

‘Party Wear’ style costume design inspired by Praewa silk from Phutai Ban Phon. Kalasin Province

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to study the history of Praewa silk, produced in Phutai Ban Phon. Kalasin Province, in order to analyze patterns and the production processes. Specifically, this study looks at the costume design process in order to create a guideline for designing contemporary costumes in the style of ‘party wear’ for women aged 25-30 years.

Keywords: Praewa silk, party wear, development

Introduction

Clothing is a part of the four basic necessities one requires to survive besides food and medicine. Weaving is a traditional art, with each community adding its own spin to it. Traditionally the art of weaving is passed down generationally through the women of a family who learn the art from their parents and grandparents. Accordingly, each community or family will have its own unique pattern, color and weaving technique. Unfortunately, traditional clothing, ‘Tai Lue’, is not popular with younger generations due to its price and being viewed as outdated. This is especially so local culture has been significantly influenced by Western culture. Tragically, this will have a negative impact on the traditional art of weaving as decreased demand will lead to a loss of skill as people purchase readily-made clothing, found that the traditional weaving patterns and techniques are nearly extinct. A suggested solution is to incorporate the traditional patterns and techniques of ‘Tai Lue’ into more contemporary designs, specifically clothing for social engagements, in order to ensure their survival by reviving popular usage.

Traditional weaved clothing is not popular as it is seen as unfashionable and restricted to specific niches in its use. By incorporating the patterns and techniques into more contemporary designs, the ‘Tai Lue’ pattern can be made chic. Specifically, these patterns and techniques can be incorporated to produce clothing aimed to be worn at social engagements and other special occasions. This could significantly expand how these patterns are perceived and increase social standing to make them more fashionable.

Research objectives

1. To study the history of Praewa silk, produced in Phutai Ban Phon Kalasin Province
2. To analyze the patterns and the production processes of Praewa silk.
3. To create a guideline for designing contemporary clothing in the style of ‘party wear’ using Praewa silk, primarily for women aged 25-30 years

Research methodology

Data Collection

The research is based on archival research into traditional weaving techniques, as well as on interviews with traditional producers of Praewa Silk.

Research Methodology and Project Execution

The project is divided into four main phases

Phase 1: Study the Original Patterns of Praewa Silk Cloths

1. The most prominent identifying characteristic of Praewa Silk Cloths (Baan Phon) is its use of very delicate silk, dyed dark red with lac or seedlac. The weaving patterns are made by “Jok” and “Khit” weaving techniques. In each, the pattern is made of many silk threads in different colors in each row. The structure of Praewa when folded in half can be classified as 2 parts: one is canvas and the other is fringe.

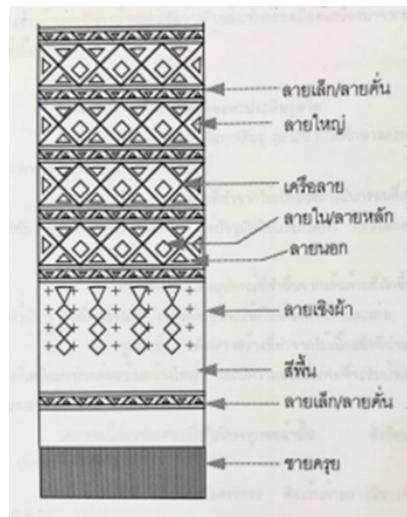


Figure 1. Components of Praewa silk pattern

Source: th.wikipedia.org , 2021

Other fabric patterns that can be made with “Jok” or “Khit” techniques include nature inspired patterns, animals, various shapes and patterns depicting elements of every day life.



Figure 2. Sketch of a group of ancient Praewa cloth motifs in flora shape

Source: Muncenam Bundit, 2013

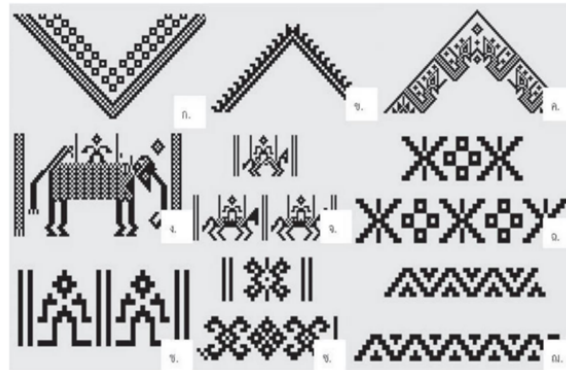


Figure 3. Sketch of a group of ancient Praewa cloth motifs, images and animal behavior
Source: Muneenam Bundit, 2013

