

Research Article

# Story Type and Factors to Adjust Story of Lanna Oral Buddhist Literature: Chiang Mai Province, Thailand

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## Abstract

This study was aimed at analyzing the identity and development of Lanna oral Buddhist literature. Research tools included (1) a questionnaire by collecting data from 304 regular users of local oral literature and analyzing data by percentage, mean, and standard deviation and (2) a structured interview form by collecting data from 6 experts in local Buddhist literature and analyzing data by descriptive analysis. The results indicated that (1) Story Type of local oral literature included traditional preaching, alms offering, asking for forgiveness, Triple Gem and others, Lanna proverbs, storytelling, morals, asking for forgiveness from dead bodies, traditional praying, sharing of loving kindness, introduction before starting a ritual, and sayings for pouring water on Phra That Chedi and (2) Factors to Adjust Story of local oral literature arose from changes according to the community context, consistency with governance system, integration with current events and local and various languages, such as Thai, Chinese, and English, application of concepts and beliefs from other localities, content shortening, deployment according to the specified time, more use of central Thai than local languages, and use of Pali with Thai accent instead of Pali with Lanna accent.

## Keywords

Identity, Buddhist Literature, Lanna Oral Literature

## 1. Introduction

The national development strategy in the Tenth National Economic and Social Development Plan, clause 5.2(2), places importance on building the stability of community economy by integrating the production process based on the potential and strength of the community to encourage communities to use knowledge from their cultural heritage to create, develop, and expand quality cultural products or other services as appropriate to the uniqueness of each community. [8] As cultural capital is an important component of social capital and a strong point that can connect economic and natural

resource capitals. [7] It complies with Section 4 of the Act on the Promotion and Preservation of Cultural Intellectual Heritage B. E. 2549 (2006), i.e. a cultural Intellectual heritage that is promoted and preserved in accordance with this Act shall have any of these characteristics. Traditional literature and languages appear in paragraph one. Literature that is conveyed through storytelling is always discrepant in the content, which may be missing or different depending on the mood and intelligence of communicators These differences mark the identity and development of oral literature, which is

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told by word of mouth and not recorded in writing, including traditional songs, folk tales, chants, and praises in various ceremonies both regarding religion and traditional beliefs. It reflects lifestyles, values, and concepts that ordinary people in society adhere to or practice, which may have similar or different characteristics from the written literature of urban or royal people [12].

Buddhism in Lanna is very important. The monks brought knowledge about the importance of writing and how to create letters back from Lanka. An oral transmission was developed as a literal transmission. [9] In particular, the Tripitaka developed in order for many years, ranging from memorization or oral tradition, writing in letters on palm leaves, Pali script printing, translation into different languages, including Thai [4]. Most Buddhist scriptures appearing in Thailand started from Lanna. Lanna characters are therefore central in creating identity. The tradition of procuring and continuing scriptures began in the Lanna period. All scripture copying projects were consistent with the idea of the future disappearance of Buddhism [3]. Therefore, the creation of scriptures was not only intended as desired, but it was also an important symbol by acting as a representative of the Buddha's teachings [2] Creating an identity for the Lanna Buddhist community will enhance the strength by using Buddhist principles that are consistent with the needs of the community as an important tool [5]. This will lead to the creation of the propagation principles of Buddhism to meet the needs of communities and a rapidly moving society. It can be considered as a policy to develop the country to achieve sustainable stability. For these reasons, the research team studied this topic.

## 2. Objectives

1. To analyze the identity of Lanna oral Buddhist literature.
2. To analyze the development of Lanna oral Buddhist literature.

## 3. Methodology

This study was mixed-method research. The sample was divided into two groups as follows:

1. The sample responding to the questionnaire included 304 regular users of local oral literature in various ceremonies both regarding Buddhism and traditional beliefs in Chiang Mai, out of 1,458 people, using the Krejcie & Morgan's table. Statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were used for data analysis; and
2. The interviewees included 6 experts in Lanna local Buddhist literature in Chiang Mai, who were chosen through the purposive sampling. The content analysis was conducted.

## 4. Results

The sample agreed with the identity of Lanna oral Buddhist literature at a high level with a total mean of 4.43 and a standard deviation of 0.613, including introduction before starting a ritual, sayings for pouring water on Phra That Chedi, Tan praying, traditional preaching, traditional sharing of loving kindness, alms offering, asking for forgiveness, Triple Gem and others, asking for forgiveness from dead bodies especially monks, Lanna proverbs, storytelling, and morals.

Lanna rituals have their own uniqueness and should be preserved so that they are unique to the local area. Determining appropriate ceremonies or merit-making sequences should not be too short or too long. Most of the contents are about teaching gratitude to patrons, such as parents and teachers, which is very important in creating a happy society and living well together. Using teaching methods that are easy for learners to understand and put into practice is very critical. In addition, characteristics, such as being kind, having good speech, and helping the community, are highlighted so that learners can access and understand the contents easily and better.

