

## Urban tour tet's Urban talk; Guidelines for tourism promotion by cultural heritage on Urban landscape in Roi Et province, Thailand

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### Abstract

**Aim:** The goals of this research are to (a) investigate the factors that shape Roi-Et Province's most significant urban landscapes, (b) assess how these urban landscapes influence the province's tourism industry, and (c) propose strategies for boosting the province's tourism industry through the use of cultural heritages.

**Methodology:** Data about the city's fundamental components that impact tourism were collected, recorded, and their significance was determined with the help of an observation form.

**Findings:** Path, edge, node, districts, and landmark are five of the most fundamental components of the Roi-Et urban landscape. I also looked into Roi-historical Et's significance.

**Novelty/Implications:** The knowledge management of cultural resources maximizes benefits, and this study analyzed the value and significance of Roi-cultural Et's heritage in the urban landscape. It was found that the value and significance of cultural heritage vary greatly from one area to the next.

*Keywords:* Tourism Strategy, Cultural Heritage, Value of Cultural Heritage, Urban Landscape

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### INTRODUCTION

Roi-Et province suggested tourism as a means of increasing revenue in Roi-Et city due to the housing development project and the slum prevention/resolution plan. Located in the heart of Roi-Et City, Bueng Phalan Chai is revered as a Node and a significant provincial symbol for Roi-Et (National Housing Authority 2012).

Roi-Et City's architecture and built environment reflect the city's historical development and provide insight into the city's current setting. It denotes a long-standing and unwavering wealth within Roi-Et society. The remarkable structures of Roi-Et City are irreplaceable cultural treasures that must be protected for future generations. Tourists will gain an accurate impression of Roi-Et City, informed by the city's history and context, and be impressed by Roi-customs, Et's traditions, culture, and urban way of life.

Currently, Roi-Et City's landscape is valued by government agencies as a significant landmark and tourism activity hub that can give visitors a favorable impression of the city's aesthetics. To tell the story of Roi-Et City, you can use this composition on urban activity areas and landmarks as a stand-in. Symbolic areas in Roi-Et can be managed as cultural tourist attractions, providing entertainment for both foreigners and locals.

### Objectives

- To study the composition of the important urban landscape of Roi-Et Province.
- To study the value and importance of urban landscape affecting the tourism of Roi-Et Province.
- To suggest the guidelines for tourism promotion by cultural heritages on the urban landscape in Roi-Et Province.

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## Scope of the Study

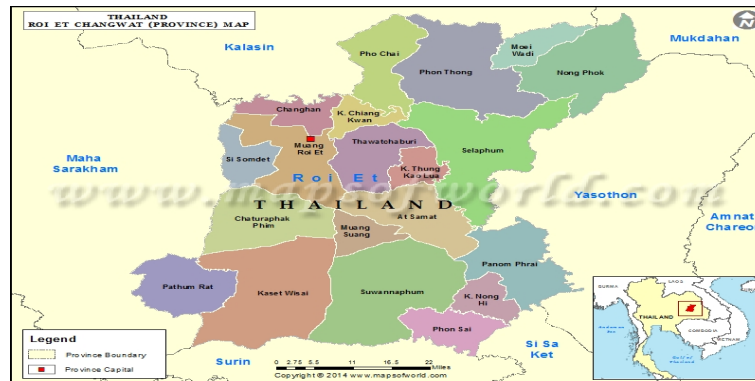


Figure 1. Map showing the administrative divisions of the Roi-Et Province, Thailand

Source: Roi Et Map (2014)

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Urban Landscape

Cullen and Gosling (1996) said that urban landscape is the art about the connection among spatial articles of the city that can be perceived from vision; it is a perceptual interaction of human physical environment via visual perception on happened things in the city. The perception on urban landscape will be changed by moving from one point to another point within the city. This visual perception may be made for responding and being in the same direction as people's perception via arranging of physical composition of the city environment as the center of city activities. Sometime, the city landmarks and the center can be in the same place.

