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## The study of beliefs and faith in preserving the tradition of the Phi Ta Khon festival to promote tourism in Loei province

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### Abstract

The academic article aims to achieve the following objectives: 1. To investigate the historical background of beliefs and religious devotion related to the ghost procession tradition known as 'Phee Ta Khon.' 2. To examine the strategies for conserving and promoting the 'Phee Ta Khon' tradition. 3. To propose recommendations for promoting tourism in Dan Sai District, Loei Province. The researchers employed various data collection methods, including document analysis, participant observation, non-participant observation, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and participatory workshops.

The study findings revealed the following: 1. The 'Phee Ta Khon' tradition has a long history, but clear evidence of its inception is lacking. Local communities in the region have preserved and passed down this tradition from generation to generation, making 'Phee Ta Khon' a distinctive symbol of Loei Province. The tradition combines various religious rituals and festivities, such as offering merit to monks, holding fire walking ceremonies, 'Samo Khao' (an ancestral spirit appeasement ritual), and the playful 'Phee Ta Khon' ghost procession. These rituals are performed to pay homage to local deities and auspiciously celebrate spiritual entities. 2. The tradition serves as a means of instilling a sense of cultural pride among the local inhabitants. It encourages awareness and appreciation of the value and significance of local wisdom, fostering support for organizing events based on traditional customs and diverse cultural practices. The 'Phee Ta Khon' tradition helps cultivate a collective consciousness among the local population, urging them to unite in preserving local wisdom and supporting the establishment of community or local museums. 3. Dissemination and exchange of cultural knowledge occur through the promotion and support of extensive knowledge and cultural exchanges. Utilizing information technology and various methods, the dissemination of local knowledge is widespread, reaching countries across the globe.

**Keywords:** onservation, Phi Ta Khon festival tradition, promotion, tourism



## 1. Introduction

The Phi Ta Khon festival, also known as the Ghost Festival, is an annual cultural event of immense significance celebrated in the province of Loei, Thailand. This unique festival is deeply rooted in the local beliefs, folklore, and customs, making it an enchanting and captivating spectacle for both the indigenous community and tourists. The Phi Ta Khon festival holds great cultural value, as it is believed to bring blessings of prosperity, good fortune, and plentiful rain to the region while simultaneously honoring the spirits of ancestors.

Despite its cultural richness and potential as a tourism attraction, the preservation of the Phi Ta Khon festival faces a multitude of challenges. Like many traditional festivals worldwide, the Phi Ta Khon festival confronts the pressures of modernization, evolving cultural dynamics, and external influences that may pose a threat to its authenticity and continuity. The traditional practices and rituals intrinsic to the Phi Ta Khon festival may gradually fade with time, potentially jeopardizing the cultural heritage and identity of the Loei province.

The preservation of the Phi Ta Khon festival not only safeguards its cultural essence but also holds significant implications for tourism in the region. With its unique and captivating elements, the festival possesses the potential to attract domestic and international tourists, thereby stimulating the local economy and fostering cultural exchange. However, to harness the festival's potential for tourism promotion, it is vital to comprehend the profound beliefs, faith, and active community involvement that play a pivotal role in its preservation.

Thus, the primary aim of this research is to delve into an in-depth exploration and examination of the beliefs and faith intertwined with the Phi Ta Khon festival, serving as a key means of preserving its rich tradition. By unraveling the cultural significance and the deeply rooted beliefs associated with the festival, we endeavor to identify and propose effective strategies for its conservation and promotion. This study seeks to highlight the critical importance of cultural preservation within the context of sustainable tourism development, emphasizing the need for responsible and ethical tourism practices that respect and support local traditions.

In the subsequent sections of this research, we will conduct a thorough analysis of the historical background of the Phi Ta Khon festival, delving into its traditional beliefs and customs, and meticulously examining the challenges encountered in preserving its authentic essence. Through comprehensive research, data analysis, and stakeholder engagement, we aspire to offer well-founded recommendations and innovative strategies that will contribute to the sustainable promotion of tourism in the province of Loei while safeguarding the invaluable cultural heritage encapsulated in the Phi Ta Khon festival.

By illuminating the intricate relationship between cultural preservation, beliefs, and the tourism industry, this study endeavors to engender a profound appreciation for the Phi Ta Khon festival's cultural significance, thereby fostering its continued celebration and enduring contribution to the cultural identity and tourism sector of the Loei province.



