

IDENTITY OF LUANG PRABANG TAI-LUE WOVEN FABRICS

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Abstract

The research article entitled “Identities of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue Woven Fabrics” aimed to study the development of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics. The informants of this research comprised the experts of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics, manufacturers and distributors of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics, designers of fashion textiles, target consumers, tourists, and working-age people. The following instruments were employed in this research: preliminary field survey, interview, design assessment, opinion survey questionnaire, design satisfaction questionnaire, observation, and analysis based on the concepts, theories, and related literature. The study found that Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics have its roots in weaving culture from the Tai-Lue Xishuangbanna ethnic group. Women have the roles and duties based on traditional culture where women are encouraged to learn and practice weaving patterns inherited from the past as fabrics are one of the four essentials for life. A collective identity of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics has evolved into an individual identity -- the use of locally handcrafted cotton fibers made from cotton spinning as the main material, dyes made from natural materials, dark blue color (Nam Nil Dye) made from Hom leaves, and woven with the technique of Jok Koh (Luang) Khit Yok, the collective identity of Tai-Lue weaving. The patterns have been developed from abstract beliefs, beliefs in nature, faith in Buddhism, myths, stories, imagination, way of life, living areas, traditions, and ancient rituals that have been passed down from the ancestors. The concrete individual identity found on the patterns are as follows: 1) supernatural patterns, such as Singha or Mom, Nak Klong or Naga head, Nak Khai (Mermaid Naga); 2) animal patterns such as elephants and birds; 3) plant patterns such as Khom Dok Kaew and Dok Mob Noi; 4) natural patterns such as Nam Lai. Fabric patterns are always associated with beliefs of the weavers themselves. In other words, supernatural patterns are the symbols of power and refer to Himmapan Forest, holiness or representation of heaven, and giving birth. In addition, Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics are connected with the way of life, ritual cloths, and religious cloths, which all convey positive messages such as virtue, value, beauty, happiness, heaven, brightness, greatness, strength, unity, power, fortune, nobility, faith, calmness, growth etc.

Keywords: identity, Tai-Lue woven fabrics, Luang Prabang

Introduction

Tai-Lue, a large group of Tai language-speaking people, currently live in the northwest of Lao People’s Democratic Republic. They originally lived in the region of “Xishuangbanna” with the center of government located in the city of Chiang Rung. Later, it was merged into Banna area in the reign of the 23rd King of the Phraya Chueang Dynasty (B.E. 2112-2126). Provinces were divided into 12 districts and 2 parts by the Mekong River, having Chiang Rung as the capital city in the west (Songsak Prangwatthanakun, 2008). Two Lue ethnic groups migrated into Laos from Yunnan Province to the south using rivers as the main route were Tai-Lue people in the land of

Lan Xang in northern Laos. The important river basins were Tha River Basin in Luang Namtha Province and Ou River Basin in Phongsaly Province. These were the areas where the Tai-Lue people had lived on both sides of the river before it met with the Mekong River, covering Mueang U Tai, Mueang U Nuea, Mueang Ngai Nuea, Mueang Ngai Tai and many other villages in the Mekong River Basin in Udom Chai Province all the way to Chai Buri, Khan River Basin, Ban Pha Nom, Luang Prabang Province (Siraphon Na Thalang, 2002). It cannot be denied that the migration of the Tai-Lue people involved exchange of cultural heritage as every time there was a settlement, basic necessities of life would follow.

Tai-Lue weaving culture is very important to the lifestyle of Tai-Lue women. Lue women learn to weave from a young age, starting from weaving clean white cloth, then learning various methods such as Jok Khit Koh Luang or Mudmee. The weaving culture of the tribe developed, making woven cloths become part of the lives and cultures of the tribe. The Lao Tai tribe in Luang Prabang Province that clearly reflects the unique weaving culture is the Tai-Lue people of Pha Nom Village, who have been known for their weaving skills since ancient times because they played an important role in serving the royal court in the past (Jaran Chairatoom, 2013). This corresponds to the work of Patricia Cheesman (1988), who mentioned the weavers in Luang Prabang. She said that actually Luang Prabang's woven fabrics were often used for weaving for the royal court as a unique handicraft. They were woven with a variety of techniques, especially woven cloth for offering or serving the royal court, for example, weaving cloth for the king's wife during the time of the great ruler of the Lan Xang Kingdom of Luang Prabang, Phraya Samsaenthai Tribhuvanat.

After that, there was a change of government, and the royal title was abolished, reducing the status of the king to a commoner. However, one thing that the Tai-Lue people of Pha Nom Village still maintain is the identity of the weaving cultural heritage (Siraphon Na Thalang, 2002). Tai-Lue woven fabrics in Luang Prabang are still popularly woven with the weaving process of Koh Luang Jok Khit. The patterns that appear on the fabrics are created from the surrounding things. It reflects the wisdom and culture of Tai-Lue weaving which is different from Tai-Lue woven fabrics in other areas. This has resulted in an identity that is like a man-made symbolic system in society based on Stryker's concept of identity, which then reflects the group identity within a particular society (Stryker, 1991). Identity is, therefore, of particular importance since it connects two things together, i.e. individual identities that connect and relate to society through various symbolic systems. This conveys the meanings hidden in the fabric patterns through the process of weaving, and finally, it becomes a representative image or various symbols. The researcher analyzed the symbols found using Peirce's semiotic theory for the interpretation (Kanjana Kaewthep, 2000).

