

Culture

Ways of Life and Wisdom





Culture



Ways of Life and Wisdom





“...ชาติไทยเรานั้นได้มีเอกราช มีภาษา
ศิลปะ และขนบธรรมเนียมประเพณี
เป็นของตนเองมาช้านานหลายศตวรรษแล้ว
ทั้งนี้ เพราะบรรพบุรุษของเราได้เสียสละอุทิศชีวิต
กำลังกายและใจ สะสมสิ่งเหล่านี้ไว้ให้
พวกเรา จึงจำเป็นอย่างยิ่งที่เราจะต้องรักษา
สิ่งเหล่านี้ไว้ให้คงทนถาวรเป็นมรดกของอนุชน
รุ่นหลังต่อไป...”



Royal Address by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej
at the Opening Ceremony of the Ramkhamhaeng National Museum, Sukhothai Province, on 25th January 1964





Message

From

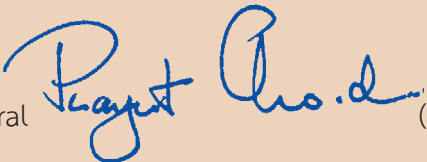
His Excellency General Prayut Chan-o-cha (Ret.)
Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand
on the Occasion of the Publication of the Book entitled
“Culture, Ways of Life and Wisdom”



Throughout our long history, the Kingdom of Thailand has been independent, prosperous and rich in culture. We take much pride in preserving and cherishing the magnificent Thai arts, culture and tradition inherited from our ancestors. The distinctive Thai culture, ways of life and wisdom passed on from generation to generation, are by-products of our ability to develop our own traditions and adopt various cultures and civilizations that came into our contact, reflected in our literature, music, performing arts, fashions and foods, which are unique and vary from region to region.

The Royal Thai government has implemented a number of policies, for preserving, restoring and promoting our cultural heritage. In this connection, this book can help encourage the Thai people to learn and understand our own history, and to be aware of the importance of our cultural lineage. It can also cultivate and enable the younger generation to cherish and uphold “Thainess”, thereby sustaining our long-standing status in world history.

This book serves as a permanent record of the knowledge about Thai culture, ways of life and wisdom. It should enable the young generation to enhance their understanding of Thai ways of life, practiced, developed and handed down through the generations. I wish this initiative great success in its effort to generate pride in being a Thai person. In addition, I sincerely hope that this book can create a better understanding of the Thai culture and wisdom to our foreign friends.

General  (Ret.)
(Prayut Chan-o-cha)

Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand



Message from the Minister of Culture



Culture is fundamental in determining the notion of Thainess. As the principles of morality playing a role for overall individual, social and national development, culture remains the foundation for our unity and security for the sake of human dignity and prestige. The Ministry of Culture is entrusted with the task of promoting and supporting all dimensions of culture in line with the government policy.

The elements of the book, “Culture, Ways of Life and Wisdom,” appear as part of the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage officially recognized and legally protected by the Department of Cultural Promotion. The Act of Promotion and Preservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage B.E.2559 (2016) was established as a normative instrument for the protection of intangible cultural heritage. Apart from being the pride of the nation, intangible cultural heritage can be developed according to the concept of economic value added to its contribution to cultural tourism, cultural goods and services.

On behalf of the Ministry of Culture, I hope that the book will be useful to enhance knowledge, understanding and awareness of the importance of culture to both the Thais and friends of Thailand with regard to sustainable development in the context of the future.

Vira Rojpojchanarat

(Mr. Vira Rojpojchanarat)

Minister of Culture



Preface by Director-General of the Department of Cultural Promotion



The Department of Cultural Promotion following the Minister of Culture's policy has produced this book to promote knowledge of culture, ways of life and wisdom for the general public to understand and become aware of importance of culture.

It is extensively known that Thailand is a country of cultural diversity. People living in different regions have their unique ways of life – owing to the ingenuity of Thai ancestors for utilizing their wisdom to live in harmony with nature.

The content of the “Culture, Ways of Life and Wisdom” book is divided into 6 chapters: Prologue; Precious Tradition and Ways of Life; Performing Arts and Spiritual Performance; Thai Craftsmanship; Thai Cuisine and Lifestyle; and Thai Folk Games and Sports. Each chapter showcases a unique story covering every region of Thailand, for interested people to visualize the importance of the varieties.

The Department of Cultural Promotion hopes this book will be useful for promotion patriotic love and pride among Thai people.

(Mrs. Pimravee Watthanavarangkul)

Director-General
Department of Cultural Promotion

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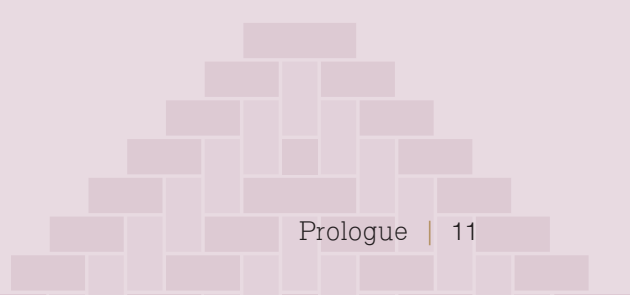

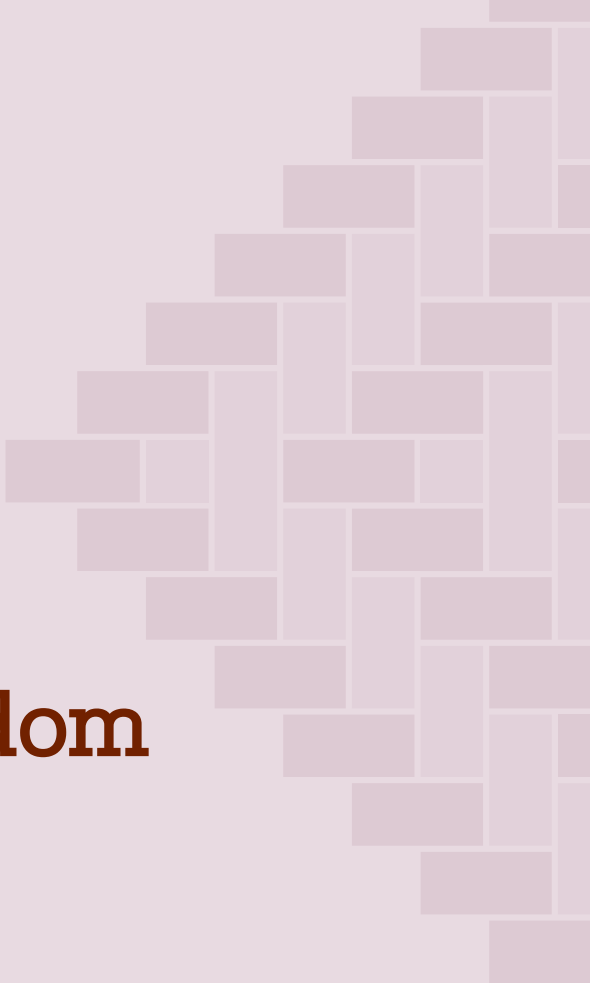

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Culture Ways of Life and Wisdom

Prologue

Thai culture, ways of life and wisdom is a precious heritage inherited through many generations and worthwhile to be preserved for pride and sustainability.

The book entitled **“Culture, Ways of Life and Wisdom”** is produced by the Department of Cultural Promotion, the Ministry of Culture with the determination to disseminate the valuable stories and charming cultural heritage, the identity of lifestyle and wisdom through the lives of Thai people living across the country, especially in terms of Thai tradition, performing arts, traditional craftsmanship, cuisine and sports to the general public.

The knowledge process reflects on the ways of life close to the nature, reverence for ancestors and benefactors, community solidarity, beliefs and faith in religions, artistic creations and skills invented to develop lives and livelihood, in harmony with the nature.

In addition to the dissemination of knowledge and understanding of Thai culture, the book aims to promote morality and good attitude to the general public to realize the importance of Thai culture.

The Definition of Culture, Ways of Life and Wisdom

Culture or **“Wattanatham”** in Thai, is composed by two words: **“wattana”** means growth and prosperity, while **“tham”** refers to action or practice. The overall meaning is the action for growth.

The National Culture Act, B.E. 2553 provides the definition of **“culture”** that refers to the ways of life, thoughts, beliefs, value, norm, custom/tradition, rituals and wisdoms which a group of community or society incorporates in creation, accumulation, cultivation, transfer, learning, improvement, and change for growth both mental and physical aspects peacefully and sustainably.

Culture therefore covers all aspects created by humans whether they are abstract or concrete. It also means the behavioral pattern of the society from the past, through the learning, invention, adaptation in response to the needs and development of livelihood. It evolves from generation to generation systematically to create growth and social security.

Ways of life refers to Thai people’s ways of live from their birth to mortality, including the four requisites necessary for living: shelter, food, clothing and medicine. It also means social knowledge, culture, wisdom, behavior, practice, education from past to present.

Wisdom is knowledge and skills developed over a period of time through cognitive process, selection, improvement, development and transfer to be used for solving problems, life development with nature balance and suitable to the current period. Thai wisdom is outstanding in many areas including agriculture, arts, literature and language.

It is obvious that culture, ways of life and wisdom reflect on the competence of local people as a product of various knowledge collection, dynamic adaptation to environment. The process has been ongoing through many generations to become the ways of life that suit Thai society.



- Religion is one of the factors that influences the ways of live and culture. Thai culture has its root from Buddhism and it has been inherited through generations in the pattern of beliefs, rites, morality, law, literature, language and custom.

“Culture is a tool to unite social members, engage them in harmony, and cultivate the right attitudes, beliefs, and values. In addition, culture is subject to a never-ending process of changes through time.”



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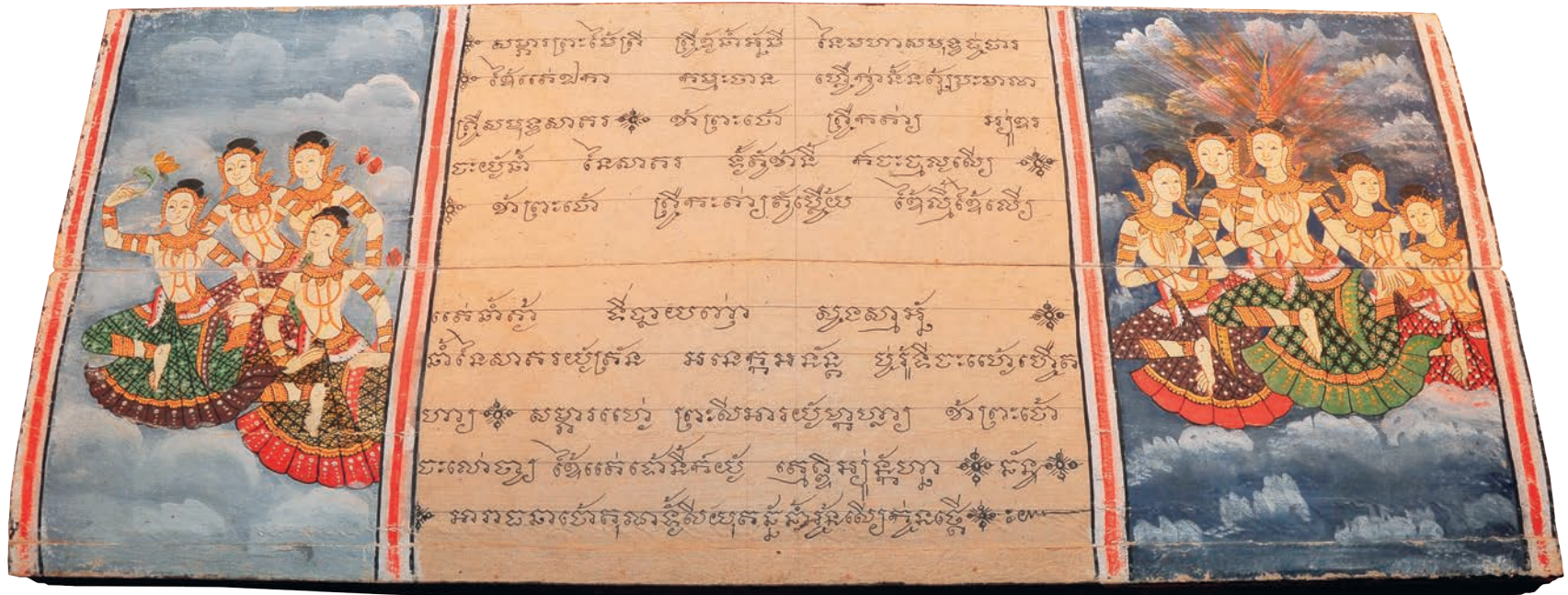
Intangible Cultural Heritage

Intangible cultural heritage refers to practice, representation, knowledge, skills, tools, artifacts and cultural space in connection with them, which community, community members, individuals accept they are part of the cultural heritage. Intangible cultural heritage transferred from generation to generation is created by the community and group of people who interact with their own nature and history. Giving the sense of identity and continuity, the heritage also makes them respect to cultural diversity and human creativity.

Intangible cultural heritage is divided into 6 categories as follows;

© Folk Literature and Language

Folk Literature is literature or art created from thinking and imagination that is composed, told, recorded, performed, communicated in several ways. In general, there are two types of literature: written literature and oral literature. Hence, the scope of literature covers folklores, legends, tales, short stories, fictions, chronicles, songs, epigrams, etc. Thai literature can be in the form of verses and poems. The famous stories include royal and folk literature such as Thai Stone Inscription No. 1, Inao, Ramayana, Phrapathom Sombodhikatha, Supasit Phra Ruang, Phra Apai Manee, Lilit Yuan Phai, the Legend of Phra Phutthasihing , the Legend of Dao Lookkai, the tale of Kong Khao Noi Ka Mae, etc.



“Wisdom of each locality is the heritage that ancestors had been creating, collecting and retaining through generations. Thai and the local people should realize its value and be proud of sustaining the heritage.”

Language refers to the tool that people use to communicate in life, interact with other groups. Both spoken and unspoken language reflects perspectives, wisdom and culture of each ethnic group. Thailand has Thai language as a national language with the following classifications.

“Thai Language” refers to official language of Thailand

“Local Thai Language” refers to dialects communicable and understandable in each locality. It can be differed in words and sound, such as Northern Thai dialect, Northeastern Thai dialect, Central Thai dialect and Southern Thai dialect.

“Ethnic Group Language” refers to dialects communicating among ethnic groups living in Thailand, such as Tai language, Chino-Tibetan language and Mong-Mian language.

Moreover, Thai language also has levels of vocabulary and rankings used in particular groups and activities. For example, terms of reverence are set for royal family members. Individuals can be called like family members such as brother, sister, uncle, aunty, grandfather, grandmother, even though they do not have a kinship relationship.

- Culture and tradition of each Thai locality may differ by geography, natural resources, environment, but remain their identity of language, artefact, music, food and costume.

© Performing Arts

Performing Arts refer to the forms of arts including Lakorn (drama), modern dance, traditional dance and music that conveys stories. They can be formal or adapted from originals, performed in front of audiences serving the purpose of beauty, entertainment, thought-provoking which leads to social development and change. The performances can be original or adapted, such as Lakorn, music and local performance.

Performing Arts can be divided into 2 categories.

“Music and singing” refers to the sound from musical instrument and singing that composes music melodies, creating pleasure or various moods. It also plays a role in driving moods, providing entertainment, supporting acting or ritual performances. As for the music, it can be classified as music for performances and music for ritual performances such as playing Pin (stringed lute), Can (reed mouth organ), wooden xylophone, flute, fiddle and singing baby lullaby songs.

“Dramatic arts and Drama” refer to a physical expression, body movement, dance, use of voice, singing, use of scripts, use of equipment, etc. to convey stories, moods and feelings, together with or without music and singing. The performance is divided into ritual performance, storytelling performance, and nonstory play, such as Lakorn Nai, Li-kae, Khon, Mo Lam, Manohra, dance, etc.

© Social Practices, Rituals, Traditions and Festive Events

Social practices, rituals, traditions and festive events mean the collective behaviors of people in the community that transmit through generations and lead to the peaceful society and express the identity of that community and ethnic group which can be divided as follows;

- **Etiquette** means good behavior towards other people, such as etiquette of speaking, paying respect, walking, sitting and squatting, proper manners at the table, etc.



- **Tradition** refers to continued behaviors and practices of activities based on the lifestyle and society of the community such as religious tradition, festive tradition, lifecycle tradition traditions about livelihood.

- Religion traditions e.g. Buddhist Holy Day, Buddhist Lent Day, End of the Buddhist Lent Day, Visakha Bucha Day, Makha Bucha Day, Asanha Bucha Day.

- Festive traditions e.g. Loy Krathong, Songkran, parades of lent candles, Phi Ta Khon, the end of the tenth lunar month, Chak Phra (Pulling the Buddha), Bun Pha Wet, Mahachati Sermon

- Lifecycle traditions from birth to death e.g. baby haircut, tonsure, funeral ceremony, wedding ceremony, new house ceremony, prolonging life tradition, ordination, requiem, traditional welcome ceremony wrist-binding ceremony, Phuk Seui (Silk Festival for friendship)

- Traditions about livelihood e.g. Teacher veneration (Wai Khru) ceremony, rice ritual (Kwan Khao), cat parade for rainfalls, Rocket Festival, Royal Plowing Ceremony



“The different characteristics of climates and environments in each region of Thailand contribute to the diverse culture of living.”



◎ Knowledge and Practices Concerning Nature and the Universe

Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe refers to the knowledge, methods, skills, beliefs, practices and the expressions developed from interactions between human and environment, naturally and supernaturally as follows;

- **Food and Nutrition** is consumable substance for humans, cooking methods, consumption methods and nutritious value

• Thai Traditional Medicine and Indigenous Medicine

“Thai Traditional Medicine” is the medical process concerning the health check-ups, diagnosis, treatments or preventions, promotions and rehabilitations of humans and/or animal’s health by the application of Thai traditional wisdom.

“Indigenous Medicine” is the way of self-reliance healthcare in traditional communities through different beliefs, rituals and resources based on each locality until it has become part of life.

• Astrology and Astronomy

“Astrology” is knowledge of predicting the fortune and future of individuals and nations based on the position and pattern of the stars at the time of incidents.

“Astronomy” is knowledge concerning the observation and explanation of the universe beyond the earth’s atmosphere e.g. eclipses and weather forecasts.

- **Natural Resource Management** is knowledge of ecosystem management for conservation and sustainable utilization of natural resources

- **Strategic Location and Settlement** refers to knowledge and belief in the inhabitant selection in harmony and balance with the environment and culture of the community.

◎ Traditional Craftsmanship

Traditional Craftsmanship refers to wisdom, technical skills, material selections, and creative methods that express the local identity, social and culture development of people. Local materials together with knowledge accumulated from many generations are developed into expertise of individuals. It becomes quality and unique craftsmanship of the locality such as silk or cotton weaving, lai or krajood basketry, silverware, brass making, pottery, leather, wood carving, etc.



◎ **Indigenous Games, Indigenous Sports and Martial Arts**

Indigenous games, indigenous sports and martial arts refer to sport games and martial arts which are played in Thailand and reflect on Thai identity, divided into three following categories.

“Indigenous games” is the self-motivated and body-moving activity for fun, uniquely found in each locality. Such games create love and harmony in the group — without fixed rules but agreed among the players, such as Mak Keb (jackstones), Mon Son Pa (hiding a cloth behind one’s back), Ma Kan Kluai (Banana rib horse), Mae Ngu Aei (Snatching a baby from the mother snake), Phong Phang (Trapping the fish), Ri Ri Khaosan (Catching the last one in the line), Son Ha (Hide and seek) or Pong Pae.

“Indigenous Sports” refer to the physical competitions which require moving ability, with an aim of winning results by the rules of each locality such as ox and cattle running competitions, Ti Chab (Humming and Tagging), Takro Lod Huang, Yae Long Roo, Thai kite, and chess.

“Martial arts” refer to fighting methods or formats of using body or tools with the skills culturally and inherently trained such as swordplay and Thai boxing.







Ways of Life

Thai People of Four Regions

Thai people's ways of life are similar and different dependent on each of their regions. Several factors including environment, ethnicity, beliefs, religion and tradition in that region are mixed and lead to their ways of life and identity that significantly indicate value and the pattern of their lifestyles.

Northern Region of Thailand formerly known as Lanna Kingdom has unique livelihoods in terms of spoken language, written scripts, culture and tradition. With its temperature cooler than other regions, the Northern people's ways of life are soft and neat, obviously seen from their soft sweet dialects and delicate traditions and indigenous performances like the festive events of Poi Luang, Yi Peng, Floating Lanterns, Nail-covered Dance, Ngiao Dance, Klong Sabud Chai (Lanna Encouraging Drum). The Northern people also have strong faith in Buddhism, and a primitive belief in spirits as evident in the prolonging ceremony.



Their culture of eating is similar to the Isan people as their popular food includes sticky rice and pickled fish. Famous Northern food include green chili paste (Nam prik Num), Northern sausage (Sai Oau), Nam ngiao curry noodles (Kanom Jeen Nam Ngiao), etc. Due to its high mountainous terrain rich in forest, most of the Northern Thais make their living by raising livestock and agriculture in the lowlands. Their slow ways of life makes themselves gentle and kind. Through many generations, they continue to adhere to their native traditions and customs that have been developed into the lifestyles of Lanna people.

Isan or the Northeastern Region of Thailand is diverse in terms of arts, culture and traditions that vary from place to place due to the ethnic interactions. Isan people have a simple way of life. Despite their poor living conditions, the Northeast Thais are still very diligent, hard-working, and retain the ancient traditions of the ancestors strictly, both dialects used in communication and beliefs in spirit of the ancestors and farms. They normally hold worship ceremonies as they believe that ghosts have superstitious power which can bring them good or bad luck.

Northeastern tradition and indigenous games are unique, such as the tradition of Phi Ta Khon, rockets, fire boats, Moh-Lam Dance with string musical instrument or reed mouth organ. The show is fun and lively to replace the arid landscape. Another very famous thing is the food, especially **“Som Tam”**, which is popular among people in all parts of Thailand. The indispensable ingredient for Isan food is **“pickled fish”** or so-called **“Pla Dak”** by the Isan people.

Central Region of Thailand. The ways of life of people in the Central region is related closely to water. Most houses are in the height of the floodplain to prevent floods in the wet season and use the boat as a vehicle for convenient transportation. This region is the country's major rice plantation area. The Central Thais have a way of life that is associated with farming societies, especially rice farming. There are still rituals that reflect the beliefs in rice society, such as the worship of the mother and the farmer. People in the Central region eat rice as the main food. And with its rich terrain, it is rich in so many fish. The main food that is available in almost every meal of the Central people is **"Chilli"** such as shrimp paste chilli sauce (Namprik Kapi), sweet chilli paste (Namprik Long-rua), and grilled-fish chilli paste (Namprik Pla Yang). There are also many vegetables enabling possibilities to create various kinds of dishes, tastily and beautifully both on main dishes and sweets.

In addition to being an important food source, the Central region is a main region collecting both Thai culture and arts of the royal court and villagers, as evident in the performances of Khon, Li-kae, Lam Tat, folk song for rice cultivation, E-saew, Choi, as well as craftwork which is considered an archetype of Thai arts. The people in this region are still attached to religion, as evidence in their traditions and beliefs, such as the tradition of food offerings at the end of Buddhist Lent Day, flowers offerings and Rub-Bua (lotus acceptance) tradition. Although the lifestyle of the people in the Central region is changing along with the influx of civilization, the traditional ways of life is preserved in many parts of Central Thailand.

Southern Region of Thailand. Culture and ways of life of the people in the Southern region is diverse based on their religious beliefs, both in Buddhism and Islamism. Ethnic groups are living together whether they are Thai-Buddhist, Thai-Muslim, Chinese, or Chinese-Malay (Nyonya). Their costumes are different according to the uniqueness of their identity. They also respect and express their gratitude to our ancestors through the end of the tenth lunar month (Sart Duan Sib) tradition. There are also important traditions and festivals like Pulling the Buddha (Chak Phra) tradition, sacred cloth parade (Hae Pha Khuen That) festival, boat racing festival, vegetarian festival, and Hari Raya day. In addition, the Southern region is a rich array of culturally diverse performing arts and indigenous games that are bustling with excitement, such as the shadow play, Manohra dance, Dike Hulu, Rongngeng dance and Zebra Dove competition. Their food is also unique in light of strong spicy taste, such as spicy and sour soup (Kaeng Lueng), spicy rice salad with mixed vegetable (Khao Yum), fish soup with fermented fish's kidney (Gaeng Tai Pla), fried Parkia (Pad Sator). They make their living by rubber plantations, palm plantations, fishery and plantations of some fruits such as rambutan, durian, mangosteen and Southern langsat.

Ethnic differences, beliefs, religions and culture in each area of the South add charm to its lifestyle. It is full of integrated diversity and cultural strengths that create the identity of people in this region.







Precious Traditions and Ways of Life

The pattern of people's lifestyle in the society is made by humans with regard to the nature of their livelihood. It leads to traditions practiced and passed through generations, which reflect beliefs and moral anchors of the community members.

