A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THAI AND MYANMAR TEMPLE FESTIVAL DRESS

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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this research were to compare and to study on Thai and Myanmar temple festival dress for creating the knowledge which can be useful for Thai cultural attitudes and festival perceptions, especially for young generation. The findings of the research disclosed that there were four temple festivals of Thai Buddhists such as Songkran festival, Buddhist Lent festival, Sart Duen Sib festival and End of Buddhist Lent festival. Myanmar Buddhists also have four Buddhist temple festivals such as Thadingyut Festival, Tazaungmon Full Moon festival, Htamane festival, and Thingyan Festival.

Thai and Myanmar Buddhist men wear the stand-up collar, spread collar and round neck collar, hip-length blouses with long sleeves or short sleeves and they wear Sarong. While Thai Buddhist men also wear long pants or loincloths too. Myanmar Buddhist men wear headdresses call ‘Guang Baung’. Thai and Myanmar Buddhist women wear stand-up collar, spread collar and round neck collar, hip-length blouses with long sleeves or short sleeves with the tube skirts. Thai Buddhist women also wear loincloths and use fabric shoulder flattering, while Myanmar Buddhist women use Scarf.

Keywords – Temple Festival dress, Thai Buddhist, Myanmar Buddhist

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays Thai people are facing several crises of value, ethics and behaviours which link to Thai way of life, thinking, attitude and virtue. These problems are the effects of foreign culture expansion on multimedia. The creative media are much less dangerous and illegal media which spread over the whole country of Thailand. While Thai people, especially children and young people, are not aware of Thai custom and culture, social institutions such as family institution, religious institutions and educational institutions take less active role in the implantation of ethical virtues and the potential development of Thai people, especially children and young people. That is because the youth and their parents rarely have the opportunity to see the beauty of Thai traditional dress in the Buddhist temple festivals, and the importance of these festivals with Thai temple festivals dress. The dissemination of precise knowledge about the temple festivals and the temple festival dress of Thai and Myanmar, which community and religious adhesive country are alike. They will enrich attitudes and cultural perceptions of the two countries. For these reasons, this research is conducted.

METHODOLOGY

In this documentary research study, all data from National Library of Thailand and Electronic media is collected. The qualitative data is analyzed and interpreted in qualitative research without variable control just as naturalistic research, and the analysis results and research results are presented by descriptive writing with pictures.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
A) Thai Buddhist Temple Festival and Myanmar Buddhist Temple Festival.

In Thailand, there are four major Thai Buddhist temple festivals as follows:

1) **Songkran** is a Thai traditional New Year. Songkran Festival starts on April 13 every year and lasts for 3 days. Thai New Year begins early in the morning when faithful Thai Buddhists give alms to Buddhist monks. After that, they build sand pagodas and release caged animals, especially birds and fish. Elders and parents will be visited and respected by their children and grandchildren. The young pour scented water over their elders’ hands, they in return, wish them good health, happiness and prosperity, and also go to the temple to make merit to their deceased ancestors. In the afternoon, Thai Buddhists sprinkle scented water on Buddha images. After that, they sprinkle perfumed water on, or throw clean, cold water over each other. In addition, they take part in folk plays [2].

![Figure 1 Thai Buddhist activities in Songkran Festival.](image1)

2) **Buddhist Lent Festival**. The commencement of the three-month Buddhist Lent traditionally falls on the first day of the waxing moon of the eighth lunar month. During this period, coinciding with the rainy season, Buddhist monks and novices remain closeted in their particular Buddhist temples, and discouraged from spending nights elsewhere. It is a popular time for young Thai men to be ordained as a Buddhist monk. Two main important things presented to monks during the Buddhist Lent are the large candles and garments worn by monks, especially the bathing robes [3].

