

“Pha Chuan Tani” or The Chuan Tani Textile

Pattani Province



The Chaun Tani Textile

The “Chuan Tani” or Long Chuan textile is the type of cloth that was created after the literature “Dalang” of King Rama the First. A researcher who has tracked down the trace of this textile said that there are two kinds of Chuan Tani textiles: one is made with “Khit” technique, which uses the cords made from Tani banana trees to tie up the weft yarns for “Khit” and another kind is a brocaded pattern textile that has some insertion of metallic threads on the pattern.

The word “Chuan” is a slight difference in pronunciation when speaks rapidly, from an original word “Chuwa.”

Also the word, “Chuan” means a finding or a meeting,

and thus could be the referring to the distinguished character of this type of textile that the body and the hem meet.

The Origin of “Pha Chuan Tani”

The origin of “Pha Chuan Tani” is still obscure due to the lack of enough evidence. The name only appeared in some documents. Mr. Phichai Kaew Khao, one of the learned scholars of Pattani has tried to trace back on its historical background and found that “Pha Chuan Tani” may have been a well known brocaded pattern textile of Pattani in the periods of Ayuthhaya and Rattanakosin.



The Chaun Tani Textile

This assumption comes from historical evidence, which had recorded that Pattani was an important portal city and a market junction for foreign trading and merchandise shipping from afar. The city then, was full of seafarer; and as a consequence, it could have been the center for foreign textile trading and also one of the largest sources in the region for weaving material such as cotton and raw silk. Furthermore, the weavers of Pattani themselves, must have already been very famous of their craftsmanship among the neighboring and other countries as well.

With this qualified skill and the knowledge gained from outside merchants and foreign weavers, who had already communicated with Pattani since ancient periods, the Pattani weavers, as a result should be able to produce very good quality of textile as assumed. The name of that textile is that of “Pha Chuan Tani” or the brocade textile of Tani.

The Art and Intellectual Wisdom of “Pha Chuan Tani”

From many old documents, recorded by many foreign people indicated that the city of Pattani had relations to Chinese, Indian and Arabian people through trading and culture for over a long period of time, ever since the time of Langkasuka Kingdom to the period of Pattani Darussalam. During that time, China, India and the Arabs are already great countries who had exported highly exquisite design textiles to many countries throughout Asia and Europe which suggested each country must have plenty of high potential weavers within their land. Therefore, when Pattani had a long time connection with them, they may have passed on some of the classical techniques in weaving to the Pattani weavers directly. Another route is through the weavers of Java, Sumatra and the Malays who lived along the Malayan cape from Yabor, Pahang, Terengganu to Kelantan and entering to Pattani at the end. As a consequence, the “Chuan Tani” textile, created from the intellectual wisdom of the local weavers of Pattani, reflected the mixture of many different cultures and the local technique that was there before. One of the examples is the pattern of the “Chuan Tani” textile that is woven into vertical and horizontal stripes throughout the whole piece, which is similar to the pattern and colors of the Patola cloth of India.

Furthermore, it can be mentioned that because of the good qualifications in weaving of the Pattani weavers in the past, the Pattani cloth became quite well known among the people in Siam. From the unique characteristics of the Pattani textile, there are no other textiles in Siamese regions alike, in the patterns or the colors. Due to the facts that the styles are used in Java and Malaya, therefore, they are different in the eyes of the Siamese. The distinguished characteristics made the textile known and memorable.



The Chaun Tani textile : Pra jae jeen ornament



The Chaun Tani made of silk called Pu Chau Por Tong



The Chaun Tani made of the "Juli yarns" called Pu Chau Por Tong

The Importance of “Pha Chuan Tani” in Folk Culture

The “Chuan Tani” textile would be made into the pattern of plain and stripes pattern. They are used by male and female in a daily life basis and also in special ceremonies such as to join in the parade, etc. Traces of the importance in the indigenous culture can be mentioned as follow:

The photo, from the archival collection of Mr. Phichai Kaew Khao, shows the picture of people who lived in Pattani, approximately during the reign of King Rama V to King Rama VII. Most Muslim men in the picture wore sarongs, woven from a local hand loom, in a check pattern. The textile in this pattern is normally called, “Pha Ta” or “Pha Plae Kae or Pha Palai Kat” textile among the Muslims.



