



# **The Dynamics of 'Thung Isan (Isan flags)' in Buddhist Traditions in Nong Paen Subdistrict, Kamalasai District, Kalasin Province**

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## **Abstract**

The objectives of this research were: 1) to study the dynamics of 'Thung Isan (Isan flags)' in various Buddhist traditions; 2) to study the dynamics of 'Thung Isan' in Buddhist traditions in Nong Paen Sub-district, Kamalasai District, Kalasin Province; 3) to analytically study the dynamics of 'Thung Isan' in the Buddhist tradition of Nong Paen Subdistrict. This study was carried out by means of qualitative research. The data were collected from documents and fieldwork by conducting in-depth interviews with 25 key informants. The obtained data were interpreted by descriptive analysis. The research results were as follows: The dynamics of 'Thung Isan' in various Buddhist traditions: Thung is used in religious ceremonies as a symbol according to the tradition or festival such as Thung (flag), flag to worship the relics, Phawet Thung, Kathin Thung and Thung in the giving rice tradition, etc. The dynamics of 'Thung Isan' in Buddhist traditions in Nong Paen Sub-district: Thung is made with cotton thread or yarn. In the composition, it often brings natural materials that can be found in the area. Most of the production will be done with in-house equipment. The pattern uses multi-colored threads interlocking or alternating colors of yarn until the desired color and pattern are obtained. 'Thung Isan' can be developed a variety of patterns. Each style has a different meaning. It is an application for use in religious ceremonies and creates local innovations. The analysis of the dynamics of 'Thung Isan' in the Buddhist tradition of Nong Paen Subdistrict: Thung is used in religious ceremonies and has been inherited for a long time. The model has been modified and the appearance has been improved to create fashionable patterns. Villagers make Thung as offerings in Buddhist rituals. It is a symbol in the ritual and has applied the Dhamma principles to design the characteristics according to the Dhamma topics.

**Keywords:** Dynamics, Thung Isan (isan flags), Buddhist Traditions in Nong Paen

## **1) Introduction**

The flag in the overall picture of the country is the symbol of the country. Nut Thung is a type of flag that is the belief of the Thai Isan people which is based on ghost culture, Brahmins, and Buddhism. It has been an important rite of the Isan people for a long time. It is believed that it can be used to protect against bad things or unseen bad things or spirits that will interfere with merit-making. If Thung is seen by ghosts, they will retreat. At the same time, it also tells the deities in the area that there are making-merit and there are important ceremonies to help protect them. The plunging or hanging of the Thung in the making-merit area is a notice or a symbol for people, including the invisible ones, to know that this place is having a making-merit ceremony. In some places sew a bag attached to the Thing for carrying money, flowers, and more. As for beliefs about putting money, there may be some differences for example; some believe it is to send money to a deceased person or relative, and Some say it is given to persons with previous deeds in each other. The plunging or hanging of the Thung is to prevent the devil from disturbing the sacred ceremony area according to traditional belief. The plunging or hanging of the Thung is an important making-merit venue decoration that used to be passed down until it is a tradition. Isan people, therefore, have beliefs about Thung in 2 ways, 1) making-merit, when making merit by offering Thungs will stay cool, and auspiciousness for life. Giving alms, when giving alms by offering alms, will help the soul of the deceased to escape from hell or misfortune [Prathapjai Sikkha, 2012: 2] [1]. Buddhism in Tripitaka mentions the result of the flag offering in Aupavanatherapadana 2, it mentions the Pubbakamma (a former deed) of Phra Upavanathera who ties his washed

white blanket with a rope and hangs it on the top of bamboo and raises it as a flag up in the air. The great giant Abhisamamata takes his flag and carries it up into the sky. He sees the flag fluttering in the wind, he rejoins with various benefits. All of you must lift the flag up around three rounds every time in eternity, but in this eternity we do not know what deeds we have done at that time. This is the result of these wonderful offerings, that is, Patisambhida 4 (discrimination), Vimokkha 8 (liberations), and Abhinna 6 (superknowledge). We make it clear. Buddhism, we have finished, as told by Phra Upavanathera [Kh. (Thai) 32/22/2.] [2] Dhajaggasutra, which the Buddha tells the monks that Indra's words tell the gods in the Dava in Tavatimsa heaven while they are at war with the demons that if it's time to get in a critical area, there will be a startle and fear, and look at the flag of the division to relieve fear. According to this, the Buddha further says that if a monk is bon in fear, one should remember the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, kindness is the chant Itipisobhagava, etc. Will take away the cowardice [Sathirakoses, 1972: 52] [3].

