

Moon-Mung Phutai: The Process of Creating a Socio-Cultural Learning Space through Ethnic Textile Wisdom in Sakon Nakhon Basin, Thailand

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this article are to (1) study *Moon-Mung Phutai* in Sakon Nakhon basin in geographic, economic, social and cultural aspects; (2) study *Moon-Mung* of the ethnic textile wisdom of *Phutai* in Sakon Nakhon basin, Thailand, and (3) synthesize the pattern of the process of creating social-cultural space in terms of ethnic textile wisdom of *Phutai* in Sakon Nakhon basin, Thailand. This study uses the qualitative study method and participant observation. The results of the study found that (1) *Moon-Mung Phutai* in Sakon Nakhon basin area that is still preserved or inherited include belief in spirits and soul, language, food, weaving wisdom and fabric patterns, although their residence and occupation have changed (2) textile wisdom of *Phutai* ethnicity in Sakon Nakhon basin area is the ability of *Phutai* women to weave clothes for household use especially the *Sarong* which is called *Tinto* that has a specific aspect and an indigo-dyed three-quarter sleeve shirt, (3) the pattern of the process of creating a social and cultural space in terms of ethnic textile wisdom of *Phutai* in Sakon Nakhon basin is divided into 2 levels.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The historical landscape of Sakon Nakhon basin consists of 8 provinces namely Sakon Nakhon, Nakhon Phanom, Mukdahan, Nong Khai, Udon Thani, Loey, Nong Bua Lamphu and Bueng Kan. Sakon Nakhon basin is a place of civilization that has been inhabited by humans since prehistoric times of Ban Chiang era which came to set up a place of various ethnic

groups that leads to the cultural diversity (Institute of Language, Arts and Culture, Sakon Nakhon Rajabhat University, n.d.). It has been inherited and passed on until the present, especially in the field of ethnic textile wisdom.

Culture is a symbolic system in which people of the same ethnic group or people living in the same society share a common culture. It has been passed down from generation to generation like textile culture that it is one of the four essentials for life that can indicate the status of the wearers (Fuengfusakul , 2003; Ganjanapan, 2008; Chudhavipata, 2012). It can also be a social aid and show the status of women because weaving is a duty of women both at the household and community levels (Phassadu, 1992). Most of the transmission is transmitted to female members (Kaewthep, 1998). There is an accumulation of wisdom that has been passed on from generation to generation. *Phutai* people are considered to be one of outstanding ethnicities in textile wisdom that has been recognized and passed down to the present day such as the Mekong literature that is entitled “Phaya Khamkong teaches slaves” wherein excerpts from the poem stated that;

*Lady, you should learn the knowledge Khit design,
Loom weaving learn how to grow the mulberry
Weaving cloth and silk sewing clothes
Learning to pick up and embroidering Saew
Dyeing silk, cotton hook
Learning and adjusting the color, lady*

The lines of this ancient poem mean that in being a woman one has to learn weaving, doing Khit, growing mulberry, silk weaving, sewing, embroidery, dyeing silk threads, cotton threads, and tying because they reflect the role of women. In the past, weaving was a duty of women and to be able to weave leads to being a factor of family clothing (Chathiphot, 2010; Chathiphot, 2017). Therefore, the inheritance of weaving wisdom is important that has been passed on from generation to generation (Boonthieng, 2016).

“*Moon-Mung*” means inheritance so *Moon-Mung Phutai* in this research means the cultural heritage that is related to the ethnic textile wisdom of *Phutai* which appears in an individual way of life and common identity. It is for the existence of ethnic groups in a multicultural society through the creating process of a social-cultural space in the field of textile wisdom which may have to borrow cultural features from other cultures to mix them together. However, the *Phutai* people were forcibly brought from the left bank of Mekong to Thailand (Komolmal & Cadchumsang, 2018). Although there were new settlements in new areas but in terms of dress, beliefs, language and food wisdom, there are still the cultural heritages of the group as usual and the cultural inheritance of *Phutai* ethnic group still maintains the identity and the cultural inheritance very well (Burrell, 2009; Chaiyakhan, 2013). Therefore, the researcher is interested in this study, *Moon-Mung Phutai*: The process of creating a social-cultural learning space through ethnic textile wisdom in Sakon Nakhon basin, Thailand. There were issues in the study of *Moon-Mung Phutai* in Sakon Nakhon basin in terms of history, economy, society, and culture aspects (Cheesman, 2004).

