

**The *Tin Chok* Textile and Weaving Tradition of Mae Chaem, Thailand**

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## Abstract

This thesis evaluates the unique social function, history and tradition of *tin chok* textiles (a weaving technique whereby the yarn is picked out using a porcupine quill), which originate from the Mae Chaem area of Chiangmai province in northern Thailand. It represents the first systematic examination of the culture and tradition of the Mae Chaem hand weavers, one that analyses and contextualises their art and provides a comprehensive digital resource.

It examines the critical and analytical context of the *tin chok* tradition, the economic and social influences which have affected it, and its future sustainability.

This project involved several field trips, to harvest oral history interviews with expert *tin chok* weavers, teachers and academics, who have detailed knowledge of the technique and its history.

A comprehensively representative digital catalogue of *tin chok* textiles from Mae Chaem is presented. A corpus of historical examples was assembled from museums, personal archive collections, and publications and these are compared with contemporary *tin chok* textiles. An archive collection of examples of weaving was assembled, and the methods, techniques and processes of the weavers were observed closely, to enable a better understanding relative to the analysis of *tin chok* textiles in Mae Chaem.

The techniques, significance and meaning of patterns and motif types are examined in relation to cultural and economic factors present in the wider South East Asian context.

Trends, such as transition from production for the domestic, subsistence market to the global tourist industry, are analysed, and the influence of Buddhist theology, changes in Thai culture, and the undermining of weaving by the importation of factory-produced garments are assessed. Ways are sought of re-orientating the end use of the woven product, with a view to offering opportunities for the *tin chok* weavers to create and extend a niche market.

## **Glossary of Terms**

*Chok*: To pick out or lift out, referring to a weaving technique whereby the warp yarns are picked out by hand using a porcupine hair, to weave discontinuous supplementary weft

Continuous supplementary weft: A weaving technique whereby the extra or supplementary weft yarns create a pattern between two regular weft yarns. The yarns run from selvedge to selvedge.

Discontinuous supplementary weft: A weaving technique whereby the extra or supplementary weft yarns create a pattern between two regular weft yarns but the yarns do not run from selvedge to selvedge. Instead they are isolated to their area of pattern and colour.

*Gok luang*, sometimes known as *koh*: a technique used by the Tai Lue people of Chiang Kham and Chiang Muan districts in Phayao province. It can also be seen, in silk, in Nampat and Uttaradit provinces.

*Khit*: Continuous supplementary weft.

*Ikat*: Indonesian; adopted into the English language to describe a resist dyeing technique used on yarns before weaving.

*Mudmee*: an *ikat* technique common among the Lao people of north-east Thailand, the Tai Lue in Nan province and the Lao Khang of the lower Lan Na area. Cotton *ikats* are dyed indigo while silk *ikats* are dyed red, yellow, green or brown.

*Pha*: Thai fabric.

*Pha sin* – A tubular skirt for women made of several pieces of fabric sewn together.

Supplementary warp: A weaving technique whereby supplementary or extra warp yarns are woven into the cloth, creating a warp pattern.

*Tin chok*: A decorative cloth woven in supplementary weft technique used as hem for *pha sin*.

Warp: Permanent yarn stretched lengthwise on the loom to be crossed by the weft.

Weft: Moving yarn woven into the warp to create a web.

*Yok din*: technique popular with the higher classes as the materials were expensive and not available to ordinary people.

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This was my understanding when I emerged from a meeting at the learning centre (hosted by Nussara Tiengkate, the director) with the village weavers. The learning centre is a philanthropic enterprise, consisting of a free-standing traditional mountain farm-style building, situated in the village and containing a weaving loom workshop and a collection of locally produced fabrics. This facility is owned by Tiengkate, a merchant and retailer of Thai traditional crafts, mostly textiles.

Interviewing several expert *tin chok* weavers, and the new generation of weavers, together with the head of the learning centre, enabled me to map out my research question, and I tried to see if I could find any additional useful research outcomes associated with this specific situation. If determined there might in the future be a wider dissemination of the research, assisting alleviation of the problems of the *tin chok* weavers which had been initially identified.

The learning centre being a focal point in the village and farming community enabled me during the discussions to discover that they do not have any records or text books or a written history that they can share with a wider public and or teach the new generation to better understand how important it is to preserve their own culture and traditional textiles in their area.

From this point forward it appeared that my actions had led to a need to reshape the research, therefore I was able to formulate a fresh proposal because a closer look at the interview data suggested that the new generation was not interested to learn how to weave their unique *tin chok* fabrics but this supposed fact was very much influenced by their perception of both the viability and future economic prospects of *tin chok* weaving, rather than disinterestedness.

### **1.1 Identifying problems**

Tiengkate at the learning centre collected many vintage classic and contemporary *tin chok* textiles but did not know how to efficiently catalogue or document and keep records or display these artifacts.



It now became clearer how the research could be useful for their area and could also help them to articulate their own specific history of their special *tin chok* textiles.

The Mae Chaem expert *tin chok* textile weavers and the learning centre organisation agreed to co-operate with me and are willing to give all the information that they have to support my research and appreciate it will help them preserve and safeguard their traditional textiles.

It should therefore be understood from the outset that whatever the contextual studies, arguments and or discussions raised in this thesis or used in reference to this research they are only discussion points taken from literature, firstly and foremost, for the purpose of or to enable the formation of data collection and analysis relative to the condition of the *tin chok* weavers.

This research and thesis is designed to:

- a) Ascertain what local craftswomen think about their *tin chok* weaving activity and its future prospects.
- b) Establish a method or process for interaction between the *tin chok* weavers and a broader range of “outside” agencies including the researcher.
- c) Reveal the nature of the *tin chok* weaving activity.
- d) Explore the iconography of *tin chok* weaving and its meaning and cultural validity.
- e) Examine *tin chok* weaving’s specific situation with regard to the global craft debate.
- f) Create a visual historical context-related record and representation of weaving practices and the repertoire of styles.
- g) Create a template for a digital record and textbook to enable the teaching of future generations of weavers.

h) Develop a strategy for the continuing support and broader recognition of the activity.

Although the above are not declared as the specific aims and objectives of this research they form the basis upon which they are stated later in this chapter.

## **1.2 Brief location and history of Mae Chaem villagers and weavers**

Mae Chaem or Muang Chaem is one of 24 districts in Chiangmai province in northern Thailand, and is the largest district in Chiangmai. Ninety percent of the whole area is highland and the remainder are lowlands where people dwell collectively (Kulthida Sueblar, 2008, P. 53)<sup>3</sup>.

Mae Chaem is a historic community which comprises an ancient and diverse culture and resources for tourism which include archaeological sites, historical and religious sites, ethnic cultures and lifestyles, folk wisdom, and handicrafts. This district could be developed for tourism and might well become a destination of distinction.

The old town of Mae Chaem is situated on the edge of the plain and has its own legend, which evolved intertwined with the Buddha himself, since it used to be the centre of Buddhist religion in Chiangmai, the former Lanna<sup>4</sup> council or ancient regional government of the Lanna people. These ancestors to the modern day inhabitants built numerous temples in the centre of the town, one of which is supposed to house the actual footprints of the Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama<sup>5</sup>. These temples contain beautiful architecture and arts such as sculpture and painting. They are the most apparent evidence of the history of the district.

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<sup>3</sup> Kulthida Sueblar, Lampang: Our home, Others' story. Aor Sor Thor Journal] 48. 12 (July, 2008)

<sup>4</sup> Lanna; Northern Thailand

<sup>5</sup> Siddhartha Gautama, known as the Buddha, was born in the sixth century B.C. in what is now modern Nepal. His father, Suddhodana, was the ruler of the Sakya people and Siddhartha grew up living the extravagant life of a young prince. According to custom, he married at the age of 16 to a girl named Yasodhara. < <http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhistworld/buddha.htm>>

This literature review is designed to provide an overview and shed light on the commonalities and contrasts in a common understanding of craft problems, establishing the appropriate level of cultural consciousness by which to comprehend this specific situation.

Colleen Kriger<sup>8</sup> argues that: “Modern industrial manufacture has not only transformed the way human labour is thought of and remunerated, but it has also changed our sense of the value of manufactured goods, especially the cloth we wear.”

Kriger is a professor of history at the University of North Carolina and her book on West African cloth makers built on her seminal work, *Pride of Men: Ironworking in 19<sup>th</sup> Century West Africa*.

The West African cloth makers and the weavers of Mae Chaem both face problems stemming from industrialisation and globalisation. Although the environments and local issues are clearly specific in each case and differ in detail they have many similarities.

Selcuk Gurisik<sup>9</sup>, in his examination of the contemporary felt-making and its ancient roots in the Anatolia region of Turkey where he identifies the industrial processes and its impact upon the craft of felt-making, quotes Walter Benjamin<sup>10</sup> in relation to an “*alienation of man from the product of his labour*” which has occurred in the age of industrial production.

In the case of the Anatolian felt-maker, like the *tin chok* weaver of Mae Chaem, this disconnect in the craftsmen’s production and the tendency of local culture to refocus on industrial products, has driven felt-making in the region to the verge of extinction.

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<sup>8</sup> Kriger, Colleen E, *Cloth In West African History*, (AltaMira Press, 2006).

<sup>9</sup> Gurisik, Selcuk Halil, *The Paradox and Contradictions in Cultural Value Exchange Worth of Anatolian Hand-crafted Wool Felted Textiles*, (Ph.D thesis, University of the Arts, 2006).

<sup>10</sup> Benjamin, Walter, *Selected Writings. Volume One: 1913±1926*, ed. by Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996).

Hence, felt-making in the Anatolia region exemplifies Benjamin's prognosis of the disconnection between craft production and the local and regional culture's inclination towards industrial production and its consumption. (See also 1.6)

Keireine Canavan<sup>11</sup>, a scholar in the field of traditional textiles, is an expert in *al sadu*, an ancient Arabic tribal weaving artform, which due to widespread illiteracy among Bedouin nomads, has left little or nothing of a written archive. Canavan described how culture-related crafts are taught and learned in the community which is redolent of the informal weaving training present in Mae Chaem society and she added: "Motifs, patterns and associated symbolism are memorised and passed from generation to generation, by word of mouth and example."

Canavan's paper is in the milieu of Asian textiles and, as is discussed in this thesis, it is obviously appropriate that this is taken into account since it relates to that situation of the *tin chok* weavers, who in common with other textile craftsmen from other parts of Thailand and further afield in Asia, face the same problems.

Canavan highlights the single most important issue; relating the problem of a reliance upon word-of-mouth communication together with the lack of documentation at the time.

The findings of my nine-month field study in Kuwait, in collaboration with Al Sadu Weaving Co-operative Society, Sadu House museum, Bedouin master-weavers, academics, poets and social anthropologists. The oral history of a dwindling number of master-weavers, were video-recorded and documented to preserve the declining memory, practice and awareness, and to prevent further loss.

Importantly in so doing she may have also have suggested the cause for both an evolution in the weaving styles, intended or not, together with a quality and meaning loss impacting upon perceptions (see chapter five discussions) which may have a causal effect upon the decline of craft activity.

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<sup>11</sup> Canavan, Keireine, *The Language of Weaving*, (Oral History Society Conference V&A Museum: The Language of Al Sadu, July 2010)

Rens Heringa<sup>12</sup>, an anthropologist and freelance textile curator, suggests in relation to our topic:

At this point the study of South East Asian textiles has developed into a specialty in its own right". Since 1979 a series of international symposia, often organised in connection with innovative exhibitions, have been staged and are important because they have offered an opportunity for regular contacts between textile scholars. The range of regional specialisms and disciplines involved is expanding every year.

Furthermore this situation therefore affords an opportunity to discuss and evaluate associated problems and solutions, reviewing best practice and comparing and contrasting in detail similar situations.

Heringa, who is Dutch, has an intimate knowledge of textiles from Indonesia (a former Dutch colony), and particularly the 2,000 pieces (670 different textiles) from the Georg Tillmann Collection of Indonesian Art, which was donated to the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam in 1994, and is in a good position from which to view world textile craft production and its significance and contribution to world culture and, as importantly, to foresee some of the problems.

While I, as author of this thesis, am aware of the wider global context and the experiences of cloth-makers in West Africa, felt-makers in Turkey and Bedouin textile-makers in the Middle East, it is Thailand and its hand-crafted textiles which I am examining in great detail. I argue that the Thai context is unique in as much as it is located in a system of royal patronage and agricultural governance whereby sustainability is a driving force.

Silk cultivation and weaving are regarded as income-generating activities for smallholder farmers and much research and development funding is directed towards these activities.

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<sup>12</sup> Heringa, Rens, *The State of the Art*, (IIAS Newsletter 9, 1996).

This is not however the case for the *tin chok* weavers who make their cloth from cotton and receive no patronage or subsidies. Their activity is not economically driven but rather culturally motivated because the making of textiles is part of the socio-cultural ritual of birth, marriage and death, since *tin chok* is a border pattern textile woven for the bottom edge of the traditional sarongs worn as formal costume at such ceremonies and rituals. The specificity of the *tin chok* design, appearance and function in this context denotes also identity of a sub-cultural group among the many similarly identifiable national sub-cultural costumes of groups or ancient tribes which make up the Thai people and their collective national identity.

Thailand is a country that manages to mix tradition and a proud heritage. It is the only country in South East Asia never to be colonised. This is combined with a desire and capacity for wealth creation and progress. Therefore its approach is focused upon support for manufacturing, products and services which reflect regional identity and this happens as much through its craft production as its high-tech industries.

Between 1970 and 1997 the country's economy grew by an average of 7.5 per cent per year. The Far East economic crisis of 1997/8 was a major setback to the Thai economy and thousands of construction workers left the big cities and returned to the countryside. But Barry Bosworth<sup>13</sup> says the crisis was temporary and by 1998 the economy was growing again and it is still growing exponentially.

Thailand's gross domestic product (GDP) per capita rose from \$893 (£538) to \$2,593 (£1,564) between 1975 and 1998 (United Nations Human Development Report 2000, Trends in human development and per capita income)<sup>14</sup>.

Urban areas like Bangkok, Chiangmai and Phuket have seen rapid development in the last 50 years with modern international airports, shopping arcades, skyscrapers, motorways and monorail transport springing up.

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<sup>13</sup> Bosworth, Barry. *Economic Growth in Thailand: The Macroeconomic Context*, (The Brookings Institution, 2006).

<sup>14</sup> < [http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/261/hdr\\_2000\\_en.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/261/hdr_2000_en.pdf) >

Industry now accounts for 44 per cent of Thailand's GDP, compared to 21 per cent in 1970, while agriculture's contribution has fallen from 23 to 10 per cent in the same period (Bosworth<sup>15</sup>).

Mae Chaem village, in Chiangmai province, may have changed less in the last 100 years than Bangkok, 500 miles to the south, but the global economic and cultural changes, such as industrialisation, the social liberation of women, increased social mobility and globalisation, have had an impact. Relatively minor increases in income focus on transportation in the form of motorbikes enabling young and old mobility. Children are told about the wider world at school and parents are able to travel to undertake extra work.

Mae Chaem village shares many aspects with rural communities in West Africa, Turkey and the Middle East:

- i) It has poor transport infrastructure and is geographically remote from major conurbations and seats of industrial and cultural innovation.
- ii) It has a strong cultural identity which is partly fostered by its geographical isolation
- iii) It has undergone a great deal of outbound migration as residents' aspirations are often unable to be satisfied locally.
- iv.) It has undergone social changes which, although slower than in urban areas, have had a significant impact, eg the empowerment of women.

Veronica Wilkinson<sup>16</sup> argues: "The modern reality of village life has been altered by economic necessity, forcing young women to seek employment in the cities, often in roles that rob them of their pride and independence."

Bosworth says: "The high employment rate in Thailand is largely due to the very high employment of women."

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<sup>15</sup> Bosworth, Barry. *Economic Growth in Thailand: The Macroeconomic Context*, (The Brookings Institution, 2006)

<sup>16</sup> Wilkinson, V., *Nussara Tiengkate's Dream: Preserving Tradition*. (Sawaddi second quarter 2006, Bangkok. 2006) <<http://awcthailand.org/sawaddi.php>>

His research verified the perceived situation expressed by the Mae Chaem weavers namely that Mae Chaem's distinct culture has come under pressure from a number of factors in the last 50 years and its remote geography has only partly insulated it from these influences.

Asphalted roads linking the area with Chiangmai city and the rest of the country were laid in the 1960s and electricity and gas supplies followed soon after. By the 1970s the villagers were able to access films and television shows imported from Bangkok and further afield.

Tourists and other visitors also began to come to the area and brought with them new fashions such as denim jeans and western-style shirts and blouses, however the rural constraints of land boundaries, building restrictions and national park status inhibited the development of alternative industries. However the paradox of western modernity infiltrating these remote areas impacts and changes the perceptions of the open minded or impressionable young people.

#### **1.4 Importance of craft traditions**

This paradox has resonance in other writings about the contemporary situations as Timothy J Scrase<sup>17</sup> argues in his article "Precarious production: globalisation and artisan labour in the Third World", where he states that:

It is important to recognise, however, that artisan production is frequently a highly contested and antagonistic form of production. The relentless commodification of craft production, inherent gender segregation and discrimination against women and girls, and a generational divide are evident throughout studies of artisan communities.

It is notable, therefore, that in mainly ethnographic studies of the localised effects of the commercialisation of craft production, complex and subtle social changes are unearthed. In her article on the embroidery (chikan) industry in Lucknow, India, Clare Wilkinson-Weber analyses the way this industry has changed over time to become a mass-market industry. Once dominated by highly skilled male embroiders who are mostly now the agents or middlemen) it is now dominated by semi-skilled Muslim women, most of whom work from home-

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<sup>17</sup> Scrase, Timothy J, *Precarious production: globalisation and artisan labour in the Third World*, Third World Quarterly, Vol24, No 3, pp449-446, (Taylor & Francis, Ltd, 2003)



which keeps them in purdah-and produce coarse, cheap products for a largely local market.<sup>18</sup>

This is confirmed in several important studies of women's home-based, subsistence production various settings in the Asia Pacific region and, as such, reveals the unique ways women are exploited by both their class and gender, and even, in some specific cases, their religious affiliations. Likewise other issues impact upon the values applied to women's craft work for example. Scrase also says:

Ideas of domesticity and the 'ideal' role of women intersect at various levels in the craft production process, leaving many women at home, thereby having to mind children, cook and clean and produce craft goods on time and for low rates of pay.

Artisanal crafts that are seen to be of high quality, rare, with great artistic beauty, or intricately constructed, have a specialised and elite consumer market. These elite consumers are most likely to be able to relate tales concerning the craft involved, where the item is from, the location of, and specific details about, the artisan community, and so forth.

It may be now possible to speak of the 'virtual artisan', meaning that the craft itself survives in a hybrid form that may or may not be produced by the original workers. Coupled with this is the concomitant emergence of artisanal or craft 'bricolage', whereby the artisanal product becomes an assemblage of popular patterns and designs, often used out of context, and with the finished good a mere resemblance of its former self.

Either way, the identity of the artisans is imbued in the craft piece itself-whether it is on the design of the embroidery, the shape of the pot, the style of weaving, or the colours and patterns of the cloth. In other words, unlike the displaced or marginalised wage worker, artisan crafts carry with them a piece of the identity of the makers themselves and so circulate in the global consumer markets of department stores, fair trade shops or local bazaars and markets. Thus, despite the precarious and fragile nature of artisan production, their crafts and skills survive.

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<sup>18</sup> Scrase, Timothy J, *Precarious production: globalisation and artisan labour in the Third World*, Third World Quarterly, Vol24, No 3, pp449-446, (Taylor & Francis, Ltd, 2003)

## 1.5 Role of "making craft"

Q: What is craft?

In defining craft Dr Nicholas Houghton<sup>19</sup> from the Crafts Council wrote:

"There are many kinds of crafts and different contexts in which they are practised. In this section an attempt is made to define craft for the Art and Design curriculum of mainstream secondary schooling."

So important is craft as an activity in an industrial society, particularly if as is often claimed it carries with its tangibility the additional intangible of identity, that it is constantly being redefined according to context. Many researchers and professionals talk about craft definition for example Mark Jones, Director of the Victoria & Albert Museum, states: "Craft is remembering that art is seen, felt and heard as well as understood, knowing that not all ideas start with words, thinking with hands as well as head."

His reference to the unconscious action has a relevance to this thesis because in the context of a community such as the *tin chok* weavers where there is no formal or written method of knowledge transfer what has been learned by other means can often be perceived as some instinctual or automatic action negating the reality of tacit knowledge.

Contemporary craft is about making things. It is an intellectual and physical activity where the maker explores the infinite possibilities of materials and processes to produce unique objects. To see craft is to enter a world of wonderful things which can be challenging, beautiful, sometimes useful, tactile, and extraordinary; and to understand and enjoy the energy and care which has gone into their making.

Rosy Greenlees, Director of the Crafts Council, seems to be suggesting that our ideas of traditional craft should consider that aspect of craft which is the physicality of making. He suggests that making is a psychological imperative and therefore anything hand-made is also craft activity or impacts upon our understanding of what craft is.

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<sup>19</sup> Houghton, Dr Nicholas, *Benefits to the Learner of 21<sup>st</sup> century Craft* (2005).

Laurie Britton-Newell, Curator of the Out of the Ordinary exhibition, V&A, November 2007, states:

I use the word craft as an umbrella term, not as the definition of a separate discipline. I find craft difficult when it has an 's' on the end; the crafts implies something clear cut, but it isn't. When craft is involved with the making of something, be it a pot or a piece of writing, it usually means that the process of how and why it has been put together has been well considered, and generally I prefer it. Instead of using 'that's cool' people could start saying 'that's craft'!

The above statement support a specific view of craft which seems to take no account of the notion of tradition so important in many indigenous craft works presumably because its preference is stated as craft being something to do with the making and physical quality of the object itself.

However for Press and Cusworth<sup>20</sup>, any definition of craft must take into account the following: "The craft versus industry debate, the art versus craft question and problems of cultural interpretation."

This suggests that the context within which craft activity takes place has some sort of impact upon the resultant object. In the case of the *tin chok* weavers since it is an industry we might ask the question where and how is the cultural significance embedded? However there is another dimension to the nature of the "craft" activity debate which may be a relevant factor in evaluating the current conditions under which the handcraft of *tin chok* weaving operates, encapsulated in our preconception of what exactly we know or understand about "creativity" in relation to cultural objects.

Linda Sandino and Grace Lees-Maffei<sup>21</sup> suggest: "The principles that define the differences and relations between design, art and craft are subject to historical change and vary regionally and culturally." They then state:

In March 1973, an article called The Concept of Craft asked - among others - two questions: "What is craft?" and "How does it differ on the one hand from industry

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<sup>20</sup> Press, M, and Cusworth, A, *New Lives in the Making*. The Value of Craft Education in the Information Age, Executive Summary. (Commissioned by the Crafts Council as part of the Learning through Making research programme, 1998).

<sup>21</sup> Sandino, Linda and Lees-Maffei, Grace, *Dangerous Liaisons: Relationships between design, craft and art*, Journal of Design History, 17 (3). pp. 207-220. ISSN 1741-7279, 0952-4649 [Creative Arts and Design studies, 2004]

and on the other hand from art?" Thirty years on, a third question follows up the second: "Does it matter?" Their response was:

Certainly today few makers consider the barriers between art, craft and design of such significance. Craft and industry are routinely partners, and many designers happily combine the making of one-offs with the production-line process...[and] the term craft is now simply "inadequate" to summarise the collaborative, interdisciplinary diversity of current practice.<sup>22</sup>

As understood by Sandino and Lees-Maffei, many try to define craft through materials, or disciplines, or a combination of the two, for example wood, fibres, metals, ceramic, furniture, woven textiles, jewellery, crockery etc.

This only begs the question: what kinds of furniture, ceramics etc may only be established by reference to the context within which the activity occurs?

Most of the craftspeople in this research – the *tin chok* weavers - in common with many other hand crafted textiles producers often design for their own culture and from or in relation to their traditions and culture.

Learned long ago these traditions have been found to benefit one generation to the next for whatever reason. The significance and history of textiles charting changes over time, as new materials and technology lead to an evolution of the products, relies upon asking the question in what respect and to what extent?

## 1.6 Crafts: Function and meaning

Some light may be shed upon the underlying issues which provide partial answers to these questions, by reference to Helmut Lueckenhausen<sup>23</sup> who in his study "Craft and Design - Function and Meaning", undertaken in Australia, states:

In Australia, as in most developed economies, traditional crafts and modern industrial production have in recent times been considered to be entirely separate. Craft practice is often seen as being the ancestor of industrial production, where what was once done by hand is now done by machines and by great industries. Our Western tradition, which has only in recent times begun to

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<sup>22</sup> Sandino, Linda and Lees-Maffei, Grace, *Dangerous Liaisons: Relationships between design, craft and art*, Journal of Design History, 17 (3). pp. 207-220. ISSN 1741-7279, 0952-4649 [Creative Arts and Design studies, 2004] < [http://ualresearchonline.arts.ac.uk/871/1/Sandino\\_Dangerous\\_Liaisons.pdf](http://ualresearchonline.arts.ac.uk/871/1/Sandino_Dangerous_Liaisons.pdf)>

<sup>23</sup> Lueckenhausen, H, *Craft and Design - Function and Meaning. Enhancing the Quality of Crafts*, (Seminar in conjunction with the 19th WCC Asia Pacific Assembly, Kyoto, Japan, October 1995)

be more influenced by the traditions of the Asian and Pacific cultures in our region of the world, separates art from craft and both of them from design. The word design is usually understood to fit more comfortably with industry, manufacture and modern technologies than it does with traditional and/or creative pursuits such as art and craft.

Inferring an evolutionist view of making relative to industrial development separating the intellectual conceptual from the “hands-on” physical activities, and thereby suggesting that in advanced industrial culture there is a definable or discernible difference in the process of achieving a product to the extent that they become separate activities may be undertaken by separate individuals. This perception is of importance in this thesis and will be discussed later.

Continuing his discourse Lueckenhausen raised the issues as questions many of which are pertinent to or precisely the questions addressed by this thesis relative to “that which is hidden” and “that which is revealed” in the making and creative process:

Some people in Australia believe, as do some others in the Western world, that craft is old fashioned and sentimental. These people believe that the only real way forward is for goods to be produced on a large scale by rapidly developing technology.

To believe this one must ignore some very important facts and questions.

1. If crafts are no longer important in developed countries why do they continue to exist and to flourish?
2. Why do crafts people still exist?
3. Why do crafts people continue to make things?
4. Why do people still want crafted goods?
5. Why do people still demand and buy crafts?
6. What is the relationship between function and ceremony?
7. What type of man-made objects have everyday practical use but also symbolic, religious and cultural use? In what range of ways are objects that speak of the culture from which they spring, made?
8. What is the relationship between function and material?
9. How do human beings best understand existing materials and develop new materials?
10. How do craft skills and traditions affect our understanding of how we can best exploit and preserve the materials we have?
11. What is the relationship between human beings and the objects they fashion?  
What is the relationship between human beings and their tools?
12. How do we develop the skills that are most suitable to the way we live and the opportunities (and the limitations) that we are given?

In an increasingly internationalised world, where export and import, trade and raising foreign exchange are important to every country, developed and developing, how do we share, trade and exchange with other cultures? I would suggest that one key word that applies to all these questions is DESIGN.<sup>24</sup>

Whilst appreciating and accepting to a certain extent that these questions need to be answered this thesis might counter-argue that design, although important as a tool, might be not as important as identity in resolving some of these issues or maybe it is the focus for discussion in resolution of some of these issues.

However in the advanced industrial or even post-industrial economies whereby the cultural significance and value of hand crafted products is apparently accepted and as such the products have an economic intrinsic as well as cultural value, their production has once more been elevated to a position whereby they are a major contributor economic stream, warranting them the title craft industry.

Lueckenhausen concludes his offering here by positing categories or characteristics which in this thesis might pertain to hidden or embedded values relative to the hand-crafted product rather than the visible tangible value:

In a developed economy such as that of Australia, the industry is taken to also mean writers, critics and publishers, curators and gallery directors, arts administrators, crafts shop owners, agents and dealers, educators and trainers etc. In fact crafts practice in my country has a big stake in the educated middle classes. A whole network of people makes their living from, and makes a professional contribution to, the crafts industry.

Economic function: Very often what we mean by design and function in a modern consumer economy is for those traditional attributes to be refigured within new and changing fashion, so that they become increasingly desirable and can be traded.

We need to understand the implications for our material culture of the future pertinence of the verb craft, in the sense of making work, of utilizing skill - of

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<sup>24</sup> Lueckenhausen, H, *Craft and Design - Function and Meaning. Enhancing the Quality of Crafts*, (Seminar in conjunction with the 19th WCC Asia Pacific Assembly, Kyoto, Japan, October 1995)  
< <http://lueckenhausen.com/articlesfde3.html?page=written&articleID=43>>

doing. We need to understand the implications of the verb design in the sense of planning, managing, organizing and inventing.<sup>25</sup>

Re-configuring or re-presenting traditional attributes is a key concept not only in the economic function but also in the reawakening of interest in craft production on the part of the regional makers and productivity which may be in decline. It is therefore of importance and will be addressed later in this thesis. In highlighting other intangible attributes Lueckenhausen, continues:

Social function: It also means that new objects have to mean something to us, they have to tell a story about who we are and who we want to be. Objects become part of how we want to act out our lives and help us to live with others.

Spiritual function: The objects we design and craft sometimes fulfill spiritual needs that cannot be defined and measured as easily as whether a pottery bowl holds water.

At present the *tin chok* weavers appear to be in a transitional phase, between terminal decline and trying to understand and create a new way to explore new materials and create fabric that is dynamic or at least has an appeal and reference external to their own cultural frame. This raises two questions: firstly, is this direction desirable? And secondly, how do we change the meaning and significance of traditional textiles?

It is important to reflect on the larger picture of what we are creating and why. Are we able to find a way to preserve traditional textiles using new materials?

Houghton also says: "Craft is the development of practical, aesthetic and thinking skills and of creativity through the conception and production of individual works and an in-depth engagement with material."

Again in relation to tradition the notion of development is problematic in as much as thinking skill is often at odds with a singular perception of knowledge or information acquisition. Therefore the question is how might this be achieved or what is the mechanism for transformation?

Other researchers in craft, Andrew McAuley and Ian Fillis<sup>26</sup>, argue that:

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<sup>25</sup> Lueckenhausen, H, Referencing Craft Australia but also at the Visual Arts Crafts Board and in the wider crafts community were incorporated into the Craft 2000 conference held in Perth in 1992 and the Second National Crafts Conference, Making Culture, Crafts, Communication and Commerce, (Melbourne, 1995)

Craft is taken to mean an object which must have a high degree of hand-made input, but not necessarily having been produced or designed using traditional materials, produced as a one-off or as part of a small batch, the design of which may or may not be culturally embedded in the country of production, and which is sold for profit.

An understanding of craft materials and processes offer a route to interpreting objects from historic and ethnographic collections. Although knowledge of how an object has been made and how the materials used might feel or be handled in a tactile manner might enable an audience to discover more about the original environment, context and use of that object.

As stated the context and conditions within which a craft object is produced have an impact upon its form and status within and sometimes without its cultural location. Clare M. Wilkinson-Weber<sup>27</sup> suggests in her study of embroidery in India that:

The conditions of production in women's handicrafts are related in complex and contradictory ways to discourses about them. The semblance of tradition and authenticity that surrounds women's craftwork masks the alienated production of handicraft commodities for the market. Indeed, commoditisation and commercialisation depend upon such constructions, just as home-based labour and hand-power, while fully consistent with capitalization processes, tend to strengthen assertions about the survival of traditional practices in handicraft production.

This also has a resonance in respect of this thesis because the *tin chok* weaving is and has always been a home activity for women in Mae Chaem.

Wilkinson-Weber states:

Taking no account of these social variables of which they are certainly not unaware embroidery traders (those who coordinate production and sell the final product) persistently describe the work of all female embroiderers as 'free-time' labour, intrinsically incapable of rising to the heights of professionally-made (i.e. literally 'man'-made: *chikan*).

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<sup>26</sup> McAuley, Andrew & Fillis, Ian, from *Careers and Lifestyles of Craft Makers in the 21st Century* in *Cultural Trends* Vol 14 (2) (Routledge, June 2005)

<sup>27</sup> Wilkinson-Weber, Clare M., *Women, Work and The Imagination of Craft in South Asia*, Contemporary South Asia, p287-306 (Carfax Publishing, September 2004)



The issue of professional standards is as much about who undertakes the activity as how the activity is undertaken and to what quality of product. Therefore in continuing the argument Wilkinson-Weber reiterates that specific regional or cultural perception of women's work may undermine the quality values associated with it and the exchange worth also. Referring to the Indian craftsmen, Wilkinson-Weber states:

They are not alone in this view; it is encountered among middle-class residents of Lucknow of all kinds, as well as government officials, and is printed in the pages of books and magazines about chikan. Its apparent plausibility stems from several distinct but related discourses about craft, women, and Lucknow itself: crafts have been corrupted by modernity and the market; contemporary Muslim, female embroiderers are incapable of matching their predecessors in the quality of their work; and Lucknow has undergone an absolute decline in its status as a cultural and artistic centre.<sup>28</sup>

Again Wilkinson-Weber reinforces her argument by explaining the historical precedence associating decline with a gender shift in dominance of the craft activity which is not applicable in the case of the *tin chok* weaver, however the degree to which there is cross-gender support for the other craft activity is an important social consideration especially in relation to that aspect of culture which represents religious ideology or values. Wilkinson-Weber states:

In support of this account, contemporary embroiderers report that their grandmothers were the first women in their families to learn to make chikan, invariably so as to earn an income. In the cases of the most highly skilled, grandfathers or great-grandfathers who were proficient in embroidery had begun instructing their daughters instead of their sons in the intricacies of fine work by the mid-twentieth century. Male embroiderer numbers have dwindled dramatically throughout the past 50 years or so. Some continue to work as agents, streaming piecework to their womenfolk, while others have moved into new occupations entirely.

The perceptions about women's work pervade in general in most of rural Asia where the gender divide in respect of working contribution to family economic

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<sup>28</sup> Wilkinson-Weber, Clare M., *Women, Work and The Imagination of Craft in South Asia*, Contemporary South Asia, p287-306 (Carfax Publishing, September 2004)

and social status remains traditional. However in the case of the *tin chok* weavers the activity of weaving was never a male activity as far as is known and therefore its declining fortunes cannot be ascribed to the same conditions described although some government and other official perceptions discriminate against *tin chok* weavers because the material (cotton) is regarded as inferior to silk which is privileged in society and has a higher value.

This section of this chapter, in its concern for the state of craft, acknowledges that while the material quality impacts upon perceptions of value or quality of crafted objects as have been discussed elsewhere, there is yet another aspect raised by Wilkinson-Weber <sup>29</sup> which should be considered in relation to the work of the *tin chok* weavers.

Embodiment of values whilst manifest in materiality, structure and of making skill and so on, relative to perception there are hidden or socio-psychological values which may be tacit or have a relation with traditional socio-cultural conditions. Whatever the case it is suggested that here that the real and the imagined have a symbiotic relationship and are vital to our understanding of the crafted object. Wilkinson-Weber states:

Projecting handicrafts into an imagined history is not unusual in the popular and even academic literature on crafts in South Asia. What is surprising is the comparative scarcity of anthropological or historical accounts that take a more critical approach, not only to the understanding of South Asian handicrafts as economic activity, but also to the kind of rhetoric that has arisen around them. Texts on handicrafts are remarkably rich sources for studying the articulation and expression of themes like tradition, authenticity and identity. Conditions of production in these handicraft industries, moreover, are related in complex and contradictory ways to discourses about them. It is not enough simply to look at the production and consumption of ideas as they themselves do not become truly meaningful until they are connected to the productive conditions and relations that underlie (and contradict) them.

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<sup>29</sup> Wilkinson-Weber, Clare M., *Skill, dependency and differentiation: Artisans and agents in the Lucknow embroidery industry*, (Ethnology, 6 (1), pp 49-65, 1997)

However in research by Press he states: “Craft presents us with the oldest knowledge there is: the most fluid knowledge our culture has produced knowledge about making things”<sup>30</sup>

Although many definitions of craft do acknowledge the role of tradition they do so with an assumed evolutionist acceptance that reproduction of the same patterns and design is excluded and by implication craft is learning from the past but changing the nature of it for transposition into this new contemporary situation.

This is evidence that, even though the craftspeople appreciate the exoticness of their own crafts, they mostly accept new material or new technology. Crafts in the modern era represent the traditions of the local culture even if they are using new technology.

It is understood therefore in this thesis that in relation to the connection between craft and sustainability in the economic context of any local craftspeople is rather complex. If as is suggested by the literature that on the surface, as craft skills can be transferred easily from one to another, craft activities should be a way of easily increasing productivity.

The economic policy of each country drives the direction for its craft sector. Consequently craft in this context is not just about making things but also an economic activity which may encompass a variety of current sustainability issues, including cultural preservation, environmental conservation and so on. This aspect will be discussed at intervals throughout the thesis.

### **1.7 Aims and objectives of this research**

The initial field study visit to the *tin chok* weavers of Mae Chaem, Thailand together with, the literature review compiled and summarised above, has led to a set of research questions which give focus to the research, and clarify its aims and objectives in respect of; determining and or verifying the perceived phase of

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<sup>30</sup> Press, M, *Handmade Futures: The Emerging Role of Craft Knowledge in our Digital Culture*. In Alfodly, S.(Ed) *NeoCraft-Modernity and the crafts*. (The press of Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Canada, 2007)

development relating to the national or international level cultural acceptance and awareness of the value of *tin chok* weaving.

Also in determining the extent to which this small sub-culture of Thai crafts production contributes or could contribute to regional identity if it were to experience a revival or resurgence in the dynamics of its production, and or if the significance and meaning of its craft traditions were represented.

### **1.7.1 Aims**

- i) Establish a critical and analytical context for the evaluation of *tin chok* textiles production, including its social function and economic effects and sustainability.
- ii) Conduct oral history interviews with the *tin chok* weavers which seek to analyse and discuss processes, techniques, significance and meaning of patterns and motif types.
- iii) Compare the patterns and motifs of the earliest original textiles with those up to the present day creating categories and types relative to i) and ii)
- iv) Create a comprehensive digital archive and catalogue of the *tin chok* textiles in the Mae Chaem collection, which incorporates these aspects.

### **1.7.2 Objectives**

The objective of this research is therefore to:

- i) Extract evaluation criteria for discussion from literature search analysis focuses on socio-cultural and economic contexts in which craft activity are sustained.
- ii) To collect data from field study trips to Mae Chaem area and e.g. library, museum and local collections.
- iii) To work alongside a weaver following their instruction and learn their weaving technique and processes to enable a better understanding relative to the analysis of the *tin chok* collection.

## 1.8 Methods

The approaches employed in this research will necessarily be cross disciplinary to the extent to which different types of method from different disciplines will need to be applied to the collection analysis of data. Where possible methods will be learned and where not expert advice will be sought. (See chapter3 for details)

Therefore what is required is a data collating method which allows for the acquisition of data from many sources as diverse as literature, non-fiction books and periodicals together with data collected by audio and visual digital recording, resulting substantially in qualitative information analyses evaluated by the appropriate methods. Digital correlation of all data will require a web page-type interactive format.

In the first instance a literature survey will be undertaken and grouped according to history of *tin chok*, cultural theory relative to indigenous groups and creative practice. Additionally contemporary discourses and case studies in the field of sustainability will be incorporated in to the literature survey because this increasingly important context for creative practices will in the future have an impact upon the strategies devised for the viability of the activity of weaving in the Mae Chaem village. The literature survey of the history, cultural studies and process technologies provided the link between theory and practice and qualitative and quantitative methods.

This supported the multi-disciplinary object-based design strategies, which consisted of the mediatory action (Gurisik). In his and this research, an adapted model from action research requires the researcher to mediate or otherwise input data for discussion and collective decision making informing not only creative practice sustainable strategies but further research.

Primary data will be qualitative and methods will comprise ethno-historical observation, as pioneered by Robert Bogdan and Sari Knopp Bilken,<sup>31</sup> and listening to the storytellers. Transcription fixes but likewise does audio record

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<sup>31</sup> Bogdan, R. C & Biklen, S. K., *Qualitative Research for Education: An introduction to Theories and Methods*, pp110-120, (4th ed.) (New York, Pearson Education group, 2003)

therefore the stories become permanent and not subject to change. This more permanent record will become part of the digital textile collection. (See chapter 3 for details).

The primary data will use qualitative methods, comprising the following: ethno-historical observation and listening to the storytellers, from Paul Harper<sup>32</sup>. It has been recorded on digital medium, both audio and visual, grouped as follows:

Observation based on the methodology of Ranjit Kumar<sup>33</sup>. Kumar's methodology will be using mainly non-participant observation of the traditional weavers. By passively observing and occasionally asking questions I will be able to analyse their methods and the cultural significance of certain colours, motifs and patterns.

Video/audio recording of oral history will be archived by interviewing the old and young expert *tin chok* weavers to discover attitudes and unearth stories told and compare generational contemporary attitudes relative to change. It will also interrogate the significance and meaning in *tin chok* motifs and the history of the culture related to pattern changes from time to time. To this end it will be necessary to develop an analytical template which provided the metric of data size all which can be view simultaneously thereby insuring the inclusion of every specific piece of data relevant to the particular analysis needing to be undertaken.

Video/audio recording of the crafts, techniques and processes - by observation of the practical weaving techniques and rituals and examining the external influences relative to behavior or ritual in teaching and learning skills. (See chapter 4).

Proximity participation involves the observer undertaking practical instruction from the observed in order to better understand the specific technical implication, vocabulary and verbal discourse relative to processes, technique and

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<sup>32</sup> Harper, P, PhD candidate, London Metropolitan University (2011)

<sup>33</sup> Kumar, R, *Research Methodology: A Step-By-Step Guide for Beginners*, (Sage published edition, 1999)

product. Photographic records of archive material will supply close-up detailed visual information for comparative analysis.

## **1.9 Summary of thesis**

**Chapter 1** outlines the background, leading up to the research and indicates possible research questions which suggested the aims and objective for which a rational is presented. The chapter also includes a brief presentation of research method and concludes with this thesis summary.

**Chapter 2** gives an overview of the important issues relating to the subject of this research namely *tin chok* textiles and describes the global context or conditions in which many similar traditional textiles are produced and operate as cultural signification but which have been over time losing their impact and value with communities because of the encroachment of industrially produced commodities.

*Tin chok* is one of many types of traditional Thai textiles with artistic value and a rich and diverse history. Hand-weaving techniques have been used in Mae Chaem village for a very long period, they were produced on very basic looms, and the motifs and patterns were insert by hand during the weaving process, the technique similar to embroidery on looms.

**Chapter 3** explains the methodology used to obtain data and in particular the benefits and flaws of oral history methods. The oral history in this thesis will be mainly comprised of unstructured interviews, producing qualitative research. This method enables the researcher to react, following a potentially profitable new direction, depending on what the interviewee says. There is much greater interest in the interviewee's point of view, in their subjectivity.

**Chapter 4** is concerned to present data analysis discussion of *tin chok* interviews. This thesis, based on knowledge of the regional context, involves interviews with several expert weavers, educators, a curator and young people and analyses them to examine the reasons for the changes which *tin chok* has undergone in recent years.

These interviews suggested reasons for a decline in the popularity of *tin chok* weaving among women and girls in Mae Chaem in recent years.

As part of the thesis life in the small community was also observed to gain a better perception of the social role that weaving plays in the Mae Chaem area. Interviews were also conducted, especially with the older weavers, to explore the history of the *tin chok* tradition and the religious or cultural reasons for using certain motifs. This chapter will present the results of the data, which is a combination of oral interviews and observation during several field trips from 2009-2010 to Mae Chaem. It is symbolic of the cultural and economic milieu and as such has to be treated with a healthy amount of cynicism. But it is accompanied by a collection of photographs and illustrations of *tin chok* weaving examples from Mae Chaem, Chiangmai and from various primary sources, such as books and journals, which can be used to support or contradict the assertions of the weavers and the other interviewees.

In order to establish a context for this research and begin to understand the nature of the issues and problems preoccupying the *tin chok* weavers and the organisations which support them it was necessary to visit the region of Thailand where they live and work in order to conduct semi-structured interviews.

The questions were generalised and aimed to illicit non-specific, as opposed to detailed, technical information and conditions under which the interviews occurred were therefore informal.

The interviews were recorded in the normal environment of the interviewee so as to maintain a natural and relaxed atmosphere and were recorded on audio tape, and a digital camera was employed to capture gestures and location dynamics.

The raw data sheets represent a transcription in English from the audio recording first transcribed in the Thai language and as such they are double interpretive rather than singular verbatim.



Although a protracted process the researcher has been scrupulous in endeavouring to ensure as accurate report as is possible given the variables in the circumstances of the interviews. The original Thai language transcripts are available and will be accessible to other scholars should they be required.

**Chapter 5** contains 11 samples of *tin chok* and involves a detailed analysis of the patterns and motifs. It takes the conclusions as principles and together with criteria taken from literature applies a visual analysis firstly as underlying geometry then as motif elements and finally relating the oral testimony of weavers. It will discuss recommendations for future work and be presented in this chapter relative to what have we learned about *tin chok* and how can it be used to improve its chances of survival and success in the future.

**Chapter 6** is a conclusion in which recommendations for future work are finalised. In this chapter we will discuss the findings in the context of an original contribution to knowledge and makes recommendations for further work. This research by reference to its methodology suggests continuing involvement with the local community of weavers and therefore the manner of this relationship is discussed and its continuity in respect of different partner participants, projects and mechanisms for hand over. It is considered at this point that the digital records will play an important part in this process.

## **1.10 Conclusion**

### **Summary**

In this introductory chapter Thailand is cited as a country of tradition and proud heritage. The urban area of Chiangmai province has its own distinct tradition and culture. Mae Chaem is a district of Chiangmai province and is located approximately 500 miles from Bangkok.

