

**Silk and Post-Conflict Cambodia: Embodied Practices and Global
and Local Dynamics of Heritage and Knowledge Transference
(1991-2018)**

MAGALI AN BERTHON

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
of the Royal College of Art for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in History of Design

October 2021

The Royal College of Art

This research is supported by TECHNE – Arts and Humanities Research Council

Copyright Statement

This text represents the partial submission for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the Royal College of Art. This copy has been supplied for the purpose of research for private study, on the understanding that it is copyright material, and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

Abstract

My thesis examines silk in terms of craft, heritage and use in contemporary Cambodia under the perspective of a history of trade, conflict, loss, and foreign influence. In Cambodia, silk weaving developed into a cottage activity since the twelfth century, producing ceremonial textiles for the domestic market and trade. The Khmer Rouge regime, which claimed close to two million lives between 1975 and 1979, heavily impacted this ancestral craft by impeding silk yarn production, weaving, and skills transmission. The country's slow reconstruction boosted by the reopening of foreign investment in the 1990s has deeply modified its cultural landscape. How to sustain threads of knowledge and cultural identity in a post-conflict context? In this thesis, the dynamics of rupture and revival of cultural practices and knowledge redefined under local and global tensions are investigated through the scope of silk.

In doing so, the position of silk in Cambodia and its global diaspora since the fall of the destructive Khmer Rouge regime opens the way to a polyvocal exploration. Angles of analysis include looking at the enmeshment of silk in Cambodia's history, geography and geopolitics and the structuration of the silk sector via its main foreign and domestic actors since the 1990s. Recentring on the weavers' key role in skills transmission, the craft of Cambodian silk weaving and the meaning of textiles and dress are lenses through which this study explore themes of embodiment, tacit knowledge, cultural memory, identity, and empowerment.

Through several periods of fieldwork in Cambodia and Long Beach, California, combining ethnographic methodologies, interviews and Action Research, this thesis produces its own base of primary oral and visual resources. This prime material on contemporary silk practices in post-conflict Cambodia are put in dialogue with archival and object-based studies to reveal an updated critical perspective on the multilayered nature of silk.

Ultimately, the polyphony of the human geography forming the silk sector aims to delink monolithic narratives on Cambodian cultural identity and heritage.

Table of contents

Copyright statement	2
Abstract	3
Table of contents	5
List of figures	9
Acknowledgements	21
Author's declaration	23
Abbreviations	24
Notes about translation and transliteration	25
Introduction	26
A short history of Cambodia and impact of the Khmer Rouge regime on silk	33
Specificities of Cambodian silk	41
Key actors of the silk sector	44
Literature review	47
Theoretical frameworks: from global silk networks to individual forms of embodied and tacit knowledge	58
Polyphonic and multidisciplinary methodology	68
Sources	74
Chapter summary	77
Chapter One Cambodian silk polyphonies: historiography, geography, and materiality (1200-1990)	
Introduction	80
Crossing theoretical territories: metageography, design history, and voices	84
Silk fibre and fabrication process	86

Geopolitical and material junctures in the Khmer Empire (802-1431 CE)	93
The Thai influence over Cambodia (1430-1860)	104
French colonisation and the crafting of a Cambodian national culture (1863-1950)	119
Materiality of the silk landscape during Independence (1950-69)	128
Dismantlement of the silk territory (1970-1979)	135
Multiple agencies in reconstructing the silk industry (1980-1990)	146
Conclusion	159

Chapter Two Key players in silk weaving: networks and narratives (1991-2018)

Introduction	160
Conceptual and methodological approach to exploring the Cambodian silkscape	164
Domestic and transnational forms of <i>khsae</i> in post-conflict Cambodia	166
Defining foreign agencies in the Cambodian silkscape	170
UNESCO: generating silk revitalisation initiatives under transnational input	176
Artisans Angkor (AA): French patronage as a leading voice of the silk sector	182
The Institute for Khmer Traditional Textiles (IKTT): authority under Japanese patronage	197
Cambodian initiatives: between macro-consortium and micro-enterprises	215
Conclusion	234

Chapter Three Weavers: dynamics of knowledge production through practice, embodiment, and memory

Introduction	237
Action Research and yarning: developing dialogic methodologies	241
Establishing the needs of Cambodian silk weavers to set up the Action Research	

project	251
Planning the Krama Yuyu Action Research project	266
Observing weaving during the Action Research project at Krama Yuyu	273
Weavers' interviews: agencies in knowledge and skills transmission in the Action Research project	286
Weavers' voices on memory, knowledge, and taste in silk practices	296
Activating knowledge through community, matrilineal connections and apprenticeship	301
Conclusion	306
Chapter Four Silk embodiment: crafting Cambodian identity in the global diaspora	
Introduction	309
Capturing the displaced experience through ethnography and embodiment	311
From refugee camps to resettlement: weaving practice in displacement	316
Cambodia Town: a platform of encounters for silk dressmakers and wearers	331
Staging silk at the Cambodia Town Culture Festival (CTCF)	350
Rituals in movement: silk embodiment in Khmer classical ballet	367
Conclusion	387
Conclusion	
Key conclusions and original contributions	390
Challenges and reflections	398
Future research	400
Appendices	
A1. Khmer [phonetic]-English glossary of terms	402

A2. Technical glossary of weaving	406
A3. Visual lexicon of Cambodian textiles	409
A4. Ethics information and consent forms for interviews in English and Khmer	415
A5. Preliminary scheduling chart for the <i>hol</i> project, from Tomoko Takagi, 2017	422
A6. Interview excerpts	423

Bibliography

Oral sources	431
Archival sources	433
Primary sources	433
Newspaper articles	443
Secondary sources	447

List of figures

Best efforts have been made to contact the copyright holders of the figures below:

Introduction: Fig. 6

Chapter 1: Fig. 26, 38a, 39a-b-c, 41a-b-c-d-2

Chapter 2: Fig. 62

Chapter 3: Fig. 79,

Chapter 4: Fig. 120a, 128, 147, 150, 151, 160a-b

Introduction

Figure 1 Koh Dach island located in Kandal province at the north of Phnom Penh, Wikimedia Commons, 2019.

Figure 2 Pheap, former weaver, showing a green silk *phamaung* she had woven, Koh Dach, Kandal. Author's photograph, 2017.

Figure 3 Production of silk yarn in Cambodia citing the *Cambodian Sericulture Stocktaking Report* (Mid-Term External Evaluation: Cambodia Sector-Wide Silk Project Phase II), 64.

Figure 4 Cambodian golden silk yarn and cocoons on display at the Institute of Khmer Traditional Textiles shop, Siem Reap. Author's photograph, December 2016.

Figure 5 Map of the main sericulture and weaving areas in Cambodia in 2016, based on data from the National Silk Strategy 2016-2020, by the author.

Figure 6 Cambodian silk value chain chart from the National Silk Strategy 2016-2010, 14.

Figure 7 Buddhist hanging *pidan* showing the Great Departure of Buddha, early 20th c., silk ikat, collected by Suzanne Karpelès. acquisition 71.1933.111.258, Musée du Quai Branly, Paris.

Figure 8 *Pidan* hanging sold at Caring for Young Khmer shop in Phnom Penh. Author's photograph, December 28, 2016.

Figure 9 Procession of women dressed in *sampot hol*, *aor*, and *krama* for a Buddhist ceremony in Takeo province. Author's photograph, March 17, 2018.

Chapter One

Figure 10 Woman wearing a *krama* cloth around her chest in Angkor Vat, Siem Reap. Author's photograph, 2012.

Figure 11 Theary and Chenda Heng, weavers at Krama Yuyu showing a *sampot hol* from their personal collection, Ta Pouk, Siem Reap. Author's photograph, 2017.

Figure 12 Species of polyvoltine *bombyx mori* cocoons producing golden silk, Koh Dach island. Author's photograph, December 2016.

Figure 13 Artisanal extraction process of the silk threads from the cocoons in boiled water, Koh Dach island. Author's photograph, December 2016.

Figure 14 Entangled silk filaments on a golden silk cocoon from Siem Reap, microscope view. Author's photograph, October 2017. Courtesy of Quai Branly Museum.

Figure 15 Degummed fine silk from Siem Reap, microscope view. Author's photograph, October 2017. Courtesy of Quai Branly Museum.

Figure 16 Different qualities of silk yarn: raw silk on the left and fine silk on the right before degumming, Koh Dach island. Author's photograph, December 2016.

Figure 17 Unwinding silk cocoons, Bati Commune, Takeo province, 1968. Photograph courtesy of Bernard Dupaigne.

Figure 18 Map of Southeast Asian key powers in 900. Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 19 Pair of carved lotuses under a lintel, Angkor Wat. Photograph by Gillian Green, 2005.

Figure 20 Canopy from The Stein Collection, Dunhuang (discovered), 7th century to 9th century (made), Plain woven hemp, painted, On loan from the Government of India and the Archaeological Survey of India. Copyright: Government of India, Victoria & Albert Museum.

Figure 21 *Devata* (celestial being) wearing lightweight patterned silk on a bas-relief in Angkor Wat, Siem Reap, 12th century. Author's photograph, 2012.

Figure 22 Cash medallions, Preah Khan, Cambodia. Photograph by Gillian Green, 2006.

Figure 23 Block-printed cotton textile produced in India from Fustat, Egypt from a later period (18th century) showing similar patterns, Acquisition number 1973-76-16-b. Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum.

Figure 24 Map of Asia and Southeast Asia in the 18th century. Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 25 Engraving plate from *Du Royaume de Siam* by Simon de La Loubère (1642-1729), illustrator unknown, pp72-76.

Figure 26 Detail of a painted page of the Ten Birth Tales from the Thai manuscript Or 14068; f3v, Paper folding book, late 18th century, British Library.

Figure 27 Detail of a painting about the life of Gautama Buddha, Cambodia, 18th century. Catalogue number 961.3.305, Asian Art Museum of Toulon, France.

Figure 28a Close-up of an irregular twill weave 2-1 structure on a *sampot hol*, acquisition 71.1962.22.118, Quai Branly Museum. Author's photograph, January 2017.

Figure 28b Diagram of the 2-1 twill weave (two wefts up, one weft down) forming diagonal lines, by the author.

Figures 29a-b *Sampot chawng kbun hol* gifted to the India Museum by King Mongkut; detail of borders of yantra, c. 1855, Accession number: 5640(IS). Victoria & Albert Museum.

Figures 30a-b *Sampot hol* in *saudagiri* style; detail of the central field. Catalog Number: E83, from King Mongkut, ca. 1856, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution.

Figure 31 Textile in the *saudagiri* style, printed and resist-dyed, India, 19th century, Accession number: IPN.960, Victoria & Albert Museum.

Figures 32a-b *Sampot hol* with confronted *naga* in the central field, from Viceroy Prah Pin Klao, c. 1856 in Lisa McQuail, *Treasures of Two Nations: Thai Royal Gifts to the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1997), Figure 100, 96.

Figure 33 *Saput songket* with confronted *naga*, early 19th century from Singaraja, Bali, TONYRAKA Art Gallery Twitter, 2019.
<https://twitter.com/tonyrakagallery/status/1200583237669511168> [Accessed June 10, 2021]

Figure 34 Map of countries forming French Indochina in 1900. Wikimedia Commons/ Author's image.

Figure 35 George Groslier in his office in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 1926. Photograph by Martin Hurlimann. Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 36 Postcard of a photograph showing the silk spinning and weaving workshop at the School of Cambodian Arts, c.1924.

Figure 37 Silk pictorial *pidan* in weft ikat woven at the School of Cambodian Arts produced for Maison Rodier, *Vogue*, 1 January 1927, 44.

Figures 38a-b Left: Carte '7. Industries rurales' showing cotton and sericulture, in conjunction with weaving, mat weaving, metalwork, *makleua* dyeing, basketry, and ceramics, in Jean Delvert, *Le paysan cambodgien*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 1994. Right: location of the area studied by Delvert in Cambodia. Wikimedia Commons/ Author's image.

Figure 39a Women wearing a *krama* scarf growing rice, from *Femme Cambodgienne à l'heure du Sangkum* (1959), Dir. Samdech Norodom Sihanouk, Produced by Khemara Pictures, Cambodia, CNC.

Figure 39b Weaver wearing a *sampot phamaung* warping white silk thread on a wooden warping device, from *Femme Cambodgienne à l'heure du Sangkum* (1959), Dir. Samdech Norodom Sihanouk, Produced by Khemara Pictures, Cambodia, CNC.

Figure 39c Woman weaving a *sampot rbauk*, from *Femme Cambodgienne à l'heure du Sangkum* (1959), Dir. Samdech Norodom Sihanouk, Produced by Khemara Pictures, Cambodia, CNC.

Figure 40 Administrative zones of Democratic Kampuchea 1975-78, Library of Congress. Federal Research Division. *Cambodia: A Country Study*, c.1990, Public Domain.

Figure 41a Women collecting cotton balls in the fields, from *Les Actualités cambodgiennes*, 'Tissage artisanal et industriel du textile sous le régime khmer rouge', January 1, 1977, INA. Accessed on September 16, 2017. <https://www.ina.fr/video/VDD06002101/tissage-artisanal-et-industriel-du-textile-sous-le-regime-khmer-rouge-video.html>

Figure 41b Feeding silkworms with mulberry tree leaves, from *Les Actualités cambodgiennes*, 'Tissage artisanal et industriel du textile sous le régime khmer rouge', January 1, 1977, INA.

Figure 41c Women in a Khmer Rouge garb spinning silk thread, from *Les Actualités cambodgiennes*, 'Tissage artisanal et industriel du textile sous le régime khmer rouge', January 1, 1977, INA.

Figure 41d *Sampot hol* cloths displaying the diversity of geometric and stylized ikat motifs, from *Les Actualités cambodgiennes*, 'Tissage artisanal et industriel du textile sous le régime khmer rouge', January 1, 1977, INA.

Figure 41e Workers entering the State Textile Factory 1, from *Les Actualités cambodgiennes*, 'Tissage artisanal et industriel du textile sous le régime khmer rouge', January 1, 1977, INA.

Figure 42 Reproductions of women's and men's Khmer Rouge uniforms (black garments, *krama*, and rubber-tyre sandals) exhibited at the Choeung Ek Killing Fields, Phnom Penh. Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 43 Map of Cambodia in the 1980s showing the Thai border, regions and zones of Khmer Rouge activity. Author's map.

Figure 44 Research map of the survey conducted by Kikuo Morimoto for the UNESCO. Morimoto, UNESCO report, 1995.

