

Elements And Bodily Practices Of Phuthai Costume In Kalasin

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Abstract

This study investigates the elements and practices of the Phuthai costume in Kalasin via a qualitative research approach. The research methodology involves examining relevant literature sources such as documents, books, textbooks, research papers, theses, and conducting interviews using questionnaires. Additionally, field observations are undertaken to gather data. The research has two main purposes. The first target is to provide an explanation of the many components of the Phuthai costume in Kalasin. The second objective is to conduct a study on the practices of Phuthai women in Kalasin, specifically focusing on their use of costumes. The investigation discovered that several aspects of the Phuthai attire in Kalasin show an apparent resemblance to the entirety of the Kalasin region. The normative attire comprises a Phuthai shirt (Suea Tab, Suea Mob), Phuthai Xin Mhee, Pha Biang, Pha Phrear Mon Pha Prear Mon, and Kruang Ae Kreang Ea (ornamental accessory). All of its parts are works of art that are both scientific and aesthetically pleasing, and they tell stories of a civilization that has stood the test of time. These stories highlight the efforts of the senior Phuthai women who have worked tirelessly to preserve and pass on their costume culture from one generation to the next, ensuring that it will be a lasting part of the Kalasin province's heritage.

Keywords: *Phuthai women's costume in Kalasin, Kalasin's Phuthai attire, elements of Phuthai attire, practices of Phuthai attire in Kalasin.*

Introduction

Wisdom, popular wisdom, or local wisdom, denotes the collective knowledge and understanding that is rooted in the native culture. It encompasses the everyday knowledge acquired from individuals through personal experiences and is passed down directly or indirectly to subsequent generations and become the way of life of people in Thailand (Channuwong et al., 2024; Wongmarjapinya et al., 2024). According to the Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Anthropology Centre (Public Organisation), ethnic groupings are described as collections of persons that share a common subculture, which include values, beliefs, ideology, religious rites, systems of signs, and other cultural aspects like clothes. Clothing serves as a protective layer for the body, shielding individuals from the effects of weather and illness. These factors enhance the significance of clothes. Garments display various patterns influenced by spatial and cultural elements, as seen by the distinct apparel found in particular

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areas, reflecting the adaptation to the surroundings and the cultural context. Humans possess an innate will to survive and endure natural disasters. They adapt and acquire knowledge to coexist with nature, resulting in the creation of suitable attire. In addition to providing insulation against extreme temperatures, it also serves as a means of cultural expression.

The Phuthai ethnic group resides mostly in the Tang and Lai townships of the Sip Song Chau Tai area, situated in northwestern Vietnam. The northern section of the territory had a border with Vietnam's Tongkin region, while the southern part had a border with China. The eastern boundary of the region is next to the Black river, while the western border is adjacent to Houaphanh Province in Laos. The primary urban centre in this province is Tang township, also known as Tan, Tian Bian Fu. The area is situated within the realms of three powers - China, Luang Prabang, and Vietnam. During periods of power struggles, the army would occasionally traverse the region. The Phuthai people, affected by these wars, subsequently relocated to Wang township, Kum Kert township, and Kum Muan Township in pursuit of peace. During the reigns of King Taksin of Thonburi and King Rama I of Rattanakosin, the monarchs engaged in military conflict with the Kingdom of Lan Xang and relocated the Phuthai people to dwell inside Thailand's frontiers (Patya Yimrewat, 2001) .

During the rule of King Rama III, Chao Anouvong, the ruler of the Kingdom of Vientiane, staged a revolt against Siam. In response, the Thai king ordered his generals to suppress the insurrection. After achieving victory, the Thai military proceeded to move the Phuthai people who were residing in Wang township to Kum Kert township and Kum Muan Township, across the Mae Khong river, in order to reduce the manpower of Laos. These individuals have established their residence in the northeastern and central regions of Thailand from the past till the present day (Winyu Pholsawat, 1993).

Kalasin Province is a significant urban centre with a rich and ancient civilization. Additionally, it is a prominent province in the northeastern region, characterised by a significant population of Phuthai ethnic individuals residing in several districts. The districts that have a significant population of Phuthai people include Khao Wong, Naku, Kuchinarai, Huay Pung, Kam Muang, and Sam Chai.

The Phuthai people have a distinct and easily identifiable cultural identity, especially via their distinctive clothing and traditional way of life. The costume serves as a means of safeguarding the body, and it has been passed down through several generations. In contemporary culture, the costume continues to hold cultural significance and may also be a lucrative profession, particularly for individuals who may be more vulnerable. The textile culture and costumes crafted by craftsmen serve as a significant means of revenue or primary form of trade for many groups, communities, and individuals. This economic gap not only generates revenue for artisans and their families, but also provides financial opportunities for those involved with transportation, sales, and the collection or production of supplies. These activities generate suitable employment opportunities as they occur within the context of family and community. If every segment of the population in Kalasin provinces recognises the significance of the vitality of costume culture, it will empower the transmission of traditional wisdom to civilization in accordance with contemporary times.

Hence, I intend to analyse the elements and the practices aspects of the Phuthai costume in Kalasin. My objective is to examine the correlation and integration of Phuthai wisdom, cultural adaptability, and the role of costume in shaping social identity. I am interested in exploring the interconnections between historical-cultural elements, cultural development, and the function of modern costume. This research aims to provide valuable insights for those studying textile and fashion industry, as well as those involved in the conservation of Thai ethnic groups.