The topic of *tin chok* was chosen because I was interested in creating a comprehensive digital archive and a catalogue of textiles and the *tin chok* textiles

of Mae Chaem seemed an ideal candidate for preservation after a preliminary field study visit which revealed that the weaving skills seemed so under attack from creeping urbanisation and global economic and cultural encroachment.

The preliminary investigation of *tin chok* textiles of Mae Chaem was undertaken from the Textiles Learning Centre in Mae Chaem's museum and library. The origins of *tin chok* are not recorded in Mae Chaem Learning Centre and details of motifs and pattern of *tin chok* have not been found.

Primary objectives were set out after an initial visit to the area and the evaluation of *tin chok* textiles production for its social function and economic effects on Mae Chaem and Thai people as a whole.

Initial oral interviews with the weavers to discuss the weaving process and technique also raised issues of sustainability and cultural continuity and relevance.

A literature search focusing on socio-cultural and economic contexts of craft production revealed a multiplicity of problems common to craftsmen and women globally but were also specifically located in relation to the socio-economic and cultural integration and identity phase of development of the host culture or grouping, often referred to as consciousness level of appreciation within in and outside the specific culture. The research questions were formulated in respect of the literature and combination with those raised by the initial field research.

Initial research activity conducted in the initial stage and recorded elsewhere in this thesis centred on preliminary interviews at the learning centre with their weavers discussing technique. This gave a better understanding, which enabled the formulation of a research plan and analysis methods. It was revealed that there existed a collection of over 100 pieces of *tin chok* fabric spanning a period from 1832 to 2009 which it was agreed should be incorporated into the research process relating to fabric analysis and the photographic records of archives material to be undertaken would likewise also be incorporated later into the thesis either as analysis or raw data in a second volume.

The preliminary and impromptu video and audio recording of the oral history involved interviewing the old and the young expert *tin chok* weavers, enquiring about their attitudes and unearthing stories to compare the changes. It also raised questions about the reliability of knowledge transfer by telling, specifically the tendency to result in knowledge loss through lack of reinforcement. Video and audio recording of the weaving techniques and processes, meaning in *tin chok* motifs, history of culture, pattern changes, learning skills was found not to have delivered much valuable data therefore further research need to be conducted, and this requirement was factored into the thesis research plan.

## **Chapter 2: Overview of the historical location, socio-cultural and economic context for *tin chok* weaving.**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Having established in chapter one the justification for the research this chapter focuses upon some of the questions and issues raised in chapter 1.6, which are placed in the first instance in the specific situation and location of Mae Chaem, impacting upon the location, socio-cultural and economic context within which *tin chok* weaving has flourished thus far but is now being placed under increasing pressures, threatening the continuation of the traditional craft activity.

Chapter one concluded among other things that craft production “faces a multiplicity of problems common to craftsmen and women worldwide” but that these problems were also “specifically located in relation to the socio-economic and cultural integration and identity phase of development, of the host culture or grouping, often referred to as consciousness level of appreciation, which operates both within in and outside the specific sub-culture group”. In order to locate this phase of consciousness level and identify its specific problem relative to those of similar sub-cultural groups, relevant information from the initial field study trip together with an overview of the historical location, and contemporary socio-cultural and economic context within which *tin chok* handcraft weaving continues is reported here.

### **2.2 Specific location and context of *tin chok* weaving.**

The Mae Chaem district is located in a natural setting: rolling mountain ranges surround picturesque hillside village of terraces of tranquil paddy fields growing rice. In the valley the Mae Chaem River dissects the plain and gives its name to the village, which is in the foothills. It is a compact village with adequate houses and public buildings and a well-organised centre; with all necessary public services organisations - both government and privately-owned - located on both sides of the main road which, like the river, dissects the village. The village supports the “land people” and “mountain people” - names which differentiate

two distinct groups. The smallholding farmers inhabiting the mountain villages on the fertile upland slopes are from a different cultural heritage to those in the valley.

Another differentiating characteristic of relevance to this research is the weaving traditions - the “mountain people” prefer and utilise the back-strap loom to produce rough cloth, as opposed to the “land people” who use the more sophisticated floor and shaft loom to produce finer, decorated *tin chok* fabric.

The Mae Chaem district has ancient and diverse cultures along with unique natural aspects in a beautiful setting. The district has fertile soil and natural resources which are being carefully and slowly developed for commercial exploitation but also the vibrant cultural tradition offers potential for quality eco-holiday attractions which would generate inward investment and lead to the local mountain village communities gaining income, in addition to the usual farming and handicrafts. The district’s major industries are agricultural production, manufacturing of industrial scale textile products and an array of services, including a university.

The area also boasts many interesting buildings and in the mountain villages these range from private houses and barns to small public buildings, all of which have been constructed from wood in a traditional rustic style.

### **2.3 Mae Chaem: Location and surroundings.**

Almost all of Mae Chaem district is located in an area preserved by the local and national authorities as part of Thailand National Forestry Parks. Mae Chaem is surrounded by two such national parks, the Doi Inthanon National Park and the Ob Luanh National Park.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> The Ob Luanh National Park covers a total area of 553 square kilometres of steep forested granite hills, adjoining the much higher mountains of Doi Inthanon Park to the north west. The elevation ranges from 200 metres to 1,656 metres along the Mae Chaem River to the northeast. The national park forms the watershed of Mae Chaem River the main water tributary of the Mae Ping River.< <http://www.chiangmai-chiangrai.com/ob-luang-national-forest.html>>

The province benefits from Mae Chaem River as a major water supply, which originates from the convergence of Chaem Creek, Little Mae Chaem Creek, and Thong Creek with other smaller streams and waterways as tributaries.

There is no confirmed documentary evidence of the beginnings of Mae Chaem district. The district, originally called Muang Chaem - according to the Community-Based Research Office: Social Mapping of Mae Chaem<sup>35</sup> - was founded in 1908 and renamed Mae Chaem in 1956.

The information regarding this district has been obtained from two sources of primary data: i) oral history interviews (verbal information collecting) and ii) documentary collection; and therefore might be presumed to be only relatively reliable.

Mae Chaem district, sometimes called Muang Chaem, is one of 24 districts in Chiangmai province in northern Thailand, with a total area of 3,361 square kilometres. The district is divided into 10 sub-districts (tumbons)<sup>36</sup>, which are further sub-divided into 131 villages by Virojtrairatt Vimalin<sup>37</sup>.

Some distance away from the mountain villages where *tin chok* weaving takes place there is a small but well-organised town. All necessary public services, government agencies and NGOs are located on both sides of the main road in the village centre. Many public buildings, private houses and barns have been built from local wood, beautifully carved in a traditional way.

In 2008 Mae Chaem district had a population of 64,268 - 32,813 men and 31,455 women, evenly balanced, but the young males were drifting away from the villages in search of more profitable work.

Mae Chaem located in the west of Chiangmai province with its Mae Chaem River -

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<sup>35</sup> Community-Based Research Office: Social Mapping of Mae Chaem.

<[http://www.maechaem.org/news/maechaem\\_new2a.doc](http://www.maechaem.org/news/maechaem_new2a.doc)> [accessed 16 August 2010]

<sup>36</sup> Tumbon (Thai: ตำบล) is a local government unit in Thailand. Below district (amphoe) and province (changwat), they form the third administrative sub-division level.

<sup>37</sup> Virojtrairatt, V., *Community Pre-Empowering for Tourism: Sustainable Tourism Management Guideline, Amphoe Mae Chaem, Chiang Mai, Thailand*. (Silpakorn University, 2010).

With strong attachment to their location, they maintained their ways of living, traditions and ceremonies not for others but for themselves.

The initial field study trip of this research confirmed that different age groups and ethnic groups live and work together harmoniously.

The “land people” (so called because they dwell in the plain as opposed to the “mountain people” who live in the hills) families reside in their hometowns, in contrast to many other northern Thai communities whose adult populations often migrate to work in the major cities for economic reasons.

Mae Chaem, in Chiangmai province, has changed less in the last 100 years than Bangkok, 500 miles to the south, but the global economic and cultural changes, such as industrialisation, the social liberation of women, increased social mobility and globalisation, have had an impact.

Industry now accounts for 44 per cent of Thailand’s domestic product, compared to 21 per cent in 1970, while agriculture’s contribution has fallen from 23 to 10 per cent in the same period, according to Bosworth<sup>40</sup>.

## **2.5 Historical context of “*tin chok*” weavers and weaving aesthetic and influences.**

*Tin chok* fabrics are traditional Thai textiles with artistic value and a rich and diverse history, and the specific hand-weaving techniques have been used and made in Mae Chaem village for at least 400 years.

They were and are produced on very basic hand-loom and the motifs and patterns are created by weft insertion during the weaving process, the technique similar to “embroidery on a looms”.

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<sup>40</sup> Bosworth, Barry P., *Economic Growth in Thailand: The Macroeconomic Context*, (Paper, 15 June 2006), <<http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2006/06/15asia-bosworth>>

Historically textiles were part of the revenue collected by the Thai monarchs from neighboring (sic) countries such as Cambodia and Laos, when they were under Thai rule, in the 15th and 19th centuries respectively. Tributes were also made to the monarchy in the form of textiles from provincial districts in Thailand which were called *muang*. In turn, the Thai monarchs would reward their officers and noblemen with gifts of textiles, sometimes in lieu of their salaries. Particular textiles were designated for court use only and civil servants would be required to wear certain types of cloth to attend functions in the royal court, most of which they received from the monarch. Meanwhile ordinary people wove their own fabrics or exchanged textiles with neighboring provinces. In the case of imported textiles, until the beginning of the 21st century, the royal court controlled all imported textiles and arranged for products of a certain quality to be made available to the general public <sup>41</sup>

In Thailand the Buddhist culture has had an impact upon traditional Thai textiles as it has upon the daily life of Thai people through their religious observances and rites of passage from birth through to death. Mae Chaem is one of the largest districts in Chiangmai province. Dussadee Sontararachon <sup>42</sup> and Songsak Prangwatanakun<sup>43</sup> have undertaken surveys of the multiplicity and virility of textile craft traditions in the region but have not focused in detail on the meaning of the motifs and patterns used in the Mae Chaem district, in particular the *tin chok* traditional textiles.

The *tin chok* textile weaving traditions continue today but they are under a dual threat: the local community and social structure is beginning to fragment due to economic and technological pressure; and the erosion of over-riding traditional Buddhist values have detached the production processes and products from its cultural roots and made it less viable in a contemporary economic context.

*Tin chok* is a weaving technique whereby the yarn is picked out using a porcupine hair. The particular aspect of weaving underlying the areas renowned is the *tin chok* section, a decorated hem of the sarongs as inset border. The *tin chok* is woven in a discontinuous supplementary-weft pattern as separate strip of fabric

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<sup>41</sup> Textiles and the National Economy, The Bank of Thailand Museum, Northern Region Office  
<<http://www2.bot.or.th/museum/eng/textiles/mdesc.asp?PoID=1>>

<sup>42</sup> Sontararachon, D., *The analysis, preservation and dissemination of the tin chok fabric tradition*, (UMIST, Manchester, 2000).

<sup>43</sup> Prangwatanakun, S., *Cultural Heritage of Tai Lue Textiles*, (Chiang Mai University, 2008)



attached to the bottom part of the central panel of a wraparound skirt called a *pha sin* (sarong).

The *pha sin* skirts are often made in four sections or bands; the top waist band of un-dyed cotton which is attached to a second band of red or brownish cotton; a wider central panel often made of silk (or cotton) which in the northern areas typically has horizontal stripes; and a bottom panel or hem that reaches to the ankles.

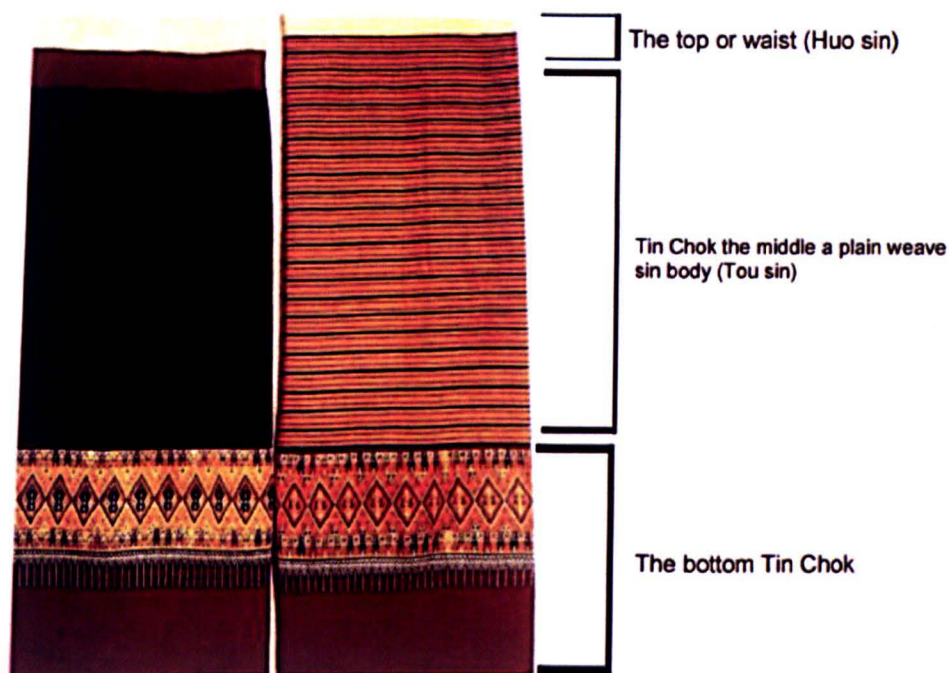


Fig 2.3 Sarong construction Top/Middle/Bottom

In Mae Chaem *tin chok* the word *tin* or *teen* denotes a bottom hem usually (but not necessarily) composed of several dark colours, and *chok* (or *jok*) refers to a discontinuous supplementary weft pattern weaving. It is this section that is so distinctive in the Mae Chaem and Lanna area work. The *chok* is woven in either cotton or silk and can be quite complex and colourful. Thus the *tin chok* textiles refer to this specific type of weaving technique localised to Mae Chaem in the province of Chiangmai in northern Thailand.

*Tin chok* also describes the process of discontinuous supplementary weft whereby the supplementary yarns are placed in the web of the loom by means of

picking out each warp yarn by hand and passing the supplementary weft yarn through them in small or specific areas only.

The result is a pattern that floats on the surface of the weave in which many colours can be placed into the design across the width of the fabric. This method is sometimes called “embroidery on the loom”. In some areas the process is done with the back of the fabric facing upwards which allows for very neat finishing, while in other areas the fabric is woven with the right face up. Usually silk is used as the supplementary yarn on either a cotton or silk base. Ethnic groups famous in Thailand for *chok* weaving are the Tai Yuan from Mae Chaem district, Chiangmai province; Long district in Prae province; Tha Pla and Laplae districts in Uttaradit province; and Ratchaburi province; the Tai Phuan/Lao Phuan of Sisatchanalai district, Sukhothai province; and the Lao Khang from Uthai Thani and Chainat provinces.

*Tin chok* is the weaving technique that villagers use to make a *pha sin*, a type of sarong common in northern Thailand. The methods of *tin chok* patterns and motifs are complex. The traditional methods of weaving and *chok* technique are still in use today but they originate from hundreds of years ago and have been passed down from one generation to another with the patterns and motifs changing over time. (Nussara Tiengkate, 2006)<sup>44</sup>

According to Tiengkate’s research “with few original surviving *tin chok* textile examples, there is a need for records to preserve images of existing textiles and evidence the weaving skills of contemporary makers as an essential contribution to the world’s textile heritage”. The names of motifs and the significance and meaning in terms of derivation will be discussed in chapter five and elsewhere in the thesis however there are well-known archetype designs known such as the *lai dok khia* or *lai hong* (swan); *lai dok jun* (flowers); and *lai kom* (lantern).

However the earliest material evidence for these *tin chok* production of cotton fibres and fabrics in the area precedes the appearance of definitive literary references by a considerable period of time, therefore range and volume of evidence for the production of woven cotton is limited but, as is the case of most

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<sup>44</sup> Wilkinson, V., *Nussara Tiengkate’s Dream: Preserving Tradition*. (Sawaddi second quarter, Bangkok, 2006). <http://awcthailand.org/sawaddi.php>

other types of Thai textiles, evidence multiplies greatly in the 19th century.

By this time the dissemination of pattern-weaving skills that began with the decline of the ancient technique appears to change.

This may have been the result of a greater availability of imported yarns as well as the economic and political changes. However thus far unfortunately motifs and patterns in *tin chok* textiles have not been recorded and survive only in fragmentary memory or, one might speculate, in as yet undiscovered personal records in storage.

## 2.6 What we know.

Chiangmai province has been the subject of surveys by Sontararachon and Prangwatanakun who were investigating the multiplicity and virility of textile craft traditions that exist in the region. Sontararachon undertook research into *tin chok* textiles however his brief was to use modern technology in the form of rapier looms with electronic jacquards to copy the traditional weavers' skills. Upon reflection Sontararachon realised that if successful, this approach would hasten the demise of the *chok* tradition and accelerate the debasement of the product.

Different ethnic groups each have their own structure and characteristics and also possess something that might be an original form. Despite the fact that people throughout the world have unprecedented opportunity for cultural interchange, the underlying characteristics of a culture may not change.

Canavan<sup>45</sup>, quoted in the previous chapter in the context of women's issues as an expert in *al sadu*, an ancient Arabic tribal weaving art form, found that "due to widespread illiteracy among Bedouin nomads, little or nothing was left of a written archive."

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<sup>45</sup> Canavan, Keireine, *The Language of Weaving*, (Oral History Society Conference V&A Museum: The Language of Al Sadu, July 2010).

“Motifs, patterns and associated symbolism are memorised and passed from generation to generation, by word of mouth and example,” which says Canavan, is redolent of the informal weaving training present in Mae Chaem society.

Ethnologist Prangwatanakun widely researched weaving techniques and patterns commonly found in northern Thai folk textiles. He disclosed the interrelation between the weaving techniques of craftsmen and peasants, and gave details of weaving characters in Tai Lue<sup>46</sup> textiles and also patterns of sarongs in different ethnic groups, which he selected from different weaver groups in northern Thailand. He defines the meaning of motifs and designs on the textiles as

The patterns or motifs on the textile were formed by weaving and combination of colours. The patterns could be created with basic forms with no specific meaning or evolved from nature, imagination, belief, idealism or faith. Thus, the pattern on Tai Lue fabric represents the inheritance of the women weavers.<sup>47</sup>

The categorisation of *tin chok* motifs is derived from the word *lai*<sup>48</sup> in Thai.

One of the most important of the many weavers is to remember to count the yarn to create motifs and patterns while they are weaving.

## **2.7 History of Mae Chaem and the influences and trends affecting *tin chok* over the last 100 years**

The district of Muang Chaem was founded in 1908, consisting of the tumbons<sup>49</sup> of Mae Thap, Tha Pha, Chang Khoeng and Mae Suek split off from Chom Thong. In 1917 it was renamed Chang Khoeng, as the district office was located in that tumbon.

In 1938 it was reduced to a minor district and was a subordinate of Chom Thong district and the following year it was officially renamed from Muang Chaem to Mae Chaem. In 1956 it was upgraded to a full district.

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<sup>46</sup> Tai Lue is the name to refer to a people who speak Tai language and Lue ethnic group that are spread out from southern Yunnan province of people's Republic of China to northern Thailand.

<sup>47</sup> Prangwatanakun, S., *Cultural Heritage of Tai Lue Textiles*, p19, (Chiang Mai University, 2008)

<sup>48</sup> *lai* – pattern.

<sup>49</sup> *Tumbons* - sub district

Textiles reflect the identity unique to each community. They are an important record of the lifestyle of the villagers which is based on superstitions, traditions, religion and culture, as well as their relationship with the environment and locality. The weaving techniques employed; the styles, patterns, colours and materials used differ from community to community.

Textiles have played an important role in the economics of village life in Thailand throughout history. Cultural parameters demanded sets of textiles for various cultural events such as weddings, ordinations, Buddhist offerings and showing respect to the elders. These cultural beliefs preserved the high quality of the textiles as well as boosted the economy of the parties concerned.

Textiles were collected in much the same way as savings accounts are kept today. In times of need, pieces were sold or exchanged and in the case of young couples, the production of the wife's loom could subsidise any losses made in the agricultural activities of her family. Today weaving is a cash income for many Thai women.

Religion and Buddhist culture has had a tremendous impact upon the traditional Thai textiles and the daily life of the Thai people. They observe the rites of passage from birth through death. Each ethnic group has their own structure and characteristic but also possess the original form and the original form of culture will not change.

It is worth noted that the vocabulary used in *tin chok* motifs, patterns including weaving process and some tools and equipment cannot be translated into English and sometimes cannot even be translated into the Thai language, because the technical terms and words used are local and ethnic.

The example of the words frequently and descriptive of motifs found in local textiles:-

*Lai khom; Lai* = motif

*Kom* = lantern

*Lai kum; Lai* = motif

*Kum* = a kind of bird called 'nok kum'

*Hang sapao; Hang* = tail

*Sapao* = boat

*Hong nok; Hong* = room

*Nok* = bird

When the translations are put together, they do not carry the meaning of the literal translation. For example, *Hong nok* means *bird room* but the motif is not a bird room. It is simply the name of the motif. The local makers cannot explain this anomaly.

Textiles reflect the unique identity of each community hence it is an important record of its people life style based on superstitious, tradition, religion and culture. The cultural beliefs preserve the high quality of the textile including the boosting of local economy. Today weaving could be a cash income for many Thai women.

The *tin chok* textile weaving traditions continue despite the fact that the local community and social structure is beginning to fragment due to economic and technological pressure. Despite the strength of traditional Buddhist values the production processes and products are both detached from its cultural roots and less viable in a contemporary economic context.

This cultural decline is also in demand for local *tin chok* textiles coincided with social and economic changes in Mae Chaem society, which included the liberation

of women, growing migration to the cities and a denuding of the traditional male respect and admiration for women's weaving skills.

All these factors make the modern-day Mae Chaem villager a very different entity from their forebears, even those who lived just 60 or 100 years ago.

But the tranquility and natural beauty of the region still influences the 21<sup>st</sup> century weavers. As Bridget Wilkins<sup>50</sup> concludes,

This is the region where I saw my first metallic blue-green beetle on the wing, similar to the exquisite *maleng thap* (genus of sternocera) the wings of this beetle are used to create decorative effects as jewelry (sic) and delicate ornamentation. Is it any surprise that where nature's example is so magnificent artists and artisans excel?

In the past, weaving of *tin chok* materials was a pastime which was enjoyed by all the womenfolk in the village and weaving skills were revered both by women and also, significantly, by the men for whom it was considered something of an attribute in a prospective wife.

## **2.8 Globalisation and aesthetic influences.**

Traditional textiles similar to *tin chok* are produced and operate as cultural signification but which have been over time losing their impact and value with communities because of the encroachment of industrially produced commodities.

Mae Chaem was of course not alone in revering textiles and their producers.

Kathleen F Johnson<sup>51</sup> argues:

Textiles have long played an important part in the Buddhist culture of Thailand: in its daily life, religious observances and rites of passage from birth through death. But in recent decades the importance of weaving has declined. Partly this is due to the easy availability of cheap and good quality factory-produced clothes and partly due to the hectic pace of modern life, the temptation of television, film and other hobbies.

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<sup>50</sup> Wilkins, B. , Text & image, (Octavo, 1990)

<sup>51</sup> Johnson, Kathleen F, *Homily In Cloth: Southern Thai Textiles*, (Sawaddi magazine Conclusion, 2008).

“Young girls are growing up in Mae Chaem with mothers who are unable to teach them tin chok weaving skills because they themselves were never taught them” (from interview with Nussara Tiengkate, second field trip, 2010). Nonetheless, the skills base is still there, with older generations of weavers whose skills can be harnessed.

Industrialisation in the 1960s, 70s and 80s saw factories in Thailand, Hong Kong and elsewhere mass producing textiles at prices which soon became affordable to the people of Mae Chaem. The allure of fashion and low prices tempted many women and men to buy clothes in Chiangmai or from traveling salesmen rather than from local weavers of traditional textiles.

Despite the economic and technological pressure, the traditional weaving has continued. The industrialisation and mass production at lower prices meant textiles became affordable to the people of Mae Chaem. The allure of low prices has tempted the local people to buy cheaper clothes rather than local traditional textiles. Although Mae Chaem is approximately 500 miles from Bangkok and may have changed less in the last 100 years than Bangkok, *tin chok* fabrics face problems from industrialisation and globalisation. Mae Chaem shares many economic aspects with impoverished rural communities in West Africa, Turkey and the Middle East.

The decline in demand of *tin chok* fabrics plus socio-economic changes in Mae Chaem render its people very different from their forebears. In the past, *tin chok* weaving was a pastime for the women of Mae Chaem. Weaving skills were highly valued; this skills base still exists.

*Tin chok* textiles are produced as culturally significant crafts, similar to craft traditions in other countries. *Tin chok* is considered a distinct traditional fabric that has been carried on from generation to generation for hundreds of years.

The decline in textile craft production worldwide threatens regional identity and it is definitely the case in Mae Chaem.



## 2.9 Conclusion

Research findings presented here are confirmative of a position articulated in the conclusion to the last chapter and backed up by this discussion and information namely that there is a decline in the production and demand for *tin chok* weaving, and an inadequacy in the results of oral transmission of traditions not least weaving practices generation to generation impacting on the community which is beginning to fragment.

What the preliminary research articulated in this chapter also verified previous postulation, that there appeared to be a gathering dislocation of culture traditional activity, from its meaning and contemporary significance which was also referred to, in the previous chapter as an alienation from the product of labour and furthermore it seemingly being “at play” in this sub-cultural location or setting, was a realistic social perception.

This chapter also gave insights as to the evolving levels of significance or changing consciousness in the perception of the significance and meaning of *tin chok* illustrated by the historical record of changing purpose of *tin chok* and other textiles in Thai society whereby the macro (national) situation impacts upon the micro (local) situation. The phase level or consciousness level of appreciation for hand craft weaving of all non-silk products perceived either as progression or decline in the significance and standing in national and regional society in Thailand is listed for the purposes of this thesis as:

Level	Function or significance of <i>tin chok</i> hand crafted textile product
Level one	Socio economic necessity or domestic utility
Level two	Domestic economy trade goods
Level three	Tribute to state or Monarch (taxation)
Level four	Monarchy/governmental remuneration Token of payment or currency
Level five	International trade commodity
Level six	Culture object (domestic, trade commission Tourist souvenir)

Fig 2.4 Level of function or significance of hand crafted products.

The initial research supported by literature review confirmed that there were sufficient knowledge gaps and issues raised to warrant a systematic research project needed to discover precisely what the current situation in terms of *tin chok* weaving culture was, in particular in relation to Mae Chaem. This would necessarily require a close involvement with the local community and the following chapter discusses the method and processes.

The research at this point determined to, and focused upon protecting the traditional *chok* weaving, discussed and evaluated interactive research methods which, it was thought might be compatible with an evolutionist approach to interdisciplinary data input.

Additionally cost-effective CAD systems have been developed based on low cost software which it was decided would best enable traditional *chok* designs to be documented using modern methods which might have other useful applications later, such as teaching and learning.

Importantly therefore the research will use this technology to create a digital record based upon historical examples of *tin chok* weaving, however this research does not focus on, record or analysis of the motifs and patterns in *tin chok* only.

In doing this research the intention was to focus in detail on the meaning of the motifs and patterns used in the Mae Chaem district, in particular the *tin chok* traditional textiles and this was greatly assisted by the access given to the learning centre collection. It was thought selective analysis of this collection might shed some light on the issue of the phases and levels of consciousness as they are impacted by changes, not only historic, social and economic changes, but also changes in usage or social significance. Changes are inevitably reflected in design and resultant visual appearance.

The *tin chok* specimens in the collection on initial inspection showed signs that motifs had changed since the first example to the last a period covering over 100 years.

The subject objects of investigation (specimen samples) will be selected *tin chok* textiles from the areas of Mae Chaem. Samples for analysis have been selected from the Textiles Learning Centre in Mae Chaem museum and library. The origins of *tin chok* have not been recorded in Mae Chaem Learning Centre.

No research of detail in motifs and pattern of *tin chok* have been found and therefore this research is important for both the present generation and the future continuation of the tradition.

## Chapter 3 Research methodology

### 3.1 Introduction: Development and use of methods

This chapter explains the methodology used to obtain data, with particular reference to benefits and shortcomings of oral history as a singular method for data collection to be used in the evaluation of significance and meaning of motifs in *tin chok* woven textile designs of northern Thailand.

As previously acknowledged the *tin chok* weavers are a community located in a small village in a remote region with specific problems of encroaching urbanisation impacting upon their tradition and local economy. This research seeks to interact with them in order to seek new knowledge or insights which it is intended should assist in ensuring a sustainable future strategy, specific and particularly tailored to their situation.

Therefore the overall methodological approach of this research might be understood to be a hybrid action research method which consists of an adaption of several types of methods and accompanying analysis as utilised in the areas of sociology, anthropology, statistics, history and arts research.

The justification for the hybrid method is peculiar to the research undertaken and to the parameters set forth in the original research proposal is that, this research as a project extends beyond the parameters of the duration of the PhD study and its thesis preparation: it is an ongoing research project with progressive and sequential outcomes.

The methods used in the field of sociology are considered an appropriate element in this research. It employs questionnaires and surveys which are important to elicit primary data in a situation whereby interaction with the individual within a social context both formal and informal is a feature of the research. However there were instances in this research where for verification it was necessary to utilise an observational method. As is usual in the field of anthropology,

observation is a key method of eliciting data particularly when direct intervention in the social situation is regarded as unethical. This is evident where isolated communities unaffected by external context, need to be protected from socio-cultural contamination.

The happenstances of periodic changes in the nature, appearance and quality of *tin chok* fabrics were better understood by consulting samples in the learning centre archive and empirical data elsewhere which revealed patterns, directions or circumstances necessitating change and requiring quantitative analysis.

The *tin chok* weavers have no comprehensive documented history, particularly with respect to the weaving practices and the significance and meaning of their woven product. Therefore an oral history method was employed whereby questions and answers or reminiscences and storytelling are recorded and later transcribed as primary data forming the basis of a qualitative analysis.

Visual research and qualitative analysis methods widespread in the arts were utilised in the context of this action research approach in order to identify and categorise the textile appearance, aesthetics and symbolic meaning.

Finally much, if not all, of the above primary data needed to be recorded in a contemporary, durable, accessible and portable document, and therefore digital technology and internet resources will therefore be used to present and preserve the data. All these methods with their associated analysis are combined in this research in a general method understood in design and industrial research practice to be action research. This chapter will conclude by discussing the creating of a template which will allow the presentation of the differing types and modes of data collection and analysis and which will also be utilised in specifying and or underpinning the programming and development of the interactive multi-media digital achieve/collection, which will be an outcome of this research but not necessarily within its scope or time scale relative to the aims and objectives of this PhD submission.

### 3.2 Overview: Goals of action research

- The improvement of professional practice through continual learning and progressive problem solving;
- A deep understanding of practice and the development of a well specified theory of action;
- An improvement in the community in which one's practice is embedded through participatory research.

#### Standard Systems Model of Action-Research Process

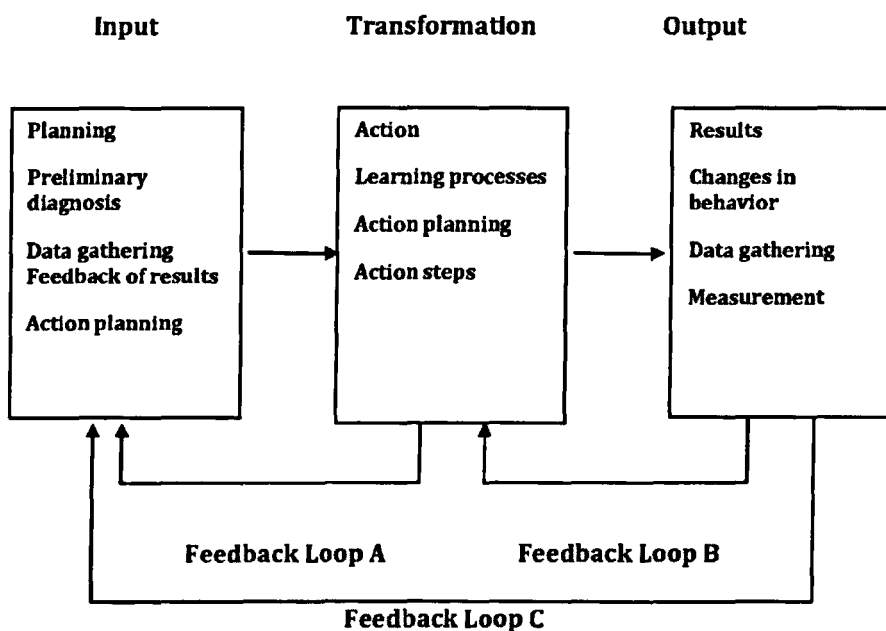


Fig 3.1 Standard Model of Action-Research Process<sup>52</sup>

Changes in action or understanding in this research process must be fed by informing replacement supplied by variety of sources which require analysis and

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<sup>52</sup> Johnson, Richard Arvid, *Standard Model of Action-Research Process*: self-made according to the description in *Management, Systems, and Society: An Introduction*, (Goodyear, 1976).  
<[http://www.moderntimesworkplace.com/about\\_us/cprojectabout\\_us.html](http://www.moderntimesworkplace.com/about_us/cprojectabout_us.html)>

discussion ensuring that which is retained is important and that which is disposed of is no longer relevant or required. The exchange and circulation data achieves a virtuous cycle of new knowledge or perceptions.

This research method is therefore designed to evaluate and discuss change and analyse the unique social function, history and tradition of *tin chok* textiles already begun in chapter one. In doing so it seeks to examine the critical and analytical context of the *tin chok* tradition, the economic and social influences which have affected it and its sustainability in the future. Therefore the research will includes digital records of motifs and patterns from 1860 until 2010. The purpose of this recording was not only analysis, but also digital preservation in the form of database devoted to this *tin chok* type of cultural heritage, which can be of use to designers and researchers.

Observation of the weavers is necessary to study their methods, techniques and processes and enable a better understanding relative to the analysis of the changes in the *tin chok* textile collections. The observation data will be processed as shown in the following Fig 3.2

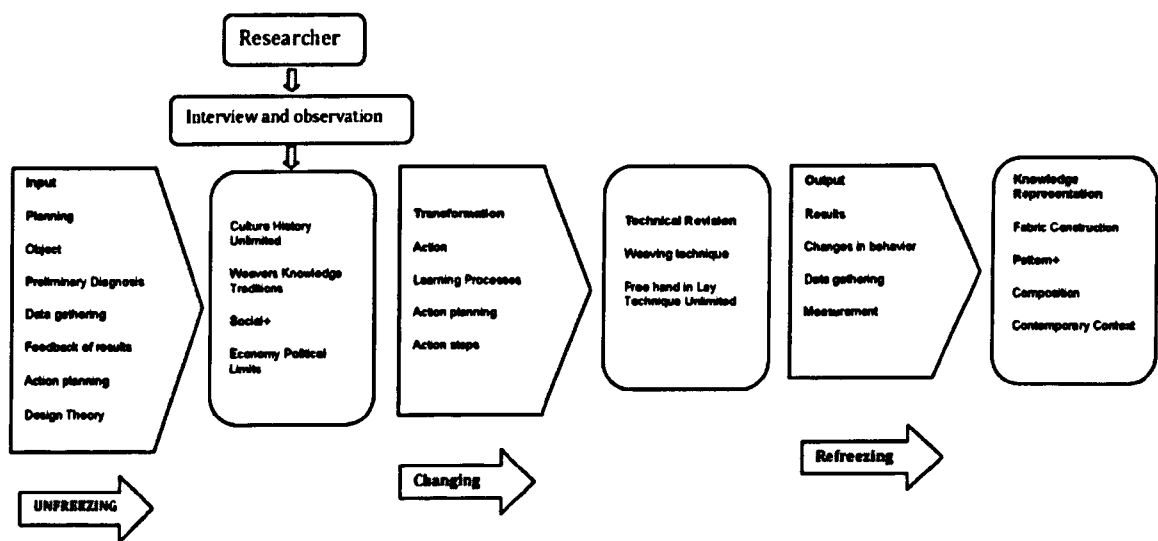


Fig 3.2 the research interrelation/interactions and process model

The methodological approaches employed in this research as previously stated is necessarily cross disciplinary to the extent to which different types of method from different disciplines will be applied to the collection and analysis of data. Action research methods can be learned and of important is the interactive circulation of research data within the model system.

### 3.3 Similar application of action research

One example of this approach is documented in the PhD thesis of Selcuk Gurisik<sup>53</sup> utilising action research as a method but also looking at sustainability in the context of felted craft textiles in Anatolian Turkey.

This method and model of action research which also creates sustainability is taken from the doctoral thesis of Gurisik who was concerned about the decline in the fortunes of the Anatolian felt-makers who hand craft their product along traditional lines but lacked the engagement of the next generation. They were unable to create products that had relevance in the global market although their products were ecologically-friendly.

The paradox and contradictions of cultural worth and exchange values were Gurisik's main theme for his thesis. He talks about the hand-crafted felt objects in terms of either a focus object in the context of transformation or a cultural object when discussing the embedded qualities of emotional and symbolic representation.

Gurisik's model is interactive and participatory regarding the external mentor as a journeyman who comes and goes and on occasion works alongside the felt makers facilitating a design meme transfer, based on the meme transfer theory by Susan Blackmore.<sup>54</sup>

His model integrates three distinct cyclical phases allowing for new input to be absorbed in the synthesis transforming and/or evolving the system. This model can therefore be understood as a positivist and progressive model for sustainability, not in an ecological sense but rather as a self-perpetuation of the system which recognises personnel changes and a degree of serendipity and

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<sup>53</sup> Gurisik, Selcuk Halil, *The paradox and contradictions in cultural value and exchange worth of Anatolian hand-crafted wool felted textiles*, (University of the Arts, 2006).

<sup>54</sup> Blackmore, S: Anything transmitted culturally from person to person by imitation or teaching/learning: Fashion / Story / Tune, Idea / Belief / Scientific Theory, Skill / Practical Knowledge.

Memes are habits, skills, songs, stories, or any other kind of information that is copied from person to person. Memes, like genes, are replicators. That is, they are information that is copied with variation and selection. Because only some of the variants survive, memes (and hence human cultures) evolve. Memes are copied by imitation, teaching and other methods, and they compete for space in our memories and for the chance to be copied again. Large groups of memes that are copied and passed on together are called co-adapted meme complexes, or memplexes, *The Meme Machine*, (Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 1999).

< <http://www.susanblackmore.co.uk/memetics/about%20memes.htm> >



The virtue of his model is that it is evolutionary and therefore adaptability is inherently interactive, which militates against inertia. It is therefore a dynamic model relying on the forces of the individual.<sup>56</sup>

### **3.4 Cross and interdisciplinary approaches**

The approaches employed in this research will necessarily be cross disciplinary to the extent that different types of method from different disciplines will need to be applied to the analysis of data collected. Where possible, methods will be learned and where not expert advice will be sought.

This methodology combines literature survey, abstraction from books and periodicals together with data collection by audio and visual digital recording, resulting substantially in qualitative information evaluated by the appropriate methods.

In the first instance a literature survey will be undertaken and grouped according to subject relevance. Additionally contemporary discourse and case studies in the field will be incorporated into the literature survey.

The literature survey of the history, cultural studies and process technologies provide the link between theory and practice and qualitative and quantitative methods. This supports the multi-disciplinary object-based design strategies, including the mediatory action (Gurisik).

Primary data will be qualitative and methods will include ethno-historical observation (Bogdan and Biklen<sup>57</sup>). The methodology will also include elements of “listening to the storytellers” (Gurisik; and Harper<sup>58</sup>). Interviews will be recorded on digital media, both audio and video.

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<sup>56</sup> Benjamin W, *The work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* first published 1936 translation copy right J.A Underwood, Penguin Group 2008

<sup>57</sup> Bogdan, R., and Knopp Biklen, S., *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theories and Methods*, (Ally and Bacon, 1992)

<sup>58</sup> Harper, P., PhD student, London Metropolitan University (2011)

This research will be using also non-participant observations of the traditional weavers, using the methodology of Kumar<sup>59</sup>. By passively observing and occasionally asking questions I will be able to analyse their methods and the cultural significance of certain colours, motifs and patterns.

Video/audio recording of oral history will be archived by interviewing the old and young expert *tin chok* weavers to discover attitudes, unearth stories told and compare generational contemporary attitudes relative to change. These interviews will be transcribed and written up in chapter four.

My research will explore the significance and meaning in *tin chok* motifs and the history of culture, related to pattern changes from time to time some of the data for which is presented in the chapters in this thesis one and two but much else is located in Volume Two of this thesis as collected appendices to include anthropological photographic documentation. It is hoped that since this research is ongoing beyond thesis submission that there will be created an online interactive and integrated dissemination and synthesis system. Video and audio recordings will document the craft techniques and processes - by observing and documenting the practical weaving techniques and examining the external influences relative to behavior or ritual in teaching and learning skills.

Proximity participation involves the observer undertaking practical instruction from the observed in order to better understand the specific technical implication, vocabulary and verbal discourse relative to processes, technique and product, and this interaction might need be redacted although in a different form may have value elsewhere in the system .

Photographic records of archive material will supply close-up detailed visual information for comparative analysis.

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<sup>59</sup> Kumar, R., *Research methodology: A step-by-step guide for beginners*, (Sage, 1999).

### 3.5 Concise literature review of appropriate contemporary ethnographic research methodology.

Several papers were reviewed in support of the choice of action research as application method in this research and reported in chapter three of this thesis. The papers are reports of findings of research projects dealing with similar topics to this research and therefore are analytical discourses implying a method rather than explicit descriptions or rational for the adopted methodology.

**Paper One:** “An analysis of Javanese influences on Malaysian motifs in batik sarong design”, by Rafeah Legino<sup>60</sup>, published in the International Journal of the Arts in Society.

This paper examines the culture influences upon the design of batik sarong samples that were photographed in order to trace and categorise the range of design motifs. The samples were sourced from museums, galleries, private collections and batik makers in Malaysia. Through the analysis of the samples it was argued that design characteristic had been established and could be define as Malaysian in origin.

In reporting comparative analysis the paper indirectly illustrates a method whereby a combination of data drawn from literature is visually deconstructed into its constituent parts as separate motifs and or, areas/background to designed borders incorporating motifs. These are compared, contrasted and discussed by reference to composition, stylisation but also, importantly references to the religious iconography of Buddhism and Hinduism found elsewhere.

Criteria for evaluation are drawn from the latter, augmented by resemblance indicators and used in combination in each analysis of the sample selection to create a profile/ performer for the batik sarong described and discussed as either distinctively Malaysian or Javanese-influenced Malaysian sarongs.

The research is therefore relevant to this research because it similarly examines samples from literature, museums, galleries, private collections and contemporary batik makers, analyses motifs and design layout and categorises the visual representations in comparison against criteria which were

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<sup>60</sup> Legino, R., *An analysis of Javanese influences on Malaysian motifs in batik sarong design*. (The International Journal of the Arts in Society, volume 6, issue 4, 2011)

iconographically culture-specific, the latter reflecting historical and cultural symbolism of the practices surrounding Buddhism and Hinduism.

Not only is this approach to qualitative analysis is relevant to this research, so are its findings. They suggest that along the Malayan chain and its neighbouring countries there is a common usage of motifs said to be either Buddhist or Hindu in origin which if not direct then indirectly influenced the design of contemporary sarongs.

**Paper two:** The classification of Indonesian textiles by Puji Yosep Subagiyo, presented at the International Seminar and Exhibition on Indonesian Textiles in Jakarta in 1994.<sup>61</sup>

This work is significant because it investigates the classification of Indonesian textiles by discussing identification, naming, systematical classification for weaving, non-weaving and colouration techniques.

The research employs the paradigmatic model, the structure and properties are measured to reconstruct human behaviour involved in processing and performance of material culture (Vandiver, 1990: XIX). This quantitative research method implements a reconstructive strategy once removed although informed by weaver observations, rather than a descriptive account from weaver interviews at first hand, followed by evaluation of or discussion with the weaver and product. However it contributes to this research by providing a template format useful in the creation of a deconstructive analysis template that this research employs alongside first hand or primary data.

**Paper three:** Digital Archiving of Traditional Songket Motifs using Image Processing Tool by Nursuriati Jamil, Tengku Mohd Tengku Sembok and Zainab Abu Bakar, published at 5<sup>th</sup> Recent Researches in Chemistry, Biology, Environment and Culture conference in Switzerland in 2011.<sup>62</sup>

This paper presents an image processing tool using several image processing techniques which provides digitisation of songket motifs extracted from songket patterns.

This research describes the digitisation processes and experiments conducted on 50 textile motifs using image processing techniques: contrast enhancement,

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<sup>61</sup> Subagiyo, P.Y., *The Classification of Indonesian Textiles based on Structural, Materials and Technical Analyses*, (International Seminar and Exhibition on Indonesian Textiles Jakarta, 1994)

<sup>62</sup> Jamil, N., Sembok, T. M. T., and Abu Bakar, Z., *Digital Archiving of Traditional Songket Motifs using Image Processing Tool*, (Recent Researches in Chemistry, Biology, Environment and Culture, Montreux, Switzerland, 2011).

noise reduction, and morphological operations. Motifs can be isolated from their compositional context and categorised according to stylistic or origination criteria, subject or representational type. The motifs are created by individual craftsman weavers from memory or older traditional sample copies, but are not recorded in a comprehensive library catalogue or document. The paper and method offers an accessible and systematic categorisation method in a digital data archive of designs and motifs.

