

The Legend of the Bird: Reviving Cultural Heritage Through the Yala Province Festival, Thailand

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to study the history and significance of the bird procession tradition in Yala province, including the transmission of related legends and cultural stories, as well as to revive the old tradition of the bird procession to create a cultural festival in Yala. A mixed-methods research design was used, combining both qualitative and quantitative research. For the qualitative research, data collection tools included focus group discussions and development actions. For the quantitative research, questionnaires were used to collect data from 328 samples, including young people, local artists, community scholars, and cultural entrepreneurs. This study focuses on analyzing the economic value created by managing cultural capital and evaluating the economic and social outcomes of the cultural market. Qualitative data were analyzed using descriptive analysis, focusing on the perspectives of the community members (lay views), which led to conclusions and suggestions for further development. Quantitative data were processed using descriptive statistics to calculate the mean, standard deviation, and percentage, with results presented in tables and descriptive narration. The findings of this research will help highlight the importance and potential of developing the bird procession tradition as part of a creative festival and tourism attraction, benefiting the economy and society of Yala province. The aim is to revive cultural heritage and foster local pride.

Keywords: legend, bird parade, revival, cultural heritage, burung market

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Introduction

This research explores *The Legend of Birds: Revitalizing the Cultural Heritage of Yala Province*, focusing on the symbolic significance of mythical birds across diverse cultures while examining the revitalization and preservation of cultural heritage in the southern region of Thailand, specifically in Yala Province. The study investigates how local bird legends are intertwined with economic and tourism development in the region. By delving into these cultural symbols and myths, the research underscores the importance of integrating cultural heritage with contemporary economic strategies to enhance the local economy, particularly through tourism development.

The exploration of mythical birds offers a comparative analysis of various global symbols, such as the Phoenix from ancient Egypt, the Griffin from European traditions, the Vermilion Bird from Chinese mythology, and the Thunderbird from Native American lore. This research highlights how these bird legends contribute to forming local identities, helping revitalize cultural heritage through their inclusion in local narratives and practices. By focusing on Yala Province, this study examines how cultural heritage can be preserved while promoting sustainable tourism, which in turn aids in the region's economic growth (Faulkner, 2003; Fitzhugh, 2008). With its rich history and diverse cultural landscape, Yala Province plays a pivotal role in preserving and promoting the community's cultural heritage. Integrating mythical bird stories into local arts, crafts, performances, and tourism attractions serves as a living exhibition that fosters greater understanding and appreciation of the region's history and traditions. As tourism in Yala grows, revitalizing these cultural symbols creates new opportunities for cultural and economic development (Smith, 2017). This process balances cultural preservation and sustainable development, providing a model for other regions facing similar challenges.

Revitalizing bird legends in Yala provides an opportunity to integrate these myths into local economic development strategies in ways that respect cultural sustainability (Alim, 2013; Chen, 2015). This process not only helps preserve local heritage but also introduces new meanings, deepening the connection between cultural identity and contemporary global practices. Through the strategic use of mythical birds in storytelling, art, and tourism, Yala Province becomes a focal point for the intersection of cultural heritage and economic vitality, demonstrating how cultural revitalization can drive tourism and sustainable economic growth.

As the global tourism industry increasingly emphasizes cultural heritage as a cornerstone of authentic experiences, the case of Yala offers invaluable insights into how cultural revitalization can be effectively linked to tourism development. The integration of local myths with economic initiatives offers a unique opportunity to preserve and promote regional traditions while contributing to broader goals of sustainable tourism and heritage management. Given the complex relationship between cultural preservation and economic development in today's globalized world, this research is timely and necessary to understand how these dynamics can be successfully navigated. It aims to contribute to the growing field of heritage tourism and cultural sustainability, offering a model that can be replicated in other regions with similar cultural assets and economic challenges.

