



Meaning Alteration of Thai Sacred Tattooing in the North of Thailand

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Abstract

In this article, the author has paid attention to the meaning alteration of Thai sacred tattooing in the North of Thailand. It seems like the foreigners who come to travel or move to stay in Thailand are starting to be interested in Thai sacred tattoos more than before, and they often get the ones that help to have a better fortune and good at trading. The author believes that the future trend of Thai sacred tattooing will continuously increase as modern societies become more receptive to tattoos, no matter whether it is tattooed in women or men. People also started to respect more and more in the individual rights. Nowadays, there is a group of foreigners who have come to get tattoos at the sacred tattooing house in Chiang Mai or even invite the tattooing masters to go tattooing to the ones who are interested and believed in sacred tattooing abroad. Thus, the author sees that these phenomena, meaning, and the changes are worth investigating in the author's thesis.

Introduction

This research article is a part of the author's Master's thesis under the topic of bodily practices and power of the tattooing among ethnic groups in Northern Thailand. By focusing on the meanings, purposes, and the change of the Thai sacred tattoos, which is a sub-culture, it becomes more popular among the Thais and foreigners who come to travel or stay Chiang Mai recently. In the past, tattoo culture had often associated how human life had evolved since ancient times. The ancients' tattooing is a symbol expressing the development of species mixed the stories to link between nature and life. Most of the tattooing beliefs often relate to the sanctity, superstition, and religious ritual. The meaning and purpose of tattoos are continuously changing, especially among teenagers. It becomes a trendy fashion that could refer to as a mainstream culture that everyone turns their attention to highlight and to identify themselves. However, the sacred tattoos are still prevalent in a particular group, which may be called a sub-culture that must get some sacred powers to the self. Currently, this type of tattoos has become trendier among foreigners. Most of the foreigners who travel to Thailand not only want to get the tattoos as a souvenir to save their memories from place to place, but in some groups, they also want to learn to follow the Buddhist belief in Buddhism ways.

This research had done in Huan Sala Sapyant Monton Payab, Chiang Mai Province. With Master Wathanyu Aupanan, who has experiences in Thai Sacred tattooing for over ten years from his ordination, to owning his own sacred tattooing house. He had studied and was interested in the art of tattooing to explore all hidden meanings within the doctrine. The author interviewed and collected data at this sacred tattooing house and observed a few times to gradually understand the tattooing process. It included a group

of followers that have tattooed as followers of this sacred tattooing house. There are several groups of people, from businesspersons, bikers, foreigners, or even some ethnic groups that came to get tattooed. Everyone came to tattoo at this sacred tattooing house to get some sacred powers from tattooing and to meet the needs of each person.

The author has collected data by using the Participant Observation method by participating in various activities during tattooing ceremonies at this sacred tattooing house. It was all done to understand multiple contexts. It included the tattooing process, the rituals, and the interaction of all participating parties. In addition, the author used the Key Informant Interview method to question one tattooing master to study the origins of this sacred tattooing house and the process of tattooing and the group of followers or those tattooed to learn how to practice to maintain tattoo powers. Lastly, the author used the case study method to select case studies from data collection, interviewing key informants. When finding the case with the relevant issue, the author then asked to get 2-3 in-depth information and then analyze it further. This article is consisting of the meaning alteration of Thai sacred tattooing, tattooing evolution, Thai sacred tattooing and beliefs in Buddhism, and Thai sacred tattooing in the age of globalization, respectively.

Meaning Alteration of Thai Sacred Tattooing

If we talk about tattooing cultural beliefs, it has associated with human life since ancient times. Chanit Pukarn (1996) mentioned that tattooing or tattoo is the history of many races on earth. Ancient tattooing is the symbolism that illustrates the development of the race, which combines stories to appear

between the nature and way of life. Mostly the meaning of the sacred tattooing in Thai society or even among ethnic groups in Thailand can be defined in different ways. Still, it mainly refers to tattooing to be invulnerable to prevent all dangers while you are traveling away from home. The meaning of the tattoo is often changed from time to time. Whether it is a tattoo to tell who they are or some people are willing to have tattoos to get some extra features than others, the tattooing sometimes can classify as a person who embroidered that person like a commoner or a slave.

