

**MURAL PAINTING: DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL TOURISM
PUBLIC RELATIONS WAT PA LELAI WORAWIHAN, MUANG
DISTRICT, SUPHANBURI PROVINCE**

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Abstract

The objectives of this research were to investigate the background and importance of mural painting, its problems of public relations and its problem solving approaches to develop the cultural tourism public relations about a Folk Epic of Khun Chang-Khun Paen in Wat Pa Lelai Worawihan, Muang District, Suphan Buri Province. The researcher employed a mixed method studies through the Explanatory Stepwise Research. The first step was a quantitative research by applying questionnaire conducted with tourists visiting the mural painting. The second step was a qualitative research to more evidently clarify results through purposively sampling. 11 samples were a monk, 2 temple committee members, a cultural scholar, a tourism scholar, five mass media, a tourist representative and a community intellectual. The instruments for data collection were the informal interview format, focus groups, and workshops. The researcher found that its background and significance were inaugurated in the Abbot Term of His Most Ven. Phradhamma Mahaviranuvattara and completed in the Abbot Term of His Most Ven. Phradhepsuwannamolee in 2004. The mural contained 60 paintings about the Sepha Literature of Khun Chang-Khun Paen painted by Muangsingh Janchaai. They provided the past of the Thais because they collected the Thai customs and cultures from national unto the local levels. They were the important sources to learn about Thailand where the Thai later generations should learn about their identities of Thainess. With regards to public relations on printed matters, personal media, audio visual aids and mass media were at moderate level of 3.30, 3.30, 2.90 and 2.95 by average, respectively. The problem of printed matters was the most critical

which required public relations emphasizing the mural painting by personal media and audio-visual aids. The approaches to the external development demanded organizing training and seminars on communication for public relations in printed matters through inviting keynote speakers for knowledge and training. As of the internal elements, they required development, and supports through providing knowledge and training, creation of understanding public relations, organizing activities, creating networks for connection and creating more media about the mural painting, intimacy of external public relations, the temple personnel, provisions of brochures, websites, page groups, PR billboards, exhibitions and activities about the Folk Epic of Khun Chang-Khun Paen during the Songkran Day, Mahacharti Sermon Days, the 10th Lunar Month Sart Day, and the Tourist Guide Training.

Keywords: Mural painting, development, public relations, cultural tourism

Introduction

Worldwide tourism endlessly grew and expanded. The reports of The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has estimated 1.8 billion tourists around the world in 2030, or 3.3% expansion rate each year. 535 million tourists have been expected to visit Asia and Pacific at 57% expansion rate by average. Such number has been divided into 293 million tourists from Northeastern Asia, 187 million from Southeastern Asia, 19 million from Oceania and 36 million from South Asian. The Thai tourism industry grew and reinforced the national economy and social amid the prolonging world economic slowdown. The rapid growth of the tourism industry the competitor nations, long stride change of the digital technology affected enterprising, media, marketing, customer relations, partners and big-date management for the direction of the enterprise decision making, precise and appropriate market positioning. In addition, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) prioritized collaboration with all partners to promote tourism in Thailand as the sustainable tourist destination. There were presentations of tourist values where tourists would meet valuable experiences, and new perspectives upon touching the charms of the Thai ways of life with their uniqueness in each locality under a campaign of “Amazing Smart Thai” for the Thai tourists and a campaign of “Amazing Thailand” under the concept of “Open to the New Shades” for foreign tourists. These campaigns were continuously launched and enabled to direct the

Thai tourism industry to retrain its 1 in 5 of the world rank in terms of gross income and 1 in 10 in terms of the tourist numbers in the world rank. It also maintained the bottom-line of gross income for not less than 33%.

