

The Conservative Processes of Palm Leaf (Bailan) Scriptures with The Participation of People In Khonkean Province.

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Abstract

The Research entitled “*The Conservative Processes of Bailan Scriptures (Scriptures on Palm Leaf) with the Participation of People in Khonkean Province*” is of qualitative type of study. The research has three main objectives. They are: 1) To study the processes of conserving Bailan Scriptures in Khonkean Province; 2) To study the forms of the participation of people in Khonkean Province in conserving of Bailan scriptures; and 3) To study the conservation of Bailan scriptures with the participation of people in Khonkean Province. The data-analysis of this type of research has been made with the inductive methodology.

The Results of research are as follows:

1. The processes of the conservation of Bailans criptures in Khonkean Province

The conservation of Bailan scriptures in khon Kean province has fixed steps, that is, survey Bailan scriptures scattered in various places, collecting and dividing them into several sections for proving convenient searching, for instance, religion and philosophy, folk literatures, history and chronicle, and so on. However, the conserving of Bailan scriptures has no, in the first phase, fixed format. But, at present, after surveying, collecting and grouping

them in several sections, there are many types of keeping Bailan scriptures through modern tools, for example, transmitting them from original copies to microfilms, and keeping on websites and other electronic Medias. In addition, the spreading of Bailan scriptures has been made through various ways, for instance, through giving sermon by monks on the occasion of making traditional merit, academic exhibition, conducting research, and integrating them with learning and teaching, including the spreading of knowledge from Bailan scriptures in the forms of multimedia, i.e., radio, television and website, etc.

2. The Forms of the participation of people in Khonkean province in conserving of Bailan scriptures

The result of research is found that forms of participation of people in Khonkean province in conserving of Bailan scriptures have been made

through cultivating awareness for the conservation of Bailan scriptures, for example, through giving correct knowledge and letting people be aware of the value of Bailan scriptures as the sources of all areas of knowledge passed down to them right now from their own ancestors. For the promotion of conserving of Bailan scriptures, it should be made with the collaboration of three important pillars of society, that is, temple, village and government office (school). Of those, there should be promotion of conserving Bailan scriptures through learning and teaching with short courses emphasized in writing and reading dhamma-script, through showcase in the learning places, and there should be academic seminars participated by monks, folk-wise persons and scholars as well. And more importantly, there should be the promotion of conserving Bailan scriptures by publishing knowledge obtained by seminar as the new set of knowledge in order to spread Bailan scriptures in various online-medias. In addition, there should be activity praising several persons and associations being able to read and write dhamma-script correctly.

3. The conservation of Bailan scriptures with the participation of people in Khon Kean Province

The conservation of Bailan scriptures should have been supported budget from many organizations both government and private sector, including monks who are as the main coordinators with many organizations for fund-aid aiming at organizing activities in conserving Bailan scripture by letting all section of society to take part in supporting of fund and setting plan for conserving of Bailan scriptures, and there should have been personnel who take charge on this matter in order to make good effect to the project as well. Besides, there should have continuously been system of assessment in order to improve and develop the conservation of Bailan scriptures, and in addition to apply this result of the research for the conserving of Bailan scriptures in the future.

Keywords : Conservative Processes, Bailan Scriptures, Participation

Introduction

At present, there are few people who are able to read and write ancient Isan script (ancient northeastern script), particularly the young generation in Isan region. If we let this situation go without any solution it is probably that the invaluable things recorded in Bailan scriptures from our ancestors would be lost, and it is also regrettable for us to lose the invaluable scriptures which had been built by our ancestors for a long time. In this research, the researchers have entered to survey Bailan scriptures in two sources of Khonkaen Province, that is, i) Devpuranaram temple, Nong-Bua-Dimee

village, Taphra sub-district, Maung district, Khonkaen Province; and ii) Mahachulalongkorn Rajavidyalaya University, Khonkaen campus. The former is the place where there are many Bailan Scriptures have been conserved without making known to the public, the latter is the academic institution that provides course on the ancient scripture study as the selective subject, for which student who wish to study lectured by assistant Professor Dr. Phramaha Doa Siam Vajirapanno, and PhraKalya Sophakul. If These Bailan scriptures could have been read and written by people in the region, we would have seen many valuable ones recorded in Bailan scriptures. So it is a great task for all of us to build the process for conserving Bailan scriptures with the participation of people in Khonkaen province in recovering of ancient Isan script to be as a pride of the advancement of our ancestors to the next generation in our country (Somchai Nilnithi, 2012 : 59- 63).