## 2. Objectives of the Research

1. To study the historical background of beliefs and faith in preserving the tradition of the Phi Ta Khon festival
2. To investigate the approaches and methods for conserving and promoting the Phi Ta Khon festival tradition
3. To propose recommendations and strategies for promoting tourism in Loei province, focusing on the Phi Ta Khon festival

## 3. Scope of study

Loei Provincial Municipality. Between 2022-2023

## 4. Research Instruments

The research methodology employed in this study aims to investigate the beliefs and faith surrounding the Phi Ta Khon festival and its role in preserving the festival's tradition to promote tourism in Loei province. The research approach combines qualitative and quantitative methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of the cultural significance and community involvement associated with the festival.

### Research Procedure:

#### Literature Review:

A comprehensive review of existing literature and scholarly works related to the Phi Ta Khon festival, cultural preservation, and tourism promotion will be conducted. This step will help establish a theoretical framework and provide valuable insights into previous research findings and methodologies used in similar studies.

#### Ethnographic Approach:

An ethnographic approach will be adopted to immerse researchers in the festival's cultural context and gain an insider's perspective. Researchers will actively participate in the festival's rituals and activities, conduct interviews with local community members, religious leaders, festival participants, and tourists, and observe traditional practices and beliefs.

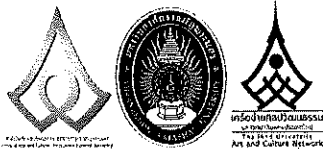
#### Surveys and Questionnaires:

Structured surveys and questionnaires will be administered to collect quantitative data from festival participants, tourists, and local community members. The surveys will focus on understanding perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs associated with the Phi Ta Khon festival and its preservation as a means to promote tourism in Loei province.

### Data Collection:

#### In-depth Interviews:

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with key informants, including local elders, religious leaders, festival organizers, and tourism stakeholders. The interviews will delve into their perspectives on the festival's significance, cultural beliefs, and the impact of tourism on its preservation.



#### Observations:

Observations of festival events, rituals, and cultural performances will be recorded to gain firsthand insights into the traditional practices and beliefs embedded in the Phi Ta Khon festival. These observations will help identify how faith and beliefs are manifested during the festival.

#### Surveys and Questionnaires:

Structured surveys and questionnaires will be distributed to festival participants and tourists to assess their motivations for attending the festival, perceptions of cultural authenticity, and the influence of beliefs on their festival experience.

#### Data Analysis:

##### Qualitative Analysis:

Qualitative data from interviews and observations will be analyzed using thematic analysis. Common themes, patterns, and key insights related to beliefs and faith in preserving the festival tradition will be identified and interpreted.

##### Quantitative Analysis:

Quantitative data from surveys and questionnaires will be analyzed using statistical software. Descriptive statistics will be employed to quantify responses and assess patterns and trends related to tourism promotion and cultural preservation.

##### Triangulation:

The findings from both qualitative and quantitative analyses will be cross-referenced and triangulated to ensure the validity and reliability of the research results.

The research methodology, including the research procedure, data collection techniques, and data analysis, will contribute to a comprehensive and rigorous investigation of beliefs and faith in preserving the tradition of the Phi Ta Khon festival to promote tourism in Loei province. The insights gained from this research will help formulate effective strategies for the sustainable preservation and promotion of this cultural heritage, contributing to the development of responsible and culturally sensitive tourism practices in the region.

## 5.Data analysis

### Population/Sample Groups/Target Groups

#### Population:

The population for this study comprises individuals and groups associated with the Phi Ta Khon festival and its cultural context in Loei province. The population includes the local community members residing in Loei province, religious leaders, festival organizers, tourists visiting during the festival, and other stakeholders involved in tourism and cultural preservation in the region.

#### Sample Groups:

The study will involve the following sample groups to ensure comprehensive data collection and representation:



a. Local Community Members: This group will include individuals from the local community who actively participate in organizing and celebrating the Phi Ta Khon festival. Members from different age groups and social backgrounds will be selected to obtain diverse perspectives.

b. Religious Leaders and Festivity Organizers: Key informants, such as monks, religious leaders, and festival organizers, will be included in the study to gain insights into the festival's religious significance and traditional practices.

c. Tourists: Tourists attending the Phi Ta Khon festival will be part of the sample group. A diverse range of tourists, including domestic and international visitors, will be included to understand their perceptions and experiences related to the festival.

d. Tourism Stakeholders: Representatives from the local tourism industry, hospitality services, and relevant government agencies involved in tourism promotion and cultural preservation will be included in the study.

