

Food and Local Culture Media in to Enhance the Tourism in I-San Dhavaravadi Society (Phrathat Na Dun)

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Abstract

The current study was designed in qualitative approach aiming at examining the current situations of the area, cultural mechanisms leading to tourism development, and creating of innovative local culinary media to creatively boost tourism economies. The findings revealed that the area's current landscape features elevated community land intermittently covered with large trees and several streams, including Huai Wang Long, Huai Bang Bon, Huai Nong Bua, Huai Chong Ngok, Huai Nong Chok, and Huai Tha Khum Poon. However, water scarcity is prevalent in the dry season due to the elevated, sandy terrain, forcing most residents to purchase water for consumption. Approximately 80% of the population are engaged in agriculture, and after the rice farming season, some laborers migrate to other areas for employment. Regarding cultural mechanisms promoting tourism development, Wat Pho Tharam in Ban Dong Bang houses "Hoop Taem," mural paintings dating back more than 200 years. These murals, significant remnants of Isan folk art, depict Buddhist narratives and past local lifestyles. Preserving and presenting Hoop Taem serves as valuable cultural communication and attracts tourists interested in local art and history. The Dong Bang Subdistrict Administrative Organization, together with the local community, has established the Hoop Taem and Local Wisdom Learning Center at Wat Pho Tharam as a knowledge hub for educating visitors about local art and wisdom, displaying and selling community products, and providing services to culturally interested tourists. Additionally, residents of Ban Dong Bang are highly skilled in traditional silk weaving, an inherited wisdom passed down through generations, integral to community life and culture. Tourism activities involving silk weaving, such as silkworm raising, silk reeling, and natural dyeing workshops, contribute to sustainable cultural tourism. Dong Bang community has also developed Community-Based Tourism (CBT), emphasizing active local participation in hosting and caring for tourists, offering homestay accommodations, cultural activities, and showcasing unique local cuisine like "Sa Bak Kheua." Community-based tourism enhances local incomes and pride in cultural heritage. These cultural mechanisms form a critical foundation for tourism development in Dong Bang, integrating cultural preservation, community involvement, and meaningful visitor experiences. Local governmental organizations, along with higher educational institutions both central and surrounding Ban Dong Bang, actively contribute to driving this developmental effort.

Keywords: *Dvaravati-Isan Cuisine, Cultural Communication*

INTRODUCTION

The act of eating is one of the four essential factors of human life and represents a significant process of social interaction. Accordingly, the act of eating encompasses a wide range of behaviors, including cultural elements such as customs, traditions, norms, and shared practices (Anderson, 2014). Communication frequently occurs during mealtimes and serves as an effective and rapid means of cultural transmission. As Lasswell (1960, cited in Kaewthep, 2000) noted, communication plays a vital role in transmitting culture—heritage passed down from one generation to another or from one group to another (Edelstein, 2011).

Thailand's 20-Year National Strategy (2018–2037) prioritizes the conservation, restoration, and sustainable development of natural resources, architectural and cultural heritage, local identities, and traditional ways of life based on ecological and cultural foundations (National Strategy Secretariat Office, 2017). This aligns with the Thai National Food Strategy, which positions Thailand as a nation rich in biodiversity and food production potential—commonly referred to as the "Kitchen of the World" (Thai National Food Committee, 2013). The process of producing traditional Thai cuisine is recognized as a form of cultural expression that conveys stories of philosophy, wisdom, and community lifestyle (Maleesuwana, 2021).

Maha Sarakham Province has been selected as a model creative economy city under an initiative led by the Department of Intellectual Property, Ministry of Commerce. The project aims to encourage Thais to utilize local wisdom for commercial purposes, stimulating the economy, generating employment, and creating income across various regions. Provinces with high potential are identified as creative economy cities and selected as models based on their distinctive heritage, arts, and culture. These characteristics are seen as assets that can enhance the value and identity of local products and services, thereby contributing to both local and national economic development.