In the Northeast region from the past to the present, the flag or Thung plays a huge role in a cultural way. In addition to being found in ritual traditions, flags are also found in various types of literature, including literary tales, and literary legends. The teachings inscribe in a large number of palm documents such as Thao Hung Khun Chueng, Kashnam, Urangathat, teach grandchildren Dhamma, teach the world, etc. It often appears in parade scenes. The battle scenes and some flag terminology have been lost, e.g. Pa means a type of flag, is Salong Ananissa, mentioning the origin of the flag in Buddhism, the type of flag uses in various ways, and the merits of presenting the flag, by writing according to the dialect tradition, that is, using ນ instead of ຕ for example, Thung Kradat, Thungsai, Thungsai, Thungthong, Thungpherng, Thungfai, Thunglek, etc. Isan people tend to inscribe both Dhamma and Thai Noi characters, with ນ mixed with ອ and ສ as spelling characters at the final position. Thung is a handicraft that has many production methods based on beliefs, expertise, and wisdom in production that have been passed down from generation to generation [Phathabjai Suwanthada, 2018:71] [4].

History of assembly of Thung in Nong Paen Subdistrict, Kamalasai District, Kalasin Province. Originally, the main occupation of the villagers here was agriculture, farming, gardening, farming, and animal husbandry and there was also What Pho Chai Semanram as a place to hold the mind. A flag is something that flutters in the air, to be used as a mark, a display, or an observation machine for humans in the tribes of the world, both in the past and the present, continuously for a long time. The function of the current flag, although it is not different from the original, it has developed in terms of patterns, colors, and a lot of variety according to the area, and culture of the ethnic group. But the flag and the flag rope are still the main components as they used to be in the past such as the Mahachat festival is decorated around the pulpit, fence, tiered, flags, flowers, bananas, sugarcane, rice, and coconuts. Witchcraft offering consists of flowers, roll candles, and roll joss strict. Later, making witchcraft offering are prepared, which are called "Khueng Hoi Khueng Phan", collected in a container made of lathed wood or zinc white cloth called "Khueng Kharuphan". The pavilion area is decorated to look like the forest where Phra Vessantara and Nang Mathri Kanhachali live. In addition, What is indispensable is a pot of holy water, a candle ring for people, owners of spells, or those attending the ceremony to worship the sermon [Weena Weesaphen, 2019:47] [5].

Therefore, Thung Isan has many roles as well as other localities with very distinctive new roles. At present, it is used as an ornament to decorate tourist attractions in various merit ceremonies such as Makha Buja Festival, Maghapurami, Dvaravati Mingla, Mueng Fa Daet Song Yang Na Phra That Ya Khu in Nong Paen Subdistrict, Kamalasai District, Kalasin Province. The Visakhapunmi festival has a tradition of pouring water on Phra That Ya Khu, etc. This is to attract the eyes and entertain tourists along with the use of Thung as a symbol of being a sacred area as well. The researchers are therefore interested in studying "The dynamics of 'Thung Isan (Isan flags)' in Buddhist traditions in Nong Paen Subdistrict, Kamalasai District, Kalasin Province" that has changed, or there is a development of logging both in general and in Nong Paen Subdistrict. After that, we continue to analyze the dynamics of Thung for society.

## **2) Research Questions**

- 2.1) How is the dynamics of 'Thung Isan (Isan flags)' in various Buddhist traditions?
- 2.2) How is the dynamics of 'Thung Isan' in Buddhist traditions in Nong Paen Sub-district, Kamalasai District, Kalasin Province?