Lynch (1977) defined "Urban landscape" as composition of the city that makes good understanding about relationship among activities assembled to be the city image and know the city's structural system. The concept of Lynch (1977) suggested that 5 basic elements can make good understanding about the city and make people in those Urbans to create their own imaginations about the city: 1. Path means main and minor routes that people use for traveling in the city and intercity, 2. Edge means the final point of distinct boundary specified by using natural or administrative criteria of each area of the city, 3. Node means the center of activities that have changes all the time depending on each activity and duration. It is a place for gathering people in urban, 4. Districts Each city consists of many communities, neighbors or areas e.g. residential area, railway community area, etc. and 5. Landmarks are remarkable things of the city appearing in the sight of urban people. There are both small and large landmarks with different perceptions; the city image will be created by 5 basic elements for watchers' perception. If the city environment has its proper composition, it will make distinct image and landscape affecting visitors for having impression of that area of the city. Hence, it can be concluded that urban landscape is a combination work between physical environment and manmade architectural building. The characteristics of urban landscape design influence people and visitors in their understanding of the city, perception of relationship between the city activities and structural system that has its uniqueness in each city.

### Cultural Heritage Tourism

Feilden and Jokilehto (1998) defined as follows: There are many kinds of cultural heritage, not only ancient sites, gardens, and buildings or historical areas; but also including entire surrounded environment both manmade and existing in ecosystem that indicates human activities and successes in the past. Works made by these individuals or groups were created, accumulated and applied for using in their living continuously in conforming with society and environment of each group that shows their cultural identity and diversity.

Seminar document for public hearing of Draft Act on Protection and Promotion of Intangible Cultural Heritage 2013 (Pundit 2013) said that "Cultural heritage is a culture that has its identity and value as a symbol of foundation and background of the country that should be conserved as the heritage of all people in the country to utilize and introduce it for worldwide admiration." United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

(UNESCO) (2003) divides the protection of cultural heritage into 2 categories as:

1) Tangible Cultural Heritage is all objects that can be seen covering both movable and immovable cultural heritages e.g. ancient sites, antiques, monuments, clothes, murals, sculptures, architectures, etc.

2) Intangible Cultural Heritage UNESCO explains the meaning of intangible cultural heritage as knowledge, customs, traditions or all kinds of rules both local and international that have been created and transferred from generation to generation in words or any methods through a period and can be developed and changed by knowledge accumulation and application process.

#### **Characters of Cultural Heritage (Department of Cultural Promotion 2010)**

- Having historical, academic or artistic value.
- Showing changes and development in way of life of communities and societies that have been inherited continuously.
- Having prototypes that can be retrieved from their previous origins.
- Having characters indicate the history of community or locality.
- If there is not any conservation, it will be lost finally.

#### **Classification of Cultural Heritage (Cultural Heritage)**

According to World Heritage Committee (2010), cultural heritage means various ancient sites whether they are architectural, scriptural, mural works, or natural archeological sites such as caves or a group of buildings that are uplifted and connected, or significant places that are made by human or co-working between nature and human. These include archeological sites with their supreme value in historical, artistic, anthropological or scientific aspect. Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage defines that the cultural heritage is Jokilehto (2007).

- Monuments are architectural works, ancient sites, scriptures, and large murals, archeological compositions or structures, inscriptions, caves, and places with combined composition or structure with their international value in historical, artistic or scientific aspect. These also include separated or connected group of buildings related to architecture, unity or location of such buildings in places and landscapes with their international value in history, arts or science.
- Sites are works of human or cooperative works between nature and human including archeological sites with their outstanding value in historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological aspect.

Thus, it can be concluded that the meaning of cultural heritage is a kind of tourism related to all environments both man-made and existing in ecosystem including tangible cultural heritage and intangible cultural heritage (Vecco 2010). Each of these cultural heritages has their inseparable relationships i.e. the cultural heritage can reflect the system of idea, belief, and wisdom of human (Office of the National Culture Commission 2010) in the form of abstract object as interaction between local people versus nature and history in conforming to society and environment of each group.

#### **Population and Sample**

Population used in the study of “Guidelines for the Management of Tourism Promotion by Cultural Heritage of Urban Landscape in Roi-Et Province” consisted of 5 basic components of “urban landscape” that will enable to understand the urban by letting people in such urban make their own imaginations about the urban.

- Path means major and minor traffic routes that people use for travelling in and intercity.
- Edge means the end of distinct boundary by utilizing of natural administrative boundary in each area of the city.
- Node means the center of activities that were changed all the time depending on such activity and its duration as a gathering of people in that urban.
- Districts - Each city consists of many neighborhood communities or districts e.g. residential district, railway community district, etc.
- Landmark is an outstanding characteristic in the city that appears in the sight of people who live in urban

communities, both of small and large-side landmarks, which can be differently recognized.

