

Presentation 5



Chak Ka Yer: Traditional Tug of War in Thailand

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1. Introduction

“Chak ka yer” is a Thai word having a similar meaning to a game called “Tug of War” in western countries. It is one of the oldest folk team-games in Thailand. Almost Thai people in every corner of the country; north, northeast, central and south, know “Chak ka yer” and they may have some experiences on this game directly and indirectly. In the direct way, they may participate in the game, or in the indirect way, they may definitely see or cheer the game. Chak ka yer can be a play, game and sport that benefits Thai society in several aspects. Folk people use Chak ka yer as an activity for fun, pleasure, recreation and relax from their routine work. Chak ka yer can be played as a traditional game for trial or contest between teams, groups or communities to test their players’ physical strength. The game does not place a focus on competition, team preparation, contest regulations and rules and championship, but it focuses on unity, friendship, morale and incentive of the people in communities and inter-communities. Chak ka yer as a play and as a game is related to thought, belief, custom, tradition, ritual and value concerning the way of life and living a life of people in different areas. Chak ka yer as a sport is a higher level of playing development than a game which focuses on the systematic contest, has a specific agency to response and has the team trained and practiced seriously to obtain the championship.

Chak ka yer as a sport is left unmentioned in this field survey since it has already become the international sport. But the survey will reveal Chak ka yer as a play and a game relating to thought, belief, custom, tradition, ritual and value concerning the way of life and living a life of the local people in the field survey target.

2. Research Methodology

Since the objectives of this study were to collect the data on Tug of War in Thailand relating to categories, kinds, playing methods, history, thought, beliefs, custom, tradition, ritual and value concerning the way of life and living a life of local people in the present day, and to protect, preserve and support the Tug of War to lively exist in present Thai society. The study was a field survey research with in-depth study in the areas where the body of knowledge in some kinds of the Tug of War still exists.

The study used the field survey method according to ICHCAP by study information on “Chak ka yer” in Thailand from documents, books, research works and other related texts through off line and on line to obtain the local information containing the cultural heritage, Chak ka yer, in different categories and kinds to represent the chak ka yer in regions of Thailand. Within the limited time, only 6 weeks long, before the dead line on 5 April 2015, the urgent research time frame was set as follows:

- Literature review before conducting the field survey
1 week (24 February-2 March 2015)
- Preparation of documents for data collecting
0.6 week (3-6 March 2015)
- Communication for cooperation from the cultural heritage sources of “Chak ka yer”
0.4 week (7-9 March 2015)
- Collecting data by field survey
1 weeks (10-16 March 2015)
- Data analysis
0.5 week (17-20 March 2015)

- Report writing, Translating, Photos and Audio visual
1.5 week (21-30 March 2015)
- Power point preparation for International Symposium
1 week (31 March-5 April 2015)

All these processes have to be finished within 6 weeks that causes the stress and challenge to the research team. So the time frame for collecting the field data is set for only 1 week. The criteria in collecting the data from the local cultural heritage in 'Chak ka'yer' are as follows:

- ① Categories and kinds of Chak ka yer are really existing and practicing in those areas and they express the identities of those areas.
- ② The informants in the cultural heritage 'Chak ka yer' are willing to reveal their data.
- ③ The study is limited in the scope of the budget granted.

The purposive random method was used to obtain 2 samples of cultural heritage in Chak-ka-yer from 2 regions 3 provinces as follows:

- ① The locality owning the cultural heritage "Chak Phra" in Phatthalung, and Nakhon Si Thammarat, and
- ② The locality owning the cultural heritage "Chak ka yer kwian" or "Cart Chak ka yer" in Chanthaburi.

3. Meaning and Significance

"Chak Ka Yer" in Thai means a play with two teams trying to tug and hold the middle point of the rope in their own area (The Royal Institute 1982). "Chak" means to pull or to tug in English, and "Yer" means to pull back and forth. Chak ka yer is similar to a game called "Tug of War" in the West. To make sure, the meanings of the "Tug of War" are quoted from dictionaries; Merriam Webster Dictionary: A contest in which two teams pull against each other at opposite ends of a rope, English-Italian Dictionary; A game in which two teams pull on opposite ends of a rope, trying to pull the other team over a line marked

on the ground, and English-Japanese Dictionary: Strength competition between groups or individuals which are pulling from both ends of a rope attempting to bring the adversary to one's side; hard struggle. From the above definitions, it can be concluded that "Chak ka yer" in Thai and the "Tug of War" in English have the relevant meanings, which means the game emphasizing pulling, tugging, struggling and pulling back and forth. In the Tug of War, the word "pulling" has a clear meaning which refers to the manner of pulling, tugging and pulling back and forth with hands and arms, and it is the same as the "Chak ka yer" in Thailand (Fig. 1). Since Thailand is rich in identical folk plays and games, it still has other similar games as "Chak ka yer", such as "Dan Sao" (to push the rod), "Yae Long Ruu" (A ground lizard running into its hole), "Yaeng Mueang" (to attack the town) and others in which the game focuses on pushing, not pulling with hands or arms. Those plays and games are not included in this study because the methods of playing are different from the "Tug of War".

