

# TRANSFORMATION SISAKET INDIGENOUS FABRIC TO FASHION AND LIFESTYLE PRODUCTS TO ENHANCE THE CULTURAL TOURISM IN THE SOUTHERN PART OF NORTHEASTERN REGION OF THAILAND.

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## ABSTRACT

This research has focused on the transformation of the indigenous fabric that originated in Sisaket province in the southern part of the northeastern region of Thailand. The researcher has developed fabric patterns for fashion and lifestyle products to enhance local tourism. A field survey was arranged to study the weaving potential of the locals and their readiness for the product transformation such as lifestyle or trendy products. The information, obtained from community leaders, has been developed into new pattern designs to reflect the provincial identity through its local auspicious flower whose shapes have been simplified through the Art Nouveau technique. The overall design concept and color tones have been derived from seasonal fashion trends that were used for prediction in future demands from the consumers and creating appropriate product guidelines for promising markets. The researcher has applied his design from the start, silk weaving patterns, dye color, and decorative techniques into his finishing products.

**Keywords:** design, processing, woven fabric native to Sisaket province, fashion lifestyle, southeastern culture

## Sisaket Woven Fabric

This locally woven fabric has originated from the free time spent by the locals who have grown innumerable mulberry trees for feeding silkworms. This kind of fabric has been created based on local custom, culture, and belief resulting in a unique identity.

Moreover, the products from the local fabric can be another source of income and increase monetary velocity through tourism. Therefore, developing the traditional goods into a more alluring lifestyle product that can attract tourists' purchasing power can be another way to elevate the local's earnings.

The concepts to solve the problems can be listed as follows. Firstly, knowledge and overall production line systems need to be developed such as silk threads, natural dyes, and local woven techniques. Secondly, provincial identities: art, customs, wisdom, ethnicities, and lifestyles, have to be displayed on the fabric patterns creatively. Thirdly, knowledge-based design and product transformation can be created with local collaboration to access the urban market which possesses high purchasing potential.

According to the problems, the solution provided from this research can be the starting point to trigger the development of the whole system for local product transformations and distribution channels. This can serve the needs of the consumer and market demands, especially the tourism market. As well as this, the new products can elevate the local income which is corresponding to the provincial and national development plans, so the local people can rely on their multisource of earnings. Moreover, by utilizing technology together with the design, Sisaket woven fabric has been commercially improved throughout the concept of 'Specific

Local Charm'. Thus, the researcher is interested in the development of local woven fabric and attire fashion design.

### **Objectives**

1. To study the features and quality of local fabric which will be developed to the lifestyle products intertwined with local wisdom and culture based on the concept of 'the local charming' which enhances the local tourism business.
2. To design the prototype of fashion and lifestyle products from Sisaket's local hand-woven fabric.
3. To assess satisfaction from the consumers and producers including knowledge transference from research study to local leading to an extension of networks for producing lifestyle goods.

### **Scope of Study**

Six product transformations from local fabric have been made as follows.

1. Three-woman lifestyle products
2. Three-man lifestyle products

### **Procedures**

The procedures of this research can be listed as follows.

1. Local surveys have been organized at Ban Koke Petch Mudmee Weaving Group, 21 moo 1, Koke Petch Subdistrict, Kukhan district, Sisaket province. The information obtained has been estimated its potential for creating the prototype of attire fashion products.
2. Literature reviews have been gathered from any related context and research concerning product transformation and Sisaket's local wisdom and culture.
3. Interviews: in-depth and group interviews have been held among specialists from multidisciplinary: handwoven techniques, local custom and culture, and sericulture.
4. Observation method over the local woven pattern including attire design has been done.
5. The information obtained from those methods above has been analyzed based on theories of pattern design, art composition, and attire fashion design.
6. After synthesizing the information above, the researcher has created four prototype fabric patterns based on local wisdom and culture.
7. Six pieces of clothing have been created.
8. Academic interviews have been made with three specialists in the fields of silk and locally woven fabric. These three specialists have been highly experienced in producing techniques, and patterns created on the fabric for more than ten years.
  - a. Dr. Supavadee Buranabhand, agriculture operated officer, The Queen Sirikit Department of Sericulture
  - b. Asst. Prof. Supavadee Juisukha, an independent scholar in textile and fashion apparel products
  - c. Mr. Suradej Theragul, product designer, professional level, Office of Sericulture Research and Development, The Queen Sirikit Department of Sericulture
9. Interview about Sisaket local wisdom and textile has been made upon three knowledgeable people to obtain the information of textile knowledge in dimensions of local wisdom and culture of Sisaket Province.

