

タイ国ラムパン県の馬車の文化的有効性

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The Cultural Validation of Lampang's Horse Carriage, Thailand

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Abstract

This article claims that Lampang's horse carriage has cultural value owing to the local horse carriage drivers' socio-cultural practices. Although its mode has turned to be a touring activity since 1980s and the wheeled vehicle legislation has also been invalidated by law since 2003, Lampang's horse carriage remains a living tradition. The horse carriage had been utilized as a modern and noble vehicle in Bangkok during the modernization of Siam in the 19th century. The use of the horse carriage was changed from private to public transport since the beginning of the 20th century, and at the same time, many horse carriages were transferred from the capital to regional provinces including Lampang due to popularity decline. For over a century, Lampang province has become unique in utilizing and conserving horse carriages as shown in Lampang's provincial slogan. This article describes the analysis on social capital of Lampang's horse carriage drivers in order to assert the cultural value of Lampang's horse carriage. This article suggests that a revival of the legislation would be a practical way to regard the cultural value of Lampang's horse carriage and support its future conservation.

Keywords

horse carriage, Lampang's horse carriage drivers, cultural validation, vehicle legislation

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要旨

本稿は、ラムパン県の馬車の文化的価値を、その御者の社会文化的慣習に基づいて主張する。ラムパン県の馬車は、1980年以降観光利用に転じ、さらに2003年にはそれまで適用されていた車両法が無効となったとはいえ、いまだ伝統として息づいている。19世紀シャム（タイ国）の近代化の最中、バンコクでは馬車が近代のかつ高貴な乗り物として利用された。当初の馬車の用途は個人的なものであったが、20世紀初頭からは公共交通として利用されるようになる。中央での馬車の人気が薄れるにつれ、多くの馬車が首都からラムパンを含む地方の県にもたらされた。以来一世紀以上のあいだに、その県のスローガンにも見られるように、ラムパン県は他とは異なる独自の馬車の活用と保存を行ってきた。本稿では、ラムパン県の馬車の文化的価値を示すことを目的とし、ラムパン県の御者の社会資本に関する分析を行う。ラムパン県の馬車の文化的価値とそ

の将来へ向けた保存のためには、車両法を復活させることが有用であることを主張する。

キーワード

馬車 ラムパン県の御者 文化的有効性車両立法

Introduction

Horse carriage is a cultural resource that conserved locally in Lampang province, Thailand. Its historical significances can be traced back to the beginning of Siam's modernization period in the 19th century. As the subject of study, the horse carriage is a lesson from the past to understand the present and consider the future of cultural resource management. Recently, the legislation of the horse carriage as a wheeled vehicle has come to an end for a reason that it is no longer suitable for transportation. I would argue that the horse carriage is culturally applicable to the present condition.

This article first introduces the legislation issue of the horse carriage in Thailand before describing the subsequent utilization modes of the horse carriage in the following section. Next, Lampang's horse carriage and local drivers are explained in the third section. Then, the terms "cultural validation" (Wiener, 2008) in political studies is taken to discuss on Lampang's horse carriage drivers' practices. In sum, this article claims that Lampang's horse carriage is valid in respect of socio-cultural significances and also suggests that a revival of legislation is crucial to support this tradition.

According to *the Act Repealing of the Certain Laws Which Is Not Appropriate for the Present B.E. 2546 (2003)*, the Wheeled Vehicle Act B.E. 2478 (1935) and the additional Acts were repealed.¹ As a result, horse carriage

becomes a product that can be bought and sold without any registration.² Anybody who wants to drive the horse carriage is not required to get any driving test and does not hold a carriage driver's license issued by the Provincial Land Transport Office anymore.³ Invalidating the Acts signifies a disregard for socio-cultural meaning and gradually diminishes the utilization of the horse carriage. Although the present chairman of the Lampang Carriage Association submitted a request to the Lampang Provincial Land Transport Office to reconsider the effects of the repealing, any regulation seems to be reactivated in the near future.