Loy Krathong Festival, Tham Khwan Khao Ceremony and Rocket Festival of the Northeastern region, shows human humbleness towards nature in terms of food resources and occupations. Songkran Festival is not only the Thai New Year, it is also an expression of love and unity in families. The Tenth Lunar Month Festival of the Southern region reflects the gratitude to the parents and ancestors. The expression of reverence for benefactors and teachers leads to a teacher worship (Wai Khru) ceremony since the ancient times.



Songkran

The Thai New Year

The moment of life in transition to a new year is important for people to be aware and reminisce of the past. The Songkran tradition, in parallel to Thai New Year tradition, shows the culture and lifestyle of people in the society in association with Buddhism and reverence towards their parents and ancestors.

Thai tradition of making a smooth transition from the old year to the new one is based on the beliefs in eliminating bad things from life and replacing with new auspicious things, as the meaning of **“Songkran”** in Sanskrit is stepping up or moving into. This refers to the passage of the sun, from one zodiac sign to another sign every month from one sphere to the next until completing a cycle, or from Pisces to Aries, which is counted one year according to the solar year. Therefore, the new year is celebrated for 3 days: the 13th of April is set as the Songkran day; the 14th of April is called **“Wan Nao”** (literally **“the day of living”** in Lanna), which is the day of bridging the old year and the new one; and the 15th of April is called the beginning of New Year’s Day. The traditional Songkran festival according to the lunar year is on the 15th day of the fourth month.

The preparation to the New Year starts with cleaning houses, things, places including temples which are considered as public space. People begin their new day by making merit or offering food to monks at temples in the morning, and participating in bathing rites to monks and Buddha images in order to sustain and nurture Buddhism. The activities also soften their minds to make a sacrifice without expectation. Forming sand pagodas is another form of making merit and solidarity at the same time because the sand can be further used in construction or land filling.



“Songkran is a tradition of summer, therefore “water” is used as a symbol to relieve the heat of weather by splashing water on each other for moisture and asking the elderly family members’ blessings for auspiciousness and prosperity.”

The dedication of the charity to the ancestors is paying reverences to the the deceased. Watering the elderly is the act of paying a tribute to living senior members of the family or respected adults of the community. It is the act of showing reverence from the younger generation to the elders. Following the graceful culture of Thailand, splashing water after ceremonies is considered a way to strengthen relationship among friends and family members. Clean water probably mixed it with scented water or perfume is used for pouring on them in a polite way. Festivals and entertaining games may differ in each locality and for enjoyment and harmony such as Mae Sri spiritual possession, communication with spirits, Saba, Luk Chuang etc.

The current lifestyle of Thai people may change. Traveling to other places to make a living may not allow family members regularly in touch as in the past. Yet, the Songkran tradition connects people, by bringing good ties and culture back to the identity and community again. It also preserves traditions and culture, and remains true to the core idea to make people aware of the activities during the past one year and ready to move forward with good practice.



- “Saba Mon”, a traditional game of Mon people at the Phra Pradaeng Songkran Festival in Samut Prakan province.





Songkran of the Four Regions

New Year Festivals in each region may be celebrated differently in detail. But every process still retains the essence of lifestyles based on family principles, reverence and Buddhist doctrine.

Central Thailand

The Songkran tradition of the Central Thailand begins on the April 13th April 14th is regarded as 'Wan Nao' or the middle day. April 15th is called 'Wan Thaloeng Sok' (the beginning of new year). Activities during the three days include releasing bird and fish, pouring water for making merit to the deceased relatives, bathing rites to monks and Buddha images, and forming sand pagoda.





- *Splashing cool water to each other in a gentle way helps reduce the heat of summer, add the enjoyment to the Songkran Festival and strengthen friendship among the community members.*

Northern Region

The New Year's day in the northern region of Thailand is also called 'Prapheni Pimai Mueang', starting from April 13th or 'Wan Sangkan Long' or 'Maha Songkran'. It means the old year passes by and the day that family members help each other clean their house for luck. The next day, April 14th, is called 'Wan Nao', a day for maintaining auspiciousness by thinking and doing good all day. The third day, April 15th, is called 'Wan Phaya Wan' or 'Wan Thaloeng Sok', starting from offering food to monks, listening to sermon at monastery, pouring water to the elders (Rot Nam Dam Hua) in the afternoon. On April 16th, or 'Wan Pak Pi', people will perform the water - pouring ceremony to the abbot at various temples to show respects and ask for forgiveness. Finally, on April 17th 'Wan Pak Duean' is for dispelling bad luck.

Northeastern Region

Northeastern people called the Songkran Festival 'Thambun Duean Ha' (the Fifth Month Merit Making). They implement similar activities with a main focus on sprinkle water onto the Buddha image, water - pouring the elders of the family to ask for their forgiveness, and ancestor worship.

Southern Region

According to the southern belief, Songkran is the time of changing the guardian angels of the nation. Therefore, the first day of Songkran is called 'Wan Song Chao Muaeng Kao' or the day of sending the old governor on April 13th, to perform a ritual of dispelling bad luck. The following day is considered 'Wan Wang' or the day without the guardian angel, on April 14th. The villagers make merit at the temples and sprinkle water onto the Buddha image. The last day is called 'Wan Rab Chao Mueang Mai' or the day of having audience with the new governor on April 15th. The new angel will be welcomed by people with beautiful dresses, also to bid farewell Songkran Festival.



“Countries which share the same Songkran tradition with Thailand are the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, including people who speak Tai language.”





Loy Krathong

The River of Life

River is the lifeblood of Thai people as they live around watersheds and make a living with agriculture. The Loy Krathong festival therefore is an act of offering to apologize to rivers and reverence to the streams that nourish all lives at the full moon of the 12th month. As the month has the highest level of water in a year, it is a good time to express gratitude and appreciation to the nature.

The Loy Krathong tradition is based on a belief in a ceremony of offering apologies to rivers from the activities humans might have been done by ignorance, such as trampling, excreting, dumping wastes to rivers and others impropriety. In addition to expressing gratitude and apology to the rivers, Loy Krathong has many other purposes, depending on the belief of each locality, such as worshiping the return of Lord Buddha after the preach the Dharma at the Sawan Chan Daowadeung (Tavatimsa Heaven); worshiping the footprint of the Buddha on the sandbanks of the Narmada River in India; worshiping the Ket Kaew Chulamani pagoda which contains the holy hair of Buddha at the Tavatimsa Heaven; and expelling misfortune, similar to the sin floating ceremony of Brahman.

The apology ceremony in the Loy Krathong tradition will use floating materials such as banana stalk, bamboo stem, etc. to make a Krathong and filled in some sacrifice things to be floated away with water. Inside it contains a flowery worship set, one incense stick, and one candle. In general, a Brahman Krathong is created in the same way of a Buddhist Krathong. But the difference is that there is no flowery worship set in a Brahman Krathong. In some local areas, people will put a piece of betel nut, silver coins, some threads of their hair, and nails in the Krathong to dispel the bad luck.

- *"The Brahman rite of floating candles" a mural painting on the Twelfth Month Royal Ceremony at Wat Ratchapradit Sathit Maha Srimaram Ratchaworawihan*





The current creation of magnificent Krathongs is originated from the banana leaf Krathong, as firstly evident in the Royal Chronicle (Praratcha Phongsawadan) in the reign of King Rama III that Princess Vilas created a Krathong to play every year. Afterwards, the culture was distributed to Bangkok and the area in the Chao Phraya watershed. Its popularity was widespread across the country in 1957.

The ties with streams and awareness of shared benefits for living together create graceful traditions such as the Loy Krathong, which reflects the water bounded culture and the river apology tradition of mankind. These come with a hope that all community members will continue preserving water resources as long as possible.

Loy Krathong Festivals in the Four Regions of Thailand

Northern Region

The Loy Krathong of the Northern Thailand is most likely celebrated on the full moon day of the second month (December or January, based on the lunar calendar). But at the present the festival is held on the 15th day of the second waxing moon, with great celebrations in many provinces, such as Chiang Mai's Yi Peng Festival (the word **"Yi"** means **"second month"**), Loy Krathong Festival in Tak province, Long Sa Pao Festival in Lampang and Loy Krathong and Candle Festival in Sukhothai province.









- On the Loy Krathong Day, “Krathong” will be made from various materials, decorated like lotus flowers, together with incense sticks and candles. People also put nails, hair or coins into the Krathong and float it to the river to seek forgiveness from the River Goddess (Ganges).



“Countries which share the same Loy Krathong tradition with Thailand are the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.”



Northeastern Region

In the Northeastern region, Loy Krathong is known as Sip Song Peng (the full moon of the twelfth month). Each of the Northeast provinces has its own way of celebrating the festival. For example, Roi Et province hosts Somma Naam Kuen Peng Seng Pratheep as a way to seek forgiveness from the River Goddess. In Sakon Nakhon province, there is the floating of krathongs made from banana leaf sheaths in a shape like an ancient beehive castle. The festival is called Loy Pratheep Pra Rajathan Sip Song Peng Tai Sakon.

Southern Region

The Southern of Thailand also celebrates a great Loy Krathong festival like other regions, especially in Had Yai district in Songkhla province. In addition to the act of seeking forgiveness from the River Goddess (Ganges), the Southern people believe in a Krathong floating to ward off bad luck. They use banana stalks to make a beautiful small boat or raft filled with various food items, flower, incense, and money before floating it away.

Central Region

The evidence of the Central region’s Loy Krathong which is regarded as a model of the festival countrywide is traced back to the Ayutthaya period. There was a royal ceremony called “**Chong Priang Lod Chood Loy Kome**”. Later in the reign of King Nangkhao (Rama III), it was known as “**Loy Pra Prateep Krathong**” and has become one of the twelve month Royal Ceremonies.





“ ‘Khon artists’ Wai Khru is held as a mask covering ceremony for worshipping Khon teachers. After being covered with the mask from the teacher, that person becomes a complete artist. The mask covering ceremony is classified in three levels: mask covering to be accepted in a group of artists and for auspiciousness; mask covering to a teacher; and mask covering to act on behalf of the teacher as that person is authorized to perform the Wai Khru ceremony.”

• *The important gods of dance and music*

Wai Khru Ceremony

The Way of Expressing Gratitude and Reverence

Parents are a child’s first teachers. A teacher who provides knowledge for the future benefits is comparable to a second mother.

Showing respect, humbleness, gratitude for patrons is a beautiful Thai culture since the ancient times. Likewise, when knowledge is transferred by knowledge providers, they are all considered teachers. The Teachers’ Appreciation (“**Wai-Khru**”) Ceremony is therefore emerged and held on the first occasion for students to submit themselves to their guidance. As a result, the Teachers’ Appreciation Ceremony is most likely hosted every year to show respect and deep appreciation to teachers for their benevolence. It is also an opportunity to seek teacher’s support in guiding on higher education.

The main purpose of the Teachers’ Appreciation Ceremony is to pay homage to teachers and students accept them as virtuous teachers with full of morale and knowledge. At the same time, the students as the successors of academic legacy are determined to receive the knowledge transferred from the teachers to achieve the ultimate goal of education. The meaning of the word “**teacher**” is a guru who is able to transfer knowledge to students and take care students. The essence of being a teacher is not only the transfer of various knowledge, but the teacher, with the righteousness, is ready to inform and teach students on how to behave.

In the past, people willing to submit themselves will have to bring flowers, incense sticks, and candles to salute the teacher. Then, the teacher will lead students with chanting for auspiciousness and hold students' hand in a manner to teach them such as writing a slate as a symbol of studying.

As Thai ways of life holds the value of gratitude and reverence, there are many types of the Wai Khru ceremony such as Wai Khru Dontree Thai (Thai music instruments), Wai Khru Nattasilp (dance), Wai Khru Mo (expertise), Wai Khru Muay Thai (Thai boxing). The current Wai Khru, despite differences in detail, overall process is very similar. One of the successors is the day of hosting worshiping ceremony on Thursday, as it is a teacher day based on the Hindu-Brahman beliefs. The teacher of the gods in religion is Br̥haspati (Thursday).

Different types of Wai Khru ceremonies are not only held in remembrance of the graceful teachers, but also to make merits for past teachers. In some major fields of study such as Thai boxing, dance and music, after students learned subjects thoroughly, a teacher worship ceremony is held to show that the learner has sufficient knowledge to teach others. This is therefore wisdom used to motivate learners to complete the study diligently and successful.

“The offering set used in the dance Wai Khru Ceremony is called Kan Kamnon or a bowl filled with Wai Khru's sacrifice materials including a sacred flower (Ixora flower, eggplant flower, Bermuda grass), or scent flowers covered with a coned Krathong, one pack of incense sticks, one candle, one piece of white cloth and money for teacher worship.”



• *Wai Khru Ceremony for Music Teachers (Duriyangkasilp)*



• *The traditional Wai Khru Muay Thai Ceremony*





The delicacy and process of the Wai Khru Ceremony is the wise integration of consciousness, wisdom and value. It is important for people in the society to respect each other and the value of acquired knowledge which is considered as intellectual property that teachers have collected and transferred with determination to make students competent.

The Traditional Offerings

On the Wai Khru day, students will make offerings to the teacher with a set of flowers, incense sticks, candles, pea eggplant flowers, Bermuda grass, Ixora flowers and popped rice. Each of them has a symbolic meaning as follows.

- **Dok Ma Kuea**, or pea eggplant flowers, represent respect and modesty. When the flowers are in full bloom, they blend downwards the ground. That represents the gesture of respect that students should gently show respect to their teachers.
- **Yah Praek**, or Bermuda grass, is a durable type of grass that can survive in all seasons. This implies that students must have patience with their studies in class if they want to be successful later in life.
- **Kao Tok** (popped rice) symbolically represents the discipline and controllability. It represents the process of roasting the rice. If the rice is not popped right in a container, it will not be popped rice. Therefore, this implies that if students cannot control themselves, they will be gone out of discipline.
- **Dok Kem**, or Ixora flowers' symbolize the sharp minds and intelligence of students.





Tham Khwan Khao Tradition

Faith of the Golden Field

Before seedlings grow into golden rice ready for harvest, they depend on fertile land and continuous care for more than four months. Morale and strength of rice farmers is crucial to withstand the change of nature that could occur anytime during the cultivation. Tham Khwan Khao (Rice Blessing) Tradition is not just a ritual for worshipping Mae Phosop (Rice Goddess) of Thai farmers to protect the fragile rice. It is, however, the integration of the faith of all members in the community that will enable the smooth cultivation and harvest.

Because rice has been the main food and plant that feeds Thai people since the ancient times, its importance is comparable to a sacred thing to be respected. It is also believed that rice is the only crop that has morale and being protected by sanctity called Mae Khwan Khao or Mae Phosop (Rice Goddess) who protects the rice to keep growing well. If Khwan Khao does not stay with rice, it will not thrive and will not produce completely fertile yields. Therefore, rice farmers must treat rice with gratitude. Whenever there is a change in rice, such as pregnant rice or harvesting rice, farmers must seek rice's forgiveness every time.

Tham Khwan Khao is the wisdom and belief of all Thai people, in order to live together and respect the nature. It is also a ritual in response to psychological needs which help build the morale of Thai farmers. Rice rituals in Thailand are divided into 3 stages: before cultivation, during cultivation, and after cultivation when get the yields. However, there are different ways of practices based on each of the regions. The Central and Southern regions hold the Tham Khwan Khao many times after the panicles of rice have formed and begin to swell like a pregnant woman, also known as Khao Khad Hang Platoo. Tham Khwan Khao is performed again when harvesting grains, moving them in the yard, and relocating them into the barn. In contrast, the Northern and Northeastern farmers would perform Tham Khwan Khao rituals during the harvest and when moving rice to the barn.



“During the period of rice pregnant in the paddy field, farmers will bring a bite of banana, peanut, sesame and orange into a basket together with one piece of betel nut and betel leaf to perform a Tham Khwan Khao ritual to worship Mae Phosop. According to the belief, rice grains will not fall, while worms and insects will not invade, and it will lead to fertile yields.”





- *The Tham Khwan Khao ritual will be performed again after harvests and bringing rice together in the yard, as a way to express gratitude to the sanctity and Mae Phosop for the support of the perfect yields.*

The way of rice cultivation each year is rotated according to the farming season. After harvesting, rice farmers will invite Khwan Khao or Mae Phosop on a barn. When it comes the time of sowing rice again next year, the first rice ploughing ceremony will be performed on a good day to invite Mae Phosop to the paddy field. Then, Khao Khwan (rice collected from the last the ritual) are brought to mix with ordinary rice to cultivate and sow the grains as for blessings. Farmers will recite a spell and a verse to entrust Mae Phosop to Phra Mae Thorani (Mother Earth) and other spirits in the paddy field. Next, they choose another good day to perform the ritual of first rice seedlings transplanting.

When rice is pregnant, farmers will build a temporary shrine and make the offerings to Mae Phosop. Bamboo is prepared for weaving a five-angle sign, together with a small basket to put the offerings. With the belief that Mae Phosop is a young woman, a plate of offerings is normally filled with food for the pregnant, such as coconut water, sugar cane, betel nut and leaf, and especially sour food, like orange and tamarind. In addition, the ceremony performer, often a female owner of the paddy, also need to bring a glass, comb, powder, scented water, lip wax, Phasin (sarong), paper flags, to make the Tham Khwan Khao ceremony or visit Mae Phosop in the paddy field as well.



In the harvest time and after bringing all yields to their threshing floor, farmers will perform Tham Khwan Kwao ceremony, seeking forgiveness from Mae Phosop again, as a way to make merit and celebrate the rice harvest. People of the Central region call the ceremony Tham Khwan Lan (rice threshing ceremony), while the Isan people call it Boon Koon Lan. In addition to creating the morale and seeking forgiveness, through Tham Khwan Khao Ceremony, farmers express gratitude to the rice, sanctity and nature. After the rice is completely threshed, it will be collected to the barn. Before selling the rice, farmers must perform the ceremony of Perd Yung or Tak Yung (opening a barn) to ask for permission to sell the rice as well.

Tham Khwan Khao tradition is not just a ritual for expressing gratitude to nature, but it is also a humility to everything that supports life and existence. It also shows the benevolent spirit and solidarity of the community members that they will combine efforts to help each other during the rice harvest.

Although currently rice farming can be done several times a year, the Tham Khwan Khao ceremony is only performed for in-season rice farming. However, with changes in farmers' ways of life and farming methods affected by modern agriculture and technology, the present Tham Khwan Khao ceremony may not be performed in comprehensive process like in the past or it is adapted to be more concise. But the belief in Mae Phosop remains with rice farmers in some areas where they still rely on rainwater for rice plantations and organic agriculture. Some communities perform Tham Khwan Khao ceremony together with the ritual of Pha Pa Khao Pheuk (merit making for rice seeds), while some communities hold the Tham Khwan Khao ceremony in conjunction with the temple's annual event.

“In the harvest season, farmers of each locality often combine their efforts for the harvest. It creates unity, solidarity, appreciation and pride of the production together, after the year-round hard work.”



Bot Tham Khwan Khao (Tham Khwan Khao ritual text)

Bot Tham Khwan Khao is a verse sung during the rice growers' ritual for restoring the soul of Mae Posop. It is called differently in different regions. But the similarities are **"Inviting the Khwan"** or **"Calling the Khwan"** part and the **"Kho Phon"** part which asks for Mae Phosop's blessings to make rice bountiful. The verse often heard when performing the Tham Khwan Khao ritual is: **"Mae Phosi, Mae Phosop, Mae Nopdara, Mae Chandevi, Mae Sri Soda, may I invite the mothers to take the offerings in a farmhouse in Khao Khitchakut. May I invite you to get morning sickness of pregnancy, to eat sweet and sour things, to eat oily and salty foods, in and out, left and right of the paddy field. May I invite you to take the offerings. May the rice abundant without harm. May the rice grow as large as a bludgeon with the belly as big as a basket, ear of the paddy as big as galangal flower, all good over the field."**





- “Hmrub” is arranged to make offerings to monks as for dedicating merit to ancestors in the Tenth Lunar Month Festival.



Sart Duan Sib

The Tenth Lunar Month Festival Dedicating Merit to Ancestors

Thailand has a tradition to express gratitude and reverence, which is the foundation of ancient Thai virtues, especially to ancestors and benefactors. Although they have passed away, but the descendants still give importance and always keep them in mind. As obviously seen from the Sart Duan Sib Festival (Tenth Lunar Month Festival) of the Southern Thai Buddhists. It is the successive tradition held every year. The purpose is to make merit dedicated to ancestors who passed away.

From the Buddhist beliefs that if the ancestors had done good deeds when they were still alive, they will be reborn in heaven. But, if not, they will be fallen to hell as evils or become hungry ghosts (Pret/Preta). Hungry ghosts are suffered and rely on merit dedicated by descendants to stay alive. They are only released to the human world once a year on the first day of the 10th lunar month to seek merit from descendants. On that day, Southern Thai Buddhists arrange the Hmrub Lek ceremony (The sound of M and R is diphthong following the Southern Thai dialects) or the day of welcoming grandparents for descendants to make merit dedicated to relatives who may be born into hungry ghosts. Afterwards, on the 15th day of the 10th lunar month, is called the day of Hmrub Yai (The great day or the ceremonial day). They bring a plate of food and supplies to make offerings to monks at temples and perform religious ceremonies such as laying down a funeral robe, to dedicate merit to ancestors and relatives. It is believed that making merit on that day is extremely important. If they do not perform the rituals on that day, their ancestors and relatives who passed away will not receive merit. They will continue to be suffered and hungry, while the living descendants will become ungrateful.



In addition to the purpose of dedicating merit to deceased relatives, the tenth month is a rainy season when agricultural crops start to bloom. Making merit by bringing agricultural product offerings to monks is a blessing for themselves and families. It also supports monks the necessity during the rainy season when they are not convenient to go out for collecting alms.

In addition to their reverence for ancestors, the virtues will be shared to other spirits as in the ceremony of Tang Pret-Ching Pret which is held after the Hmrub ceremony and food offerings. Villagers will divide Kanom (sweets) to put on the temple court, the base of big tree or the wall of temple, known as **“Tang Pret”**. The time villagers in rush to take Kanom is called **“Ching Pret”**. It is believed that people who consume the sweets will also gain merit.

Currently the Tenth Lunar Month Festival is considered the largest ceremony of the Southern Buddhists to return home to express their gratitude and reverence for ancestors annually. The center of the festival is in Muaeng Nakhon Si Thammarat, regarded as the Buddhist Kingdom since the ancient times and still preserved the tradition excellently.

“The rainy season of the Southern Thailand begins around the tenth month. It is a difficult time for monks. Villagers therefore arrange their food offerings in the form of ‘Hmrub’ so that the temple can keep them as supplies for the monks during the rainy season.”

- The Tang Pret-Ching Pret Ceremony is emerged from a belief in Buddhism that the spirit of people making bad deeds will be come hungry ghosts (Pret/Preta) in hell, only surviving on the merit dedicated by someone. Each year, on the first day of the tenth lunar month, the hungry ghosts will have the opportunity to return to the human world to seek merit from relatives and back to hell on the 15th day of the waning moon of the 10th lunar month.



The Sweets of the Tenth Lunar Month

Kanom La

Kanom La is made of glutinous rice flour and sugar into a shape of nets through the process of making fried flour lines interlaced. It symbolises clothing. Other meaning is that the ancestral spirit may have become a hungry ghost and had a mouth as small as a needle, unable to eat a piece of food, but only a small snack like this.



Kanom Kong

Kanom Kong is made of glutinous rice flour and molded into a wheel shape, then deep-fried until its color turns to golden brown—symbolized as a jewelry for body accessories.



Kanom Dee Sum

The method of making Kanom Dee Sum is similar to Kanom Ba, but changed to rice flour. After the flour is molded in a ball shape and then pressed the middle to be a hole. After being deep-fried, it becomes white, yellow or light brown, symbolized money.



Kanom Pong

Kanom Pong is made of steamed sticky rice which is pressed down onto a mold to make its shape like a crescent moon and diamond. It is sun-dried before being deep-fried in very hot oil until it swells (Pong). It is symbolized as a raft to take the spirit of the ancestors across the great ocean.



Kanom Ba

(snuff box sea bean-shape snack)

Kanom Ba is made by glutinous rice flour mixed with syrup and mold it in a flat shape like a Saba seed (snuff box sea bean) before being fried. It is symbolically like a Saba seed dedicated to ancestors to play on Songkran Day.



“The heart of making merit in the Tenth Lunar Month Festival is the five key desserts and each of them has significant connotations.”



The Setting of Hmrub

Hmrub, or Samrub (tray of food) for the Tenth Lunar Month Festival is usually organized by family members together with relatives. It is prepared in layered containers such as woven bamboo baskets decorated with supplies or desserts of the Tenth Lunar Month. The bottom floor is placed with dry food. The second floor is long-lasting vegetable. The third floor is for items used in daily life. The top or the fourth floor is considered the heart of the Hmrub. It is packed and decorated with sweets, as symbols the Tenth Lunar Month Festival, such as Kanom Pong, Kanom La, Kanom Kong (Kanom Kaipila), Kanom Ba, and Kanom Dee Sum which are essential and believed that the ancestors and the deceased will use them.



