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COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES FOR CREATIVE HOMESTAY MANAGEMENT AT BAN PIYAMIT 1, YALA, THAILAND

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Abstract

This research aimed to study 1) the context of Ban Piyamit 1, Yala, Thailand; 2) to study 5A components of Ban Piyamit 1; and 3) to explore communication guidelines for homestay management. Creative research in Piyamit Village. This research is a qualitative study. The key informants included travel group leaders, homestay owners, community tourism management committee, entrepreneurs, and tourism police, totaling 20 people, selected through purposive sampling. Research tools utilized in the study encompassed in-depth interviews, group discussions, and observations. Data were analyzed using descriptive analysis. The research found that Ban Piyamit 1 boasts an important tourist attraction, namely the Piyamit Tunnel, characterized by a distinctive appearance that yields tangible benefits. Factors influencing communication for creative homestay management encompass 1) tourist attraction, 2) accessibility, 3) accommodation, 4) activities, and 5) ancillary services. The guidelines for community tourism development include 1) the promotion of unique local cuisine specific to the area, 2) the presentation of appealing cultural and traditional activities, 3) the proficiency of tour guides, 4) the natural and suitable ambiance of accommodations for relaxation, and 5) ensuring safety and comfort during stays and rest. Communication guidelines for creative homestay management in Ban Piyamit 1 encompass both internal community communication and external community communication. This involves collaborative thinking and planning, with members engaging in discussions to formulate policies and common practices for the development of creative community tourism activities.

Keywords: Communication Management, Homestay, Tourism, Betong

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Introduction

After the global outbreak of COVID-19, the economic and tourism conditions in many countries, including Thailand, have been significantly affected, leading to a decline in the number of tourists (Qun et al., 2022a). Numerous nations have allocated substantial resources towards vaccination efforts as a preventive measure. This necessitates a considerable amount of time and budget to restore the confidence of tourists. The implementation of measures such as the Bubble & Seal approach is one strategy to manage the epidemic and support the continuity of businesses. This, along with other contributing factors outlined in the Thai Tourism Development Strategy Plan (2009-2021), will require an extended period for the recovery of the tourism and hotel industry. The repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic have been severe and are anticipated to have a prolonged impact (Qun et al., 2022b).

The government has prioritized tourism as a National Agenda. On April 17, 2019, the Cabinet passed a resolution to actively promote tourism. The Ministry of Tourism formulated the Tourism Development Plan No.2 (2017-2021) and put forth guidelines to implement this plan, aiming to develop tourism over 20 years. Additionally, a 5-year Thailand tourism development plan was established, guided by the vision of making Thailand a top-tier tourist destination globally. This vision seeks to bolster the economy, society, and income distribution sustainably in line with the overall development plan. Consequently, a 4-year strategic tourism plan (2018-2021) was instituted to provide a roadmap for the advancement of Thai tourism. This plan places a strong emphasis on environmental considerations, aiming to cultivate a high quality of life within Thai society, fostering a culture of development and sustainability. This approach aligns with the strategy of the Ministry of Culture, which seeks to harness the cultural wealth of the nation, thereby generating both social and economic value. Given that Thailand boasts rich cultural assets found throughout the country, notably in the enduring Buddhist civilization intertwined with the traditional Thai way of life, there is an opportunity to leverage this cultural capital to spur economic growth, create employment, and enhance community livelihoods. This, in turn, can drive the expansion of creative tourism initiatives rooted in cultural capital (Thampramuan & Tekhanmag, 2020), serving as a catalyst for development at both the local and national levels. Homestay tourism, an increasingly popular form of tourism, plays a pivotal role in this endeavor.

Homestays are regarded as a form of ecotourism that stems from the integration of principles from sustainable development and natural resources conservation. These are incorporated into tourism experiences that prioritize nature, ensuring satisfaction for all tourists by emphasizing responsibilities related to nature conservation, learning, and community involvement. This attraction draws people from foreign countries with diverse cultures who seek to immerse themselves in the local lifestyle and engage in homestay tourism activities or community-based cultural accommodations. The appeal lies in the distinctiveness of each community. It extends beyond providing a place to stay; other essential elements include human resources, community identity, way of life, and the presence of unique and noteworthy cultural traditions. This type of tourism offers an opportunity for visitors to not only reside in a homestay but also to engage in cultural exchanges and knowledge sharing with the hosts. This cultivates trust and confidence among customers (Sakulrat, 2020). The activities predominantly revolve around the everyday routines of the homestay owners. Guests actively participate in learning, observing, and engaging in various undertakings alongside the hosts, who are eager to welcome tourists and visitors willingly.

