

Cultural Landscape of Hot Springs Toward Health Tourism and Recreation in Kanchanaburi, Thailand

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Abstract

The paper examined the significance and focused on two hot spring sites: Hin Dad and Lin Thin hot springs in the watershed called 'River Kwai Noi Watershed of Thong Pha Phum' in Kanchanaburi. The main purpose was to investigate the potential of the hot spring cultural landscape to cater to health tourism and recreation. The recommendation for sustainable development of hot spring destinations has been proposed at the end. The significance was identified through five values: aesthetic, historic, scientific, social, and spiritual values accordingly. The research was studied by a combination of tools of qualitative research methodology: field study, semi-structured interview, focus group, and participant observation. The major finding showed the impact of hot springs on health and recreation. The harmonious relationship found between hot springs and Thong Pha Phum communities with their potential relevance of driving environmental sustainability. A key symbol of their cultural heritage continues to shape their cultural norms of health promotion. Socializing and talking among the community members at the hot springs, can help them stay healthier because they keep encouraging each other and share their local wisdom practices. Hot springs are regularly served for senior citizens without surcharge, they then contribute to their ecological sustainability by ensuring cleanliness and sanitation at the sites as well as regulating the human activities that would damage the hot springs. This shown that elderly people themselves having the role to audit the standard of hot springs. The author's interest in hot spring and spa sectors may motivate health tourism to some degree and drive Thai hot spring destinations, spa business, and community-based tourism.

Keywords: Cultural Landscape, Health Tourism, Hot Spring, Kanchanaburi, Thong Pha Phum

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Introduction

The values and benefits of hot spring draw to study its significance concerning health tourism; the hot spring may act as a key to the successful development of health tourism to attract both domestic and international tourists to choose Kanchanaburi as their destination for health and recreation. Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has launched the strategy of health tourism to attract more international tourists in 2015. They promoted Thai Traditional health care such as Thai massage and Thai spa together with Thailand's Natural Hot springs campaign. Ministry of Tourism and Sport has been planning to promote the 'hot springs tourism' in Thailand as 'Hot Springs Village' and 'Spa Town' (Jumnongrasami, et al., 2015). Therefore, studying hot spring destinations will support national tourism. Health tourism may be a key component of the market strategic national plan to increase the numbers of tourism and spending in Thailand.

Research Objectives

The main purpose of this paper was to promote the cultural landscape of hot springs as a tourism resource by evaluating five aspects; aesthetic, historical, scientific, social, and spiritual values. This research could help to expand tourism destinations to the countryside in Thailand like Kanchanaburi. This may also assist local tourism stakeholders in pointing out their cultural landscape hidden in the Thong Pha Phum district of Kanchanaburi. The hot spring cultural landscape and its associated natures will support in tourism of Kanchanaburi then further will impact it on the national level. Nevertheless, in Thailand, the analysis of hot springs was inhibited by the limitation of hot spring specialists to assess the resource. Also, the limited advice of hot spring tourism management may be one of the problems toward Thailand hot spring tourism. In addition, no research has been done in terms of the 'hot spring cultural landscape' in Thailand. Therefore, the author's interest in hot spring and spa sectors may motivate its tourism sector to some degree and gain more useful information to drive Thai hot spring tourism, spa businesses, and community-based tourism.

Research Scope

Even though seven hot spring sites were found in Kanchanaburi, only two sites were investigated in this research: (1) Hin Dad hot spring and (2) Lin Thin hot spring. The researcher examined the significance and focused only on 'River Kwai Noi Watershed of Thong Pha Phum'. The distinctiveness of the watershed area is crucial to be selected as the identity of the landform where River Kwai Noi is the main waterway that discharges from Vajiralongkorn Reservoir (Khao Laem Reservoir) and flows down into various small rivers called 'streams'. The scope area studied only

community zones located near the Kwai Noi River and the associated streams. The two hot springs are situated near the Kui Meng stream and Kwai Noi River.