Suphanburi is a province located in the west-central of Thailand with the areas of 5,358.01 square kilometers. It north adheres to Uthaithani Province and Chainat Province. It east adheres to Singburi Province, Angthong Province and Phra Nakon Sri Ayutthya Province. It south adheres to Nakhon Pathom Province and Kanchanaburi Province. Its west adheres to Kanchanaburi Province and Uthaithani Province. Its most lands are paddy fields with Tha Chin River or Suphanburi River as the major river runs through its north to south. Suphanburi Province homes diverse resources responsive to organize tourism. It homes rich nature, archeological sites, archeological materials, cultures, traditions, and ethnic groups. In history, Suphanburi Province aged nor less than 3000 years since the era of Khun Luong Pha Ngua, the first Suphanburi dynasty, the victory of the elephant fight by His Majesty Naresuan the Great over Phramaha Upparacha at the Don Jedi battle zone, where mega-celebration to honor His Majesty has been organized each year.

Wat Pa Lelai Worawihan, was previously called “Wat Lan Makwit” an ancient temple associated with Suphanburi Province and estimated ages of 1, 200 years. It is located at rim of Malai Man Road, Rua Yai Sub-District, Muang District, Suphanburi Province. Common villagers call it “Wat Pa”. In its temple, it situates Luong Phor To in Pa Le Lai mudra a Buddha Image of U-thong of Suvarnbhumi Era. Within the image, there were 36 relics of His Lord Buddha offered by Phramaha Lai Ya Laai. At present it is the Royal Temple of the third Order. Wat Pa Lelai Worawihan connected to the renowned local epic of Thailand and that is the Sepha Khun Chang-Khun Paen, the Nirat (Journey) Muang Suphan of Sunthorn Phou, the Birth of Khun Chang-Khun Paen Legend an important Thai literature. Its narration and sites as in the literature were still found until today such as Wat Pa Lelai, Ban Rua Yai, Wat Khow Yai, Tha Sib Bia Rai Faai, Wat Khae. Sala Khun Paen at Wat Ta Lum, and Phu Muong Waterfall. The Khun Chang-Khun Paen is a local literature narrated since the Ayudhya era and become the dignified literature to the Suphanburi people and Thailand. In the age of His Majesty Rama V, it was first printed in 1872 at the Hor Smith Press. However, there are two major references, today which are the Sepha Khun Chang-Khun Paen of the Vajirayana Library and the Wat Khor Khun Chang-Khun Paen.

The 60 mural paintings at the Ra Biang Kod (Winding Balcony) around the Wat Pa Lelai Worawihan are about the Khun Chang-Khun Paen literature painted by Muangsingh Janchaai since 2004. It is about the literature written by His Majesty Rama II (His Majesty Phrabuddha Lert La Napha Lai) and poets in His Majesty era to create this magnificent masterpiece based on the true Suphanburi folklore epic since Ayutthya capital. The literature is ever since renowned and popular until today. It has been recognized as the leading literature in His Majesty Rama VI. The mural painting begins with the birth of Khun Chang-Khun Paen until ends (the 60th mural painting) Somdej Phraphan Vasa orders Plaai Chumphol to execute Dhera Khawd. Besides the narration of the Khun Chang-Khun Paen literature, the mural paintings reflect the Thai lifestyles, social and existence. It contribute the knowledge of the Thai custom, traditions and cultures from birth, hair shaving for children, entering novicehood and learning, marriage, cremation, merit-making tradition on Songkran Day, attending sermon tradition of Mahacharti Sermon, superstitious belief, belief of dreaming, arts literature, language uses for negotiation, and language uses for imaginations.

As such, they contribute to the renown of Wat Pa Lelai Worawihan and the popularity of its literature. However, with the mural painting of Khun Chang-Khun Paen literature around the temple balcony which are important to Suphanburi Province has not been likely attracted and prioritized by tourists and local people as they deserve. This is due to it is difficult to clearly find the data of mural painting in the websites of Suphanburi Province connecting to the mural paintings. It is witnessed that the Wat Pa Lelai mural paintings are voided with the information of public relations for nationwide recognition. Also, the modern technological influences replacing cultures and the ancient Thai societies concoct the Thais to ignore their unique cultures. Therefore, the researcher has been attracted to investigate mural paintings for the purpose of disseminating and publicizing them among tourists and common people for their recognition, developed them to further become a famously cultural tourist site embroidered with academic benefits, and income raising for the communities around Wat Pa Lelai Worawihan, Muang District Suphanburi Province.