Ban Piyamit 1 is situated in a region characterized by lush forests and high mountains, making it a natural and historically significant site within Betong district, Yala province, Thailand. This village area, which once served as a refuge for those enlisted in the Thai army, has a historical connection as a former stronghold of the Malayan Communist Party. In 1976, the Piyamit Tunnel, an earthen passage constructed by the Malayan Communist Bandit Movement, was

established and utilized as a base for their political activities. In the present day, former members of the Malayan Communist Bandit Movement have reintegrated into society, contributing to the development of Thailand. Consequently, the Piyamit Tunnel has been transformed into a tourist attraction, inviting interested visitors to explore its historical significance while highlighting the unique traditional way of life of the community and the historical context. This form of tourism aims to showcase past cultures and lifestyles, encompassing architectural structures, housing, clothing (Tangkaew, 2011; Wu et al., 2019), ecotourism, and captivating local wisdom. An interview with a group of Piyamit community tourism leaders revealed that while the community possesses the potential to welcome tourists and is prepared to be excellent hosts, certain aspects leave an impression on tourists during study tour visits. However, there remains a challenge related to a lack of knowledge and understanding about efficient community-based tourism management to systematically meet the satisfaction of visitors. This encompasses aligning tourism with the broader strategy to position Thailand as a hub for health tourism and emphasizing local development (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2018). Consequently, tourism management has yet to fully realize the community's potential. Previously, government agencies had engaged in public relations and marketing efforts with the community, albeit for a limited duration. Following the cessation of government funding, operational issues emerged in terms of administration and management. Furthermore, community participation plays a significant role in community development, serving as a reflection of the strength of participation and the utilization of cultural capital. Additionally, the community has had to grapple with the impact of the COVID-19 situation, resulting in reduced income for its members. Considering the challenges, the researcher has taken a keen interest in studying the guidelines for the development of Piyamit Community tourism. The aim is to utilize the findings of the Piyamit Community study to inform the planning of community management systems and facilitate sustainable tourism development.

Literature Review

The concept of management involves a group of individuals within an organization collaborating to accomplish the organization's shared goals. It encompasses various elements, including planning, organizing, leading or directing, and controlling the organization or its activities to achieve these common objectives. This concept can be applied to the management of community enterprises that offer homestay services. It serves as both a model and a process for overseeing innovations in homestay-related tourism within a group or enterprise, ultimately serving as a foundation to bolster homestay tourism.

Tourist satisfaction refers to the expectations that tourists hold for tourist attractions and the travel services and experiences they encounter during their visits. This encompasses factors such as the quality of service, the appeal of the tourist attractions, and the reliability of the overall experience. When evaluating the experience against the initial expectations of tourists, it becomes evident that understanding the preferences and needs of tourists is crucial in comprehending their behavior. This insight is pivotal for the success of travel service providers. Entrepreneurs can employ this model and process for effectively managing innovative homestays within the realm of tourism. This enables them to strategize marketing efforts for homestays in community enterprises, formulate products and services tailored to the community's offerings, and establish marketing strategies that align with the satisfaction of tourists (Wangchan & Worapishet, 2019).