And the photo, taken in the area of the field in front of the city of Pattani during the royal visit of King Rama VII to see the total eclipse on May 9, 1929, the “Bai Sri” Procession of Pattani ladies to receive His Majesty is shown here. People appeared in the picture wore various patterns of sarong: plain, checked, etc., including the Batik.

From the interview that were made by Mr. Phichai to the two elderly ladies: Mrs. Hae Wo Wang Mhat, ninety four years of age from Khok Pho district of Pattani and Mrs. Marieyae Nisalae, one hundred years of age from Raman district in Yala province, we learn that during her period, local women dressed in the textile that they weave by themselves. Both of them are also weavers. The fabrics made are in plain and check pattern, same as the male material. Batik was only come into the use not long before the Japanese war.



The Chaun Tani textile using as in Baisi parade welcome to His Majesty the King Rama VII of the people Pattani, At the time when he went to observe the full moon eclipse at Pattani, 9th May 1929

From the changing style of clothing, from the old style of sarong to the Batik; has a great effect on the weaving profession in many parts of Thailand, Pattani and many southern bordering provinces were among the first.

The Functions of “Pha Chuan Tani”

“Pha Chuan Tani” is a high price material that, therefore, it is looked after very carefully by owners. It will be worn only in a special occasion. The Muslim ladies will use it as a shawl over one shoulder or a scarf; and a cloth worn over the breast (Pha Kra Chom Ok.) Men use it as a sarong or a sarong over trousers. It is also used as for covering the body of passed away Muslims.

For the Buddhists, they prefer to use them for official occasion. Men wear them to the length of the feet while women put on one shoulder like a shawl. For the elder ladies, they used on the ordained monks and the cloth covering a coffin.



1. The Muslim lady wearing the Plae Kae Sarong which is a local hand woven fabric.



2. Type of dressing called “Lauey Chal”



3. Type of using the Chaun Tani textile as a sarong over trousers

The Production Source of Pha Chuan Tani

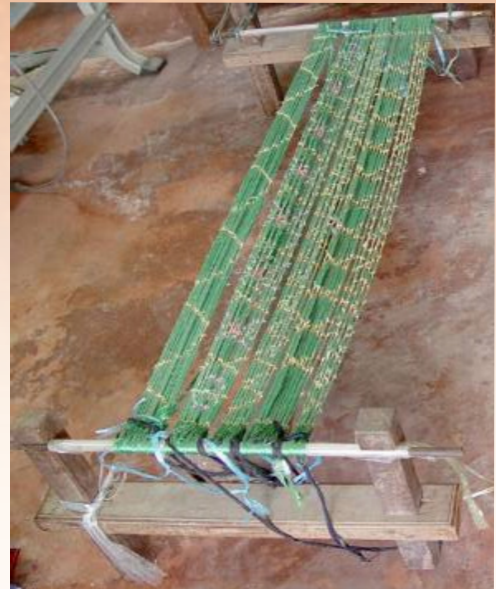
The textile was very famous in the reign of King Rama the First, at that time; it was well used in the court. Later, the popularity gradually declined due to the interference of European textile that is less expensive. Many weavers of the “Chuan Tani” textile during that period had to change their career. The story of the textile can only be learned from a literature. However, the textile that was mentioned in the literature is normally a rare piece at present because the knowledge on this textile is hardly passed on to present weavers. Fortunately, there are still a few weavers left in Pattani who have received the skill and wisdom from their ancestors. From the information gathered from an official at the cultural office in Pattani and a researcher of the Institute for Southern Thai Studies, Thaksin University, we learn that efforts have been given in the preservation and the revival of this textile. Reproductions of an original pattern of the “Chuan Tani” are produced for sale. They become the symbol of weaving technique of the province. Some groups of The “Chuan Tani” weavers are the one led by Miss Natdaphon Phromsuk from Khok Pho district and the Mayo district group.

