

The Changes of Lao Silverware in Vientiane

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Abstract: This research aims to study the history of Lao silverware, to study the changes of silverware in Vientiane Capital. Research methodology consists of descriptive research to analyze the changes of silverware in Vientiane Capital. The researcher collected the documents and field from the study area of silverware manufacturers in Vientiane Capital Champalanxang Shop, Fa Watthana Shop, Phaiwan Handicraft Shop and Achan Uding Silversmith. Study plans consist of interviews by in-depth interviews and sub-group discussions with 4 silverware craftsmen, observation using both participant and non-participant observation, analyze the data on the change of silverware in Vientiane Capital, using the theory of cultural diffusion, theory of aesthetics in arts and crafts and the concept of inventing related traditions. The research found that Lao silverware began in the reign of King Fa Ngum where the silver artisans were taken from the town of Khmer to Luang Prabang. In the old time, the silverware was a privilege held by kings and the royal family as well as noblemen. Lao silverware is influenced by Khmer art (Cambodia), China, Lanna, Sukhothai (Thailand) and Bagan (Myanmar). For the changes of silverware in Vientiane, it is found that from the past until 2015, Khan (pedestal tray) and Or (bowl) are the most utensils for daily use attached to the way of life of the Lao people. The shape and pattern have been changed due to the economy and the country administration structures.

Key words: Change, silverware, Vientiane Capital, Lao people, Cambodia, Thailand

INTRODUCTION

Vientiane in the Lan Xang Kingdom was named “Chanthabuly Krunsi Sattanakhanahud”. According to legend of the city, three-brother Hermits settled in the area, making the city pillars with sandalwood, so, this area was named the wood pillars as “Vientiane”. In the year 1560, King Chaiyachetthathirat established Vientiane city as the capital of the Kingdom of Lan Xang instead of Xieng Dong-Xieng Thong or Luang Prabang. Vientiane was ruled continuously by Kings until 1975, it was established as the capital of the country and was renamed to Vientiane Capital. Vientiane is located in the central part of Laos and is recognized the capital or the master city of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic. General conditions of some of the buildings are European designed on Lan Xang Road which is the most important road in the city of Vientiane. The two-sides of the road are lined with government offices, banks, tour agents and etc. Vientiane is a city with an economic and social role. Vientiane has Patuxai (Victory Gate) located in the heart of the city and

is a symbol of the French rule in 1893 or when the Lao territory was under the French rule and Vientiane was appointed the capital of Laos until now. However, at present, the country has become Lao People’s Democratic Republic (Lao PDR). In 1975, Vientiane city has become Vientiane Capital. Lao people are loyal, courageous, tolerant, liberated, living in unity. Lao people do not like to persecute others but they are a peaceful nation and have respect in the ancestors. Elderly respect is important. Family size is rather a large family like the Thai people. For female traditional clothing, Lao women favorably dress traditional sinh with sbai across the shoulders, hair in a bun. The capital of Vientiane is a source of economic products of Lao PDR such as woven fabric, cotton, silk, silverware, golden ware, basketry, wood carving, clothing and handicrafts from China and Vietnam, etc. This results in that Vientiane is now an important city of development of the country under the new economic imaginary policy, since, it was designated as a center for economic and trade. The main shopping areas are the Talad Xao (morning market) in Vientiane, the Hmong

market, the Kua Din market, the Thung Khan Kham market, the Chinese market, the Lao International Trade Exhibition and Convention Center (Lao-ITECC). (Anonymous, 2010).

In the past, Lao people used silverware as jewelry, consumer goods for everyday use and as tributes to the kingdoms in relationship with the Khmer (Cambodia), China, Lanna, Sukhothai (Thailand), Bagan (Myanmar) as well as items for Kings, the royal family and the noblemen to carry out religious ceremonies. Silverware is an ornament that indicates rank, position and social feudal rank. The geographical features of the Lan Xang Kingdom are mostly mountainous and plateau. The rulers in the area rule the villagers in the highland area such as Lao Lum, Lao Thoeng where most of the villagers serve as human tribute or were recruited as workmen. The Kingdom of Lan Xang at that time had a traditional society where a system of circulation that consisted of “tribute” and “internal trade” were practiced. Under the “tribute system, the villagers have to bring different kinds of native products to the ruling class. Some groups of the common-villagers produced the “family industrial products” including the production of goods to be traded with gold, frankincense, lac, salt, textiles and other goods. This has created a circulation of products in the city of Vientiane, since, the era of Lan Xang Kingdom (Yoshiyuki, 2002). While some of the Lao Lum and Lao Thoeng groups of people are skilled in the art of silversmithing, they served as the Royal artisans to produce silverware for the king, the royal family and the noblemen as in the past, those who used the silverware were wealthy people with social status or the wealthy people, ordinary Lao people did not use the silverware because they couldn't afford to buy it for everyday use. In the past, the most popular types of silverware are calabash-shaped jug, pedestal tray, bowl, betel bowl, betel tray, betel box, cylindrical container for red lime, or (bowl), polearm, sword, knife, etc. Popular designs for the engraved Lao silverware include the 12 Zodiac signs and the 8 directions (elephant, bull, garuda, cat, lion, tiger, naga, rat), images or designs such as elephant, horse, Thephanom, new year designs (e.g., the Songkran Goddess riding a mythical creature assigned to a particular year such as Lion), floral design. For these designs, the Lao people believe that they can promote merit and prestige to those who use such silverware including the three-headed elephant design a silverware motif privileged to the kings, the royal family and noblemen as they represent the greatness of the Lan Xang Kingdom. The pattern is designed by engraving the three-headed elephant motif in the main pattern of the research and then with the floral design or if

