

The Value and Inheritance of Local Weaving in Uttaradit Tai – Laos Ethnic

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The objective of this research is to study the background and present conditions of the traditional woven fabric of Tai – Laos ethnic groups in Uttaradit Province, and to study the continuation approaches toward the traditional woven fabric. The qualitative methodology was applied to the study with field data collection and from related literatures and researches. The study finds that; 1) The history of traditional woven fabric of Tai – Laos ethnic groups in Nakhum Sub-district of Bankhok District, Faktha Sub-district of Faktha District, and Banfai Subdistrict of Nampad District, Uttaradit Province started when their ancestors were evacuated to Thailand in the late Ayutthaya Era, continuing up to King Rama IX's Era. Those ancestors brought their knowledge of weaving with them, and the Tai-Lao matmi weaving technique has continued until the present time. The traditional weaving style of matmi can still be found in the areas either using silk thread or using cotton thread, and it is an additional source of income for those people. 2) The value of the traditional woven fabric of Tai – Laos ethnic groups in Uttaradit Province in their way of life is that many local women have been weaving and using matmi fabric. In the social aspect, traditional woven fabric has been a part of social activities from small social units like families, to bigger ones like villages or communities. In the traditional aspect, matmi fabric has been used in many different traditions, and this is similar to those found in the north-eastern region of Thailand and in Laos PDR. And finally, in the cultural aspect, the traditional woven fabric can reflect the history of their ancestry, and it also has value in academic aspects as it is a body of knowledge that can be furthered in favour of the economy of the communities. 3) There were four approaches to traditional weaving continuation; 1. the continuation as a career because it could make a profit, 2. the continuation exclusively by the family members, 3. the continuation by learning directly from an expert or an educator, and 4. the traditional weaving continuation by practicing and developing the technique by oneself. The most common continuation approach to the traditional woven fabric of Tai – Laos ethnic groups in Uttaradit

Province is by teaching and learning exclusively in one's family, from elders to their children or grandchildren. In addition, the study of the value of traditional woven fabric reflects the roles of the traditional woven fabric in the ways of life, societies, traditions and cultures of Tai – Laos ethnic groups; and the continuation sustains the existence of the traditional woven fabric of Tai – Laos ethnic groups in Uttaradit Province.

Key words: *Value, Continuation, Traditional woven fabric, Tai-Lao Ethnic, Uttaradit.*

Background and Importance of the Study

Weaving is a kind of wisdom heritage which has been taught and continued since ancient times in each ethnicity where fabric has been woven for daily-life use by any gender and ages, according to specific geographical locations. In a way, weaving helped unite people as a society where one could rely on each other. Moreover, it could also be related with different religious philosophies and beliefs that had deeply bound people in the region together. Clothing is one of humanity's four basic needs, and different local woven clothes tell different stories, with different usage based on different ways of life and cultures that make them distinctive. Woven fabric played three important roles in the past; first, it was one of humanity's four basic needs for everyday use. Second, it could explicitly tell the social status of a wearer or user as it could be seen at first sight. Villagers wore cotton clothing due to the simplicity of growing cotton to weaving it, while people who belonged to a high social rank wore beautiful and colourful silk clothing woven by an especially skillful artisan. And lastly, weaving defined the roles between a man and a woman in a family. Most villagers were agriculturists, and in their free time, the women wove while the men prepared tools and equipment for farming and household use – as it was said, 'When the farming season ends, women weave clothing and men forge steel (Wanna Wutthakun & Yurarat Phanyura, 1994). Therefore, woven fabric has been an important part of the people for a long time.