The Research's Objectives

1. To analyse the elements of the Phuthai costume in Kalasin
2. To examine the practices aspects of Phuthai woman costume in Kalasin

Limitation

The research focuses on researching the costume elements in three distinct groups of Phuthai people residing in different areas of Kalasin Province. These groups include the Phuthai community in Khao Wong District and Naku District, the Phuthai community in Kuchinarai and Huay Pung District, and the Phuthai community in Kam Muang and Sam Chai District.

Expecting benefits

1. To facilitate the acquisition of knowledge on costume and the development of costume culture.
2. To serve as an archive for the traditional attire of Phuthai women in Kalasin, facilitating its preservation and enabling future scholarly investigations.

Methodology

This study is a qualitative research that entails analysing pertinent literature sources, including documents, books, textbooks, research papers, and theses. Additionally, it requires conducting interviews utilising a camera for still photography and video camera for motion pictures, as well as utilising a sound recorder, mobile phone, and questionnaires. Every questionnaire has been evaluated by five expert academics specialising in Phuthai culture. The revised and enhanced questionnaires were evaluated on a focus group consisting of individuals who shared at least one common characteristic per category. The questionnaire underwent further refinement prior to its actual implementation. The provided data has been organised and combined to be presented in an analytical textual format.

The categorization of research tools may be divided into two groups based on the specific focus of each category, as previously described.

1. Questionnaire for the first focus group : Phuthai women in Kalasin to interview elements of Phuthai costume in each area and its practices
2. Questionnaire for the second focus group : craftsman, tailors, and Oblouse entrepreneurs in Kalasin province to interview the process of crafting the textile, designing and tailoring the costume, and practices of Phuthai in Kalasin.

Research result

The research revealed that Phuthai people exhibit a strong work ethic and possess a rich tactile culture, which results in a unique and varied dress code. The garments consist of a combination of silk and cotton. Thus, it may be concluded that the Phuthai people possess a very notable textile tradition. The Phuthai people are an ethnic group renowned for their passion for beauty and creativity. Women's attire may be classified into two distinct types: daily garments and ceremonial or semi-formal attire. In addition to their attire, the people of Phuthai also differentiate themselves by their hairstyles. The up-do hairstyle custom is an integral component in enhancing and emphasising the uniqueness of Phuthai women, complementing their entire attire appearance. As a proverb stated "Sao Phuthai Ngam Som Khon Xa Ti, Tin

Pom He Lao Klaing, Tin Xin He Lam Piang-Phuthai ladies are renowned for their exquisite beauty, characterised by their flawless hairlines and perfectly draped robes.”

The Phuthai outfit serves as a distinctive representation of Phuthai culture through its attire. The design components and colour palette are both intricate and sophisticated. The primary colour scheme consists of black and red. When combined, it would provide a visually appealing representation of the cultural history of Kalasin province, with the potential to gain global recognition.

The Essence of Kalasin's Phuthai garments

If referred to informally, "Kalasin's Phuthai garments" might be described as "ethnic attire" that represents the cultural heritage of the Kalasin's Phuthai ethnic group. The researcher gathered data from three distinct groups of areas in Kalasin: the Phuthai community in Khao Wong District and Naku District, the Phuthai community in Kuchinarai and Huay Pung District, and the Phuthai community in Kam Muang and Sam Chai District. Research has revealed that the phuthai people of Kalasin adhere to a similar dress code, characterised by clothes that share a consistent colour palette and have a common set of key features. These outfits are differentiated by minor nuances, which will be described in further depth below.

1. The Phuthai blouse is a garment with long sleeves and cylindrical sleeves, with a Chinese collar. It is usually available in black or indigo. The blouse is adorned with a strip featuring a Khit design. Occasionally adorned with silver buttons or coin buttons and with simple strips of fabric in white, yellow, or green, arranged around the rim.

The Phuthai women's blouse is skillfully crafted from indigo-dyed cotton fabric, known as "Yom Moh Dam" in the Phuthai language. However, on occasion, it is also dyed in various other hues, particularly red, for the purpose of embellishing the rim. Traditionally, Phuthai women have the responsibility of tailoring shirts for all members of the household. These blouses may be classified into two categories: ordinary blouses for farming without decoration, and special blouses for ritual ceremonies or community celebrations that will be adorned with coloured strips or Knit-pattern strips. The Phuthai woman's blouse comprises the body, neckline strip, rim strip, buttons, rim hemming (Mob), Sai Phi Sai Nong, Hang Change or Lai Keem, and low end.

The Phuthai blouse, also known as Seu Phuthai, is often characterised by its frontal button-down design, cylindrical dropped-shoulder silhouette, and embellishments of regular buttons, silver buttons, or coin buttons. Later, it evolved into a fit-shoulder. The name of the stripped blouse varies depending on the region. In Kam Muang and Sam Chai District, it is called "Sue Khab" (Suea Tab), whereas in Khao Wong, Naku, Kuchinarai, and Huay Pung District, it is called "Sue Mon Sue Ngim Meau" (Suea Mob). The term "Suea Mob" originates from a design with a decorative pattern of coloured strip hemming at the bottom end and neckline of a blouse garment.

The Classical Phuthai tribe decorated their blouses with various coloured strips, including red, white, yellow, and green. Subsequently, they began decorating it with a Khit-pattern strip to enhance its elegance. The pattern of Khit strips varies depending on their size and the design preferences of each weaver. The prevalent motifs observed in all places are the Lai Koh Khai pattern.