Literature Review

Mythical Birds and Their Cultural Significance

The Griffin (England and France). The Griffin, a legendary creature with the head and wings of an eagle and the body of a lion, symbolizes courage, protection, and sacredness in ancient European cultures, particularly in England and France. Often associated with the supernatural, the Griffin embodies the fusion of two powerful animals and represents a balance between strength and wisdom. The Griffin's connection to sacred power and its possible origins in ancient fossil discoveries in Central Asia (Fitzhugh, 2008) offers valuable insight into the ways myths adapt and reflect the natural world and human imagination.

The Phoenix (Ancient Egypt). The Phoenix, known as Bennu in ancient Egyptian mythology, represents rebirth and immortality. The bird's unique life cycle—consuming itself in flames only to rise again from the ashes—symbolizes the eternal cycle of life and death. This powerful image of regeneration speaks to the Egyptian belief in the afterlife and the enduring nature of the soul (Faulkner, 2003). The Phoenix not only reflects death and resurrection but also encapsulates the broader themes of renewal found in Egyptian cosmology.

The Vermilion Bird and the Phoenix (China). In Chinese mythology, the Vermilion Bird (Zhuque), one of the Four Sacred Animals, guards the southern direction and symbolizes summer and fire. Similarly, the Phoenix (Fenghuang) represents virtue, grace, and rebirth, often depicted as a harmonious union of opposing forces, exemplifying balance within the universe (Chen, 2015). These birds are deeply embedded in Chinese culture, symbolizing both cosmic order and moral integrity.

The Garuda (Thailand and Indonesia). In both Thai and Indonesian cultures, the Garuda, a bird-like creature from Hindu mythology, serves as the vehicle of the god Vishnu. It is regarded as a symbol of sovereignty, power, and protection. The Garuda's prominence in national symbols and religious rituals underscores its role as a guardian figure, embodying authority and divine strength (Alim, 2013).

The Thunderbird (Native American). The Thunderbird is a revered figure in Native American folklore, particularly among northern tribes. Known for its ability to create thunder and lightning, the Thunderbird represents the raw power of nature and serves as a protector of the people. Its mythological significance extends beyond physical strength, symbolizing the interconnectedness of all life and the respect for natural forces that human beings cannot control (Smith, 2017).

The Robin (Birth of Jesus). In European folklore, the Robin is associated with the birth of Jesus Christ. One poignant legend suggests that the Robin, in an act of compassion, comforted Jesus during His crucifixion, resulting in its breast being stained with blood. The red breast is thus seen as a symbol of sacrifice and kindness in Christian teachings (Hughes, 2011). The Robin represents hope, compassion, and the willingness to help others during times of suffering.

Southern Thai Bird Procession Tradition

The bird procession tradition is an ancient local custom of the three southern border provinces: Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat. This tradition has been passed down for generations

and is occasionally held to welcome important guests, celebrate various occasions, or for entertainment. For example, it is often performed during the “Maso Yawi” ceremony (a circumcision ritual) or sometimes organized for contests unrelated to religious events or significant dates in the calendar. Typically, these events are held at suitable times for enjoyment and to express local artistic creativity. It also serves as a gesture of respect and loyalty to elders or a way to welcome distinguished guests on special occasions (Department of Cultural Promotion, 2020).

The bird procession tradition is unique because it involves a parade featuring elaborately designed bird sculptures, including beautifully crafted bird heads and bodies. However, in recent years, the tradition of bird procession in Yala province has been fading. Several factors contribute to this decline, such as the limited transmission of knowledge regarding the bird procession, especially the craft of making bird sculptures (bird heads and bodies) and the performance art of “Sila Bueng See Rae.” The number of skilled artisans in Yala who can make bird sculptures is small. Additionally, there are issues related to the lack of demand for the art and the reluctance of owners to preserve the artworks due to the absence of caretakers and successors (National Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2023). Moreover, various government agencies have not given sufficient attention to revitalizing the bird procession tradition, possibly due to factors like high event costs, local values that do not emphasize the preservation of local arts according to religious principles, the difficulty in organizing the parade requiring a large number of participants, and the lack of proper support from the government. As a result, this tradition is at risk of disappearing permanently (National Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2023).