Originally, Uttaradit Province was an ancient town called Bangpho Tha-it, which means 'the northern port'. This was an area of nine districts where people of different ethnicities had moved to and lived. The endemic population were Siamese-Thai and Tai-Yuan people; their bones were excavated with prehistoric tools made from stone and bronze found together. Uttaradit had been an important route since the age of the Dong Son civilisation, and people moved there more and more in the Tharavadi era and the Khmer Empire, as evidenced by the existence of an ancient town, 'Wiang Chao-ngo'. Later in the era of Sukhothai, there were several new towns emerging, like Fang, Thungyang, Tachuchok and Phichai. Additionally, since it was a major port for waterborne trade, people residing in Uttaradit came from many places, and thus, many ethnicities (Uttaradit's Provincial Office. 2017). Uttaradit people

today mainly consist of three cultural groups: 1) the Lanna cultural group, which has a similar way of life and culture to the Thai Lanna people – these people mostly reside in the Laplae District (Maepoon, Nanokkok, Failuang and Chaichumphon Sub-districts) and the Tapla district in the north of the province; 2) the Central Thai cultural group, who mostly reside in the Muang, Tron, Phichai and Thongsankhan Districts in the west and middle of the province, and; 3) the Lanchang cultural group, whose culture is similar to that of the people in north-eastern Thailand, and who mostly reside in the eastern part of the province and can be classified into two minor cultural groups: the Vientiane cultural group and the Luang Prabang cultural group. The Vientiane cultural group consists of the people whose ancestors were evacuated from Vientiane, Laos. They now live in the Wangdaeng, Bankaeng and Hadsongkhwaie sub-districts of the Tron District – Ban Kongkho of Khorum Sub-district, Ban Nataeo and Ban Natha-le of Laplae District. Luang Prabang culture can be found in the Ban Khoke, Faktha and Nampad Districts, and in certain parts of the Thongsankhan District. (Narumon Watthanaphanit, 2004). This is in accordance with what Withi Wanitchaphan states (2005), that Lao people usually moved from place to place, and regularly crossed the Mekong River to Thailand. Lao ethnics can be found in many parts of Thailand, for example; Tai Phuan or Lao Phuan people today live in the Hadsiao District, Sukhothai Province and in the Tron and Laplae Districts, Uttaradit Province.

The movement of different ethnicities brought with them the cultures and wisdoms of weaving with different techniques. Therefore, there have been many production processes of traditional woven fabric that are unique to each ethnicity. The uniqueness came from weavers' skills and have been continued and blended with the skills of other weavers from another ethnicity residing locally. However, the patterns differ depending on the people's liking, beliefs, available materials, and their traditions, customs and changes in society. Lao Phuan people in Uttaradit prefer weaving tinchok sin (a tubular skirt made of several pieces of fabric sewn together) with patterns on red cloth. The colours and the patterns are emblazoned; the threads are light and thin, mostly a mixture of cotton and silk. Yokdok fabric and muk fabric are used to make the body of a sin. Once the body of the skirt is sewn with the bottom part, it is flutterier than others that are made of cotton alone.

Historically, people in the Faktha, Nampad and Bangkok Districts had fled from Luang Prabang and Vientiane since the Thonburi Era because of wars. Woven fabric handicrafts in the Faktha, Nampad and Ban Khoke Districts of Uttaradit Province can be classified as a part of Luang Prabang's Lanchang cultural group and look much similar to woven fabric found in Lao PDR and in the north-eastern region of Thailand, as their borders are adjacent to each other. There are different traditional weaving techniques such as chok, matmi and khit techniques, which are popular among Tai-Lao cultural groups along the Mekong River basin (Withi Wanitchaphan, 2005). Because the people had woven clothes as tributes for the Lan Chang (Lan Xang) Kingdom for centuries, Lao ethnicity has had an excellent weaving skill.

As found in the history of China, Lao people established a prosperous kingdom in the south of China and specialised in silk farming dating from 1000 BC (Wannachat Thewabun. nd.), where silk was popularly woven with the matmi (weft ikat) technique derived from the Isan (north-eastern) people who had moved to many parts of northern Thailand (Silpakorn University, 2000). Examples of the woven handicrafts include blankets, pillow covers, bed sheets, and shawls, which reflect the wisdom and knowledge of weaving possessed by female weavers who have passed these to their descendants and developed them as a part-time or even full-time job for their source of income, even now.

