

Introduction

“ผ้าไหม” เครื่องนุ่มห่มที่ถือเป็นเอกลักษณ์ของความเป็นไทย ไหมทุกเส้นถูกถักทอเป็นลายผ้าอย่างวิจิตร สวยงาม อันแสดงถึงความเป็นไทยและเป็นศิลปวัฒนธรรมที่ทรงคุณค่ายิ่งของประเทศสืบต่อมายาวนานจากอดีตจนถึงปัจจุบัน ด้วยสายพระเนตรที่ยาวไกลของสมเด็จพระนางเจ้าสิริกิติ์ พระบรมราชินีนาถที่ห่วงใยความเป็นอยู่ของเกษตรกร ทรงเป็นองค์อุปถัมภ์ที่สำคัญยิ่งแก่วงการไหมไทย ในการเสด็จพระราชดำเนินไปปฏิบัติพระราชกรณียกิจจะฉลองพระองค์ด้วยผ้าไหม เป็นที่ชื่นชมในความงดงามแบบไทย และหันมาสนใจผ้าไหมไทยมากขึ้น นอกจากนี้ทรงศึกษาและพัฒนาหม่อนไหมไทยกระจายสู่ประชาชนในประเทศและภูมิภาคต่าง ๆ ทั่วโลก และยังทรงศึกษาพัฒนาและพระราชทานคุณประโยชน์ด้านหม่อนไหมต่อเกษตรกรผู้ปลูกหม่อนเลี้ยงไหมสืบมาจนปัจจุบัน

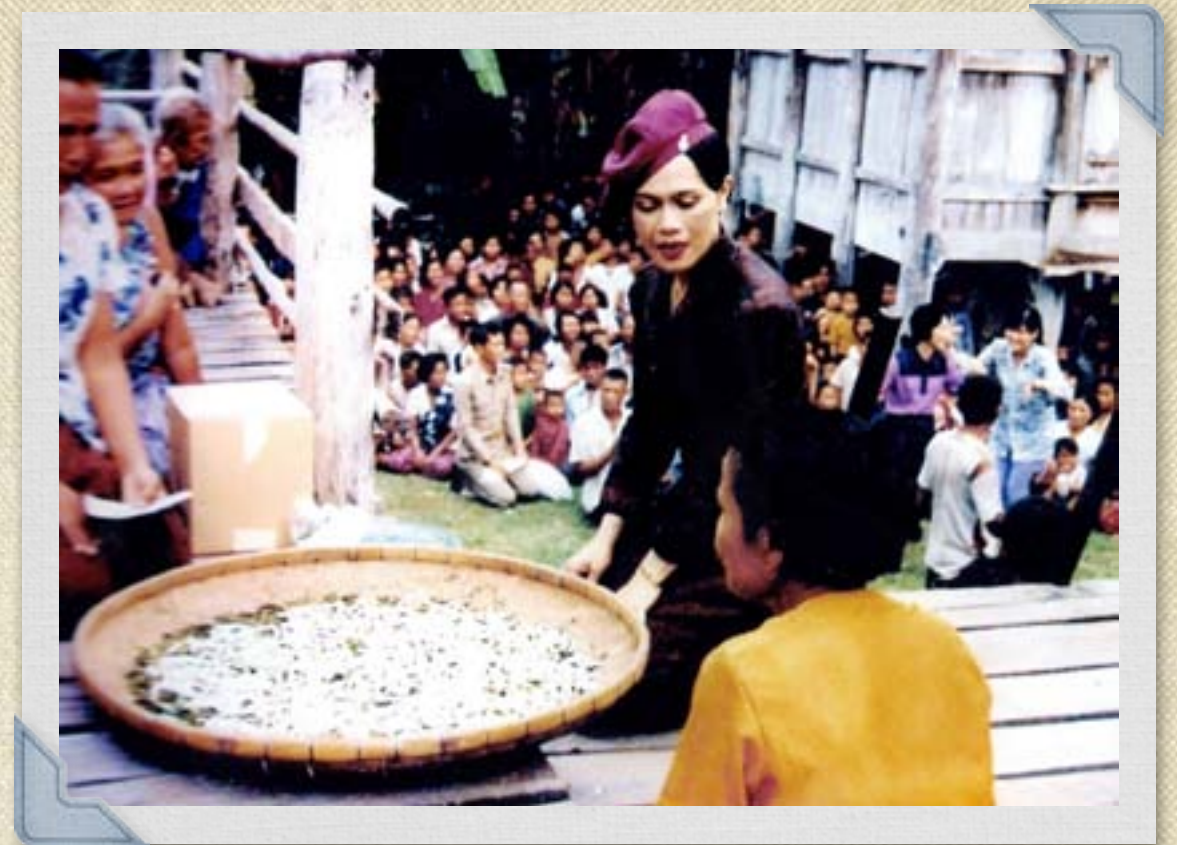
เมื่อปี ๒๕๔๕ คณะกรรมาธิการหม่อนไหมระหว่างประเทศตระหนักในพระอัจฉริยภาพและพระปรีชาสามารถของสมเด็จพระนางเจ้าฯ พระบรมราชินีนาถได้ขอพระราชทานพระบรมราชานุญาตทูลเกล้าฯ ถวายรางวัลหลุยส์ ปาสเตอร์ แด่พระองค์ในฐานะที่ทรงเป็นผู้ที่ได้มีการศึกษาพัฒนาและทำคุณประโยชน์ต่อวงการหม่อนไหม ในโอกาสนี้สมเด็จพระนางเจ้าฯ พระบรมราชินีนาถ ได้เสด็จเป็นองค์ประธานในงานเลี้ยงต้อนรับคณะกรรมาธิการหม่อนไหมระหว่างประเทศอีกด้วย และเมื่อวันที่ ๑๑ มีนาคม ๒๕๕๔ สมเด็จพระนางเจ้าฯ พระบรมราชินีนาถ ได้เสด็จเป็นองค์ประธานเปิดอาคารที่ทำการกรมหม่อนไหม นับเป็นพระมหากรุณาธิคุณยังความปลาบปลื้มแก่ข้าราชการและเจ้าหน้าที่กรมหม่อนไหมอย่างหาที่สุดมิได้

