Title: The Continuity and Change of Chinese Shrines in Samutsongkhram Province
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Abstract

The research titled with The Continuity and Change of Chinese Shrines in Samutsongkhram Province study 23 registered Chinese Shrines, with an in depth 4 shrines. The research methodology is Qualitative Research with emphasis in Participant Observation, Semi-Structured Interview and Focus Group.

The main objectives of the research is to study the important roles and duties of Chinese Shrines in Samutsongkhram and the changes taken place to these shrines due to the changes in economy, society, and cultures within Thailand.

The findings were as follows:
In terms of the roles of the Chinese Shrines in the community, the findings reveal that these shrines can help preserve the Ethnic Chinese identity of the people living in the community. Moreover, they are still considered as the places of spiritual comfort, the places which house the sacred images of Chinese Gods worshiped by the Chinese, the places for religious rituals and social events, the Clan Shrines, and the places for Chinese arts and cultural studies.

The changes taken place to these Chinese Shrines in Samutsongkhram Province are closely related to the changes in the country’s economy, society, and culture. These can be seen in some of the traditional rituals which have been adjusted to suit the modern-day society, while some, unfortunately, have died out. The shrines’ architectural design and construction are also affected. Besides, the changes can be observed through the shrines’ management and administrative systems, their roles as the community center for the Chinese, the community’s participation in the activities.
organized at the shrines, the conservation of Chinese arts and cultures, the use of Chinese language, to name a few.

Based on these findings, some recommendations on how to conserve and develop the Chinese Shrines in Samutsongkhram Province are given. For example, the Shrines’ physical appearance should be well maintained. The Shrines should continuously organize religious rituals and other festivals every year. The Shrines’ historical accounts and important religious rituals should be documented. The Government should provide more financial support and personnel so the religious rituals and other cultural activities can be appropriately organized.