



The SUPPORT Arts and Crafts
International Centre of Thailand
(Public Organization)



Types of Handicrafts

Screwpine / Fan Palm Basketry



Toey Panan, which is also known by other names, including, Lumjiak, Toey Talay, or Screwpine, is a medium-size shrub is a species of Pandanus and quite similar to palm. Screwpine can be abundantly found in the south, especially on sandy ground or near swamp area, or along the mangrove forest. Screwpine grows in big clump, with the height of approximately 4-5 meters. It has green long leaf, which contains thorns on the side like pineapple's leaf, but longer and thicker. Screwpine's leaf contains strong fiber, and once its thorns are removed and the leaf is treated with heat, the result is softer, flexible and shiny fiber that is also strong and resist mold infestation. Screwpine is therefore an excellent candidate for basketry.

Screwpine usually grows along the beach, seaside, mangrove forest, and on almost every coastal province in the South. With abundant supply of Screwpine, the local people hence usually use Screwpine to create Tork, a thin long stripe of material used for weaving, and to create various utensils that they use in their daily life, from the past to today.

On the other hand, Larn or Fan Palm is another species of palm. Larn plant is a standing timber. It has straight and strong trunk and it grows one tall single trunk, does not produce any clump or shoot. Its trunk is comprised of fine fiber. Larn plant does not have any branch and its leaf is attached to the top. The leaf has short, saw-like thorn on the sides. Larn's leaf is quite large, and quite similar to Tarn's leaf (Sugar Palm). In the past, green Larn leaf was usually used for inscribing Buddhist's Dharma, where a piece of sharp iron was used to create the characters on the leaf. The book made with Larn's leaves is known as Kum Pee Bai Larn (Larn Leaf Treatise.)

Larn leaf is very tough, quite strong and doesn't tear easily. It can also be dyed with many colors. Larn leaf is hence used as a raw material for basketry as well.



Woven Pandanus leaf appliances



Round-shaped Pa-nhan mat

Screwpine: a raw material for basketry

Basketry products from different locality reflect the unique characteristic, tradition, culture, or belief of such community. This is also the same for basketry products made in the South of Thailand. These products are unique to their origins, and made to serve various purposes. They are made as containers for various household' items, such as rice and products, for over hundred years, for example, Gra Cher, a type of basketry product made for as a rice container, from the people's local wisdom. Rice contained in basketry container made with Screwpine will be free from weevil. Other examples are Mook Tin Charng, a container for betel nut; square mat, which was used for trading for rice or food; Kra Sorb or sack for containing rice or produces, etc.

Screwpine's leaf has unique characteristics and it is quite tough. Once its thorns are removed and the leaf is treated with heat, the result is flexible, soft and shiny fiber, which is a perfect raw material for weaving. The local people hence usually use Screwpine' leaf for making Tork. Screwpine' leaf is a popular choice of raw material for basketry product, especially on the Southern coastal area on the side of Andaman Sea, where Screwpine was extensively used for making several equipments since the past; such as, making a mat, sack, utensils, etc. In some areas, basketry products made from Screwpine are integrated with the local people's tradition and custom, such as, brining Screwpine mat to the temple's gathering; to contain the deceased' body (for Muslim) in the burial; and to lay on the floor in the wedding ceremony, where, in the past, the bride and groom must together collect Screwpine and make Screwpine mat for their wedding. For the wedding, the couple must prepare at least 12 mats. Moreover, number of mat designates the couple' status as well. Also, mat made for these purposes will be made with more delicacy and elegance than normal mat, such as, decorating with mirror on the corners, etc.



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Pa-nhan mat

Screwpine Basketry: the handicraft that is a part of the people life and the Southern culture

In the past, Screwpine basketry products were known and used by every household in the South. People of the previous generation inherited the knowledge of Screwpine basketry, as the tale tells, from their Indonesian ancestors, who immigrated to the Lower Southern region of Thailand, including Narathiwat, Yala, Pattani, Satun, Trang, and Krabi.

Back then, trading between Thai and Indonesian merchants was at its peak. The Southern people called this group of foreign merchants as Kak Indo (Indo Indian), who traveled by ship and docked at the port in the Sikao Bay. These merchants then landed on the ground and traded Patay cloth they brought for Kamookya (which is also known in Southern dialect as Kumpaid, or a tobacco container) from Thai people, before bringing Kamookya back to sell in Indonesia. Some sources claim that the knowledge of Screwpine basketry should have been inherited from this group of merchants as well.