In the North of Thailand in the past, sacred tattooing culture can convey unique Lanna's identity to indicate being a people in the Lanna Kingdom where have collected various ethnic groups as well as control migration both in and out of the kingdom. There are two distinctive features, which are Lanna language and Dharma characters. The tattoos will rule the Dharma characters, and the Lanna language is a noticeable spot that is different from tattoo designs from the central region or Myanmar or other ethnic groups. Although there are similar characteristics in the pattern structure of the pattern, the language used to control the inside Lanna Kingdom is Lanna language, which can indicate the identity and beliefs of each ethnic group.

After the Second World War, another form of tattooing meant making people feel comfortable fighting with the economic insecurity by having the sacred tattoos as their spiritual anchor. Later, there are some changes in tattooing; there are also several sub-culture groups that come in various forms. Whether they are a biker, musician, artist, or a group of women who need roses on their chest, showing the women proportion for attracting the opposite sex, even those at risk while working, such as ten-wheeled truck drivers or nighttime workers are increasing consecutively. It can assume that tattooing

culture spreading rapidly and resulted in a variety of tattooing meanings. Additionally, teenagers love to express themselves as part of a particular group such as tattooing Adler tattoo to indicate that they are one of that gang. As well as some are closely cropped haircut wearing a white tie, which is influenced by Western culture, which becomes trendier nowadays at the same time that the Hollywood industry has become more popular. Even the tattooing becomes the subject of negative identities of men in those days, and everyone always looks down on those who have tattoos as a hooligan. Moreover, tattooing is also a transformation from childhood to adulthood or even a sign of being a man or a woman in the past. It is not only because of physiological differences, but also the differences between men and women in social ways by having some rituals.

To sum up, tattooing has a different meaning in today society. Among teenagers may want to be a sub-culture or tattoo for the art of beauty. This group is diverse from the first group who want to get some sacred power as the anchor of their mind, such as having attention from peoples around, easily convince others, be wealthy, or even cannot be harmed by any weapons. Thus, the definition of tattooing for the new generation can be divided into a sub-culture or a widespread group of teenagers who want to use force or may call them a gangster. This group loves to get tattoos with tattoo master focusing on an incantation and celebrities from Thailand and abroad. They want to get that kind of tattoos to get a tremendous sacred power which can advance to their work as well as protection. It is a new trend that has spread through globalization widely.

Tattooing Evolution

The evolution of Thai sacred tattooing has evolved according to the values and beliefs of people in each age continuously. Rattana Arunsri (2004) stated that from the past, sacred tattooing often found in men who have to fight the enemy or have to travel away from their habitat. To protect the dangers of both enemies and bad spirits that may attack any time. The tattooing can even show the ownership (a commoner/a slave) to seal that person under the power of a particular person. In Thai society, it creates a negative image for those who have a tattoo until the present. If anyone gets tattoos, they will be looked down like a bumpy hooligan with bad habits, but nowadays, a society seems more acceptable about tattooing.

Nowadays, people have a look at tattooed peoples in a better way and think it is an artistic way instead. Being the tattooed ones cannot be measured by their value from just appearance, which is resulting in tattooing values in both women and men more in today's society. Nowadays, the topic of having tattoos in society is widespread, especially among teenagers interested in Thai sacred tattooing. Unlike in the past, peoples with tattoos on the body often labeled negative. However, it is noteworthy that, when referring to traditionally sacred tattoos, it usually comes with rituals, beliefs, and sacred powers, which are sometimes difficult to explain in science.

There are different perspectives in these studies. If you look at the cultural angle, tattooing found in several ethnic groups, especially among men. Tattooing can also convey a sense of masculinity as well as particular strengths. Besides, tattooing is continually changing and focus on fashion and beauty recently. Diversely in some groups, they also want to encourage the beauty of tattooing and can even prevent diseases. An example, in the author's field

repository in Hpa-an, Myanmar, there are several contexts and functions of tattooing. It is not only in the context of gangsters or boxers, but also referred to as a sub-culture, but the traditional tattooing is very diverse at the same time among Karen peoples in Hpa-an. Shan peoples who whether live in Myanmar or Thailand believe that tattooing can be a medication that is widespread and gains in popularity nowadays. It has found in either in Hpa-an, Bago in Myanmar, or Mae Sot, Thailand, in the past, but it is not as extensive as the present.