Moreover, there are some textile collectors who have old materials of “Chuan Tani,” dated around one hundred years in their collection such as: Mr. Phichai Kaew Khao, from the Pattani Technical College, The Textile Museum of the Kalayaniwattana Cultural Studies Institute, Prince of Songkhla University and the C.S. Hotel in Pattani, etc.

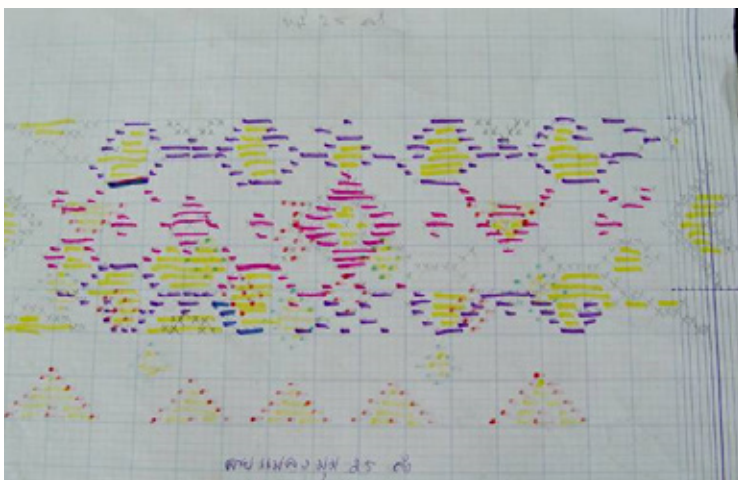


The Inheritance of the Wisdom of “Pha Chuan Tani”

The way that the knowledge and the intellectual wisdom on the “Chuan Tani” textile is passed on, in order to preserve and revive the weaving of this textile by way of making reproductions of the original textile, has been practiced by the group of Miss Natdaphon. She tries to persuade a group of women villagers who like to have an extra career to come in and learn of the knowledge on making the reproduction of the “Chuan Tani” textile, using old material as the prototype model. The pattern is copied onto a design paper (See picture) and then brings the weft yarns to tie up in a pattern, in the technique of “Matmi.” “Matmi” is to form a pattern on the textile by dyeing; the area that is tied will not be dyed. At the end of the dyeing process, the weft yarns are used in weaving.



1. Honh Kon Mee



2. Design paper



3. Colored Yarns

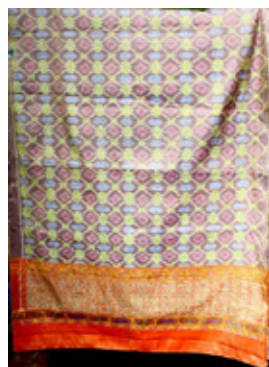
Material and Equipment Used in the Production of “Pha Chuan Tani”

Raw Material:

Silk threads, to be used as warp and weft yarns

Main Equipment:

A loom



Weaving Process

The weaving process of “Pha Chuan Tani” is as follow:

