SALWEEN YOUTH ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

TECHNICAL REPORT

Cultural Festivals at Nan Pang River in Southern Shan State: Practices, Beliefs, and Environmental Changes



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INTRODUCTION

The Salween River, also known as the Thanlwin River in Myanmar, is one of the longest free-flowing rivers in Asia, supporting high levels of biodiversity and sustaining the livelihoods of communities along its course (Salween Watch et al., 2004). It begins at the Tibetan Plateau before flowing through China, Myanmar and Thailand to finally reach into the Andaman Sea at a total length of 2,820 kilometers (Middleton & Lamb, 2019). In the Southern Shan State of Myanmar, the Salween River is joined by the Nan Pang river as one of the tributaries near Kunhing town. This tributary supports locals with water supply for agriculture, fishing and transport (Middleton & Lamb, 2019). For locals in Shan State, Salween and Nan Pang rivers are considered to have sacred value due to their relation to religious rituals and traditional festivals such as floating bowl and light festivals, water festival and seasonal events on the riverbank (KESAN, 2021). These festivals are meant to demonstrate both cultural traditions and recognition of the river's essential role in sustaining their livelihoods (KESAN, 2021). The festivals lead community people to be united as well as to be actively participating in cultural development (Middleton & Lamb, 2019). On the other hand, the festivals may harm the river through waste and pollution due to lack of good management. During the festival periods, the rising activities of people along the riverbanks likely lead to the dumping of plastic bags and other materials into the water. Consequently, this contributes to an environmental problem that has a direct impact on the river and the aquatic life that the communities rely on for food.

Cultural festivals shape how communities understand their responsibility toward the river. By performing religious rituals and following cultural beliefs, communities establish a moral framework that influences their behavior, including avoidance of harm to water sources and overfishing (Middleton & Lamb, 2019). Moreover, some cultural events and ceremonies also provide platforms for communities to take collective action on the issues of the rivers, including cleanups, discussions that concern the river's condition and instructions on what to do around the river (KESAN, 2021). Even though these practices may not serve as an effective way to ensure the river is not polluted, they may serve as recognized social spaces to address issues arising from environmental concerns.

Despite the rising concern associated with the environmental status of the Salween River ecosystem, the majority of research work done so far is concentrated on broader impacts associated with hydropower, mining and water management issues. There has been very little attention for cultural practices on smaller river tributaries such as the Nan Pang River.

Specifically, few studies have been conducted on how these festivals and rituals demonstrate their contribution to the conservation of a river of cultural significance but also how they negatively affect the environment by contributing to pollution through the production of waste.

To address the knowledge gap regarding the interactions between local communities and the Nam Pang River near Kon Hein, this study was conducted with the aim of examining cultural festivals as complex social events with both positive and negative environmental impacts. The study sets out the following objectives:

- To examine how the Than Lwin (Salween/Nan Pang) River contributes to the daily lives of local people, particularly in agriculture, fishing, and transportation.
- To investigate the role of religious and cultural festivals celebrated along the river and to understand their cultural and spiritual significance for the villagers.
- To assess both the positive (benefits to local's daily life, etc..) and negative (plastic pollution, river's resources, etc…) impacts of these festivals on community life as well as on the river's environment.
- To evaluate the balance between cultural preservation and environmental sustainability, and to propose recommendations for future community and environmental well-being.

METHODS

Study Area

This study was conducted in and around Kunhing town which is located near the Nan Pang river in southern Shan State. The area was selected because of its strong dependence on the river for daily livelihoods and presence of religious and cultural festivals held along the riverbanks. Data collection took place during field visits to the town and surrounding river areas. A pilot field visit was conducted from 10–13 September 2025 to assess local conditions, refine the research design, and evaluate the feasibility of the study. The main fieldwork was subsequently carried out from 5–10 October 2025.

Data Collection Methods

This study used four major approaches to collect information that is as comprehensive and reliable despite relatively small sample sizes. These concerned Key Informant Interview (KII), Focus Group Discussion (FGD), individual survey interviews and participant observation. These techniques were applied to ensure a comprehensive review of cultural practices, community life and environmental conditions related to the river.

