

Abstract

This thesis is an attempt to understand Thai food culture in an urban context by describing the food system in one urban community in Bangkok. Thaprachan, a well-known community located in the part of old Bangkok is chosen to be the site of this study because of its reputation for being a large food market.

Food system of Thaprachan consists of two main sub-systems, one of production and the other of consumption. In production sub-system, there are three main parts. The first describes the producers themselves who are small restaurant (food shop) owners and food vendors. The second describes the production process which includes the workforce and describes the transmission of knowledge and beliefs about food and cuisine among the producers. The last part describes food itself which is classified into seven categories.

In consumption sub-system, there are two main parts. The first describes the types of consumers, namely university students, government officials and office workers around Thaprachan, tourists and special customers. The second part is concerned with the knowledge and beliefs about food among the consumers.

This study also points out the transformation of the food system in the past four decades. These changes come from both external and internal factors. Internal factors consist of the changes in the pattern of family and the attitude of child rearing and education, leading to the decline of family business.

External factors consist of the constuction of Prapinklao Bridge in 1973 and the remove of first year students from Thaprachan to a new campus out of town. The external factors have caused a large drop of the number of customers. Finally, the study gives examples of how different restaurant owners and food vendors have adjusted themselves to these changes.