultural hub with Burmese cities during the colonial era, shaping a distinct Tai Yai identity in language, attire, cuisine, and Buddhist practice. Since 1960s, government policies have promoted Mae Hong Son for cultural tourism, with Phra That Doi Kong Mu, as an iconic 19th century pagoda, emerging as a symbol of Tai Yai and Thai cultural fusion. The pagoda was restored in the mid-20th century and continues to anchor local traditions and rituals that preserve and celebrate Tai Yai heritage.

Phra That Doi Kong Mu is the spiritual center of the community, especially during the annual "Poi Loen Sip Song" festival, which includes the communal offering of Mathupayas rice (Tang Som Tor Luang). Since 2020, the festival has been rescheduled to coincide with Buddhist Lent, and participation has declined due to social and economic changes, resulting in shortened rituals and the replacement of the traditional pilgrimage walk with vehicular transport. These changes highlight challenges in preserving cultural heritage while affirming the continued significance of Phra That Doi Kong Mu as a symbol of Tai Yai identity and spirituality. The study therefore proposes a participatory model for managing Tai Yai cultural capital through public spaces in Mae Hong Son city, focusing on reviving traditions associated with Phra That Doi Kong Mu.

The development of a model to revive and creatively enhance Tai Yai traditions and festivals in Mae Hong Son was based on extensive research into the historical background, lifestyle, and current status of key traditions such as Poi Tang Som Tor Luang (the rice cooking and stirring ritual) and Poi Loen Sip Song (pilgrimage to Phra That Doi Kong Mu). This process was structured into three phases: pre-festival, festival, and post-festival, guiding both revival and innovation efforts.

A key achievement of the project was the creation of Tai Yai style offering sets for Phra That Doi Kong Mu, used during Mae Hong Son's 150th anniversary in January 2024. The initiative successfully transferred cultural knowledge to local leaders and entrepreneurs, encouraging wider community participation. Notably, the long-discontinued "Tang Som Tor Luang" ritual was revived and served as a model for other communities. By October 2023, the project had expanded to eight network communities, with consistency high satisfaction ratings (Year 1,  $\bar{X}=4.50$ ; Year 2,  $\bar{X}=4.56$ ). The initiative also underscored the importance of public spaces that support free cultural expression through dance, drumming, and Tai Yai songs.

The project developed 88 income-generating prototype products, such as figurines of auspicious animals (Garuda, Singha, Naga), alongside cultural promotion courses on ceremonial crafts. Moreover, the ceremonial cloth procession and pilgrimage during the Poi Loen Sip Song festival engaged over 700 participants and six community networks, with a high satisfaction rating ( $\bar{X}=4.33$ ). Additionally, a Tai Yai decorative writing course was introduced to support religious art and fabric design. Recognizing its community relevance, Mae Hong Son Municipality allocated it into the 2025 budget, illustrating successful integration of research into cultural revitalization.

### **1.2. Assessment of Economic and Social Impacts From the Revitalization and Management of Tai Yai Cultural Capital in Mae Hong Son**

This research demonstrated notable economic and social impact, generating a return of 3.76 times the initial investment. While this figure may not appear remarkably high, it confirms the project's effectiveness in delivering tangible community benefits. Interviews with stakeholders showed that participants in cultural events at Wat Phra That Doi Kong Mu were able to apply project-based knowledge in ways that supported income generation and community development across five local groups. These outcomes highlight improvements in both economic conditions and overall quality of life.

The project significantly improved economic conditions and quality of life while fostering strong stakeholder satisfaction. By the documenting and revealing endanger traditions, it mitigated the risk of cultural loss and created long-term income opportunities. The participatory nature of the research enabled local people to take ownership of their cultural heritage, strengthening their connection to Tai Yai identity and traditions. To address the lack of cultural education in local schools, a learning kit on Mae Hong Son's heritage was developed, incorporating local histories and contributions from elder cultural bearers. This effort preserved collective memory and supported intergenerational knowledge transfer, embedding Tai Yai traditions into the community's everyday life.