Research Objectives

1. To explore the backgrounds and significance of the mural paintings of Wat Pa Lelai Worawihan, Muang District Suphanburi Province.

2. To investigate the problems of public relations on the mural paintings of Wat Pa Lelai Worawihan, Muang District Suphanburi Province.

3. To investigate the PR development approaches of the mural paintings of Wat Pa Lelai Worawihan, Muang District Suphanburi Province.

Literature Review

Suphanburi is a province located in the west-central of Thailand with the areas of 5,358.01 square kilometers. It north adheres to Uthaithani Province and Chainat Province. It east adheres to Singhburi Province, Angthong Province and Phra Nakon Sri Ayutthya Province. It south adheres to Nakhon Pathom Province and Kanchanaburi Province. Its west adheres to Kanchanaburi Province and Uthaithani Province. Its most lands are paddy fields with Tha Chin River or Suphanburi River as the major river runs through its north to south. Suphanburi Province homes diverse resources responsive to organize tourism. It homes rich nature, archeological sites, archeological materials, cultures, traditions, and ethnic groups.

In history, Suphanburi Province aged nor less than 3000 years since the era of Khun Luong Pha Ngu, the first Suphanburi dynasty, the victory of the elephant fight by His Majesty Naresuan the Great over Phramaha Upparacha at the Don Jedi battle zone, where mega-celebration to honor His Majesty has been organized each year.

Wat Pa Lelai Worawihan connected to the renowned local epic of Thailand and that is the Sepha Khun Chang-Khun Paen, the Nirat (Journey) Muang Suphan of Sunthorn Phou, the Birth of Khun Chang-Khun Paen Legend an important Thai literature. Its narration and sites as in the literature were still found until today such as Wat Pa Lelai, Ban Rua Yai, Wat Khow Yai, Tha Sib Bia Rai Faai, Wat Khae. Sala Khun Paen at Wat Ta Lum, and Phu Muong Waterfall. The Khun Chang-Khun Paen is a local literature narrated since the Ayudhya era and become the dignified literature to the Suphanburi people and Thailand.

Research Methodology

This study employed a mixed quantitative and qualitative research explored from Sepha literature of Khun Chang-Khun Paen, books and documents linked to the mural paintings whether they were involved with public

relations and cultural tourism involving tourists and tourism agencies in Suphanburi Province. The study was an Exploratory Stepwise Research. The first step was a quantitative research by applying questionnaire and observations conducted with 500 tourists visiting the mural painting, problems of public relations, exploring the interest of tourists on the mural paintings of Khun chang-Khun Paen to develop tourism at a tourist site of Wat Pa Lelai Worawihan. The second step was a qualitative research to more evidently clarify results through purposively sampling. 11 samples were a monk, 2 temple committee members, a cultural scholar, a tourism scholar, five mass media, a tourist representative and a community intellectual. The instruments for data collection were unstructured interview format, focus groups, and workshops.

Data Analyses

The researcher brought data for analyses and presented in 2 parts, which were:

1. The Quantitative Data: Analysis questionnaire about problems of PR and the mural paintings

Part 1: Analysing general information of the respondents

Part 2: Analysing backgrounds and significance of the mural paintings

Part 3: Analysing the PR problems of the mural paintings

2. The Qualitative Data: Analysing data collected from informal interview

Part 1: the values of the mural paintings of Wat Pa Lelai Worawihan

Part 2: the approaches of the cultural tourism PR development on the mural paintings

Analysis data from focus groups and workshops; then drawing conclusion as the development approaches.

