



A STUDY OF TA KHAMUK (TA SAMUK) HANDWOVEN TEXTILES USED IN BUDDHIST PRACTICES OF PEOPLE IN RAYONG PROVINCE

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Abstract

Background and Objectives: Historically, fabric has been one of the four essential necessities, serving not only domestic purposes but also as a cultural medium reflecting belief systems and local wisdom. In Rayong Province, Khmer-Thai communities had preserved traditional weaving through the Ta Samuk cloth, a distinctive textile featuring grid-like patterns that symbolized perseverance, order, and the Middle Way in Buddhism. More than just clothing, it had been used in rituals as an offering and symbol of merit-making, expressing devotion, ancestral respect, and cultural identity. The weaving process itself had been seen as a meditative act that nurtured mindfulness and moral discipline, sustaining both spiritual and cultural heritage across generations. The objectives of this study were to study the motto of woven fabrics in Buddhist scriptures and to study the pattern of pearl weaving cloth (Ta Samuk) used in Buddhism by the people of Rayong Province.

Methodology: A qualitative approach was adopted, combining documentary analysis with ethnographic fieldwork. Data collection included in-depth interviews with fifteen key informants: Five local master weavers, five Buddhist monks and novices, and five ritual leaders (Maccanaiyok). These interviews were conducted in Ban Phe Subdistrict, Mueang Rayong District, a community where Ta Samuk weaving is still actively practiced. Additional data were drawn from traditional textile pattern analysis, primary Buddhist texts (e.g., the Tripitaka), and relevant secondary literature, including scholarly articles and ethnographic records.

Main Results: The findings revealed that textiles mentioned in Buddhist scriptures and traditionally used in Khmer-Thai communities fell into five main functional categories: Garments for the Buddha, symbolic items representing the Dharma, robes for the Sangha, sacred offerings, and ritual-related fabrics. In Rayong, Ta Samuk weaving followed this classification. A unique textile known as the "Pearl-Eyed Fabric" featured geometric grid patterns symbolizing order, harmony, and the Middle Way. Weaving itself was interpreted as a meditative act that fostered mindfulness and spiritual focus. Specific fabric colors carried symbolic meaning: White represented purity, gold denoted wisdom and enlightenment, red symbolized compassion, and black reminded of impermanence. This color codes closely align with moral values emphasized in Buddhist teachings.

Involvement to Buddhadhamma: The study highlighted that textile offerings extended beyond material generosity. They embodied core Buddhist principles such as *Dāna* (Giving), gratitude to



ancestors, and Puññānumodana (Transfer of Merit). The weaving process served as a spiritual discipline promoting moral cultivation and communal cohesion. These practices were deeply integrated into the Khmer-Thai cultural-religious framework and have been adapted to modern contexts by combining traditional Buddhist knowledge with contemporary academic perspectives, supporting both ethical development and intellectual growth.

Conclusions: To protect and revitalize this endangered cultural practice, the study proposed four key strategies: 1) Documenting and exhibiting traditional woven fabrics in museums and cultural centers; 2) Integrating Ta Samuk weaving into school curricula, especially in Khmer-Thai communities; 3) Creating multimedia materials to raise public awareness of the spiritual and cultural significance of the textiles; and 4) Promoting Buddhist teachings that emphasize the symbolic and ethical dimensions of weaving and ritual offerings. These initiatives were deemed essential for ensuring the continuity of traditional textile arts, reinforcing Buddhist identity, and preserving the intangible cultural heritage that connects generations through faith, craftsmanship, and shared values.

Keywords: Ta Samuk (Ta Khamuk), Handwoven Textiles, Buddhist Practices, People in Rayong Province, Khmer-Thai Group

Introduction

Fabric was historically recognized as one of the four fundamental human necessities. Beyond its domestic function, it served as a cultural artifact—an artistic expression of emotion and a historical record, particularly from the perspective of women weavers. Woven textiles communicated stories of the past and reflected ways of life, beliefs, values, and local philosophies encoded within their vertical threads.