Figure 45 Decorated wood carved elements of a Khmer loom collected in the 1920s. Photograph, January 1923, National Museum of Cambodia archives.

Figure 46 *Sampot sarabap* at the National Museum of Cambodia folded in the textile storage room, object number N.38. Author's photograph, April 2018.

Figure 47 Two contemporary *pidan* hangings produced and donated by CYK on display at the National Museum of Cambodia. Author's photograph, April 2018.

Figure 48 Khmer ballet costume elements on display at the National Museum of Cambodia. Author's photograph, April 2018.

Chapter Two

Figure 49 Map locating the organisations presented in Chapter Two. Author's image.

Figure 50 Diagram of the business model of Studio Naenna, a Chiang Mai-based private enterprise, sketched by Peewara Jitsukummongkol for the 'New for Old': Southeast Asia Research Residency, December 2016.

Figure 51 Diagram of the middleman business model. Author's image.

Figure 52 Map of Thailand highlighting the region of Surin at the border of Thailand. Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 53 Official Development Assistance by donor in USD million in Cambodia. OECD, 2018.

Figure 54 Chart of Les Chantiers Ecoles de Formation Professionnelle structure and network of founders from 1990 to 1995. Author's image.

Figure 55 Chart showing the transfer of leadership between 1995 and 2000 from La Ligue Francaise de l'Education ceding Les Chantiers Ecoles de Formation Professionnelle to the Cambodia Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training and the National Silk Center taking charge of training, and the foundation of Artisans d'Angkor supported by the EU Replic funding programme. Author's image.

Figure 56 Diagram showing Artisans Angkor ownership model since 2003. Author's image.

Figure 57 Pav Eang Khoing, Silk Director at Artisans Angkor workshop, checking the work of a weaver tying an ikat pattern on silk weft threads, Puok, Siem Reap, Cambodia. Author's photograph, April 2, 2018.

Figure 58 Lion statue inspired by Bakheng temple and silk products *hol rbauk* on display at the Artisan Angkor shop, Siem Reap, Cambodia. Author's photograph, December 25, 2016.

Figure 59 Artisans Angkor guide presenting the tying work of *hol* during a visit at the Silk Farm, Puok, Siem Reap, Cambodia. Author's photograph, December 25, 2016.

Figure 60 Kikuo Morimoto in his house showing one of his *yuzen* silks, Chot Sam village, Cambodia, 2012. Author's photograph for Tissus & Artisans du Monde project.

Figure 61 Kikuo Morimoto (foreground) working on a well-drilling project at Aranyaprathet in eastern Thailand, 1983. Photograph courtesy of IKTT, from the book Kikuo Morimoto, *The man who built a village in Cambodia* (Tokyo: Hakusuisha, 2015).

Figure 62 Om Chea weaver, right of picture, in still from *RAE 2004:11th Rolex Awards for Enterprise - 2004 Laureates* long form, produced by National Geographic Channel, distributed by TVE Asia Pacific, 2004.

Figure 63 Kikuo Morimoto is standing second on the right with a team of specialists in charge of demining the land near Chot Sam village, future Wisdom from the Forest site, Siem Reap, 2002. Courtesy of IKTT.

Figure 64 Map showing directions to access to the 'Wisdom from the Forest' project from the shop in Siem Reap, collected in 2016. Courtesy of IKTT.

Figures 65a-b Selection of *hol* silks in natural dyes and products on display sold at the IKTT shop, Siem Reap, Cambodia, December 2016. Author's photographs.

Figure 66 Artisans Angkor brightly-coloured silk products. Author's photograph, January 2017.

Figure 67 Screenshot of the IKTT Website with Kikuo Morimoto's bio page in the English version destined to an international audience. Accessed on May 10, 2017.

<http://www.ikttearth.org>

Figure 68 Screenshot of the IKTT Website homepage in the Japanese version. Morimoto appears on the left side of this archival image. Accessed on May 10, 2017.
<http://www.iktt.org>

Figure 69 Chin Koeur's certificate for her training in silk weaving under master weaver Leav Sa Em's apprenticeship, dated October 1995 delivered by UNESCO Phnom Penh, Silk Associations of Cambodia in Kanhjang village, Samraong District, Takeo province. Author's photograph, March 17, 2018.

Figure 70 Sign for Silk Associations of Cambodia, at the entrance of Chin Koeur's house and office, Kanhjang village, Samraong District, Takeo province. Author's photograph, March 17, 2018.

Figure 71 Map of Samraong District in Takeo province, Cambodia, encompassing Sla Commune and Phnom Chisor, by the author based on a Google maps view.

Figure 72 Diagram of Silk Associations of Cambodia business model, based on Chin Koeur's interview, by the author.

Figure 73 Chin Koeur working on a tied bundle of weft silk yarn in her workshop, Kanhjang village, Samraong District, Takeo province. Author's photograph, March 17, 2018.

Figure 74 Maybank Women Eco Weavers programme at the Maybank Silk Weaving Training Center, Sla commune, Takeo province, n.d. Photograph Color Silk Foundation.

Figure 75 Range of Color Silk ikat fabrics in a variety of colourways and patterns, Color Silk website. Accessed May 2, 2020. <https://colorsilkcommunity.wixsite.com/colorsilk-cambodia/fabrics>

Figure 76 Distribution of Color Silk's export/wholesale and domestic retail products. Author's image.

Figure 77 Color Silk weavers for the Fashion Revolution 2017 campaign 'I made your clothes', April 2017, Color Silk Facebook page.

Chapter Three

Figure 78 My fieldwork for this chapter is concentrated in two provinces: Siem Reap in the north, Takeo in the south. Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 79 'The Indigenous Research Agenda', in Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies* (London: Zed Books Ltd., 1999), Figure 6.1, 117.

Figure 80 Group at Krama Yuyu. Left to right, translator Yu, weaver Heng Theary, former weaver Heng Chendy, weaver Heng Chenda, Magali An Berthon, co-founder Tomoko Takagi, Ta Pouk village, Cambodia. Author's photograph, July 26, 2017.

Figure 81 Heng Chenda, centre, with Sarin, Salat, Srei Pon, and So Kim working on the warping, Ta Pouk village, Cambodia. Author's photograph, July 24, 2017.

Figure 82 Yuon Sophon working on her loom, Samraong District, Takeo province. Author's photograph, March 17, 2018.

Figure 83 Pon in her house showing a bright blue *sampot hol* she has woven, Samraong District, Takeo province. Author's photograph, March 17, 2018.

Figure 84 So Ai with one of her woven silks, Samraong District, Takeo province. Author's photograph, March 17, 2018.

Figure 85 Kamon weaving a *sampot hol* at home, Samraong District, Takeo province. Author's photograph, March 17, 2018.

Figure 86 The Caring for Young Khmer weaving centre is located in Trapaing Krasaing commune, Bati district, Takeo province. Google Maps, August 25, 2019.

Figure 87 Am Sai weaving an indigo-dyed *pidan*, CYK weaving centre, Trapaing Krasaing, Takeo province. Author's photograph, August 3, 2017.

Figure 88 Now Saraem working on the tying frame for a special *sampot hol* order, CYK weaving centre. Author's photograph, August 3, 2017.

Figure 89 Pheach sorting and collecting golden silk threads, CYK weaving centre. Author's photograph, August 3, 2017.

Figures 90a-b Diagram of the design structure of one hol piece (*kbun*) as deconstructed by Tomoko and Chenda for the weaving process. Author's photograph of a set of seventeen bobbins (*knar*) representing one repeat (*bunteah*) of one pattern (*koem*).

Figure 91 Action Research project full planning from May to October 2017, by the author.

Figure 92 Theary winding the black warp threads on spools, Ta Pouk village, June 2017. Photograph courtesy of Tomoko Takagi.

Figure 93 Industrially-produced fine silk imported from Vietnam next to golden silk threads at Krama Yuyu workshop, Ta Pouk village, Cambodia. Author's photograph, July 24, 2017.

Figure 94 Empty packets of pink chemical fast dye from Thailand for the *hol* tie-dye process, Ta Pouk village, Cambodia. Author's photograph, July 24, 2017.

Figures 95a-b Chenda looking at *hol* motifs in books and taking notes to determine the designs, Ta Pouk village, May 2017. Photograph courtesy of Tomoko Takagi.

Figure 96 Chart of the Action Research observation and interview programme from July 24 to 30, 2017, by the author.

Figure 97 Weavers in the warping process trying to keep the threads untangled, Ta Pouk village, Cambodia. Author's photograph, July 24, 2017.

Figure 98 Split screen showing weavers on both end of the warp threads to keep the tension even. From *The Silk Chronicles: Warp*, film, dir. Magali An Berthon, 2017 [Time Code 01:10].

Figure 99 One weaver separating the threads and the other passing it through the reed's dent with a hook, Ta Pouk village, Cambodia. Author's photograph, July 24, 2017.

Figure 100 Chenda and Theory's hands checking the quality of the pink dyeing process, Ta Pouk village, Cambodia. Author's photograph, July 24, 2017.

Figure 101 Theory on the second round of tying *koem B*, unmasking certain areas and covering others with plastic strips, Ta Pouk village, Cambodia. Author's photograph, July 26, 2017.

Figure 102 Split screen of Chenda and Theory dyeing the tied pink silk skein in the yellow vat. From *The Silk Chronicles: Weft*, film, dir. Magali An Berthon, 2017 [Time code 04:33].

Figure 103 Theory spinning the multicoloured weft silk threads for *koem B* on spools, Ta Pouk village, Cambodia. Author's photograph, July 30, 2017.

Figure 104a Chenda manually making the heddles on the loom, Ta Pouk village, Cambodia. Author's photograph, July 30, 2017.

Figure 104b Diagram of where the heddles are positioned on the loom. Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 105 Chenda coating the warp with water mixed with tapioca, Ta Pouk village, Cambodia. Author's photograph, July 30, 2017.

Figure 106 A spool of the knar for *koem A* is put in a shuttle and passed though the warp, Ta Pouk village, Cambodia. Author's photograph, July 30, 2017.

Figure 107 Chenda's hand showing the multicoloured section she had woven, Ta Pouk village, Cambodia. Author's photograph, July 30, 2017.

Figures 108a-b Chendy Heng showing her collection of silk ikat spools brought from Takeo province, Ta Pouk village, Cambodia. Author's photograph, July 26, 2017.

Figure 109 Detail of the finished hol *kbun koem* A, October 2020.

Figure 110 Detail of the finished hol *kbun koem* B, October 2020.

Figure 111 Detail of the finished hol *kbun koem* C, October 2020.

Figure 112 Chenda with the fourth *kbun* she wove in neutral tones and mixed patterns, Ta Pouk village, Cambodia. Photograph courtesy of Tomoko Takagi, October 2017.

Figure 113 So Ai and Prom Chak holding her latest piece in a bright acid green and salmon pink motifs, Samraong District, Takeo province. Author's photograph, March 17, 2018.

Figure 114 *Sampot hol poar* woven by Pon in electric blue, Samraong District, Takeo province. Author's photograph, March 17, 2018.

Figure 115 Stack of *sampot* from Pon's collection, including the first hip wrapper skirt she had woven for herself on the top, Samraong District, Takeo province. Author's photograph, March 17, 2018.

Figures 116a-b Kamon working on her *sampot hol* piece for a wedding and close-up, Samraong District, Takeo province. Author's photographs, March 17, 2018.

Figure 117 Om Lai (on the right) working with other weavers on dyeing silk skeins, IKTT Wisdom from the Forest village, Kna Sanday commune, Banteay Srei district, Siem Reap province. Author's photograph, December 26, 2016.

Figure 118 Jok Kiang working on a *hol* textile, IKTT Wisdom from the Forest village, Kna Sanday commune, Banteay Srei district, Siem Reap province. Author's photograph, December 26, 2016.

Figure 119 Pan Dam at the silkworm nursery, IKTT Wisdom from the Forest village, Kna Sanday commune, Banteay Srei district, Siem Reap province. Author's photograph, December 26, 2016.

Chapter Four

Figures 120a-b Geographic location of Cambodia Town in Long Beach, In Adebisi and al., *The State of Cambodia Town Report* (Los Angeles, CA: UCLA, 2013), 7 ; Localisation of Long Beach, CA, Google Maps, 2018.

Figure 121 Map of Cambodian refugee camps on the Thai-Cambodian border, 1986. From Tony Jackson, *Just Waiting to Die? Cambodian Refugees in Thailand* (Oxford: Oxfam Research and Evaluation Unit, July 1987), 5.

Figure 122 Handwoven *krama* woven in Khao I Dang refugee camp, Thailand, 1987-1989, Acquisition number HT 31980, donated by Jennie Robert, Courtesy of Museums Victoria / CC BY.

Figure 123 Em Bun weaving on her loom in Harrisburg, PA. Photograph, Blair Seitz.

Figure 124 Em Bun (left) at the 1990 National Heritage Fellowship Concert, Washington, D.C. Photograph courtesy of the National Endowment for the Arts. Accessed June 3, 2020. <http://mastersoftraditionalarts.org/artists/41>

Figure 125 Weaver working on her loom, screenshot from the Khmer Dance and Music Project video archive: Apsara exhibit by Amy Catlin-Jairazbhoy, filmed on December 6, 1987 during the open house day. Accessed June 3, 2020. https://archive.org/details/calauem_000240

Figure 126 Phan Ith weaving at Khmer Women Weavers studio in Long Beach, in Amy Catlin, *Apsara: The Feminine in Cambodian Art* (Los Angeles: The Woman's Building, 1987), 26.

Figure 137 Series of *krama* scarves made by the Khmer Women Weavers's Project, Long Beach, in Catlin, *Apsara: The Feminine in Cambodian Art*, 3.

Figure 128 Weaver demonstrating cotton spinning at the United Cambodian Community Center on Anaheim Street, Long Beach, CA, in Susan Needham, and Karen Quintiliani, *Cambodians in Long Beach* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2008), 66.

Figure 129 City sign Cambodia Town delineating the Cambodian ethnic neighbourhood of Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, 2017.

Figure 130 Sok Chan in her shop Chanda Tailor, Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, April 6, 2017.

Figure 131 Sok Chan adjusting Nancy Lee's purple dress at Chanda Tailor workshop, Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, April 2017.

Figure 132 Stacks of *hol poar* yardages at Chanda Tailor, Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, April 2017.

Figure 133 Men Kaylene at her booth at the Cambodia Town Culture Festival (CTCF), Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, 2017.

Figure 134 Embroidered *sbaay* and solid silk *sampot* on display at Khmer Bridal, Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, April 2017.