#### **Target Groups:**

The research aims to address the following target groups:

a. Phi Ta Khon Festival Participants: This group comprises individuals actively participating in the festival's rituals, ceremonies, and cultural performances. Their beliefs and faith in the festival's traditions will be a key focus of the study.

b. Local Community Members: The target group includes individuals from the local community who actively engage in preserving and passing down the festival's cultural heritage to future generations.

c. Festival Tourists: Tourists attending the Phi Ta Khon festival are another important target group. Understanding their motivations for visiting, perceptions of cultural authenticity, and experiences during the festival will provide valuable insights.

d. Tourism Stakeholders: The study will target tourism stakeholders involved in promoting the Phi Ta Khon festival as a tourism attraction. Their perspectives on the relationship between cultural preservation and tourism development will be explored.

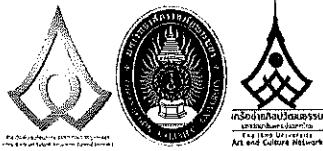
#### **Selection Criteria:**

Participants from the sample groups will be selected based on their active involvement in the Phi Ta Khon festival, knowledge of its cultural practices, and willingness to participate in the research. A diverse representation of age, gender, and cultural backgrounds will be sought to ensure a comprehensive understanding of beliefs and faith in preserving the festival tradition.

#### **Sampling Techniques:**

The study will utilize purposive sampling to select participants from each sample group. Researchers will identify and invite individuals who meet the selection criteria and possess relevant knowledge and experience related to the Phi Ta Khon festival and its cultural significance. The sample size will be determined based on data saturation, ensuring that sufficient data are collected to address the research objectives effectively.

By focusing on these population, sample groups, and target groups and employing purposive sampling techniques, the research will obtain a holistic understanding of the



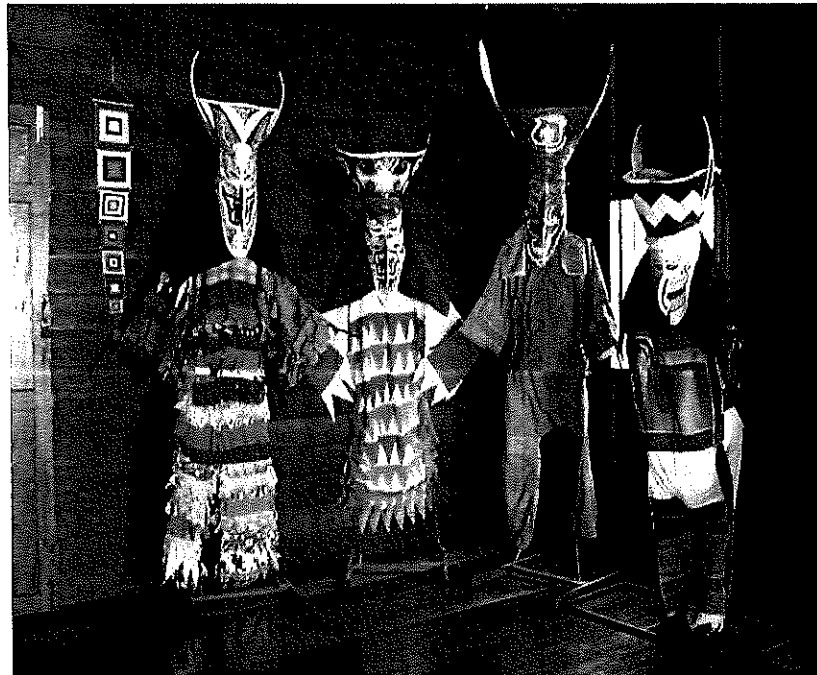
beliefs and faith that contribute to preserving the tradition of the Phi Ta Khon festival and its implications for tourism promotion in Loei province.

## 6. Results

1. The origin of "Phee Ta Khon" can be traced back to its former name, "Phee Tam Kon." This festival was influenced by Mahavessandorn (Chadok) in Buddhist mythology. According to legends, during a journey, both Mahavessandorn and her companion, Nang Mathee, were followed by forest spirits and various animals that loved and adored them. These spirits and animals accompanied the local villagers to escort both divine beings back to the town with great lamentation. This gave rise to the term "Phee Tam Kon" or "Phee Ta Khon." The belief in the "Phee Ta Khon" tradition also includes the notion that this playful festival is a way to venerate and appease ancestral spirits, which in turn safeguard the community, bringing prosperity and good fortune. Hence, to satisfy the spirits of ancestors, local communities organize the "Phee Ta Khon" festival.

