



Workshop
Traditional Knowledge for Ecosystem Services in ASEAN Countries - Folk Culture:
Proverbs, Old Sayings and Community Rules
2–4 March 2016
Kuala Lumpur

Introduction

The very diverse types of forests, typical for tropical and sub-tropical countries, in Southeast Asia, have been providing various different types of ecosystem services. Likewise, there are many indigenous groups that have been residing in and around these forests, with diverse culture and rich traditional knowledge. Many of the traditional knowledge directly or indirectly contributing to sustaining the various ecosystem services which are crucial to their livelihood and wellbeing.

Prompted by encouraging early results from questionnaire surveys conducted in Korea to document traditional knowledge related to ecosystem services, the National Institute of Forest Science (NIFoS, formerly known Korea Forest Research Institute (KFRI)) has contacted the Asia Pacific Association of Forestry Research Institutions (APAFRI) to engage other Asian countries in this initiative. Five countries: Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Vietnam, participated in this initiative. The outputs were presented during a workshop convened in Kuala Lumpur, 2-4 February 2015.

The undertakings to document traditional knowledge related to ecosystem services have stirred up much interest. Many more similar knowledge, some may have been long forgotten, could still be relevant to the present days, warrant detailed study and proper documentation. These traditional knowledge, more often than not, are being passed down the generations by words of mouth, often then in the form of proverbs, poems, folk tales, or songs. Some have since time immemorial, been encrypted into rituals, customary practices, or even community rules and regulations.

The National Institute of Forest Science had initiated a project documenting and analyzing old sayings and proverbs related to ecosystem services in Korea. NIFoS is interested to extend this project to cover other countries in Asia Pacific region, especially in Southeast Asia.

The Workshop Objectives, Programme and Participants

A workshop was organized in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 2–4 March 2016, to share the experiences of collecting and documenting old sayings and proverbs, including rituals and community rules and regulations, related to ecosystem services. This workshop,

organized by APAFRI, in collaboration with FRIM, was supported by the contributions of NIFoS to APAFRI.

The three-day workshop with seven presentations from Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia (Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah), the Philippines, and Vietnam, also included a day-long field trip to an *Orang Asli* (Indigenous People) community near Lake Bera, about 160 km from Kuala Lumpur. The detailed programme is as in Annex 1, and the list of participants is appended as Annex 2.



Presentations and Discussions

The workshop was jointly opened officially by Dr Kim Kyongha, newly appointed Director General, Forest Ecology Division, NIFoS; and Dr Abd Latif Mohmod, Director General Forest research Institute Malaysia. Dr Kim also assumed the position as the Secretary General of the Asia Center for Traditional Forest-related Knowledge, currently hosted by NIFoS.

There were a total of seven presentations by the colleagues from Korea, and the four SEA countries: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Vietnam. Their presentations summarized the results of studies/surveys, focusing on collecting and interpreting proverbs, old sayings, rituals and community rules, from various indigenous communities in their countries.

Various challenges and hurdles encountered due to the complexity of the indigenous peoples in these countries. Very often, the meanings and context/contents had been distorted and twisted over time. However, there is a general agreement that many of the old sayings and rituals provided important guidance to these people in the sustainable utilization of the ecosystem services in ways that they themselves are not aware. The discussions after the presentations had concluded that:

- The presenters shall submit extended abstracts (of length of about five pages) to be compiled and published as proceedings for this workshop. APAFRI would



format and go through the drafts submitted, and suggest improvements wherever necessary. The deadline for submitting the draft shall be end May, and the proceedings shall be printed by end of June 2016.

- APAFRI, building from the proposed protocol of Ms Hong Junghyun, would draft a proposal for conducting surveys in Indonesia, Malaysia (Sabah and Pen Malaysia), the Philippines, and Vietnam; on documenting proverbs, old sayings, community rules and regulations of Indigenous Peoples. The proposal would be sent to all Focal Persons before end April 2016. The survey will need to be completed with a report by end December 2016.