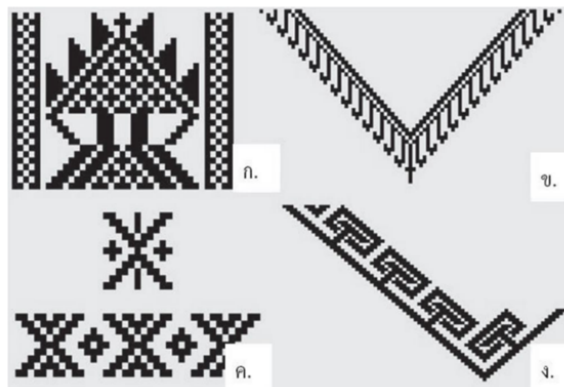


Figure 4. Sketch of a group of ancient Praewa cloth motifs, shapes of utensils,
Source: Muneenam Bundit, 2013

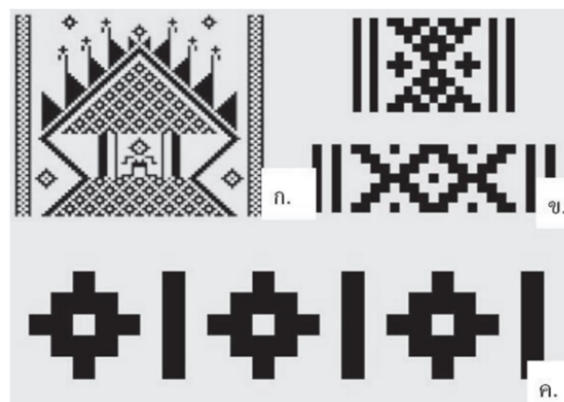


Figure 5. Sketch of a group of ancient Praewa cloth motifs in the shape of the surrounding environment
Source: Muneenam Bundit, 2013

2. The weaving technique of the silk mixes 'Khit' and 'Jok' patterns. The 'Khit' technique uses 'Keb Khit' or the collection of patterns on a flat canvas using by using 'Mai Keb Khit', a long stick to collect the pattern by pulling on the yarn and counting the number of threads to collect the pattern. The weaving is divided into many separate parts over a pattern. The fringes of the main canvas would use 'Khit Dork Lek' or small patterns, followed by 'Khit Dork Yai' or big patterns and 'Dok Lai Pha', patterns using a long stick.

The process of "Jok" is to pull the warp yarn then insert colored silk yarn in the weaving which make the textile have pattern. In Phutai weaving, they will not use any equipment in order to pull warp yarn such as pin, stick or hedgehog spine but only use their little finger to "Jok" and pull the inserted colored yarn, then make a knot to make the pattern from one side to another of the row. It is repeated twice for the clarity of the pattern. The pattern is at the bottom of the textile during weaving.



Figure 6. Method for collecting Khit patterns and the method of using the pinky finger to raise the warp yarn

Source: th.wikipedia.org , 2021

3. The color of the silk is derived from the silk's natural coloration, as well as through the use of other natural dyes. The main colors are black, from ebony's seed, indigo or blue, from Indigofera tinctoria, red or pink, from lec, and yellow, from turmeric myrobalan wood and Bael's seed boiled together with salt. Other colors are derived from the saturation of dye colors during the dyeing process.

Phase 2: Study the traditional culture of wearing clothing made Preawa silk, including the wearing Preawa silk as a loose cloth, which allows the textile to be kept in one piece.

Thai clothing favours a multitude of materials, such as silk, cotton, sarong, mudmee, indigo, yok orr preawa. Prewa is most commonly used by adults and it is used as in everyday clothing. Prewa silk especially showcases the local identity of Kalasin people. Incorporating it into contemporary designs will allow to showcase the traditions of the North-East.

Kraisorn Kongchaya, Governor of Kalasin Province said that Prewa silk is a uniquely woven fabric from Phu Thai or Phu Tai. The inhabitants of the region originally migrated from Laos and Vietnam before evacuating across Khong river to settled down at the north-eastern area, mostly in Kalasin province. They have kept their traditional culture, including the are of Prewa weaving, which is a unique part of their identity. Prewa cloths have been promoted by the Special Arts and Crafts Center project under Her Majesty Queen Sirikit, The Queen Mother, when she visited the Khum muang district in 1977. The queen mother has observed residents of Phu tai Baan Phon wearing Prewa shawls and she developed an interest to support the art, as well as to have a royal initiative to increase the textile

width for making cloths from it. Her Majesty's the Queen Mother's support was essential to the development of preawa weaving. During "Pong Lang Prewa Celebration commemorating the 224th anniversary of Kalasin" at the Phraya Sunthon Monument there was a great Phu Tai dance including 4,724 people, all dressed in robes. They also had their hair tied with beautiful silk cloths.



