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Abstract

The objective of the thesis is to study the otherness construction for Sakai in the context of the development of Thai state. This is an anthropological research that is working lie hidden in the site. The main data provider is Sakai who lives in Banthat mountain range, Phattalung, and the other data providers are the state officers, villagers and private entrepreneurs; who concern with Sakai. The study finds that Sakai is backward people in the state’s view point, which caused of the state attempt for bringing Sakai from the jungle to the town. The state ways for mentioned attempt are bringing educable and contracting the wedding ceremony for them to promote the tourism. Though, for the state view point, these ways are the Sakai development but they also are the “otherness” construction.

Keyword: Sakai, Otherness, Development

Introduction

The territory of Banthat mountain range, Phattalung, is the habitat of Sakai who has the way of life in the jungle by construct the “Tub¹” (Cottage) to live, look for the nature subsistence; animal hunting and yam digging to be their food and also curing with herb, and they leave the patient and the dead in the Tub because this is Sakai’s belief.

The development flow of the state; which especially is the infrastructure development, move forward to up-country and then mountaineer community where is Sakai’s habitat independently. They used to travel to everywhere in the jungle and they have the belief, culture and tradition which concern with the nature. After the development, they are driven out to the town, which their ways of life in the city have to change their identity. They use the facility in daily life, construct the permanent residence replaced the temporary “Tub”, pay the money to buy food, clothes, using mobile phone, motorcycle, and watching television. The Sakai modernization come from the state view point that see Sakai as barbarian whom is developed to be the modern with everyway, but the state development construct the “otherness” for Sakai instead. Sakai became joker by lured with red flowers they like or building their picture for others with putting red flower behind their ear.

¹ Tub means Sakai’s residence.
The “otherness” construction; in the context of the development of the state, come from the viewpoint of their own that see Sakai as the “otherness” and differ from Thai people in town. (Mr. Chalad-chai Ramitanon, 2006) The state’s view point is Sakai’s backwardness, and they have to be developed without carefulness because the development will make the better living for them.

For the Sakai presentation for the “otherness” construction in the context of the development, the researcher presented 5 aspects as follows; 1) from the mountaineer to the town: Sakai was constructed the otherness from this aspect 2) animal within human: without understanding from others, this aspect presented the town people’s view that see Sakai as different group or frightful group 3) Clothes, television, mobile phone, motorcycle: this aspect is the otherness construction in the context of the modernity 4) Wedding: the ceremony of the otherness construction in the context of tourism 5) Red color, red flower: this is the meaning or symbol creation of the town people for Sakai.

Objectives

To study the otherness construction for Sakai in the context of the development of Thai state.

Technical Terms

Sakai Community means the people who have unsettled living in the southern jungle of Thailand, look for the nature subsistence, communicate with Tan-An language (Mr. Paiboon Duangchan, 1982), pass the race, language, belief, way of life, culture and tradition from the past to present. They may combine or separate to live, but they have the conscious of only one origin.

The context of the development of the state means the modernity construction process from the state through the policies to civilize the countryside with public utility such as road, electricity, water supply, etc., to lift up the quality of life such as education, medical treatment, tourism development and dispersion of city culture to countryside, minority and Sakai without the consideration of their original ways of life.

The otherness means the meaning construction for some group of people who is “eject” to be the undeveloped people. Though, Sakai is modernize by the state but they still be the “otherness” of the state or the others who use Sakai to present the tourism side.

Framework of the study

The researcher use the concept of Thai state’s development to be the context of studying, and analyze Thai state’s policies in Thailand development plan for economy and social; which expect to civilize everywhere in Thailand, such as encouragement Sakai for house building, medical treatment, ID card registration, education, and tourism which construct Sakai became the “otherness” or the ethnic goods to increase the income for community.

Therefore, the research will analyze the reason which constructs the otherness or the marginal people for Sakai in the context of the development trend. Sakai has to change their ethnic identity into modern condition. So, the researcher’s conceptual frame is the analysis the otherness, the marginal people and the ethnic identity.
Research Methodology

This is an anthropological approach which focus to find out the knowledge from knowledgeable people\(^2\), and the instrument being used in this research is the detailed studying from the site for the way of life of Sakai by the observation of landscape, living, belief, culture, wedding ceremony of the Tourism Authority of Thailand and resort owner to promote the culture tourism in Phattalung. Therefore, there is the interviewing the state officers, villagers and private entrepreneurs; who concern with Sakai, the keeping data period between August 2009 to February 2010.