Rocket Festival

Sending fire for rain

Rain coming in accordance with its rainy season is like a gift fallen from the sky to farmers. But if rain does not continue as anticipated, growing yields may fail. The Rocket Festival is therefore considered as one of the merit-making ceremony to worship the god for seeking rains, based on a belief of Isan people which still remains until today.

Because their ways of life are very close to nature and dependent on rainwater for crop cultivation, Isan people have a long-standing belief that the God who gave water to humans is **“Tan”**, based on the legend of Phaya Kankak or the Giant Toad who defeated Phaya Tan. Every time if the world needs water, a Bang Fai (rocket) or firework must be sent up to the sky to signal Phaya Tan to send some rain down. Therefore, when the farming season arrives, the Northeast people organize the Rocket Merit-making Festival.

The Rocket Festival or the Sixth Lunar Month Festival is a great tradition for the Isan people to practice. It has been passed through generations from the ancient times and is set in the **“Heet Sib Song - Klong Sib See”** or the twelve-month tradition and the 14 traditional virtues hold as the core of living by all levels of citizens, from the King to ordinary people.

When entering the farming season and starting to cultivate rice, residents and neighbouring villagers will make an appointment to create rockets. As the village representatives, they cooperate in a rocket parade from their locality to the temple in the village as the host. This tradition connects people in the community and provides their opportunity to have fun together before entering the farming season which will last for several months.



“The Rocket Tradition is one of the rain-making ceremonies, seeking heaven blessings for rains, based on the belief of the Northeast people who make their living by agriculture which requires abundance of land and seasonal rainfall for their cultivation. If anything is mistaken, the yields which are growing good may become failures.”



As for the rocket parade, in addition to the beautifully decorated rockets that demonstrates local wisdom, there is rocket folk dance performed by villagers together with singing and dancing along the beats of Tum drum. They also play games showing the way of life of people in the society, such as fishing. Originally in the parade, it used to be only male participants. Some of them dressed up as women or bring the female puppets to pose sexual positions along the way. Their verses of folk dances are also full of sexual stories and humorous jokes to ask for rain from angels. In some parades they play sexual comedies to make the parade colorful and nobody minds. In later times, when the rocket folk dance has become a community tradition and resulted in a competition between villages, the format and content of the rocket folk dance has been also changed. Participants consist of both real men and women, creating beautiful dance styles. The host's village will prepare welcoming food such as Khao Pun (Khanom chin) in grilled fish (crispy fish) soup with alcoholic drinks and tobacco (tobacco rolled in dry banana leaf).

Normally, the Rocket Festival is organized for two days only. On the first day, the rocket parade is called **“Wan Home”**, while on the next day, villagers dressed in beautiful costume will bring best food and sweets as offerings to temples. After making merit and having lunch together, they will carry thier rockets to the base in order to fire the rockets one by one, which is considered as a forecast. If the rocket rise well, it is predicted that it will rain well and food will be abundant. If the rocket does not go up or exploded, it is predicted that it will be drought. Relying on such beliefs, each community must put every effort into shooting the rocket to the sky as far as possible.



- When the rocket parade is finished, villagers will gather rockets from the other villages together and hold a celebration on that night. On the next day, they will lit a “Predicting Rocket” to forecast the weather if rain will fall seasonally. If the Rocket rises well, the rainfall and the water will be abundant.







The Rocket Festival not only reflects the living philosophy of Isan people, but it also demonstrates the wisdom that cleverly engages people in the community by using the Rocket Festival as a channel. When everyone is in solidarity, they can live happily together.

From Bamboo to Amazing Rockets

In the past, rockets were made of the largest bamboo stem which were cut through. At the outside, bamboo strips were woven as ropes tied tight around the bamboo beam to make it firm. The last segment is filled with a considerable number of thick wood, pressed it firmly with Mueu (gunpowder) by pounding or using a lever. The making of rockets is by folk technologies that the wisdom has been inherited and accumulated through generations in addition to the rocket decoration which also requires artistic competency.

There are four types of rockets: Bang Fai Thammada (ordinary), using up to 12 kilograms of saltpeter; Bang Fai Meun (ten thousand), using about 12-119 kilograms of saltpeter; Bang Fai Saen (hundred thousand), using 120 kilograms of saltpeter; and Bang Fai Lan (million) using 1,200 kilograms of saltpeter.

When the rockets are finished, they are decorated with beautiful colored paper, called in the folk language “Ae”. The head and tail of the rockets will be composed in various shapes as required, mostly in the shape of Naga head.

“The Rocket Festival is popularly organized in the 6th or 7th month, which is in the rainy season for rice farming, seedling, planting and ploughing. It is made to worship the ‘Tan’ to beg for rainfalls in the season, similar to the parade of rainmaking cats of the Central people.”







Performing Arts Spiritual Performances

Thailand's performing arts, whether they be music, dance, or drama, are the expressions of valuable culture filled with the grace of Thai wisdom. Each of the performing arts aims to serve the purpose of beauty and entertainment which may encourage critical thinking that leads to social change and development. At the same time, performing arts express emotions, feelings and ways of life of each locality as well, such as the Nora dance in the Southern Thailand, Li-kae and Lakhon Chatri in Central Thailand, Mo Lam in the Northeastern Thailand and Phin Pia in the Northern Thailand.

Phin Pia

The Stringed Instrument of Lanna

Among the supreme music instruments of Lanna, “**Phin Pia**” is considered as a unique lute by the resonance and pitch sound of the instrument placed on the bare chest or abdomen of the instrumentalist. The sound brings peaceful feelings to listeners to dive deep into the magical melody.

The history of Phin Pia can be traced back to Indian people’s music instruments, in the family of Wina or Phin. The word Pia is differently pronounced by each locality. It can be Phia, Phlia, Phin Phia or Phin Pia.

The identity of Phin Pia is at its structure, comprising the head or skull made of half coconut shell or gourd. Its fingerboard is made of long and round Kaen wood. The length measured from the top end to the bottom is about 70-80 centimeters. Wood used for making the tail (fingerboard) is hardwood such as Padauk wood, Rosewood, Redwood, Ebony wood. At the peg box, covered on the top with bronze or brass Hasadiling bird (elephant headed bird), Naga, peacock, or elephant. The pegs are attached to the strings, from 2 to 7 strings.

The charm of Phin Pia is not only about its gorgeous appearance, but also the technique and expertise of the instrumentalist in flicking the Phin Pia properly. The method to play Phin Pia is similar to that of other lutes. The left hand presses the strings on the fingerboard and holds the tail against the body of the instrumentalist, while fingers of the right hand sweeps, touches and releases the strings of Phin Pia to create a beautiful sound. Music tones can be adjusted as desired, in association with the control of opening and closing Phin Pia’s head attached to the muscles of chest or abdomen.

In the past, Phin Pia was popularly played exclusively in the Northern royal court. Later, the popularity spread to a community of well-off people and skillful folk musicians. Phin Pia players are highly regarded in the society as the head of Phin Pia, an important component of the instrument, is rare and expensive. It is also difficult to play the instrument despite its beautifully melodic sound. Young men of Lanna in the past tried to play Phin Pia over other types of instruments in order to take the advantage in courting girls at night.



- *For the technique of playing Phin Pia, instrumentalists must cover the head on their chest and flick the strings with a specific technique called “Pok” by using a little finger or a ring finger. Then finger bases are used to touch the strings to make loud, clear and resonant sound, like a pitch from a bell.*

“It is assumed that the name “Phin Pia” comes from the past when Lanna people called it “Pia” in short, literally meaning show-off or match (in the Northern language). Therefore, Phin Pia instrumentalists look more charming than the players of Salor, Sor, Sueng and it became a competition itself.”





- *Phin Pia has been developed from Phin Thanu (arrow-shaped lute), while its sound-generating and flicking principles are similar to those of Phin Namtao (gourd-shaped lute). A half coconut shell is used as a sound head. Phin Pia's rod is made of hardwood for its own strength and beautiful sounds.*



Songs mostly played with Phin Pia are often those with slow and sweet melodies that convey the feelings of the artist. They are Lanna-style songs which inherited until now, such as **“Prasat Wai”** song, **“Chok Lai”** song, **“So Phama”** song, **“Muai”** song, **“Luk Kui Woei”** song, **“Ruesi Long Tham”** song, **“Yaeng Luang”** song, **“Lamai”** song, **“Long Nan”** song and other folk songs. Music of central region can also be flicked as well, such as **“Toei Khong”** song, **“Khamen Saiyok”** song, and **“Soi Lampang”** song.

In practicing Phin Pia, the player needs to be patient over a period of time, in order to be able to play beautifully and clearly express emotions. But beautiful music will become a rewarding outcome of the commitment. The uniqueness and alluring sounds of Phin Pia is filled with the cultural values and wisdom of the Lanna people. The wisdom was reflected on the Phin Pia music which is played in various occasions and purposes, such as religious ceremonies, entertainment, social status positioning and gaining, and marriage partner finding.

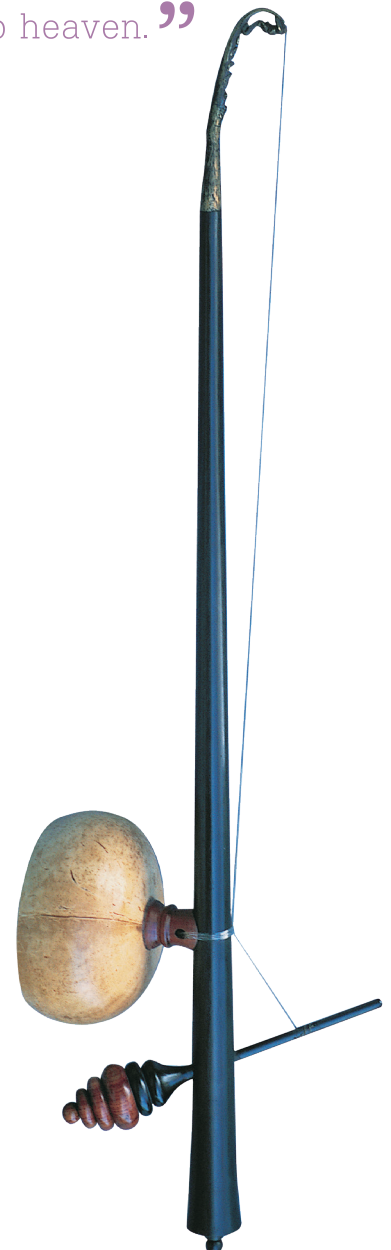


“The top of Phin Pia is usually decorated with a Hasadiling, an ancient bird living in the Himavanta. It has an elephant-like head, while its body is still a bird. According to the Lanna beliefs, the bird is a very powerful creature, equivalent to five elephants and has a mission to bring the soul of the merited people to heaven.”

Based on the style that the Phin Pia's head must be placed on the bare chest, it is thus believed that this instrument is suitable for male artists only. But according to an image engraved in stone of Ban Khu Bua in Ratchaburi province, which is dated back to the Dvaravati Civilization, it is evident that women could also play the lute as the instrument on the stone look similar to Phin Pia. In addition, if it is not convenient to attach the instrument to the chest, it can also be placed on the abdomen instead.

At the present time, it is popular to play Phin Pia in the style of “**Pia Chum**”, which is, bringing 2-7 sets of Phin Pia to play together as an ensemble. It is also played with other undertone instruments such as Sueng, Salor or flute. Despite the number of Phin Pia's player are lesser than before, together they stand fast and maintain beautiful melodiousness.

“There is a say that Phin Pia is a flicked lute which generates beautiful and light sounds. It is one of the most difficult-to-play Lanna musical instruments. There is a Northern musician's metaphor “Practicing (Pin) Pia (Phin Pia) for 3 years, learning to play but flute for 3 months” showing that to be able to play Phin Pia beautifully, it needs technique, expertise, and training for a very long time.”







Nora

The Exquisiteness of Performance

The delicately soft, yet energetic dance movement in intensely rhythmic music from Thap (or Thon) and a unique costume adorned with colorful beads is the incomparable charm of Nora, a form of folk performing arts popular in the Southern region of Thailand since ancient times.

Nora has been a long-standing performance since the Ayutthaya period. It is believed that Nora was firstly performed in Phatthalung city, which is now Bang Kaeo district, in Phatthalung province. Nora was later distributed to other cities of Southern Thailand and when it reached the Central region, where it gave birth to Lakhon Chatri. As it brought the story of **“Phra Suthon - Manohra”** to the show, it was finally called Manohra.

The prominences that make Nora’s performance different from others are its costume and musical instruments. Nora costume includes a Soet (crown), an exquisite head accessory for the principal performer, or **“Nora Yai”**, and a top which is made of beads in various colors, patterns and motifs. It is also decorated with Pik Nok Aen or Pik Neng (a pair of wings), Thap Suang (pendant), Pik or Hang Hong (tail wing), Pha Nung (wrapped skirt), Sanap Phlao (a pair of half-length trousers), Pha Hoi Na (front-hanging cloth), Pha Hoi Khang (side-hanging cloth), Kamlai Ton Khaen (armlets), Kamlai Plai Khaen (bracelets) and Leb (extended fingernails). All these arts in great detail require strong commitment and creativity. However, they are the costume and decorations only for the principal character, called Nora Yai or Nora Yuen Khrueang, while the costume for female characters or Khrueang Nang does not have armlets, pendant, or wings. But the bead decorations are comparably beautiful.



“The uniqueness of the Nora dance is to mix the various dance moves together harmoniously with the agility and skillfulness to change the dancing style to the rhythm of music. It also has to be beautiful and lithe, sometimes it also increases the ability to dance in particular, such as arm posture, lithesome body, finesse dance.”



As Nora's music will change its tempo according to the dance, Nora orchestra comprises mostly percussion instruments. A pair of Thon or Thap Nora (tuned one-sided drums), which are beaten by one drummer, is the most important instrument in the orchestra because it controls the tempo and leads the orchestra following the performer's dances. Other instruments to complement to the sound include drum; Thap (Nora percussion); a Pi (Thai oboe); a pair of Mong (medium-sized gong) or double gongs; a pair of Ching (small cymbals); and a pair of Trae (Multiple layer claves).

The key element of Nora performance is its harmonious integration of singing and dancing. On some occasions, the performances convey the stories of ceremonial beliefs and Wai Khru (reverence to teachers) rituals. In this regard, Nora Performance can be divided into two types: one is Nora for ritualistic ceremony, called Nora Rong Khru, and another is Nora for entertainment. Nora Rong Khru is a very important ritual performance for the Nora professionals. The spirits of the Nora past masters are invited to the ceremonial stage (Nora Long Rong) for the younger performers to pay homage to the masters or Ta Yai Nora. The sacred ceremony includes a sacrificial offering to the past masters, and tying Soet or holy cloth for the new generation of Nora performers.

Nora for entertainment is a performance made for pure entertainment. It plays a vital role in the way of life of people in the community. This type of Nora is usually held in monasteries for raising funds to support religion. Important traditional festivals held for Nora performances on special occasions by the local communities, temples, and government offices consists of multi-gesture dance that show individual skills and talent by mixing various dance postures such as arm posture, body bending with singing skills and improvising witty verses with good content and good rhyme. Because of the challenge, making a script is considered the most excellent art of Nora. If time allows, a story of Nora might be told to entertain the audience, with a focus on the comicality and Nora-style verse singing based on the story.



Although the performance is considered mastery, delicate and needs time for practice, both types of Nora are still performed, not lost through time like other performances. Not only because of the unique beauty of Nora's costume and dance postures, but Nora also can easily access and communicate with people, so that it also serves as **"media"** to disseminate news and information to the general public. Nora therefore remains as a sacred ceremony, which are still preserving its core value, belief, and performing style excellently, passed through generations until today.

Nora Rong Khru Ceremony

Nora Rong Khru Ceremony is divided into two types: Nora Rong Khru Yai and Nora Rong Khru Lek. The Nora Rong Khru Yai is the complete version of the ritual dance, which lasts three days and two nights. It usually starts on a Wednesday and ends on a Friday and must be performed every year or every three or five years, dependent on the beliefs of different Nora schools. The ritual performance of Nora Rong Khru Lek lasts one day and one night. It usually begins on a Wednesday evening and ends on a Thursday.



Khru Mo Nora

Khru Mo Nora is the spirit of former Nora masters or the ancestor of Nora, sometimes called Khru Mo Ta Yai, respected by the local people and regarded as a spiritual anchor when facing difficulties. If the local people have fallen ill without causes, Khru Mo Nora will be invited to find the treatment. At the same time, Khru Mo Nora is a local wisdom in a way of contributing to the harmony of the community and being a subtle mechanism to control community members' behaviors to behave in virtue. If they misbehave, Khru Mo Nora can punish them.

Nora for Entertainment

Nora for entertainment normally has a standard sequence of performances, starting with the release of Nang Ram to dance (two to five performers.) with Kiao Man or Khap Na Man, in which the performers sing the verses from behind the curtain, invisible to the audience. It is followed by skillful dances which the performers come out to show off their dancing skills and special talents making the script. The performers express more verses to present the poetic ability and dance again before exits. Next, it is time for Ok Phran (**"Entrance of the Hunter"**) or the presence of the comedian, an important character that adds humors to the show. The performance ends with Ok Tua Nai Rong (**"Entrance of the Principal Performer/Character"**) or Nora Yai, who will show off his expertise and talents in dancing, singing, and improvising verses as cherishing his position as the principal performer. In case of a competition, Nai Rong will perform the rites of Khian Phrai (**"Flogging the Sprites"**) and Yiap Luk Nao (**"Stepping on Lime Fruits"**) as a spell on the rivals and boost the troupe's morale, followed by Ok Phran again to tell the audience the next story before starting the performance.





Mo Lam

The Ballad of People's Ways

Mo Lam performance is evolved from a Mo Lam Phuen or a Mo Lam Rueang (master of storytelling), who tells stories in a lively way together with the sound of Khaen in randomly high and low rhythms. Then, it was transitioned to Mo Lam consisting of a Mo Lam (singer) and a Hang Khrueang (dancer), reflecting a social change and different ways of life of the Isan people in each era.

Mo Lam performing arts have been standing with the Isan people since the old times. **“Mo Lam”** is composed of two words: **“Mo”** refers to a master and **“Lam”** is a kind of storytelling along with beautiful melodies. Mo Lam therefore means a master of storytelling with melody. In other words, Mo Lam adopted Isan literatures into verse singing, or telling folktales in Isan dialects while playing Khaen folk music.

Mo Lam in the Northeastern region of Thailand can be divided into two major types: Mo Lam for entertainment and Mo Lam for ritual ceremonies. Mo Lam performing arts for entertainment include Mo Lam Rueang, Mo Lam Moo, Mo Lam Ploen, which tell stories through different performances, music instruments and performers. Some of them sing in duo or group. Some rely on Khaen music, sometimes add Pin and drum to create more fun. Mo Lam for ritual ceremonies refers to a medium for the communication with Phi Fa (spirit in the local folklore) following Isan people's beliefs in Phi Fa and Phi Thaen. This kind of Mo Lam is able to forecast the weather or cure sick people, also provide a moral support to patients for fighting disease.



“Khaen (bamboo mouth organ) is the only musical instrument used in complementing the show of Isan people's Mo Lam Klon. Mo Khaen will play the Khan accompanying the verses.”





- *In the Thai-Isan tradition of Heet Sibsong Kong Sibsi, there often have the Mo Lam Klon as a protagonist in celebrating the festive event.*

With an unsophisticated lifestyle close to nature, Mo Lam is considered as a valuable folk performance, important to the Isan people in the past. It is not only a show for entertainment at festivals or festive events. Mo Lam is filled with knowledge, ideas, morals, beliefs and traditions that improve listeners' intelligence, continue well behavior, and promote morale and ethics among them and subtly retain social norms.

The simple quality to reach all kinds of villagers is an advantage of Mo Lam and makes popularity widespread. As the lifestyle of local people is close to temples, Mo Lam is regarded as a social philosopher and a successor of wisdom. To be a good Mo Lam, that person must have a wide range of knowledge, from history, geography, occupation, traditions and custom, sins and mercy, folktales, to national news. A Mo Lam also needs to be clever to respond and solve immediate problems on stage in a timely manner. In the past, when communication

did not develop as today, Mo Lam played a role in providing updates, knowledge of political ideology, guidance for understanding democracy, knowledge of family planning, contraception, and hygiene.

If the proposition of the show is the entertainment for the audience, Mo Lam is considered as an entertainment full of flavour and spirit of the Isan people and filled with moral lessons for refining people in the society and reminding them of good and bad deeds. At the same time, Mo Lam performances have changed through time. From a solo storyteller in the early stage of Mo Lam Phuen, it became a duo performers to add the fun of responsive chorus. Then, it transformed into a group performance of the Mo Lam Mu and Mo Lam Ploen. They further formed a band that brought an instrumental band accompanying with the Mo Lam performances of Mo Lam Sing. Regardless of change, all types of Mo Lam can reach out the audience. This is an important part that makes Mo Lam sustained until nowadays.



Mo Lam for entertainment can be classified by a chronological order, storytelling method and style of performances as follows: Mo Lam Phuen, Mo Lam, Mo Lam Klon, Mo Lam Mu, Mo Lam Ploen, Mo Lam Sing.

- **Mo Lam Phuen**

Mo Lam Phuen is the oldest kind of Mo Lam for entertainment, sometimes called **“Lam Rueng”** as the Mo Lam tells stories from allegories, such as Thao Karaket, Thao Si Thon, Nang Tang On, Nang Sipsong and Thao Mayui. Khaen is used for creating two-tone background melodies: one is slow and melancholy, and another is fast and rush, to keep tracks with the narrative.

- **Mo Lam Klon**

Mo Lam Klon, usually performs as a duo, is a storyteller of responsive verses, poems or parodies. The performance is sometimes filled with a courteous melodrama between men and women.

- **Mo Lam Mu**

Mo Lam Mu is a performance by a group of artists. Its costume is influenced by that of Li-kae, while the story telling part is modelled from Mo Lam Phuen and Mo Lam Klon. The group consists of 15-30 people playing roles according to the Isan tales or allegories, such as a king, queen, prince, princess, servant, parents, son, daughter, hermit, angel and ghost. Its outstanding performance is the dance and fun elements. Mo Khaen will perform **“Lam Toei”**, which includes Toei Kong, Toei Burma, Toei Thammada and Toei Hua Nontan.



“The indigenous performance of the Northeastern Thai people like ‘Lam’ has evolved continuously. It starts from Lam Phuen Mueang (folk storytelling) by using the content of folk tales, such as Karaket, Sin Chai, Nang Tang On. The performers comprise of one Mo Lam and one Mo Khaen. Mo Lam assumes to play all characters and tells the stories all night long. Thus, it is the origin of all types of Mo Lam.”

- **Mo Lam Ploen**

Mo Lam Ploen is another type of Mo Lam which perform as a group. The story of the show could be anything, including that the Mo Lam Moo performs. The difference between the Mo Lam Moo and the Mo Lam Ploen is that all the female performers of Mo Lam Moo are dressed with Pa Sin --- traditional Isan folk costumes or Thai dresses. But female performers of Mo Lam Ploen will wear short skirts, showing off their body. The melody of Mo Lam Ploen is focused on excitement and thrill by using various instruments of Khaen, Pin and and drum set to excite the audience.

- **Mo Lam Sing**

Mo Lam Sing is a melodic dance adapted from fun Mo Lam songs. Male performers will sing to court female performers, while show the soft and beautiful performances and accompanied by Khaen. Modern instruments are used to create rhythm like Mo Lam Ploen, while Hang Krueang joins the show like Luk Thung music. The highlight is the fun verse with an exciting rhythm.

Lakhon Chatri

Heritage of Singing and Dancing

Lakhon Chatri is one of the oldest forms of Thai traditional performing arts that link between the dramatic performances of the Central region and the Nora dance of the Southern region. It is filled with the beliefs in fortune and holiness which influence the livelihoods and lifestyles of Thai people.

The origin of the word **“Chatri”** is discussed on several assumptions. For instance, **“Chatri”** may refer to a master of weaponry, who knows the methods of protecting himself from all kinds of weapons. Or, it could be a slightly different pronunciation of a Sanskrit word **“Kasatriya”** to **“Chattriya”**, and it became further distorted to **“Chatri”** after entering Thailand. This hypothesis is based on the performance of Lakhon Chatri which presents the story about kings of the costume of ancient kings. On the other hand, Chatri may be derived from the word **“Yatri”** or **“Yatra”**, which mean **“to wander”**, in accordance with a mobile troupe in India called **“Chatri”**.

After its widespread popularity in the Southern region, Lakhon Chatri was introduced to Bangkok in 1769 AD, when King Taksin of Thonburi led the army to suppress the ruler of Nakhon Si Thammarat and brought several people including the Lakhon Chatri troupes to the capital of Thonburi. Later in 1780 AD, on the occasion of celebrating the Emerald Buddha Statue, King Taksin commanded the ruler of Nakhon Si Thammarat’s Lakhon Chatri troupe come to Thonburi for performance in the royal court. Next in 1832 AD, during King Rama III’s reign, Somdet Chao Phraya Borom Maha Prayurawongse (Dit Bunnag), then Head of the Royal Treasury, led the army to suppress an uprising in the Southern region and brought back with him some talented performers of Lakhon Chatri. Banding as a performing group later, these performers became well received and the popularity of Lakhon Chatri continues to younger generations until today.