Literature Review

“Cultural landscape is a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values” (National Park Service, the Department of Interior, 1994). Recently, the definition of the cultural landscape at Yellowstone National Park in the USA where many hot springs are situated in was updated as, *“Cultural landscapes are settings that human beings have created in the natural world. They are geographic areas that have been shaped by human manipulation of natural and cultural resources and are associated with historic events, people, or activities in the park.”* (National Park Service, the Department of Interior, 2020). The difference between both definitions is the importance of *human beings and human manipulation* added into the updated definition that leads its meaning even better and clearer. In 1992, UNESCO announced the definition of cultural landscape officially, as it reflected specific techniques of sustainable land use, considering the characteristics and limits of the natural environment they are established in, and a specific spiritual relation to nature. Natural resources are necessary to support the human way of life so the relationship between culture and landscape consists of: First, the landscape is a foundation of culture. Knox and Marston (2014) mentioned landscape in cultural geography, as it is the way space, place, and landscape shape culture at the same time that culture shapes space, place, and landscape. The landscape is a factor to guide and control human behavior to respond to basic human needs. Second, landscape as text that can be read and written by groups and individuals (Knox and Marston, 2014) as same as Bjelland et al. (2013) who agreed that all landscapes can be read, interpreted, and challenged to understand the culture that produced it. Third, the landscape is evidence of people's activities and way of life as it appears in the physical environment, and that is supported by Olwig (1996 cited in Kaya, 2002). He stated the substantive meaning of landscape is a place of human habitation and environmental interaction that could be considered as a nexus of community, justice, nature, and environmental equity, a contested territory. To be simply defined by the author, cultural landscape is *‘human way of life through the relationship between culture and landscape involving some period’*. It should generalize its definition to be able to simply assess the site without pressure on the definition itself. Because the main purpose of the study is for promoting the cultural landscape as a tourism destination and the local community participating is required during the study. It also matches well with the Thailand Tourism campaign. The Minister of Tourism and Sport, Thailand has emphasized further tourism

promotion to local communities because this will ensure a fairer distribution of tourism income, especially for people in the villages. Because when local communities grow, the country grows. Travel and tourism are widely recognized as major contributors to grassroots economies and income distribution. Consequently, studying the cultural landscape will ensure that the benefits are better distributed to communities across the entire Kanchanaburi or even neighboring provinces.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The research was studied by a combination of tools of qualitative research methodology; field study, semi-structured interviews, focus group, and participant observation, and ensures the whole process involving local people's perspectives as a necessary stakeholder.

Key Informant

There were 30 interviewees, consisted of 6 public sector agents, 4 private sector agents, 5 local community members, and 15 hot spring-experienced tourists. The questions ranged from informal unstructured to semi-structured interviews with different levels of depth and typically took place in a conversational manner.

Research Instrument

There are two research instruments used in this research. They are (1) Interview form, and (2) Focus Group Record. While carrying out interviews, the researcher initially explored more general topics to uncover the views of participants to achieve the research objectives. The focus group employed to define subtopics and explain research objectives, particularly suited for explorative research because it offered a diversity of perception, judgment, and experiences. The synergistic effect of focus groups was created by participants who shared and compared ideas, experiences, and perceptions and by reactions to the responses of other members in the group. Two times of focus groups were casually organized and not only focused on hot spring issues but also on other recreation activities.

Data Collection

This research started at the end of 2018 before unexpected COVID-19 pandemics. During the period of collecting data between 2019 and 2020, there were some difficulties along the way due to the restriction of the COVID-19 situation such as grouping people and having a meeting. The alternative methods were rearranged such as calling individually in some cases. Furthermore, to conserve the cultural landscape, Hoi An Protocols for Best Conservation Practice in Asia (2009) was used as the main guideline for this research because regionally-specific protocols will be suitable for practitioners working in Asia.

Data Analysis

Since this research was designed as qualitative method, content analysis technique was used to analyze the data collected from the interview and the focus group.

Findings

Sustainable management must take part due to conservation schemes to keep its values exist as they are so that the authenticity also presents at the place. There are tools for the preservation of authenticity in Hoi An protocols. Assessment of the significance of a place carried out by the author as a necessary preliminary to conservation action. Significance assessment is the process of understanding the meanings and values of places. According to the Burra Charter, the Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 1997, each heritage site has its cultural significance (or cultural heritage value) which is embedded in the place itself, its fabric, setting, uses, associations, meanings, records, related placed and related objects. In addition, the Burra Charter, the Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 2013. It can be divided into 5 values which are listed alphabetically; Aesthetic, Historic, Scientific, Social and Spiritual values. Thus, to understand the heritage values of hot springs and their related context, the researcher investigated its heritage values and potential significance as follows;

