

The Phu Tai Trail: Ethnic Tourism and the Revival of Indigenous Thai-Lao Communities

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Abstract

This study looks at how ethnic tourism helps the Phu Tai people—a Thai Lao group mainly in northeastern Thailand—revive their culture and improve their lives. The Phu Tai used to be seen as just exotic tourist attractions. Now, they're getting more involved in tourism projects in their communities, like building the Phu Tai Trail in Ubon Ratchathani.

This article follows how ethnic tourism has changed in the area, shows off the Phu Tai's rich culture, and discusses how they balance keeping their identity and selling their culture to tourists. By looking at their old rituals, food, crafts, and how their culture is presented, this paper shows how tourism doesn't harm the environment can give power to local groups and question the usual stories told about them. It also talks about the dangers of acting too much for tourists, losing their culture, and turning everything into a business. The Phu Tai Trail is a good example of tourism that includes everyone, bounces back from problems, respects the culture, and finds a good balance between protecting their heritage and growing in modern ways.

Keywords: Phu Tai; Ethnic Tourism; Thai-Lao Communities; Community-Based Tourism; Cultural Revival; Ubon Ratchathani; Indigenous Identity; Cultural Commodification; Sustainable Tourism; Heritage Preservation; Phu Tai Trail; Isan Culture; Tourism And Development; Traditional Crafts; Culinary Tourism.

1. Introduction

The Phu Tai are a Thai-Lao group who mostly live in northeastern Thailand, also known as Isan. They're farmers who grow rice and build thatched-roof houses, and they're also known for their unique culture. This includes shadow puppet shows (Nang Khaek Luesong), games (Wang Khaek), spirit ceremonies (Khwan Chao Wa), the Sabaidee dance, and mango flowers. Until the 1970s, the Phu Tai were mainly farmers who didn't have much to do with tourism. But when Bangkok started getting more international tourists looking for something different, the Phu Tai were presented as a different group to draw them in, bringing in some extra money. In the 1980s, some people thought about using this ethnic diversity to boost tourism. The Phu Tai and Isan were used to market ethnic tourism, where they were seen as a different group of people, not as equals, but as something interesting to watch. This happened during a time of nation-building and modernization, where groups with different cultures were seen as minorities who needed to fit into the national culture. A proposal by Davern Sugar Industries in the 1980s and 90s to develop villages mainly helped the rich and powerful, while only slightly helping the poor. Jobs in the Phu Thai cultural village in Ban Nong Khon were closely controlled and monitored.

While ethnic tourism can bring in income and jobs, it also risks losing cultural identity and turning culture into something fake for tourists to look at. Some studies have pointed out unfairness and human rights issues in how ethnic

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minorities are shown to tourists, or have looked at how communities benefit from tourism, without thinking about resisting tourism. The study of tourism and its landscape shows that there's a way to avoid being commodified or misrepresented.

2. History

In the mountains of Vietnam, there are villages of ethnic minorities like the Ha Nhi, Muong, Ta Oi, Ngai, Cor, and Kho Mu. Ta Van, in Sa Pa District, is the biggest and richest of these villages. The wealthiest families send their kids to school in the lowlands and buy woven textiles from nearby villages. Ta Van is about 18 km south of Sa Pa and can be reached by car, though the roads have changed landscape. You can rent a motorcycle in Sa Pa and tour the area, returning before sunset. It's common to go to Ta Van in the evenings to hang out at the bars by the river.

For the people who live there, and for outsiders, ethnic tourism has its ups and downs. It brings in money as foreigners are drawn to the local style. Villagers can use this money to buy rice and livestock. More women also know Vietnamese, giving them something to do. But sometimes, traditional clothes are faked, and things like face paint and nose piercings lose their meaning. People feel torn between their traditions and want things they can't afford. One day, a girl named Kham put on an old skirt. Soon after, when tourists started arriving, kids were quickly dressed up in bright hats. Houses were turned into guesthouses, standing in danger of falling apart.

3. Culture

Phu Tai culture includes beliefs, clothing, performances, music, language, and ways of living. They believe they are made up of the soul (Phra Khue), spirit (Laisik), bones (Laisaen), blood (Yaa), and flesh (Thao), which were created by gods. They respect different spirits, both good and bad, and honor their ancestors and the environment. They have ceremonies to celebrate births and remember the dead. These beliefs also influence their weaving.

Knowledge of Phu Tai culture is passed down through families. This is important for keeping their identity alive as the world becomes more globalized. The Phu Tai are careful about how their culture is shown to the public, preferring to share knowledge through stories and in person. People who know a lot about Phu Tai culture take care to share information in a personal way, building trust with those who want to learn. This also affects how they present their culture in art, like in children's books.