10. Satisfaction levels have been surveyed by three specialists who have been experienced in attire fashion and product design for more than ten years.
  - a. Prof. Dr. Pornsanong Wongsingthong, a specialist in attire history and design, Chulalongkorn University
  - b. Associate Prof. Dr. Jaruphan Sapprung, a specialist in attire design, Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University
  - c. Dr. Thee Koth-Tha, Professor of Fashion Textile and Design Department, Faculty of Textile Industry, Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep

## RESEARCH RESULTS

It is found that five community enterprise groups consist of Saiyairak of Kropkrua Bannathung group, Ban High-Lueng weaving maiden group, Ban Nongna maiden development group, Ban Kanhuan Moo 10 weaving maiden group, and Ban Noi Na Chareon group. All of them are not rated as a three-star One Tambon One Product (OTOP) standard, but they specialize in woven products

Moreover, the local woven technique- the Mudmee technique- has been one of the provincial identities. Several local communities have systematically contributed to this uniqueness by planting mulberry trees for the silkworms, dyeing the silk threads, and weaving the cloth.

The researcher chose Ban Noi Na Chareon community enterprise group to work with because this community has the most readiness in silk fabric production starting from mulberry tree planting, silk reeling, thread dyeing, and weaving. More than 80% of their products have been dyed with plants and herbs. Ms. Vanida Rayabsri, a community leader, has been widely known in purely natural coloring and submitted her products to several competitions at the national level. Furthermore, this community can be counted as an Inno-Life community that promotes local tourism, silk weaving learning centers, homestays, and agricultural products.

Subsequently, the researcher has studied the spring/summer fashion trend 2021 by WGSN and chosen the trends relating to the product transformed design as follows.



Figure 1: Fashion trend for Spring/ Summer 2021 by WGSN

### 1. New Fabric Pattern Design Trend

The new pattern has been inspired by the inherent culture and minimal art style resulting in simply timeless check-board patterns and natural color tones. As well as this, the organic patterns with naturally intricate lines give a relaxing sense. The uneven proportion of the patterns enables the new contrast allowing an application of the white cheesewood flower on the product to reveal.

### 2. Main Color Tones

Homespun color tones, used in the dyeing process, have been derived from plants and herbs. These tones were used to soften the contrasting tones among the warm and cold shades, and the bright tones. For example, the variegated red threads have been interwoven with white threads which are the main color themes in design based on the local materials.

### 3. The Adaptation of an Organic Pattern to Graphic Design

This adaptation allows the consumers to feel the closeness to nature and can be a creative methodology of the composition of the flower patterns on the fabric.



Figure 2: Art Nouveau works and a white cheesewood flower

A white cheesewood flower has been named as the provincial symbol because of HRH. Queen Sirikit, of King Rama the 9th, has given the tree to the provincial governor to grow as a symbol of goodwill from the queen. This tree could encourage the local people to start a forest project to honor the Golden Jubilee, Celebrations of His Majesty's Accession to the Throne. The white cheesewood blossom festival is the most important event for Sisaket. Thus, the white cheesewood flower is suitable for this research design, as well.