กรมหม่อนไหมในฐานะหน่วยงานหลักในการพัฒนาหม่อนไหมได้น้อมนำแนวพระราชดำริมาพัฒนา ศึกษา วิจัย และถ่ายทอดองค์ความรู้แก่เกษตรกรผู้ปลูกหม่อนเลี้ยงไหม รวมทั้งการอนุรักษ์ไหมไทยอันเป็นมรดกกันล้ำค่าของชาติเสมือนหนึ่งเป็นสินทรัพย์ของแผ่นดินอันเป็นที่ประจักษ์แก่ประชาชนในชาติและชาวโลก เพื่อเสริมสร้างชีวิตความเป็นอยู่ของเกษตรกรผู้ปลูกหม่อนเลี้ยงไหมให้มีความอยู่ดีกินดี มีรายได้เพิ่มขึ้น อันจะนำไปสู่การพัฒนาเศรษฐกิจและสังคมของประเทศแบบยั่งยืนต่อไป

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“ ...Sericulture is not only the source of extra income for farmers but also the historical and fine culture of the Thai nation that has long been inherited. No matter how the country's economy has changed, development of Sericulture must continue...” ”

*Translated from: Royal remark of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit
January 19, 2542 B.E. (1999 A.D.)*



Royal Activities with Thai Silk

Her Majesty Queen Sirikit has been interested in Thai fabrics since she was Mom Rajawongse Sirikit Kitiyakara. After the royal announcement of her engagement, her fondness for Mud mee silk (Thai silk woven in Northeastern Thailand) became very apparent to the Thai people, as she always dressed in sarongs made of Thai silk such as Korat or Chiang Mai silks, even though weaving of traditional fabrics was not yet widely promoted at that time.

His Majesty the King first graciously honoured Mom Rajawongse Sirikit Kitiyakara by inviting her to become “Queen Consort of Thailand”, followed by her elevation as “Her Majesty Queen Sirikit of Thailand” on the 5th May 2499 B.E. (1956 A.D.). From that moment, it can be stated that the Royal activities of Her Majesty the Queen as Mother of the Kingdom began, and have continued to increase and flourish ever more with each passing year.

Thai Silk... A Bond of Relationship

Since the first visit of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit to rural areas in 2498 B.E. (1955 A.D.) as an entourage of His Majesty the King, she has noticed that women attending the royal appearances in each region came in Mud mee (ikat) silk sarongs. It was the splendour of their various colours and patterns that caught her attention.

During the great flood of 2513 B.E. (1960 A.D.), which caused much damage to paddy fields, as well as hardship and suffering to the Thai people, Their Majesties paid a visit to Nakhorn Phanom province where the land was in standing water and homes in damp condition. Her Majesty saw local women who came to receive relief supplies sitting on the wet ground in their silk sarongs, yet the beauty of the silk sarongs was not in the least diminished.

