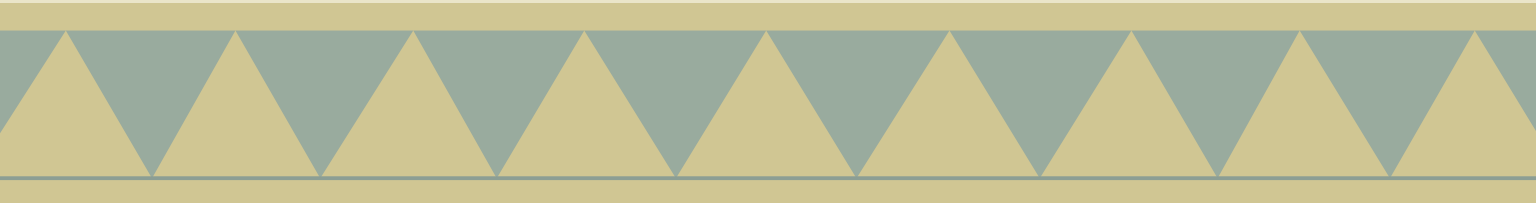
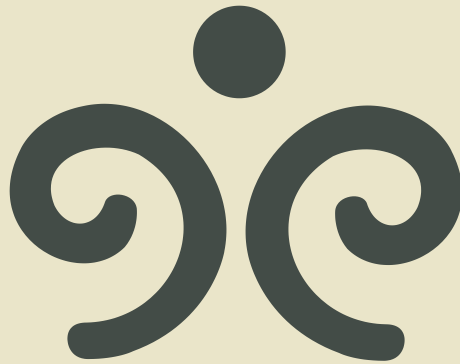




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THE WISDOM OF YONG COMMUNITY IN NORTHERN THAILAND: THEIR TRADITION AND SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

The Yong community has been settled in Lanna or upper northern Thailand, especially Lamphun province, for more than two centuries. They have a background from northern Burma (Myanmar), but nowadays, they are Thai people and a part of northern Thailand. However, they have an identity, dialect, and belief that they are similar and different from others. Their sub-communities were distributed both plain and riversides. Therefore, the Yong community is a case study to learn about their history, local wisdom, and sustainable practices in tradition. The article is qualitative research in anthropology and social science, including history. Collecting data is mixed between document review and researcher experience from a hometown. Therefore, finding mentioned their way of life because, nowadays, the sociocultural context in the main town is mixed with agriculture, industry, and globalisation. However, community empowerment can motivate that traditional mixed modernisation. In the environment, they take care of the gardens and river, because the traditional food sources are from a good natural environment. While the language and culture, they preserve their dialect, weaving, and work in their own folk museums. Those are their strengths, especially multidimensional driving with research and an academic database. Moreover, Lamphun province has a high potential to develop into a world heritage site. The Yong traditional community is an important part of this province, both a socio-cultural environment and a friendly environment, and is among the social sustainability practices for learning.

Key words: Social sustainability, Local wisdom, Northern Thailand, Yong community.

INTRODUCTION

The case study of Lamphun Yong community³ in upper northern Thailand was mentioned by Thais and Yong inner scholars that most books and publications are the Thai version. These scholars were interested in their history, dialect, socio-cultural, and identity. While their narrative and information in the English version are not so much. This my article is written based on my surroundings in Lamphun. Therefore, some of knowledge that I learnt from their community, and some research update that we have reviewed from Thailand.

The Yong community has been considered among the ethnic groups in northern Thailand since the early nineteenth century. The ideological Yong was expressed via their tradition and applied to the way of life. Adaptation of traditional Yong, their ancestors absorbed or mixed

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with others. Not only the traditional values and the Buddhism of Lanna society, but also the Thai cultural power of Bangkok. Their tradition is both similar and different from others in Thai society, including the Asian community. In addition, the ideological Western influenced Lanna after the British East India Company (or India Government or British Raj in 1858)⁴ successfully connected Lanna (Chiangmai) via the Bangkok government⁵. In particular, religious conventions and belonging to some sects by missionaries that some Yong families are Christian. Therefore, their community is multidimensional, and multicultural in Thailand.

In the agricultural society in rural areas of upper northern Thailand, some Yong sub-communities surround riversides or mixed forests. Both fruit gardens and vegetable farms were designed for their way of life. In particular, their river water system organised natural resources and the benefit of using that designation depends on wisdom and Dharma. Including harvest and worker management. While, in the forests, they can get various vegetables and other things.

Four decades ago, Lamphun was selected by the Thai government, as a minority area and the Chiangmai link. The industrial estate as a hub for large employment happened in the 1980s and the industrial booming for the new generation. This is among the wave of our world and Lamphun became a part of the international industry. Lamphun mixed sectors of both agriculture and industry. Not only farming, the Yong new generation also work in factories. But in between, pollution issues have been reported by some communities.

In the 2010s – 2020s, the Lamphun provincial government and some scholars led presented that the province has a high potential to develop into a world heritage site. Looking at and considering the social and local cultural capital that province had. Including the province's history, the value of Buddhist temples, local lifestyle, the agricultural products, and others. The Yong identity was mentioned that a part of multiethnic and multicultural.