1. Aesthetic Value - the result as listed below;

There are two sites of hot springs in the scope. Hin Dad hot spring is very unique because it is more than just a hot mineral bath. The site is a meeting between the hot spring where the temperature reaches 40-45 degrees of Celsius and cold water from the Kui Meng stream nearby. The color of the water in the pools is green as it is filled with warm water. Hin Dad hot spring surrounded by lush greenery and together with cool stream. Its aesthetics value involves the fabric, color, and temperature of the hot spring ambiance. Moreover, the mix of different temperature streams creates unique choices for visitors to experience three water temperatures; hot, warm or cold bathing. This hidden natural hot spring lies in a valley of Ta Nao Sri mountain range and is filled with many green tropical plants. Local people have been using hot springs to keep in good health for ages. The hot spring has produced odorless mineral water in abundance. Since the hot spring has been officially operated by the local government, they offer complimentary entry for elderly people. Surprisingly, strengthening relationships among the community is the unexpected outcome that derives from regularly meeting and talking among them at the hot springs. This shifts the role of hot spring transforms into a place of socialization as well. In addition, there are some senses of cultural combination that can be seen at the place. While some international tourists visit and enjoy their hot spring bathing, the local people also enjoy

their way of life with different dress code cultures. The different cultures of clothing do not interfere with the feeling of enjoyment as long as they follow the regulations of hot springs. It also shows the happiness of blending different cultures at the same place. 'Nudity' communal bathing is a common practice in Japanese culture. Japan is a prime example of communal bathing and the extension of that ritual to soaking at the numerous 'onsen' or natural hot springs of the country (Shimokawa, 2019). In Japan, these same prudish individuals will often disrobe in front of strangers and slide into the relaxing hot waters with them. In Thailand, if it happens, it may be not accepted how a newcomer behaves. Because nudity seems unacceptable and adding an unwelcome and unexpected element to the communal bathing experience, that is often perceived as sexual and embarrassing. Most Thai people are uncomfortable with the idea of nudity in public bathing. Then, the visitors may have to approach soaking with a respectful acceptance of the land's social norms.



Figure 1 International tourists and local people enjoy their way of life at Hin Dad hot Spring

Source: Alena Yadriona

Another one is the Lin Thin hot spring situated in nature which temperature around 50-57 degrees Celsius next to the Kwai Noi River. There are two big man-made pools for body bathing and some separated pools for foot soaking which are established above the river bank. These pools are usually operated by pumping up hot water from the original hot spring spot which originated down in the river. After taking a dip in the hot mineral baths, it can be easily assessed down into the Kwai Noi River, which is nice and clear due to the base being rocks and stones. It can be seen air bubbles coming to the surface above the river. The outstanding point is that hot springs are located next to

the cool river where the visitors can enjoy both cool and hot baths at the same spot. Visiting the open-air hot springs within the valley of Thong Pha Phum, visitors will feel rejuvenated after soaking in these hot spring waters and breathing in the cool, refreshing mountain air. The hot springs sit beside running river and stream making for incredible vistas. Both Lin Thin and Hin Dad hot springs permit mixed-gender baths.



Figure 2 Lin Thin hot spring
Source: Nuntana Ladplee (2019)

Many accommodation businesses around Kanchanaburi have invested in the construction and renovation to be hot spring hotels or spa resorts. Due to the fact the business is located in a scenic environment, the resorts have been forced to adapt to sustain their economic growth. The focus has been shifted away from the action of bathing towards the aesthetic experience surrounding the baths.

2. Historical Value - the result as listed below;

2.1 Hin Dad Hot Spring

Before the establishment of hot spring baths, Japanese soldiers were the first to utilize the thermal waters for their curative qualities of body and mind during World War II in Thailand (1941-1945). Furthermore, one of the secondary sources recorded a large number of valuable old photographs taken in World War II, the author found evidence, the hand-writing record of the dead list shown that the army camp in Thong Tha Phum called '*Hindato*' where the Japanese military