Figure 135 Groom ensemble on the left and bride dress the right on mannequins at Khmer Bridal shop, Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, April 2017.

Figure 136 Bride and groom photographed on their wedding day. *In Green, Traditional Textiles of Cambodia*, 194. Photograph courtesy of Gillian Green.

Figure 137 Portrait of former clients in an interracial marriage seen at Khmer Bridal, Cambodia Town, Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, 2017.

Figure 138 Map of Cambodia Town, Long Beach, CA, Google Maps, 2018.

Figure 139 Dr Susan Needham and Mary Tan both in Khmer dress, Cambodia Town Culture Festival. Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, April 2017,

Figure 140a Female festival-goer with a matching silk ensemble and a green silken sash, Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, April 2017.

Figure 140b Women dressed in the typical ensemble: laced *aor* and silk *sampot hol* at the Cambodia Town Culture Festival, Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, April 2017,

Figure 141 Mary Tan's husband wearing a jacket in shot silk and holding the crown for the parade, Cambodia Town Culture Festival, Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, April 2017.

Figure 142 Dressed in red, woman participant wearing a Cambodia Town *krama* with the embroidered logo of Cambodia, Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, April 2017.

Figure 143 Chakra performing in front of the Khmer Veterans, Cambodia Town Culture Festival, Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, April 2017.

Figure 144 *Robam Chhay Yam*, performers at the Cambodia Town Culture Festival parade, Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, April 2017.

Figure 145 Actors performing King Jayavarman VII and his queen on a float at the Cambodia Town Culture Festival parade, Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, April 2017.

Figure 146 Group of young girls dressed in silk bodices and *sampot chawng kbun* at the Cambodia Town Culture Festival parade, Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, April 2017.

Figure 147 Khmer classical ballet performance for Cambodian New Year in Long Beach in front of a painted backdrop of Angkor Wat, ca. 1980. Photograph courtesy of CamCHAP archives.

Figure 148 The young Princess Norodom Buppha Devi performing an *apsara* piece, c.1960s. Photograph courtesy of The National Archives of Cambodia.

Figures 149a-b-c Male and female roles in costume; Giant (*Yeak*); Monkey (*Sva*) in costume. Photographs courtesy of UNESCO, 2004. Accessed June 3, 2020.

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000135258?posInSet=18&queryId=N-EXPLORE-6611dc0c-8034-4f37-ac53-7a9fe951e4de>

Figure 150 Dancers in costumes and accessories made from materials from Thailand, c. 1977, Long Beach, CA. Photograph courtesy of CamCHAP archives.

Figure 151 Sophiline Cheam Shapiro in 2009. Photograph courtesy of Alan Governor/Masters of Traditional Arts. Accessed June 20, 2018.
<http://www.mastersoftraditionalarts.org/artists/300>

Figure 152 Ok Khannia (centre left) teaching a weekly class at Khmer Arts Academy, Cambodia Town, Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, February 2018.

Figure 153 Dance class with students in silk garments for practice at Khmer Arts Academy, Cambodia Town, Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, April 2017.

Figure 154 Set of silk *sarabap* textiles belonging to Khmer Arts Academy purchased in Cambodia by Sophiline Cheam Shapiro, Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, April 2017.

Figure 155 Close-up of a shimmering silk *sarabap* patterned with scale-like gold motifs, Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, February 2018.

Figure 156 Prince's full costume in silk purchased in Cambodia by Sophiline Cheam Shapiro. Author's photograph, April 2017.

Figure 157 Ok Khannia getting dressed for a performance, 2016. Photograph courtesy of Khmer Arts Academy.

Figure 158 Pleating of the silk skirt on a dancer before a performance, The New York Public Library. 'Make-up and costumes, 2009-01-13/15'. Courtesy of New York Public Library Digital Collections. Accessed September 20, 2020.
<http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/3ef7d750-0381-0131-9fd1-3c075448cc4b>

Figure 159 Khmer Arts Academy students and instructors performing *Seasons of Migration* at the TuTu Foundation, Torrance, CA, 2017, Courtesy of Khmer Arts Academy.

Figure 160a *Neang Neak* piece from *Seasons of Migration*, performed by Keo Kuntheaom dancing with her extended *sbaay*, choreographed by Sophiline Cheam Shapiro, Jakarta, August 2009.

Figure 160b Detail of the long *sbaay*, *Seasons of Migration* by Sophiline Cheam Shapiro, Jakarta, August 2009.

Figure 161 Magali An Berthon dressed in a *sampot chawng kbun* for dance practice with instructor Lath Reaksmeay. Author's photograph, February 2018.

Acknowledgements

Completing this thesis has been an eventful, exciting, and challenging journey marked by precious encounters and support. Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisors Sarah Cheang and Martina Margetts for being so generous with their knowledge and experience. They created invaluable spaces of discussion fostering critical thinking while pushing me to follow my ideas and intuitions. It has helped me shape and produce a project that has felt simultaneously personal, innovative, and ambitious.

This research would not have been possible without a doctoral award from the Techne consortium helmed under the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Other research bodies have generously contributed to the funding of my fieldwork: The Royal College of Art; l'Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient; the Pasold Foundation; and Friends of Khmer Culture Foundation. Attending conferences was made possible with the support of the Design History Society, the British Council, and the Textile Society of America.

I would also like to highlight the principal institutions that welcomed me and helped advance my research: the National Museum of Cambodia; Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum; Bophana Film Center; the National Archives of Cambodia; Musée du Quai Branly Jacques Chirac; Victoria & Albert Museum; British Museum; l'Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient branch in Cambodia; UNESCO Phnom Penh; and the Cambodian Community History & Archive Project. I felt lucky to engage in rich and insightful conversations with passionate experts in some of these institutions; in particular, Christophe Moulhéat, Sue Needham, Bertrand Porte, Bernard Dupaigne, Helen Wang, and Jenny Spancake.

I would also like to thank my fellow PhD students at the RCA, within the Techne consortium, and in other universities with whom I gladly discussed the mundane realities and challenges of tackling a thesis, as much as the nuanced trappings and complexities of specific theories

and methodologies; in particular, Artun Ozguner, Pathitta Nirunpornputta, Huh Rowlands, Rebecca Bell, Ruth Clifford, Anne-Laure Porée, Katie Irani, and Vera Mey. I am also grateful to Cathy Johns, Research Librarian at the RCA.

I would like to acknowledge all the contacts I made in Cambodia and Long Beach, California: silk farmers, weavers, shop owners, academics, students, and dancers... There is not enough room to credit them all here, but these essential encounters were deeply affecting and nourished my understanding of Cambodian culture inside and outside its borders. In Cambodia, I will mention Tomoko Tagaki, Heng Chendy, Chenda and Theary, Prom Chak, Pav Eang Khoing, Sophiline Cheam Shapiro, Seng Sonetra, with a special thought for Kikuo Morimoto whom I met in 2012 and sadly passed away in 2017. In Long Beach, California, I am thinking of Ok Khannia, Lath Reaksmey, all the students at Khmer Arts Academy, Mary Tan, Sok Chan, and Kaylene Men.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank my family, especially my parents Tuyet Anh Tran and Pierre Berthon for their unwavering support, their patience to act as my sounding board and first readers, and their constant encouragements and care. I am also grateful to my love Brett and my friends, especially Emily Orr (who inspired me to start a PhD), Eloise Larochelle, Nicholas Calcott, Anne-Laure Roussille, and Myrtille Odichelidze, who were my support system in this journey. I have also a thought for my colleagues at the Fashion Institute of Technology and New York University who never stopped encouraging me, and for my students.

I dedicate this thesis to my grandfather Joseph Berthon, whose commitment to teaching and learning all his life has been a never-ending source of strength and inspiration.

Author's declaration

During the period of registered study in which this thesis was prepared the author has not been registered for any other academic award or qualification. The material included in this thesis has not been submitted wholly or in part for any academic award or qualification other than that for which it is now submitted.

Magali An Berthon

October 2021

Abbreviations

Note: The full titles of these acronyms below are given on their first appearance in this thesis and in the titles. On all further references only the acronym is employed, except when it is deemed necessary to remind the reader of the abbreviation's full words.

AA: Artisans Angkor

AAC: Artisans Association Cambodia

ANT: Actor Network Theory

AR: Action Research

CamCHAP: Cambodian Community History & Archive Project

CPK: Communist Party of Kampuchea

CTCF: Cambodia Town Culture Festival

CYK: Caring for Young Khmer

DK: Democratic Kampuchea

EU: European Union

IKTT: Institute for Khmer Traditional Textiles

ITC: International Trade Center

KAA: Khmer Arts Academy

KR: Khmer Rouge

KY: Krama Yuyu

NSS: National Silk Strategy

OECD: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

PRK: People's Republic of Kampuchea

UN: United Nations

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

V&A: Victoria & Albert Museum

Notes on Khmer translation and transliteration

In this thesis, words in the Khmer language are romanised with a consistent transliteration system inspired by the ALA-LC Romanization Tables developed by the Library of Congress available at this link <https://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpsd/romanization/khmer.pdf>

There is no uniform transliteration system for the Khmer language. The results presented here do not always reflect standard pronunciation in spoken Khmer. It aims to approach it the closest possible and to remain consistent within the text. For the textile technical terminology, this thesis refers to the transliteration model used in Gillian Green's reference book *Traditional Textiles of Cambodia* (2003).

Here are some indications of pronunciation below:

au = as in 'rot'

ay = as in 'tie'

ea = as in 'fleet'

u = as in 'June'

oo = as in 'loot'

j = as in 'cheat'

h after p, t, and k = indicates inspiration

ph = as in 'pat'

r = as in 'l'

nh = as in 'line'

Introduction

About twelve kilometres north of Phnom Penh, Koh Dach, an island located in the middle of the Mekong River in Kandal province, has been nicknamed ‘Silk Island’ by foreign visitors, in reference to the local industry of artisanal silk weaving, essential until the 2000s [Fig.1].¹ In 2006, about 70 per cent of the 2,887 families living on the island worked in silk weaving.² Textile production has declined in the past ten years, mainly due to the steep rise in silk fibre prices, which has reduced the weavers’ profits and pushed them to abandon textile activity for more lucrative jobs.³ Koh Dach benefits from rich and fertile soils, and its estimated 20,000 inhabitants are now mostly fishermen and farmers working on large agricultural areas of banana, corn, papaya, coconut, taro and cassava plantations and rice paddies.⁴ With its dusty roads, houses on stilts gathered in small *phum* (villages) and lush landscapes, the site offers a glimpse of a Cambodian rural life that appears to have been protected from the rapid, widespread urbanisation that has affected Phnom Penh’s surroundings, in particular, since the mid-2000s, offering sightseeing opportunities for tourists for a day trip out of the city.

¹ Mang Channo, ‘Silk Sarong Weaving Supports Island Folk’, *The Phnom Penh Post*, May 6, 1994 <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/silk-sarong-weaving-supports-island-folk> [Accessed 30 October 2016].

² Sam Rith, ‘Business Drop-off Hits ‘Silk Island’,’ *The Phnom Penh Post*, 29 October 2008 <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/business-drop-hits-silk-island> [Accessed September 20, 2019].

³ ‘The Silk Road to Koh Dach,’ *Khmer Times*, July 29, 2016 <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/26250/the-silk-road-to-koh-dach/> [Accessed September 20, 2019].

⁴ Steve Noble, ‘A quick-fix break on Koh Dach,’ *Asia Life Magazine*, March 6, 2016 <https://www.asialifemagazine.com/cambodia/quick-fix-break-koh-dach/> [Accessed September 20, 2019].



Fig.1 Koh Dach island in Kandal province, north of Phnom Penh. Wikimedia Commons, 2019.

I went to this renowned centre of Cambodian *saut* (silk) production in December 2016 to examine the state of loss or survival of silk practices and production. Several looms on the ground floors of the houses were visible, but with few weavers working at them. The evidence of a shop with woodworkers building and selling new looms indicated ongoing textile activity. The clatter of manual looms had been replaced by louder noise of mechanical looms processing yardages of checkered cloth in synthetic fibres. Discussions with a retired silk weaving couple, Pheap and Lim, through the intermediary of Chomnit, their nephew, who spoke English, revealed a history of domestic production destined for the local market and shops in Phnom Penh. Pheap and Lim specialised in the island's typical *sampot phamaung*, solid-coloured hip wraps that are usually adorned with a gilded

brocaded band of diamonds and stylised floral motifs.⁵ Pheap took up weaving after marrying Lim and moving to Koh Dach at the age of twenty-five. She pulled a few pieces from her wardrobe, especially the first two tube skirts she ever produced as a weaver and had kept carefully as precious items. The first piece was a black tube skirt in mixed silk material, possibly a blend with rayon, featuring an all-over pattern of small diamond motifs in seven colours, each colour associated with one of the days of the week in Cambodian culture.⁶ The second piece was a solid dark green *phamaung* with a hem border of brocaded gilded geometric patterns, which Pheap often wore for wedding ceremonies [Fig.2].⁷

Ko Okhna Tey, a small island connected to Koh Dach, also accommodated the Chiangkasnaey silk farm and workshop, which has attracted students from schools from Phnom Penh and foreign tourists since 2013. Local guide Pich Vang explained that the weaving centre, advertised as a community-based project, actually belonged to a private Cambodian owner, whose name was not disclosed.⁸ On a quick tour, visitors could walk around a series of outdoor spaces showcasing the whole process of silk making, from the silkworm nursery to the spinning section and the weaving area with several floor looms, eventually ending at the shop section. The difference between Pheap's story and the development of this silk facility illustrates the shift from domestic to tourist activity, in which the area is turned into a repository of past practices, as well as a centre for trade between islanders, foreign tourists, and urban textile dealers.

⁵ Pheap and Lim, informal conversation with Magali An Berthon, December 30, 2016, Koh Dach, Cambodia.

⁶ Based on a Khmer adaptation of Hindu cosmology, each colour is linked to one day of the week. Red is for Sunday, orange for Monday, purple for Tuesday, green for Wednesday, yellow for Thursday, blue for Friday, and purple for Saturday. This is also prevalent in Thailand, with a slight variation in tones. See Susan Conway, *Thai Textiles* (London: British Museum Press, 1992), 55-56.

⁷ See appendices A1-A2-A3 for the glossary of terms in Khmer and textile technical definitions.