On the contrary, the head of the Lampang Provincial Land Transport Office expresses that the horse carriages are customarily allowed to drive along with other vehicles in public roads owing to its cultural significance. I state the issue of the legislation in the first part of this article because I consider the registration as a crucial support to maintain the cultural value of the horse carriage and the driver occupation.

It is an undeniable fact that the utilization of the wheeled vehicles including horse carriage have gradually declined and is now limited in some specific areas. The mode of the horse carriage has gradually changed from "a modern vehicle" to "a carriage taxi" and recently to "a touring carriage." Each mode of the horse carriage will be described in the next section. In respect of a living tradition and identity, the phrase "*Renowned horse-drawn carriages*"

has been involved as a complement of Lampang's provincial slogan.⁴ "The Horse Carriage City" has become a unique and conventional representation of Lampang province.

The latest official number of the horse carriage drivers in Lampang province was 112 drivers in 2009. These local drivers live in the periphery of the downtown areas which afterwards have been covered in the municipal territory.⁵ Most drivers living in the same community usually gather together at the same horse carriage station. In this sense, it can be said that there are three main horse carriage stations or communities in Lampang province.⁶ The horse carriage driver has become a self-employed occupation relying mainly on tourism, meanwhile, it is a living tradition that can be survived by norms, network, and trust among the drivers, including full-time and part-time drivers. Based on my research fieldwork in September 2014, this article, aims to clarify how the horse carriage is culturally important in Thai society.

Modes of the Horse Carriage in Thailand

The initial mode of the horse carriage was an influence of "modernization" that Siam followed in Europe's footsteps. Back to the second half of the 19th century, the number of horse carriage in Bangkok was soaring concurrently with the Modernization of Siam Era since the reign of King Rama IV (1851–1868). Horse carriage was more than just a means of transport; this "modern vehicle" had a high social status as the Royals' luxury and private property. Roads were constructed around the Grand Palace to accommodate horse carriages' users. During the reign of the King Rama V (1868–1910), many European

horse breeds and European-style carriages were bestowed upon the nobilities, utilized as the royal convoys, and welcomed official guests. In the same time, tram service drawn by two pairs of horses started operating by Danish concession holders (Arthit, 2014). According to the initiative of the King Rama VI (reign 1910–1925), *The Department of the Royal Horse* was founded and operated in charge of The Ministry of Palace (Wang Ministry, nowadays The Bureau of the Royal Household). The honorary titles were conferred on the Royals' horse carriage drivers by the King. These royals' drivers had expert skills in driving carriage drawn by pairs of horses to guard the royals.

In the beginning of the 20th century, The Department of the Royal Horse was abolished and subsequently the horse carriages spread from the aristocracy to common people. Mode of the horse carriages in Bangkok was significantly changed to a public transportation for hire: "carriage taxi." Likewise, horse carriage driver became a middle-class occupation. Inevitably, the import of foreign motor vehicles and the development of road transport entailed the decline of the horse carriage in Bangkok.

The large number of horse carriages were gradually transferred to regional provinces, such as, Chiang Mai in North, Nakhon Ratchasima in Northeast, and Nakhon Si Thammarat in South, especially when the railway networks were constructed to link the satellite regions for the purpose of developing the country and preventing the expansion of European colonialism. The northern railway line was started construction in 1901 and it reached Nakhon Lampang in 1916. It took about 11 years (1907–1918) to complete the railway tunnel between Lampang and Lamphun

province before reaching the final railway destination in Chiang Mai province in 1926. Many horse carriages were unloaded in Lampang and became a principal transport for people and goods in Lampang city.

Apparently, Lampang's horse carriage has developed parallel to the northern railway history as the first arrival of modern transport in the province. Since 2000 the local government formally initiated "*The Railway and Horse Carriage Memorial Festival*," which continues celebrating annually on April 1st–5th at Nakhon Lampang Railway Station. Kasem mentions that the first horse carriage owned by Bunyawat Wong Mani, the last city ruler of Lampang (reign 1897–1922), was conveyed along with the first train to Lampang on April 1, 1916. However, some scholars argue that horse carriages were already available in Lampang before the first train arrived (Kasem, 2000).