"Chak Ka Yer" is treated as both a play and a game which is available in areas and regions of Thailand. Its name and playing method may be varied from places to places but the basic playing method is similar. In the east zone of the central plain, there is a "Chak ka yer kwian" (to tug the cart), in which a cart is set at the middle and both teams try to tug the cart into their own side to win in the game. In some areas in the north, there is a play called "Sak Sao" (to pull the rod), in which a bamboo rod is used instead of the rope and it is usually played under a high floor house. In some areas in the northeast, there is a play called "Dueng-Nang" (to pull the Leather rope), in which a hide rope is used instead of the Manila hemp rope. There is a play called "Chak Cha", in which a male-team will fight against a female team. The loser will start dancing approaching the winner and the winner will sing for their dance. In some areas, there is a play called "Dueng Khrok" (to pull the mortar), in which a mortar is placed in the middle and both teams try to tug the mortar into their own side to win in the game. In some areas, there is "Chak ka yer khon kap chang" (to tug between human and elephant). In some areas in the south, there is a play called "Chak Saow", in which a short stick is used instead of a rope, a representative of each team holds each end of the stick and the others hold the waist of one another in the team and then start to tug. The loser is the team that leaves the stick from their hands. There is also a play between human and vehicle called "Ruea Phra" (a boat enshrined with a Buddha image),

in which lots of people participate to pull the boat called “Chak Phra” or “Laak Phra” (to pull the Buddha image).

Chak ka yer is usually played or contested for fun or recreation of folk people in annual auspicious events or festivals. It is also played traditionally to create unity, friendship and good relation among folk people in communities or inter-communities, and to make understanding in different genders, between a man-team and a woman-team. Above all, chak ka yer activity is closely related to thought, belief, tradition, custom, ritual and value concerning the way of life and living a life of the local people. For example, chak ka yer in almost every region of the country is related to the rituals in Buddhism. In some areas, it is related to agriculture, especially in farming period and harvesting period and it is also related to the way of life in transportation or moving heavy objects, such as towing a boat or a cart enshrined with a Buddha image and logging. In the past, there were chak ka yer activities for improving physical and mental efficiency and competing physical strength in school sports annually. In present, some people have developed chak ka yer into the international sport system, but the essence of chak ka yer in the aspect of international sport seems to lack of the relation to thought, belief, tradition, custom, ritual and value concerning the way of life and living a life of the local people since international chak ka yer places a focus on training and practicing for excellency.

Chak-ka-yer is usually arranged in Songkran Festival or Thai traditional New Year festival in the mid of April (Fig. 2), End of the Rain Retreat, City Annual Fair, The King’s Birthday Celebration, New Year’s Day and general festive events. The players in Chak ka yer may be children, youngsters, adults or seniors. The activity can be arranged for fun or for competition among people in the same sex or age and in the different sex and age. In the different sex competition, a number of women in the team are usually more than that of the man-team. When the game is over, the loser will dance according to the rhythm of the local songs to entertain the winner and at the same time they will joyfully tease one another.

4. History/Background

The results of the study from documents and interviewing with the local informants found that the beliefs concerning Chak ka yer in Thailand could be classified into 2 main concepts;

1) Chak ka yer was imitated from the way of life of the people in the ancient time. Since at that time, the geographical features of the country were full of thick forest, mountains, valleys and rough roads. The vehicles used in transportation at that time was not comfortable as the present, so the suitable vehicles were carts towed by buffaloes, bulls, horses or elephants. Elephants were used in logging by tying the log with one end of rope and tying the other end with the elephant's neck to tow the log from the thick forest (Fig. 3). The manners of towing, tugging and pulling of the animals were challenging, and then the folk people adapted those manners into a play called "Chak Ka Yer".

2) Chak ka yer was originated from the thought, belief, tradition, custom, ritual and value concerning the way of life and living a life of the local people which was related to the belief in Buddhism that became the Buddha image procession festival. In the procession, a Buddha image was enshrined on a beautifully decorated cart and the cart was tied with one end of a rope or a rod and left the other end for people to tow or pull. The cart was towed throughout the town or community to let people pay respect to the Buddha image on the cart (Fig. 4). This ceremony was called "Chak Phra Festival" (Towing the Buddha image Festival). This festival has been practiced in provinces in the south of Thailand. In some areas in the east of the country, there was a festival similar to "Chak-Phra Festival" in the south, but it was different in details. A decorated cart was enshrined with four Buddha's foot prints in his four existences printed on cloth and the cart was towed round the town or village.

There were no any documents to certify when Chak ka yer started, but it was believed that Chak ka yer was started in Sukhothai period around B.E. 1700 or 900 years ago since there were documents concerning Buddhist festivals at that time. However, it was found from a Thai literature called "Khun Chang Khun Phaen" that there was a chak-ka-yer in the late Ayutthaya period (Fig. 5) or around 1757 (Department of Fine Arts 1970), in 1897, there was chak-ka-yer competition in the first school athletic game of Department of Education in the reign of King Rama V of Rattanakosin period (Sawasdi Lekhayanon 1971),

and in 1900, Department of Education gave a trophy engraved the school name on it for the chak ka yer game. This indicated that chak ka yer was a popular sport at that time. At present, chak ka yer is still popular in Thailand and it is included in the main activity of the smallest unit in the country administration called “Village”. Almost every village will arrange the chak ka yer game in festivals or festive events. Although the chak ka yer is still played throughout the country but the essence of tangible cultural heritage and intangible cultural heritage relating to thought, belief, tradition, custom, Buddhist ritual and value concerning the way of life and living a life of the people in the countryside and the cities is fading which correlates to an expert in Thai traditional sports, A famous physical educator associate professor Fong Kerdkaew (1977), saying “Cultural heritage of the Thai traditional sports especially the cultural value of chak ka yer seems to disappear from the heart and mind of Thai people in present”. Luckily, the results of the field survey revealed that the chak ka yer was well preserved and transferred against the influence of globalization, IT mania, materialism and international culturalism.