Among the ten provinces chosen from an initial pool of thirty, Maha Sarakham has been distinguished as a “Learning City towards Community Development” or, alternatively, “Taksila City”—a city of education. Located in the heart of the Northeast, Maha Sarakham is characterized by flat terrain with the Chi River flowing through. Its central location and relatively slow pace of modernization make it an ideal setting for visitors to experience the simple and authentic lifestyle of the Isan people—a charm increasingly rare in urban contexts. Maha Sarakham serves as a cultural hub of the Northeast, inhabited by diverse ethnic groups such as native Isan speakers, the Yo people, and the Phu Thai. These communities live modestly, practicing mutual aid and maintaining strong social bonds typical of the Isan way of life.

The province is home to several important archaeological sites, though many remain relatively unknown and require better communication strategies to promote broader tourism (Visuttilak, 2013). Tourism policies have thus been aligned with the concept of creative tourism. However, despite these policies, their intended outcomes have yet to be fully realized, necessitating further knowledge development to effectively support policy implementation.

Northeastern Thailand, especially its upper region, has been a cradle of civilization for thousands of years. This is evidenced by large boundary stones (*bai sema*) engraved with Buddhist iconography dating back to the 12th century Buddhist era. Na Dun District in Maha Sarakham is a key archaeological site, where evidence of the ancient city of Champasri has been uncovered. Excavations revealed a stupa containing relics of the Buddha enshrined in gold, silver, and bronze reliquaries, estimated to date back to the 13th–16th centuries Buddhist era, or the Dvaravati period. Consequently, the government approved the construction of a large permanent stupa to enshrine the relics. Interestingly, the chosen construction site was relocated approximately two kilometers from the original excavation site to an elevated plain known as Kokk Dongkheng.

Phra That Na Dun has emerged as a highly promising cultural tourism destination. However, its potential can only be realized through strategic support, effective publicity, and the development of essential infrastructure such as visitor centers, welfare shops, restrooms, and clear signage to guide tourists throughout the site (Thammarungruang, 2008).

Na Dun District remains a place where traditional Isan foodways are still practiced. Its historical significance and visible archaeological remnants serve as a living record of the region’s legacy. In this context, food is more than just ingredients, seasonal availability, or distinctive flavors—it embodies philosophies, wisdom, narratives, values, and beliefs woven into each dish. Consuming Isan cuisine thus becomes a multisensory experience that reveals deeper cultural meanings. This richness in intangible heritage offers great potential for promotion through effective communication, aligning with the cultural tourism model proposed by Pinthong (2013), which defines cultural tourism as the pursuit of knowledge in areas of historical and cultural importance, conveyed through narratives that reflect human and societal development. Cultural tourism highlights the value of architecture and natural landscapes as expressions of historical lifestyles and social values.

Among these cultural dimensions, food remains a particularly powerful medium of communication, embodying the collective stories of a people. Despite global changes, traditional food practices persist—especially in the context of the Lao and Isan communities—where sticky rice remains a signature staple. This indigenous grain, widespread among Mekong Basin communities, is deeply embedded in every aspect of local life (Saenboon, 2010).

Based on the above rationale, this research project explores innovative approaches to promoting cultural tourism as a means of enhancing the creative economy rooted in the Dvaravati civilization. Specifically, the study focuses on the transmission of cultural heritage through local culinary wisdom in Maha Sarakham—an area rich in historical significance and cultural identity. The objective is to map new tourism routes in the northeastern region, allowing visitors to authentically engage with the lifestyles of local communities. The research team envisions that the sustainable tourism management strategies

derived from this study will help improve the tourism potential of Phra That Na Dun in Na Dun District and promote long-term community self-reliance and sustainability.