Whereas the horse carriages are gradually obsoleted in other provinces, the horse carriages have been constantly produced and utilized in Lampang province. It is a living tradition and, to some extent, Lampang people's way of life. The three plausible reasons why there are a great number of horse carriages in Lampang province mentioned in the published booklet titled "*The History of Lampang's Horse Carriage*" (2012) by the Lampang Carriage Association are as follows: 1) horse carriage was an important means for carrying goods from the railway station to downtown area, 2) many horses were natively bred as well as imported from Bangkok and Burma for playing polo by the British logging entrepreneurs who had founded logging companies in Lampang for some decades during the second half of the 19th century, and 3) there were cartwheel

factories that could supply carriage apparatuses, repair and assembly horse carriage in Lampang.

The horse carriage was utilized as "taxi" especially from the railway station and in downtown area. Local service businesses including hotels, restaurants, and shops around the railway station became lively. A 70 year-old horse carriage driver recounts his childhood memory that he weekly accompanied with his father who is a horse carriage driver to convey letters and parcels between the post office and the railway station. Horse carriage was a public transport that local people utilized in their daily commute. Nevertheless, there was once an attempt to revoke the horse carriages by cancelling the horse carriage drivers' driving license because it was seen relatively out of date compared to tricycle. Luckily, the horse carriage was rescued to remain by the founder of the Lampang Carriage Association.

During the wartime (1939–1945) when there was a gasoline shortage, the horse carriage was a suitable mode of transport. After the wartime, *The Wheeled Vehicle Association* was founded in 1947 by Khun Utankhadee who was the mayor of Lampang city during 1938 to 1940 in order to organize the group of local horse carriage drivers in Lampang province. The association was renamed to the *Lampang Carriage Association* in 1952 during the presiding period of the second chairman (1950–1988), Bunsong Na Lampang, a son of the last city ruler. There were 200–300 horse carriages in those heydays. The association was once under a patronage of the Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat, the eleventh prime minister of Thailand (reign 1959–1963) and it was an honor for the association in giving a two-wheeled carriage and a horse to the prince in 1964. Ruang Khuankaew, the mayor of

Lampang city (1983–1999), was the third chairman of the association during 1988 to 1995. Since 1996 Akkharin Pitchayakul has become the fourth chairman until present. For nearly 70 years, the Lampang Carriage Association has taken a vital and representative role to welcome guests and introduce Lampang's horse carriage to visitors.

Kasem (2000: 20–21) gives five substantial reasons why the horse carriage has been constantly utilized only in Lampang province for over a century as follows: 1) the horse carriage driver occupation is inherited from generation to generation among kin groups, 2) the craftsmen are horse carriage drivers, so they are skillful to produce and modify the horse carriage, 3) the knowledge of training horse and driving horse carriage have been transmitted, 4) Lampang is only province that registers horse carriages and issues horse carriage driver licenses, and 5) Lampang people have appreciated the horse carriage as a part of local life. Based on my fieldwork data, I affirm that the conditions that Kasem mentioned remain true, except for the registration of horse carriage and driver license.

Nowadays, the Royals' horse carriages are kept in the palace and are not exhibited. Yet, the horse carriages, *Victoria*⁷, are still driven side by side with cars and motorcycles by local horse carriage drivers in Lampang province. The clip-clop of the horse hooves and the vibrant peals of the carriage's bell catch a glimpse of passengers on the street. Every day the horse carriage drivers come to park their carriages in orderly line at the horse carriage stations, colloquially known as *Queue Rod Ma*. Under the tree shed near footpath that the city municipality provides, the drivers wait for passengers.

Horse carriage riding is a sightseeing tour around Lampang city. The service charges are varied from 200 baht for a small round (20 minutes), 300 baht for a big round (30 minutes), and 400 baht per hour on charter.⁸ The circuit of horse carriage riding usually starts and finishes at the horse carriage station, however, passengers can choose the route as they like and ask to stop in some tourist attractions along the way. During my fieldwork in September 2014, when it is a low season month and the late of rainy season in Thailand, each horse carriage driver could find passengers only one or two rounds a day in average and even none in some days. So, it is a period to train horses and prepare carriages for the upcoming high season (November–February).

