

Abstract

This study attempts to create an understanding of lifestyle and physical environment of a city which evolves and experiences continuing changes for the past 200 years. It is a study of the Thai society during the Ratanakosin era. The author intends to explain the social phenomena which happened during the period under the viewpoint and knowledge in Anthropology.

Based on the findings, it is found that Bangkok at the present time seems to lose its essence of a cultural city because of the invasions of modernized city system which results in over-structuralism both in terms of architecture and economy. Materialism brings about an influx of basic economic infrastructure, capital, goods and garbages some of these are more than necessary. The growth of materialism has hampered the social relations among human beings which invaded and forced the city's inhabitants to move away to the outskirts of town at different directions. Only a few of them manage to integrate themselves along the borderline or loopholes beyond control of the materialistic infrastructure. The neighbourhood traditional Thai lifestyle of "Yan" seems to dissolve. However the "Yan" lifestyle is still revered by current city's inhabitants as it is observed that attempts are made to preserve this on adapt it for survival. However these attempts seem not effective as the physical environment of today's city is not facilitation and,

most important, these actions are against the flowing direction of materialistic economy which is the current global ideology.

It is envisaged that the free materialistic economy will, sooner or later, gradually faces its own inner conflict without limitation as there are a lot of loopholes within the system, making it unable to generate forceful communities within the society. This study, therefore, attempts to recommend strategies for utilizing the "good points" of the "Yan" system coupled with the concept of humanism to compensate the lost being experienced in current city life. One of the things which current city's inhabitants might need is an open area for multipurpose usage or the so-called "Lan" from the household level up to the city level. The "Lan" will serve as the centre for social and cultural transactions of the community and the city, facilitation group formations and social interactions. The area for the "Lan" must be flexible and could be adapted to meet the requirements of different activities and for the people of all walks of life in response of the communal ownership concept of the "Lan".