According to *The Great Journey in the Midst of Religion and Commerce* (Gillow & Sentence, 1999); (Thongchoen, 2003); (Thongchun, 2015), although traditional weaving declined in many regions of Thailand, communities in the East, North, and Northeast continued to preserve this practice (Panitchpan, 2014). In Rayong Province, Thai people of Khmer descent retained much of their weaving identity (Prangwattanakul, 2008). While some Khmer-Thai communities adapted their weaving customs or ceased weaving altogether, such adaptations were insufficient to preserve traditional knowledge (Hintow, 2014). As a result, ancient fabrics deteriorated over time, and tangible evidence of weaving traditions became increasingly rare. This underscored the imminent risk of losing intangible cultural heritage, especially weaving practices deeply connected to local beliefs and Buddhist rituals (Klomklumnum et al., 2024).

One of the most significant traditional textiles was the Pearl-Eye fabric, also known as Ta Khamuk or Ta Samuk. This textile, traditionally woven by the Khmer-Thai people in eastern Thailand, particularly in Rayong Province, reflected both aesthetic sophistication and profound symbolic meaning. The Khmer Thais, an ethnic group descended from ancient Khmer populations, preserved their cultural identity through language, religious practice, and textile arts. Pearl-Eye fabric featured a distinctive grid pattern that symbolized perseverance, order, and the Middle Way in Buddhist thought.



From a Buddhist perspective, the fabric was more than a garment-it was a symbolic expression of the Dharma.

In ritual contexts, Pearl-Eye fabric was used as an offering to the Buddha and as a medium of merit-making (Puñña), expressing gratitude toward ancestors and reinforcing community cohesion. Weaving itself was viewed as a meditative practice aligned with the development of mindfulness and moral discipline. The repeated patterns and structure of the fabric echoed Buddhist paths of concentration and balance. In Rayong's Khmer-Thai communities, the integration of these textiles into religious ceremonies, merit transfer rituals (Puññānumodana), and temple offerings exemplified how woven cloth embodied spiritual devotion and cultural continuity.

Given the decline of traditional weaving knowledge and its entanglement with religious and ethnic identity, this study aimed to examine the role of Ta Samuk woven fabric in Buddhist rituals among Khmer-Thai communities in Rayong Province. The research sought to understand how textile traditions functioned as both religious instruments and cultural symbols. In doing so, the study contributed to broader efforts to preserve endangered forms of intangible heritage and to revitalize local identity through the lens of Buddhist practice and textile art.

Objectives

The objectives of this study were to study the motto of woven fabrics in Buddhist scriptures and to study the pattern of pearl weaving cloth (Ta Samuk) used in Buddhism by the people of Rayong Province.

Methodology

This research combines documentary and qualitative research. The research method is divided into two main phases, as follows:

1. Documentary Research

This phase focuses on tracing the historical origins and significance of woven fabric motifs in Buddhist scriptures. Primary sources include the Thai version of the Tripitaka (Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 1996). Secondary sources include books, articles, academic papers, research reports, theses (Both in Thai and English), and electronic media. The scope of content covers two main areas:

1.1 The physical characteristics of fabric, including its shape, size, color, materials, equipment used, and visible patterns.

1.2 Functional uses of fabric within the context of Buddhism.

This stage also investigates references to traditional cloth in Theravāda Buddhist texts, local temple records, and national cultural heritage registers to understand how these fabrics are preserved or mentioned under religious and legal frameworks.

2. Qualitative Research

This phase investigates the cultural significance and contemporary usage of woven fabrics in Buddhist practices among Thai people of Khmer descent living in Rayong province. In-depth interviews were conducted with key local informants, including five novice monks and five elders (Deacons)



from Ban Phe Subdistrict, Mueang Rayong District-an area where Pearl-Eye weaving traditions are still actively practiced.

The selection of participants was purposive, based on their role in community religious life and textile knowledge. Attention was given to generational differences, weaving knowledge transmission, and the socioeconomic challenges currently faced by weaving households, including youth disengagement, market competition, and modernization pressures.

The study was guided by a cultural materialism framework, incorporating concepts from material religion and symbolic anthropology to understand cloth as both a religious object and a vessel of cultural identity.

Data Analysis

The content analysis method was used to summarize the symbolic meaning and role of pearl-woven fabric (Pearl-Eye) used in Buddhist practices among the people of Rayong Province. Textual data from interviews and documents were coded and categorized based on recurring themes such as merit-making, ancestral reverence, religious aesthetics, and identity expression. Special focus was given to how fabric is used as a material link between cultural memory and Theravāda Buddhist values.