1. Research Objectives

1.1 To examine the current state of the area and the cultural mechanisms that contribute to tourism development.

1.2 To develop innovative local food media to enhance the creative tourism economy.

2. Research Questions

2.1 What is the current state of the area and the cultural mechanisms that contribute to tourism development?

2.2 What is the nature of innovative local food media that can enhance the creative tourism economy?

3. Research Population

The research population is situated within the context of Na Dun District, Maha Sarakham Province, with a specific focus on the case study area: Ban Dong Bang Community, Na Dun District, Maha Sarakham Province. The sample is categorized into three groups using purposive sampling:

3.1 Key Informants – individuals providing essential insights into tourism models and concepts, including:

Local wisdom bearers: individuals with in-depth knowledge of important sites and related local matters;
Government officials from relevant agencies, such as local administrative organizations and community leaders;

Private sector representatives, including chambers of commerce and local entrepreneurs;

General public: individuals who visit or are involved in the community of Tambon Na Dun, Na Dun District, Maha Sarakham Province.

4. Scope of the Study

Geographical Scope: Ban Dong Bang Community, Na Dun District, Maha Sarakham Province.

Timeframe: October 2024 – July 2025.

5. Expected Benefits

5.1 To obtain information about the current conditions and cultural mechanisms that facilitate tourism development.

5.2 To create innovative local food media that enhance the creative tourism economy.

6. Definitions of Key Terms

Isan Dvaravati Cuisine: Refers to food uniquely created as a local identity of the Dong Bang community in Na Dun District, Maha Sarakham Province.

Local Cultural Communication: Refers to the dissemination of information in various forms that reflect the food culture of the Dong Bang community in Na Dun District, Maha Sarakham Province.

Cultural Mechanism: Refers to the methods or processes by which a society uses culture as a tool to regulate the behavior of its members, aligning with shared values, norms, and beliefs specific to the Dong Bang community in Na Dun District, Maha Sarakham Province.

Media Innovation: Refers to the creation or development of new media and content using modern methods or technologies, aiming to generate changes in knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors of recipients toward tourism in Dong Bang community, Na Dun District, Maha Sarakham Province.

Research Design

1. Interview Method

The researcher employed interviews as the primary tool for data collection, which can be categorized into two main formats:

1.1 Interview Form: Utilized in qualitative or mixed-methods research, this included both structured and unstructured formats. It was suitable for gathering in-depth data on individual experiences and perspectives.

1.2 Observation Form: The researcher directly observed behaviors and recorded notes according to predefined criteria. This could be either structured (focused observations) or unstructured (open-ended observations).

1.3 Field Notes: Used to record observations and occurrences during fieldwork, often in conjunction with interviews or observations.

2. Sampling and Target Group

The researcher conducted fieldwork in Ban Dong Bang, Dong Bang Subdistrict, Na Dun District, Maha Sarakham Province. The target population was selected using non-probability sampling methods, categorized into four approaches:

2.1 Accidental Sampling: Data were collected opportunistically without predetermined criteria, from individuals involved in or residing in and around the study community.

2.2 Snowball Sampling: Informants who had already been interviewed recommended additional participants, enabling the researcher to reach the required number or depth of information.

2.3 Purposive Sampling: Participants were selected based on their relevance to the study, including community leaders, monks, local scholars, and stakeholders.

2.4 Convenience Sampling: Participants were chosen based on ease of access, focusing on communities in close proximity to the target area.

3.Data Collection and Analysis

3.1 Data Collection: The researcher designed a data collection plan identifying sources, methods, and timeframes. These included fieldwork and online interviews. For qualitative data, content analysis and interpretive analysis were applied.

3.2 Analytical Tools:

Document Analysis Form: A content analysis framework was applied to documents such as community histories, personal narratives, cultural communication, and rituals.

Qualitative Data Analysis: Focused on verbal data, texts, opinions, field notes, and interview transcripts.

4.Analytical Techniques

4.1 Content Analysis: This involved analyzing data from:

In-depth interviews

Focus group discussions

Field data such as observational notes, community behavior, local food establishments

Transcripts were coded to identify key words, phrases, main ideas, and themes. Examples of themes include “cultural mechanisms influencing tourism” or “food as a representation of local identity.”