The deep desire of Their Majesties to alleviate distress and comfort the Thai people, especially the farmers, was eloquently expressed in the following description from that time:



“ ...During the royal visit to give relief supplies, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej described the giving of relief supplies to the victims as being like throwing pebbles into a river. How great an amount of supplies would need to be given for everyone to survive? There should be something new provided to the people to enable them to earn a reliable income. Her Majesty realized in her heart immediately that even though they looked poor, they all dressed in clothes made from Mud mee silk. So, Her Majesty thought that encouragement should be focused on developing their familiar handicraft of weaving Mud mee silk fabrics into a supplemental occupation to create a reserve for their families that they could rely on in the event of drought or flood that caused the loss of their production from paddy fields...”

Translated from : “Mud mee Mai Thai.Saiyai Chonnabot” by Thanphuying Maneerat Bunnag

Her Majesty the Queen did not simply pay a visit to her people but she also showed deep concern for their livelihood through detailed inquiry. She was empathetic with their hardship and suffering. She also recognized that they had traditional skills of silk weaving. So Her Majesty had the vision that silk crafts could become the means for her people to supplement their agricultural activities in order to earn steady income not subject to the vagaries of climate and weather conditions.



“ ...I have seen the villagers attending the royal appearances, especially the women wearing beautiful sarongs which look old but the weaving skill and patterns of the fabrics are very refined and aesthetic displaying the beauty of local art. So I thought, why not ask the villagers to weave different patterns of Mud mee Silk fabrics that they wear, and why not make the beauty of Mud mee Silk fabrics that they wear more beneficial than just sitting on the ground in royal appearances?... ”

*Translated from : Royal remark of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit
August 11, 2547 B.E. (2004 A.D.)*



Promotion of Mud mee silk weaving in the Northeastern provinces had started without the need for training in weaving skills because the local women passed on traditional weaving skills in their families as a precious heritage from generation to generation. Her Majesty was convinced that by encouraging and supporting the local women to use their heritage to supplement their farming, they would be able to produce a large enough quantity of silk woven fabrics to enable them to enter the market without great difficulty. She taught them to preserve and develop their existing techniques and patterns to gain extra income from artwork and fabrics.

Her Majesty graciously showed concern for the livelihood of Thai women, especially those in the Northeastern provinces. She worked tirelessly to promote and encourage sericulture as well as lay the foundation for silk crafts to expand as a small scale industry. Her encouragement and vision on the sericulture has been shown to the public.





Sericulture under Her Majesty the Queen's Patronage

Her Majesty the Queen has dedicated her tireless efforts for the betterment of the Thai people and the entire nation. In 2519 B.E. (1976 A.D.), "The Foundation for the Promotion of Supplementary Occupations and Related Techniques" was established under Her Majesty the Queen's patronage to develop and promote knowledge of agriculture and small scale industry altogether for the people, so they could become sources of supplement income. Her Majesty the Queen used her personal funds to establish the foundation and encourage people to gain extra income by applying Thai traditional handicraft skills.



“ ...I noticed hope in their eyes when they realized that there would be a new occupation for them with which they are already familiar and skillful. Some of them weaved cotton fabrics for daily use. Others weaved silk fabrics to be used for special occasions such as going to temple. Later, they began to weave fabrics for me, which I used to make my own clothes. After that, greater and greater numbers of people volunteered to weave these fabrics. Thus I thought this was the right moment to establish The Foundation for the Promotion of Supplementary Occupations and Related Techniques...”

*Translated from: Royal remark of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit
August 11, 2547 B.E. (2004 A.D.)*



The efforts of Her Majesty the Queen to alleviate the hardship and improve the livelihood of the Thai people and nation are countless. Apart from the establishment of training centers for weaving in all regions, particularly in the Northeastern Thailand, Her Majesty the Queen graciously ordered Her Majesty's Principal Private secretary to purchase Mud mee silk fabrics from villagers in each province directly.

At first, the villagers were ashamed to sell the fabrics because they thought the fabrics were from uncivilized area and not beautiful. Her Majesty's Principal Private Secretariat had to explain for a long time before they could understand Her Majesty's intention. The offered price was higher than the regular price due to the determination of Her Majesty to reward the villagers for their fine crafts and to give the villagers as "from mother to her children".

Previously, Her Majesty used her own private funds to buy the finished silk fabrics and weaving equipment to support the villagers. After the Foundation for the Promotion of Supplementary Occupations and Related Techniques was established, the donation was regularly raised. The support given to the weavers are now from the Foundation under her Royal patronage which creates an opportunity for the people with higher income to help the poor. The other operations to maintain and promote the Mud mee Silk fabrics remain unchanged.



“...Everyone realized the effort put into these fabrics by the silk weavers and was amazed by the beauty of each silk fabric that represented the value of Thai farmers who are capable of not only overcoming many difficulties to grow rice for the entire nation but also creating the magnificent artistic works...”