2. METHODOLOGY

Knowledge of ethnic textile wisdom of *Phutai* in Sakon Nakhon basin, Thailand and synthesizing the pattern of the process of creating social-cultural learning space in terms of ethnic textile wisdom of *Phutai* in Sakon Nakhon basin, Thailand. The information was described and the data was compiled and examined by focus group discussion to check the facts. Then, the data was synthesized and used the presentation of research results by descriptive analysis. This study has 5 main processes as the following:

The first step, the study of documents and the conceptual framework of digital anthropology is the study of documents and researches that is related to *Phutai* ethnic group and the study of documents and research papers that is related to the concepts and theories used in this research. To provide information on historical, economic and social contexts, as well as information about the identity of the *Phutai* ethnic group and information related to concepts and theories. There is also a study through the digital anthropology framework which is the study of digital space that is now regarded as the world of digitalization (Kapilakanchana, 1987).

The second step, the multi-method community study is a study of data from 2 parts: data from documents and data from field studies to know the contextual information on the area and the identity of *Phutai* ethnic group in Sakon Nakhon basin that include information on the creating process of cultural social area of *Phutai* ethnic group in Sakon Nakhon basin.

The third step, the participatory field study is a field visit to study the information on the economic, social, historical context and identity of *Phutai* ethnic group by choosing to study *Phutai* people in Nong Sung district, Mukdahan Province, Phanna Nikhom district and Waritchaphum district, Sakon Nakhon province and Renu Nakhon district, Nakhon Phanom province and other areas who have knowledge of textile wisdom.

The fourth step, data analysis is a study that analyzes data from documents and field study to suggest guidelines for creating social-cultural areas through the ethnic textile wisdom in Sakon Nakhon basin. The results were reflected by group discussion to verify the accuracy of information.

The fifth step, summarizing and proposing research innovations. It is the use of all information that was obtained to draw conclusions and integrate the learning process of local studies.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Moon-Mung Phutai in Sakon Nakhon basin area that are still preserved or inherited includes superstition and soul, language, food, wisdom of weaving and fabric patterns. The things that are changed include residence and occupation. That is, the minorities learn to live with nature in balance by cooperating with natural environments (Lefebvre, 1991; Leepreecha, 2004).

Moon-Mung Phutai of ethnic textile wisdom in Sakon Nakhon basin area is the ability of *Phutai* women to weave cloth for household use (Ketsingsoi, 2011; Boonpila, 2015; Changruea, 2016). Especially, *Sarong* that has a specific character called *Tinto* and an indigo-dyed three-quarter sleeve shirt. The weaving pattern is influenced by the Buddhist belief and the influenced by the adaption to survive with natural environments (Figure 1).

The pattern of the process of creating a social-cultural space in terms of textile wisdom of *Phutai* ethnic group in Sakon Nakhon basin area is divided into 2 levels: the individual level where the area is created through the belief in Buddhism. As a result of tourism, the *Phutai* ethnic group is known. In addition, the area was created through the integration of the consciousness of one ethnic group through the World *Phutai* Association. For the common identity level, *Phutai* ethnic group represents as a symbolic interaction that depends on the social structure that is creating an area of textile wisdom through educational institutions and the monarchy (Mankhoksoong, 2004; Moryadee, 2010; Linphosan, 2012).



Figure 1 *Phutai* ethnic group performed dancing to worship Phra That Choeng Chum, Sakon Nakhon province

Phutai ethnic group has a symbolic approach to fighting, negotiate and adaptation so that their group can coexist with social structures that rely on new centers of power both in terms of history, economy, society and culture. It is by bringing the matter of religion, spiritual worship and textile wisdom to create a social area (Mangkang, 2016; Pananankhonsab, 2017).

The process of creating a social and cultural area of *Phutai* ethnic group in Sakon Nakhon basin is a creation of an area through religion (Pha-in, 2016). The results showed that it influences to tourism, creating a learning space through the collective consciousness of *Phutai* ethnic group, creating space through educational institutions and creating space through the monarchy (Dumrongsakul, 2011; Narkurairattana, 2015; Nitipaparnan, 2015).

4. CONCLUSION

A process of creating a social-cultural learning space in terms of textile wisdom of the *Phutai* ethnic in Sakon Nakhon basin, Thailand. It is the creation of a space through a unique dress that can create acceptance from other ethnic groups in a multicultural society. In the educational model of Thailand, there has been a discrepancy in the understanding of *Phutai* ethnic group about textile wisdom. Therefore, the curriculum and social studies textbooks need to be reviewed to create the learning process for local studies.

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