had set the camp in Hin Dad area. The locals named 'Hin Dad' but Japanese called by their familiar accent as 'Hin Dato'. In addition, Piesse (2017), a tour leader of 'Quiet Lion' Tour wrote a report that said "We pass through the town of Brankassi, site of the Brankassi camp, and a few kilometers further on we pass the site of Hindato camp which has a hot spring on the bank of a small river. This was a favorite place for Japanese engineers and soldiers who had the PoWs build a concrete pool for the use of Japanese staff." This could be a paragraph of proven evidence by the P.o.W. (prisoner of war) who participated in the 'Quiet Lion' tour. The tour that brought together the P.o.W. and relatives to visit the event that has taken place for several years in Kanchanaburi and is to commemorate and remember the ex-prisoners of war that never returned home from the Dead Railway in Kanchanaburi. The evidence of the same source also found that the P.o.W. supplied the water from the Kwai Noi river near their camps. Not every camp allowed them to use it for bathing after work and resting. They used the river water for cooking the rice and stew (Nelson, 2019). The Hin Dad hot spring for the next generation group was used as indigenous tradition, their leader held the hot spring in high regard as a neutral zone and a place of healing, and that various bands made pilgrimages to the site to use the thermal waters for cauterizing wounds and curing illness. Around Hin Dad Hot Spring, it was believed that Japanese soldiers buried gold and treasure underground. The local people told the traces of gold-digging and Japanese military air raid shelter from World War II have been seen around the site.

2.2 Lin Thin Hot Spring

In 1949, around 5 years after World War II ends, 10 kilometers away from Hin Dad hot spring, one more spot of hot spring named 'Nong Chareon' was unexpectedly found by two community leaders. The Department of Mineral Resources had studied after their notice. Several research had been studied in the area to develop this hot spring to promote as a health tourism attraction until 2009. Then, the project of 'Lin Thin', a new name hot spring had been proceeded by Government fund support. The project finished in 2011 and officially opened for visitors in 2012. Earlier, the photo evidence found that ex-prisoners of war members worked at Rinteng (Lin Thin) railway station, one of the stations in the Burma-Thailand railway. It can be seen clearly that there was a war camp settled in Lin Thin, Thong Pha Phum. The hot spring was used during World War II by the Japanese soldiers who had camped about 2 km away from Lin Thin hot spring. Japanese soldiers used the hot spring water to soak for relaxation because the cement round pond was found there. It is believed that it was the hot spring bath pond of the Japanese army during World War II. The people of Karen descent in the area believed that it was a holy well used to drink to heal disease and to prevent various evils.

3. Scientific Value - the results of rare endemic plants as listed below;

3.1 Red Milk Thong Pha Phum

Khamchompoo and Thongpakdee (2005) studied endemic plants in Thong Pha Phum district and first found new species of *Kradangnga* or *Ylang Ylang* species in the forests. The native name is given that '*Red Milk Thong Pha Phum*' due to the characteristic of flowers with pollen circles, males are red or pink along with the name of the specific area where this plant was first found within Thong Pha Phum.

3.2 Orchid of Thong Pha Phum Lion

It was discovered for the first time in Thong Pha Phum, Kanchanaburi by Sitthisajattam (2012). This type of orchid is classified as a rare orchid and only found in the remote forest of Thong Pha Phum, Kanchanaburi. This was a new record reported in 2012 and described that it was also discovered approximately 127 years ago in Tenneserim, Myanmar.

3.3 Lin Thin Lotus

The local people called '*Lin Thin Lotus*' (*Bua-Lin-Thin*) because they have been seen in the Lin Thin subdistrict of Thong Pha Phum. Its habitat is terrestrial in the riparian bamboo forest. Moreover, other populations may occur in similar habitats in Laos.

Native plants form the critical base of food chains in the ecosystem. Through photosynthesis, plants harvest the energy of the sun, providing both food and habitat for other organisms. In addition, they support other native species more effectively than non-native plants. Native plants are also valuable to human cultures for recreational and scientific uses. Ecosystems link people together culturally, as they share in appreciating the beauty of the outdoors through recreation, education, and scientific uses. Many people appreciate the forest setting for camping, picnics, and other family gatherings. Some make a special trekking event to see the wildflowers (Department of Entomology, 2021).

4. Social Value - the result as listed below;

4.1 Harmonious Relationship between Communities and Hot Springs

The harmonious relationship between communities and hot springs in Thong Pha Phum and their potential relevance driving environmental sustainability. This social value had been investigated by observation - survey-based and revolved around secondary literature coupled with interviews. The community members seem to enjoy a strong cultural attachment in the communities in which they are located and are considered by the respective communities to be a key symbol of their cultural heritage and as such continue to shape their cultural norms of health promotion. 'Therapeutic Landscape' is a significant relationship among the people living in the area. Two hot springs of Thong Pha Phum are considered an important part of this study. Under social value, the

