The Japan Foundation/ASEAN Heritage Tourism Research Project Year Two Report:

Investigating evidence of social sustainability in the restaurant and food service

industries of Asian heritage tourism centers

東南アジアにおける観光振興プロジェクト

—外食と食品産業の社会的持続可能性に関する調査報告—

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For a business to be truly sustainable, it must sustain not only the necessary environmental resources, but also social resources—including employees, customers (the community), and its reputation (Figge, F. & Hahn, T., 2008)

要旨

本研究は、研究プロジェクト「アジアに於ける多文化交流を観光振興により実現する為の縦断的・横断的研 究」における成果の一部を報告するものである。また、東南アジア三ヵ国――タイ王国(チェンマイ市)、ベト ナム社会主義共和国(ハノイ市)、ラオス人民民主共和国(ルアンパバーン市)――における食文化の比較を通 じて社会的持続可能性について考察を加えるものである。

具体的な方法として、三ヵ国における屋台と飲食店を中心に観察し、とりわけ飲食店の従業員を対象にイン フォーマル・インタビューを行った。

チェンマイでは、現地の人びとによる飲食店営業が観察できたが、その一方で首都バンコクから大勢の人び とが事業展開を目的として移住してきていることが分かった。さらに、中国人観光客の増加に伴い、飲食店を 経営するタイの人びとは、中国人観光客を目標とした中華料理およびタイ料理を融合させた新しい調理法を生 み出している。

ルアンパバーンもまた、現地住民による飲食店の運営が多く、ルアンパバーンの「真正な」料理を継承して いく人びとがいる一方、フランス人による経営が増え始めたこともあり、調理の方法に変化がみられた。それ は、チェンマイ同様、異国の伝統的な料理との融合による新しい様式であった。

ハノイは、以前から観光客を考慮した事業展開が促進しており、均衡を保つために観光客と現地住民の双方 をターゲットにしているように考えられる。しかし、上記二ヵ国とは異なり、現地の伝統料理と異国料理を融 合するという様式に発展していない。

このように、チェンマイ、ルアンパバーンの伝統料理が外国の食文化と混淆することで、食文化が変容し始 めている状況にあることを確認した。これらの背後には、観光促進、すなわち観光客にとって親しみやすい料 理を提供するという経済的戦略があるように思われる。したがって、調査地三ヵ国における観光業の経済的発 展と、その社会的持続可能性の均衡を保つためには、「真正な」料理と観光客にとって受け入れやすい料理の融 合が、今後のマネジメントをしていくうえで極めて重要である。

【キーワード】 Social sustainability / ASEAN / Food cultures / Heritage tourism / Fusion foods

1. Introduction

The United Nations World Tourism Organization defines sustainable tourism as, "tourism that meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future ... the objective of sustainable tourism is to retain the economic and social advantages of tourism development while reducing or mitigating any undesirable impacts on the natural, historic, cultural or social environment" (UNWTO, 2005).

This fits very well with the goals of many UNESCO World Heritage cities and towns in developing countries in the Asia region, as they struggle to manage the increasing numbers of tourists to their destinations with, quite often, not fully developed infrastructures and facilities. Providing a good range of accommodation options, high levels of service, and efficient transportation links is difficult, but essential to development, and as heritage destinations they must also be aware of retaining authenticity in what they have to offer, such as local customs, architecture and food. Likewise, maintaining a strong degree of local ownership in both the property and business sense, as well as control of employment opportunities for local people, regulation of business practices, and support for local producers and organizations, is necessary for all aspects of real socially sustainable development.

In this report, we will firstly introduce the rationale behind the selection of the theme of 'food' for an expanded year two of the Heritage Tourism Research Project (HTRP), generously supported by the Japan Foundation, and secondly outline the aims, the structure and the methodology to be applied, in the pursuit of a more focused and defined set of research objectives for the student led fieldwork of the project. Finally, we will offer the results and observations on research carried out by the authors in the three heritage cities we visited as part of the project in early August, Chiang Mai, Hanoi and Luang Prabang, with regard to the level of local participation in food heritage tourism in each location. Food heritage tourism is seen as a way to both maintain and develop an interest and the traditional food and culinary specialties of a particular country or region.