## **2. Discussion**

The development of a model for revitalizing or creatively restoring cultural traditions and festivals of the Tai community in Mae Hong Son involves the study, exploration, and investigation of the historical background and way of life of the Tai Yai people in the area. It also includes the analysis of the current status of traditional festivals such as Poi Tang Som Tor Luang and Poi Loen Sip Song (walking up to Phra That Doi Kong Mu) to understand how these traditions are being preserved today. This aligns with Wallace's (1956) concept of cultural revitalization, which views such efforts as an attempt to create a culture that is more satisfying than the existing one. A key aspect is that community members become aware of and seek to manage their culture in response to change.

The revitalization approach taken by the research team aligns with two methods: preservation of traditional culture and creation of new cultural forms. These approaches can be seen through various project activities. Preservation of traditional culture is reflected in the traditional meanings embedded in offerings, religious procedures, and steps used in rituals such as the cooking and preparation of rice in the Tang Som Tor Luang tradition. Meanwhile, creation of new

cultural elements can be seen in innovations like the walking-up ceremony to Phra That Doi Kong Mu, the creation of a sacred cloth for the pagoda, the restructured parade formation, and the design of new mythical animal sculptures.

The revitalization efforts correspond with Voget's (1956) three factors. First, social change: economic, social, and cultural transformations in Chong Kham subdistrict, Mueang district, Mae Hong Son have reduced community participation in traditional festivals, altering ritual practices and weakening awareness of local cultural capital. Second, identity definition: although the Tai Yai and their descendants continue to express identity through dress and language, knowledge related to religion and rituals has declined, prompting efforts to rediscover and sustain Tai Yai identity while also promoting cultural tourism. Third, cultural preservation: strong potential exists for revitalizing Tai Yai culture through collaboration among local institutions, including municipal authorities, the Provincial Cultural Office, the Cultural Council, monks, schools, and community networks. Previous research also indicates that Tai Yai identity in Mae Hong Son has historically evolved through interactions between indigenous and migrant Tai groups, suggesting opportunities for the reconstruction of a renewed cultural identity.

The researchers applied historical critique methods using primary and secondary sources together with field data. The findings were synthesized into a conceptual framework for restoring and creatively developing Tai traditional festivals, organized into three phases: pre-festival, during the festival, and post-festival. This framework guided the revitalization of the following activities:

1) Revitalization of the Rice Offering Tradition practice: This allowed for a reconstructed ritual process, serving as a model for other communities. During the first year (October 7–9, 2024), the work expanded to eight community temples, and inspired additional adoption. High satisfaction scores of both 2023 ( $\bar{X}$ =4.50, S.D. =0.604) and 2024 ( $\bar{X}$ =4.56, S.D.=0.579) confirmed community appreciation. Afterward, the Mae Hong Son Municipality and the Tourism Authority of Thailand (Mae Hong Son) incorporated the Rice Offering Tradition practice to the annual activities calendar and have continued to promote the practice through their respective organizations to the present day.

2) Creative Development of Tai Yai Pagoda Offerings: The research produced two sizes of offering sets, which were developed with layout guidelines and transferred to the community, notably Phra Suwit Thirathammo and local artisans, and handed over to the municipality for future use. The results and practices of this research led the Mae Hong Son Municipality to recognize the cultural importance of this tradition and actively support its promotion. As a result, Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha participated in the Tai Yai Pagoda Offering during his official visit to the province on November 21, 2024. Subsequently, the Mae Hong Son Municipality, together with the Tourism Authority of Thailand (Mae Hong Son), incorporated the Tai Yai Pagoda Offering into the province's annual events calendar and has continued to promote the tradition to this day. This outcome aligns with Janklap (2020), and Mankong (2017), emphasizing the importance of understanding and managing cultural assets for creative economic development and foster public and private collaboration. Complementing this, three cultural learning curricula on Kok Som To, Dok Phueng, and Mathupayas rice were introduced to address gaps in cultural education and promote heritage awareness. Additionally, product development based on the ritual elements led to prototype items for community income generation, demonstrating how cultural revitalization, education, and strong local network can collaboratively transform heritage into sustainable socio-economic value. This reflects trust and collaboration among networks, consistent with studies by Pitchdamrong (2010), Pholphirul (2013), and Mankong (2017), all of whom stressed that strong local partnerships are key to turning cultural capital into economic and social benefits.