Screwpine basketry is a part of the Southern people's culture and tradition for hundred years. It is appeared in many Thai literatures, where mat made from Lumjiak or Screwpine was mentioned. Screwpine basketry products are therefore a representative of the Andaman's lifestyle. They are not merely beautiful products made with artistic style from the local wisdom but also serving as the excellent cultural inheritance of the Southern Peninsula.

In the South, Screwpine is used for creation of various equipments that in turn represent the unique characteristics of this locality, in a harmonious way with the area's tradition and culture. For examples, Screwpine is usually made for producing mat, which is locally known as Sue Panan (Screwpine Mat), especially in the provinces where Muslims are abundant. Muslim people use Screwpine Mat to cover the floor where they sleep, or lay the mat over the floor to pray at mosque. The people call Screwpine Mat as Sad Om (Soft Mat) or Sad Panan (Screwpine Mat), and almost every household use Screwpine mat for covering the floor while they sit or sleep on it. In the past, some poor people even used Screwpine Mat as dowry, when a man went to ask a woman to marry him.



In some areas, Muslim people use Screwpine Mat of natural color that isn't dyed, to contain the body of the deceased before burying the body into Kubo or Muslim burial ground. (This practice is known as Rong Mayard.) Muslim people also use Screwpine mat to cover the floor before the sit down to pray. Such usages are a part of Muslim people's lifestyle that can be found everywhere, especially Muslim people in the South.

Moreover, Screwpine is used as a raw material for making various equipment used in the people's daily life, such as, Cher for containing the rice and dried food, Joang for containing shrimp paste or salt, Kamookya for containing tobacco, Nipa palm's leaf (for smoking) and money, and Kamook Tin Change for using in decoration.

Therefore, many provinces on the Southern coast on Andaman Sea and in the Southern border provinces use Screwpine basketry products. These products come in various designs, such as, Lai Kat, Lai Sorng, Lai Sarm, Lai Dork Pikun, Lai Ngoo Lueam, Lai Okpoo, Lai Look Kaew, Lai Kradarn Markrook, etc. The craftsman also invented many modernized – creative designs, for example, Lai Talaywak. Lai Talaywak was originated from the people's impression, when they witnessed the royal proceed of His Majesty King Rama IX, when His Majesty visited Krabi Province and drove a boat. The boat's movement that created waves to both sides gave them the inspiration to create this design.

Nowadays, Screwpine basketry products are developed and presented with more variety, from the old days of making basketry product for household use to selling basketry products as souvenir. There are more available formats and colors of Screwpine basketry products that match the current trend, such as, mat, pillow, bag, cigarette case, container, handbag for girl, hat, file folder, dish mat, saucer, medicine book, vase, tablet cover, etc. Screwpine basketry products become popular souvenir, whether inside or outside of the country, such as, United States of America, United Kingdom, Japan, Indonesia, etc.



Plain weaving Pa-nhan.





Woven palm-leaf carp

Fan Palm Basketry: A handicraft that exists since the ancient time

Fan Palm basketry produces products with similar formats, designs, and methods as normal basketry. It is an outcome of the people's wisdom to use Fan Palm's leaf, which is a tough material that can endure the weather for over hundred years, as a raw material for making basketry products. These products are used in the people's daily life, and represent one of Thai unique identity since the ancient time, such as, using Fan Palm's leaf to weave Ngorb (a kind of hat) or hat, sticky rice box of the Northern and Northeastern people, notebook and small bag of the Southern people, etc. One of the most prominent and well known products of Fan Palm basketry among Thai people that can be found today is Tapian Bailarn (A mobile made with woven Fan Palm's leaf in the figure of Carp.) Tapian Bailarn is a part of Thai people's belief for a very long time, as Carp is considered to be the symbol of auspiciousness and fertility. Thai people in the past hence usually



Container for holding
cooked glutinous rice

used dried Fan Palm's leaf to weave the figure of Carp in several sizes and combine them into a mobile. Tapian Bailarn is usually placed over the infant's crib, as a part of the superstition that such symbol of auspiciousness will help the child to grow stronger.