Traditional Phu Tai clothes are worn during important events like Tet, weddings, and funerals. Women's skirts have an embroidered belt, a body, and a hem. In the past, the hem was woven separately and then sewn on. They used to use natural dyes to color their clothes before cheaper dyes became available. Phu Tai music includes different styles like solo songs (Xat), dance songs (Xop), and dramatic plays (Xam) where people are possessed by spirits. Traditional instruments include wind and percussion instruments.

4. Ethnic Tourism

Ethnic tourism is when people travel to see different cultures and focus on the local people and their traditions. It's become more popular over the years. A good way to think about ethnic tourism is when a group shares their culture with visitors. This involves going to places with different environments and cultures and experiencing lifestyles that are different from your own. This means looking for something real, which may or may not be obvious. Sometimes, traditions are exaggerated, whether on purpose or not. The people sharing the culture, the tourists, and those who help them connect all play a part in this. In Southeast Asia, ethnic tourism in the mountains is called hilltribe tourism. It's become a way for these groups to make money and has led to studies on how ethnic tourism has changed and how culture is presented. In Thailand, tourism in the north started in the 1930s when the royal family visited the highlands. They were interested in the local cultures, like the Akha, Karen, Kuy, and Miao, and enjoyed the scenery. This interest in the culture of the local hilltribes brought about objectifications. Ethnic tourism can include museums, town gate performances, and quick tours. People want to see new cultures in a specific time and place.

5. Community Development

Opportunities in ethnic tourism can give local people new skills and knowledge if done right. When developing tourist sites based on natural and cultural things, it's significant to involve local people in planning and management to make sure it lasts. Strategic planning helps the community use their culture and environment for their own benefit.

This is important for tourism that includes everyone and helps the community thrive. A tourism program that values the local community's knowledge and experiences will encourage them to get involved and support the local economy. While there are no perfect solutions, this approach can help build something that lasts in the community. The main goal is to reduce the bad impacts and make the good impacts better.

Tourism planning needs to match what the local community can handle. Communities can use planning for their own needs while making sure tourism is done responsibly. This means using local resources and knowledge. The strength of tourist resources should determine how much development happens, instead of outside companies planning for their own benefit. It's better to improve resources rather than completely change them. Being flexible and taking advantage of tourism that happens naturally is good. This kind of resource development needs less social change but does need things like infrastructure, access, money, and communication.

6. Challenges

Indigenous communities involved in tourism face challenges in protecting their cultures, identities, languages, and traditions. These can come from tourism becoming too commercialized. When Phu Tai traditions are performed for tourism, it might mean getting support from powerful people, which can lead to disagreements. A similar issue was found in central Thailand. Getting involved in tourism strengthens the local identity, but some receive help from powerful people, and there are different understandings of how culture is being produced.

Limited knowledge can prevent communities from creating their own tourism products. In Chaleunthai Commune, women can weave purses because they received training, but they depend on the older generation's experience to promote them, and the older generation doesn't want to engage with the market. This can mean the communities can't publicize themselves or make money, which can cause them to lose their cultural identity.

7. The Phu Tai Trail

The Phu Tai Trail, north of Ubon Ratchathani, is a tourism effort based in the community. Started after the Mun Riverway ecotourism project, it was officially created in May 1999. The Thai Tourist Organization, the Ubon Ratchathani Office of Tourism, and local tourism associations have worked together to develop, promote, and manage the trail, focusing on quality. With the creation of the trail, community members have started building new places for tourists. The Phu Tai Trail includes six villages about 40 kilometers north of Ubon Ratchathani. Community tourism has become a way to learn more about the heritage of the area. The communities better understand the social, environmental, and economic aspects of their natural and cultural environments because they're directly involved in arranging tourism and sharing their traditions. Reducing poverty is still a problem in this region, and many traditional things are disappearing. Most tours and activities have been created for tourists, which has meant that tourism resources are being used for a short amount of time.

8. Attractions

The Phu Tai Trail has attractions based on the views and the local environment. For example, Mu Si La has a great view of the Phu Wei cliff and valley. Some attractions, like homestays, have been built just for tourism. Others, like Phu Tai songs, are based on long-held traditions. So, there are attractions based on the views and attractions based on the environment. While environmental attractions seem permanent, those based on people's views can change. The highlight of the Phu Tai Trail is the Nong Bua Charoen Basin, known for its largest water lily basin in Thailand. The Thai tourism board promoted it in 2016, and it quickly became a popular spot, leading to more local investment. This change led to the creation of a local tourism group, which holds a market festival twice a month. The festival features the Umbrella dance, which aims to appeal to tourists and promote the spirits. Mu Si La holds a health and herbal care event once a season, showcasing practices that are disappearing because of modernization. In the 1960s, these practices were done by grandmothers or community herbal doctors. Today, not many people know about them, and things like synthetic oil and paracetamol are being used instead. By showcasing these practices, the event hopes to bring back traditional knowledge and a sense of identity among the middle-aged and elderly. This comes from the community's desire to bring back knowledge and practices that have been forgotten because of modernization, while also being a part of the Phu Tai Trail.