“Women were permitted to act in general performances during the reign of King Rama IV, not only limited to men. Lakhon Chatri performers changed their dress to the costume of Lakhon Nok and changed Soet to Chada because of the slimmer shape and suitability to a woman’s face that makes her look gorgeous.”









“Some of the current Lakhon Chatr troupes are inherited from traditional Lakhon groups such as Soithong Hirun troupe (Bunchu Luk Soithong), Udomsin Krachangchot troupe. Some of them split from traditional groups and changed to new name. They updated their performances to modern style, such as Thida Na Bangsai Troupe, Chadet Daoden Troupe and Si Chanthra Troupe.”

The prominence of Lakhon Chatr is its adaption of entertaining literatures or folk literatures to the performances, such as Sang Thong, Chai Chet, Phra Rot and Meri, Kaeo Na Ma (A horse-faced woman), and Suwana Hong. Sometimes the troupe will create their own scripts, while they memorize, improvise, or listen to the lines of lyrics and verses. Their dialogues are usually simple with straightforward communication, accompanied by Pi Phat Chatr band playing music with a focus on beautiful dance scene. Lakhon Chatr used to be the performance for general celebration and an offering for god because it is believed that the performers has magical power to contact with god or the holy spirit. If one would prayed for fortunate things, once it were received, one must present a suitable dramatical art as an offering to god. The theatre used in Lakhon Chatr consists of four poles in four corners of a square with one bed and a monumental pole at the center to make a theatre. The Lakhon Chatr performers in the past were shirtless males. There was only a principal performer/character, dressed in elaborated costume of Sanap Phlao (a pair of calf-length trousers), Chia-rabat (a kind of sash with decorative strips hanging down over the thighs), Hoi Na (a decorative cloth strips that also hang down in front from the waist, Hoi Khang (a decorative cloth strips that hangs down aside from the waist). Later joined by females, the performers are no later shirtless but dressed like Lakhon Nok.



- The music instruments of Lakhon Chatri originally comprise Ranat Ek (traditional Thai idiophone), Pi (Thai oboe), Ta Phon (two-faced drum), (Klong Tuk (small drum), Thon Chatri (tuned two-faced drum), Ching (small cymbals), small Chap (cymbals) and Krap Maiphai (bamboo rhythm clappers)

Lakhon Chatri performance starts with an homage rite to the teachers and past masters, followed by Pi Phat Hom Rong Chatri (Chatri's overture), Rong Prakat Na Bot (announcement singing). The principal character will come out to perform the dance of Ram Sat Na Bot in an anti-clockwise circle. In the past, the performer must chant an incantation to invoke protection from the evil force. This part is called **"Chak Yan"** (Spinning the fabric talisman or Casting a spell). Next, the principal character sits on the bench, as a start of the performance, singing and being chorused by other characters. When the performance finishes, the principal character performs the Ram Sat again, but with backwards chanting and moves in a clockwise circle. This part is called **"Khlai Yan"** (Undoing the spell), to remove all spells.

Lakhon Chatri has changed through time. The singing to carry on the story which was earlier performed in the Nora tunes, such as Na Trae and Rai Chatri tunes was changed to simple tunes of the central region in level 2 tempo, with the addition of Ranat Ek to enhance the dance. The part of Ram Sat is replaced by dances of Phleng Cha, Phleng Reo, and Phleng La (slow tune, fast tune, and farewell tune) these are called **"Ram Thawai Mue"** (veneration dance). The set and equipment of Lakhon Chatri are more decorated and colorful from its fundamental costume influenced by the high-level dress of the Royal Court. Despite many changes in style, Lakhon Chatri is still performed as Ram Kae-Bon an act of votive offering—under the same belief in the past.





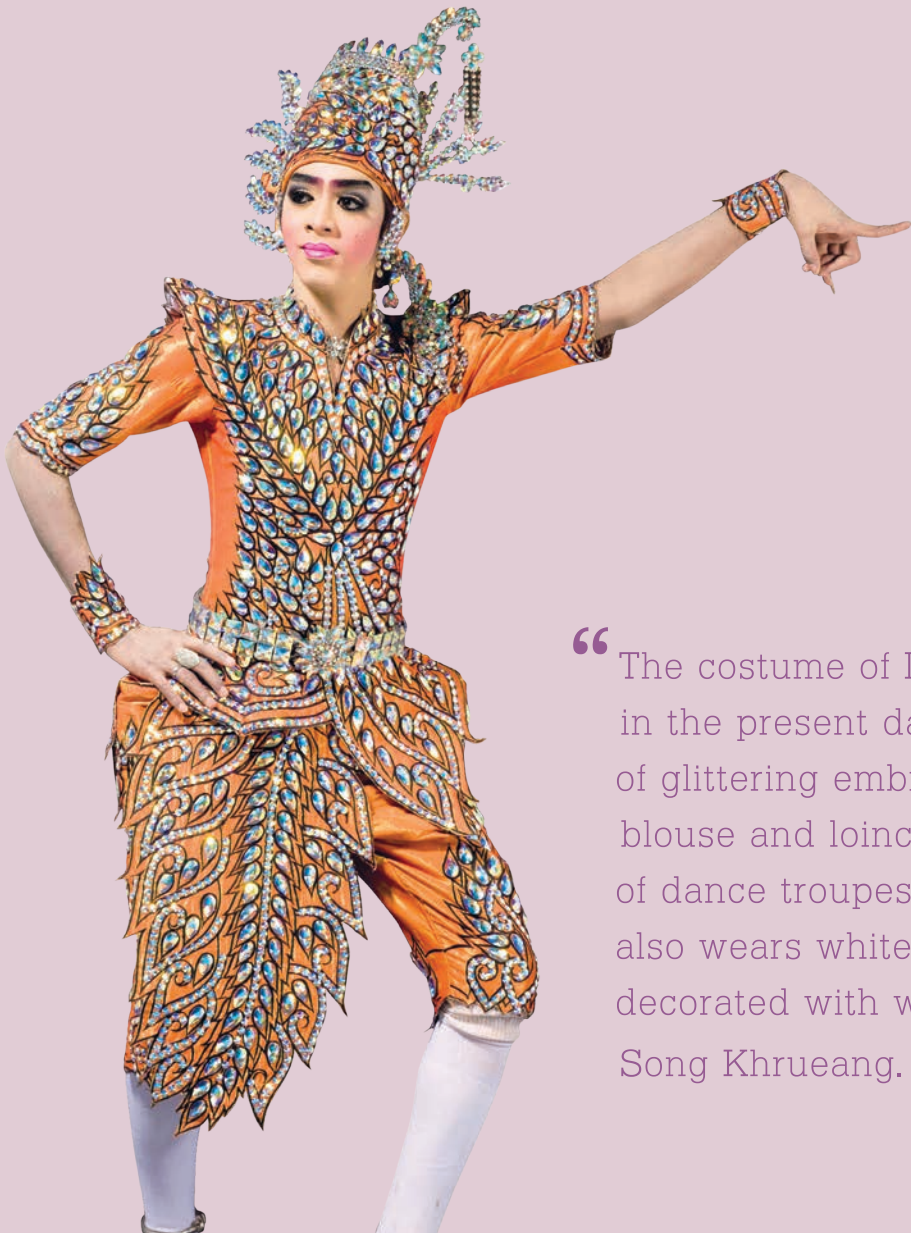
Li-kae

The Folk Dance of Thailand

Li-kae in Thailand is originated from the Islam worship chanting with its folk music in harmony with the rhythm of Rammana (one-sided drum with shallow body) about hundred years ago. It is developed into a performance that combines dance with music from Pi Phat ensemble. It proceeded in the style of folk drama that entertains audiences in each era. It is a unique charm of Li-kae that it picks the story from social conditions or events to present in the form of entertainment.

It is believed that the word Li-kae is derived from the Persian word Sike, which refers to reading the praises to commemorate God Allah in Islam. Earlier during the reign of King Rama III, Li-kae was called Li-kae Suat Khaek, when Thai Muslims traveled from the Southern region to settle down in Bangkok and brought the chants to God together with Rammana performances. Later in the reign of King Rama V, the Li-kae Suat Khaek started its performance by chanting in Malay praises to God and singing Southern Malay verses, called Puntun or Li-kae Pantun. Later, Li-kae brought the Pi Phat Ok Pasa (performance with mixed languages) to tease the expatriates at that time through the satirical dress and spoken language mixed with foreign languages. The songs started with Malay prayers, followed by other languages including Mon, Chinese, Laos, Burmese, Cambodian, Japanese, English, Javanese, Indian, and Talung (Southern Thai) and ended up with a series of short comedy.

“The costume of Li-kae’s heroine character in the present day focuses on the luxury of glittering embroidery, wearing a plaited blouse and loincloth like a heroine character of dance troupes. The heroine character also wears white stockings and the head decorated with white feathers like Li-kae Song Khrueng.”





The most popular Li-kae performance today is from Li-kae Song Khrueang, considered as a folk dance drama of the Central region which originated around 1907 AD, in the reign of King Rama V. The first Li-kae Song Khrueang was performed by Phraya Phetpani at a theatre (called “**Wik**”) near Pom Phrakan, on the bank of Khlong Ong Ang. The performance of Li-kae Song Khrueang features a combination of singing, dancing, acting and natural expressions following the dialogues and accompanied by the Pi Phat ensemble. The performers wear a glittering dress and present a long story similar to those of Lakhon Ram.

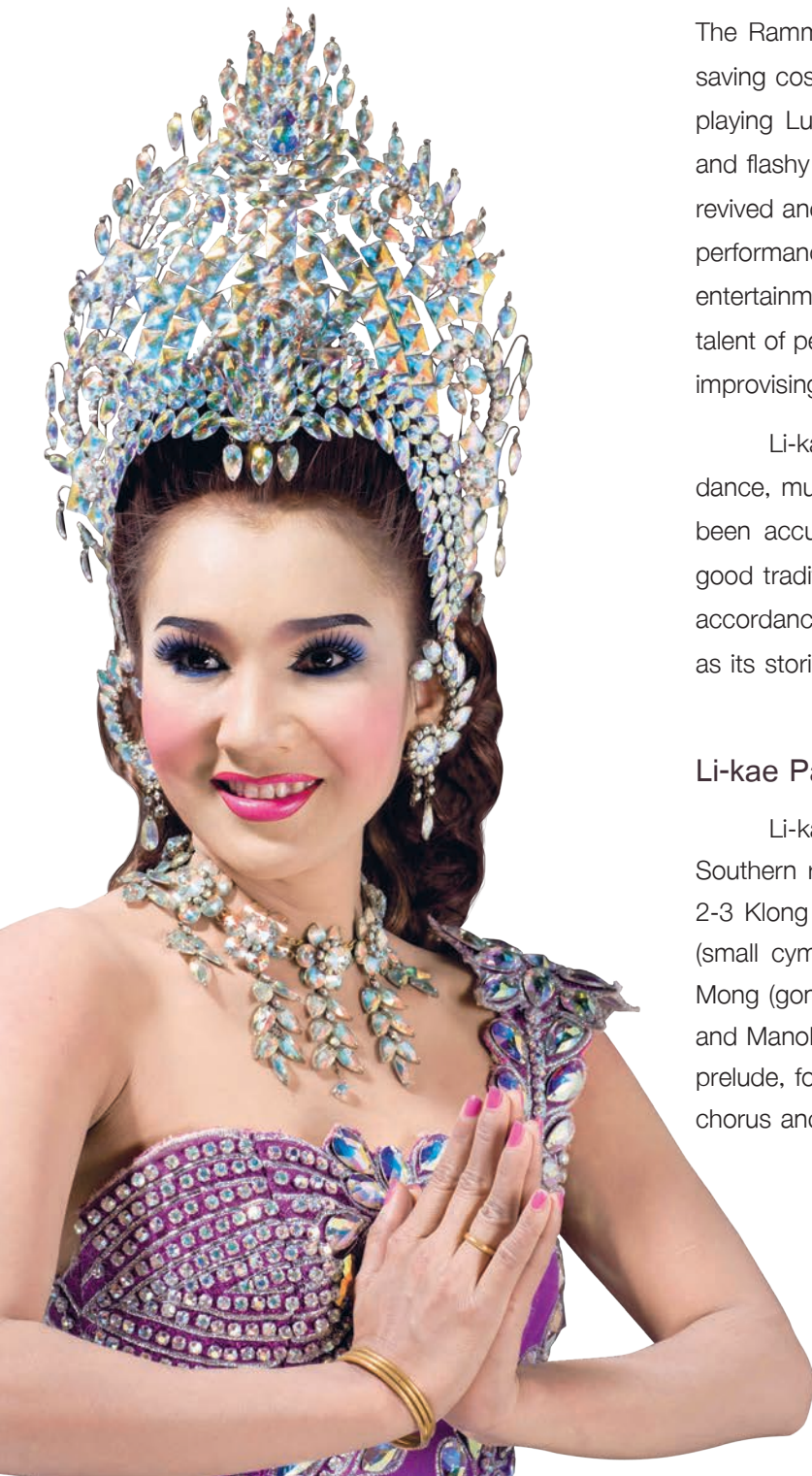


- Li-kae music is played by two types of Pi Phat: Pi Phat Thai and Phi Phat Mon, by playing two-tiered music that is used in Thai dance and folk songs sung by the Li-kae performers to draw the attention of the audience.





“Li-kae dance is different from Lakhon dance based on a say “Lakhon dance is a posture, but Li-kae dance is a gesture”. Lakhon dance is meant to start the dance to complete a session, but Li-kae dance will imitate the Lakhon dance’s posture, not to perform full dance as standard for proceeding the story quickly.”



Li-kae Song Khrueng is considered a prototype of later Li-kae performances, whose dance patterns, classical Thai-style singing, and presentation style serve as the framework and model. The most striking example is the Rani-kloeng song or Ratchani-kloeng song that was created by Master Dokdin Suea-sa-nga. It has become identified with Li-kae.

The performance of Li-kae Song Khrueng was halted during the World War II due to a shortage in local costume materials. The difficulties in importing cloth and artificial diamond from overseas also resulted in the discontinuity of the original Li-kae Song Khrueng costume. The Rammana ensemble for supporting Malay songs was replaced by Pi Phat ensemble for saving costs and further changed into Li-kae Lukbot, which is the performance of singing and playing Lukbot song, led by Pi Phat orchestra. The performers were all male wearing glitzy and flashy costume during the time. After the end of World War II, Li-kae Song Khrueng was revived and added more with social dimensions. Its performance was complimented with other performances, such as folk and Indian songs and more spectacular dress to create more entertainment for audience. The enjoyment of watching Li-kae of all types is dependent on the talent of performers who are competent in singing and well-versed in the story. They must have improvising abilities and impressive voices.

Li-kae is a theatre that reflects Thai ways of life, traditions, values, language communication, dance, music, painting, morale, and ethics cultivation. The wisdom of Li-kae performance has been accumulated through learning, training, experiences and successions by retaining the good traditional wisdom. At the same time, some wisdom had been changed through time in accordance with the social conditions today. Li-kae therefore remains as a popular performance as its stories highly entertain audience.

Li-kae Pa

Li-kae Pa is another form of Li-kae popularly played among Muslim people living in the Southern region. The instrument of Li-kae Pa or Li-kae Rammana or Li-kae Bok comprises 2-3 Klong Rammana or Thon (tuned two-faced drum), one Pi (Thai oboe), one pair of Ching (small cymbals) and one Krap (wooden rhythm clappers). Some Li-kae Pa troupe may use Mong (gong) and Thab (small drum). There are masters as well as Nang Talung (shadow play) and Manohra. One Li-kae Pa troupe comprises six to eight people. The folk play begins with a prelude, followed by dancing and singing of white Indians and red Indians in harmony with the chorus and continued with storytelling prior to the main performance.



- Mural paintings of “Ramayana” on the cloister’s exterior walls of Wat Phra Si Rattana Satsadaram (Temple of the Emerald Buddha)

Thai Puppet

The Science and Art of Performance

Thai puppet theatre is the art of pulling and plunging. It requires expertise, skills and multiple knowledge of the puppeteers to drive the puppet’s movement like the gesture of humans as much as possible, at the same time also in harmony with the music rhythm and roles in the story. Thai puppets are divided into 4 sub-types: Hun Luang, Hun Wang Na, Hun Krabok, and Hun Lakhon Lek.

Hun Luang (The Great Royal Puppet)

Hun Luang is the royal performance emerged since the middle Ayutthaya period of King Narai. It is evident in royal orders, Thai books and various literatures. Hun Luang’s prominent feature is its large size about one meter tall, made of wood. Hauled at abdomen, the puppet’s body is tied with fingers by stacked rattans and strings for controlling its movement, while legs and feet are fixed together. The puppeteer holds the wooden handle at the bottom part of the puppet and moves the strings to perform different actions. The puppet’s costume and ornaments is similar to those of Khon and Lakhon.



“The personality and appearance of the puppet will be adjusted in accordance with the characteristics, popularity and culture of the people in individual country, as well as the Thai puppet that conveys the dance, costume and the continuity from the Thai performing arts.”

Hun Wang Na (Front Palace's Puppet)

During the reign of King Chulalongkorn, Krom Prarachawang Bovorn Vichayachan created a puppet with a height of about 50 centimeters called Hun Lek, while the original Hun Luang was called Hun Yai. The small puppets he produced are divided into two types. The first one is **“Hun Chin (Chinese puppet)”**, a hand controlled puppet with painted face wearing Chinese theatre costume as played in Chinese literature, such as the Suai Ngak (the story of General Yue Fei), Three Kingdoms. The second is **“Hun Thai (Thai Puppet)”** about 28-30 cm tall, wearing exquisite jewelry and costume. The latter puppet is used to play Ramayana, comprising a hero, a heroine, demon and monkey.





- *Hun Krabok performance of the legend of King Naresuan on “Lilit Taleng Phai (The Defeated)” at the Chakrabhand Foundation*

Hun Krabok

Hun Krabok (bamboo puppet theatre) originated in the reign of King Rama V by adapting the Chinese Hainan puppet theatre which used bamboo as a body stem of the puppet. Therefore, it was later called Hun Krabok since the puppets use bamboo as the trunk of their body. The key feature of the puppet is its half body with the following main parts: Head - representing different roles of the hero, the heroine, the demon, the monkey, the clown, and the animals; Hands - the right hand of the hero, the demon and the clown is clenched in a fist for holding a weapon, while their left hand is in a Tang Wong Ram (dance setting) gesture. The hands of heroine are both set in the Tang Wong Ram gesture. Each of both hands is attached to a stick, called Mai Takiap, for the movement of hand gesture; and Costume, which is a sack covering from the shoulders to half-body length, beautifully embroidered. The hero has epaulets and an embroidered collar; the heroine has an embroidered cloak and collar. The method of playing the puppet is adapted from the dance but in the way of imitating real human gestures. Famous stories for playing Hun Krabok are derived from Lakhon Nok (All male performing theatre) such as Laksanawong, Sang Thong, Kaeo Na Ma (horse-faced woman), Suwanna Hong, and Phra Aphai Mani.



Hun Lakhon Lek

Hun Lakhon Lek presumably started in 1901 A.D. as a one-meter-tall puppet created by Master Krae Saphthawanit, to imitate Hun Luang (great puppet) and Hun Lek (small puppet) with the difference in controlling the puppet and the playing style. Later, Hun Lakhon Lek was inherited by Master Sakhon Yangkhiaosod, widely known as Joe Louis. He created a new small puppet theater and develop the playing style to show off the puppets outside. The audience can see the style of puppeteers along with the puppet. One puppet is controlled by three puppeteers and the skills were transferred to offspring. He finally established the first puppet troupe in Thailand named **“the Troupe of Sakorn Nathasilp Lakhon Lek, nephew of Khru Krae”**, and the first theatre for small puppet performances, known as Natayasala Hun Lakhon Lek (Joe Louis) [Traditional Thai Puppet Theatre (Joe Louis)].

The importance of Thai puppetry is to bring different forms of national arts and culture together by relying on a skillful sculptor in making a head and body sculpture, an expert in creating the puppet mechanic controls, and a competent artisan specializes in making embroidery costume and apparels. The performance also requires an excellent puppeteer who has knowledge of dance, music instruments, literary arts, rhythm and mood of the music to control the show, proceed the story based on the lyrics and dialogues, especially for Hun Krabok, which is the combination of several high-class arts, such as architecture, decorative arts for creation of the puppet theatre and scenes in line with the story. Therefore, it is indeed a performance that brings several forms of arts and culture of Thailand to blend together harmoniously.

“In addition to the Hun Luang which remains to the present day, the evidence of Thai puppet theatre is visible in the mural paintings dated back to the reign of King Rama III at Wat Phra Chetuphon Vimolmangklaram (Wat Pho) and the craftsmanship from the reign of King Rama IV at the Wat Thongthammachart, Wat Sommanatwattana in Bangkok, and Wat Machimimas in Song Khla.”

- In the performance of Hun Lakhon Lek, the audience will be able to see the puppets and the puppeteers at the same time. Therefore, it is necessary to use the puppeteers who are also mastery in Khon theatre.







Science and Art Thai Craftsmanship

Thai craftsmanship demonstrates wisdom and skills passed through generations over a long period of time as well as creativity in the utilization of natural materials with a focus on functions. Splendid details are added to make it precious and unique craftwork full of charm, such as the construction of traditional Thai houses localized to suit the living conditions and the environment of each region, bamboo basketry, woven fabrics which are more than everyday clothing, the creation of Lanna lanterns, fresh flower arrangement and banana stalk carving.



- *“The cold weather condition affects the structure of Northern Thai houses, apparently lower than Thai houses of other regions. Windows are smaller to block the wind from outside and decorated with Lanna art, such as Ka Lae. The space underneath the elevated floor is often used as storage for agricultural equipments, resting, and implementing household industries such as umbrella making, weaving, cotton thread spinning, rice pounding.”*



Ruean Thai

Traditional Houses for Living

The identity of the Ruean Thai (Traditional Thai house) varies from region to region, dependent on geography, beliefs, arts and culture, socio-economic conditions, and the popularity in each locality. What they have in common is the preferences in building a single-storey wooden house in a rectangular shape, high-sloping roof with long eaves, wide terrace, elevated floor and high cellar. The details of each region house may be different in terms of house roofing, style of the structure and the shape of the house.

Northern Style Ruean Thai

In general, Ruean Thai in the Northern region is a wooden house with a platform of raised floor, cellar, gabled roof and long eaves to block sunlight and rain. The horizontal gable of the house is turned towards the North-South direction. The house’s staircase is always set under the left side of the eaves. The roof structure must be supported by floated pillars. The style of each house is similar, while the details are slightly different based on the type of craftsmanship. For example, the roof angle of Lanna House in the style of the Lampang school is not very steep and the gable peak is not sharp or high. Kalae house of Chiang Mai school is decorated by magnificently carved wood. The essential component of a Northern Thai house is a water pavilion or **“Han Nam”**, for placing a pot filled with water. It is like a jar of water for guests.

- *“A Central Thai house usually has a Manila-style roof, gable end, awning, and elevated high floor.”*



- *Northeastern Style Ruean Thai*



- *Central Style Ruean Thai*

Central Style Ruean Thai

Thai houses in the Central region of Thailand are most likely built along canals, rivers or lowland areas. As they can be flooded easily, the basement of the houses must be raised from the ground slightly over the height of a standing man to let wind blow through. There are inward slopping pillars and the wall with high gable roof, long eaves for blocking rain and sunlight, the terrace for recreation, the kitchen house is often separated from the main house, a porch, a bird tower as part of the compound, and a staircase at the front. The layout is likely positioned in accordance with the surrounding environment. For example, waterfront houses will be geographically laid out in the direction of the river.

Northeastern Style Ruean Thai

A tradition Thai house of the Northeastern region of Thailand is a wooden house with elevated floor under a gable roof. The large house of the compound is called 'Ruean Koei' with a roof terrace. In some families, a smaller house called 'Ruean Khong', which could be in a small or medium size, may be built separately in addition to the compound. Alternatively, it could be 'Ruean Noi' or a little house with a shape similar to Ruean Khong, but sharing its structure with the big house. The function is modified into separated bedrooms especially for parents and daughters. The most outstanding structure is a shelf which is raised and built separately in another chamber, following the belief in ancestral spirits. Every house has a high floor like those of other regions, but not the big windows. Windows are narrow, while the door is built for the front only to avoid cold wind in winter. There is no eaves covered like a house in the Central region. The space under the master bedroom may be used for other activities such as cattle farming.



- *Isan people (Northeastern Thai people) usually build a barn about 1-4 meters away from their house. Mostly the barn is laid out in parallel to the house in the North or South direction.*

Southern Style Ruean Thai

Because of heavy rainfalls and frequent floods, Thai houses in the Southern part of Thailand are also built with elevated floor. In the monsoon season, current will flow through the basement. The foundation is built using wooden or stone pads to support pillars, it helps preventing the pillars' decay. There are three types of roofs: gable, Panya (hip roof), and Manila gable roof which is mostly found in Pattani. It is a roof combining the style of a hip roof with a gable roof to ventilate well. The cultural diversity in the South makes the Southern houses unique in terms of people in the society, such as Buddhist houses in Surat Thani province, Nakhon Si Thammarat province, Phatthalung province and Songkhla province are often built with gable roofs. Thai Muslim houses, in contrast, are built with hip roofs and gable roofs because the roof structure of these type is very strong and can withstand rain and wind or even typhoon which usually facing in the lower South, such as pattani province, Narathiwat province and Yala province.