5. Categories, Kinds, Forms and Playing Methods

The results of the study from documents and field survey can classify “Chak ka yer” in Thailand into 2 main categories and each one can be sub-classified as follows:

1) Chak ka yer between human and human can be classified into

- Chak ka yer in which 2 teams with 10-12 players each try to pull or tug the rope so that the middle of the rope enters to their own side and they win the game. This kind of chak ka yer is a basic play in local areas throughout the country (Fig. 6).
- Sak Sao, according to Lanna-Thai dictionary, “sao” means a long object connecting with a main object to reach the thing afar, such as a long stick or rod used for gathering or supporting something (Udom Rungrueangsri 1991). The prominent character of ‘Sak Sao’ is to use a long bamboo stick or rod instead of a rope and it is played under a high-floor house with 2 teams consisting of 5-8 players. The

traditional Thai houses have a high floor and keep the ground floor open for walking through or working underneath. Sak Sao is usually played between men and women. The man-team holds the rope-end outside the house and the woman-team holds the other end under the house. The border or the line for the game is the house terrace area. The team that tugs the opposite into their side is the winner. The loser team will dance in local styles circulating the winner team. Sak-Sao is a popular play in Phrae province and Nan province in the north (Muen Wongwan, cited by Chuchchai Gomaratut 1982).

- Chak Cha is a tug of war between a man-team and a woman-team with 8-12 players each. At the end of each game, there is no change of the side. The loser team will approach the winner team with dancing and the winner team will sing for the dance. It is popular in Khon Kaen province and Nakhon Ratchasima province in the northeast.
- Chak Saow in which a short stick is used instead of a rope. The leaders of each team hold each end of the stick while the other 5-8 players hold one another's waist and tug the opposite (Fig. 7). The loser is who lets the stick out of holding. It is usually played between men and women. The man-team has fewer players than the woman-team. The loser team will be assigned to dance with the winner team's request. The Chak-Saow is popular in Phetchaburi province, Prachuap Khirikhan province and Chumphon province in the south.
- Duen Nang in which a leather rope is used instead of a Manila hemp rope. The other playing methods are the same as to 'Chak ka yer'. It is usually played between men and women with 8-10 players each. The numbers of players in the man-team are fewer than that in the woman-team. The winner team will use the leather rope to circulate the loser team as the captives and then let the loser team perform a dance. It is a famous play in Sisaket province, Chaiyaphum province and Sakon Nakhon province in the northeast.

2) Chak ka yer between human and vehicle or domestic animal can be classified into

- Chak ka yer kwian (the tug-of-war between human and cart) in which a cart is tied with a rope and set at the middle of two teams with 12-20 players each. Each team tries to tug the cart into their own side to win the game (Fig. 8). The details of this play will be presented separately. It is a famous play in Chanthaburi province, Rayong province and Trat province in the east part of the central plain.
- Dueng Khrok (the tug-of-war with a mortar) in which a large wooden mortar is tied with a rope and set at the middle between two teams with 12-20 players each (Fig. 9). Each team tries to tug the mortar into their own side to win the game. It is usually played between a man-team and a woman-team in which a numbers of players in the man-team are fewer than that in the woman-team. Dueng Khrok is related to an old belief about the weather and agricultural products each year. If the man-team wins the game, there will be draught because of a little rain which causes damage to the crops, and if the woman-team wins the opposite results will be expected (Department of Physical Education, 1937). This play is popular in Roiet province, Buriram province and Yasothorn province in the northeast.
- Chak Phra or Laak Phra is the tug between human a vehicle called “Ruea-Phra” (Fig. 10), boat enshrined with a Buddha image. There are many people to join in tugging ‘Ruea Phra’ through rough roads to the ceremony destination. Chak Phra or Laak-Phra is related to tradition, custom and Buddhist ritual and belief of people. The details of this play will be presented separately. It is a popular play in Surat Thani province, Nakhon Si Thammarat province and Phatthalung province in the south.
- Chak ka yer khon kap chang or Chak ka yer between human and elephant in which an elephant will tug with 20-50 men or more depending on an agreement made before the game (Fig. 11). The playing methods are the same as other chak-ka-yer (Fig. 12). Chak ka yer between human and elephant is the identity of Surin province in the northeast.

3) There are several methods of playing; man against man, woman against woman, man against woman or mixed type. In case of man against woman, a number of players in the woman-team are more than that of the man. The play or the game between the same sexes, the number of players in each team is equal.

4) Equipment in Playing: Usually the materials easily found in the areas are the best choices in the game, such as Manila hemp rope or leather rope with 2.5 cm. wide and 20-30 m. long. In some areas in the north, a long bamboo stick or rod is used and the play is called “Sak Sao”. Besides, there are 3 pieces of red cloth, one is tied at middle point of the rope to mark the win or lose, and another two are equally tied at 2-3 m. from the center (middle point) to mark the holding border on the rope of each team.

5) Place to Play: Chak ka yer is usually played on the open ground or field. A 3-4 meter-thick line is marked on the ground as the border or center-point, and from that point, another line is marked on both sides to indicate the border of each team. The range of the border line is equal to the range of the red cloth marked on the rope.

6) Playing Methods: In general, Chak ka yer playing starts with laying a rope or other materials, such as a long stick or leather rope, on the ground and placing the red mark of the rope exactly on the center-line and the border lines. The players of each team hold the rope in line behind their red border mark and stand facing another team. The rope is held tight a little bit and the red center-mark must be rightly placed on the border line. Every player keeps ready in their border waiting for the start signal. Having heard the signal, the players of each team try to tug the rope into their side with strength. The team that can tug the red center-mark on the rope into their border wins the game. The team that wins consecutively twice or two third will be the champion. The prohibitions in the play are that any parts of the players’ bodies except their feet cannot touch the ground, the players cannot tie the rope with any other things except their bodies, and the players cannot hold other things than the ground with hands or feet. If anyone in the team breaks one of these rules, the team will be technically defeated.

