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PHRAPALAD PRAPOJ YUSAMRAN: THE ROLES OF MUSEUM IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:
A MULTI-CASE STUDY OF FOLK MUSEUMS IN NAKHON CHAI SI DISTRICT, NAKHON PATHOM PROVINCE.
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The objectives of this research are: 1) To study the concepts and display formats of the folk museums under study; 2) To study the roles of folk museums in community development; 3) To conduct a comparative study of the community development roles of three museums. The research methodology employed are: qualitative research conducted among a total of 141 key informants -- museum personnel, local leaders, learned villagers, school personnel, Tambon Administrative Organization officials and villagers; documentary research/analysis; participant observation; and interview (formal as well as informal interview) . The researcher is the major tool of this research. Documentary analysis, inductive analysis and constant comparison were used in analyzing data. The research findings are as follow:

1. The concepts and display formats of the three folk museums in Nakornchaisri district were initiated by each community to meet its own requirements. External agencies, such as the Prapathom Jadee National Museum and the Friends of Nakhon Pathom Museums Group, provide operation guidance and advice for all museums. The museums' display formats focus on a presentation of local history, livelihood, religious beliefs as well as community relations. These features are presented through local relics and replicas of items that depict local lifestyles.

2. The folk museums under study play the following roles in community development. *Educational Roles:* All three museums were established to promote the study of local history, lifestyles, and past ways of life. They are centers for the study of local traditions, customs and values through various displays and demonstration of how the displayed items are put to use. Such displays and activities provide museum visitors with concrete experiences that can be applied to their everyday life agricultural, art, painting, sculpturing, handicraft and performing art activities. *Social Roles:* all three folk museums are centers for the transmission of community pride of the ancestors to the present generation as well as centers for moral unity and local cooperation. *Religious, Cultural and Customary Roles:* the museums have direct link and association with each community's customs, culture, ceremonies and beliefs. Local folk plays, deemed to be worth preserving, are usually included in museum and community activities. *Economic Roles:* All three museums generate local employment and income from sale of local products and work as museum guides.

3. In comparing the roles of community development performed by folk museums operated by the temple, house and school, it was found that although the museums differ in terms of display formats and activities, they share similar goals of preserving and promoting local lifestyles and local wisdom that reflect the ancestors' ways of life. These invaluable local wisdoms should be preserved for future generations to learn, appreciate, preserve, and transmit.

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