From the reason mentioned above, the researchers as ones who have been in academic institution are interested in doing research with regard to the conservative processes of Bailan scriptures with the participation of people in Khonkaen province in order to promote the conservation of Bailan scriptures, on which the teachings of the Buddha, folk Isan literatures, history and chronicles, including traditional herbal pharmacopoeia, Isan proverbs (Phayā) short stories, etc., have been recorded. All of these are the valuable ones that denote the identity of Isan region. It is the cultural heritage for the study and research in the next generation.

Objectives of Research

1. To study the processes of the conservation of Bailan Scriptures in Khonkaen Province
2. To study the forms of the participation of people in Khonkaen Province for the conservation of Bailan scriptures
3. To study the conservation of Bailan scriptures with the participation of people in Khonkaen Province.

Question of the Research

1. What is the process of conserving Bailan scriptures in Khonkaen Province?
2. How do people in Khonkaen Province participate in building the conservative processes of Bailan Scriptures?
3. How do people in Khonkaen Province participated for the conservation of Bailan scriptures?

Scope of the Research

1. Research Methodology

This research is of qualitative type of study. The researchers intend to study the Conservative Processes of Bailan Scriptures with the Participation of People in Khonkean Province with three main objectives. They are: 1) To study the processes of conserving Bailan Scriptures in Khonkean Province; 2) To study the forms of the participation of people in Khonkean Province for the conservation of Bailan scriptures; and 3) To study the conservation of Bailan scriptures with the participation of people in Khonkean Province.

2. Sources of Data Collection

This research has two sources of data-collection: i) Devpuranaram temple, Nong-Bua Dimee village, Taphra sub-district, Maung district, Khonkaen Province, and ii) Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Khonkaen campus.

3. Population and Samples

The samples of data-collection in this research have been chosen from populations in two sources as mentioned above with the specified selection, that is, Monks, folk wise- men who have knowledge in Bailan scriptures, the leaders of communities, the officers of local administrative organization (Tambon Administrative Organization), and people who have knowledge in Bailan scriptures are totally 40 persons. The Samples of this research consist of ten monks, five folk wise-men, five the leaders of communities, five officers of local administrative organizations, and fifteen people who have knowledge in Bailan scriptures

The Expected Benefit of Research

1. Having known conservative processes of Bailan scriptures in Khonkaen province
2. Having obtained the forms of the participative conservation of Bailan scriptures of people in Khonkaen province
3. Having known method and step of conserving Bailan Scriptures with the participation of people in Khonkaen province
4. Having known problems and hurdles in conserving of Bailan Scriptures with the participation of people in Khonkaen province
5. The result of this research would be the information for ones who wish to study regarding the conservative processes of Bailan Scriptures in the future

The Result of Research

The results of research were as follows:

1. The conservative processes of Bailan Scriptures in Khonkaen Province:

1.1 Surveying collecting and grouping of Bailan Scriptures in Khonkaen province.

In this aspect, the result of research is found that there are surveying and examining Bailan Scriptures scattered in various places, for example, in temples, in Mordham's houses (The house of local doctor in Isan region) and folk wise-men's houses. The scriptures occupies by Mordham and folk wise-men are reserved and believed as the sacred scripture kept for black magic ceremony, and also as the herbal pharmacopoeia that could not be made known to the public, whereas Bailan Scriptures reserved in temples have been surveyed by ones who are expert in Bailan Scriptures, they have divided Bailan Scriptures and grouped them into many sections and sub sections for providing convenient searching, following the contents appeared or scribed in Bailan Scriptures in each bunch. Bailan Scriptures have been grouped in three sections: i) Religion and Philosophy, consists in Mantra-chanting ceremony, various results of making merits, ethics, Isan proverbs (Phaya), medical knowledge, astrological knowledge, etc., ii) literatures, consists in the chronicles of folk tales short stories proverbs, etc., iii) Histories, consists in chronicles: chronicle of folk village, of folk city, of folk Buddha's statue, of Buddha's Relics, and of sermons, and of codes of ancient law, and so on.