Participants

Participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure representation of the key stakeholders associated with the Nan Pang river and the activities of the festival. Participants included leaders from the town, religious leaders, CSOs as well as local people. All participants were Shan and practiced Buddhism, including the religious leaders, which is directly relevant to the focus of this study on the cultural and spiritual aspects of the festivals.

Table 1. Overview of data collection methods and participants

Sr.	Method	Participants	Number
1.	Key Informant Interviews (KII)	Ward leader, religious leader, CSO	3 - 5
2.	Focus Group Discussions (FGD)	Town ward leader and community members	1 group (8 - 10)
3.	Individual Survey Interviews	Local people	10 - 15
4.	Participant Observation	Festivals and daily river users	Not fixed

Research Methodologies

The research adopts a qualitative and participatory method to explore the relationships between religious and cultural festivals and their effect on the environmental condition of Nan Pang river near Kunhing town. The research method focuses on obtaining the knowledge and meaning of everyday practices related to the river.

The research team developed a set of 28 interview questions focused on type of festival, timing, location, level of participation and cultural meaning as well as the impact on the river and community. A community-based case study approach was applied in which local residents in the town were considered key knowledge holders whose perspectives guided data interpretation. This study approach enables an inclusive data analysis in which positive aspects like community cohesion and environmental impacts like waste disposal are taken into consideration.

Data Analysis

After data collection, the data from the field were recorded into Excel. Qualitative data was analyzed through thematic analysis and the major themes were identified and coded based on the responses. After coding, the data was analyzed in Excel with a simple Pivot table.

Limitations

This study faced three limitations. Firstly, during the field visit, only the Annual Rice and Vegetable Offering Festival to Monks was directly observed as the other festivals were not being held at that time. Thus, it limited direct observation of all events and their environmental impact. Secondly, some participants who had agreed to participate in the main study during the pilot trip failed to participate due to scheduling conflicts which reduced diversity of the perspective. Language barriers between the research team and local Shan participants also posed challenges, potentially affecting the depth and accuracy of communication. However, one team member was fluent in Shan and served as the translator for all interviews, which helped ensure that the data collected remained largely reliable despite the language barrier. The remaining team members supported other activities to facilitate smooth fieldwork. Lastly, data from interviews depended on the participants' memories and perception which could have been biased.

RESULTS

1. Overview of Festivals and Rituals along Salween River

The study found that people living along the Salween River and its major tributary, the Nan Pang river, celebrate several festivals and rituals. Most of the festivals are closely related to the river. These festivals include floating bowls with offerings during Tabaung, the lively Thingyan water festival, a Loy-Krathong style floating lights festival and an annual rice and vegetable offering to monks. Together, these events show how the river is used as a place to pray, seek merit, celebrate and spend time with family and neighbors. The river is not just a background feature but it is an important part of these activities and helps to bind culture and religion with everyday life.

Table 2. Festival activities and their relationship with the river

Festival	**Connection**	**Key Activities Linking to River**	**Positive Impacts**	**Negative Impacts**
Tabaung Floating Bowls	Direct	Bowls with offerings are floated directly in the river near Holin Pagoda	Maintains spiritual merit-making tradition and strengthens cultural identity	Plastic bowls increase water pollution and harm fish

Thingyan Water Festival	Direct	Water play and temporary stalls set up along the Nam Pang riverbank	Strengthens community bonding and social interaction	Large crowds cause riverbank erosion and increase waste
Loy Krathong	Direct	Decorated containers and lights are floated on the river at night	Reinforces community awareness of river importance	Use of plastic materials creates water pollution
Rice & Vegetable Offerings	Indirect	Food offerings made at monasteries located near the river	Monastery rules, such as fishing bans, help protect fish and river life	Plastic packaging from offerings may litter monastery and nearby areas

Tabaung Floating Bowl Festival

The Tabaung Floating Bowl Festival takes place at Holin Pagoda. It is located a mile east of the Salween River in Maingpyin-Kyaington in Shan State. The pagoda has a rich mythological history associated with Buddhist myths. The root of this festival runs back to a story of Buddha's past life as the Monkey King which is closely connected to the area around the Salween River.