*Translated from : Royal speech of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit
July 25, 2538 (1995 A.D.)*

Introduce Thai Silk to the World

Her Majesty the Queen always chooses the apparels made of Thai fabrics, especially Thai silk fabrics from the Royal Folk Arts and Crafts Centre. She has also promoted Thai silk to the world of fashion. Whenever Her Majesty visits other countries, she has always taken the opportunity to show the products from the Royal Folk Arts and Crafts Centre. Thai silk is one of the products from natural fabrics which are now recognised by a large number of people for its unique beauty and charm.

Her Majesty Queen Sirikit intends on making Thai silk, particularly, Mud mee silk, become well known. Her Majesty took the initiative of dressing in Thai silk apparel on every occasion and also encouraged government officials to dress in clothes made of Thai silk. Therefore, villagers are supported and increase their opportunities to gain extra income. Every royal appearance of Her Majesty in Thailand or other countries, the clothing is designed beautifully to suit the occasion.

Her Majesty is always the role model in wearing Thai traditional cloths for various occasions influencing the public to follow her by increasingly wearing the traditional outfit.

When His Majesty accepts the invitation to visit other countries in Asia, Europe, and America to renew or begin





the friendly relationship between the two countries which results in better reputation of Thailand, Her Majesty will prepare the apparels made of Thai silk in both Thai and international designs suitable and beautiful for the occasion. Her Majesty uses different Thai traditional gowns for various occasions which only Thai Fabrics such as Silk, Cotton and Yok (brocade) are chosen.

The elegance of Thai traditional apparels which Her Majesty uses during the visits to foreign countries has been praised. The world famous designers from France and Italy agreed to honour her as “the Best Dressed Woman of the Year”. This did not only bring honour to the Kingdom of Thailand but attracted the awareness of foreigners to Thai silk and also increased the use of Thai silk to make clothing in European styles.

Besides Her Majesty’s influence to the Thai government officials and general public in using traditional fabrics such

as Mud mee silk, Her Majesty also inspire people overseas. Mrs. Takako Kanomi, a Japanese lady, also saw the possibility of using Mud mee silk fabrics to make a kimono. Later, she contacted the Royal Folk Arts and Crafts Foundation and arranged the exhibition of Mud mee silk in Japan. There were a large number of people interested in this event. After that, the Japanese government invited Her Majesty to visit their country and Her Majesty, accompanied by Her Royal Highness Princess Chulabhorn, accepted the invitation. During the visit, Her Majesty organized the exhibition on Mud mee silk fabrics which included the successful sale and fashion show.

For the United States of America, Her Majesty tirelessly paid several visits to various states so that the American public was attracted by the beauty and uniqueness of the Mud mee silk fabrics

The highly valuable handicraft from farmers who produce food to feed the whole nation is now recognized globally that Thai farmers are not only supply the world with the export food but also the work of art. This artwork may not be able to shine without the great vision and kindness of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit, Mother of the Kingdom.





Mud mee Thai silk conserved for future generations

In the Northeastern part of Thailand, Her Majesty Queen Sirikit graciously established a special project to support Thai silk weaving and teach rural villagers to learn how to plant mulberry trees and weave silk fabrics in larger amounts for sale, in addition to production for use in the household. The project also provided guidance on how to assure high quality of silk fabrics, as part of a plan to export products of uniformly high quality in regular quantities.

In the Southern region, Her Majesty the Queen realized that rural villagers have more free time after the end of their main agricultural activities, i.e., rice paddy farming or rubber tapping, which they could use profitably to develop

supplemental activities to earn more income. The idea of Her Majesty the Queen is to support rural villagers to improve their weaving, by providing all necessary equipment and raw materials as well as sending skilled weaving trainers. Training programs were established for both cotton and silk dyeing. In addition, Her Majesty the Queen also made funds available to support part of the daily expenses and provide a monthly stipend to trainees. In those sub-districts where natural conditions are suitable for sericulture, Her Majesty the Queen encouraged people to engage in sericulture and weave fabrics using silk of natural colour.

The Northern part of Thailand has long reputation as a land of world-class silk fabrics. Her Majesty the Queen graciously arranged Thai silk threads produced in other parts of Thailand to be sent to the North, and asked silk craftsmen to weave using that silk threads, since sericulture was not well developed in Chiang Mai Province and raw materials for weaving had to be purchased from other regions. In the beginning, silk threads made from foreign silkworm races were used as warp yarns, while silk threads from Thai silkworm races were used as weft yarns. Later, Her Majesty sent trainers from the Northeast to teach local people all the steps in silk fabric making, from pulling silk threads to dyeing silk yarns. This enabled them to use Thai silkworm races for both warp yarns and weft yarns. The local also learned the processes for weaving Jok and Yok fabrics. Their products were as good quality as those woven by master silk weavers. Based on these achievements, Her Majesty the Queen graciously established the Royal Silk Weaving Training Center and placed it under the patronage of Her Majesty.