⁸ Pich Vang, informal discussion with Magali An Berthon, December 30, 2016, Koh Dach, Cambodia; See also: Bernard Dupaigne, 'L'élevage des vers à soie au Cambodge,' *Revue d'ethnoécologie* 14 (2018): 24. <https://journals.openedition.org/ethnoecologie/3697> [Accessed 5 November 2020]



Fig.2 Pheap showing the green silk phamaung she had woven, Koh Dach, Kandal. Author's photograph, 2017.

The site visit to Koh Dach reveals a context that consisted of multiple layers of history, geography, trade, and tourism, but also of memory, fibre production known as sericulture, weaving practices and family relationships. Before the war period, silk weaving was commonly a female rural activity led on the side of farming. Sericulture was also practised by farmers in the countryside on a small scale. Silk cloths were mainly used for clothing to make hip wraps, shawls, and shirts. Brocaded silk textiles or embroidered with gold threads were integral to the royal court's regalia for official, diplomatic and religious ceremonies and for the performance of Khmer classical ballet. Cambodians in the countryside and cities also favoured silk in shantung or ikat for specific occasions such as wedding ceremonies and to

attend religious ceremonies at the pagoda. Therefore, the overarching aim of this thesis is to identify how threads of knowledge and cultural identity have been reclaimed and sustained through silk practices in the Cambodian post-war context.

Sociologist Arjun Appadurai describes a '-scape' as a 'perspectival landscape of fluid, irregular shapes' which 'do[es] not look the same from every angle'.⁹ According to this definition, Koh Dach is a circumscribed portion of the complex Cambodian contemporary 'silkscape' bound by 'historical, linguistic and political situatedness of different sorts of actors'.¹⁰ It is within this context that this thesis explores the complex nature of silk in contemporary Cambodia and the diasporic territory of Long Beach, California. It does so by examining the conditions of sericulture and weaving in the aftermath of decades of conflict, from the 1970s civil war, the Khmer Rouge (KR) regime (1975-1979) and its downfall. What are the areas of loss and reclamation in silk cultural heritage, production, knowledge and use, as they have been redefined under new local and global tensions? By silk cultural heritage, it means the ways in which silk practices are essential aspects of Cambodian social and cultural fabric: in rural areas where skills transmission happens at a young age in a matrilineal system; in the economic and social interactions between weavers, middlemen, and merchants linking rural areas to urban markets; finally in the conduct of cultural rituals in which silk is involved such as dance and wedding ceremonies, especially in a diasporic context. And how have the main actors of these practices, such as weavers, traders, and company founders, responded to, encouraged, or resisted these changes? This particular context of reconstruction also asks who, among the main stakeholders and silk weavers, has been able to access new economic ventures, and which groups have remained at the margins of these opportunities.

Studying the recent and contemporary history of Cambodia and the country's return to

⁹ Arjun Appadurai, 'Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy,' *Theory Culture Society* 7 (1990): 296-297.

¹⁰ Ibid.

independence and a globalised economy since the 1990s also requires the consideration of Cambodia's main historical antecedents, especially in the context of foreign relations, cultural loss and displacement. Historians Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger pioneered the concept of 'invented traditions' as ritualised constructs in perpetual reinvention, in which a specific historic past is formulated 'to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition'.¹¹ Hobsbawm and Ranger suggest that traditions are mostly responses to new situations, and have ideological, political and cultural purposes.¹² This paradigm has implications for an examination of how silk, a cottage industry, was reestablished as an expression of national post-conflict heritage, entailing the perpetuation of 'invented traditions' and informing contemporary Cambodian cultural identity. By locating silk textiles in a contemporary and historical context of production and consumption, this thesis aims to highlight potential connections with the past without confirming them as traditional. Instead of considering the revitalisation of silk production in Cambodia as a nostalgic reenactment, it asks how Cambodian silk can be considered in discontinuous and fragmentary forms that cross overlapping narratives of loss, reclamation, change and innovation.

The successive waves of conflict and forced migration in the 1970s and 1980s and the socio-economic transformations in the 1990s have also redefined the significance of silk for Cambodian consumers. In 2015, the domestic market (individual consumption and local businesses) represented an estimated 50 per cent of the overall sales volume of Cambodian silk products. Local consumers favoured ikat textiles, scarves, bags, garments and silk fabric from retail and wholesale shops in urban markets.¹³ With more than 6.2 million international tourists visiting Cambodia in 2018, sales of silk products for the tourist and

¹¹ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 4.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Cambodia Ministry of Commerce, and ITC, *Cambodia National Silk Strategy* (Phnom Penh: Cambodia Ministry of Commerce and ITC, 2016), 46.

export market (scarves, clothing, fashion accessories and home decor items) went up to 30 per cent of the total volume, silk being especially popular with Asian visitors.¹⁴ Exports made for the remaining 20 per cent. Moreover, as contended by anthropologists Judy Ledgerwood, May Ebihara and Carol Mortland, my research examines the workings of 'transformation and persistence, loss and continuity' which prevail particularly in diasporic communities.¹⁵ Taking account of immigrant experiences, this thesis reflects on the role of silk dress in overcoming a sense of cultural disconnection to reclaim new identities through performance, memory, and imagination.

This study thus brings together a polyphony of voices and actors that form a multilayered landscape of silk, emphasising the voices of silk weavers in Cambodia and consumers in the diaspora to identify their individual strategies of transmitting and perpetuating specific sets of skills and customs. How do various material realities, skills and experience in learning, sourcing, making, and selling silk inform the understanding of Cambodian silk that is presented by dominant institutional discourses and stakeholders? Five periods of fieldwork in Cambodia and Long Beach provide data for an examination of the value of silk textiles as tokens of Cambodian cultural identity, and how skills have been reclaimed through various forms of oral, embodied, and tacit knowledge. Visual documentation and interviews were obtained through ethnographic methodologies, qualitative interviews and participatory Action Research (AR). The dialogue between these primary findings and visual archives, textile materials and objects offer an original contribution to the understanding of silk in post-conflict Cambodia as a textile production, craft and cultural practice.

¹⁴ Cambodia Ministry of Commerce and ITC, *Cambodia National Silk Strategy*, 47; Sok Chan, 'Ancient Silk Farming Regains Growth with Proper Ecosystem', *Capital Cambodia*, March 4, 2019, <https://capitalcambodia.com/ancient-silk-farming-regains-growth-with-proper-ecosystem/> [Accessed 24 September 2019]

¹⁵ May Ebihara, Carol Mortland and Judy Ledgerwood, eds., *Cambodian Culture since 1975: Homeland and Exile* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1994), 22.

A short history of Cambodia and impact of the Khmer Rouge regime on silk

Located in mainland Southeast Asia, Cambodia possesses a distinctive artistic heritage that is rooted in a rich regional history marked by local particularism and religious beliefs. It also embraces ethnic diversity, colonial influences, regional conflicts and cultural exchange with the neighbouring countries of Thailand to the west, Vietnam to the east, and Laos to the north. This wider historical and geopolitical perspective needs to be understood in to order to recognise the reenactment of certain postures and policies in contemporary Cambodian crafts. Furthermore, it is important to position Cambodia within its Southeast Asian regional context and beyond, looking at the emergence of other powerful key players, such as Siam and France in the nineteenth century followed by Japan and the United States in the twentieth century. Highlighting these connections is essential in this research, as they inform patterns of trade, cultural influences and subordination, all of which have continued to frame Cambodian silk in the twenty-first century within a post-colonial, post-conflict context.

Cambodia's history is marked by the long rule of the Khmer empire from 802 CE to 1431 CE, a powerful state which conquered a large part of the Southeast Asian mainland region, covering the territories of present-day Thailand, Laos and Southern Vietnam. By the late twelfth century, the Khmer royal court had settled in the monumental architectural site of Angkor Wat. Originally devoted to the Hindu god Vishnu, it was transformed into a Buddhist site of worship under King Jayavarman VII (c.1122-1218) marking the shift in the whole region towards Theravada Buddhism. These centuries of conquest and domination in the early modern era have remained a pillar of Cambodia's history and culture in scholarly literature, as well as in Cambodian discourses and imaginaries to the present day.¹⁶

¹⁶ See David Chandler, *A History of Cambodia* (Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 2000) ; John A. Tully, *A Short History of Cambodia* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2005).

However, by the nineteenth century the kingdom had long lost its regional outreach and was reduced to a marginal state, its independence endangered by Vietnam and Thailand (then Siam), which had been competing over the Mekong River area since the fifteenth century. The loss and reclamation of sovereignty have been a repeated pattern in the formation of the Cambodian nation. In the 1840s Cambodia was a poor agricultural country suffering from major internal dissent, with a population of less than a million.¹⁷ Until his death in 1860, King Ang Duong (1796-1860) restored relative stability for a few decades, that was heavily dependent on a joint vassalage between Siam and Vietnam.

In search of protection, Cambodia reached out to France to guarantee its monarchical regime and territorial integrity. Cambodia became a French colonial protectorate in 1863, with a limited form of autonomy, retaining the king as the figurehead of the regime.¹⁸ France expanded its power over the Southeast Asian peninsula. By 1887, the French colonies had gathered the Vietnamese regions of Tonkin, Annam, Cochinchina and Cambodia into the Indochinese Union, further adding Laos (formerly attached to Siam) in 1893.

World War II permanently disrupted the French colonial empire and opened a new and difficult process of decolonisation in Southeast Asia. Prince Norodom Sihanouk was chosen by the French as the successor to monarch Sisowath Monivong, who died in 1941. Backed by the Japanese, who occupied territories of Indochina, Sihanouk started promoting an agenda for the country's independence.¹⁹ The post-war period brought the contestation of French colonial power to the forefront across the Cambodian political chessboard, from the Khmer Issarak (Free Khmer) independence movement to French-educated graduates such as Saloth Sar, later known as Pol Pot, and Khieu Samphan, who had studied at universities in

¹⁷ Chandler, *A History of Cambodia*, 120.

¹⁸ John Tully, 'Cambodia in the Nineteenth Century: Out of the Siamese Frying Pan and into the French Fire?' in *Cambodia and the West, 1500-2000*, ed. T.O. Smith (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 37-63 ; Lawrence Palmer Briggs, 'The Treaty of March 23, 1907: Between France and Siam and the Return of Battambang and Angkor to Cambodia,' *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 5:4 (1946): 439-54.

¹⁹ Geoffrey Gunn, 'The Passing of Sihanouk: Monarchic Manipulation and the Search for Autonomy in the Kingdom of Cambodia,' *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 10:50(1) (Dec 09, 2012): .1).

France and discovered the Marxist ideologies which would inform the future nationalist KR regime.²⁰ In parallel, the Vietnamese rebellion led by Ho Chi Minh and backed by the newly established People's Republic of China engaged in the First Indochina War, which led to the defeat of the French in 1954. Bugged down in the conflict with Vietnam, and facing growing resistance, the French agreed to Cambodia's independence in 1954.

Sihanouk founded the Sangkum Reastr Niyum (People's Socialist Community) in January 1955, taking the title of Head of State in 1960 and leading the country as an absolute ruler until 1970. During this period of stability, Cambodia saw some social reform.²¹ However, Sihanouk's repressive regime generated an alarming divide between 'urban consumerism, corruption, and the deepening of peasant pauperisation.'²² As a result, the government experienced internal conflicts in the 1950s with the rise of the Communist party, the progressive distrust of the elite classes and opposition from the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK) led, amongst others, by Pol Pot.²³ In the Cold War era, Cambodia was stuck between pro-American regimes in South Vietnam and Thailand and Communist China. The monarch's fear of getting sucked into the Vietnam War eventually led him to sever diplomatic relations with the United States in 1965.²⁴ Despite these tensions, the Sangkum era has also been considered the golden age of modern Cambodian culture. Journalist Robert Turnbull suggests that by promoting dance, music and theatre, 'the regime superseded ethnic, racial, and class divisions by merging Cambodia's very different strands

²⁰ James Tyner, *The Killing of Cambodia: Geography, Genocide and the Unmaking of Space* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 40-50.

²¹ Among these social reforms, in 1955, women were given the right to vote. With the foundation of elected provincial assemblies, ordinary Cambodians were encouraged to take part in national politics. Sihanouk's government also invested in education by doubling the number of schools from 1953 to 1968. Brigitte Bouhours and Roderic G. Broadhurst, *Violence and the Civilising Process in Cambodia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 151.

²² *Ibid*, 164.

²³ The CPK was founded by a group of Cambodians who had studied in Paris in the colonial period, among them Pol Pot, Ieng Sary, Khieu Samphan and Duch.

²⁴ See David Chandler, *The Tragedy of Cambodian History, Politics, War, and Revolution since 1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 150-165; Bouhours and Broadhurst, *Violence and the Civilising Process in Cambodia*, 149-165.

of performance culture, such as the traditions of temple, court, and village.²⁵ These cultural forms, that reinforced a fetishisation of Cambodianness, remained the preserve of an urban elite and associated with diplomatic events, thus excluding the common people, especially in rural areas.

By 1970, Cambodia plunged into civil war. Sihanouk was ousted in a bloodless coup by Lon Nol, the Cambodian army commander and member of his administration. Pro-American, Lon Nol became Head of State of the Khmer Republic until 1975, ruling over a country increasingly fragmented into political factions and caught in the crossfire of the Vietnam war. Sihanouk retreated to China and remained the leader of the government-in-exile. The CPK, also known as the KR, gained more power during the following years, and eventually marched into Phnom Penh in April 1975, forcing the population to abandon urban centres for the countryside, spelling the advent of Year Zero and the formation of Democratic Kampuchea (DK). This regime quickly turned the country into a communist peasant dictatorship, ruled with economic quasi-autarky.²⁶ Between 1975 and 1979, DK instituted mass collectivisation, separating families, displacing people across the country and engaging them in forced work, particularly rice farming. The CPK also orchestrated several waves of bloody purges, first eliminating all their political opponents, civil servants, intellectuals, and artists, and then aggressively persecuting ethnic minorities in the name of national purification, in particular the ethnic Cham and Vietnamese living in Cambodia. This revolutionary utopia turned into a humanitarian disaster, leaving starving populations facing penury and a major sanitary crisis that claimed an estimated 1.7 million victims, about a quarter of the population at the time.

²⁵ Robert Turnbull, 'A Burned-Out Theater', in *Expressions of Cambodia: The Politics of Tradition, Identity and Change*, eds. Leakthina Chau-Pech Ollier and Tim Winter (London: Routledge, 2012), 143-4.

²⁶ Charles Twining, US career diplomat in Cambodia, stated about self-reliance in DK that 'there had to be some movement of goods within the country. Not everyone had a supply of old tires or had cloth and garment makers.' See Charles H. Twining, 'The Economy,' in *Cambodia, 1975-1978: Rendez-vous with Death*, Karl D. Jackson, ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 121.