Different Thai houses in each region show the wisdom to live with nature. People build their house based on geographical condition and adapt with the environment by using easy-to-find materials local materials, in line with their beliefs and popularity in the society, leading to the local identity of various Thai houses.



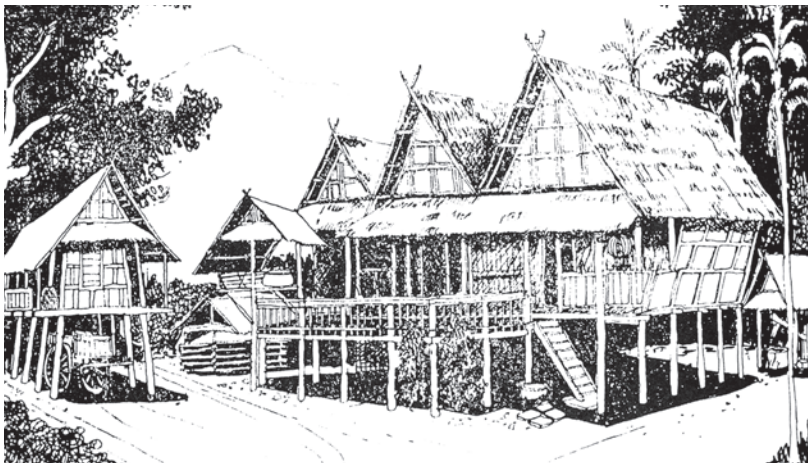
- *With a sloping triangular shaped head and tail, a hip roof Pan Ya has a very strong roof structure, resistible to rain, wind or storm.*



Ruean Khruelang Puk and Ruean Khruelang Sap

Thai houses can be divided into two types by construction methods: Ruean Khruelang Puk (small simple house) and Ruean Khruelang Sap (hardwood house). Ruean Khruelang Puk is a small house with the roof built with local materials such as dry leaves and vetiver grass. Its floor is made of bamboo. Beams and columns are built with hardwood. Bamboo and rattan is used to hold the parts of the house together. The body of the house is made of hardwood such as teak, Teng, Rang, Ta-khian, and Iron wood. This type of construction method is without nails, by hammering the side of beams to make open slots and assemble them together. Thus, the woods are interlocked. Roof is covered with tiles.

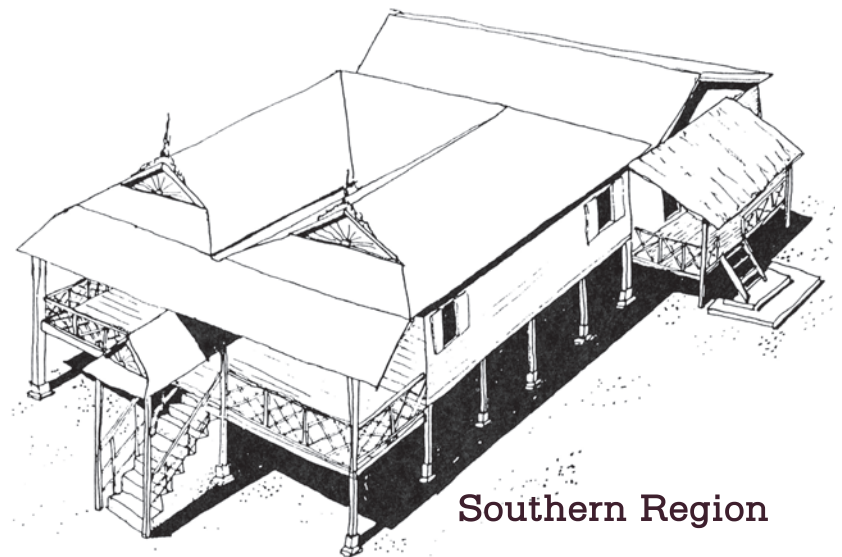
“The culture of living as an extended family of Thai people makes Thai house unique. It can be modified without affecting residents. Because the weight of the house increases on the side, therefore the main structure has not been affected.”



Northern Region



Central Region



Southern Region



“The difference between the word ‘Ruean’ and ‘Ban’ in Thai is that Ruean is an elevated building that has a covered roof, the Ban is the area where the house is located.”



Hand-woven Fabric

The Magnificence of Thai Crafts



The resonance of the wooden loom in harmony with the intertwinement of the multicolored yarns woven into a variety of patterns on the fabric is a reflection of the ways of life and wisdom inherited through the creation of hand-woven fabrics for a long period of time.

Fabric is one of the necessities for living. Weaving is considered a way to bring the essence of local authenticity to integrate with thoughts and beliefs through patterns and symbols together with the color of nature. It leads to the identity of each community almost impossible to imitate.

Household weaving of Thai society is the culture connecting families to the society. In the time when agriculture is still a foundation of living, women were responsible for weaving fabrics to be used in daily life, while men made weaving tools after farming works. Knowledge and wisdom of weaving has been transmitting in the family from generation to generation, from mothers to daughters. Therefore, weaving helps women develop the qualities of details oriented, patience and artistic creativity, in addition to the benefit of the knowledge transfer and fabric self-production.

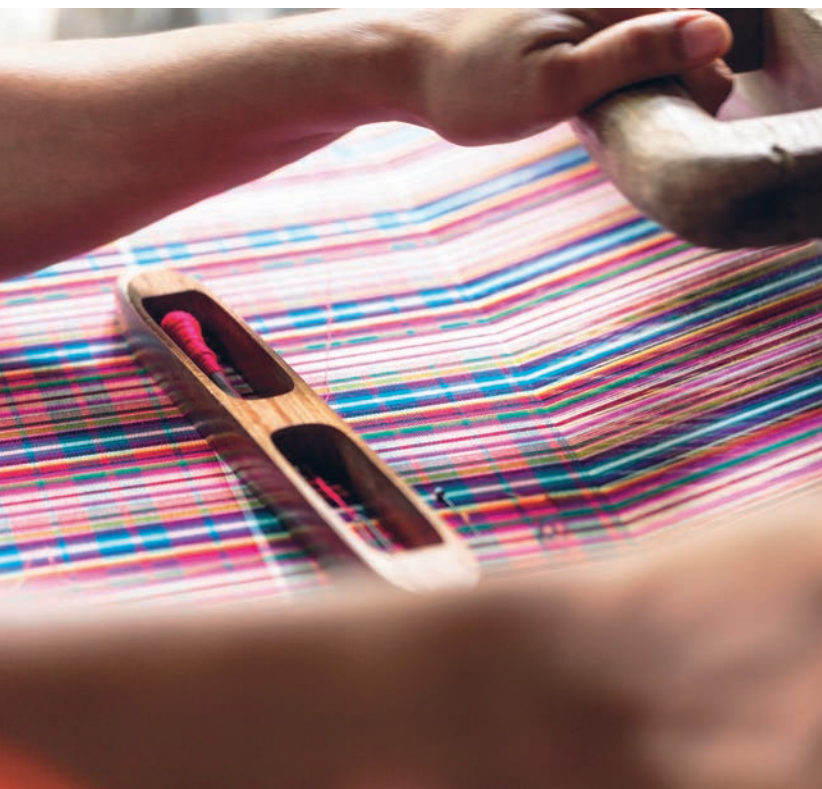
“Weavers will design their own patterns by collecting natural materials such as flower, stars, animal or household utilities. They also call the name of the patterns based on the description of the source of inspiration, such as Dok Kaew (flower of orange jasmine), Bang (Colug), Krabia (Butterfly), Kho Kham Duean, Khit, Sam Ruat (rocket), Hong (swan), and further develop more complicated and beautiful patterns.”



The basic of hand weaving starts from twisting yarns together firmly on the loom. Pick yarns on the reel of the loom are intertwined with the end yarns over and over, back and forth, until the pattern is formed on the fabric and developed into the size as required. Although it is a simple principle, the weaving can create many thousands of patterns by using different methods or techniques and bring the fabric identity of each ethnic group.

The art of weaving in Thailand can be characterized by the ethnic groups of weaving masters. The famous woven fabric of the North is Teen Chok which is cotton woven, using a Chok method to create patterns on the front side of the fabric such as Teen Chok textile of the Tai Yuan ethnic group. For the Northeastern region, silk and cotton play a similar role in the community. But the key characteristic of the regional fabric is Madmi, which makes beautiful patterns by tied and dyed yarns, such as Hol fabric and the Madmi fabric of Thai-Khmer ethnic group in Surin province. In the Southern Thailand, weavers emphasize on the beauty of Yok Dok by controlling the yarns to intertwine up and down to lift the patterns floated on fabrics, such as the Yok fabric of the city of Nakhon Si Thammarat province and Phum Riang fabric of Surat Thani province. The hand-woven fabrics of the Central region are different by patterns and weaving methods, such as Tai Yuan Chok fabric in Ratchaburi province and Tai Yuan Yok Muk fabric in Saraburi province.

Colors on fabrics are made from dyeing them with natural plants, reflecting local wisdom which is also based on scientific knowledge. Community members bring flowers, leaves, barks, seeds and roots of local plants to boil until it turn dark for dyeing clothes, such as noni roots used for dyeing red color; indigo used for dyeing blue; ebony used for dyeing black; turmeric or jackfruit used for dyeing yellow; kaffir lime used for dyeing green; jambolan plum used for dyeing purple; mangrove bark used for dyeing brown. In some communities, colors indicate the status of women. For example, a single woman of Thai Phuan wears a tube skirt with a red hem (Teen Daeng), while a married Thai Phuan woman is dressed in a tube skirt with a black hem or a tube skirt with a black Chok hem (Teen Chok). Colors reveal the identity of fabrics in each community as well, such as a Maecham tube skirt with a teen Chok hem has nine ancient patterns in reddish yellow, while a tube skirt with a Chok hem from Uttaradit province is in greenish yellow.



The creative motifs on each fabric also convey beliefs and local culture, sometimes linked to patterns visible to other art, such as mural paintings and architecture. Some of them derive from folklores and literatures. These details reflect that each fabric produced by hand weaving is not just the foundation of lifestyle, culture and wisdom pass through many generations, but each of the yarns is like a record of wisdom worth the education and conservation in Thailand.

- *Weaving is to intertwine yarns together in an over-and-under pattern like basketry. A yarn held in tension as a main warp is called a warp end or end. Another single thread of the weft, crossing the warp, is called a pick.*

Weaving the Yarns

“Stories of Fabrics

Weavers will design their own patterns by collecting natural materials such as flower, stars, animal or household utilities.

They also call the name of the patterns based on the description of the source of inspiration, such as Dok Kaew (flower of orange jasmine), Bang (Colug), Krabia (butterfly), Kho Kham Duean, Khit, Sam Ruat (rocket), Hong (swan), and further develop more complicated and beautiful patterns.”

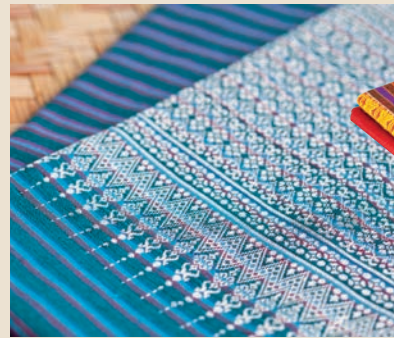
Khit

Is a technique of selecting the special wraps to create patterns and insert weft through the longitudinal dimension of Khit fabrics. Each row of Khit will have same color and pattern floated over the fabric.



Chok

Is a technique of adding extra special wefts continuously to pass through the length of the fabric. A stick, quill or finger can be used to lift the ends and insert the extra picks to make up the pattern more beautiful.



Madmi

Is a technique of tie-dyeing. Yarns are wrapped with banana tree fiber or plastic rope before they are dyed. Then, a weaver will roll the dyed yarns in the heddle following arranged patterns and weave.



Yok

Is a pitching technique to make the pattern noticeable, similar to Khit weaving. However, using special pick yarns such as silver and gold silk with a hem requires a more complicated process than Khit fabrics weaving.

Yok Muk

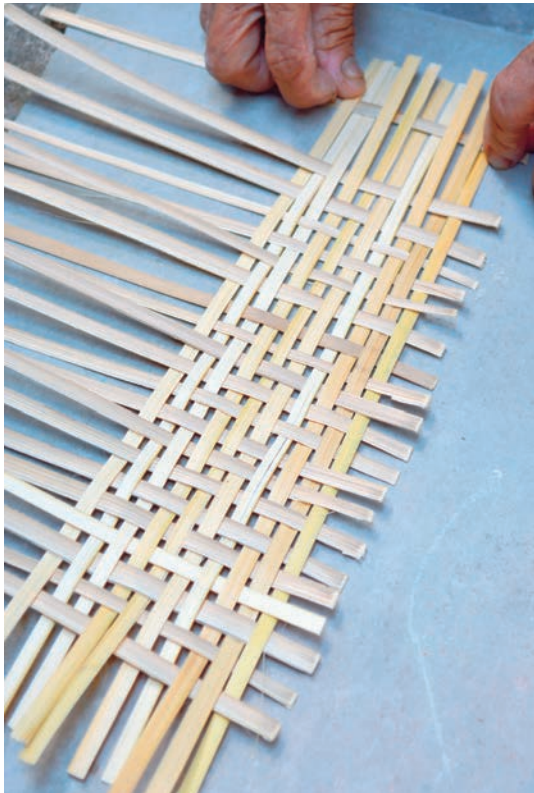
is a technique to weave with extra special end yarns on the loom. The pattern is created by the use of heddle and special weft, similar to the pattern of Khit and Chok. Weavers who first used this technique are Thai Phuan people at Hat Siao sub-district, Sukhothai province and at Lap-lae district, Uttaradit province.





Bamboo Basketry

Thai Folk Arts and Crafts



Bamboo basketry is a traditional Thai craft, despite the fact that its main purpose of creativity does not focus on beauty, but functions. The simple shapes and motifs created by the two hands are filled with high artistic values, not inferior to any other types of handicrafts.

Basketry is one of the appliances that bring bamboo, rattan, cumin, palm leaf, Liphao (Lygodium), or other materials to **“Chak”** (cutting materials into strips), **“Tok”** (thin bamboo strips) and **“San”** (weaving materials). Then, the strips are intertwined up-and-down vertically and horizontally, or they could be intertwined in diagonal or various shapes according to the uses. The development of bamboo woven basketry is originated from a demand in household appliances and agricultural tools which support people’s living in an agricultural society close to nature, such as making Chalom (round bamboo basket), Krabung, Takra. Moreover, bamboo is also easily to find, thus it helps reduce the purchasing costs.

Bamboo processing is one of the weaving wisdom. In general, the thick bamboo is cut into pieces according to the length of the strips to weave. Craftsmen cut the materials into strips and make them thin to suit various utensils. There are various types of strips depending on the appliances, such as Tok Phew, a long flat line used to weave container requiring durability, such as baskets or water traps which have to be immersed in water for a long time; Tok Phlai, a small round strip to weave the area close to the mouth of the container; and Tok Saphai, a strip to weave a stripe for chaining the nose of cattle as it is small, soft and flat, cut from Phai Si Sook (spiny bamboo) or Mai Sang (male bamboo), in a size of coffee straw.

- *“Lai Khat” (Intertwined pattern) is a basic design of basketry. It is a way to create strong intertwinement between each of strips horizontally and vertically.*





“Thai woven basketry craftsmanship not only expresses the wisdom of the local community’s way of life, but its also reflects the value of folk craftsmen’s emotional and mind expressions, through the fine details, neats and the delicate emotions of the weavers very well.”

The main purpose of basketwork is the usability. The shape is determined by applications, such as Khu Ti Khao of the North. It is a large woven basket container with about 2-3 meters in diameter and 1 meter high, used for threshing rice. Thus, the container’s mouth must be woven wider and the base is slightly lifted. For Takraeng Chon Pla (fishing sieve). If using to catch a small fish, the sieve’s mesh will be small. If catching a bigger fish, the sieve will be larger with wider mesh and raised rim.

Living culture in each region also affects the production of different basketwork. For example, people in the Northeastern region and the Northern region prefer having sticky rice. Therefore, they invent Kratip and Kong Khao for keeping the steamed sticky rice. But the Kratip and Kong Khao in both regions are different in details. Isan Kratip is more likely woven natural bamboo without any patterns, while the Northern Kong Khao is mostly made of palm or bamboo leaves, with colorful and beautiful patterns. The lifestyles of Thai people in the central region are tied with water. Therefore, they have various types of functional basketry which facilitates their activities with water, such as a Krachang (floating fish cage), Lob (rattan fish trap) and Sai (bamboo fishing trap) for catching aquatic creatures along the shore. In contrast, the Southern Thais have different basketry patterns from that of other regions, such as Kradong Fat (winnowing basket), an oval shaped container for filtering grains. It looks similar to a heart, not as round as a Kradong Fat in the Central region.





The wisdom transferred through the basketry shows the expertise of the craftsmen. Most of them are farmers who spend their free time inventing objects, developing object forms for the maximum use of them. For the woven patterns, even though the intervals and weaving characteristics are considered to mainly support the usability. But the creation later becomes a unique identity that the basketwork also reflects local geography, living conditions, traditions, beliefs, and religions of the craftsmen. Basketry, therefore, is a valuable art and craft and regarded as a good historical evidence of local communities.



“ The types of bamboo widely used for basketwork in all regions of Thailand are: Phai Si Suk (spiny bamboo), which has long large stalks; Phai Sang (male Bamboo); Phai Bong or Phai Tong (rough giant bamboo) mostly found in the North; Phai Hok; Phai Hia; Phai Ruak; Phai Liang; Phai Ruak Dam; and Phai Pao. ”



- “Khong” (creel) is shaped like a water jar. Some Isan people weave Khong in a cylindrical shape to keep fish, crab, shrimp, frogs when fishing.

Fresh Flower Arrangement

The Art of Flower Refinement

The combination of flowers, leaves, and petals in a form of fresh flower arrangement is one of the traditional Thai craftsmanship. It brings the fragrant and fragile petals of the Thai flowers to the magnificent flower arrangements in various forms to be used in the royal ceremonies and traditional festivals. The value of this craftsmanship is highly regarded for cultural identity and represents the delicate Thai ways of life and their excellence in artistic work.

The craftsmanship of fresh flower arrangement is one of the three branches of Ngan Chang Khrueng Sot (Fresh Material Craftsmanship), comprising soft carving, banana stalk carving and fresh flower arrangement. Each of them has unique identity and requires specific skills and expertise of the craftsman.

The center of competencies in fresh flower craftsmanship is from the wisdom of the floral craft making ladies in the inner court of the royal palace who arrange fresh flowers for the king and the royal family members and for Buddhist worships during important ceremonies and festivals. For instance, in the reign of King Rama I, Chao Chom Manda Tani was skillful in creating garlands and sewing banana leaves. In the reign of King Rama IV, Princess Lamom created splendid floral mobiles, such as a Raya Plaengphuangkaeo, Wiman Phra-in, and Wiman Thaen. In the reign of King Rama V, Queen Saovabha Phongsri designed and arranged fresh flowers in a form of Naga head, decorating them on a dining table for welcoming foreign guests. It was the first creative idea ever.

Fresh flower arrangement is also one of the components in ceremonies and social traditions such as robe offerings, Buddhist candle decoration, and lotus-shaped flower offerings during the Buddhist Lent; Mahachat (story of the last great incarnation of the Buddha) Sermon offerings; lotus-shaped flower offerings to the ancient Kings ; and artificial flower wreath offerings.

The principal methods of fresh flower arrangement include flowers threading, stitching, Phu (tuft), Raya (hanging), Malai (garland) and Khrueng Khwaen (floral mobiles). Phum Dokmai (Lotus-shaped flowers) is the arrangement of fresh flowers in containers, such as a tray with a pedestal. It uses clay, sweet potato or Wintergreen wood, to be molded and sharpen into a round piece as a base for sticking flowers, while the top is sharp, sometimes decorated with Thum (The smaller lotus-shape flowers decoration). Most of Phum Dokmai are arranged in a lotus shape, an upside down monk's alms-bowl shape, and a fresh flower style. It is decorated by real flowers and sewed with petals, probably mixed with leaves or Malai Thao [A group of Malai Sik (half circle garland) tie together in a circle then stack vertically from large ones to smaller ones, in order to form a lotus-shape]. Another kind of Phum is called Phum Kanthet, formerly made of fresh flowers on a Phan (pedestal tray), Talum (receptacle, usually made of wood and inlaid with mother-of-pearls) or Tok (wooden tray on a pedestal) surrounded by money coins glued with beeswax, which is used as an offering to Buddhist priests (Kanthet).



“Malai (garland), is the art of Thai flower craftsmanship that brings flower, petals, leaves and different parts of flowers to thread them together in a wide range of styles, from traditional Malai and modern designs.”





“Fresh flower craftsmanship represents creative flower arrangement, such as flower stitches, flower filtration, etc. It produces a variety of craftwork, such as Uba, Feuang, Malai, to be used in ceremony and beautiful decoration of places.”

Malai (garland) is a combination of flowers, petals, and leaves, such as Mali (jasmine), Put (cape jasmine), rose petals threaded together into a bunch of different styles such as a Malai Chai Diao, a garland with one Uba (flowers chained like a tassel to be stringed with garland); Malai Song Chai, a garland with two Uba; and Malai Muea (hand garland) for wearing on a hand, sometimes called Riang Malai or Malai Pia.

Khrueang Khwaen is a fresh flower mobile arranged as a decoration for doors, windows or ceremonies. There are various types such as Phu Klin Dok Mai (fragrant flower tassels), comprising Uba, Raya. It can be arranged in a shape of Khom Chin (Chinese lantern), Khom Huat and Phuang Kaeo. The method of making Khrueang Khwaen includes net sewing, tassel making, and many different types of fresh flowers. Fresh flower arrangement for other ceremonies include floral wreath for covering monk's robes, flower decorations on the base of Buddha Images and for funeral coffins, and flower arrangement in a vase.

The value of fresh flower craftsmanship is not only in bringing flowers, petals, or leaves to arrange together in magnificent forms, but fresh flower arrangements also have psychological benefits and value of real-life application. Fresh flower craftsmen needs to be detail oriented and long-term expertise in order to produce a prefect masterpiece.



- Phan Phum, Malai and Khrueang Khwaen (fresh flower mobile) fresh flower are Thailand's magnificent craft works in terms of form, methods of using colours and easy-to-find materials.

Fresh Flower Craftsmanship

There are three important methods in arranging fresh flowers.

Malai can be made in different patterns by using petals such as petals of damask rose and lolls; by using leaves such as leaves of orange jessamine and Krabuea; using whole flowers such as flowers of jasmine, Put (cape jasmine) and calotropis, stringed them together into a Malai Khor Phrakon and Malai Song Chai.



Screening. Flowers will be screened and selected to be in the same size before being stringed together such as Dok Khachon (cowslip creeper), Dok Phikun (bullet wood), Dok Lamduan (white cheesewood), or being chopped into thin slices before being composed together such as Dok Ban Mai Ru Roi (globe amaranth).



Due to the fragile nature of Thai flowers, and tropical weather, Thai flowers have a shorter life than that of other regions. The application of fresh flowers to various works is considered as artistic wisdom and help extend the flowers' life and keep the beauty last longer.



Knitting. Net can be knitted by fresh flower such as Dok Put, Dok Mali making alternate motifs of fabrics and flowers such as Lai Klet Tao, Lai Si Kan Si Dok, Lai Sam Kan Sam Dok, Lai Ok Mangmum, Lai Dao Lom Duean, Lai Phra Athit Ching Duang, Lai Kao Ching Duang and Lai Phum Khao Bin. This technique is normally used for knitting nets or decorating flower mobiles or Phan Phum.







Lanna Floating Lantern

The Fine Art of Offerings

Khom Lanna (Lanna lantern) is traditional craftwork of Lanna people since the ancient times. Its beauty is at the decorative stencils which are all meaningful and sacred. The purpose of making lanterns is to worship Buddha or sacrifice to a respected person. Lanna lantern also depicts the society of Thai Lanna people who believe in Buddhism and commonly respect spirit. The creativity of the lantern craftsmen is full of exquisiteness and determination to work with their full capabilities.

Based on the Lord Buddha painting dated in the reign of King Tilokaraj of Lanna 500 years ago, discovered by Prof. Silpa Bhirasri of the Department of Fine Arts in 1958 at the Dok Ngoen Temple, in Chiangmai province, it is assumed that the lantern-making is an ancient Thai craftsmanship. They also have their own unique characteristics. The shape of Lanna lantern is made of Hia bamboo frame. The bamboo, found only in the North, is cut into a circle shape and covered with rice paper or hand-woven cotton, decorated with stencil paper with the designs which have auspicious meaning, such as Lai Dok Ka Kok and Lai Duang Tawan.

Lanna Lantern is often celebrated in the Yi Peng Festival, held on the night of the 15th lunar month. The lantern is therefore called Khom Yi Peng (or Yi Peng) and will be made one day earlier as Lanna people prepare to use lanterns for lighting Phang Prathit or Phang Prathip (a small clay pot filled with bees wax or oil to be placed in the lamp) and hang them on **“Khang Khom”** (a large bamboo pole) in front of temples. At the end of the pole there are a stand and a pulley to move lanterns up.