Initially, the method of tailoring included manual skill due to the absence of sewing machines. They employed several stitching techniques, including back stitch, whip stitch, and others referred to in their own terms, such as Lai Klao, Lai Kiew, Lai Hang Xing, Lai Don, Lai Erk Taktan, and so on. (Kritsada Wongmontri. 2023 : Interview)

The blouses are decorated with ancient coins with a puncture, sometimes referred to as coin buttons. This specific coin is no longer available in the market, resulting in its value

exceeding its stated worth. These coin buttons were arranged in a line to display one's wealth position, rather than for mere ornamentation. (Lai Yurata. 2022 : Interview)

In addition to using ancient money buttons, the Phuthai society subsequently adopted modernization and began using commercialised buttons, including those that were bright. The design of Phuthai clothing includes both fitted and oversized styles. The fitting style is often worn at dance ceremonies or significant ceremonial occasions, whereas the oversize style is used in everyday life, particularly in the Kuchinarai region. The researcher discovered that the sleeves are often too lengthy, necessitating the folding of the sleeves when worn. Another notable feature of the Phuthai shirt is the extra hem on the sides of the hips, known as Hang Chang or Lai Keem (resembling 3-handed pliers). This detail enhances the originality of the blouse and adds to the wearer's personality.

Initially, the blouses worn by Phuthai women appeared to have simple necklines that were hemmed with coloured stripes, which is uncommon in contemporary culture. Additionally, they also had mandarin necklines. The mandarin-style garment (Suea Koh Chin) had a patterned strip that was attached to the neckline and hemmed with coloured strips according to the district of the wearer. Phuthai shirts are adorned with white stripes in certain villages, yellow stripes in others, and either red or green stripes according to the village's level of popularity. The neckline has slight variations throughout villages; for instance, in Kam Muang and Sam Chai, the Mandarin neckline is comparatively broader. The neckline in Kuchinarai and Huay Pung Districts will be tightened.

Currently, it is difficult to distinguish between neckline designs in different locations due to the widespread popularity of each style throughout regions. The choice ultimately depends on the preference of the tailor or the person wearing the garment.

The buttonhole on the original phuthai blouse is not a hole, but rather a loop made of a mix of multicoloured threads. It is put through a placket and sewn onto the blouse at intervals that match the size of the buttons. This is a practical technique for button installation, since it allows for adjusting the loop size if the buttons or coins used are too large, unlike the practicality of the buttonholes. Phuthai women typically leave the ends of the threads around 10 cm long and tie them into knots. This is done to have them readily available in case of emergencies, such as when the blouse becomes damaged or when the threads are needed when travelling through mountainous and forested areas. They even utilise threads to secure the umbilical cord during emergency childbirth. The threads are referred to as "Sai Phi Sai Nong-sibling threads" (Pasdawan Srikampol. 2022 : Interview). In addition to sparing the threads, the Phuthai women's blouse is ingeniously designed to include a hidden pocket located at the inner lower end. This pocket serves as a concealed storage space for important items, ensuring they remain hidden from view.

2. The "Xin Phuthai" (Phuthai wrap) is a distinctive warp with a phuthai-pattern ikat motif in black or dark tones. It consists of the "Tin Xin" (lower end of the wrap) and the "Hua Xin" (upper end of the wrap), which are coloured in red. In addition, there is also Xin Tew, a scarlet shawl stained with lac, woven using the cross-threading technique.

Phuthai wrap cloths are textiles carefully woven using the ikat method and coloured. The pattern-weaving technique is made up of a variety of methods and sophisticated techniques. The ikat technique involves securing the pattern with a nylon or plastic rope, creating the desired pattern structure. This stage is referred to as "Oop Mhee". subsequently carefully loosen the rope and thereafter re-fasten it before applying other colours. The final and tiniest colour will be precisely applied by hand, predominantly in a shade of green. This process resulted in the Phuthai's ikat wrap being referred to as a "Xin Tam-painted wrap."

Pha Xin or Pha Tung (both terms used to describe a type of wrap) is a unique and distinguished aspect of Phuthai women's dress culture, characterised by distinctive patterns. The Phuthai wrap, also known as "Mhee Tam" or occasionally referred to as "Mhee Luad Xin

Tor Tin" or "Mhee Lai Yai Mhee Mong Yai" depending on the local dialect. The Phuthai wrap is made up of three components: the Hua Xin (upper end), the Lai Xin (body), and the Tin Xin (bottom end). The reed beater of the woven fabric is initially tiny and has a short edge, resulting in the top and lower ends being sewed to the body. (Jun Punjot. 2022 : Interview)

Phuthai warps were observed in the form of ikat-patterned wraps, monotone wraps, and scarlet wraps. Traditionally, the Phuthai people like to wear a single-coloured garment as their everyday attire. Each home would possess an indigo pot for the purpose of dying, resulting in the wrap being coloured in a shade of indigo that is nearly black. Some people referred to it as "Pha Dam or Xin Dam (black wrap)".

The distinctive feature of Phuthai's wrap lies in its complex weaving method and complicated designs such as those woven into small motifs. In addition to them, several additional patterns were also seen, such as Mhee Ta, Mhee Tum, Mhee Kra Jung, Mhee Koh, and Mhee Kan (It should be noted that this particular pattern does not conform to the all-ikat style, but rather includes discontinuous patterns.) The prevailing colours are green, blue, red, and purple. The wrap's background colour is typically a shade similar to sugarcane skin, namely a light brown hue. We also discovered cotton fabric with black and white ikat patterns in several Phuthai regions in Kalasin, particularly in Khao Wong, Naku, Kuchinarai, and Huay Pung.