Figure 7. Prewa silk dress
Source: th.wikipedia.org , 2021

Prewa silk cloth decoration mostly use embroidery technique by using silk yarn, sequin, bugle bead and also using "Knit" for neater and tidier.

Phase 3: Study the design of contemporary 'party wear' clothing in order to create a foundation for the incorporation of Prewa weaving techniques.


Phase 4: Create and present 1 collection of Prewa weaving inspired contemporary collection, consisting of 5 distinct designs of 'party wear' style clothing.

Data Analysis





The design of 'party wear' for women is inspired by Prewa silk from Phutai Ban Phon, Kalasin Province. The researcher's main focus has been to identify how the original weaving technique can be combined with new colors and materials, such as the use of silk threads and natural yarn, which offers multiple properties and the mix has a higher versatility. The research gathered the following data.



Pattern Analysis table of Prewa Silk cloth from Kalasin Province

Table 1. Pattern analysis table of Prewa silk

Pattern Example: Prewa silk, Phutai Ban Phon. Kalasin Province	Analysis	Pattern Structure
<p>"Lai Rea" Boat Pattern</p> 	<p>Pattern in the style of boats, which shows the way of life during a time when boats were the primary means of commerce and communication between river-bound communities.</p>	<p>Warp thread in red with weft thread in dark blue, green and white, which makes the weft pattern more outstanding with the contrast of the warm and cold color tones.</p>

Pattern Example: Praewa silk, Phutai Ban Phon. Kalasin Province	Analysis	Pattern Structure
<p>“Nark” Naka</p> 	<p>The pattern style is ‘Naka’, which shows the belief that the Naka swimming heralds the arrival of the rainy season.</p>	<p>Warp thread is dark yellow, dark brown with weft thread in pale brown’ which makes color tone more harmonious. In case of a white warp, Naka pattern remains outstanding.</p>
<p>“Cho Ton Son” Pine bouquet</p> 	<p>The pattern style is ‘Pine’, which shows the cultivation of forestry.</p>	<p>Using a warm tone red, orange and pale yellow with a white warp thread, at some points cut with weft in red which pushes the pattern to be more noticeable .</p>
<p>“Dok Kra Buan” Kra Buan flower</p> 	<p>The pattern shows the flower “Kra Buan”, which is related to the flora pattern in Kalasin Province</p>	<p>Warp thread in read cut with weft in green, dark yellow and white, which makes the weft pattern stand out with the contrast of warm and cold color tones.</p>
<p>“Kor Kor Kai” Hooks</p> 	<p>A pattern consisting of multiple hooks which shows the good relationship between the people in the community</p>	<p>Using gradient color, which merges various colors into one tone; using weft in dark yellow, red and brown which are in the same color tones.</p>
<p>“Lai ta bong” Geometry</p> 	<p>The pattern style of Lai Ta Bong is using multiple geometric patterns by overlapping multiple rectangles</p>	<p>Warp thread in dark yellow with weft thread in white; if using weft thread in dark brown to cut the edge, the pattern will be clearer and sharper.</p>

Pattern Example: Praewa silk, Phutai Ban Phon. Kalasin Province	Analysis	Pattern Structure
<p>“Kar Kae” Crossing</p> 	<p>The pattern style of Kar Kae consists from patterns with 45-degree angles for both side similar to a cross .</p>	<p>Warp thread in red with weft thread in black will make the pattern sharper and not too tight in textile.</p>
<p>“Knu Loy” Snake</p> 	<p>The pattern style of Knu Loy is similar to waves, which are reminiscent of a slithering snake.</p>	<p>Using harmonious color in warm tones with a weft thread in white makes the snake shape striking.</p>
<p>“Lai Down Noi” Little star</p> 	<p>The pattern style is based on geometric shapes, inspired by the surrounding environment.</p>	<p>Using contrasting colors for weft threads to make patterns clearer.</p>
<p>“Nak Chom Dao” Naka with star</p> 	<p>The pattern style is ‘Naka’, which shows the belief that the Naka swimming heralds the arrival of the rainy season.</p>	<p>Warp thread in crimson with weft thread in yellow, white or green which makes the pattern easy to see; patterns are delicate within the overlapping borders.</p>