Results and Discussion

Findings

1. The Motto of Woven Fabrics in Buddhist Scriptures

There are 5 types of woven fabrics mentioned in the Tripitaka. The first type refers to cloth which shows the type of material used in weaving, such as Gochao cloth and Khoma cloth. The second includes woven fabrics that indicate the place of origin, such as Ka Si woven fabrics. The third type refers to cloth used for monks' robes, such as the cloth of the trijivara. The fourth includes the cloth used for monks' personal items, such as bedding. The fifth type consists of offerings, such as ceiling and flag cloths, with only limited descriptions of fabric patterns and details. These details are usually found in extended footnotes or quoted in commentaries from the scriptures (Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 1996).

As for the motto of offering clothes to the Buddha or his disciples, it appears only in the Vinaya Pitak and Suttan Tapitak, and is mostly connected to acts of devotion in which a person listened to the sermon and then offered cloth woven by themselves. In some cases, they purchased the cloth or even gave up their own garments to offer as alms. In most instances, the type of cloth is not specified. Exceptions appear in the sutras, particularly the Kuttaka Nikaya, including the Vimanavatthu and Petavatthu, which emphasize the consequences of wholesome and unwholesome deeds, especially through stories of heavenly abodes and the suffering of spirits. These texts highlight the importance of dāna (Acts of Giving) in accumulating merit, which clearly describe the causes and effects of such offerings. These texts mention two levels of Anisong (Merit): Worldly rewards and spiritual rewards. Most of the donors are said to be reborn as celestial beings in heavenly realms. Some are reborn as aristocrats. In the Upalana scriptures, it is stated



that they first attain divine treasures in the heavenly world, and then, when reborn as humans, they become people of high status. Many are born into noble families, become educated, and rise to positions such as monarchs, kings, or even emperors. However, these blessings do not arise solely from offering clothes. As is made clear in many stories, these noble individuals performed countless good deeds beyond almsgiving, including observing precepts and engaging in prayer.

For fabrics and textiles made for use in Buddhism in Thailand, they may be divided into two main categories: Those used as monastic articles (Samnabrikarn) or monk's utensils, such as the trijivara, alms bowl cover (Yam), prostration cloth, scripture wrapper (Talapatra), mattress, pillow, and others. Although some of these fabrics have declined in popularity, such as the scripture wrapper, others have been revived, like the rebel cloth, and some have been reimagined using modern technology, such as garlands and Bai Sri arrangements. These fabrics have been adapted and developed through modern textile innovations to suit today's economic and social conditions.

In the study of the woven fabric style used in Buddhism today. It was found that they can be divided into five types according to their use. The first type includes woven fabrics for Buddhas, such as the God's blanket, thatched cloth, and relic blanket. The second type consists of woven fabrics for the Dharma, including wrapping cloths for scriptures and cloth coverings for the Dharma-hall. The third type is woven cloth for monks, which includes satirical cloths used by monks that come from two sources: Cloth obtained through traditional offerings, such as yam, bandages, sitting cloths, and Sangha bags, and cloth obtained from the kitchen (Thai Dham), most of which appear as small wipes or handkerchiefs. The fourth type includes woven cloths offered as sacrifices, which generally have no specific function but are mostly used to decorate temples, such as Tung cloth (Munjana Cloth). Finally, the fifth type comprises other fabrics, such as the cloth of the face of the Lord (Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 1996).

2. The Pattern of Pearl-Eye Weaving Cloth Used in Buddhism of the People of Rayong Province

2.1 Pearl-Eye Woven Fabric Pattern Used in Buddhism

The woven fabric patterns in Buddhism of the Thai Khmer people living in Rayong province reflect a strong connection to the practice of giving alms, which is believed to create and accumulate merit. This belief also extends to the dedication of handwoven and sewn fabrics for deceased relatives, often made using factory-produced materials. Most of these practices are rooted in monastic traditions and local village Buddhism, which still strongly influence the community. This section provides detailed explanations about the stable traditions of Thai Khmer people in Rayong province, as seen through their many traditional fabric offerings, including the origins, uses, and historical changes of various woven fabrics according to collective memory. The characteristic patterns of woven fabrics used in Buddhism among the Thai Khmer remain unique in many ways. Although some fabrics have evolved in material due to changing times, they retain traditional forms and characteristics, such as Tung fabrics, thatched fabrics, and Noi wipes. The most original forms and appearances are preserved in handwoven works made with folk threads, which continue to be popular offerings to this day.