2. HTRP Year Two

Moving into its second year of operations, it was agreed the HTRP needed to move from the more general tourism theme it had taken in its first year to a narrower field of research, and with the unanimous agreement of all partners in the project during a meeting at the symposium in March 2017, it was decided that the focus would be on Food and Food Culture for Year Two. To this end, a new version of the general survey to be conducted by the multi-national groups was created, as well as questionnaires and interview questions. Two new partners were also added for Year Two, one from Luang Prabang, Laos, and another from Jogjakarta, Indonesia, bringing the number of participating partner universities to six. However, for budgetary reasons, it was necessary to reduce the number of participating students and faculty, so only three students and one faculty member from each institution would be allowed to travel to each destination.

The project would also be divided into four possible parts: Part One, teams travel to Chiang Mai, Hanoi, and Luang Prabang; Part Two, teams travel to Penang (the Jogjakarta visit was omitted later for budgetary reasons); Part Three, Teams travel to Kyoto. Following completion of Parts One to Three, a decision would be made on Part Four, a proposed symposium to be held in Kyoto in March 2018. In addition, a three-point approach to the second year's fieldwork was discussed and agreed upon:

(1) Students from each of the partner universities would once again form multi-national groups to conduct at least some of the research, with the students from each host city acting as guide/translators for their group. Due to the general nature of the questions in the student survey, it was envisaged that the student groups could well carry out this task without teacher support. Preferably, some time would then be given over for the group members to discuss and evaluate the results of the survey directly following said fieldwork, and these sessions could very well be with teacher support/supervision.

(2) In order, for Professors/Research Assistants to conduct more in depth interviews and data gathering opportunities concerning Food Tourism/Sustainable Tourism issues, it would be desirable that meetings or interviews with local experts be arranged. This would be very beneficial to the more in-depth type of research, and also toward the production of academic papers or reports for publication.

(3) The members from each individual partner institution would be free to conduct research into a particular area or theme relevant to their own interests or specialization.

The forming of the multi-national groups was, once again, a key component of the project from the point of view of KUFS. The numerous opportunities it affords students to engage in meaningful, cross-cultural and intercultural communication is invaluable, and leads to stronger bonds with students from other countries and cultures, and forges lasting multicultural understanding. Therefore, around 50% of fieldwork time was given over to this activity. The survey results would also yield responses from around 450 interviewees across all locations, if conducted fully and properly. Each of the six-member groups would ask two of the questions from the survey only, with the questions asked rotated around the groups in each new city visited. Each group is tasked with asking the two questions of 30 local people of different gender, age and occupation, to get a varied response range. This is the simple survey sheet used (below).

2-1 General Food and Eating Habits Survey Questions

Survey teams: Multi-national student groups

Interviewees: local adult residents, including students, traders, hotel workers, etc.

Mark the answer sheet with interviewee's:

- 1.Where do you or your family buy most of your food or fresh produce? Market? Supermarket? Farmer? Etc.
- 2. Who does most of the cooking or food preparation in your household?

- 3.What kind of food or particular meal, do you or your family eat most regularly at home?
- 4. How often do you or your family eat a meal outside of the home, where do you eat and how much do you usually spend per person?
- 5. What local food do you consider to be the most traditional?
- 6.Which special occasion, in your opinion, (weddings, birthdays, special holidays, etc.) has the best traditional food? What is the food/dish eaten at this time?

In addition to this general survey, each group of three students from each participating institution was required to conduct field research on a sub-theme of their own choosing. While one group chose "Street Food" as its sub-theme, and another, "Rice", the Kyoto team chose a comparative study of the food choices made by locals and tourists/visitors. They conducted short interviews with people involved in all areas of the food service industry in each of the locations visited, with the support of a local partner student. Below is the short survey to be used:

2-2 HTRP Research Questions for KUFS Students Chiang Mai, Hanoi, Luang Prabang, Penang and Kyoto

Interviewees: waiters, restaurant owners or staff, stall holders, street food sellers

10 interviews to be conducted in each city with the help of a host city student <u>Questions</u>

1.Do local people eat the same food as the visitors/tourists?

- 2. What food is most popular among tourists? What food is most popular among local people?
- 3. Who usually spends the most, locals or tourists?

The results of these student surveys will be gathered and assessed once all three of the field research components of the project have been completed in November 2017, and hopefully presented on by students from all participating institutions during the proposed symposium period in Kyoto in March 2018.

3. Research on Social Sustainability in Food Tourism

3-1 Methodology

The basic methods we undertook were interviews and participant observation during fieldwork in three heritage centers in the summer of 2017: Chiang Mai (August 2-4), Hanoi (August 6-8) and Luang Prabang (August 10-11). Informal interviews and formal interviews were largely employed, however, due to the relatively short period over which the research project was conducted, we chose simple questions to help us gauge the authenticity of food served in local restaurants of different sizes and class, and the extent of local ownership. Through this, we hoped to gain some idea of the social changes brought about through the development of tourism.