This article and context explained about Lamphun Yong community, and explanation that how Yong is, including they are a case study with sustainable practices. It will be useful for international understanding.

OBJECTIVE

To study and review the tradition and sustainable practices through a case study of the way of life and local wisdom of the Lamphun Yong community in upper northern Thailand.

METHODOLOGY

This study is qualitative research in anthropology and social sciences, including history. Collecting data is mixed into two parts, the most data is collected from the document review in the Thai version, and the writer knowledge and experience of my hometown.

i. Document review:

The data are considered that are the research reports, publications, and books written by university scholars. That mentioned the Lamphun Yong community with multi-dimensions. Including the updated data and important movements on the year 2020s that are from the Lamphun province official reports and news, Thai newspapers, and the online documentaries. Therefore, these data are the secondary data.

The historical data was arranged by a timeline that mentioned both Lamphun and Chiangmai provinces, and the union kingdom of Lanna. Including some important situations in the past, both Siam (Thailand) and Burma (Myanmar), until the Thai government policy or global trends⁶ that link the local communities as destinations.

The cultural data were collected in multicultural studies and related to multiethnic. That interested the respecting and participating in the province. The Yong community is among the main ethnic groups in Lamphun.

The sustainable practices in tradition and wisdom were considered following social sustainability, that is the ability of a society to uphold universal human rights, and cultural rights are respected.

ii. Experience from hometown:

My knowledge and experience of my hometown, Lamphun, between the 1980s and nowadays, my data are primary data on sub-communities from three districts (Muang, Pasang, and Mae Tha). That the participant observes with their tradition and ceremonies on important occasions between the 1990s and 2010s. Especially worshipping ancestral spirits in traditional houses, and at celebrations and festivals in Buddhist temples that my joining with family, Yong kinship and friend families.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

There are three dimensions of this literature review: (i) the sustainability meaning, and it used in the Sustainable Development Goals, or SDGs; (ii) the concept of diaspora people and community; and (iii) the previous review of the Lamphun Yong community.

i. **Sustainability and SDGs:**

In this decade, sustainability is being talked about even more, including research projects for university scholars all over the whole world, and explanation the case studies from communities as the best practice for learning.

Generally, the word 'sustainability' that the Cambridge Dictionary⁷ has given its meaning; *'the idea that goods and services should be produced in ways that do not use resources that cannot be replaced and that do not damage the environment'*. It is among the important keyword. Not only used for the environment, but also in multidimensions.

According to the United Nations Brundtland Commission⁸ mentioned that sustainable development requires an integrated approach into consideration environmental concerns along with economic development. In 1987, they defined sustainability as *'meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'* Including forming the SDGs that the framework for improving the lives of populations around the world. Nowadays, it is well-known that there are 17 SDGs in categories and a breadth of topics where sustainability can be applied.

While the McGill University⁹ in Canada explained sustainability that the indigenous peoples have practised elements of sustainable living for generations by being in tune with the natural environment and its limits, cycles, and changes. This understanding is usually referred to as traditional ecological knowledge, or the deep knowledge and beliefs about relationships between people, plants, animals, natural phenomena, landscapes, and timing of events in a specific ecosystem. However, linked to the environmental movement and the notion that it is only focused on the environment is a misconception. Therefore, considering the Three Dimensions of Sustainability. The first is environmental sustainability. It occurs when humanity's rate of consumption does not exceed nature's rate of replenishment and when humanity's rate of generating pollution and emitting greenhouse gases does not exceed nature's rate of restoration. The second, social sustainability is the ability of a society to uphold universal human rights

and meet people's basic needs, such as healthcare, education, and transportation. Healthy communities ensure personal, labour, and cultural rights are respected, and all people are protected from discrimination. And the third, economic sustainability, is the ability of human communities around the world to maintain their independence and have access to the resources required to meet their needs, meaning that secure sources of livelihood are available to everyone.

Even multidimensional sustainability, but especially in this article, considered social sustainability in a case study.

i. Diaspora community:

The diaspora people and communities were explained by multi-dimensions. This article mentioned the diaspora factors and the new settlement in other countries. That many words to call follow different situations and conditions, including new concepts and others. While many words to call, such as displaced, migrant, and others.

Similarly, accounting by Kamboureli¹⁰ explained that nowadays the diaspora conception is an increased global flow of people and parallel developments in other fields, and diaspora is examined in the five adjacent contexts: globalisation, postcolonialism, multiculturalism, transnationalism, and hybridity. The diaspora as a concept and a particular phenomenon of migration, the term has been applied to the involuntary displacement of other peoples. That identified different kinds of diasporas, both labour, trading, and imperial diasporas, that emphasis on dislocation and loss, evoking at once the experience and politics of dispossession

and ethnic identification. Later, understanding of the diaspora has expanded to embrace a range of displaced communities – both immigrants, migrants, exiles, and refugees, and has thus come to be identified with global mobility as an aftereffect of modernity.