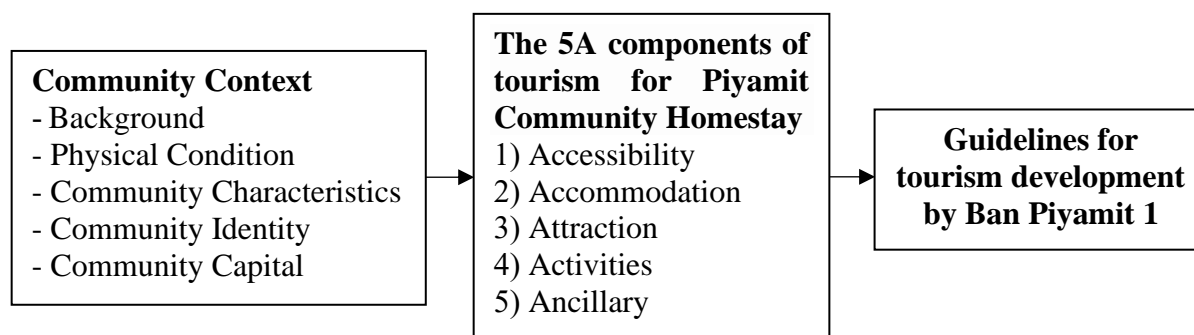
Community participation refers to the engagement of citizens in activities or projects right from their inception. This involvement includes expressing opinions, contributing to decision-making processes, providing and receiving information, staying informed about news, offering suggestions, and collaborating in project planning. This extends to co-managing initiatives that

could potentially influence various aspects, such as the quality of life, environmental sustainability, and socio-economic development. It also encompasses the planning and management of environmental and natural resources, as well as the crucial aspects of monitoring and evaluating progress in alignment with project policies and goals. Public participation must remain an integral part of the project, from its inception to its completion (Chinsomboon, 2019).

The concept of the main components of the tourism product involves the 5A components, consisting of 1) accessibility, 2) accommodation, 3) attraction, 4) activities, and 5) ancillary services. Within the context of successful homestay accommodations, activities play a crucial role. They stem from a process of social control, where the proper management of available space is employed to determine what guests learn, their lifestyle, and the activities they engage in during their stay. Additionally, activities serve as the behavioral unit of individuals in society. According to the social exchange theory, homestay tourism activities transpire between homeowners or community members and the visiting tourists. This interaction forms an integral part of the homestay experience.

This is a summary of the concepts, theories, and related research employed in studying communication for management. Specifically, it pertains to tourism activities, The 5A framework provides a meticulously structured methodology for crafting journeys that will remain etched in one's memory. As you embark on the task of travel planning, it is prudent to meticulously consider each of the 5A elements: attractions, accessibility, accommodation, activities and amenities, which thrive when tourists come to visit. Preserving tourism resources while retaining their distinctive identity remains paramount. Effective business management not only proves profitable, providing income for local communities but also minimizes impacts on the environment-both natural and socio-cultural-ensuring the long-term sustainability of tourism.

Research Conceptual Framework



Research Methodology

This research employs qualitative methods, incorporating field observation, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions to gather data from the key informants included travel group leaders, homestay owners, community tourism management committee, entrepreneurs, and tourism police, totaling 20 people, selected through purposive sampling. The collected data was then analyzed descriptively under the specific issues under study.

Key Informants/Population

Key informants encompass travel group leaders, homestay owners within the Piyamit community, representatives from homestay groups, members of the community tourism management committee, local scholars, entrepreneurs, and community shop owners, as well as officials associated with community tourism, including the Piyamit Community Tourist Police. Additionally, a group of Thai tourists who visit the Piyamit Community are also included.

Research Tools

- 1) Observation form: This tool is employed to analyze various aspects of the community, including its context, historical background, physical condition, characteristics, and identity.
- 2) In-depth interview form: The researcher initially checked the quality of the formulated tools, whether it is comprehensive and consistent with the variables studied or not, namely a semi-structured interview form for in-depth interviews and interviews in group discussions.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

Data collection is an integral component of qualitative research. In this study, researchers engaged in self-collection through in-depth interviews. Permission was sought during these interviews to make notes, record audio, and capture photographs. Additionally, during the Focus Group Discussions with key informants and relevant individuals, as well as in the field observation process, the researcher combined observation techniques with an analysis of the community context.

The data analysis methods involve a systematic examination of descriptive data and content, focusing on specific subjects such as the history of community tourism management, physical conditions, community characteristics, community identity, community capital, and community leaders.