The informal interview questions are as below:

Where are you from?
How long have you been here (Chiang Mai / Hanoi / Luang Prabang)?
Why did you come?
How long have you worked in the restaurant / food service business?
Who owns this restaurant?
Are they from Chiang Mai / Hanoi / Luang Prabang? If not, where are they from?
How long has this restaurant / business been here?
Is the food made here modified and made for tourists, or is very local and authentic?

We informally interviewed six people in Chiang Mai, nine in Hanoi, four in Luang Prabang (total 19 people in three centers).

Unfortunately, we were only able to conduct two formal full-length interviews among the three countries visited, and these were held with officials at the Luang Prabang Provincial Information, Cultural and Tourism Department, and the Luang Prabang Tourism Association. We also had an informal interview with Mr. Thomas Henseler, the General Manager of a five-star resort in Luang Prabang called La Residence Phou Lao, and several of his staff.

3-2 Results and Discussion

Below is a tabular version of the interview data we collected in Chiang Mai, Hanoi and Luang Prabang:

Chiang Mai			
Q1)	Chiang Mai (3) / Bangkok (2) /		
Where are you from?	Suburb of Chiang Mai (1)		
Q2)	0 year – 15 years	16 years – 32 years	
How long have you been here (Chiang Mai / Hanoi /	three years: (1)	eighteen years / twenty	
Luang Prabang)?		years / thirty years: (3)	
Q3)	-To support his family	·	
Why did you come?	-To search for work		
	-To continue the family business		
Q4)	0 year – 15 years two	16 years – 32 years	
How long have you worked in the restaurant / food	years / three years /	eighteen years: (1)	
service business?	four years / six years:		
	(4)		

Table 1: Interview data in Chiang Mai

Q5) Who owns this restaurant?	Local person (3) / Grandfather from Bangkok (1) / Big company (1) / Family from Chiang Mai (1)	
Q6) Are they from Chiang Mai / Hanoi / Luang Prabang? If not, where are they from?	Chiang Mai (4) / Bangkok (2)	
Q7)	0 year – 15 years	16 years – 32 years
How long has this restaurant / business been here?	three years / ten years:	twenty-five years / forty
	(2)	years / fifty years: (3)
Q8)	-Modified for Chinese tourists	
Is the food made here modified and made for	(50% for tourists)	
tourists, or is very local and authentic?	-Some modified for Chinese	
	-Thai and Chinese fusion.	
	However, there are more local people	
	-Modify for Chinese tourists	
	(50% for tourists)	
	-Local people	
	-For Japanese tourists (80% for tourists)	

The number of people who move to Chiang Mai from other cities, such as Bangkok, or the countryside, is increasing. These people are looking for places other than Bangkok where a tourism-based business can be developed and Chiang Mai seems the right city for them. Consequently, the number of tourists in Chiang Mai is growing remarkably, especially among the Chinese tourist market. Thus, the aim in terms of cuisine offered, seems to be moving towards a loose fusion of Chinese food and Thai food. Moreover, though many owners at present are locals (people from Chiang Mai), because the development of the tourism industry is still in progress, it is not clear what condition Chiang Mai's food services could be in ten years. Perhaps, there will be a lot more Chinese people moving in to run restaurants, or becoming stakeholders in the tourism business overall.

Table 2:	Interview data in Hanoi	
Hanoi		
Q1)	Hanoi (8)	
Where are you from?		
Q2)		
How long have you been here (Chiang Mai / Hanoi	-	
/ Luang Prabang)?		

Q3)

Q4)	0 year – 15 years one	16 years – 32 years	
How long have you worked in the restaurant / food	month / three months /	twenty years: (1)	
service business?	six months / one year /		
	three years / six years /		
	eight years / ten years:		
	(8)		
Q5)			
Who owns this restaurant?	Local person (8) / French (1)		
Q6)			
Are they from Chiang Mai / Hanoi / Luang	Hanoi (8) / Suburb of Hanoi (1)		
Prabang? If not, where are they from?			
Q7)	0 year – 15 years	16 years – 32 years	
How long has this restaurant / business been here?	fifteen years / six years	twenty-five years /	
	/ five years / three years	twenty years: (2)	
	(2) / two years / one		
	year: (7)		
Q8)	-For local people and	tourists (serve authentic	
Is the food made here modified and made for	food)		
tourists, or is very local and authentic?	-For Tourists (Fusion cuisine of foreign taste and		
	local taste)		