According to this traditional history from the communities, the Buddha once lived as a Monkey King in one of his past lives. He and his followers traveled through the mountain ranges with forests along the west side of the Salween River. Near the end of his life, he led his disciples towards where Holin Pagoda now stands. After resting on a sandy plain, the Monkey King made a promise that if he were truly destined to become a Buddha, a stone would rise from the river. Before dawn, a large stone appeared and enabled the monkey disciples to cross over to the other side safely. However, though his monkey followers reached the other side safely, the Monkey King injured himself in his attempt to make a long jump over. His blood fell on the stone and he passed away shortly afterward, surrounded by his grieving followers.

The story continues with Sakka Deva King descending from heaven to guide the monkeys in performing a respectful cremation for their master. The burning of the Monkey King’s body, along with the sacrifice of four loyal monkey ministers became a significant part of the sacred narrative. Many years later, an arahant monk saw a bright light on the mountain and felt inspired to build a pagoda at that spot. With the help of local villagers and a mysterious old man - later revealed to be Sakka - they dug into the ground and discovered the skull of the

Monkey King. It was believed that celestial beings had protected the skull from decay. Thus, the pagoda was enshrined using the holy skull of the Monkey King and from that time onwards the site became known as Holin Pagoda.

Over time, according to the responses, Holin Pagoda became an important pilgrimage destination for monks and lay devotees, especially during the full moon of Tabaung, the final month of the Myanmar Buddhist calendar. On the full moon day, people from nearby villages and farther towns travel to the pagoda. Many come to pay respect, pray for blessings, and participate in the floating bowl ritual. Visitors place money, small offerings, or symbolic items inside bowls and float them in the nearby stream. The festival area becomes very crowded, with villagers selling food, snacks, and drinks along the road and near the stream. Boats and small ferries carry people across the river, and the riverbank stays active throughout the day.

Holin Pagoda is believed to fulfill wishes, so many villagers visit the pagoda especially during Tabaung to pray for health, happiness, and good fortune. The stream where bowls are floated becomes a meaningful place for prayer, and the ritual remains an important tradition. Moreover, the floating bowl ritual during the Tabaung Festival also encourages care for the river. Before the festival, villagers often clean the stream to prepare for floating the bowls, which helps keep the water clearer. This shared activity reinforces a sense of responsibility toward the river and its role in supporting local fisheries and agriculture.

Thingyan Water Festival

According to the responses collected during the field research, Thingyan in Kunhing continues to follow the general traditions of Myanmar New Year festival but the origins of the particular way this festival is celebrated in Kunhing as developed quite recently. The celebration in this community began in 2003 when a small group of residents informally gathered at the Nan Pang river to picnic and play water during Thingyan holidays. In the following years, more community members joined in these gatherings and people from nearby villages also began to participate.

By 2017, the festival became very popular where they needed security guards and other maintenance teams for the festival. Now the festival has become the most important and lively festival in the region. During the festival, people gather at the water’s edge to splash water on each other, listen to loud music and buy food and drinks from temporary roadside stalls along the Nan Pang creek. The community also built temporary Mandats (platforms from which water is thrown onto people passing by) for the festival.

Over time, Thingyan in these areas has become more crowded and commercial. Many stalls now line the riverbank, selling grilled fish, snails, snacks, and drinks. There is also loud music and more visitors, including people coming from other villages. The number of participants can reach into the thousands during peak days. This change has made the festival more colorful and exciting, especially for youth, but it has also created pressure on the riverbank environment.

The festival also has benefits for the river. In preparation for Thingyan, local communities often remove dry branches, logs, plastic, and other trash from the river to make the water cleaner and create more space for the celebrations. While this cleaning is done for the festival rather than for ecological purposes, it has the incidental benefit of allowing the river to flow freely and reducing blockages after the festival, showing how cultural practices can unintentionally support river health.

Loy Krathong Festival

In some Shan communities along the Salween River and Nan Pang, people practice a festival similar to Loy Krathong. However, this is not widespread and does not take place in every area. Local residents reported in the study that in the past, this festival was more regular but it disappeared for roughly a decade. Later, some residents who had been to Thailand observed Loy Krathong practiced there and upon returning to Kunhing they started the celebration again in their own way based on what they learned. These renewed celebrations are done mainly by small groups of friends or family without any formal leader, committee, or large community organization. So the practice remains limited and informal.