there are other designs such as birth-year assigned animal motifs as the main pattern, the silverware must have the three-headed elephant pattern embossed at the bottom (Sompong, 1995). Later in 1975, there was a change in the regime of Laos from the kingdom with the king as the head of the state to be Lao People's Democratic Republic. The power structure of the state has been reformed, resulting in the economic, social and cultural traditions have been modified according to the new culture structure to suit the era and the government (Supachai, 2010). These days, the public can now afford to buy and use silverware. The largest silverware trading center in the country is Vientiane, the capital city. Vientiane is also the economic center, a historic tourist attraction, resulting in more and more businessmen and Foreign tourists coming to buy or run a business of Lao silverware export every year. The opening of the country and free trade with this foreign investments result in changes in the way of life, society, culture and tradition of people in the country. This research focuses on the changes of silverware in Vientiane, changes in the shape and designs of the lost ancient motifs, the shape and designs newly created, under the economic and social changes that introduce the Lao silverware to be a cultural product that represents the Lao nationality.

Research objectives:

- To study the history of Lao silverware
- To study the changes of silverware in Vientiane Capital

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study focuses on the changes of silverware in the Capital of Vientiane of which the researcher has sequenced the research methods as follows.

Scope of research: In this study, the researcher used the descriptive analysis to study the changes of silverware in Vientiane. The study took place at villages of silverware production and silversmith shops located in the capital of Vientiane which consists of 9 districts, i.e., Chanthabouly, Sikhottabong, Xaysettha, Sisattanak, Naxaithong, Xaythany, Hadxaifong, Sangthong and Pak Ngum. Purposive sampling is selected from the silversmith groups that still have been in operation for at least 10 years.

The researcher studied the changes of silverware in Vientiane capital. Study issues are general silverware in the capital of Vientiane, i.e., Silverware for everyday use such as water dippers, cups, plates, bowls, ladles, tissue boxes. Silverware for the uses in rituals such as Ors, water

bowls, trays with pedestals, betel sets, water jugs, to study what changes they have had in shape, pattern and designs from the past to present.

Basic information study: The researcher collected and analyzed field data from the study area to study of the change of silverware in Vientiane capital. Study issues consist of general silverware in the capital of Vientiane, i.e., Silverware for everyday use such as water dippers, cups, plates, bowls, ladles, tissue boxes. Silverware for the uses in rituals such as Ors, water bowls, trays, betel sets, water jugs, to study what changes they are in shape, pattern and motifs from the past to present. This study also includes Lao national historical study, interview method (in-depth interview), observation method both participatory and non-participatory observation, analyze the change of silverware in Vientiane Capital by applying the theory of cultural diffusion and the concept of inventing a related tradition.

Population selection and sampling groups: The researcher chose the Capital of Vientiane as of the largest silverware production and trading center in Lao PDR, consisting 84 silversmith shops for the field sampling sites with selection criteria of the sampling groups that have produced silverware for not >10 years. 4 groups are selected as follows. A group of silver shops that produce the traditional style that are preferable by reputed people in the country, a group of silver shops that produce silverware preferable by Lao people in the country, a group of silver shops that produce silverware preferable by tourists and a group of silver shops that produce silverware for export.

