

Abstract

This thesis focuses on the processes of establishing and running of Thai Boeng local museum of Kok Salung village in Central Thailand, and of cultural performances which are seen in the context of cultural revival of Thai Boeng identity of Ban Kok Salung, a village in Central Thailand. The origin and existence of 'Thai Boeng' as an ethnic group are controversial and inconclusive. In popular conception, however, 'Thai Boeng' refers to a group of people identified by a specific style of linguistic expression, found in many parts of Central and Northeastern Thailand.

Recently, several Thai Boeng communities in the Pa Sak river basin, including, Ban Kok Salung, were affected by the impact of Pa Sak Dam construction, especially resettlement. The social and cultural consequences of dam building led to involvement by local intellectual groups who attempted to record and preserve the disappearing traditional ways of life. .

The village of Kok Salung was identified as a site for collecting cultural and ethnic data. Through changes that occurred in the process of dam construction which opened up the village to the outside world, and through intense interaction with researchers, the villagers became increasingly aware of the Thai Boeng identity which subsequently materialized in the form of a local museum, set up in the village. The museum was lively at the beginning, but soon went into decline. However, the villagers found another way of expressing and exerting their Thai Boeng identity through cultural performances in the forms of singing and dancing which they now perform in many fairs and exhibitions.