author found two factors that seem to shape the harmonious relationship between the communities and their respective hot springs: Firstly, medicinal factor; hot springs are valued for their medicinal factor with members of their respective communities continuously flocking to them to be cured of certain diseases and ailments. The perceived curative properties of hot springs have resulted among the local community members. Gesler's (1993) concept of therapeutic landscapes and the consecutive development of this concept helped to systematically investigate the links between health and landscape. It defined different aspects of a therapeutic landscape including the physical environment, the social environment, and the spiritual environment. In addition, Liamputong and Suwankhong (2015) studied in Thailand that intense motivation was for regaining good health and healing by transforming their body into a landscape of 'healing and recovery. The transformation of the therapeutic landscape was performed mainly through the changes in diet, exercise, and living conditions in their daily lives. It had been found that the home and community constituting therapeutic landscapes of emotional well-being and healing in the form of social support. Social support played a major role in helping people deal with their illnesses. One important aspect of therapeutic landscapes is the cultural landscape (Liamputong and Suwankhong, 2015). The people also adopted cultural beliefs and religious/spiritual practices commonly performed in their locality to be their therapeutic landscapes for dealing with their sickness. More importantly, socializing and talking among the community members can help them stay healthier because they keep encouraging each other and share their own health experiences including local wisdom practices. Secondly, economic factors; hot springs are valued for the financial benefits that they bring to the local communities in terms of tourism-related revenues. For example, local products and food items are sold to the visitors who come to relax in the hot springs. The entry ticket charge at the hot springs is used as the fund of the hot spring management. The community committees can spend to maintain the hot spring condition.

4.2 Sai Nam Tum Khao

Associated stream of Kwai Noi river, long time ago, some indigenous Karen villagers invented the water power in the stream as a labor-saving tool for pounding rice. This method of pounding rice by using hydro-power has been called '*Sai Nam Tum Khao*', '*Sai Nam*' means water, '*Tum*' means pounding and '*Khao*' means rice. The tool consisted of a mortar, a gear shaft, a lever, and a propeller or turbine. Their ancestors taught them to build and utilized this tool prior in the Sangkhlaburi district next to Thong Pha Phum. However, at the present '*Sai Num Tum Khao*' pounding tool does not exist in the area because they have some new rice mills in the town where local people have to pay to use it, as well as, there are still some villagers using '*Khrog Kra Dueng*', original rice mill in Lin Thin of Thong Pha Phum.

4.3 Health Promotion for Buddhism Monk

The Buddhist monks who practice Dharma teaching in the ‘*Tharn Nam Ron*’ (means Hot Stream) Temple near the hot spring site, normally come to bathe in the Hin Dad hot spring. There is a separate area for the only monk provided at the site. The main purpose is to improve their health conditions. They normally come for hot mineral bathing to rest their body aching after heavy physical work at the temple.



Figure 3 Monks of Tharn Nam Ron Temple nearby hot spring regularly visit the hot spring for their health promotion in the specific area provided.

Source: Nuntana Ladplee (2018)

5. Spiritual Value - the results as listed below;

5.1 The Shrine of Jivaka Komarabhacca at the Hot Springs

During observation of both hot springs, the walkway to Hin Dad hot spring, and near OTOP shop zone of Lin Tin hot spring, there is the shrine of Jivaka Komarabhacca each site. The officers of subdistrict administration and local people believe and respect him as the Buddha's doctor. The hot spring establishment provides spiritual practice at the place. His dedication shall be recognized and enhanced by local people and Thai visitors. Chatnarat and Karchung (2019) described Traditional Thai massage is a type of traditional medicine taught in a Buddhist context in Thai traditional medicine, but the religious practices peculiar to that country need not deter beginning students from other cultures from studying this art form. Both Thai traditional medicine and the

cultivation of Loving Kindness (in Thai 'Metta') are compatible with any spiritual tradition. The most important lesson which Buddhism offers is that it is universally desirable to make a sincere attempt to live honestly, humbly, and compassionately. A spiritual practice that emphasizes these virtues will benefit the practice of healing by decreasing the self-centeredness of the practitioner and increasing his or her attention to and compassion for others. Most Thai massage therapists respect Jivaka Komarabhacca as their teacher. According to Chatnarat and Karchung (2019), around 2,600 years ago back in the Sakyamuni Buddha's time, there was one prominent physician who always cured people with a traditional remedy whether poor or rich, ugly or beautiful, noble or lowly, king or beggar, etc. His name was Jivaka Komarabhacca. In the 5th century BCE, he was the personal physician to the Buddha and King Bimbisara. Sometimes he was narrated as 'Medicine King'. Consequently, having his shrine in front of the hot spring site will encourage both therapists and visitors to feel safer and healthier. It can be seen that humans do benefit from their spiritual experiences. The spiritual understanding of the value leads people to develop moral responsibilities towards nature and community. This is more significant than spiritual benefits. This shown that cultural landscapes are closely linked to nature, culture, spiritual belief, and community collaboration, which means that living environments have the potential to promote human lifestyles and well-being.