**Paper four: Motifs and Symmetry Characteristics of the Ornamentation on Traditional Greek Woven Textiles from the Area of Aegean by Lila Lekka and Sofia Dascalopoulos<sup>63</sup>.**

This paper presents an analysis of woven ornamentation of traditional Greek textiles from a specific area of the Aegean Sea. The aim of this research is to explore the relationship between woven ornamentation and the technology used for its construction. Additionally these traditional hand-woven fabrics from this area were digitally recorded. The motifs of these textiles were analysed using the international classification and notation system created by H.J.Woods and M.A.Hann. This methodology enables the classification of woven ornaments into categories, making possible the comparison of ornament and motif “types”, making use of the method of geometric analysis. This method, based on the principles of crystallography, classifies patterns based on their geometric symmetries on the plane. Consequently the nature of weave technique seems to dominate the aesthetic result and thereby appears to overcome cultural influences.

**Paper five: Patterns in the Plane and Beyond: Symmetry in Two and Three Dimensions by B.G. Thomas and M.A. Hann. <sup>64</sup>**

This is where two component and equal parts are each a reflection of the other. The meaning of the term symmetry can be extended beyond this everyday use to include other geometrical actions and their combinations; in all cases the essence is one of regular reproduction or repetition of a fundamental unit, shape, figure or other element. These further geometric actions are known as “symmetry operations” or “symmetries”, and are most readily understood if considered, at least initially, in a two-dimensional context, although it should be noted that many of the relevant concepts were developed in association with the improved understanding of three-dimensional crystal structures in the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This monograph reviews the historical developments in the study of patterns and, in particular, how our understanding has been enhanced

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<sup>63</sup> Lekka, L. and Dascalopoulos, S, *Motifs and symmetry characteristics of the ornamentation on traditional Greek woven textiles from the area of the Aegean*, (Fibres & Textiles in Eastern Europe, 2008)

<sup>64</sup> Thomas, B.G., and Hann, M.A. *Patterns in the Plane and Beyond: Symmetry in Two and Three Dimensions*, No. 37 in the Ars Textrina series, (published in association with the University of Leeds International Textiles Archive (ULITA), 2007)

< [http://ulita.leeds.ac.uk/docs/Ars\\_Textrina/Monographs/Patterns\\_in\\_the\\_Plane.pdf](http://ulita.leeds.ac.uk/docs/Ars_Textrina/Monographs/Patterns_in_the_Plane.pdf) >

through adopting concepts and principles sourced in mathematics and the discipline of crystallography. The symmetry rules governing both two-dimensional patterns and three-dimensional polyhedra are outlined. Finally consideration is given to how patterns which exist in the plane can be applied to repeat regularly around the surface of polyhedra.

**Paper six:** Japanese design motifs and their symbolism as use on *itajime*-dyed *juban* by Susan Elizabeth Gunter<sup>65</sup>.

The objectives of this research were to examine a sample of 65 *itajime*-dyed garments, to identify the motifs used to decorate the garments, to ascertain the symbolic meanings of the motifs, and to create a catalogue of the 65 *itajime*-dyed garments. The motifs appearing on the garments were most often botanical, although other motifs in the following categories were also present: animal/bird/insect motifs, water-related motifs, everyday object motifs, and geometric designs and abstract shapes. This research illustrated the usefulness of form analysis as a research tool with the creation of a catalogue documenting the information collected from this research.

### 3.6 Summary

The six papers reviewed offer a diverse set of approaches and methods currently utilised in this field of research to categorise artefact data and analytically evaluate its significance and meaning.

A method of comparative analysis in research paper one is therefore relevant to this research because it similarly examines samples from literature, museums, galleries, private collections and contemporary batik makers, analyses motifs and design layout and, categorises the visual representations in comparison against criteria which were iconographically culture-specific, the latter reflecting historical and cultural symbolism of the practices surrounding Buddhism and Hinduism.

A second paper employs the paradigmatic model that involves processing the performance data of material culture by a quantitative research method which implements a reconstructive strategy collating technical detail. This diametrically

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<sup>65</sup> Gunter, S.E., Japanese design motifs and their symbolism as used on *itajime*-dyed *juban*, (The University of Georgia, 1999).

opposite method provides useful strictures for preparation of a deconstructive analysis template that this research seeks to employ in the processing of first hand or primary data.

Paper three presented an image processing tool - using several image processing techniques which provide digitisation. The paper and method offers an accessible and systematic categorisation method in digital data archives of designs and motifs allowing manipulation of detail useful in cataloguing.

Drawing upon the classification and notation system by B.G. Thomas and M.A. Hann paper four peruses a qualitative evaluation based upon observation of characteristics of formal orders in design such as symmetry, composition and so on. There is a presumption that designed artefacts differ from culture to culture therefore comparative analysis of this kind allows classification of woven ornaments into categories and identifies origins.

Importantly paper five is concerned with pattern analysis, and appraises the application of the systematic classification system outlined. Therefore this paper presents a summary of the more important geometrical concepts significant to classification such as relationships of motifs, border pattern and all-over patterns. It also provides a flow diagram to aid identification of pattern symmetry.

Paper six examines a sample of 65 *itajime*-dyed garments, ascertaining the symbolic meanings of the motifs, and creates a catalogue. This research illustrates a method of form analysis whereby visual representation of non-verbal elements understood by Kathy M. Jung & Jo B. Paoletti<sup>66</sup> taken together with the context in which they are used creates an interpretive documentation or description which when correlated informs classification. These papers evidence the appropriateness of different methods relative to circumstance/situation and required format, also in relation to this research the papers offer alternatives which in turn give flexibility to the process in allowing for gathering and using data in forms from different situations.

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<sup>66</sup> Jung, K.M., and Paoletti, J.B. *Documentation and analysis of dated Victorian crazy quilts*. (Clothing and Textiles Research Journal, 1, 14-17, 1987).

### 3.7 Oral history overview

The oral history in this thesis will be mainly comprised of unstructured interviews, producing qualitative research. Alan Bryman<sup>67</sup> argues that the advantage of this method is that it enables the researcher to react, following a potentially profitable new direction, depending on what the interviewee says. Bryman also argues that in the unstructured interview there is much greater interest in the interviewee's point of view, in their subjectivity.

The analysis of the interviews will be fed back to the interviewees along with all of the thesis analysis as digested at the next, post thesis, action research project meeting although it is hoped that some information flow will already be being fed into the model made action via the internet and other open communication routes.

#### Motivations

Since the earliest records academic historians, and including in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, have struggled with the desire to discover the "truth" despite the pressures upon them from the political and academic establishment, public opinion and other cultural influences.

Early oral history pioneers such as Numa Denis Fustel de Coullanges <sup>68</sup> fought to ascertain the truth despite "systematic bias". But long before the birth of academic history this was recognised as a problem.

The Arab polymath Ibn Khaldun<sup>69</sup> criticised the "idle superstition and uncritical acceptance of historical data".

Oral history has a long and contumacious past and has always been vulnerable to ambiguity, misinterpretation, misquotation or erroneous contextualisation. There are in some cases of oral history also dangers of interviewees doctoring

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<sup>67</sup> Bryman, A, *Interviews in Qualitative Research*, (Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>68</sup> Fustel de Coullanges, N. D., *The Ancient City: A Study on the Religions, Laws and Institutions of Greece and Rome*, (Durand, 1864).

<sup>69</sup> Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, (1377).



their own views, memories or theories to please those who might view the resulting work. This could be for personal or cultural reasons, excessive modesty, fear of offending relatives or colleagues, or even fear of political, religious or social persecution. However oral historians also have to accept their own inherent and unconscious bias, as well as the influences imposed by the social and academic establishment.

In recent years oral history has become a new string in the bow of historians who wish to challenge common, institutionally accepted perceptions about the past. Paula Hamilton<sup>70</sup> says a “memory boom”, starting in the 1990s, has continued apace with the majority of this work being on Eurocentric subjects. Hamilton goes on to point to several state-sponsored initiatives, which were designed to encourage the production of oral histories about particularly painful and controversial periods of recent history – namely the truth and reconciliation commissions in South Africa and Chile.

While the politics inherent in the apartheid era and the Pinochet regime are obvious, the controversy and political difficulties in other subjects are more nuanced.

When studying the history of weaving in Mae Chaem, Chiangmai province, Thailand, an uninitiated observer might not see any reason to tread carefully. But deeper analysis would suggest the subject matter could be vulnerable to manipulation and subversion by those with political agendas.

### **3.8 Structured and unstructured interviews**

Oral historical sources are by definition narrative sources, argues Alessandro Portelli<sup>71</sup>. They are naturally influenced by the subject’s own experiences and prejudices. Everyone has their own internal narrative and they will recount events, or discuss their daily life and work in a way that seeks to conform to that

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<sup>70</sup> Hamilton, P., *Sale Of The Century: Memory and historical consciousness in Australia*, (Transaction Publishers, 2006)

<sup>71</sup> Portelli, A, *What makes oral history different*, (Routledge, 2nd edition, 2006)

narrative. If someone is being interviewed about artistic work or a business that was a team effort they may be disingenuous and seek to exaggerate their own importance in the project or downplay the role of one of their colleagues.

Portelli believes the subjectivity of each individual's narrative does not negate their value and in fact he claims "subjectivity is as much the business of history as are the more visible facts". Portelli also argues: "Oral sources tell us not just what people did but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing and what they now think they did."

However he suggested that an oral historian's approach has to be broad enough to create a cross section of the subjectivity of the group or class they are focusing on.

Jill Ker Conway<sup>72</sup>, argues: "Whether we are aware of it or not, our culture gives us an inner script by which we live our lives".

An interviewee's inner script will depend on their cultural origins and economic circumstances and may be similar to relatives or friends who have grown up in the same milieu. In a village such as Mae Chaem there may also be generational and gender distinctions which will also influence the inner scripts. The oral historian's approach will seek to draw out the similarities as well as the disparities between these outlooks on life.

Anna Green<sup>73</sup> says: "Historians are increasingly focusing upon the ways in which individual recollections fit (often unconscious) cultural scripts or templates." She adds: "As a consequence oral history is converging with collective memory studies, within which individual memory is either subsumed under 'collective memory' or assigned to the realm of the passive unconscious." Most historians, researchers and journalists have experience of interviewees who would not or could not engage in the process and remained monosyllabic and hostile or vacant throughout.

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<sup>72</sup> Conway, J. Ker, *When Memory Speaks: Reflections on Autobiography*, (Alfred A Knopf, 1998).

<sup>73</sup> Green, A., *Individual Remembering and Collective Memory: Theoretical Presuppositions and Contemporary Debates*, (Oral History, The Journal of the Oral History Society, 2004).

Marianne Paget<sup>74</sup> argues the interview is a conversation and has described in great detail the way the interview is shaped by both parties. "If the interviewer is inexperienced, apathetic or lacks the requisite knowledge and interpersonal skills then the data he or she can derive from the process will be of poor quality", says Paget.

Oral history interviews have the potential to reveal the motivations and the dynamics at work within a community. The documentation of the interview can become a primary source for further research.

Paul Thompson<sup>75</sup> says: "Oral history has a special value to the labour historian concerned with the work process itself – not merely its technology... but the experience of work and the social relationships that follow from it."

Oral history is only as good as the historian involved, both in terms of the amount of research they undertake, the group of interviewees they focus on and the quality of their interviewing technique. To research a subject the historian needs to know in great depth the history of the subject, the context, the environment and the external influences before conducting an interview, in order for it to flow smoothly.

In this research however and in the case of the Mae Chaem the research process it requires the ability to find the correct and appropriate interviewees, not just the publicity-hungry "good talkers", but also those who are more reticent perhaps due to traditional deference, a fear of appearing inarticulate or simple modesty.

The weavers of Mae Chaem are from the Karen tribe<sup>76</sup>, an ethnic group that straddles the Thailand/Burma border. But the cultural and political perspective is only one aspect of the issue with oral history in Mae Chaem area.

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<sup>74</sup> Paget, M., *Experience and Knowledge*, (Human Studies Volume 6, Number 1. p67-90, 1983)

<sup>75</sup> Thompson, P., *The Voice of the Past*, (Oxford University Press, p80, 1998)

<sup>76</sup> The Karen, pronounced Kah-Ren (emphasis on the second syllable), are indigenous to the Thailand-Burma border region in South East Asia and are one of the many ethnic groups in Burma.

< <https://ethnomed.org/culture/karen/karen-cultural-profile> >

Thailand is a largely homogenous entity but it has had struggled with a low-key rebellion among Muslims in the far south in recent years.

A reminder of the culture of another ethnic minority, the Karen in the north-west, may be viewed by some in Thailand with hostility. But this is not at issue in this research which is mainly concerned to find out the specific local realities and community history but also the evolutionary history of the craft and the perceptions the weavers and others have of its heritage.

The structure of the interview will of course depend on whether it is quantitative or qualitative research. In quantitative research a structured interview - probably consisting of a structured questionnaire - enables the research to be of a consistent approach but it filters out the ability for the historian to react, or go off at a tangent, depending on what the interviewee says.

Bryman states that "in the unstructured interview, as seen in qualitative research, there is much greater interest in the interviewee's point of view, in their subjectivity."

Since the interview for this research is a collaborative process, which relies on the co-operation of both parties to at least engage in dialogue. But while the interviewer should seek at the outset to elicit the truth we will not come into the interview with pre-conceived ideas of what the truth is.

Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson<sup>77</sup>, suggest: "Discrepancies between facts and remembered, retold stories are interesting because they reflect the way in which we attempt to make sense of our experience, to order and select, re-interpreting."

Dr Linda Sandino<sup>78</sup> argues that: "Remembering is active rather than passive. By asking respondents to recollect instances and their feelings at the time, oral history could be seen to be abandoning objective empiricism for the subjective approach of psychoanalysis."

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<sup>77</sup> Samuel, R., and Thompson, P., Eds. *The Myths We Live By*, (Routledge, 1990)

<sup>78</sup> Sandino, L., p8, *Speaking about things: oral history as context*. (Working Papers on Design, 2, University of the Arts, 2007)

Samuel and Thompson seem to suggest a self-analytical period is implicit in responses to questions which if true negates Sandino's concerns. Therefore in relation to the questionnaires undertaken in this research analysis will be a comparative one taking account of, or paying attention to anomalies.

Although the maxim "history is written by the victors" – often attributed to Winston Churchill – is now a cliché, it does encapsulate the essence of why history reflects at its political heart.

However in the case, interviews for this research, the personal and subjective histories of the *tin chok* weavers are a requisite, for the action research model, because theirs is the creative output upon which personal narratives must resonate. In order to have a credible cultural location the individual perceptual historical narrative is that upon which the craft object encoded.

### **3.9 Memory.**

Oral history interview is about recording people's memories so they can remember their history or an incident that happened in the past and they can show each individual perspective.

Anna Green and Megan Hutching<sup>79</sup> say: "Historians are increasingly focusing upon the ways in which individual recollections fit (often unconscious) cultural scripts or templates." They add: "As a consequence oral history is converging with collective memory studies, within which individual memory is either subsumed under 'collective memory' or assigned to the realm of the passive unconscious."

In one sense it can be argued that everything that oral historians do not want, in their quest for truth, namely a collective consciousness or passive unconscious, may in respect of the embodiment of culture be the very cornerstone of the sensibility of or mythology of tradition, and therefore in this instance the factor which is vital to the analysis in this thesis.

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<sup>79</sup> Green, A. and Hutching, M., *Remembering: Writing Oral History*, eds, (Auckland, Auckland University Press, 2004)

Dinah Eastop<sup>80</sup>, in her research, *Sound Recording and Text creation: Oral History and the Deliberately Concealed Garments Project*, says:

Oral history accounts (sound recordings and their transcriptions) are important sources for the study of textiles and dress. In the case of the recorded history referred to here, what is significant about sound recording is, the intonation missing from transcripts of questionnaires.

In reference to a recorded interview concerning the discovery of artifacts hidden in a public building in Kent, Eastop observes: "It also provides a vivid record of the finder's excitement at the discovery."

Sharon Veale and Kathleen Schilling<sup>81</sup> provide a further insight which was taken into account in preparation for interviews recorded for this research. In some cases people recount stories which have been passed on to them by others who may have moved away or died.

Oral history relates both to the personal stories and memories that people tell other people about the past and the formal collection or account of such stories and memories by oral historians and researchers.

Within families often such stories are passed on from generation to generation. More frequently our history lives as a personal narrative remembered and told inside our own head. Throughout the passage of our lives we only ever speak about the past through our memories, the mental impressions we retain and are able to recall. These memories and the stories we tell about them help explain our identity and place in the world.

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<sup>80</sup> Eastop, D., *Sound recording and text creation: Oral History and the Deliberately Concealed Garments Project*. In: M. Hayward and E. Kramer, eds. *Textiles and Text: Re-establishing the Links Between Archival and Object-Based Research*. Postprints of the Third AHRC Research Centre for Textile Conservation, 2007)

<sup>81</sup> Veale, S., and Schilling, K., *Talking History. Oral History Guidelines*, (Published by the Department of Environment & Conservation (NSW), June 2004)

<<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/cultureheritage/TalkingHistoryOralHistoryGuidelines.pdf>>

Louella McCarthy, Paul Ashton and Hamish Graham<sup>82</sup> show how important it is to understand stories and memories through people's values and their history:

Oral history in the context of cultural heritage assessment work can assist in understanding social values within living memory. This means that we may gain an insight into the changes in people's values and the landscapes and places they consider important through their lives and experiences. Moreover, we may learn from recording the stories and memories that are passed from one generation to the next how different values become part of social memory and history and be able to track the shifts in values between the present and the past.

According to these oral historians the important thing to understand when conducting oral history interviews is to fully understand the information you have received from the interviewees before transcribing it and turning it into reliable data.

### **3.10 Visual analysis method.**

To reiterate this thesis argues for a specific and precise analytical method and or methods, appropriate to determining the significance and meaning of the visual appearance of *tin chok* traditional hand woven fabrics from the Mae Chaem district of Chiangmai province, Thailand. Therefore the following existing visual analysis methods are reviewed, in so far as they are deemed appropriate, given the specific task and contextual circumstances relating to this research. These are reported elsewhere in the thesis; however what is discussed here is the proposed adoption of analytical methods directly related to the specific research circumstances, needs and situation.

It is worth stating the factors impacting upon the research situation and process in which knowledge, information and data is and has been gathered.

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<sup>82</sup> McCarthy, L., Ashton, P., and Graham, H., *Culture and Heritage: Oral History, Australia*, State of the Environment Technical Paper Series (Natural and Cultural Heritage), Series 1, (Department of Environment, 1997.)

Fig 3.5 shows the interconnections present in the research field study situation where information exchange and preliminary interpretation of object representations occur.

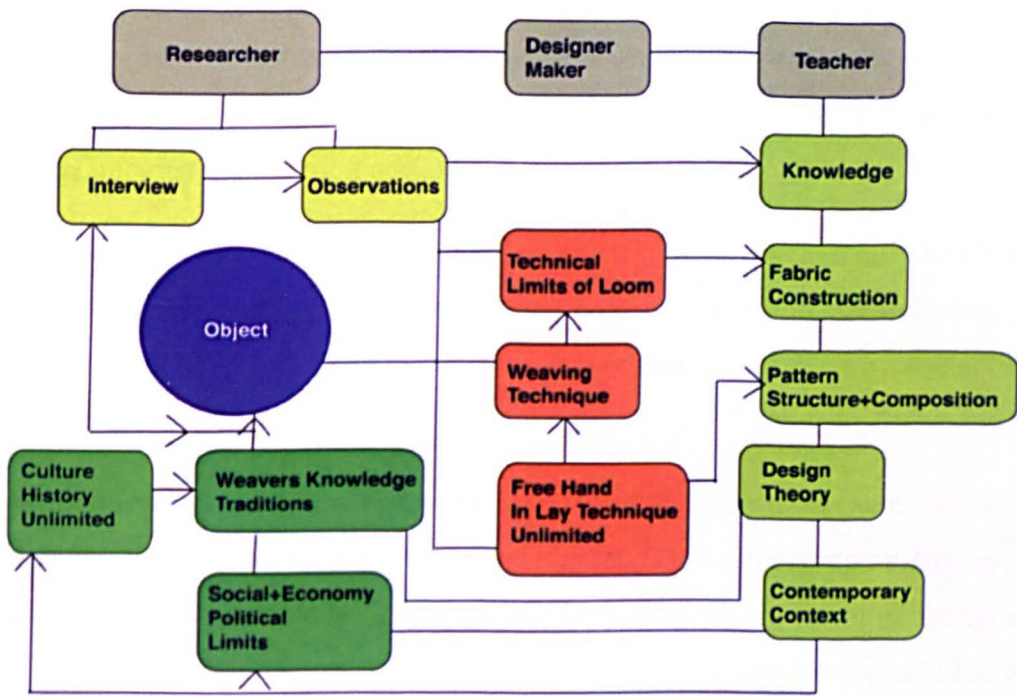


Fig 3.5 the research interrelation/interactions and process model in which the different type and source data knowledge/information input is indicated in different colours.

This type of interconnected/interactive field research process, following an interdisciplinary approach, is the basis for the preliminary analysis undertaken by this researcher, in order to identify and focus the further lines of enquiry needed. In this case both the interview procedures and observations are related and synthesised as compound, the analysis of which is undertaken using criteria from experience in the area of weaving, design practice and Thai cultural history.

This model differs from that of Gurisik for example in as much as focus object is actual not a new design proposition and therefore the data input from the outsider related to that rediscovered knowledge which in part due to the oral communication of information , has been lost over time generation to generation.



As can be seen from the model these areas of knowledge overlap with those of the designer maker producing the focal objects (namely the weaver of the *tin chok* fabric) and interviews with them. These intersecting circumstances, privilege the physical and tangible components and processes as significant and meaningful over the intangible, symbolic or embodiment aspects of the fabric because the cultural embodiment understood from the initial field visit suggested were unconscious or tacit actions.

Embodiment of underlying meanings is an intangible that can only be revealed by cultural discourses (perhaps interviews) because signs and symbols are only understood by members of the society or by those investigating a society for whatever purpose.

While there are experiences and tacit knowledge inherent in the preliminary analysis and categorisation of selected sample fabrics accepted as displaying differences in appearance. The researcher's perceptions by dint of background, cultural connection and skill, has its limitations and therefore, detailed analysis requires a "proportioning significances" mechanism relative to totality of data gathered.

In other words the question will remain up and until all information is analysed, which data or to what extent does specific data significantly influences the differing qualities both tangible and intangible? Maybe this is not so important?

It is argued here that separate and differing data analysis methods relating to the constraints of the specialist subject norms may also be limited in the area of interpretation and verification which this research seeks to present.

A cohesive explanation may be undermined as the gap between the tangible and the intangible elements of the object (in this case the fabric) can separate significance from meaning.

In undertaking a review of existing visual analysis methods which purport to elicit the significance and meaning ascribed to or embedded into objects, some

methods are specific to textiles, some more generalised in application and some methods which concentrate on the composition and structures of decoration and pattern.

The complex culture specific methods of visual analysis such as semiotics, in respect of the symbolic meaning and representations derived from linguistic description, are important in and of themselves but rely heavily upon the specific cultural interpretive expertise which is not always objective.

### **3.11 Semiotic analysis**

Semiotics has a role to play in the analysis in this research where the interview is the main vehicle through which insights are gained regarding significance and meaning of the fabrics and where the discourse is culturally located in both the interviewer and the interviewee. The theory of semiotics is constructed around three relational elements: the sign the signifier and the signified; but there are also other levels such as the signal, index, icon, symbol and so on.

In Barthes' *Elements of Semiology*<sup>83</sup>, he defines the sign as:

The classification of sign: The signified and the signifier, in Saussurean terminology, are the components of the sign... for Peirce, the symbol is not existential where as it is for Jung... Many semiological systems (objects, gestures, pictorial images) have a substance of expression whose essence is not to signify; often they are objects of and food for nourishment even if they are also used as signs. We propose to call these semiological signs, whose origin is utilitarian and functional, sign-functions. The sign-function bears witness to a double movement, which must be taken part... these objects are unavoidably realizations of a model, the speech of a language, the substances of a significant form.

Barthes, Peirce et al assert a three part system which both separates and mediates what is said indicating what is meant. Furthermore the indicators are both tangible and intangible for example the sign and signifier are towards the tangible whilst that which is signified although may be real in its transmission becomes a concept which is implicit and therefore not tangible.

Barthes further explains in his *Nature of the Signified*: that

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<sup>83</sup> Barthes, R., p1, *Elements of Semiology*, 1964, (published by Hill and Wang, 1968)

In linguistics, the nature of the signified has given rise to discussions which have centred chiefly on its degree of 'reality'; all agree, however, on emphasizing the fact that the signified is not 'a thing' but a mental representation of the 'thing'. We have seen that in the definition of the sign by Wallon, this representative character was a relevant feature of the sign and the symbol (as opposed to the index and the signal). Saussure himself has clearly marked the mental image (this will prove important in the subsequent discussion on the nature of the sign). These discussions, however, still bear the stamp of psychologism, so the analysis of the Stoics will perhaps be thought preferable. They carefully distinguished the *phantasia logiki* (the mental representation), the *tinganon* (the real thing) and the *lekton* (the utterable). The signified is neither the *phantasia* nor the *tinganon* but rather the *lekton*; being neither an act of consciousness, nor a real thing, it can be defined only within the signifying process, in a quasi-tautological way: it is this 'something' which is meant by the person who uses the sign. In this way we are back again to purely functional definition: the signified is one of the two relate of the sign; the only difference which opposes it to the signified is that the latter is a mediator.<sup>84</sup>

The notion that the signified is not 'a thing' but a mental representation of the 'thing, in relation to transmission of meaning or what we call communication is important to know when transcribing text.

In defining the signified Barthes asserts the following again in his *Nature of the Signaler*:

The nature of the signifier suggests roughly the same remarks as that of the signified: it is purely a *relatum*, whose definition cannot be separated from that of the signified. The only difference is that the signifier is a mediator; some matter is necessary to it. But on the one hand it is not sufficient to it, and on the other, in Semiology, the signifier can, too, be relayed by a certain matter: that of words. This materiality of the signifier makes it once more necessary to distinguish clearly matter from substance: a substance can be immaterial (in case of the substance of the content); therefore, all one can say is that the substance of the signifier is always material (sounds, object, and images). In semiology, where we shall have to deal with mixed system in which different kinds of matter are involved (sound and image, object and writing, etc.), it may be appropriate to collect together all the signs, inasmuch as they are home by one and the same matter, under the concept of the typical sign: the verbal sign, the graphic sign, the iconic sign, the gestural sign are all typical signs.

The important thing here to be remembered, relative to transcription and the transpositioning of signifier as meaning to be transmitted is, that it is thereby a

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<sup>84</sup> Barthes, R., p2, *Elements of Semiology*, 1964, (publ. Hill and Wang, 1968).

intangible representation carried by a tangible matter/material and can, too, be relayed by a certain matter: Therefore the signifier is always material (sounds, object, and images). Oral recordings are therefore signifiers.

Finally Barthes proposes that: "it may be appropriate to collect together all the signs, inasmuch as they are home by one and the same matter, under the concept of the typical sign: the verbal sign, the graphic sign, the iconic sign, the gestural sign are all typical signs."

If this is true then Barthes has indicated that the integration of the signs which data represents but collected in different ways or methods relative to or appropriate from differing disciplines the will necessarily be as transmitted material "typical signs".

This linguistics-based analysis method, when applied to the visual language of fabric design, can establish a connection between the tangible and the intangible as it focuses upon the transmission via symbolic order and the communication mechanisms of culturally constructed meanings and understanding.

### **3.12 Material analysis**

The oral interview material gathered as part of this research is concerned not only with the details of construction and making but also with the weavers' intention to communicate through the construct of the object.

With regard to analytical methods utilising a systematic approach to the physicality of pattern design reviewed, it is most appropriate to refer to application of methods initiated by Henry John Woods<sup>85</sup> and Michael Hann<sup>86</sup>.

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<sup>85</sup> Woods, H.J.; *The Geometrical Basis of Pattern Design*. Part 3: Geometrical Symmetry in Plane Patterns, (Journal of the Textile Institute. Transactions, 26, T341-T357, 1935)

<sup>86</sup> Hann, M.A., pp14-18, *Symmetry in Two-dimensional Design. A Review of its use in the Analysis and Synthesis of Regular Repeating Patterns*, (Proceedings of International Conference. The Textiles: Research in Design and Technology, Kaunas, Lithuania, September 21 and 22, 2000)

One such example is research by Lekka and Dascalopolos, applied to vernacular woven textiles from Greece. "Motifs and Symmetry Characteristics of the Ornamentation on Traditional Greek Woven Textile from the Area of the Aegean."<sup>87</sup>

Their research presents an analysis of woven ornamentation of traditional Greek textiles from the area of the Aegean Sea. The aim of their research is to explore the relational between woven ornamentation and the technology used for its construction. The decoration and motifs of these textiles were analysed using the international classification and notation system created by Woods and Hann, taking into account the limitations that exist in the case of woven ornaments. This methodology enables the classification of woven ornament into categories, making possible the comparison of ornament type with the weave techniques used. Results of this symmetry analysis of these textiles are presented in their paper and lead to some conclusions that show that technology plays a determinant role in the appearance of woven ornaments.

They suggested that:

For this research a number of hand woven samples were recorded. The purpose of this recording was not only analysis, but also digital preservation in the form of a database devoted to this type of cultural heritage, which can be of use to designers and researchers. The woven patterns were analysed using the Woods-Hann system of notation and classification [1-6]. Although a lot of research has been done on Greek textiles in the past, this type of systematic analysis has not been applied until now, and can give way to more conclusions, and also the opportunity to conduct comparative studies. The analysis of patterns was made possible apart from descriptive approach that has been applied to the analysis of Greek textiles until now with the use of method of geometric analysis by Woods and Hann. This method, based on the principles of crystallography, classifies pattern, including woven ones, base on their geometric symmetries on the plane.

Their study constitutes an extremely valuable tool for this research because it enables the characterisation of patterns into different classes or types, and therefore allows the establishment of the main or prevailing 'type' of a given sample of textiles, something not possible with descriptive analysis. This is important when the research incentive is the unveiling of the common structure

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<sup>87</sup> Lekka, L. and Dascalopoulos, S. *Motifs and symmetry characteristics of the ornamentation on traditional Greek woven textiles from the area of the Aegean*, (Fibres & Textiles in Eastern Europe, 2008)

of these 'type' of pattern rather than just the verification of the use of specific motifs.

The type of pattern repeat on woven textiles is dependent on the type of loom used. When patterns are forms using loom shaft movements, then certain types of symmetries are obligatory, depending on threading of the loom and the weave (lifting) plan.

However, when a pattern is inserted by hand, as in the technique mainly used in the Aegean, then the repeat of the motifs is a design decision, because there are no such restrictions in this type of weaving. Nevertheless, in traditional weaving a preference for repeated patterns is observed.

All the samples that are examined here have repeated patterns, and therefore conform to symmetries that can be analysed.

### **3.13 *Tin chok* textiles analysis template.**

Concerns that the diversity of type forms of data makes for difficulty in understanding or compression in terms of its connectivity each with the other; moving image to text to photograph to sound and so on are in part elevated as a result of Barthes' sociology since all are "typical sign" however it is a difficult concept to track.

However there is still a need for a container or depository for all the types and kinds of tangible data collected during this research. The container or matrix template designed should allow access to all that is relevant or known about the focus object under analysis at the same time separate but also in the same place. (See fig3.6) At this stage it facilitates, if not all the data in question relating to the analysis of specific sample or specimen to be seen simultaneously and at a glance, then in its development in the digital media version it will allow the different levels or densities of data to be at least "just a click away".

The template categorizes the type of information/data needs and places them in a matrix which has no specific hierarchy but rather has flexible boxes which

expand according to the volume of data gathered. There are spaces/boxes undesignated which allows for further categorization in case there is further research data collection needed since the project is ongoing. Such data might fall into the category of authentication.

<b>Notation (Code)</b> <i>Mae Chaem (MC)</i> <i>Learning Centre Archive (LCA)</i> <i>Tin chok (TC)</i> <i>Type A (A)</i> <i>Number</i>		
<b>Date/Year</b>		
<b>Group/Type</b> <b>Border design classification</b> <i>(Traditional six motif classic compositions type A or variants type B )</i>		
<b>Technique</b>		
Top		
Middle		
Bottom		
<b>Usage (Sarong/pieces)</b>		
<b>Dimension</b>		
<b>Material</b> Cotton/Metal yarn/Silk		
<b>Motif</b> Geometric  Animal  Flower  Miscellaneous man-made object  Abstract  Symbols of Buddhism		
<b>Colouring</b> Bright primary/secondary Buddhist Color Symbolism		
<b>Dye Class</b> Natural dyes Synthetic dyes		
<b>Methods of recording /identification</b> -Visual Examination -Digital image processing Technique		
<b>Analysis Type</b> Stylistic Analysis Semiotic Iconography Structural Oral historical analysis		

Fig 3.6 Analysis data template for *tin chok* hand woven specimens

### **3.14 Conclusion.**

The aim of this research is to examine and analyse the motifs and patterns of *tin chok* textiles, as well as the motifs and symmetries that form the patterns. A correlation of the analysis results, it is argued, will confirm the embodiment of the communication and articulate the physical, tangible relationship with the intangible codes or symbolic representations.

Inevitably some of oral history's strengths are also its weaknesses.

On the one hand oral history can give unbeatable insights into the subjects and the motivation for their actions. But oral history's flaw is that no matter how skilful the interviewer and how faithfully he or she transcribes what the interviewee says, an oral history will never be completely truthful or objective.

This is due to the innate prejudices and preconceptions, however subtle, which will exist within both the interviewer and the interviewee.

The researcher must always remember the basic ground rules – to research the subject properly in advance; to choose a focus group of interviewees who will offer a wide spectrum of opinions and experiences; to interview with skill and subtlety and finally to write up the interviewees' accounts fairly and with corroboration where possible from historical documents, archives and photographic illustrations.



## Chapter 4: Data collected analysis discussion

### 4.1 Introduction:

This chapter will present and report data obtained from field trips to Mae Chaem, Thailand between 2009 and 2013. The data comprises oral interviews and observation made during two of three field trips under the heading Section One.

In addition the chapter also includes digital data presentation of photographs and illustrations of *tin chok* weaving taken from first hand primary observation/interaction with weavers by the researcher and relates to the second field study report and is under the heading Section Two. The discussion introduces supplementary and secondary sources material derived from further reading.

Armed with the knowledge of the regional context obtained on the first field trip or initial research (See Chapter 1), I interviewed several expert weavers, educators and young people to examine the reasons for the changes which *tin chok* has undergone in recent years.

It was speculated that once these interviews were subjected to either key concept or key word analysis they might suggest reasons for a decline in the popularity of *tin chok* weaving among women and girls in Mae Chaem in recent years.

The author also observed life in the small community to gain a better perception of the social role that weaving plays in the Mae Chaem area.

The author also conducted interviews, especially with the older weavers, to explore the history of the *tin chok* tradition and the religious or cultural reasons for using certain motifs.

It was deemed important also to establish a relationship with not only the weavers but also organisations which support them, it was therefore necessary to visit the region in order to conduct semi-structured interviews.

The questions were generalised and aimed to illicit non-specific, as opposed to detailed, technical information and the conditions under which the interviews occurred were therefore informal. A plan for the interview data-gathering field visit was formulated and included initial thoughts about what questions to ask and who might be questioned.

A plan for the visit was formulated as follows comprising day-to-day task objectives together with a schedule. The trips, including the first, were independently-funded, therefore efficiency and economy were important.

#### **4.2 Section One: first formal field study trip one**

The itinerary for the field study trip one is listed below and was informed by an earlier initial visit to the Chiangmai province reported in Chapter 1. The main purpose of this field study was to conduct an investigation into the *tin chok* weavers' contemporary socio-cultural and economic situation and that of the younger generation and also gain some sense of the personal and socio-cultural histories in addition to the formal histories perhaps more objectively presented by the local experts.

The reportage is given here in the first person in order to convey the relative informality of the interaction, however later a third person delivery is deemed more appropriate for analysis and summary conclusions.

##### **Itinerary: August 2009**

First formal field trip to Mae Chaem district in Chiangmai province, Thailand.

**Day one:** Travel by plane from Bangkok to Chiangmai city, the capital of Chiangmai province, and from there drive to Mae Chaem district by car.

**Day two:** Mae Chaem is a two-hour drive from Chiangmai, set in the foothills of the mountains of northern Thailand, not far from the border with Burma (Myanmar) and China.

I will be staying in a guest house in Mae Chaem, so I will be able to absorb the cultural, ethnographic and economic influences on the region.

**Day three and day four:** The field trip will begin with a meeting with Nussara Tiengkate, the chairperson of the Weaving Technical School Project in Mae Chaem, a veteran weaver and expert on the *tin chok* method of weaving, which is native to Mae Chaem.

I plan to conduct an exhaustive oral interview with her, to ascertain the history of the region, the economic and cultural influences at play in the locality and the impact of global economic and cultural changes, such as industrialisation, feminism and globalisation.

These interviews will be audio-taped to enable me to concentrate on asking the correct questions and responding to answers, rather than analysing the responses instantaneously.

**Questions I intend to ask include:**

When did you first show an interest in *tin chok* weaving, at what age did you start weaving and who was your mentor?

How did *tin chok* weaving differ at that time from the modern era? Was the process significantly different technologically? Was there any machinery involved?

What were the most common motifs and patterns in use? Are they still in use and if not what superseded them?

What were the most significant social and cultural influences impacting on the motifs and patterns used? Were any motifs taboo for religious or cultural reasons?

How many girls or women in the village were involved in weaving at that time and has the percentage increased or decreased in the intervening years? What has driven the change?

What was the village's male population's involvement in weaving and how did they interact with the process and with the women involved in it? Was there a social element to weaving skills?

Has industrialisation and globalisation had an effect on the economic climate in the village and the popularity of *tin chok* textiles?

Has demand for *tin chok* textiles decreased and, if so, have any initiatives been launched to try to adapt the product for the contemporary market or boost demand artificially?

**Day four and five:** I intend to observe the *tin chok* weaving process in detail, watching both seasoned and experienced weavers and the younger generation.

Part of Tiengkate's remit is to resurrect *tin chok* weaving skills among the younger generation of girls, who have not obtained this expertise from their own mothers or grandmothers.

She has built a partnership with a local school, which has agreed to free up part of its curriculum to allow the young girls to learn from the remaining skilled weavers at the project centre in Mae Chaem.

I will be video-taping some of the techniques in use by oldest weaver and will also be photographing the process and taking close-ups of the textiles, the motifs and patterns which are in use.

**Day six and seven:** I also intended to interview some of the young people involved to see if they relish regaining these lost skills and whether they have any knowledge of the meaning of the motifs and patterns they are using.

**Questions I intend to ask include:**

When did you first show an interest in *tin chok* weaving, at what age did you start weaving and who was your mentor?

How did *tin chok* weaving differ at that time from the modern era? Was the process significantly different technologically? Was there any machinery involved?

What were the most common motifs and patterns in use? Are they still in use and if not what superseded them?

What were the most significant social and cultural influences impacting on the motifs and patterns used? Were any motifs taboos for religious or cultural reasons?

I will be videotaping some of the techniques in use by the younger generation and will also be photographing the process and taking close-ups of the textiles, the motifs and patterns which are in use.

**Day eight:** I will be returning to Chiangmai, where there is a large archive of traditional textiles from Mae Chaem and other districts of Chiangmai province.

This will enable me to compare the motifs and patterns used across the region and to analyse the influences on *tin chok* textiles.

Having obtained permission, I will be photographing some of the textiles in the archive to enable me to illustrate the thesis.

**Day nine:** Having returned to Bangkok I will be conducting further interviews with academics and textiles professionals who will be able to cast a critical eye over the textiles I have collected. Also I will go to the Jim Thompson Centre to visit the textiles exhibition and meet with Gridthiya Gaweewong, Artistic Director of The Jim Thompson Art Centre. To get more information of *tin chok* private collection and also museum collection to plan for visit and collect data with the antique *tin chok* textile collection

The duration and plan for the field study having been set, the trip was undertaken and the objectives were achieved successfully and upon return the data was transcribed from the audio recordings and the findings written up as follows.

### 4.3 The Interviews

In the eventual circumstances the interviews were recorded in the normal environment of the interviewee so as to maintain a natural and relaxed atmosphere and were recorded on audio tape, and a digital camera was employed to capture gestures and location dynamics.

The raw data sheets represent a transcription in English from the audio recording first transcribed in the Thai language and as such they are double interpretive rather than singular verbatim.

Although a protracted process, the researcher has been scrupulous in endeavouring to ensure the report is as accurate as possible given the variables in the circumstances of the interviews. The interviews conducted in the Thai language were recorded and later translated into English and transcribed.

The original Thai language transcripts are available and will be accessible to other scholars should they be required.

#### **Interview questions and answers**

Topic: *Tin chok* weaving

Place: Mae Chaem, Chiangmai province, Thailand.

Date: 4 August-15 August 2009

**Interviewer: Orrapavadee Serewiwattana MA**

#### **Interviewees:**

1. Mrs Nussara Tiengkate – Head of Learning Centre, Mae Chaem and owner of Nussara Textile shop in Chiangmai. (The founder of Learning Centre and Target Textile Technician School).

**Position:** Head of the Learning Centre for *tin chok* hand weaving at Mae Chaem, Thailand.

**Date of interview:** 9 August 2009.

**Place of interview:** Learning Centre, Mae Chaem.

2. Mrs Umporn Chaiton (Padadd School).

**Position:** Primary school teacher (Padadd School weaving project).

**Date of interview:** 10 August 2009.

**Place of interview:** Padadd School, Mae Chaem.

3. Mrs Tosaporn Janpraneat (Bantub School).

**Position:** Primary school teacher (Padadd School weaving project).

**Date of interview:** 10 August 2009.

**Place of interview:** Padadd School, Mae Chaem.

4. Mrs Darat Changpan (Museum Director, Bank of Thailand Museum, Northern Region Office, Ancient Money and Textile Museum).

**Position:** (Curator, Bank of Thailand Museum).

**Date of interview:** 11 August 2009.

**Place of interview:** Bank of Thailand Museum, Northern Region Office, Ancient Money and Textile Museum, Chiangmai.

5. Associate Professor Songsak Prangwatanakun (Head of Thai Department, Faculty of Humanities, Chiangmai University).

**Position:** Head of Thai Department, Faculty of Humanities.

**Date of interview:** 12 August 2009.

**Place of interview:** Chiangmai University.

6. Mrs Somsree Prechaudomkarn.

**Position:** Primary school teacher (Bantub School weaving project).

**Date of interview:** 10 August 2009.

**Place of interview:** Bantub School, Mae Chaem.

7. Mrs Vilai Boonteam.

**Position:** Expert weaver.

**Date of interview:** 13 August 2009.

**Place of interview:** Her home, Mae Chaem.

## **Interview Number One: Raw data sheet No 1.**

### **4.4 Interview transcripts one**

#### **Number One**

**Name of interviewee:** Mrs Nussara Tiengkate

**Position:** Head of the Learning Centre for *tin chok* hand weaving at Mae Chaem, Thailand.

**Date of interview:** 9 August 2009.

**Place of interview:** Learning Centre, Mae Chaem.

**Duration of interview:** 1 hour, 34 minutes.

**Q:** When did you start the Learning Centre project?

**A:** I started the project 20 years ago, in 1989. Before that I worked for the government but I didn't enjoy it. My husband suggested moving to Mae Chaem and I started helping local people to sell their products. I helped them buy material with which to weave. As it got successful I decided to set up a learning centre to help young people learn weaving skills.

**Q:** How would you describe the purpose of the Learning Centre?

**A:** My intention was to help the local people to make a small income and give them something to do in their free time.

The teaching system we use is like a family, with the elderly teaching the young children. We give an opportunity for the younger generation to try to experiment. We teach our way of weaving textiles to try to save it. Our purpose is to keep our culture alive and pass it from one generation to the next. They can also make a good living out of this.

Our weaving technique (*tin chok*) is a valuable part of our culture and shows us who we are, our past history, which we need to keep. It is not just a functional product. The younger generation who go to school with the new education system will not have an opportunity to learn how to weave, as it is not a subject



at school, which is such a shame. Many older women (over the age of 60) in our village have never done weaving for a living but now they have started to get a regular income from weaving textiles, using their childhood knowledge.

Q: How long did it take your centre to become known locally and when did you link up with the school?

A: In the last four years I started to get very serious on this project. Now in our centre we have expert weavers who are local people. These expert weavers channel their passion and dedication into teaching classes and want to develop and pass on their traditional knowledge to the next generation.

Now we have two primary schools co-operating with this project and they have added weaving to their timetable and the girls come and study every Friday while the boys are learning how to cultivate rice. Elderly women with lots of weaving experience come in on Fridays to help teach the girls.

Q: Tell me more about the Mae Chaem area?

A: Mae Chaem is a very old community in Chiangmai province, about 400 years old. It is close to Doi Internon (mountain) and the Mae Chaem River which is a tributary of the Mae Ping, the biggest river in northern Thailand.

People in Mae Chaem are a mixture of mountain dwellers and valley dwellers. In the past girls would be trained in housekeeping duties by their mothers or other female relatives. Today their weaving training would start with making shoulder bags or handkerchiefs from simple *tin chok* techniques.

In the old days the weaving culture was a way for women to show their potential value as a wife. Unfortunately the weaving culture has begun to disappear and lose its significance. Nowadays everything is ready-made and can be bought at your convenience. Men no longer value the weaving experience of girls as they did in the past.

The *pha chok* technique is achieved by using a stick, a porcupine quill or the fingers to pick out certain warp threads into which a special supplementary weft yarn is threaded while still on the loom.