Results

The researcher found that its background and significance were inaugurated in the Abbot Term of His Most Ven. Phradhamma Mahaviranuvattara and completed in the Abbot Term of His Most Ven. Phradhepsuwanamolee in 2004. The mural contained 60 paintings about the Sepha Literature of Khun Chang-Khun Paen painted by Muangsingh Janchaai. They provided the past of the Thais because they collected the Thai customs and cultures from national unto the local levels. They were the important sources to learn about Thailand where the Thai later generations should learn about their

identities of Thainess. With regards to public relations on printed matters, personal media, audio visual aids and mass media were at moderate level of 3.30, 3.30, 2.90 and 2.95 by average, respectively. The problem of printed matters was the most critical which required public relations emphasizing the mural painting by personal media and audio visual aids. The approaches to the external development demanded organizing training and seminars on communication for public relations in printed matters through inviting keynote speakers for knowledge and training.

Discussion

Development Approaches, the Mural Paintings: Development of Cultural Tourism Public Relations Wat Pa Lelai Worawihan, Muang District, Suphanburi Province.

An investigation on the 60 mural paintings about the Khun Chang-Khun Paen could be divided into 3 parts. **Part 1** was the birth of Khun Chang-Khun Paen counted from Khun Krai unto his execution. **Part 2** was about Plaai Kaew or Khun Paen, the hero, and his mother escaped him to Kanchanaburi where he completed his studies and entered marriage with Nang Phimphilalai until he staged war with Chao Chiangmai and won the battle. On his return, he was entitled Khun Paen until he beseeched royal pardon for Nang Lao Thong. His Majesty Phra Phan Vasa was at rage and order Khun Paen imprisonment. **Part 3** was the story of Plaai Ngarm and Plaai Chumphol. It began with the birth of Plaai Ngarm who fled from Khun Chang home to Grand Mom Thong Prasi in Kanchanaburi. He completed his studies and served the office with Phra Jamuen Sri a friend of Khun Paen. He had opportunity to enter battle field and beseeched for royal pardon for Khun Paen and brought him to the battle. Then Nang Sroi Fa pleaded Dera Kwad to prepare philter/ potion to charm Phra Vaivoranaj (Plaai Ngarm) Finally, Plaai Chumphol had to suppress a crocodile and ended with the execution of Dera Kwad. The 60th mural painting the last one gathered the national and the local history particularly traditions, festivals, cultures, the Thai livelihood during Ayutthya period until the early Rattana Kosin. Details were beginning from Chao Fa (the Royal Highest) until the commoner. Non literature could equal it in particular, the illustrations exhibited looked reality valuable for the cultural tourism. There were studies the problems of conceptual theories to be applied for designing questionnaire to find the tile of 4 areas in public relation with the descending average rates of printed matters,

personal media, mass media, and the audio visual aids had the least average rate. As of the unstructured or informal interview, the 4 areas were respectively relevant. The issue of printed matters became the critical topic needed to develop public relation on cultural tourism emphasizing the mural painting of the Khun Chang- Khun Paen. In summary, the approaches to develop public relations on cultural tourism organized to visit the mural painting of the Khun Chang- Khun Paen at Wat Pa Lelai Worawihan, as follows:

1. With the external factors, it needed to organizing trainings and seminars on communication for public relations on printed matters by inviting keynote speakers form external agencies to conduct trainings.

2. With the internal factors, it needed development and supports by organizing to disseminate knowledge, and creating understanding on public relations, communication for public relations, organizing activities to create networks, connection, and good relations between public relations with the temple personnel.