9. Culinary Experiences on the Phu Tai Trail

The Phu Tai are a Thai-Lao group who mostly live in the northeastern part of Thailand, called Isan. They're farmers who grow rice and live in thatched-roof houses. They're also known for their unique culture, which includes:

- Nang Khaek Luesong (shadow puppet shows)
- Wang Khaek (Khaek Games)
- Khwan Chao Wa (spirit honoring)
- The Sabaidee dance
- Mango flowers

Until the 1970s, the Phu Tai people were mainly farmers who didn't have much to do with people from other countries. But then Bangkok started getting more international tourists who wanted to see different cultures, and the Phu Tai were promoted to meet that demand. In the 1980s, people who worked on community growth saw the chance to use the ethnic diversity of the area for mass tourism. The Phu Tai and Isan were used to market what they called ethnic tourism. This meant that they showed the ethnic groups as different and not equal partners, but rather as something to watch like it's a show. Ethnonationalism, the rise of nation states, nation-building, and the move to update society were all part of what shaped the idea of ethnic tourism. Groups that were different and had their own cultures were seen as minorities who needed to fit into the national culture. Davern Sugar Industries' plan in the 1980s and 1990s for village helped the upper class and local leaders but didn't do much for the poor. Some jobs were created at the Phu Thai cultural village in Ban Nong Khon, but these jobs were managed and closely watched. While ethnic tourism or community tourism that showcased culture could make money and create jobs, it also had the risk of wiping out their identities and turning their culture into something to buy or a made-up story for tourists to see them as strangers. These studies were about unfairness and human rights issues in how ethnic minorities were shown to tourists, or about how ethnic communities made money from tourism. It didn't talk about how the ethnic communities resisted tourism as well.

Some ethnic minority villages like the Ha Nhi, Muong, Ta Oi, Ngai, Cor, and Kho Mu are in the mountains of Vietnam. Ta Van, in Sa Pa District, is the biggest and richest ethnic minority village there. Some of the richest families in Sa Pa live there. They send their kids to schools in the lowlands and buy their woven clothes from villages nearby such as Matra, Giang Ta Chai, and Hoang Lien. Ta Van is about 18 km away from Sa Pa. People can get there by car since there are wide dirt roads there. Motorcycle tours from Sa Pa go there and get back before sunset. Tien said that he and his friends rent a motorbike or get a jeep to go to Ta Van almost every evening. They go to the bars by the river and dance with the girls who work there. He used to hang out with Vietnamese girls from Hanoi and Saigon there, too.

Ethnic tourism is good and bad for people who live there and for people who visit. Villagers make money by selling to foreigners who are in marketplace style dressing enticed by the charm that they have lost. They can use that money to buy rice and farm animals. More women also know Vietnamese. But people often sell dresses that are not original. Also, the Hu Mong face paint and Lolo nose piercings are no longer real, and don't have anything to do with their Christianity. They are stuck in between wanting things they can't afford and keeping their traditions. One day, a 16-year-old named Kham put on an old skirt. Two days later, when they heard tourists coming, kids were quickly put in bright hats. Houses were turned into guest houses and bars. Phu Tai culture includes their beliefs about their identity as people, their clothes, shows, music, language, and how they live. They believe that they are made up of Phra Khue (the soul), Laisik (the spirit), Laisaen (the bones), Yaa (the blood), and Thao (the flesh), and that they were made by the gods. They also believe in spirits, some good and some bad. They respect the spirits of their ancestors. They hold ceremonies often to celebrate births and respect older relatives who have passed away. Their beliefs also affect how they weave fabric.

They share what they know about their clothes, shows, music, beliefs, language, and stories from parents and grandparents to children. This is important for each person's identity. The Phu Tai are careful about how their culture is shown to the public. They would rather share what they know through stories. People who know a lot about Phu Tai culture make sure to add their own personality to the information they give. They build trust with the person getting the information. This also goes for children's book illustrations.