An art nouveau style has been adapted to simplify the white cheesewood flower form owing to its unique delicate line movement. This art style is suitable for reproducing organic forms into an abstract form and creating a couple of new enchanting natural tones on the products. Moreover, the researcher has engaged an uneven form of English cursive writing letters into his design resulting in awe-inspiring work based on natural dye structure.

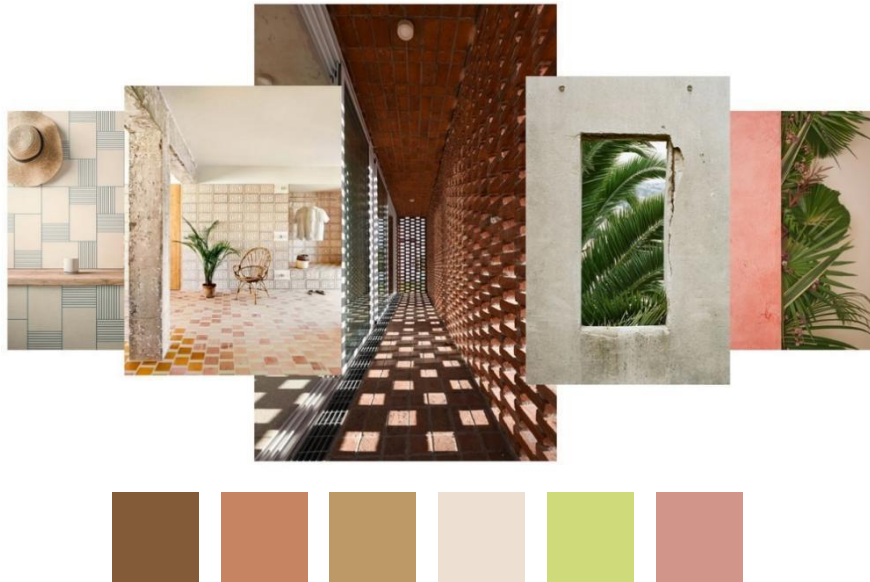


Figure 3: The design conclusion

Additionally, other inspirations have been derived from contemporary architecture whose distinctive appearances are geometry forms with variegated warm brown and pinkish tone bricks. These contrast the curved lines of plants, flowers, or rattan furniture and weaved baskets. Hence, this combination of design can offer the natural friendly essence with the modern and tough feelings.

The warm tones: various shades from brown to pink colors are naturally dyed and softened by beige color with a highlight tone from white cheesewood leaf dye.

Sisaket province is famous for weaving patterns and techniques, the high potential of weaving communities, and their mulberry tree plantation. These attributes inspired the researcher to portray his design as follows.

The geometry patterns of the woven fabric have been developed from naturally dyed threads. Then, three products have been created and screened on top with white cheesewood flower patterns in an art nouveau style. These can imprint the provincial identity into the consumer's minds. The process can be explained as follows.

1. The designs have been laid out after a discussion with Ms. Vanida Rayabsri, the community leader. The natural dyes are obtained from lac tree sap.