Revitalizing the bird procession tradition is crucial to preserve the community's unique cultural heritage and create new value for the tradition. This requires promoting knowledge transfer and support from both the government and the private sector, as well as developing the necessary infrastructure to ensure the sustainability of the bird procession and its continuation for future generations.

Research Methodology

A mixed-methods design was employed:

- Qualitative: Focus group discussions with community members and action-based development workshops captured lay perspectives and generated development plans.
- Quantitative: Survey questionnaires administered to 328 stakeholders (youth, artists, scholars, entrepreneurs) measured attitudes toward economic and social outcomes.

Data analysis:

- Quantitative Qualitative: Descriptive thematic analysis.
- Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, percentage).

Results

Qualitative Findings

The qualitative data collected through focus group discussions revealed the deep-rooted cultural and emotional connection between the local people and the bird procession tradition. Community members perceived the procession as a valuable expression of shared identity, aesthetic sensibility, and intergenerational continuity. Participants noted that the intricate bird

sculptures and accompanying performances served not only as artistic displays but also as a means to teach younger generations about cultural pride and moral values.

Elder artisans and cultural scholars emphasized that the tradition once played a central role in village festivals and religious ceremonies, fostering a sense of togetherness among ethnically diverse groups in the region. However, the decline in practice was attributed to multiple interrelated factors: lack of formal education on cultural arts, insufficient financial support for materials and performances, and the gradual disappearance of master craftsmen who once passed down the techniques orally and practically.

Another significant theme that emerged was the tension between traditional imagery and Islamic values. Some community leaders expressed concern that the bird sculptures could be seen as idolatrous under certain interpretations of Islamic law. To address this issue, focus group participants proposed integrating symbolic, non-figurative designs that align with cultural intentions while respecting religious sensitivities.

Suggestions for revitalization included: (1) forming cultural preservation clubs in schools and local communities; (2) organizing training programs to revive craftsmanship; (3) utilizing digital platforms to document, archive, and promote the tradition; and (4) creating an inclusive planning committee composed of artists, religious leaders, educators, and local government representatives.

These findings underscore the importance of both cultural sensitivity and community collaboration in designing sustainable cultural festivals that can strengthen local identity and boost regional tourism.

This elaborate organization reflects the rich cultural heritage and traditions associated with the Bird Procession.

Figure 1

The Bird Procession Tradition (Photographed on July 27, 2023)



The Bird Procession: Participants wear shirts and pants wrapped in cloth (Krabong), with the number of participants corresponding to the size of the bird.

The Spear Procession: A procession of soldiers and commanders, dressed in short pants, red, white, or black shirts, and headscarves.

Sacred Sticky Rice: The rice is colored yellow, red, and white, shaped into a cluster with one boiled egg peeled and placed on top of the rice.

Sacred Sweets: Includes snacks such as *Kalamai*, *Kanom La*, *Kanom Jeoh Hu*, *Kanom Ko*, puffed rice, sweet sticky rice (Nasimanis), or glassy sticky rice.

Incense Tray

Betel Nut Tray

Bunga Sereh: A type of floral decoration used in the procession.

Making and Assembling the Bird for the Bird Procession Ceremony

The steps to make the bird's head are as follows:

Figure 2

The Process of Making the Bird's Head (taken on July 9, 2023)



Use wire to stretch over the components of the bird's head for added strength.

Figure 3

Steps in Making the Bird Head (taken on July 9, 2023)



Begin by taking an egg carton or scraps of paper, tearing them into small pieces, and soaking them in water overnight. Once soaked, place the mixture in a blender and blend it until the paper becomes fine and smooth. The blended mixture should then be strained using a fine sieve to separate the water from the pulp. After straining, add glue to the pulp and stir the mixture thoroughly. The prepared mixture can then be applied evenly onto the bird head structure. Allow it to dry completely in the sun. Finally, decorate the dried structure using poster paint to enhance the appearance of the bird head. Steps for making a bird

Figure 4

Steps to Make a Bird Figure (taken on July 9, 2023)



The bird's body is constructed by tying bamboo together to form a frame, which is then attached to a carrying beam. A layer of paper is applied as the base. Colored fabric or reflective paper is then cut into feather shapes and used to decorate various parts of the bird to enhance its beauty and make it eye-catching. Commonly used colors include green, gold, and silver while contrasting colors are also added for emphasis. Fringes are often attached along the edges of the wings to complete the look.