2.3) How is analytically study the dynamics of 'Thung Isan' in the Buddhist tradition of Nong Paen Subdistrict, Kamalasai District, Kalasin Province?

**3) Research Objectives**

3.1) To study the dynamics of 'Thung Isan (Isan flags)' in various Buddhist traditions

3.2) To study the dynamics of 'Thung Isan' in Buddhist traditions in Nong Paen Sub-district, Kamalasai District, Kalasin Province

3.3) To study analytically study the dynamics of 'Thung Isan' in the Buddhist tradition of Nong Paen Subdistrict, Kamalasai District, Kalasin Province

**4) Research Method**

This research is qualitative research, fieldwork by in-depth interviews of the dynamics of 'Thung Isan' in Buddhist traditions in Nong Paen Sub-district, Kamalasai District, Kalasin Province. It studies the target group. The researchers defined the research method or research model as follows;

4.1) This study is a documentary study and collecting data is from relevant documents and evidence from Tripitaka, books, and research reports. The document associated the relationship with the dynamics of 'Thung Isan' in Buddhist traditions in Nong Paen Sub-district, Kamalasai District, Kalasin Province

4.2) Data from in-depth interviews with 25 sets from the main informant population regarding the dynamics of 'Thung Isan' in Buddhist traditions in Nong Paen Sub-district, Kamalasai District, Kalasin Province

4.3) Data is from observations participants, focus group together the key informants regarding the dynamics of 'Thung Isan' in Buddhist traditions in Nong Paen Sub-district, Kamalasai District, Kalasin Province

**5) Expected Benefits**

5.1) To know the dynamics of 'Thung Isan (Isan flags)' in various Buddhist traditions

5.2) To know the dynamics of 'Thung Isan' in Buddhist traditions in Nong Paen Sub-district, Kamalasai District, Kalasin Province

5.3) To know analytically study the dynamics of 'Thung Isan' in the Buddhist tradition of Nong Paen Subdistrict, Kamalasai District, Kalasin Province

**6) Research Results**

The research title of "The dynamics of 'Thung Isan' in Buddhist traditions in Nong Paen Sub-district, Kamalasai District, Kalasin Province" can be summarized, discussed and suggested as follows;

**6.1) The dynamics of 'Thung Isan (Isan flags)' in various Buddhist traditions:** The importance of the flag in Dhajaggastra Buddhism is used to chant for prosperity. In one chapter of Phaya Chang Chaddanta Jataka, it is explained that it sees the Sonattara hunter and thinks that "I will kill it, therefore inserting a silver-colored trunk to capture, suddenly he sees the flag or banner of an Arahant like the Buddha, etc. The hunter then places a flag banner of an Arahant on the trunk of the great elephant king, the elephant then picks him up and places it in front of the elephant. At that time, even though he has suffered so much, this feeling arose that "It is known as the flag of Arahant, it cannot be killed, they should only perform worship and respect. In the performance of Buddhist rituals, Thung is something that is offered as an offering in Buddhist rituals. It is a symbol and a sacred object used in rituals to decorate various religious ceremonies. The assembly of the Thung in the rituals can reflect the beliefs of the local people according to tradition. It is also an expression of the local wisdom that can be brought to the top in the preservation of arts and cultures.

**6.2) The dynamics of 'Thung Isan' in Buddhist traditions in Nong Paen Sub-district, Kamalasai District, Kalasin Province:** From the flag banner of an Arahant to put on the trunk of the king of elephant, Phaya Change creates the feeling that "It is known as the flag of Arahant, Thung is actually made by thread, cotton or yarn. In components that often bring natural materials that can be found in the area. Most of the production will be done with in-house equipment. The pattern uses multi-colored threads. There are coordinating or knitting threads alternating colors until the desired color and pattern are achieved. Thung Isan will develop a variety of patterns. Each style has a different meaning. It is an application for use in religious ceremonies and creates local innovations".