The relationships with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam had worsened by 1978. Military troops composed of the Vietnamese army and Cambodians who had defected invaded Cambodia's borders in 1979, overthrowing DK and establishing the Vietnam-backed People's Republic of Kampuchea. Historian Margaret Slocomb states that in the last years of DK, more than 600,000 Cambodians, including ethnic Vietnamese and Chinese populations, fled the country.²⁷ About 350,000 people relocated to refugee camps at the Thai border, or managed to cross the border to Thailand and Vietnam.²⁸ More than 240,000 Cambodians relocated outside Southeast Asia permanently, including 152,000 people in the United States and another 90,000 in Europe and Australia. This forced migration of Cambodians has radically transformed the definition of contemporary Cambodia, and thus issues of diaspora and cultural identity are important elements of this study. The country was left with a ravaged economy that relied on inefficient agricultural policies, inadequate technical and industrial expertise and underdeveloped infrastructures. In the 1980s, economic recovery was heavily supported by other Communist nations, especially the Soviet Union and Vietnam, and was hindered by KR guerrilla insurgency until the mid-1990s. In October 1991, the Paris Peace Agreements allowed Cambodia to transition from its Vietnamese tutelage to the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia, which was in charge of organising fair elections in May 1993. This key moment opened the country to foreign aid presence. This recentring of Cambodia on the global map significantly modified the country's socio-economic landscape. Between 1997 and the 2009 world financial crisis, Cambodia experienced rapid economic growth facilitated by increasing international trade and the massive expansion of telecommunications across the territory. This movement towards globalisation was further encouraged by its regional incorporation into the

²⁷ Margaret Slocomb, *An Economic History of Cambodia in the Twentieth Century* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2010), 195.

²⁸ United States General Accounting Office, National Security and International Affairs Division, *Relief Efforts for Cambodian Camps Fact Sheet* (Washington: United States General Accounting Office, 1991), 2.

Association of Southeast Asian Nations in 1999 and the World Trade Organisation in 2004, 'provid[ing] an institutional framework that [has] arguably improve[d] the country's prospects for development'.²⁹

These decades of political unrest inform the underlying structural imbalances of Cambodia's silk sector at the turn of the twenty-first century. In the late 1940s, mulberry tree plantations whose leaves feed *bombyx mori* silkworms covered about 6,000 hectares of the Cambodian territory, with Phnom Srok district in Banteay Meanchey province as the main producing area.³⁰ In the 1960s, silk farmers yielded between twenty to fifty metric tonnes of yarn a year for a national consumption of eighty tonnes. Anthropologist Bernard Dupaigne was the last researcher to conduct fieldwork on silk in Cambodia before the civil war. His study revealed that until the 1970s sericulture was structured as a cottage industry that was almost exclusively run by women in rural areas and destined for domestic consumption.³¹ By the late 1970s, silk production and weaving practices were massively impacted by the destruction of mulberry tree fields, the sacking of villages, and the displacement of craftspeople.

Most of the data on silk farming in the twentieth century must be considered as estimates.³² The official number presented in the National Silk Strategy 2016-2020 (NSS) for silk production in the post-war era is 0.8 metric tonnes of silk yarn annually, without indicating the exact year for the lowest level ever recorded in the twentieth century.³³ This report also

²⁹ Sok Udom Deth, Kairat Moldashev and Serkan Bulut, 'The Contemporary Geopolitics of Cambodia: Alignment in Regional and Global Contexts,' in *The Handbook of Contemporary Cambodia*, eds. Katherine Brickell and Simon Springer (London: Routledge, 2017), 21.

³⁰ Jean Delvert, *Le paysan cambodgien* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1994), 282-3.

³¹ Dupaigne, 'L'élevage des vers à soie au Cambodge,' *Revue d'ethnoécologie* 14 (2018): 4.

³² Due to the lack of official surveys, estimates on sericulture have remained approximate, differing from one report to the other. Jean Delvert spoke of 25 tonnes of silk fibre in the early 1950s. Mey Kalyan, founder of the Royal University of Phnom Penh's Silk Research Centre in 2018 with the support of the UNDP and Japan, states that in the 1960s, only 20 tonnes of silk fibre were produced. The 2016 National Silk Strategy mentions 50 tonnes in the 1960s. See Mey Kalyan, 'Final Report: Efforts to Revive the Silk Sector in Cambodia,' 13 February 2013, 2; Jean Delvert, *Le paysan cambodgien* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1994), 282-3; Cambodia Ministry of Commerce and ITC, *Cambodia National Silk Strategy*, 1.

³³ Cambodia Ministry of Commerce and ITC, *Cambodia National Silk Strategy*, 1.

mentions that only fifteen hectares of mulberry tree fields were recorded in the Banteay Meanchey area after the war without providing a clear date or source.³⁴ Both these numbers were presented –this time dating from 1995– in the pamphlet *On the Golden Silk Trails* published by Khmer Silk Village in 2006, which is referenced in the NSS. Khmer Silk Village was an association founded in 2005 with the support of PASS (Projet d'Appui au Secteur de la Soie) to support sericulture and silk weaving in Banteay Meanchey.³⁵ The publication was illustrated and toned down for a general audience. It is not footnoted with precise sources but acknowledges its reliance on a preliminary study published by PASS in 2004.³⁶

Published by Cambodia's Ministry of Commerce with the technical support of the United Nations International Trade Center (ITC), the NSS report is 98 pages, combining a comprehensive survey (pp.1-43) and an action plan on the silk sector (pp. 44-73). Its data mainly relies on prior ITC-led projects: a first silk sector strategy on the Cambodian value chain in 2005, followed by the Sector-wide Silk Project launched in 2007 in two phases until 2012, implemented by ITC and funded by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs and the New Zealand Agency for International Development.³⁷

The second phase of this Sector-wide Silk Project was evaluated internally in 2011. The report explains that the data used in the study is based on discussions with key actors of the silk sector and on two reports *The Silk Industry in Cambodia* in 2005 and *Cambodian Sericulture Stocktaking Report* in 2008.³⁸ Internal evaluator Artur Dillman states: 'the validity of the data utilized in the reports is repeatedly questioned in those reports themselves; for the purpose of this elaboration the available data seems to provide overwhelming evidence for the below interpretation, more precise data would possible give

³⁴ Cambodia Ministry of Commerce and ITC, *Cambodia National Silk Strategy*, 1.

³⁵ PASS was at the initiative of the Cambodian Ministry of Agriculture with the funding of the French Development Agency. Khmer Silk Villages, *On the Golden Silk Trails* (Cambodia: 2006), 6.

³⁶ PASS, *Cambodian Silk Sector*, 2004.

³⁷ International Trade Center, *Mid-Term External Evaluation: Cambodia Sector-Wide Silk Project (Phase II) CMB/49/05A* (Geneva: ITC, 2011), 5.

³⁸ Jalin, H., PASS, BDPA, *The Silk Industry in Cambodia*, 2005 ; Budd Gibbons and Jose Vahl, *Cambodian Sericulture Stocktaking Report: For Cambodian Sector-Wide Silk Project* (Geneva : ITC, 2008).

more details, but certainly would not significantly change the general perspective'.³⁹ Dillman underlines 'the unknown level of credibility' of the collected data, adding: 'data on perception of project activities can be utilized for interpretations, but it is more for qualitative purposes'.⁴⁰ In this chart from the *Cambodian Sericulture Stocktaking Report* presented in the *ITC Mid-Term External Evaluation*, one can see there is no data collected for the production of silk yarn between 1960 and 1990, which reflects the destructive years of the civil war, the KR regime and the Vietnamese occupation [Fig.3]. These issues of data credibility illustrate the challenges of studying silk production in Cambodia. However, while the data is not fully reliable, it still provides useful estimates that have informed the strategic decisions and investments of the stakeholders involved in the silk sector since the 1990s.

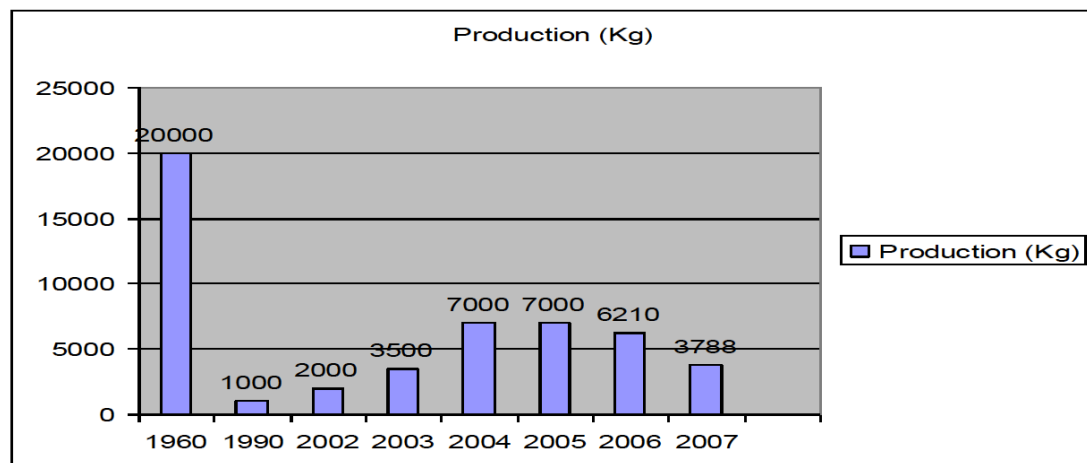


Fig.3 Production of silk yarn in Cambodia citing the *Cambodian Sericulture Stocktaking Report (Mid-Term External Evaluation: Cambodia Sector-Wide Silk Project Phase II)*, 64.

Moreover, the number of weavers who perished, quit or escaped during the civil war from 1970 to 1979 remains unknown. Until silk production became a more salient concern for officials in the early 2000s, there was no data available about the number of weavers still

³⁹ International Trade Center, *Mid-Term External Evaluation: Cambodia Sector-Wide Silk Project (Phase II)* CMB/49/05A, 11.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 41.

active after KR regime.

Specificities of Cambodian silk

The study of silk incorporates the geographical characteristics which allow the growth of mulberry tree fields and silkworms. Cambodia's climate follows monsoon winds, with a wet season from mid-May to early October and a dry season from early November to mid-March. Its soils are mostly sandy and do not easily retain nutrients. However, they benefit from the flooding of the Mekong once a year during the rainy season, which generously fertilises the central plain with alluvial sediments, creating a suitable ecosystem for rice-growing. As a predominantly agricultural country, about 80 per cent of the total population of 16 million live in rural areas, i.e. 12,047 million, according to the 2017 census.⁴¹ Silkworm rearing and weaving have been side activities grounded in villagers' lives. With its warm tropical climate, Cambodia supports the indigenous species of *bombyx mori* silkworms, which produce a type of silk commonly called Cambodian golden silk, recognisable for its bright yellow colour which washes away at the degumming stage to reveal a creamy white tone [Fig.4]. Cocoons are processed by hand. One cocoon gives an average of four hundred metres of filaments, compared to a minimum of one thousand metres from the white mulberry silk cocoon in other parts of Asia.⁴² The native Cambodian silk has been valued for its properties of absorbency and durability, with a heavier texture than white mulberry silk, and a softer sheen.

The NSS report stated that by 2005 subsidised sericulture farming had effectively resumed and peaked at ten tonnes of annual silk yarn production in 2008. However, by the 2010s,

⁴¹ Cambodia National Institute of Statistics, *Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey* (Phnom Penh: Ministry of Planning: 2018), 5. Since 2019, the Cambodian population has exceeded 16 million.

⁴² The first semi-automated silk reeling machine was developed in 2019 by Aoral Silk Community. Sok Chan, 'Ancient Silk Farming Regains Growth with Proper Ecosystem.'

with fewer sponsoring programmes, sericulture had declined again to an average of one to three tonnes of yarn annually, returning to its lowest levels since 1990.⁴³ To compensate for this low indigenous silk production, about 400 tonnes of fibre annually—often of lower quality— is imported from Vietnam and China.⁴⁴ These contrasting facts about sericulture delineate a context of rupture and recovery in which the revitalisation, continuity and decline of silk overlap. In 2016, the Cambodian Ministry of Commerce asked the European Union (EU) to grant geographical indication status to silk yarn from Phnom Srok, Banteay Meanchey province, the largest area for sericulture.⁴⁵ Obtaining this trademark would encourage local production and reach export markets, selling the concept of a quality locally-produced fibre to export buyers and tourist consumers. The conjunction between natural resources, land, national production, and trade is a determinant specificity of Cambodia sericulture, which justifies the material and geographic approach in this thesis.



⁴³ Cambodia Ministry of Commerce and ITC, *Cambodia National Silk Strategy*, 1.

⁴⁴ Rann Reuy, 'Imported Raw Silk Gets Cheaper,' *The Phnom Penh Post*, September 11, 2012, <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/business/imported-raw-silk-gets-cheaper> [Accessed September 10, 2019]; Cambodia Ministry of Commerce and ITC, *Cambodia National Silk Strategy*, 37.

⁴⁵ This initiative has not yet been granted. Kampot pepper has been recognised as GI in 2016 and Kampong Speu palm sugar in 2019. Sok Chan, 'GI Status Soon for 4 Products,' *Khmer Times*, November 2, 2016, <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/61763/gi-status-soon-for-4-products/> [Accessed 10 September 2019]

Fig.4 Cambodian golden silk yarn and cocoons at the Institute of Khmer Traditional Textiles shop, Siem Reap. Author's photograph, December 2016.

Anthropologist John Ter Horst, who has produced the most extensive and recent research on silk, identified the provinces of Kandal, Takeo, Prey Veng, Kampong Cham, and Siem Reap as the main areas for silk weaving activities in Cambodia [Fig.5].⁴⁶ Each area is known for a specific type of production. The largest silk weaving workforce, is concentrated in Takeo, about forty kilometres south of Phnom Penh, especially in the Prey Kabas and Bati districts, where about ten thousand weavers were active in the area in 2005.⁴⁷ Silk weavers from Takeo are experienced in the art of *hol*, the Cambodian term for polychromic weft ikat silk.⁴⁸ As stated earlier, Koh Dach weavers in Kandal produce *sampot phamaung*, the plain silk cloth often patterned with a brocaded band at the hem that is sold to textile dealers in Phnom Penh for the domestic market. Siem Reap, where Angkor Wat is located, that hosts more than two million visitors every year, benefits from the large presence of NGOs and craft companies drawn by tourism. Prey Veng and Kampong Cham are secondary centres of activity with fewer weavers, about 2,500 in 2005.⁴⁹ The weaving communities of Prey Veng, located along the Mekong, make various kinds of silks, including organza and silk sold by the metre in Phnom Penh textile shops.⁵⁰ The Cham ethnic groups of Kampong Cham province mostly weave cotton *krama*, the checked Cambodian scarf. High quality silks, especially *sampot hol*, are still produced in the village of Prek Changkran, Sithor Kandal District in Prey Veng.⁵¹

From the 1990s, the overall number of silk weavers grew exponentially to 20,000 in 2005, declining again at an alarming rate from the 2010s to an estimate of 5,000 in 2016.⁵² Silk

⁴⁶ Ter Horst, *Weaving into Cambodia: Trade and Identity Politics in the (post)-Colonial Cambodian Silk Weaving Industry* (Amsterdam: Eigen Beheer, 2008), 131.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 133.