In the afternoon, Ms Shin Yujin of NIFoS presented a proposal to map cultural sites (historical, religious, sacred, ritual) as a means of documenting cultural component of the ecosystem services. NIFoS would like to propose that this would be the activity for the participating ASEAN countries in 2017. The participants had generally agreed that this could be a good project, and would discuss further probably in early 2017.

Dr Park Chan Ryul started the second day of the workshop off with a presentation outlining the current status of TFK research in ASEAN. He then continued to discuss a number of activities which NIFoS would like colleagues in ASEAN to work on for the next few years: mapping of cultural services; resilience of indigenous communities to natural disasters. All these would cumulate to the launching of an Asian Initiative of TFK in 2019.



Dr Park would also like all the participating countries: Indonesia, Malaysia (Sabah and Pen Malaysia), the Philippines, and Vietnam, to send him the raw data collected during the survey conducted in 2014. These data would be used for a comparative study which would be reported as a peer-reviewed paper.

In closing the workshop, an agreement was signed between NIFoS represented by Dr Kim Kyongha, and APAFRI, represented by Dr Gan Kee Seng, the Executive Secretary of APAFRI. The agreement reaffirms the commitment of NIFoS in supporting TFK research in ASEAN countries, to be coordinated by APAFRI.

Field Trip

The participants then traveled out of Kuala Lumpur, eastwards towards the Main Mountain Range of the Peninsular Malaysia and visited indigenous people settlements near the Lake Bera, a large fresh water lake and a RAMSAR site established in 1994. Villages around the lake were regrouped in 1980s under the government regroupment scheme (known as RPS Iskandar) now with an estimated population of 2,500 people. In this regroupment scheme, various basic facilities such as government administrative office, primary school, rural clinic, community hall, play ground, electricity and pipe water supply were provided. Lake Bera has provided crucial livelihoods to the Indigenous



People *Semelai*, settled around the lake. The *Semelai* at Lake Bera was traditionally a forest-dependent community. Since 1950s, the

community began to plant rubber which is now the major source of cash income. Rubber is planted with own initiative and also assistance from the government. In recent years, some smallholders began to replace rubber with oil palm.

Regroupment of villages has transformed the traditional forest-dependent *Semelai* community. The community does maintained some traditional crafts: wooded handicrafts from trees around the villages, and also weaving using the tall, thorny leaves of the *pandanus* or *mengkuang* (*Pandanus* spp.) into colorful gift boxes, mats, beach bags, hats, fans, purses, and slippers.



PROGRAMME

Day 1	2 March 2016	Remarks
09:00	Introduction NIFoS: Opening remarks FRIM/APAFRI: Welcoming remarks	Kim Kyongha Abd Latif Mohmod
09:30	Participants Introduction	
10:00	Group Photo & Coffee Break	
10:30	Introduction about the Workshop	APAFRI/Sim HC
11:00	<i>Folk Culture: Proverbs, Old Sayings and Community Rules for Ecosystem Services:</i> in Korea in Indonesia in Peninsular Malaysia	Moderator: Park CR
12:30	Lunch	
14:00	<i>Folk Culture: Proverbs, Old Sayings and Community Rules for Ecosystem Services:</i> In the Philippines in Sabah in Vietnam	Moderator: Lim HF
15:30	Coffee Break	
16:00	Follow-ups for Surveys in SE Asian Countries: Mapping	Shin YJ
17:30	<i>Concluding Remarks for Day 1</i>	
19:30	Dinner	

Day 2	3 March 2016	
09:00	Current Status and Future Directions	Park CR
09:30	Discussion on Future Research	Participants
10:30	Coffee Break	
11:00	Continuation of Discussion and Planning for Future Research	Participants
12:30	Concluding Remarks on the Workshop	NIFoS
13:00	Lunch	
14:30	Depart for Bahau	Lim HF
19:00	Dinner	
20:30	Night at Bahau	

Day 3	4 March 2016	
08:30	Depart for Field Trip	Lim HF
18:30	Back to Kuala Lumpur/Home	

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