In addition, the former, holding up the home nation as the ultimate reference point and thus viewing diasporas as distinct and cohesive entities, is concerned with demarcating the boundaries of the term by establishing categorical definitions and typologies. The latter, viewing diaspora as inhabiting an interstitial space in relation to the receiving nation and thus as a hybrid formation and social condition, is interested in diasporic subjectivity.

While Kar¹¹ pointed out religion and diaspora by referring to Tweed's explanation of the levels of diaspora for religious functions. There are three levels: (i) 'Locative' implies the re-location of the religious tradition and practices in the hostland; (ii) 'Translocative' refers to the linkages between the religion practiced in the hostland and the religious traditions, practices and legends of the homeland; and (iii) 'Superlocative' suggests a transcendental crossing of the religious borders, of both homeland and hostland locations. The heritage is not only religion, but language also. The language links with the hostland and is in determining the membership of a diasporian in the nation-state of the hostland. The host language using by the new generations and makes their acceptance.

In the database of Princeton University¹², it is explained that both historical and modern ethno-national diasporas are cultural-social-political entities, created as a result of either voluntary or forced migration from a homeland. Whose members are and regard themselves as of the same ethno-national origin, and who permanently reside as minorities in one or several host-countries. Based on group decisions to settle permanently in host-countries, but to maintain a common identity, most core members of diasporas identify as such, show solidarity with their group in their host land and their entire nation. Including, organize and are active in the cultural, social, economic, and political spheres. Groups of the same ethno- national origin who themselves, or

ancestors, voluntarily or under coercion migrated from one place to another, or to several other places, settled in these other places, and maintain their identity and various kinds of contacts with their place of origin.

However, the diaspora community as a case study in this article, was affected by the powerful kingdom with the post-war and reform. Some communities were occupied as colonies and forced to migrate. After centuries, the new generations are not linked to the original land.

i. The previously review of Lamphun Yong community:

In the half of century, the Yong community was interested in research by university post-educated scholars, especially the Yong themselves. Their sub-communities became the case studies that most Thai scholars mentioned in five dimensions in the social and human sciences, and language. Five dimensions are; i) Yong history and ancestors; ii) Yong community organisations such as the rulers and senior system in their villages; iii) Yong language, especially dialect, literature, and communication; iv) Yong culture, especially dressing and dancing; and v) Yong identity or Yongness. Some research and reviews were conducted by Yong scholars, while some projects were researched by universities.

The early research in the decade 1980s - 1990s that interested Yong dialect and history as the rare database on minorities in Thailand. The Yong scholars led the important topic that explained their ancestor history and the Yong diaspora community in the Lanna from the Shan State of Burma was researched by Malasam¹³.

However, the Yong dialect was an early study. For example, the Yong phonology in Lamphun was researched by Neimnakh¹⁴. Later, the language in Lamphun's Yong songs was researched by Emmak, Satyopas, & Withayasakpant¹⁵, that analysis to Yong identity. The findings explained that their songs covered three dimensions for representing both the image, society and culture, and economics. While, they mentioned Yong's popularity, personal respect, joy and karma. The songs not only reflected various community thoughts and criteria, but also reflected the way of producing and consuming.

Also, the Yong identity was analysed in the Thai society context and all northern Thailand context, where Yongness in Lamphun was studied by Thammasena¹⁶. The other is studied in the traditional festival, the second month's full moon night, called 'Yibeng', where lanterns hang in front of houses and roadside sides as cultural symbols. A case study of Yong sub-community at Ban Makok of Pasang district was researched by Wannamakok¹⁷.

This finding explained that they can continue tradition a bit, but some of them understood both symbol and value. The inner sub-communities concern this traditional preservation. While the government policy is promoting local and traditional tourism, that makes many sub-communities join and participate, such as in this case study.

FINDINGS

Part 1 Lamphun in Brief

The brief introduction to Lamphun that started with part i is the overall Lamphun information, then part ii is backwards to the history of Lamphun in the past. Finally, part iii is Lamphun in the present situation. Details are as follows:

i. The overall Lamphun information:

In the seventy-seven provinces of Thailand, there are eight provinces in the upper northern

and, namely, Chiangmai, Chiangrai, Lamphun, Lampang, Payao, Phae, Nan, and Maehongson. These provinces were the historical union kingdom called Lanna, and then merged into Siam or Thailand where the new capital name is Rattanakosin or known as Bangkok on April 21st, 1782. Finally, the upper northern is a part of Siam, after Siam reformed in the reigned King Rama V.

Lanna or these eight provinces nowadays is the middle area between two countries, both Laos in the west and Myanmar in the east. However, some periods occupied some parts of upper Burma (Myanmar) and Yunnan, Southwestern China. Chiangmai province was the central power of Lanna, until nowadays as central northern Thailand with seventeen provinces (including lower northern).