This specific type of wrap is classified according to the scale of its pattern. If the pattern is of significant size, it would be designated as "Mhee Yai" by the Phuthai people. Conversely, if the pattern is small, they would refer to it as "Mhee Noi". This type of warp does not require any further extension at the top end, as the reed beater used by the weaver for this pattern is often wide enough. If the additional end is attached to the wrap, the wrap would become too lengthy for wearing. (Sompong Piewlamoon. 2022 : Interview)

The Phuthai warp pattern, known as Pha Xin, exhibits variations based on the original ikat designs such as Nark, Kan Mak Beng, Hor Pha Sart (castle), Hang Pla Wa, Jung (shrimp), Khor, Kra Jung, and others.

The defining characteristic of Phuthai's Xin Mhee is its mostly dark colour palette, such as dark crimson, dark purple, or black. These colours are complemented by a red top end, which is a distinctive feature of the Phuthai wrap. At present, in addition to the red top end, there are other top ends of different colours such as blue (indigo) or dark brown, among others. Before the attachment, the upper sections are intentionally crafted to harmonise with the colour scheme of the wrap pattern and the lower end of the wrap.

In addition to the distinctive red top end, which is an essential part of each warp, the lower end is also significant. Typically, it is crafted by Luang and Yok Khao Jok Dok Lai, which employ various coloured threads to be inserted upon one another, so forming a pattern designed by the weaver. The colour scheme typically employed in Jok Dok Lai (pattern creation) consists of white, red, and yellow, arranged in overlapping order. Occasionally, weavers may use more colours based on their creative instincts. The Tin Xin can be found in both silk and cotton, undergoing continuous refinement in terms of both proportion and design to meet the demands of the market.

3. Pha Biang or Pha Sabai is a crimson textile, sometimes known as Pha Phrear wa, Pha Lai Riang, Phrear Kheb, Pha Jeb Jok, Phrear Khit, and so on. The varieties include Phuthai's Pha Khit and Pha Tum Khit. Phrear Ta Loh, also known as Pha Khao Ma, is occasionally used for the same purpose. The Pha Biang Phrear culture, the practice of draping a garment called Sabai Phrear over the shoulders, also known as the Pha Biang Culture among the Phuthai people, is a significant aspect of the traditional attire of Phuthai women. This study will employ the term "Pha Biang". The procedure is draping the entire garment or folding it in half vertically, passing it over the shoulder, tracing it through the underarm and leaving the cloth's end at the back. (Likewise how Sabai is worn in the central part of Thailand.) The distinguishing characteristic that sets Phuthai Kalasin apart and allows for easy recognition is the utilisation of a red Pha

Biang, known by several names according on the area, such as Phrear Kheb Jok, Pha Biang Phrear Lai Rieng, and so on.

The original connotation of "Phrear Wa" refers to Pha Biang Khit and Pha Khao Ma (Pha Ta Loh). The study demonstrates that the term "Phrear" refers to cloth while "Wa" denotes a specific measurement of cloth that is comparable to two metres in length. "Pha Biang Phrear Wa" refers to the specific type of cloth that Phuthai women use to drape themselves as part of their attire. This cloth can be either a red Pha Khit or a colourful Pha Ta Loh.

The current definition of "Phrear Wa" refers to a crimson Pha Khit that is 2 metres in length. Initially, the width of the shorter side would vary from either 25 centimetres or 50 centimetres. The size has been modified to accommodate shoulder draping, resulting in a length of 2.5 metres. Currently, Pha Phrear Wa has seen developments in several aspects, such as colour scheme, pattern, and size. However, the core of Pha Phrear Wa still has its red hue, symbolising the distinctiveness of Kalasin's Phuthai ethnic group.

In this context, the researcher may use the term "Pha Biang Phrear Wa" to refer to a type of textile that is characterised by a red knit-pattern. The beauty of Pha Biang Phrear Wa is evident and captivating when worn as part of Phuthai costume. This distinctiveness of Phuthai apparel contributes to its status as a representation of indigenous civilization. The essence that the Phuthai women of Kalasin wove and utilised uniformly in all regions is known as Pha Biang Phrear Wa. Pha Biang Phrear Wa is an essential item for ladies belonging to the Phuthai community in Kalasin. Previously, the drape would be loosely fastened without using minimal tools, such as safety pins, to ensure a taut drape.

4. Pha Phrear Mon is a square cloth that is available in white, Phrear Wa pattern, or Phuthai's Khit pattern. It is used to wrap around the head or hair bun. The term "Pha Phrear Mon" may be divided into two parts: "Phrear," which refers to clothing, and "Mon," which denotes a circular form. The term "Phrear Mon" in Phuthai speech refers to a square-shaped piece of fabric that is used to wrap around the head or hair bun in a circular manner. Occasionally, it is referred to as Pha Kian Hua (Kamsorn Srating, Interview, 15 July 2022). It is known by several names in different areas, such as Phrear Foi, Phrear Pok Hua, Mad Theen Phom, and so on. In this study, it will be termed as Phrear Mon.