The encouragement given by Her Majesty to the application of Northeastern antique patterns to be displayed in the silk weaving fabrics was a reflection of the high esteem that Her Majesty graciously held for the dignity and wisdom of the local. Her Majesty graciously advised officers of the Foundation to encourage the people to search for old patterns and use them to make models for weaving fabrics.

Her Majesty the Queen worked tirelessly to develop all aspects of the production processes in sericulture and improve the quality of silk threads including dyeing and designing of weaving patterns. Her Majesty also unceasingly promoted local people to pass on their precious heritage to each new generation.

Her Majesty Queen Sirikit has contributed her entire working life to support sericulture in a systematic way, including not only silk production but also its marketing.



During buying of Mud mee silk fabrics from villagers, the working group bought and recorded the addresses of the weavers whose products were extraordinarily beautiful in order to use as colour and pattern samples for weaving fabrics in the future. Her Majesty also suggested collecting the fabrics with local pattern unique to specific regions. Furthermore, Her Majesty checked the quality of the bought silk fabrics and advised villagers to widen the fabric to meet the standard by lengthening Feum (reed), or comb teeth as well as lengthen the fabric by weaving several meters long for a piece of fabric. For quality, Her Majesty gave an advice to weave using tight tension to obtain smooth and soft fabric. The dyeing process should be done with care so that the colour is even and quality dye should also be used. Her Majesty has initiated the use of silk thread from local silkworm varieties for both warp and weft yarns because the silk thread from local silkworm varieties is naturally iridescent sheen.





Praise for Her Majesty's Work

Her Majesty the Queen has the great kindness and virtue. Her Majesty's endless giving to her people especially the poor in rural area can be seen from her selfless devotion without concerning about her health or personal fund. Her Majesty regularly cooperates with the social work and other charity organizations to improve the social status of women in the nation. Her Majesty organizes the teaching and training project on traditional arts and crafts for women in order to elevate their incomes and social welfare. At the same time, this project improves the popularity of traditional arts of the nation which will be passed on to the next generation.

Her Majesty the Queen has founded the Foundation for the Promotion of Supplementary Occupations and Related Techniques under Her Majesty's patronage. The intentions of the foundation are to revive the folk arts and crafts, preserve the uniqueness of crafts from each region and improve skill and technique of the people in each area of arts. Through various activities such as designing the artistic crafts to suit the modern use and market trend, distribution and promotion of the handicrafts, the SUPPORT Foundation has succeeded in achieving national and worldwide recognition.

Her Majesty the Queen's remarkable ability in arts combined with the concept of economic and social development especially the development of occupation suitable for ability and local environment of the people in each region creates the cottage industries in remote area. This cottage industries help reduce the unemployment in the areas which cause less migration of villagers to the major cities for working in industrial areas.

Her Majesty the Queen's initiative in teaching and training art and craft techniques creates the cottage industries which increase jobs in the remote area continuously and endlessly. Through this project, the problem on income distribution is solved and Her Majesty succeeds in preserving some dying arts.





SC Offer Her Majesty with Louis Pasteur Prize

The International Sericultural Commission (ISC), the organization related to the global sericulture development, was established in 2491 B.E. (1948 A.D.) The headquarters is located in Lyon, France. The aims of the International Sericultural Commission are to encourage and promote the development and improvement from the technical, scientific and economic points of view, of all the activities dealing with sericulture including general information through the setting-up of a sericultural documentation centre and establish the database on sericulture among member countries around the world.

Her Majesty the Queen's great impact on Thai sericulture has been recognized by the International Sericultural Commission (ISC). Her Majesty has promoted and supported sericulture related occupations and encouraged silk weaving using different patterns. Her Majesty also represents the uniqueness of Thai silk through her apparels which are all produced from silk fabrics. The Commission honoured Her Majesty with the Louis Pasteur Prize in 2545 B.E. (2002 A.D.) for her great devotion in preserving Thai sericulture occupations and further developing so that Thai silk has become well known worldwide.



International Sericultural
Commission



Louis Pasteur prize

The Louis Pasteur Prize was established by the International Sericultural Commission (ISC), and is presented as both a medal and a diploma every three years to scientists, researchers, and other individuals who have contributed to the study and development of silk and sericulture in the fields of science, technology, economics, and marketing for at least 10 years.

The name of the Louis Pasteur Prize is taken from the name of the famous scientist, Louis Pasteur, in recognition of his special historic contribution to the sericulture. In 2388 B.E. (1845 A.D.) the silk industry in European countries, especially Italy and France, suffered an economic crisis caused by outbreaks of a disease called “Pebrine.” This disease attacked silkworm eggs and caused the death of silkworms, which resulted in great losses to the farmers. During the disease outbreaks, the Italian and French governments sought

an immediate solution to this crisis by engaging all scientists.