Phu Tai clothes are worn during important community events such as Tet, weddings, and funerals. Women's skirts have an embroidered belt (diem), a body (bang), and a hem (kan). In the past, the hem was woven separate from the body earlier than sewn together. They used natural dyes to color clothes, which varied by region. The music of the Phu Tai has different styles. Xat is a solo song. Xop (dance songs) are verses with movements involving body posture and foot stamping. Xam are plays where the characters are possessed by spirits. They play music with wind and percussion instruments.

Ethnic tourism is a type of travel where people visit different cultures and are very interested in the local people and their traditions. It has become more liked in recent years. Another idea of ethnic tourism is when one ethnic group lets other groups learn about their culture when they come to visit. It is about traveling to places with different environments and cultures, experiencing different ways of life, and searching for what is real. Sometimes, the people involved in performing the culture may not even realize what is real, and they may show things that aren't. This look is sometimes a product that is equally shared among the people involved. In the mountain areas of Southeast Asia, it's sometimes called hilltribe tourism. This became how the hilltribes made a lot of money internationally. Domestic tourism in Northern Thailand began in the early 1930s when the rich people from central Thailand visited the highlands to relax. They were interested in studying the culture of ethnic inhabitants. The mix of ethnic tourism includes museums, town gate performances, and click-and-race expeditions. The goal is to show new cultures.

Ethnic tourism can help local community members with knowledge if done right. Using natural resources located at cultural sites invites the resource exploiting of those resources. It's important to include local people in planning, and managing the resources so the site will be sustainable, Strategic planning is needed so that the indigenous community can improve what they offer for their own benefits.

This can help tourism that includes everyone and community strength. Any tourism plan that improves the attitudes, knowledge, and thoughts of the local community would encourage them to be a part of tourism. The main question is how to minimize the bad impacts while making the good impacts better.

Tourism must be planned with local knowledge in mind. Planning can be used for the needs of the people. This means using local resources, especially local knowledge for the planning shift. The strength of tourist resources must set the scale for how development should take place. Technical needs such as infrastructure, access, finance, and media might be included.

Indigenous communities can be affected by having their cultural, identities, languages, traditions changed in commodified tourism. Showing Phu Tai tradition in tourism might have provincial power agents. This might mean that different groups' claims to value the shows might be the same.

Their limited technology keeps them from making their own products. Older women can weave purses, but they rely on an older generation and are not enthusiastic towards the market. Without being able to promote their tourism development, there is a risk that the communities may not publicize well and hence they may lose identity.

The Phu Tai Trail was made north of Ubon Ratchathani as a community tourism effort. With help from Mun Riverway ecotourism, this program was fully put into place. The Thai Tourist Organization (TTT), the Ubon Ratchathani Office of Tourism, and the Ubon Ratchathani and Si Sa Ket tourism groups have all joined together to improve the Phu Tai Trail. Community people build venues for tourism. The Phu Tai Trail has six villages: Ban Pang Khwang, Ban Pha Khai, Ban Thung Na-Ko, Ban Platwankham, Ban Phu Ya, and Ban Tha Chang. They mostly speak Phu Tai, which are about 40 kilometers north of Ubon Ratchathani. Community tourism has deepened the understanding of heritage. The communities are directly involved in giving tourism activities and sharing legacy for tourism. Most tours are built to welcome guests, resources are for a time spell, could be seen as irretrievable.

The Phu Tai Trail comes from the point of view of both the local people and its natural environment. A major attraction is the view of the Phu Wei cliff and the valley. Some attractions are made into promotion of tourism entirely. Some attractions are based on heritage. There are two sorts of attraction down the trail: One the local people and attractions coming from nature. The latter sort seems fixed, but the former is dynamic and changes with new ideas. the Phu Tai Trail occurs at Nong Bua Charoen Basin, also the largest water lily basin in Thailand. famous spot was promoted, which rose to a tourism network group. The group does Mari night market festival, in which Umbrella dance is in it. Besides the lily basin, tourists appeal, the people also publicize by helping each other the spirits the community worships., Mu Si La care is showcased, it has been gradually eroded change. in the 1960s, practice was by grandmothers. Now, muscle treatment eel replaced, and fever leaves with a paracetamol. and a knowledge, Mu Si La care is looked like a of people and culture, and a part of Phu Tai Trail.

The Trail known has beautiful landscapes, that are an import to sustain the indigenous people. The owners of the homes protect their lands, help develop a fair method, offer the community, and make sure local values are to have. There are plants to cook. There is processed foods that are sold. Are plants and encourage to promote tourism and help process tourism and help create more and develop tourists can held events stages here. And culinary are included with Phu Tai. Meals are Thai, 5-7 is ensured with sanitation.