Population selection: For the population selection in the field study and fieldwork, the researcher selected 4 populations directly related to silversmithing in Vientiane, i.e., silver traders and silver craftsmen in Vientiane or can be classified by 4 work types as follows. Shops that produce the traditional style preferable by reputed people in the country is the silverware from the house of Mr. Uding Chanthaminawong in Sikhottabong District. Mr. Uding Chanthaminawong is specialised in silverware and Lao History, he has been a silversmith and silver trader in Vientiane, since, 1970. Shops that produce silverware preferable by Lao people in the country is the silverware from Phaiwan Handicraft Shop, Ban Viangsawan, Sikhottabong District, Vientiane Capital, manufacturer of silverware, since, 1995. Shops that produce silverware preferable by tourists is the silverware from Champalanxang in Xaysettha District, Vientiane Capital, manufacturer of silverware, since, 1990. Shops that

produce silverware for export is the silverware from Fa Watthana Shop, Chanthabouly District, Vientiane Capital, manufacturer of silverware, since, 1990.

Tools and research tools creation: The researcher selected research tools to study the change of silverware in Vientiane Capital. Research tools consist of a structured questionnaire for the in-depth interviews with the sampling groups to provide facts and information of Lao history, development and types of silverware, patterns, design and changes of silverware in Vientiane capital.

Data collection

Step 1: The researcher used structured questionnaire to conduct an in-depth interview with the population for facts and information about the history of Laos, history of Lao silverware and silver handicraft in Vientiane Capital, particularly in the patterns and motifs of the silverware, along with changes in the silverware in Vientiane from the past to present.

Step 2: The researcher used the closed-end and open-ended questionnaires constructed in accordance with the research objectives and theoretical framework to ask for opinions of the population in various aspects to compile a classification and to analyze the results of the study.

Step 3: The researcher surveyed the area formally and informally with concerned officials and people in the target area.

Step 4: The researcher conducted group interviews with voice recording and photo shooting during the interview including face-to-face and small-group conversations.

Step 5: The researcher took an informal observation by noticing the specific characteristics of the silverware in Vientiane from the 4 manufacturers in terms of shapes and designs then compared and observed the changes of silverware in Vientiane Capital from the past to present.

Data analysis: The investigator checks the integrity of the baseline data by: examining data from different sources of data from the main respondents, checking the data collection which more than one methods are used, i.e., individual conversation, group conversation, together with observation and concealment to study the way of life of the group and repeatedly asked information. Checking the information with the owner of the information by examining the interpretation of the findings if they are

consistent with the characteristics of the silverware of the four manufacturers. The data is then analyzed, sorted and categorized, according to the issues defined in the research framework and content analysis, compared with differences of information at each manufacturer then link the information according to facts (reality) about the changes of silverware in Vientiane Capital.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study of the changes of silverware in Vientiane Capital from the 4 silverware manufacturers found that there are differences in the patterns and designs of the silverware. Therefore, the researcher compiled from the field study and the document by studying the changes of silverware in Vientiane in each of the following points.

- History of Lao silverware
- Changes of silverware in Vientiane

The study results of the change of silverware in Vientiane Capital are as follows

History of Lao silverware: The researcher found that history of Lan Xang Kingdom (Laos) began in 1271 or since the reign of King Lang Athirat. The story begins to be clearer when King Fa Ngum the great gathered the Lao kingdom which at that time was divided into states and independent districts to be reunited with the city of “Xiang Dong-Xiang Thong” (Luang Prabang) was capital city. Sa-Nguan Rotbun, said that King Fa Ngum brought art and Sinhalese Buddhism from the Khmer Dynasty to Xiang Dong-Xiang Thong, along with artisans of different skills and Thammagatha, master of arts as the leader, from Cambodia to the Xiang Dong-Xiang Thong Dynasty. Artisans here consist of the following craftsmanship, the woodcarver, the painter, the silversmith and goldsmith and the blacksmith (Sa-Nguan, 2002). The historical evidence indicates that in the Kingdom of Lan Xang, silverware and golden ware are considered top-class as of designs and techniques are all influenced by the art of the Khmer Dynasty. This is noticed by the social contexts that both of the two kingdoms, Khmer and Lan Xang were ruled by the monarchy. During the reign of King Fa Ngum, the silverware was used as a tribute for relationship with other kingdoms such as Cambodia, China, Lanna, Sukhothai (Thailand), Bagan (Myanmar) as well as items for Kings, the Royal family and the noblemen to carry out religious ceremonies. The silverware is an ornament used to represent rank, position and social feudal rank.