In addition, due to the motto, strong belief, and faith in Buddhism among the Khmer Thais living in Rayong province, especially as seen during traditional events like the Songkran New Year, it is clear that Khmer Thais still hold firmly to the Triple Gem (Rattana-trai). Although this was not explicitly mentioned in interviews, it is reflected in the various offerings made to worship the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha, as seen in many types of woven fabrics used in Buddhist ceremonies and rituals. Furthermore, the practice of hanging these fabrics throughout the temple continues to reflect a strong cultural belief: That Tung cloths can help lead the donor from suffering in hell to rebirth in a better realm or paradise. This belief still has a powerful influence on the hearts and minds of the Thai people of Khmer descent living in Rayong province.

Nevertheless, in the past, the Pearl-Eye woven fabric (Ta Samuk) of the Khmer Thai people living in Rayong province has undergone changes in its roles and functions. Some of its uniqueness has been altered to suit commercial demands, to the extent that much traditional wisdom has not been passed down, based on the belief that "It is Difficult, Time-Consuming, and not Worth the Income." Consumers also no longer desire traditional woven fabrics, viewing them as old-fashioned, especially when better, more beautiful, and cheaper fabrics can be bought in the market. When the weavers do not value the craft, and the buyers do not appreciate it, it becomes very difficult to promote Ta Samuk folk weaving. Despite the efforts of local leaders, no matter how much funding is provided, it has been found that the impact is only temporary. The Khmer Thais living in Rayong province still have a deep and enduring faith in Buddhism. Therefore, the role of woven fabrics in Buddhist practices, closely tied to the traditional weaving of the Thai Khmer people, should not be overlooked. The restoration of woven fabrics and Pearl-Eye designs for Buddhist use is still possible, unless the Khmer Thais in Rayong Province eventually "Lose Faith in Buddhism."

Indigenous textiles are an important symbol of the culture and lifestyle of different communities. In Thailand, Rayong province in the eastern region has a distinctive cultural identity, namely the Pearl-Eye woven fabric, also known as Pearl-Eye cloth. This is a hand-woven textile with geometric grid patterns that reflect the local wisdom and beliefs of the Thai people of Khmer descent. In the context of Buddhism, the use of Pearl-Eye cloth holds both cultural and spiritual significance. Traditional textiles in Thailand often feature regional patterns and techniques that have been passed down through generations (Hongyon & Saiduang, 2017). Moreover, the use of cloth in Buddhist rituals is considered an expression of faith and reverence for the Triple Gem (Leksuit, 2018)

2.1.1 Characteristics of Pearl-Eye Woven Fabric

The characteristics of the Pearl-Eye fabric are woven into small square patterns woven using silk or dark cotton threads such as red, brown, and purple, which contrast with the white lines of the grid arranged in an orderly manner. The hand weaving reflects the skill and dedication of the weavers in the community.



2.1.2 Cultural Meaning

The grid pattern conveys stability, harmony, and order in the community. It also reflects the strong relationships among family members within the community. It also shows the connection between the past, present, and future, which form the core of the folklore in the area.

2.1.3 Use in Buddhism

Pearl-eye cloth is used in various rituals such as offering forest cloth, covering Buddha statues, and in ordination and funeral ceremonies. The use of this cloth represents faith and respect for the Triple Gem, a symbol of purity and faith. In addition, weaving is considered a Dharma practice that requires perseverance and concentration.

2.1.4 The Cultural Meaning of Pearl-Eye Woven Fabric (Pearl-Eye)

The grid pattern (Square Pattern or Small Canvas) is the main design of Pearl-Eye fabric, conveying order, stability, and community harmony. It can be compared to a simple but patterned human life, which also reflects the social harmony where community members share responsibilities and support one another.

The vertical and horizontal lines (Grid Outlines) represent the "Path of Life" or "Path of Ancestors" that descendants continue to follow.

The fabric's colors with the base tones such as red, brown, and dark purple often reflect. The white color of the grid represents purity, faith, and virtue. The contrast of dark and light colors symbolizes the balance between the material world and dharma.

Hand weaving represents local wisdom and the role of women in the community. Therefore, woven fabrics used in various religious and merit-making ceremonies carry their own sacredness.