There have been various weaving techniques unique to each ethnic group. Uttaradit is a province with three cultures, Lanna, Lanchang (Tai-Lao) and Central Thai cultures, and each culture has its own identity of weaving. However, due to its very large area, most development are located in the Muang District, which is the capital of the province, and includes many attractions, accommodation, restaurants and souvenir shops. As for the traditional woven fabric, most souvenir shops sell woven fabric including Tai-Yuan's tin chok, sin muk, bags, loincloths and plain clothes made in Uttaradit and the nearby provinces such as Sukhothai, Phrae and Nan. The researcher's survey found that no Tai-Lao's traditional woven fabric was marketed in these shops. Traditional woven fabric with matmi technique was available only in provincial annual festivals such as Phraya Phichai Dap Hak and Red Cross Fair, and Uttaradit Sweet Langsat and Quality Products Fair. Other than these events, matmi woven fabric could exclusively be found at local career group shops or local festival and fairs such as the Phaya Pad Festival; Nampad's Shallot, Garlic and Quality Products Fair; the Ko Chedi Bun Kong Khao Yai Festival; Ban Khoke's Cotton Blossom Festival; and Faktha Quality Products Fair. Unfortunately, even Uttaradit natives seem not to recognise the existence of traditional matmi fabric woven by the Tai-Lao ethnic group for hundreds of years ago in items such as the tin chok, whose tradition has become cultural heritage since 2012 (Ministry of Culture, 2017). The wisdom of weaving can be used to improve the communities' economy and develop products that can reflect the state of being a town of three cultures. Traditional woven fabric has been used in public relations for the province for a year, by emphasising and demonstrating the value of the Tai-Lao's traditional woven fabric, showing that it is as important as other types of clothes of Uttaradit.

Therefore, the researcher was interested in the history of Tai-Lao's traditional woven fabric and would like to research its values in different aspects, and the approaches to continue this traditionally woven fabric in Uttaradit, which is likely to be forgotten and discontinued as less and less people wish to continue weaving it. This is to formalise knowledge of the history, values and approaches of continuation; to raise awareness among related people; and to make the ethnic people proud of their ethnicity and their traditional fabric. These efforts will lead to the development, conservation and public relations of Tai-Lao's traditional woven fabric in the near future.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the history and actual condition of Tai-Lao's traditional woven fabric in Uttaradit Province,
2. To analyse the values of Tai-Lao's traditional woven fabric, and
3. To study the continuation approaches to Tai-Lao's traditional woven fabric in Uttaradit Province.

Methodology

The qualitative research methodology is applied to this research. The data is collected from related literatures, surveys, interviews and group discussions, and analysed according to the primary theories and the supporting theories and by comparative analysis. The data were presented in a descriptive analysis according to the objectives, and the results provided according to the scopes of the study.

Scope of the Study

1. The history and actual condition of Tai-Lao's traditional woven fabric with the matmi weaving technique in Uttaradit Province, to analyse the values of Tai-Lao's traditional woven fabric,
2. The values of Tai-Lao's traditional woven fabric in the aspects of the way of life, society, traditions and cultures, in order to demonstrate its value and to be used in the study of the methods of the continuation found to promote the Tai-Lao's traditional woven fabric as one of major traditional woven fabrics, and
3. The continuation approaches for Tai-Lao's traditional woven fabric in the changing societies and cultures in the community by researching different concepts of wisdom continuation.

Areas of the Study

1. Any areas in Uttaradit Province where Tai-Lao ethnic groups have resided since they were evacuated, and
2. where matmi traditional woven fabric has been made constantly, ranging from household production to community enterprise, and
3. whose population has continued weaving matmi traditional woven fabric.

The elementary study found the areas where Tai-Lao ethnic groups have resided and constantly woven matmi traditional woven fabric and the weaving wisdom has been

continued were the Nakhum Sub-district of the Ban Khoke District, the Faktha Sub-district of Faktha District and the Banfai Subdistrict of the Nampad District, Uttaradit Province.