6. Chak Ka Yer in Cultural perspective

The essence of Chak ka yer in cultural perspective can be concluded from the study as follows:

1) Chak Ka Yer in the perspective of Tangible Cultural Heritage

- The equipment used in chak-ka-yer, such as rope, long stick, cart, mortar and elephant, is necessary in daily life of people in each local area. Even though the progress of science and technology can make the local people's life more comfortable than before, but the equipment mentioned above is still beneficial, valuable and necessary for them.

- *Rope: Somphote Taksila, 60 years, a former chak-ka-yer player from Moung district of Chanthaburi province said that the rope used in chak-ka-yer was usually made of the natural fiber, such as jute or hemp, but the most popular rope was that made of Manila hemp because its quality was tough, soft, durable and not slippery (fig. 13), while a plastic rope was hard, rough, slippery and it hurt the palms while tugging.*

- *Mai-Sao (A long stick or rod): Chit Phromsawai, 67 years, a former player in Sak Sao from Chiang Mai province said that the long stick mostly used in Sak-Sao was a bamboo stick, 6-8 m. long. The stick was well shaped and trimmed thoroughly (Fig. 14). Another material used in Sak Sao was the rotten but it was difficult to find and rather expensive since the rotten was used for furniture and craft. Sao or a bamboo stick was naturally available in villages and forests, so it was easy to find.*

- *Cart: Nit Pongjansatein, 69 years, from Phatthalung province said that a cart pulled by buffaloes or bulls was a necessary vehicle in the rural areas since the roads were too rough for motor-vehicles to run (Fig. 15). The cart was a contemporary vehicle and still useful in the modern days.*

- *Mortar: It means a large wooden mortar with 50-80 cm. diameters at its edge. The large wooden mortar was used as equipment in processing paddy into rice. The paddy was put into the mortar and pounded in steps with a wooden pestle with 10-20 cm. diameters (Fig. 16). The pounded paddy was dipped up from the mortar and put in a winnowing basket to separate the light brown rice from the chaff (Fig. 17). The rice obtained from this process was called "hand-made rice", which produced more nutrition than the white milled rice. In this way, the mortar is the symbolic meaning as the equipment in producing healthy food to people.*

- *Elephant: The elephant is the largest terrestrial animal in the world. There are lots of elephants in Thailand. The people in the north and northeast use elephants in their living, such as for trekking, transporting and logging (Fig. 18, 19). Elephants are treated as the symbolic animals of Thailand. Once, the figure of elephant was sealed on the national flag of Siam (the former name of present Thailand). So the elephant is the symbolic value referring to nation and Thainess (Fig. 20).*

- How to keep Chak Ka Yer Equipment: All equipment used in Chak ka yer; rope, long stick, cart and mortar, can be reused for several times in several years. In the past, the equipment was stored at the house where its owner stayed, at the temple which was the community center or at the house of the community leader, such as sub-district headman or village headman. In present, the equipment is kept at local youth center, the office of Tambol Administration Organization or local public house. But elephant are kept and fed at the elephant owners' houses or in the elephant camp.

2) Chak Ka Yer in the perspective of Intangible Cultural Heritage

- Chak Ka Yer between human and human; A variety of chak ka yer played throughout the country, such as Sak Sao, Chak Cha, Chak Saow, and Dueng Nang may be evolved from "Chak Ka yer between human and vehicle or domestic animal" that is played in a ceremony or religious ritual. Later the form of playing is adjusted for comfortable, quick and easy performance because the essence of chak ka yer offers more fun, excitement and value to the players and audience than performing in the ceremonial process. Sathaporn Ketkeaw, 58 years, a chak ka yer program runner for 30 years, said that chak ka yer was a fun game. There were so many participants in each event that the match ran out of the time set. Most people were interested in this game rather than the concerned ceremony. So the ceremonial activities and chak ka yer game were arranged in separate days. Later on, chak ka yer was cut off from the ceremony indirectly. However, the results of the study from documents, research works and experts found that the

cultural identity and value of chak ka yer are love, sacrifice, cooperation, unity, spirit and localism among the players, teams, villages, community members and finally the audience.

- Chak Ka Yer between human and vehicle or domestic animal: Chak Ka Yer Kwian, Duen Khrok, Chak Phra or Laak Phra, and Chak ka yer khon kap chang or Chak ka yer between human and elephant are usually arranged as a part of ceremonial activities according to the belief of people in a particular area.

- Chak Phra or Laak Phra is related to the belief and teachings in Buddhism on doing good and loving kindness on the poor, the suffered or the lacked of chance. Villagers pulling a boat enshrined with a Buddha image through villages or towns are to share a chance in merit making to the others. It is believed that the more rough they go on, the more merit they earn. On the way, the people living on both sides of the roads will give offerings or donate money to the boat and all these things are handed to the temple at the end of the ceremony. Everyone knows well that the money and things they have offered will return to their own villages or communities because the money and things will be used in constructing or renovating the temple. The temple in communities is treated as the village or community center and everyone can obtain utility from the temple equally. Utai Pongchantornsatein, 70 years, a participant in the Chak Phra festival for more than 35 years, retold the happiness obtained from this festival that the villagers from different backgrounds could do the same thing that was to make merit together in Chak Phra ceremony and create a close relation to one another. This resulted to the cooperation in the public work of community or local area. Besides, there was an old belief embedded in this festival, i.e. the major of Thai people live on agriculture and what they need most is the rain in the right season. Chak Phra festival is related to a belief in begging for the rain in agriculture. So it is believed that Chak Phra or Laak Phra festival can cause the rain fall in the right season.