Lanna lanterns are various in terms of styles and designs based on the creative wisdom of each locality. The ancient lanterns which have been inherited until now include Khom Rang Mot Som (red ant-nest shaped or Wheel of the Dharma lantern); Khom Dao (star-shaped lantern), Khom Hai (jar-shaped lantern), Khom Ngiao, Khom Krabok (cylinder-shaped lantern), Khom Hu Kratai (rabbit's ear-shaped lantern), Khom Dokbua (lotus-shaped lantern) Khom Yipun (Japanese-style lantern), Khom Phat (Spinning silhouette lantern) and so on. Khom Hu Kratai (rabbit's ear-shaped lantern), Khom Dokbua (lotus-shaped lantern) Khom Yipun (Japanese-style lantern), Khom Phat (Spinning silhouette lantern) and so on.

“In ancient times, lanterns were used to produce lights instead of lamps. But because oil was expensive, lanterns were usually lit in the Royal Court and the high-level government officials’ houses only. Lanna people more likely lighted worshipping lanterns early in the evening after listening to sermons. They were praying to worship the five Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa which is present Kalpa (Bhadra means excellent and Kalpa is time measuring unit that indicate a very long period of time or an eternity), namely Kakusandha, Koṇāgamana, Kassapa, Gautama, and Maitreya.”

Khom Rang Mod Som (Red Ant-nest Lantern) or Khom Sema Thamma Chak (Wheel of the Dharma on the Boundary Stone Lantern)

This lantern's form is similar to a colony of red ant (Mod Daeng) and in an octagonal shape like **"Dharma chakra"** (Wheel of the Dharma). Its top is attached with triangle-shaped handles. When its bamboo frame is wrapped with paper, the upper part is left open to put Phang Prathit inside, or let air transmit into the lantern. The lower part is decorated by Khom's tail. Khom Rang Mod is created for Buddhist worships only.

Khom Hai (Jar Lantern)

The lantern's shape is like a jar as its top part wider than the bottom part which is square. The shape of the upper part is hexagonal, with attached four triangle-shaped handle, while the bottom part is square. The tail is decorated with stencil paper. The mouth has a hole to hold the Phang Prathit. This type of lantern can be used for general worships, sometimes called **"Khom Phet"** (diamond lantern). It is popular as a gift for a new house and wedding ceremonies as for its auspicious meaningfulness.







Khom Krabok

The shape of Khom Krabok is similar to a cylinder. The decorative patterns used are mostly Soi Dok Mak. The bottom of the lantern is closed with hard paper to put the Phang Prathit for Buddhist worships. This lantern comes in round and square shape. The square form is sometimes called Khom Lo as it is similar to the lantern hung with an ox cart giving light to merchants for travelling at night.

Khom Ngiao

This sophisticatedly beautiful lantern originated from Tai Yai people. In comparison to other lanterns, it is more difficult to produce because of its complicated structure like diamond.

Khom Dao

Shaped into a five pointed star, this lantern is mostly decorated with a sun pattern. A small hole in the middle is made to place Phang Prathit to be lit for Buddhist worships.

The beauty of Lanna lantern is composed by the fine decorative stencils, fascinating angle of structure and the implicit values from faith and determination to make the lantern for worshipping the Lord Buddha. Each of Lanna lanterns definitely expresses the wisdom of Lanna craftsmen who can bring creativity to make this beautify lanterns deserved to be the great offerings.



“Villages which are still the place of lantern making and selling include Ban Mueang Sat, Nong Hoi sub-district, Mueang district, Chiang Mai province.”







Banana Stalk Carving Craftsmanship

The Craftwork on Banana Trunks

“Banana stalk carving craftsmanship is a knowledge transferred from generation to generation and the beauty of using natural and easy-to-find local materials to create a fine work. It also reflects the culture related to death and Buddhism which is inherited from ancient times.”

Large banana stalks are cut fresh from the trunk, peeled into thin pieces. A double-edged knife is further used to carve Thai patterns without prior drafts. To avoid bruising the stalks, only master craftsmen can make finely elaborated carvings for decorations in both blessing and funeral ceremonies.

Banana stalk carving belongs to carving branch in the school of fresh material craftsmanship, together with the soft material carvings and the fresh flower arrangements. It is a fine art of using 2-5 inches long double-edged knives to plunge into banana stalks and to carve Thai motifs in various designs. A good craftsman must have expertise in Thai patterns and pattern elaborations because it is unmistakable once the knife is plunged into the banana stalks. The carver must be accurate and smoothly drag lines to create patterns. Otherwise, the banana stalks will be spoiled. This kind of work also requires the craftsman to run against the time. That is, a carver must prepare and carve the stalks within 10-12 hours before using it, in order to keep the work fresh and beautiful during the time of the event.

The importance of banana stalk carvings is the application to decorate rituals according to local beliefs. They can be used in the sacred ceremonies, such as tonsure, Thetmahachat sermons, and in decorations of monk's seats, palanquin of new monks, and the funeral pyre.





Kluai Tani (wild banana) is the popular banana tree used by banana stalk carvers because the meat is solid, white, clean, less resin, and its color does not change fast. Nowadays, Kluai Tani is getting rare and its size is not suitable for carving. Kluai Namwa becomes a substitute. But only a young Kluai Namwa or a Kluai Namwa which has never had a bud before will be selected because of its soft and easy to carve patterns.

Each step of stalk carving begins with the carver paying a homage to teachers to commemorate the devoted teachers who transferred the expertise. After that, the carver will prepare banana stalks in the size that fit the place to be decorated and carve the stalks into Thai motifs following the creativity of the craftsman. Finally, each of carved stalks will be arranged in a set pattern.

The composition of the set pattern comprises a basic pattern like carving Lai Fan Pla (zigzag pattern) or Lai Fan Neung (1st Herringbone pattern) up and down alternated all over the stalk. More zigzag patterns such as Lai Fan Sam (3rd Herringbone pattern) or Lai Fan Ha (5th Herringbone pattern) can be added, dependent on the carver's expertise. When vertically splitting banana stalks, there will be brought to connect with Lai Na Kradan (front board pattern) and Lai Sao (pole) which are the main part of the pattern.

Lai Na Kra Dan pattern (front board pattern) is the main component of the pattern sets on top, middle and base parts, mostly carved in Lai Rak Roi, Lai Kampu, Lai Khrua Thao, Lai Dok. The patterns to carve are similarly complicated. Most of them are Lai Khrua Thao (bunch of vine) such as Lai Mali Lueai (weeping jasmine), Lai Kanok , animals such as fish, birds, butterflies, dragons, Himavanta creatures, flowers, funny patterns, language scripts, and 12 zodiac animals.



- *Lai Fan Sam (3rd Herringbone pattern) is a pattern adapted from the the teeth of a fish.*



- Patterns commonly used in banana stalk carving include Lai Fan Pla, Lai Fan Sam, Lai Fan Ha, Lai Fan Bua, Lai Khaeng Sing, etc.

Both types of stalk carvings are classified as the most difficult. The craftsmen must combine Thai patterns in place all over the banana stalk with special care, otherwise the patterns would be easily broken. However, these two are the patterns that craftsmen most likely show off their full skills. The patterns are based on local beliefs and traditions. Sometimes craftsmen perforate the stalks and insert color paper inside to make color. Alternatively, they lightly mark the stalks with knife before coloring on the marks and lightly wipe the colour to see the clear pattern.

The value of the banana stalk carving is considered as one of the cultural evidences since the ancient times, especially involved in various rituals associated with the deaths of Buddhist people, such as the cremation of the deceased. In the past, the cremation were often implemented in an open area on a temporary crematory, made of wood or bamboo. The crematorium for burning the body is normally placed by the banana tree before firewood and the coffin. Because banana's stems and its leaves are watery, they can be fire resistance to protect the catafalques. The use of banana tree was evolved into stalk carving which changes its form to create beauty along with functions. It is considered as wisdom in harmony with lifestyles and also demonstrates the ability of Thai craftsmen who can adapt natural materials available in the locality to create the fine art.

“Banana stalk carving has been inherited in forms of craftsmanship in the Royal Court and folk craftsmen in communities or provinces such as the Wat Rakhankhositaram family, the Wat Apson Sawan family the Wat Dong Munlek family and the Phetchaburi family.”

“The uniqueness of the banana stalk carving work is that there is no motif draft on the stalks. The craftsmen must be expertise to create patterns with good timing. The patterns as a result will be beautiful and consistent.”









Thai Cuisine and Lifestyle

The food and eating behaviors of Thai people are not just for living, but explicit science and art in the creation of tasty and nutritious food with various sensations through cooking process and methods. It also reflects the tastes of people in each region, such as a set of dishes and varieties of Nam Prik, Somtum, Tom Yum, Khao Yam of the Southern region, food and desserts for festivals like Krayasat.

Thai Set Dishes

Traditional Thai Food and Eating Culture

The identity of Thai cuisine is not only in its flavor, aroma, appearance and cookery process, but also includes its nutritious element in each meal through the combination of food in each meal of each region in order to obtain complete nutrition. The way of food consumption culture in each region.

People in Thai society generally gather together as a big family. The main meal for a family is dinner while all family members share a large set of food together. Thais eat rice as the main food and try to find various side dishes suitable for the preferences of family members. It is so-called consumable both to eye (for beauty) and tongue (for taste). Food is normally served in a set of containers for sharing. Thai set menu is called differently in each region, such as **“Sam Rab”** in the Central region; **“Hmrab”** in Southern region; **“Khan-Toak”** in Northern region; and **“Pa-Khao”** in Isan or Northeastern region.



• *Toak or Khan-Toak*



• *Hmrab*

• *Pa-Khao*





“In Central Thailand, the set menu is not only served as daily meal, but also as offerings to Buddhist monks on merit-making occasions. It is called “Samrab Phra” (set dishes for monks, in the past they were arranged in a tray) generally consists of a set of main dishes including both curry and clear soup and a set of desserts including 5–6 desserts and fruits.”



Food arranged in a set menu served with rice is normally rich in flavors, cooking methods and attractive appearance. One set menu consists of a dip — such as chili sauce or **“Lon”** (a type of dip enriched with coconut milk), seasonal raw or cooked vegetables, a side dish such as grilled food, deep-fried food, spicy salad or stir-fried dish and a soup.

This kind of food arrangement helps enhance the taste of dishes become more flavorful and nutritious. For example, when having fried mackerel (Pla-too) or fried salted gourami (Pla Salid), together with fresh or cooked vegetables with shrimp paste sauce (Nam Prik Kapi), the sour, sweet, and spicy tastes in Nam Prik Kapi are toned down. After finishing main course, dessert mostly fresh fruit is served in order to reduce the salty and spicy tastes (or so-called **“eat for refreshing the mouth”**) and to balance the taste left on the tongue.

The flavor of local Thai food depends on the region’s ecological and natural conditions as well as the eating taste of the local people. With the abundant food materials of Central plain of Thailand, there is a plenty of basic ingredients for food in this region and the taste of dishes generally combines four flavors — sour, salty, hot, and sweet. The Northern dishes are mostly mild in flavor but highlights only on greasy and spicy taste. Due to cold weather. Northern people need fatty food to keep their body warm more than people in other regions. Northeastern or Isan people generally live on a plateau, therefore they prefer salty and spicy food. The salty taste is mostly obtained from fermented fish (Pla Ra) and salt. The basic ingredients of Northern and Northeastern food are normally easy to find in their locality. They usually grill and roast food rather than deep fry. In addition, Southern region of Thailand where is located on the peninsula embraced by sea on both sides, seafood is abundant. Due to living in hot and humid weather, the Southern people therefore like salty, hot and spicy food. The spicy flavor of Southern food is from chili and pepper which help burn body heat, while the salty taste is obtained from shrimp paste (Kapi) and salt. Besides, spices are commonly used in Southern dishes to get rid of fishy odor from seafood.

Geographical proximity as well as trades in the past between Thais and foreigners has influenced Thai food culture, leading to the identity of each region's cuisine. In Northern Thailand, sticky rice is served as a main dish. As such, a set of dishes on **"Khan-Toak"** (a pedestal tray used as a small dining table in the Northern region) comprises sticky rice. Sticky rice is generally eaten with hand by squeezing into a small ball shape and dipping in soup or chilli pastes such as Nam Prik Num (roasted green chilli paste), Nam Prik Ong (fried minced pork chilli paste, and Nam Prik Nampu (paddy crab chilli paste) with fresh or cooked vegetable, Kae curry, Hang-Lay curry, Ho curry, bamboo shoot curry, Om curry, and sweet leaf curry as well as; deep-fried dishes (for instance Pork Rind and Sai Aua, the Northern Thai spicy sausage); spicy salad dishes (such as bamboo shoot salad, frog salad, dried beef dipping sauce, jackfruit salad, mango salad, pickled green mustard salad; and steamed dishes (for example Northern steamed meet and rice, steamed fish with Northern curry paste).

Because of their agricultural abundance more than that of any other regions, people of Central Thailand eat rice as a main dish, while other dishes are influenced by various cultures from China, India, Cambodia, and Western countries. But the flavors are adjusted in accordance with Thai preferences and lifestyles, such as a curry soup made of coconut, and stir-fried dishes cooked with oil in a pan. There are many types of side dishes and flavors of food in this region because of used different ingredients. For examples, sour taste can be extracted from lime, tamarind, kaffir lime, and bilimbi. Salty taste can be obtained from fish sauce and shrimp paste. Spicy taste can be from chilli, pepper, and spices.

Isan people consume sticky rice and fermented fish (Pla Ra), which is produced from local wisdom in food preservation and is used as a main ingredient in every type of Isan dishes. Isan people serve their set of dishes on **"Pa"** which is a round pedestal tray made of rattan or bamboo. The size of tray depends on number of family members. A set of dishes on the **"Pa"** comprises sticky rice, a dip, a side dish, a spicy salad dish, and a curry soup, similar to those in other regions.

Because of its coastal location, there is a large quantity of seafood in Southern Thailand. The region's dishes reflect the integration of food culture between Thai Buddhists and Thai Muslims, especially evident in the use of spices as ingredients for cooking. Additionally, its huge amount of rainfalls and the longer rainy season result in several local vegetables -- such as bitter bean (Sator), djenkol bean (Luk Nieng), cashew nut, fever vine leave and taro stalk, apparently different from those in other regions. A set of Southern dishes, is normally served on a round brass pedestal tray, comprises steamed rice, and several side dishes such as a dip, a stir-fried dish and a curry soup.

Thai culinary wisdom is reflected from the cooking methods, tastes of the food, and the nutritious value of food, suitable for different living condition and lifestyles of each region. Round shape seating with food sharing in each region is also a unique eating culture. Not only enjoyable, it is good for strengthening relationship of family members.

“ A **“set of Royal Thai Cuisine”** in the Central region is more various and exquisite than any other Thai dishes. It consists of main dishes, desserts, side dishes, delicately cooked for the excellent taste and further led to new dishes, such as Cho Muang (sweet purple dumpling), Jaa Mong-Goot (egg yolks dumpling in wheat flour crown), Luk Choup (mini sized fruits made of mung bean), Khao Chae (rice soaked in cool jasmine water), as well as carved vegetables and fruits. **”**





• น้ำพริกกุ้งสด



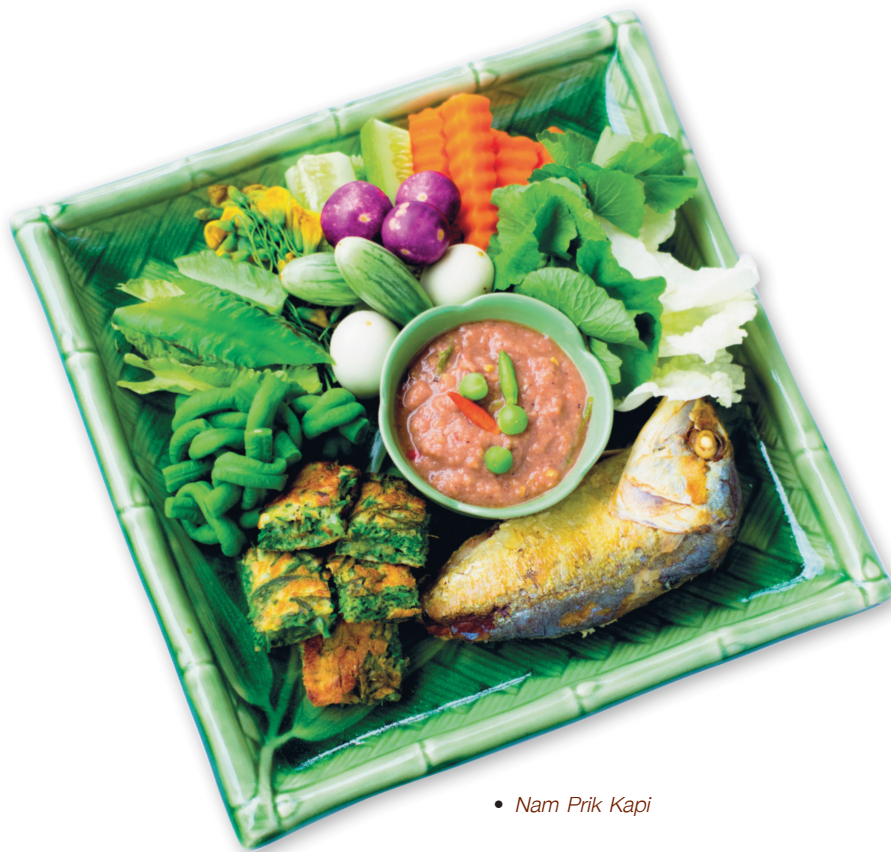
Nam Prik

Thai-Style Dipping Sauce

There are various types of hot and spicy sensations in Nam Prik (spicy chilli paste), dependent on local ingredients and creativity in each region, which is the charm of Nam Prik. As a result, Nam Prik is always served along together with side dishes for every family. Having Nam Prik together with steamed rice or sticky rice is very mouthwatering for every household.

Nam Prik is a one main dish of Thai shared serving. Main ingredients of Nam Prik are chilli and other seasonings, depending on local preferences in each region. Nam Prik generally includes strong smelling spices such as shallot and garlic, and shrimp paste (kapi) in Nam Prik of Central and Southern region while fermented soybean of Northern region, and fermented fish (Pla-ra) of Northeastern region. These ingredients are pounded or mashed together with local plants (such as hairy fruited eggplant, tomato, lime, mango, star gooseberry, sour orange, bilimbi, tamarind, salacca, santol etc.) in order to give various scents and flavors. Nam Prik is normally served as a dip with various kinds of vegetables for instance scalded kauri flower, cucumber, string bean, winged bean, white turmeric etc. Additionally, to make Nam Prik thicker, some minced grilled fish or minced dried shrimp may be added.

It can be assumed that Nam Prik is originated in the late Ayutthaya Period, when chilli pepper, the local plant of the South America, was introduced to Southeast Asia by the ships of Portuguese during the reign of King Ekathotsarot. As in the past, Thai people usually preferred eating aquatic animal such as fish and shrimp. Therefore, it is believed that Nam Prik was created to enhance flavor and to cover up the unpleasant scent of meat.



• *Nam Prik Kapi*



• *Nam Prik Num*



• *Nam Prik Ong*

Due to the strong flavor of Nam Prik, Thai people generally eat Nam Prik along with seasonal vegetables. For example, during the season of young tamarind, it will be used for cooking for Nam Prik Makam, which is served along with fresh vegetable such as eggplant, cucumber, string bean, and white turmeric; and with side dishes such as fried salted gourami (Pla Salid) and salted egg. Similarly, in the Northern region, Nam Prik Ong is cooked when little sour tomato is in season, is served along and also with fresh vegetables such as cucumber, string bean and winged bean; with scalded vegetables for example; hummingbird vegetable, pumpkin, and calabash. In addition, as Thais are highly selective on their choices of consumption, they like to match their side dishes with different types of Nam Prik in order to enhance more toothsome flavor. As a result, for example in the Central region, Nam Prik Kapi is served with Acacia, white turmeric, cucumber, Acacia Pennata omelets (Cha-Om Omelets) along with fried mackerel (Pla-too) as side dish. In the Southern region, **“Nam Choup Kapi”** (the Southern spicy shrimp paste) is served together with bitter bean (Sator), djenkol bean (Luk Nieng), boiled and pickled vegetables.

The different lifestyles and living conditions reflect the varieties of tastes, ingredients, and cooking methods in each region. All ingredients of Northern Nam Prik are grilled or roasted and then seasoned with salt. Hence, it is not as spicy as the other regions. Instead of shrimp paste, fermented soybean is added to enhance the flavor of Northern Nam Prik such as Nam Prik Num, Nam Prik Ong, Nam Prik Nam Poo, Nam Prik Nampu, Nam Prik Nampak, Nam Prik Kapmoo, and Nam Prik Moomok. In the Isan region, there are three types of Northeastern Nam Prik, cooked with fermented fish (Plara) as the main ingredient: **“Pon”**, **“Jaew”**, and **“Choup”**. Firstly, **“Pon”** is a thick kind of Nam Prik, and served along with vegetables. This kind of Nam Prik consists of dried chilli, shallot, garlic—which is pounded or mashed together with fish, mushroom, or meat and seasoned with fermented fish in order to make thicker liquid for dipping with vegetable such as Pon Plara, Pon Pla Nueng, and Pon Platoo. Secondly, **“Jaew”** is original Nam Prik of Isan, and served along with vegetable and meat. Fermented fish and chilli are the main ingredients of Jaew. And lastly, **“Soup”** is another kind of Nam Prik in Isan region, adapted from Jaew since the word **“Soup”** came from **“Choup”** meaning **“dip”**. There, the word **“Jum and Jim”** also means adding vegetables into Jaew sauce and seasoned with ground roasted rice.

“ Nam Prik also has medical properties because of its herbal ingredients for instance ginger, galangal, lemongrass, chilli, and shallot. It is even more nutritious if eaten together with fresh vegetables which have antioxidants that help prevent aging and reduce the risk of cancer, heart disease, stroke, and brain diseases. ”



• *Nam Prik Plara Sab*

• *Nam Prik Ma Kwaen*



Nam Prik in the Central region is influenced by royal cuisine, hence it has several flavors and has raw materials from local and other areas as ingredients. As a result, there are more variety of tastes and more type of Nam Prik in the Central region than any other regions. Some samples of Central plain's Nam Prik are Nam Prik Kapi, Nam Prik Mamuang, Nam Prik Pao, Nam Prik Makam, Nam Prik Rakam, Nam Prik Long Ruea, Nam Prik Joan, Nam Prik Tao Jeaw, Nam Prik Plara, Nam Prik Keeka etc. Nam Prik in the Southern region, locally called **"Nam Choup"**, has stronger taste than that of other regions. The main ingredients of **"Nam Choup"** are chilli, shallot, and shrimp paste. Given names of Nam Prik in Southern region are related to the methods to cook. **"Nam Choup Yam or Nam Choup Joan"** has the ingredients which are mixed together by hand while **"Nam Choup Yoah"** are pounded together by a mortar or a pestle. In addition, it is called **"Nam Choup Pad or Nam Choup Keaw"** when the ingredients are pounded together by a mortar or pestle and then stir-fried. Feature of having Nam Prik in the Southern Thailand is the big basket of vegetable being served along with Nam Prik.

As the family's favorite dish and a part of Thai food culture, Nam Prik reflects the ways of life of Thai people. There is a Thai quote saying that "if you want to know a woman's cooking skill, listen to the sound she pounds Nam Prik's ingredients.



• Nam Prik Makam

• Nam Choup Yum Madan





“The uniqueness of Tom Yum soup is the diversity of tastes—hot and sour—and a great herbal scent of lemongrass, kaffir lime leaves, galangal, lime and fresh chilli in the soup.”

Tom Yum

The Colorful Flavor of Thai Soup

Tom Yum has a comprehensive quality of both delectable taste and aroma. It is a harmonization of four tastes: sour, hot, salty, and sweet. Fresh herbal scent enhances the taste of meats such as fish, shrimp, chicken and beef which are the main ingredients become more flavorful. Hot Tom Yum served with hot steamed rice is a smooth sensation.

Tom Yum, is a type of Thai soup made by two cooking methods including **“Tom”** and **“Yum”**. **“Tom”** refers to a boiling process, while **“Yum”** refers to a mix of spicy and sour tastes. Through the boiling process, bone broth is used as the main element of Tom Yum. Then, the broth is seasoned with lemon juice, fish soup and sugar to get hot and sour flavor. Fragrant spices and herbs including kaffir lime leaves, lemongrass, galangal, and fresh chilli is the main ingredients of Tom Yum. There are multiple kinds of meats that can be added to the Tom Yum, but the authentic Thai Tom Yum is a clear fish soup for example; climbing perch fish, snakehead fish which can be easily found in the Central lowland.