Later in the reign of King Samsenthai of the Kingdom of Lan Xang, there was a tribute to the Chinese in the Yuan and Ming Dynasties for relations development,

making the design of silverware influenced by Chinese art. In the Reign of King Phothisanrat, Tai-Yuan silversmiths were employed to serve Princess Yodkhamthip, King Phothisanrat’s wife who was originally from Chiang Mai to Luang Prabang, resulting in the Lao silverware in Luang Prabang at that time was applied and mixed by the Lanna art. In the reign of King Chaiyachetthathirat, the palace was moved from Luang Prabang to Vientiane, making Vientiane a new capital but the silverware was still influenced by Khmer mixed with Lanna arts. Later in the Chao Anuwong’s period which governs the city of Vientiane, silverware is a blend of Lanna art and Siamese art in the early Rattanakosin era. Since, Chao Anuwong has taken some of the Siamese craftsmen to create art in Vientiane as well, the designs of silverware in Laos during the Kingdom of Lan Xang are favorably the creatures assigned to 12 Zodiac signs (rat, horse, bull, goat, tiger, monkey, rabbit, chicken, dog, naga, snake, mom), 8 directions (elephant, bull, garuda, cat, lion, tiger, naga, rat), abstract design, geometrical design, flora, kankod, dok-kood, dok-kalakab, krueaman, Buddhist’s symbols, Theppanom, Sangsinxai, Lakshmana and Rama, Qilin, three-headed elephant with 9-storey umbrella. In view of techniques of silversmithing, methods of embossing, carving and engraving, it can be summarized that the ancient Lao silverware in the period of the Kingdom of Lan Xang and before the change of the regime from the monarchy to a socialist, Lao silverware arts were influenced by the neighboring kingdoms of Khmer, China, Lanna and Siam during the early Rattanakosin period. It is recognized devices for the high-born, objects used in rituals and tributes for the development of relations with other countries.

Changes of silverware in Vientiane Capital: The researcher found that the change of silverware in Vientiane was under the changes of the government in the country. The researcher can divide these changes into 4 historical moments.

Former until 1974: The study found that Laos was ruled by monarchy. Before the change of the regime, Lao silverware was in service for the Kings, Royal family, nobles, wealthy people and monks for their daily use including the uses for religious and ritual purposes. The number of silversmiths in Vientiane Capital is small compared to that in Luang Prabang, since, the Capital of Vientiane is the center of the government of Laos but Luang Prabang is the King’s residence, so, most of the silversmiths prefer to live there in Luang Prabang. Furthermore, the silverware is a high-priced commodity, so, silverware users in Vientiane are relatively limited

because most of the people are rather poor. Silver motifs at that time was preferably the 12 Zodiac signs and 8 directions, (elephant, bull, garuda, cat, lion, tiger, naga, rat), flora, Thephanom, kankod, dok-kood, dok-kalakab, Sangsinxai, Lakshmana and Rama, krueaman, Qilin, Mom, three-headed elephant with 9-storey umbrella and the mirror-frame. During this period, the silverware can be divided into three types 1. Silverware as for king's utensils. Silverware for Buddhist ceremonies such as monk's bowl, pedestal tray, water jug. Silverware in the daily life such as Khan (pedestal tray), Or (bowl) for water container, pot, betel box set, tobacco pipe, spittoon.

Years 1975-1985: The study found it was the early years of Lao PDR to change the government from the monarchy to a socialist. In Vientiane, most of the silversmiths did not produce silverware for sale as of the economic downturn. Silverware is also considered a reflection of luxury and the old regime as well as the royal family, social elites who used to be the big group of silverware clients, migrated to neighboring countries.

Years 1986-2005: Lao PDR had launched a National Development Plan No. 2-4 Foreign trades and investment began to flow in and Vientiane was assigned the center of the country's economy. In 1998, the Lao government set up a Lao Handicraft Association. The Lao Handicraft Association is responsible for the development of local handicrafts. The most favourable motifs are 12 Zodiac signs, 8 directions (elephant, bull, garuda, cat, lion, tiger, naga, rat), flora, Thephanom, kankod, dok-kood, dok-kalakab, Sangsinxai, Lakshmana and Rama, the mirror-frame, That Luang and Patuxai design. The silverware in the third phase can be divided into two types: Silverware for uses as utensils, silverware for decorating other products.