Amphur Pa-Bon and the territory of Banthat mountain range, Phattalung, are the studying area, because Sakai has came to make the relationship, exchange the goods with mentioned community, educate in Suksa Songkroh School, Phattalung, and live near the territory of Banthat mountain range, Phattalung. Therefore, the researcher followed the travelling of Sakai from Phattalung to Trang and Satun.

Results

The researcher presented the aspects as follows;

From the mountaineer to the town: the otherness construction in the context of the development

The story of Kanang-Noi; who change herself into the Royal Palace, can tell the way of life change absolutely until being of tragedy for a Sakai girl’s life in town. This story give an expression of life that she has to lade with the “otherness” from the people in the Royal Palace, and she regrettably faced with the tragedy. Though, nobody know the end of Kanang’s life, but the research know that she has unhappiness with the new matter differed from her past in the jungle.

From the story of Kanang, the researcher sees the change phenomenon when the development flow has come; the development flow in the dimension of lifting up the quality of work life are education, medical treatment, and the dimension of tourism are supporting the career which push Sakai to make the relationship with the other community. Though, Sakai has already the developed way of life, but these development constructed Sakai to be the “otherness” all the time.

Some Sakai; who emigrated between Phattalung and Satun, is the one split small group separated from the main group. The reason of separation to be smaller group is the convenience of looking for the food enough. (Aunty Worn, interviewed on December 18, 2009). From Sakai following, the researcher found that Sakai emigrate to Sai-thong waterfall, Satun, has already had the permanent residence, but the other one group has had only small hut to live.

\(^2\) knowledgeable people mean key Informants and Informants
From the picture 1, the “Tub” is the permanent construction where piled, raise the ground, arranged the splat to sleeping, had the paneling to protect the weather conditions, constructed the in-out door, and construct the litter beetled from the hut for the visitors. However, the researcher saw that all Tub or new style home of Sakai has lightened inside (See picture 2), there is the drift and lightened in the house all the time.

Form the picture 3 and 4, we saw that Sakai use the equipment such as pot, dish, bowl, plastic ware, even if folk and spoon. Their water glass is plastic replaced bamboo flask in the past, use plastic bag to keep the jungle food, and even if using vegetation oil, salt, sugar, monosodium glutamate for Sakai’s cooking. Sakai has the television in the bedroom for their entertainent.

There are full of home-grown vegetable around Sakai’s house (see picture 4) such as papaya, banana, galangal, lemongrass, chili, plate brush, caladium, etc. and there is herb such as aloe vera planted around the house, and there is orchid planted as picturesqueness. Sakai’s home-grown vegetable is reflected that they often are easily taking care plant, and it is the general plant. The additional plant is specifically herb for only Sakai.

The merchandising in the market make Sakai as the joker for the others. Sakai is looked as the “otherness” for the others. Sister Soo told that “...almost Sakai sometimes went to the market to buy the food by themselves, but aunty Worn; Sakai’s intimate friend, would be the buyer for them in the rainy day. Sakai seldom brought their goods to sell, excepted someone order them…” (Sister Soo, interviewed on February 22, 2010) The mentioned phenomenon reflected that the going to the market, make Sakai as well as the others but also make Sakai as the “otherness” who has the difference from...
others. There is some different treating for Sakai such as the higher price goods than others.

Animal within human
: the “otherness” is without understanding from others

“…..Is it the animal within human?…” (Ann, interviewed on December 17, 2009) This message express the affront to Sakai intensely, because of the way of life in jungle of Sakai. Sakai is called “it” like as animal and it is the affront from the others. Someone imaged that Sakai was ferocious people that come to be Sakai’s definition all the time. In fact, Sakai dislike this other’s calling and definition, they know that this is the affront without fact. Sakai is the human who has the different way of life from the others, but they don’t want to exploit the others.

Therefore, Sakai is accused that being of the “uncivilized people” (Ann, interviewed on December 17, 2009). From speaking with the other person in the community, the researcher can get the viewpoint that there are many persons who dislike Sakai by thinking that Sakai has no education, and they are dirty.

From above matters, the researcher think that this is one reason of Sakai self’s protection. They try to make themselves avoid the affront by accepting the other culture instead, wearing the clothes as the city people, communicating with Southern-Thai language, and bringing their children to educate in the school. However, they still maintain their some identity such as the conversation among their group, the tradition, the ceremony, etc. This is reflected that Sakai have to change some identity to survive, and maintain some identity to carry down Sakai race.

Clothes, television, mobile phone, motorcycle
: the otherness construction in the context of the modernity

The wearing clothes is one of the civilization way as the Reign King Rama V promotes Thai to wear the clothes look like the western country (Anong Chaowanakit, 2007). This seem that the wearing clothes can change Sakai to be the civilization as city people, but in fact, the definition of the others Sakai still be the barbarian.