- *Tom Yum Snakehead Fish Soup (Tom Yum Plachon)*





• Clear Tom Yum Shrimp Soup
(Tom Yum Goong)

Today, Tom Yum Goong is very famous both domestically and internationally. Although there is no any written evidence indicating the period of Tom Yum Goong creation, the Thai cooking book named **“Tumrakabkhawthai”**, published in the book **“Calendar and Archives in Rattanakosin Era 108”** during the reign of King Rama V in year 1889 (reprinted by Tonchabub Publisher in year 1997), presents several menu of Thai food, but only Tom Yum Pla recipe particularly climbing perch fish, stingray and snakehead fish was written in the category of **“Tom Yum”**. In addition, in the cooking book named **“Tumrubsaiyaovabha”**, published by Saipanya Association in the reign of King Rama VII (Year 1935), there is only Tom Yum Plachon recipe written.

Until year 1964 Tom Yum Goong recipe was recorded in the book named **“Kong Sawoei ”**. This book was written by M.R. Kitinatda Kitiyakara, who was once in position of General Secretary of the Privy Council. In addition, the book was published in order to donate sale incomes of the book to the Ananda Mahidol Foundation. The menu namely **“Tom Yum Goongsod”** was eventually written in the book with the story how the menu originated.

“...During summer, His Majesty the King and Her Majesty the Queen together with their four royal children usually stay at Klai Kangwon Palace, Hua Hin district, Prachuap Khiri Khan province. At night, the King and the Queen occasionally had their dinner on the beach.”

...On the evening of April 2, 1962, just one day after arriving at Hua Hin, Her Majesty the Queen kindly requested to have dinner on the beach and ordered me to prepare one extra dish in addition to what regularly served.

“With the sense of emergency, without any preparation, a menu of Tom Yum Goong was created to serve...”

“Tom Yum Namsai (Clear Tom Yum Soup) is considered as the original recipe of Central Thai people. In Isan, the dish is called “Tom Sab” cooked with different ingredients such as dried chilli, and ground roasted rice. Furthermore, fish, frog, and local chicken are added in Tom Sab.”



According to M.R. Kitinatda's Tom Yum Goong recipe, the first step is to peel and devein shrimp. And then, boil the removed shell and head's shrimp in water in order to make broth soup by adding fish sauce, lemongrass, and kaffir lime leaves. Afterwards, filter the broth soup and let it boil over high heat. When serving, scald peeled shrimp into hot water in short time then place the cooked shrimp into a serving bowl and add boiled broth soup. Finally, season the soup with lime juice, pounded chilli, and fish sauce in accordance with preferences.



• Tom Yum Goong Namkon

- Tom Sab (top)
- Tom Yum Kai (bottom)



Tom Yum recipe has been adapted through the period of time. It can be seen from Tom Yum Namkon is the milky Tom Yum soup by adding coconut milk or milk. Chilli paste and fresh chilli are also mixed to enhance the flavor for the consumers. Besides, culantro, shallot, mushroom, and cilantro are added as extra ingredients from the original recipe.

Traditional Tom Yum recipe, in spite of being adapted through period of time, reflects Thai culinary wisdom in using easy-to-find local raw materials to cook a delicious dish, and in using proper cooking techniques to get a better flavorful taste. For instance, the use of kaffir lime leaf, lemongrass, and galangal helps to cover up fishy odor which is the main ingredient of the dish. Likewise, the use of lime juice, fish sauce, and sugar as seasoning helps to cover up unpleasant taste from boiled herbs. Moreover, the use of the herbs gives nutritious value and health benefits.







Somtum

The Sensational Way of Spicy Salad

Although, Papaya is not a native plant of Southeast Asia, like Asia chilli which originated in America, both of them have been used as raw materials for popular Thai dishes especially **“Somtum”**, for long time. What is the charm of Somtum which makes it as the forever favorite dish for Thai people? We may have to start from the origin of Khaoman-Somtum.

“Khaoman-Somtum” is originated in the Central region of Thailand, as one of the Royal Thai Dishes, which is normally eaten along with deep-fried shredded salted beef topped with fried shallot. It is assumed that the dish was originally from a royal Persian concubine as Khaoman or rice cooked with coconut milk which is Muslim cooking style.

The oldest recipe of Khaoman-Somtum was written in the cooking book named **“Tumrub Sai Yaovabha”** by Princess Yaovabha Bongsanid. Main ingredients of the dish are Khaoman or steamed rice with coconut milk and Somtum — which is shredded papaya mixed with pounded dried shrimp, garlic, chilli and seasoned with tamarind paste, lime juice, good fish sauce, and sugar. Khaoman-Somtum is consumed along with fresh vegetables (such as Thonglang leaves, young star-gooseberry leaves) and deep-fried vegetables such as; deep-fried polscias and deep-fried flowers. There are some recipes which include dried shrimp and grounded peanut as ingredients. Those are different from the Northeastern Somtam.

- *Somtum Thai*

Nowadays, the most famous and widespread Somtum recipe is called **“Tum Bak Hung,”** or known as **“Tumsom”** in the Northern region. Stronger taste is the highlight of this recipe. The main raw materials of Somtum comprise shredded papaya, garlic, and chilli. But some other ingredients are added depending on local preferences. For examples, Isan people like Somtum Plara with ripe spondias pinnata (as the sweet and sour taste of spondias pinnata helps dilute spiciness and salty of the Somtum). For Amphawa people in Samut Songkhram province, they usually mix raw Indian mulberry, raw banana, steamed Mackerel (Pla-too), chilli, shallot, lime juice, fish sauce, and palm sugar together in their Som tum and then add slices of unpeeled lime. Normally, Amphawa people eat Somtum with young star gooseberry leaves and jackfruit leaves.

Today, there are three kinds of well-known Somtum. Somtum Thai is mixed with dried shrimp and roasted peanuts with sour, sweet and spicy tastes. Somtum Poo is mixed with salted crab or preserved crab (Poo kem), has salty and spicy flavor. Somtum Lao or Somtum Plara is mixed with fermented fish sauce, has salty and spicy taste. Besides, there are newly varied type of Somtum such as Somtum Pooma (Somtum with blue crab), Somtum Khaikhem (Somtum with salted egg), and Tumsua which is Somtum mixed with Khanom Chin (fresh soft rice noodles).

- *Somtum Pooma*



- *Tumsua*



- *Somtum Poo*





• *Somtum Khaikhem*



• *Somtum Thai with sticky rice and grilled chicken*

“Nutrition of Somtum :
Low calories, low fat
and high fibers are the
nutrition highlights of
Somtum. A dish of
Somtum contains
62.23 kilocalories.”

No matter how Somtum recipe has been developed, the nutritious value of Somtum is the raw papaya as the main ingredient — Somtum is truly a nutritious and healthy because of low fat, high fiber, and rich of various vitamin. Furthermore, the dish has medical properties from its herbal ingredients. Papaya helps increasing breast milk, getting rid of parasites, treating dysentery, treating gum breeding, and helping digestion. Additionally, tomato, which is sour, helps to balance color and flavor of the dish. Also, medical properties of tomato help to promote excretion and nourish skin. Spiciness of chilli urges appetite, stimulates digestion and relieves gas. Garlic can relieve intestinal gas and cough and get rid of phlegm, help digestion, lower blood sugar, and reduce cholesterol. Sour lime skin helps gas relieve. Sour lime juice can relieve cough and get rid of phlegm, and treat gum bleeding.



A royal song composition “Somtum” by Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, is a song explaining how to cook Somtum in great details, with simple lyrics and melodies. The song was played for the first time by Au Sau Wan Suk Band and sung by Her Royal Highness.

ส้มตำ

ตำไปนี้จนได้	ถึงอาหารอร่อย
คือส้มตำกินบ่อย	จากชาติแซบถึง
วิธีการก็ง่าย	กะแกงได้ดังมี
มันเป็นวิธี	วิเศษเหลือหลาย
ไปซื้อมะละกอ	มาดองเฉพาะเฉพาะ
สับสับเฉพาะเฉพาะ	ไม่ต้องปรุงมากมาย
ตำพริกกับกระเทียม	ให้ขมดองเปรี้ยวมันกลิ่นหอ
มะนาวหั่นทุบใส่จานทราย	หั่นตากปิ๊บถ้ามี
ปรุงรสให้เป็นพริก	ใส่มะละกอดองไป
อร่อยอย่าลืมใส่	กุ้งแห้งผ่นของดี
มะเขือเทศหั่นแฉลบ	ถั่วงอกขาวถั่วงอก
เสร็จสรรพแล้ว	ยกออกจากครัว
กินกับข้าวเหนียว	เก็บแฉลบให้ทั่ว
กลิ่นหอมชวนชวน	น่ากินภายใน
จดจำราช	ส้มตำลาวเอาตำรา
ใจรหมักเก็บอรรถา	ระวังหั่นละเอียด
ขอแถมอีกนิด	แล้วจะอร่อยใหญ่
ไว้ยกถวายเป็นไมรา	อร่อยแน่จริงเลย

Khao Yum

The Color of Southern Thai Rice Salad



The colorfulness of Khao Yum Pak Tai (Southern Thai rice salad) is an eye-catching healthy dish, in harmony with sour, salty and sweet tastes. The combined ingredients of steamed rice and various color vegetables particularly the special flavor of Budu sauce, are highlights of the dish.

Nasi Kerabu (**Nasi** = rice, **Kerabu** = salad) is name of Khao Yum in Malay language. Khao Yum is the local Southern food, consisting of steamed rice (not too wet or mushy), roasted coconut flakes, pounded dried fish or pounded dried shrimp, fresh vegetables, various kinds of fresh cut fruits namely **“Muad Khao Yum”**, topped with Budu sauce (locally called **“Krill sauce”** in some regions). All of these ingredients are mixed well altogether before eating and normally served as breakfast or lunch.

In addition to a variety of ingredients, the other feature of Khao Yum is the rice color. In the original Khao Yum recipe, steamed rice is cooked in two colors, each of which has different medical properties. Black color is extracted from juice of Indian mulberry leaves while blue color is obtained from butterfly pea which has antioxidants. Additionally, green color is extracted from pandan leaves (small type) which helps diuresis and heart nourishment. Yellow color is extracted from juice of turmeric, which helps treat flatulence and heal intestinal wound. Likewise, Khao Yum recipe of Pattani province, steamed rice come in five colors, called Khao Benjarong or **“Nasi Kebu Limau Jayo”** in Pattani Malay language.





Dependent on season and location, there are many different kinds of fruits and vegetables added to Khao Yum, such as wild tamarind seeds, shredded bitter bean (sator), bean sprout, shredded string bean, cucumber, paco fern, garcinia cowa leaves, pomelo, raw tamarind, shredded local mango, lime, paederia foetida, torch ginger, mangrove apple leaves, shredded rose apple leaves, pea eggplants, white turmeric and fresh pepper. Although each vegetable and fruit gives different flavor, at least one kind of fruits or vegetables should give sour taste in order to balance salty and sweet sensations of Budu sauce.

The main factors that make Khao Yum tasty are not only steamed rice, fruits and vegetables but also Budu sauce which is a significant seasoning. A delicious Budu sauce can be cooked by boiling Budu with shallots, small pieces of ginger, smashed galangal, cut lemongrasses, torned kaffir lime leaves, and then adding palm sugar until it becomes a little thicker and smells good. Budu sauce has a strong salty taste with slightly sweet.

“The famous Southern Budu is Sai Buri Budu, a product of the Budu Paseyawo occupation group in Sai Buri district, Pattani province. Raw materials used are anchovy mixed with a proper proportion of salt fermented in a suitable duration, will result a tasty Budu sauce.”



How to cook Budu Sauce

- Put fermented Budu water, clean water, lemongrass, galangal, shallot and tamarind sauce into a pot, boil them together until the mixture turn in high heat.
- Simmer the mixture with a light fire and filter the residue.
- Boil the filtered Budu sauce again and stew with palm sugar, sugar and kaffir lime leaves over a light fire until it tastes salty and slightly sweet.





The origin of Budu sauce is from the abundant resources for the Southern Thai people. When seafood is excessive to consume, it is processed and preserved for longer consumption. Budu is one of the local wisdom of the Southern Thai people who bring excessive sea fish such as anchovy to ferment with salt and become a fermented sauce similar to fish sauce but thicker in texture. It is used for seasoning various foods in the Southern part of Thailand, like Plara in the Northeastern region.

The taste of Khao Yum can be customized according to the preferences of consumers. After mixing rice with roasted coconut, dried shrimp, vegetables and Budu sauce, they may add lime juice and chilli to make more intense taste. But if there are sour tastes from pomelo or mango already, there is no need to add lime juice. In some recipe, they may add crispy rice or eat with boiled egg.

Khao Yum reflects the intelligent wisdom of ancestors in creating the food complemented with 5 groups of nutritious food, comprising protein from fish and shrimp; carbohydrates from rice, fat from roasted coconut; vitamin and minerals from several fresh vegetables. Its medical properties include low calories, high fibers, anti-oxidants. The original recipe even contains more medical properties, such as cashew nut leaf to cure diarrhea, sandalwood (Kasem in Southern dialect) to relieve flatulence, increase appetite due to its scent, and nourish the heart.

“Budu sauce is nutritious and rich in protein, fat, carbohydrates and vitamins including minerals such as calcium, phosphorus and iron, similar to Plara of Isan people. Despite different raw materials used, both of them have the same value in terms of local wisdom gained over a period of time from generation to generation, from past to present.”





Krayasat

Dessert Offerings Dedicated to Ancestors

Krayasat or a sweet made for Sat Festival (festival for offerings to the deceased), was originally made for the festival only, not as common as nowadays. Nevertheless, the dessert is made with the intention of the descendants to make merit dedicated to the deceased relatives.

From late rainy season to early winter in the tenth month, it is a season for the first yield of the year. With Thai way of life is bound to nature with gratitude, there is a Sat Festival held on the 15th day of waning moon in the 10th lunar month, regarded as the day of making merit dedicated to the deceased. It is believed that on that day the ghosts who have relatives and homeless ghosts will be waiting for food and merit dedicated by the relatives through the food offerings to monks and pouring water dedicated to ancestors.

In addition to expressing gratitude and reverence for benefactors of the family, Thai people believe that making merit with the first rice during the harvest season is considered as a great virtue, and prosperity for the rice in the paddy fields and for bountiful agricultural crops. In the past, Thai people in the Central and Southern regions used to stir Krayasat for monks at temples and gave it to elderly for expressing their respect because Krayasat is regarded as excellent dessert made of fresh and selective ingredients with strong determination.

How to make Krayasat starts from roasting shredded rice and popped rice mixed with peanuts and sesame seeds, then stirring them with sugar cane juice over a light fire. Honey and sugar may be added dependent on local recipes. When the mixture becomes sticky and adhered together, it can be eaten in a bar or put in a mold before cutting it into pieces. Sometimes Krayasat is eaten with ripen golden banana because of banana season. Alternatively, it could be topped with scraped coconut for more flavors.



“It is believed that Krayasat is originated from the making of Khao Mathupayat, which Thai people adopted from the Buddhist legend that Nang Suchada cooked Khao Mathupayat by mixing rice with sugar and milk as an offering to the Lord Buddha.”



Each year, villagers will prepare crops to be fresh ingredients of Krayasat, for example; planting sugar cane in the 3rd month to harvest in the 8th or 9th month; and growing peanut and sesame in the 2nd-3rd month to get the yield during the 6th -7th month. One day before the Sat Festival, relatives will gather together to make Krayasat and prepare other sweets following the local beliefs.

On Sat Day, Thai people will bring food and Krayasat to make food offerings in the morning and pour water to dedicate ancestors. The remaining Krayasat will be distributed to neighbors and relatives. In some localities, they may make this dessert for worshipping sanctity, Mae Phosob (Goddess of Rice) and spirits. After the offerings are done, this dessert will be worshipped in the paddy fields on trees.

Sat Tradition is a culture in expressing gratitude to ancestors. Not only served as a sweet for making merit and blessings for agriculture, Krayasat is used as an expression of caring neighbors, to strengthen relationship among community members and to live together in harmony.





Folk Games and Sports

One of the tools to strengthen solidarity is that people in communities doing joint activities. Not only for spending time together, the activities can also be physical exercises for health benefits. Some activities are sports adapted from martial arts in ancient societies such as Krabi–Krabong (sword and club fighting), Muay Thai (Thai boxing), and Silat. But today they are used mainly for exercises, while some activities are uniquely authentic Thai sports, like kite flying, Takro Lod Huang (hoop Sepak Takro) as well as folk games focusing on pleasure, enjoyment and harmony of people in the community.



“The suspended hoop for making score in Takro Lod Huang called “Huang Chai” (hoop of victory), which consists of three identical hoops. With its diameter of 40 centimeters, a hoop is made of metal, rattan or wooden materials. The triple hoops must be tightly joint together in a form of triangle and each of them is attached with a rope netting.”

Takro Lod Huang

Thai Rattan Ball Sport

The versatile style of kicking a rattan ball into the hoop suspended above the ground is an identity of Takro Lod Huang which are originally from the creativity of Thai people.

The popularity of playing a rattan ball for the relaxation among Thai people has been feasible since the past times. The rules have been modified to enhance enjoyment with a variety of games like Takro Te Wong (Takro encircling group), Takro Phlik Phlaeng (modified Takro), Takro Chingthong (running Takro), Takro Te-thon (endurance Takro), Takro Kham Ta Khai (Takro over the net), and Takro Lod Huang (hoop Takro). The last type is one of the sports created from over 88-year-old Thai wisdom.

The beginning of Takro Lod Huang sport is evident that during 1927 - 1929 Luang Mongkolman (Sanka Buranasiri) initiated playing of Takro Lod Huang in Bangkok. He combined the method of playing Sepak Takro with several kicks of Takro Plik Plaeng (modified Takro), in addition to hanging a hoop high above the ground in the middle of the playing field. The score is awarded for each successful passing of the ball into the official hoop and the style according to degree of difficulty. The more difficult it is; the higher score the team will get. After the playing method had been more disseminated, the first tournament of Takro Lod Huang was organized in 1931 by Siam Sports Association. After that, it has been widespread to other provinces in the Central region of Thailand and throughout the country.

“Takro Lod Huang is a sport that awards a score by the style of successful passing of the ball into the official hoop, which have varied level of difficulties. Therefore, Takro Lod Huang sport requires tactics and experiences, rather than the power, which makes it playable to all genders and ages.”



Based on the rule of Takro Lod Huang, each team consists of 6-7 players, standing on a floor which is drawn with one circle line of 2-meter radius. Above the centre point of the circle, a metal triangle hoop is hung in the air with a minimum length of 5.70 metres away from the pulley. Players toss the ball to each other attempting to score by kicking/bumping into the hoop with their sophisticated styles and masterful skills. Within 40 minutes of playing time or when the number of floor hitting reaches the rule, the team who achieves the highest points is the winner.

The Takro Lod Huang sport requires comprehensive body uses from head to toe. Players can perform their styles through arms, knees, shoulders, elbows, and heads. Kicks can be in different ways like front kick, side kick, back kick, standing kick, jumping kick, cross-legged kick and kick through hand loops to pass the ball into the hoop. Names are created after the kicking styles, such as Phra Ram Baung Mue (Bend downward kicking the ball into the hoop), Kuen Ma (crossed jump), Pab Pieb, Manao Tat, with a total of 32 styles, in which the Takro professionals call “Look”. .

The feature element of Takro Lod Huang, apart from skills competition, is that players must compete with themselves by using their skills, practice and accuracy in delivering a ball to the hoop with difficult hits. It is therefore a sport that supports players to develop their physical strengths, flexibility and motions. They also well develop their intelligence in relation to scientific calculation of angles and kicking force, as well as decision-making and immediate problem solving. Takro Lod Huang is also filled with wisdom values. For example, rattan, Thai indigenous plant, is brought to be woven as a Takro ball. The creation of triangle hoops and outstanding Takro playing styles are also regarded as Thai identity.

There are five playing styles of Thai Takro

- **Takro Wong or Takro Tae Ton (Marathon Takro)** Players of each team will encircle to toss the rattan ball in pair simultaneously, not to let it touch the floor. Team scores are counted in aggregated hits after all pairs have played.
- **Takro Phlik Phlaeng (modified Takro)** is an individual play. A player kicks or toss the ball in several different styles continuously, to maintain the ball in the air. To win over competitors, the players must hit the ball more frequent, more difficult styles and longer than the rest of them.
- **Takro Lod Huang (Hoop Takro) or Takro Lod Buang (Loop Takro)** is played in team by hanging a triangle hoop in the middle of the floor. Players toss a ball until they can pass it into the hoop. They will receive scores according the difficult levels of the styles.
- **Takro Kham Takhai (Takro over the net)** is played by two teams facing each other divided by the net line on the field similar to a badminton court. They pass a ball over the net with an attempt to make the opposite side miss the ball. The rule is also similar to that of Badminton.
- **Takro Ching Thong** is played like ox running contest or fast running. But players run and toss a rattan ball at the same time by using different parts of their body, except their hands. From the start to the finish line, in the distance of 50 meters, they have to keep bouncing the ball in the air.



“ Thai Takro is one of the ball games played by foot, similar to some Asian games, like “Sepak Raka” in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia; “Chinlone” in Myanmar; “Sipa” in the Philippines; and “Kator” in Laos. A ball is mostly made of Ta Ka rattan and Wai Ka rattan by using the same weaving method. However, the ball could have different sizes, most likely with 15–17 inches in circumference, 140–180 grams in weight, and 12 holes.”

The Stances of Takro Lod Huang

Side kick pass arm
loops: 15 points



Crossed spike
(Manao Tat):
30 points



Cross-legged
jump kicks the
ball through hand
loops: 15 points



Front Cross-legged,
inside kick :
30 points



Side kick pass arm
loops: 30 points



Cross-legged knee
bump: 40 points





• Wai Khru Thep Phanom Stance

Krabi-Krabong

Martial Sport



The martial arts of Krabi-Krabong (Sword and Club fighting) are regarded as the art of using weapons to protect the nation in the ancient times. After the country became peaceful, Krabi-Krabong were developed into training and fighting sport with the use of tool imitated from traditional weapons such as Krabi (sword), Dab (backsword), Phlong (club), Ngao (halberd), Dang (shield), Khen (forearm shield), Lo (buckler), short stick, and spear. They are made of metal, wood, rattan or animal skin materials for safety. Previously known as a sword competition or spear competition, it was called “**Krabi-Krabong**” after the reign of King Rama I of Rattanakosin.

“**Krabi-Krabong**” is a generic term for martial arts weapons. Krabi refers to all short weapons such as swords, backswords, bucklers, arm shields, daggers. Krabong covers all long weapons like sticks, halberds, spears, and lance. Krabi-Krabong weapons are also classified into two types. Khrueng Mai Ram (weapons for ritual dance), covered with gold leaves and decorated with beautiful glasses, is used for the teacher worship ritual at the beginning of the play. Another type is Khrueng Mai Tee (weapons for fighting), without any decorations, used for skill challenges.

• Tee Lai Pai Klab
Stance (hitting back
and forth stance)







• *Khuen Loi Stance (step up stance)*

“In the ancient times, Thai nation often had battles. Fighting in close contact in group one by one with scimitars, swords, bucklers, Thai soldiers were trained by practice and became experts. Krabi-Krabong made of wood, rattan, cow and buffalo leather, were used as a tool to practice instead of real weapons to prevent them from injury or death.”



• *Preparation Stance of Krabi player*



• *Preparation Stance of the Krabong player*

Krabi-Krabong play is held in a large open space to support movement. Traditionally, before proceeding with the sport, there must be Wai Khru (pay homage to teachers) every time. The ritual starts with a dance demonstrating wooden weapons, mixed with a specific dance style of each troupe or school to showcase the beauty of different choreography. The key dances of Krabi-Krabong start with “**Khuen Phrom**” which is a dance in four directions. Next, “**Khum**” is a typical dance to challenge each other by invading to the opponent’s side. Then, it is “**Doen Plaeng**” or dancing and observing each other to find weaknesses. Players kneel down to perform “**Thawai Bangkhom (offering obeisance)**” for 3 times, then change the dance weapons to the hitting ones as a start for the real battle.

In addition to fighting in terms of skills and the use of weapons, at present, Krabi-Krabong play is also regarded as a martial art of Thailand which brings the music from one Pi Chawa, two Klong Khaek (double-headed drum) and one Ching (a pair of cymbals) to arouse both players and audiences.

The costume of the Krabi-Krabong players is inspired by ancient military costumes, such as pulled up Jung Kraben, inscribed headband, rolled metal amulets or shorts. But it is important to wear a Mongkhon (sacred headgear) made of twisted unbleached threads as big as Manila rope, wrapped with another layer of cloth. Both ends of the threads are left protrude.

“Thai swordsmanship is truly a science of art because of the fight from start to finish progresses in a straightforward manner. Starting from the Wai Khru ritual, players must accurately understand the principle of moving hands and feet to make their movements smooth and efficient.”



• The stance of Wai Khru sitting and standing Brahma



• Tee Lai Pai Klab (hitting back and forth stance)



• Tee Lai Pai Klab (hitting back and forth stance)

“The name of Krabi-Krabong is assumed to originate from Ramayana. The word Krabi refers to the head of monkeys (Hanuman), holding a short trident. The small monkeys move very fast and some of them use daggers. The word Krabong refers to giants carrying clubs as their weapon. Therefore, “Krabi” is used as a generic term for short weapons such as swords, scimitars, bucklers, arm shields, daggers. “Krabong” refers to long weapons like sticks, clubs, halberds, lance, and spears. These are also evident in plays about the battle between the monkeys and giants. Their popular weapons are the pairs of short sticks (Krabi) and clubs (Krabong).”