2.1.5 Pearl-Eye Woven Fabric (Pearl-Eye) and Buddhism

Grid = Consistency and Consistency

The pattern is orderly and consistent, comparable to the principle of the Middle Way (Majjhima Patipada). The grid, equal in all sections, conveys a stable and centered mind, not inclined toward extremes or worldly distractions.

Weaving = Prayer and Perseverance

Weaving is an activity that requires concentration, patience, and a firm mind, just like prayer in Buddhism. Fine and orderly weaving is comparable to a mind that has been disciplined through morality, concentration, and wisdom.

The Color of the Cloth = The Dharma in Tangible Form

Dark colors (e.g., Red, Purple, Brown) can be compared to endurance, calmness, and spiritual awakening. The combination of contrasting colors serves as a reminder that Dharma arises from balance rather than extremity.

The Role of Cloth in Rituals

Pearl-Eye cloth is often used in meritorious ceremonies such as offering to monks, covering pavilions, altar tables, and coffins as a way of showing respect for the Triple Gem and expressing gratitude and reverence.



Passing on Woven Fabrics = Inheritance of the Dharma

Weaving and passing down cloth to children and grandchildren, or using it in merit-making activities, is a symbol of transmitting the Dharma and spiritual values from generation to generation.

2.1.6 The use of pearl cloth in Buddhism

Offering to Monks (Forest Robes/Kathin Robes)

Pearl-Eye cloth is often used as an offering cloth in merit-making events, such as weaving forest robes or presenting Kathin robes, symbolizing the act of giving up material wealth to create merit.

Covering the Altar Table or the Monk's Seat

Pearl-Eye cloth is used to cover Buddha statues, altar tables, or monk's seats during merit-making events or ceremonies held at home. This practice is a tangible offering, representing devotion and spiritual generosity, similar to offering the highest gift to a king. It also reflects perseverance and deep faith.

Use in Ordination Ceremonies

In some areas, pearl cloth is used to cover the monk's seat or wrap ceremonial items such as shoes during ordination. It symbolizes purity, humility, and entering the monkhood with sincere faith, following ancestral traditions.

Rituals Related to Ancestors

It is used to cover the coffins or urns during funerals and in ceremonies held to make merit and dedicate good deeds to the deceased. This practice shows gratitude to ancestors and encourages the living to embrace the Dharma with a compassionate heart.

Religious Premises

It is used as a decorative cloth in temples, pavilions, or ceremonial halls, especially during events to honor the King. This reflects simple, local beauty and expresses reverence for sacred spaces.

Therefore, the use of pearl cloth in Buddhism is a form of Dharma-based almsgiving and faith practice that reflects the integration of local culture and Buddhist values. Pearl-Eye cloth is not just a "Cloth," but a symbol of faith, perseverance, and ancestral gratitude passed down through generations.

2.2 In-depth Interviews with Three Sample Groups about Pearl-Eye Woven Fabric Used in Buddhism

These informants were selected using purposive sampling, based on their expertise in religious practices and cultural knowledge. The weaving experts are among the last remaining practitioners of Pearl-Eye weaving in Ban Phe Subdistrict, Mueang Rayong District, where the tradition remains active. The monks and deacons were chosen for their roles in maintaining Buddhist rituals and transmitting traditional cloth practices.



The study site represents a unique Khmer-Thai community in Eastern Thailand where cultural identity and Theravāda Buddhist beliefs are deeply intertwined. The population is composed of multiple generations, and the community faces challenges such as reduced youth engagement in weaving, a lack of local textile education, and competition from modern fabrics. These contextual factors were taken into account when selecting participants to ensure a comprehensive view of both the tangible and intangible aspects of cloth tradition. The interview process followed semi-structured formats, developed based on a review of literature and verified by three experts in Buddhist studies and cultural anthropology for content validity. Informed consent was obtained, and triangulation was applied by comparing responses across groups. Interview themes were pre-coded based on symbolic use, ritual functions, and cultural meaning of the textiles.

2.2.1 Results of the Interview with the Pearl Woven Fabric Expert

Experts said that Pearl-Eye cloth is a distinctive handwoven fabric with a square grid pattern that conveys stability and social order within the community. The weaving process uses traditional methods that require both skill and precision. This type of cloth is often used in significant religious ceremonies, especially merit making events and forest robe offerings, which express faith and reverence for the Triple Gem. Weaving is also considered a form of Dharma practice, as it requires concentration, discipline, and perseverance.