2. Forms of conserving Bailan Scriptures in Khonkaen Province.

In this aspect, the result of research is found that previously, there is no, in Khonkaen Province fixed step of conserving Bailan Scriptures, however there are actually two traditions of keeping Bailan scriptures, that is, one is keeping Bailan scriptures by binding them in bunches, and two is keeping Bailan scriptures by strictly splicing woods in two sides aiming at keeping Bailan scriptures smooth and unfolded, then covering them with cotton garment or silk, which would be consist of various patterns on the garment covered each bunch of Bailan scriptures, dependent upon ideology or belief of each locality; the last step of conserving is to keep Bailan scriptures in *Sim* (Uposatha in formal Pali for Sanghakamma activities) or *HorTrai* (Trititika-Room) or in the room of the Buddha's statue or on the shelf of the Buddha's statue; someone like to keep Bailan scriptures on the head of bed they sleep because of the ideology or belief that Bailan scripture is the sacred one.

For the present day, after surveying, collecting and grouping them in several sections, there are many types of keeping Bailan scriptures with the modern tools, for example, transmitting them from original copies to microfilms, and keeping on websites, and other electronic Medias. In addition, the spreading of Bailan scriptures

has been made through various ways, for instance, through giving sermon by monks on the occasion of making traditional merit, academic exhibition, conducting research, and integrating them with learning and teaching, including the spreading of knowledge from Bailan scripture in the forms of multimedia, i.e., radio, television and website, etc.

3. Spreading of Bailan Scriptures in Khonkaen Province.

In this aspect, it is found that the spread of knowledge particularly the teachings of the Buddha, philosophy of folk literatures and histories, etc., is a very good action as the traditional belief of the people in Isan region that one who scribes one dhamma script would get result of it as those who built one Buddha's statue. In addition, people in Isan region have firm belief that the scribing or recording of Bailan Scriptures is to give Buddhism alive. In addition, there is an ideology that one who scribes or who presents scriptures would get result of it, they would be born as the wise persons in the next life, and would attain the state of *nibbana* in the final birth. At present, there are various types of spreading Bailan scriptures, for example, giving sermon on the traditional merit making of monks, academic showcase, study and research, and integrating Bailan scriptures with learning and teaching. Besides, there is spreading of Bailan Scriptures in the forms of multi-media, and several kinds of online Medias, for example, radio, TV., websites, and so on.

Forms of the participation people in Khonkaen Province in conserving of Bailan Scriptures:

1. The cultivation of awareness in conserving of Bailan Scriptures.

In this aspect, the research is found that there should be cultivation of awareness in conserving of Bailan Scriptures through giving correct knowledge and letting people be aware of the value of Bailan scriptures as the sources of all areas of knowledge passed down to them right now from their own ancestors. At present, there is misunderstanding among people in the region that Bailan Scriptures are the sacred ones thereby they burn them and bring their ashes to be as one component of the building of the Buddha, small image (used as amulet, etc. This misunderstanding has caused the loss of Bailan scriptures in Isan region especially in Khonkaen province.

2. The promotion of conserving Bailan Scriptures.

In this aspect, the result of research is found that the promotion of conserving Bailan Scriptures should be made with the collaboration of three important pillars of society, that is, temple, village and government office

(school). These three pillars of society should pay more attention and be aware of the value of Bailan scriptures as the sources that recorded the various kinds of religious teachings and literatures. On this matter, there should be promotion of conserving Bailan scriptures through learning and teaching with the short course emphasized in writing and reading dhamma-script, through showcase in the learning places, and there should be academic seminars participated by monks, folk-wise persons and scholars as well. And more importantly, there should be promotion of conserving Bailan scriptures by the publishing knowledge obtained by seminar as the new set of knowledge in order to spread Bailan scriptures in various ways, for example guidebooks textbooks, etc. In addition, there should be learning Centre for community as the source for information in Khonkaen province.

3. The Activities for Conserving of Bailan Scriptures.

In this aspect, the result of research is found that there should be activities concerning conservation of Bailan scriptures continuously organized starting from letting monks and laypersons in the communities know the value of Bailan scriptures and be proud of them as the valuable ones passed down to them from their ancestors, and then choosing ones who wish to study with reading writing and composing of verses. The activities of learning and teaching of conserving Bailan scriptures could be made through modern technology or with the participation of the worthy persons, scholars, and folk wise men, and also there should be association establishment for spreading Bailan scriptures in various online-medias. In addition, there should be activity praising several persons and associations being able to read and write dhamma-script correctly.