For the name 'Lanna', calling the union kingdom, it has a million rice fields. The word is numeric, 'Lan' means a million or a large number, and 'Na' means the rice field. Nowadays, calling the northern people refers to the Lanna people or is called 'Khon Muang', while words 'Khon' means people or human, and 'Muang' means city or country. This calling has meaning as the city people or local people who lived in the valley, or represent the citizen of kingdom. Generally, the Thai people call themselves 'Khon Thai' and speak Thai language or 'Phasha Thai'. The Khon Muang are Lanna people and refers to northern people that meaning as the majority, and spoke 'Kham Muang'. While, the Yong people had the special calling themselves 'Khon Yong'. In addition, the Thailisation and Thainess effort in half a century, calling the ethnic group names by adding the word 'Tai'¹⁸ with meaning Thai people, such as 'Tai Yong' (Thai Yongs). The multiethnic in northern called themselves by their dialects. The Yong identifies through dialect that is a bit different from Kham Muang, but they speak each dialect.

Lamphun is the smallest province in northern Thailand with 4,505.88 km² or 4.85 percent of the northern area. Neighboring provinces are Chiangmai in the northern and western, Lampang in the eastern, and Tak in the southern. The northern lane to Lamphun is about seven hundred kilometres from Bangkok. There are eight districts, and land is shared for three kinds: the mostly 56.55 percent for the mixed forests, while 24.57 percent for agriculture, and 14.93 for non-agriculture.¹⁹

According to the Thailand Official Statistics Registration Systems of the year 2024, which reported that the Thailand population census is over 65 million, and 396,753 in Lamphun or

0.6 percent of the population.²⁰ Even we have known that most of the Thai population is Buddhist. Not only do Lamphun people belong to Buddhists, but they also disciple as Christians and Muslims. Therefore, there are three religious things. In particular, multi-sects of Christians connected to communities in Lamphun. The missionary was successfully named the Bethel Church Lamphun, which is among the oldest churches in northern Thailand and was established in 1895 or more than 130 years old.

Even Lamphun is a small province, but people are interested in democracy. They always express their right that Lamphun had the highest voter turnout in Thailand's General Elections. Lamphun has continue the 14 times of highest voter turnout, included the last time was the 2023 General Election.²¹

Land and use in Lamphun are explained according to proportions. Most of 24.57 percent is for agriculture; communities have the best fruit gardens and field crops. The fruit named is longan, which is the highest quality longan was exported to markets around the world. The longan Lamphun annual festival is organised each August. In addition, the quality of both garlic and red onion grown in the Lamphun soil, and harvested in summer. Organic garlic farming

was also a successful promotion. These cash crops generate income and reputation for northern Thailand for more than half a century.

While, the mostly 56.55 percent for the mixed forests, they can seek and get the various vegetables, bamboo shoots, leaves, honey, insects, and others. The barometer earthstar as mushroom is most famous, both rare and expensive, its price is about 30 USD per kilogram.

Some 14.93 percent of Lamphun land is for non-agriculture. In particular, the large land for industry has become the hub for industry in upper northern Thailand, the Lamphun Industrial Estate, since the 1990s. According to the Fourth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1977 – 1981), Lamphun was selected as the hub of industry in northern Thailand. Then in 1983, this industrial estate started its process and foreign companies joined the factories in the new town. Since the 1990s, there have been two main sectors of career in Lamphun, both agriculture and industry. The various careers attracted younger generations that look for factory jobs. But they moved to the industrial sector from the agricultural sector, which slowly shows the worker problem in harvest. The serious issue happened on the environmental problems and pollution. Communities reported low-quality and impure of both water in the river and the air, because of the smell of chemicals and combustion from the factories. That became the classical problem and conflict between communities and factories over the decades. Examples of these problems have been briefly discussed.

Therefore, Lamphun overall is mixed and multi-dimensions; the richest historical, religious, cultural, and multiethnicity; full field quality agriculture; and fully industrial development. Which the value heritage of Lamphun is prepared for the world heritage.

ii. **Lamphun in the past (the first kingdom in northern Thailand):**

Among the historical kingdoms in South East Asia is name Lamphun. An early name called ‘Samantara Pratet’²² by a group of Indian hermits from Jambudvīpa after the Buddhist era started. In upper northern Thailand, the Indian hermits met in the Mon community (Mon people) or other names in Thai dialect called Lue or Meng people. Later, they found archaeological evidence, especially, the ancient Mon Alphabets. Lamphun is a civilisation kingdom more than 1,300 years old or since the eighth century (or assumed to be between the fifteenth and seventeenth century of the Buddhist era).²³

In addition, previously the journey of Indian hermits in Lamphun, that area was the Lua community (Lua people, a Mon – Khmer minority ethnic group native to Laos) and they believe the Animism. Then they respected the hermit group and they became disciples of both Buddhism and Hinduism. Therefore, we know at least for the kingdom’s history that some communities in the early Lamphun were the Lue or Meng or Mon people, and the Lua people. Before establishing the Hariphunchai kingdom.

Then this kingdom is called ‘Hariphunchai’ and established the centre. According to the Yonok Chronicles of Thailand, Hariphunchai was the first kingdom in northern Thailand where the first ruler in 663 – 670 was a woman, namely Cham Thewi (or Chama Devi)²⁴. However, Chamadevi dynasty has more than 50 rulers (called Chao) and ruled for a total of 620 years (the decade of 1280s).²⁵ Besides, Hariphunchai was the first kingdom in northern Thailand that respected Buddhism and named the centre of Buddhism in northern. Later, the ruler built a pagoda at the end of the fifteenth century, namely Hariphunchai. That after finding the sacred relics of Buddha, therefore built Phra Borommasari Rikkatart (The Holy Relics). The Hariphunchai pagoda is the province seal and refers to the historical site and the Buddhist power in Thailand and South East

Asia from the Indian subcontinent.