Population and Target Groups of the Study with Purposive Sampling

1. Three experts or specialists on traditional woven fabric in Uttaradit Province with following qualifications
 - a teacher or an academic who specialise in the history, art and culture of traditional woven fabric of Uttaradit Province, and/or
 - a folk philosopher or a wisdom teacher specialised in the history, art and culture of traditional woven fabric of Uttaradit Province.
2. Practitioners who are producers of textile, weaving instruments and materials; including sellers and retailers
 - male and female traditional fabric weavers in the Nakhum Sub-district of Ban Khoke District, the Faktha Sub-district of Faktha District and the Banfai Subdistrict of Nampad District, Uttaradit Province, with over 5 years of experience in weaving traditional fabric for their household use and/or for sale, and/or
 - sellers and tailors of traditional fabric in forms of clothing and different products in the production areas and around the attractions in Uttaradit.
3. Persons in the policy, visions, missions and planning of the governmental agency related to the promotion of Tai-Lao traditional fabric in Uttaradit Province.

The data collection tools and methods included primary data collected from the field interviews in the communities and secondary data from related literature and research. The field data collection was comprised of surveys, observations, structured and unstructured interviews, group interviews and group discussions. The collected data were analysed according to the primary theories and the supporting theories and by comparative analysis, and presented in a descriptive analysis according to the objectives.

Results of the Study

1. The study of the history and actual conditions of Tai-Lao's traditional woven fabric in Uttaradit Province found that,

The area of Nakhum Sub-district of the Ban Khoke District was populated by Lao Phuan people who had moved from the north-eastern part of Lao PDR (present day Chiangkwang) in 2240 B.E. because of war. Then those people moved out and were replaced by Lao people living by the border from Ban Huaibuha of Paklai, Xayaburi District and Lao people who were evacuated after the Thai–Lao Border War in the three villages of Ban Mai, Ban Klang

and Ban Sawang, located between the Ban Khoke District, Uttaradit Province, Thailand and Xayaburi District, Lao PDR (Matichon Editorial. 2007).

For the Faktha Sub-district of Faktha District; their ancestors, led by Phaya Pad, had moved from Luang Prabang to live by the Pad River in the area of Bansongkhon. First, they travelled along the Mekong River to Paklai town and crossed the Luang Prabang Mountain Range to Ban Muangchetton of the Ban Khoke District. They travelled further and settled down by the Pad River, nowadays called the Ban Faktha and Ban Wangkhwan of Songkhon District. The Pad River was named after their leader Phaya Pad. And when there were more people, they moved southward and built a new town called Banfai, which was also located by the Pad River. From the literature review and the interviews with experts and village philosophers about matmi traditional woven fabric, it was found that there were many different patterns of woven fabric, even school uniforms in the past were woven for the children. The weavers also farmed silk worms, but it was not successful, so they stopped over ten years ago. Weaving became a part-time job for the villagers, and it could make them a fortune.

From the literature review and the interviews with experts and village philosophers about matmi traditional woven fabric in the Banfai Sub-district of Nampad District, Phaya Pad, who ruled the area at that time, brought cotton seeds from Ban Nafai of Paklai Town, Xayaburi District, Lao PDR, and gave the seed to his people to grow together with their rice in the rice fields. After 120 days, the cotton would bloom in the rice fields, when the cotton was harvested, threaded, and then woven into clothing. A large amount of fabric was woven at the time including matmi, chok, and khit. Later on, as growing rice became more popular, the cotton fields gradually disappeared.

As for the actual conditions of Tai-Lao's traditional woven fabric in the Nakhum Sub-district of Ban Khoke District, people have constantly woven it because there is always increasing demand for tin chok fabric and the market is still widely open for the people in the area, and those from the Isan region (north-eastern Thailand) like to wear matmi in their daily life. Each month, people come to buy matmi fabric for retailing. The weavers also group together for systematic production and register their groups as community enterprises. They are well known because they have made their products available in the area and in the trade fairs organised by different governmental sections. The weaver groups found are groups with members aged under forty and groups with members aged forty to seventy years old. These groups can now constantly weave their products, but as their part-time job when they are free from their regular agricultural work like growing rice, tamarind and corn.