In the case of Hanoi, much of the food on offer is still authentic and cooked by locals. Yet, it is important to understand what exactly constitutes authentic dishes, and what is perceived as "traditional" among the local people. The same question could be posed in regard to local people. Who can be considered to be "local"? Should the term be applied to people who were born in Hanoi only, or could it be applied to people who have moved to Hanoi and resided for more than ten years, for example? It is not easy to respond to these questions, but it is important to mention here that Hanoi was the only capital city among the three centers we undertook fieldwork in. That is to say, a capital city like Hanoi is very busy and diverse, just like many others around the world, and has developed more quickly over a short period. This makes it harder to determine the effects of the changing social situation on levels of authenticity and traditional practices, and so on.

Another complex idea that could very well be discussed in further research is about the mixed culture born during the country's colonial history. In Hanoi's case, there is French baguette (sandwich) and Vietnamese noodles, pho. The two dishes are ubiquitous in Hanoi and both seem to be considered equally as a typical dish. Finally, even though Hanoi is the second city of Vietnam in size and economy after Ho Chi Minh, many restaurants owned by locals have been run for less than fifteen years. Moreover, despite the target market being both locals and tourists, mostly 'authentic food' is prepared and offered with little given over to modification to suit the visitors' tastes and palate.

Luang Prabang			
Q1) Where are you from?	Luang Prabang (3) / France (1)		
Q2) How long have you been here (Chiang Mai / Hanoi / Luang Prabang)?	Eight months		
Q3) Why did you come?	To work in Laos		
Q4)	0 year - 15 years ten	16 years – 32 years	
How long have you worked in the restaurant / food	years / eight years /	eighteen years: (1)	
service business?	three years: (3)		
Q5) Who owns this restaurant?	Local person (3) / French (1)		
Q6) Are they from Chiang Mai / Hanoi / Luang Prabang? If not, where are they from?	Luang Prabang (2) / Country side (1) / Vientiane (1)		
Q7)	0 year – 15 years	16 years – 32 years	
How long has this restaurant / business been here?	ten years / three years:	twenty years / sixteen	
	(2)	years: (2)	
Q8)	-For tourists (fusion cuisine of local and		
Is the food made here modified and made for	western)		
tourists, or is very local and authentic?	-For locals (serve authentic food but is		
	changing)		
	-For locals but tourists are increasing (most of customers are tourists)		
	-For locals (authentic local food)		

Table 3: Interview data in Luang Prabang

Luang Prabang is a small town compared to the other two cities (Chiang Mai and Hanoi) and clearly still feels the need to develop further in terms of size. In contrast to the other two locations, however, the roads and public areas appear very clean and ordered and we got the impression the infrastructure in Luang Prabang has been well developed and every effort is being made to maintain and improve on this. Upon visiting one of the major hotels in Luang Prabang, *La Residence Phou Vao*, we were given a greater

insight into this when interviewing Mr. Thomas Henseler (General Manager) and several local people on his staff. We were told that this luxury hotel, a member of the prestigious Belmond Group, has initiated an innovative community engagement program among its staff that sees them help clean the town once per month in order to support the local community. The workers have also help set up temples schools for more than 1000 local monks, which is a very important initiative in such a deeply spiritual, Buddhist country. Employees are also offered free English language instruction, are trained to serve safe food, and can be involved in any number of motivational schemes and activities. For example, there are monthly birthday parties for staff members, family days, free health checks, Employee of the Month awards, as well as long service bonuses. Obviously, these practices offer a good example of social sustainable employment practices in action, and could easily form the basis of a general community wide system to promote good local social sustainability.

On another day, we managed to procure interviews with two local tourism professionals, and were able to ask them one or two general questions to get a broader picture of the situation regarding sustainable practices in the service industries in the area, particularly concerning accommodation and food services. According to our first interviewee Mr. Vongdavone Vongxayarath, Director of Promotion and Marketing Division, at the Luang Prabang Tourism Department, and regarding a key research question of ownership and employment, 70% of restaurant owners are from Laos and the remaining 30% are foreigners, French and Chinese in particular. In terms of involvement in the restaurant and food industry, he went on to explain that a large number of local people are employed in some capacity, with many using the experience to find permanent work or careers in the business. In fact, there are many family run businesses that train and recruit locals, including, of course, family members, and there is government policy that states that a certain percentage of local people must be employed by local businesses (no exact figures were given though). Employment does remain seasonal however, with many students employed in the high season (October – March), who will then return to their villages in the low season (April – September).