Among the Karen ethnic group in Burma, a group called Manaw Seiktoppat group formed 30-40 years ago. The Manaw Seiktoppat followers have established several sub-organizations in Burma, including Mae Sot sub-district in Tak province, Thailand. The worshipping ceremony holds once a year. The primary purposes of this sacred tattooing ceremony are to expel bad spirits, including the lousy superstition, and protect them from all dangers. The most critical tattooing in this ceremony is to cure diseases that cannot be cured by modern medicine, through tattooing various positions on the body from head to toe, according to their ancient sacred tattooing textbook.

In the North of Thailand, tattooing culture can convey Lanna's unique identity to indicate the people in the Lanna Kingdom that gathered ethnic groups altogether and control of migration to and from the Lanna Kingdom. There are two main characteristics of Lanna tattooing, which are Lanna language and doctrine alphabets, which appear on the tattoos. It is noticeable that Lanna tattooing is different from the central part of Thailand or in Burma or other ethnic groups. However, it has a similar structural pattern; the language used in tattoos is different. Another type of Lanna tattooing is a tattoo that indicates the identity and morals of the ethnic group.

When you have mentioned about traditional tattooing, whether it is a Shan, Karen, or Lanna tattooing, there is always related to beliefs and rituals which cannot be separated. Since the way of life in the past depends on the anchor of mind, either to travel long distances to trade or to fight in the war. The tattooing is often accompanied by magic spells to keep them some sacred powers to protect and to create affection for those who have sacred tattoos. As an example of Wandee Santiwuttimethi's (2002) article, she mentioned that Shan women or knew as "NangHan" in Shan language, which is a female soldier. All of Shan female soldiers need to get tattoos while they are in the military, but when they come back to Thailand, they did not want to make a personal appearance as a soldier, so they need to remove all tattoos. When time flies over, there always some changes occur. Sacred tattooing may be necessary during the warfare. Still, as laborers in the present time, tattooing may be unnecessary or maybe necessary among urban adolescents, such as teenagers who drive motorbikes may be interested in such sacred tattooing to prevent them from all accidents.

Moreover, the living ways of life context has changed. The value of sacred tattooing has changed as well. Nowadays, the sacred tattooing of being invulnerable tends to decrease, but it is still popular among the ones who love boxing since they believe that if they have such sacred tattoos, they will be able to beat the opponent more. For the sacred tattooing of being admirable, interestingly increases because trading is the main business of living at present. There is still a group of people always satisfied in a traditional way to get the motif of tattooing. Each group has a different tattoo master, and each of which has taboos, prohibitions, and practices differently. However, everyone lastly has a way of doing things to get those invulnerable and admirable powers and want to keep those sacred powers with them last forever.

The study of tattooing process or tattoos, it is not enough if you look only at a tattoo which is one of an object. However, it must see as a tattooing process involving tattoos, called material culture. If one talks about an object in a tattoo, it often requires several things before humanity centered on Western theories. It has changed various factors such as needles, spells, ink, tattoos, and a discourse of taboos and precepts recently; it is a part of the object. The object is not necessary to be only human but non-human as well.

Anan Ganjanapan (2012) mentioned that Michel Foucault concluded that Ethics is the actual behavior of individuals. It has linked to the rules of conduct, with the rule of perception being the operations that govern and control the actions that are considered part of the actual behavior of humans/individuals involved with Practice rules. It is related to sacred tattooing that when the body has tattoos, it will come up and transform that person to sense the feeling of those sacred powers, for example, tattooing for being invulnerable, being protected or being admirable. Still, the transformation will depend on the implementation of the practices. These transformations cannot occur immediately right after tattooing; they must be disciplined, imbedded, or controlled to allow those who are tattooed or to follow those disciplines strictly to keep those powers with them as their wishes.

Later, the bodily study is an area that was of interest to the postmodern theorizers. In modern times, many theorists believe that the body can control itself. The body may control unconsciously by accepting the knowledge of the truth of a given discourse under the power of discourse. The body has to surrender to capital and power, becoming a physically dependent man under the dictates of male capitalism, and the sale of women's bodies became a commodity. Several studies of Governmentality, later on, result in the study of human identity that not control solely, but the human identity can also

cause a new subject. Among Thais found to have intense physical and mental training. Sacred tattooing is a process to train yourself to strengthen and empower at the same time.