4.2 Interpretive Analysis: Aimed to understand the deeper meanings of local food and cultural elements from the perspectives of local residents. This analysis considered context, tone, belief systems, and implicit customs to explore the worldview or cognitive frameworks regarding food and culture.

4.3 Creative Synthesis: Focused on identifying cultural meanings and distinctive features of local food. This included assessing which forms of media (e.g., graphics, exhibitions, multimedia) most effectively communicate cultural narratives. The process also involved co-design activities with members of the Dong Bang community.

Analytical Approaches Based on Research Objectives

5.1 To examine the current conditions and cultural mechanisms, the researcher employed content analysis and interpretive analysis.

5.2 To develop media innovations for promoting the local economy, the researcher applied creative synthesis combined with conceptual grouping derived from field data.

Analytical Framework

Main Category	Subcategories for Analysis	Guiding Questions/Observational Points
Local Context	Community condition, lifestyle, belief systems	What is the layout of the community? How are sacred areas arranged? Are there any festivals or rituals?
Cultural Mechanisms	Knowledge systems, traditions, cultural media	Daily meals, festive foods, food served to elders or heads of family
Food Identity	Ingredients, cooking methods, local beliefs	Are there any dishes considered “unique”? How do they reflect local identity or religious/cultural beliefs?
Food Presentation	Presentation of local dishes	Are local dishes presented in a modern or traditional style?

Communication	Food communication channels (oral, media, activities)	Are there any food-related media? Are food stories narrated or explained?
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Code Book

Theme	Code	Description
Local Context	Community lifestyle	"..."
Cultural Mechanisms	Traditions and belief systems	"..."
Food Identity	Signature dishes	"..."
Ingredients and Methods	Use of indigenous ingredients	"..."
Food Presentation	Mothers presenting food to monks	"..."
Communication	Storytelling about food	"..."
Tourism	Local guides communicating food culture	"..."

Research Findings

Studies on the Dvaravati influence in the Isan region reveal that the Dvaravati culture originated from the Mon ethnic group, who migrated from central Myanmar before the 6th century CE. Influenced by Indian and Sri Lankan traditions, the culture adhered to Theravāda Buddhism. In Northeastern Thailand, Dvaravati culture spread along the Chi and Mun river basins, where ancient settlements were established. These sites, often surrounded by moats and earthen walls, reflect sophisticated urban planning and effective water management systems that supported human habitation during that era.

Archaeological surveys have uncovered numerous Dvaravati-period sites in Isan. Key findings include: Fa Daet Song Yang in Kamalasai District, Kalasin Province – An ancient town with Buddhist artifacts and sandstone sema stones featuring religious carvings.

Sema City in Nakhon Ratchasima Province – A historical site with important religious relics such as sema stones and stupa bases.

Nakhon Champasri in Maha Sarakham Province – An ancient city that has yielded significant archaeological evidence of Dvaravati prosperity. Local residents have occasionally discovered artifacts such as sema stones, deity statues, and tools during routine agricultural activities. Some cultural traces remain evident in local customs, especially food culture.

Nakhon Champasri is now part of Na Dun District, where Phra That Na Dun, a stupa housing Buddhist relics, is located. Surrounding communities still preserve historical traces and certain cultural traditions, particularly in culinary practices. The Dvaravati presence in the region began to decline in the 16th Buddhist century as the influence of the ancient Khmer Empire spread into Isan. Nevertheless, vestiges of Dvaravati culture remain visible through monuments, artifacts, and enduring local customs.

Dong Bang Community, located in Na Dun District, Maha Sarakham Province, is one of the few communities where remnants of Dvaravati-Isan culture persist. According to oral histories, the village was originally one unit before dividing into two (Village Nos. 5 and 8). The local temple, Wat Pho Tharam, is commonly referred to by residents as "Wat Dong Bang" (Satien Phutthaisong, 2025: interview).

Mr. Damrong Senanorit (2025: interview) shared that community ancestors migrated from Vientiane (the current capital of Lao PDR) in search of a suitable location to settle—one with forests, fields, and water resources. This narrative is supported by Sunthornchai Chopyot and colleagues (2017), who interviewed elder Songka Phimram. He recounted, "We came from Vientiane, fleeing conflict. We crossed the Mekong, started with four families, grew cotton and corn, and eventually resettled here."