2.2.2 Results of Interviews with Novice Monks

The monks and novices stated that Pearl-Eye cloth plays an important role in Buddhist rituals, such as covering Buddha statues and offering cloth during various merit-making events. This fabric carries symbolic meanings of purity, simplicity, and reverence for the Triple Gem. The monks view the act of receiving pearl-woven cloth from the community as a reflection of the villagers' faith and strong connection to Buddhism. This type of woven fabric also helps enhance the atmosphere of the rituals, adding a sense of sacredness and tranquility to the ceremony.

2.2.3 Results of the Interview with the Grandfathers (Deacons)

The deacons, who oversee ceremonies and religious activities in the community, said that Pearl-Eye cloth is a part of tradition passed down through generations. The use of this woven fabric in merit-making, ordination, and funeral ceremonies is an expression of gratitude and faith in both Buddhism and ancestral heritage. The deacons emphasized that preserving traditional weaving practices and the use of ritual fabrics help to maintain community identity and strengthen religious connections. Pearl-Eye cloth is more than just a woven material; It represents the spirit, faith, and perseverance of the community.

Overall, all three groups agreed that Pearl-Eye woven fabric (Tasamuk) is a traditional textile that plays an important role in Buddhism and has a profound cultural and spiritual meaning. Weaving is seen as an act of faith and perseverance. Its ritual use promotes relationships and bonds in the community, as well as a symbol of respect and gratitude toward the Buddha and ancestors.



Therefore, Pearl-Eye cloth in Rayong province is important in both cultural and religious contexts. This study helps to understand the role of indigenous textiles in Buddhist rituals and demonstrates the connection between local culture and the spiritual life of the community.

Discussion

The style of woven fabrics used in Buddhism by Thai people of Khmer descent living in Rayong province today is primarily handwoven with additional yarn or decorative materials during the weaving process. Some fabrics are entirely handwoven, while others are partially embellished with Pearl-Eye woven patterns. These textiles aim to maintain connections to traditional styles and symbolic meanings. Regarding the Buddhist textiles of the Khmer Thai, it can be seen that the fabrics used by the Khmer Thai people in Rayong province today. This is consistent with the findings of Kusupolon (2015), who studied the weaving practices of a group of housewives in Ban That Sobwan, Chiang Kham District, Phayao Province. Her research found that they used natural materials, including cotton and plant-based dyes, highlighting a similar emphasis on traditional techniques and materials.

However, while Kusupolon's study emphasizes raw materials and dyeing techniques, the present study expands further by connecting the woven patterns with Buddhist symbolic thought, particularly the Middle Path, merit-making, and gratitude to ancestors. For instance, the grid pattern of Pearl-Eye weaving is interpreted by informants as symbolizing balance and order, which aligns with the Buddhist concept of Right View (*Sammā Ditt̄hi*). The process of weaving itself is seen as a spiritual act, reflecting mindfulness (*Sammā Sati*) through steady rhythm and intention.

Additionally, the fabrics are not only considered beautiful or traditional but are also regarded as sacred media in religious offerings. This spiritual value enhances their role in ritual life, particularly in ceremonies where cloth is given as a form of *dāna* (Generosity). Elders in the community emphasized that these woven fabrics carry accumulated merit across generations, reinforcing the importance of passing on the tradition.

The research also finds that while traditional practices persist, younger generations are increasingly disengaged due to economic constraints and lifestyle changes. This highlights a gap in cultural transmission that requires urgent attention. Compared to earlier studies, the present research not only documents technique but also reflects the lived religious and cultural experiences embedded in cloth, offering a deeper, more integrated understanding of textile heritage in a Buddhist Khmer-Thai context.

Originality and Body of Knowledge

The use of pearl tarpaulin in Buddhism is an example of a harmonious blend of local culture and religion. Woven fabrics with unique patterns serve not only as clothing but also as spiritual and social symbols that reflect the beliefs and values of the community. The Pearl-Eyed fabric of the people of Rayong province plays an important role in both cultural and religious life. The study of this type of woven fabric provides a deep understanding of the lifestyles, beliefs, and Buddhist practices. Its use illustrates how Buddhism and cultural tradition are interwoven in



meaningful ways. These woven fabrics are more than garments or decorations; They are symbols of dharma and faith, created through a weaving process that requires patience, dedication, and mindfulness, qualities that align closely with core Buddhist principles such as morality, meditation, and wisdom.