The utilisation of Pha Phrear Mon is mostly attributed to the traditional hairstyle of Phuthai women, who traditionally maintain long hair and dress it in an updo, which serves as a distinctive characteristic of their ethnic group. Phuthai women start styling their hair in an updo at an early age and continue to do so throughout their entire lives. (Pang Punjit, Interview, 27 July 2021)

Historically, Phuthai ladies utilised Pha Phrear Mon as a means to maintain the tidiness of their baby hair, safeguarding their updo (Klao Muay) from being dishevelled at a period when bobby pins and hair products were not available. Untidy hair might hinder productivity during labour or daily activities. Therefore, Pha Phrear Mon has been adopted as a method of arranging the hair around the head. (Lai Yurata. Interview, 27 July 2022) Hence Pha Phrear Mon is an essential part of Phuthai clothing, having been included throughout their costume from ancient times.

Pha Phrear Mon is a textile specifically designed for the purpose of wrapping around the head or adorning a hair bun. There are two styles in which it is used with Phuthai's hair bun. The first method involves encircling the hair bun to prevent the hair from being dishevelled during daily activities. This fabric made of white cotton is intended for this purpose. Another type is to be utilised as a decorative component, known as Kreang Ea, which serves as a decorative ornament, especially during religious ceremonies or significant rituals, paired with Phuthai clothing. The phuthai Khit-pattern fabric or Phrear wa pattern fabric would be used for this purpose. (Kamsorn Srating, 2022, Interview).

Phuthai's Phrear Mon originally exists in two distinct forms, distinguished by their pattern and use. The first type is called "Pha Phrear Mon Khao", which refers to a plain white or beige fabric made of cotton. It is often embellished with decorative tufts. This type of Phrear Mon is a form of headgear commonly worn by Phuthai women to maintain their hair's neatness throughout daily tasks, such as engaging in agricultural work. The second style is called "Phrear Mon Lai", which is a crimson Phrear Wa pattern or Phuthai khit pattern fabric, adorned with "Yoi Pha" - sometimes referred to as "Chai Krui". This particular style of Pha Phrear Mon is typically woven using the same weaving machine as Pha Phrear Biang, with the weaving process seamlessly continuing from the end of Pha Phrear Biang. The Pha Phrear Mon of this kind has exquisite patterns and is exclusively worn by Phuthai women at significant events, such as religious ceremonies or traditional rituals. This particular variety of Phae mon is not only used to maintain the hair neat, but also serves an aesthetic purpose.

Phrear Mon is characterised by fabrics that possess a square shape and exhibit flawless alignment of all corners when folded along the diagonal. Pha Phrear Mon Khao is predominantly white, with occasional crimson tufts added according to the users' choice. Pha Phrear Mon Lai is a textile that features a central fashion and decorative tufts at each end. Some of the fabric also includes white backgrounds with patterns at the edges.

5. The Kruang Ae, an accessory, is also used in the Phuthai women's costume to enhance the distinctiveness of the Phuthai outfit.

Phuthai women adorn themselves with distinctive earrings known as "Kajon Hu," which include flower-like designs and are attached with hook-like wires. Kajon Hu is not only used as Phuthai costume, but it is also commonly worn in their daily lives. Typically, individuals pierce their ears and wear earrings called Kajon Hu throughout their teenage years, usually around the age of 15, and continue to wear them regularly throughout their adult lives. Some individuals even wear them on a regular basis till their death. (Sompong Piewlamoon. 2023 : Interview)

Phuthai's Kajon Hu offers a variety of designs, such as the Big-hook Kajon or Little-hook Kajon, as well as the Kajon Yoi which is decorated with pendants for aesthetic purposes. Kajon Yoi is commonly worn for dancing, but not suitable for daily wear due to the pendant, which hinders regular activities.

Phuthai women also adorn themselves with a necklace known as "Ma Tum" or "Soi Med Mayom" in the Phuthai language. The necklace consists of round-shaped silver beads like star gooseberries, tied in alternating patterns with "Bak Lord" (teardrop-shaped silver beads). In the past, ladies who wore the item were often of wealthy families, as it was considered costly. It is often worn only at significant ceremonies, religious rituals, and noteworthy ceremonies.

Another vital item in Phuthai attire is the Kong Kaen, an arm bracelet crafted from silver, available in both solid and hollow designs. Solid Kong Kaen is a heavy and non-expandable bracelet, ideal for Phuthai ladies with slender arms. The hollow component may be easily adjusted to accommodate those with larger arm sizes. Phuthai women's Kong Kaen is often characterised by its simplicity and minimalistic patterns. However, local artisans may embellish it with a lotus pattern or Dok Ma Buab motifs at both ends.



Figure 1 : features in Kalasin's Phuthai costume

1. Phuthai blouse, Sua Tab, Sua Mob Mhee Dam
2. Xin Mhee Phuthai, Xin Tam, Mhee Dam
3. Pha Biang, Phrear Biang, Phrear Wa Biang
4. Pha Phrear Mon, Phrear Foi
5. Kong Kaen, Bangle
6. Kajon Hu
7. Necklace

Bodily Practices in Kalasin's Phuthai Attire

The researcher will discuss the clothing culture of Phuthai women in Kalasin. This will involve examining distinct local practices that stem from their daily surroundings and inherited culture, resulting in various forms of wearing that have evolved over time. The researcher will analyse the crucial role of culture and practises action in both traditional and contemporary dress to explain the practices activities of Phuthai women in diverse contexts.