Following Foucault's concept of Governmentality, government refers to the practice of controlling the body to practice disciplines, practices, and prohibitions. If you have been tattooed but not yet practice, still be immoral, consume food and beverages in various misfortunes, walk through the basement of the house, the subjectivity will be gone. The government can divide into two dimensions. When tattooing on the body, the tattoo alone cannot empower. It must follow the practices and prohibitions strictly, such as worship the tattoo master, and do not spit in the toilet because it believed that the lavatory is dirty. It will keep the invulnerable and admirable powers with the subject continuously.

Thai Sacred Tattooing and Beliefs in Buddhism

Thai sacred tattooing is known as Sak Yant in the Thai language. Sak usually means to tattoo, and Yant means mystic symbol. When combining Sak and Yant, it means to tattoo mystic symbols. The author interviewed Master Dum, a well-known Lanna sacred tattooing master; he added that if only the word "Yant" has mentioned, the meaning of the Yant as in the dictionary referring to a movement. The thing moves in the Yant is the power of the magic, as we know as a mantra. Besides, Yant is a symbol to protect, to cure, and to have a good relationship in love. The Yant cannot clearly distinguish categorizes because some of the Yant has a shared-powers. It can be either protecting or admiring powers at the same time. Thus, they cannot be classified separately, but most of the Yant is for protection.

It is still in the meaning of the spell in most tales if you dig deep into the invulnerable tattooing. It is about the practices of not going to do anything in the wrong way and not being a bad person since the good is constant. It is the doctrine hidden behind the Yant. If we viewed superficially, the talisman might consider to be credulous, but you sole study seriously, then you will find many more teachings in it. The Yant cannot claim that it belongs to anyone because it is what tattoo masters have invented and relayed these things to their followers. Therefore, to say that the Yant is someone's property is not possible. From the above statement.

The author found that the sacred tattooing is directly related to the beliefs based on Buddhism, which often has the underlying doctrines of the Buddha in the tattoos. Still, it is interesting that the integration of Buddhism and superstition, which is quite contradicted, can combine perfectly. Whether the tattooing is to tattoo for protecting or having a good fortune, it is a good thing to have with you to have a better life, which is hidden in the morals and beliefs of the superstition.

On the side of virtue, it will make peoples believe in the sacredness of the sacred tattooing house that exists. The tattooed ones will be afraid or fear of offenses, which may be considered legal in itself, not get off the box and keep being kind. For example, in a superstition belief, if your sacred tattoo is a tiger, a monkey, or a Hanuman, it could be implying as a hot-tempered person. Whenever you are impatient, something terrible may happen to you. So you need to keep yourself calm while getting into any trouble.

Besides, the tattooed ones have forbidden to eat the leftover food or do not drink the same glass with friends because the sacredness of the tattoos might be gone. When they accidentally did something wrong, they

might go insane. These taboos and practices must be observed by those who are the tattoo masters and by whom the tattooed one will focus on meditation and strict on religious observance. If they do not follow it strictly, those incantations will be automatically gone. It can solve by doing the worship to pay respect and apologize to your tattoo masters what you have done wrong and to reinforce those incantations again. Lastly, Thai sacred tattooing can be categorized either to be invulnerable or to be admirable. Whether it will have sacred powers or not, the tattooed ones need to trust and believe in those sacred powers first, then follow and practice the doctrines of Buddha strictly to keep those sacred powers with them thoroughly. The belief of tattooing in Buddhism has associated with how human life has evolved since ancient times, with many pieces of evidence. Chanit Pukarn (1996) stated that tattooing is a symbolic depiction of the development of a species that mixes the story to form a link between nature and life. In Asia, tattooing is a part of indigenous culture as well as the western world. Later, the tattoo culture has appeared in many Asian countries such as Cambodia, Burma, China, Laos, Indonesia, and Thailand.

Most of Thai sacred tattooing beliefs usually link to the sacredness, superstition, and rituals. We could say that in Thai society, Buddhism and superstition are indistinguishable. This is why we believe that “Buddhists and occult dwell upon each other” because, in the past, Thais believe in spirits before worshiping Buddhism and also repeatedly influenced by Brahmanical-Hinduism. It, therefore, combines the elements of the three beliefs. It can consider that the superstition is one of the most influential sciences for Thais. In superstition perception, the word “incantation” is the most meaningful. This incantation has been spawned by magic and holiness to get the mercy of great popularity, be invulnerable, or even prevent all dangers. Since everything

depends on only faith, it rises to such sacred power. It could be both Buddhism and superstition at the same time.