In the Faktha Sub-district of the Faktha District, there is little matmi production due to the amount of orders received. Weavers do not weave matmi fabric and wait to sell it, they only make it to order. The matmi production for household use is rare, since tin chok, another kind

of woven fabric, is more popular in the area. Another reason is that the price of tin chok fabric is much better than for matmi, so they prefer weaving tin chok to matmi. In addition, more local people tend to do silkworm farming and sell silk to many fabric weaving producers inside and outside the province.

In the Banfai Sub-district of Nampad District, however, matmi fabric is still very popular. There is a considerable amount of production because of its quality, thickness and attractiveness, although there are still different types of fabric produced in the area including tin chok and phakhaoma (loincloth). There are many groups of weavers, they gather together strongly to produce goods as community enterprises and can produce the fabric constantly. However, their numbers are not high enough, since most of the weavers are so old that they cannot weave as much fabric in a short time as they used to do.

2. For the study of the values of Tai-Lao's traditional woven fabric in Uttaradit Province, its values can be analysed through four aspects (way of life, society, tradition and culture) as follows:

1) Way of life: In the past, women were responsible for weaving clothing for their family members; they could weave loincloths, blankets, bags, curtains and more using khit or chok techniques. Matmi woven fabric is now woven for sale in the community markets, fairs and festivals, instead of being woven for household use as it was in the past. The weaving processes are done when weavers are free from their regular agricultural work like farming rice and tamarinds and including other rotated crops like beans, vegetables, corns, shallots and garlic. Female weavers usually weave fabric in the afternoons or evenings after they finish their farm work.

Matmi fabric is still popular in the Faktha, Nakhum and Banfai sub-districts, especially among the elderly because it is comfortable and beautiful. It is also easy to weave and it can be worn well in daily activities like chores at home and agricultural work in the orchards or rice fields.

2) The social aspect of Tai-Lao's traditional woven fabric in Uttaradit province: Weaving was a part of social activities because every household wove their own clothing. As a family is the smallest unit of a society, household weaving reflected the role of women in a family in weaving different kinds of fabric for household use. It was a role that was conducted to serve the basic and economic needs of a family, and also reflected the division of roles in a family between men and women. The family unit was the starting point of the instruction and continuation of customs, traditions and cultures in the community, which included the weaving and using of traditional fabric, especially for female children. Another extended unit of a society is a social economic institute where people produce fabric to satisfy their direct

physical need. People need to be a member of a society to cooperate with other members, and thus they establish organisations and institutes related to weaving to help each other in the community.

3) Traditional aspects: The Tai-Lao ethnic groups in Uttaradit are similar to those in the north-eastern part of Thailand and those in Lao PDR. Each year, there is the Ko Chedi Bun Kong Khao Yai Festival, where people bring their own rice to form a large chedi, which has continued for a long time in the Ban Khoke district. There is the Bunprasatkhaio Bucha Phramaephosop festival in the Faktha District where people parade and build a rice castle to worship the goddess of rice, and people in Nampad District hold the Garlic and Shallot fair. Matmi traditional fabric has been a part of these events. People wear a matmi which is especially beautiful to the events, a combination of matmi and chok to make their sin (skirt) more beautiful and unique. They even weave sin (skirts) with silk, which is more expensive. Traditional woven fabric is also used in the decoration in the events, on the parade carts and as the costumes of shows to present their Tai-Lao identity in accordance with each event.