The Practices on Wearing Phuthai blouse

The research indicates that Phuthai women use the Phuthai blouse in three distinct manners: regular wearing, pairing it with Pha Biang, and wrapping the shirt over their neck (referred in Phuthai language as Had Ang), each manner happening in different contexts. The act of wearing the blouse conventionally, i.e., with the blouse and buttons fastened, occurs when individuals are either at home or engaged in agricultural activities. Wearing the Pha Biang, which involves donning a blouse and draping the Pha Biang across one shoulder, is a customary practice observed during religious ceremonies, traditional rites, and formal community events.

When it comes to body practices, the Phuthai blouse paired with Pha Biang involves wearing the Phithai shirt underneath and draping the Pha Biang like a Sabai across the shoulder. This attire consisting of a shirt and Pha Biang is typically worn at religious or local ceremonies. The Had Ang style of wearing is meant for casual occasions since it involves hanging the blouse over the body and tying both sleeves on the shoulder to maintain a relaxed look, lacking neatness. Historically, Phuthai women used this method of wearing clothing for its comfort and convenience when breastfeeding. Phuthai women often wear a white undergarment called Sue Oong or Sue Pi Bing, often known as bat wings top, to prevent nakedness and shield their body

from direct touch with the blouse. They think that wearing this Sue Ong would absorb dampness and indirectly protect the blouse from deterioration.

The Practices on Wearing Pha Xin

The way Phuthai Women in Kalasin wear Xin changes according to the activity they are participating in. In the past, Phuthai ladies did not wear a belt. They employed Xin cloth by folding the end toward the left lap, making an asymmetric bottom, then tucking the piece of fabric at the top end around their waist. Phuthai women wear Xin in the "Xin Yuk" pattern while doing housework or farming, wrapping a spear on the side over their hip to cinch the waist. The Xin thereby shortens and increases convenience for doing their jobs. The study concludes that the particular way Phuthai women wear Xin is a distinctive feature of their culture. Originally worn for convenience, seeing older Phuthai women with updo hairstyles without wearing "Xin Yuk" with their traditional clothes gives a sense that their identity is incomplete.

In addition to wearing Xin in the "Yuk" style, Phuthai people also wear it in the "Yon Tad Chang" style, where the front end of the Xin is longer than the back end, symbolising a lack of tidiness due to an active lifestyle or a modest manner of dressing. The researcher stated that the choice of wearing Xin is based on the specific tasks being performed, such as transporting water supplies in the past, which required a container carried by a carrying pole. Activities like this include long distances, heavy loads, therefore lengthy wrap bottoms are not suitable for Phuthai women. They take little steps to avoid water splashing (Pondsawan Pondonkoh, 2023: Interview). In the past, Phuthai women were skilled in wrapping a tight warp. Nowadays, wrapping Xin no longer requires skills due to the availability of equipment like belts, buckles, and elastic bands.

Currently, Phuthai ladies no longer wear Pha Xin in the Yuk Xin or Yon Tad Chang styles due to the prevailing perception that these styles lack neatness and elegance (Chan Punjit, 2022 : Interview). They wear the garment, adjust the bottom ends of the cloth, and fold the upper end to expose it underneath the blouse for decoration.

Phuthai women take personally with their own Xin. When wearing it they wear it carefully, careful not to make it scratched by tree branches. Particularly silk Xin would be more precious and more carefully taken care of, they only wear it when there are important events (Swart Kusakulrat, 2022 : Interview) In the past, individuals would wear Pha Xin with two layers for protection. The lower layers are white, and when covered by the top layers, the upper edge of the white layer will be slightly apparent. The white layers also served as a protective barrier for the top layer from sweating or stains, as silk is not often washed. Natural fibres are effective at maintaining freshness, with stains being the primary issue.

Currently, Phuthai women continue to wear Pha Xin, although some also opt for wearing trousers for modernity and ease when travel or other activities. In the past, the type of Pha Xin worn also indicated the wearer's status. Xin Tew is often worn by senior ladies. Phuthai women over 50 years old traditionally wear dark-colored horizontal-pattern Xin Mhee (Mhee Kan). Unmarried ladies wear Pha Xin without the Tin Xin component, as that recognise is reserved for married women. After becoming widows, ladies would detach the Tin Xin section from Pha Xin and not reattach it (Kong Jitjak, 2023: Interview). Over time, this dressing specifications has vanished. During the research, it was discovered that Phuthai women choose to wear Pha Xin based on their preferences and convenience, without being restricted by their social status.



Figure 2 : Body practices of Phuthai in Kalasin in the traditional period

- No.1 Blouse wearing style of Had Ang
- No.2 Xin wearing style of Yuk Xin
- No.3 Xin wearing style of Yon Tad Chang
- No.4 Xin double-layer wearing style, Xin Don

The Practices on Wearing Pha Biang

Phuthai women wear Pha Biang in two ways: by folding the cloth vertically and wrapping it around their body, or by wrapping the fabric around their body without folding it. The selection of the style is based on personal desire. When wearing lengthier Pha Biangs, ensure that the fabric's end on the front does not extend past the bottom end of the blouse. Shorter fabrics like Phrear Ta Loh or Pha Tum Khit are easier to wrap since they are more adjustable.

The Practices on Wearing Pha Phrear Mon

Phuthai women prepare their Pha Phrear Mon by folding it diagonally, rolling it into a cylinder form, leaving some ends slightly exposed, and then wrapping the cloth over the nape of their head. They tie each end with some hair to keep it from sliding.