Chaiyanong Thongyot (2018) adds that the area was once a dense forest inhabited by wildlife such as tigers and elephants. The current site of Wat Pho Tharam was still densely wooded in earlier times. The construction of the ho jaek (sermon hall) began during the late reign of King Rama III and displays the craftsmanship of Vietnamese and local artisans. Restoration efforts include the preservation of centenarian murals (huup taem) and a wooden pulpit (thammasat) through community projects like "Isan Mural Heritage" led by local youth and elders (Thai Health Promotion Foundation).

The ordination hall (sim) of Wat Pho Tharam was built between 1904 and 1908 and features wall paintings created by artists Sing from Ban Khlong Job and Master Salai. The ho jaek, constructed in 1917, is over a century old and showcases the influence of Vietnamese artisans who migrated to Thailand during wartime

due to colonial disruptions in Vietnam. These craftsmen left a mark across Isan, with unique architectural features, including stylized naga roof designs and distinct plasterwork differing from traditional Lao or Isan craftsmanship.

Inside the ho jaek, there is an elaborately carved wooden pulpit decorated with scenes from Buddhist scripture, including the Vessantara Jataka, the Buddha's biography, and episodes from Sinxay. The artwork, crafted by a master named Phomma, was previously used in religious ceremonies but has since deteriorated with time.

The name "Dong Bang" derives from the geographical features of the area. Although the village no longer has dense forest to conceal it as in the past, large, centuries-old trees still remain at the edge of the village, particularly around the old cemetery near Dong Bang Phisai Nawakananusorn School. Additionally, the sacred San Pu Ta shrine near Dong Bang Community School is also surrounded by large trees. A noteworthy aspect of the community is its strong commitment to preserving cultural heritage and local wisdom. Ancient religious structures such as the sim (ordination hall) and ho jaek (sermon hall) have not been demolished but are instead maintained and utilized as educational sites for future generations.

Dong Bang possesses rich historical and cultural capital, including mural paintings (huup taem), the sim, and the ho jaek, which serve as focal points for community-based cultural management and development. Through participatory processes, the community has collaboratively created a local cultural asset database and developed an online cultural map to promote their heritage sites (Kanta Wilachai et al., 2023).

The Dong Bang Mural Learning Center, established as a result of strong community cooperation, represents a model of collaborative governance involving the local administration (Or Bor Tor), public health units, and the temple-school-village triad. Together, these stakeholders helped transform Dong Bang into a tourism-oriented subdistrict recognized for wellness, warmth, safety, good governance, and moral values. Community engagement has been key to success—initiatives are created by the people, for the people, and with the people.

A notable initiative is the community's collective exploration of its cultural roots through the study and preservation of mural paintings at Wat Pho Tharam (Ban Dong Bang) and Wat Pa Rerai (Ban Nong Phok). This has been carried out through the "Isan Mural Art for Youth and Community Development" project, supported by the Isan Community Cultural Media Network and the Thai Health Promotion Foundation. The project has revitalized community interest in its own cultural assets, including murals, sermon halls, oral histories, and traditional narratives. These resources were recently consolidated into the "Dong Bang Mural and Wisdom Learning Center," which was formally inaugurated with the district chief in attendance (Sumalee Suwannakorn, 2018).

Creative cultural events such as the Bun Bang Fai (Rocket Festival) and Hug-Paeng Boeng Ngaeng Huup Taem have invited both local and outside participation, strengthening community cohesion, enhancing tourism potential, and generating local income (Chaianong Thongyot, 2023).

In collaboration with Mahasarakham University and organizations such as NRCT and TRF, the community has also developed health and cultural tourism through the "HELLO Na Dun" project. Activities at Ban Dong Bang include mural tours, local wisdom learning, Thai traditional massage, herbal cuisine, and homestay accommodations. These activities holistically address physical, mental, social, and intellectual well-being (Pornchai Pornsrirachai, 2022).