After the change of government in 1995, Luang Prabang was listed as a World Heritage City. It is a factor that has made Luang Prabang a world-class cultural tourism industry city. Many cultures have been revived by tourism, so it has led to the development of textile products and trade competition. Textiles as cultural products with unique identity have become sought after products of tourists. Therefore, the image of Luang Prabang

was used in the creation of works. Ancient patterns are used to create contemporary and exotic products. As a result, Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics are valuable and can be sold at a high price due to their identities in both concrete and abstract forms (Teerayut Pengchai, 2014). The study areas in this research are Pha Nom Village and Na Yang Tai Village. Due to the identity related to the traditional weaving culture of the Tai-Lue people and changes as a result of the designation of the World Heritage city, Pha Nom Village has become the most famous and important tourist destination of Luang Prabang because it is a source of beautiful fabrics with unique patterns. Meanwhile, Na Yang Tai Village is an area where many Tai-Lue people live and still have the weaving culture to the present day in the form of weaving for use in daily life, woven fabrics used in rituals, and woven fabrics used for religious purposes.

Due to the above reason, the study of the identity of Tai-Lue woven fabrics of Luang Prabang can lead to an indication of the development of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics. The identity that appears on the fabrics both in concrete and abstract forms that is embedded with beliefs has led to the question "What is the influence from the past to the present of the identity of Tai-Lue woven fabrics in Luang Prabang, which is a city with historical importance and a World Heritage City, and Tai-Lue weaving culture that has been revived for the purpose of product sales?" The researchers, therefore, would like to conduct a study in order to better understand Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics, and to indicate how the identity of Tai-Lue woven fabrics of Luang Prabang has developed and how it differs from that of the Tai-Lue in other areas. This study will bring much-needed new knowledge for development towards the international market in the future. The research objectives are as the following: To study the development of Tai-Lue woven fabrics in Luang Prabang, and to investigate the identity of Tai-Lue woven fabrics in Luang Prabang.

Research Methodology

For the research on the Identity of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue Woven Fabrics, the researchers employed both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, with the objective to study the development of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics. The research target areas covered the two villages i.e. Pha Nom Village in Luang Prabang, and Na Yang Tai Village in Nam Bak. The sample group consisted of the following informants i.e. experts, practitioners, and related people, such as village philosophers, group leaders, community leaders of the Tai-Lue ethnic group, academics, experts in fabrics, experts in ethnic group culture in Luang Prabang Province, the chief of the cultural province, the Ministry of Culture Press Conference on the Development of Tai-Lue Woven Fabrics in Luang Prabang, practitioners related to Tai-Lue woven fabrics, and producers and distributors of Tai-Lue woven fabrics in Luang Prabang. The instruments for collecting the data were a field survey, the unstructured and structured interview forms, non-participatory observation, a sub-group discussion with questions for categorizing and analyzing data covering various issues. These issues covered the following information: general context information, history, development, social context, implementation, material used for weaving, production process, colors of the woven fabrics, concrete patterns and abstract patterns embedded with beliefs that lead to the

purpose of weaving for use in daily life, for rituals, and for religious purposes with characteristics as a collective and individual identity of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics. The primary and secondary data collected were consistent with and analyzed based on the objectives in order to create a body of knowledge. Then all the obtained data were classified into categories and triangulated for their accuracy. This research examined data from persons, time and place in the form of documents, observation results, and interview results. Finally, the data were summarized and compared. Figure 1 presented the structure of the data types.

