

Na Muen Si Hand-Woven Fabric

Trang Province

Na Muen Si is the name of a sub-district in Na Yong district, i.e., Na Muen Si sub-district, which has been renowned for its local hand-woven fabric of Trang province since the old days. The beginning of Na Muen Si hand-woven fabric is still unclear, but the local elderly people assume only that Na Muen Si locals have created hand-woven fabrics for approximately three generations. Almost all the local families possess their own looms for household consumption, so the hand-woven fabric is named after the sub-district as **Na Muen Si hand-woven fabric**. The art and local wisdom for Na Muen Si hand-woven fabric have been passed down from generation to generation for up to a hundred year. Na Muen Si hand-woven fabric is a well-known local product of Trang province, which has been reputable and attracted tourists visiting Trang province. Most of them regularly stop by and do shopping for Na Muen Si hand-woven fabric products.



Importance on Local Culture

Na Muen Si hand-woven fabric has been related to the ways of life of Na Muen Si locals for over 200 years. The purposes of Na Muen Si hand-woven fabric are not only for daily household consumption but also for the significations of tradition, belief, and faith conveyed in the fabric. This can be exemplified by the orally passed down information that different kinds of traditional Na Muen Si hand-woven fabric that reflect a local bond of tradition, belief, and faith include:



- Ritual fabric, which is a piece of work made in relation to tradition and cultural folklore. One example is the fabric made for the monk-to-be wearing in an ordination ceremony. Na Muen Si locals convey their belief in the heaven after death through the fabric weaving. Doing her best, a mother normally prepares woven fabrics to dress her son when he turns the age of ordination, with a strong belief that she will go to heaven after death by holding the yellow robe of their monk-son. The other example is the monk-offering fabric, which is used for common rituals for Na Muen Si locals and is woven as handkerchiefs or seat covers with letter patterns based on the belief that the use of such letter patterns is like conveying a message about the participants' meritorious deeds to the deities of the next life;

- Pha Biang or Pha Sabai or Pha Phad is a kind of shawl for both female and male use or for marriage ceremony, that is, the fabric that a bride provides to a groom as his shawl; and

- Pha Phan Chang is a kind of fabric that is important for the funeral ceremony for Na Muen Si locals. It is believed to be a kind of holy fabric. It is a supplement fabric for the funeral ceremony to be placed on a footed tray and leaned upward a coffin prior to cremation, or the belief that the fabric is like a step toward the next life. Thus, most of the hand-woven patterns are letters arranged as poems, morals, or contributions of the dead. After cremation, the fabric will be divided into small pieces for the monks to use them as napkins for different purposes or for the young as a collection gift.



Unique Characteristics of Na Muen Si Hand-Woven Fabric

Na Muen Si Hand-Woven Fabric is a kind of hand-woven fabric that is related to the ways of Na Muen Si locals' lives, reflects local wisdom, and is considered as a pride for Trang province residents. A unique characteristic of Na Muen Si hand-woven fabric is the technique of Yok Dok, a method of weaving. One of its patterns is a uniquely traditional and local pattern. The other originates from the adaptation of the pattern made in Koh Yor, Songkhla province. As a result, different pieces of Na Muen Si hand-woven fabric at present, such as Pha Lai Look Kaew, Pha Lai Dok Phikun, Pha Lai Rachawat, Pha Lai Ta Mak Ruk, and so on, are similar to those in Koh Yor. Nowadays, Na Muen Si hand-woven fabric has a variety of its own creations, pattern mixtures, and colours, so as to fulfill the consumers' tastes. Without doubt, Na Muen Si hand-woven fabric can thus be used as a material for both female and male costumes based on the consumers' satisfaction. After all, Na Muen Si hand-woven fabric is still a local art piece that can at present equip Na Muen Si locals with careers and income.