This reflects not only the functional role of fabric but also its symbolic and spiritual dimensions, forming what can be conceptualized as a cultural-religious model consisting of four interrelated components: 1) Symbol- Visual elements such as the grid pattern reflecting the Middle Way and order in Buddhist cosmology; 2) Process- The weaving itself as meditative action fostering mindfulness (Sammā-sati); 3) Function- Its role in rituals and communal merit-making; and 4) Transmission- Intergenerational teaching that maintains the continuity of Khmer-Thai Buddhist identity.

The use of pearl cloth in Buddhism includes several important functions. First, it is used as an offering to monks and monastics, such as forest robes or Kathin robes, which are often presented during merit-making events. These include handwoven forest cloths or Kathin offerings, symbolizing renunciation and acts of charity. The traditional colors and patterns reflect respect and simplicity, aligning with the monastic way of life. Second, pearl cloth is used for covering altar tables or monk's blankets, often placed over a Buddha statue, altar, or monk's seat during ceremonies at temples or even at home. This practice serves as a concrete act of offering, representing the presentation of a valuable gift, similar in meaning to royal offerings. Third, in some regions, pearl cloth is used during ordination ceremonies, where it may cover the monk's seat or be placed under shoes worn at the event. Fourth, pearl cloth is used in rituals related to honoring ancestors, such as covering coffins or urns at funerals, or in ceremonies that dedicate merit to the deceased. Finally, pearl cloth serves as religious decoration, adorning temples, pavilions, or halls of honor, where it displays beauty in a simple, local style and functions as a respectful tribute to sacred spaces.

Across these roles, pearl cloth becomes a vehicle for conveying Buddhist teachings in a tangible form. Its presence in merit-making, funeral rites, and daily rituals embodies the Buddhist values of compassion, gratitude, and the impermanence of life.

Therefore, the use of pearl cloth in Buddhism is a form of dharma-based almsgiving and a practice of faith that reflects the connection between local culture and Buddhist principles. Therefore, pearl eye cloth is not merely a piece of "Cloth," but a symbol of devotion, perseverance, and gratitude, passed down through generations as a cherished cultural and spiritual heritage from the ancestors. Such understanding can support cultural preservation policies, intergenerational education, and curriculum development on intangible heritage, enabling communities to sustain traditional weaving while promoting its religious and ethical significance in contemporary life. (In Figure 1)