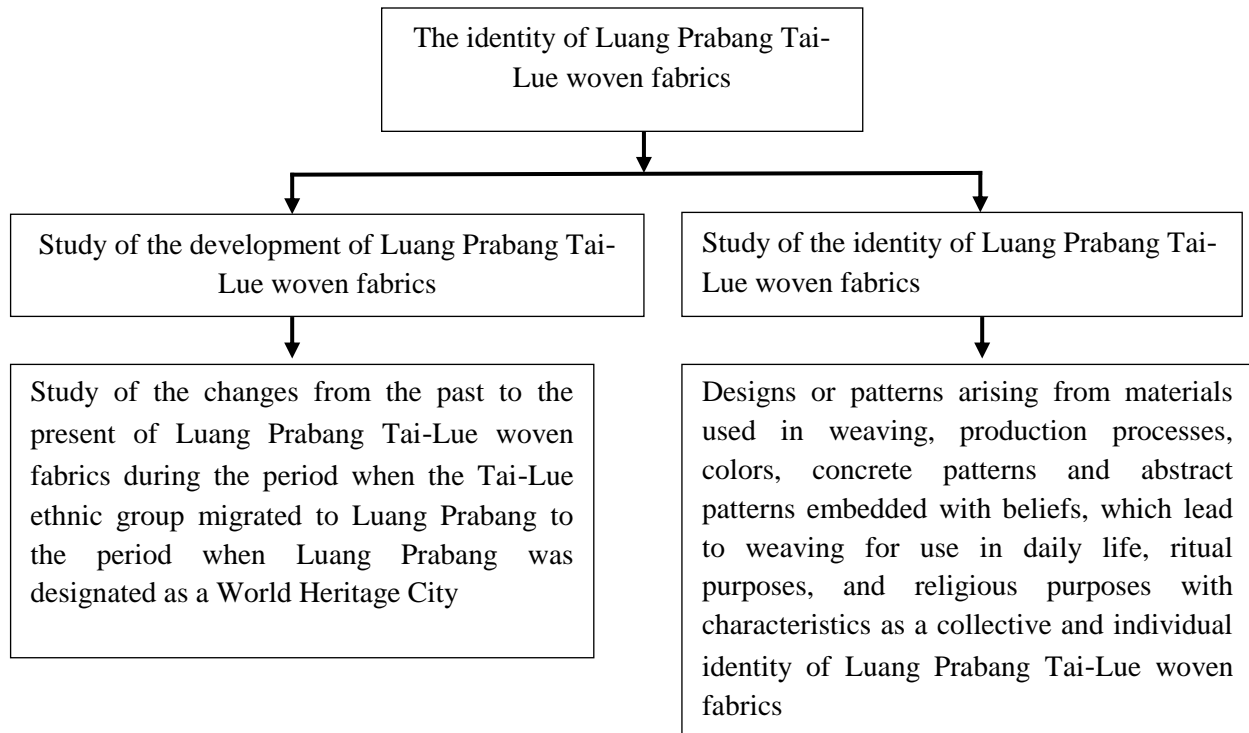


Figure 1: Structure of Data Types

Research Results

The study on the Identity of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue Woven Fabrics was analyzed according to the research objectives as follows:

Objective 1: To study the development of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics

The researchers studied documents, textbooks, and research related to changes from the past to the present of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics during the period when the Tai-Lue ethnic group migrated to Luang Prabang designated as a World Heritage City.

Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics originated in the Chiang Rung Kingdom, Xishuangbanna period. It was closely associated with the local way of life of the Tai-Lue people, especially women. Weaving culture is one of the four essential elements of life. All Tai-Lue women need to learn the process of weaving and know how to weave

through the transmission of wisdom from generation to generation. Old female weavers would keep passing on the knowledge to their children -- from the process of growing cotton, the main material used for weaving, production of natural fibers made into threads by spinning cotton, and dyeing fibers from natural materials that can be found locally. The weavers will determine the color of that fabric by themselves. In the process of weaving into patterns, old female weavers pass on the technique, such as Jok Koh (Luang) Kit, which is a collective identity of Tai-Lue weaving. In the past, weavers preferred weaving into a “mirror shadow (Ngao Krachok)” pattern.

The development of fabric patterns has its roots in belief in nature, faith in Buddhism, traditions, rituals that have been handed down from ancestors or previous generations, myths, stories, imaginations, way of life, and stories that show the context of the living area and environment. Tai-Lue women must learn to weave both traditional and newly created patterns based on experience, surrounding nature, imagination, belief and supernatural things that are intangible. Although having different patterns, they are still consistent with cultural traditions.

Migration is an important factor leading to the spread of weaving culture of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue ethnic group and the creation of the individual identity of the Tai-Lue woven fabrics. According to the data discovered from this research, more than 120,000 Tai-Lue people migrated to settle in Laos in 1579 using waterways of three rivers in northern Laos as the main source. Some of them took the route of the Tha River Basin in Luang Namtha Province down to the capital Pu Kha and Ou River Basin. The settlements spread along the plains on both sides of the rivers. The early migration took place during the time when Chao Naw Muang was the ruler of the Lan Xang Kingdom, using the route from Udomxay Province, crossing the Ou Khwae River Basin, the largest river basin of the Mekong River in northern Laos, to Luang Prabang to work in the palace as a craftsman and a dancer, and to serve the king who lived in Pha Nom Village in Luang Prabang Province. The migrants using waterways in the Bang River Basin were those who fled from natural disasters and political warfare to settle in Puka City in Luang Namtha Province and Bang City in Udomxay Province. Later, some migrated to the present-day Na Yang Tai Village. In the year 1634, some people migrated to settle in Luang Prabang Province and a village was built on the bank of the Khan River. This group of Tai-Lue people is called “Tai-Lue Pha Nom Village.” As for the Tai-Lue people who built the village on the bank of Nam Bak, which was about 175 kilometers north of Luang Prabang, they are called “Tai-Lue Nayang.”