The Conservation of Bailan scriptures with the participation of people in Khonkaen Province:

1. Fund-Aid for conservation of Bailan Scripture.

In this aspect, the result of research is found that The conservation of Bailan scriptures should have been supported budget from many organizations both government and private sector, including monks who are as the main coordinator with many organizations for fund-aid, aiming at organizing activities in conserving of Bailan scripture by letting all section of society to take part in supporting of fund. On this aspect, monks and local administrative organization, particularly, sub-district administrative organization and the leaders of the communities in all levels as the organizations being very close

to community and know them well more than others. All of the parties mentioned above should set plan of budget in supporting of conservation of Bailan scriptures in three kinds: i) Budget for survey; ii) Budget for maintaining; and iii) Budget for seminar and work-study

2. Plan and personnel for conservation of Bailan Scriptures

In this aspect, the result of research is found that monks, government and sub-district administrative organization should join hand together in planning and providing of annual budget for supporting of Bailan scriptures-conserving in three phases of planning : I) short planning—surveying, collecting and grouping Bailan scriptures in many sections, building forms of keeping and make them to be known in the public through various medias; ii) Middle Planning—cultivating awareness in conserving of Bailan scriptures, promoting and organizing activities in supporting of Bailan scriptures-conserving; iii) Long Planning—planning and providing budget and personnel for pursuing and evaluating conservation of Bailan scriptures with participation of people in Khonkaen Province in order to make good effect to the project.

3. Evaluation of the conservation of Bailan scriptures.

In this aspect, the result of research is found that there should be teamwork and committee constituted to always evaluate all stages of Bailan Scriptures-conservation in order to bring problems and hurdles of projects to analyze and find weak point and strength point, and lastly to bring recommendation from the above process to improve and apply for the next project of Bailan scriptures conserving.

Discussion on the Results of Research

From the data-analysis of qualitative research on the topic “*The Conservative Processes of Bailan Scriptures with the Participation of People in Khonkaen Province*” the research has found some points that are interested to discuss as follows:

1. The conservative processes of Bailan Scriptures in Khonkaen Province

The result of research is found that the conservation of Bailan scriptures in khon Kean province has fixed steps, that is to say, survey Bailan scriptures scattered in various places, then collecting them, and grouping them into several sections, for instance, religion and philosophy, folk literatures, history and chronicle, and so on, or grouping them following the sizes of Bailans, for example, short-books - the collections of Isan literatures recorded in Bailan Scriptures in short style, for example, pharmacopoeia, hand-binding words, traditional spirit chanting (kam sutra Kwan),etc., bunch-

book - the collections of long Isan literatures, for example, Sang Sin Chai Tao Kam Ka Dam, etc., and fragmented-books - the collections of short words, for example, rough-word, greeting-word, chatting, and so on. There are actually two kinds of keeping Bailan scriptures, one, keeping them following the tradition of each region, for example, covering with cotton garment or silk, then keeping them in Sim (in formal Pali for *Sanghakamma* activities) or HorTrai (*Trititika-Room*) or in the room of *Uposatha* the Buddha's statue or on shelf the Buddha's statue, etc., two is keeping Bailan scriptures with the modern tools, for example, transmitting them from original copies to microfilms, and keeping on www., and other electronic medias. This research is similar to study of Somchai Nilnithi on the topic "*View from Bailan Scripture: Ideology and the way of life.*" (Somchai Nilnithi, 2012 : 163). (The result of this study was found that there are various divisions of contents and stories scribed in Bailan, for example, sub-commentary, Buddhist literature, ancient literature, translated literature chronicle, verse, science, ancient nature, and Isan proverb (Phaya), folk story of Buddhism, ancient law, ethics, history, astrology, verses, herbal knowledge, creed and ceremony, black magic and miscellaneous division etc.