This is a very slow weaving process, which requires placing a supplementary yarn into the warp by hand because it does not pass from selvage to selvage as in the continuous supplementary technique.

The patterns or motifs on the textiles were formed by weaving a combination of colours. The patterns could be created with basic forms with no specific meaning or evolved from nature, imagination, idealism or religious beliefs. The pattern on the fabric represents the heritage of the women weavers.

Q: How do the weavers understand motifs and colour theory when they have never learned art?

A: Mostly they have learned it from their mothers or the older generation. But the really expert weavers really are artists because they have worked out colour combinations themselves. In the past they used real cotton and dyed it with natural dyes but nowadays the yarn, which is imported from Burma, is already chemically dyed and it is more vividly coloured than natural dye. So the new *tin chok* is much brighter than the antique *tin chok*.

Q: Do the weavers want to develop their own patterns and motifs?

A: Few of them want to develop their work and they worry that new designs might not work or might not sell. But the merchants who buy *tin chok* are keen on them developing new patterns and new products.

## **Interview Number Two: Raw data sheet No 2**

**Name of interviewee:** Mrs Tosaporn Janpraneat.

**Position:** Primary school teacher (Bantub School weaving project).

**Date of interview:** 10 August 2009.

**Place of interview:** Bantub School, Mae Chaem.

**Duration of interview:** 36 minutes.

Q: When did the weaving school project start?

A: We started it four years ago.

Q: Tell me how did you start?

A: It started when the parents had a meeting and agreed that they wanted the girls to learn how to weave.

Q: Why did you and the parents want the girls to learn to weave?

A: They wanted the new generation to learn their indigenous tradition of *tin chok* and the parents had no time to teach them. So the school would give the girls a chance to learn and to practice weaving skills.

Q: What weaving facilities do you have in the school for the students?

A: We have a basic loom and all the yarn they need. It is all provided for them by the school.

Q: How do you fit the lessons into the school timetable?

A: Every Friday the students wear traditional Thai dress and come to learn traditional weaving all day.

Q: What sort of patterns do you teach them to make?

A: It's a basic *tin chok* pattern – *doksak*, *dokchan* and *sak* motifs.

Q: How long does it take for them to finish one piece of work?

A: They weave the motifs on a piece of material, which is then attached to the side of a traditional pillow. In all it takes three months to complete although some of the better students complete it quicker.

Q: Do you have a textbook the students learn from?

A: No. There is no formal textbook. There are just rough notes from the expert weavers and the school. The expert weavers use the talents they learned and pass it on, by means of oral history, to the students. The expert weavers tell them about the methods they use before the students themselves practice on the loom.

Q: What were your problems when you began the project?

A: The budget from the government was discontinued after a change of government. The school itself doesn't have a budget so we were reliant on the politicians. We got money from visitors' donations and other contributions.

Q: What problems did you notice when you started teaching weaving?

A: We couldn't find information to compliment the expert weavers' knowledge. There were no formal textbooks that could explain the history of *tin chok*. We invited some of the old people to explain some of the old stories that might explain the *tin chok* patterns.

Q: Is there anything you would like to say to the outside world about this project?

A: This project is really important in preserving *tin chok*. It is helping to preserve these skills among the new generation. It helps to give Mae Chaem its distinctive character. But we don't have enough money to keep the project going and we need help from the government.

Q: Since this project started have you found any girls who have decided they want to be a *tin chok* weaver as a career?

A: Most of the students are so proud when we have visitors and they want to buy their pieces of work. They take the money and bringing it to their parents. Some of them really want to be expert weavers and they ask their parents to help them learn more when they are at home.

Q: Are there any students who have a problem with choosing the colours and designs to weave?

A: The students practice by themselves and often learn by mistake. Sometimes they copy colours and patterns they have seen their mothers and fathers wear. The older students teach the younger children and every Friday they come together and learn from each other.

**Q:** What is the school's plan for the project?

**A:** After the students learn how to weave they will start to practice in November and in February they go to a traditional craft fair where they can show off their work.

### **Interview Number Three: Raw data sheet No 3**

**Name of interviewee:** Mrs Umporn Chaiton.

**Position:** Primary school teacher (Padadd School weaving project).

**Date of interview:** 10 August 2009.

**Place of interview:** Padadd School, Mae Chaem.

**Duration of interview:** 42 minutes.

**Q:** When did the weaving school project start?

**A:** We began in 2005.

**Q:** Tell me how did you start?

**A:** The learning centre had a textile class project and our school decided to join with the other school, Bantub School.

**Q:** Why did you and the parents want the girls to learn to weave?

**A:** The boys were learning how to grow rice and other farming skills so we thought it made sense for the girls to also learn some traditional skills.

**Q:** What weaving facilities do you have in the school for the students?

**A:** We have more than 10 looms for the students to practice on and all the materials necessary for the lessons.

**Q:** How do you fit the lessons into the school timetable?

**A:** On Fridays, when boys are in the fields learning rice farming techniques, the girls of Year 4-6 spend the day learning *tin chok* skills.

Q: What sort of patterns do you teach them to make?

A: They start with basic *tin chok* patterns and by the time they get to Year 6 they have moved on to slightly more complicated designs.

Q: How long does it take for them to finish one piece of work?

A: One piece of work might take 3-5 months because they are only working on it one a week. Some of the more enthusiastic students come in on other days apart from Friday to work on it and sometimes finish a piece within a month.

Q: Do you have a textbook the students learn from?

A: We have a few pieces of paper written by the teacher with the help of the expert weavers but we have no formal textbooks.

Q: What were your problems when you began the project?

A: The budget for this project from the government has been inconsistent – sometimes it is stopped and then restarted - so we have had to set up a foundation to solicit contributions from tourists and other visitors.

Q: What problems did you notice when you started teaching weaving?

A: Sometimes we have to wait for the expert weavers to be available because they are unpaid volunteers. They are not available every Friday.

Q: Is there anything you would like to say to the outside world about this project?

A: We need more information or a textbook about designs and colours, which would complement the expertise of the weavers. We are hoping your research will provide this for us. And of course we need more money to support the project, buy materials and maintain the looms.

Q: Since this project started have you found any girls who have decided they want to be a *tin chok* weaver as a career?

A: A couple of girls are interested but most want to work in the city as nurses or whatever.

**Q:** Are there any students who have a problem with choosing the colours and designs to weave?

**A:** The students learn by mistake and also copy the patterns from their mothers' sarongs.

**Q:** What is the school's plan for the project?

**A:** We plan to have an exhibition in the school and invite government departments to come and see the work we have done.

#### **Interview Number Four: Raw data sheet No 4**

**Name of interviewee:** Mrs Darat Changpan.

**Position:** (Curator, Bank of Thailand Museum).

**Date of interview:** 11 August 2009.

**Place of interview:** Bank of Thailand Museum, Northern Region Office, Ancient Money and Textile Museum, Chiangmai.

**Duration of interview:** 58 minutes.

**Q:** When was the museum created?

**A:** Queen Sirikit officially opened the northern region office on Wednesday March 1, 2000.

The museum's aims were to exhibit the ancient money and antique textiles that are the cultural heritage of the nation and to provide for the public a learning resource centre of these ancient articles.

**Q:** What was the purpose of creating it?

**A:** The main role of the Bank of Thailand is to protect the national economy. But the bank also has an important role in conserving Thai arts and culture. The northern region exhibition displays the relationship between coinage and textiles, both of which have had an important role in history as means of trade and exchange, from a basic way of life to an economic system.

**Q: Why is the collection significant?**

**A: The objects are significant because they express the people's way of life as an integral part of their economic and social relationships.**

**Q: What have you got on display?**

**A: The exhibition hall is divided into two sections.**

**The first section is a money room, which displays various types of money from around the world, including ancient times.**

**The displays from this room show the evolution of Thai money from the exchange of valuable materials and precious stones to the manufacture of coins and notes.**

**The exhibition also includes prehistoric money as well money used in Suwanapum including the Funan coins, Sikaset coins, Taravadee coins, Srivichai coins and different types of money.**

**The second section is the antique textiles room. This room displays different types of textiles collected and preserved by the Bank of Thailand.**

**Q: Why are textiles on display? How do they relate to the money which is exhibited?**

**A: These valuable textiles exemplify folk wisdom and reflect the ways of life, economic and social relationships related ancient of the culture of weaving. The majority of the exhibition displays Thai textiles however there are also Laotian, Khmer, Indian, Chinese and Burmese textiles.**

**Q: How are the textiles displayed?**

**A: The textiles on display are arranged according to the weaving techniques used. Each piece has its unique characteristics due to the techniques employed in the creation and execution of the various designs.**

**Q: Can you explain the different techniques on show?**

**A: The most basic technique is plain weaving. The weft and the warp create plain fabric.**



*Khit*<sup>88</sup> is a continuous, supplementary weft technique. The shuttle takes the weft yarns from selvedge to selvedge in order to create the patterns along the width of the textile.

Brocade is a technique similar to *khit*. It employs silver or gold supplementary threads as rest yarns. Ancient royalty and people of the upper classes cherished the exquisite fabrics not just because of the monetary value but also for their elegant design.

Brocade technique - sometimes called *yok din*<sup>89</sup>, *mudmee*<sup>90</sup> or *ikat* - is a technique of tying the yarns with water-resistant strings so the portion tied resists the dyes and thus creates a pattern of woven threads. To create a multi-coloured pattern therefore the yarns must be retied and dyed many times until the pattern is achieved.

*Yok din* is a discontinuous, supplementary weft technique. It creates a pattern similar to the *khit* but the difference is the use of a porcupine quill or fingers to pick out certain warp yarns before threading the wefts. The technique employs multi-coloured weft yarns and can be used to create a pattern similar to an embroidered design.

*Gok luang*<sup>91</sup> is a tapestry weave technique similar to the *chok* design in its use of weft yarns of different colours. But the difference is that *gok luang* uses regular weft yarns to hook and dovetail warp yarns in order to create a pattern whereas in *chok* technique the supplementary weft yarns are threaded using porcupine hairs.

The well-known *gok luang* technique is used to create the characteristic pattern of *rai nam rai* textiles from Nan province.

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<sup>88</sup> *Khit* is woven mainly by Lao groups in the northeast of Thailand for blankets, pillows and shoulder cloths.  
<sup>89</sup> *Yok din* technique was popular with the higher classes as the materials were expensive and not available to ordinary people.

<sup>90</sup> *Mudmee* or *ikat* is common among the Lao of the northeast, the Tai Lue in Nan province and the Lao Khang of the lower Lan Na area. Cotton *ikats* are dyed indigo while silk *ikats* are dyed red, yellow, green or brown.

<sup>91</sup> *Gok luang*, sometimes known as *koh*, is used by the Tai Lue of Chiang Kham and Chiang Muan districts in Phayao province. It can also be seen, in silk, in Nampat and Uttaradit provinces.

**Q:** What is the wider historical significance of these textiles?

**A:** These hand-woven textiles are valuable artifacts, which illustrate various aspects of ancient people's lives ranging from daily life to special occasions and ceremonies.

The textiles are considered to be artistic and cultural heritage objects as they express the people's beliefs, religion and history and this is why they are preserved and studied today.

### **Interview Number Five: Raw data sheet No 5**

**Name of interviewee:** Associate Professor Songsak Prangwatanakun.

**Position:** Head of Thai Department, Faculty of Humanities.

**Date of interview:** 12 August 2009.

**Place of interview:** Chiangmai University.

**Duration of interview:** 1 hour, 14 minutes.

**Q:** Can you tell me a little bit about yourself and your background?

**A:** I was born in 1952 in Nan province. I graduated with a master's degree in Thai language and literature at Srinakharinwirot University in 1976. I have been teaching at Chiangmai University ever since. My interest in Thai textiles started in 1986 when I researched a book, *Lanna Textiles: Yuan Lue Lao* (co-authored with Patricia Cheeseman, 1987). I have subsequently had several other books and papers on textiles published. My most recent book, *Cultural Heritage of Tai Lue Textiles* (Chiangmai University, August 2008), has been compiled over two decades. It was funded by the Toyota Foundation and the Bank of Thailand, Northern Region Office.

**Q:** Tell me why you became interested in Tai Lue textiles?

**A:** In 1986 I visited Sipsongpanna in Yunnan province, China, for the first time and experienced the lifestyle of the Tai Lue people, which inspired my interest in their culture and textiles. I have spent more than two decades classifying and categorising Tai Lue textile types in each region. The textiles illustrated in this book are mostly from my collection.

**Q: What are the ethnic groups in northern Thailand?**

**A: There are a lot of different ethnic groups in northern Thailand. There are eight provinces and there are people in the valleys and others in the mountains.**

**Q: Can you tell me something about the history of northern Thailand and how it has influenced the textiles?**

**A: In the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries there were a number of competing Buddhist kingdoms in the area of northern Thailand, northern Laos and across the modern-day border of Burma and China. The most successful of these was Lanna, which has its golden age under King Tilokaracha (1441-1487). Woven textiles found today in the north of Thailand are culturally linked to three main groups. These are:**

**1 Tai Yuan, or Khon Muang, who established Lanna in eight northern provinces. Their influence is also found in Uttaradit, Tak and Ratchaburi provinces.**

**2 Tai Lue, who migrated from Sipsong Pan Na into Lanna, and are to be found in parts of Nan, Phayao and Chiang Rai provinces.**

**3. Lao, who migrated from the old kingdom of Lan Xang. They are particularly well known for their weaving skills and can be found in parts of Sukhothai, Uttaradit and Phichit provinces.**

**Q: And what has happened to these ancient textiles?**

**A: Sadly the villagers have sold them to the museums and private collectors so they do not have any of these fabrics left in their communities.**

**Q: Which museums have the best collections?**

**A: The Bank of Thailand northern region probably has the best collection. They invested 16 million baht (£291,000) to buy antique textiles from all over the north of Thailand.**

**Q: When you are buying antique fabric how do you know which ones to buy?**

**A: Some people collect only the perfect examples but I collect everything, even quite plain examples. Sometimes it is only a small piece of material.**

Q: How do you take care of these antique fabrics?

A: You have to keep them in a room with the right temperature and humidity. If they get too dry they will become brittle. You have to use gloves to handle them and do not expose them to direct sunlight.

Q: Can you explain the significance of clothing for women?

A: The main garment for women is the *pha sin*, a tube skirt made up of three pieces – the waistband or *hua sin*; the main body or *tua sin*; and the hem piece or *tin sin*. In the north *pha sins* tend to be patterned with horizontal stripes of different colours with red, yellow and green being the favoured colours. The waistband and hem is usually red or black.

*Pha sins* worn on special occasions, such as Buddhist ceremonies at the temple, are more elaborate. Tai Lue *pha sins* have a heavily decorated main body while the Tai Yuan and Tai Phuan prefer special decorations at the hem.

Q: What sort of dyestuff is used?

A: I discovered that some groups used natural colour dye and others used chemicals because they wanted really vibrant colours.

Q: What do you think are the distinctive qualities of *tin chok*?

A: *Tin chok* is very difficult to develop because the villagers try to make bags and other products from it but *tin chok* is best used to decorate the bottom of sarongs. It does not look right in other situations because a motif which is known to be near the feet is not culturally suitable for other positions.

Q: What potential is there for developing *tin chok*?

A: If people want to develop a market they need to find a niche. The new generation of designers do not understand the culture. They need to develop a new pattern using elements of *the tin chok* design.

Q: What are the political problems facing the *tin chok* weavers?

A: Every time there is an election the politics change. At election time the politicians promise to buy products if they are designed in a certain way but things change.

Q: Tell me what OTOP is?

A: OTOP is an initiative meaning One Tambon One Product. Tambon is an administrative district, similar to an English county. OTOP was set up by the government and to get chosen for an OTOP stamp you have to be selected by a panel of judges from Bangkok. But the judges are not weavers.

Q: What do you think of weaving learning centres?

A: The problem with learning centres is sometimes they are very political and they are built just before elections but the villagers do not use them because they weave at home and they just become ghost buildings. But some centres are good projects if they have a proper foundation behind them, like the Royal Project. They will be permanent.

Q: What do you think the best way to help the villagers would be?

A: The best way would be to help them with marketing their product and finding them materials which would be good quality but not too expensive

Q: What would be the most useful research in this area?

A: Somebody needs to look at ways of developing *tin chok* because it is currently only used in sarongs.

Q: Can you explain how the motifs and designs came about?

A: The patterns or motifs on the textiles were formed by weaving and combining colours. The pattern could be created with basic forms or geometric shape with no specific meaning or they could be evolved from nature, imagination, belief, idealism or faith that may have meaning in motifs. So the pattern on Tai Lue fabrics represents the inheritance of the women weavers.

Q: What about the geometric designs?

A: Geometric designs are basic designs of the textiles. They vary from small dots, fish-egg dots, diagonals, crossed, triangles and squares. These basic designs are developed into other symbols. For example *lai kap* is a triangular design and *lai nuay* is a small square design.

**Interview Number Six: Raw data sheet No 6**

**Name of interviewee:** Mrs Somsree Prechaudomkarn.

**Position:** Expert weaver.

**Date of interview:** 13 August 2009.

**Place of interview:** Her home, Mae Chaem.

**Duration of interview:** 53 minutes.

Q: How old are you and when did you begin weaving?

A: I am 42 and I began when I was a teenager.

Q: How did you first learn weaving?

A: My mother told my older sister not to go to school any more because she wanted her to help her with the weaving so they could sell the *tin chok* fabric in the market so we could buy food. So I started learning a few years later with my mother and sister teaching me.

Q: When you were 18 did you do anything else apart from weaving?

A: When I wasn't weaving I had to help my father grow rice.

Q: How many children have you got?

A: I have two daughters.

Q: Have you taught them to weave?

A: I have tried to teach my oldest daughter but she is not interested. She wants to become a nurse in Chiangmai. The youngest one just wants to learn Thai traditional dancing and is not interested in weaving either.

Q: Can you tell me about the sarong you are wearing now? What sort of pattern is that?

A: It's an ancient pattern and every section has 16 motifs. In the new patterns there is only one pattern so it is much less complicated.

Q: The sticks you use to pick up the yarn from the loom, what are they made from?

A: They are quills from porcupines. They enable us to create the *tin chok* pattern by hand.

Q: What are you thinking when you weave?

A: I concentrate only on the weaving and counting the yarns and planning for the colour of the next motif.

Q: Have you ever taught weaving in school?

A: Yes. I teach at the learning centre and some of the students come and study at my house. Some of them only come once a year but others come every month. My youngest daughter can only do the pillow but she does not have the patience for the more difficult patterns.

Q: How different are the ancient and modern patterns?

A: Since I was 18 the patterns have not changed a lot but the methods used have become simplified. In the ancient fabric the patterns were so detailed and the yarn was so fine. The material in different seasons is priced differently. Because of the cost less colours are used and the patterns are less varied.

Q: How do you work out how to do the ancient patterns?

A: I have to calculate how to fit the 16 motifs in one line. Every single space has a different motif and the detail is very important.

Q: If somebody asked you to teach weaving in school what would you think?

A: I would do it but I wouldn't want to do it permanently in the school. I would rather teach part-time at home.

Q: If you make a mistake while weaving what do you do?

A: When I make a mistake – like counting the yarns wrong – I have to take all the yarn out and start again.

Q: How different is *tin chok* from Mae Chaem to *tin chok* from other areas?

A: Mae Chaem's *tin chok* patterns are more detailed and the fabric looks more embroidered than the fabric from other areas.

Q: What is the difference in the final product between hand weaving and machine weaving?

A: Machine-woven fabric is a bit too perfect whereas the hand-woven fabric shows the beauty of each individual stitch. In hand-woven fabric you have to hide the left over yarn, while the machine just smoothly uses it all up.

Q: Do you ever go into Chiangmai to sell your fabric?

A: Yes. I have been a few times to sell my fabric in the learning centre in Chiangmai.

Q: What do foreigners think about your fabric and do you care what they think?

A: All the foreigners prefer the ancient pattern to the modern patterns because they are so detailed and it sells really well, which is good for me.

Q: Have you ever tried to create new patterns?

A: No. We can't afford to waste time and money making patterns which might not sell well. We stick to what we know will sell.

### **Interview Number Seven: Raw data sheet No 7**

**Name of interviewee:** Mrs Vilai Boonteam.

**Position:** Expert weaver.

**Date of interview:** 13 August 2009.

**Place of interview:** Her home, Mae Chaem.

**Duration of interview:** 47 minutes.



Q: How old are you and when did you begin weaving?

A: I am 45 and started when I was 15. I left school to help my mother weave but I watched her weaving since I was very young.

Q: When did you first see *tin chok*?

A: Ever since I was little I remember everyone had a *tin chok* sarong. My grandmother and all the other women had one. We believed that you have to weave your own piece of *tin chok* so that you have something to wear when you die.

Q: Have you got any children of your own?

A: I have got two daughters.

Q: Do they like to weave?

A: The oldest one does not like weaving but the youngest one really enjoys it.

Q: Have you ever designed your own pattern?

A: No, never. I just followed the pattern which my mother used. I just changed the colours sometimes.

Q: Have you ever seen new textile products or designs when you went to Chiangmai?

A: I saw a lot of new things and I wanted to try but I thought it might be too difficult and it might not sell.

Q: How much did you earn for making one sarong?

A: I sell them for 2,000 baht (£40) each.

Q: This fabric that you are making now, how long did it take?

A: I began weaving two weeks ago and I think it will take another two days to complete.

Q: Have you ever seen a really ancient *tin chok* design?

A: I remember my grandmother had some really ancient fabrics which were passed on down the family. The yarn was dyed using natural colour only and the pattern is really detailed and very neat. It looked much more difficult than the normal patterns. The pieces using ancient pattern took six weeks whereas the modern patterns take only seven days.

Q: Did you ever use different colours?

A: Yes I experimented with different colours. I wore them and if I didn't like them I would take the colour out and weave it again.

Q: In your village how many houses have weavers in them? What is the busiest weaving time of year?

A: Around 10 houses have weavers but they are only part-time but between September and November and March-April are the busiest weaving times. The rest of the year the villagers are busy growing rice and corn.

Q: What equipment do you use? What is the most important one?

A: The porcupine quill is the most important piece of equipment. It is very convenient because some patterns are very difficult and it helps to count the space between vertical and horizontal yarns. The most difficult *chok* is a black on black pattern and it is very useful for that.

Q: Do you have a collection of any ancient patterns?

A: No. I never kept it. I sold a lot to collectors from private collections and museums. I sold one piece which my grandmother's grandmother made. It was more than 100 years old and we sold it for 4,500 baht (£90).

Q: How many looms do you have in your home?

A: I have two looms. One is mine and the other is used by my elderly mother and my daughter.

Q: When you weave *tin chok* what do you make with it?

A: I make either sarongs or pillows and they are all done by hand. I can make a pillow in one day but if I am making a sarong it takes seven days. If I am using an ancient pattern it can take a month so I would charge a lot more for that sarong.

Q: Where do you buy the cotton yarn and how much is it for one roll?

A: Each roll costs 50 baht (£1) but it is made with chemical dye, not natural dye which is more expensive.

Q: Have you ever taught weaving?

A: Yes. Sometimes people come to learn from me. To learn basic weaving you need to come every day for a week. But to learn *chok* it takes more than a month, depending on how good you are.

Q: What do you think of the new generation and *tin chok* textiles?

A: Some kids want to learn but others don't. Everyone has to go to school now. It's the law. The younger generation often thinks it is not worth it because you cannot make enough money from it.

Q: Have you ever tried using silk yarn to weave *tin chok*?

A: I tried to use silk yarns once but it never worked because the silk yarn is quite sticky and always got stuck. Cotton yarn is smoother and easier to use.

Q: How fast can you weave?

A: Normally a garment using ancient pattern takes a month but if I work hard and spend 10 hours a day on it I can get one completed in 10-15 days.

Q: Have you ever tried copying other patterns you have seen in the shops?

A: Yes.. I saw a lot of really nice designs but I was afraid to do it because I might not sell it. I only weave something if somebody has commissioned it up front

Q: What do you think when you weave?

A: I think which colour to make the cotton yarn in the next line and where am I going to hide the end of the yarn. I am always thinking about the next step.

Q: Tell me about the importance of *tin chok* to Mae Chaem.

A: I was born here, I married someone local and I have never been away. Since I was young I learned that everyone needs to have a sarong when you die. So Mae Chaem people believe you have to weave at least one sarong to wear when you die. It should have a bird motif and we believe that if we wear it one we die we will ride that bird to heaven.

Q: Do you know the meanings of any other motifs?

A: No. I just wove it and followed what my mother did. They are just called things like leaf, elephant and bird.

Q: Do you think about how to preserve the weaving techniques among the new generation?

- A: I want to preserve it because after my daughter there might not be anyone else to learn it from. So whenever people come and ask for my knowledge I am happy to give it and I am happy to help the school project too.

#### **4.5 Summary**

The initial research trip to Mae Chaem yielded much information and thereby speculative discussion and it was therefore necessary to undertake a first formalised or planned field trip in order to confirm and formally record the informal conversations of the initial visit and document an oral history and review the contemporary situation with respect to the weavers of *tin chok* and the actuality of their craft production however as is often the case each question answered poses another question. (See Section Three of this chapter for analysis discussion)

## 4.6 Section two: Second formal Field Study Trip

### Mae Chaem Learning centre

Interview with the founder of the Learning Centre, Mae Chaem, interview transcript from expert weaver, interview with young generation, interview with curator, interview with educator



Fig 4.1 Mae Chaem Learning centre library



Fig 4.2 Learning centre

### Introduction/background

As stated in order to verify a justification for this research and begin to understand the nature of the issues and problems preoccupying the *tin chok* weavers and the organizations which support them it was necessary to visit the region of Thailand where they live and work in order to conduct semi structured interviews.

The questions were generalised and aimed to illicit non-specific as opposed to detailed technical information, and the conditions under which the interviews occurred were therefore informal.

The interviews were recorded in the normal environment of the interviewee so as to maintain a natural and relaxed atmosphere and were recorded on audio tape, and a digital image camera was employed to capture gesture and location dynamics.

The raw data sheets represent a transcription in English from the audio recording, which has first transcribed in the Thai language and as such they are interpreted twice rather than being in a singular verbatim.

Although a protracted process the researcher has been scrupulous in endeavouring to ensure the report is as accurate as possible given the variables in the circumstances of the interviews. The original Thai language transcripts are available and will be accessible to other scholars should they be required.

## **4.7 The interviews**

### **Background**

In order to establish a motif design and patterning data base for this research and begin to understand the nature of the issues and problems of the transfer of skills from generation to generation among the *tin chok* weavers - who have an oral rather than a written tradition - a second formal visit to Mae Chaem was organised and would be documented on digital recording devices, both audio and video. The weavers would be interviewed more closely and their practices and asked about teaching and learning the next generation and what emphasis is placed upon significance and meaning of the motifs relative to their cultural history rather than the more mundane utility values.

It was necessary to visit them where they live and work in order to conduct semi-structured interviews and the questions were generalised and aimed to elicit non-specific as opposed to detailed technical information and the conditions under which the interviews occurred were therefore informal.

The interview transcripts which follow represent the spoken data however the visual data focused in the first instance upon the weavers as they produced their *tin chok* patterns but possibly more significantly upon the collection of historical specimens of sarongs carrying the *tin chok* border patterns.

Some 100 or more of these specimens were photographed for motif and pattern analysis. This large volume of specimens has been reduced to a sample group of ten (see chapter 5 and discussion in 4.9 of this chapter). The complete collection of 104 specimens is documented in Volume Two.

The interviews were recorded in the normal environment of the interviewee so as to maintain a natural and relaxed atmosphere and were recorded on audio tape, and a digital camera was employed to capture gesture and location dynamics.

The raw data sheets represent a transcription in English from the audio recording first transcribed in the Thai language and as such they are double interpretive rather than singular verbatim.

Although a protracted process the researcher has been scrupulous in endeavouring to ensure as accurate report as is possible given the variables in the circumstances of the interviews. The original Thai language transcripts are available and will be accessible to other scholars should they be required.

The circumstances were therefore broadly as before and evidence/data is available in the same forms and the process conforming to research norms.

#### **4.8 Interview transcripts two**

**Purpose:** An investigation of the traditions and designs of the *tin chok* weavers of Thailand.

**Transcriptions** of interview data collected from second research study field trip in Chiangmai province, Thailand, 12 August-24 August 2010.

#### **Interviews**

**Topic:** *Tin chok* pattern and motif history

**Place:** Mae Chaem district, Chiangmai Province

**Date:** 12 August-24 August 2010



**Interviewer: Orrapavadee Serewiwattana**

**Interviewees:**

1. Mrs Nussara Tiengkate – Head of Learning Centre, Mae Chaem and owner of Nussara Textile shop in Chiangmai (The founder of Learning Centre and Target Textiles Technician School).

**Position:** Head of the Learning Centre for *Tin Chok* hand weaving at Mae Chaem, Thailand.

**Date of interview:** 13 August 2010.

**Place of interview:** Learning Centre, Mae Chaem.

2. Mrs Mayuree Boontiam – Expert weaver.

**Position:** Expert weaver.

**Date of interview:** 17 August 2010.

**Place of interview:** Her home, Mae Chaem.

3. Mrs Vilai Kewchompu – Expert weaver.

**Position:** Expert weaver.

**Date of interview:** 18 August 2010.

**Place of interview:** Her home, Mae Chaem.

4. Mrs Chanunchida Sarinja – Expert weaver.

**Position:** Expert weaver.

**Date of interview:** 19 August 2010.

**Place of interview:** Her home, Mae Chaem.



Fig 4.3 Mrs Nussara Tiengkate



Fig 4.4 Mrs Mayuree Boontiam





Fig 4.5 Mrs Vilai Kewchompu



Fig 4.6 Mrs Chanunchida Sarinja

### **Interview Number One: Raw data sheet No 1**

**Name of interviewee:** Mrs Nussara Tiengkate – Head of Learning Centre, Mae Chaem and owner of Nussara Textile shop in Chiangmai. (The founder of Learning Centre and Target Textiles Technician School).

**Position:** Head of the Learning Centre for *Tin Chok* Hand Weaving at Mae Chaem, Thailand.

**Date of interview:** 13 August 2010.

**Place of interview:** Learning Centre, Mae Chaem.

Q: When did you first show an interest in *tin chok* weaving?

A: After I moved to Mae Chaem when I graduated from university in 1988.

Q: How did *tin chok* weaving differ at that time from the modern era?

A: There was still no technology and the weavers still did it at home.

Q: What were the most common motifs and patterns in use?

A: *Tin chok lai kom* and *lai kum*.

Q: Are they still in use and if not what superseded them?

A: Yes we still use them as the main motifs.

Q: What were the most significant social and cultural influences impacting on the motifs and patterns used?

A: The motif and pattern will have a motif that mean something and relate with the way believe in Buddhism. Women will go to the temple and wear sarongs that they weave themselves.

Q: Were any motifs taboos for religious or cultural reasons?

A: Some of the motifs like boat tail (*hang sa pao*) will be the main one on the pattern in *tin chok*, which mean that when you die you wear this *tin chok* and it will take you to heaven.

And for any kind of Buddhist ceremony all women in the village will wear *tin chok* sarongs to attend the ceremony.

Q: How many girls or women in the village were involved in weaving at that time and has the percentage increased or decreased in the intervening years? What has driven the change?

A: Before the 1970s almost all women and girls will learn to weave from their mother or grandmother and almost every woman in the village knew how to weave. But now the percentage has decreased because of new technology and they have to attended school and they go study further in university and they want to have other job than being a weaver.

Q: What was the village's male population's involvement in weaving and how did they interact with the process and with the women involved in it?

A: Usually men are not involved in weaving but might be involved in building a loom for women. Men will work in the crop fields and farm while women take of children and weaving at home.

Q: Has industrialisation and globalisation had an effect on the economic climate in the village and the popularity of *tin chok* textiles?

A: Yes of course whenever technology and news and economic change it effect all villager with the way of life and the way of living. It makes new generation change the way of their family culture and they want to do something else to make more money than being a weaver.

Q: Has demand for *tin chok* textiles decreased and, if so, have any initiatives been launched to try to adapt the product for the contemporary market or boost demand artificially?

A: The demand for *tin chok* has not decreased but the weavers decreased and almost every weaver still weaves sarongs or square pillows more than any other product.

Q: Was the process significantly different technologically? Was there any machinery involved?

A: Not much technology involved in *tin chok* weaving - we still use hand looms to weave *tin chok* textiles.

Q: In Mae Chaem how many people weave as their main job?

A: Some of the families do it as a hobby, when they are not working in the fields. Only 15-20 families in the village do it as a main job.

Q: What are the main motifs of Mae Chaem *tin chok*?

A: *Kom*: It is the main composure of Mae Chaem *tin chok*. In naming the pattern of each piece, *kom* is mainly recognised. *Kan*: It is a pattern to decorate the *tin chok*. It is triangular in shape, placed between the two *koms*. *Hong nok*: It is a unique pattern of Mae Chaem *tin chok*. It is placed continuously at the top and bottom parts of *kom* and *kan*. *Hang sapao*: This is the lowest part of the *tin chok* motif which is connected to the lowest *hong nok*.

## **Interview Number Two: Raw data sheet 2**

**Name interviewee:** Mrs Mayuree Boontiam - expert weaver.

**Position:** Expert weaver.

**Date of interview:** 17 August 2010.

**Place of interview:** Her home, Mae Chaem.

Q: When did you start weaving and how old are you now?

A: I started weaving when I finished high school, aged 18. I am 42 now.

Q: Did you do any other job, apart from weaving?

A: When I started I took other people's sarongs to sell in the market.

Q: How much do you sell one sarong for?

A: If it has one motif I can sell it for 2,800 baht, but if it has 16 motifs it will be 3,800 baht.

Q: How long does it take to weave one sarong?

A: If I weave for eight hours a day it will take two weeks.

Q: Who taught you how to weave?

A: My older sister.

Q: Who taught her?

A: Our mother.

Q: When you started learning to weave what was the first pattern you did?

A: I started with a plain sarong and then I learned *tin chok* after that.

Q: Are you able to weave without looking at the loom?

A: No. I still have to concentrate in order to count the number of yarns.

Q: Can you weave old motifs and contemporary motifs?

A: Yes I can do both but the one with 16 motifs is very difficult. You have to hide the yarn very tidily at the back.

Q: Do you know the meanings of the motifs?

A: I don't know many meanings but I know the boat-tail means that if you wear it when you die the boat will take you to heaven. With the contemporary motifs there will be no bird room.

Q: Have you ever taught anybody how to weave?

A: I taught one pupil, who was 30 and came to learn every day for a year.

Q: How long does it take to teach someone to weave *tin chok*?

A: If you learn every day and practice every day you could start after two months. My daughter can only weave a simple pattern on a pillow but she doesn't want to learn *tin chok* because it takes too long to finish one sarong and she doesn't have the patience to do it.

Q: Can you weave a lot of motifs in *tin chok*?

A: Yes. I always look at my mother's old sarongs and copy the motifs and patterns. Now I can weave a lot of motifs and patterns.

Q: In Mae Chaem how many people weave as their main job?

A: In the village some of the families do it as a hobby, when they are not working in the fields. But not many families do just weaving as a main job.

Q: Which motifs and patterns do tourists like to buy?

A: All foreigners like to buy the old motifs, the ones which have 16 motifs in one sarong.

Q: Have the motifs and patterns changed since you started weaving?

A: Nothing has changed. There are just more contemporary motifs. We don't use the old motifs much.

Q: Can you tell me the meaning of the motifs?

A: I don't know much about the meaning of the motifs because my mother never explained it. My sister just told me the name of the motifs but never told me the meaning. I just learned that it was all based on Buddhist beliefs.

Q: How can you explain the heritage of the old motifs?

A: They combine 16 motifs in one sarong. They repeat one motif four times until they have 16 around the sarong. It is the most difficult motifs to weave because you need a lot of colours and you need to concentrate on how to tidy up all the yarn at the back.

Q: Does anyone else in your family still weave?

A: My older sister still weaves when she is not working in the sugar cane fields. She sells a few pieces.

Q: Do the motifs differ between the villages around Mae Chaem?

A: Not really. Every village uses the same old motifs. The difference will be with the contemporary motifs. They take some detail off to make them easier to weave.

Q: Can you tell me something of the history of Mae Chaem?

A: I don't know much. Mae Chaem was very poor and there was no education. People used to weave a lot more than they do now and they traded their textiles for rice (approximations: 1868 education revolution led to some schooling for under-12s, but partial primary education only 1908-1956, compulsory education for 12 year olds from 1998, first primary school was only built in Mae Chaem in 1975, secondary school built post 1998).

Q: How did *tin chok* weaving differ at that time from the modern era?

A: Natural colours extracted from plants, flowers, clay, etc for *tin chok* weaving in the old days and having more detailed motif and patterns woven from the cotton yarn spun by hand.

Q: What were the most common motifs and patterns in use?

A: *Lai kom* and *Lai kum* are the most common motifs and pattern used since the old days until present.

Q: Do you know what the meanings of the motifs and patterns are?

A: I do not know all the meanings but only the significant ones like *kom* and *kum*. *Kom* means lantern and *kum* means a kind of bird, however this is just called bird but not actually appears on the pattern.

Q: What are the detail structures of *lai kom* and *lai kum*?

A: *Lai kom* is composed of five rows of motifs. The first row is *hong nok* then *kan* then *kom* then reversed *kan* then *hong nok* finished with the *hang sapao*. *Lai kum* is composed of four or five repeated patterns then finished with *hang sapao*.

Q: What were the most significant social and cultural influences impacting on the motifs and patterns used?

A: The most significant influences are religion, economy and politics. The economy depends on the politics because sometimes the government does not support the production.

Q: Were any motifs taboos for religious or cultural reasons?

A: None. Most are woven according to the belief of the people in religious that with the *hang sapao* part of the *tin chok*, they would go to heaven after life.

Q: How many parts comprising one piece of *tin chok sarong*?

A: There are three parts put together. The top part is *hua sin* or waist, the middle part is *tua sin* or the body part, the lowest part is *tin sin* which is *tin chok*.

Q: Does every girl or woman in the village get involved in weaving at that time and has the percentage increased or decreased in the intervening years?

A: All the young girls must learn how to weave, it was just the way of life just like learning how to cook. Today fewer girls participate in the weaving activities.

Q: What has driven the change?

A: The new lifestyle and modern machinery.

Q: What was the village male population's involvement in weaving and how did they interact with the process and with the women involved in it?

A: It was not in the interest of the male population to do weaving themselves but considered it important for a woman's task. They would rather go to the temple to learn other crafts and skills.

### **Interview Number Three: Raw data sheet 3**

**Name interviewee:** Mrs Vilai Kewchompu - expert weaver.

**Position:** Expert weaver.

**Date of interview:** 18 August 2010.

**Place of interview:** Her home, Mae Chaem.

Q: When did you first show an interest in *tin chok* weaving?

A: When I was eight years old, I saw my mother and my grandmother weave and it seemed fun.

Q: When did you start weaving your own and how old are you now?

A: I started weaving when I finished high school at the age of 12. I am 39 now.

Q: Do you have any other job apart from weaving?

A: No, I am just a housewife and doing house chores and weaving.

Q: Do you sell your sarong?

A: Before I just did it for my household use but when I have more time I made more and started to sell them.

Q: How much do you charge for your craft?

A: It depends on how difficult the patterns are: if it has one motif I can sell it for 2,500 to 3,000 baht, but if it has 16 motifs I could make about 3,500 to 4,000 baht.

Q: What are the differences between one motif and 16 motifs?

A: One motif is actually repeated one *lai kom* pattern while the 16 motifs are four sets of different patterns.

Q: Does it take long for you to weave one sarong?

A: It could take two weeks if I really spent a lot of time to do it.



Q: What do you mean by a lot of time?

A: I would say 8-9 hours per day.

Q: Who taught you to design and weave the desired pattern?

A: My mother and my grandmother and they too learned from their forebears.

Q: Did you try weaving your own sarong when you were eight years old?

A: I started with a plain sarong and gradually I learned how to weave *tin chok* after that.

Q: Are you able to weave without looking at the loom?

A: No. I have to count the number of yarns. I don't want to miss the count.

Q: Can you weave old motifs and contemporary motifs?

A: Yes I can do both. I think almost every weaver in Mae Chaem knows how to do both but we all agree that the one with 16 motifs is very difficult when you have to hide the yarn very tidily at the back.

Q: Do you know the meanings of the motifs?

A: I know some meanings. I know the *hang sapao* (boat tail) means that the person wearing it at death, the boat will take you to heaven. There are no *hong nok* (bird room) in the contemporary motifs.

Q: Has anyone ever learned how to weave from you the way you did with your mother and grandmother?

A: Yes, my children and sometimes their friends.

Q: Is it a tiresome task to teach someone to weave *tin chok*?

A: Yes, it is quite a tiresome task. If you learned and practised every day you could start to weave within two months. Some girls can only weave a simple pattern and some do not even want to learn *tin chok* at all due to the difficulties.

**Q: Do you know how to weave a lot of motifs?**

**A: Yes. I would learn the motifs and patterns from the old sarongs. Now I can design weave a lot of motifs and patterns.**

**Q: Which motifs and patterns do tourists like to buy?**

**A: All foreigners like to buy the old motifs, the ones which have 16 motifs in one sarong.**

**Q: Are there any changes in the motifs and patterns since you started weaving?**

**A: Now there are more contemporary motifs and I don't use much of the old motifs.**

**Q: Do you know the meaning of the motifs?**

**A: It was not mentioned much about the meaning of the motifs. It seems we were never explained about it. I just know the name of the motifs but never the meaning. I believe that it was all based on Buddhist beliefs.**

**Q: How can you explain the heritage of the old motifs?**

**A: As far as I examined the sarong I found that 16 motifs were combined in one sarong. One motif was repeated four times until they have 16 around the sarong. It is considered the most difficult motifs to weave because several colours were used hence it is necessary to focus on tidying up all the yarn at the back.**

**Q: Do the motifs differ among the villages around Mae Chaem?**

**A: No, that is if every village uses the same old motifs. For the contemporary motifs, each village will design their own which is easier to weave.**

**Q: Can you tell me something of the history of Mae Chaem?**

**A: Mae Chaem is a remote sub-district faraway from town life. People were very poor and have no education. People traded their textiles for rice.**

Q: Do you think *tin chok* weaving differs much at that time from the modern era?

A: Yes, in the old days everything was hand-made, natural dyed, hand spun yarns. Now they have the modern machine to help make it quicker.

**Interview Number Four: Raw data sheet 4**

**Name of interviewee:** Mrs Chanunchida Sarinja.

**Position:** Expert weaver.

**Date of interview:** 19 August 2010.

**Place of interview:** Her home, Mae Chaem.

Q: When did you first show an interest in *tin chok* weaving, at what age did you start weaving and who was your mentor?

A: I started since I was very young and cannot remember exactly what age, maybe around seven or eight years old, now I am 48.

Q: Have you done any other work than weaving?

A: I did work in the fields sometimes but not anymore. I am doing only weaving now for a living.

Q: Do you spin your own cotton yarns?

A: Yes, I do. I bought the yarns sometimes when it is not the cotton harvest season.

Q: Do you sell a lot of your sarongs?

A: Yes, my works are quite detailed and neat and they are marketable.

Q: How about your loom?

A: My loom is just ordinary nothing special.

Q: What is the difference between "town people" and "hill tribe" weaving process?

A: Town people will use ordinary looms and the hill tribe people will use backstrap looms.

Q: How does the backstrap loom work?

A: They will tie the loom with a branch of a tree at one end and the other end with their own waist. The woven fabric from the backstrap loom is usually narrow around 30 to 40 centimetres. That is because of the ability of the body to hold on to the loom.

Q: How did you weave the *tin chok* so detailed?

A: I very much concentrate on counting the number of yarns and spend a lot of time to tidy up the back of the fabric.

Q: How do you choose the colours of the yarn to suit each pattern?

A: It is not that difficult. Each and every weaver has some pieces of the old *tin chok* kept in their baskets for them to follow. There were times that I tried to use different colours other than the old sample but they were not marketable. That is maybe because the colours were too bright. Then I have to follow the traditional colours that appeared on the sample pieces.

Q: How long does it take you to weave one sarong?

A: At eight hours a day, it would take 10 to 14 days depending on the difficulty of the pattern.

Q: How many *lai koms* do you know?

A: I know there are a lot of *lai koms*. The ones that I am familiar with are *komlubnok*, *komchengsan*, *komlakorn*, *komhoumorn*, etc.

Q: How about *lai kum*, do you know any?

A: Of course. We have quite a few *lai kums* such as *lainokkum*, *narkkum*, *noknornkum*, *lakornkum*, etc.

Q: Do you know the significant meaning of those *lai kom* or *lai kum*?

A: I do not exactly know the meaning, I guessed nobody knows the real meaning of the pattern but we all know that if we weave the particular pattern we know how it looks like. Mostly it is involved with the religious belief.

Q: Do you know the meanings of the motifs?

A: It is believed in our communities that motifs involved religious belief. We all want to go to heaven and it shows in our weaving, for example; wearing sarong with the *hang sapao* when you die it will help taking you to heaven.

Q: Have you ever taught anybody how to weave?

A: I have no time to teach anyone as I weave for a living. Maybe one day when I am more ready.

Q: This research is made to maintain *tin chok* textile history in digital form, do you think it is useful to the community in the future?

A: Yes, very much so. In the old days, people seemed to spend a lot of time and attention on producing arts and crafts and we are trying to maintain the same value. We want the new generation to know that *tin chok* weaving is a hard work and we want them to appreciate their ancestors' effort. The crafts that we produce need a lot of time and care to make it beautiful. Sometimes the buyers do not understand why our sarongs are costly with your research it may tell the world all about us and our works.

#### **4.9 Section Three: Third formal field study trip**

##### **Report and Questionnaire data**

A third formal field trip was therefore planned which this time would focus on the tin chok weaving and fabrics. In order to progress the research further a greater depth of knowledge/information was needed about the detail of the weaving process and pattern styles. This data collection was needed to search for the significance and meaning which might have originated the motifs, patterns or designs other than its decorative function as border to the traditional sarong.