From picture 6, the researcher find that Sakai has clean their clothes, taken a bath, make up with powder, comb, lotion, etc. Their children who go to school often use the making up. It is reflected that the interaction with others can change their clothes wearing.

Therefore, (see picture 8) the electric pot, motorcycle, gas stove, and other facilities, are used in daily life of Sakai. They also have the mobile phone (see picture 7), television which is their supreme technology in the present. Some others still have no mobile phone, but Sakai has it and learn using, or add the money into pre-paid system mobile phone. Can Sakai change to be the developed people by these equipments? For the others, the owner of latest version of mobile phone is the symbol of
the modernity, but it is the exception for Sakai. The mobile phone of Sakai is only the symbol of changing culture, Sakai still be the joker for the others though they have mobile phone. The others have the question that “Can Sakai use mobile phone?” or “Whom Sakai called to?” (Ann, interviewed on December 17, 2009). Therefore, their education is not equal the city people, which cause of taking their advantage by the others. The supreme technology of Sakai, is it advantage or disadvantage?

Wedding
: the ceremony of the otherness construction in the context of tourism

The wedding ceremony between Tao-Yao, groom from Pa-Bon and Bin-la, bride from Ta-Mode last September 24, 2009, is the ceremony was arranged at their Tub, Pa-Bon, Amphur Pa-Bon, Phattalung, with more than 1,000 guests such as officers, villagers, the Thai or foreigner tourists and the more 50 relatives of groom and bride from Trang and Satun, and there is the district-chief officer to be eye-witness.

Therefore, the organizer invited the monks to do the observance. There is the food for all guests, and the shows of Sakai’s Tub construction and their jungle living also. Sakai was taken the photograph by the guests all the time, that cause of their unsatisfied and scared feeling; somebody run away from the party, somebody hide themselves while observe the party, etc. The bride was blacked out because the long journey from Ta-Mode, and many bystanders in the ceremony. The groom and the bride wear the red dress with red chaplet and necklet of bride.

The groom was in the prepared Tub with many bystanders around the Tub. Their countenance has no any expression. The ceremony started when the district-chief officer give them marriage certificate (Bai-Ma-Don) to confirm that groom and bride had already been the husband and wife in law. The ceremony finished when all guests already had the meal together.

This wedding ceremony is not their original ceremony which cause of their worries and unhappiness. Poi said that “….Why take the people to see us? The wedding ceremony as our way is better than this ceremony ...” (Poi, interviwed on September 24, 2009). This Poi’s message express that Sakai dislikes this ceremony arrangement. The researcher know this is the way to tell that there is one of minority who has the different way of life, it attracted the tourist and the other for traveling to see. The origin culture became the goods, there is the donation of clothes, money, and the food for Sakai during the ceremony also. The mentioned way express that Sakai is the “otherness” group who has the different way of life from the others in the social.
Red color, red flower: this is the meaning or symbol creation by the city people for Sakai.

The definition of Sakai represented by Red color or red flower or red clothes. In fact, it is defined by the others, because Sakai has not told that they like or dislike the red. The understanding of red symbol means Negrito-Sakai people, but this is misunderstanding. The researcher find the possibility that their color liking depend on the reason of each things such as Tao-Yao, educated Sakai, told that “...I like green color or soldier uniform, because I often meet many soldier and wild traveler who copy the dress as soldier uniform. So, I would like to ware such clothes...” (Tao-Yao, interviewed on December 13, 2009) Tao-Yao said that he need the clothes (the dissemble cloth look a like soldier uniform) of Aunty Worn (The person who Sakai respect because he always help Sakai). Tao-Poi, Tao-Yao’s relative; who travel from Satun to Phattalung, told that “...I like red color because it is more value...” (Tao-Poi, interviewed on January 6, 2010) Tao-Poi compare the red color with the format of 100 hundred baht bank bill because the tourists will give/donate Sakai with various bank bill of Thai money. Then they found that they can exchange more goods with 100 hundred baht or red bank bill, that cause of Tao-Poi’s red liking.

This mentioned phenomenon express that red color does not have more meaning for Sakai, and red is defined by the others to represent Sakai who is different from the others.