Years 2006-2015: Under the National Development Plan No. 6-7, the promotion of silverware and silversmithing to increase to 18% per year (Anonymous, 2010), resulted in silverware manufacturers and villagers to have joined together as a group to establish a silverware association. Phu Wong Phamasit, Silverware Association Director said that about 90% of the local silverware production is in Vientiane while the other 10%, Luang Prabang. There are 84 manufacturers in silversmithing of which the majority are scattered around the city with 80 Lao entrepreneurs and 4 Foreigners. 95% of them are small producers, using labors in the family for the production process. Each of

them has no more than 10 workers and has not used any modern technology or heavy machinery in the production line. Since, 2006 when the Lao government has launched a policy to develop and promote tourism and silverware as a cultural product, the three-headed elephant silverware design has been revived and promoted as a conservation value (Phu Wong Phamasit interview, 2015). Based on Eric Hobsbawm's concept of tradition invention, the use of invented tradition is to serve the economic situation, politics, society and culture in the time of changes (Eric, 1983). The three-headed elephant motif is a design that depicts traditional Lao culture. The popular silverware designs during this year then are the 12 Zodiac signs and 8 directions designs (elephant, bull, garuda, cat, lion, tiger, naga and rat) flora, Thephanom, kankod, dok-kood, dok-kalakab, Sangsinxai, Lakshmana and Rama, three-headed elephant, That Luang, Patuxai, the mirror-frame design and designs that depict the way of life such as the life style of the aquatic animals or farming lifestyle of the old Laos. Silverware in these 4 ranges can be divided into 3 types: silverware as for utensils, silverware for decorating other products, silverware for home decoration.

According to interviews with the manufacturers at the 4 silver shops, silverware most preferable by the Lao buyers in the country is Khan (pedestal tray) and Or (bowl) as they are both used in ritual ceremonies in everyday life and home decoration. Sangchan Sihalat, the owner of Champalanxang silver shop, said that the silverware designs preferable by the Lao people are the mythical naga, the 12 Zodiac signs and the three-headed elephant (Sangchan Sihalat interview, 2015). Ritthikrai Phummasak, the owner of Fa Watthana shop said that the most preferable designs for the tourists are the flora and 12 Zodiac signs designs (Ritthikrai, 2015). Uding Chanthaminawong an academic and senior silversmith in Vientiane Capital, said that the shape of Khan (pedestal tray) and Or (bowl) had no changes and there were 5 shapes as follows. For Khan (pedestal tray), there are 5 shapes: Khan Liam Pak Loei (Square-shaped pedestal tray with a funnel-shaped top), Khan Liam Pak Tang (Square-shaped pedestal tray with an upright top), Khan Klom Pak Loei (Circular pedestal tray with a funnel-shaped top), Khan Klom Pak Tang (Circular pedestal tray with an upright top), Khan Kab (Pedestal tray rounded with lotus-petal design,) (Uding Chanthaminawong interview, 2015) (Fig. 1-5).

While Or (bowl) comes in 5 shapes: Or Kiang/Or for face-washing (Semicircular-shaped bowl), Or Tum (Water jar-shaped bowl), Or Tum Liam (Square-



Fig. 1: Khan Liam Pak Loei (Square-shaped pedestal tray with a funnel-shaped top) photo by Amara Kaewbootsa



Fig. 3: Khan Klom Pak Loei (Circular pedestal tray with a funnel-shaped top) photo by Amara Kaewbootsa



Fig. 2: Khan Liam Pak Tang (Square-shaped pedestal tray with an upright top) photo by Amara Kaewbootsa



Fig. 4: Khan Klom Pak Tang (Circular pedestal tray with an upright top) photo by Amara Kaewbootsa

water-jar-shaped bowl), Or Liam Pak Loei (Square-shaped bowl with a funnel-shaped top), Or Nam Kiang (Basket-shaped bowl) (Fig. 6-10).

In the year 2015, Vientiane Capital witnessed no silverware with neither shapes of Khan Liam Pak Loei (square-shaped pedestal tray with a funnel-shaped top), nor shapes of Khan Klom Pak Loei (circular pedestal tray with a funnel-shaped top) nor shapes of Or Liam Pak Loei (Square-shaped bowl with a funnel-shaped top) as all of these designs were considered ancient and the current silversmiths are rather new-generation, so, they don't recognize these designs. From the survey and group conversation, it was found in Vientiane that the

longest and most experienced silversmith was Udom Chanthaminawong, a knowledgeable manufacturer of all the 3 shapes of Khan (pedestal tray) and Or (bowl). The study found that the shapes and designs of the silverware products at the 4 shops are different because the experience and craftsmanship in silversmithing are different. Moreover, shapes and designs must be produced according mainly to the market or client's requirements. Handmade production is still on the focus though, the fineness of the work is different from the past as current production becomes more business-like, production is accelerated to keep pace with the volume and orders placed by domestic and foreign tourists.



Fig. 5: Khan Kab (Pedestal tray rounded with lotus-petal design) photo by Amara Kaewbootsa



Fig. 6: Or Kliang/ Or for Face-washing (Semicircular-shaped bowl) photo by Amara Kaewbootsa



Fig. 7: Or Tum (Water jar-shaped bowl) photo by Amara Kaewbootsa

Study findings: The researcher summarizes the changes of silverware in Vientiane Capital as follows.