The approaches in developing through priority and the analytical outcomes from interviews, focus groups and workshops from the external and the internal factors were summarized as below:

1. Forming a teamwork to be responsible for specially accounted for printed matters in relation to the mural paintings;

2. Preparing pamphlets for public relations about paintings in every historical angle and contemporary traditions and cultures;

3. Preparing websites for public relations especially about the mural paintings of the Khun Chang-Khun Paen;

4. Organizing the center of painting studies located at the area of the temple balcony;

5. Segmenting the mural painting into 3 parts in the plot of the Khun Chang-Khun Paen;

6. Organizing exhibitions on the knowledge of the Khun Chang-Khun Paen or photos contest as in the mural paintings;

7. Organizing activities not less than thrice a year by the traditional festival seasons during Wan Songkran, Mahacharti Sermon, and the 10th Lunar Month Sart Day; and

8. Organizing “the Guide Training” to acquire cognitions and ability to explain the narrations in the mural painting.

Conclusion

Backgrounds and Significance of the Mural Painting: Development of Cultural Tourism Public Relations Wat Pa Lelai Worawihan, Muang District, Suphanburi Province.

Part 1: Analysing General information of the respondents

The research revealed that most tourists were female at 58.1% or 129 respondents, male at 41.9% or 93 respondents earning bachelor degree at 23.4% or 52 respondents, students/collegians at 53.6% or 119 respondents.

Part 2: Analysing backgrounds and significance of the Mural Painting: Development of Cultural Tourism Public Relations Wat Pa Lelai Worawihan, Muang District, Suphanburi Province

The backgrounds and significance of the mural painting on the Khun chang-Khun Paen was a folk literature narrated since the Ayutthya era and became the influential literature of Suphanburi people. In the time of His Majesty Rama V, it was first printed in 1872 at the Hor Smith Press. However, there are two major references, today which are the Sepha Khun Chang-Khun Paen of the Vajirayana Library and the Wat Khor Khun Chang-Khun Paen. Its 60 mural paintings at Wat Pa Lelai Worawihan, Suphanburi Province narrated the Khun Chang-Khun Paen literature drawn by Muangsingh Janchaai in 2004. It was written by His Majesty Rama II (His Majesty Phrabuddha Lert La Napha Lai) and poets in His Majesty era to create this magnificent masterpiece based on the true Suphanburi folklore epic since Ayutthya capital. The mural painting begins with the birth of Khun Chang-Khun Paen until the 60th painting ends at Somdej Phraphan Vasa orders Plaai Chumphol to execute Dhera Khawd. It has been recognized as the leading literature in His Majesty Rama VI. The mural paintings at Wat Pa Lelai Worawihan, Muang District, Suphanburi Province revealed that it is responsive to cultural tourism – an excursion for leaning, touching the ways of life, cultures and in-depth traditions focusing on history, community life, livelihood, and ways of life. It is the field experiences or the site importantly attributes history and cultures. There are narrations of social and human development through history linked to cultures, knowledge and valuing social. By synopsis, the cultural tourism is a touring emphasizing specific interest of the tourists with studies, exchanges and participation with the local people. The touring time is spent on admiring cultural heritage which are attractive sites, arts, traditions, ethnic groups, festivals exhibit the local cultures. All the sites are pointed to a tourist model where tourists have been inspired or

motivated to travel to the destination sites for the purpose of observations, learning, co-experiences and being aware of cultural values of the community at that destination sites. It also covers creative jobs, customs, traditions and activities. The development is a process leading to change through allocating social resources for change in order to reach the selective social goal. These are through efficiently controlling changing rate. The meaning of development is closed to its word – to systematically create change from a status to a better status or to systematically better the previous existing status. Development is to change for the better and growth. At the same time, public relation is a process to use communication to promote relationship and the good understanding between organizations and people involved and also among the organizational members or the organizations disseminate information to the targeted people in order to create understanding, collaboration, and supporting people while helping create good image. For organizations and agencies. Successful public relation requires efficient communication, planning, setting objectives and serious and proper operations by plans. By synopsis, public relation is an attempt to plan in order to acquire influences over the mind of people involved through operating the good way valuable to social so that public would rise good attitudes for the socially common good. Public relations pertain 4 areas of potentiality.