These 5 components will create the imagination of people recognition about the city. If there is proper composition of the city environment, distinct scenery and imagination will be created and affect those who see such city area for having their impressions.

## METHODOLOGY

In this research, the researcher used an observation form as the research tool for collecting, recording, and finding out the significance of data about the city's basic components affecting tourism.

Table 1: Population and samples used in this research

Population	Sample	Research Tool
1. Urban Landscape	1. Path 2. Edge 3. Node 4. Districts 5. Landmark	Observation Form

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data was analyzed, interpreted, and then presented in the form of charts to show the position of image of the city and description to explain such analysis in accordance with the following objectives:

- To present data of the urban landscape and its important components in the Roi-Et City.
- To analyze the values and importance of urban landscape affecting the tourism of Roi-Et Province.
- To set guidelines for the tourism promotion of cultural heritage of Roi-Et urban landscape.

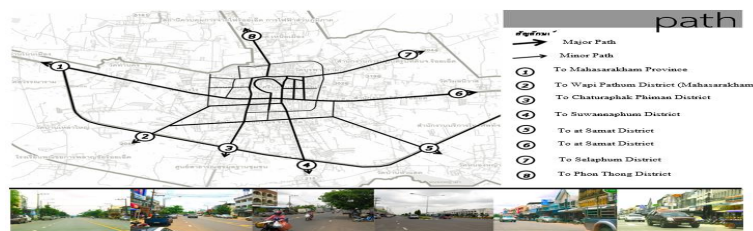


Figure 2. Show path

Source: Program in Architecture (2012)

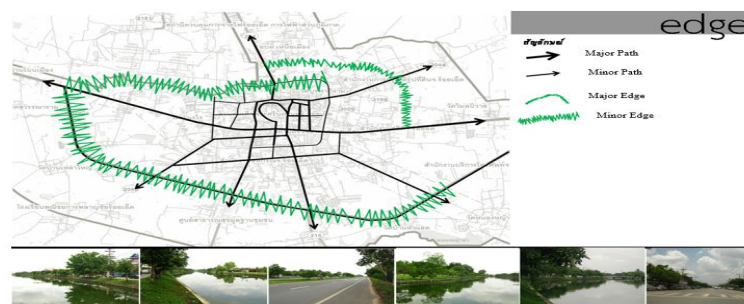


Figure 3. Show edge

Source: Program in Architecture (2012)

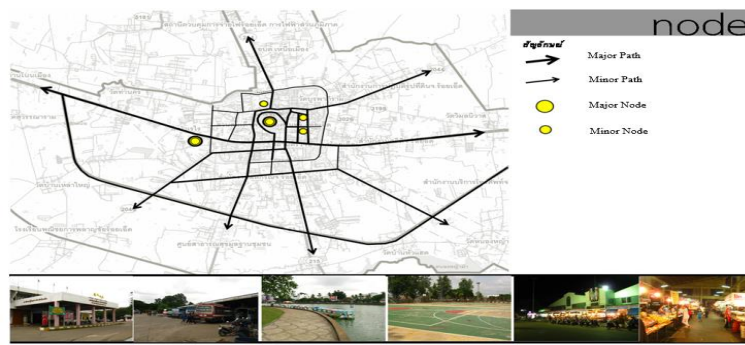


Figure 4. Show node

Source: Program in Architecture (2012)

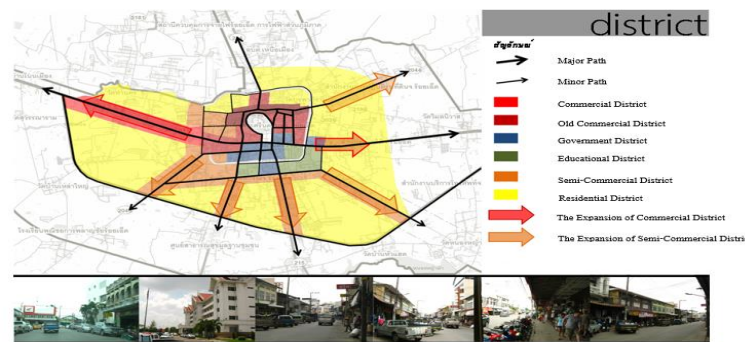


Figure 5. Show district

Source: Program in Architecture (2012)

## Roi-Et Urban Landscape

Researches revealed that the 5 basic elements of Roi-Et urban landscape have image of the city as follows:

### Path

The area of Roi-Et City can be divided into outbound paths as main and minor paths. Main paths do their duties to connect main paths for people in and out of the area e.g. Highway No. 23 (Chaeng Sanit Road) and roads to other districts. Minor paths are roads to connect together with other main paths and also combine activities of the city.