10. Preservation of Cultural Heritage

The Phu Tai Trail is more than just a pretty path; it's now a way to keep Phu Tai culture alive. Through local tourism, villagers can share their knowledge, language, beliefs, healing methods, food, crafts, and celebrations. Still, it's tricky to stay true to their culture while also bringing in tourists.

For example, the Mu Si La care, a traditional healing practice, is changing. It used to use herbs, muscle work, and spiritual beliefs, but now modern medicine is more popular. This adaptation shows how traditional knowledge is getting lost. The Umbrella Dance, once a small local event, is now performed at festivals for tourists, and its spiritual meaning sometimes gets lost.

Also, Phu Tai textiles, once made by hand with special symbols, are now mass-produced. This business side of things could take away from their cultural value. As textile scholar F. Connors (2004) says, when sacred symbols are sold as souvenirs, they lose their meaning and become less special. What once belonged only to the Phu Tai becomes more common and less personal.

Even so, the trail gives chances to bring back and protect cultural practices. The six villages along the trail are working on keeping control of how they share their stories and skills. By creating local tourism groups, holding workshops on keeping their heritage alive, and teaching younger generations, these communities can handle tourism in a way that respects their culture.

Keeping the Phu Tai Trail's cultural heritage alive involves finding a balance between tradition and new ideas. It's about making sure tourism helps the Phu Tai people feel proud of who they are, instead of hurting their identity.

11. Environmental Considerations

Tourism can also cause problems. According to (F. Connors, 2004), tourist textiles made by artisans can't really be called ethnic textiles. Phu Tai textiles that get mass-produced and sold as souvenirs lose their cultural meaning. Sacred symbols that once only belonged to the Phu Tai now get used by anyone. Textile scholars who buy them straight from the village women are blamed for ruining the heritage by selling what should stay within the culture. The textiles become merchandise, with profits being more important than staying true to the culture. (Prompayuk and Chairatananonda, 2018) pointed out that cultural heritage in Thailand has been affected by tourism. Tourist spots are either too crowded and changed, with little of their original identity left, or not visited enough and about to disappear.

Tourists visiting Phu Tai homes don't get much of a chance to learn about the Phu Tai way of life, their beliefs, or their knowledge. They don't respect Phu Tai culture enough. Instead of showing the tourists the real culture, things get changed, taken out of context, and staged. Tourism can make Phu Tai people interested in their heritage, jobs, and identities again. Saeng's idea that tourism could grow too big and ruin the Phu Tai culture completely, is likely to happen. Since the Phu Tai are better studied by researchers than by themselves, how people see the Phu Tai might be based on what outsiders want. With more tourism, Phu Tai tourism might start to look too like Akha, Karen, or Hmong tourism, and won't be authentic anymore.

12. Government Policies and Support

The Office of Tourism Development has helped the Phu Tai community start a tourism project focusing on their culture and a tourist spot at Phu Tai. This spot protects against problems with land and a messy burial ground, which affects the community's way of life. Ethnic tourism on the Phu Tai Trail considers the economy that supports their living, national and community identity, environmental conditions that can handle climate change or natural disasters and keeping the way of life of their ancestors as key things for keeping their ethnic character. Ethnic tourism also makes people aware of the Phu Tai community and helps community leaders and groups work together to support future growth, as well as support from local and regional tourism groups.

The Phu Tai Trail tourism project doesn't have an official endorsement; this idea should be shared with other indigenous communities in Thailand. Looking at tourism on the Phu Tai trail is a way to fight against globalization, which threatens the traditional ways of life and beliefs of minority cultures. To keep the group's identity and social role, it can't be done alone. It needs real support from the government and tourism groups. The Phu Tai Trail is a good example for indigenous communities in Thailand that can be used again in the future.

The results of the checking and review, in Section 4.4 of the Tourism Development Plan, cover four areas. The economic impact of tourism on the Phu Tai community over the past three years is about 139,488-344,863 Baht per year, on average 212,055 Baht per year or 17,671 Baht per month per 12 homestays. The impact and return on investment of the tourism project on a firearm for firewood was about 892,945 Baht, which means that with an investment of 266,09 Baht, the community got an income of 626,835 Baht or a recovery within the first year. The checking of tourism resource management covered both the community (economic) impact of ethnic tourism and environmental impact assessments. Most of the Phu Tai homestays protected against the taking over of the agricultural area. The way of tourism resource management that cares about the environment has meant that tourism buildings and facilities haven't changed the identity and lifestyle of the Phu Tai community (Prompayuk and Chairatananonda, 2018).