2. Forms of the participation people in Khonkaen Province in conserving of Bailan Scriptures:

From the result of research that the participation of people in Khonkaen should be made through cultivating awareness in conserving of Bailan scriptures, the promotion of conserving of Bailan scriptures should be made with the collaboration of three important pillars of society, that is, temple, village and government office (school), and there should be promotion of conserving Bailan scriptures by the publishing knowledge obtained by seminar as the new set of knowledge in order to spread Bailan scriptures in various online-medias, it is similar to study of Khaimuk Utayavari on the topic "*The Problems of conservation of the original copy of learning sources of history and local culture.*" (Khaimuk Utayavari, 2009 : 12-14). The of this research is found that the problems of the conservation of community is correlate to the overlooking of the importance of local information due to lacking of knowing and understanding of their own knowledge, thus causing them weak in knowing the correct knowledge of their own community. So the local organization taking charge in conserving of local information would become the sources that deal with the problems of cultural and historical knowledge of communities, instead of communities themselves. So the concerned organization of this kind should set up clear policy and plan in conserving of local information. And also, the organization should develop the

system of database, for example, buying new model of software for dealing with system of database, thereby being able to expedite the database-system on this matter.

3. The conservation of Bailan scriptures with the participation of people in Khon Kean Province

From the result of research that the conservation of Bailan scriptures should have been supported budget from many organizations both government and private sector, including monks who are the main coordinator with many organizations for fund-aid aiming at organizing activities in conserving of Bailan scripture, and that there should have continuously been system of assessment in order to improve and develop the conservation of Bailan scriptures, it is similar to the study of Boukhai Peingphrachandra on the topic “*The Recovery of Bailan Scriptures in the New Imagine-Age of Lao Republic*.” (BoukhaiPeingphra-chandra, 2008 : abstract). The research is found that the recovery of Bailan scriptures in Lao society both before and after the new imagine age is the politics of culture. It is said that Bailan scriptures are brought into Lao society as the knowledge heritage, memory of the past, historical sensibility, or Lao Identity in pre-modern past. They are brought to be as the identity of the nation of new age of Lao, that is to say, the recovery of Bailan Scripture is the mechanism of power and make it legitimating of state in dealing with the culture and custom in the way of life of folk men and women under the condition and context of society changed over time. On this matter, it is brought to promotion of the recovery and conservation of national culture. Bailan Scripture and old traditions have been enshrined as “the Cultural Heritage” or as the important part of building of National Identity of Lao Republic. Lao’s government has set up policy and plan in conservation of Bailan scriptures on the state Project resulting in making local people having their own identity. Local people have awareness and pride in their own local culture as the National Heritage and Culture.

Recommendation from the result of Research

1. Recommendation on Policy

There are three recommendations on policy from the qualitative research on the topic “*The Conservative Processes of Bailan Scriptures with the Participation of People in Khonkaen Province*.” They are as follows:

1.1 The conservative processes of Bailan Scriptures in Khonkaen Province. There should be survey and grouping Bailan scriptures for providing convenient searching through setting up systematic format of keeping them and making known to the public.

1.2 Forms of the participation people in Khonkaen Province in conserving of Bailan Scriptures. There should be cultivation of awareness in conserving of Bailan scriptures through activity-organizing for promotion in various modern ways

1.3 The conservation of Bailan scriptures with the participation of people in Khon Kean Province. All parties should support budget and set planning of budget and personnel for assessment the result of Bailan Scriptures conserving

2. Recommendation on the application of the result of Research

There are three recommendations for application from the qualitative research on the topic “The Conservative Processes of Bailan Scriptures with the Participation of People in Khonkaen Province.” They are as follows:

2.1 Monks and people in all sections of community should participate in conserving of Bailan Scriptures in Khonkaen Province

2.2 Monks, communities, and government’s offices in Khonkaen Province should take part in creating forms and processes of Bailan Scriptures conserving

2.3 All people in Khonkaen Province should participate in conserving of Bailan Scriptures as the slogan and identity of communities in Khonkaen Province

3. Recommendation for next research

3.1 There should be doing qualitative research regarding the collaboration between government and private sector for conservation of Bailan Scriptures with the participation of Community in Isan region

3.2 There should be doing mixed method research both quantitative and qualitative research regarding the conservation of Bailan Scriptures with the participation of Community in Isan region

3.3 There should be doing quantitative research regarding the conservation of Bailan Scriptures with the participation of Community in Isan region

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