This study employed a qualitative research design, using in-depth interviews, participant observation, and content analysis to examine the current conditions around Phra That Na Dun, as well as to explore the cultural mechanisms that support tourism development. The study also aimed to design local food media innovations to enhance the community's creative economy. The findings are presented in two main sections aligned with the research objectives.

4.1 Current Conditions of the Area and Cultural Mechanisms

Field research conducted in the area surrounding Phra That Na Dun reveals a rich cultural diversity and distinctive local identity, especially in terms of traditional food. Dishes are typically prepared using local ingredients such as fermented fish (pla ra), spicy chili paste (jaew bong), roasted rice powder, and native herbs. Religious and cultural events—most notably the annual worship ceremony for Phra That Na Dun—continue to play a vital role in preserving culinary knowledge and encouraging community participation. Cultural mechanisms observed in the community include:

- 1) The intergenerational transmission of wisdom from elders through family activities
- 2) The formation of women's or occupational groups to produce traditional food
- 3) Collaboration with local administrative bodies such as subdistrict councils and municipalities to promote cultural practices

Field data collected from Na Dun District, Maha Sarakham Province, indicate that the surrounding communities maintain strong cultural integrity. Their identity is clearly reflected in local food, lifestyle, and traditions associated with Phra That Na Dun. The variety of local dishes is rooted in long-standing indigenous knowledge.

Environmentally, the area retains characteristics of a semi-rural settlement, with agriculture as a primary livelihood. The community relies heavily on natural resources. For example, freshwater fish and frogs from local streams are harvested and cooked according to the season. Sticky rice farming is done in village paddies, and seasonal vegetables are sourced from the surrounding environment. This reflects a deeply interconnected relationship between livelihood, food, and the natural ecosystem.

One respondent, Mrs. Sompit, a 63-year-old local food vendor, noted:

"In the past, we lived seasonally. Whatever was available, we made use of it. Our food may not be luxurious, but it's meaningful. It shows how we live in harmony with nature."

In-depth interviews with community leaders and elders reveal that local food is closely linked to religious ceremonies and rituals. For instance, during the annual Phra That Na Dun celebration, villagers prepare traditional dishes like khao pun nam ya (rice noodles with curry) and kaeng bon (taro stem curry) for merit-making and to host guests from other areas. These occasions serve as important opportunities for cultural and culinary transmission to the younger generation.

Mr. Khamphong, a local cultural group leader, shared:

"During the Phra That festival each year, many people come, some from far away. So we try to prepare our best local food for them to taste. When they're interested and ask questions, we get to share our history. That way, they get to know Na Dun better."

A key cultural mechanism in this community is the transmission of culinary knowledge within families, particularly through the role of women in food preparation. There are also community-based groups, such as fermented fish makers, mushroom processors, and crispy rice snack producers (khao taen). These groups receive support from the Na Dun Subdistrict Municipality, which runs programs to preserve local food culture and organize exhibits at community festivals.

Mrs. Prayoon, the leader of a local women's food processing group, stated:

"We teach each other. If our children or grandchildren don't know how to ferment fish, we train them. It's not just food—it's a way of life. It's the pride of Isan people."

Data analysis indicates that the area surrounding Phra That Na Dun continues to maintain a stable cultural ecosystem closely tied to its cultural landscape. Despite facing modern economic and media-driven changes, the active involvement of the community and the preservation of cultural relationships ensure that the region retains strong potential for sustainable cultural tourism development.

Moreover, the area possesses tangible cultural capital, such as the ordination hall (sim) of Wat Dong Bang, which has become a strategic site for attracting visitors. The community has adapted by developing new processes and practices that align with contemporary realities, while still respecting and preserving its cultural roots.