The weaving culture of the Tai-Lue people in Pha Nom Village appears in ancient poems used for proposing a woman for marriage. Elders of the male would praise the female for having good qualifications suitable for marriage or becoming a daughter-in-law. The poems on flirtation between young men and women reflect the importance of women’s roles. The skill of weaving was a charm and a must-have attribute showing that a woman could get married and was desired by men. Therefore, it can be explained that the roles and duties of Tai-Lue women in the past were mainly associated with agriculture and rice farming. At the same time, they had to learn weaving skills, growing cotton and growing mulberry as supplementary jobs. Pha Nom Village Tai-Lue woven

fabrics were known for their delicacy and beauty, especially Sarong, to be used as clothing for family members. Moreover, fabrics were also woven for use in traditions or religious ceremonies. These cloths were woven by Tai-Lue women themselves. Men would choose a mate based on the woman's weaving ability. Tai-Lue weaving culture continued to be like this for a long time up until the Lan Xang Kingdom of Vientiane in the reign of Chao Anouvong between the years 1804 – 1829.

Later in the year 1876, more than 1,500 Tai-Lue immigrated to settle at Pha Nom Village during the reign of King Chao Un Kham or Chao Sam Saen Thai the Fourth, who was the ruler of the Lan Xang Kingdom. At that time, the governor of Chiang Rung sent Kate Kaew Thida or "Chao Nang Phom Hom" as a tribute to the royal consort of Luang Prabang along with a Tai-Lue woman, who accompanied her in order to perform service, weaving, dancing, and acting as a guardian in the palace. This tradition was passed on for more than 9 generations. Therefore, it can be explained that Pha Nom Village's Tai-Lue group in the past had a role in serving the royal court. Luang Prabang at that time was the center of politics, administration, transportation and trade. Through contact with the Chinese, Indian, and Burmese, the royal courts embraced the weaving culture and different patterns of embroidery that later developed into a unique style (Jarun Chairatoom, 2013). Luang Prabang became an important area where weaving culture was exchanged both in the form of woven fabrics and the materials used in weaving, such as silk, silver thread, gold thread, etc. However, Luang Prabang Tai-Lue weaving culture was also intended to be used as clothing for family members and in religious ceremonies. Thus, we can say that Luang Prabang Tai-Lue fabrics are different from Tai-Lue woven fabrics in other areas. With the roles and responsibilities of weaving for the royal court and the acceptance of weaving culture in various forms, it resulted in an exchange of knowledge on weaving culture in terms of weaving patterns, more diverse materials used in weaving compared to Tai-Lue weaving in other areas, and weaving techniques that were delicate, beautiful and required expertise because it was a high-class weaving art. The weavers would receive wages in return and medals for being skilled workers from the royal court of Luang Prabang.

Until the year 1975, the Lao monarchy was abolished. As a result, people's lifestyles changed. Tai-Lue women who weaved for the royal court had to stop doing this role along with many court-related issues to avoid threats to themselves. Since then, Tai-Lue women from Pha Nom Village started weaving fabrics and selling them to Tai-Lue people living in both China and Thailand. Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics have distinctive patterns and colors. Although some patterns are similar to Tai-Lue weaving from Nan province in Thailand, it can be seen that the pattern has been created to look different. As for the weaving technique, a technique that the Tai-Lue people are proficient in is Jok Koh (Luang) Kit. The fiber material used for weaving is also hand-pushed with cotton, demonstrating the collective identity of the Tai-Lue ethnic group.

In the late 1990, there was a cultural revival where various activities were carried out both formally and in everyday life. It was during the time the capitalist regime began to enter Luang Prabang. Foreigners came to live in Laos and many tourists flocked to

Luang Prabang. These factors led to changes in society, resulting in a cultural mix in terms of way of life and Tai-Lue weaving culture. There was a change in the pattern of the material used in weaving and form of fabrics for utilization. Thus, Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics were developed for the purpose of selling to meet the needs of tourists. The weavers would weave fabrics at their own homes and trade among themselves as they pleased.

In 1995, Luang Prabang was registered by UNESCO as a World Heritage City. The Luang Prabang Tai-Lue weaving culture was greatly restored and promoted by the authorities, with the main purpose to develop Tai-Lue woven fabrics to become cultural products and be used for decorating homes, hotels and tourist reception areas. As a result, the production process of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics was changed to follow the pattern of the fabric sample that customers or entrepreneurs wanted. Colors of woven fabrics were determined according to the buyer's requirements, and fabric patterns were made contemporary by creating new patterns based on beliefs, culture, and traditions, and cutting down the patterns to be more contemporary, while still retaining the identity of the mirror shadow pattern. Also, a new pattern composition appeared on the woven fabrics that told the story of traditions. Materials and dyes became more various to help reduce costs and production time, such as the use of synthetic fibers and chemical dyes. These items gradually replaced original materials for the speed of production and distribution in a timely manner. They could also be sold at a price that was not very high. From what is mentioned above, it shows the development of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue weavers and their ability to learn to develop fabric patterns to meet the needs of buyers. When cultural traditions received the attention of tourists, then the culture became a commercial matter. The weavers needed to show the cultural identity; therefore, it was the origin of the word "Marketable Identity" (Somporn Varnado, 1995). In addition, they were developed into one of the most popular export souvenirs abroad that finally the Cultural Village Handicraft Center was established as a center for Tai-Lue weavers. It also served as a place to learn Tai-Lue weaving culture, where the weaving process was demonstrated and information was presented to tourists and those who were interested in knowing the history of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics, along with knowledge of weaving in the Royal Court of Luang Prabang, and products were sold. There was a development in conveying written wisdom in the form of books or more academic documents. The Luang Prabang Handicraft Association (LPHL) was established to preserve the uniqueness of various types of handicrafts patronized by the Royal Court of Luang Prabang and to guarantee the quality and uniqueness of the woven fabrics.