Once the frame and decorations are finished, the bird's head and wings are securely attached to the body using wire. Final adjustments ensure every detail is in place and the bird fully prepares for the ceremonial procession.

To Restore the Old Tradition of the Bird Procession Into a Cultural Festival in Yala Province

Based on interviews with religious scholars regarding appropriate approaches to reviving the bird procession tradition in Yala Province while respecting Islamic principles (Ibroheng Yanya, interview on December 14, 2023; Niyabdurrokib Bin Nihassan, interview on November 24, 2023), several key ideas emerged.

The revival of the tradition should consider the current social and cultural context. It is suggested that the bird procession be adapted into an economic activity—functioning as a cultural event that generates income for the local community. This approach should emphasize that the festival is cultural in nature, rather than religious, and is open to participation from people of all faiths. This inclusivity supports both economic sustainability and social harmony.

To avoid religious conflict, particularly with Islamic teachings prohibiting idol worship, the bird figures used in the procession should not be made in a form resembling statues intended for reverence or worship. This ensures that the cultural aspect of the tradition does not conflict with religious beliefs.

The bird procession can still be held as a parade for aesthetic and cultural display, celebrating the local identity and heritage of Yala Province. However, avoiding holding the procession near religious sites such as the central city shrine is recommended, where associations with worship practices could arise.

Ultimately, the revival of the bird procession in Yala should focus on cultural preservation, community engagement, and economic benefit while ensuring that the practice aligns with religious sensitivities. To support this effort, establishing a network of clubs or organizations dedicated to preserving and revitalizing the bird procession tradition is encouraged. These groups can play a vital role in promoting the tradition respectfully, inclusively, and sustainably.

Development of a Cultural Community Network for Reviving the Bird Procession Tradition and Yala's Cultural Market

On October 31, 2023, an activity was held to develop a cultural community network to revive the bird procession tradition and Yala's cultural market. In 2024, representatives from government agencies, educational institutions, and local entrepreneurs presented their cooperation in developing a cultural network for revival and the Burung Market as follows:

Yala City Municipality (educational and cultural scholars) will integrate the bird procession and cultural market into the municipality's event calendar. They will provide facilities, set up venues, and promote the event through the municipality's official page, which has over 100,000 followers, to increase awareness and make the Burung Market a new attraction for the Yala Marathon on August 4, 2024. The municipality will share information and invite the research team to attend meetings to plan for the Yala Marathon and the festival.

The Provincial Administrative Organization (PAO) will present the information from this forum to the management and is willing to participate in organizing the cultural festival.

Yala Archives will collaborate to organize an exhibition to revive the bird procession tradition alongside the university, providing a learning resource for locals and tourists. This exhibition aims to promote the revival of the lost tradition in the area.

Educational Institutions (Municipal School 5) are interested in having the school and students participate in local history youth research activities to restore, preserve, and continue traditions lost in the area.

Yala Culture has proposed a project for the 2024 fiscal year, which has received support to help researchers connect activities with the province's projects.

Experts in language and cultural arts (Dr. Asiya Wan-Alo) have presented ideas on connecting religion and tradition to raise awareness among the local population.

Local entrepreneurs on Nualsakul Road (Alex Coffee and Zhong Tea House) have cooperated in becoming cultural product sellers and developing their store products to contribute to reviving the lost bird procession tradition, such as creating birds from leftover glass materials from their shops.