- Chak ka yer khon kap chang or Chak Ka Yer between human and elephant; This play may not be clear about the ceremony concerned since it has been practiced

for 50 years, but it expresses the relation between human and elephant and elephant's value. It also reflects the hard and tough burden that elephants have to carry on in logging and the pain from tying with chain or rope. Again, in the chak ka yer between human and elephant, the enormous strength in tugging of elephant and 30-50 men in the game can realize human on how hard work the elephant has to do in its duty. Tugging with enormous strength can hurt the palms of players and that makes them understand the elephant status and treat the elephant with love and kindness. The result is that elephants have a better life quality.

7. Chak-Phra: An ancient festival in the south

1) Introduction

Chak Phra is a local festival of the people in the southern part of Thailand. It is the merit making festival at the end of the Rain Retreat or on the fifteenth waxing moon day of the eleventh lunar month, calls it Wan Ork Phansa. Wan Ork Phansa means the last day on which monks end their vow, according to the Discipline, to stay in the same residence for 3 consecutive months in the whole rainy season. Monks make a vow on the first waning moon day of the eighth lunar month and they have to stay in the same place until the fifteenth waxing moon day of the eleventh lunar month. After this period of time, monks can go anywhere as they wish.

2) Background

Chak Phra festival is mixed between a belief in Buddhism and Brahmanism that prefers to bring deity statues in procession in occasions. The legend of Chak-Phra festival said that after the Buddha performed the Twin Miracle to subdue adherents of another religion at the mango grove in the adjacent of Savatthi and then he descended to Tavatimsa Heaven to give a sermon to his late mother. The Buddha stayed in Tavatimsa Heaven until the fifteenth waxing moon day of the eleventh lunar month or the end of the Rain retreat.

Then he returned to the human world. The Buddha came to the human world in the early morning of the first waning moon day of the eleventh lunar month. Knowing the return of the Buddha, Buddhists got together to welcome him with foods and beverages. Since there were so many people gathering there that they could not reach the Buddha for offering him the foods. Some of them wrapped the food with tree leaves and passed the wrapped food to the Buddha. But the people standing in the outer circle could not wait, some tossed and some threw the wrapped food into the Buddha's alms bowl with a lot of commotion. With the people's purified mind and good will together with the Buddha's miracle, all the food fell into the Buddha's alms bowl. So, the festival of "Hor Tom' or "Hor Pat' (Wrapped boiled sticky rice) was set up to express the people's rapture when the Buddha returned from Tavatimsa Heaven to the human world. The people invited the Buddha to sit on a wooden throne and paraded to his residence. When the Buddha's time was over and there were Buddha images, people enshrined a Buddha image on a wooden throne instead of the Buddha.

3) Meaning and Significance

Chak Phra or Laak Phra festival means a process and ritual of folk people to invite a Buddha image to enshrine on a cart tied with a long rope and they help tug, pull or drag it through communities with the purpose that the people living in that area have a chance to pay respect to the Buddha image in the procession and make a donation as they like. Its significance refers to the rapture of people waiting to welcome the Buddha on the day he returned from Tavatimsa Heaven to the human world. This festival is performed on the day at the end of the Rain Retreat and has been practiced and transferred from the past to present. Chak Phra festival is performed almost in every province in the south, but the grand and famous Chak Phra festival is in Kor Phra Ngan district, Mueang district and Phun Phin district of Surat Thani province, Lang Suan district of Chumphon province, Kraburi district in Ranong province, Pak Phanang district, Thungsong district and Mueang district of Nakhon Si Thammarat province, Ranot district and Hat Yai district of Songkhla province, and Pak Phayoon district of Phatthalung province. The field survey was conducted in Thungsong district of Nakhon Si Thammarat province.

4) Rituals in Chak-Phra Festival

Nit Pongchantornsatein, 69 years, a senior in Thungsong district, Nakhon Si Thammarat province said that there were many rituals to be followed in Chak Phra festival which could be concluded as follows (Fig. 21):

- Taeng Nom Phra or Vehicle Decoration: Nom Phra means a vehicle used to carry a Buddha image. The vehicle used to carry a Buddha image on land is called “Nom Phra” (Fig. 22), and that in the water way called “Ruea Phra” (Fig. 23). Nom Phra is made with a scaffold supported by two pieces of wood crafted in the shape of Naga (Mythical serpent). There are four wheels under the Naga. The scaffold is walled with weaved bamboo strips decorated with colorful designs on it, the vehicle is decorated all around with colorful silk cloth, stripe flags, triangle flags, lined flags, hanging flags, banana trees, sugar canes, coconut leaves and fresh flower garlands. Wrapped boiled sticky rice is hung in the front of the vehicle and the Naga is decorated with colorful glass for glittering. Beside the vehicle, a double headed drum, drum, bell and gong are hung. Behind the vehicle, some chairs are set for monks to sit on. The topmost of the vehicle is greatly decorated because this show-case part indicates the grand and dignified feature of the vehicle.
- Invitation of Phra Laak onto the Vehicle: Phra Laak means a standing Buddha image and generally a standing Buddha image holding an alms bowl is used (Fig. 24). On the fifteenth waxing moon day of the eleventh lunar month, people will bathe the Phra Laak, change its robe and then transfer it onto the boat. A monk will give a sermon telling the Buddha’s story when he went to Tavatimsa Heaven. In the early morning of the first waning moon day of the eleventh lunar month, Buddhists will give alms food in front of the standing Buddha image called “Tak Baht Na Lor” and then the Buddha image transferred onto the vehicle. At this process, some temples will perform a magic ritual to make the festival safe and go on smoothly.
- Laak Phra or Chak-Phra (Tugging or Towing): In tugging the vehicle, 2 ropes are separated for men and women. The double headed drum, drum, bell and gong

are struck to give encouraging rhythm in tugging. Participants are crowded with joy and sing the festive songs in chorus for relaxing.