Hariphunchai kingdom is connected to the two important kingdoms in Thailand, namely, the Lawo kingdom in the central (and Ayutthaya kingdom) and the Nakhon Si Thammarat kingdom in the southern and seaport. In addition, during Hariphunchai kingdom power, there was a pandemic and people were killed. Thus, the Mon people of Hariphunchai fled to Pegu and Satern (or Suthamwadi), Burma. Finally, they returned to their own kingdom, which some Mon people of Pegu joined as they migrated to upper northern Thailand, both Lamphun and Chiangmai.

The previously the union kingdom of Lanna, many kingdoms were under controlled by the Ava army of Burma²⁶ for more than two centuries and multi-times. Until, the founder Chao Chetton dynasty²⁷ and ruler of Chiangmai namely Chao Kawila (1716 – 1815)²⁸, he reformed Lanna with the political concept of *'keeping the vegetables in a basket, keeping people in town'* in 1805²⁹. This policy looked towards the multiethnic in the communities of upper Burma such as Shan State, and among them was the Yong community. It was the first and largest diaspora to upper northern Thailand from upper Burma because of war and political reasons. The other, the Lue ethnic group in Yunnan, southwestern China, included the target of the Lanna policy. They had settled down in the new union kingdom of Lanna and their new sub-communities were distributed in many areas, both riversides and foothills. They still used and referred to their dialect names for new communities until nowadays. The Yong sub-communities are the west part of upper northern Thailand, the three provinces namely Lamphun, Chiangmai, and Chiangrai. This article is mentioned the mainly and mostly of Yong community in Lamphun that is majority of Yong.

Hariphunchai period ending, merged into Lanna union kingdom in the eighth century and Chiangmai established the capital of Lanna. Finally, the Lanna merged into Siam or Thailand, in 1782. During the reign of King Rama I and Chao Kawila, the Lanna transferred rule to Bangkok government and established Chiangmai as the capital of upper northern. Later, the upper northern is a part of Siam, during Siam reformed in the reign of King Rama V.

iii. Lamphun in the present:

The old town Lamphun, there are numerous old Buddhism temples. The main temple and pagoda of Lanna names Wat Prathat Hariphunchai (temple). Including, Wat Mahawan that had the well-known Buddhism images, Pra Rod, and Thai people believe that can protect from the dark wizard and bad situations. The other temples also had the long-time history with ethnic groups background.

On the opposite new site, the industrial estate is slowly development to the model town. While industrial development in Thailand increased, both Lamphun and Chiangmai are linked by superhighways and logistics. The new site fully supermarkets, hotels, hospitals, sports clubs, others.

In two decades (2000s – 2020s), especially in 2004, the Thai official cabinet meeting outside the office in Lamphun, had a meeting resolution that approved in principle the project to study and conserve and develop Lamphun into a world heritage site. This project is according to the strategy for developing the central city of the upper northern region. Until 2025, the movement and preparation for the Lamphun creative city concept was processed by the Lamphun government and the cultural alliance. Including the seeking cultural capital according to the strategy of the soft power concept by the Thai government policy. However, they look for local products such as textiles, cuisines, handicrafts, products from agriculture, etc. that are similar to the other

provinces.

However, a classical problem comes from the system designed in the government administration where provincial governors are appointed by the central government. The case study of a small province like Lamphun often changed provincial governors since the 1970s. Whoever is on the retirement list and prepares for duty in the rich provinces who sit in this province before going to the target. Therefore, who can efficiently work for a longer time in a small province or deeply understand the province's identity?

Part 2 Yong in Brief: People and Community

A brief introduction to the Lamphun Yong community that started with the first part is the diaspora community to Lamphun more than two centuries, and the second part is the Yong community in upper northern Thailand. Details of both two parts are as follows:

i. Yong diaspora community in Lamphun of Lanna:

Some communities were in Lamphun during the Hariphunchai period and previously a union kingdom of Lanna (in this article). They were Lue and Mon communities. After the Hariphunchai period ended, and during established Lanna and the policy of Chao Kawila was added to both Yong and Yuan communities.

In Tai ethnic or Tai people history, their original communities covered a part of Yunnan in southwestern China, and the upper Burma or Shan State nowadays. While some groups called other names as Lue ethnic or Lue people. Including Yong people in northern Thailand call themselves by an identity that is different from the Lue people of Yunnan. Therefore, Yong people are among the Lue of Shan State, and a common practice among Tai of Burma and Yunnan. The whole Yong dialect is a member of the Southwestern Tai linguistic branch.

The name 'Yong' was the original name of their river name that surrounds the community in upper Burma. Therefore, 'Yong' nowadays with the old meaning that referred to the community's name. Finally, it became the ethnic group name in northern Thailand, and was automatically called 'Khon Yong' or Yong people. Calling people Yong, so their community, dialect, dressing, and others are called Yong. That became the 'Youngness' of 'Khon Yong' referring to their identity. The name Yong is the more well-known and powerful name than other sub-communities, and replaced other river names.

