

Abstract

The study on “Knowledge Discourse on Reconstructing the Local Culture, Case Study : Khao Khun Si Educational Park and Cultural Village, Tambon Ban Kao, Amphoe Phrom Ki-ri, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province” has an aim to testify that the process of restoring culture is in fact of a form employing power especially the hidden power used tactically in name of various branches of “knowledge” in order to create / justify / publicize / emphasize things that are selected to represent the “identity” of village culture. For example, knowledge in history, archaeology and ethnology is used to manifest that the village has a longstanding history, that villagers are proud of their history, wisdom, culture, tradition and kin relationship, and that their culture has been handed down in a long continual period. With such “traditional capital”, both cultural and social capital that the community possesses, when “revived” to have an outstanding identity, the community will be revived or strengthened. This is the main reason why the village is chosen and recognized as “model” of cultural community according to the social and economic development master plan (edition 8th). It is also combined as part of “educational park”, the center of holistic learning, which integrates knowledge in culture, nature and science.

The study applies Michel Foucault’s concept on “discourses, power, knowledge and discursive analysis” to demonstrate *what ways and means* are used in the process of reconstructing culture including recalling memory, restoring tradition and incorporating local wisdom with modern knowledge, *who has legitimate power* to select the place that needs “reconstructing”, *what are the criteria*, value system, notions and beliefs that are used to select / justify the “identify” , together with an analysis that points out the relation / association, between the process and social, economic and political contexts.

The study also takes on Pierre Nora’s concept of “sites of memory” and Eric Hobsbawn’s “invention of tradition” to explain how the identity is constructed. The concept of “sites of memory” reflects the power of sorting memory and controlling society – what or who is to “remember” or “forget” by creating socio-cultural practice to support the existence of “memory”. Examples of exercising the power are materialized as monuments, museums and historiography of heroes while the concept of “invention of tradition” attempts to disprove that traditions have been handed down in a long continual period but to attest that they are invented to

replace the identity of each class. Therefore, the invented tradition is concealed with ideology, interests and power structure.

To analyze knowledge discourse on reconstructing local culture is to uncover the “self” or identity of the village that is constructed from series of discourses intertwined with unity, reasons and discursive practice so concretely that “dominant discourse” is established as model of “cultural village”, blocking out other different discourses. The “cultural revival” is in fact the process of fabricating myths of “imaginary community” or the idealistic village under the support of local power network which tries to establish itself as part of the state power.