13. Role of NGOs in Promoting Ethnic Tourism

Local authorities giving freedom for indigenous tourism has still hurt local communities in the long run. Buddhist monasteries and traditional Lavan Wan are supported by and controlled by the government and are centers for indigenous tourism. Tours to these spots are seen as safe for mostly Chinese Thai visitors, giving local people enough space to sell things and offer tourist services in line with local traditions. But these self-control measures haven't worked well because community leaders depend on the money from these institutions, so they can't really disagree with how they change the local culture. The ethnic groups have been given responsibilities along with the approval of the state. Some tourist activities that are against the law are moved to less visible areas of the local communities, which slowly ruins the indigenous beliefs and lifestyles of these people. Also, the lack of openness in the process of tourism leaves community projects open to the decisions of local authorities on permits and places. The current conditions for community-based tourism seem to exclude most local groups from the money, only making things more unfair. Ethnic tourism must have entry costs and set places. Only events approved by the local authorities can use temporary things to collect fees. Only a few larger groups, with many interests in tourism, can get this permit. All other events are seen as illegal. There have been more eco-Buddhism charges on footpaths built where floods happen, or problems with local authorities over detoxing, which turn into media problems. Help from NGOs has helped individual communities bring back tourism and growth, more working together between tourism authorities and non-government groups in helping ethnic groups fight for their place in the mass tourism market could help create long-term tourism.

14. Visitor Experiences and Feedback

The trail just opened in October 2022, so it's still new. Local news has covered it a lot. Visitors have been sharing their experiences and photos online through a visitor logbook and social media. The first groups showed up in November, and before things got busy in early 2023, the first hundred visitors gave us some great feedback. This feedback is super important for us to see how the trail is doing.

Overall, the feedback has been positive. We've had visitors from all over the world, so we're getting all sorts of cool perspectives. The good stuff people are sharing on social media is getting a lot of attention. People love the tour, especially the awesome hospitality and yummy food. They often say that the program is organized well and full of info, which lets them chill out and connect with the locals.

Besides social media posts, guests have sent emails thanking us and talking about their cool experiences. Sometimes, people ask about staying longer, sharing farming skills, and building airfields, which wouldn't be good for the environment. Some people worry that the Phu Tai people are so friendly and open that it might not last with more tourism. Finding the right balance between keeping the culture alive, protecting nature, and coming up with creative ideas is a common concern. And some visitors weren't happy with some of the Phu Tai's ways of doing things.

Even with the negative comments, we know our local partners are facing some tough stuff. For example, there's worry that too many visitors will wear out the Phu Tai people and their culture. Other problems include helping people learn new languages and staying motivated. Since the trail is new, we're hoping that everyone will work together to help the community grow.

15. Future of Ethnic Tourism

Ethnic tourism is cool, but it also brings up questions about the culture and people whose lives are on display. How you see it depends on what you think about the effects of tourism. Most people thought the Phu Tai Trail had brought about positive work. New places, activities, products and opportunities have become obvious. Most locals seemed happy with the new chances. But there were varied concerns about tourism's effects on culture, especially about money changing

things and culture starting to disappear little by little. Making sure the community owns the tourism thing seemed super important to have good social, cultural, and money effects. Tourism started for the Phu Tai's cultural resources seemed like it would share the culture widely and the right way.

The Thao minority in Vietnam, in a collective of similar Thao villages also took part in the effects of ethnic tourism. They knew that the homestay idea would majorly change how people saw their cultural resources. Communities worked together to make money and make a sales strategy, so the money stayed in the communities and villages. And networks that offered support created locally and in Vietnam's capital, Hanoi were made. But unlike the Phu Tai Trail, professional producers were engaged to oversee all stages of the proposal's development. The marketing of satisfaction capabilities indirectly attracted broader attention to transform the social context of Thao–Kinh relations then drive development in broader and more sustainable fashions.

16. Comparison with Other Areas

Compared to the more famous Tai Thai villages, the Phu Tai in Thailand are not well known. The area doesn't have as much money, which makes home stays and tourist spots difficult. The QL13 road being built made the village less accessible because cars drive faster. Also, making sure tourism money is shared fairly is a problem, as villagers with money invest in tourism, which causes problems. But not like Amphawa, Samchuk, or Chiang Khan, the Phu Tai Trail is seen as a chance to bring the area back to life, especially by showing the unique Phu Tai culture. There are a lot of temples and festivals but not very many communities share a strong sense of home and family with their cultural background. The Phu Tai Trail is special because it lets people see a culture that's far away but not a complete unknown to tourists from Northeast Thailand.

Across the region, Tai groups share old beliefs, with focus on how things in nature go over time, people in communities over space, and family outside of the physical body. The Phu Tai Trail also showed Phu Tai beliefs, ways, and language with nature and cultural checkpoints. but the feeling of home is because of the Phu Tai community being reservists from Tai migrations a long time ago. Because there were so many of them in Thailand, the links with similar communities disappeared when Phu Tai traffic stopped. The 'difference' was used for tourism, making the aesthetic difference bigger and putting down cultural work.