##### **Third formal field study trip report:**

Motifs, patterns and colours of *tin chok* are brought to life by oral interviews and observation.

## **Third field study report visit to Mae Chaem, Thailand**

Notes from: Visit to Chiangmai province 15 to 19 August 2013

### **Introduction**

The field study trip to Chiangmai province was primarily to perform two tasks:

- a) to document the collection of *tin chok* textiles belonging to collector and entrepreneur Nussara Tiengkate and,
- b) to document the weaving process of *tin chok* in the rural farm setting of Mae Chaem where weaver Vilai Kaewchompoo and her cousin Chanunchida Sarinja maintain the centuries-old weaving tradition.

### **Itinerary and report August 2013**

**Day one 16<sup>th</sup> August 2013** In the northern provincial capital city of Chiangmai, Nussara Tiengkate has a regional craft retail business called Nussara Thai Handcraft Cotton Products situated at 66 Charcentral Road. Its stock comprises textiles, ceramics, baskets and wood carvings and it attracts visitors from all over the world. This renowned connoisseur emporium, servicing those who purport to know about high quality crafted products, was established 20 years ago.

Although a retailer and self-financing founder of the “hand weavers learning centre at Mae Chaem”, Tiengkate has amassed a unique personal collection of *tin chok* textiles from around the region. Her collection comprises mostly sarongs integrating *tin chok* but also individual specimens of the *tin chok* or border weaving itself. The earliest of her specimens dates to 1813 and another similarly dated, is decorated entirely using silver thread.

Of the 200 or so specimens, this research project focused upon documenting 140 specimens only, thought to be best representative quality and style of all those in the collection. Although among the sample specimens there were early examples of 19<sup>th</sup> century *tin chok* most of the samples taken were 20<sup>th</sup> century and were regarded as evenly representative of each of the decades.

The digital images taken of the specimens featured a written ticket listing the number, date and measurement relative to each but there was also an additional

hand written sheet which carried a descriptive account and comments where relevant or where forthcoming. These sheets will be further completed to include some pattern or design visual analysis later in the process of recording data (see appendix).

**Day two 17<sup>th</sup> August 2013** Vilai Kaewchompoo is the cousin of Chanunchida Sarinja, and both are hand weavers of traditional cotton *tin chok* textiles. Both live and work on a smallholding in the village of Mae Chaem in the Chiangmai province of northern Thailand. They are local to the learning centre established ten years ago by Tiengkate who at the time received government support which has subsequently been withdrawn therefore it operates as a charity. The learning centre acts as a focal point for the education of the weavers and their children but is only open for part of the year. (Problems associated with the learning centre are discussed elsewhere in the thesis).

The visit to the smallholding was arranged in order to digitally record the process of weaving *tin chok* in its original location, witnessing the use of authentic equipment (warping frames and looms) in situ.

Vilai Kaewchompoo demonstrated the use of the warping frame which comprised a timber plank laid flat with two cross members, into which were inserted at intervals vertical pegs approximately ten centimetres in height.(see fig 4.7-fig 4.4.11)



Fig 4.7

Fig 4.8

Fig 4.9

Fig 4.10

Fig 4.11

Fig 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 4.10, 4.11 Vilai Kaewchompoo demonstrated the uses of the warping frame



Step one: Two yarns (threads) running together as one were passed over a hook above the frame to ensure ease of flow of the yarn and then tied to the first peg from which anchor the yarn (thread) were drawn in a zigzag between the pegs to a length of two metres. At the opposite end to the anchor point a crossing point for the yarns was created. The purpose of the cross was to facilitate counting but also separation of the individual yarns required later on in the process of “dressing or drawing the warp” or attaching the warp (collective threads or yarns) to the former “entered already threaded” warp ending, through the shafts and “reed or beating comb” thus fettling the loom. The zigzag of the yarn continues on the warping frame is repeated over and over until the correct number of warp yarns is laid achieving the correct width of the warp in terms of numbers of individual yarns “ends” per centimetre.

In this case there are approximately 28 to 30 ends per 1cm. And the required width is laid in three sections of differing colours. Section one 1cm red, section two 1cm black and section three 1cm red and then beaten again. The warp completed it is then removed from the frame and plaited at which point it is ready to be presented to the loom. (See fig4.12-4.15)

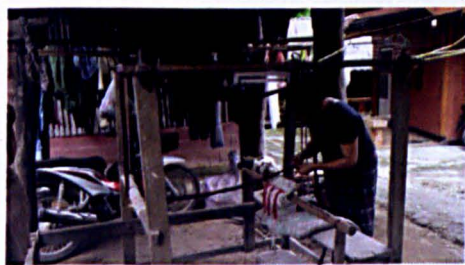


Fig 4.12



Fig 4.13



Fig 4.14



Fig 4.15



Since warping takes some time to achieve there was meantime a demonstration of the discontinuous weft inlay weaving process given by Chanunchida Sarinja, the younger of the two cousin weavers. (See Fig 4.9, 4.10, 4.11)



Fig 4.9

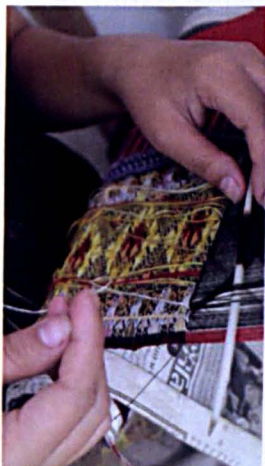


Fig 4.10



Fig 4.11

Fig 4.9, Fig 4.10, Fig 4.11 Demonstration of the discontinuous weft inlay weaving process given by Chanunchida Sarinja

A predetermined number of double twisted and differently coloured threads or yarns are passed under pre-selected warp yarns and then passed around each other to secure and prevent them being pulled back under the warp threads. The pre-selection of colours corresponds to the desired colour balance in the finished design. The pre-selection of warp threads or yarns to be lifted is determined by the desired pattern each traces a design element or outline of motif intersection. After each insertion of the wefts yarn or thread of ground colour red and or black is passed by shuttle through a shed or space created by lifting 50 per cent of the warp yarns or threads and then beaten into place, thereby giving a volume of base cloth equivalent to that of the inlayed yarns. This weft insertion is necessary to ensure equal and even progression of the wefts binding the warps into a square set fabrication.

By repetition of this procedure over and over the desired pattern emerges and the decorated *tin chok* achieved.



Returning to the warp making process which was by now completed the platted warp threads are presented to the loom by unfolding the plait and attaching one end to the top front beam of the loom and passing the rest of the warp around and behind the back beam until it is tied to rest behind the two shafts. (The term beam refers to the horizontal cross timber frame of the loom which rotates. The term shafts, refers to the frames containing string eyelets through which the warp yarns are threaded). The two shafts located in the central plane space of the loom have already been secured with ties and are filled with the remains of the threaded yarn ends of the previous woven fabric. Likewise the adjacent reed or baton/beater is filled with former warp threads. Therefore it only remains for the new warp threads to be twisted onto the old threads and pulled through the shafts and beating reeds to finally be tied off to the front beam.

Weaving commenced with a few centimetres of 50x50 plain weaving to secure an even tension warp anchor and first few rows of the inlay weft yarns or threads. Thus begun the weaving process continued by repetition as described above.

A one full repeat sample of the pattern design was woven and cut out from the piece for documenting purposes. (see Fig 4.13)

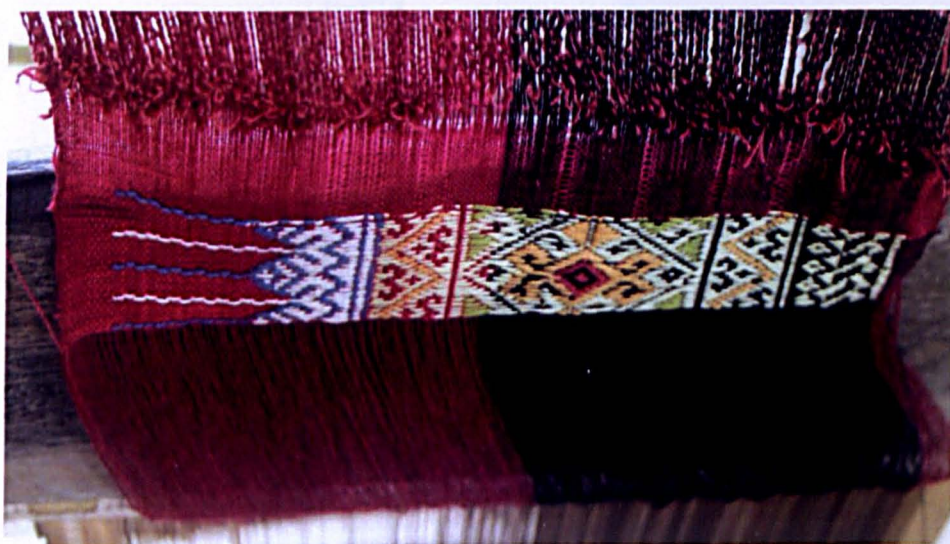


Fig 4.13 One full repeat sample of the pattern design *tin chok* demonstration sample

The full process of *tin chok* having been documented the day's task was successfully achieved and the visit was concluded.



**Day three 18 August 2013** although not scheduled as part of the field study a visit to the TCDC Thai Crafts Design Centre in Chiangmai was undertaken. The TCDC is designed to “*expand opportunities for learning about design to the North by reaching out to entrepreneurs, designers, students and people in the province and giving them the tools to turn original innovative ideas into real economic returns. TCDC’s approach is focused on widening Thailand’s intellectual assets, with its rich cultural heritage, and the latest technologies, to create distinctive and competitive goods and services that contribute to Thailand’s drive towards creative economy.*” Although tangential to the focus this research field study, there was in the current exhibition issues raised pertinent to this research thesis argument, in so far as the apparent dichotomy in the presentation of tradition in the context and relationship between innovation and maintenance of Thai character and or identity as embedded quality in new objects.

Attention was drawn to this dichotomy by an exhibit of traditional weaving wherein a photographer and an entrepreneur set out their views relative to this issue of representation and intrinsic value. Tiengkate displayed her *tin chok* collection. (See fig 4.14, fig 4.15)

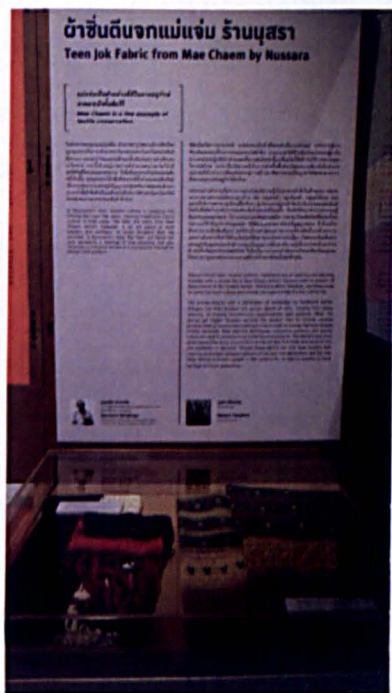


Fig 4.14 Exhibition at TCDC in Chiangmai



Fig 4.15 Exhibition at TCDC

**Day four 20 August 2013**

### **Visit to Kasetsart University museum**

Professor Dr Orathai Pholdis is a historian dedicated to the promotion of Thai culture particularly the traditional crafts of textile weaving, costume pottery and woodwork. Working at Kasetsart University as head of the history department, she is an international expert and researcher but also the curator of the University Museum.

This little known museum on the university campus housed an extensive collection of sarongs and regional costumes, among which are some exceptional specimens of *tin chok* weaving from Chiangmai and the former Lanna kingdom.

Her museum showcases all the regions and peoples of Thailand specifically their periodical migratory patterns and cultural heritage which is reflected in the costumes and textiles displayed. Although she has several books to her name she has not as yet written any definitive history of Thai textiles.

Dr Pholdis is also making herself unpopular with Chinese scholars because of her long campaign to establish that almost all of the indigenous people of southern China, below and to east and west of the Yellow River, are in fact Thai and has amassed a huge amount of historical (archaeological) evidence to support this assertion.

Her knowledge of Thai culture is great and valuable it would be a mistake if, in verification of this research findings, she was not consulted to support our conclusions.

### **4.10 Summary of points of interest from initial data collection**

The data collected from the interviews upon first analysis indicates that irrespective of any intention the responses fell into categories which may be the coincidence of two sets of interest namely the interviewer and the interviewee. The quantity of responses to questions was uneven as was the quality as might

be expected given the cross-section of society selected however The data gathered in the questionnaires fell into three categories and were discussed in terms of data relating to sub-cultural interests and thereby might be described as anthropological data. The second being information about the place and activity of *tin chok* weaving socio-cultural and economic. And the third category of data, being the significance of *tin chok* nationally in terms of cultural heritage and thereby being of a more academic nature.

The following “digest” of interview data gathered from field study trips 1 and 2 to Mae Chaem with subject headings rather than by specific question and response.

#### **4.10.1 Historical precedence**

In the past they used real cotton and dyed it with natural dyes but nowadays the yarn, which is imported from Burma, is already chemically dyed and it is more vividly coloured than natural dye. So the new *tin chok* is much brighter than the antique *tin chok*. Natural colours extracted from plants, flowers, clay, etc. for *tin chok* weaving in the old days and having more detailed motif and patterns woven from the cotton yarn spun by hand. Yes. I would learn the motifs and patterns from the old sarongs. Now I can design weave a lot of motifs and patterns. I remember my grandmother had some really ancient fabrics which were passed on down the family. The yarn was dyed using natural colour only and the pattern is really detailed and very neat. It looked much more difficult than the normal patterns. The pieces using ancient pattern took six weeks whereas the modern patterns take only seven days. Brocade is a technique similar to *khit*. It employs silver or gold supplementary threads as rest yarns. Ancient royalty and people of the upper classes cherished the exquisite fabrics not just because of the monetary value but also for their elegant design. Brocade technique - sometimes called *yok din*, *mudmee* or *ikat* - is a technique of tying the yarns with water-resistant strings so the portion tied resist the dyes and thus create a pattern of woven? To create a multi-coloured pattern therefore the yarns must be retied and dyed many times until the pattern is achieved. *Gok luang*, sometimes known

as *koh*, is used by the Tai Lue of Chiang Kham and Chiang Muan districts in Phayao province. It can also be seen, in silk, in Nampat and Uttaradit provinces

#### **4.10.2 Students**

We have more than 10 looms for the students to practice on and all the materials necessary for the lessons. They weave the motifs on a piece of material, which is then attached to the side of a traditional pillow. In all it takes three months to complete although some of the better students complete it quicker. The students practice by themselves and often learn by mistake. Sometimes they copy colours and patterns they have seen their mothers and fathers wear.

They start with basic *tin chok* patterns and by the time they get to Year 6 they have moved on to slightly more complicated designs.

#### **4.10.3 Weaving times**

One piece of work might take 3-5 months because they are only working on it one a week. Some of the more enthusiastic students come in on other days apart from Friday to work on it and sometimes finish a piece within a month. If I weave for eight hours a day it will take two weeks.

#### **4.10.4 Teachers and Learning**

My older sister: Our mother: I taught one pupil, who was 30 and came to learn every day for a year. Yes, my children and sometimes their friends. I have no time to teach anyone as I weave for a living. Maybe one day when I am more ready. Yes. Sometimes people come to learn from me. To learn basic weaving you need to come every day for a week. But to teach *chok* it takes more than a month, depending on how good you are. We have a few pieces of paper written by the teacher with the help of the expert weavers but we have no formal textbooks. Sometimes we have to wait for the expert weavers to be available because they are unpaid volunteers. They are not available every Friday. We need more information or a textbook about designs and colours, which would complement

the expertise of the weavers. We are hoping your research will provide this for us. And of course we need more money to support the project, buy materials and maintain the looms.

#### **4.10.5 First weaving experience**

I started with a plain sarong and then I learned *tin chok* after that. I started with a plain sarong and gradually I learned how to weave *tin chok* after that. I started since I was very young and cannot remember exactly what age, maybe around seven or eight years old, now I am 48. I did work in the fields sometimes but not anymore. I am doing only weaving now for a living.

#### **4.10.6 Ability**

Yes I can do both but the one with 16 motifs is very difficult. You have to hide the yarn very tidily at the back. My daughter can only weave a simple pattern on a pillow but she doesn't want to learn *tin chok* because it takes too long to finish one sarong and she don't have patient to do it. But the really expert weavers really are artists because they have worked out colour combinations themselves. Yes, my works are quite detailed and neat and they are marketable.

#### **4.10.7 Meaning of motifs**

I don't know many meanings but I know the boat-tail means that if you wear it when you die the boat will take you to heaven. With the contemporary motifs there will be no bird room.

I don't know much about the meaning of the motifs because my mother never explained it. My sister just told me the name of the motifs but never told me the meaning. I just learned that it was all based on Buddhist beliefs. Most are woven according to the belief of the people in religious that with the *hang sapao* part of the *tin chok*, they would go to heaven after life. I know some meanings. I know the *hang sapao* (boat tail) means that the person wearing it at death, the boat will take you to heaven. There are no *hong noks* (bird room) in the contemporary

motifs. It was not mentioned much about the meaning of the motifs. It seems we were never explained about it. I just know the name of the motifs but never the meaning. I believe that it was all based on Buddhist beliefs. I do not exactly know the meaning, I guessed nobody knows the real meaning of the pattern but we all know that if we weave the particular pattern we know how it looks like. Mostly it is involved with the religious belief. It is believed in our communities that motifs involved religious belief. We all want to go to heaven and it shows in our weaving, for example; wearing sarong with the *hang sapao* when you die it will help taking you to heaven. The well-known *gok luang* technique is used to create the characteristic pattern of *rai nam rai* textiles from Nan province. Some of the motif like boat tail (*hang sapao*) will be the main on the pattern in *tin chok* it means that when you died you wear *tin chok* it will take you to heaven. And for any kind of Buddhist ceremony all women in the village will wear *tin chok* sarongs to attend all ceremonies. Have a bird motif and we believe that if we wear it one we die we will ride that bird to heaven. The patterns or motifs on the textiles were formed by weaving and combining colours. The pattern could be created with basic forms or geometric shape with no specific meaning or they could be evolved from nature, imagination, belief, idealism or faith that may have meaning in motifs. So the pattern on Tai Lue fabrics, represent the inheritance of the women weavers. The motif and pattern will have a motif that mean something and relate with the way believe in Buddhism. Women will go to temple and wearing sarong that they weave it themselves. I have two looms. One is mine and the other is used by my elderly mother and my daughter. Yes we still use it as main motif. Geometric designs are basic designs of the textiles. They vary from small dots, fish-egg dots, diagonals, crossed, triangles and squares. These basic designs are developed into other symbols. For example *lai kap* is a triangular design and *lai nuay* is a small square design.

#### 4.10.8 Durations and difficulties

If you learn every day and practice every day you could start after two months. Before I just did it for my household use but when I have more time I made more and started to sell them. It could take two weeks if I really spent a lot of time to



do it. I would say 8-9 hours per day. Yes, it is quite a tiresome task. If you learned and practiced every day you could start to weave within two months. Some girls can only weave a simple pattern and some do not even want to learn *tin chok* at all due to the difficulties. At eight hours a day, it would take 10 to 14 days depending on the difficulty of the pattern. I began weaving two weeks ago and I think it will take another two days to complete. Around 10 houses have weavers but they are only part-time but between September and November and March-April are the busiest weaving times. The rest of the year the villagers are busy growing rice and corn. When I make a mistake – like counting the yarns wrong – I have to take all the yarn out and start again.

#### **4.10.9 Learning style**

Yes. I always look at my mother's old sarongs and copy the motifs and patterns. Now I can weave a lot of motifs and patterns. The students learn by mistake and also copy the patterns from their mothers' sarongs.

#### **4.10.10 Customers and economic value**

All foreigners like to buy the old motifs, the ones which have 16 motifs in one sarong. All foreigners like to buy the old motifs, the ones which have 16 motifs in one sarong. Now there are more contemporary motifs and don't use much of the old motifs. It depends on how difficult the patterns are: if it has one motif I can sell it for 2,500 to 3,000 baht, but if it has 16 motifs I could make about 3,500 to 4,000 baht. The demand for *tin chok* not decreased but the weaver decreased and almost every weaver still weave sarong or square pillow more than any other product. I sell them for 2,000 baht (£40) each.

#### **4.10.11 Products: the sarong**

There are three parts put together. The top part is *hua sin* or waist, the middle part is *tua sin* or the body part, the lowest part is *tin sin* which is *tin chok*. As far as I examined the sarong I found that 16 motifs were combined in one sarong.

One motif was repeated four times until they have 16 around the sarong. It is considered the most difficult motifs to weave because several colours were used hence it is necessary to focus on tidying up all the yarn at the back. I make either sarongs or pillows and they are all done by hand. I can make a pillow in one day but if I am making a sarong it takes seven days. If I am using an ancient pattern it can take a month so I would charge a lot more for that sarong. Normally a garment using ancient pattern takes a month but if I work hard and spend 10 hours a day on it I can get one completed in 10-15 days. The main garment for women is the *pha sin*, a tube skirt made up of three pieces – the waistband or *hua sin*; the main body or *tua sin*; and the hem piece or *tin sin*.

In the north *pha sins* tend to be patterned with horizontal stripes of different colours with red, yellow and green being the favoured colours. The waistband and hem is usually red or black.

*Pha sin* worn on special occasions, such as Buddhist ceremonies at the temple, are more elaborate. Tai Lue *pha sins* have a heavily decorated main body while the Tai Yuan and Tai Phuan prefer special decorations at the hem.

*Tin chok* is very difficult to develop because the villagers try to make bags and other products from it but *tin chok* is best used to decorate the bottom of sarongs. It does not look right in other situations because a motif which is known to be near the feet is not culturally suitable for other positions.

#### 4.10.12 Motif names

It is a basic *tin chok* pattern – *doksak*, *dokchan* and *sak* motifs. *Lai kom* and *lai kum* are the most common motifs and pattern used since the old days until present. I do not know all the meanings but only the significant ones like *kom* and *kum*. *Kom* means lantern and *kum* means a kind of bird, however this is just called bird but not actually appears on the pattern. *Lai kom* is composed of five rows of set motifs, the first row is *hong nok* then *kan* then *kom* then reversed *kan* then *hong nok* finished with the *hang sapao*. *Lai kum* is composed of four or five repeated patterns then finished with *hang sapao*.

I know some meanings. I know the *hang sapao* (boat-tail) means that if the person is wearing it at death, the boat will take you to heaven. There are no *hong*

*nok* (bird room) in the contemporary motifs. I know there are a lot of *lai koms*. The ones that I am familiar with are *komlubnok*, *komchengsan*, *komlakorn*, *komhoumorn*, etc. Of course we have quite a few *lai kums* such as *lainokkum*, *narkkum*, *noknornkum*, *lakornkum*, etc.

*Kom* is the main composure of Mae Chaem *tin chok*. In naming the pattern of each piece, *kom* is mainly recognised. *Kan* is a pattern to decorate the *tin chok*. It is triangular in shape, placed between the two *koms*. *Hong nok* is the main unique pattern of Mae Chaem *tin chok*. It is placed continuously at the top and bottom parts of *kom* and *kan*. *Hang sapao* is the lowest part of the *tin chok* motif which is connected to the lowest *hong nok*.

#### 4.10.13 Weaving change

Nothing has changed. There are just more contemporary motifs. We don't use the old motifs much. No, that is if every village uses the same old motifs. For the contemporary motifs, each village will design their own which is easier to weave. It is not that difficult. Each and every weaver has some *tin chok lai kom* pieces of the old *tin chok* kept in their baskets for them to follow. There were times that I tried to use different colours other than the old sample but they were not marketable. That is maybe because the colours were too bright. Then I have to follow the traditional colours that appeared on the sample pieces. I saw a lot of new things and I wanted to try but I thought it might be too difficult and it might not sell. No, never. I just followed the pattern which my mother used. I just changed the colours sometimes.

#### 4.10.14 Weaving design parameters

Mae Chaem's *tin chok* patterns are more detailed and the fabric looks more embroidered than the fabric from other areas. The hand-woven fabric shows the beauty of each individual stitch. In hand-woven fabric you have to hide the left over yarn, while the machine just smoothly uses it all up. They combine 16 motifs in one sarong. They repeat one motif four times until they have 16 around the sarong. It is the most difficult motifs to weave because you need a lot of colours

and you need to concentrate on how to tidy up all the yarn at the back. One motif is actually repeated one *lai kom* pattern while the 16 motifs are four sets of different patterns. No. I have to count the number of yarns. I don't want to miss the count. Yes I can do both. I think almost every weaver in Mae Chaem knows how to do both but we all agree that the one with 16 motifs is very difficult when you have to hide the yarn very tidily at the back. Yes, I do. I bought the yarns sometimes when it is not the cotton harvest season. Each roll costs 50 baht (£1) but it is made with chemical dye, not natural dye which is more expensive. My loom is just ordinary nothing special. Town people will use ordinary looms and the hill tribe people will use back-strap looms. The back-strap loom: They will tie the loom with a branch of a tree at one end and the other end with their own waist. The woven fabric from the back-strap loom is usually narrow around 30 to 40 centimetres. That is because of the ability of the body to hold on to the loom. It is not that difficult? Each and every weaver has some pieces of the old *tin chok* kept in their baskets for them to follow. There were times that I tried to use different colours warp yarns in order to create a pattern whereas in *chok* technique the supplementary weft yarns are threaded using porcupine hairs. Not much technology involved in *tin chok* weaving we still use hand loom to weave *tin chok* textiles. *Yok din* is a discontinuous, supplementary weft technique. It creates a pattern similar to the *khit*. But the difference is the use of a porcupine quill or fingers to pick out certain warp yarns before threading the wefts. The technique employs multi-coloured weft yarns and can be used to create a pattern similar to an embroidered design. I tried to use silk yarns once but it never worked because the silk yarn is quite sticky and always got stuck. Cotton yarn is smoother and easier to use. I think which colour to make the cotton yarn in the next line and where am I going to hide the end of the yarn. I am always thinking about the next step. Yes I experimented with different colours. I wore them and if I didn't like them I would take the colour out and weave it again. *Gok luang* is a tapestry weave technique similar to the *chok* design in its use of weft yarns of different colours. But the difference is that *gok luang* uses regular weft yarns to hook and dovetail. The porcupine quill is the most important piece of equipment. It is very convenient because some patterns are very difficult and it helps to count the space between vertical and horizontal yarns. The most difficult *chok* is

a black on black pattern and it is very useful for that. I have to calculate how to fit the 16 motifs in one line. Every single space has a different motif and the detail is very important. The textiles on display are arranged according to the weaving techniques used. Each piece has its unique characteristics due to the techniques employed in the creation and execution of the various designs. The most basic technique is plain weaving. The weft and the warp create plain fabric. *Khit* is a continuous, supplementary weft technique. The shuttle takes the weft yarns from selvage to selvage in order to create the patterns along the width of the textile. They are quills from porcupines. They enable us to create the *tin chok* pattern by hand. I concentrate only on the weaving and counting the yarns and planning for the colour of the next motif.

#### **4.10.15 Influences, future prospects and heritage**

The most significant influences are religion, economy and politics. The economy depends on the politics because sometimes the government does not support the production. (This research is made to maintain *tin chok* textile history in digital form, do you think it is useful to the community in the future?) Yes, very much so. In the old days, people seemed to spend a lot of time and attention on producing arts and crafts and we are trying to maintain the same value. We want the new generation to know that *tin chok* weaving is hard work and we want them to appreciate their ancestors' effort. The crafts that we produce need a lot of time and care to make it beautiful. Sometimes the buyers do not understand why our sarongs are costly with your research it may tell the world all about us and our works. I saw a lot of really nice designs but I was afraid to do it because I might not sell it. I only weave something if somebody has commissioned it up front. I want to preserve it because after my daughter there might not be anyone else to learn it from. So whenever people come and ask for my knowledge I am happy to give it and I am happy to help the school project too. Sadly the villagers have sold them to the museums and private collectors so they do not have any of these fabrics left in their communities. No. I never kept it. I sold a lot to collectors from private collections and museums. I sold one piece which my grandmother's grandmother made. It was more than 100 years old and we sold it for 4,500 baht

(£90). It is an ancient pattern and every section has 16 motifs. In the new patterns there is only one pattern so it is much less complicated

#### **4.11 Summary conclusion**

The collection and analysis of the questionnaire data was intentionally, a verification process not only of the impressions gained and the practical prophetic identified, in the initial visit to the region and which stimulated my interest in this research in the first place; but also of the subsequent literature review text analysis which indicated that crafts production develops and evolves along similar lines in differing global geographies.

This is especially true it seems where the activity is considered to be “women’s work” and which directly relates to the Mae Chaem *tin chok* weavers, since they are all women.

## Chapter 5: *Tin chok* textiles

### 5.1 Introduction

The first and second field studies and the oral interview transcription analysis reported in chapter 4 presented the current and contemporary context within which *tin chok* textiles design and manufacture are taught, woven and exploited by the weavers at the learning centre in Mai Chaem.

They also verified the research problems and the premise of the action research project, and therefore the methodology for which were presented and discussed in chapter 3.

The action research is both part of the PhD process but also extend beyond the timeframe as a continuing interaction with the *tin chok* weaving community.

Chapter 4 in its verification and analysis of data for this research also highlighted the significance of the *tin chok* weaving and its heritage in the region and its role as signifier of identity for the weavers and villages of Mae Chaem.

This chapter takes up this theme by focusing attention on the analysis of ten samples or specimens of *tin chok* weaving selected from a small but unique collection, in the ownership of Nussara Tiengkate held at the Mae Chaem Learning Centre, of which she is the director. The analysis will be recorded on a template later used to develop the interactive digital media site which incorporates a catalogue of the Tiengkate Collection, previously provided as images as part of this ongoing action research, and presented in volume two of this thesis.

Since 11 samples or specimens selected for analysis are taken at random from a collection of 104 sarongs they represent different periods within a time span of 200 years and represent different types of pattern and motif. The oldest specimen, Sample Number 11, is from 1813. The *tin chok* fabrics in the collection recorded in volume two of the thesis are variously described as antique, classic and vintage for the purpose of the catalogue however they would also serve a

purpose as categories which relate to the levels of craft function or significance discussed in chapter 2 and seen in Fig 2.4 In that context they also represent an evolution of style or character reflecting the identity of not only the *tin chok* textile type but also, it will be argued, of its weavers.

This chapter therefore begins with a brief historical overview setting a context, for the analysis and its later discussion and presentation, ostensibly establishing what is known or speculated about the Mae Chaem weavers and their craft practice, but also to open up a space, where bench marks or criteria for evaluation of significance and function or meaning, can be discussion.

## 5.2 Context

The people in Mae Chaem are a mixture of mountain and valley dwellers. In the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries there were a number of competing Buddhist kingdoms in the area of northern Thailand, northern Laos and across the modern-day border of Burma and China.

The most successful of these was Lanna, which has its golden age under King Tilokaracha (1441-1487). Woven textiles found today in the north of Thailand are culturally linked to three main groups. These are:

1. Tai Yuan, or Khon Muang, who established Lanna in eight northern provinces. Their influence is also found in Uttaradit, Tak and Ratchaburi provinces.
2. Tai Lue, who migrated from Sipsong Pan Na into Lanna, and are to be found in parts of Nan, Phayao and Chiang Rai provinces,
3. Lao, who migrated from the old kingdom of Lan Xang. They are clearly well known for their weaving skills and can be found in parts of Sukhothai, Uttaradit and Phichit provinces.<sup>92</sup>

From the earliest period the weaving culture was a way for women to show their potential value as a wife and to this end throughout the ages the girls would be trained in housekeeping duties by their mothers or other female relatives

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<sup>92</sup> From oral history interview Associate Professor Songsak Prangwatanakun.

Date of interview: 12 August 2009.

Place of interview: Chiangmai University.



They also receive weaving craft training and this socio-cultural situation was retained up until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Unfortunately the weaving culture has begun to decline and lose its significance, not according to recent surveys because of lack of demand, but paradoxically due to lack of supply. Research reported in this thesis suggests that because of encroaching urban social and economic forces there is equal and opposite decline in significance of *tin chok* textiles subscribing to the identity of the Mae Chaem people.

To whatever extent the decline is proceeding, it is by no means terminal, and there are signs that because of the efforts of a few enthusiasts, there may just be a turning point whereby the next generation may be beginning to see the benefits of the culture and lifestyle with its significances, and characteristic and distinctive identity.

### **5.3 Preliminary discussion of *tin chok***

Today development technique's for creating various patterns and designs of the ethnic Mae Chaem clothes are to benefit their present lifestyle. However to maintain an identity of the *tin chok* pattern, natural dyeing, different weaving techniques of each ethnic group and most importantly to maintain their lifestyle and culture is still essential in Mae Chaem weaving, it seems still alive.

Weaving fabrics with meaningful patterns and weaving techniques and regard as high level arts in term of ethnic identity and culture, is *tin chok* ตีนจก fabric which can be summarised briefly as follows:

Mae Chaem *tin chok* is a traditional Thai textile originated by inventing the patterns by picking up yarn. This is the method of inserting of picking the various cotton yarns to create the desired patterns by using porcupine needle or sharp-end metal tool.



Fig 5.1 Picking up yarn

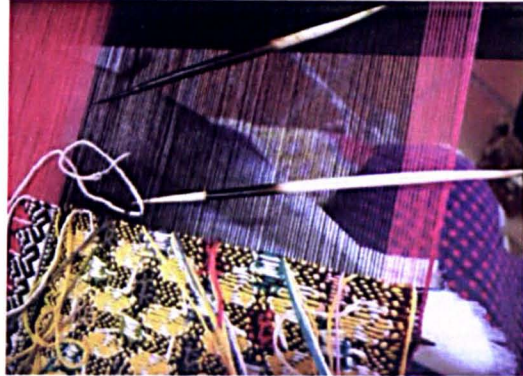


Fig 5.2 Porcupine needle

*Sin* (sarong) *tin chok* weaving is regarded with delicate details and neatness with its ethnic identity that indicates the effort and peaceful mind of the weavers to create such artful and precious work for a long period of time before. Over and above it indicates the belief and faith which involves the lifestyle of most women of Mae Chaem. The *tin chok* weaving technique is different from those of any other ethnic group. The weaving process is done and picked from behind the pattern in order to tie the knot easily and beautifully to be able to wear the fabric on both sides.

#### 5.4 *Tin chok* motif types and pattern

*Tin chok* weaving is what is generally known as an inlay technique usually applied to a plain base fabric as additional weft or warp threads creating a slightly raised geometric pattern used as a traditional border fabric which can be appliquéd to other fabric items. These fabric pieces approximately 95 cm x 160 cm are used in traditional Thai costumes such as a sarong or *pha sin*. The inlay (*tin*) woven at the border bottom (*chok*) is usually approximately 30cm deep when in the finished garment but when on the loom it is woven vertically and therefore might be produced in any length. The narrow width vertically woven cloth is applied to the sarong along its width. Therefore the sarong is a composite garment consisting three parts; the bottom *tin chok* the middle a plain weave *sin* body (*tou sin*) and the top or waist (*auo sin*) see fig 5. The border piece of woven inlay patterns are presented in two types: the *tin chok lai kom* and *tin chok lai kum*. The first pattern type combines six sub patterns, borders or stripes named



from top to bottom 1. *hong nok* (bird room). 2. *kan* (bowl) 3. *kom* (lantern). 4. reverse *kan* (bowl). 5. *hong nok* (bird room). 6. *hangsapou* (boat tail) (see fig5.3to5.7)

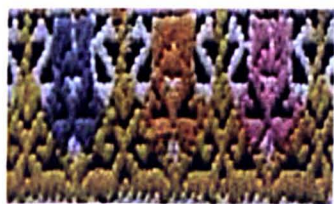


Fig5.3 *hong nok* (bird room)



Fig 5.4 *kom* (lantern)

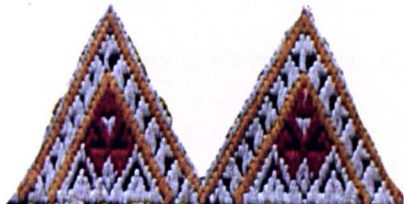


Fig 5.5 *kan* (bowl)

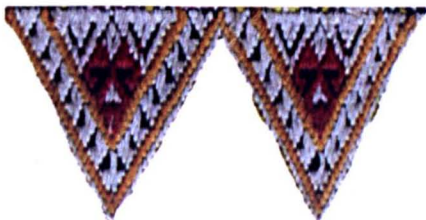


Fig 5.6 reverse *kan* (bowl)



Fig 5.7 *hangsapao* (boat tail)

It is essential also to identify, understand and apply the technical methods, materials, development and historical context of the various weaving techniques because each impacts on the tangible and intangible quality of the woven specimen.

Most of the *tin chok* motifs are geometric, mainly abstract but including stylised variations of flowers, animals and human figures. The geometric shapes include diamonds, eight-pointed stars and symmetrical triangles symmetric flowers. Diamond shapes were found in one of the *tin chok* motifs.

The *tin chok* motifs are often found in decorative bands at the bottom of fabrics, such as sarongs.

The more complex motifs, created by hand weavers over centuries, are virtually impossible to replicate in an automated process. The hand-weaving process is both time-consuming and labour-intensive.

Colour usage presents problems similar to automated weaving. In recent years there is a growing tendency to replace natural dyes with chemical dyes. This has resulted in brighter, bolder patterns but is accompanied with a certain degree of loss of subtlety.

Therefore this research into the motifs and patterns will employ the geometric analysis method which is based on crystallography, classifies patterns, according to their geometric symmetries on a 2D plane.

Many of the patterns are symmetrical and the researcher will explore some of the psychological and cultural reasons for this fondness for symmetry in repeating pattern. Gestalt psychology tests offer an explanation not only of the preferences for symmetrically repeated patterns, but also for common symmetry preferences among different cultural contexts. They also provide a good defence of the argument posited by Alois Riegl<sup>93</sup>, that symmetry in decoration derives from an internal human need for harmony and beauty, the same symmetry found in nature, as man in his decoration employs the same laws as nature.

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<sup>93</sup> Alois Riegl is known as a pioneer of formal analysis, but his theory of beholding contradicts formalistic preoccupations. The essay interprets this theory in the intellectual context of fin-de-siecle Vienna, arguing that Riegl regarded the relationship to the beholder not as the formal means, but as the ethical purpose of art, and defended the beholder's participation against the charge of "theatricality." Riegl's "formal" theory, too, was not hermetic, but responsive to the same intellectual challenge as the theory of beholding. A brief discussion of intellectual currents in the later twentieth century reveals the strengths and limitations of Riegl's endeavour.

< <http://www.collegeart.org/pdf/artbulletin/Art%20Bulletin%20Vol%2071%20No%202%200lin.pdf> >



Fig 5.8 Sarong construction top/middle/bottom

*Tin chok* fabric is composed of three parts, ie waist, body and foot. The three parts will be sewn together to make one piece of sarong. This is because most of weavers are still fond of using small size loom. Today some weavers are using larger looms.

#### 1. The waist part (*huo sin*)

This is the head part of the fabric that is approximately 21cm in width and it is divided into two small parts. The most top part is made of the white cotton called the white waist. Below the white part is a red strip of about 5-6 cm wide. In the old days, natural dye from plants was used.

#### 2. The body part (*tou sin*)

This is the middle part between the waist and the foot parts of the fabric. It is about 50 cm in width. There are many patterns including the cross-cut patterns with different colours. The name of the fabric is called according to its colours such as *sin talung* (yellow) ชินตาเหลือง *sin takaew* (white) ชินตาขาว *sin tadeng* (red)

ชินตาแดง or even with the technique of using 2-3 colours of threads or cotton yarns spun together and is called *sin amm* ชินแอม.



Other than those, there is *sin hom ouan* ซิ่นหอมอ้วน which is a special identity of Mae Chaem using the technique of weaving the thick yarn alternately with the thin yarn to create the small chequered pattern, usually using black or blue dye that is left over from indigo dyeing fabric.

### 3. The foot part (*tin sin*)

It is the lowest part of the fabric and is categorised by two dominant features which are *tin chok lai kom* ตีนจกแบบลายโดม and *tin chok lai kum* ตีนจกแบบลายกุม.

## 5.5 Tin chok traditional six motif classic compositions

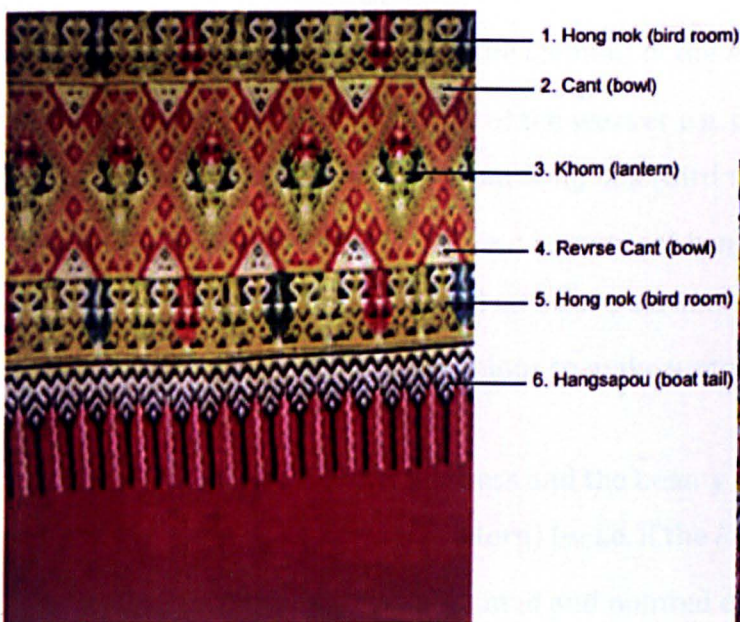


Fig 5.9 *Tin chok* type A (*tin chok lai kom*)

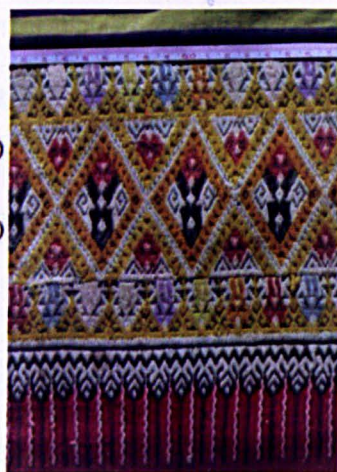


Fig 5.10 *tin chok lai kom*

### 1. *Tin chok* type A (*tin chok lai kom*) ตีนจกแบบลายโดม

The special feature of this fabric is the rhombus pattern placed side by side all over the entire fabric. This part is called *kom* โดม which is the main pattern for this particular fabric. At the bottom of the *kom* โดม there is a triangle pattern called *kun* ชัน with the row of *hong nok* (bird room) ห้องนก which composed of birds, *nam ton* น้ำตัน *kolai* ขอลใต้ or *naka* situated on the upper and lower parts of โดม and ชัน .The rows of *hong nok* ห้องนก sometimes indicate the *hong kood* ห้องกูด

feature that replaces the *tin chok* pattern at the lowest most part called *hang sapao* (boat tail)หางสะเปา and is the front part of the *tin chok* sarong. Most of the favourite colours used are black and white.

The name of each *tin chok* fabric is mostly determined significantly by the pattern of the *kom* (lantern) โคม. The favourite *kom* โคม pattern on *sin tin chok* is *komlubnok* โคมรูปนก *komchengsan* โคมเชิงแสน *komlakorn* โคมละคอน *komhoumorn* โคมหัวหมอน etc. Some are called by the feature of *kan* (bowl) ช้น such as *kansamelle* ช้นสามแฉ *kanaeweu* ช้นแฉ *kankeanlum* ช้นเขียนลุ่ม. Others will be called according to special features of the pattern such as *lakornhuokarm* ละคอนหัวง่าม *lakornhuonok* ละคอนหัวนก *hongbee* หงส์บี้ *hongploy* หงส์ปล่อย etc. The element of the *kom* (lantern) โคม pattern might vary in technique and tactics of the weaver e.g. placing the additional *kolai* ขอลี้ pattern on the top most row from *hong nok* (bird room) ห้องนก or altering the element in *hong nok* or maybe without any row of *hong nok* at all. This will make the *tin chok* ตีนจก pattern seem small and compact suitable for the children or might have the adjustment of the colour to make it more outstanding.

To examine meticulously the neatness and the beauty of the *tin chok*, one must observe the feature of the *kom* (lantern) โคม i.e. if the *kom* (lantern) โคม is made in the rhombus pattern and have the small and pointed ends, the smaller and more pointed ends it is the more neatness it will be. This indicates that the weavers intend to use the smaller and thinner yarns with the not so many thread counts. Colouring and proportion of the patterns are also very important. Some weavers today are not fond of allowing the void in the pattern of *tin chok*. Colouring and proportion of the patterns are considered the tactic of the weavers to create a different pattern of the fabric originating from the main pattern. Hence one piece of *tin chok* fabric might be called differently according to the eyes of the beholders.





Fig 5.11 *Tin chok* type B (*tin chok lai kum*)

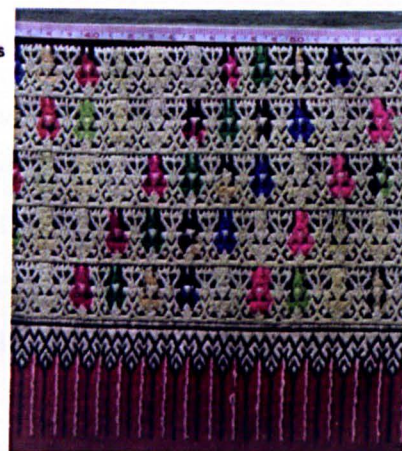


Fig 5.12 *tin chok lai kum*

## 2. *Tin chok* type B (*Tin chok lai kum*) ขึ้นต้นจากแบบลายกุ่ม

The specific feature of Mae Chaem *tin chok* that is different from the other fabric is there are no main elements of *kom* (lantern) โคม *kan* (bowl) ชัน and *hong nok* (bird room) ห้องนก but it has the grouping pattern connecting to *hang sapao* (boat tail) หางสะเปา such as *lainokkum* ลายนกกุ่ม *narkkum* นาคกุ่ม *noknornkum* นกนอนกุ่ม *lakornkum* ละคอนกุ่ม etc. Mae Chaem might be the one and only community in Chiangmai province who still inherits the traditional feature of *tin chok* ขึ้นต้นจาก weaving as well as their lifestyle that is closely bound to nature.