The local people explain that people prepare small floating containers fashioned of leaves with candles, flowers and other offerings during the festival. They float them at night, usually in near monasteries or calm river bank spots. The floating lights create a soft, peaceful scene on the dark water and give people an opportunity to make wishes, ask the river for forgiveness and let go of bad luck or past mistakes. The main purpose is to demonstrate their gratitude and appreciation for the water. Moreover, it is also passing the ideas of living in harmony with nature to younger generations.

Annual Rice and Vegetable Offering Festival to Monks

Once a year, on the day after the full moon day of Thadingyut, an offering of rice and vegetables takes place during a ceremony at Kunhing town and surrounding villages. This is a time when people from various places bring rice, vegetables, oil, and various goods necessary for everyday life. The villagers bring as much as they can offer, sometimes grouping them or

carrying them with people in a line as they walk or use transport, an event that will bring unity as people from various villages will gather for this single ritualistic practice. The research indicates that people explain this event as related to following religious traditions and as a method whereby monks' daily needs will be provided - against the background of the river and creeks.

Cultural and Religious Significance of the River

The way festivals are celebrated in communities near the Salween and Nan Pang rivers indicates that these rivers hold cultural and religious significance for local communities. The river is not only a physical resource but also a sacred space where religious beliefs, cultural identity, and everyday life intersect. Many festivals and rituals are directly connected to the river, such as the Tabaung Floating Bowl Festival, Thingyan Water Festival, and Loy Krathong–style floating lights ceremony.

For local people, the river is a place to make merit, offer prayers, seek blessings, and express gratitude to nature. Floating offerings, splashing water, and nighttime candle rituals underline the importance of the river in local culture and Buddhist practices, and thereby its relational value for local communities. These practices also reinforce Buddhist teachings such as merit-making, generosity, gratitude, and harmony with nature.

In addition, the river functions as a social space where families, neighbors, and visitors gather during festivals. Through these shared activities, cultural traditions are passed down to younger generations, helping to preserve local identity and strengthen community bonds.

Role of Monasteries near the River

The study found a number of monasteries near the River of Nan Pang. Monasteries located near the river play a vital role in shaping the religious, cultural, and social life of local communities. Along the Salween River and the Nan Pang creek, monasteries are not only places of spiritual practice but also important centers that bring people together and strengthen communal bonds.

Water is widely regarded as a symbol of purity, life, and merit in Buddhist belief. For this reason, monasteries are often established close to rivers and streams, allowing religious activities to take place in a calm and spiritually meaningful natural setting. The proximity of flowing water creates an atmosphere of peace and reflection, which supports meditation, prayer, and ritual practices.

These river-side monasteries also serve as focal points during annual ceremonies and festivals, such as the rice and vegetable offerings to monks. During such events, villagers from different areas gather at the monasteries to make offerings, perform merit-making activities, and express their shared devotion. Through these collective practices, monasteries help to reinforce religious values, social unity, and a sense of belonging within the community.

In addition, monasteries near the Nan Pang River influence how the river and its surroundings are treated by local communities. Areas adjacent to monasteries are often regarded as sacred, and certain activities such as fishing, cutting trees, or disposing of waste in the water are discouraged. The study found that Kon Aww Monastery has established no-fishing zones within and around the monastery compound, helping to protect aquatic life. These informal rules also safeguard riverbanks, nearby vegetation, and wildlife, creating small areas where human activity is limited and nature can thrive. Although these practices are motivated by religious beliefs rather than formal conservation policies, they indirectly contribute to preserving the river and maintaining its ecological condition near religious sites.

Overall, monasteries near the river function as bridges between nature, religion, and everyday life, highlighting the connection between the natural environment and spiritual traditions in the region.



Figure 1. Local monastic customs: signs prohibiting waste disposal and tree-cutting in sacred areas (Source: Shine William)

Environmental Impacts of Festival Activities

While festivals bring joy and cultural vitality, the study also found that large-scale celebrations have environmental impacts on the river and its surroundings. During Thingyan, increased numbers of visitors lead to more waste, including plastic cups, food packaging, and leftover

materials from temporary stalls. Loud music, overcrowding, and construction of temporary Mandats also place pressure on the riverbank environment.