**6.3) Analytically study the dynamics of 'Thung Isan' in the Buddhist tradition of Nong Paen Subdistrict, Kamalasai District, Kalasin Province:** Thung Nong Paen as a whole has been produced from material

that can be found locally and then woven into a short or long piece of cloth, depending on the purpose used in that work. At present, the thread has been used to make a Thung. There is the use of natural materials to assemble into a Thung, produced with yarn tied together. There are threads or silk threads, alternating colors together until you get what you want. Nowadays, it focuses on using threads, however, many pieces of equipment are needed to create a Thung. There are a variety of styles, adding color with yarn. It can be applied to what you want. Nong Phaen Sub-district, in the past, the cloth was used to make Thung. Later it is popularly used thread to make until it became popular. There were different looks that were brought about by their values and uses. There is a bronze flag, Chan Kra Chang Thung, Dhamacakka Thung, Yard Fah or Bai Pho Thung, Chistmas Thung, etc. There are patterns that the villagers invented. Each Thung and pattern is unique. It has new dimensions constantly making it a magnificent symbol. Production invents patterns in production until it becomes a symbol of use, use to decorate religious ceremonies and local traditions. These Thung are unique to Nong Paen Sub-district.

## **7) Discussions**

**7.1) The dynamics of 'Thung Isan (Isan flags) in various Buddhist traditions:** The importance of the flag in Dhajaggastra Buddhism is used to chant for prosperity. In one chapter of Phaya Chang Chaddanta Jataka, it is explained that it sees the Sonattara hunter and thinks that "I will kill it, therefore inserting a silver-colored trunk to capture, suddenly he sees the flag or banner of an Arahant like the Buddha, etc. The hunter then places a flag banner of an Arahant on the trunk of the great elephant king, the elephant then picks him up and places it in front of the elephant. At that time, even though he has suffered so much, this feeling arose that "It is known as the flag of Arahant, it cannot be killed, they should only perform worship and respect. In the performance of Buddhist rituals, Thung is something that is offered as an offering in Buddhist rituals. It is a symbol and a sacred object used in rituals to decorate various religious ceremonies. The assembly of the Thung in the rituals can reflect the beliefs of the local people according to tradition. It is also an expression of the local wisdom that can be brought to the top in the preservation of arts and cultures. It is consistent with [Phra Nirat Abhivaddhano (Khanthima), 2008: 48] [6] study "Wisdom Thung Lana of the ancestors". It was found that Pataka or Pataka, it is the name of the Indian flag. It is a sheet of cloth, wood, paper, and metal. The figure is used to hang down by attaching it to the end of a pole. In addition, if we consider spatially, it was also found that The Thung Pha carved on the rock is similar to "Thung Sawwa". This Thung Pha may be a symbol of the spiritual rituals that link between the human world and the spirit world according to the traditional culture of people in the Suvarnabhumi area. In addition, Thung also appears on the Sema leaves carved depicting the story of the Soraphanga Jataka in Buddhism.

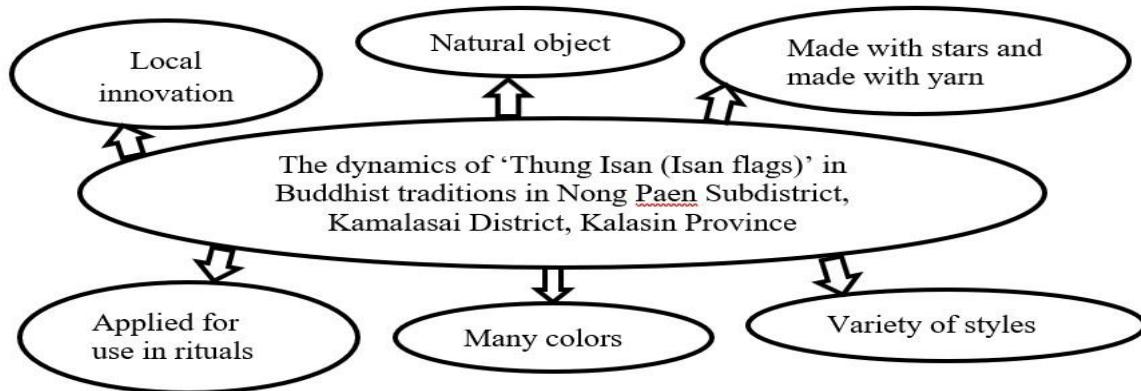
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**7.3) Analytically study the dynamics of 'Thung Isan' in the Buddhist tradition of Nong Paen Subdistrict, Kamalasai District, Kalasin Province:** Thung Nong Paen as a whole has been produced from material that can be found locally and then woven into a short or long piece of cloth, depending on the purpose used in that work. At present, the thread has been used to make a Thung. There is the use of natural materials to assemble into a Thung, produced with yarn tied together. There are threads or silk threads, alternating colors together until you get