- In the south, there are 2 types of Chak Phra festival; Tugging the Buddha image on land and in the water way.
 - *Chak Phra on land is to transfer a standing Buddha image holding an alms bowl onto the wooden throne and parade. Participants are joyful in the crowd and sing the Chak-Phra songs for relaxing. The most temples arranging this festival are usually located far from rivers or canals.*
 - *Chak Phra in the water way is to enshrine a standing Buddha image holding an alms bowl on a wooden throne in a boat and tow the boat along a water way. Chak-Phra in the water way is usually arranged by temples located on the river banks or close to rivers. Chak-Phra in the water way gives more fun than that on land because of its comfortable surrounding conditions; easy to tow and to arrange the boats in the ceremony.*
- Steps in Chak Phra Festival
 - *10-15 days before the start of the festival, villagers and monks help in decoration the boat to be used in the ceremony.*
 - *On the ceremonial day, the first waning moon day of the eleventh lunar month, villagers will gather and give alms in front of the ceremonial boat in the early morning.*
 - *After monks finished having their breakfast, the ceremonial boat will be towed to the place where boats get together in Thungsong district.*
 - *After monks have eaten lunch; there will be “Sad Tom Contest” (a contest in throwing wrapped boiled sticky rice) and “Boat Racing”.*
 - *Usually the ceremonial boat will be towed back to the temple in the evening of the same day. In some areas, as in Surat Thani province, after the ceremony, the boat will be anchored there for 3-4 days to let people make merit.*

5) Chak-Phra Festival in Cultural Perspective

It can be concluded in cultural perspective from the data collected from villagers having experiences in participating in Chak Phra festival at Thungsong district, Nakhon Si Thammarat province as follows:

- Villagers believe that the outcome of chak-phra will cause the rain fall in the right season. It is believed that “after chak phra festival, there will be a heavy rain”. So, the vehicle enshrined with a Buddha image is designed in a shape of Naga because the Naga living in the ground under can give rains. Chak Phra is related to the way of life of people in agricultural society.
- Villagers believe that whoever has attended the Chak Phra festival earns a lot of merit and he will be successful in life. Whenever the vehicle enshrined with a Buddha image goes past their residence, they will get out helping in towing the vehicle until it passes their houses and the others in the next houses will do the same.
- Since the towing activity is hard and tiresome, villagers compose some prose and verse to sing while towing the vehicle. The prose and verse is usually short and funny in asking and replying each other. It encourages intellectual and wit.
- Villagers believe that Chak Phra may be the origin of Chak ka Yer because in Chak-phra procession sometimes there are pits, mound or rough roads; participants have to work hand in hand to have the vehicle gone through those obstacles.

8. Chak Ka Yer Kwian (Tug of War with a cart): The Ancient Festival of the East

1) Introduction

Chak Ka Yer Kwian is a specific form of play in the east area of Thailand. Especially in Chanthaburi province, this festival has been practiced and continued for more than 100 years. Chak Ka Yer Kwian is to tie a cart with ropes at the front and back. The players are divided into 2 teams; one at the front and the other at the back. Both teams will tug the cart into their side. The teams that tug the cart into their border line win the game. Chanthaburi is located in the eastern side of Thailand. Chak Ka Yer Kwian is still practiced, well conserved and transferred until now. The famous areas are Tambol Tapon and Tambol

Kwian Hak in Khlung district. The survey study was conducted at Tambol Tapon because it has continued this festival longer than the others.

2) Background

Chak Ka Yer Kwian or Chak Ka Yer Kwian Phra baht (Tug of War with the cart enshrined with the Buddha's Foot Print) of the people in Tambol Tapon in Khlung district of Chanthaburi province is arranged together with Chak Phra Baht festival. In short, this festival is called "Chak Phra" in the southern part of Thailand. It is arranged on the first waning moon day of the eleventh lunar month. Chak-Phra festival of Tapon people is similar to that in the south but different in the ritual performing details. That may be adjusted to suite the local geographical conditions, living and way of life there. In the south, the geographical feature is close to the sea and the people live their life on fishery and travel by boat. So the vehicle used in the ceremony and festival in the south is "a boat" called "Ruea Phra" (Fig. 25), while the main area of Chanthaburi province is not close to the sea and its people live on agriculture. In the past, the cart was the most important vehicle for traveling, loading and performing important rituals in the province. So, the cart is used in carrying Pha-Phra-Baht (The Buddha's foot print clothe) in Chanthaburi province (Fig. 26).

3) Meaning and Significance

Chak Ka Yer Kwian is called differently in different areas, such as Chak Ka Yer Kwian Phra Baht, Chak Ka Yer Phra Baht. The word "Chak Ka Yer" means to tug, pull or pull back and forth with force, the word "Kwian" refers to the ancient two-wheel vehicle towed by bulls or buffaloes, and the word "Phra Baht" means a foot or feet used for the king and the Buddha. Here it means only the Buddha's foot print. So, Chak Ka Yer Kwian is a play in which a cart is placed at the center and the players of both teams have to tug the cart into their border. Chak Ka Yer Phra Baht is tugging the cart loaded with the Buddha's foot print clothe. It is similar to towing or tugging the holy objects.

4) Forms and Playing Methods

Equipment: The equipment is a cart, a piece of cloth designed with the Buddha's foot print from Wat Tapon Noi, 2 ropes, a drum, 1-2 drum sticks, 1-2 seats for the drum players (Fig. 27). In preparation, the ceremony organizers will tie the cart with 2 ropes; one at the front and the other at the back. Rolls or layers of clothe designed with the Buddha's foot print are tied on the cart. The cart is decorated with fresh flowers beautifully and then a drum, drum sticks and seats are placed on the carts. At the same time, the men responsible for drum beating are assigned.