4.2 Developing Local Food Media Innovations to Enhance the Creative Tourism Economy

Based on collaborative analysis with community stakeholders, the researcher developed a series of media innovations reflecting the identity of Dvaravati cuisine. These innovations include illustrated food stories embedded with cultural narratives, graphics depicting the journey of ingredients from nature to the plate, and packaging designs featuring symbolic patterns of the Dvaravati civilization. These innovations serve not only to promote local cultural learning but also hold commercial potential—as souvenirs, local products, or promotional materials for tourism events.

This corresponds with the perspective of Ekk Phatthanakun (2025), who noted that among Thailand's 11+ creative industry sectors supported by government policy, food and tourism stand out with high public awareness and strong potential for further development. Thai cuisine is globally recognized, and Thai tourism continues to thrive on the international stage.

Through interviews and video documentation, the research supported the development of media innovations aimed at enhancing the creative tourism economy. The process of communication design is summarized as follows:

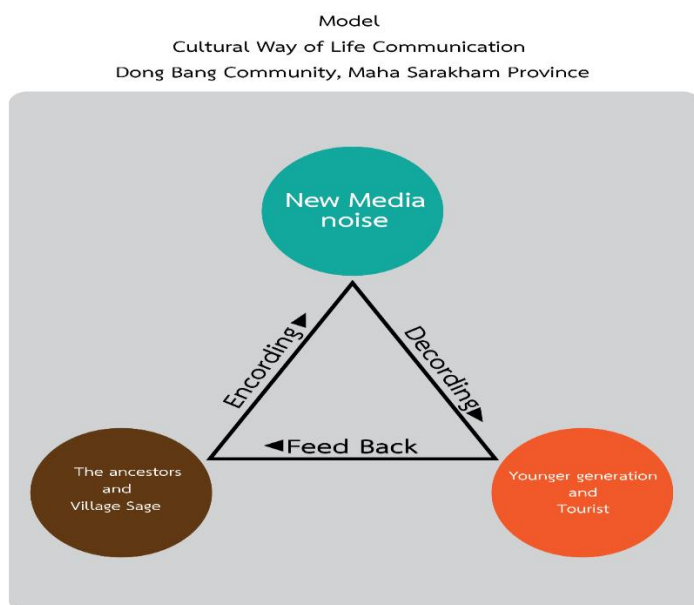
Local individuals—craftsmen, village sages, abbots, and cultural experts—functioned as content creators (encoding), transmitting knowledge through traditional media, particularly mural paintings (huup taem). These were reinterpreted and transformed into new media formats aimed at younger audiences (decoding), enabling them to understand and appreciate local culture in modern ways.

This approach had several positive outcomes in the community: Emergence of new cultural activities, shifts in lifestyle patterns, as tourists visited more frequently, increased household income, reverse migration of laborers returning home after seasonal work, heightened interest from both public and private organizations, and formation of new community groups to promote local enterprises. These outcomes fostered long-term community sustainability by reaffirming the indispensable value of cultural capital.

The data analysis indicates that Dvaravati-Isan food functions as a cultural communication tool for the community. As Kaenjanna Kaewthep (2002) explains, food communicates stories, beliefs, values, and ways of life to both consumers and tourists. Dvaravati food—prepared with local ingredients and traditional methods—acts as both tangible media and performative practice through which the community expresses its cultural identity and heritage.

Such food media help instill community values, educate the public, and promote local pride. They also encourage cooperative food-making initiatives and the organization of food festivals tied to cultural rituals. This is in line with the observations of Chinepan Maleesuwan and Meena Radenahmad (2021), who found that in southern Thailand, local food knowledge is often communicated through personal networks—such as family members, local scholars, or elders—who serve as informal cultural messengers for indigenous plant knowledge and food traditions.

Cultural mechanisms and the reproduction of food traditions, including the transmission of ancestral recipes and associated rituals, are powerful tools that enable communities to transform their cultural capital into economic value—particularly through cultural tourism. The role of food media innovation—such as video clips, multimedia content, and printed materials—has significantly expanded the reach of Dvaravati culinary culture beyond the community, helping construct new discourses that reinforce the value of local cuisine as a cultural heritage asset.



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