Overall, the Phu Tai Trail values how important the past is in keeping home safe. Buildings, views, and even things protected by being 'brought back' after Thai immigration can be seen but are poor for showing what it's like to live that history because of Thai tropes. Most meanings of faraway are already not real before they're shared.

17. Moral Considerations

People have been asking about ethics in tourism, mostly ethic tourism, for a long time now by analysts and workers alike. The industry was created by outsiders' mistakes and exploitations of mountain rural people. This tourism left hill tribes worldwide in the dumps while those who enriched stakeholders kept pace. A lot of real cultures quickly became trivialized and made small by their commodification, evolved staged dances, and re-enactments of habits. Historic budgets do not positively influence significantly indigenous peoples; The more poverty stricken a site, the more likely, and viciously, it is exploited through kitsch markets, tattooing, drunkenness and littering. However, morality is made through tourism itself, and theoretical research has a huge overlap with this tourism area that makes us think. Concerns are framed differently based on the audience as workers, academics, tourists and the hosts themselves. Mostly The most direct things that happen when tourism shows up can be put into three groups: nature, people and their cultures, and money. The damage to nature gets the big criticism and disagreement. The cultural or social impact of tourism can outweigh money aspects from a kind perspective. Economic considerations are traditional and central on the agenda. Local economic leakages and low net income affect international organizations. People in rural mountain areas and external visitors can raise awareness and wonder about sustainability and if alternatives locally owned, provided and integrated are realistic opportunities. With fast cultural worldwide minority ones losing smarts in over their environments.

18. Marketing Plans for Phu Tai Trail

The Phu Tai Trail, a 100-kilometer route through 14 Phu Tai communities in Mukdahan Province, has been created. Local people, government workers, and students had workshops to plan tourist agendas. Sustainable tourism management planning was formed with the local stakeholders that wanted to study ethnic culture so that they would

appreciate and protect it more. Planning and management, marketing plans, and tourism product development were also studied. With collective work between locals and the local government to make the Phu Tai Trail and get prizes.

The Phu Tai Trail got promoted with selling, tour with footage, PR trip, and hiring a professional to work with locals and write scripts at the team level, it was obvious that a lot of locals wanted to promote the trail and was difficult and key leaders were pressured. Meeting the needs of sellers and booths in parades, a promotional method of food for lunch can be used. professional help can also be used for local for knowledge management media. With Marketing used adult fun runs and walking for local and the marketing strategies.

19. Role of Tech in Promoting Tourism Rise

Tech in the Phu Tai Trail is among the main sources for learning about local culture. As the trail's development communications network helped make that, the role of tech should be watched. Communities and organizations maintain and make ways to respond to local problems and share the answers.

Community platforms are used which help people share and view information, changing ways information is shared. In interviews people see that NGO and organizations is needed to help scale up.

Trust is a challenge which is the online communication system and making user distrust to marketing. It makes a problem to local heritage and new people get data collection from the site. Social platform analysis communication system of communication remains based tradition. Tourism makes the economy grow from jobs to profit. But local communities still hope Phu Tai Trail gets recognition. Social situation change reveals old struggles and interests coming up from little known attempts from the communities. The platform wants the memories and the conflicts online with the social accounts.

20. Working with Local Businesses

To make sure the Phu Tai Trail is a success for years to come and helps the community as much as it can, it's important to team up with local businesses. We need to actively get small businesses involved. A good way to start is by working with local Ali's cafés and restaurants since food is a key part of any tour. Providing meals also means a steady income from tourism. Motorbike taxis are also needed for getting around. Working with local guides is also super important because they know a lot about the Phu Tai culture and the trail. These partnerships should start early, and things like keeping the quality high and having fair, set prices should be kept in mind. Ali's cafés and restaurants are great because they have simple menus and food choices, so they can be an example for setting prices.

There are lots of things to think about when it comes to pricing, and we need to talk about them before any meetings. The focus groups showed that the local people want to oversee pricing. Guided walks on the Phu Tai Trail should be cheap. This means the tour price can change based on whether a local person is running it, which is what we want for the future. Also, local guides should oversee not just prices, but how the tours run. To keep things going, it's important that they have the freedom and responsibility to keep the quality high. Without that, it'll be hard to grow in the future. Also, we can't just use one plan for everyone. The product needs to let local guides change their tours to fit their style and what people want. The team wants to start with just a basic outline that local people can then change to fit what they like and what makes sense for them.