Place to Play: The place for playing must be an open space, such as a temple ground, the road connecting villages, village field or the rice field. 3 lines or 3 flags are marked beside the place used for Chak ka yer. The first line is marked at the middle of the ground where the cart is placed; another two lines are equally marked at the front and at the back of the cart at 5-6 meters as the border of each team.

Players: The main players are people living in the local area, divided into 2 teams; one stands at the front of the cart and the other at the back of the cart behind each team's border line. The players are usually classified according to their age and sex, but sometimes a man-team will play against a woman-team. In this case, a number of players in the man-team are fewer than of the woman-team (Fig. 28).

Playing Methods: The play starts when a referee counts; one, two, and three, or beats the drum. When the players hear "three" or the drum, they start to tug the cart into their border to win the game. At this moment, the drum players seated on the cart will strike the drums repeatedly to arouse the game. Sometimes they give tugging rhythm by singing. The team that beats the opposite in two-third is the winner (Fig. 29).

5) Chak Ka Yer Kwian in the Cultural Perspective

- Chak Ka Yer Kwian in the Tangible Cultural Heritage found that all the equipment used in Chak Ka Yer Kwian-Phra-Baht has cultural meanings.
 - *Cart: This represents the vehicle loading the holy objects and carrying merit or good things to villages and communities.*
 - *The cloth designed with the Buddha's foot print is treated as the Buddha comes to visit people in the villages or communities.*

- *Rope is compared to the line of faith that people can touch and with this line, the goodness can be tugged, pulled, towed and led from place to place.*
 - *Drum and drum sticks are similar to the voice from heaven to announce merit, goodness and virtues to people to do according to their faith.*
 - *The seats for drum beating are similar to a firm column causing the voice from heaven spreading with merit and goodness.*
- Chak Ka Yer Kwian in the Intangible Cultural Heritage found that it was firmly and deeply related to belief and ritual in the local area.

Belief: Karn Koranee, 69 years (Fig. 30), the lay bursar of Wat Tapon Noi and the chairman of Cultural Council of Khlung district told about the belief of people in Tapon village and Chak Ka Yer Kwian festival or Chak Ka Yer Kwian Pha Phra Baht festival in brief that:

- *Pha-Phra-Baht (The cloth designed with the Buddha's foot print) is 1.5 m. wide and 7 m. long on which the four fold Buddha's foot prints are drawn. According to the legend, it was believed that the four Buddha's foot prints represented the four Buddhas. The largest foot print belonged to Kakusandho Buddha, the second one belonged to Konagamana Buddha, the third one belonged to Kassapa Buddha, and the smallest one belonged to Gotama Buddha or the present Buddha. The villagers believe that the cloth is so sacred and noble that they pay respect to.*
- *The origin of the cloth with the Buddha's replica foot prints was from Wat Chang Hai in Pattani province. It was loaded on a boat and embarked at Khlong Ta Yai village. Then there was a 7-day celebration for the cloth. After 7 days, it was brought to Wat Tapon Noi. In Song Kran Festival every year, the cloth is taken out for merit making and celebrating in 'Chak Ka Yer Kwian Pha Phra Baht festival'.*
- *The cart carrying the cloth with the Buddha's foot prints is sacred and noble. The Tapon villagers have a faith on it and wish to participate in the procession and towing the cart because they believe that it is auspicious*

for themselves and their family. This indicates and cultivates unity among people in the village.

- *In the past, it was believed that the Buddha's four fold foot prints on the clothe loaded on the cart in the procession and the beating of drum and gong traveling round the village could relieve the sickness of people and epidemic in the village. This belief is correlated with the retold of Karn Koranee, 69 years, that once there was cholera in the village and many people died of it. A monk suggested the villagers to carry the clothe with the Buddha's foot prints on a cart and parade along the village and the procession stopped at the houses where the sick people lived to let them pay respect to the cloth and make wishes for their goodness. It was wonderful and unbelievable because after that the sick ones could recover from their sickness.*
- *Chak Kwian; towing the cart loaded with the Buddha's foot print clothe helps eradicate or relieve disease and natural disaster in the local area correlating to Boonmee Jaitrong, 66 years, a senior in the village, that there are wonderful or supernatural events occurred in the village, such as the rainfall in the dry season or in summer time, and that increases the villagers' belief and faith and then this festive activity is arranged consecutively every year.*
- *The tangible value obtained from towing the cart: Kartnarong Yangyuen, 60 years, told that according to the villagers' belief, Chak-Ka-Yer-Kwian can strengthen their energy and health, they have new friends and cooperation from others, and finally they can relieve from some physical disorder, such as finger-joint, toe-joint and knee lock. This belief is correlated with the scientific result in Sports Science that the tug-of-war effectively helps in physical, mental, emotional, social and intellectual development as follows:*
 - *Physical Development: In the tug-of-war, limbs, legs and body are directly used with force and that supports physical force and strength. The muscle must use its strength to resist the fatigue while the players bend down or stretch in tugging the rope. Sometimes the game may cause*

fatigue and exhaustion, so breathing system and blood circulation system have to function more.