![Figure 2 The large candle procession in Ubon Ratchathani Province](image2)

3) **Sart Thai Festival** is held on the 15th waning (no moon) day at the end of the tenth lunar month. Sart Thai Day is the day of making merit traditions and the honoring Ghosts & Ancestors Day of Thai Buddhists. This traditional festival is now celebrated mostly in Thailand’s southern provinces, especially in Nakhon Si Thammarat, and other parts of Thailand. It has many features of animism, attributing souls or spirits to animals, plants, and other entities [3].

![image3]
The end of Buddhist Lent Festival begins on the full moon day of the eleventh lunar month. Thai Buddhists celebrate this occasion by offering foods and other necessities to monks. This ceremony is called "Dhevo Rohana Ceremony".

In Myanmar, there are four major Myanmar Buddhist temple festivals as follows:

1) **Thadingyut Festival, or Myanmar festival of lights**, is celebrated at the end of Buddhist Lent. This festival commemorates the time when the Buddha returned to the earth after preaching in the abode of celestials during the three months of Lent. He descended at night and devotees greeted him with lamps and lanterns. So people decorate their houses with candles and colored lanterns. Pagodas are crowded with people in doing of meritorious deeds so it is not only a time of joy but also thanksgiving and paying homage to parents and elders. There are concerts and theaters in every city.
2) **Tazaungmon Full Moon Festival** is a celebration for the season of the offering robes and other requisites needed by monks after the end of Buddhist Lent. Cash offerings for monasteries are also collected and displayed on wooden frames built in the shape of a tree. There is the special offering of Mathothigan, or timely woven robes, a robe that is woven in one single day, held on the night of the eve throughout to the full moon day. There are weaving competition to complete the robes, which are offered to images of Buddha.

3) **Htamane Festival or Glutinous Rice Festival** is a celebration for the donation of sticky rice and sesame seeds. There is a competition between teams of men for donation of glutinous rice to the Great Lord Buddha. Lots of people enjoy watching the competition of cooking glutinous rice. After finishing the competition, glutinous rice is distributed as donation to people and followed by the prize giving ceremony for the winners.

4) **Thingyan Festival is the Myanmar New Year Festival and the Water Festival.** During the festival, Myanmar people pour water over one another to the melodious tunes of singing and dancing at the decorated pavilions. Pouring water signifies cleansing the body and mind of evils of the past year, performing a lot of meritorious deeds to usher in the New Year such as going to pagodas and monasteries, offering food and alms to monks, paying respect to parents, teachers and the elders, setting free fish and cattle and so on.
IT MAY BE CONCLUDED THAT

1) Thai Songkran Festival is similar to Thingyan Festival in Myanmar in terms of the purpose of the festivals, which is traditional New Year celebration and the Watu Festival.

2) Buddhist Lent Festival is similar to Tazaungmon Full Moon Festival in terms of the offering robes and others requisites needed by monks. The dissimilar is Tazaungmon Full Moon Festival has Junla Kratin too.

3) Sart Thai Festival is similar to Htamanæ Festival in terms of making merit traditions and Hororing Ghosts and Ancestors. The dissimilar is Htamanæ Festival making merit for Buddha, too.

4) The end of Buddhist Lent Festival is similar to Thadingyut Festival in term of offering foods and other necessities to monks, the dissimilar is Thadingyut Festival in Myanmar’s Festival of lights and also has Tradition Devo.

B) Thai and Myanmar Buddhist Temple Festival Dress.

Most of Thai and Myanmar Buddhist men wear the stand-up collar, spread collar and round neck collar, hip length blouses with long sleeves or short sleeves and they wear Salong. Thai Buddhist men also wear long pants or loincloths, too. Myanmar Buddhist men wear headdress call “Guang Baung”
The temple festival of women, most of Thai and Myanmar Buddhist women wear stand-up collar, spread collar and round neck collar, hip-length blouses with long sleeves or short sleeves with the tube skirts. Thai Buddhist women also wear loincloths and use fabric shoulder flattering, while Myanmar Buddhist women use scarf.

Fig 9 The comparative of Thai and Myanmar Buddhist Temple Festival Dress

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