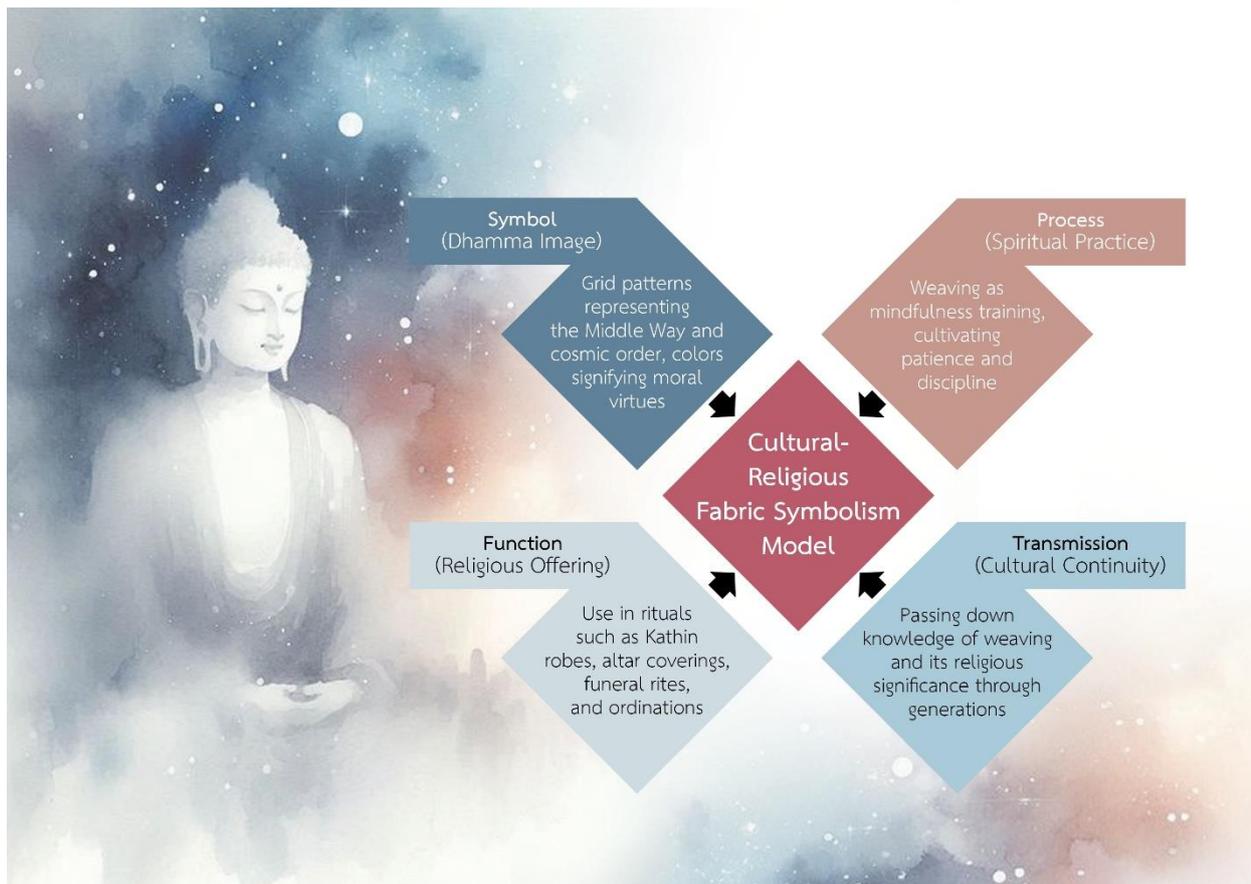


Figure 1 Cultural-Religious Fabric Symbolism Model

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study of Ta Khamuk or (Ta Samuk) woven fabric used in Buddhism by the people of Rayong province reveals that textiles mentioned in Buddhist scriptures play a significant role not only as monastic requisites for monks, but also as offerings made by laypeople to express their reverence toward the Triple Gem. These woven textiles can be categorized into five types based on their usage: Textiles for the Buddha, the Dhamma (Buddhist Teachings), the Sangha (Monastic Community), sacred offerings, and other ritual-related fabrics. Ta Khamuk fabric, traditionally used in Buddhist contexts by the people of Rayong, reflects local wisdom, beliefs, and religious faith through its patterns, colors, and weaving processes. These five types of cloth are not merely categorized by usage, but each holds symbolic connections to core Buddhist values: Offerings to the Buddha signify enlightenment and devotion; Cloths for the Dhamma represent transmission of knowledge; Cloths for the Sangha embody communal harmony; Sacred offerings express Puñña (Merit); And ritual fabrics mark the integration of spiritual life into cultural practice. Symbolically, the checkered patterns represent consistency and the Middle Way; The act of weaving is likened to meditative practice; The fabric's colors convey moral and spiritual virtues; The use of the fabric in rituals signifies generosity and reverence; And the act of passing down the fabric represents the transmission of Dhamma across generations. These meanings align directly with Buddhist teachings on impermanence (Anicca), mindfulness (Sati), and communal merit-making (Sangha-Dāna), reinforcing



the sacred nature of cloth as both object and medium for spiritual cultivation. From these findings, three key areas of knowledge emerge: 1) Symbolic significance of grid patterns as visual metaphors for Buddhist cosmology; 2) The cloth as a communicative tool for transmitting Dhamma across generations and rituals; and 3) The act of weaving itself as a lived expression of Buddhist practice, embodying patience, mindfulness, and discipline. Therefore, the preservation and promotion of Buddhist woven textiles should be encouraged through initiatives such as collecting and conserving fabrics in cultural centers, preaching about the merits of offering cloth in Buddhism, developing textile weaving curricula for youth, and publishing educational materials about Ta Khamuk fabric in its cultural and religious contexts. These recommendations can be implemented by local temples, community learning centers, and educational institutions through workshops, exhibitions, intergenerational craft programs, and collaborations with the Ministry of Culture. In terms of future research, scholars may consider comparative studies of Buddhist textile practices in other ethnic communities, long-term studies on intergenerational transmission of weaving knowledge, or digital archiving of patterns and oral histories to ensure sustainability and broader public access. These efforts aim to safeguard the intellectual and artistic heritage of Thai people of Khmer descent in Rayong province and to foster pride in their local identity.

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