Woven Pandanus leaf bag

The unique identity that reflects the craftsman's wisdom and ability

Screwpine basketry product is a form of a handcraft that reflects the people's wisdom, whether their intelligence in choosing the raw material, where the local people is well versed in each type of raw material, in order to appropriately pick and process the material, whether by soaking under water, treating over heat or flame, or roll pressing, until they acquire the perfect raw material for weaving. The craftsman then produces highly useful products with simple yet effective method, where the result is basketry products that are made with specific formats that fit their intended task perfectly.

Screwpine basketry product is highly durable against weather and environment. There is no need to concern about humidity or mold, as these products can be stored anywhere. They are also made with relatively cheap material that can be abundantly found in the local environment. The buyer also enjoys the product's beauty, which is both simple but novel. Screwpine basketry product is sold at affordable price, this in turn ease the buyer's decision making to buy. As a result, Screwpine basketry product becomes another source of income for the community. The popularity



Palm-leaf hat

for this product stimulates further creativity among the craftsmen, who in turn keep developing and producing newer product continuously.

For Fan Palm basketry product, the Fan Palm's leaf must be green but not too green. This is because too old leaf will be brittle, which is harder to weave and thus requires longer time to complete. Fan Palm's leaf is normally used for making Fan Palm hat, basket or hand bag. In the South, leaf of another species of Fan Palm, known as Lam Pru, is cut into long stripe and weave into long thread. This thread is used for further weaving into a plate, which is called Harnng Uan. Harnng Uan is a part at the end of fishnet, and it is used as a bag for catching shrimp. Other Fan Palm basketry products are, for example, salt bag, glasses bag, tobacco bag, etc.



Dried Pandanus leaves



Wild Jujube

Method for producing Screwpine basketry products

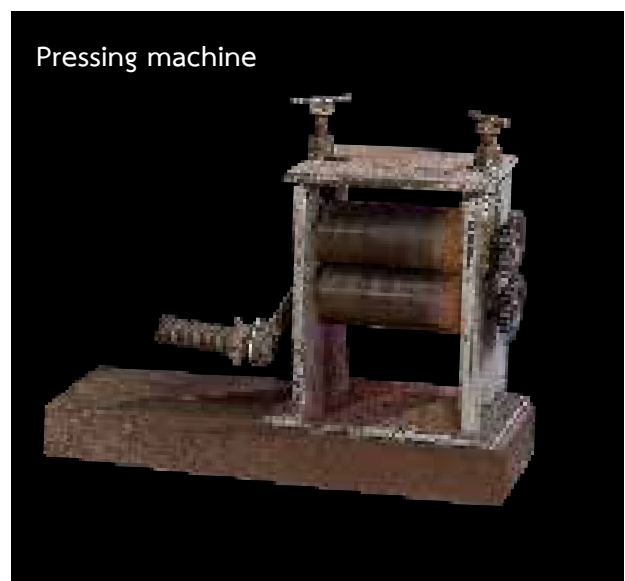
Materials / equipments for producing Screwpine basketry products

Screwpine' leaf that has been dried under sunlight

Roll pressing machine, for pressing and
smoothing Screwpine' leaf and Tork

Mai Greed (Sharp wood) (known as Ya Ngard
or Lep Maw); this tool is used for cutting Screwpine'
leaf into Tork of desired size

Knife; for notching the Screwpine' thorn



Pressing machine



Scissor

Mai Kood; this wooden tool is used for scrapping and smoothing the Tork

Mai Tap; this wooden tool is used as a weight, and placed on the Tork to straighten it into straight stripe, so it is easier for weaving

Chemical colors; for dyeing the Tork into desired color

Charcoal brazier; for boiling the green Tork and dyeing the Tork

Pan; for boiling the water for dyeing the Tork.



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Cut Pandanus leaves into different shapes.



Processing Screwpine' leaf into the Tork

Screwpine' leaf that can be used for producing the Tork must be collected from the deep forest, as the Screwpine in such deep forest is more fertile than Screwpine on the skirt of the forest. The craftsman will choose thin and long leaf, which will give better quality Tork. Thinner leaf will produce smaller amount of Tork per leaf. The leaf must be green but not too green, with the length of 1 meter.

Cutting the leaf; the craftsman will choose the leaf in the 4th rows from the trunk and avoid the 2-3 top rows. The craftsman will cut the leaf diagonally and avoid the trunk, in order to allow new leaf to grow up in place.

Once the leaves are collected, they will be put and bound into a bundle. The leaves' bottom will be removed, as well as the tip, in order to get leaves of equal length. The craftsman will then use sharp knife to remove thorn on the leaf, where the craftsman will make the cut from the leaf's bottom to the tip.