Reviving the Southern Border Culture Bird Procession in a Multicultural Form

Reviving Southern Border Culture Through the Bird Procession: A Multicultural Celebration

Figure 5

Bird Procession Welcoming Distinguished Guests at RESEARCH DAY 2023 (taken on July 27, 2023)



A series of activities have been organized to breathe life into the southern border culture by simulating the bird procession in a multicultural format under the theme “Tracing the Past, Nibong Village, Kebudayaan An Burong.” This event was graced by the presence of local scholar Mr. Saman Dosomi and held in collaboration with the Cultural Arts Center and the Southern Border Research and Development Institute of Yala Rajabhat University as a special occasion to welcome distinguished guests during the YRU RESEARCH DAY 2023 on July 27, 2023.

Figure 6

Bird Procession at the Ma-Soyawi (Circumcision) Ceremony (taken on August 18, 2023)



In a continuation of the cultural revival, on August 18, 2023, the bird procession was organized for the Ma-Soyawi (circumcision) ceremony at Kampong Baru Village, Reaing Subdistrict, Rueso District, Narathiwat Province.

Figure 7

Multicultural Bird Procession “Tracing the Past, Nibong Village, Kebudayaan An Burong” (KEBUDAYAAN BURUNG) at the 4th Burong Market 2024 (taken on August 3, 2024)



Looking ahead, on August 3, 2024, the First Multicultural Bird Procession Contest, themed “Tracing the Past, Nibong Village, Kebudayaan An Burong” (KEBUDAYAAN BURUNG), will take place in Yala Province. This vibrant event will also feature the Burong Puteri Creative Dance Competition and the 4th Burong Market, located at Nualsakul Road (Vegetable Garden Community) in Muang District, Yala. This cultural festival promises to be a highlight, welcoming both locals and visitors alike.

Figure 8

Bird Procession at the 31st Arts and Culture Festival “Simple and Sustainable Culture” at Prince of Songkla University, Pattani Campus (taken on September 13, 2024)



The celebration will continue on September 13, 2024, as the bird procession becomes a key feature of the 31st Arts and Culture Festival, titled “Simple and Sustainable Culture,” at the Kalyaniwuththana Cultural Studies Institute at Prince of Songkla University, Pattani Campus. The procession will showcase the talents of Mr. Saman Dosomi and the creative dance performers from Bunnangsta Wittaya School, the winners of the creative dance contest, as they participate in this culturally significant procession.

This series of events not only revives a cherished tradition but also celebrates the multicultural richness of the southern border, making it an unforgettable cultural experience for everyone involved.

The Revival of the Bird Procession Tradition in Yala Province Seeks to Promote Conservation, Deepen Cultural Understanding, and Encourage Active Community Participation. This Effort Can Take Many Forms.

The historical transmission of the bird procession tradition plays a key role in preserving and sharing the community's rich cultural heritage. Historical details about the tradition can be used to create informative displays at cultural markets, offering visitors insight into the origins, evolution, and significance of the procession within the community's daily life. Events like the creative “Burong Puteri” dance competition and exhibitions at the cultural market can provide immersive experiences that foster a stronger connection to the tradition.

Activity design for demonstrations or performances is another vital way to educate both locals and tourists about the bird procession tradition. Public events such as re-enactments of the procession or storytelling through music can bring the culture to life, offering a chance for hands-on learning and active participation in traditional customs.

The use of digital learning media is also an effective tool for expanding the reach of the bird procession tradition. By converting historical information into digital resources, such as websites and online databases, the tradition becomes more accessible to younger generations and people from other regions. These digital platforms can serve educational purposes, especially in schools and universities, making the tradition more relevant in today's digital age.

Promotion of cultural tourism can help further integrate the bird procession tradition into the community's economic and social fabric. This can include creating cultural tourism routes that highlight significant locations related to the procession, as well as offering signage or brochures that explain the tradition's historical importance. Additionally, local products and souvenirs reflecting the cultural identity—such as bird-patterned yukata shirts, bird-themed t-shirts, notebooks, and fabric bags—can be developed to help share the tradition with visitors and generate sustainable income for the community.