If understood in that regard, it could say that to share the same concepts of sacred tattooing and amulets as a reminder of the Buddha, precepts, and monks. If talking about incantation and holiness, the power of the believer's worship is a superstition. Hence, the superstition is a science which has a belief as a fundamental which can one of their shelters if they could not find any other mental dependency. If it can prove the reason behind the faith, it will be useful to let us believe permanently and have wisdom that the Buddha is a permanent dependency to make you happy and do not have to be in metempsychosis forever.

Thai Sacred Tattooing in the Age of Globalization

Niti Eiewsiwong (1998) said that the reason that peoples in the modern era turned their attention to believe more in sacred things, coupled with a system of beliefs that are rational in the current economy, such as if they would like to sell their lands instead of searching for information to analyze prices and sales strategies, add as much confidence to buyers as possible. They decide to bring the title deed to the monk to perform the sacred ceremony. Some are even want to trade stocks, then go and ask the fortune teller or a medium instead of analyzing the stock price reasonably. It can say that in the modern world, economic, political, and cultural links together, which is difficult to predict what will happen. It leads peoples to need to find a mental refuge to build more confidence in themselves by turning to rely on faith, and sacred things are more natural. The sacred tattooing is one of the reasons that people are becoming more interested nowadays.

The author has found that tattooing has begun in ancient times, in the form of symbols, to signify some critical implications on the skin. For sacred tattooing in Thailand, it is not possible to identify when it started. According to the ancient texts, it may say that the tattooing began from the King Ramkhamhaeng from the Khun Chang Khun Phaen literature has mentioned the tattoos on the body of the characters. Additionally, most of the tattooing in the North of Thailand often influence by the legendary Shan peoples. You will find the characters or symbols on the talisman tales, and the gurus who give talents to talented tattoo masters today is often the Shan.

Thus, the author is interested in studying these phenomena to understand the broader implications of tattooing changes in the social context, economy, and globalization. It is always changing all the time, including bodily practices and power of the sacred tattooing among the different groups who get tattoos or even the tattoo masters. There are a variety of formats both in traditional and modern fashion tattooing. The foreigners do not have to do any conventional rituals. Thus, meanings and techniques of the tattoos are continually changing, and when the tattoo becomes a commodity, resulting in the traditional ritual disappears over time.

Nowadays, the popularity of sacred tattooing has increased in various groups. It results in the increasing number of tattooing houses and tattoo masters, who are monks or savants, such as Luang Por Phoen, Luang Por PraThueng, Ajarn NuGunPai including Ajarn Watthanyu Aupanan; a head of Huen Sala SubYant Monton Payab tattooing house in Chiang Mai Province. These sacred tattoo masters are skilled in tattooing equipment such as tattoo needles, tattoo inks, and tattoo patterns. Tattooing on the part of the body on those who need a tattoo and give practicality to those who want to follow can transform into the body, which has full of sacred powers. Therefore, the

tattooing process is related to tattoo masters; they must follow the discourse of Buddhism precepts strictly to govern the body and maintain such sacred powers as their desires.

There are several practices and taboos of sacred tattooing. The tattooed ones need to pay respect to their tattoo master during the worship ceremony every year, and they must take the oath to practice it strictly. According to requirements to comply, the tattooed ones who need to hold on to the commitment of self-control must abstain or strictly prohibit the following activities. The tattooed person must not be unfaithful, such as commit adultery, do not steal, do not be hot-tempered or say abusive to parents, do not eat leftovers from others or the priest or the funeral, do not eat star apples, bottle gourds, squashes, and coconuts, do not pass under the bridge or banana trees and do not let the woman sit on the lap. Janjop Yingsumon (1991) stated that the tattooing often conceals teachings and ideas not to get out of the box. After tattooing, the tattooed person must behave and practice the five precepts of Buddhism strictly. The taboos can divide into two kinds of beliefs: the invulnerable and admirable powers of tattooing.