⁴⁸ See appendices A1-A2-A3.

⁴⁹ Ter Horst, *Weaving into Cambodia: Trade and Identity Politics in the (post)-Colonial Cambodian Silk Weaving Industry*, 140.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 138.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 139.

⁵² *Ibid*, 131; Cambodia Ministry of Commerce and ITC, *Cambodia National Silk Strategy*, 1.

fibre producers have decreased to only a hundred people. The discrepancy between sales, tourism, and a declining workforce provides a key paradox to start with in the study of silk weaving. This points to the need to reevaluate the notion of the 'revival' of silk production as a linear construction and consider which aspects of Cambodian silk have indeed been revived, lost, and transformed in the contemporary era. This also motivates the focus on the two main silk-producing regions of Takeo and Siem Reap, which both host numerous craft organisations and groups of independent weavers, to articulate the connections and differences in weaving practices, products and markets between Takeo as the historical region of silk ikat production and Siem Reap as the leading tourist centre.

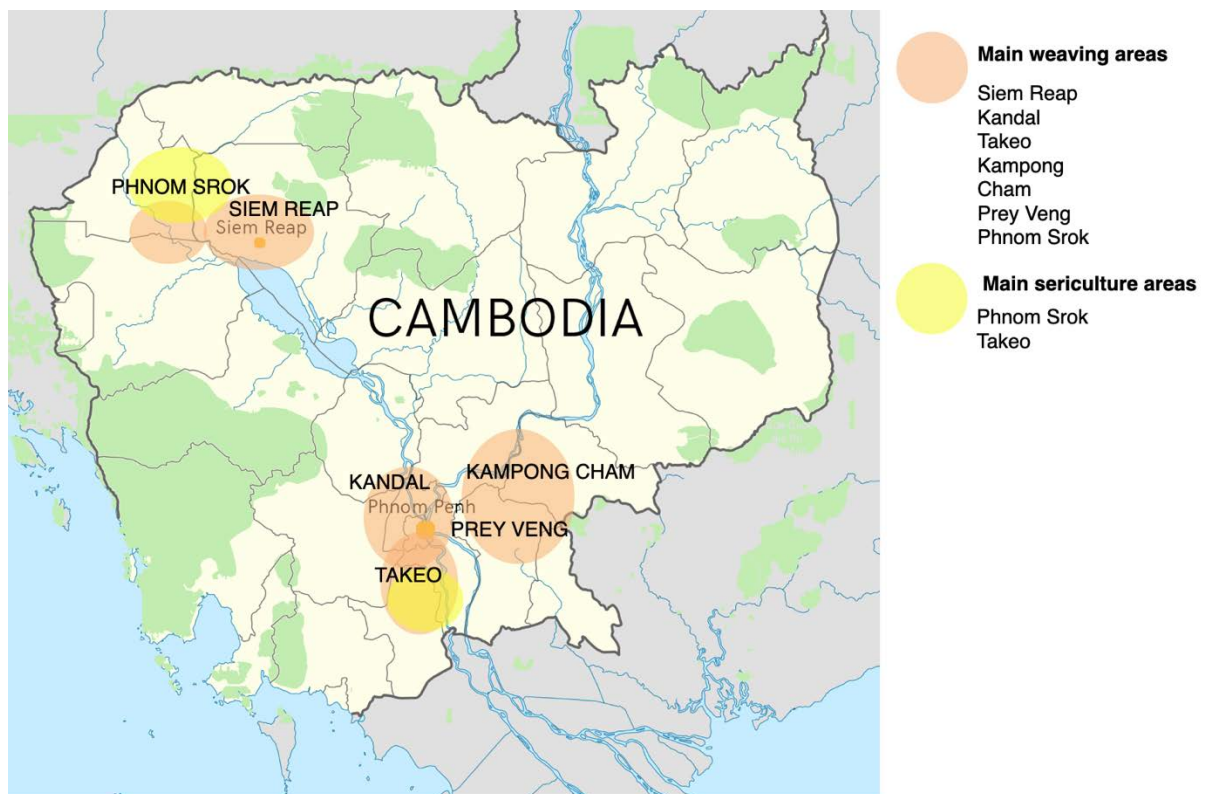


Fig.5 Map of the main sericulture and weaving areas in Cambodia in 2016, based on data from the National Silk Strategy 2016-2020, by the author.

Key actors of the silk sector

The concept of a silkscape enables an approach to the disjunctures and movements in the sector by simultaneously connecting and challenging the local and the global worlds. In a dynamic view of geography, Appadurai has identified five overlapping ‘-scapes’: the ethnoscape, the mediascape, the technoscape, the financescape, and the ideoscape, which are territories or flows forming the global, that are mediated through historical, linguistic, cultural, and political contexts.⁵³ These flows involve numerous actors such as nation-states, transnational institutions, diasporic communities and sub-national groups of different scales. Under this premise, silk becomes a dynamic matter animated by the circulation of people, discourses, skills, various forms of knowledge, and imaginaries.

Since 1991, when the country’s economy was reopened to liberalism, Cambodia has welcomed new actors to the silk sector, supported by foreign investors from the EU, Japan, and the United States.⁵⁴ With the potential to contribute to poverty reduction, rural development and cultural preservation, silk has generated interest from international development institutions such as the ITC, the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation and the EU. One institutional representation of the silkscape is this diagram from the NSS report [Fig.6]. This perspective on the Cambodian silk sector is invaluable because it offers a visual materialisation of the numerous flows—including transnational exchanges—of agents, raw materials, and silk products. The international key players are in blue and the domestic ones in orange. Arrows show contracts and material inputs between different actors of the chain. This diagram exemplifies an attempt in encapsulating as comprehensively as possible the complex system of Cambodian silk production. This thesis will provide additional diagrams to locate and visualise specific aspects of the silkscape. Also, this thesis will focus specifically

⁵³ Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 33.

⁵⁴ Deth, Moldashev and Bulut, ‘The Contemporary Geopolitics of Cambodia: Alignment in Regional and Global Contexts,’ 24.

on the central section of what is represented in the NSS diagram: the weavers, SMEs, NGOs and middlemen, intermediaries and national institutions involved the sector.



Fig.6 Cambodian silk value chain chart, NSS 2016-2020, 14.

Literature review

This thesis is concerned with the topic of knowledge and skills transmission in contemporary silk practices. This literature review is built with the idea that knowledge is power and that producers of knowledge have a specific agency in conveying dominant or marginal discourses about Cambodia. In addition to presenting key canons of scholarship on history, French colonialisation, the KR regime, immigration, rurality and textile practices, all of which have proved useful in my thesis, it is essential to critically consider the space given to indigenous perspectives to emphasise them further in this research. From the early travel writings on Cambodia by the thirteenth-century Chinese envoy Zhou Daguan to the extensive scholarship on the French colonial period, the scholarly literature on Cambodia was mostly written by foreign voices until World War II.⁵⁵ The KR tyranny was a pivotal time in the twentieth century, which impeded further the rise of Cambodian academic scholarship. It brought a vast array of international scholars to focus on the political, human and social cost of this dictatorial regime and its outcome, including the refugee crisis. Cambodian scholars slowly emerged in the 1980s with the contributions of anthropologist Ang Choulean, linguist Saveros Pou and botanist Pauline Dy Phon, which significantly expanded and disseminated expert knowledge on pre-modern Cambodia and its rites and religious beliefs, as well as on local flora. For instance, Ang Choulean offers an ethnological view which expands more common art history perspectives on the Khmer Empire. His examination of the *devata* statues carved on Angkor Wat's walls shifts its focus to the psychology and sensibilities of the Khmer artisans who aimed to 'represent these precious women in all their physical diversity and personalities'.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Zhou Daguan, Peter Harris, trans., *A Record of Cambodia: The Land and Its People* (Bangkok: Silkworm Books, 2007), 75-76.

⁵⁶ Ang Choulean, 'Psychologie de l'artisan khmer : une petite pièce à verser dans le grand dossier', *Udaya, Journal of Khmer Studies* 6 (2005), 188.

In a speech delivered in February 1998, Saveros Pou coined the term 'Khmerology' to designate a diachronic approach of Khmer language and ancient texts relying on epigraphic sources and the thorough training of Cambodian students. She argued that 'the history of a country is [...] that of human beings, of their thoughts, their action, their way of life, individuals and as members of the community'.⁵⁷

Pauline Dy Phon listed 1,254 extant plant species in Cambodia with their names in Latin, Khmer, English and French, including plants for natural dyes and species of mulberry trees *mon thom* (*Morus alba*) and *mon toch* (*Morus australis*).⁵⁸ All these perspectives provide important forms of insider knowledge connected to Cambodia's land, culture and language. Archaeology had developed as a field in Cambodia by the mid-1990s with the participation of the Royal University of Fine Arts in collaboration with international partners.⁵⁹ Moreover, with the prominence of the UN-backed Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia in the late 1990s, genocide studies have expanded, eventually becoming the most hospitable field for Cambodian expertise. The International Association of Genocide Scholars conference held in Phnom Penh in 2019 exemplifies the rise of early-career Cambodian researchers such as Hang Nisay and Seang Sopheak, artists Kim Hak and Neang Kavich and performer Phloeun Prim, all of whom are actively engaged with Cambodia's history of genocide.⁶⁰

The French dominance of the historiography of Cambodian art and design began with the French rediscovery of the ruins of Angkor Wat in 1907, ceded by the Thais, and the establishment of L'Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient, the French School of Far East Studies.

⁵⁷ Saveros Pou, 'What is Khmerology? (in Khmer),' trans. by Sotheara Vong (Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and the Buddhist Institute, Phnom Penh, 1998).

⁵⁸ Pauline Dy Phon, *Plantes utilisées au Cambodge = Rukkhajāti proeprās knuñ prades Kambujā* (Phnom Penh, 2000), 894.

⁵⁹ Lower Mekong Archaeological Project, Department of Anthropology, *University of Hawaii* <http://www2.hawaii.edu/~miriams/lomap/index.html> [Accessed August 20, 2020]

⁶⁰ International Association of Genocide Scholars 14th convention, 'The Missing Picture': Rethinking Genocide Studies & Prevention, Phnom Penh, July 14-19, 2019.

Focused on the conservation of the monumental site of Angkor Wat, the organisation fostered research in archaeology, art history, and religious studies, mainly concentrated on the Khmer Empire and the wealth of archaeological temples found in the country. This French colonial ideology has left an enduring mark on the historiography of Cambodian crafts. Crafts became concrete expressions of the Cambodian nation built on the glorious past of the Khmer Empire.

This was epitomised by the writings of art historian and architect Henri Marchal and artist and educator George Groslier in the 1910s.⁶¹ Both praised the unique aesthetic of Khmer ornamental art while declaring the impending decadence of Cambodian crafts.⁶² Since the 2000s, Groslier's legacy has been the subject of many critical studies. The pioneering work of Ingrid Muan, and subsequently that of historian Gabrielle Abbe, evaluated Groslier's promotion of Khmer arts and crafts as part of the 'civilising mission' of the French Protectorate, to 'craft a national discourse [...] and the construction of a Khmer cultural identity, especially for a Western audience'.⁶³

In relation to textiles in particular, Penny Edwards has explored the connected issues of territoriality, nationalism, colonialism and indigenous artistic production in Cambodia from 1850 to 1950.⁶⁴ She highlights how dress styles in the colonial era redefined social norms of gender identity and ethnicity, separating men from women and Khmer people from ethnic Vietnamese and Chinese living in the country. Edwards demonstrates how the *sampot* became the central element of women's attire and the epitome of the Cambodian national dress, not only domestically but also in mainland France through colonial

⁶¹ Henri Marchal, 'L'art cambodgien moderne,' *Bulletin de la Société des Etudes indochinoises* 65 (1913): 69.

⁶² Georges Groslier, 'La reprise des arts khmers,' *La Revue de Paris*, 6 (Nov-Dec 1899) : 398-402.

⁶³ Ingrid Muan, 'Citing Angkor: The 'Cambodian Arts' in the Age of Restoration 1918-2000', (unpublished PhD thesis, Columbia University, 2001), 19 ; Gabrielle Abbe, 'Le développement des arts au Cambodge à l'époque coloniale : George Groslier et l'École des Arts cambodgiens (1917-1945),' *Udaya, Journal of Khmer Studies* 12 (2014): 35.

⁶⁴ Penny Edwards, *Cambodge: The Cultivation of a Nation, 1860-1945* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008), 144-150.

exhibitions.⁶⁵ Edwards did not directly incorporate Cambodian subjectivities, instead grounding her analysis in early French commentators' writings and rare articulations by voices from the Cambodian elite.

To counter the ways in which Cambodian cultural history had been dominated by foreign perspectives, Ingrid Muan and Daravuth Ly invited four Cambodian researchers, Chea Narin, Chea Sopheary, Kem Sonine, and Preap Chanmara, to collect testimonies from elderly Cambodians on dress and beauty customs from 2001 to 2003. This archive, entitled 'The Memory Bank' reconstructed 'individual memories of historical events associated with colonialism and independence; local beliefs of geography and land use; conceptions of gender and the experiences of women and everyday accounts of modernisation and change' outside of the official histories of twentieth-century Cambodia'.⁶⁶ This thesis builds on this approach of looking at the vernacular and embracing the narratives of insiders that have been marginalised in the existing English- and French-language scholarship.