The conclusion

The growth; which be along with the state’s development policy for Sakai, dominated Sakai clearly. Sakai think that they were already developed and modernized by the convenient traveling, the construction of infrastructure, the quality of life improvement, the accession of mobile phone, television and motorcycle, the wearing clothes, the construction of permanent residence, the education in the school, and the believing in some religion. These changes lower the wall of ethnic. However, Sakai attempt to connect the “otherness” gap, but they are not still been in the same group of the others. Sakai was always defined as the second class people of Thailand. The interesting issue is some identity maintenance of Sakai such as language, some tradition, etc, because Sakai needs to carry their ethnic down to next generation.

Discussion

The results express that the state development policies; the convenient traveling, the construction of infrastructure (electricity and water supply), the quality of life improvement such as the accession of mobile phone, television and motorcycle, the wearing clothes, the construction of permanent residence, the education in the school, and the believing in some religion, and etc., bring the convenience for Sakai and also make Sakai to be the modernized people.

Peter Vandergeest (1993) studied about the “Construction Thailand: Regulation, Everyday Resistance, and Citizenship” during the development construction practices of the state and the resistance practices of Thai farmer in Amphur Sating-pra, Songkhla. The study finds that Thai state discourse the individual right of Thai Citizenship by referring the international law. The state development affect to the farmer, meanwhile the farmer also refer the right and law of citizenship to protect their advantage, and they have the resistance for the taking advantage from the state. This research reflect that the development of the state to be the modernity, absolutely affect to the farmer.
community, Amphur Sating-Pra, Songkhla; such as the farmer lost the land by the investor, etc, while the farmer has some resistance. For this Sakai study, we find that Sakai has no any resistance while the state attempts to develop them. The reason is Sakai has no enough education. Sakai has the difficulty to change some identity as the state development, but they still keep some identity such as language, tradition, etc. This result conform to the research of “the maintenance of identity of Mon-khmer’s culture” by Sirirat Add-sakul (2000). This study found that some Culture Identity of Mon-khmer can be maintained such as language, religion, ceremony, belief, and tradition, but some identity has also changed into the social. The cause of this result is the state policy about the culture adaptation, education, wedding, living, and immigration.

Therefore, the study of the cognitive element of agriculture of Karen community, Thung-Yai-Naresuan jungle by Pinkaew Luaeng-aram-sri (1996), the study find that the people; who attempt to adapt themselves to be Thai and modernity as the state development, faced the conflict in themselves. They attempt to find of Thai characteristics hardly, but it is the impossible for their attempt. If they develop themselves, they found the unhappiness as they expected. Their living as the past has more the honor and the happiness without any attempt. This study; which focus on the state development and their resistance, absolutely effect to the original culture. The state allocated the project for Karen without the consideration in the original culture. This is the cause of many problems found during there adaptation of themselves as the state policy. This study relate to the study of the researcher in the area of the “otherness” construction for Sakai while the modernity flow as the state development. The way of life of Sakai has been changed. This result conform to the research of “the identity change of Tai-Daeng, Huaphun sub-districi” by Sumitr Pitiphan (2003) the mentioned study finds that Tai-Daeng has more changed their original identity to be Laos. The condition of change depend on the definition of themselves as the same group of Laos, because the believing in the same religion as Buddhism. Sumitr’s study conform to the research of “the religion changing; the complexity of identity expression of Karen, Northern people of Thailand” by Kwan-cheewen Buadaeng (2003). The study finds that the religion changing is new identity construction to change the relation of power; both over-nature power and social power, to improve the better living. Therefore, one person can express various identity sides; such as religion, relative, community, depend on the current environment and time. The religion change is the attempt to adaptation themselves to conform to the way of life of city people.

The above studies find that the crisis of modernity is constructed by the state development. The state thinks that the economic growth or the infrastructure construction, are the development to protect the being of “barbarian”, while their development they face the conflict of themselves. Similarly, Sakai who is modernized by the state with the residence development, education, ID card registration, or permanent Tub construction for them. They are out the jungle to be employed as the scratching the rubber tree worker, gardener, and resort guard, or their ways of life became the tourism goods. The mentioned crisis takes Sakai into the modernity condition, which is the cause of the “otherness” construction for Sakai; such as the affront, etc.
Suggestion

The suggestion for this research can be divided into two issues:

First is the new cognitive element construction, which Sakai is constructed as the “otherness” in the context of the state development. From the way of life in the jungle, Sakai have to have the interaction with the city people, until their wedding ceremony to be presented through the television. The state thinks that the presentation through the media, is the development for Sakai. In fact, this state action is the “otherness” construction for Sakai ethnic. Therefore, giving Sakai education in the school, ID card registration, and the permanent residence construction, change Sakai to be the goods in the context of tourism.

Second is the data expression to adapt into the way of making correct understanding between Sakai and the others, which think that Sakai is the otherness.

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Interview

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