### 5.6 Additional *tin chok* motifs:

Application to products other than the sarong border pattern

In recent times the application of *tin chok* motifs has diversified into other products most noticeably the pillow, itself a traditional square or triangular prism shaped item, made from ticking or cores woven cotton, stuffed almost solid with cotton fibres. It is small by comparison to western pillows and owes its origins to China or Japan, although historically borders with China were not clearly delineated, as established earlier in this thesis.



Single motifs are woven in strips, cut into squares and appliquéd to the end cross section of the pillow or stitched as a band of several motifs around the circumference. (See figs 5.13 and 5.14)

Some of the pillow motifs appear in the tin chok sarong border patterns others do not although the reason for this is not known, it may however be because the tin chok border patterns carry, it is thought a religious (Buddhist) lifestyle ritualistic function, and thereby different or inappropriate symbolically to be synthesised with that which the others pillow motifs signify.

It is difficult to say also because some of the names of the pillow motifs also relate to the natural world as can be seen listed below alongside the motif image.



Fig 5.13 Mae chaem tin chok on pillow



# Sample Pillow motifs







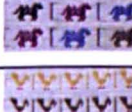





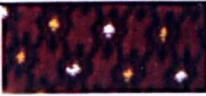
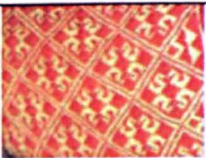




1		คนขี่ม้า Kon ke ma (Man riding horse)
2		ดอกจันทร์ Dork Jan (Flower)
3		จันทน์แปดกลีบ Jan-pad-keep (Eight pettled flower)
4		กูดกบ Kud-kob (frog)
5		จันทน์แปดกลีบ Jan-pad-keep (Eight pettled flower)
6		คนขี่ช้าง Kon kee chang (Man riding elephant)
7		ช้าง Chang (Elephant)
8		ลา La (Donkey)
9		ไก่ Kai (Chicken)
10		นก Nok (Bird)
11		เป็ด Ped (Duck)
12		นกกินปลาค้าง nok-norn-fun-pla (sleeping bird fish teeth)
13		กุยน้ำจืด Kud-puk-wan (water fern/cress)
14		นกกิน nok-norn (sleeping bird)
15		จันทน์แปดกลีบ Jan-pad-keep (Eight pettled flower)
16		กูดกบ Kud-kob (frog)
17		นกกิน nok-norn (sleeping bird)
18		หงส์ Hong-bee (swan (comprss))

Fig 5.14 Sample pillow motif name

## 5.7 Introduction to pattern analysis

The analysis of patterns was made possible – apart from the descriptive approach that has been applied to the analysis of Greek textiles until now – with the use of the method of geometric analysis by Woods and Hann. This method, based on the principles of crystallography, classifies patterns, including woven ones, based on their geometric symmetries on the plane. It constitutes an extremely valuable tool for this research because it enables the characterisation



of patterns into different classes or 'types', and therefore allows the establishment of the main or prevailing 'types' of a given sample of textiles, something not possible with descriptive analysis. This is important when the research incentive is the unveiling of the common structure of these 'types' of patterns rather than just the verification of the use of specific motifs.

The international classification and notation system of ornamentations divides all regularly repeating weaving ornaments into three classes: finite ornaments, mono-translational and di-translational ornaments. These three classes, depending on the combinations of the four basic symmetry operations, are subdivided into two, seven and 17 (only 12 for weaves) groups, respectively. Further explanation of the classification of ornaments is given by Washburn and Crowe. The textile patterns will be analysed and classified into these groups according to their symmetry.

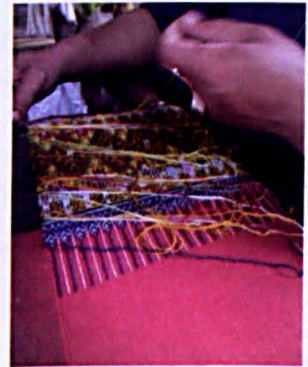


Fig 5.15 Back strap loom Fig 5.16 Loom shaft movements Fig 5.17 Inserted yarn by hand



Fig 5.18 Sample of *tin chok* motif 1



Fig 5.19 Sample of *tin chok* motif 2



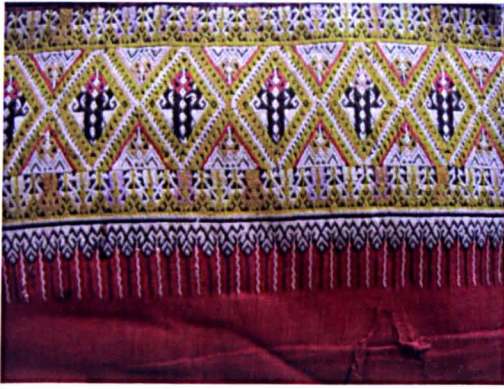


Fig 5.20 Motif in *tin chok* sarong from 1912      Fig5.21 Motif in *tin chok* sarong from 2008

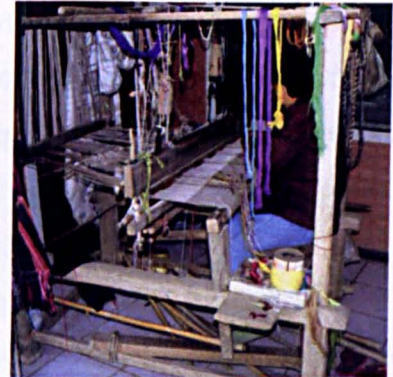


Fig 5.22 *Tin chok* pattern and motif is inserted by hand      Fig 5.23 Loom shaft movements

The type of pattern repeat on woven textiles is dependent on the type of loom used. When patterns are formed using loom shaft movements, then certain types of symmetries are obligatory, depending on the threading of the loom and the weave (lifting) plan. However, when a pattern and motif is inserted by hand, as in the *tin chok* techniques mainly used in the Mae Chaem (Fig 5.15 -5.23 ), then the repeat of the motif is a design decision, because there are no such restrictions in this type of weaving. Nevertheless in traditional weaving a preference for repeated patterns is observed. All the samples that are examined here have repeated patterns, and therefore conform to symmetries that can be analysed.

### Definitions:

For the purpose of this analysis and elsewhere in the thesis the following terms should variously be understood to relate to the meanings or contexts listed below:

**Motif:** A motif is not only a decorative device, image or design element but also a sign indicator of meaning, differentiated by the use of the term as an adjective. Its substitute synonyms therefore are associative terms. In the first instance the words symbol, emblem, logo, badge, colophon, diagram, model, decoration, illustration, effigy and ornament are often substituted. In relation to motif as sign indicator of meaning the words crest, ensign, insignia and token are used alongside the words signifier, slogan, icon, representation and so on. Therefore it can be understood that a motif does not exist as image but also as representation of an idea or thing ethereal, mythological or theoretical and rhetorical.

**Geometric:** The word is derived from and associated with the calculus or measurement of angles in mathematics named geometry; resultant diagrammatic drawings commonly referred to as geometric designs are basic designs. In textile design, specifically weaving, where horizontal and vertical lines (warp and weft yarns) intersect to form cohesive structures, the resultant fabrics appear according to a design as a variety of geometric constructs often described in relation to nature eg: from small dots, fish egg dots, diagonals, crossed, triangles, diamond shape and squares. These basic designs are developed in relation to other motifs or symbols by combining and varying scale sometimes these resulting compositions are highly complex and imbued with significance and meaning.

**Animal:** The term animal is used here to differentiate designs, which consist of not only naturalistic depictions of animals and birds, that is the “real”, but also recreations of mythological entities relating to old beliefs of the Himmavanta or Himalayan religion and or folkloric morality tales. These often hybridise entities for example human birds to reinforce the notion of good and evil or ensuing moral dilemmas.

**Flower:** The floral designs consist of creeping vines, flowers and tree motifs, which reflect fertility of nature and their idealistic beauty.

**Miscellaneous man-made object:** Man-made artifacts are often depicted in indigenous crafts worldwide and therefore for the purpose of this research thesis

## Tin chok motif types and pattern

*Tin chok* weaving is what is generally known as an inlay technique usually applied to a plain base fabric as additional weft or warp threads creating a slightly raised geometric pattern used as a traditional boarder fabric which can be appliquéd to other fabric items. These fabric pieces approximately 95 cm x 160 cm are used in traditional Thai costumes such as a sarong or *pha sin*. The inlay (*tin*) woven at the border bottom (*chok*) is usually approximately 30cm deep when in the finished garment but when on the loom it is woven vertically and therefore might be produced in any length. The narrow width vertically woven cloth is applied to the sarong along its width. Therefore the sarong is a composite garment consisting three parts; the bottom *tin chok* the middle a plain weave *sin* body (*tou sin*) and the top or waist (*quo sin*) see fig 5. The border piece of woven inlay patterns is presented in two types: the *tin chok lai kom* and *tin chok lai kum*. The first pattern type combines six sub patterns, borders or stripes named from top to bottom 1. *hong nok* (bird room). 2. *kan*(bowl) 3. *kom* (lantern). 4. reverse *kan* (bowl). 5. *hong nok* (bird room). 6. *hangsapao* (boat tail). It is essential also to identify, understand and apply the technical methods, materials, development and historical context of the various weaving techniques because each impacts on the tangible and intangible quality of the woven specimen.

Most of the *tin chok* motifs are geometric, mainly abstract but including stylised variations of flowers, animals and human figures. The geometric shapes include diamonds, eight-pointed stars, symmetrical triangles and symmetrical flowers. Diamond shapes were found in one of the *tin chok* motifs.

The *tin chok* motifs are often found in decorative bands at the bottom of fabrics, such as sarongs. The more complex motifs, created by hand weavers over centuries, are virtually impossible to replicate in an automated process. The hand-weaving process is both time-consuming and labour-intensive.

Colour usage presents problems similar to automated weaving. In recent years there is a growing tendency to replace natural dyes with chemical dyes. This has

resulted in brighter, bolder patterns but is accompanied with a certain degree of loss of subtlety.

Therefore this research into the motifs and patterns will employ the geometric analysis method, which is based on crystallography, classifies patterns, according to their geometric symmetries on a 2D plane. Many of the patterns are symmetrical and the researcher will explore some of the psychological and cultural reasons for this fondness for symmetry in repeating pattern. Gestalt psychology tests offer an explanation not only of the preferences for symmetrically repeated patterns, but also for common symmetry preferences among different cultural contexts. They also provide a good defense of the argument posited by Riegl<sup>95</sup>, that symmetry in decoration derives from an internal human need for harmony and beauty, the same symmetry found in nature, as man in his decoration employs the same laws as nature.

Necessarily the collation of separate analysis of data relating to the design of tin chok border patterns takes into account the conclusions thus far as principles and together with criteria taken from literature (see previous chapters) applies a visual analysis firstly as underlying geometry then as motif elements and finally relating the oral testimony of weavers as naming related meaning all of these recorded on the template of the ten specimens selected from the

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<sup>95</sup> Alois Riegl (1858–1905) made pioneering contributions to the history of late Roman, 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch, and Baroque art. His impact on scholars, however, extended beyond art-historical circles into the fields of art theory, psychology, sociology, literary criticism, and philosophy. Margaret Olin utilises extensive archival material and the entire range of Riegl's published writings to locate his theory of representation in the Viennese and wider European intellectual context of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

< <http://religiousstudies.yale.edu/forms-representation-alois-riegls-theory-art> >



## 5.8 Differentiating colour from weave

In his classic textbook for weavers “Textile Design and Colour” William Watson<sup>96</sup> describes how by setting up a warp yarn order of contrasting stripes and weaving the same weft order, irrespective of weave structure such as twill or hopsack there would be a resultant pattern or motif appearance at the intersections equal in proportion and giving the illusion of a positive negative image. These visual illusion he named “colour and weave effects”<sup>97</sup> (see fig 5.25 below)

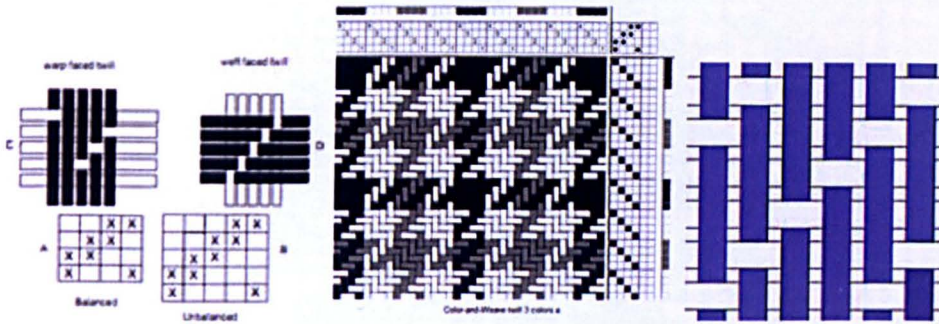


Fig 5.25 Left to right Design graph and visualisation of interlacing, outer edge colour order inner design graph and visual effect called “Hounds tooth”, extreme right depiction of yarn interlacing 3/1 twill

It is important to understand therefore in any analysis of fabric design, based upon Watson’s explanation, that there are three elements to consider namely, the structure or interlacing of yarns composing the fabric and the visual appearance or effect, both of which may constitute also the motif or motifs forming pattern. Watson’s example illustrates a 3/1 twill weave structure coloured in such a way as to create a “hounds tooth motif” repeated in multiples to produce the pattern. What needs to be determined in respect of the analysis of *tin chok* weaving is i) if the differences in visual appearance is due to weaving structural differences (e.g. inlaying different float lengths that is passing extra weft yarns over or under the

<sup>96</sup> Watson, W., *Textile design and colour elementary weaves and figured fabrics 2d ed., with an appendix on standard yarns, weaves and fabrics.* (Published by Longmans, Green and Co, London, New York, 1921) [http://www.cs.arizona.edu/patterns/weaving/books/ww\\_tdc\\_1.pdf](http://www.cs.arizona.edu/patterns/weaving/books/ww_tdc_1.pdf)

<sup>97</sup> < <http://talkingaboutweaving.blogspot.com.tr/2008/05/color-and-weave-three-colors.html> >



warp in differing ratios of length) or ii) to the judicious placement of colour and the naming of resulting motifs achieved in this way is composite of one or both.

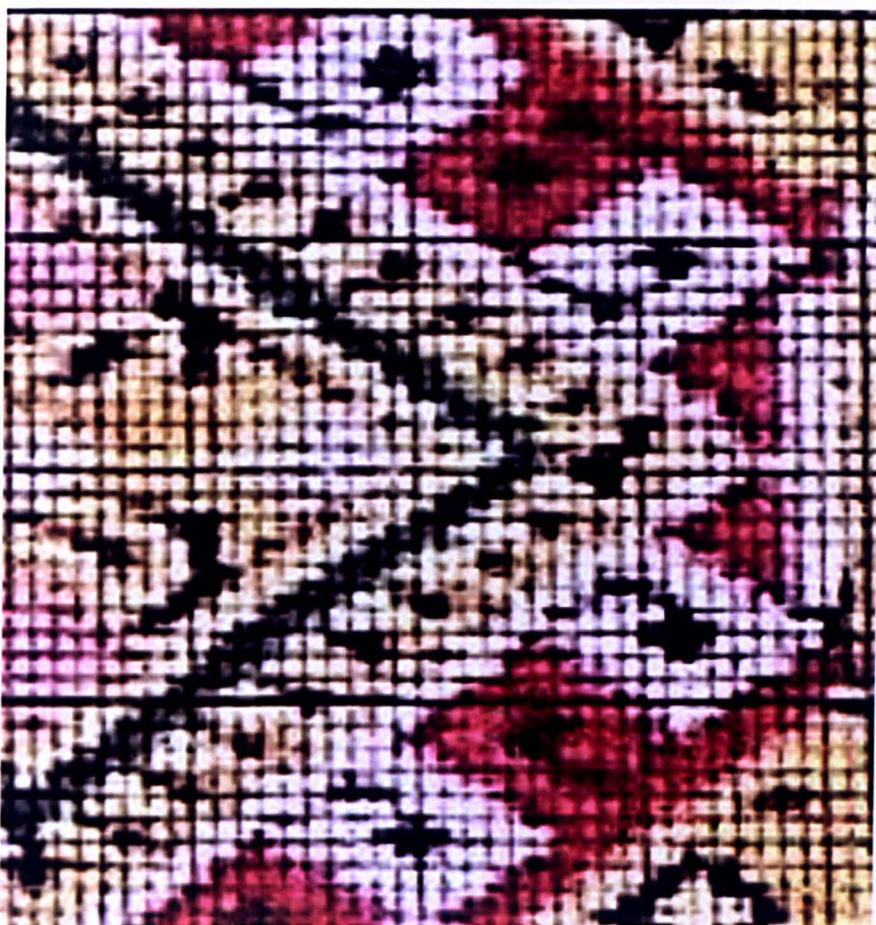


Fig 5.26 Enlargement illustrating the inlay floats and colour variation

Initial fabric analysis began with the over graphing of the *tin chok* woven sample chosen at random and its enlargement, (see fig 5.26) revealed that, in the inlay pattern areas of the textile, the finer quality (.5 or .25 mm) support yarns structure, or base cloth was hidden indicating that whatever structure was being used, the compositional ratio of difference in yarn diameter/thickness progressed the fabric evenly, but to a lesser advancement in the base cloth, thereby creating sufficient difference between bulk or package so as to result in a higher relief profile in the inlay yarns.



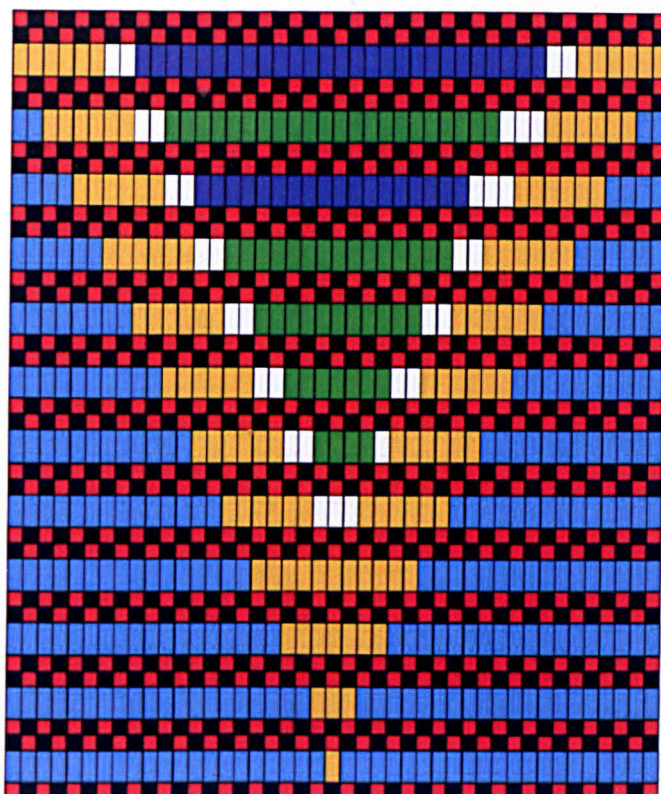


Fig 5.27 Inlay weaving structure graph

The plain weave construction produces the maximum interlacing possible in weaving and depending upon the fineness of the yarns used, the strongest structure with the minimum advancement of the total fabric.

Only two rows of plain weave threads between the single inlay rows is needed to bind the structure, because the inlay threads in progression produces the least interlacing, thereby the weakest structure, and cannot form cohesive structure of its self.

The plain weave structure therefore acts as a support or skeletal structure and provides the only cohesive element in tin chok textiles fabrication.

The diagram Fig 5.27 enlarges the graph resulting in an abstract representation of the structure indicating and making visible the underlying base structure interlacing and inlay presented in a code understood by most weavers of advanced fabric design.

The following graph is numbered line by line vertically and from the same corner starting point horizontally. The numbers indicate the specific weft and/or warp order sequence.

This enables any intersection to be located or indicated by number coordinates but it also enables the lifting of the warp allowing the weft or inlay to pass over or under as required to be identified by number. Thus a number sequence can be designated for each line of weaving irrespective of the intermittent placement of the inlay by colour. The colour changes are in the learning chant spoken in relation to the numbered lift. The colour number chant refers only to the inlay, since the plain weave, is achieved by the feet operating the loom peddles.

Thus in this example Fig5.28 the weavers memorise and in the weaving chant what may be understood as “recitation in ascending order sequence” as follows:

Row 1- “Plain red”

Row 2-“lift 21blue, lift 1 orange, lift 21blue”

Row 3- “Plain red”

Row 4- “Plain red”

Row 5-“lift 20 blue, lift 3 orange, lift 20 blue”

Row 6 “Plain red”

Row 7”Plain red”

Row 8”lift 18 blue, lift 7 orange , lift 18 blue”

Row 9 “Plain red”

Row 10 “Plain red”

Row 11 “Lift 16 blue, lift 11 orange, Lift 11 blue”

Row 12 “Plain red”

Row 13 “Plain red”

Row 14 “Lift 14 blue, lift 6 orange, lift 3, lift 6 orange, lift 14 blue”;

Row 15 “Plain” 16 “plain” and so on.

As the increased numbers of coloured inlay wefts increases the line chant is minimised to numbers and colours only or even just numbers because there

establishes itself a rhythm and a degree of automatism thus what follows is therefore:

R17-“12blue,6 orange,2 white,4 green,1 white,6 orange,12blue” Row 18 red, Row 19red; and so on until the pattern is at a point where because of the reflection of the geometry the number sequences are reversed and have to be chanted in declining order.

As previously stated the weaving process employs the insertion of extra wefts in a multiplicity of colours building up a shape line by line with each weft insertion floating or laying under or over the base cloth, like the embroidery or tapestry technique (see fig 5.8). Each weft insertion is purposely a series of over- or underplaying yarns twisted with the next to create an intermittent coloured but single line of weft. Each colour yarn is turns back on its natural colour and is held in place by a much thinner double weft base cloth yarn insertion twisted at the centre to progress equally of the warp where the colour of the base cloth changes from red to black.

Unlike colour and weave effects however the motif and pattern in *tin chok* weaving is built up line by line each colour shifting position relative to the total pattern area however unlike the colour and weave effect described by Watson results in a single patterned cloth the *tin chok* fabric is a three layered fabric of floating weft front and back of a plain weave base fabric which is unseen excepting for the “boat tail” selvedge.

The naming of the different motifs of *tin chok* weaving therefore can be understood to be related to visual appearance more than weaving structure although the under laying geometry of the requisite total border pattern has a part to play together with the traditions established. There are two helpful texts offering evaluation criteria

The contemporary analysis of patterns was made possible – apart from the descriptive approach that has been applied to the analysis of Greek textiles until now – with the use of the method of geometric analysis by Woods and Hann. This method, based on the principles of crystallography, classifies patterns, including

woven ones, based on their geometric symmetries on the plane. It constitutes an extremely valuable tool for this research because it enables the characterisation of patterns into different classes or 'types', and therefore allows the establishment of the main or prevailing 'types' of a given sample of textiles, something not possible with descriptive analysis. This is important when the research incentive is the unveiling of the common structure of these "types" of patterns

Symbol, Pattern and Symmetry: the Cultural Significance of Structure by BG Thomas and Michael A Hann investigates how pattern and symbol has functioned in visual arts, exploring how connections and comparisons in geometrical pattern can be made across different cultures and how the significance of these designs has influenced craft throughout history. However it is their pioneering work in the conceptual developments in the analysis of pattern: part one the identification of fundamental geometrical elements and part two the application of the principles of symmetry.

Symmetry: A Review of Fundamental Concepts Four symmetry operations are of importance in the context of two-dimensional designs: translation, rotation, reflection and glide-reflection (shown schematically in Figure 1). Translation allows a motif to undergo repetition vertically, horizontally, or diagonally at regular intervals while retaining the same orientation. Rotation allows a motif to undergo repetition at regular intervals round an imaginary fixed point (known as a centre of rotation). Reflection allows a motif to undergo repetition across an imaginary line, known as a reflection axis, producing a mirror image; this is characteristic of so-called bilateral symmetry. Glide-reflection allows a motif to be repeated in one action through a combination of translation and reflection, in association with a glide-reflection axis. Where motifs or patterns possess the same symmetry characteristics they are said to be of the same class, and may be classified accordingly; a full explanation was given by Hann and Thomson [1992].<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Thomas, B.G., and Hann, M.A. *Patterns in the Plane and Beyond: Symmetry in Two and Three Dimensions*, No. 37 in the *Ars Textrina* series, (published in association with the University of Leeds International Textiles Archive (ULITA), 2007)

< [http://ulita.leeds.ac.uk/docs/Ars\\_Textrina/Monographs/Patterns\\_in\\_the\\_Plane.pdf](http://ulita.leeds.ac.uk/docs/Ars_Textrina/Monographs/Patterns_in_the_Plane.pdf) >



5.9 *Tin chok* weaving pattern analysis sample/specimen

5.9.1 *Tin chok* pattern analysis sample 1 Code MC/LCA/TC/A022 Year 1908

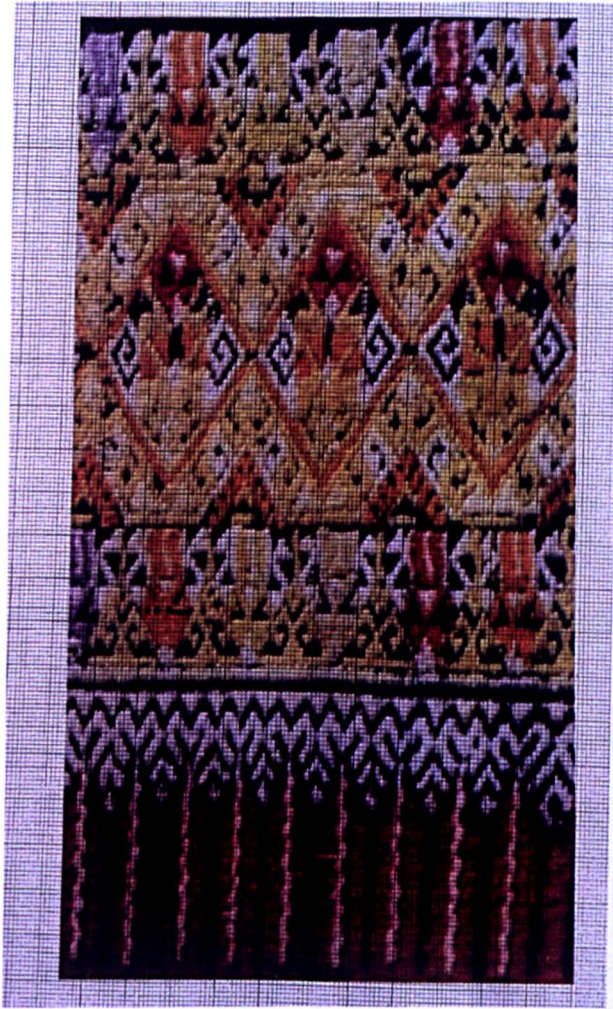


Fig 5.32 Analysis sample1 Code: MC/LCA/TC/A022

Having established in the preliminary discussion 5.8 that the yarn diameters used in *tin chok* weaving usually fall within an approximation of one millimetre the first stage of analysis begins by overlay of a millimetre graph on the first sample/specimen MC/LCA/TC/A022.

This procedure allows for an exact and precise measure of weft line by line the structure of the inlay pattern by dint of float length. Float length is the technical term which refers to the distance each coloured weft inlay yarn is passed over the warp yarn in a single passage relative to the next inlay colour. The line by line colour by colour graphing reveals how the structure was assembled which is traditionally formulated by the weavers according to a mental or remembered

counting numbers of warp yarns lifted in sequence. The silent mental recitation or chanting of the number sequence is both a focus for concentration or meditation for the weavers but also a part of the mystique which the teacher and student - in most cases mother and daughter - share.

The graphed design can be enumerated line by line both horizontally and vertically and by this means any if followed by the weavers any previous pattern can be reproduced without recourse to memory or chanting thus providing a visual record and weaving instruction easy to read with an elementary knowledge of weaving.(see fig 5.32)

The mapping of: MC/LCA/TC/A022 reveals a pattern repeat of 2cm/20m weft inlay insertions per half repeat, mirrored/reflection to a total of 4cm/40cm. This has a direct relationship to the underlying pattern geometry in so far as the full line motif as replication present a diamond/rhombus along the centre of the border which is 22.5 cm from top to bottom.

This the second stage of analysis requires a determination of the underlying geometry of the pattern achieved by visually following the graph matrix and outlining or mapping the motif or motifs deposition across the pattern area or field

A random delineation will quickly reveal the repetitions and begin to expose the classes of border pattern and the symmetry operations described by Hann and Thomson.

When this operation is separately drafted out (see fig 5.33below) it can be seen that sample/specimen has a pattern repeat of 4.8mm in reflection symmetry (F)

### **Underlying geometry**

This *tin chok* falls into the category “classic” and displays all the attendant characteristics of a Type A *tin chok* design, and it is 106 years old. The high quality, clear image and traditional colouring makes this a good example of its type and category. When delineating its motifs it can be seen that the underlying geometry used in the placement and construction of the pattern, reads as follows.



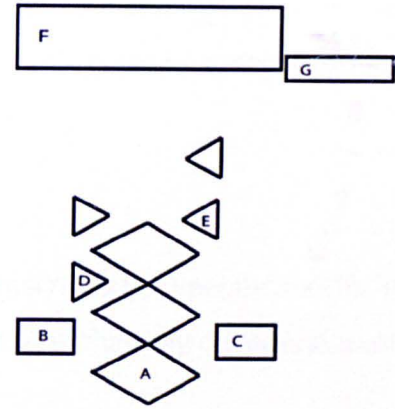


Fig 5.33 Locating motif placement over the pattern Fig 5.34 Isolating relative positions

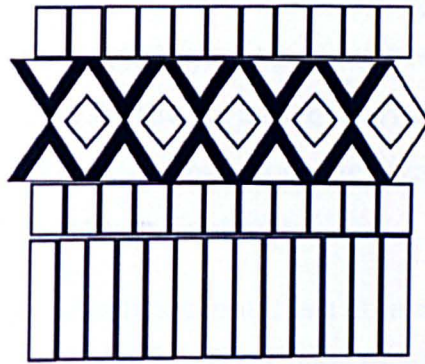


Fig 5.35 Underlying pattern geometry positions fragments assembled in repetition

Geometrical Shapes A,B,C,D, and E represent the separate motifs and the relative positions they occupy while G is the distinguishing sign of *tin chok* border pattern weaving, the ever present variously described as “boat tail” which is always placed at the edge of the design in a constant orientation to the border itself. (see fig 5.34)

### Structural elements

In this sample 1, A the diamond or lantern is constructed in reflection as also shown in G which is continuous along the border. (see fig 5.34)

D and E are reflected each side of the *kan* where as B and C are *hong nok* although placed at opposite sides of the lantern are aligned the in same direction.



Each motif is itself held in a specific geometric form although relative scale and position in the underlying geometry varies. The visual content/configuration of the geometric form may also be subject to variation.

### **Motifs delineation**

The following and third stage in analysis charts illustrates the specific motifs in MC/LCA/TC/A022 sample specimen and differentiates them by colloquial name.

As can be seen there are four distinct motifs 1 boat tail 2 swan released, with 3 bowl city reflected as 5 and finally the being duplicated also in the same orientation named bird room. If there is meaning or message to these names and relative position in the symmetry and geometry of the border pattern is discussed later however for the purpose of clarity and as a matter of record, the correct order of motif in this sample specimen reads bird room, bowl city, swan released, bowl city, bird room, boat tails.

This the second stage of analysis requires a determination of the underlying geometry of the pattern achieved by visually following the graph matrix and outlining or mapping the motif or motifs deposition across the pattern area or field. A random delineation will quickly reveal the repetitions and begin to expose the classes of border pattern and the symmetry operations described by Hann and Thomson.

When this operation is separately drafted out (see fig 5.33) it can be seen that sample/specimen has a repeat of 2x2.18cm in reflection symmetry (F) Geometrical Shapes A,B,C,D, and E represent the separate motifs and the relative positions they occupy while G is the distinguishing sign of *tin chok* border pattern weaving, the ever present variously described "tail" which is always placed at the edge of the design in a constant orientation to the border itself.

In this sample specimen A the diamond or lantern is constructed in reflection as also shown in G which is continuous along the border.

D and E are reflected each side of the lantern where as B and C although placed at opposite sides of the lantern are aligned in the same direction.

Each motif is itself held in a specific geometric form although relative scale and position in the underlying geometry varies. The visual content/configuration of the geometric form may also be subject to variation.

### Motifs

Following the third stage the following analysis chart illustrates the specific motifs in MC/LCA/TC/A022 sample specimen and differentiates them by colloquial name. (See fig 5.36)

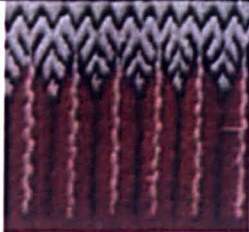




MC/LCA/TC/A022	Motif/Name	Remark
	หางสะเปา Hang-sa-pao (boat tail)	This motif is meaning and way of villager believed that you wear this sarong it will bring you to heaven after you die. Color use in hangsapao is black and white In buddish it means as good and bad
	หงส์ปล่อย Hong-ploy (swan(released))	Hong means swan Ploy means released It also means is you released swan to be free which is good karma
	ขันตะกอน Kan-lakorn (bowl city)	Lakorn or nakorn is the meaning of city It show how good relationship from orther town
	ห้องนก Hong-nok (bird room)	Hong means room Nok means bird bird room motif detail inside contain swan facing each and repetition
	ขันตะกอน (reverse) Kan-lakorn (bowl city)	Reverse Kan-lakorn Lakorn or nakorn is the meaning of city It show how good relationship from orther town

Fig 5.36 Motif chart Code: MC/LCA/TC/A022

As can be seen there are four distinct motifs 1 boat tail 2 swan released, with 3 bowl city reflected as 5 and finally the being duplicated also in the same

orientation named bird room. If there is meaning or message to these names and relative position in the symmetry and geometry of the border pattern is discussed later however for the purpose of clarity and as a matter of record, the correct order of motif in this sample specimen reads: Bird room, bowl city, swan released, bowl city, bird room, and boat tails.

### **Significance meaning**

It may be useful to think of these collective motifs not so much as short narratives but rather in journalistic terms as “banner headlines” which direct your attention to a deeper and lengthier “rich text narratives”, located elsewhere in scripture or other philosophical writings or ancient ritualistic ceremonies half remembered.

The oral interview with the weavers suggest almost unanimously that the meaning of these motifs, and thereby collectively as patterns, refers not only to nature and the natural environment but also to the Buddhist religion and or its philosophy/theology and or its associated religions of Hinduism and Confucianism both the religions of neighbours, however they seem unable to be specific, therefore neither can this analysis.

### **Speculation**

Generally speaking speculation in analysis is not correct but in this instance where analysis incorporates interpretation there may be an allowance made to the extent that other information may be acceptable as context which may impact after further research.

Buddhism in Thailand is a hybrid form, incorporating some of the mythology of Hinduism, as is evidenced by a visit to the Thai temple where, there are many representations of Hindu deity. In both religions there are sacred symbols which represent the values, virtues or otherwise of both natural and supernatural examples might be the swan and the dragon or serpent common images in East Asia wherever Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism coincide.

Many of these symbolic icons or motifs appear elsewhere in the art and artifacts of this region and are of the historical period of the Mae Chaem (Lanna descendents) *tin chok* weaving people.

They can be interpreted from a variety of religious perspectives which is why it is so confusing to analyse, but this mirroring the complexity of the heritage and history of the Mae Chaem people who as suggested in Chapter Two were caught up in territorial wars for centuries and resided variously in what is now China, Burma as well as this area of northern Thailand.

Some of the structure of the patterns of traditional *tin chok*, are also representational of Buddhist and other religion elements such as ritual objects. Common in many *tin chok* pattern structures is as well as the boat tail, the *kom* (lantern) contains light and therefore in this specific weaving represents enlightenment itself and ritual object used in Buddhist ceremony. Whatsoever is also represented within the lantern might also have a relational with the spiritual elements of enlightenment.

The *kom* also if in the form of a balloon can be lit and released into the air where it floats away taking all you bad luck and inhibitions with it, but if it fall or lands on another's house all that bad luck and inhibition will befall them.

*Kan* (ceremonial bowl), similarly imbues whatever is contained within the bowl the similar significance and might likewise be understood to be an offering of humanistic element or concepts such as beauty, in celebration of special Buddhist ceremonial days relating to the Buddha's enlightenment, such as moon day.

*Hang sapao* (boat tail) is representational of the last journey of life towards death and the last resting place over the water. And also this boat will take you to heaven.

The swan often depicted in *tin chok* weaving as in this example signifies different things according to its specific depiction for example whether it is about to fly, or its size and demeanour.

The “swan released” in this specific *tin chok* sample is a particular type of representation which denotes in Buddhism the liberation of all that the swan represents. According to some these elements are:  
Love, Grace, Union, Purity, Beauty, Dreams, Balance, Elegance, Partnership, and Transformation

### **Summary**

Given this perspective on the understanding of the cultural significance of the *tin chok* design lends greater meaning when it is metaphorically referred to as a “banner headline” leading to a narrative rather than a narrative embedded in the textile fabric itself. In order to make more sense of these designs it is necessary to have an in-depth scholarly understanding of the culture demanding further research outside the scope of this thesis.

In the analysis of this sample it has become clear that it is designed to a high degree of sophistication notwithstanding the high degree of craftsmanship in the making. This sample is both classic in its traditional demonstrating the lantern and bowl structure following the underlying geometry and utilising the colour palette discussed earlier.

It displays the A type characteristics also referred to previously and therefore justifies its quality standard classic.

The analysis of sample specimen's two to 11 will necessarily be shortened because much of the data detail is similar or the same, and therefore this analysis will focus upon stages one, two and three data headings. The “significance and meaning” sections together with those of “speculations” will be taken forward into the final analysis discussion later in this chapter



### 5.9.2 *Tin chok* pattern analysis sample 2 Code: MC/LCA/TC/B025

Year 1928



Fig 5.37 Analysis sample2 Code: MC/LCA/TC/B025

This sample MC/LCA/TC/B025 Year 1928 is a Type B and typical of what the weavers suggest is contemporary insofar as it departs from the traditional Type A. border pattern. It differs to the extent that there is no centre line lantern with bowl and bird room in the traditional manner instead the design relies for its

impact upon all over repetitions of the motif, which may be considered as a lantern by some, but is a diamond shape and its decorative contents.

The first stage analysis of this sample revealed that thread count in both directions was the same as Code MC/LCA/TC/A022 demonstrating a remarkable consistency in the quality of weaving and the materials used over the 20 year period. This would suggest a reliable supply chain in materials and the maintenance of quality weaving standards either as a result of same family hand craft production or maybe the same individual weaver. The dimensions of the motif are 1.4cm mirrored/reflection 2.8cm the resulting rhombus is 5.5cm the total pattern repeat area therefore is 2.8cmX 21.6cm.

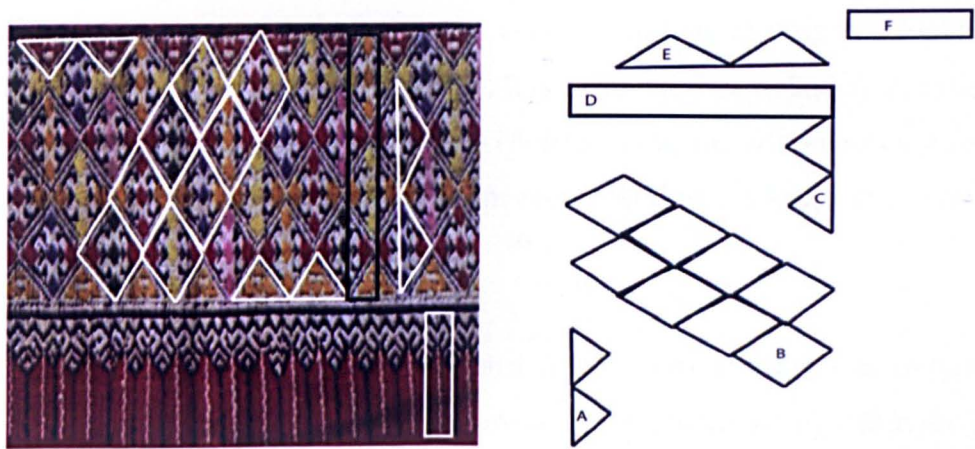


Fig 5.38 Locating motif placement over the pattern Fig 5.39 Isolating relative positions

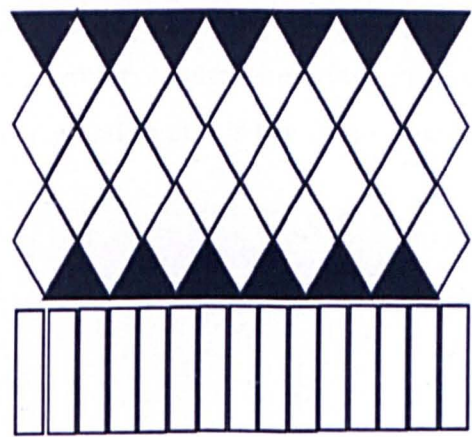


Fig 5.40 Underlying pattern geometry positions fragments assembled in repetition



The second stage analysis looks to the underlying geometry illustrated in Fig5.38 by isolating motif by line drawing its boundaries presents us with a specific geometric shape as in B, which shows the rhombus in two rows running diagonally. A, and C represent *kan-lakorn* (bowl city) and is placed in reflection top and bottom of the border. D represents the half total pattern discussed above, E the half rhombus, and F the boat tails. When all isolated repetitions are assembled the regular symmetrical geometry can be seen in fig5.39.

Stage three analysis has isolated the motifs and placed them in a chart labelling by name as before, indicating that this sample is made up of only three motifs namely, sleeping bird, bowl city and boat tails. Boat tails as we know has an embedded meaning believed by the villagers and pertaining to the last journey by boat after death towards heaven. It is essential they believed that the motif should be incorporated into the *tin chok* weaving and stitched as border to the sarong as a sign of belief but also a prayer to God to not forget to provide the requisite boat.

The key motif here is the sleeping bird, altered here and there by colour change details which are inserted in step repeat, the implication being that the harmony and tranquility is never complete or constant there are always minor disturbances. It is not clear, unless one refers to the narratives indicated; the precise significance of the sleeping bird but it has evidently a relationship with the desire for peaceful relations with one's neighbours. "Let sleeping dogs lie" comes to mind as a universal assertion of tolerance. Maybe the sleeping bird denotes the same aspiration and is the same metaphor.







MC/LCA/TC/B025	Motif/Name	Remark
	หางสะเปา Hang-sa-pao (boat tail)	This motif is meaning and way of villager believed that you wear this sarong it will bring you to heaven after you die. Color use in hangsapao is black and white in buddish it means as good and bad.
	นกนอน nok-norn (sleeping bird)	Nok means bird Norn mean sleeping But the motif detail not have any bird in their It a dimond shape with detail in geometric form.
	ขันละกอน Kan-lakorn (bowl city)	Kan means bowl. Lakorn or nakorn is the meaning of city it show how good relationship from orther town this kind of motif can have different
	ขันละกอน Kan-lakorn (bowl city)	Kan means bowl. Lakorn or nakorn is the meaning of city it show how good relationship from orther town this kind of motif can have different

Fig 5.41 Motif chart Code: MC/LCA/TC/B025

## Summary

The analysis shows that the distinguishing characteristics of this sample specimen MC/LCA/TC/B025 Year 1928 is its pattern structure and underlying geometry which as Type B departs from the traditional Type A five line motif traditional classic *tin chok* pattern in which it might be expected to have the apparatus of Buddhist religion namely the lantern, bird room and bowl. It is however well woven, conforming to the technical specification of weaving warp and weft and inlay threads as many other *tin chok* fabrics. In so far as motifs are concerned there are only two making a singular statement or headline relating to harmony with neighbours a gospel of tolerance.