As described above, the horse carriage has been utilized in a different mode in each different socio-cultural condition. This remnant of modernization in the late 19th century was distributed from the center to the periphery of Thailand. It has become an essential feature of local history to present Lampang's horse carriage as a unique and living tradition. Although its current mode is focusing on tourism, the horse carriage still roots in local resources and practices.

Lampang's Horse Carriage Drivers

Pakistanis are mentioned to as group of horse carriage drivers who took horse carriages from Bangkok to drive for wage in Lampang province and even as the carriage driver of the last city ruler of Lampang. They introduced this career opportunity to the local Muslims in a village. Some years before the Second World War many horse carriages were sold to local people and the Wheeled Vehicle Act was

promulgated. During the wartime the prime minister commanded to force foreign residents out of northern Thailand areas, which was possibly the period that the ownership of horse carriage driver occupation was transferred from Pakistanis to local drivers.

The big community of the local horse carriage drivers was located in the present downtown area which is already dissolved into a densely residential and business area. Some photos of the driver community taken by Wang Rattananatee were published on *Khon Muang* monthly magazine in October, 1955. The photos portrayed a customary way of local drivers' life, which is currently being discontinued by the descendants in the community. A possible reason of the driver community's collapse is because it becomes impossible to raise horses in the present inner city.

Nowadays communities of the local horse carriage drivers are located in the outlying subdistricts of the municipal city area. Ton Thong Chai is the northwards bordering subdistrict to the city where 20–30 horse carriage drivers, who belong to the biggest horse carriage station of Lampang province (Station A), live. The drivers live in four villages including Wang Mo, Wang Mo Pattana, Wang Mo Chedi Sao, and Ton Thong Chai, which originated from the same village, *Wang Mo*, before the separation of villages in the subdistrict. This area is classified as a low density residential area on the city plan in 2008. Most drivers have grown in the community among their relatives and neighbors who also were horse carriage drivers. It was the grandparent generation of the present drivers that this area became a community of horse carriage drivers. In this sense, being horse

carriage driver means a conventional essence of tradition rather than just a means to make money.

The horse carriage station is a specific place where the drivers gather to line their horse carriage in order and wait for a passenger. Some drivers prefer parking in touristic areas to at the station because they are more likely to get a passenger at the touristic areas than stay and patiently wait at the carriage station. Taking a chance outside the station is sometimes seen by other drivers at the station as a cunning exploit, but it is often a proactive approach to channel other drivers' opportunity to get passenger as well. There are three sizable horse carriage stations in Lampang province. The biggest station A is near the market in the inner city. The station B is in front of a big hotel in the city and the station C is in front of the provincial symbolic temple "Pra That Lampang Luang" in Ko Kha District. Each horse carriage station has different characteristics in terms of the drivers' residential area, type of passengers, and representation of the station.

I mainly conducted participant observation at the horse carriage station A during a rainy and low season month in 2014. There were not more than ten drivers who came to queue at the station in every day of my fieldwork. Some drivers wait all day long until the evening while some drivers just come to train their horses around the city in the morning. Many horses were trained by the drivers and their friends in order to prepare for high season. There were a small number of tourists coming to the station for riding horse carriage. And, more often, the drivers received a call from other drivers or hotel receptionists to pick up the passengers. The station A's and B's

drivers sometimes overlap the touring routes in the city. Most of the station A's drivers get back by nightfall and some of them move to find passengers near a hotel before going back home, whereas the station B's drivers stayed at the station far into the night. Different from the drivers at the station A and B, the station C's drivers rely on the visitors coming to the temple. The drivers attract the visitors to ride horse carriage by decorating the carriage and provide a photo-taking service to fill the shortcoming of tourist spots in the area. The station C's horses look more beautiful than other two stations' horses in the city.