Traditional Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics can't be found today. This is due to the fact that, in the past, woven fabrics were used as clothing for family members, and when they were used, the fabrics would deteriorate over time. Furthermore, as the Tai-Lue people in Luang Prabang accepted more international dressing culture, ready-made clothes that can be bought easily have become more popular, resulting in less weaving for daily life and family use. As for some sarongs that are woven, the weavers will sell or exchange them for money or other things, such as rice, agricultural crops, etc. Ancient woven fabrics or woven fabrics of the ancestors are therefore not preserved for future

generations to see. Yet, there are some types of fabrics that are still woven for family use, such as blankets, bed sheets, and woven fabrics used in merit-making or traditional festivals, such as shoulder cloths for going to temples, Thung cloths, wiping cloths, etc. However, Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics have been part of the culture of the Tai-Lue ethnic group since the Chiang Rung Kingdom of Xishuangbanna, where wisdom was systematically inherited step by step. It reflects the social context of the Tai-Lue ethnic group that has been associated with Tai-Lue fabrics for a long time from the past to the present. Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics therefore play an important role in the way of life, beliefs and faith.

Objective 2: To investigate the identity of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics

Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics have their roots in the weaving culture of the Xishuangbanna Tai-Lue ethnic group. With the roles and responsibilities of Tai-Lue women in the past, everyone had to be able to weave in order to get married and have a family. It is a pattern of the traditional culture of the Tai-Lue people as a collective ethnic identity. Girls must learn and practice weaving into patterns according to the tradition of Tai-Lue culture that has been handed down to the present day. For the individual identity of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics, the structure of sarongs is divided into three parts: sarong head; sarong body which is popularly woven in the form of a large main pattern with a stripe across the body of the wearer, which is caused by alternating weft and warp threads; the last part is sarong foot.

Regarding the techniques of the weaving process, the individual identity of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue fabrics is Khit, Chok, Koh (Luang) Yok. These four techniques are the main techniques used to weave Luang Prabang Tai-Lue fabrics to be outstanding.

For the fiber material used for weaving, cotton fibers are the collective identity of Tai-Lue woven fabrics of the Tai-Lue ethnic group found in both Pha Nom Village and Na Yang Tai Village, but the fiber material used in weaving that is the individual identity of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics is hand pushed cotton fibers. Tai-Lue people in Na Yang Tai Village make their own fibers in every process. As for Tai-Lue in Pha Nom Village, they prefer to buy only hand-pushed cotton fibers. Therefore, Luang Prabang Tai-Lue fabrics in Na Yang Tai Village have a more distinctive individual identity in comparison. With the use of natural fiber materials made from cotton grown in the community and spun cotton, known as “hand-pushed cotton” to be used as a material for weaving, this makes the woven cotton fibers fluffier and thicker than ready-made cotton fibers or Toray threads. In addition, the fabrics have a unique texture, giving a natural feeling, with large sizes of cotton fibers that are commercially available. Two threads of hand-pushed cotton fibers are required for weaving, and four for weaving fabrics that require extra thickness or want to emphasize the pattern more clearly.

For the fiber dyeing, the individual identity of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics at Pha Nom Village and Na Yang Tai Village is the use of blue as the main color obtained from Hom leaves, known in the local language as “Nam Nil dye.” Hom leaves are commonly found in the forests adjacent to brooks and the Tai-Lue people also plant Hom trees for their own use. The technique of cold dyeing is used to create fibers with

beautiful indigo blue color. In addition, this Nam Nil dye is also used as a ground color to mix with other colors and natural dyes. The colors that are a collective identity is black from betel pieces mixed with mud, brown from mud, red from shellac, and white from cotton fiber, which is commonly used for weaving for religious ceremonies.