Since the early nineteenth century, the Yong have been among ethnic groups in Lanna. Then they became the new diaspora community in Thailand after Lanna merged into Rattanakosin or Bangkok. Accounting to the Cultural Council of Lamphun Province mentioned that there are five mainly ethnic groups. They are namely Khon Muang or Yuans (Tai Yuans), Yongs (Tai Yongs or Khon Yong), Lues (Tai Lues), Mons, and Karans. The first four communities settled on the outskirts, riversides, and foothills. While the Karen communities settled on the hills. Each speaks different dialects in their hometowns. Therefore, all of their identities always express the dialect, including history, tradition, and belief.

ii. Yong community in upper northern Thailand:

The Lamphun Yong community has celebrated the first time for the two centuries (1805 – 2005) anniversary, and nowadays they celebrated the 220 years (1805 – 2025) anniversary. Therefore, some of their details as follows:

In the history of Lanna, after Lanna was under occupied by the Ava army of Burma for more than two centuries and multiple times. Until, during Chao Kawila reformed Lanna with his

political concept in 1805. This policy looked towards the multiethnic in the communities of upper Burma, and among them was the Yong community, including the Lue ethnic group in Yunnan. It was the first and largest diaspora in upper northern Thailand because of war and political reasons. They had settled down in the new Lanna and their new sub-communities were distributed in many areas, both riversides and foothills. They still used and referred to their dialect names for new communities until nowadays. Then, during the reign of King Rama I and Chao Kawila, the Lanna transferred rule to Bangkok. The Yong sub-communities are the west part of upper northern Thailand, the three provinces namely Lamphun, Chiangmai, and Chiangrai. This article mentioned that the Lamphun Yong community is the majority. However, in the first period, they selected in Lamphun. There are three river basins namely Mae Ping, Mae Guang, and Mae Tha that settled down for new sub-communities. Nowadays, there are four districts namely Muang³⁰, Pasang, Mae Tha, and Ban Hong. Later, some of them moved to other provinces, to the east part from the west part.

We found evidence spanning centuries in the Buddhist temple. For example, in Pasang district, they built the wooden Vihara for a new landmark. According to this, they found their teak inscription that marked built in 1828.³¹ This case expressed that during their few decades of settlement, they slowly adapted and created a new community under traditional Yong until completed.

In the Thai society context in the decade 1990s, interest in localisation issues increased after facing globalisation that affected the Lamphun Yong community. They had themselves review their original homeland and Yongness that were led by the Buddhist monk group in Pasang district and Yong scholar group. The leader monks have a good relationship between Thailand and Myanmar. Their journeys started connection to the Shan State, especially seeking the Yong brotherhood and linking them to the Buddhist temples. Later, it became the cultural tour trips during the ASEAN community rose. That is under the frame of Lanna or northern or Thai style, Yongness is a representation of the localisation issue that they fulfilled from society's roots and history. They created social value and set their identity to giving their new generations what they are. Nowadays, according to the government, promotion of cultural strength affects the Yong community. For example, the younger people speak Yong dialect, design the dressing and dance, promote Yong food and products.

Part 3 Yong Community and their wisdom

i. Yong traditional community:

In general, respecting ancestral spirits is the majority in a traditional community, including the Lamphun Yong community. The kinship system that succeeds to ancestral system and the original from the upper Burma. Their system expresses the way of life that mixed between ancestral spirits and applied Dharma. The respecting persons that they are leaders and seniors from each kinship; monks, traders, and specialists, including artisans and mediums. They may be members of kinships, and the roles of both males and female were respected.

We also know that the family is the smallest unit in the community as a nucleus. The lineages and kinships together established a sub-community where seniority was considered automatic. In Yong sub-communities, one elder in some lineages becomes the middle person or representative of lineages, especially, female or grandmother/grandfather/great- grandmother/great-grandfather). That representative has the role of getting something as a gift or Puja from each generation, taking action and communicating with the respecting ancestral spirits on each occasion. The

seniority links to the multi-management in sub-communities that cover temples and ceremonies, the community forest or river (if they have), including the sharing of water and family workers for farming. Therefore, these actions related mostly to property, products, resources, and wealth.

ii Silk, cotton, and museum:

Both silk and cotton weaving in Lamphun have been named a long time ago. Pasang district has been named cotton and has organised the Pasang Cotton Fair in the past. They are the microeconomic industry, and contemplated the environmental aspects of cotton farming alongside the socio-cultural environment. During the fair, we saw a group of women riding bicycles, wearing traditional cotton clothing, and holding an umbrella in one hand. While, Lamphun Silk, some communities have sericulture, which involves the cultivation of silkworms to produce silk. The silk weaving of patterns creates raised bumps on the fabric and it was called Yok. The most famous are Dok or flower patterns, such as Pikun (bullet wood) pattern. It is called Yok Dok Lamphun. Both silk and cotton are dyed in natural plant-based, environmentally friendly fabrics. It is the high price on the Thai market and is used for luxury.