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#### **8) New Explicit Knowledge**

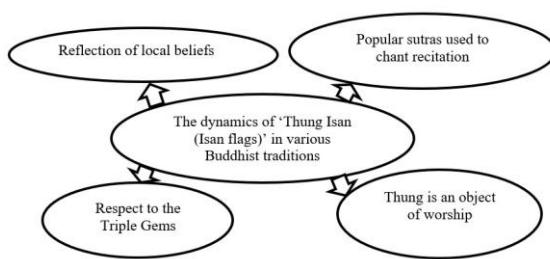
The dynamics of 'Thung Isan (Isan flags)' in Buddhist traditions in Nong Paen Subdistrict, Kamalasai District, Kalasin Province, there is Dhajaggasutra which is a chant that brings prosperity. There is a cloth flag as a symbol to hold the mind. There has been a change in the production of Thung which has been inherited for a long time. The style has been improved throughout the development of a variety of patterns. Thung is used as an offering. Natural materials are used, there are threads made of cotton and yarn. There is a variety of styles, adding colorful patterns that are local innovations.



**Figure 1** New Explicit Knowledge

#### **9) Conclusion**

The importance of the flag in Dhajaggasutra Buddhism is used to chant for prosperity. Thung is the flag of the Arahant and pays worship and respect. Thung Nong Paen is popularly made with thread, cotton, or silk. There are many styles or characteristics. Thung is an accessory for Buddhist worship. It is a symbol and is sacred in rituals according to the beliefs of the local people. It is also an expression of wisdom that has been preserved and preserved in local arts and culture.



**Figure 2** The dynamics of 'Thung Isan (Isan flags)' in Buddhist traditions

## **10) Recommendations**

### **10.1) Recommendations for Policy**

- It should be offered to the Fine Arts Department, Ministry of Culture to elevate the Thung of Nong Paen Sub-district as a source of historical learning, providing personnel with knowledge and expertise in transferring knowledge in order to transfer knowledge to tourists, students, students, and people who have the opportunity to enter the cultural area.

- It should present a plan to ask for budget support from Kalasin Province, Kalasin Provincial Administrative Organization, National Office of Buddhism, or other agencies to rise the level of the Thung of Nong Paen Sub-district of Kamalasai District for being the center of religious ceremonies including local traditions or rituals.

### **10.2) Recommendations for Academic**

- Workshops should be organized for knowledge transfer or academic discussions between academics from universities in the area, organize activities to exchange interesting issues that can be crystallized into new knowledge, the villagers of Nong Paen Sub-district have the potential to be the center of knowledge transfer at the local level.

- There should be public relations for tourism, and should increase public relations channels through media or other channels that can reach all levels of tourists. This will help support the decision to travel to cultural areas.

### **10.3) Recommendations for Practices**

- To be used as information for the study of Buddhists who want to make Isan Thungs in Nong Paen Sub-district as an example for organizing events in their area.

- The committee can use the research data to improve the next event.

### **10.4) Recommendations for Further Research** - The Sangha can bring this research to be integrated and applied in Kamalasai District.

- The government agencies can adopt the concept and have integrated the principle of making the Isan pilgrimage in the Nong Paen Sub-district.

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