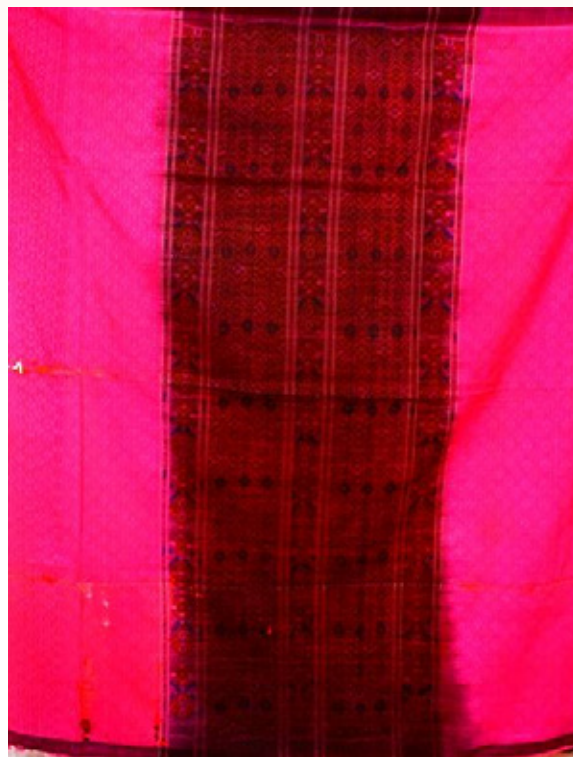
- The degumming of silk, is to take off sericin from silk threads to be qualified for weaving into fabric
- Dyeing of colors is to create a pattern on silk threads by dyeing. The dyeing in “Pha Chuan Tani” is in the “Khit” technique. “Tani” cords were used for tying the pattern, today is replaced by straw cords
- The threading of threads and sinew to the teeth of a reed
- The collecting of an upper heddle, is the technique in inserting a thread line into a hole of the heddle, as designed
- The collecting of a lower heddle, is to put wooden poles in front of the reed and attached to the loom to prevent the threads from falling
- The spinning of warp yarns onto the loom by using a tool called “Rawing” or a spindle
- The stretching of warp yarns to the specific length, as determine
- The threading of warp yarns to the loom
- The framing of warp yarns to a loom
- The stretching of weft yarns to the determine length
- The dyeing of weft yarns into every color designed to appear on the pattern
- The taking off the straw strings or cords after dyeing is finished
- The “Rawing Matmi” on the fabric, is to prepare the weft yarn
- The weaving, is to weave on the weft yarns that have been patterned with the “Matmi” technique, to create a textile



The threading of threads and sinew to the teeth of a reed

The Distinguished Character of “Pha Chuan Tani”

The distinguished characteristics of the “Pha Chuan Tani” are a strip pattern or color at the end or the rim of a cloth. Old weavers in Pattani called these strips: “Chuwa.” It refers to a pattern, appeared on each end of a cloth. If the pattern is placed in parallel line, like a strip; it is called “Long Chuwa.” The other “Chuwa” patterns are created with the “Matmi” technique. There are many variety forms of “Chuwa” pattern. The cloth that is laid out with “Chuwa” pattern throughout the piece is called “Lima Cloth.” It is considered as the high class textile because it needs a lot of delicacy in weaving, therefore, very expensive. For the textile with a “Chuwa” pattern on the hip (Pata), is called: “Pa Ta Chuwa.” If made into a sarong called: “Pha Sarong Pa Ta Chuwa.” Ancient clothes that have been found in Pattani are diverse in many ways: weaving process, special techniques or methods in making a pattern, raw material or fiber used. Therefore, “Pha Chuan Tani” are varied under different names:



Characteristics of sarong, using
“Long Chuwa” as Pata’s (hip position)
Pata Chuan sarong