In late 2413 B.E. (1870 A.D.), Louis Pasteur finally discovered the particular protozoa which are the causal organisms of Pebrine disease. Subsequently, technology for detection of the disease in cells of silkworm eggs was developed. Today, this practice is common and strictly adhered, providing a universal safety system for the industry of sericulture around the world.





Thai Silk... Quality Silk

The Royal Peacock Logo

“Making silk fabric using the local wisdom creates uniqueness of beauty to Thai silk resulting in building up its good reputation globally.” This sentence has been accurate among people all over the world for a long period of time so that Thai silk becomes image of the nation in foreigner’s eyes.

With its glamour, uniqueness and quality, Thai silk becomes so valuable and remarkable that it is denominated as “The Queen of Textile”. To respond to the aspiration of Her Majesty the Queen in conserving and promoting Thai silk, Thai people are taking part to support their silk as the world heritage by using the Royal Peacock Logo as certification mark for the quality silk.



Royal Thai Silk : Gold Peacock

This is the certification mark of silk fabrics produced by using silk thread, raw materials and process which exclusively maintain Thai traditional technique as follows.

- Use of pure silk threads from local Thai silkworm races for both warp and weft yarns.
- Silk threads pulled by hand through shuttles into a container.
- Fabrics weaved on folk hand looms with hand shuttles.
- Use of natural or chemical dyes with no chemicals harmful to the environment.
- Produce in Thailand.

Classic Thai Silk : Silver Peacock

This is the certification mark of silk fabrics using traditional process in conjunction with limited assistance of applied equipment and manufacturing practices as follows.

- Use of pure silk threads of local or improved Thai silkworm races for warp and/or weft yarns.
- Silk threads pulled by hand or equipment with a motor not exceeding five horsepower.
- The fabrics weaved on hand looms.
- Use of natural or chemical dyes with no chemicals harmful to the environment.
- Produce in Thailand.



Thai Silk : Blue Peacock

This is the certification mark of silk fabrics using applied traditional process with modern and commercial manufacturing technique as follows.

- Use of pure silk threads for warp and/or weft yarns.
- Only natural dyes used with no chemicals harmful to the environment.
- Fabrics weaved on any kind of loom.
- Use of natural or chemical dyes with no chemicals harmful to the environment.
- Produce in Thailand.



Thai Silk Blend : Green Peacock

This is the certification mark of silk fabrics using modern process and technology with the integration of traditional wisdom in pattern and colour between pure silk threads and other types of natural or synthetic fibers according to the utilization and demand of customers as follows.

- Use of pure silk threads as the main yarns with some other fibers as the auxiliary yarns.
- Fiber composition must be clearly specified.
- Fabrics weaved on any kind of loom.
- Use of natural or chemical dyes with no chemicals harmful to the environment.
- Produce in Thailand.



Becoming... Thai silk fabrics

Silk is considered so valuable fabric amongst all textiles that it is denominated as “The Queen of Textile”. The process to obtain the silk fabric of good quality and in demand of the market requires skill, technique and local wisdom altogether. To produce fine quality of silk threads, the process begins with planting of mulberry trees, silkworm rearing, silkworm reeling, silk dyeing and weaving which create the fabrics attracted to every people.

Thailand is one of the globally recognised sources of fine quality silk and related products. Thai silk fabrics especially have brought good reputation to the country as well as have been accepted and recognised among national and international consumers. Thai silk fabrics are uniquely distinguished by their distinctive beauty, consummate craftsmanship, soft and smooth texture, iridescent sheen, attractive designs and colours which make it different from silk fabrics produced elsewhere.

In addition, Her Majesty Queen Sirikit recognises the value of local wisdom and has the people in the Royal Folk Arts and Crafts Centre use local silk threads for two reasons.

1. The use of local silk threads in weaving makes the woven Thai silk fabrics become unique, through





the characteristics of woven fabrics that are shiny, knotted, well dyed and flexible. The patterns of knots can be adjusted by the type of thread. Silk fabrics with a large number of knots are woven by using the Mai Sam or Mai Laub (silk threads that are pulled from the outermost layer of silkworm cocoons). On the other hand, silk fabrics with a lesser number of knots are woven by using Mai Neung or Mai Noi (silk threads that are pulled from the innermost layer of silkworm cocoons).

2. Local Thai silkworm races are stronger and more suitable for sericulture in a tropical climate than hybrid varieties of silkworms. Farmers can develop the whole range of productive activities and crafts based on sericulture starting from growing mulberry plants, rearing silkworms, pulling threads, dyeing and weaving. Her Majesty the Queen realized that promotion of the use of local Thai silkworm races would be an important step for Thai sericulture development, so she graciously advised the farmers to use local silk threads in fabric weaving.