Cut the edge of Pandanus leaves
and remove their thorns.



The leaf will be treated with heat, by placing over fire, in order to soften it down. Doing so prevents the leaf from easily tear or break. The fire used for treating Screwpine' leaf must be smokeless and produced from charcoal, in order to prevent the leaf's color from turning to muddy white. The Screwpine' leaf will be roasted until it is done, that is, its color will be darker shade of green and its surface is shiny. This is caused by the oil inside the leaf, which is evaporated from the heat and now coated the leaf's surface. Doing so allows Screwpine basketry products to be stored for a very long time, without the problem with mold.

Producing Tork of the desired size from the Screwpine's leaf; by using Lep Maw to cut the leaf, in order to prevent deformation. The Tork will be put into a bundle and boiled for 3 – 5 minutes, and the left to soak under water for a couple nights, until the leaf's green dissolves into the water. The result is Tork with the color of yellowish white. The Tork will be washed and then left over sunlight for 1-2 days. ๓

The dried Tork will be smoothly white. The craftsman will put the Tork into a bundle of the same



side and length, and store it away from direct sunlight and in a location with good air ventilation, in order to prevent any humidity. This Tork is now ready for weaving into equipment.



Process for dyeing the Tork

Color used for dyeing process is chemical color; and normally the craftsman will dye the Tork in red, blue, yellow or orange.

The craftsman will boil half a basin of water, then add a handful of salt, in order to boost the color's adhesion, along with 3 drops of concentrate vinegar or Formic acid, which helps smoothing the Tork's surface. Then the craftsman will add 1 table spoon of the dyeing color into the basin, and uses wooden spatula to mix the solution.

After the water is boiled, Tork, which is previously soaked under water, will be put into the boiling solution. The craftsman must keep stirring the basin, in order to make sure that the dye will stick evenly to the Tork, and then leave them for 3 -5 minutes.

The dyed Tork will be dried under sunlight, and then scrape once again. The result is Tork of different colors, as the

Process for weaving basketry product

The Tork will be press with roll pressing machine, so it is straight and soft, and suitable for further process.

The pressed Tork of the same length will be put together into a bundle and then folded in the middle.

The weaving process starts from the fold point, where 2 pieces of Tork will be woven together into an interlacing design, which is known as Lai Nuang. One stripe will be laid over another, and the process continues until the remaining length is woven, or the required size of the product, a mat in this case, is achieved. The finished mat will be dressed, especially on the rim, which will be trimmed.

Trimming the rim, or dressing the trim, which is locally called Ment, is a process of dressing the remaining length of Tork, in order to produce finished mat. There are 2 ways to do this, the first method called Pub Glub (Fold Back); by fold the tip of the Tork back under the mat, and weave the Tork backward into the mat for 2 – 3 inches, then cut the remaining Tork and dress the rim. The second method is Chor Rim; by folding the remaining length of the Tork,



and weave them together, into a small bundle at the rim, then cut the remaining tork.

The finished product must be stored away from sunlight and rainfall, as such conditions can easily cause mold; use clean cloth with water or Nom Maw solution to clean the product.



Lady's bag

From a merely local plant that can be found abundantly on the coastal area of the Southern provinces, the local wisdom of the people in the past invented the method to apply the natural advantage of this plant into many useful tools and equipment for their daily life. At the beginning, there were quite a few manufacturers of this type of product. Moreover, the product itself wasn't presented with any distinct or unique characteristic. As a result, most people could not recognize Screwpine basketry product from other basketry product, such as, Kra Jood, or other similar raw materials.



Case

However, after Screwpine was used for producing mat, and after further more formats had been developed, where Screwpine was used for producing woman's hand bag, various household items, container, tobacco box, tablet cover, etc. And with the unique characteristic of this plant, which possesses tough, strong but highly flexible leaf that has great resistance to sunlight and mold. The leaf can be freely folded. Moreover, Screwpine basketry is improved, with more variety of beautiful products that represent unique identity of the community, which is consistent with the people's culture. More Screwpine basketry products are also being developed, for example, Screwpine is used for making furniture, household's equipment, or in some area, even beach chair. These products attract much interest from customers, and as a result, Screwpine basketry products become popular choice of souvenir, when visitor visits many Southern provinces of Thailand.



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