4) The cultural aspect: Tai-Lao traditional weaving can also reflect its cultural values as follows:

- The value that reflects the history of the ancestors: This is like a reminder or a symbol for the Tai-Lao ethnic groups whose ancestors came to Thailand in the era of King Rama III around 2371-2372 B.E., from the evacuations of the Anouvong's Rebellion (Lao-Siamese War) and the Thai-Lao Border War in the three villages of Ban Mai, Ban Klang and Ban Sawang located between Ban Khoke District, Uttaradit Province, Thailand and Xayaburi District, Lao PDR. Tai-Lao women at that time liked to wear matmi skirts with striped patterns, which were usually created according to their beliefs. One of the patterns was the naga pattern, a symbol of greatness, prosperity, and power. This was similar to those in the north-eastern part of Thailand and in Lao PDR.
- The value in academic or educational aspect: Tai-Lao traditional woven fabric possesses a value to be researched, for there are many interesting dimensions, whether in its history or its wisdom and knowledge of weaving materials and processes, which should be passed to local people and students. The continuation can benefit the development or adaptation of the knowledge into new products. The key academic value is that of materials and process of Tai-Lao matmi traditional weaving in the Faktha, Nakhum and Banfai sub-districts.
- The value in economic aspect: The local wisdom of Tai-Lao traditional woven fabric is the cultural heritage of the local communities. The weaving culture is directly and

distinctly involved with the economy in terms of generating income for the people. They can sell matmi in plain cloth, as ready-made products for everyday use, or as contemporary clothing. The production of the traditional fabric therefore helps increase their income and promote the economy of a community with its unique local wisdom of weaving.

3. For the study of the continuation approaches of Tai-Lao's traditional woven fabric in Uttaradit Province, there are constant continuations in weaving Tai-Lao traditional fabric. Conclusions from the analysis of the way of life, society, tradition and culture in the Nakhum Sub-district of Ban Khoke District, the Faktha Sub-district of Faktha District, and the Banfai Subdistrict of Nampad District, Uttaradit Province are as follows:

1) The continuation as a career: This approach needs to have all of the elements required for the continuation, but its process does not have to be in the correct order because it also depends on when the weavers are free from other responsibilities and it is convenient to teach. The environment and the atmosphere in the training process are genuine with true media, materials and equipment. Learners do not expect to be evaluated, since the continuation as a career approach takes a long time to complete. It is an approach that applies the economic value of the local wisdom because it can make income for the trainees in the future. The approach is suitable for trainees aged 40-60 years old who can practice weaving by themselves at home. In this case, it is possible that the trainers can be ones who live in the same community or not.

2. The continuation exclusively by the family members: This approach needs to have all of the elements required for the continuation and they do have to be in the correct order of learning weaving because the trainer and the trainee live in the same residence, or they are relatives. The environment and the atmosphere in the training process are genuine with true media, materials, equipment and fabric models which are the heritage of a specific family. There is no obvious evaluation, since they have plenty of time until the trainee is specialised. It is an approach that applies the social value of the local wisdom, for it makes learners love and want to conserve the weaving wisdom of their own family. This approach is suitable for trainees aged 40 years old and under who can practice weaving at home with their own family. In this case, the trainers need to live in the same community only.

