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TANAPOOM ATIVETIN: EVOLUTION AND SURVIVAL OF THE LOCAL HERITAGE IN DON WAI RIVER MARKET: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY.

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This research aims to study the evolution of Don Wai River Market in Nakhon Pathom province and the changes that have impacted on its local identity and cultural heritage. These changes are linked to the process of modernisation, industrialisation and urbanisation that have affected Thailand as a whole but have also transformed the Don Wai River Market into a favourite tourist attraction for middle class visitors, particularly from Bangkok. The research also studies the awareness of the significance of cultural heritage and the degrees of participation and involvement in cultural heritage management and preservation among stakeholders in this local context.

It has been found that Don Wai River Market has three important evolutionary stages. Firstly, the market originated as a main trade centre for agricultural products and groceries among local communities along Nakhon Chaisri River bank. Later on, a period of decline happened when the market was almost abandoned and the popularity of the river as a trading route decreased as a result from modern development and urbanisation. Finally, as a result of the cooperation among local residents, assistance from the mass media and influences from consumerist culture, the market has been revitalised again and has become a much well-known tourist attraction as a centre of exotic local food and desserts during the past few years.

Although the high level of tourist visitation seems at present to guarantee the market's future viability, there are nevertheless some problems that need to be resolved, such as uncontrolled expansion of the market area and emergence of products that are not compatible with the local context of the place. These changes directly affect the unique cultural identity of this traditional local market. Furthermore, conflicts among the vendors, the residents and the local authorities, accompanied by other problems such as the great amount of garbage, the determination and control of product costs and qualities and the incidence of crime must be solved through the solid cooperation among all involved stakeholders, including local authorities, central government agents, local residents and the visitors, in order to manage the local cultural heritage appropriately for its sustainable existence into the next generations.

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