Research Results

Community Context, Situation, and Tourism Aspects

1) Background: Ban Piyamit 1 is a village steeped in the history of Thai nation-building, once serving as a stronghold for the Malayan Communist Party. Constructed in 1976, the tunnel is a winding passage that extends approximately 1 kilometer into the mountain, with a width of about 50-60 feet. The arduous task of excavation required the efforts of 40 to 50 individuals over three months. The tunnel features multiple entrances and exits, originally designed for air refuge and storage of essential supplies. Today, visitors have the freedom to access any point along its length. However, tour guides generally recommend using exit No.1 for the shortest path to the thousand-year-old tree. The tunnel boasts nine entrances and exits, all interconnected. Presently, six routes remain accessible. These led to what once served as a radio station for the communist insurgents, as well as sleeping quarters and supply rooms. The interior of the tunnel is equipped with electricity, rendering it a more comfortable environment. Within, visitors can trace remnants of life, from simple dirt-floored sleeping quarters to weaponry and hiking gear. The combat headquarters, with a capacity to house up to 200 people, stands as a testament to its strategic importance. Originally, this subterranean passage was a crucial asset for the Malayan Communist Bandit Movement, utilized as a base for political operations. In recent times, former insurgents have re-engaged in the development of Thailand. Consequently, the Piyamit Tunnel has been transformed into a historical tourist attraction, offering insight into a significant chapter of the nation's past.

2) Physical Conditions: Betong is a large district in Yala and the southernmost district of Thailand. It was established as a district in 1898. The term "Betong" comes from the Malay term "Buluh Betong" meaning bamboo. Betong district is probably located about 140 kilometers from the city of Yala. An apt metaphor for this southern territory is that of a spear penetrating the Federation of Malaysia, as it is enveloped by three Malaysian borders: to the north, it converges with Than To District; to the east, it meets Cha Nae District in Narathiwat Province; and to the south, it links with Rath Rae (Malaysia). Additionally, its western boundary connects to the state of Kedah (Malaysia).

Ban Piyamit 1 is characterized by houses belonging to community members lining both sides of the road and extending into the foothill area. The majority of residents are engaged in farming, with occupations centered around agriculture and horticulture, leading to a significant

degree of self-sufficiency in these domains. The predominant crops cultivated are rubber, along with various fruit orchards featuring durian, mangosteen, and oranges.

3) Community Identity: Ban Piyamit 1 possesses a distinctive identity with remarkable customs, traditions, and cultural practices, predominantly influenced by its Chinese heritage. Notably, the community excels in harnessing the wisdom of herbal remedies—a tradition passed down through generations for healing and treatment. This practice has endured through the ages, preserving invaluable knowledge of local flora and their medicinal properties. Furthermore, Ban Piyamit 1 boasts a culinary heritage that sets it apart. Delicacies like Betong noodles, Betong steamed chicken, Khanom Ba Jang, Khanom Tao, Khanom Chan, marinated Bok Choy, water vegetables, and Tor Douronenis (local fish) grace the local cuisine, offering a unique gastronomic experience.

4) Social Capital, Cultural Capital, Natural Resource Capital: The location of Ban Piyamit 1 holds both geographic and historical importance in Betong, Yala. This village was once a refuge for the pioneers of the original Thai nation and served as a stronghold for the Malaya Communist Party. The tunnels, remnants of the past, were strategic bases for political operations during that time. Today, former insurgents have redirected their efforts towards nation-building in Thailand. At present, Malaya Communist bandits have joined in developing the Thai nation. The Piyamit Tunnel, now a compelling tourist attraction, offers a window into this significant historical period. The majority of the village residents are engaged in agricultural pursuits. Many have also taken part in the royal initiative, supported by Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, to cultivate temperate flowers, providing an additional source of income. The tunnel is accessible for visitors every day from 8:00 a.m. to 4:33 p.m., and a tour typically lasts around two hours. Equipped with electricity, the interior offers a cool and comfortable environment. Surrounding the entrance area, a variety of plants flourish, and natural pools fed by mountain streams create a refreshing ambiance. Outside the tunnel, once a military training ground, an exhibition showcases pictures and historical accounts, offering insights into forest life. Additionally, mushrooms and herbal medicines sourced from the forest are available for purchase, providing a unique and educational experience for tourists.

5) Tourism Situation: The tourism scenario at Ban Piyamit 1 can be delineated in three phases: before the COVID-19 pandemic, during the pandemic, and after it.