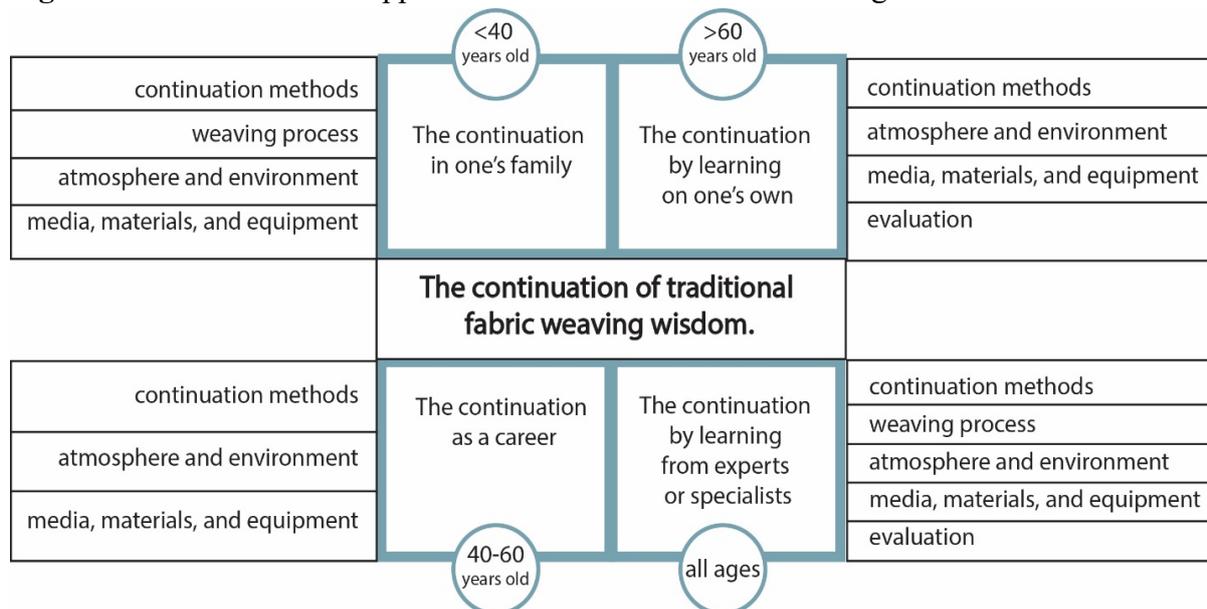
3) The continuation by learning directly from an expert or an educator: This approach needs to have all of the elements required for the continuation and they do have to be in the correct order of learning weaving because the trainer is specialised and has known that there will be training sessions in weaving, so he or she has sufficient time to review the training and to prepare the required materials and equipment. The environment and the atmosphere in the training process are genuine with true media, materials and equipment, but it is not necessary

that the fabric models have to be real. They can be pictures or even modern computer graphics. Trainees are expected to be evaluated whether by observation or documentation, or both. There can also be a pre-test and a post-test to make the learning outcome objective. This approach is suitable for people of all ages because it only focuses on academic knowledge; learners may not use the skill as a career, or they may not want to be specialised, either. Both male and female trainees are capable of learning, and it is also possible that trainers can be ones who live in the same community or not.

4) The traditional weaving continuation by practicing and developing the technique by oneself: This approach also needs to have all of the elements required for the continuation and have to be in the correct order of learning weaving, possibly with an agreement between the trainer and trainee. The environment and the atmosphere in the training process are genuine with true media, materials, equipment and fabric models made by the trainer. An observation and discussion can be used to evaluate the quality and standard of the trainee's ability. This approach is suitable for people of aged 40-60 years old who are able to afford the cost of certain materials and equipment and have sufficient time for the training. It is an approach that applies the social value of the local wisdom because it promotes a generosity between the trainee and the trainer to help each other; a trainee can act as an apprentice who helps his or her trainer in weaving during the training. After the training, one can practice weaving by oneself until able to earn income from weaving. It is also possible that trainers can be ones who live in the same community or not.

The knowledge acquired can be classified into four models of the continuation of traditional fabric weaving as follows:

Figure 1. The continuation approaches of traditional fabric weaving



Discussion

The study of Tai-Lao's traditional woven fabric in Uttaradit Province found that people in th Faktha, Nakhum and Banfai Sub-Districts still continue their local wisdom of traditional matmi weaving. The weaving culture can satisfy the needs of an individual in three aspects according to the structural function theory (Anurak Panyanuwat, 2005):

1. Clothing, including Tai-Lao's traditional woven fabric, is one of the four basic needs of a human-being, which could not be purchased in the past. While clothing is available for sale in the community today, people needed to weave clothing for themselves and their family members a long time ago.
2. Tai-Lao's traditional woven fabric reflects the social and mental needs that are the structures of the social status and the wellbeing of one's family members. In the past, weaving was a function of women in a family while men prepared all materials and equipment. This was one obvious thing about weaving culture, and it was related to the marriage: a man usually chose a wife who could weave.
3. Tai-Lao's traditional woven fabric also reflected the need of mental security. Weaving could reassure the identity of people and of their ancestors who moved from Laos to Thailand and lived in the Nampad, Faktha and Ban Khoke Districts, Uttaradit Province at the beginning of the Rattanakosin Era.