Introducing funny stories into teaching is good because it can disseminate ideas and contents in an interesting and noteworthy way. Using modern technologies and communications. For example, presenting interesting contents through online media or applications can help learners stay interested and access information more easily. In addition, contents related to beliefs should be emphasized, such as doing good and bad things and believing in Buddhist teachings. Teaching about making merits, keeping precepts, and practicing meditation is important because it is an honest basis for being a good person and having value to society. Contents are revealed through the use of current events, and it is important in making learners understand and become more interested in the contents.

The sample agreed with the development of Lanna oral Buddhist literature at a high level with total mean of 4.18 and a standard deviation of 0.794. The development of local oral literature arose from changes according to the community context, consistency with governance system, integration with current events and local and various languages, such as Kham Muang, Thai, Chinese, and English, application of concepts and beliefs from other localities, and content shortening according to the specified time. Monks and deacons should distribute literature regarding self-government and people-government to be responsible for oneself and own feelings, know how to listen and respect the opinions of others, perform work in accordance with the principles of work, be responsible and practice skills and knowledge related to work, create discipline and time management at work by applying the Brahmavihara principles correctly and honestly, and promote cooperation and responsibility in teamwork.

Propagating Buddhist literature is a guideline for guiding the new generation in creating a happy and successful society for themselves, communities, and society. In addition, importance should be given to training and development of teaching skills to become monks who are skilled in preaching and pointing out the causes of suffering and happiness in order to lead to the mental growth of people in society as well as to success in living a happy life for the new generation.

## 5. Discussions

According to the results, the definition of Lanna identity was linked to the cultural pluralism in Lanna society, which coexists peacefully among ethnic diversity. The phenomenon of construction and definition of Lanna identity through the literature of Mala Khamchan and Pibulsak Lakornpol is therefore important in reflecting on the nature of existence of human society in any nation. Any society has characteristics of both harmony and conflict, including negotiation and compromise. [16] The point is that how we can live together peacefully in the context of this social, cultural, and ethnic diversity. The construction of the Lanna identity of the writers presented through fictions indicates that there is a link between identity and gender of the Lanna people. It suggests that Lanna male identity is often tied to the original traditions of masculinity. [15] At the same time, it also incorporates the ideology of Buddhism. The identity of Lanna women is often linked to the tradition of femininity, which includes both the tradition of behaving according to the ideals and modern Lanna femininity. [14] However, even though there are separate and overlapping identities of the same person, the relationship between men and women in Lanna society shows that they both live together, negotiate, and compromise within the social and cultural context of Lanna [6].

According to the results, the Lanna identity changed in the context of contemporary Thai society in the era of cultural globalization. Adjusting oneself in a dimension negotiated with the center of power determined by the state is a play with culture in the world of globalization, western culture, local trends, and gender status in the current era, which probably changes over time [13]. Similarly, Buaphin [1] suggested that the knowledge management process can develop the learning of local literature. It is a process where all parties participate from the beginning, that is, thinking, planning, and practicing, and checking together, and the time can be flexible as appropriate. Local wisdom is committed to telling various stories and resulting in the creation of four groups of knowledge managers at the classroom level: facilitator, operator, note taker, and coordinator, making it possible to manage knowledge to promote learning, develop wisdom, and further utilize local wisdom for benefit, which is accumulated, inherited, and preserved with appreciation. It is about learning the roots and discovering the value of local culture through choosing to accept, adapt, and connect

between new ways in combination with old methods that are fading away to be useful again and meet the needs of people in the community. [11] This is a process that is based on the community culture in each locality in a consistent and appropriate manner in accordance with the Basic Education Core Curriculum B. E. 2551 (2008) [10].

## 6. Suggestions

### 1. Policy suggestions

Suggestions for policy establishment are as follows:

- 1) Chiang Mai monks and the National Office of Buddhism should establish a policy for monks to be trained in preserving local literature to remain with Lanna society forever;
- 2) Mahamakut Buddhist University and Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University should establish a policy to use information technology in organizing the learning process as a guideline for preserving local literature appropriate to the local area and promoting teaching and learning in educational institutions through the moral teacher project; and
- 3) The Local Administrative Organization, the Provincial Cultural Council, Phrapariyattidhamma Schools, and the National Office of Buddhism should establish a policy to create a network to search for information about Lanna literature, especially local Buddhist literature.

2. Research suggestions Suggestions for further research are as follows:

- 1) There should be research on guidelines for developing a learning center of Lanna oral literature for students and people in the north;
- 2) Integrated research should be done on preserving oral literature by creating a learning center of the village supported by houses, temples, and schools;
- 3) Research should be done on developing the potential of preaching monks in learning oral Buddhist literature, which promotes Buddhism to continue prospering; and
- 4) Research should be done on guidelines for developing preaching monks and deacons, who are important persons in the conservation and development of local literature.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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