The author found these taboos and practices are similar to stratagem, to frame the lives of adolescent youths in the past, who may have been riveting. There is an underlying belief that comes with the doctrine of Buddhism and the sacred tattooing to arouse to believe in fear and fear of doing bad things. If you want the power of the alchemy of the sacred tattooing to stay with, you must follow the practices of the five precepts of the Buddha's teachings as the primary practices to dominate in a right way, be conscious, and keep as a mind restraint to make the tattooed ones more confident.

Moreover, the author has also found that each ethnic group had similar tattooing beliefs. The men will have a tattoo to get the incantation of the various designs and also represents strength and to indicates masculinity to attract the opposite sex. The women will have little tattoos to protect against bad spirits and beasts. It is interesting that during the study, the author found that the ethnic tattoos in the past can indicate the origin or interrelations of each ethnic group as well.

Tattoos have served the story, and it is a part that reflects the link between man and nature. It also demonstrates the development of progress in the way of life, ideas, and beliefs in diverse social and cultural contexts. Whether the reason or condition that makes the cultural context change, it affects the thought, feelings, and patterns of tattooing as well. However, sacred tattooing and tattoos are still responsible for creating the meaning, identification of tattoos, and social groups in the context of changing social and cultural backgrounds.

From field data collection, the author found that there are several sacred tattooing houses in Chiang Mai. The author selected the most prominent and relevant sacred tattooing house, namely, the Huan Sala Sapyant Monton Payab, Chiang Mai, the headman of this sacred tattooing house is Master Wathanyu Aupanan. This sacred tattooing house receive many people who are interested in the mystical powers of tattooing both Thais and foreigners. Thus, this sacred house is the best place to collect the data.

During the data collection, the author has a chance to interview one Passionate Chinese about sacred tattooing called “ArTu.” He is one of Master Wathanyu’s followers. ArTu told us about his friends’ experiences after tattooing with Master Wathanyu that they had experienced differently. ArTu said that

there was his Thai friend who owns the tour company. He had more than 200 cars and motorbikes for rental, then went bankrupt and had nothing left. He needed to go back home to open a small restaurant instead. Two years later, ArTu brought his friend to meet with Master Wathanyu to get sacred tattoos, and unbelievably, in one year, his friend's life was much better. ArTu does not know how to describe religious superstition, but everything has to start with the faith first.

ArTu additionally said that some of his Chinese friends who get sacred tattoos from Master Wathanyu say the same thing that after getting those tattoos, everything is much better than before. For ArTu himself, he has a good business because of the admirable sacred tattoos. ArTu also got protecting tattoos, which is a five Buddha pattern. He believes that if we do good deeds, Buddha will always be with us. Besides, ArTu still has a clutch tattoo, which is a weapon of Vishnu to protect against various dangers. ArTu added that the sacred tattooing with powerful spells. It is not suitable to bring a tattoo to the legs or lower waist. He maintains the powers of sacred tattoos with him by following the five Buddhism precepts. Sometimes, he could not follow all five precepts strictly like not drinking alcohol, which means not drinking alcohol at all because, in ancient times, alcohol sometimes is a medication to recover our body. The reason it is strictly prohibited the alcohol drinking because by getting drunk, it can lead to hurting others. If you are already drunk, try to keep yourself calm. Another admirable powers of tattooing that ArTu got is SalikaLinThing, the taboos of such admirable tattoos are not to spit on the floor and do not eat climbing plants for the invulnerable ones. After all, ArTu still believes that if you do not understand or trust in these things, those mystical powers or the holinesses do not come true. Mind and Faith are the most important things.

Tum, who is one of the followers of monk master Phornsit, SawangArom temple in Chiang Mai, had shared his experiences after being a disciple with the monk master Phornsit that previously, he was working on the construction business. At first, he hesitated whether to get tattoos or not, then he went to meet with monk master Phornsit and told him that he worked on this kind of business, and it is suitable for him. The monk master recommended him to get the main sacred tattoos. Tum told us with his sparkling eyes that after a month or even less than a month, the work he did not want to do or tons of work, including large-scale work, came to him unbelievably. From that day, he became successful until this day. After he succeed in his career, he decided to get more sacred tattoos. He got a sacred power of good trading tattoos for the first time, and later, he wanted admirable tattoos. Again after he got the admirable ones, the more his business is incredibly going well.