Part 3: Analysing the PR problems of the mural paintings: Development of Cultural Tourism Public Relations Wat Pa Lelai Worawihan, Muang District, Suphanburi Province

In the printed matters, the tourists estimated just moderate level in the overall views. It was found that the mural painting PR for Wat Pa Lelai Worawihan. The printed matters revealed that all items in general by average was at moderate level or 3.34. By each item, it was found that most of them were at moderate level. Respectively, they were beautiful illustrations; printed matters adequately and clearly provided information about the mural paintings on the Khun Chang-Khun Paen at Wat Pa Lelai Worawihan; updated information; attractive designs; easing to read; immediate understanding, useful information on arts and cultures of mural painting at Wat Pa Lelai Worawihan. It was followed by postures that were also perceived at moderate level whereas magazines were at the lowest level, respectively.

As of the personal communication, the tourists estimated just moderate level in the overall views or 3.00 by average. By each item, it was found that most of them were at moderate level. Respectively, they were knowledge-edged

authorities; skillful in conveying knowledge to the tourists; providing coverage information to every destination site; hospitable authorities with service-mindedness and guides for information in details about the mural paintings of Wat Pa Lelai Worawihan. They were corresponded with the work of Monchanok Chaisaenyakorn (2015) studied “Exposures of Public Relations within the Organizations and Satisfaction over Information of the Staff in the Faculty of Public Health: Mahidol University. She set and objective on to investigate the differences between the staff backgrounds and the satisfaction over the organizational PR information. She found that the staff exposed the internal organizational PR with regards to printed matters, and e- media by overall at high level.

In the audiovisual aids, the tourists estimated just moderate level in the overall views or 2.90 by average. Considering by each item, it was found that each one was at moderate level. Respectively, they were clear explanation on the meaning of the mural paintings, ability to present the past unable to go back for admiration, able to convey emotion, able to understand the feeling, having maps to guide tourists, techniques of drawing, and the painting exhibit the identity of the mural painting at Wat Pa Lelai Worawihan. They were corresponded with the work of Buaphin Tosap (2019) investigating “Tourism Public Relation through Social Media Online: a case of Phoom Riang community, Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province.” Its objective was to investigate satisfaction among media users over public relation communication in the social media online. She found that by overview, respondents were satisfied with Facebook page at high level. With regards to mass media, the tourists by overall estimated it at moderate level or 2.59 by average. Reflecting each item, she found that all were at moderate level which were convenience to access information, appropriate day and time of public relations, and adequate and avail information, respectively.

Content and time of public relation were adequate to understanding while communicative language and listening eased to understand, respectively. They were corresponded with the work of Kusuma Bhuset (2010) investigating “Public Relations to Construct Community Participation to Promote Cultural Tourism”. Its objective was to investigate PR strategies to construct community participation to promote cultural tourism. She found that mass media was the principal in the PR of cultural tourism because it can access and cover the targeted groups – numbers of common people.

Recommendations

1. Recommendations for Agencies

Recommendations the tourists needed most are the printed matters, clearer and more constructive public relations such as pamphlets on the mural paintings, introduction of visiting sites within the temple, to narrate the history of Wat Pa Lelai Worawihan, and the important sites within the temple.

2. Recommendations for Further Studies

2.1. There should be information exchanges with regards to facts, thoughts, feelings, community expectations to develop tourist sites at Wat Pa Lelai Worawihan between people and the state agencies with state agencies to people through preparing news reports, articles, and hosting the meetings to exchange opinions and recommendations.

2.2. There should be researches conducted on the needs of tourists over public relations about the information of mural paintings at Wat Pa Lelai Worawihan with various areas to find their needs of perceiving information leading to appropriate development.

2.3. There should be researches conducted on efficiency of the overall public relations at Wat Pa Lelai Worawihan, Muang District, Suphanburi Province.

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