### Edge (Main edges are such as)

The ring road at the south of Roi-Et City and another distinct point is the wall line of Prasert Songkhram Camp along the edge of upper moat at the north of Roi-Et City. Minor edges are such as: New Rong Mueang Road at the northeast of Roi-Et City.

### Node

The center of Roi-Et City is at the downtown area. Main nodes are as: Bueng Phalan Chai, bus terminal, and surrounding area. Minor nodes are as; Thung Charoen Market, Roi-Et Plaza Department Store, and surrounding commercial area; are important commercial centers of Roi-Et City.

### Districts

The area of Roi-Et City has various forms of land utilization, most of them are spread along the city main paths that are consisted of; 1) Commercial district is a high density district at the area of the city moat, Roi-Et Vocational College, and Roi-Et City Hotel. It is the district that has activities on trading for the whole day, 2)

Old commercial district can be seen at the area of the city moat with old architectural style influenced by modern and colonial styles. It is the district that has activities on both wholesaling and retailing for the whole day, 3) Education institution district is rather grouped as a cluster because there are many levels of education institutions located in that area and surrounding areas, 4) Government district, 5) Quasi commercial-residential district, and 6) Low-density residential district are spread around the city. Most of them are in the outside area of the city moat and direction of expansion is to the south of Roi-Et City.

**Landmark**

Roi-Et City consists of several landmarks. Main landmarks are standing Buddha, Roi-Et city gate, the circle of Phra Khattiyawongsa Monument (Thao Thon), and Isan Panpipe Circle. Minor landmarks are Roi-Et City Pillar Shrine, Phra Khattiyawongsa Monument (Thao Thon), and Clock Tower.

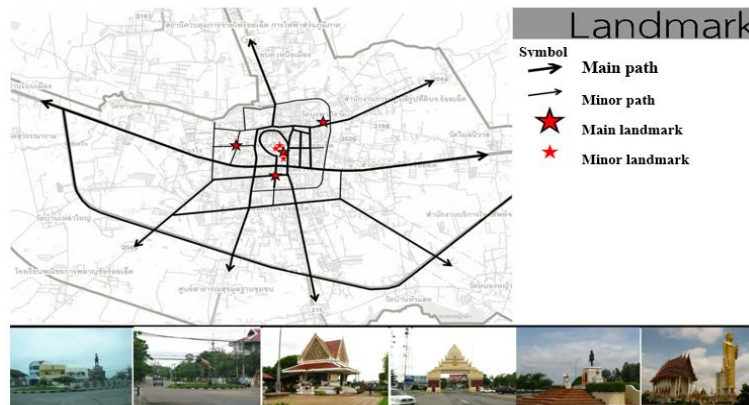


Figure 6. Show landmarks

Source: Program in Architecture (2012)

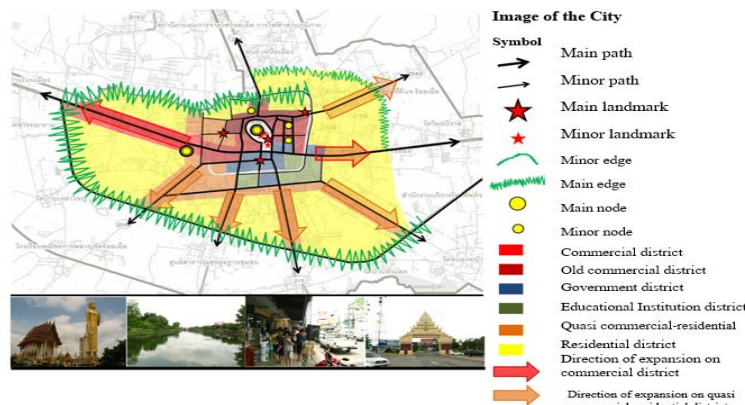


Figure 7. Show image of the city in Roi-Et downtown

Source: Program in Architecture (2012)

**Analysis of Significance of Roi-Et Urban Landscape**

Roi-Et City is an ancient city in the northeastern part (Isan) of Thailand with a long history since pre-historical period to Dvaravati period. It has appeared in the Urangadhatu Legend as “Saket Nakhon” or “Mueang Roi-Et Pratu” (the city with one hundred and one city gates) and has many of the vassal states. Roi-Et has its city planning in the form of rectangular shape surrounded with moat and earthen dyke (National Housing Authority, 2012 and Kunnu 2016).