The history of Tai-Lao's traditional woven fabric in the Nampad, Faktha and Ban Khoke Districts is coherent. At any rate, in the area of Ban Songkhon, which is farther away, the historical timeline is shorter. This could be because it is secondarily acquired wisdom from nearby areas and the people have reinvented the identity, patterns and techniques as their own. This agrees with what Wandu Santiwutthimethi (2002) explains about the process of ethnic identity development originating under continuous relationship and social changes. It was supposed that the ethnic groups who lived closely to each other had some relationships that included trading and even battling. These relationships made people borrow and blend others' cultures with their own. Therefore, when an ethnic group needed to unite their people or solidify their identity, the ethnic identity development was established to identify the similarities that made people of the same ethnicity 'we', and the differences that made others 'they'. The process could be completely invented, or it could be reinvented by borrowing certain parts of other cultures and applying them as parts of ones' own culture. Woven fabric was one of those cultural identities that was borrowed and blended. Patricia Cheesman (1988) study of Tai-Lao's traditional woven fabric found that when comparing the processes of silk threading, pattern making and fabric weaving of Tai-Lao's traditional woven fabric in Vientiane, Luang Prabang and Pakse to Tai-Lao's traditional woven fabric in Thailand there were similarities which could not be differentiated as to which one influenced or was influenced by the other. As a result, both of them could be said that they were an identity of

Tai-Lao woven fabric. However, an identity created at one time might not be effective evidence when the time has passed because each ethnic group may adapt and borrow other cultures. This is similar to what Linda McIntosh (2008) states, that weavers wove fabric in different patterns based on their own culture, such as from religious beliefs and other parallel cultures such as agriculture or waterborne trade. These made fabric in the multicultural Southeast Asia region similar.

Tai-Lao traditional woven fabric in Uttaradit Province possesses the way of life, social, traditional and cultural values. There are also historical, academic and economic values found in the weaving wisdom. People in the three districts still use matmi fabric in many occasions, whether at home or outside their house in the community, because it can be woven easily with various patterns. Matmi fabric can be decorated to make it more attractive with colours, patterns, techniques and materials, to use in special occasions or ceremonies. Tai-Lao traditional woven fabric is an important kind of folk art that people make to use in their everyday life or for their local traditions or beliefs. The art is made simply but is still functional, and it can be continued, improved, or adapted according to changes in a society (Santi Leksukhum, 1993).

The continuation of Tai-Lao traditional woven fabric in the Nampad, Faktha and Ban Khoke Districts can be classified into four approaches. 1) The continuation as a career that could make a profit and promote income for the people in the community. A good example of this approach is found at Ban Nonkum's community enterprise, where people weaving Tai-Yuan fabric let others come and study the weaving process so the community can earn money from the training and by selling their products. 2) The continuation exclusively by the family members, which is the most-found continuation approach because a family has a major influence in the fostering of a weaving technique with the children or grandchildren so they can use it in their future career. The trainers are parents who specialise in weaving through practice and experience. Additionally, the resources available locally can be adapted for their benefit (Utsani Suadi, 2006). The training can be performed at any time at their convenience and interest. 3) The continuation by learning directly from an expert or an educator where the trainers are specialised and can be supported by a government agency. The training can be a lecture, demonstration, experiment, workshop, exhibition, seminar, community forum, brainstorming, study visit, individual or group practice, or a study from samples, documents, videos, or other types of media (Sumari Sangsi, 2014). And, 4) the traditional weaving continuation by practicing and developing the technique on one's own, which is possible for a learner who has no basic weaving skill. The reasons of practicing alone can be a personal interest ongoing since childhood, for he or she possibly may have seen the weaving process performed before, or else the individual may have received some guidelines and wants to practice weaving on their own (Pathom Nikmanon, 1996).



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