At the same time, efforts to prevent river pollution can be observed among local residents and community leaders. During the Thingyan festival, waste bins are systematically placed along the riverbank and festival areas, and after the celebrations, community youth groups work together to collect and remove garbage. Furthermore, funds are collected from temporary riverside stalls and reused for riverbank maintenance, cleaning activities, and small-scale restoration work.

However, because the festival continues throughout the entire Thingyan period, its effects on the river happen again and again. Even though there are efforts to protect and clean the river, the impacts cannot be fully reduced. Waste, noise, and human activities are still clearly seen along the river. As a result, while some problems are controlled, the overall pressure on the river and its environment slowly increases over time.

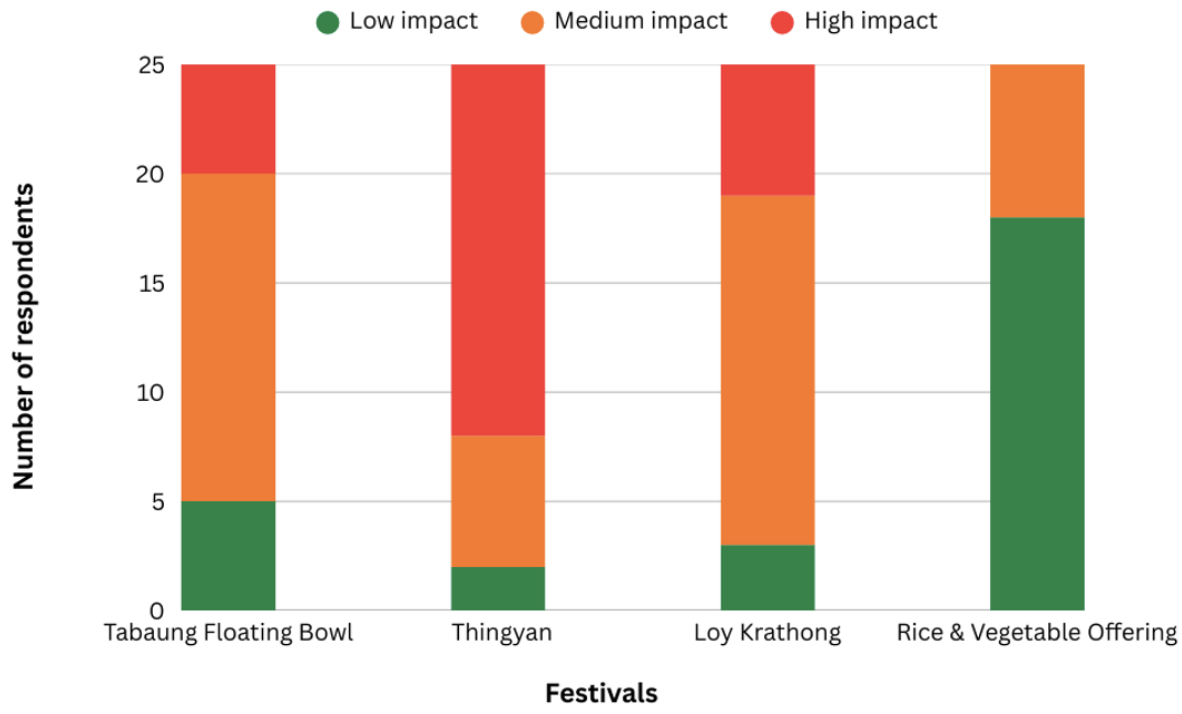


Figure 2. Community's perceptions on the environmental impact of festivals along the Salween River

Figure 2 presents community perceptions of the environmental impacts of four major festivals celebrated along the Salween River based on responses from 25 participants. Participants were asked to assess the environmental impact of each festival as low, medium, or high, using observable factors such as waste generation, crowd size, and direct interaction with the river.

The Thingyan Water Festival received the highest number of high-impact responses, reflecting participants' concerns regarding intensive water use, large crowds, and increased waste generated by temporary stalls along the riverbanks. The Tabaung Floating Bowl Festival and the Loy Krathong-style Festival were most commonly rated as having medium environmental impacts, largely due to the practice of releasing floating offerings into the river, some of which include non-biodegradable materials.