The practices are uncommon nowadays due to the declining wearing of hair buns in daily attire, but are still evident in the traditional wearing style of the people with Moh Yao role. Currently, people are adapting the wearing of Pha Phrear Mon according to their aesthetic preferences. The trend of wearing the item shifted to wrapping it around a hair bun after folding it diagonally and rolling it into a cylinder form.

Upon analysing the origin and use of Pha Phrear Mon among Phuthai women in history, it was discovered that initially Pha Phrear Mon served as a tool or ornament to secure hair. White Pha Phrear Mon serves the same role as today's headband, which is a utensil used to maintain the hair neat while working. Pha Phrear Mon and Khit Phrear are patterned fabrics used in significant ceremonies or religious events. In addition to maintaining tidy hair, they also serve aesthetic purposes. It is also concluded that the Pha Phrear Mon in Phrear wa was fashioned to become Pha Ae Pom or an aesthetic accessory for Phuthai ladies at some point beforehand.

Phuthai people are currently adapting traditional cloth weaving techniques into developed form, resulting in smaller Pha Phrear Mon. The utilisation of Pha Phrear Mon altered due to modernization's impact on lifestyle. Phuthai women no longer style their hair in their daily lives because it is considered unfashionable and difficult to upkeep. Instead, they solely utilise Pha Phrear Mon for aesthetic purposes.

The Practices on Wearing Kruang Ae in Phuthai attire

Phuthai women inherit practices gestures by wearing Kruang Ae or ornaments at religious or traditional communal rites. They wear them sparingly to reveal a hint of beauty, without excess. Phuthai women will wear the pattern of Kruang Ae according to each context. In ordinary traditional rituals, they would wear only Kajon Hu and a necklace. When dancing is part of the occasion, they would wear bangles to enhance the elegance of their dress while dancing. practices is also relevant to some specific Kruang Ae. Phuthai ladies will always wear Kajon Hu, for instance. Some Phuthai women wear only one Kajon Hu from adolescence until their last breath. After death, the Kajon Hu will be passed on to their kids as an inheritance.

The Practices on Hairstyle in Phuthai attire

Phuthai women have a unique cultural practice of arranging their hair using the technique known as Muay Pom Phuthai (also Kao Pom in the Phuthai language). A hairstyle characterised by a high bun positioned in the middle or slightly to the side on the top of the head. The hairstyle will be named in this literature Muay Pom Phuthai, which involves pulling the hair into a ponytail and then wrapping it into a bun at the side of the head in the Muay Kod manner. I differentiate this style from the traditional hair bun typically seen in the Isan region's performance art, which refers to the buns located in the middle of the head (Ponsawan Porndonkoh, 2021. Interview).

The Muay Pom culture is a traditional practice passed down throughout the Phuthai ethnic group in the past. Phuthai people's hair styling signifies their social status and affiliation with distinct subgroups within the Phuthai ethnic community, such Phuthai in Renu Nakorn, Phuthai in Sakon Nakorn, Phuthai in Khao Wong, Phuthai in Kam Muang, and so on. Phuthai people in different regions have unique methods of styling their Muay Pom, resulting in various patterns and shapes for each. Phuthai culture of practising Muay Pom is a characteristic inherited by persons from a certain group within the Phuthai ethnicity. In the past, all Phuthai women would wear Muay Pom from childhood till death. It is a convention that everyone follows. There are two kinds of Muay Pom Phuthai.

Muay Jik involves rolling Muay Pom at the top of the head and securing the hair with a porcupine-hair or bamboo hair pin. (Pondsawan Donkoh, 2022. Interview)

Muay Jok, also known as Wik Wok, is a hair styling technique where the hair is tied up and twisted to form a hoop in the middle of the Muay.

During the practices of Muay Pom by Phuthai ladies, they position their Muay slightly to the left or right of the top of their head according to their preference. Today's fashion prefers muays that are either circular formed at the top of the head or comprise of circular-shaped Huang Poy, rather than the traditional style.

To style Muay Pom in these two methods, start by combing the hair with a hair comb. Move the head forward and collect all the hair in the right hand, ensuring the hair is slightly to the left. Twist the end of the hair with your left hand and roll it backward to the left side. Grasp

the hair end with the right hand and secure it around the ring finger of the left hand. Wrap the remaining hair around the base of the bun to the end, then twist the hair in the right hand under the end of the hair with the left hand. Pulling the hair hoop to adjust for a tidy appearance.

The Phuthai people prioritise their appearance and attire, particularly when attending traditional or significant events. They often adorn their Muay Pom with flowers such as Dok Slatae, Dok Cutcault, Dok Man Pla, Dok En Tawa, based on what is locally available. During rituals like Phiti Yao, they will only use Dok Jampa (Dok Lilawadee) to Ae their hair.



Figure 3 : The practices on hairstyle in Phuthai attire with Kruang Ae

Conclusion

The study on elements and body performance related to the clothing of Phuthai people in Kalasin revealed that Phuthai individuals in the three areas wear clothes with similar components. Each area's clothing is differentiated due to differences in fabric details, weaving techniques, and tailoring methods. Phuthai dress serves to shield the body from environmental elements such as heat, cold, rain, wind, and sunshine, while also symbolising the historical and cultural evolution of the ethnicity through aesthetics and arts.