6) Number of Tourists: Before the COVID-19 pandemic, there were 1,200 Thais and foreigners/day. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the numbers dropped to zero for both Thai and foreign tourists. It is worth noting that the majority of tourists in Ban Piyamit 1 are Thai, Malaysian, and Singaporean. These visitors fall into two main categories: 1) Recreational tourists: These are organized groups traveling through tour companies. 2) General independent tourists: This category comprises individuals who travel out of personal interest, gathering information primarily from the Internet.

The 5A Components of Ban Piyamit 1

The 5A components of tourism provide a meticulously structured methodology for crafting journeys that will remain etched in one's memory. As you embark on the task of travel planning, it is prudent to meticulously consider each of the 5A elements.

1) Attractions: Select iconic destinations and landmarks that encapsulate the very essence of your chosen location. Prioritize attractions, ranging from historical sites to awe-inspiring natural wonders, that resonate deeply with your personal interests. Ban Piyamit 1 is home to a diverse community of Chinese people from various ethnic backgrounds, living harmoniously in a charming village. This provides an opportunity for tourists to immerse themselves in a distinctive local environment, where they can learn about daily life and language, including the use of Mandarin for communication.

2) Accommodations: Opt for accommodations that meticulously align with both your individual preferences and budgetary constraints. Whether you seek the unparalleled luxury of a renowned resort, the intimate charm of a boutique hotel, or the homely warmth of a bed and breakfast, ensure proximity to key attractions and unwavering comfort remain paramount considerations. The accommodation offers a natural way of life, complemented by stunning scenery, cleanliness, and comfort, all of which are designed to captivate guests. The thoughtful homestay decorations create an impressive first impression and provide an ideal setting for relaxation.

3) Activities: Designate engaging activities that cater specifically to your individual interests and provide an immersive experience within the local culture. Prioritize activities that elevate your travel experience, whether it be the exploration of esteemed museums, exhilarating outdoor adventures, or indulging in the region's unique culinary offerings. Local food: Being offers a portion of unique local food and Betong local vegetables including Betong minced chicken, marinated Bok Choy, Chinese beans, Chinese fish, Betong noodles, and Tor Douronenis (local fish).

4) Amenities: Seek out additional features that further enhance both convenience and comfort throughout the duration of your journey. From diverse dining options and rejuvenating spa services to meticulously planned transportation arrangements, prioritize amenities that elevate your travel experience to exceptional heights. A local tour guide proficient in both Chinese and English is essential for effectively communicating and imparting historical knowledge to foreign tourists.

5) Accessibility: Ensure that your meticulously crafted travel plans prioritize accessibility for all travelers, regardless of individual limitations. Whether it be providing accommodations specifically designed for individuals with disabilities, implementing clear and concise signage, or offering convenient and diverse transportation options, accessibility remains paramount in ensuring an inclusive and enjoyable experience for all. Safety: Ensuring the safety and comfort of our guests is of paramount importance. We treat our guests' belongings with the same care as if they were part of our household, guaranteeing a secure and comfortable stay. We look forward to welcoming them back for future stays.

Guidelines for the Potential and Management System at Ban Piyamit 1 for Creative Homestay Building

Communication for creative homestay management encompasses both participatory communication and community communication. Participatory communication within the tourism community involves joint thinking, active participation in planning, collaborative policy decision-making, shared allocation and distribution of benefits, as well as collective efforts in monitoring and evaluation. On the other hand, community communication plays a pivotal role in crafting appropriate strategies for guiding the communication processes related to creative homestay management. These strategies have important factors as follows.

1) People, starting with the leaders of the tourism community, have a vision, a spirit of sacrifice, and a commitment to transparent management. They aim to ensure that all community members receive fair and equal benefits, taking into account individual roles and responsibilities. Those entrusted with specific tourism zones are chosen based on their abilities, skills, and personal inclinations. Moreover, community members engaged in tourism exhibit open-mindedness and a willingness to make sacrifices, reflecting the overall generosity and spirit of cooperation within the community.

2) Environment: The Ban Priyamit tourism community's location is intrinsically linked to its historical significance and exceptional geography. Consequently, the community can conceptualize and implement various approaches to tourism.

3) Strong community: This community thrives on a foundation of strong moral values, fostered through participatory communication between the village headman and its members. This

dynamic encourages a sense of affection, unity, and shared goals moving in a cohesive direction.