Fig. 8: Or Tum Liam (Square-water-jar-shaped bowl) photo by Amara Kaewbootsa



Fig. 9: Or Liam Pak Loei (Square-shaped bowl with a funnel-shaped top) photo by Amara Kaewbootsa



Fig. 10: Or Nam Kliang (Basket-shaped bowl) photo by Amara Kaewbootsa

History of Lao silverware as in the chart showing the influence of art on the designs of the Lao silverware (Fig. 11).

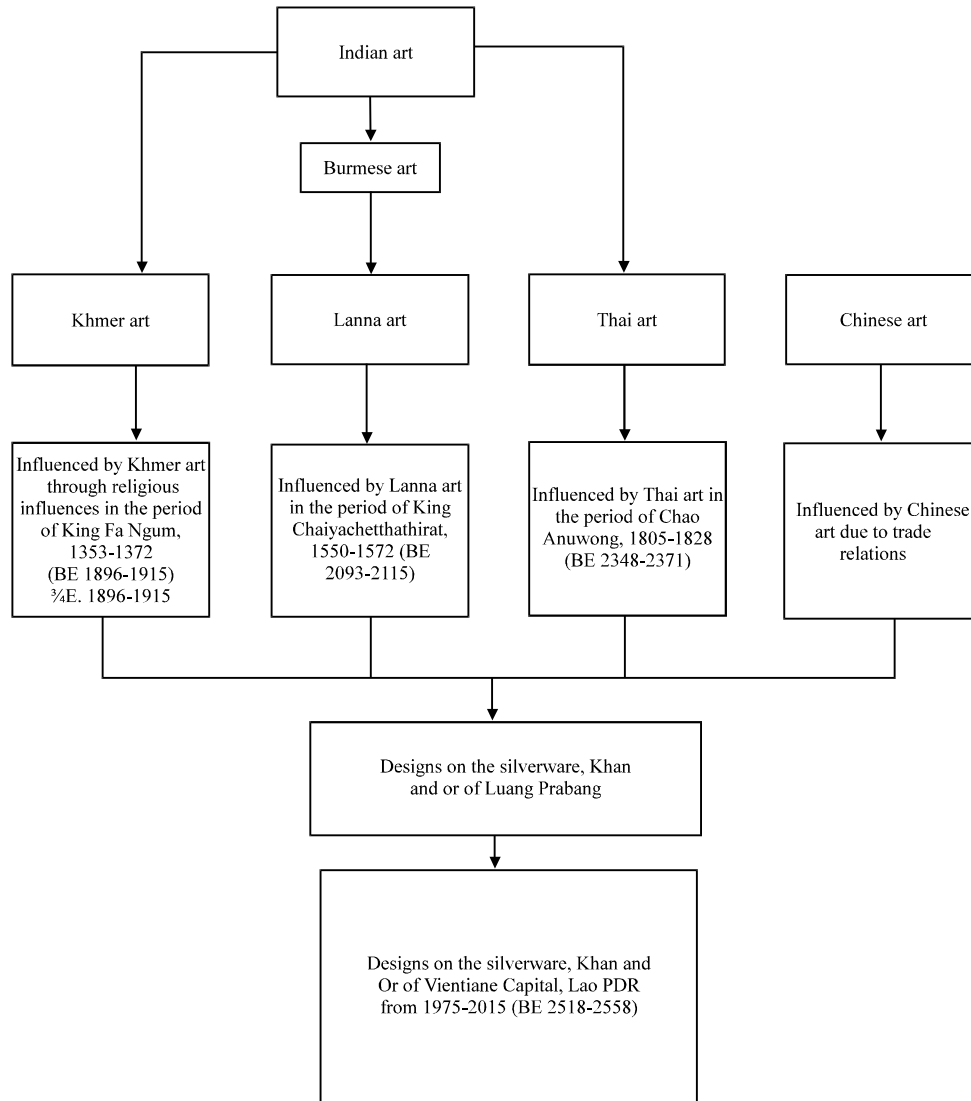


Fig. 11: Chart of influenced art of Lan Xang Kingdom to silverware production

Chart of influenced art of Lan Xang Kingdom to silverware production: From Table 1, the researcher classified the data into categories and found that Lao silverware was influenced by patterns and styles of silverware production from other sources. According to Boas's theory, cultural diffusion and artistic influence comes from two factors as follows. Geographic factors as of the adjacent areas of the Lao PDR or the Kingdom of Lan Xang in the past, Cambodia and Thailand in the North, Lao silverware is influenced by various types of designs derived from Khmer art and Lanna art which Lanna art itself is also influenced by Burmese art. Economic and trade factors, Laos has been trading with China for a long time, resulting in the motifs of Lao silverware to be influenced by Chinese art.