In contrast, the Rice and Vegetable Offering Festival was predominantly rated as having a low environmental impact. Participants noted that this festival is mainly conducted at monasteries near the river, involves limited waste generation, and does not require direct use of river water. Overall, the findings suggest that festivals involving direct interaction with the river are perceived by community members as having greater environmental impacts than those indirectly associated with the river.



Figure 3. Local people celebrating Thingyan Festival in the Nam Pang River (Source: U Yar Latta, Kon Hein Ward Administrator)



Figure 4. Small stall selling alms food packaged in plastic during Tabaung Floating Bowls Festival (Source: Adventures by Sai Swan)

Community Responses and Conservation Actions

As environmental impacts from festivals have become more noticeable, some local residents have begun actively working to protect and conserve the river. Community elders and religious leaders regularly emphasize that the river is not only a natural resource but also a sacred space that should be respected and kept clean.

In particular, during Loy Krathong–style festivals, people make an effort to use natural materials such as leaves and flowers to reduce water pollution. After the festivals, local youth groups participate in cleaning activities along the riverbank, collecting trash and ensuring that waste is not thrown into the river. Temporary riverside stalls also contribute by collecting funds, which are then used for riverbank maintenance, cleaning, and small-scale restoration projects.

One notable initiative is the celebration of International River Day on March 14, led by a local CSO, which combines educational talks, riverbank cleanup activities, and collective prayers for river health. This approach reflects an understanding of the river as both a natural resource and a sacred space. In addition, educational talks are held along the river to raise awareness among the community about water pollution and the importance of environmental protection.

These talks explain the benefits of using natural materials for floating offerings, the responsible use of river resources, and the broader social and environmental significance of such practices.

These conservation efforts and educational activities reflect a growing community commitment to preserving cultural traditions while protecting the environment. Together,they provide a vital foundation for the long-term sustainability of the river.

Changes in Practices Over Time and Disappearing Traditions

From the study, the data indicates that festival practices along the river have changed over time. These changes are mainly related to the scale of celebrations, types of activities and materials used and the implications on the local environment.

According to the data, the traditional boat-rowing races that were once held along the river are no longer commonly practiced. One reason suggested by local observations is that the Thingyan Water Festival has become the main focus and attention has shifted toward water-splashing activities instead of boat-rowing events. As a result, the boat-rowing racing tradition has gradually declined and is now rarely seen.

Another change is related to the materials used in the festivals for ritual practices. The data show that plastic bowls and containers have now been widely used in the Tabaung Floating Bowl Festival. In the past, natural materials such as banana leaves were commonly used to make bowls or wrapping for offerings. This change in material has led to increased plastic waste in the rivers because of the above transformation, even if the practices themselves remained the same.

The study also indicated that there has been a decline in the attendance of some festivals, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and the political instability. Consequently, the festivals are now smaller and attract fewer visitors in some areas. Moreover, the research further explains that young people have migrated to neighboring countries which has reduced local participation in these events.

Overall, the study found that festival practices have changed over time and many practices are smaller or less common and participation in some areas has declined. These changes mainly reflect shifts in community participation rather than clear long-term environmental improvement.

DISCUSSION

The study identifies several categories of festivals practiced by communities living along the Salween River and the Nan Pang tributary. These festivals can be classified into religious festivals, cultural festivals, and community-based merit-making ceremonies. The Tabaung Floating Bowl Festival is primarily a religious festival rooted in Buddhist mythology and associated with pilgrimage to Holin Pagoda. The Thingyan Water Festival is mainly a cultural and social event that marks the Myanmar New Year and has developed into the largest and most crowded festival in the region. The Loy Krathong–style floating lights festival is less formal and is practiced by small groups, focusing on expressing gratitude and respect toward water. In addition, the annual rice and vegetable offering festival to monks represents a collective religious practice aimed at supporting monastic life. Overall, these festivals reflect a diverse range of religious, cultural, and social practices connected to the river.

However, festival practices along the Salween and Nan Pang rivers are not fixed. New celebrations continue to emerge, showing how communities adapt traditions over time to reflect local participation and contemporary interests. These developments demonstrate that festivals are living cultural practices, continually reshaped by communities while maintaining their connection to the river.