Regarding the Patterns of fabrics, Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics are often associated with beliefs, Buddhism, myths, stories, imaginations, and ways of life that tell about the context of living areas, traditions, and cultures. The weavers create patterns from experiences inherited from their ancestors. Nowadays, the pattern has been adjusted to look beautiful, quirky, and unique, while still retaining the fabric pattern that is related to ancient beliefs. The results of the study reveal that Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics can be grouped into eight categories of patterns, including supernatural patterns, animal patterns, plant patterns, natural patterns, geometric patterns, appliance patterns, invented patterns, and traditional patterns, which reflect four groups of individual identity of Tai-Lue woven fabrics of Pha Nom Village and Na Yang Tai Village as follows:

1. Supernatural patterns

The distinctive feature of Singha or Mom pattern is that it has two heads and both sides of the head are slightly rounded and facing away from each other with the same body and 4 legs. Mom is found only in Pha Nom Village. It is the individual identity of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics of Pha Nom Village. As for Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics of Na Yang Tai Village, only Singha or Mom patterns with a single rounded head and four legs similar to the Tai-Lue woven fabrics of Pha Nom Village. Therefore, it is the collective identity of the Tai-Lue woven fabrics of both villages and the individual identity of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics.

Naga Klong or Naga Head pattern is in a shape of a trapezoid. In some forms, the shape is pyramidal triangle combined with a mirror shadow pattern, and there are small Naga heads on the periphery facing away from each other in an S shape. It is found in Pha Nom Village and Na Yang Tai Village. Therefore, it is a collective identity of Tai-Lue woven fabrics of both villages and the individual identity of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics. In addition, it is found that Naga Khai or Mermaid Naka pattern is a large Naga with 2 heads facing each other. One pattern consists of two Nagas placed together in a trapezoidal shape accompanied by a floral pattern and a small Naga head pattern. This pattern is usually found on sarongs in Pha Nom Village. It is the individual identity of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics of Pha Nom village.

2. Animal patterns

The elephant pattern consists of small elephants with a long body. It is often used as a supporting pattern, which is found at Pha Nom Village and Na Yang Tai Village. Therefore, it is a collective identity of Tai-Lue woven fabrics of both villages and is the individual identity of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics. Another elephant pattern consists of large elephants with a triangular body and decorative patterns on the inside. The elephant has a zigzag structure, big eyes, a thick trunk, and two-lobe toes commonly in red and black colors. An elephant pattern like this is often found on Kang

cloth (curtains) and Tung cloth, which is popularly woven with the Khit technique. This type of elephant pattern can only be found in Na Yang Tai Village. As a result, it is the individual identity of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics of Na Yang Tai Village.

A bird pattern consists of a giant bird and a small bird with two legs and a thick body. If it is a giant bird with a big body, there are usually decorative patterns inside woven into a large main pattern. Various forms of small bird patterns are also found on the same fabric as a decorative pattern. Thus, it is a collective identity of Tai-Lue woven fabrics of both villages and the individual identity of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics.

3. Plant patterns

Khom Dok Kaew pattern looks like an eight-pointed flower. Inside there is a small diamond pattern and the outside has an octagonal or diamond-patterned frame. The pattern is similar to Ta-Laew wickerwork, which is considered an ancient and popular pattern. It is used as the main pattern, both small and large. It is a collective identity of Tai-Lue woven fabrics of both villages. Dok Mob Noi pattern looks like a small rhombus with a small pattern in the middle. It is a collective identity of Tai-Lue woven fabrics of both villages and is the individual identity of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics.

4. Natural pattern

Nam Lai pattern looks like a horizontal line with jagged angles arranged in steps like a flowing stream. It is woven with alternating colored fibers. It is a collective identity of Tai-Lue woven fabrics of both villages and is a collective identity of Tai-Lue woven fabrics. Figure 2 presented the groups of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabric patterns.