Changes of silverware in Vientiane Capital: Motifs on the silverware in Vientiane can be classified into 5 types of designs:

- Designs inspired by shapes present in nature
- Creature designs
- Designs derived from religious or literary beliefs
- Geometrical designs or invented-shaped designs
- Designs that show the pride of the people in Lao PDR
- Designs inspired by the way of life

From the charted data, Table 2 shows that the designs of the Mythical Mom, Qilin, the three-headed elephant are ancient designs. At present, the Mythical

Table 1: Summary of the influences on the silverware designs in Vientiane Capital

| Lao historical period | Artistic influences | Silver motifs |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|---|
| King Fa Ngum's period | Khmer art | Lotus, dok-kalakab, dok-kood, dok-krajangtaoi, krajangbaithet, dok-rakroi, dok-lamduan, kankhod, krueaman as well as other designs resembling bunches of vines |
| King Samsenthai's period | Chinese art | Himmaphan mythical creatures Ratchasi, Kotchasi, Hong, Garuda, Naga, Kinnon, Kinnari The 12 Zodiac signs Chinese mythical creatures, e.g., Qilin The mirror-frame design |
| King Chaichetthathirat's period | Lanna art | The 12 Zodiac signs design, featuring the Mom instead of Pig as Mom is a one of the mythical creatures, according to Lanna's artistic belief |
| Chao Anuwong's period | Thai art | Thepphanom, Lakshmana & Rama (inspired by Ramayana) krajangbaithet, kapok, dok-rakroi, dok-lamduan, kankhod, and other different floral designs |

Table 2: Summary of the changes of silverware in Vientiane capital in the aspects of designs

| Type of design | Silver motifs found and produced in each period | | | |
|--|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | Former until 1974 | 1975-1985 | 1986-2005 | 2006-2015 |
| Designs inspired by shaped present in nature | | | | |
| For example, Dok-kood, dok-krajangtaoi, krajangbaithet, Dok-rakroi, soi-sa and various floral designs | / | - | / | / |
| Creature designs | | | | |
| The 12 Zodiac signs | / | - | / | / |
| The 12 Zodiac signs featuring the Mythical Mom instead of pig | / | - | - | - |
| Qilin, the Chinese Mythical creature | / | - | - | - |
| Designs derived from religious or literary beliefs | | | | |
| For example the pphanom, Sangsinxai, Lakshmana and Rama (inspired by Ramayana) | / | - | / | / |
| Geometrical designs or invented-shaped designs | | | | |
| For example the mirror-frame design, glass ball, dotted-line, zigzag, rope-strand and other irregular shapes | / | - | / | / |
| Designs that show the pride of the people in Lao PDR | | | | |
| Three-headed Elephant | / | - | - | / |
| Architectural designs, that luang, Patuxai | - | - | / | / |
| Designs inspired by the way of life | | | | |
| For example the way of life and tradition of the Lao people, designs that show the abundance of creatures and nature | - | - | - | / |

Mom and Qilin designs cannot be found anymore as the modern silversmith do not recognize these motifs. For the three-headed elephant design, after Laos changed its regime to socialism, the designs that represent the royal court art were banned. Later in 2005 when the Lao government promoted the economy and tourism, the traditional Lao culture is then revived back to life. The government allowed the production of silverware with three-headed elephant designs. The That Luang and Patuxai designs were promoted during the consolidation of Laos as the meaning of the pattern is the solidarity of the Lao people, thus, it has been chosen to use the symbol of architecture that reflects the great beauty of culture and traditions. The motifs inspired by the way of life are a new design that has no religious meaning and doesn't reflect the Lao nationality but the motif represents the rural lifestyle and abundance of nature. This design is preferable by clients with high-social status.

From the comparative charted data, Table 3 found some of Khan (pedestal trays) and Or (bowls) are similar in shape to the silverware in neighboring countries. The reasons why the shape of the Lao silverware is different from the neighboring countries may be caused by the fact

that Laos has been influenced by the arts from many countries to blend with its traditional art, since, the Kingdom of Lan Xang, resulting in the different shapes of the silverware, beautiful and unique. For the disappearance of silverware with the shapes of Khan Liam Pak Loei (Square-shaped pedestal tray with a funnel-shaped top), Khan Klom Pak Loei (Circular pedestal tray with a funnel-shaped top) and Or Liam Pak Loei (Square-shaped bowl with a funnel-shaped top) in the year 2015, this could be caused by the fact that these 3 designs are considered ancient shapes. Those who can produce silverware with those shapes are only ancient silversmiths or royal court artisans which in Vientiane Capital, there has been only one silversmith left, resulting in the disappearance of the silverware with these shape in the Capital of Vientiane.