2. The "Phee Ta Khon" festival serves as a means to instill cultural pride and awareness among the local inhabitants regarding the significance and importance of this local wisdom. It promotes and supports the organization of activities based on the "Phee Ta Khon" tradition, fostering a collective consciousness among the local population to preserve their distinctive cultural heritage in Dan Sai District, Loei Province. Additionally, it encourages the establishment of local or community museums to showcase the way of life and historical context related to the "Phee Ta Khon" tradition, thus creating knowledge and pride within the local community. The process of cultural creativity and adaptation is essential to ensure that the local wisdom remains relevant to the current era and beneficial to daily life. Utilizing local wisdom as a foundation for developmental activities should incorporate scientific and technological knowledge to enhance production, marketing, environmental conservation, and transfer of knowledge through family, educational institutions, and various cultural activities.

3. Strategies for conserving and promoting the "Phee Ta Khon" tradition require collaboration from all sectors within the community, including the government, private sector, educational institutions, and most importantly, the local populace. Every sector must actively participate in organizing events to promote the "Phee Ta Khon" tradition, which holds distinctiveness and symbolizes the people of Dan Sai District, Loei Province. Particularly, the local population with deep-rooted beliefs in this tradition should help create awareness and understanding among the younger generation who may lack appreciation for the significance of the "Phee Ta Khon" tradition. This understanding should foster a sense of belonging to the cultural heritage and contribute to the transmission of the cultural legacy of the "Phee Ta Khon" tradition. Moreover, it should enhance cultural learning opportunities by providing avenues for local experts or individuals with experience and knowledge related to the "Phee Ta Khon" tradition to share advice and play a pivotal role in promoting this festive tradition.



**Figure 1** Phi Ta Khon festival 1

Source: Yuttapong Tonpradoo (on February 2023)



**Figure 2** Phi Ta Khon festival 2

Source: Yuttapong Tonpradoo (on February 2023)



Figure 3 Phi Ta Khon festival 3

Source: Yuttapong Tonpradoo (on February 2023)

## 7. Conclusion and Discussion

The discussion of results in this research aims to provide a comprehensive analysis and interpretation of the findings related to beliefs and faith in preserving the tradition of the Phi Ta Khon festival and its role in promoting tourism in Loei province. The discussion will revolve around key themes and insights derived from the data collected through qualitative and quantitative research methods. The following points will be addressed:

### 1. Beliefs and Faith in Cultural Preservation:

The discussion will delve into the beliefs and faith held by the local community members and religious leaders in preserving the tradition of the Phi Ta Khon festival. It will explore the spiritual significance of the festival and the role of cultural practices in perpetuating its traditions over generations. The impact of these beliefs on cultural preservation efforts will be analyzed, highlighting the motivations and commitment of the community to sustain the festival's authenticity.

### 2. Role of the Phi Ta Khon Festival in Tourism Promotion:

The discussion will examine the perceptions of tourists and tourism stakeholders regarding the Phi Ta Khon festival as a tourism attraction. It will explore how the festival's cultural richness and unique elements contribute to its appeal to both domestic and international tourists. The role of beliefs and faith in enhancing the tourism experience will be analyzed, along with its implications for sustainable tourism development in Loei province.

3. Challenges and Opportunities for Cultural Preservation and Tourism Promotion: The discussion will address the challenges faced in preserving the authenticity





of the Phi Ta Khon festival amidst modernization and changing cultural dynamics. It will explore the impact of tourism on the festival's traditions and identify potential threats to its preservation. Furthermore, the discussion will highlight opportunities for leveraging tourism as a means to promote cultural awareness, foster community engagement, and support the continuity of the festival's cultural heritage.

#### 4. Community Engagement and Sustainable Tourism Practices:

The discussion will emphasize the significance of community engagement in cultural preservation and tourism promotion. It will explore how active community involvement, guided by beliefs and faith, plays a crucial role in sustaining the Phi Ta Khon festival's tradition. The discussion will also emphasize the importance of adopting sustainable tourism practices that respect and support local traditions while ensuring a positive impact on the community and environment.

#### 5. Recommendations for Future Preservation and Tourism Initiatives:

Based on the research findings, the discussion will propose recommendations and strategies to strengthen the preservation of the Phi Ta Khon festival and enhance its potential as a tourism attraction. These recommendations will be focused on fostering cultural appreciation, promoting responsible tourism practices, and ensuring the continued involvement of the local community and religious leaders in preserving the festival's tradition.

#### 6. Contributions to Cultural Heritage and Tourism Industry:

The discussion will highlight the broader implications of the research findings for cultural heritage preservation and the tourism industry in Loei province. It will underscore the significance of cultural festivals like Phi Ta Khon in promoting cultural diversity, heritage conservation, and sustainable tourism development at the regional and national levels.