Our second research question was centered on the issue of authenticity in the service of food in the local industry, and whether or not general menus, and in particular, the local dishes have been modified to suit the tastes of particular tourist groups. Mr. Vongxayarath explained that this rather depended on the size and ownership of the restaurant in question, but local ingredients and recipes were offered in most establishments. Small restaurants tend to offer food made from all locally sourced produce, whereas larger restaurants and foreign owned and operated restaurants often used imported meats and seafood, as well as ingredients unavailable in Laos like certain cheeses, meats, etc. However, local farming cooperatives do grow a great deal of organic produce to supply local and foreign restaurants alike. In terms of the actual authenticity of the dishes themselves, local recipes have been changed and modified to help tourists to some extent, but lately government policies have changed to protect and preserve local

traditional recipes. In addition, due to time limitations, some truly authentic dishes are not always easy to produce. Some dishes do require a rather extensive and longer cooking method, and this does not fit with the turn around time demanded by restaurants and customers. Our interviewee did conclude by saying, however, that requests continue to be made to local and state governments to enact measures to protect and preserve local food culture.

In 2016, 180,000 Laotian tourists visited Luang Prabang, and more than double that number of foreign tourists came to the city, at around 400,000. China, Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia are now providing the most visitors, taking over from the Europeans and Americans who made up the bulk of customers in the past. Our second interviewee, Mr. Kongchakky Phanthasombath, President of the Luang Prabang Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Association confirmed this and went on to say that he believed that visitor levels are nearing capacity during the high seasons (October to April) in Luang Prabang, stretching the limits of availability in the number of rooms on offer (accommodation) and covers (seating) in restaurants. His association has 31 businesses as paid up members, with 50 affiliates, of which 80% are local and 20% foreign (membership is not compulsory). Support for members does bring extra benefits though, including discount rates and regulations to maintain standards. He told us that there are currently about 300 guesthouses in Luang Prabang (all Lao owned) and 70 hotels of different sizes. Many employ tour guides, or can put visitors in contact with them, and all these guides are Laotians. He reiterated that the high season was somewhat dependent on the services of the students who were on school holidays, but made a point of saying that overall standards of service needed to be improved in order to maintain levels of tourist satisfaction in all areas.

3. Conclusion

This report gives us a preliminary insight into the actuality and reality of food cultures in three heritage centers in South East Asia: Chiang Mai, Hanoi and Luang Prabang.

Comparing food cultures between the three places, we came to understand certain crucial facts about experiences in the food service industry in each, and the transformation of recipes in response to changing trends in the customer base in each place.

In Chiang Mai, beside the continued local participation in the food business, many people from Bangkok are now attempting to find work there, too. Also, due to the influx of a great number of Chinese tourists, business owners are making a conscious decision to change their traditional local recipes into a fusion style of Chinese and Thai, to accommodate the particular tastes and wants of the visitors. In the case of Hanoi, it seems that they have started to create restaurants for tourists over the past few years, and that could be one of the reasons why businesses in Hanoi have set their sights on both the local and tourist trade. However, the food in Hanoi does not seem to have developed into a type of fusion model yet, and wholesale changing of a lot of the more traditional recipes has not occurred, as seen in Chiang Mai.

Finally, the town that is most obviously in the process of development, Luang Prabang, seems to be

especially aware of how to promote and develop their social sustainable tourism. The roads in this small heritage center are clean and the residents seem to care about their town, and are very welcoming of tourists. Although most of the restaurant owners are trying to retain the authentic or 'traditional' food of Luang Prabang, the French, who have started their own food service businesses, showed us that they have a certain vision for transforming the local recipes just like in Chiang Mai, by mixing the local food with other traditional foods and foreign elements.

Interestingly then, Chiang Mai appears to be promoting its food service industry to match the demographic of its tourism market and is doing so to accommodate the great impact the swelling numbers of Chinese tourists is having on the local economy. It is obvious that this situation may very well happen in Luang Prabang, too, however, the fusion of foods seems to be an important aspect in striking a balance between economic development and the sustainable development of tourism and local food cultures with limited impact or damage to authenticity.

Basically then, it is essential that further research to understand what local people perceive as their 'traditional food' should be conducted for a necessary and deep comprehension of this theme of social sustainability and food cultures. Likewise, tourists image of, or even experience of eating, food from heritage centers means that they may come to demand greater authenticity in the food they are provided when visiting the "real" home of the cuisine. Today, we are living in a globalized and internationalized world: a period of true global tourism. Therefore, extensive research on this theme will prove to be indispensable for the future responsible sustainable development of this growing area.

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