4) Network mechanism system: The community has established a robust network system organized into groups, known as community tourism zones. This network extends its connections to nearby communities, like Ban Piyamit2, and further extends to external entities including governmental and private sectors, educational institutions, as well as various independent organizations.

5) Community policy: Within the community, there exists a clearly defined tourism development plan. Leaders actively engage in continuous learning, either through personal studies or by seeking knowledge externally, which is then disseminated to the community members. Policies have been adapted to align with the demands of the modern era, particularly in response to the post-COVID-19 tourism landscape.

Conclusion and Discussion

Ban Piyamit 1 is a village nestled in a valley, known for its primary attraction—the historic Piyamit Tunnel, which played a crucial role in past conflicts with the Malaysian government. The area boasts lush forests with medicinal plants that hold significant value for the local community. Additionally, there are accommodations primed for conversion into homestays. Before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Ban Piyamit 1 enjoyed a steady influx of tourists throughout the year. These visitors came to study, explore, and immerse themselves in the community's unique offerings, thereby contributing substantially to the local economy. Community members actively harnessed their cultural identity to derive concrete benefits from tourism, viewing it as a key tool for both survival and sustainability. This is consistent with the research of Streimikiene et al. (2021) who studied and found that tourism in rural areas focuses on social and economic sustainability and environmental sustainability. The Piyamit Tunnel, a historical attraction showcasing the wisdom of the community's ancestors, distinguishes the community from other tourist destinations. Ban Piyamit 1 primarily relies on agriculture, including rubber plantations and fruit orchards, and most of its residents practice Buddhism. Despite their diverse cultural backgrounds, the community coexists harmoniously, reflecting the research findings of McIntosh et al. (2002) which highlight the role of tourism communities in preserving cultural identity, fostering cultural exchange, and constructing community identity. This is consistent with the research of Phongkraphan et al. (2024) research on community-based environmental tourism management, local culture, and lifestyles closely linked to the natural environment. These factors strengthen distinctive and remarkable tourism, incorporating cultural and lifestyle dimensions into nature-based tourism systems. Such findings align with Dann's (1977) push and pull motivation theory, which can benefit the community and serve as a guide for sustainable development. Local product manufacturers and is a guideline for development communities in the Piyamit 1 community to be a sustainable tourist destination in the future. In the future, after the COVID-19 situation improves, there will be more tourists. The people in the community must prepare to provide services to an increasing number of tourism members by expanding the ideas of the new generation of youth. In addition, participation in training and training personnel to have abilities in tourism can make the potential of members develop in a better direction including having a network of both government and private agencies to provide advice can help with publicizing tourist attractions and accessibility during visitors' stay. This approach is consistent with a study by Devu et al. (2020), which underscores that tourism significantly impacts economic levels. Tourists are drawn to places based on five key factors: 1) attractions, 2) accessibility, 3) accommodations, 4) activities, and 5) ancillary services. Streamlining these elements ensures convenient and safe travel, making the destination more appealing. To elevate their homestay offerings to a higher standard, Ban Piyamit 1 should focus on several crucial developments. 1) Local food: Offering

unique local food, and Betong's indigenous vegetables. Simple cultural activities and traditions are attractive to tourists who come to travel. 2) Tour guide expertise: local travel guides possess comprehensive knowledge and can recommend accommodations. 3) Accommodation atmosphere: maintaining a natural way of life and relaxing environment. Safety is safe and comfortable to stay, encouraging repeat visits in the future.

Recommendations

1) It is imperative that relevant agencies, such as local government organizations, the provincial tourism and sports office, and the Tourism Authority of Thailand, collaborate closely with the community to devise a comprehensive plan for promoting tourism activities, local wisdom, and community products. Subsequently, they should actively promote this plan to both Thai and international tourists, enhancing their role as advocates for the attractions and activities within the community. Tourists themselves can serve as effective conduits for disseminating information, essentially becoming amateur journalists who share insights about the community with the wider society.

2) The community's distinctive identity and way of life represent a cultural heritage that has been passed down through generations. It is essential to foster an environment where both tourists and community members are motivated to safeguard this heritage to the best of their abilities. With the rapid advancement of technology and the encroachment of urban society, there is a risk that these unique aspects may fade away if not consciously preserved.

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