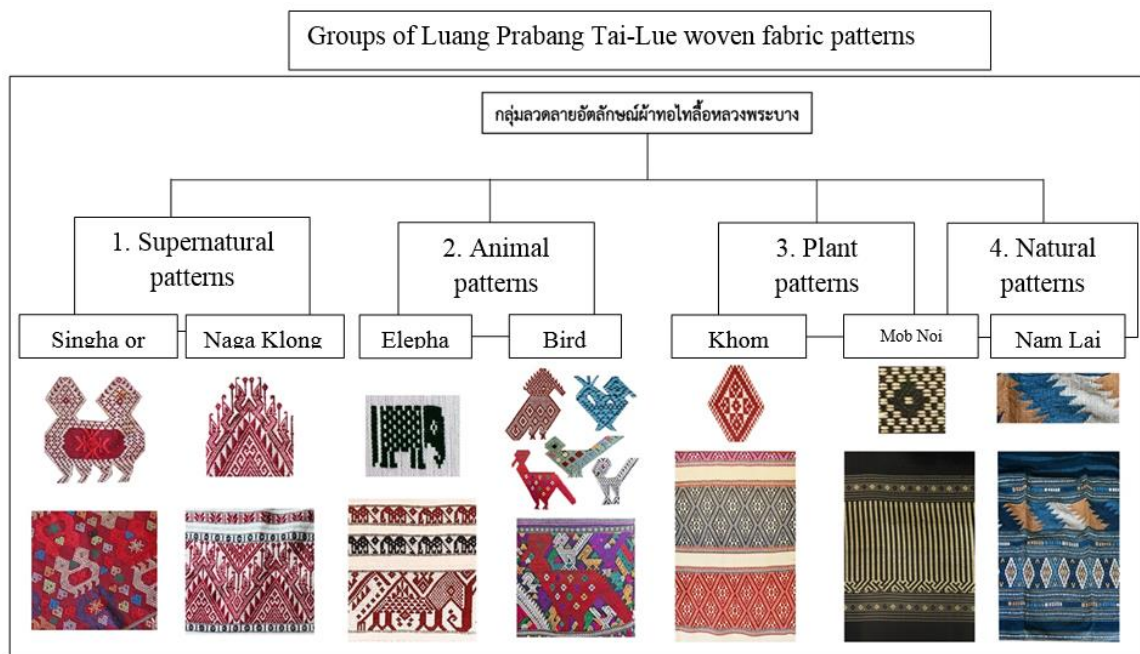


Figure 2: Groups of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabric patterns

Regarding their beliefs associated with fabric patterns, Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics are always embedded with the beliefs of the weaver. Supernatural patterns are the symbols of power and refer to Himmaman Forest, holiness or representation of heaven, and giving birth. Meanwhile, animal patterns, plant patterns and natural patterns convey the meaning of beautiful nature and abundance.

In addition, Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics are connected with the way of life, ritual cloths, and religious cloths, which all convey positive messages such as virtue, value, beauty, happiness, heaven, brightness, greatness, strength, unity, power, fortune, nobility, faith, calmness, growth etc. It is believed that the most obvious individual identity of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics is the use of Khit Jok Koh (Luang) Yok techniques in weaving using locally sourced natural fibers, which are hand-pushed cotton fibers. Moreover, it also includes using blue as the main color obtained from dyeing Hom leaves or Nam Nil dye, creating fabric patterns linked to lifestyles and beliefs to represent cultural symbols of the Luang Prabang Tai-Lue ethnic group, and weaving Luang Prabang Tai-Lue fabrics for sale as cultural products through the use of the collective identity of Tai-Lue weaving culture and new patterns to meet the needs of buyers in the new era. Meanwhile, beliefs and faith are still hidden in the fabrics in the form individual identity. This allows the Tai-Lue weaving culture to continue and weaving can serve as the main occupation that generates income for the family.

Discussion

Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics originated in the Chiang Rung Kingdom, Xishuangbanna period. It was closely associated with the local way of life of the Tai-Lue people, especially women. Weaving culture is one of the four essential elements of life. All Tai-Lue women need to learn the process of weaving and know how to weave through the transmission of wisdom from generation to generation. Old female weavers would keep passing on the knowledge to their children. This is related to the social context of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue weaving according to the conceptual framework of Parsons structure-function theory. When analyzed, it was concluded that in the past, Tai-Lue women learned the culture and weaving methods since childhood from their ancestors or family members, who transmitted their experience by means of telling. Then their descendants would follow – from the process of growing cotton, the main material used for weaving, production of natural fibers made into threads by spinning cotton, and dyeing fibers from natural materials that can be found locally. This is in line with Sirivannavari Nareerattanarajkanya (2021), who conducted a thesis on the direction of Thai fashion trends in the beginning of the new mixed era through a group of fashion consumer individual models. This work describes natural dyes from wisdom that have been used in a relaxed style, local stories that reflect the perspective of being a part of nature and the attitude of being a giver by using the colors determined by the weaver and weaving into patterns, a technique that the Tai-Lue people are skilled at, namely Khit, Jok, Koh (Luang) Yok. Fabric patterns are often linked with beliefs, natural environment, faith in Buddhism, myths, stories, imaginations, way of life, etc. Nowadays, weavers learn to weave both traditional patterns and creative patterns from experience and the surrounding nature in different ways, but still consistent with cultural

traditions. It is therefore consistent with Charles Kayes (1965), who explained the distinctiveness of the development of a collective identity of Tai-Lue woven fabrics and the development of an individual identity of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics, namely the interpretation of the inheritance of cultural heritage and memories of the ancestors who ruled in the past. The understanding of Lue identity depends on the context of the situation. The development of Tai-Lue woven fabrics as cultural products to meet the needs of buyers must show the individual identity – being salable (Somporn Varnado, 1995). Woven fabrics deteriorate over time and people tend to embrace an increasingly international dress culture. There are only some types of fabrics that are still woven for family use. This is consistent with the evolutionary theory framework of Charles Darwin (1859), who explained social and cultural changes. Therefore, it can be said that Luang Prabang Tai-Lue weaving is a multilinear evolution that fluctuates due to various factors from outside society and culture at certain times (Julian Steward, 1963). This includes migration, serving the royal court of Luang Prabang in the Kingdom of Lan Xang, where Luang Prabang was the center of trade, and the context of being a World Heritage city, resulting in fast evolution. However, Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics are part of the culture of the Tai-Lue ethnic group that has systematically inherited wisdom. It shows the social context of the Tai-Lue ethnic group from the past to the present.