“Mueang Roi-Et Pratu” may be named by metaphorical purpose for its prosperity and indicates greatness of the city than having several city gates. Mueang Roi-Et Pratu was named for its prosperity only, it should be

influenced or modelled from ancient cities or kingdoms. Dvaravati was used to be a glorious city in the past and the meaning of its name is the city with many gates surrounding as a wall. Another example is the city of Hongsawadee with 20 city gates surrounding as a wall and each gate was named in accordance with its vassal states as Chiang Mai, Ayothaya, etc. Furthermore, the name of city is exaggerated only for auspicious purpose and it is common thing for denominating the name of ancient cities or kingdoms.



Figure 8. Image of Roi Et city

Source: Roi Et Provincial Office (2011)

Bueng Phalan Chai is regarded as a Node of Roi-Et City. Bueng Phalan Chai is located in the downtown of Roi-Et City and very important for Roi-Et as the provincial symbol. Bueng Phalan Chai is a big island in the middle of a large swamp. This area is the place which Roi-Et people use for relaxation and recreation. It is decorated as a big flower garden with various kinds of plant. Moreover, there are diversities of fish and aquatic animals in the swamp and also has small boats to serve local people and tourists for rowing in the swamp. Moreover, this area of Bueng Phalan Chai is used for organizing of festivals and entertainment of the province. There is an interesting building in Bueng Phalan Chai i.e. Roi-Et City Pillar Shrine as a holy place of Roi-Et people, the Big Walking Buddha in the middle of flower garden, playgrounds, and the place for exercising of Roi-Et people as well.

### **Historic Value**

In 1907, Roi-Et City was promoted as Roi-Et Area and divided its administrative region into 5 cities as Roi-Et, Suwannaphum, Mahasarakham, Kamalasai, and Kalasin. In 1910, His Royal Highness Prince Damrong Rajanupab, Minister of Interior, agreed with an offer of Isan County's governor that this county should be divided into 2 counties as Ubon Ratchathani County and Roi-Et County. Later, His Majesty King Vajiravudh (Rama VI) had royal permission as offered and then the administrative region of Roi-Et County had 3 provinces namely Roi-Et, Mahasarakham, and Kalasin.

Bueng Phalan Chai is a large fresh water swamp in the area about 50 Rai (126.5 acres) located in the middle of Roi-Et City; it also appears in the official seal of Roi-Et Province. There are bridges going across to an island in the middle of swamp, the location of City Pillar Shrine (Chao Por Mahesak) as the highest respect place of Roi-Et people. In the former time, this swap was shallow and later was dredged up by Phraya Sunthorn Kijjaraksha (Thong Chandransu), the Governor during 1926-1927. He together with 40,000 Roi-Et people dredged up the swamp in days and nights for 2 years. The dredged soils were filled on swamp's edge and became a big island in the middle with beautiful decoration as an important cultural heritage of Roi-Et Province. Nowadays such island is the location of the City Pillar Shrine of this province. At the southeast part of Bueng Phalan Chai, people established the monument of Phraya Sunthorn Kijjaraksha to commemorate his goodness for developing Roi-Et City in many aspects.

### **Aesthetic Value**

Bueng Phalan Chai is a center of heart and soul of Roi-Et people and their cherished place. They collaboratively developed this area as a remarkable place of Roi-Et people for greeting travelers and tourists. Those who visit Roi-Et City always appreciate the beauty of Bueng Phalan Chai. Bueng Phalan Chai is a public garden located in the downtown that has its identity in the beauty of Roi-Et urban. The swamp's area is decorated with diversity of local flowers and plants. Unique street furniture (panpipe) is an identity of the city affecting good perception of tourists who visit this place. After seeing Bueng Phalan Chai, visitors and tourists have their feeling, imagination of its beauty, and are impressed by the Roi-Et City.