However, traditional Lamphun Yong was preserved by themselves, and they always attempt that for their next generation. Preserving with multi-dimension that they can do. The important dimension is the Yong review of academics by themselves. At the beginning, they started research into history and ancestors, and started with individual interests that they are the leader monks and university scholars. Until they have some associations and a link to the provincial government, including participating in some committees. These movements are based on academic or research that led to supporting for preservation and promotion via the build of folk museums, documentaries, traditional and academic events, and others.

Nowadays, some of their wooden houses and buildings in Buddhist temples have been preserved and promoted by the museum concept and local travel for learning. Not only express cross-century architecture, but museum also included daily life uses, weaving and designs, and value things in Buddhist concept. Even starting to collect for a small group, later the local government supported the budget to build museums. In particular, in the case of Wiang Yong sub-district, they organised the Wat Ton Keaw Fulk Museum, which was started by a monk leader in 1987, and the Lamphun Provincial Administrative Organization supported this project in 2002. Including the Yong senior group for weaving was worked in 1997, They have the experiences working at Lamphun palace, and the oldest weaving factory.³²

iii The multidimensional life:

The basics of communities in the river basin in Thailand are in agriculture, including gathering forest products. Both longan and garlic are well known in Lamphun and the commercial agricultural products that have mainly driven this province's economy for more than a century, especially the best quality of longan exported around the world.

Mostly, they have their own gardens where they can get the annual money and can collect the long-term income from gardening among the Yong community. They have a system to maintain the garden for both water and soil use. Including the worker system in harvest in the third quarter, and the safety longan system for harvesting and importing. While, there are two water sources for garden use, both the river and the rain. All communities have designed the river water using and the fruit keeping. Therefore, garden workers in each community play an important role. Each age can become a worker and can make money.

In the water use system for farming, they designed water ran to run to each small farm. They

request members of all farms to always join hands for work. For example, making a small dam and setting up the water level. On the riverbanks in summer, most are women or homemaker, they are always planting a small farm there that waters the lowest water. We knew that kind of soil was good. The kind of easy grows up vegetable were planted by them, before watering up. They have a duty at home that they not only consume the fresh vegetables at home, but sell them at local markets, or not make pickled for food preservation. In the rain, they are fisherwomen who professionally use local fishing tools. We can see a small group of women who stand on the riverbanks in the afternoon and before the dinner cooking time. This is a part of female life with a river and food (vegetables and fish).

While, in the mixed forest use system, some sub-communities are nearby. The important natural products are local mushrooms, vegetables, and insects that appear depending on the seasons. Besides a large sized leaf that is used for wrapping food. Between winter and summer, the *Melientha suavis* was sought that it cooked spicy soup with dried fish. They always know where they should get the best bamboo shoots and mushrooms during the rain. However, only some families have the wild skills to find natural food which not each family knew. In particular, seeking the barometer earthstar skill, they always transmit secrets to family. Anyway, their methodology is for forest preservation and for the future as a food bank. Which we know that forests are like supermarkets for a long life. This is life as a short story about both the community and the forest.

Later, the Lamphun Industrial Estate started a new site. The various careers attacked the local younger generations who looked for jobs and income. However, the negative effects slowly happen among Yong sub-communities. Especially, moving to the industrial sector, where younger people avoided the agricultural sector. The Yong ownership of longan gardens sought worker groups from other provinces. The other dimensions, some ceremonies and traditional events must change time to the weekend or at night, because it depends on the factory times. That effort towards the local culture and society, and each community slowly adapted to the industrial sector for many decades. In addition, some Yong sub-communities reported both impurities in Mae Guang River and air pollution. Especially, groups of dead fish that make people avoid eating or buying them. These stories have been happening for more than decades and slowly resolve environmental concerns.

DISCUSSION

The first dimension is the Yong people remembrance, and they refer to the following history as a diaspora community. Nowadays, they are Thai people, and do not talk about the diaspora any more. Their ancestor settlement in Thailand in 1805 by the Lanna policy, that they have mark year for 220 years in Lamphun. Their new communities were slowly built during their first century. But their stories were represented in just these four decades with research and academic studies in Thailand, and later in South East Asia. In this case, migration to Thailand, was a part of the post-war by the neighbouring armies. Until they established Yong community in Thailand, later, successful and became an important part of local culture.

Second, most research for their community was done by themselves and for themselves. This is the best way and practice included among sustainable practices. That they have their own strong database and socially driving from it, and can serve as a model for others. They have their own knowledge based on the traditional ideology that mixed or applied the Buddhist way. That they believe as the light to lead or as the root of life. The full expression was seen in both homes and temples. Including the female role in preserving weaving and cuisine, and the monk's role in

preserving historical items. Both houses and temples are folk museums. That happened for a few decades, while Thailand was talking about localisation. Later, this decade, the soft power that is blooming nowadays by the Thai government policy. In particular, Lamphun is among the cultural sites for world heritage, where preparing academics and people to participate is a continuous rolling, after Chiangmai was successful.