Ethnographic approaches, however, are not new. In the 1960s, the focus of studies shifted from archaeology and history to the anthropological study of rurality. May Ebihara, considered the first American anthropologist to carry out ethnographic research in Cambodia, with Milada Kalab, recognised kinship with French geographer Jean Delvert's pioneering survey of Cambodia's country in terms of climate, territory, rural economy and peasant life.⁶⁷ In 1968 Ebihara published a two-volume dissertation on a rice-producing village of seven hundred inhabitants in Kandal province to discuss the social, family and religious patterns of rural Cambodia.⁶⁸ Her work demonstrated the validity of a small-scale materialist and humanistic focus, following Franz Boas' advocacy of synchronic studies to

⁶⁵ Penny Edwards, 'Restyling Colonial Cambodia (1860–1954): French Dressing, Indigenous Custom and National Costume,' *Fashion Theory* 5:4 (2001): 393-416.

⁶⁶ Ingrid Muan and al., *Seams of Change: Clothing and the Care of the Self in late 19th and 20th century Cambodia* (Phnom Penh: Reyum Publishing, 2003), i.

⁶⁷ May Ebihara, 'Book Review,' *American Anthropologist*, 65 (1963): 1155-1157; Delvert, *Le paysan cambodgien*, 282-283.

⁶⁸ May Ebihara, Andrew C. Mertha, and Judy Ledgerwood, *Svay: a Khmer Village in Cambodia* (1971) (New York: Cornell University Press, 2018).

understand local histories and a diversity of cultures.⁶⁹ This method is appropriate to the prevalence of orality in Cambodian culture, especially in the countryside. Bernard Dupaigne's key ethnographic study of sericulture and weaving in the same period fits this model, exploring silk-making processes in villages through observation, description, and conversations with silk farmers and weavers.⁷⁰

In addition to David Chandler, who has remained the authority on Cambodian political studies and the KR in particular, scholars such as historian Ben Kiernan have used interviewing methods by introducing testimonies of survivors to understand the extreme violence exerted on the Cambodian population.⁷¹ In the early 1980s, Kiernan interviewed hundreds of Cambodian refugees in the Thai border camps about the mass killings and ethnic purges.

With its range of ethnographic methods, anthropology has provided some of the most potent studies on social issues in contemporary Cambodia – in Chandler's words, 'neither orientalist nor condescending' but 'displaying an extraordinary openness and sensitivity to Cambodian culture'.⁷² In the 2000s, anthropologists focused on a broader spectrum of crucial topics, including the KR genocide, the civil war aftermath, Buddhism, ethnicity and diaspora.⁷³ Studies on the refugee crisis and the Cambodian diaspora have followed a similar human-centric path, exploring the reconstruction of Khmer identity in the post-civil war period. Anthropologist Nancy Smith-Hefner interviewed 175 Khmer immigrants to

⁶⁹ Ledgerwood, 'Introduction,' in *A Khmer Village in Cambodia*, xii.

⁷⁰ Dupaigne, 'L'élevage des vers à soie au Cambodge,' 1-29.

⁷¹ David Chandler, *The Tragedy of Cambodian History: Politics, War, and Revolution since 1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010) ; Ben Kiernan, *The Pol Pot Regime: Race, Power and Genocide in Cambodia Under the Khmer Rouge, 1975-79* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

⁷² David Chandler, 'Preface,' in *Cambodian Culture since 1975: Homeland and Exile*, eds. May Ebihara, Carol Mortland, and Judy Ledgerwood, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1994), xii-xiii.

⁷³ Noteworthy in this anthropological literature are Alexander Hinton, *Why Did They Kill? Cambodia in the Shadow of Genocide* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004) ; Elizabeth Guthrie and John Amos Marston, *History, Buddhism, and New Religious Movements in Cambodia* (Chiang Mai: Silk Worm Books, 2006) ; Joachim Schliesinger, *Ethnic Groups of Cambodia, Volume 3: Profile of the Austro-Thai-and Sinitic-Speaking Peoples* (Bangkok: White Lotus Co Ltd, 2011).

document their conditions of resettlement in the United States and the renegotiated social bonds with their families and communities.

Studies focused on immigrant communities have expanded the debate about the reformation of Cambodian culture since the 1990s. Ledgerwood and Mortland, who originally spent extensive periods in refugee camps at the Thai border, examined the mechanisms of loss in ritual and artistic practices. They invited the much-needed perspective of Cambodian experts such Khing Hoc Dy on literature and Sam-Ang Sam on music.⁷⁴ Similarly, researchers such as Susan Needham and Karen Quintiliani have taken on the role of cultural brokers, working closely with communities, collecting photographs and testimonies over decades to reconstruct the formation of the ethnic neighbourhood of Cambodia Town in Long Beach, California.⁷⁵ Dance scholar Judith Hamera followed and interviewed a family of former Khmer ballet dancers in Long Beach, showing how the trauma of migration and war affects Cambodian refugees in how they project and reclaim their memories and sense of identity, especially through cultural artistic practices.⁷⁶ Cambodian survivors themselves, especially those resettled in the diaspora in the 2000s, have also reclaimed their voices by publishing their memoirs.⁷⁷ These diverse and essential contributions, providing a situated and embodied scholarship of Cambodian-American and refugee experience, inform the approach and positioning of this thesis.

As women make up the majority of the silk production workforce in Cambodia, and are also the main consumers of silk textiles, it also needs to be pointed out that my research integrates a stronger focus on female viewpoints without framing it as a gendered study of

⁷⁴ Sam-Ang Sam, 'Khmer Traditional Music Today,' In *Cambodian Culture since 1975: Homeland and Exile*, eds. Ebihara, Mortland and Ledgerwood (New York: Cornell University Press, 1994), 39-46.

⁷⁵ Susan Needham, and Karen Quintiliani, *Cambodians in Long Beach* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2008).

⁷⁶ Judith Hamera, *Dancing Communities: Performance, Difference and Connection in the Global City* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 7.

⁷⁷ Katharya Um, 'Refractions of Home: Exile, Memory and Diasporic Longing', in *Expressions of Cambodia: The Politics of Tradition, Identity and Change*, eds. Leakthina Tollier and Timothy Winter (London: Routledge, 2006), 86-101; Loung Ung, *First They Killed My Father: A Daughter of Cambodia Remembers* (New York: Harper Collins, 2006); Chileng Pa and Carol Mortland, *Escaping the Khmer Rouge: A Cambodian Memoir* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2005).

silk under a feminist framework. This thesis examines social patterns animating Cambodian society and the formation of cultural identities, including the role that silk plays in defining femininity. Women's perspectives have been marginalised in dominant historical narratives of Cambodia. Female social scholars such as Trudy Jacobsen and Annuska Derks have pioneered scholarship on women's history, internal migrations and gender inequalities in Cambodia.⁷⁸ Geographer Katherine Brickell has also examined the historiography of ideals placed on women in Cambodian society, bringing disruptive narratives of gender bias to the forefront and repositioning women as 'vocal subjects'.⁷⁹ Looking at gendered social codes in Cambodia in regards to issues of mobility and education, Brickell provides an invaluable model of 'microlevel research' combining historical study with 'empirical material' taken from group discussions and interviews.⁸⁰

Other areas of research dealing with contemporary aspects of Cambodia, such as social justice, geopolitics in rural and urban contexts and environmental studies, have received broad coverage in the recent *Handbook of Contemporary Cambodia*, which notably offers a panel of Cambodian scholars.⁸¹ The book also deals to a lesser degree with cultural and artistic expression.

Southeast Asian textile studies have noticeably centred on Indonesia, Myanmar and Thailand rather than Cambodia and Laos, looking at materials, thread-making, weaving and dyeing processes, along with dress typologies as ethnic markers, representative of the wide

⁷⁸ Trudy Jacobsen, *Lost Goddesses: The Denial of Female Power in Cambodian History* (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2008); Similarly, anthropologist Annuska Derks has explored the story of Cambodian women resettling and migrating in urban areas to provide 'a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between individual experiences and structures of inequity.' Annuska Derks, *Khmer Women on the Move: Exploring Work and Life in Urban Cambodia* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), 20.

⁷⁹ Katherine Brickell, 'We Don't Forget the Old Rice Pot When We Get the New One,' *Signs*, 36:2 (Winter 2011): 441.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 443-444.

⁸¹ Katherine Brickell and Simon Springer, eds., *The Handbook of Contemporary Cambodia* (London: Routledge, 2017), 1-13.

diversity of minorities based in the region.⁸² Scholarship on Cambodian textiles and dress has remained focused on technical and iconographic developments in sericulture, weaving and dyeing while overlooking political and theoretical aspects. It has offered the study of notable examples from museum collections such as this *pidan* (pictorial ikat) collected by Suzanne Karpelès, founder of the Buddhist Institute of Cambodia in 1930 [Fig.7]. To date, textile expert Gillian Green remains the leading reference for her extensive historical study of Cambodian textiles pre and post KR.⁸³ Green has treated contemporary textile techniques as ‘traditional’, praising their ‘enduring importance’ and linking them to textile developments dating from the Angkorian period.⁸⁴ Her work has been complemented by a handful of studies on the material culture of silk artefacts, notably Sophearith Siyonn’s work on the pictorial ikat hanging *pidan* and Kikuo Morimoto’s research and advocacy on the production of *hol* (ikat).⁸⁵ Green, Morimoto, and a UNESCO publication have focused on silk and natural dyes techniques as essential forms of cultural heritage, stressing the importance of revitalising these ancient practices.⁸⁶ This thesis acknowledges this body of literature as a foundational source of knowledge on Cambodian textiles and techniques, to be complemented by other forms of knowledge carried by contemporary silk practitioners and consumers.

⁸² See Sylvia Fraser-Lu, *Handwoven Textiles of South-East Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Jasleen Dhamija, ed. *Berg Encyclopedia of World Dress and Fashion: South Asia and Southeast Asia* (Oxford: Bloomsbury Academic, 2010), <https://www.bloomsburyfashioncentral.com/products/berg-fashion-library/encyclopedia/berg-encyclopedia-of-world-dress-and-fashion-south-asia-and-southeast-asia> [Accessed November 22, 2019]; Fiona Kerlogue, Rudolf G. Smend, Fulvio Zanettini, and Leo Haks, *Batik Design, Style & History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004).

⁸³ Gillian Green, *Traditional Textiles of Cambodia: Cultural Threads and Material Heritage* (Bangkok: River Books, 2003); Gillian Green, *Pictorial Cambodian Textiles* (Bangkok: River Books, 2008).

⁸⁴ Gillian Green, ‘Textiles at the Khmer Court of Angkor,’ in *Through the Thread of Time: Southeast Asian Textiles: the James H. W. Thompson Foundation Symposium Papers*, ed. Jane Puranananda (Bangkok: River Books, 2004), 24; Green, *Traditional Textiles of Cambodia: Cultural Threads and Material Heritage*, 107.

⁸⁵ See appendices A1-A2-A3. Sophearith Siyonn, *Pidan (Bitān) in Khmer Culture* (Phnom Penh: Reyum Publishing, 2008) ; Institute of Khmer Traditional Textiles (IKTT) and Centre for Khmer Studies (CKS), eds., *‘Hol’ The Art of Cambodian Textiles, Seminar Proceedings 12-13 Dec. 2003* (Siem Reap: Centre for Khmer Studies, 2003).

⁸⁶ See this Buddhist Institute publication commissioned by UNESCO: Sor Sokny, Phat Chanmony, and Som Vannak, *Technique of Natural Dyeing and Traditional Pattern of Silk Production in Cambodia* (Phnom Penh: UNESCO & The Buddhist Institute, 2008).

This idea of continuity and tradition in Cambodian culture has been a recurring pattern in the discourse on crafts during the French colonial period. The independence years of the Sangkum briefly departed from the crystallised 'notion of the 'Cambodian Arts' as handmade, traditional, and unchanging'.⁸⁷ The narrative returned strongly in the 1990s in the face of the tremendous damage inflicted on Cambodian culture after the KR regime. Crafts theorists such as Clare M. Wilkinson-Weber and Alicia Ori Denicola have used Hobsbawm's perspective on invented traditions to critique 'the notions of craft as either a relic or revival'.⁸⁸ Similarly, this thesis argues for the need to situate contemporary crafts within shifting social and historical contexts.



Fig.7 Buddhist hanging pidan showing the Great Departure of Buddha, early 20th c., silk ikat, collected by Suzanne Karpelès. acquisition 71.1933.111.258, Musée du Quai Branly, Paris.

Addressing *hol pidan*, silk hangings originally donated to monks and exhibited in Buddhist temples, produced by the Japanese NGO Caring for Young Khmer, art historian Joanna

⁸⁷ Ingrid Muan, 'Playing with Powers: The Politics of Art in Newly Independent Cambodia,' *Udaya, Journal of Khmer Studies* 6, (2005): 44.

⁸⁸ Clare M. Wilkinson-Weber and Alicia Ori Denicola, eds. 'Taking Stock of Craft', in *Critical Craft: Technology, Globalization, and Capitalism* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 2.

Wolfhart questioned the ‘familiar discursive dichotomy of ‘traditional’ against ‘modern’ or ‘contemporary’ [Fig.8].⁸⁹ She argued that ‘the processes used to produce these textiles’ were traditional, while the context of their production ‘under the auspices of a foreign organisation’ differed significantly from past practices. My thesis explores these tensions to overcome ‘the static connotations implied by the idea of a ‘traditional’ art form’.⁹⁰ For these reasons, this thesis instead references ancient, ancestral and artisanal techniques, using the terms ‘heritage’, ‘legacy’, ‘practices’, ‘customs’, ‘usage’, and ‘habits’.



Fig.8 Pidan hanging sold at Caring for Young Khmer shop in Phnom Penh. Author's photograph, December 28, 2016.

Finally, a few key contributions have brought contemporary perspectives on Cambodian silk. Green relied on testimonies of the Cambodian diaspora in Australia to recover

⁸⁹ Joanna Wolfarth, ‘Hol Pidan: Cambodian Traditional Pictorial Silk Textile: Preservation and Development, at the National Museum of Cambodia, 2016,’ *Southeast of Now* 1:1 (March 2017): 207.

⁹⁰ Wilkinson-Weber and Ori Denicola, eds. ‘Taking Stock of Craft,’ 6.

knowledge of clothing styles still prevalent in the 2000s, and incorporated this data in a general chapter on Cambodian dress.⁹¹ My thesis expands on silk practices reclaimed in the context of cultural displacement by considering how the major migration waves of the 1980s have impacted on and modified Cambodian dress-related cultural practices in the United States.