3) Product development for income generation: Cultural rituals inspired prototype product development, offering economic opportunities for the community. Currently, some of these developed products are being sold at Culture Connex, Bangkok, a cultural space that communicates Thai cultural capital through cultural products. This reflects strong

collaboration among local networks, in line with the findings of Pitchdamrong (2010), Pholphirul (2013), and Mankong (2017), who emphasized that trust and cooperation are key to transforming cultural capital into economic and social benefits.

In summary, the research project successfully combined historical methods with community engagement to not only revitalize disappearing traditions but also creatively build new ones that contribute to economic sustainability, cultural preservation, and community empowerment in Mae Hong Son.

## **Research Recommendations**

### **1. Recommendations for Stakeholders**

- 1.1 Expand the development and promotion of products and services with local entrepreneurs.
- 1.2 Conduct long-term follow-up on the utilization of research outcomes by stakeholders in the area.

### **2. Recommendations for Researchers**

- 2.1 Collect and compile knowledge on Tai Yai history, art, and culture, adapting presentation methods to suit all age groups, such as using animated cartoons to enhance learning and awareness of local traditions and festivals.
- 2.2 Conduct comparative studies on the effectiveness of curricula designed to revitalize Tai Yai cultural capital.
- 2.3 Broaden the application and dissemination of research findings to relevant agencies more widely, both domestically and internationally.

## **Acknowledgments**

The authors gratefully acknowledge the funding and guidance provided by Thailand Academy for Area Collaboration Innovation and Transformation (TACIT). Appreciation is also extended to the local communities and cultural practitioners in Mae Hong Son for their valuable contributions to this study.

## **References**

- Chiang Mai Rajabhat University. (2013). *Tai Yai–Thai Dictionary*. Chiang Mai: Chiang Mai Rajabhat University. (In Thai)
- Janklap, E. (2020). *Cultural capital management guidelines for promoting creative economic development: A case study of Nakhon Si Thammarat Provincial Cultural Office*. Master's thesis, M.A. in Public Administration, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand. (In Thai)
- Jeenakham, M. (2023, September 5). *Interview*. Mayor of Mae Hong Son Municipality. Mae Hong Son, Thailand. (In Thai)
- Kosol, C. (2018). Cultural Capital Management of Ethnic Groups in Northern Thailand. *Journal of Innovation in Management and Administration*, 6(2), 64–73. (In Thai)
- Lingane, A., & Olsen, S. (2004). Guidelines for Social Return on Investment. *California Management Review*, 46(3), 116-135. <https://doi.org/10.2307/41166224>
- Mae Hong Son Province. (2022). *Annual Report Summary of Mae Hong Son Province*. Mae Hong Son: Mae Hong Son Province. (In Thai)
- Mae Hong Son Municipality Registry Office. (2024). *Population Data Report*. Mae Hong Son: Mae Hong Son Municipality Registration Office. (In Thai)