} Long Chuwa
or Long Chaun

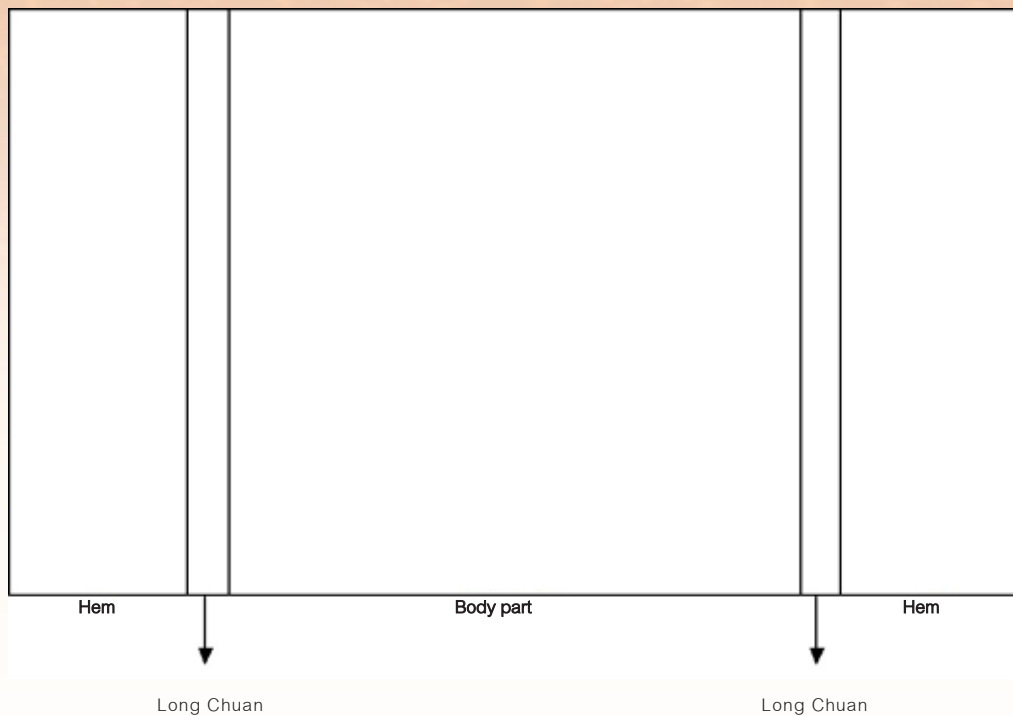
} Long Chuwa
or Long Chaun

Long Chuwa {
or Long Chaun

Long Chuwa {
or Long Chaun



1. “Pha Ka Ra Du Wo,” is a rectangular piece of cloth or a loose end cloth. Each piece is composed of three parts: an upper and a lower band; a “Long Chuan” and a body part.



Compositions of “Pha Ka Ra Du Wo”



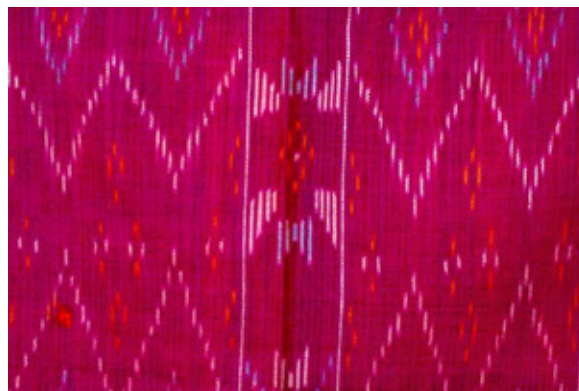
Pha Ka Ra Du Wo (Ka-Ra = the heddle, Du-Wo = two)

2. “Pha Ka Ra Ti Kho” or the Three Heddles Textile, is a long piece of cloth in a rectangular form, loosen end. It is consisted of a hem, a body and “Long Chuan,” separating between a hem and a body part. The weaving technique is three-heddles or use three heddles to stamp on alternately for the leverage of the warp and shuttle in the weft. This type of weaving, the texture of the textile will be embossed in a twill line like that of a jeans. The cloth is thick and has volume. The pattern is clear only on one side.