- *Mental development: Chak Ka Yer is the play or the game directly depending on physical force, but indirectly it also depends on effort and mental support, such as rhythm of music, drum and cheer. Tugging back and forth between the players create fun and pleasure among the players and on-lookers.*
- *Emotional Development: The players have to control their emotion and behaviors towards the outcome in the game; win or lose and towards physical hurts and pains. The fun and cheerfulness after the end of the game help relieve the players' stress.*
- *Intellectual Development: mindfulness and wit are necessary in the tug-of-war because the players have to plan together on how to arrange the standing position, what standing posture should be used and how much the body will stretch. These are used in making a decision for the game. It encourages the players to be thinkable, reasonable, learnable and creative.*
- *Social Development: It causes the learning process in justice method in the game and in social laws and rules, for example, a number of players in each team, the space range between holding border and the center mark on the rope, the unity of the team players and the unity in tugging. That creates friendship, unity, cooperation, sympathy, rule of game, justice, and spirit of sportsmanship. Sometimes, cheer leaders may sing, signal or cheer to give rhythm in tugging and this supports a sense of good leadership and followership (Chuchchai Gomaratut, 1982).*
- *This result correlated with the experimental study of Chuchchai Gomaratut (2013). Only the folk game programs were set in his study and Chak Ka Yer was one of them. The samples were children aging 7-12 years, 1 hour-play, 3 times a week in 10 weeks duration. The physical fitness test (PF test), intellectual quotient test (IQ test), emotional quotient test (EQ test) and play quotient test (PQ test) was conducted before, 5 weeks, and 10 weeks of the experimental program. The study result clearly found that 10 weeks after attending the experimental program, the physical fitness (PF), intellectual quotient (IQ), emotional quotient (EQ) and play quotient (PQ)*

development of the samples were increased more than 5 weeks and were increased more than before attending the program with a significant statistic figure at .01. This result can firmly support the belief of villagers on Chak Ka Yer Kwian.

Ritual: Chak Ka Yer Kwian of Tapon villagers in Chanthaburi province is arranged in Song Kran Festival (the traditional Thai New Year) and on April 17 every year. The processes are as follows:

- *April 13, merit making in Song Kran Festival,*
- *April 14, loading the clothe on a cart and parading out of Wat Tapon Noi through villages for people to worship and sprinkle the Buddha's foot print with scented water,*
- *April 15-16, Chak Ka Yer Kwian is arranged at Wat Tapon Noi for fun and unity among the villagers, and*
- *April 17, Wat Tapon Yai will arrange the annual festival together with Chak Ka Yer Kwian Phra Baht. It is the great event reflecting the people's faith on Buddhism and they wish to carry the Buddha's foot print clothe for worshipping in their villages.*

9. Safeguarding and Transference

In safeguarding and transference, the interesting finding in why this festival has been well conserved, continued and transferred until now is that:

- 1) There are many senior personnel who own the body of knowledge in Chak Ka Yer Kwian in Tapon sub-district more than in other areas. And these individuals are willing to devote their time and experiences to the younger generations.
- 2) From item 1, the body of knowledge is transferred from generations to generations.
- 3) The community leaders; the village headmen, the sub-district headman, and chairman of local administration organization love, understand and appreciate the values of Chak Ka Yer Kwian Festival. They all give fully supports to the festival.

- 4) Community leaders and villagers have a good vision in their identity and use it for marketing promotion. Since the Chak Ka Yer Kwian is the annual festival of the village, everyone shares in the investment and earns the benefits from tourists visiting and buying their products in the festival. It is beneficial to everyone in the village.
- 5) The community leaders occasionally arrange Chak Ka Yer Kwian for recreation of the villagers with suggestions in tangible values and advantages of the activity.
- 6) There are contest and competition in the Chak Ka Yer Kwian activity to arouse the interest and challenge among the participants.
- 7) The government and private sectors give a direct support to the village in arranging the cultural chak ka yer activity.

10. Conclusion

Chak Ka Yer is the local cultural wisdom of Thai ancestors and it belongs to the intangible cultural heritage. It is a folk play-game of Thailand, played throughout the country, and even its play-style and method may be varied. In general, the basic playing method is the same and called “Chak Ka Yer”. The forms of playing may be men against women and men against objects, such as a cart, mortar, Buddha image and elephant. The result of the field survey research through Chak Phra Festival and Chak Ka Yer Kwian Festival can be concluded that Chak Ka Yer has cultural relations in several aspects; value, goodness and morality in Buddhism, belief in healing disease, and geographical belief in agriculture. Furthermore, it also has a value on unity in community, exercising and physical, mental, emotional, intellectual and social development of the players.

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Pictures of Chak-Ka-Yer: Traditional Tug-of-War in Thailand



[Figure 1] Chak-Ka-Yer



[Figure 2] Songkran Festival



[Figure 3] Elephant tow the log



[Figure 4] Chak-Phra Festival



[Figure 3] Elephant tow the log



[Figure 4] Chak-Phra Festival



[Figure 7] Chak-Saow



[Figure 8] Chak-ka-yer-kwian



[Figure 9] Large wooden mortar



[Figure 10] Ruea-Phra



[Figure 11] human and elephant



[Figure 12] Chak-ka-yer human and elephant



[Figure 13] Manila hemp rope



[Figure 14] Mai-Sao (A long stick)



[Figure 15] Cart pulled by buffalo



[Figure 16] Mortar and wooden pestle



[Figure 17] Wincing basket



[Figure 18] Elephants for trekking and logging



[Figure 19] Elephants for transporting



[Figure 20] National flag of Siam



[Figure 21] Nit Pongchantornsatein



[Figure 22] Nom Phra



[Figure 23] Ruea Phra



[Figure 24] Buddha image holding and alms bowl



[Figure 25] Chak-Pra in water or Ruea-Phra



[Figure 26] Chak-Pra on land



[Figure 27] Equipment of Chak-Ka-Yer-Kwian



[Figure 28] Chak-Ka-Yer-Kwian: Place to play



[Figure 29] Chak-Ka-Yer-Kwian: Playing Methods



[Figure 30] Karn Koranee, 69 years.

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