Membership is expressed as being a driver of which horse carriage station or from which dwelling community rather than being a registered member of the association. At each horse carriage station, they consist of both full-time and part-time drivers. Most full-time drivers are senior drivers who always come to the station and work all day long at the station. Some of them are sometimes off for other part-time job, such as joining a folk instrument group. On the other hand, the part-time drivers who have other main jobs just occasionally drive on weekends and on holidays in high season, or during off-season of farming. Membership is, thus, woven through daily interactions based on reciprocity at the station.

Even though the horse carriage drivers possess strong tie especially among the same station's drivers, the socio-economic factors have affected the utilization of horse carriage. Firstly, local minibus and private motor vehicles which have emerged since 1970 have become the alternative choices for local transport, which gradually replace a requirement to ride the horse carriage. Fortunately, the horse carriage has been reinvigorated again by

tourism promotion since 1980s. Secondly, just shortly before entering to the 21st century, the horse carriage reached a crisis point because of the economic crisis in 1997. Some drivers changed their job and some took their horse carriages to drive at the tourist sites in other provinces. Thirdly, the higher density of the land ownership in suburban areas makes the grazing area for the horses scarcer and the traffic congestion in the city brings about the risk of horse carriage accidents. Most drivers keep their horses in wooden stables behind their houses, while drivers who have many horses also have other stables in their farm fields. The working horses used for carriage are fed at the horse carriage station, while other horses are tethered to graze on the open grassland during the daytime and fed again when the owners return home. However, it becomes difficult to find the grassland since the open fields' owners incline to fence their lands. Horse-related activities such as bathing horses have to be done in the house area instead of areas near the river bank as in the past.

Cultural Validation of Lampang's Horse Carriage

First of all, I would like to give the reason why I highlight "cultural validation" as the pivotal theme of this article. I argued in my master's thesis (Kanokwan, 2015) that Lampang's horse carriage drivers possess "social capital"—norms, networks, and trust, through their daily practices and social interaction with others. Social capital is a prior concern beyond an economic reason for the horse carriage drivers to uphold horse carriage tradition. In this article, I take cultural validation to amplify

horse carriage drivers' social capital and oppose the repealing issue of horse carriage.

Antje Wiener, the German scholar in politics and international relations field, classifies the three dimensions of norm interpretation as follows: formal validity, social recognition, and cultural validation in her book titled *The Invisible Constitution of Politics: Contested Norms and International Encounters* (2008). She proposes that the degree of democratic legitimacy is correlated with the different visible levels of the three norm interpretation. Because cultural practices are less visible than organizational practices, cultural practices or, in other words, individual social practices (including expectations and experience) need to be clarified and validated in order to implement norm application in culturally different contexts.

My master's thesis on social capital corresponds to Wiener's approach about normativity; I put importance on the horse carriage drivers' daily practices to find out the socio-cultural conditions that reinforce them in upholding horse carriage tradition. Based on my literature review on previous studies about Lampang's horse carriage, I categorized them into knowledge transmission and collaboration, socio-economic situation, and action plan for horse carriage. Theoretically, I took a sociological concept, *Social Capital*⁹, to verify my research statement that Lampang's horse carriage drivers have survived Lampang's horse carriage by their norms, networks, and trust. I affirmed that social capital has been generated in local community of the drivers and it is reproduced to fabricate the drivers together in every day practices.

Norms of obligation and reciprocity are the conventional rules that the drivers follow in order to approve their membership. These

norms are very important because the drivers spend time and interact with other drivers at the station more than going out to drive particularly in low season. By helping and sharing to each other, network and trust are deposited every single day in relationship savings, which a driver who needs help, can withdraw.

Strong and horizontal bonding is feature of the drivers' network. This kind of mutual affection among the drivers is a long-term relation that results from the compliance with the norms of the group. Since the drivers are both neighbors or relatives and colleagues, they are very familiar with each other and work consistently. On the other hand, the strong network of the drivers also weakens the link towards other horizontal and vertical external groups.

Thick trust is achieved through common faiths and experience among the drivers, particularly in traditional treatment and votive offerings for horses. The drivers trust and expect assistance from other drivers rather than the horse carriage association, the local government offices, and the non-profit organization. The traditional knowledge have been passed down and preserved by practical uses of driver members.