Tum additionally said that he follows the five principles of Buddhism as a primary practice to maintain all of the sacred things with him. He came to the pondering end that the thoughts of principles are too strict or too tight, are not right. We should do it to enhance our lives. We do what we can. What we need to keep then keep it, but what will not be decisive is to eat at the funeral, do not curse parents, which affects the sacred powers immediately.

Discussion and Conclusion

From the participant observation method by participating in the annual tattoo master' worship ceremony at Huan Sala Sapyant Payap, Chiang Mai, the author talked to Master Wathanyu, the owner of this sacred tattooing house. Most of the people interested in tattooing are foreigners, mainly Chinese. Master Wathanyu said that "They did some researches to have basic knowledge

about sacred tattooing before. If they have no information, they won't come. It is essential to understand some contexts, and they like Thai sacred tattoos. I am pleased to be a part of spreading these significant cultures to foreigners from all over the world.” Therefore, the author understands the context of Chinese people who come to tattoo Thai sacred tattoos and are ready to follow Buddhism precepts to receive and keep the sacred power of tattoos. It is fascinating during the ceremony. Most of Master Wathanyu's followers have “Khong Kheun” symptoms: having an unconscious, uncontrolled, and hash actions acting as the monkey, tiger, or an old hermit while he was chanting the mantra. The Chinese have the same symptoms as other Thai people who attend the ceremony. Although the chanting is in Lanna's language mixed with Pali Sanskrit, one Chinese gestures as an angry tiger as if understanding and accessing those sacred powers. After the ceremony, everything seemed calm as if nothing had happened. From the incident combining with the explanation of Master Wathanyu, the author has a better understanding of the context, and he further explained that Chinese people that are interested in sacred tattooing tend to tattoo designs that help fortify their fortune. There will be a lesson on moral knowledge during the tattooing so that everyone who comes to get learning Buddhism in Thailand will be at the same time. It may be called the mental reliance of a group of people in a bad state of mind. Sometimes there is no mental dependence. Going to the temple is not helping, so they decide to get sacred tattoos for a better life.

At present, there are many people who feel insecure in modernity, so they turn to look for the psychological dependence of finding the support to live a better life. The sacred tattooing or the traditional tattooing emphasizes the invulnerable and admirable powers prevalent in all ages, occupations at present. Each sacred tattooing house may have a different tattooing style,

but tattoos are often associated with processes involving the body. The method of creating the inner body of a person with tattoos may link to Buddhism. It is a concept that is linked to Western theory to understand the process that occurs in the tattooing. As we already know that the sacred tattooing is based primarily on Buddhism and Buddhist philosophy, Michel Foucault stated that a way to create a subject is to govern the self. The incantation comes from the philosophy of Buddhism, which is a “Practical Buddhism” in the form of Buddhist mysticism, which Buddhism is very distinctive in northern Thailand. The combination of Buddhism and superstition together through the incantation is resulting in the sacred act. All of the ink and spells are all related to objects, which is considering to be a cause of various sacred powers through sacred tattoos on the body. Therefore, this concept is a blend of Western thinking with Buddhism. It involves creating the subject through the governmentality or self-control, with a set of disciplines to gain the desired effects.

To sum up, the sacred tattooing is a local wisdom that should inherit by the next generation. It is a story of faith and beauty concealing with several sciences; it can prove and still wait to verify by the technology evolution. In modern times, tattooing is a matter of fashion or body art that attracts the opposite or the same sex rather than paying attention to the incantation. In the modern day, it makes new teens turn their attention to the body's art to show their attractive bodies. It results in the sacred tattooing slightly disappearing from Thai society. There is still a mixture of traditional and modern tattooing, such as the contemporary ink, which has a better sharp, durable, and safe, differs from traditional tattooing that is blending with mineral and traditional herbs. There is no sketch in the traditional pattern, which makes the tattooing of each institute different. At present, sketching and drawing

patterns on a paper before tattooing becomes more popular because it is easy to bring the figure to the desired position to make the design more orderly and beautiful by combining traditional and modern tattoos. It can say that the tattooing in this manner is “modern sacred tattooing.” No one can predict how the sacred tattooing will be in the future. If it is completely lost, it won’t be very pleasant. We should pass on this valuable wisdom to inherit to the next generations and maintain the sacred tattooing that can represent each ethnicity’s identity.

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