### 5.9.3 *Tin chok* pattern analysis sample3 Code: MC/LCA/TC/B031

Year 1943

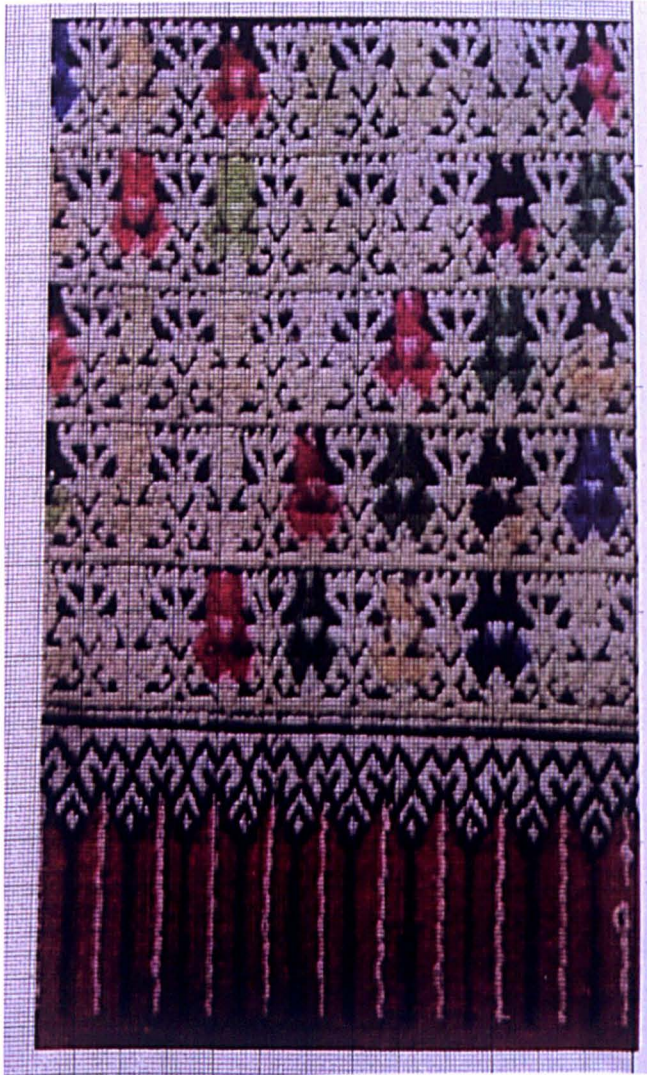


Fig 5.42 Analysis sample3 Code: MC/LCA/TC/B031

This sample MC/LCA/TC/B031 Year 1943 is like the preceding pattern a Type B and typical of what the weavers suggest is contemporary insofar as it departs from the traditional Type A. border pattern structures and devices.

**Stage one** like the previous analysis shows that this sample revealed the thread count in both directions to be the same as MC/LCA/TC/B025 Year 1928 demonstrating a remarkable consistency in the quality of weaving and the



materials used over the 15 year period. The graphing of the design was undertaken in the same way and allowed for accurate counting of the individual and collective number count to take place relatively quickly.

The total number of ends and picks in this fabric “pattern repeat” is: 20weft inlay, per 40picks of plain support fabric weft and 440 warp yarn ends. The visible patterning of inlay is therefore 2x22cm.

As can be seen from its appearance the design has one motif only aside from the mandatory boat tail, and thereby departs from the classical five motif border. The underlying geometry is therefore singularly simple.

Stage two of the analysis followed the same procedures - the motifs were isolated and are represented in Fig5.43 whereby the motifs are identified by white line drawing on the fabric sample. Step two is to create a black and white drawing of the relational and as can be seen Fig5.44 these are drawn as squares A and presented in a diagonal and are accompanied by B illustrating the shape of the repeat unit and C representing the boat tail motif. The special relation being established the final step is to draft out the total geometry which in this case is a square grid surmounting a series of rectangles in a single row . Colour is used at interval to provide interest in what is a single colour motif (see below).

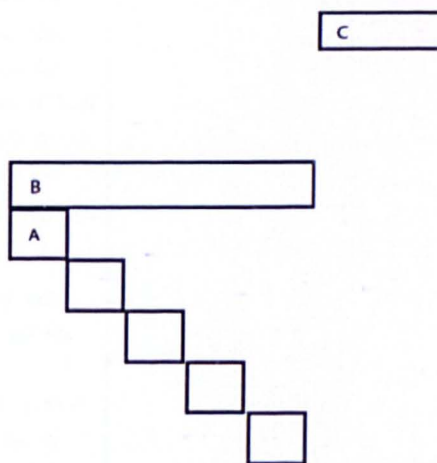
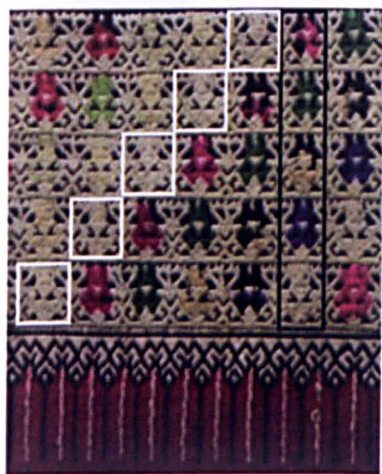


Fig 5.43 Locating motif placement over the pattern Fig 5.44 Isolating relative positions

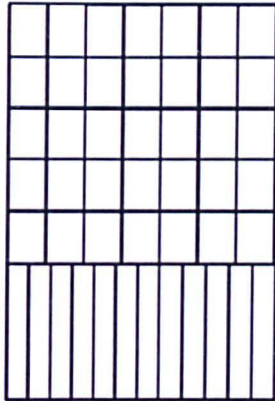


Fig 5.45 Underlying pattern geometry positions fragments assembled in repetition

Stage three is again concerned with separating the motifs and assigning titles. This sample specimen is even more minimal than the previous sample specimen MC/LCA/TC/B025 Year 1928 because there is a singular and monotonous distribution of the bird room motif. Whilst this motif is referential to the Buddhist religious ritual whereby, the offering in the temple of the release of a bird at certain times of year, is considered an act of virtuous devotion resulting in good karma, it is presented her in white the sign of purity. The white design is coloured at intervals with red, green yellow and blues all colours of significance to Buddhists: see chart below.



MC/LCA/TC/A031	Motif/Name	Remark
	หางปลา Hang-sa-pao (boat tail)	This motif is meaning and way of villager believed that you wear this sarong it will bring you to heaven after you die. Color use in hangsapao is black and white in buddish it means as good and bad.
	ห้องนก Hong-nok (bird room) Lai nok kum	Hong means room Nok means bird bird room motif detail inside contain swan facing each and repetition. But Hong nok when it repeted in four or five row in sarong tinchok will call Lai nok kum

Fig 5.46 Motif chart Code: MC/LCA/TC/B031



## Summary

This Type B sample specimen with its minimal repeat and set of motifs, seems to represent and or promote simplicity and by a single act of devotion as virtuous it is related to good karma and together with the boat tails suggests a virtuous life should ensure passage to heaven. This of course is speculative, but based on a deductive reasoning of evidence, which is both literature researched and first hand interviewed but also tacit as a Thai-born individual is undertaking this research.

### 5.9.4 *Tin chok* pattern analysis sample 4 MC/LCA/TC/B033

Year1938

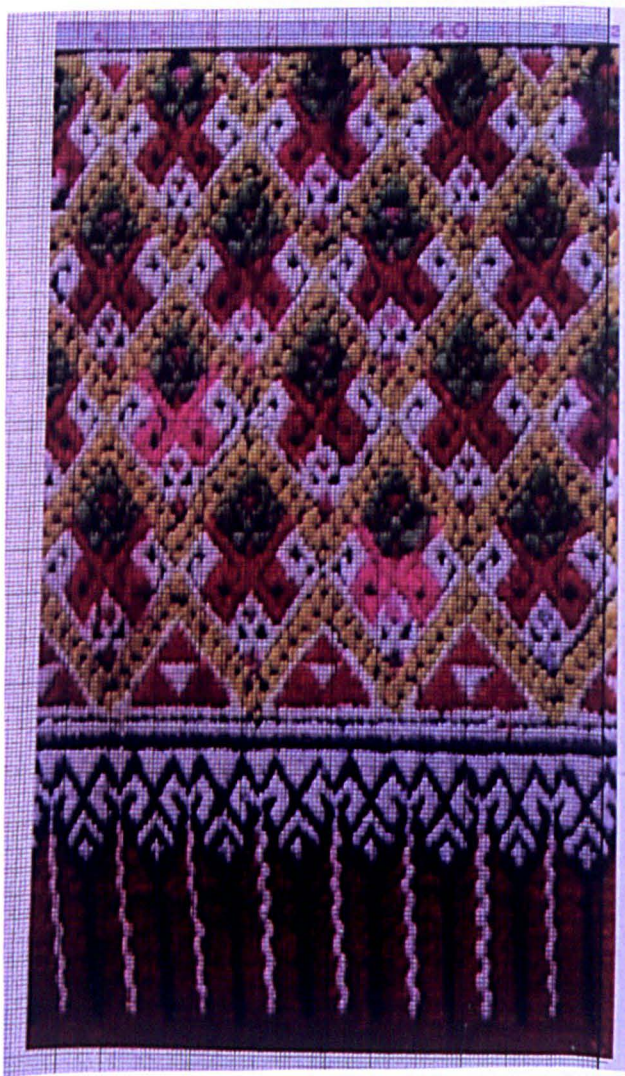


Fig 5.47 Analysis sample4 Code: MC/LCA/TC/B033

Following the same steps in analysis this sample specimen is a Type B *tin chok* however displaying four rows of motifs including boat tails. Graphing revealed the same average fabric quality in terms of material, yarn, settings and so on therefore this sample specimen is constructed similarly with the total number of ends and picks in this fabric “pattern repeat” is: 20weft inlay, per 40picks of plain support fabric weft and 440 warp yarn ends. The visible patterning of inlay is therefore 2x22cm.

Again it can be seen from the pattern that there is a single motif lantern city surrounded by bird head which is replicated over all the pattern.

The second stage analysis follows the same procedure whereby each single motif is delineated on the sample in white. In this case as can be seen Fig5.48 there are two motifs plus boat tail the second of which is *Seean* bowl.

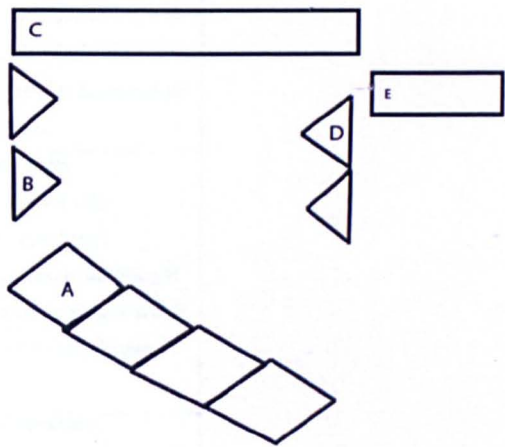


Fig 5.48 Locating motif placement over the pattern      Fig 5.49 Isolating relative positions

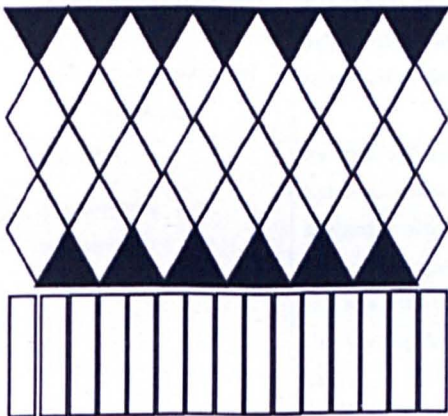


Fig 5.50 Underlying pattern geometry positions fragments assembled in repetition



The black and white drawing Fig5.49 places motif A in its proximity to itself with B and D in position mirrored/reflection, while C is representational of one repeat with a boat tail border. Fig5.50 therefore presents the complete geometrical plan or pattern design structure illustrating a bowl top and bottom of the border, the repetitive motif infill with the border finish at the bottom.

Stage three shows these to be *Seean* bowl, point down edging *kom-lakorn-huo-nok-kan-seean-lorm* (Lantern city surrounded by bird head) as all over pattern infil. *Seean* bowl forms the bottom of the border point uppermost and underneath the finish is again the boat tail.

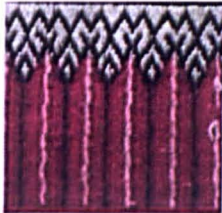
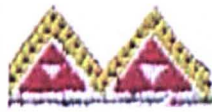


MC/LCA/TC/B033	Motif/Name	Remark
	หางสะเปา Hang-sa-pao (boat tail)	This motif's meaning and way of villager believed that you wear this sarong it will bring you to heaven after you die. Color use in hangsapao is black and white in buddish it means as good and bad.
	ขันเขียน kan-Seean (wooden bowl)	Kan means bowl Seean means wooden container with betel. With the purpose of using it as a welcome to visitors. It is also used to decorate the home
	โคมตะกอนหัวนกขันเขียน ค้อม Kom-lakorn-huo-nok-kan-seean-lorm (Latern city surround by bird head)	Kom means lantern Lakorn or nakorn is the meaning of city Huo nok means bird head Kan means bowl. Seean means wooden container with betel.
	ขันเขียน kan-Seean Reverse (wooden bowl)	Kan means bowl Seean means wooden container with betel. With the purpose of using it as a welcome to visitors. It is also used to decorate the home

Fig 5.51 Motif chart Code: MC/LCA/TC/B033



## Summary

This Type B sample specimen 4 although typical has some distinct characteristics in the manner and content of the messaging or creation of /or transformation of meaning. Attempting to interpreting the signifier to enable a clear and unambiguous understanding begins with the assigning of names in this instance

In descending order relative to the top or upper row the following was understood to be the formal order of the design and therefore the first row echoed throughout the design was the lantern containing birds head but also referencing the bowl in this instance a welcoming betel nut container. The boat tail alludes as we now know the anticipated journey to heaven.

The meaning is simple an strongly supports the notion of a special occasion fabric and domestic items such as the wooden betel nut bowls commemorative of the welcoming visitors ergo : if you are open and welcoming showing courtesy and respect to others then you secure your journey to heaven. Always hang out the welcome mat, might be the non-Buddhist ritualistic mantra.

### 5.9.5 *Tin chok* pattern analysis sample 5 MC/LCA/TC/A034

Year 1943

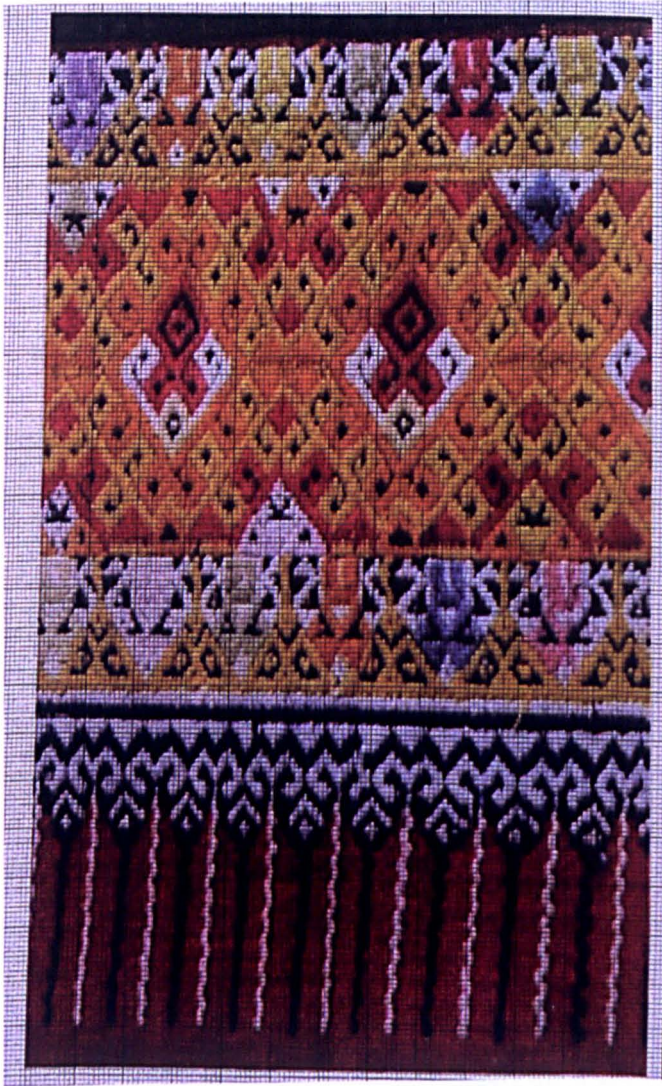


Fig 5.52 Analysis sample5 Code: MC/LCA/TC/A034

Produced in the same year as sample specimen three this example returns to the traditional design type A and displays the same standard construction and quality characteristics identified by the graphing process in as much as it: has the same average fabric quality in terms of material, yarn, settings and so on therefore this sample specimen is constructed similarly with the total number of ends and picks in this fabric “pattern repeat” is: 20weft inlay, per 40picks of plain support fabric weft and 440 warp yarn ends. The visible patterning of inlay is therefore 3x21cm.

The second stage analysis reveals the Fig5.53 motifs isolated to be the five placing the lantern in prominence. Fig5.54 shows the relational positions of the motifs with A bird room, B and D being bowl in reflection, E is bird room in same position as A whereas F indicates the integrated half pattern unit. G is the boat tail. The geometric elements are therefore square, triangle, diamond/ rhombus and two oblongs of differing proportions and scale. The third drawing assembles, the individual isolated but related geometric shapes/forms, in the design plan, and reveals the total underlying geometry. Interestingly it is not clear if the rhombus here butts up to the adjacent motif or if as is illustrated there is a void.

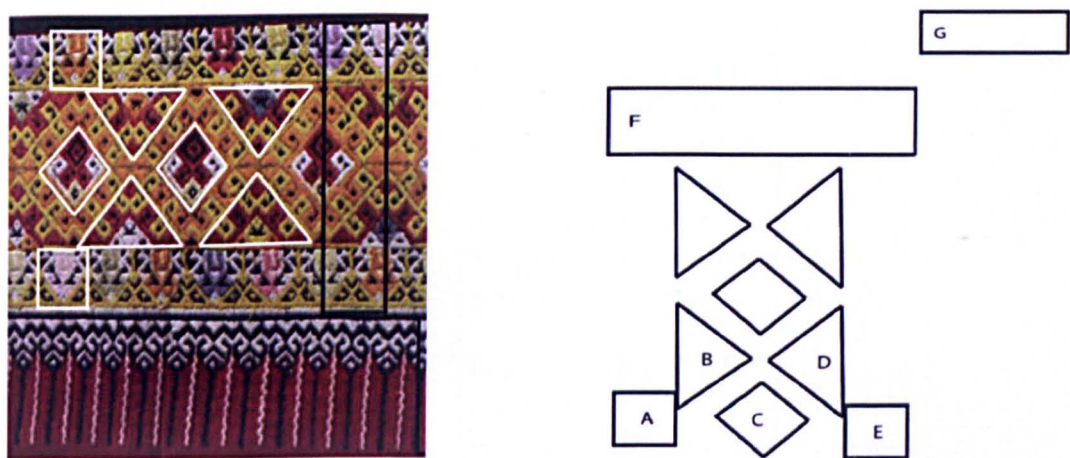


Fig 5.53 Locating motif placement over the pattern Fig 5.54 Isolating relative positions

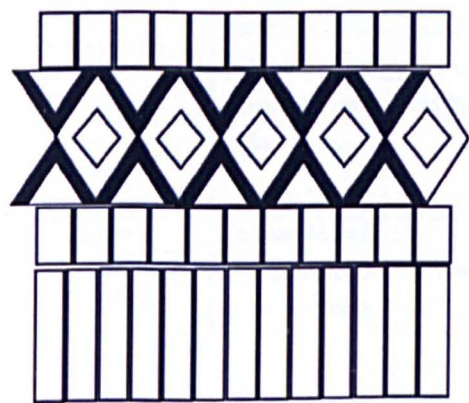


Fig 5.55 Underlying pattern geometry positions fragments assembled in repetition



Stage three analysis suggests that the motifs containers when placed in the geometric frame in descending order top to bottom, i.e. bird room, bowl subverted, lantern, bowl inverted ,bird room and boat tail prepare the specific meaning when the contents of the container (motifs within the geometric frame) is determined. In this case the substantive contents are, bird room, two swans facing, bowl contains half the name of the old city Chiangsan (duplicated top and bottom in reflection indicates good relations and a complete emblem, as balanced harmonic design) and lantern emphasis by use of the same full city emblem perhaps a wholeness or harmonic community. The boat tail emphasises if the epithet is achieved then the journey to heaven is attainable.






MC/LCA/TC/A034	Motif/Name	Remark
	หางสะเปา Hang-sa-pao (boat tail)	This motif is meaning and way of villager believed that you wear this sarong it will bring you to heaven after you die. Color use in hangsapao is black and white in buddish it means as good and bad.
	ห้องนก Hong-nok (bird room)	Hong means room Nok means bird bird room motif detail inside contain swan facing each and repetition.
	โคมตะกอน Kom-lakorn (city lantern)	Kom means lantern Lakorn or nakorn means city and this meaning is it show how good relationship from orther town.
	ขันตะกอน Kan-lakorn (bowl city)	Kan means bowl. Chiangsan means name of old city in northern Thai
	ขันตะกอน Kan-lakorn (bowl city)	Lakorn or nakorn is the meaning of city it show how good relationship from orther town

Fig 5.56 Motif chart Code: MC/LCA/TC/A034

## Summary

This classic sample type A is of high quality and is traditional, conveying a simple message encouraging harmony and good relations with city community. This is consistent with Buddhist ideology/philosophy/theology and indicates strongly that many if not all *tin chok* weaving is allegoric epithet.

### 5.9.6 *Tin chok* pattern analysis sample 6 Code: MC/LCA/TC/A036

Year 1943

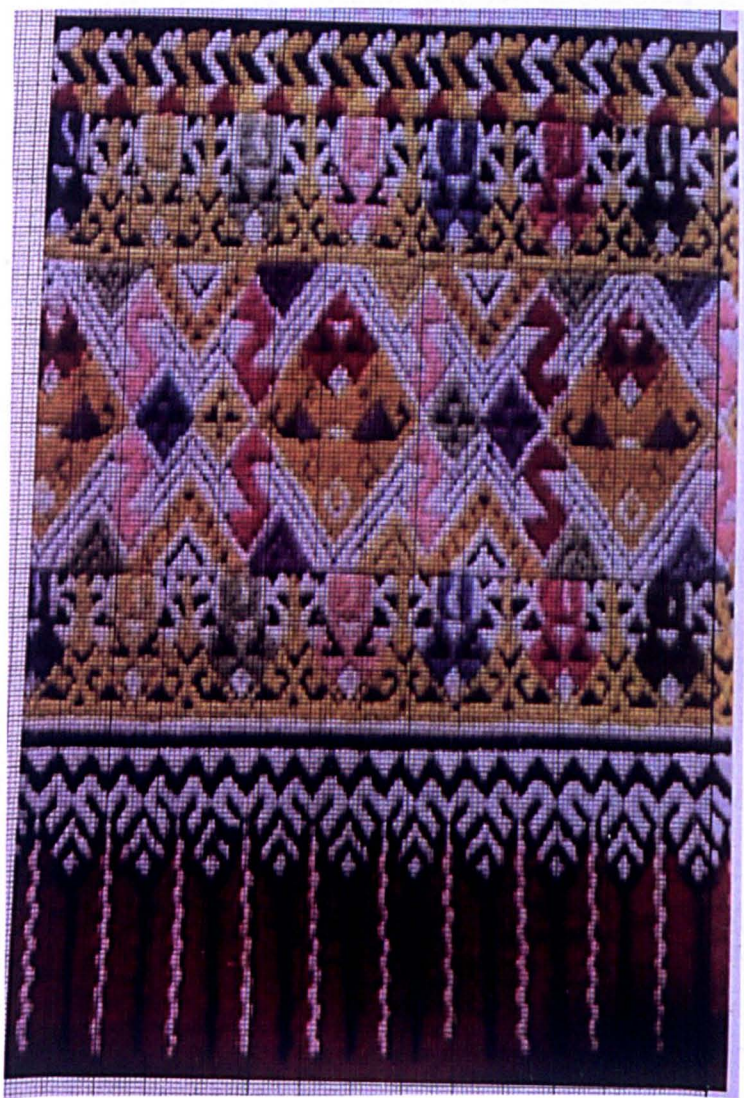


Fig 5.57 Analysis sample 6 Code: MC/LCA/TC/A036

The first stage analysis is of another Type A., sample specimen Code: MC/LCA/TC/A036 Year 1943 which shows a slight deviance from the classic in

its design. The fabrication however conforms to the standards and characteristics of *tin chok* weaving and is therefore constructed from the same yarn diameters and inlay technique with the total number of ends and picks in this fabric “pattern repeat” being 20weft inlay, per 40picks of plain support fabric weft and 440 warp yarn ends. The visible patterning of inlay is therefore 3x21.5cm.

Stage two analyses in fig5.58 reveals five or more depending if duplication is counted or not, designated areas, plus the obligatory boat tail oblong or motifs isolated. The relational drawing in fig5.59 shows small square F and J differentiated in the design by dint of colour, large square A, parallelogram B and C mirrored/ reflection, G and E rhombus reflected, H and I triangle flanked by smaller triangle reflected, K in fill oblong, L and D are the same orientation as A only differentiated by dint of colour differences and finally M the familiar oblong of boat tail. The isolated geometric of the motif containers when combined into the underlying design geometric and symmetry is illustrated in Fig5.60 It shows in descending order top to bottom small square, large square, alternate small, large and small triangles, rhombus flanked by reflection parallelogram, repeated alternate small, large and small triangles, and large square with same orientation as first row of squares and finally the oblong. The only area/geometric shape/motif not repeated in the total border design is the small square row and the reason for this may be explained in the content analysis relative to the message or meaning to be conveyed. The void area between H and I contains images/representations (see chart fig 5.61) and this introduces into this analysis the possibility that in some cases there may be a background significance whereby additional subliminal meanings are presented.



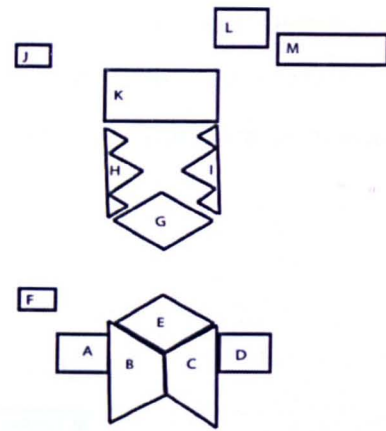


Fig 5.58 Locating motif placement over the pattern Fig 5.59 Isolating relative positions

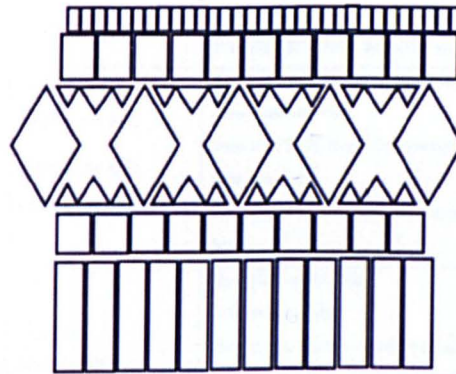


Fig 5.60 Underlying pattern geometry positions fragments assembled in repetition

Stage three analysis names containers and contents and suggests meaning, relative to the data collected and from oral interview data analysis, resides inside the containers in other words, that in which offerings are made in the temple for example the bowl are mere receptacle what matters is the offering itself.

The small square in the underlying geometry of the design top row F shows the “hook pattern” differentiated here from the swan motif but which may hold similar meaning of “consistency” and/or “continuity”.

The large square represents the container bird room of which the contents are differentiated by colour changes maybe suggesting different cultures.

The alternating large and small triangles are the bowl and contents which refer to the old (large) city of Chiangsan and (small) may be the village where the *tin chok* is made.



The rhombus lantern contains *kan sam elle* which is a representation of a swan. The void surrounding the lantern is designed and contains representations of the swan reflected and flipped. This is thought to have a meaning which reinforces the other contained meanings.








MC/LCA/TC/A036	Motif/Name	Remark
	หางตะเภา Hang-sa-pao (boat tail)	This motif is meaning and way of villeger believed that you wear this sarong it will bring you to heaven after you die. Color use in hangsapao is black and white in buddish it means as good and bad.
	ขันสามแนว Kan-sam-elle (Three bowl)	Kan sam elle is the motif in kom Kan means bowl Sam elle in this motif mean three line in motif The motif have swan between kom
	ห้องนก Hong-nok (bird room)	Hong means room Nok means bird bird room motif detail inside contain swan facing each and repetition.
	ขอไล่ Kor-lai (hook pattern)	Kor means hook Lai means keep going or go away
	ขันช้างแสน Kan- Chiangsan (Chiangsan bow)	Kan means bowl. Chiangsan means name of old city in northern Thai
	ขันช้างแสน Kan- Chiangsan (Chiangsan bow) (reverse)	Kan means bowl. Chiangsan means name of old city in northern Thai
	หงส์ Hong (Swan)	Hong means swan r his motif is repeat in between kom

Fig 5.61 Motif chart Code: MC/LCA/TC/A036

## Summary

This sample specimen 6 seems, at first glance to be typical classic Type A design however on closer inspection it can be seen that another dimension is present and which offers an additional level of meaning. Apparent voids (see above chart fig 5.61 bottom marked *hong swan*) in the underlying geometry are negative spaces in which to write additional motifs, images or decoration.

It is not known if *tin chok* weaving of this distinction were common but the least that can be said is that it represents, yet another quality of hand writing or weaver's signature. The analysis of meaning, relative to containers and contents including the voids in this sample specimen would suggest, (Hooks): Keep going or a perpetual journey or migration, Bird room: constancy high moral communion bowl: Old city emblem Chiangsan, lantern: iterates three void swans facing outwards, openness and welcoming bowl Old City emblem bird room constancy and high moral communion boat tail secures journey to heaven.

A speculation: that if the order of pattern elements top to bottom of the border design is an intended order for reading the meaning then the meaning here may be; In the endless journey to enlightenment or the old city of origin, remember the three elements and you will be welcomed with openness if you are high in morals and constancy and heaven will be open to you.

### 5.9.7 *Tin chok* pattern analysis sample 7 MC/LCA/TC/ A037

Year 1943

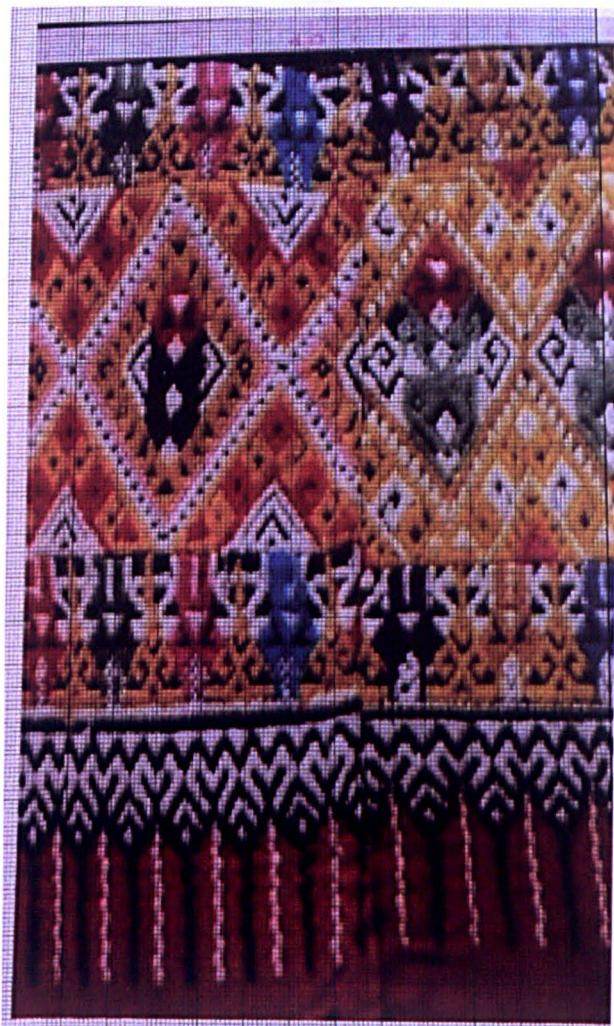


Fig 5.62 Analysis sample7 Code: MC/LCA/TC/A037

The first stage another classic A. Type *tin chok* fabric follows the traditions and is of the expected design and fabrication quality as it has the same average fabric quality as the other sample specimens examined in terms of material, yarn, settings and so on therefore this sample specimen is constructed similarly with the total number of ends and picks in this fabric “pattern repeat” is: 20weft inlay, per 40picks of plain support fabric weft and 440 warp yarn ends. The visible patterning of inlay is therefore 2x21.2cm.





Fig 5.63 Locating motif placement over the pattern

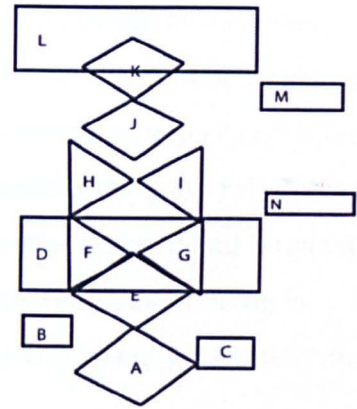


Fig 5.64 Isolating relative positions

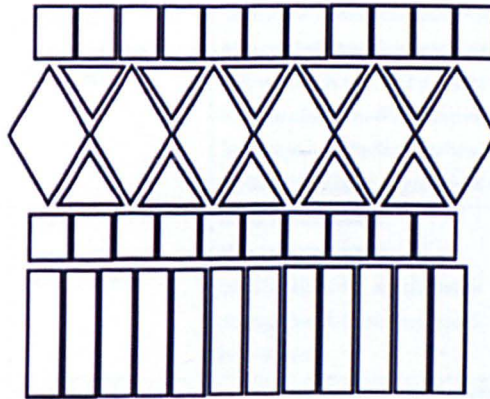


Fig 5.65 Underlying pattern geometry positions fragments assembled in repetition

Stage two analysis reveals when isolating the geometric frame for motifs Fig5.63 that there are six elements, it also shows in reference to Fig5.64 reflection of motifs horizontally and vertically as well as colour differentiations. There are also two different pattern repeats shown each with different motifs.

In Fig5.65 the complete underlying geometry is illustrated minus the reference to pattern repeat in which contents change and in descending order from top to bottom of the border pattern the containers are; Square repeated horizontally, triangle point down (reflection), rhombus repeated horizontally, and triangle point up (reflection), square repeated horizontally, and rectangle also repeated horizontally.

The underlying geometry as container, when given the names and contents offer a meaning relatively complex meaning /message which is as presented here in stage three of this analysis. The contents as motifs are top to bottom Fig5.66 Bird



room with containing two facing swans, colour differentiated at intervals, bowl offering good intercity relations, the lantern (rhombus) containing swan release an auspicious sign freedom/new beginnings/opportunities, whereas the second lantern refers to the old city, the bowl reflection repeats the good relations, and the bird room repeats the swans suggesting harmonious match and longevity in relations. Again the boat tail suggests that if this desired state of being is maintained then the outcome will be a secured journey to enlightenment and the afterlife in heaven.

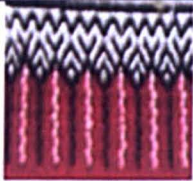







MC/LCA/TC/A037	Motif/Name	Remark
	หางสะเปา Hang-sa-pao (boat tail)	This motif is meaning and way of villager believed that you wear this sarong it will bring you to heaven after you die. Color use in hangsapao is black and white in buddish it means as good and bad.
	ห้องนก Hong-nok (bird room)	Hong means room Nok means bird bird room motif detail inside contain swan facing each and repetition.
	ขันตะกอน Kan-lakorn (bowl city)	Lakorn or nakorn is the meaning of city it show how good relationship from orther town
	โคมเขียนสนหงส์ดำ Kom-chiengsan-hong-dum (black swan Chiengsan latern)	Kom means lantern Chiangsan means name of old city in northern Thai Hong dum means black swan
	ขันตะกอน Kan-lakorn (bowl city)	Lakorn or nakorn is the meaning of city it show how good relationship from orther town
	หงส์ปล่อย Hong-ploy (swan(released))	Hong means swan Ploy means released It also means is you released swan to be free which is good karma
	ขอไ้ Kor-lai (hook pattern)	Kor means hook Lai means keep golmg or go away
	ขันเขียนสน Kan- Chiengsan (Chiengsan bow)	Kan means bowl. Chiangsan means name of old city in northern Thai

Fig 5.66 Motif chart Code: MC/LCA/TC/A037



## Summary

This epithet introduces the hook pattern as emblem of harmony and longevity in relations and is thereby very fitting to the traditions of the culture as represented by this good quality classical *tin chok* border pattern. The sophistication and subtlety of the design might be understood to mean: inter-city relations have auspicious sign of freedom/new beginnings/opportunities together with the old city good relations, harmonious match and longevity in relations assist journey to heaven.

### 5.9.8 *Tin chok* pattern analysis sample 8 MC/LCA/TC/ A040

Year 1923

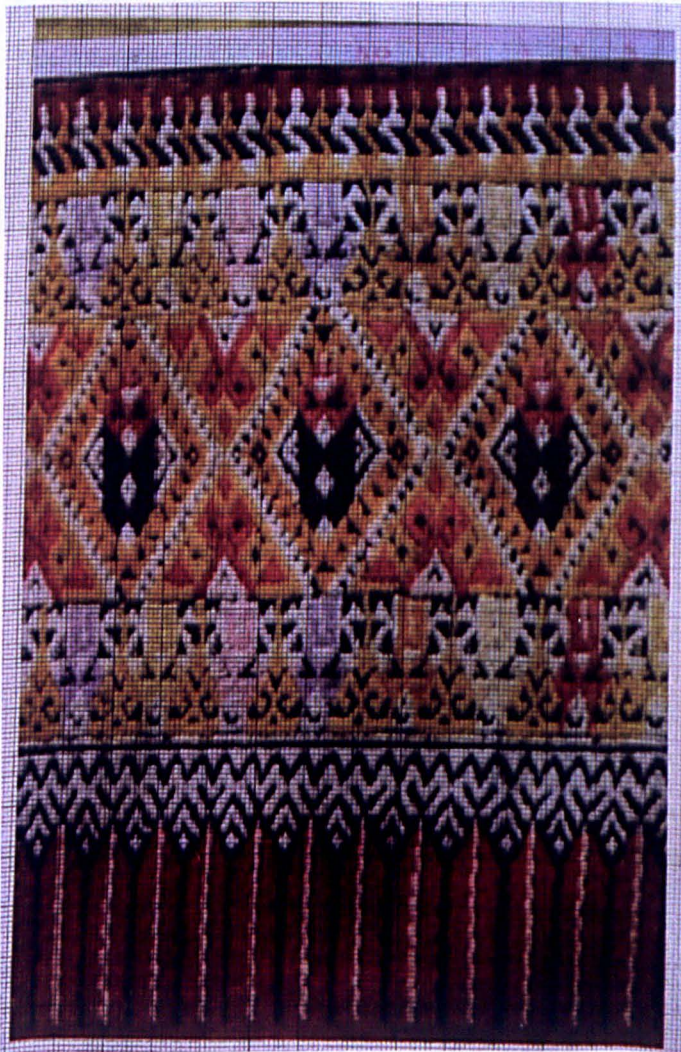


Fig 5.67 Analysis sample8 Code: MC/LCA/TC/A040



Preliminary graphing analysis reveals the standard fabrication specification in as much as it: has the same average fabric quality in terms of material, yarn, settings and so on therefore this sample specimen is constructed similarly with the total number of ends and picks in this fabric “pattern repeat” is: 20weft inlay, per 40picks of plain support fabric weft and 440 warp yarn ends. The visible patterning of inlay is therefore 2x20cm. Second stage analysis Fig5.68 identifying the individual motif profile indicates rhombus and triangle reflection as central dominant motif geometry in this border pattern design.

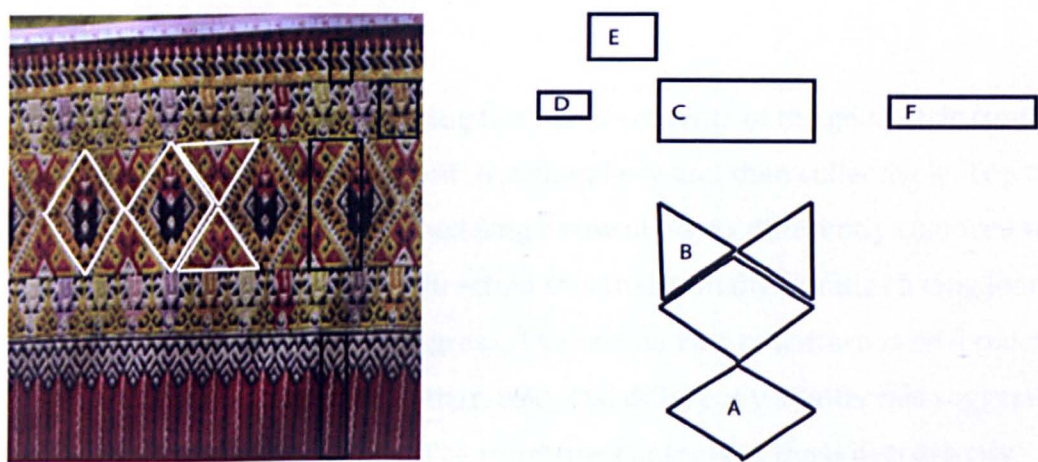


Fig 5.68 Locating motif placement over the pattern    Fig 5.69 Isolating relative positions

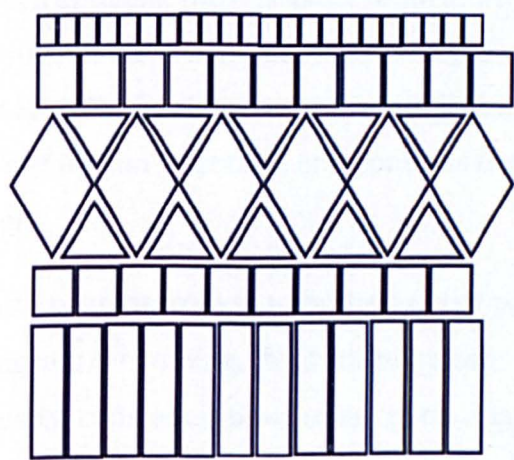


Fig 5.70 Underlying pattern geometry positions fragments assembled in repetition

The relational black and white drawing Fig5.69 indicates that there are six geometric elements that is three plus three scale differentiations. Oblongs, triangles and rhombus feature once again the latter being the centre point of the

border design. The small oblong D is singular however not shown the middle sized E is replicated in a second row whereas the long oblong is likewise singular in replication. C represents the half reflection pattern repeat connecting all motifs in reflection.

Fig 5.70 presents the total underlying geometry for this pattern in descending order top to bottom can be seen, small oblong, larger oblong, inverted triangle, rhombus, triangle reflection, medium oblong same alignment and finally at the bottom of the border the long version oblong . All these geometric figures are replicated horizontally.

The third stage analysis in naming the visual contents of the geometric container reveals the meanings of the motif first singularly and then collectively. Top to bottom the first is an uncontained single row of hooks differently coloured white and yellow facing in the same direction this traditionally signifies a long journey requiring consistency in its progress. The second row of pattern is bird room containing swans facing each other, coloured differently at intervals suggesting mutual support and harmony. The third row contents of the bowl are city emblem and the rhombus centre motif content is a black swan in the old city Chiangsan lantern emblem. Bowl is exact replication repeated on the next row of a reflection of the first bowl with identical contents extolling good relations/harmony. The final bird room row, falls immediately prior to the usual bottom row of replication boat tails, and contains the same swan motifs in the same orientation.

The rows of motif content from top to bottom of the pattern border cross section are (hook) going and/or coming, (bird room), swans facing, representing harmony, longevity, constancy, bowl offers good relations/peace, and lantern representing the old city contains a black swan representing deep mysteries. *Hong dum* means black swans indicating deep mysteries within us that are longing to be set free to express themselves creatively.(see fig 5.71)

Bowl is repeated as if to emphasise peace and bird room repeated to emphasise on constancy and devotion. Boat tail suggests that if the above epithet is adhered to times(coming or going) then the heavenly journey will be secured.







MC/LCA/TC/A040	Motif/Name	Remark
	หางสะปอ Hang-sa-pao (boat tail)	This motif is meaning and way of villager believed that you wear this sarong it will bring you to heaven after you die. Color use in hangsapao is black and white in buddish it means as good and bad.
	ห้องนก Hong-nok (bird room)	Hong means room Nok means bird bird room motif detail inside contain swan facing each and repetition.
	คอไล Kor-lai (hook pattern)	Kor means hook Lai means keep going or go away
	ขันละกอน Kan-lakorn (bowl city)	Lakorn or nakorn is the meaning of city it show how good relationship from orther town
	ขันละกอน Kan-lakorn (bowl city)	Lakorn or nakorn is the meaning of city it show how good relationship from orther town
	โคมเจียงนสนพงศ์ดำ Kom-chiangsan- hong-dum (black swan Chiangsan latern)	Kom means lantern Chiangsan means name of old city in northern Thai Hong dum means black swan

Fig 5.71 Motif chart Code: MC/LCA/TC/A040

### Summary

This typical classic Type A *tin chok* border pattern sample specemen 8 displays all the charecteristics of the five motif design. It conforms in its underlying geometry to many others but has a single line of uncontained hooks which is not mirror/refelected again th the design. Interpreting meaning according to semiotic theory requires that which is signified by a sign should have significance. Here significance which is derived from oral interview and is therefore culture-specific, might be understood to be long; a journey requiring consistency in its progress, mutual higher level of moral support and fortitude in harmony, the old city destination is mysterious and ominous therefore moral fortitude is needed if the enlightenment is to set the journey to heaven.