Impact on Religion

Festivals held along the river play a significant role in strengthening Buddhist beliefs and religious practices. Rituals such as the Tabaung Floating Bowl Festival and the annual rice and vegetable offerings emphasize important Buddhist values, including merit-making, generosity, and respect for the monastic community. The myth of the Monkey King linked to Holin Pagoda enhances religious devotion and encourages pilgrimage, as many participants believe the site can grant blessings related to health and prosperity. Monasteries located near the river serve as key centers for religious activities and provide a sacred environment for rituals and communal worship. Through regular participation in festivals, religious values are reinforced and passed on to younger generations.

Effect on the Environment

Although festivals contribute to cultural vitality and religious life, the study indicates that they also have negative effects on the river environment. Large-scale celebrations, particularly during the Thingyan Water Festival, result in increased waste, noise pollution, and heavy human activity along riverbanks. The widespread use of plastic bowls in the Tabaung Floating

Bowl Festival has further contributed to water pollution, replacing traditional biodegradable materials. At the same time, local communities have introduced measures to reduce environmental damage, such as organizing post-festival cleanups, placing waste disposal facilities, and using collected funds for riverbank maintenance. However, because festivals occur repeatedly, environmental pressure remains high, highlighting the need for more sustainable festival practices.

Duty and Responsibility

The study emphasizes that protecting the river is a shared responsibility among community members, religious leaders, and festival organizers. Local elders and monks emphasize that the river should be respected both as a sacred religious space and as an essential natural resource. Key responsibilities include minimizing waste, using environmentally friendly materials, and raising awareness about environmental conservation among festival participants. Youth groups contribute actively by participating in cleanup and restoration activities after festivals. These collective efforts demonstrate an increasing recognition that cultural and religious celebrations must be conducted responsibly to ensure long-term environmental sustainability.

Traditions Passing from Sight

The research reveals that several traditional festival practices are gradually declining or undergoing significant change. Traditional boat-rowing races that were once common along the river are now rarely practiced, as public attention has shifted toward water-splashing activities during Thingyan. Additionally, the replacement of natural materials with plastic in ritual practices reflects modernization but also increases environmental concerns. Participation in certain festivals has decreased due to factors such as migration, political instability, and the COVID-19 pandemic. As fewer young people remain in the community, the transfer of traditional knowledge and cultural practices becomes weaker. These trends suggest that while festivals continue to exist, some traditional elements may disappear unless deliberate efforts are made to preserve them.

Key Recommendations

Based on the study's findings regarding the cultural significance, environmental impacts, and evolving nature of river festivals, the following three key recommendations are proposed:

a) Promote Eco-Friendly Materials

Replace plastic bowls and decorations used in Tabaung Floating Bowl and other festivals with biodegradable alternatives such as banana leaves and natural fibers. Religious leaders should endorse these changes during sermons, framing them as expressions of Buddhist non-harm principles.

b) Establish Youth-Led Conservation Programs

Form dedicated youth groups to conduct pre-festival environmental workshops and lead cleanup activities. Integrate traditional river stories and myths into educational sessions to strengthen cultural identity while building practical conservation skills.

c) Implement Comprehensive Waste Management Systems

Festival organizers should collaborate with local authorities to install permanent waste collection stations and recycling points along riverbanks during peak events like Thingyan. Festival-generated funds should support ongoing riverbank restoration projects.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the connection between river-based festivals, Buddhist beliefs, and community life along the Salween River and Nam Pan creek. Festivals support religious practice, social unity, and cultural identity, but they also increase environmental pressure through waste and overcrowding. At the same time, modernization, migration, and changing participation patterns have weakened some traditional practices. To ensure long-term sustainability, communities must balance cultural preservation with responsible environmental management and active involvement of younger generations.

REFERENCES

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BUDGEDARY FRAMEWORK

No.	Description	Requested Budget	Expenditure	Balance
1.	Research materials	1,320,000	475,500	844,500
2.	Transportation	1,880,000	1,610,800	269,200
3.	Meals and allowances	3,840,000	2,184,600	1,655,400
Total Budget		7,040,000	4,270,900	2,769,100