Phuthai women in Kalasin exhibit a variety of wearing styles. Phuthai women in Kalasin have adapted their dress culture over time while maintaining and safeguarding their cultural identity from the past to the present. The Phuthai people have a systematic method of dressing, where certain clothing indicates the wearer's social standing. The traditional outfit of Phuthai women in Kalasin remains distinctive and recognised in the province, symbolising the local culture despite changes in Phuthai women's clothing culture over time.

Timo Rissanen, a Finnish designer and artist, completed his doctoral studies in Zero Waste Fashion Design at the University of Technology in Austria. In 2012, he utilised donated tartans to create a coat without any leftover fabric. Inspired by repurposing household cleaning cloths, he designed garments with smooth stitching and cross-stitch embellishments in 2010 (McQuillan & Rissanen, 2016).

Aligned with the cultural norms of Phuthai attire in Kalasin, the components of traditional Thai clothing will include traditional Phuthai blouses, known as Suea Mob or Suea

Tab, are made of silk and hand-sewn. They are decorated with coloured fabric strips and Khit patterned strips along the collar and cuffs to enhance their beauty. There are two common styles of Xin Phuthai : silk and cotton. Phuthai traditional Pha Biang in Kalasin province come in various patterns and are known by different names in different regions such as Pha Phrear Wa, Pha Phrae Kep, Phrae Lai Rang, etc. The original textile in some areas is becoming scarce due to lack of new weaving techniques. Some pieces are being passed on to textile collectors or museums. If new weaving techniques are employed, they may differ from the traditional process, resulting in variations in patterns and fabric structures.

In the areas of Khao Wong and Naku, Pha Phrear Mon is known by several names such as Pha Phrear Foi, Phrear Pok Hua, Mad Theen Phom, etc. The Pha Phrear Mon comes in two sizes: a large piece that may be wrapped around the head and a little piece that can be used as a hairband. Currently, ancient Pha Phrear Mon fabric is rare and not commonly woven anymore. Only a few weavers exist who produce it for conservation purposes.

In bodily practices, Phuthai women in Kalsin culture may be categorised into two types: the bodily practices in daily life, which come in many forms, and the bodily practices at religious ceremonies or special occasions, where they wear the traditional dress known as "Phuthai attire." The hair is decorated with flowers commonly found in nature. Pha Phrear Mon is utilised to secure the hair in customary techniques including braiding or wrapping around the head. Kajon Hu and Kong Kaen are utilised as decorative accessories.

The Pha Biang wrapping style can be either Pha Phrear Biang, which wraps the fabric fully or folds it in half lengthwise. However, if it is Phrear Khit, it will be folded in half. The fabric twisting will be done in a manner of twisting towards the left side. The style of wearing Xin, using Xin with the addition of Hua Xin and Tin Xin by draping the fabric over the left side of the leg. They form a unique hairstyle by styling their hair in an updo slightly off-centre from the head's midpoint, using both the circular Muay Jik and the hoop-shaped Muay Jok to display the distinctive bodily practices of the Phuthai people in Kalasin.

Recommendations

1. The researchers are aware of the issues faced by the local textile industry and emphasise the necessity for comprehensive care, promotion, and support in all aspects, particularly focusing on initiatives to promote the silk industry. Pha Phrear Wa plays a crucial role in supporting the establishment of creative clusters at various levels within Phuthai families, communities, and regions. These clusters possess distinct roles and operational directions, fostering interconnected networks within and among groups. Emphasising industries with a comparative advantage ensures efficiency in production and specialised expertise, utilising available resources effectively for maximum benefit. The government should delegate regional agencies to serve as intermediaries in connecting the roles of community, local, and regional economies with the national economy, alongside other agencies and organisations.

The government should recognise the importance of highlighting the excellence and uniqueness of the people of Kalasin province for beneficial purposes by supporting investments in infrastructure such as libraries, museums, universities, arts institutions, and cultural centres that cater to the specific needs of Kalasin province. This support will greatly boost the success of the creative industry. To develop the necessary infrastructure for the creative industry, government agencies must collaborate with community organisations by providing advice to creative businesses on various artistic endeavours, including setting up operational frameworks, acquiring business premises, modernising all systems with cutting-edge technology, providing training facilities, studios, art exhibition spaces, and other conveniences, as well as safeguarding existing locations. This collaboration will open up market opportunities for small businesses, support various activities that enhance business development and cultural arts, and promote networking and connectivity at the local level.

2. Promotion through knowledge dissemination to stimulate learning dimensions, support community and academic knowledge network building, assistance in market mechanisms and public relations, plays a supportive role by the government in advancing and transferring knowledge and community wisdom horizontally (between communities) and vertically (from one generation to another). It also involves linking and expanding local and community economic activities to larger scales, whether regional, national, and international levels, entailing exporting or attracting tourists from other countries.

The learning process of Phuthai villagers involves expanding into a network that spreads from traditional weaving practices within families, to neighbouring farmers, to adjacent villages, and even to external community organisations. Despite varying levels of challenges among individuals and groups, collaborative learning platforms can provide mutual support in terms of motivation, resources, and cooperative problem-solving.

These processes have evolved into an interconnected network, elevating to an intercommunity organisation to collectively address larger-scale issues by sharing knowledge, experiences, conducting site visits, training sessions, seminars, and engaging in activities that foster a more developed learning process for the community. Based on the case study and field experience of the researcher, it is concluded that Kalasin Province is an interesting lesson learned, as it is found to be a significant factor for the success of community and regional development to improve well-being of Phuthai people both economically and socially, along with the current trend of innovative economic development.

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