### 5.9.9 *Tin chok* pattern analysis sample 9 MC/LCA/TC/ A065

Year 1958

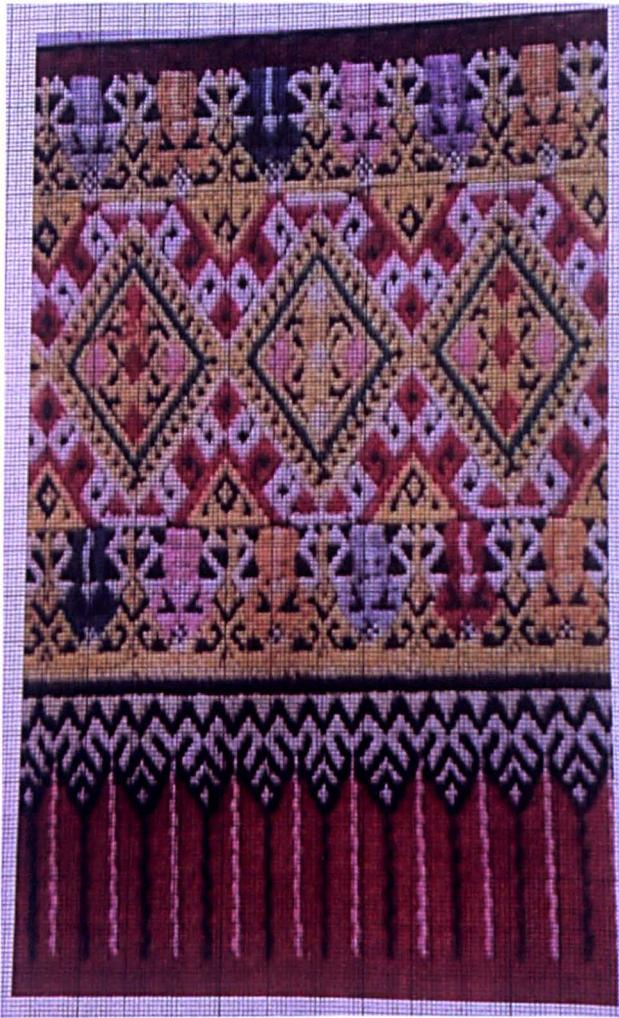


Fig 5.72 Analysis sample9 Code: MC/LCA/TC/A065

The transformative effects of colour placement, is seen in this analysis of sample specimen 9, which is a Type A classical design form of *tin chok* weaving. Example MC/LCA/TC/A065 Year 1958 retains all the physical characteristics of its type in terms of structure (inlay weaving), and materials 100% cotton. In stage one of the analyses the application of the graphic grid overlay to the precise scale digital image enabled the alignment of weft inlay yarns to the graph matrix allowing exact measurement and setting count revealing that the sample conforms averagely to the other sample a specimens. It has the same average fabric quality as the other sample specimens examined in terms of yarn, settings and so on therefore this sample specimen is constructed similarly with the total number of



ends and picks in this fabric “pattern repeat” is: 20weft inlay, per 40picks of plain support fabric weft and 440 warp yarn ends. The visible patterning of inlay is therefore 2x19.6cm.

Stage two likewise detected similarities justifying its Type A category in so far as Fig5.73 illustrates the motif geometry. Following the classic, scale and proportions, of design elements in their relational in terms of proportion Fig5.74 places the rhombus A in close proximity to triangles B and C which mirror/reflection each other either side. Square element D and E are the same unit differentiated only by colour, as is the similarly aligned J and colour differentiated I. F represents the half reflection repeat whereas the oblong K is the final edge border motif container.

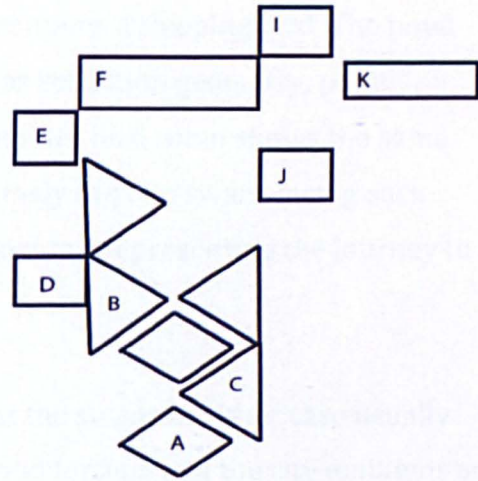
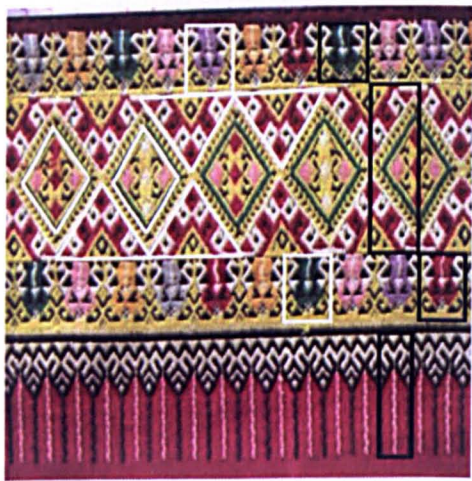


Fig 5.73 Locating motif placement over the pattern      Fig 5.74 Isolating relative positions

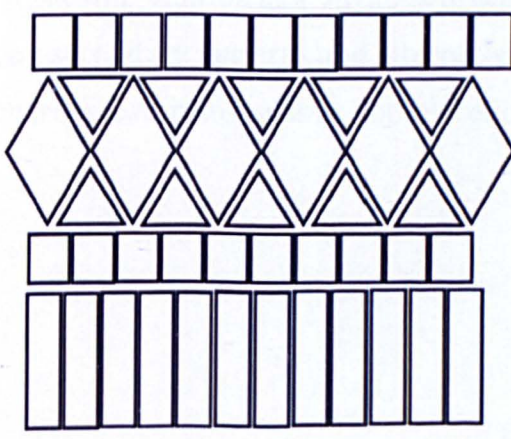


Fig 5.75 Underlying pattern geometry positions fragments assembled in repetition

Fig5.75 presents the complete geometric composition of this design looking similar to other in the Type category however this clear and simple underlying geometry is deceptive in what it allows in terms of colouration as the image reveals. The formal order of geometry repetition is from top to bottom of the drawing is squares, triangles point down, rhombus central, triangle reflection point up, squares, and the lower oblong, each container for motif content.

Stage three analysis considers contents relative to container and suggest that the first row of motifs within the underlying geometric element of the square is the bird room within which is two swans facing each other repeated in a sequence of colour changes.

The triangle bowl point down contains the city emblematic carrying it connotations, the central rhombus, lantern contains a sleeping bird. The bowl underneath again presents the city emblem as reflection geometry, point uppermost and the second square motif container bird room shows the same orientation, colour sequence and content namely the two swans facing each other. The final lowest oblong container is boat tail representing the journey to heaven.

The meaning of this design is not so apparent the swans in either case usually signify constancy, fidelity or harbingers of good fortune and the city emblems are likewise sign of harmonious relations however the sleeping bird in the lantern may be ominous suggesting caution as a virtuous precaution. The colour permutations set up secondary patterns and alternative geometries which may be intended and thereby a warning against complacency.








MC/LCA/TC/A065	Motif/Name	Remark
	หางสะปอ Hang-sa-pao (Boat tail)	This motif is meaning and way of villeger believed that you wear this sarong it will bring you to heaven after you die. Color use in hangsapao is black and white in buddish it means as good and bad.
	ห้องนก Hong-nok (bird room)	Hong means room Nok means bird bird room motif detail inside contain swan facing each and repetition.
	ขันละคอน Kan-lakorn (bowl city)	Lakorn or nakorn is the meaning of city it show how good relationship from orther town
	ขันละคอน Kan-lakorn (bowl city)	Lakorn or nakorn is the meaning of city it show how good relationship from orther town
	โคมนกนอน Kom-nok-norn (sleeping bird lantern)	Kom means lantern Nok means bird Norn mean sleeping But the motif detail not have any bird in their it a dimond shape with detail in geometric form.

Fig 5.76 Motif chart Code: MC/LCA/TC/A065

## Summary

This well executed standard Type A. sample specimen 9 seem more complex sending out contradictory messages it may well be accidental but it is unlikely it seems a precautionary epithet. Two swans facing usually signifies harmony fidelity the highest virtues in between, whereas the city bowl represents good relations however there is a sleeping bird reference also which is spiritual and messenger, however this bird is asleep. We can therefore interpret this meaning “The take not for granted the high moral good spiritual relations on your journey to heaven do not sleep always be alert.”



Year 1923

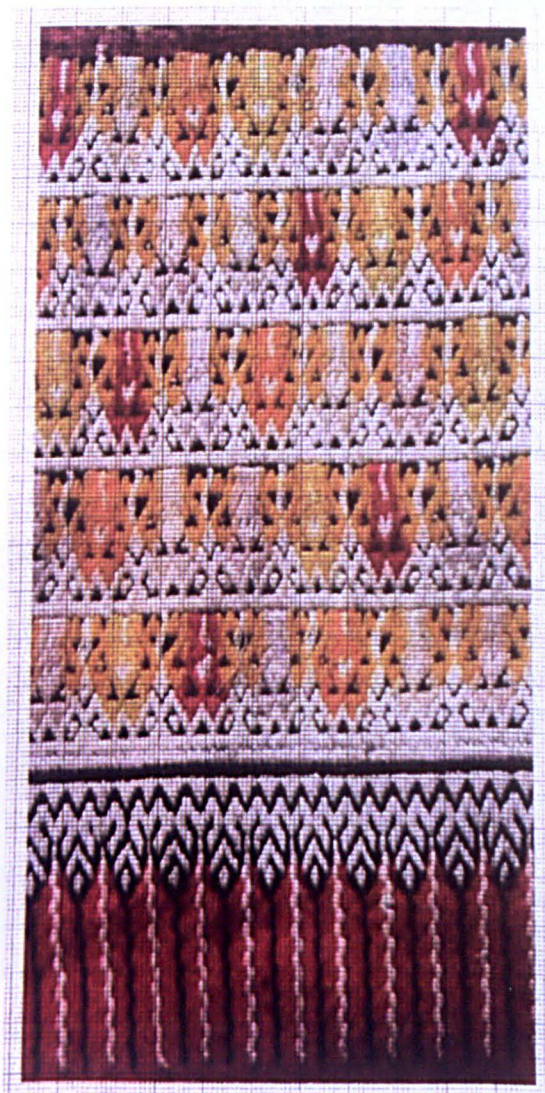


Fig 5.77 Analysis sample 10 Code: MC/LCA/TC/B039

Back to 1923 with this first stage analysis of this sample specimen 10 which conforms to the Type B *tin chok* border pattern design albeit a seemingly simple example the earliest of its kind in the collection of over 100 from which these samples were chosen as representative. This mono geometry example conforms to its physical and design type displaying the usual characteristics when its image was subjected to graphic matrix overlay alignment test in so far as it was revealed to have a total number of ends and picks in this fabric “pattern repeat”



being 20weft inlay, per 40picks of plain support fabric weft and 440 warp yarn ends. The visible patterning of inlay is therefore 1.6x22cm. The graphic overlay on a full scale digital image of the original sample fabric verifies the data given at oral interview and at site visit observations of *tin chok* weaving, ensuring accurate measurements.

Stage two evaluates the underlying geometry of the motif container and overall design by delineating the motifs on the digital image of the sample to scale. As shown in Fig5.78 the design comprised only two interlocking geometric elements: the square and the fringe edge oblong. Fig5.79 indicates in separate drawing the relationships between elements A and B to the half repeat reflection. The step repeat relates to coloration only because the structural geometry of the design can be seen in Fig5.80

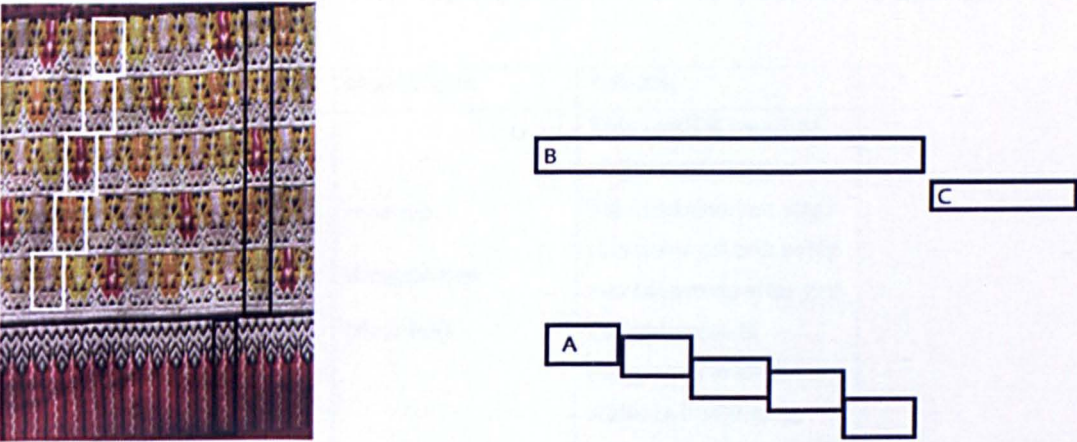


Fig 5.78 Locating motif placement over the pattern    Fig 5.79 Isolating relative positions

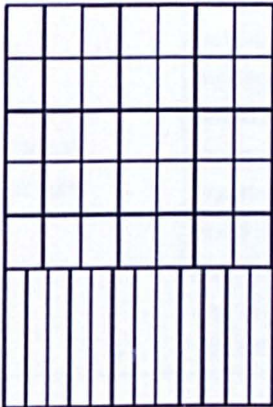


Fig 5.80 Underlying pattern geometry positions fragments assembled in repetition

Stage three analysis assesses meaning by a reference to interview and observational and documented data available in other chapters implicit rather than explicit given the time constraints volume of data that this task involves sufficient to say motif A would normally be a motif row bird room presented as discreet singular motif however in this case its replication as all over devise in the design gives considerable impact to its meaning which in this case is what is represented by two swans facing each other.

The swan being a special bird held in high regard as almost perfection in nature and lucky it seems this message of constancy also must be for a special event or ritual. The predominantly white (purity) colourations randomly touched with significant the Buddhist special yellow indicating rootedness and renunciation earth are all indicative of a ritual or rite of passage design. This may be dowry wear for young girls. The boat tail suggests a virtuous pathway to heaven.

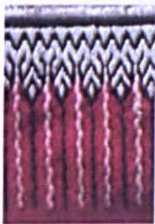

MC/LCA/TC/B039	Motif/Name	Remark
	<p>หางสะเปา</p> <p>Hang-sa-pao</p> <p>(Boat tail)</p>	<p>This motif is meaning and way of villeger believed that you wear this sarong it will bring you to heaven after you die. Color use in hangsapao is black and white in buddish it means as good and bad.</p>
	<p>ห้องนก</p> <p>Hong-nok</p> <p>(bird room)</p> <p>Lai nok kum</p>	<p>Hong means room Nok means bird bird room motif detail inside contain swan facing each and repetition. But Hong nok when it repeted in four or five row in sarong tinchok will call Lai nok kum</p>

Fig 5.81 Motif chart Code: MC/LCA/TC/B039



## Summary

Although speculative to some extent, deductive reasoning and contextual evidence suggests a correct interpretation of this sample specimen is so simple in design and so powerful in message it must be a special weave for a special occasion and the swans' demeanour, coupled with the colouring, are fairly conclusive evidence of an engagement or marriage epithet, also the *lakorn* motif means a good relationship with other towns.

### 5.9.11 *Tin chok* pattern analysis sample 11 Code: MC/LCA/TC/A016

Year 1833



Fig 5.82 Analysis sample 11 code: MC/LCA/TC/A016

This last sample specimen 11 to be analysed in the following three stages, is the oldest in the Mae Chaem learning centre collection dating back to 1833 and like some other examples thought once to have incorporated metallic threads.

While not in the best of condition this beautiful example of complex *tin chok* weaving would have in mint condition conformed to the standard Type A classic example. Although the treads are worn they all but exactly reach the standard under the application of the graphic grid overlay to the precise scale digital image enabled the alignment of weft inlay yarns to the graph matrix allowing exact measurement and setting count revealing that the sample conforms averagely to the other sample a specimens.

It has the same average fabric quality as the other sample specimens examined in terms of yarn, settings and so on therefore this sample specimen is constructed similarly with the total number of ends and picks in this fabric "pattern repeat" is: 20weft inlay, per 40picks of plain support fabric weft and 440 warp yarn ends. The visible patterning of inlay is therefore is difficult here because as can be seen from fig5.83 and 84 there is a double lanterns rhombus and a double larger irregular rhombus suggesting a hexagon which is not a true reflection nor uniform this peculiarity is discussed later

Stage one analysis shows geometric containers of motifs delineated on the sample specimen in white (see fig.5.84) indicating a composite potential derived from five classic elements. The rectangle, rhombus, triangle, hexagon, and oblong (elongated rectangle) are the design devices depicted in (see fig5.83) and important to the relational in underlying geometric composition.

The hexagon is, although inequilaterally constructed as container, specifically created to accommodate its motif contents. Thus in Fig 5.85 it can be seen that the border pattern is classic and accommodates, in its final lay out, a row of rectangles not bird room but rather, a *kud lai* meaning short strip pattern or border, which is extended or compressed in order to align to, the two by two rhombus/irregular hexagon.



Stage two evaluates the underlying geometry of the motif container and overall design by delineating the motifs on the digital image of the sample to scale. As shown in Fig5.83 the design comprised two *kom* geometric elements show in E and I on Fig5.84 indicates in separate drawing the relationships between elements B and E to the half repeat reflection, and G and I the same half repeat reflection. The repeat reference relates to colouration only because the structural geometry of the design can be seen in Fig5.85

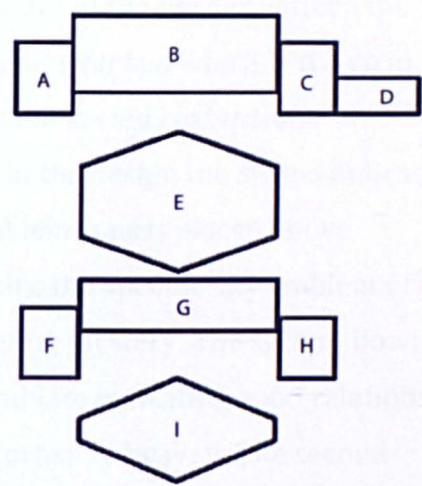
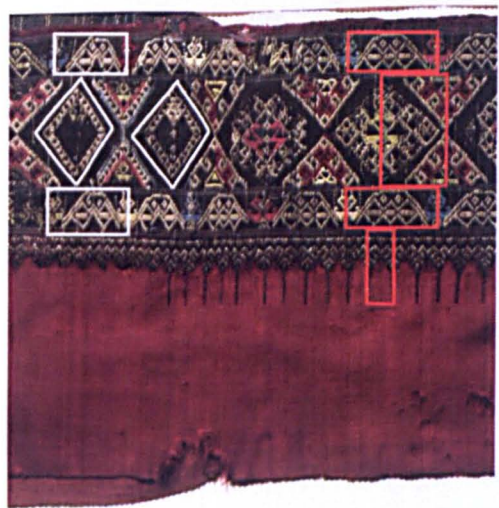


Fig 5.83 Locating motif placement over the pattern    Fig 5.84 Isolating relative positions

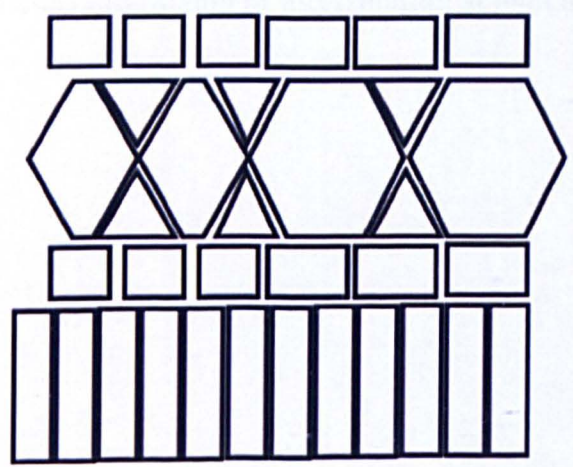


Fig 5.85 Underlying pattern geometry positions fragments assembled in repetition

Stage three analysis assesses meaning by a reference to interview, observational documented data available in other chapters, implicit rather than explicit - the descriptions do not cite specific items but are generalised. The reader is asked to take on trust the references do back up the assumptions made here and understand that, given the time constraints, volume of data that this task involved, all of the analysis is concentrated and focused upon the requirement of each of the stages.

In descending order from top to bottom (see fig 5.86) of the border pattern the containers or alternatives have the following meaning *lai kud* which is the strip open border has swans facing each other repeated in various extensions according to required fit, relative to other motifs in the design the swans indicate constancy in relations. A bowl containing city emblem is next placed above rhombus I the centre or bird lantern which contains the specific city emblem of Chiangsan the old city and a black swan representing mystery. The second bowl point uppermost contains the non-specific city emblem indicating good relations and the boat tail carries the same aspiration to journey to heaven. The second double repeat which is to the side follows the same top to bottom container contents sequence but the hexagon contained two swans facing each other signifying harmonious interaction or interrelation at high moral level.

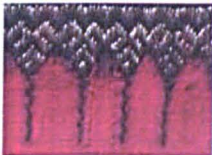


MC/LCA/TC/A016	Motif/Name	Remark
	หางสะเปา Hang-sa-pao (Boat tail)	This motif is meaning and way of villager believed that you wear this sarong it will bring you to heaven after you die. Color use in hangsapao is black and white in buddish it means as good and bad.
	ลายกุด Lai-kud (Short pattern)	Lai means pattern Kud means short But is detail of this motif have swan facing each other in between
	ขันละคอน Kan-lakorn (Bowl city)	Lakorn or nakorn is the meaning of city it show how good relationship from orther town
	โคมรูปนก Kom-loob-nok (Bird latern)	Kom means lantern Loob nok means bird image Detail inside of this motif have two swan facing each other
	โคมเชียงแสนหงส์ดำ Kom-chiangsan-hong-dum (black swan Chiengsan latern)	Kom means lantern Chiangsan means name of old city in northern Thai Hong dum means black swan
	ขันละคอน Kan-lakorn (bowl city)	Lakorn or nakorn is the meaning of city it show how good relationship from orther town

Fig 5.85 Motif chart Code: MC/LCA/TC/A016

## Summary

*Hong dum*, meaning black swans, indicate deep mysteries within us that are longing to be set free to express themselves creatively. Therefore this central theme in the design of sample specimen 11 would seem to suggest a meaning along the lines as follows: Constancy yet flexibility in relating to a mysterious old city, fosters good relations with other towns and inspires higher moral and creative expression values supporting the journey enlightenment or to heaven.



## 5.10 Summary conclusion

This chapter was concerned to present an analytical framework based upon criteria developed in the previous chapter and applied in using appropriate methods or tools discussed in chapter three specifically.

At the beginning of the chapter a rationale was argued justifying the approach exemplified by referencing what was generally known about the cultural context of *tin chok* weavers and their understanding of the meaning of their motifs.

The fabric types were reviewed in terms of different pattern appearance and the colouration as it impacted upon the visual impression. The impact of the use of colour was also discussed in relation to woven structures specifically the inlay technique as opposed to continuous yarn fabric structures, colour and weave effects.

The physical properties were discussed specifically in respect of the communication of structures by number or graphic plan/design, which had implications for the arrangement of motifs in a framework/formal order format of underlying pattern compositional geometry.

It was thought the key to understanding meaning was relational in as much as the technique followed a compositional geometry which located unit containers these containers were analogues to ritual religious objects bowl, bird room and so on and the decorative shapes and images which they contained were symbolic, representational images or motifs which had acknowledged nomenclature.

It was presented that these symbolic motifs were numerous in the context of the *tin chok* border pattern design but that there were many others not usually incorporated into this traditional form of weaving which was connected to religious allegory and ceremony.

The analysis that followed of eleven sample specimens therefore adopted three stage process focused upon the separation of the integrated aspects of the fabrication the first being the physical material and structural elements and the second the compositional geometry. The third and final stage which is focused

upon semiotics or the meaning of the motifs by means of naming, and thereby allowing for interpretation through the template, which was derived from oral interview data recording presented in direct relation to visual data realisations.

As a consequence of analysis by this process it was possible to arrive at a summarised statement which encapsulated the meaning of the sample specimens some time thought of as “banner headline” leading an expanded narrative or prophetic text or some time considered “allegoric epithet”.<sup>103</sup>

Typical examples of these allegoric epithetic interpretations follow; the first taken from the analysis of the oldest sample specimen, and the second from the newest.

*Tin chok* pattern analysis sample 11 Code: MC/LCA/TC/A016 Year 1833

Constancy yet flexibility in relation to a mysterious old city fosters good relations with other towns and inspires higher moral and creative expression values supporting the journey to enlightenment or to heaven.

*Tin chok* pattern analysis sample 9 chart Code: MC/LCA/TC/A065 year 1958

Take not for granted in search of high moral or spiritual relations on your journey to heaven, do not sleep always be alert.

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<sup>103</sup> Allegory: a poem, play, picture, etc., in which the apparent meaning of the characters and events is used to symbolize a deeper moral or spiritual meaning.

Epithet: An adjective or phrase expressing a quality or attribute regarded as characteristic of the person or thing mentioned. Use of such symbolism to illustrate truth or a moral



## Chapter 6 Conclusion

### 6.1 Introduction

I chose to research *tin chok* weaving because I was interested in creating a comprehensive digital archive and/or a catalogue of textiles which would be an asset and valuable resource for the teaching and learning of traditional Thai textiles. A preliminary visit to Mae Chaem in the north of Thailand led to awareness of a little researched weaving type and techniques called *tin chok*, which seemed an ideal candidate for research leading to documentation for preservation.

At a preliminary field study visit, there were some discussions about creeping urbanisation, because it was thought that the weaving skills were less available these days, owing to the young generation of sedentary village females were being enticed away from traditional lifestyles by the promise of socio-cultural but primarily economic improvement or alternative lifestyles, offered not too far away in the city where global economic and cultural encroachment are most apparent.

The preliminary investigation of *tin chok* textiles of Mae Chaem was undertaken from the Textiles Learning Centre in Mae Chaem's museum and library. It soon became apparent that the origins of *tin chok* are not recorded in Mae Chaem Learning Centre and details of motifs and pattern of *tin chok* had not been found apart from a small historical collection of 104 actual fabrics.

Primary objectives were set out after the initial visit to the area and the evaluation of *tin chok* textiles production for its social function and economic value in Mae Chaem were to be examined.

Initial oral interviews with the weavers to discuss the weaving process and technique also raised issues of sustainability and cultural continuity and relevance.

A literature search focusing on socio-cultural and economic contexts of craft production revealed a multiplicity of problems common to craftsmen and women globally but were also specifically located in relation to the socio-economic and cultural integration and identity phase of development of the host culture or grouping, often referred to as consciousness level of appreciation within in and outside the specific culture. The research questions were formulated in respect of the literature, but also in combination with those other questions raised by the community in my initial field research.

The resulting research questions seemed to cluster around the issues mentioned but there was also concerns expressed about the meaning and significance of the actual hand crafted product, qualities both tangible and intangible, because there appeared to be a knowledge loss within the weaving community which was seen as a contributory factor in tradition and identity, and intergenerational engagement fostering continuity.

Initial research activity conducted in the early stages of enquiry recorded in Chapter One of this thesis, centred on preliminary interviews at the Mae Cheam learning centre with their *tin chok* weavers who discussed their weaving technique. These discussions gave me a better understanding of the nature of the situation, heritage, environment and other problems, which enabled the formulation of a research plan and analysis methods discussed later in Chapter Three.

The existence of an antique to modern day collection of over 100 pieces of *tin chok* spanning a period from 1830 to 2013 which it was agreed should be incorporated into the research process was important not only to document and catalogue but also to be the subjected to analysis in order to evaluate design constraints, material construction, patterns and motifs, significance meaning and traditions over time. This research could not be undertaken in situation for reason of remote location therefore a digital photographic record of the collection material was undertaken.

The impromptu video and audio record made on the initial visit established the foundation for later digital documentation of a series of, semi structured oral history interviews conducted with, old and young expert *tin chok* weavers, and which enquired into their attitudes and values cultural perceptions but also unearthing stories with which to evaluate the recent changes in the village weaving culture.

This limited exercise raised questions about the reliability of knowledge transfer by telling, specifically the tendency to result in knowledge loss through lack of continual reinforcement by telling and re-telling but also because of memory lapses.

Video and audio recording of the weaving techniques and processes, and preliminary discussions with regard to the meaning and significance in *tin chok* motifs, history of culture, pattern changes, learning skill development and so on, was found obviously not, to have delivered the amount of valuable data available or that which might be needed for a PhD project. Therefore it was self-evident that further research was needed, and the conditions of its conducted, was factored into the research plan and also this thesis development. It should be restated here but is explained in chapter three that the research is both undertaken in relation to the submission of this PhD thesis but also in respect of the longer action research community based project.

## 6.2 Overview

The preliminary discussion of the community issue, found that there is a decline in the production and demand for *tin chok* weaving, and an inadequacy in the oral transmission of traditions not least weaving practices, generation to generation impacting on the community which is beginning to fragment.

What the preliminary research articulated in chapter two also verified previous postulation, that there appeared to be a gathering dislocation of culture traditional activity, from its meaning and contemporary significance, which was

also referred to, in the previous chapter one as an “alienation from the product of labour” and therefore it was seemingly being “at play” in this sub-cultural location or setting, was a realistic perception.

Given insights from literature in chapter 1.5-1-6 relating to the evolving levels of significance or changing consciousness of crafts, and the perception of the significance and meaning, of hand crafted objects, it was important to understand and introduce into the discussions the notion of progressive evolution, or a change in this instance being, a series of transitions according to circumstantial changes and/ or an adaptive process. The *tin chok* socio- cultural and economic situation might be understood to be in a stage of transition whereby, the level of affluence and aspiration enabled the craft product to continue being produced but not on, the scale of output or demand as was probable in some mythical golden period in the past.

Perceived either as in progression or in decline, in the significance and standing in national and regional society in Thailand, of the *tin chok* textile product and production, is dependent upon not only the individual viewpoint, but also on the actuality in a context within which the individual is a participant. Individual perception is important in both a positive and negative sensibility however the following chart was an attempt to take stock and try to objectify the problem by distilling the literature about the craft product in order to present a model which would help clarify what might be the situation impacting upon the *tin chok* weavers and based upon the historical context established.

Level	Function or significance of <i>tin chok</i> hand crafted textile product
Level one	Socio economic necessity or domestic utility
Level two	Domestic economy trade goods
Level three	Tribute to state or Monarch (taxation)
Level four	Monarchy/governmental remuneration Token of payment or currency
Level five	International trade commodity
Level six	Culture object (domestic, trade commission Tourist souvenir)

Fig 2.4 Level of function or significance of hand crafted products.

This being the case as a result of digesting the global crafts debate together with initial field work, it is considered in this thesis that *tin chok* textiles and makers illustrate by the historical record of changing purpose applications, an adaptive response to socio-cultural and economic change within the weaving community and Thai society. Further that in a negotiating an evaluation whereby the macro (national) situation impacts upon the micro (local) situation. Relative to the global context of craft production hypothesis that there are observable phases of level cultural or consciousness level of appreciation, and or perception of hand craft weaving products which are indicated in the chart (see Fig 2.4).

The initial research supported by a later literature review confirmed that there were sufficient knowledge gaps and perceptual issues raised to warrant a systematic research project needed to discover precisely what the current situation in terms of *tin chok* weaving culture was, in particular in relation to Mae Chaem. This would necessarily require a close involvement with the local community and the following chapter discusses the method and processes.



### 6.3 Organisation

The research at this point determined to, and focused upon supporting the traditional *chok* weaving, by developing a research strategy reported in chapter three and therefore discussed and evaluated interactive research methods which, it was thought might be compatible with an evolutionist approach together with an interdisciplinary data input system necessary for a continuing action research project.

Digital systems have been developed based on low cost software which it was decided would best enable traditional *chok* designs to be documented using modern methods which might have other useful applications later, such as teaching and learning. Importantly therefore the research has used this technology to create a digital record based upon historical examples of *tin chok* weaving, however this research does not focus on, record or analysis of the motifs and patterns in *tin chok* only. The perceptual issues and the teaching and learning issues are of equal importance.

In doing this research it was important to focus in detail on the meaning of the motifs and patterns used in the Mae Chaem district, in particular the *tin chok* traditional textiles and this was greatly assisted by the access given to the learning centre collection but what was also important was the analysis of the oral interview transcripts which are reported in Chapter 4.

### 6.4 Change

It was thought that the selective analysis of the antique collection might shed some light on the issue of the phases and levels of consciousness as they are impacted by changes, not only historic, social and economic changes, but also changes in relation to usage or social significance. Changes are inevitably reflected in design and resultant visual appearance.

The *tin chok* specimens in the collection on initial inspection showed signs that motifs had changed since the first example to the last a period covering over 100 years.

The subject objects of investigation (specimen samples) were selected *tin chok* textiles from the areas of Mae Chaem. Samples for analysis have been selected from the Textiles Learning Centre in Mae Chaem museum and library. The origins of *tin chok* have not been recorded in Mae Chaem Learning Centre.

No research of detail in motifs and pattern of *tin chok* have been found and therefore this research is important for both the present generation and the future continuation of the tradition.

The oral interview transcript analysis reported in Chapter 4 began to reveal knowledge trapped in the memories of the weavers and experts about the *tin chok* weavers' socio-cultural history and traditions but also about some of their perceptions which were not correct and/ or were contradictory and revealing something of a paradox between their perceived and real situation. This may be inevitable because some of oral history's strengths are also its weaknesses in so far as there was a past, present and future confluence.

On the one hand oral history can give unbeatable insights into the subjects themselves as they speak their realities and the motivation for their actions. But no matter how skillful the interviewer and how faithfully he or she transcribes what the interviewee says, an oral history will never be completely truthful or objective.

This is due to the innate prejudices and preconceptions, however subtle, which will exist within both the interviewer and the interviewee. The researcher must always remember the basic ground rules – to research the subject properly in advance; to choose a focus group of interviewees who will offer a wide spectrum of opinions and experiences; to interview with skill and subtlety. Finally to write up the interviewees' accounts fairly and with corroboration where possible by historical documents, archives and photographic illustrations, and was the

pathway chosen for this research, therefore the research methodology employed in this project is described at length in chapter three.

The collection and analysis of the questionnaire data was intentionally, a verification process not only of the impressions gained and the practical prophetic identified, in the initial visit to the region and which stimulated my interest in this research in the first place; but also of the subsequent literature review text analysis which indicated that crafts production develops and evolves along similar lines in differing global geographies.

This is especially true it seems where the activity is considered to be “women’s work” and which directly relates to the Mae Chaem *tin chok* weavers, since they are all women.

## **6.5 Research work**

The first and second field studies and the oral interview transcription analysis reported in chapter 4 presented the current and contemporary context within which *tin chok* textiles design and manufacture are taught, woven and exploited by the weavers at the learning centre in Mae Chaem.

They also verified the research problems and the premise of the action research project, and therefore the methodology for which were presented and discussed in Chapter 3.

This chapter was concerned to present, an analytical frame work based upon criteria developed, in the previous chapter and applied in using appropriate methods or tool discussed in chapter three specifically.

At the beginning of the chapter a rational was argued justifying the approach exemplified by referencing what was generally known about the cultural context of tin chok weavers and their understanding of the meaning of their motifs.

The fabric types were reviewed in terms of different pattern appearance and the colouration as it impacted upon the visual impression. The impact of the use of colour was also discussed in relation to woven structures specifically the inlay technique as opposed to continuous yarn fabric structures colour and weave effects.

The physical properties were discussed specifically in respect of the communication of structures by number or graphic plan/design, which had implications for the arrangement of motifs in a framework/formal order format of underlying pattern compositional geometry.

It was thought the key to understanding meaning was relational in as much as the technique followed a compositional geometry which located unit containers these containers were analogues to ritual religious objects bowl, bird room and so on and the decorative shapes and images which the contained were symbolic, representational images or motifs which had acknowledged nomenclature.

It was presented that these symbolic motifs were numerous in the context of the *tin chok* border pattern design but that there were many others not usually incorporated into this traditional formal weaving which was connected to religious allegory and ceremony.

The analysis that followed of eleven sample specimens therefore adopted three stage process focused upon the separation of the integrated aspects of the fabrication - the **first** being the physical material elements, the **second** the compositional geometry, and the **third** is focused upon semiotics or the meaning of the motifs, by means of naming and thereby allowing for interpretation through, the template which was derived from oral interview data recording, presented in direct relation to visual data realisations. (See picture below)

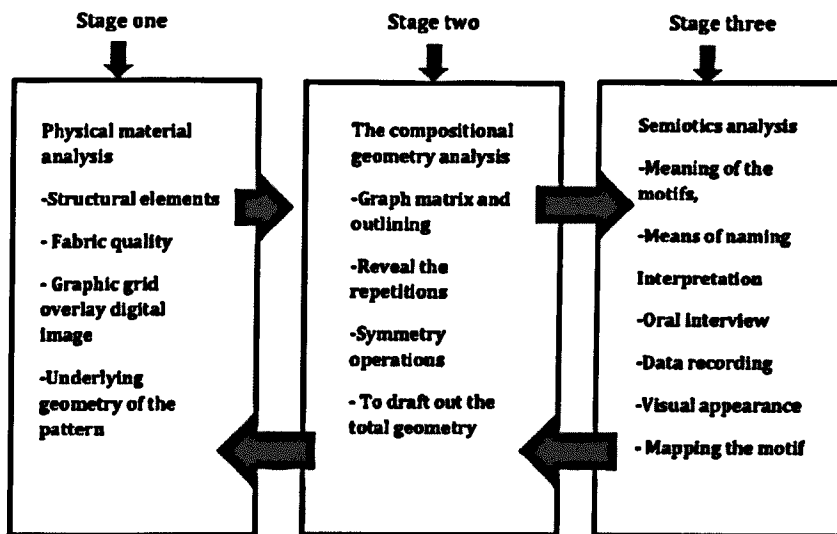


Fig 6.1 Three stage processes focus upon the separation of the integrated aspects of the fabrication

## 6.6 Research findings

Analysis of the oral interview transcripts produced several categories of preoccupations of not only the *tin chok* weavers, but also of those who were associated with or were interested parties in the progress/maintenance of *tin chok* hand-crafted woven textiles. These were collectively the issues which this research (for PhD) was concerned not to solve but rather to shed light on in order to create strategies for sustainability but also offer some practical measures in the short term each of which value can only be evaluated in the longer term action research continuum. The preoccupations revealed in oral interview transcripts were as follows in order of responses:

### a) Historical precedence, heritage.

Weaving has changed a great deal over the years and the raw materials have seen the biggest changes – nowadays most dyes are chemical, rather than natural. But despite the availability of modern factory-made fabrics, people still want to produce traditional sarongs using traditional methods.



Several attempts have been made to introduce new colours and variations but the market has been resistant to change and traditional colours and patterns remain most popular.

b) Motifs and meanings

The weavers are often unaware of the meaning of the motifs, aside from the fact that they are connected to Buddhism. The one motif that is commonly known is the *hang sapao* (boat tail), which is associated with a myth that it will take the wearer to heaven after death.

c) Changes in weaving practice (Experience ability design parameters duration and difficulties)

Learning *tin chok* techniques are very time-consuming and many younger girls and women do not have the patience to learn it, especially when they are busy with planting and harvesting rice.

d) Influences and future prospects

There is a desire in Mae Chaem to prevent traditional *tin chok* methods from dying out and there is enthusiasm for this thesis, if it can lead to resurgence in interest in *tin chok* locally and nationally.

e) Products, especially the sarong

Sarongs using the older motifs are more popular with foreign tourists and consequently can fetch higher prices. The demand for *tin chok* has not decreased but the weavers have decreased and almost every weaver weaves sarongs or square pillows more than any other product. *Tin chok* is not considered a terribly adaptable pattern and there are some cultural mores which make it less likely to be used in other garments than in sarongs.

f) Education/training for engagement of next generation

Teaching *chok* techniques are very time-consuming and would be assisted if there were formal textbooks which students could learn from or new technology to engage with the new generation.

g) Learning style, teaching and learning textbooks

Students learn one of more than 10 looms in one school but it takes up to three months from them to complete a piece of work, which is then attached to a traditional pillow. The students practice by themselves and often learn by mistake.

The summary research concluded that although these preoccupations were justified in being perceived as problematic and or against tradition, many of their perceptions were correctly focused in relation to positive actions for future progress/evolution/development. The perceptions and concerns as expressed about supply and demand were however incorrect.

The oral interview transcript clarified the situation which established that the perception was incorrect because in fact demand for hand-crafted *tin chok* products outstripped production capability; this is undoubtedly a healthy position to be in.

Prompted by this revelation and by the further analysis of the oral interview transcript two papers were prepared and presented at international conferences in Turkey and Thailand and which can be found in Volume Two of this thesis. This additional evidence of research is an important outcome of this research in as much as they argue that in the context of "the slow movement in textiles as much else (food and tourism) *tin chok* is well placed if its production keeps pace with growing demand to perpetuate its traditional product".

Later evidence came from expert and trader both of whom saw the problems differently. They understood that economics played a part in the weaver's situation which was a paradox. Because current production raised a fixed income then more income needed more production which required more weavers. This highlighted the issue of teaching and learning, also a preoccupation listed above.

According to the analysis of the oral data weavers fell into four categories a) full-time professionals, b) part-time professionals c) learners and 4) hobbyists or pin money part-timers. The key learner category was depleted even though there

were several initiatives to teach weaving there were few facilities at the learning centre and no definitive *tin chok* specific textbooks are available.

The preoccupation list of topics can be put into three groups and the research prioritises as three issues which are heritage, continuity and sustainability.

In relation to the former issue the argument in this thesis therefore suggests that the specific *tin chok* woven craft products are cultural or heritage objects and are of such quality and value as to be placed at a higher level of understanding or consciousness relative to global craft production as shown in the chart in Chapter one. Analysis supports this notion, since it concludes that the *tin chok* textiles evaluated were allegorical epithets embedded in the regional culture and history as well as its contemporary socio-economic actuality.

Analysis also shows that the *tin chok* designs and motifs are allegoric and epithetic, woven in a complexity at the limit of the technique and attain a quality standard consistent with any other longer than 400 years heritage textiles irrespective of the intrinsic qualities of materials. The assumption of a longer than 400 years is based upon the previous 100 years evidence of consistency in production based on a known sedentary community but also the longer heritage and ancestry of the people. The *tin chok* weaving traditions here are difficult to learn and have held status throughout the known cultural history and the evidence in this research supports that thesis.

Much of the research evidence would suggest a suitable place for the *tin chok* craft product is at or about the global level five if this research and findings are correct.

## **6.7 Research claims to contribution to knowledge**

This research it is believed has some interesting features both in its methods and processes as well as its knowledge out comes. While too modest to claim total innovation the thesis may lay claim to a contribution to knowledge which are expressed as follows:

1. In its analysis process the research has necessarily developed a digital graphing system for calculation based upon yarn diameters which maps textile designs and structures, enabling their reconstruction or reproduction of the fabrics or structure analysis. This might be considered as a contribution to knowledge in the field of textile design

2. This analytical tool operating in virtual space is as much an innovative, digital outcome as other claims for innovation or contribution to knowledge.

The research data in differing media required a template facilitating integration of data in digital documentation later transposed to interactive multimedia presentation/program and or database. The database would have several uses including teaching and learning. It is thought that this has not been attempted previously.

3. The discussion surrounding craft in a global context needed visualisation through a diagram or model Fig2.4 in Chapter 2 was devised especially to define distilled global situation with specific reference to the Thai *tin chok* craft product. It is suggested that this might be a contribution to knowledge in so far as it can be a benchmark for evaluation in other circumstances.

4. The three stage analysis method which approached the *tin chok* sample specimen quantitatively and qualitatively but also physically and metaphysically as modelled in this chapter might also be regarded as a contribution to knowledge since in its proven deconstruction application it might also be used as a design tool for construction or design theory. (See Fig 6.1)

5. A demonstration of the template as operable system will be presented at the oral viva voce examination. It is argued that the production of a digital format is part of this research outcome and will be offered for evaluation under the heading additional information available to examiners at the time if the viva voce when there will be a small exhibition.

## 6.8 Recommendations for further work

It has been made clear on several occasions in this thesis that although the research reported here is specifically concluded for the creation of a thesis to be submitted for examination for the award of PhD it emerged from what has been described as an action research project with the *tin chok* weavers of Mae Cheam. This being the case there are several research strands which should be continuous work in the context of the *tin chok* action research project relating to the three preoccupations of heritage, continuity and sustainability.

1. In respect of the first the analysis of *tin chok* sample specimens should continue because this research has shown that a wealth of cultural embodiment will only be revealed by the methods employed. This knowledge enriches the self-perception and sense of identity and points the way ahead when creating representation of the cultural changes.
2. The complete cataloguing and graphic mapping of the collection and also all other *tin chok* weave motifs or pattern design. This should be placed in a compendium and published.
- 3 The multimedia template or interactive encyclopaedia of *tin chok* should be followed to realisation. The template will operate at several levels enabling in-depth study of the material which is cumulative as the longer term action research project continues.

## 6.9 Thesis conclusion

The argument in this thesis suggests that the specific *tin chok* woven craft products are cultural heritage objects and are of such quality and value as to be placed at a higher level of understanding or consciousness relative to global craft production as shown in the chart in Chapter two. Analysis supports this notion, since it concludes that the *tin chok* textiles evaluated were allegorical epithets embedded in the regional culture and history as well as its contemporary socio-

economic actuality. Analysis also shows that the *tin chok* designs and motifs are allegoric and epithetic, woven in a complexity at the limit of the technique and attain a standard consistent with other heritage textiles irrespective of the intrinsic qualities of materials.

In its analysis process the research has necessarily developed a digital graphing system for calculation bases on yarn diameters which also maps textile designs and structures enabling the reconstruction or reproduction of the fabrics analysed. This analytical tool operating in virtual space is as much an innovative digital outcome as other claims for innovation or contribution to knowledge in the thesis.

The research data in differing media required a template facilitating integration of data in digital documentation later transposed to interactive multimedia presentation and database. The database would have several uses including teaching and learning.

The template will operate at several levels enabling in-depth study of the material which is cumulative as the longer term action research project continues.

It is self-evident that further work could be undertaken to expand the research and improve knowledge of the subject.

A large collection of *tin chok* textiles, images and documents have been amassed during the creation of this thesis and it is hoped it will be used to compile a book which, if published, would be a post-research activity for the future.

This work I believe is a valuable contribution to knowledge if for no other reason *tin chok* weaving ceases to exist this thesis preserves the knowledge and know-how of a cultural phenomenon that has been practiced for more than five hundred years.



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