In summary, the discussion of results will present a comprehensive overview of the beliefs and faith that drive the preservation of the Phi Ta Khon festival's tradition. It will elucidate the festival's significance in promoting tourism in Loei province and offer valuable insights for fostering cultural preservation and sustainable tourism practices in the region. The research findings will contribute to a deeper understanding of the intricate relationship between cultural heritage, beliefs, and tourism, and serve as a foundation for future initiatives aimed at preserving and promoting the rich cultural identity of the Phi Ta Khon festival in Loei province.

## 8. Recommendations

Continuously participate in activities with the community for effective research results

## 9. Recommendations for further studies

Continuously participate in activities with the community for effective research results



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## The Process of Word Spelling Distribution in Thai Language

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### Abstract

The natural way of Thai language teaching and learning in the current situation of Thai language instruction for pre-school children has been ignored causing the children to have more illiteracy problems. Consequently, the idea of applying the spelling technique which is the traditional teaching method of the Thai language is proposed in this research article. The consonant and vowel spelling distribution technique refer to initially comparing sounds to help children remember and pronounce words and then the words in pronounced forms as spoken in their mother tongue are distributed with the change of initial vowels and consonants or final pronounced consonants. The word spelling itself refers to pronouncing words by combining consonants, vowels, tones, and final consonants to form the pronounced words. With the use of this method, the distribution of word spelling and the general word spelling must be regularly used together until learners show their word accuracy.

**Keywords:** Consonant Distribution, Vowel Spelling Distribution, Word Spelling

### 1. Introduction

The consonant and vowel spelling distribution technique is the basic process that enables students to read and write for communication, and it is the essential general knowledge used for learning in the high level of knowledge in their future. Therefore, Reading and writing acquisition is very necessary as mentioned in this saying: a solid foundation of a building is a brick; the foundation of life is education. Kindergarten and primary teachers, especially, need to be well-educated, talented, sacrifice, and self-dedicated to making children see themselves as capable readers and writers. As shown in the royal remark of Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn (2006, page 26) on the topic of Thai language teaching and learning management and the importance



of Thai language teachers on the occasion of the Thai Language Teachers Association of Thailand Conference on July 26, 2006, at the Ambassador Hotel, Bangkok.

“Learning Thai language in an elementary school is a preliminary course for the foundation of education. Thai language knowledge will be gained, but it is also the language as the fundamental education for other subjects that matter. The language is the cornerstone for thinking, perceiving virtue and ethics, knowing disciplines and social rules, and having Thai culture and Thainess cultivation. The Thai language is the most important. When learners are accurately educated in elementary schools, they are well-equipped for correctly reading, writing, and applying the language to social contexts. It is the teacher who plays the main important role in teaching-learning management. To maintain effective management, the teacher needs to be knowledgeable and modern. I wish all Thai teachers to be healthy, encouraged, and determined to teach the Thai language to Thai learners so that they always love and intend to preserve the Thai language as a national treasure”.

The ability to read and write process starts from reading Thai words through spelling and reading by combining the initial consonant, vowel, tone, and final pronounced consonant to form a meaningful Thai word. This precise combination is popularly known as “consonant and vowel spelling distribution” as shown in the royal words of Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn (2006, page 26) on the topic of word spelling teaching and learning management on the occasion of the Thai Language Teachers Association of Thailand Conference on July 26, 2006, at the Ambassador Hotel, Bangkok.

“... Another topic is whether it is good to teach how to combine the words by asking the students to read ko, ka, ki, ku, koo like being taught in Thai language textbooks in the past. The traditional way was to teach one meaningful word, such as the words kin, non, and pai in which the meanings of the words were taught. Because some children feel bored learning meaningless words, or they do not understand the word meanings that are too general for those who have already learned. Thus, there are two methods in my opinion. Words in Thai are spelled differently from the ones in Chinese. The Chinese language requires learners to memorize the words, but in the Thai language, the words are spelled by combining both consonants and vowels to form the pronounced words. Why do we not take advantage of this spelling issue? Both spelling methods must be used together. I cannot say which method is better. I cannot recommend it. I cannot say this spelling method is better than another one, or this method is good. Let us say both must be mixed and used in different situations...”

#### **Consonant and Vowel Spelling Distribution**

The consonant and vowel spelling distribution are considered a basic practice process of combining a word. If the pronounced word is analyzed, it shows 2 separated details which are 1) consonant and vowel spelling distributions and 2) word spellings shown in the following explanations.