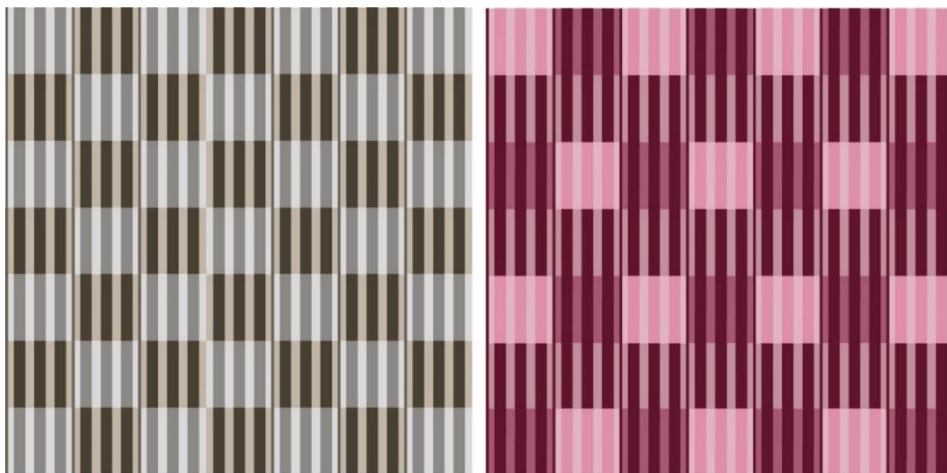


Figure 4: The Prototype Pattern

2. After a group discussion with the Bannoi Nachareon Enterprise community, it took 15 days to finish the prototype patterns including five days of dyeing. Each tone took a different number of days to finish depending on the climate, the shade intensities, and materials. It also took 45 - 60 hours to finish the prototype fabrics.



Figure 5: The Newly Created Patterns: Na-Chareon 1, Na-Chareon 2, Na-Chareon 3

The researcher has adapted an art nouveau style to simplify the outline of a white cheesewood flower resulting in six different patterns as follows.



















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Figure 6: The application of white cheesewood flower in an art nouveau style

The researcher has designed attire, a handbag, and a mask for both males and females according to a fashion trend. Those products focus on a simple pattern and are suitable for all body shapes. Their styles and patterns can attract the urban citizens easily and feature the outstanding beauty of Thai silk together with the new pattern design.

1. A male attire

The researcher designed a jumpsuit with shorts, a standard collar, a button-up, and elaborated details at the fold sleeves. This suite consists of two fabric patterns and the screen of several white cheesewood flowers at the chest, arms, and legs of the suit. The screen patterns appear only on the front suit. The brown tone is obtained from java plum barks fermented with mud in figure 7.

2. A female attire

The researcher designed a dress with a knee-length skirt, waist cutting, and wrist-long sleeves. There is a thin ribbon threading through a small hole along the collar line leaving its ends at the back of the neck. These ends can be tied as a bow. The pink tone from lac tree sap on the top of the dress has been attached with a skirt revealed the brown tone from the java plum barks fermented with mud. The upper and the lower parts share similar fabric patterns to make this dress look harmoniously. The white cheesewood flowers appear on the breast, arms, and skirt of the front of the dress in figure 8.

3. Two handbags (figure 7 and 8)

A rectangle handbag with wooden stick handles has been produced from unbleached cotton fabric and pinkish handwoven cloth dyed with lac tree sap. A screened white cheesewood flower appears in the middle of the bag. However, to add more value to the product, the whole bag can be made of silk cloth.

Another tote bag has been created from golden-brown hand-woven silk cloth with an original pattern of Banna Chareon Village and a screened white cheesewood flower in the middle, as well.

4. Two masks (figure 7 and 8)

The masks cover the face from nose to chin with adjustable ear loops. They are made from hand-woven silk with a small screen of the white cheesewood flower at the corner of the masks.



Figure 7: Male Attires and a Mask



Figure 8: Female Attires and a Mask

### Prototype assessment criteria.

The results of three criteria: the researcher's creative design, the ability to adapt local wisdom and cultural identities into the products, and the functional attributes of the products, have been listed as follows.

Table 1: Score Assessed by the Specialists

Specialists	Creative Design (5 marks)	Local Wisdom and Cultural Identities (5 marks)	Functional attribute (5 marks)	Total
1	4.3	3.6	4.8	<b>12.7</b>
2	3.8	4.2	4.4	<b>12.4</b>
3	4.8	4.3	4.5	<b>13.6</b>
Total score (45)				<b>38.7</b>
Percentage				<b>77.4%</b>

### Recommendation

Important factors to alter the moods and feelings of the products are patterns and color tones. As well as this, engaging the provincial symbols, famous tourism places or tribal identities can be other elements to imprint these images into the consumer's minds. These elements can be further experimented with in other places to encourage provincial tourism and economic flow and to develop the products that serve the needs of the promising consumers.

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