Pha Ka Ra Ti Kho

3. “Pha Ka Ra Pah” or the Four Heddles Textile, is a long piece of cloth, loose end in a rectangular shape. Consisted of a hem, a body part and a “Long Chuan” in between a hem and a body. It is similar to “Pha Ka Ra Du Wo” and “Pha Ka Ra Ti Kho,” only is different in the weaving technique. The texture of the cloth is embossing such as in different geometric designs: serrations, squares or diamonds throughout the piece. The colors are bright such as red, pink, blue, yellow, green and purple, etc. The texture is thick but soft and has volume. The “Matmi” pattern is clearer than the other Two Heddles textile.



Pha Ka Ra Pah



Pha Sau Kae using Yok Dok technique and all yarns are silk

4. “Pha Sau Kae,” is used for calling cotton or a silk textile that is woven in brocading technique with metallic threads. The distinguished characteristic is at the form of a long, loose end piece of cloth, emphasizing on the decoration on a pattern with different materials.

5. “Pha Plae Ka,” is a piece of cloth in the check pattern. Many different colors are used. It was woven for the first time in Pulikat city of India. The Buddhist people in the south called this type of textile: “Pha Ta” (Check Textile) or “Pha T a K h ok Mu.” It is mainly seen in pink and red.



Pha Plae Ka (Pa Lai Khat in central Malaysia accent)

The Distinguished Characteristics of “Pha Chuan Tani”

1. The distinguished characteristics is at the hem of the cloth (called “Hua Pha” in Malay), which is red. Evidently almost every piece of “Pha Chuan Tani” found, the hems are in red, only a few are made into reddish brown. The pattern on the hem is more beautiful and unique than at the body part. The pattern at the hem is similar to those in the style of Java-Malayan art or the pattern of Indian textile.

The hem of this type of cloth is red and the cloth looks rather red as well. This is because weavers use a special technique in tie-dyeing the warps that will be woven in the hem area in red color before weaving in the red weft yarns.



The Chuan Tani textile in green



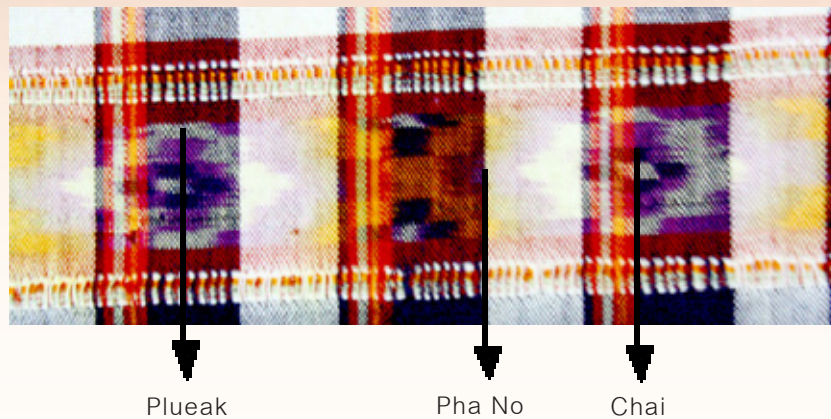
The Chuan Tani textile in stripe patterns, 100 years

2. The characteristics of the “Mi” or the “Chuwa” pattern appear mostly in diamond motifs, which are called differently as follow:

The first pattern of the upper and lower “Matmi” is called “Plueak.”

The second pattern of the upper and lower “Matmi” is called “Pha No.”

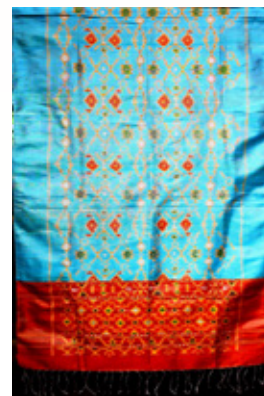
The central pattern of upper and lower “Matmi” is called “Chai.”



3. The use of color in the “Chuan Tani” Textile is quite varied, and contrast. As seen in the picture, the green color is used at the body part, in contrast with the red hem. (In theory, green is in the opposite scheme of red).



The Chuan Tani textile using contrast colors (red – green)



Using contrast color between the body part and hem