Norms of obligation and reciprocity, strong and horizontal networks, and thick trust are the social capital of Lampang's horse carriage drivers at the station A, which can be observed through the drivers' actions and interactions based on harmonious relationships. The drivers rely on each other to watch over horses at the station, to shoe horses, to build or repair carriages, to train new horses and new drivers, and to drive in local events, for free. These kinds of socio-cultural practices help

sustaining the productivity of individual drivers and the drivers' group as a living tradition.

As a cultural object, the horse carriage is a tool of cultural politics to some extent. Its status and representation correlate with a constructed social meaning as one of provincial resource and source of identity. Through the local horse carriage drivers' activities, the horse carriage becomes alive and succeeds to preserve cultural validation.

Moreover, I propose that the formal validity is also important and necessary for conserving and reviving the horse carriage, so that the organizational practices will be strengthened and fulfilled the weak sides of Lampang's horse carriage drivers' social capital, i.e. formal norms, vertical and external networks, and outward trust.

Conclusion

The article criticizes the repealed legislation of the horse carriage by providing the socio-cultural significances of the horse carriage regarding social capital and cultural validation. Gradually, the horse carriage mode has shifted from an appreciation of the horse carriage itself as modern and superior vehicle to a public taxi for carrying people and goods before becoming a town touring carriage for visitors in current mode. The design of horse carriage is also modified to fit the utilization's purposes from the luxurious closed coach for royalty drawn by several pairs of majestic foreign horses to the modest opened carriage for sightseeing tour drawn by native ponies. Significantly, the organizational management is changed from the official department to an informal and local community of drivers.

In Thailand, Lampang province has the

privilege of sustaining horse carriage culture and tradition. As long as Lampang's horse carriage survives as a local identity, it will be included in Lampang's provincial slogan. This article emphasizes the presence of Lampang's horse carriage drivers in order to appreciate the drivers who protect the horse carriage from extinction and indicate the importance of legislation for the horse carriage drivers and their communities.

[Notes]

- 1) In the section 4 of the Wheeled Vehicle Act B.E. 2478 (1935), wheeled vehicles were defined as follows: "(1) A wheeled vehicle refers to a vehicle such as car and cart that has axle and wheel, which can be moved by human or animal force. ..." and "(2) A hired wheeled vehicle refers to a wheeled vehicle for transport besides cart that has a cost."
- 2) Some horse carriage drivers keep the carriage number plate attaching to their carriage despite its invalidity.
- 3) Private license and hire license were two types of the wheeled vehicle license, while two-wheel bicycle and wheeled vehicle besides cart were two types of the driving license.
- 4) Since 1980 Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has started launching tourism campaign to invigorate economy. In 1985, Thai government assigned all provinces to create their own "Provincial Slogan" in order to promote provincial tourism. In Lampang province the provincial slogan contest was held. Catchy and rhythm words were composed into five phrases which depict the five striking identities of the province as follows:

"Widely known coal Renowned horse-drawn carriage Famous ceramics The distinguished Pra That The well-known elephant conservation center"

- 5) In 1991, Lampang city municipal area was expanded from 10.86 km² to 22.17 km², now covering 4 more subdistricts: Tbou Haew, Chom Phu, Phra Bat, and Phi Chai. As a result, Lampang city municipality was upgraded to Lampang nakhon municipality in 1999.
 - 6) According to the Lampang Provincial Livestock Office's survey in 2013, 81 horse owners utilize 186 horses for horse carriage. The largest number of horse owner and horse are in Muang District: 101 horse owners and 327 horses, from totally 130 horse owners and 468 horses in 8 out of 13 districts.
 - 7) Victoria Carriage is a French carriage type which has been utilized in Lampang province. It features a raised driver's seat in front and two-facing seats for four passengers. Some parts of the horse carriage have been modified to comfort tourist passengers and touring activity, i.e. foldable canvas roof, steel wheels, and battery operated lights.
 - 8) JPY100 approximately equals THB30.
 - 9) Robert Putnam defines social capital as "Features of social life—networks, norms, and trust—that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives" (Putnam, 1995: 664–665 cited in Fu, 2004: 8).
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