A Study of the Identity of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue Woven Fabrics is summarized and analyzed using the basic concepts of identity theory (Stryker, 1980), which can be explained by the relationship between bond, identity predominance and choice of roles. It is the pattern of the traditional culture of the Tai-Lue people. That is, a daughter has to learn and practice weaving into patterns according to the tradition of Tai-Lue culture that has been passed down to the present day. The distinguished feature of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics is a sarong structure of 3 parts: sarong head, which is popularly woven with supporting patterns; sarong body is popularly woven with a large main pattern with stripes across the body of the wearer, which is a clear identity of Tai-Lue woven fabrics; the last part is sarong foot, which is woven with supporting patterns or woven with Soi Sa pattern. Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics has a clearly demonstrated collective identity of the Tai-Lue ethnic group, namely the weaving technique *Khit Jok Koh* (Luang) *Yok*, which is the main and unique technique used for weaving, and the use of hand-pushed cotton to serve as the main material for weaving. Meanwhile dyeing the fibers using *Nam Nil* dye that gives a beautiful indigo blue color serves as an individual identity.

The patterns of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics have an individual identity and abstract patterns. In other words, it involves interpretation of the inheritance of cultural heritage and way of life. This is in line with *Sucheep Karnasuta* (2009), who explained the important characteristics of identity as a matter of using symbols to express relationships through a system of symbols that have many forms and are related to the overlapping internal dimensions of being, and interpretation or decoding of the meaning of patterns that appear on Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics, When analyzed using the framework of *Pierce's* semiotic theory, it can be explained as follows: 1) For supernatural patterns and Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics that are related to the

way of life, ritual cloths, and religious cloths, the patterns convey the symbols of power and refer to Himmaman Forest, holiness, or representation of heaven, goodness, and happiness. The INDEX communication level was found the most. It is a signal that is directly related to the real object, and decoding relies on reasoning to find a causal relationship; 2) animal patterns, plant patterns and natural patterns depict the beauty and abundance of nature. The ICON level of communication was found the most, which suggests that it is easily understood just like using the real prototype. The most obvious individual identity of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics is the use of the Khit Jok Koh (Luang) Yok technique. The fiber material used for weaving is hand pushed cotton fibers and locally sourced natural fibers. Blue is chosen as the main color for weaving, and it is obtained by dyeing Hom leaves or Nam Nil dye. The fabric patterns were created based on lifestyle and abstract beliefs to be used as cultural symbols of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics for sale as cultural products from the individual identity of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics and the collective identity of the Tai-Lue weaving culture with the application of new patterns to suit the new era.

Conclusion

Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics have their roots in the weaving culture of the Xishuangbanna Tai-Lue ethnic group. It is a pattern of traditional culture that is the collective identity of the Tai-Lue ethnic group. Tai-Lue women have a duty to learn and practice weaving patterns according to the tradition of Tai-Lue culture from generation to generation to weave cloth for household use and to show the qualities of Tai-Lue women who can marry and have a family. The collective identity colors are black, brown, red, and white, which are commonly used for weaving for religious ceremonies. Patterns of Luang Prabang Tai-Lue woven fabrics are often associated with beliefs, Buddhism, myths, stories, imaginations, and ways of life that tell about the context of living areas, traditions, cultures, etc. which reveal the individual identities of Tai-Lue fabrics in Pha Nom Village and Na Yang Tai Village in four categories: 1) supernatural patterns; 2) animal patterns; 3) plant pattern; and 4) natural pattern. Beliefs embedded in these patterns are referred to Himmaman Forest, holiness, representation of heaven, abundance, beautiful nature, goodness, happiness, etc. It can be concluded that the creation of fabric patterns linked to lifestyles and beliefs serves as cultural symbols of the Luang Prabang Tai-Lue ethnic group, and Luang Prabang Tai-Lue fabrics are woven for sale as cultural products from the use of the collective identity of Tai-Lue weaving culture, applying new patterns to meet the needs of buyers in the new era, while still inserting beliefs and faith on the fabrics in the form of individual identity. This is to allow the Tai-Lue weaving culture to continue and to serve as the main occupation that generates income for the family.

Recommendations

1. For making the fabric pattern more interesting, the following things should be properly managed: elements and sizes of Singha or Mom, and reduction of the pattern details for making the fabric more contemporary. By doing this, it can be used as a guideline in the production or design of a greater variety of fashion textile products based on the identity of Luang Prabang Tai Lue woven fabrics.
2. For further research, fiber dyeing should be studied using plant dyeing techniques or natural dyeing techniques that can provide fresh colors and good techniques to help the dyes last longer. This also helps get the shades needed, and it is easy to control the tones in the same direction.
3. The traditional fabric patterns should be developed to be more contemporary and identical so that this can lead to the development of clothing and fashion textile products.

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