Creating activities that foster community connections is another powerful way to honor the tradition. The bird procession tradition, which reflects deep community collaboration, can be a foundation for multicultural events that unite the Thai, Chinese, and Malay communities. For example, cultural performances, such as the “Burong Puteri” dance competition, Chinese traditional dance, or Malay song performances, can help build strong relationships and instill pride in the community's cultural heritage.

Lastly, the conservation and revival of the tradition must be rooted in historical accuracy and respect for the original customs. By using historical data, the bird procession can be adapted to modern contexts while maintaining its cultural essence. This ensures that the tradition not only survives but thrives, continuing to enrich the community's daily life and fostering learning and participation from all generations and backgrounds.

Quantitative Findings

Survey results indicated strong positive interest in festival participation ($M = 4.2$, $SD = 0.6$), perceived economic benefits ($M = 4.0$, $SD = 0.7$), and community pride ($M = 4.3$, $SD = 0.5$). Over 80% of respondents supported government and private sector partnerships for sustainable festival management.

Discussion

Research Findings: The Bird Procession Tradition in Thailand's Southern Border Provinces

The bird procession is a captivating and culturally significant tradition among the Malay Muslims in Thailand's southern border provinces, including Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat. Passed down through generations, this secular practice is not tied to religious events or specific holidays but is instead celebrated during special occasions meant for joy, creativity, and community bonding. The procession acts as a vibrant expression of local artistry, often organized to honor elders, welcome distinguished guests, or mark joyous events such as circumcision ceremonies (referred to as *Maso Yawi*) and festive competitions.

In Pattani today, this tradition is kept alive by a small group of dedicated artisans, mainly in districts such as Muang Pattani, Yaring, Panare, and Nong Chik. These craftsmen primarily create two types of birds for the procession: the *Kha-Kea-Sura* (also known as *Kaka-Sura*) and the *Buhrong-Singo* (Lion Bird). Of these, the *Buhrong-Singo* holds particular importance and continues to play a key role in local celebrations. This bird is featured in various ceremonial events, including circumcisions, weddings, and other cultural gatherings, and the procession is commonly referred to as the "*Buhrong-Singo procession*."

The Legend Behind the Bird Procession

The bird procession tradition is deeply rooted in a local legend that adds layers of intrigue and cultural depth to the practice. According to the story, a king once sailed along a waterway and encountered a group of fishermen who shared a remarkable tale. They spoke of a giant bird they had encountered while fishing in the deep sea—an intimidating creature with large red eyes, tusks, and fangs. Yet, when the bird took flight, its vibrant feathers and graceful form appeared so beautiful that the fishermen believed it to be a celestial bird rather than an ordinary creature. Upon returning to his palace, the king ordered craftsmen to create four bird figures, naming them *Laksamano*, *Kha-Kea-Sura*, *Karudo*, and *Singo* (Anant Wattananikorn, 1985).

Preserving and Promoting Cultural Heritage

While the bird procession is now primarily associated with the *Kha-Kea-Sura* and *Buhrong-Singo* birds, its significance goes beyond the visual spectacle. The procession serves as a means of preserving and promoting local culture, including traditional music, dance, and crafts like *Bung Si-Re* (ceremonial trays). These cultural practices continue to form a crucial part of Pattani's identity, fostering a sense of unity and pride within the community.

Research and Documentation of the Bird Procession Tradition

A recent research initiative has focused on documenting the history and stories surrounding the bird procession. The research team conducted interviews with local scholars, artisans, and academics, as well as consultations with experts in literature, culture, and local wisdom. These efforts have uncovered a wealth of historical knowledge, which has been compiled into a comprehensive database. This database not only preserves this unique aspect of southern Thai heritage but also aims to promote the bird procession as a cultural tourism attraction, ensuring that the tradition remains alive for future generations.