Krabi-Krabong are mostly played in a pair of weapons, such as Krabi versus Krabi (sword versus sword), Phlong versus Phlong (stick versus stick), Ngao versus Ngao (halberd versus halberd), Phlong versus short stick. It can be added with group or multiple pairs, or **“Samban”** fight which is one fighting with two people. The pleasure of watching Krabi-Krabong, in addition to the thrill of the fight, is the instrumental music played during the performance. The music is selected to match each of weapons in the dance, such as Krabi (sword), using the song **“Krabi Lila”**; **“Dab Song Mue”** (dual-handed backsword), using the song **“Champhatet or Khmer Song Khrueng”**; **“Ngao (halberd), using the song “Khuen Ma”** (board the horse); **“Phlong”** (stick), using the song Long Song or Khuen Phlap Phla; Sam Ban battle, using the song Pleang Krao Nok or Farang Ram Thao.

The practice of Thailand’s identity martial arts such as Krabi-Krabong has both physical and mental benefits. It can help develop personality; improve physical efficiency; enhance the muscle strength, balance, responsive movement; practice observations and intelligence by learning how to study strategic locations, environment and the postures of the opponent; and train mind to be strong and patient, as Krabi-Krabong had been used to maintain the country’s sovereignty.



• Tee Lai Pai Klab (hitting back and forth stance)



Muay Thai

Art and Science of Boxing



- “*Tai Khao Phra Sumen*”
(Climb the Mount Sumeru)

- “Mural painting of “*Ramayana*” on the balcony of the
Wat Phra Sri Rattana Satsadaram or Temple of the
Emerald Buddha.

Muay Thai is a long-standing intangible cultural heritage of Thai people and regarded as a martial art that uses tactics in 9 different parts of the body called **“Nawa Arwut”** (nine weapons), including two hands, two feet, two elbows and one head. The perfect and tactful combination of all these nine weapons is considered a full-fledged and completely dangerous fight.

In the past, Muay Thai played a vital role in protecting the kingdom’s sovereignty. Most of Thai men were trained in Muay Thai in addition to learning how to use weapons such as swords, clubs, sticks, backsword, halberds, and lances. The most important thing in practicing Muay Thai was to enhance the uses of weaponry and the ability to fight enemies in a close contact. Currently, however, Muay Thai is mainly a martial art of skill training for sports.

The unique identity of Muay Thai is the foundation and self-defence skills at various levels: Tha Rang, Choeng Muay, Mai Muay and Phleng Muay. For maximum effectiveness, those skills should be mixed in both defensive and offensive moves. **“Tha Rang”** is the movement of body and footwork. **“Choeng Muay”** refers to the mixed style of using the nine weapons for fighting, which are divided into Choeng Ruk (offensive moves) and Choeng Rap (defensive moves). Choeng Ruk includes fisting, kicking, shoving with feet, hitting with the elbow, and header; while Choeng Rap comprises guarding, brushing off, blocking, opening, clinching, trapping, holding etc. **“Mai Muay”** is the combination of both the Tha Rang and the Choeng Muay for the most effectiveness of fighting. The tactics used in the defensive moves are called **“Mai Rap”** (defensive tactics), while those used in the offensive moves are called **“Mai Ruk”** (offensive tactics). Mai Muay is further divided into Mae Mai (basic tactics), Luk Mai (applied tactics) and Mai Kret (tricks). Mae Mai is the fundamental tactics for both defensive and offensive moves which combine three elements: Kam Lang (force), Phuen Thi (area) and Changwa Wela (timing). Luk Mai is the secondary tactics as a sub-division of Mae Mai, subject to the variations of Tha Rang and Choeng Muay applied. Mai Kret refers to the tricks that enhance the effectiveness of the Mae Mai and Luk Mai. Phleng Muay is the versatile use of different tactics of Mai Muay in a continuous series during the fight.

“Mae Mai Muay Thai” (Master Techniques) can be created in many different techniques based on the combinations of fists, feet, knees, and elbows. The techniques are named to be easy-to-remember, in relation to the stories in literature such as “Montho Nang Tan” (Montho sits on a bench) and “Kwang Liao Lang” (deer turns its neck to look backward).”



- *"Mongkhon wearing"*

- *Wearing Prachiat (armband) as a talisman to protect the boxer.*



- *Khat Chueak or wrap the fists with ropes*

“In addition to Muay Thai’s great weapons like fists, feet, knees and elbows, the use of hemp rope or solid unbleached cloth soaked with flour to wrap boxers’ hands and arms, called “Khat Chueak” can maximize the harmful effects of the tactics because just a few fists near the opponent can cause bleeding.”



• *I-Nao Thaeng Krit*
(Prince Panji stabs with a dagger)

The details of Muay Thai are regarded as the science and art of fighting that requires brilliant skills and the application of all tactics and techniques. Not only serving as a self-defensive fighting, Muay Thai has also adopted Thai arts and culture. It is evident in Mai Muay's illustrative names which is easy to remember, by comparing the characteristics of the fighting technique to the movement of the characters, events, or mythical animals in literature, such as Erawan Soei Nga (Erawan thrusts tusks), Hanuman Thawai Waen (Hanuman offers a ring), Mon Tho Nang Thaen (Montho sits on a bench), and I-Nao Thaeng Krit (Prince Panji stabs with a dagger). Some of the techniques are called after Thai lifestyles, such as Then Kwat Lan (senior monk sweeps the temple ground), Khluen Krathop Fang (waves strike the shore), Nu Tai Rao (mouse walks on the line), Mon Yan Lak (Mon kicks a stake), and Yuan Thot Hae (Vietnamese casts a fishing net).

The feature of Muay Thai is that it does not focus on physical force, but more on techniques and tactics of offensive and defensive moves. In the past, Muay Thai was a bare-knuckle boxing or wrapping boxers' hands with hemp rope, called "**Khat Chueak**". It, therefore, allowed boxers to clinch, pull, twist, or throw down the opponent. Despite the same basic in each region, there are unique tactics and famous boxing styles of each locality such as Muay Chaiya from Surat Thani province, Muay Korat and Muay Lopburi.



• *Hak Nguang Iyara*
(Broke the elephant's trunk)



• *Hiran Muan Phaendin*
(Demon Hiranyaksha rolls the Earth)



“

Wai Khru Muay Thai (Paying respect to Muay Thai teachers) Wai Khru is a graceful tradition of Thai people to commemorate the benevolence of teachers and masters who sacrificed to transfer accumulated knowledge, parents, virtues of the Buddha, angels and scarcities. The stances of dances must be correct and beautiful. Wai Khru rites must be performed before the fight every time, together with musical accompaniment during the rite and the fight. The music instruments comprise Pi Chawa, Klong Khaek and Ching. This offers blessings and boosts morale of the fighters. The dances and fights along the ritual music are not only arts, but also beautiful traditions of Thai people passed through generations which it should be sustained.”



The stances of Wai Khru Muay Thai

- *Prostration*: kneel down, put hands together in salute, then prostrate on the floor 3 times.
- *Kop Phra Mae Thorani*: Spread both hands, sweep the Mother Earth (sweep the floor) as far as possible. When holding hands together, open the palm of hand up and pull both hands to the chest.
- *Tha Wai Bangkhom* (offering obeisance): stretch out both hands to the front, raise them up to the forehead level and chin up. Look at both hands, lower them to the forehead and touch the face. Raise both hands to stretch arms and lower the hands.
- *Phrom Si Na Nang* (sitting 4-faced Brahma stance): dance in the stance of Sot Soi Mala (roll the fists 3 times), flip the body backward, move left and right while still dancing Sot Soi Mala.
- *Yang Sam Khum* (three-step boxing walk): stand straight and put the palms of the hands together in salute, posing Thep Nimit (angel offers auspice), raise left knee upright, place left hand on the left leg. Lift right hand, bent the arm, raise the fist to the cheeks close to the chin. Put left foot down, step right foot to the right. Raise left hand up to the cheek to close the chin, place the right hand on the left leg, switch to the left foot and step to the left. Raise right hand and follow the previous steps and walk in an even pace.
- *Phrom Si Na Yuen* (standing 4-faced Brahma stance): Yang Sam Khum (three-step boxing walks) and dance in different stances, such as Sot Soi Mala (make a flower garland), Phra Ram Phlaeng Son (Rama shoots the arrow string), Hong Hoen (swan flies).

Although Muay Thai's main purpose is a self-defense, it remains art and science which can take down enemy's lives like in the past for maintaining the kingdom's sovereignty and it has developed into sports as in the present. Therefore, the foundation of Muay Thai practices must be built on self-discipline, tolerance and solidarity. There are Wai Khru rituals: Khuen Khru ritual (paying respect to the teacher), Khrop Khru ritual (admission to the art) and Wai Khru ritual (paying respect to past and present teachers), to remind the practitioners of upholding moral standards and good behaviors.



Silat

Martial Arts of the South

Martial arts for self-defense originated from the need of survival and safety based on the lifestyle of each locality, Silat is one of ancient martial arts popular among Thai-Muslim communities in the Southern provinces of Thailand: Satun, Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat and Songkhla. Its name variations are based on local preferences, such as Sila, Buedika, or Silat.

The fundamental fighting of Silat is a dance with bare hands that emphasizes on elegant choreography. Originally practiced in warfare, Silat is performed with a use of weapons such as Kris and Krabi (sword). Later, when the armament is more scientifically advanced, the importance of Silat in wars was diminishing and developed into a sport for physical exercises and martial arts for self-defense as of today. Its choreography is filled with stances and dance moves that show the muscle strength of arms, legs, and also the use of the fingers to move in line with the song's melody. The performance is often arranged at the Hari Raya (Muslim's annual festival that Thai-Muslim people will return home to visit parents, relatives, neighbors to beg for forgiveness to each other in the past), Khao Sunat ritual (Islamic male circumcision), annual event after harvest season, as well as formal ceremonies such as a ceremony welcoming guests of honor.

“Silat is regarded as charming martial arts by its strong dance moves that reveal the muscle strength of arms and legs, and the stylish waving fingers. The performers also have the elegance of wearing ancient-style Malayan military costumes.”



• Malay Martial arts sculpture at Borobudur in Indonesia







- Turban: folded in triangle and put the sharp end of the fabric in the center or side.



- Sarong: mostly are sarong fabric folded to cover the trousers over knees which is called differently such as Pha Li-nang, Pha So-kae, etc.



Silat or Sila is a Malay word which means fights with spirit of sportsman. Students must pledge to use the Silat strategy in the inoffensive ways in order to protect himself only, and not to hurt others. Before training, students must prepare their Wai Khru offerings which consist of white cloth, Khao Sama-ngat, white thread and a ring to offer to the trainer. Students must be at least 15 years old and study in the period of 100 days to complete the course.

The tradition of playing Silat, the player must wear Malayan dress consists of trousers, short sleeves or long sleeves shirt which is slightly cover the knees, and Sarong (Malayan Skirt) cover the top part of trousers. The colour of the costumes might be individually different. In proper costume, the players stand in the opposite corner of the arena. Then they come forth to pay respect to each other by touching each other's hands, and dab their own forehead and the chest. This salutation is called **"Salamat"**.

Before the Wai Khru ritual, players take turns dancing in the form they learned for one time and casting spell in Arabic words to seek 4 blessings: safe from the opponent; forgive the opponent; gain love from neighbours; and ask the audience to pay attention. When Wai Khru ritual is finished, music starts to play in an arousing tempo, while the players will walk toward each other to fight by using their hands to hit, thrust, push, or feet to kick, flick. They pull each other to find a chance to throw or push the opponent to fall or wrestle to tightly cradle. They must take their turn to make offensive or defensive moves. Silat takes about 15 to 20 minutes to complete and they **"Salamat"** or salute each other again after the fight has completed.



The result of the play is based on the frequency the player overthrow or wrestle until the opponent can no longer fight. But there are prohibitions not to stab eyes, strangle, or punch like a boxing with fist, bump with knees, and kick the lower part of legs.

Silat is characterized by individual talents ranging from dance moves, fighting stances, the courage promotion for expression, decision-making, to self-confidence. In addition, they are also trained to be tolerance to the pain and fatigue. The player must use his ability and intelligence to plan the fight, as well as solve problems in different situations, by using the tactics of defensive and offensive moves they learned. Therefore, Silat is full of self-defense art and science as it is regarded as a sport combined martial arts in motion with the esteemed hands-free tactics.

“By using a dagger or ‘Silat dagger’ in the fight, both players will hold one dagger each and perform choreography of dodging, kicking, threshing, resisting and destroying the opponent’s power by trying to make the dagger fallen off from his hand. .”



“Silat is a martial art accompanied with music for the fight as well as Muay Thai. The most often used instruments are Khue-Nae (a double-sided barrel drum), Gong and a Suna (a double-reed woodwind instrument).”

• *Choreography of fighting with bare hands and weapon (Kolok)*

- Choreography of fighting with with bare hands







Thai Kite

Sport of the Wind

Kite is a game for Thai people's enjoyment and entertainment for long time. According to a historical evidence, Thai people have played kites since the Sukhothai period, by using Phai Si Suk (spiny bamboo) to make kite's frame because the local material is flexible and can be sharpened to any desired size. Bamboo sticks are put together into various shapes, tied with a line covered with strong thin paper, such as rice paper (mulberry paper) decorated with dots or flower patterns, to adhere the paper with the line firmly.

Kite flying is popular among Thai people in all regions, while their playing season depends on wind. People in the Northern and Northeastern regions prefer to play kites in winter, from November to February, when the wind from the north blows to Chao Phraya River in the South or blows from the land to the sea. Thai people in the Central, Western and Southern regions most likely play kites from March to April, when the wind blows from the Southwest, from the sea to the land.

Even though wind is the key factor of kite flying, the form of kites and strong lines which are good for wind resistance are also other factor in a joyful kite flying. Kite line, if kite is played for entertainment, should not be too long to see the kite in the air. In contrast, play kites for competitions will need longer strings as it is a competition on kite control.



Kite making is also local wisdom inherited over a long period of time, especially for the shape of unique Thai kites which makes them different from that of other countries. Kites have different styles and are called differently such as I-lum kite, Dui-dui kite, Chula kite, Pakpao kite. Only Chula and Pakpao kite are popular among Thai people and brought to competitions. There are also other types of kite-making, such as kites made for beauty purposes, including animal-shaped kites like snake-shaped kites and the butterfly-shaped kites.

Kite fighting is considered a Thai folk sport required skills and expertise as a group to control kites to win over other competitors by using experiences and tactics to attack and dodge the attack. Most of the kites used for the fight are Chula kite (star-shaped kite) and Pakpao kite (diamond-shaped kite), which have different characteristics and advantages. Chula kite has its shape like a five-pointed star and a weapon called **“Champa”**, a set of 8 small arch sticks (arrows). 2-5 of them attached to the neck will be used to trap the Pakpao kite’s lines. The Pakpao kite has a shape like a vertical rhombus, with **“Niang”** (loop) as a weapon. It is made of long sharp loop string in order to catch the Chula kite and drive it out of balance.

Kite flying is a local game that provides players enjoyment and pleasure, as well as exercising their brains to outsmart and skills to control the kite in harmony with the wind direction. The creation of kites is Thai wisdom in bringing easy-to-find local materials to build an entertaining game. Such unique forms of kites clearly demonstrate the creativity of the makers.







The Different Forms of Thai Kites

Chula Kite is Thailand's national kite. Its shape is similar to a five-pointed star or the midsection of star apple. It can be controlled in different styles, quickly and elegantly. In kite flying sport, Chula kite is regarded as a male kite to be played against Pakpao kite, or a female kite.

Pakpao Kite is the identity kite of the Central region, considered as another national kite in parallel to Chula kite. Pakpao kite is a diamond shape, similar to I-lum kite, but the bamboo wings are stronger than those of the I-lum kite. While flying in the air, it can move very fast in various styles.

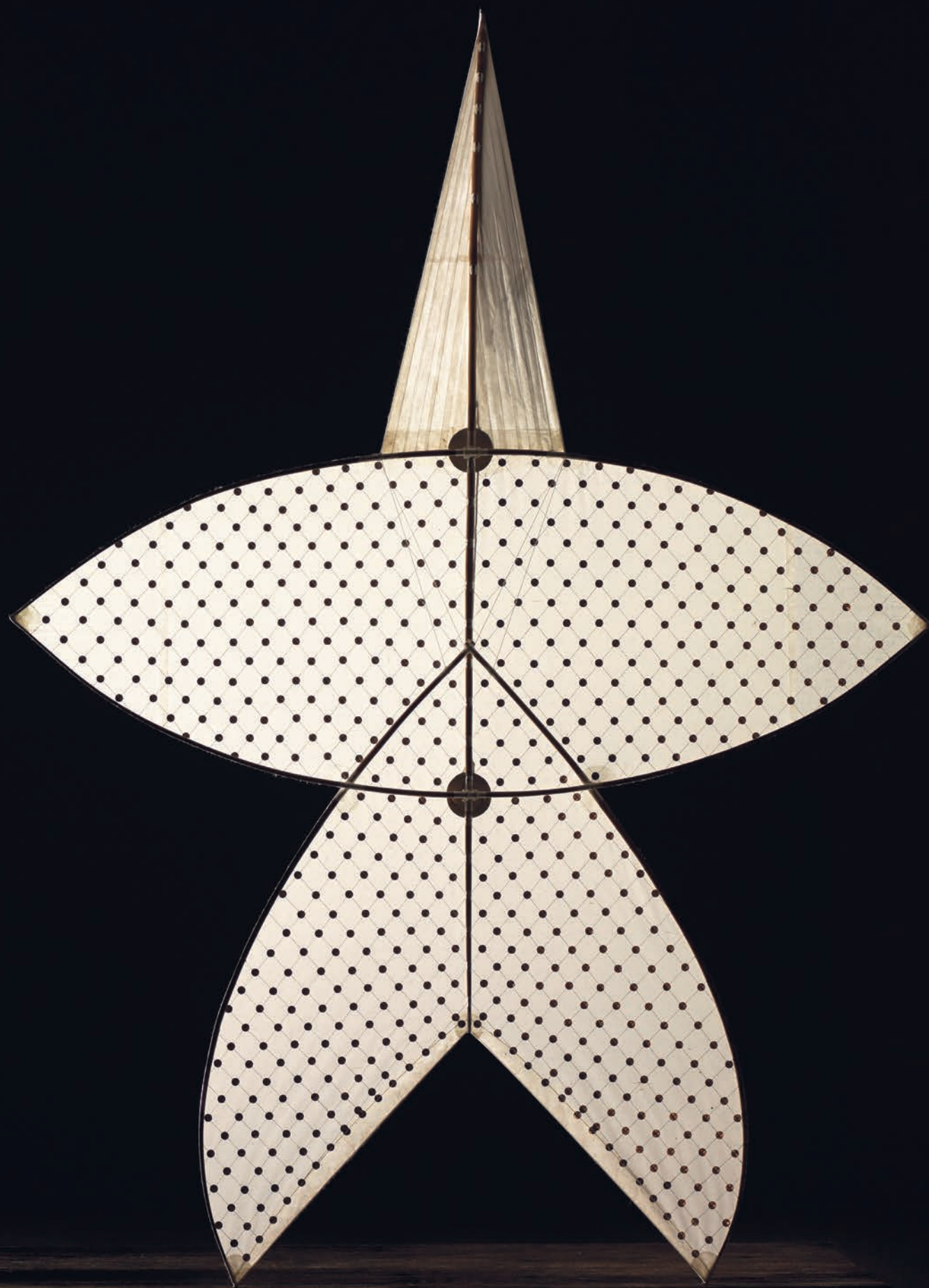
I-lum Kite is similar to Pakpao kite, by its rhombus shape. At the end of each wing is attached with a tassel to help balance itself in the air. I-lum kite flying in the central region of Thailand has developed into Sai Pan Khom kite (sharp string kite) flying which is sent off to cut other kites.

Dui Dui Kite or Tui Tui Kite is similar to Chula kite in pattern, but the wings are smaller. Its head is tied with Thanu, or Sanu, or Ut (arrow), which is called “Aek” in the south. The arrow is made of bamboo, arched and tied with strings at both ends like an arrow's bow. A small piece of rattan or palm leave is attached on the strings, producing a sound of “Dui Dui” when the kite is floating in the air.

Wong Duean Kite, called Wabulae (Yawi language) in some areas, is a southern kite. It is made in a moon shape as a component of head and tails.

“Kite flying is a popular game extensively played in many Asian countries such as Japan, Malaysia, Indonesia, South Korea, China, India and Thailand, where kite flying is popular. There is a rhetoric taken from the characteristics of kite to compare with human behaviours like “Wao Khat Loi” refers to the state of floating without anchorage. “Wao Tid Lom” (Kite flying in the airstream) refers to the state of floating kite in the air (rhetoric) or being carried away.”

• Chula Kite





Thai Folk Games

Play of Enjoyment

Thai people's ways of life are engaging with nature. Their surrounding environment, therefore, have been adapted into traditional Thai games based on nature, for fun and enjoyment. In addition, another factor is that social conditions determine the style of play, consistent with daily life and local popularity. Sometimes, games also enhance the player's skills, apart from bringing them pleasure.

The meaning of **“folk games”** refers to volunteer activities in accordance with the local identities, for fun, love and unity among group members. Thai folk games are different from English words Play and Game (Play means play for fun, alone or in group by their own free will, while Game means play with fixed rule. Players must follow the rule set). This is because Thai games are mostly played in group, with rules of play, verses and rhythms. It is often imitates real-life situations.

Thai folk games can be divided into children's play with a focus on skills enhancement and development in many areas; play of children and adults for fun and solidarity; and play in festivals to inherit local culture.



• *Doen Kala (coconut-shell walking)*





- *Ma Kan Kluai (Banana rib hobbyhorse riding) (above)*
- *Mural painting on the balcony of Wat Phra Sri Rattana Satsadaram or Temple of the Emerald Buddha.*
- *Ngu Kin Hang (Snatching a baby from the mother snake) (Below)*
- *Ri Ri Khao San (Catching the last one in the line)*

Children's folk play has multiple forms and variations in each region. For example, chasing play is called Suea Kin Wua (Tiger eats cow) in the South; Ma Lai Han (dog chases goose) in the Central region; Maew Kin Namman (cat eats oil) for the North. Some types of folk play help enhance observation skills and thinking, such as Ling Ching Lak (monkeys scrambling for posts) and Khai Tangmo (selling watermelon). There is also folk play for children to practice the role of adulthood and adapt local materials to creative ideas and imaginative shapes such as Khi Ma Kan Kluai (Banana rib hobbyhorse riding) that banana rib is cut into a horse shape. Another example is Pi To Sang (stubble music instrument) that children bring dried rice stubble to blow as a woodwind music instrument and create a tempo. Some play is composed of beautiful melodies such as lyrics, Chan Chao (the moon), Fon Tok Fa Rong (rain and thunder). Some folk play train children's comprehensive knowledge by using puzzles and riddles which are popular in every region. It is obvious that Thai children's folk play enables children to make use of their free time. It also contributes to the development of physical growth, emotions, intellect, harmony and compassion for others.

Games of children and adults are for fun such as Chakka Yer (Tug of war), Luk Chuang (cloth-wrapped ball), Ngu Kin Hang (Snatching a baby from the mother snake), Khong Tin Kwian (Isan or Northeastern region), Tang Tae, Mai Hueng, Ri Ri Khaosan, Mon Son Pha (Hiding a cloth behind one's back), Saba, Mae Sri, Khlong Chang (looping of elephants) and kite flying. Particularly for adults, folk games are often related to occupations, mainly farmers. Games in the Central region are mostly about rice farming. In addition to relieving stress, playing games is an opportunity for young people to get to know and enjoy with others based on good culture. Games are often in the type of native songs and music using interactive languages such as rice-harvesting songs, Roi Chang song, Ten Kam Ram Khiao (dance with the sickle) song and Song Fang song.

“‘Play’ is different from ‘plays’ which people perform for others, separating players from watchers by a boundary or stage for players.”



- *Mon Son Pa (Hiding a cloth behind one's back)*



The main objective of folk play seen in various festivals is to create the solidarity of the community members as well as enjoyment for activities in the festivals. For instance, regarding Songkran Festival which is regarded as the Thai New Year, people gather together at temples to make merit and networking. There may be activities for children to play together, such as Ngu Kin Hang (Snatching a baby from the mother snake), Ri Ri Khaosan (Catching the last one in the line), Mae Sri, or competitions such as Chak Cha (Tug of war, the losing team must dance), Chuang Ram (Riding back catching ball, the losing team must dance), and Saba Ram (Tossing ball to the target, the losing team must dance). Otherwise play with verse singing such as Yon Chingcha (Swing play) or Cha Nang Hong, and Ram Tone. Thai folk play is considered an intangible cultural heritage by its high artistic value in terms of movements, methods, patterns, tactics, and sophisticated language uses. It also helps to enhance the health, emotion, intelligence, compassion and harmony at the same time. Different folk play reflects distinctive living wisdom of Thai people in the past which is based on the local characteristics and tradition

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