Production of silk handicrafts is a complex process. It consists of diverse steps of which are mainly comprised of silkworm rearing, silk reeling, silk dyeing, silk weaving and processing. Different skills and techniques are required for different steps of which the producers may complete the whole process or only take parts of it.



Silkworm Rearing

Most of sericulture farmers are small scale farmers who practise sericulture as a supplementary occupation apart from rice cultivation. They rear Thai native silkworm varieties, the polyvoltine, which can be reared all year round, endures the harsh environment and produces yellow cocoons.

Silkworm Reeling

Yellow cocoons from Thai native silkworm are reeled by hand with the use of a simple hand reeling equipment which is made locally and varied from region to region. Silk yarn produced is therefore original and unique to each region.

Silk Dyeing

Thai silk is originally and traditionally dyed with natural colours extracted from plants. Every colour shades can be obtained from different plants through complicated extraction processes. Nowadays, chemical colours are also used for silk dyeing but carefully selected to be environmentally friendly.



Silk weaving

Weaving is one of the most important steps in making silk fabrics. Thai silk is different from any other silk in the world because it is made using delicate method required experience, skill and knowledge. Thai silk weaving starts as small-scale industry carried out at home. In Thailand, most silk weaving is still done on hand looms, either with hand-thrown shuttles (traditional hand loom) or with fly shuttles. However, each region has its own indigenous culture and elaborates its own traditional weaving patterns passed on from generation to generation. For these reasons, Thailand is the leader and well known for hand-woven silk.

Thai silk fabrics are distinguished by their texture and traditional designs. Thai silk fabrics are popular for their distinctive beauty, consummate craftsmanship, soft and smooth texture, iridescent sheen, attractive colours and artistic designs which make it different from silk produced elsewhere.

Silk handicrafts in the market produced from different parts of the country come in many varieties such as hand-woven fabrics, gifts, souvenirs, decorative items, etc. These handicrafts are made from local materials with passion and bond between craftsmen from generation to generation. Hence, the finished product, design, pattern, colour and even weaving style reflect and strongly associate with the origin.



Silk Road to Thailand

The sericulture was assumed to begin in China about 4,700 years ago undergone a journey of more than 10,000 kilometers. The road used for cultural exchange and trading between China and the countries in Central Asia is called the 'Silk Road' which refers to the main product of the route. Along the Silk Road at the time of Christ, sericulture expands to India and countries on Indo-China peninsular such as Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia and Indonesia. From the fourteenth to the nineteenth century, sericulture reached the North Coast of Africa, Spain, Italy, France and Americas.

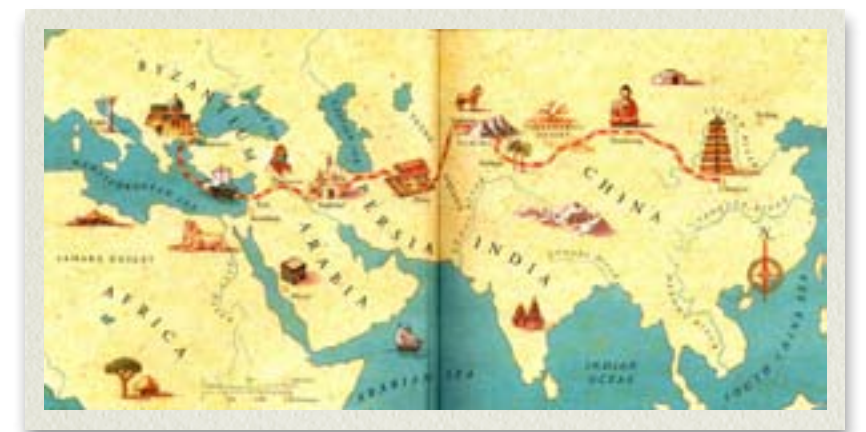
The beginning of sericulture in Thailand cannot be accurately confirmed but there is evidence of long tradition of sericulture to believe that a group of Thai migrated from China brought along the silkworm eggs and mulberry plants. At that time, practices of sericulture were not for commercial purpose but for weaving fabrics in household use.

Despite the lack of evidence to confirm the beginning of sericulture in Thailand, the other evidence emerged during unearthing archeological artifacts in 2515 B.E. (1972 A.D.) at Ban Chiang, UbonRatchathani Province. The fabric was discovered to be attached to bronze bracelets. The fabrics dated back to the same era as the bracelets which was about 2,400 – 2,800 years. So, the beginning of making fabric should be older but there was no other evidence.