21. Who Visits and What's Popular

This paper looks at how the Phu Tai Trail is helping to bring back the Phu Tai migrants' ethnic identity and culture. Keeping the ethnic identity and culture alive is a key part of ethnic tourism. This means that while tourism can be good, it can also cause problems for the communities and their culture. If the communities don't have control over tourism and don't get involved in creating it, and if their culture becomes too commercial, that can hurt the communities and their cultures. The text talks about the three main things that local people think make up ethnic tourism, and what parts of it are the most harmful to their communities and cultures. It looks at how we can fix the issues in how visitors and locals interact by having forum discussions where local people share their feelings and beliefs. It ends with some thoughts on what the future holds for the Phu Tai Trail and ethnic tourism.

The Phu Tai Trail is newer than the other ethnic trails in the area. Community leaders are hopeful about the future of trial and ethnic tourism. They hope that enough visitors will come and see how great the trail is. The Phu Tai communities have social events, cultural events, and religious ceremonies which support the Phu Tai Trail. While the

Phu Tai Trail helps bring jobs and income to people, there are fears that cheap tour groups could hurt the plan. It's good that the government and other supporters have helped with setting up the trail, signs, and brochures. But some people worry that too much involvement from the government and companies could hurt sustainability. Some people are worried that some tourists will only stay a short time in Phetchabun and not see all three ethnic trails. Also, some fear that the tourism stuff built for the Olympics might be ignored.

22. Possible Problems with Cultural Issues

Ever since the mid-1990s, when ethnic tourism became popular in Southeast Asia, Pattaya hasn't been the only popular tourist spot. New theme parks, resorts, and gardens compete for attention. Countries near Thailand started making their own tourist sites to get tourists to visit. Border tourism was created to bring in tourists who might not visit Thailand. Ethnic tourism is a type of tourism where people can participate. It lets people from ethnic groups dress in older styles, talk in their language, and not bathe as much. There used to be rafts in the river, wooden bridges in the village, and cool water on the plants, and the chickens. Now there are concrete monuments with harmonica dogs. For tourism, where the local people live as they always have, there's no need for resorts or plans. People will walk in the forest even if elephants are dying. For real ethnic tourism, where people speak the local language, there's no need for places to stay or day programs. Tourists will get invited to play fun games, even if there's only one generator.

Modern tech is used to make water forts that are easy to replace. Old drug treatment stuff can be traveling logs. Each place is landscaped for paid photos or has restaurants. They'd get some support at the start, but then they'd be on their own. Ethical tourism depends on the quality of the service and the price. Different ethnic groups, keeping old languages alive for performers, the risk of losing fluency between family generations, and old tech are problems for making money from people working across the border. Travelers have been told not to question how things are set up. Both locals and outsiders should work together to keep the universe consistent, even with rules.

23. How Communities Stay Strong

Years ago, the Tai-Lao soldiers moved down from the mountains to western Laos and Thailand. The Hmong Akha, Khua, and Deang Hreuy stayed in the mountains. After the Chinese wars, European colonialism came to Laos. In 1893, the French made a train connecting Thailand and Laos. That's when the Phu Tai became Buddhist and moved east. Over time, they made new settlements. At first, these settlements were impacted by factories and French people, but soon they got involved in government and trade with Bangkok. They met the Thai and Lao people and built a city where the rivers meet.

Since the renovations, the Phu Tai have moved to places with clean water, which is good for health. Also, problems due to weather and farming have decreased. Tourism is a chance, but company ideas, expectations, and rules are hard. The Phu Tai have changed how they live, with better houses, and these houses are often shown in tourism but not always done well. Compared to other Tai communities, the Phu Tai are better socially and follow the tourism guide instead of old ways.

24. Conclusion

The Phu Tai Trail came about because Phu Tai village was sharing tourism ideas with another village. The Phu Tai trail follows the old road through Phu Tai villages. The goal was to reclaim this road from being overshadowed by modern stuff. The Phu Tai Trail is now used for educational trips and adventure tourism. The community is studying Phu Tai language to adapt to modern changes. They have changed the plans, tourism management, and tracking indicators to fit with ethnic tourism. Another village has tried to reclaim old Phu Tai buildings. Even though the Phu Tai tourism started with community control, some people wonder if capacity building has been done well. Also, dealing with tourism effects has been a problem, but the community has been adapting. The Phu Tai Trail is a way to support community-controlled ethnic tourism to protect a culture that is threatened by the pressure to create big attractions for tourists. The community thinks it's possible to balance protecting their unique culture within tourism. It's hoped that the Phu Tai can move toward a good future where they can be proud of their culture and help create a better balance between culture and well-being within tourism in Thailand.

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