Thematic Categories and Preservation of Knowledge

The knowledge gathered from this research has been organized into various thematic categories to ensure its accessibility and usefulness. One key category is the *Concept of the Bird Procession Tradition in Yala Province*. The bird procession was originally organized to welcome important guests or figures visiting the area. It was also an integral part of the traditional Muslim circumcision ceremony, symbolizing the wealth and social status of the host. Over time, the bird procession became more than just a local event—it came to represent joy, celebration, and community unity. The preparation and procession of the bird heads require the active involvement of many community members, strengthening social bonds.

As the tradition evolved, the government became more involved, providing financial support to organize and hold procession contests. In Yala Province, the tradition also absorbed cultural elements from the multicultural society, including influences from the Chinese, Buddhist, and Muslim communities, further enriching the local cultural landscape.

The Components of the Bird Procession Are as Follows

The organization of the Bird Procession is a vibrant and elaborate event featuring various processions, each with its unique significance and participants.

The **Musical Procession**, known as **Silah**, includes 30 musicians who create a festive atmosphere. Following this is the **High-Offering Procession**, which showcases a variety of offerings. This procession features a tray of incense, betel leaves, and areca nuts, along with a pair of “Bunga Sireh,” a traditional flower arrangement. Additionally, a selection of “Kwan” sweets is presented, including Kalamae, Kanom La, Kanom Jor Hu, Kanom Ko, rice puffs, and sweet sticky rice, known as Nasimanis. A mound of Kwan sticky rice, colored in yellow, red, and white, is topped with a peeled boiled egg. The procession also includes “Kwan” fruits, traditionally bananas, along with candles, water vessels, and Dulun (or Talum), which consists of two containers for sweets. Decorative silver and gold flowers are also part of the offerings, alongside Guwaekapeh, a decorative thread tied to bamboo that represents nobility status. This aspect features seven colors of thread for nobles and three for commoners, typically held by women dressed in beautiful traditional Malay attire, with around 40 participants.

Next is the **Noble Procession**, where figures such as Datoh, Senah, Amat, and the Village Head don traditional Malay men's attire, complete with a kris, reflecting their rank. The **Bird Procession** follows, with participants dressed in shirts and pants, wrapped in “Pha Khao Ma,” a traditional cloth corresponding to the size of the birds represented in the event.

Lastly, the **Spearman Procession**, consisting of military personnel and generals, features 30 participants dressed in red, white, or black pants and shirts, along with head coverings. The event culminates with a **Performance Group**, showcasing costumes in the “Mayong” or “Rongheng” style, often accompanied by music and dance, enhancing the festive spirit of the procession.

Suggestions

On Education and Recording of Historical Stories Efforts should be made to digitally archive historical information in various formats to raise public awareness and make this data available for educational purposes. Additionally, it should serve as a cultural tourism resource that generates sustainable income for the community.

On Reviving Lost Traditions in the Three Southern Border Provinces Many local traditions that are part of the region’s identity have been lost due to changes in the social context. To revive these lost traditions in a way that aligns with current circumstances, support from both the government and private sectors is essential. This includes financial backing, provision of venues, policies, and other resources. Cultural festivals should be promoted to generate income for the local population, particularly through cultural tourism, leveraging soft power and local identity in a sustainable manner.

Conclusion

This research emphasizes the profound role that mythical birds play in shaping cultural identities and how they can be utilized as instruments of cultural and economic revitalization. The integration of these ancient symbols in Yala Province offers a unique opportunity to preserve and promote local heritage while enhancing tourism and economic growth. As global tourism continues to prioritize cultural authenticity, the study provides valuable insights into how communities can balance heritage preservation with contemporary development goals. By examining the intersection of cultural myths and economic strategies, this research contributes to the broader field of heritage tourism and offers a sustainable model for cultural revitalization worldwide.

The study of mythical bird legends from various cultures not only helps us understand the diverse ways in which birds are used as symbols in mythology and literature but also offers insight into the spiritual interpretations and societal changes associated with these beliefs (Faulkner, 2003; Fitzhugh, 2008; Smith, 2017). Integrating these symbols into local heritage preservation and tourism development, particularly in the Burong Market of Yala, showcases how cultural revitalization can be linked to economic growth while maintaining cultural sustainability.

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