Discovering the changes of silverware in Vientiane can indicate the pattern and development of Lao silverware in the aspects of: history of Lao silverware, changes of silverware in Vientiane Capital, art of the Lao silverware during the Kingdom of Lan Xang was influenced by neighboring countries from 1975-2015. Laos ruled the country with socialism, designs and shapes of

Table 3: Summary of the changes of silverware in Vientiane Capital, regarding the shape of Khan (pedestal tray) and or (bowl)

| Shapes of Khan (pedestal tray) and or (bowl) found in Vientiane | Shapes found and produced in each period | | | | Discovery of silver Khan (pedestal tray) and or (bowl) in the neighbouring countries |
|---|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|--|
| | Former until 1974 | 1975-1985 | 1986-2005 | 2006-2015 | |
| Khan (pedestal tray) | | | | | |
| Khan Liam Pak Loei (Square-shaped pedestal tray with a funnel-shaped top) | / | - | - | - | No similarity in other countries |
| Khan Liam Pak Tang (Square-shaped pedestal tray with an upright top) | / | - | / | / | Found similar shape of the pedestal tray in Thailand |
| Khan Klom Pak Loei (Circular pedestal tray with a funnel-shaped top) | / | - | - | - | No similarity in other countries |
| Khan Klom Pak Tang (Circular pedestal tray with an upright top) | / | - | / | / | Found similar shape of the pedestal tray in Thailand |
| Khan Kab (Pedestal tray rounded with lotus-petal design) | / | - | / | / | Found similar shape of the pedestal tray in Thailand |
| Or (bowl) | | | | | |
| Or Kliang (Semicircular-shaped bowl) | / | - | / | / | Similar shape of bowl found in Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, China |
| Or Tum (Water jar-shaped bowl) | / | - | / | / | No similarity in other countries |
| Or Tum Liam (Square-water-jar-shaped bowl) | / | - | / | / | No similarity in other countries |
| Or Liam Pak Loei (Square-shaped bowl with a funnel-shaped top) | / | - | - | - | No similarity in other countries |
| Or Nam Kliang (Basket-shaped bowl) | / | - | / | / | No similarity in other countries |

silverware have been changed along the administration and the economic development of the country. According to Chatcharin Sathitthammarong, the history of Lao artistic designs is influenced by the Khmer, Chinese and Burmese art. For the Burmese art, it is also derived from the Tai Yai and Tai Koen through the exchange of goods, taxes and tributes (Chatcharin, 2014). According to Suppachai Singyabut, the reintroduction and invention of traditions by the government of Laos after the opening of the country, there was economic development by promoting tourism and cultural businesses. The art that reflects feudalism such as the silverware with the three-headed elephant design and royal umbrella, the 15 clans of naga, palace designs, temple designs, depicted as the symbols of kingship and the kingdom is revived back to life by the context of tourism that desires the old memories (Suppachai, 2010). Supharoek Kunsu said that economic, social and cultural factors resulted in the changes of silverware production in communities of the Lao PDR.

CONCLUSION

In the past, it was produced for a household use or manufactured to serve the specific people. At present however, the manufacturers tend to introduce more silverware production for sale to outsiders, abandoning traditional production. Modifications and new product development are introduced including the adaptation of designs that suit the market demand (Supharoek, 2007).

SUGGESTIONS

The study found that the silverware in Vientiane Capital has been continuously developed in the aspects of patterns and designs. Therefore, government sectors or other related organizations such as Institute of Fine Arts, Lao Handicraft Association, should compile the history and evolution of the Lan Xang's handicrafts for the people, students, silversmiths interested in the study and development of Lao silverware.

General suggestions: The study result witnessed that the Lao people prefer to buy silverware of which designs are traditional or ancient motifs. Consequently, these designs of antique silverware should be revived, developed and promoted to public awareness such as the Mythical Mom, Qilin and other designs, to be produced or applied to the Lao silverware again. This is to promote the domestic economy as well as to preserve the ancient designs of Lao silverware.

Suggestions for future research: There should be comparative research to study the similarities and differences of Lao silverware designs between Luang Prabang, Vientiane and Champasak as they were all former capital cities of the Kingdom of Lan Xang. Research results may lead to the discovery of the patterns or identity of the shape and designs of Lao silverware belonged to each clan of the artisans in each capital city of the Lan Xang Kingdom.

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