Apart from Ban Chiang, there were other archeological artifacts related to fabrics including silk such as threads used to string beads, fiber spun into threads, pieces of fabrics, different size of silk fragments and fibers including flattened fiber of wild silk which indicated the use of local silk fabric in the area in the past.

Hence, both assumptions of the beginning of Thai sericulture were plausible. Firstly, sericulture arrived with the immigrants during migration. Secondly, sericulture was passed on from the local who already inhabited in the region of Southeast Asia. However, it is believed that sericulture in the past was probably not for commercial purpose but for household use because there were evidences showing that merchandise on Chinese junk traded with the Thai at the beginning of Rattanakosin era was including silk fabrics. Also, the Royal family wore clothing made from Chinese, Japanese and Indian silk fabrics.

The Silk Road leads from the origin to several regions around the globe including Thailand. It is also the beginning of continued development in Thai sericulture to the world's acknowledged product of "Thai Silk".





The Rattanakosin Era: Golden Age of Sericulture Development

During the reign of the King Rama I until the King Rama IV, sericulture was not very well known and it was supplementary occupation during the absence of activities in the paddy field.

Until the reign of His Majesty King Chulalongkorn (King Rama V), the sericulture was developed and become common all over the country, especially in Northeastern region. However, the traditional silkworm varieties and techniques were applied so that the silk threads were coarse

and short. It could only be used as horizontal (weft) silk threads while the vertical (warp) silk threads had to be imported from overseas. This was the era of renaissance with the support and development of sericulture and silk weaving.

In 2444 B.E. (1901 A.D.), Phraya Thewetwongwiwat, the Minister of the Ministry of Agriculture, invited the Japanese expert in sericulture, Dr. Kametaro Toyama and his team as advisors to research and develop Thai sericulture.

In 2445 B.E. (1902 A.D.), the experimental field was set up by the Ministry of Agriculture under the consultancy of the Japanese experts to demonstrate the practices of sericulture. For the technique of silk reeling, the King Rama V gave an initiation to educate the ladies in the royal households to use Japanese reeling equipments operated by hand and pedal.

Later in 2446 B.E. (1903 A.D.), the Department of Silk Craftsmen was established and His Royal Highness Phenphatthanaphong, KrommuenPhichaiMahinthaerodom was graciously assigned as the first Director General by the King Rama V.





In 2448 B.E. (1905 A.D.), the new division was established under the Department of Silk Craftsmen in Buriram Province called “Buriram Silk Craftmen”.

The Japanese advisors were sent by the Department of Silk Craftsmen to remote area such as Phutthaisong District and Nakhorn Ratchasima Province to advise techniques on mulberry planting, silk rearing and silk reeling using new technology which was proved to be more advantageous than the method used at the time.

Due to the death of the King Rama V and His Royal Highness Phenphatthanaphong, sericulture was in decline. Also, there was a widespread disease outbreak in silkworms which was greater than ever causing tremendous loss. People practising sericulture lost their interest to earn a living by sericulture as before. Hence, the modern sericulture to produce silk fabrics was ceased and the Department of Silk Craftsmen was finally adjourned.





The Queen Sirikit Department of Sericulture the Initiative of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit

The Queen Sirikit Institute of Sericulture has become the Queen Sirikit Department of Sericulture under the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives in order to undertake systematic and complete operation to fulfill the initiatives of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit.

The establishment of the Queen Sirikit Department of Sericulture under the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives came into force on the 4th of December, 2552 B.E. (2009 A.D.) and published in the Government Gazette Vol. 126 Part 98a Page 118 entitled the Establishment of the Queen Sirikit Department of Sericulture as the fourteenth organization of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives on the 28th of December, 2552 B.E. (2009 A.D.)



Missions

- Enhance the potential of production and add value to mulberry, silk, and products thereof.
- Research and develop mulberry and silkworm varieties as well as production technology, plant - protection, and processing of mulberry, silk, and products thereof.
- Develop and promote the conservation and protection of silkworm genetics as well as strengthen culture and local wisdom on sericulture.
- Develop and support the establishment of production cluster and technology transfer.
- Develop and promote marketing and management of mulberry, silk, and products thereof along the supply chain.
- Complete the missions in compliance with the legal requirements.



On the 4th of March, 2554 B.E. (2011 A.D.),
Her Majesty Queen Sirikit was at the official opening
of the Queen Sirikit Department of Sericulture's main office.

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คณะผู้จัดทำ

ที่ปรึกษา

นายประเสริฐ โกศลวิตร

อธิบดีกรมหม่อนไหม

คณะผู้จัดทำ

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รองอธิบดีกรมหม่อนไหม

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๓. นางสาวนิศานาถ เจือทอง

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จัดรูปเล่ม

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