Pattern Example: Praewa silk, Phutai Ban Phon. Kalasin Province	Analysis	Pattern Structure
<p>“Karb Dok Bad” DokBad flower bud</p> 	<p>The pattern style is similar to 8 petals flowers; such floral pattern in Kalasin that shows galore of environment.</p>	<p>Using geometric shapes in a flower pattern, which may have bold or thin lines that make the flower pattern have more dimension.</p>
<p>“Dok Pan Maha” Gloriosa superba</p> 	<p>This pattern style is inspired by Gloriosa Superba, which is the flora in Kalasin province; it has a reduced trapezoid</p>	<p>Warp thread in dark brown with weft thread in yellow or white to make the flower stand out.</p>

Findings

Based on the data collection and analysis, the researcher choose to use multiple patterns to represent the cultural identity of Preawa Silk when translated into female ‘party wear’ designs that fit into the contemporary ‘party wear’ design, aimed for semi-official and evening events. Preawa silk would be a suitable clothing for such occasions within the target population. Traditional structure and patterns can be applied to the new templates, inspired by Praewa Silk, Phutai Baan Pho of Kalasin province. Using those structures and patterns, the researcher has designed 5 sets of outstanding costumes.



Figure 8. A total of 5 sets of pictures

1st set of draft works



Figure 9. The first draft of the work.

Dress Short dress in red, open shoulder with ruffle that helps to hide the zip sewing. Using cloth similar to Prewa Silk with an embroidery pattern, sequin, bugle bead, crystals and precious gems.
Skirt Long skirt from silk organza with press pleat and ruffle to make it look fluff up more beautiful

2nd batch of draft works



Figure 10. 2nd set of draft works

Dress knee-length dress, 2 arms with drape cloth with long sleeves; strapless shirt in hourglass shape embroidery with Preawa pattern, sequin, bugle bead, crystals and precious gems.

The 3rd set of draft works



Figure 11. The 3rd set of draft works

Strapless Shirt with slim fit made from Preawa Silk embroidery with sequin, bugle bead, crystals and precious gems.

Shoulder enhancement 3 layers drape cloth with Duchess cloth; light weight that makes the costume look outstandingly luxurious.

Mini skirt over-knee skirt with embroidery with sequin, bugle bead, crystals and precious gems

The 4th Draft Challenge



Figure 12. The 4th Draft

Shirt V shape neck with lower part ruffle. Shirt made from Preawa Silk cloth and embroidery with sequin, bugle bead, crystals and precious gems.

Long Skirt skirt with side slits, using with Duchess cloth; light weight that makes the costume look outstandingly luxurious.

The 5th series of draft works



Figure 13. The 5th series of drafts

Dress Mini-dress with over-knee length, open collar and decorated by embroidery with sequin, bugle bead, crystals and precious gems.

Long Skirt with back part ruffle and drape in front



Figure 14. Fashion collection

Discussion and Conclusion

The main purpose of this research was to design ‘party wear’ inspired by Peawa silk clothing from Phutai Baan Phon, Kalasin Province. The main focus was on blending traditional techniques and patterns with contemporary designs attractive to working women aged 25-30 years. Traditional elements are incorporated through the use of weaving techniques, unique patterns, while modern techniques are used to color the fabrics and as a basis for the final designs. The outfits are specifically made to reflect contemporary designs that are suitable for a wide range of occasions. The sequin embroidery can also be replaced by crystals to make the final product appear even more fashionable and luxurious.

The researcher has designed 5 sets of ‘party wear’ wear outfits, aimed at professional women aged between 25 and 30 years. Accordingly, the outfits adopt a contemporary shape rooted in current fashion trends that would be attractive to this target population, while also incorporating traditional Praewa silk elements into the design to appeal to interests in heritage products.

As part of the study, the researcher has surveyed 100 members of the target population in the Bangkok area to measure their satisfaction with the designs. The quantitative data has revealed the following:

1. Outfit #3 has received the highest satisfaction, with 31% of users ranking their satisfaction with its shape and style as a 4 or a 5. This shows that Preawa silk inspired designs are highly suitable as ‘party wear’ for the target group.
2. Outfit #4 was rated the highest in terms of colour; 49% of respondents rated it as a 5 based on this aspect. Preawa silk inspired colors appear to please the target group sufficiently.
3. Outfit #1 showed the highest satisfaction in regards to patter, with an average satisfaction rating of 47%, the highest within the set. Once again, traditional inspired patterns are shown to be sufficiently attractive within the target group.

4. Outfit #5 had the highest rating in terms of beauty, showing a 45% satisfaction with its aesthetics. Traditional Praewa silk inspired designs show a high satisfaction in terms of aesthetics among the target population.

Designers and manufacturers can use this research as a guideline to successfully implement traditional designs for commercial use in order to produce products that can satisfy target customers and also elevate designs to the next level for a new generation of designers that use the unique identity of Thai textile inspiration.

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