Third is the environmental issues in Lamphun in a few decades, because of the industrial sites. Each need to protect homes. The Yong community and others were concerned and voiced those issues with the provincial government. They faced and confronted by their human rights. Even these events have passed and become a classical story, but it is still a nightmare for anyone who is in the 1990s to remember. On the opposite hand, the new town was developed and linked to Chiangmai by superhighways. Similarly, other towns around the world as among global model. The urgency and punctuality have become strict requirements for business reasons. While the old town expresses the historical and cultural site for preservation and local tourism, the socio-cultural environment can make you slow life down.

Fourth, talking about preservation and sustainability. Food security is among the topics. The river and forest are life and always give us different things each season that we know how to do. Well-being is based on what we eat, and some traditional food has nutritional value. Including the art of life that like weaving silk and cotton, and processing, is in both a socio- cultural environment and a friendly environment.

CONCLUSIONS

The wisdom of Lamphun Yong community is a case study that explains their tradition and way of life, link to sustainable practices, especially social sustainability because their socio- cultural are respected in Thailand, and participating for driving in human rights. While environmental sustainability, the community continues to preserve nature, is the main factor for a long-life food bank and benefit using, including, producing environmentally friendly fabrics. Moreover, economic sustainability is a community maintaining a livelihood, accessing the resources required, and having multiple choices for careers. This explanation is for understanding and referring to their traditional ecological knowledge, relationships between people and nature. It is a part of the province being prepared for world heritage.

FOOTNOTES

1. This article is presented for topic on 'Ethics, environmental wisdom, and sustainable practices in tradition' in the International Conference on 'Rethinking Traditions: Shifting Perspectives in Cultural Interpretation' on 27th – 28th February 2026. The article was written about the author's hometown, Lamphun province in upper northern Thailand.
2. Mr. Aphirat Kamwan is a Ph.D. student in the Anthropology program, Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi, India, and under the ICCR scholarship 2025 – 2026; and a Thai researcher who works in the Centre for Bharat Studies, RILCA, Mahidol University, Thailand. Contract: aphirat.kam@mahidol.ac.th , <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5219-7808>.
3. The Lamphun Yong community means the Yong community in Lamphun province, and overall sub- communities.
4. The 'Treaty of Chiangmai' in 1874 was signed by the Siam (Thailand) Government and the British Raj of India Government. That happened after King Rama V visited India in 1870 – 1871. Later, the Consulate Chiangmai was built in 1904 at the Ping riverside.

5. The important period was between the reign of King Rama IV (1851 – 1868) and King Rama V (1868–1910).
6. For examples, the industry development, the sustainable development, the world heritage, and soft power.
7. Cambridge University Press & Assessment, “sustainability.”
8. United Nations Brundtland Commission, “Sustainability.”
9. McGill University, “What is Sustainability?”
10. Kamboureli, *Diaspora*
11. Kar, “*Reception of Indian Diaspora*,” 7 – 32.
12. The Trustees of Princeton University, “*Diaspora*.”
13. Malasam, *Local History*, 232
14. Niamnaka, “*Lamphun Yong phonology*.”
15. Emmak, Satyopas, & Withayasakpant, “The language in Yong Songs,” 73 – 80.
16. Thammasena, “*Reconstruction of Yongness*.”
17. Wannamakok, “*Communication for revival*.”
18. The words ‘Tai’ or ‘Thai’ (Thailand, Thai people, Thai language) are used in Thailand, but are not meant to the Tai people as Assamese of India.
19. Lamphun Province Office, “*History of Lamphun*.”
20. National Statistical Office, “*Official Statistics*.”
21. Bangkok Post Online Reporter, “Lamphun had highest.”; The Government Public Relations Department, “*Lamphun province wins*.”
22. The word ‘Pratet’ in Thai means country, or ‘Pradesh’ in Hindi.
23. Note: Ahom Kingdom (Assam State of India) was ruled in 1228 – 1826.
24. The word ‘Thewi’ in Thai means queen or woman ruler, or ‘Devi’ in Hindi.
25. Sukhothai was established in the middle of the thirteenth century and is considered the first capital of Thailand.
26. In Burma (Myanmar), the reign of Bodawpaya (1782 – 1819), the sixth king of Konbang dynasty and the fourth son of Alangpaya (founder of the dynasty). Bodawpaya moved the capital back to Amarapura from Ava.
27. The word ‘Chao’ means local king, ruler, leader, prince and princes. However, this word referred to the rulers and families of northern Thailand (Lanna empire). While ‘Chetton’ means the seven persons.
28. In Bangkok, the reign of King Rama I, Phutthayotfa Chulalok (1782 – 1809), the founder Chakri dynasty, and Rattana Kosin Kingdom (Siam or Thailand).
29. It happened early the first Anglo – Burma War, 1824 – 1826, between northeastern India and Myanmar. The Yong community in Lamphun celebrated the two centuries (1805 – 2005) of settlement in Lamphun.
30. The word ‘Muang’ means a town that refers to the main town or centre of government in each

province and is called the same name, Muang district, excluding Bangkok and Ayutthaya.

31. Khamboonruang, “*The people of Muang Yong.*”

32. Lamphun Province Office, “Wat Ton Keaw.”

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