### **Social Value**

Roi-Et Urban is an ancient city that used to be glorious in the past and still remain in some parts of the city moat and wall. It shows area's condition of old city community in the form of relatively square shape, surrounded with city moat and wall. Communities in the past were clustered in line of inner roads of this city moat to support their living due to their location nearby water source. It can be said that Bueng Phalan Chai has its significance of existence of society and Roi-Et Urban since the past time as a unique symbol of Roi-Et people by dredging up this swamp for public utilization. Today, Bueng Phalan Chai is not only a water resource for Roi-Et people, but also rain drainage and reservoir of the city as well as recreation place of urban people and tourists. Furthermore, Bueng Phalan Chai is the center of people for coming together to do activities and organizing important activities on special occasions of Roi-Et City.

### **Symbol/Identity Significance**

Bueng Phalan Chai is a symbol of the province like a reminder of urban people in Roi-Et to recall the Roi-Et City from the past to the present time. This indicates cooperation of people on dredging up the swamp for using in community living. Dredged soils have become an island in the middle of swamp and used as a recreation area for doing activities. Bueng Phalan Chai has more significance for Roi-Et City because this swamp is the provincial symbol and valuable Roi-Et City that conveys the meaning of Roi-Et people's culture. It can be concluded that each place of cultural heritage of that tourism community has its diversity of valuable cultural heritage with significant value for conservation of both local tangible and intangible culture. If society and community join together on managing this valuable cultural heritage efficiently, it will affect existence of valuable cultural heritage in those tourist attractions. This will attract tourists for their visiting, studying, and exchanging experiences that is a method of cultural tourism.

### **SWOT Analysis of Bueng Phalan Chai**

#### *Strengths*

- Bueng Phalan Chai is the center and symbol of Roi-Et City as the main area for activity and recreation.
- Bueng Phalan Chai is a public garden in the heart of the city with its identity in beautiful aspect of Roi-Et Urban.
- Its suitable location can be accessed through many paths with good condition of asphaltic concrete roads and lighting in the night.
- In the area of Bueng Phalan Chai, there is a building as the tourist attraction i.e. City Pillar Shrine.
- Roi-Et is the center of the middle northeastern part of Thailand.

#### *Weaknesses*

- Development of some areas around Bueng Phalan Chai is not in accordance with the landscape of ancient historical city.
- Some buildings do not support tourism development e.g. bridges are too low and not enough for developing of water travelling.
- Lack of professional personnel on tourism as guides and also lack of certain tourism promotion as well as promotion of product development to support tourism e.g. souvenirs, tourist service center, technological equipment for tourism promotion, etc.



### *Opportunities*

- Roi-Et Municipality has outstanding vision and be in line with city development as: “Roi-Et: The Pleasant City, Loveable People, Conservable City Legend”.
- Location of Roi-Et Province is the center of the middle northeastern part of Thailand.
- Trends on natural, ecological, traditional, and cultural tourism are in higher tendency.

### *Threats*

- Political instability of the government.
- Policy of some projects for development is not clear and continuous.
- Lack of local skilled and unskilled labors.

## **Strategies for Tourism Promotion by Cultural Heritage on Urban Landscape in Roi-Et Province**

### *Strategies for city tourism promotion by bicycle trails*

#### *Principle and reasons*

The area of Bueng Phalan Chai is not only a large swamp with crystal clear water, but the area in this garden also has many buildings that can be tourist attractions as; City Pillar Shrine is the worshipful place of Roi-Et people and travelers who visit city to ask for their happy way of life, Large Walking Buddha in the middle of flower garden, Parn Rattathummanoon (constitution on a tray with pedestal), and Phu Phalan Chai as a place in the form of zoo and waterfall model.

Designing of tourism route to see Roi-Et landscape in the area of Roi-Et Moat with bicycle lane is regarded as a good tourism promotion. Cycling is not only to enable tourists to access the beauty of Roi-Et City thoroughly, but also be a choice for them to study cultural tourism deeply and gradually. Cycling on Rob Mueang Road (inner ring road) of this city can make tourists and visitors see the landscape of Roi-Et City in a wide view, perceive, and be impressed by the beauty of people and city clearly. In addition, bike routes make a systemic connection of tourist attraction groups both in and outside the area that is actual way of life and environment of Roi-Et Urban.