- Mankong, A. (2017). The Role of Cultural Capital and the Community's Economic Development: Case Study of Community in Ban Toon Sub-District, Mueang District, Phayao Province. *Research and Development Journal Loei Rajabhat University*, 12(39), 90–100. (In Thai)
- Maung Tin Aung. (2005). *History of Burma*. Sumit, P. (Trans.). Bangkok: Social Science and Humanities Textbook Project, Social Science Association of Thailand.
- Ministry of Education, Department of Religious Affairs. (1990). *History of Temples Throughout the Kingdom, Volume 8*. Bangkok: Department of Religious Affairs. (In Thai)
- Nimsakul, S. (2023, August 25). *Interview*. Local expert. Mae Hong Son, Thailand. (In Thai)
- Office of the Permanent Secretary for Culture, Ministry of Culture. (2019). *Creative Culture, Creative Economy*. Bangkok: Rungsin Printing. (In Thai)
- Ongsakul, S. (2023). *Lanna History*. 13th ed. Chiang Mai: Chiang Mai University. (In Thai)
- Panyamulwongsa, S. (2023, September 15). *Interview*. Local expert. Mae Hong Son, Thailand. (In Thai)
- Phra Khru Anusanasakorn. (1987). *Wat Phra That Doi Kong Mu Nai Changwat Mae Hong Son*. [Mae Hong Son and The Phra That Doi Kong Mu Temple]. Bangkok: Charoenphon. (In Thai)
- Pholphirul, P. (2013). Creative Economy and the Development Issues in Thailand. *NIDA Economics Review*, 7(1), 1–68. (In Thai)
- Phra Sumon Sasanakit. (2023, May 6). *Interview*. Abbot of Wat Phra That Doi Kong Mu, Mae Hong Son, Thailand.
- Phra Sumon Sasanakit. (2023, September 5). *Interview*. Abbot of Wat Phra That Doi Kong Mu, Mae Hong Son, Thailand. (In Thai)
- Pitchdamrong, N. (2010). Cultural Capital: The Treasure of the Creative Economy. *Journal of Economics and Society*, 47(4), 9–13. (In Thai)
- Pradit, P. (2023, July 20). *Interview*. Local expert. Mae Hong Son, Thailand.
- Sitthiwet, P. (1939a). *Sitthiwet Phap*. [Picture book]. N.P.
- Sitthiwet, P. (1939b). Figure 3 (a) *The Eastern Vihara of the Main Stupa, Photographed in 1939*; (b) *The Pond on the Western Side of Phra That Doi Kong Mu, With a View of the Main Stupa in the Background*.
- Sriratanaban, M. (1939). Figure 2 *Doi Kong Mu*.
- Sriratanaban, T., & Others. (2023a). Figure 4 (a) *Garuda, Singha, and Naga: Traditional Clay Sculptural Models in Ancient Style*, and (b) *Garuda, Singha, and Naga: Sculptural Models Cast in Cement*.
- Sriratanaban, T., & Others. (2023b). Figure 5 (a), (b), (c), and (d) *Revival of the “Som To” Rice-Cooking and Stirring Ritual in 2023*.
- Sriratanaban, T., & Others. (2023c). Figure 6 (a), (b), (c), (d), and (e) *Products Inspired by Symbolic Forms Reintroduced During the Revival*.
- Sriratanaban, T., & Others. (2024a). Figure 1 *Research Framework Diagram Illustrating the Objectives, Outputs, and Indicators of the Research*.
- Sriratanaban, T., & Others. (2024b). Figure 7 *Phra That Doi Kong Mu Exhibition and Stamping Postcards Activity*.
- Sriratanaban, T., & Others. (2024c). Figure 8 *Two Sets of Phra That Offering Prototypes*.
- Sriratanaban, T., & Others. (2024d). Figure 9 *Revitalization of the Tradition “Poi Loen Sib Song: Walking Up Phra That Doi Kong Mu”*.
- Surinta, A. (2024, January 5). *Interview*. Local expert. Mae Hong Son, Thailand.
- Voget, F. W. (1956). The American Indian in Transition: Reformation and Accommodation. *American Anthropologist*, 58(2), 249-263.

Waidee, A. (2023, May 5). *Interview*. Local expert. Mae Hong Son, Thailand. (In Thai)

Wallace, A. F. C. (1956). Revitalization Movements. *American Anthropologist*, 264-281.

Wannasiri, S. (2023, September 5). *Interview*. Local expert. Mae Hong Son, Thailand. (In Thai)

Winichakul, T. (2013). *The Birth of Siam From the Map: A Bodily History of the Nation*. Bangkok: Kobfai. (In Thai)