Figure 4 The Shrine of Jivaka Komarabhacca (The Buddha's Doctor) at Hin Dad Hot Spring

Source: Nuntana Ladplee (2019)



Figure 5 Traditional Thai Massage Room at Hin Dad Hot Spring

Source: Nuntana Ladplee (2018)

It shows that the experience of cultural landscape development which is based on the hot springs, allows understanding the interaction between local people and the environment, and the physical landscape, human experience, and social relationships. Cultural landscapes are not only to be preserved but should be recognized as a heritage that needs to gain added value through community action. Cultural landscapes coexist with communities through their associative values, including; maintaining the associative value of the landscape; involving the local inhabitants, who are the guardians of the cultural values expressed in the landscape; and working with the local community to ensure sustainability.

Recommendation

Hot spring tourism destinations should not only focus on the hot springs themselves, but also associated areas where should be thematically combined as a tourism destination. Therefore, it could use the original terrain and landscape to design a tourism route. Thus, to create a more distinctive hot spring tourism destination that closes to the watercourse and nature, the design needs to respect the ecological elements of the original natural environment of the site, such as hot springs, rivers, streams, rare and native plants, retain the original, valuable ecological elements to make use as far as possible and seize the characteristics of these elements to highlight the site characteristics. Both natural and social settings that are found around the hot springs, determine

good living environmental conditions for the community that have the quality of health tourism and recreation in the area. Analyzing its aesthetic, historical, scientific, social, and spiritual values within the area can assist in pointing out the identity of the community. The hot spring community may grow up to become the driving force of health tourism and recreation by concern on sustainable tourism development. The hot spring tourism destination could be a signature of Thong Pha Phum to create a hot spring village or spa town in the future. The hot springs are valued for cultural reasons and are perceived to be a connecting link with the ancestors of the local communities. Current local community members especially elderly people usually come to the hot spring for socialization; meeting and talking about both personal and community issues. Meeting regularly at the hot springs of the community leads to cultural attachment and strengthens their harmonious relationships. Since the hot springs are regularly served for senior citizens without surcharge, the community members engage to contribute to their ecological sustainability by ensuring that there is a good degree of cleanliness and sanitation at the sites as well as regulating the human activities that would damage the hot springs. This shown that elderly locals themselves having the role to audit the standard of hot springs by keeping their eyes on their community area. The hot springs are regarded as heritage properties of the communities where they are located and are thus safeguarded by their respective communities against environmental degradation.

In Thailand, hot spring sites are unlikely as important as other tourist spots such as beaches and the sea. Conserving landscapes and utilizing local resources in hot spring areas are required to revitalize hot spring areas. Zhang, Kim, Yang, and Cao (2021) also supported that revitalization is one sustainable strategy for the development of the cultural landscape. The legal system used to conserve important cultural landscapes is one of the policies that assist in revitalizing hot spring areas. The Hin Dad and Lin Thin hot spring areas in Thong Pha Phum, Kanchanaburi are managed and evaluated by applying the guideline for assessing the Quality Standard of Natural Hot Spring Site as Health Tourism 2014. This guideline book was based on the frameworks and concepts of the Physical Standards Framework Project, Natural Hot Springs Health Tourism Site of the Department of Tourism, Ministry of Tourism and Sports in 2005. It had been written to control the standard of Hot Spring updated since then. The causes of problems of hot spring resource management under the supervision of the local government organization. This was mainly due to the actions of related persons or stakeholders who may not have the adequate knowledge, understanding, and skills required to properly maintain hot springs as a cultural heritage site. More local engagement in the management and distribution of benefits will support sustainable health tourism in the area. To full fill such weaknesses, the development of knowledge, skills, and abilities, known as "competency" of all involved parties to be able to manage hot spring tourism destinations. The competencies of key

stakeholders should be developed. For instance, the usage of international standards for Treatment of Historic Properties and the Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes (1996) recommended for 'Water Features Cultural Landscapes' in terms of preserving, rehabilitation, and restoring. Nevertheless, it is required to translate in Thai language by an expert who is capable of assessing heritage values.

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