Figure 9. Designing of tourism route to see Roi-Et landscape in the area of Roi-Et Moat with bicycle lane

### *Strategies for tourism promotion on Urban landscape visiting by adding water travel activities*

#### *Principle and reasons*

The important tradition of people in the northeastern part of Thailand, both of Thai and foreign tourists are interested not less than other traditions, is the tradition of Bun Pha Wet or generally known as Bun Maha Jataka that is a charity to commemorate the biggest merit-making i.e. leaving of selfishness for the greatest benefit of humankind. Bun Pha Wet is a tradition in Heet Sib Song (twelve customs) of Isan people. This tradition has always taken place once a year from the third to the middle of the fifth lunar month. In the past, predecessors of Isan people collaboratively made merit and continually conserved as a tradition. Bun Pha Wet of Roi-Et Province is a great annual festival and shown interest by several Roi-Et people and from other provinces as well as tourists who visit the Roi-Et City. There are many activities for people to participate such as parade and traditional dance to commemorate the life story of Lord Buddha while he was born as Prince Vesantara. Bun Pha Wet of Roi-Et

Province took place again in 1991 and then conserved as an inherited culture for next generations. Roi-Et people celebrate this festival annually on the first Saturday and Sunday of March at Bueng Phalan Chai.

This festival is a commemoration of the Jakata (the story concerning the previous births of Lord Buddha). The story is performed in temples throughout the country and this is considered as an auspicious time for people to ordinate as a monk. Due to the fact of the great parade in the tradition of Bun Pha Wet to commemorate Buddhist story with a large number of participants, both Roi-Et people and tourists; if there is water parade and water travelling, it will be an important way to increase more interest for the festival and to attract more tourists. Moreover, designing of higher bridges for boats to pass under them may be another way to add value for tourism on urban landscape of Roi-Et City.



Figure 10. There are many activities for people who visit the Roi-Et City to participate

Source: Amazing Thailand (2011)

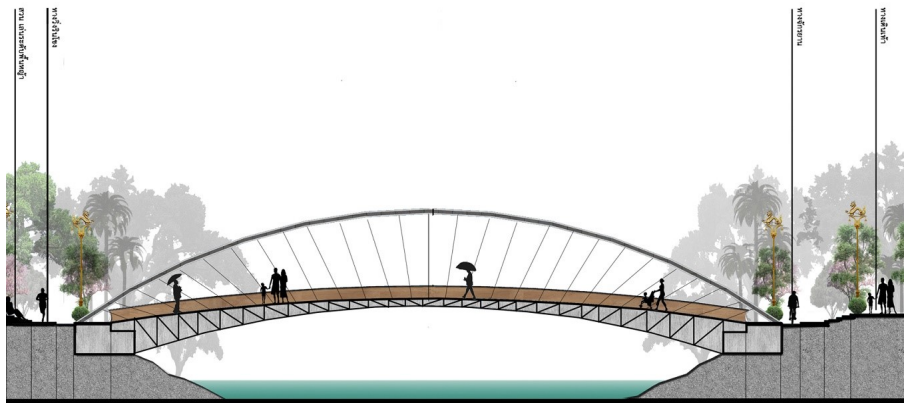


Figure 11. Designing of higher bridges for boats to pass under to add value for tourism on urban landscape of Roi-Et City

## CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

### Cultural Heritage Tourism on Urban Landscape in Roi-Et Province

Bueng Phalan Chai is a landscape of Roi-Et City that has its identity to represent the city as a narrator of Roi-Et history. It is very important for tourists' perception and should be developed and promoted for visitors and tourists to perceive good experiences and impression in cultures of Roi-Et City. Tourism by cultural heritage on urban landscape is related to tourism management. Therefore, knowledge management about cultural heritage, urban landscape, and unique culture of communities are significant processes. Analysis of value and significance of cultural heritage in urban landscape is compared as the knowledge management of cultural resources for maximizing benefits and the cultural heritages of each area have different levels of value and significance. All related agencies should participate in studying of value and significance of cultural heritage because it is not only in physical characters, but also in all knowledge related to the cultural heritage; especially relationship with

community in aspect of mind related to history, academics, arts, changing, and development of social way of life that has been inherited continuously. Management of tourism promotion on cultural heritage by participation of all related agencies will influence tourism development and existence of cultural heritage. Such tourism activities will create relationship between tourists and local people that will affect tourists' perception on their experiences, good remembrance, and impression.

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