Fashion scholar Katalin Medvedev has taken into account the sector's new order since the 1990s by focusing on NGOs involved in the industry's efforts towards revitalisation, such as IKTT in Siem Reap and Blue Mekong in Stung Treng province.⁹² Based on periods of fieldwork carried out in 2008, Medvedev investigated the impact of these silk-producing organisations 'as positive change agent, especially in fashion peripheries'.⁹³ Looking at the genesis and structure of the NGOs, and their founders' history, and mostly leaving aside the vantage points of the weavers, Medvedev integrates silk handicrafts produced by local NGOs into the Cambodian fashion industry along with the garment factories subcontracting for multinationals. While Medvedev's focus on NGOs is valid, this thesis argues that the artisanal silk sector is separated from the industrial garment sector for export, a viewpoint also supported by Cambodian silk professionals.⁹⁴

Lastly, Ter Horst, who has produced the most recent and extensive work on Cambodian silk weavers, has considered the silk chain beyond Cambodian borders by studying the role of ethnic Chinese communities in silk fibre trade, sales, and weaving.⁹⁵ Ter Horst aimed to

⁹¹ Green, *Traditional Textiles of Cambodia*, 194.

⁹² Katalin Medvedev and Brittany Reef, 'Picking Up the Threads: Model Approach Helps Cambodia Design a New Fashion Image,' *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 41:1-2 (2013): 131-149; Katalin Medvedev, 'The Roots of Change in the Contemporary Cambodian Fashion Scene,' *International Journal of Fashion Studies*, 2:1, (2015): 9-37; Katalin Medvedev, 'Cambodian Fashion NGOs: Are They Doing Good?' *Journal of Textile Engineering & Fashion Technology*, 1: 4 (2017): 148-151.

⁹³ Medvedev and Reef, 'Picking Up the Threads: Model Approach Helps Cambodia Design a New Fashion Image,' 135.

⁹⁴ 'The industrial garment sector is part of a different value chain without any major linkages to sericulture and silk weaving in Cambodia', Cambodia Ministry of Commerce and ITC, *Cambodia National Silk Strategy*, 5.

⁹⁵ John Ter Horst, *Ikat Weaving and the Ethnic Chinese Influences in Cambodia* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2011), xiv. ; See also Heidi Dahles and John Ter Horst, 'Weaving into Cambodia: Negotiated Ethnicity in the (Post)colonial Silk Industry', in *Expressions of Cambodia: The Politics of Tradition, Identity, and Change*, eds. Ollier, Leakthina Chan-Pech, and Tim Winter (London: Routledge, 2006), 119-132.

contest the discourses elevating silk as a Cambodian national product, which he argues conflate the notion of Cambodian with the dominant Khmer ethnicity and ignore the agency of other minorities involved in the sector. His research deconstructing the dynamics of silk from the 1990s, showing multiple actors from silk yarn producers to weavers, intermediaries and traders, especially from diverse ethnicities, has been an essential source for this thesis. Ter Horst, however, largely ignored the materiality of silk as objects and silk practices as a form of knowledge and agency for the weavers, which is a key focus of Chapter Three in this thesis.

Theoretical frameworks: from global silk networks to individual forms of embodied and tacit knowledge

The literature review has demonstrated the effectiveness and necessity of ethnographic and critical approaches in establishing a multifaceted understanding of Cambodia's cultural history and its peoples. It also confirms the validity of a polyvocal study that includes other forms of knowledge responding to epistemologies grounded in orality, tacitness, the body, and memory. Sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos coined the term 'the epistemologies of the South' to define these forms of knowledge that depart from Eurocentric fields of research.⁹⁶ He qualified them as 'popular, lay, plebeian, peasant, or indigenous knowledges on the other side of the line', engaging scholars in crossing boundaries and looking further.⁹⁷

First, this thesis positions Cambodian dress and textile practices within the theoretical argument supported by fashion scholars Jennifer Craik and Angela Jansen that is 'disputing misassumptions concerning non-European fashion as being static, authentic and

⁹⁶ Boaventura de Sousa Santos, 'Beyond Abyssal Thinking: From Global Lines to Ecologies of Knowledges', *Eurozine*, 29 June 2007, 2, <https://www.eurozine.com/beyond-abyssal-thinking/> [Accessed June 1, 2020]

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

symbolic'.⁹⁸ Cambodian dress has its own fashion system responding to change, taste, economic and cultural exchanges, and including clothing styles, hairstyles and cosmetics – that has been well demonstrated by interviews on Cambodian clothing and daily life documented in the book *Seams of Change*.⁹⁹ However, narratives on Cambodian fashion have not departed from the common polarised tropes that Craik and Jansen also challenge, separating West from non-West, margins from centre, tradition from modernity, and local from global. The most common discourse on Cambodian fashion history links dress changes to the rise of foreign influences of the Siam kingdom and especially French colonial power, thus reinforcing the construction of Cambodian fashion under a Western-centric scope. For instance, Edwards has explained how in the mid-nineteenth century the establishment of a specific Cambodian style responded to the colonial rule's attempt to determine codified representation of the Cambodian national identity. In the 1900s, King Sisowath, male court and governmental officials wore *sampot chawng kbun* (wrapped trousers) with tailored jackets.¹⁰⁰ On the other hand, the *sampot hol*, a silk hip wrapper of lavish polychromic weft ikat, became a commodity in mainland France. In the years of independence, the idea of fashion was tied to the arrival of mass-produced Western-style clothing with fitted shapes and colourful patterns becoming popular among Cambodian urbanites. The dictatorship in the 1970s forbid the Cambodian society to wear any sort of fashion. After its collapse, from the 1980s the Cambodian wardrobe has included a combination of mass-produced clothing and handmade textiles. Silk textiles are still worn to the present day on special occasions. For women, the main ceremonial attire consists of a silk pleated *sampot* (hip wrap) and a cotton or lacy *aor* (blouse), often with a *krama saut* (silk scarf) worn asymmetrically on the shoulder [Fig.9].

⁹⁸ Angela Jansen and Jennifer Craik, *Modern Fashion Traditions: Negotiating Tradition and Modernity through Fashion* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 1.

⁹⁹ Muan and al, *Seams of Change: Clothing and the Care of the Self in late 19th and 20th century Cambodia*.

¹⁰⁰ Linda Welters and Abby Lillethun, *Fashion History: A Global View* (London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2019), 183-184.

Fashion scholars Joanne Eicher and Sandra Lee Evenson have argued that ‘to counter Eurocentrism, we must recognize that contemporary styles of dress are the consequence of a history in which internal and external forces of change have selectively shaped the form’.¹⁰¹ This thesis acknowledges that Cambodian clothing has oscillated between being considered fashion and traditional through history, and that changes in dress have largely been discussed in connection with external influences. That said, this thesis also aims to counter Eurocentric assumptions inherent in the terminologies of fashion scholarship. Therefore, this thesis will not use terms that promote a stereotyped view of Cambodian dress as traditional, regional or under the ‘rigidly prescribed costume form with few variations’.¹⁰² It emphasises the use of the term ‘dress’, which encompasses clothing and body modifications, and ‘fashion’. The term ‘costume’ is employed solely to designate garments used in dance and theatre, following Joanne Eicher’s definition that ‘costume primarily designates dress practices that conceal or transform the individual’s identity when performing in dance, theater, and masquerades across the world’.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Joanne B. Eicher and Sandra Lee Evenson, *The Visible Self: Global Perspectives on Dress, Culture, and Society* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 101.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Joanne B. Eicher, ‘Introduction to Global Perspectives,’ *Berg Encyclopedia of World Dress and Fashion*, eds. Joanne B. Eicher and Phyllis G. Tortora (Oxford: Berg, 2010) In Bloomsbury Fashion Central. <https://www.bloomsburyfashioncentral.com/products/berg-fashion-library/encyclopedia/berg-encyclopedia-of-world-dress-and-fashion-global-perspectives/introduction-to-global-perspectives> [Accessed Dec. 8, 2020]



Fig.9 Procession of women in sampot hol, aor, and krama at a Buddhist ceremony in Takeo province. Author's photograph, March 17, 2018.

During fieldwork in Cambodia in December 2017, the majority of the Cambodians I saw wore Western-style trousers, *sarong*, shirts, and t-shirts. *Krama* (plaid woven scarf) is worn as a daily accessory by all Cambodians, men and women. Only a small number of women wore tube skirts, rarely in silk, in the *phamaung* and *hol* styles. These observations mirrored a series of articles in *The Phnom Penh Post* in 2011, which blamed Western fashion and 'sexy dresses' for causing the disappearance of the *traditional* attire, especially when attending Buddhist ceremonies at the temple such as Pchum Ben or Khmer New Year celebrations.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ 'Khmer Culture,' *The Phnom Penh Post*, September 21, 2011, <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/lift/khmer-culture> [Accessed May 16, 2018]; Kim Samath and Touch Yin Vannith, 'Why do Women Wear Sexy Clothes in Pagodas?,' *The Phnom Penh Post*, 21 September 2011, <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/lift/why-do-women-wear-sexy-clothes-pagodas> [Accessed May 16, 2019].

In these articles, Cambodian officials and media linked what they considered signs of cultural decline to globalisation and liberalism, while young people expressed a desire to wear comfortable clothes, and cited the high cost and maintenance of silk garments. Fashion scholar Margaret Maynard has stressed that globalisation and its realm of disjunctions, as developed by Appadurai, have created tensions in the way people dress, between homogenisation and heterogenisation.¹⁰⁵ This thesis addresses this set of debates around changes and adaptation in dress use in the face of globalisation, first in Chapter One on the historiography of silk and dress in Cambodia that shifts between local and foreign influences, and in Chapter Four on the Cambodian American diaspora and their clothing practices. Similarly, the field of global design history has encouraged sited approaches 'privileging the interactive movement of things and ideas, and the process of cross-fertilisation of taste'.¹⁰⁶ Sarah Teasley, Giorgio Riello and Glenn Adamson are concerned with 'the multiplicities and fragmented condition in which we experience and enact design', which is a suitable context within which to examine the Cambodian silk sector while acknowledging its historic ties, geographic positioning and contemporary reconfiguration.¹⁰⁷

This thesis considers the ways in which the Cambodian silk sector operates as a complex network which integrates what anthropologist Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing would call global and local frictions bound by historical and geographic encounters.¹⁰⁸ Tsing argues that ethnographic analysis can help unpack localised areas of friction and expose their significance. Therefore, the cultural specificity of these global interactions is explored to reveal their ramifying effects on silk.¹⁰⁹ The seemingly isolated realities of Cambodian silk

¹⁰⁵ Margaret Maynard, *Dress and Globalisation*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 21-22.

¹⁰⁶ Sarah Teasley, Giorgio Riello and Glenn Adamson, eds., *Global Design History* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 3.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 4.

¹⁰⁸ Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (Princeton: University Press, 2004), 3.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 3.

weavers are reintegrated in the context of a national and global production chain. Global design history also relies on 'network theory [which] helps us to understand how knowledge is transmitted across cultures'.¹¹⁰ With the concept of Actor-Network Theory (ANT), Bruno Latour, Michael Fallon and John Law, part of the Science and Technology Studies field, have contributed to the study of production flows and the circulation of commodities in technosocial and technoscientific contexts. Latour argues that power is a force circulating between various human and non-human agents.¹¹¹ Networks may include objects, materials and organisations. In 2008 Latour brought this philosophical and anthropological perspective to design studies, emphasising its potential to connect materials to things to forces and 'carrying with it a new attention of meaning'.¹¹² The transformative and multidimensional quality of ANT provides a useful methodological lens through which to consider the multiple nature of the silk network, 'a parliament of things [to] be assembled', which responds to the agency of specific players that, in turn, resort to a series of processes, tools, and materials to produce silk objects.¹¹³

ANT has also shown limitations. Latour himself has acknowledged the non-hierarchical, flattening nature of ANT, in which 'both micro and macro are local effects of hooking up to circulating entities'.¹¹⁴ Sociologist Tom Mills has argued that 'its horizontalist, symmetrical approach is ill-suited both to the development of scientific knowledge about social structures, and to the interrogation, empirical or normative, of the centres of contemporary social power'.¹¹⁵ Moreover, several Science and Technology Studies scholars have critically

¹¹⁰ Teasley, Riello and Adamson, eds., *Global Design History*, 3.

¹¹¹ Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 72.

¹¹² Bruno Latour, 'A Cautious Prometheus? A Few Steps Toward a Philosophy of Design (with special attention to Peter Sloterdijk)', in *Networks of Design: Proceedings of the 2008 Annual International Conference of the Design History Society, University College Falmouth, 3-6 September*, ed. Jonathan Glynne, Fiona Hackney and Viv Minton (Boca Raton: Universal-Publishers, 2009), 2-4.

¹¹³ *Ibid*, 5.

¹¹⁴ Bruno Latour, 'On Recalling ANT', *The Sociological Review* 47:1 (May 1999): 19.

¹¹⁵ Tom Mills, 'What has become of critique? Reassembling sociology after Latour', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 69 (2018): 298-9.

addressed the Western-centric universalist thinking behind ANT, comparing this paradigm to post-colonial perspectives and East Asian local practices.¹¹⁶ Wen-Yuan Lin and John Law stressed that the heterogeneity of worlds is 'contextual', meaning that 'what counts as good knowledge in one location may or may not count as knowledge anywhere else'.¹¹⁷ They argued that 'the object is to highlight underprivileged local perspectives and situations without essentialising locality'.¹¹⁸ Sociologists David Dumouilin Kevran, Mina Kleiche-Dray and Mathieu Quet recommend pursuing the energising crossing between science and technology and postcolonial cultural criticism to question 'the multiple nature of power (that we know only from sites of observation that are different) and the interplay of forms of otherness', and explore alternative empirical forms of modernity.¹¹⁹

In addition to these invaluable interpretations, my thesis also relies on the scripting approach, derived from ANT, to examine artefacts, making processes and materials.

Developed by sociologist of technology Madeleine Akrich, scripting considers how technical objects are the recipients, sums, and results of their designers' agency, built from their interactions with the users, whether imagined or real.¹²⁰ Kjetil Fallan validates this approach for design historians who are looking at 'how a product's utilitarian functions, aesthetics expressions, social meaning and cultural identities are constructed'.¹²¹

Scholars of ceramics Louise Allison Cort and Leedom Lefferts produced a comparative study of making processes in the mid-1990s in mainland Southeast Asia, including Cambodia.¹²²

¹¹⁶ David Dumouilin Kevran, Mina Kleiche-Dray, and Mathieu Quet, 'Les STS ont-elles un Sud ? Penser les sciences dans/avec les Suds', *Revue d'anthropologie des connaissances* 11:3 (2017): 423–454 ; Wen-yuan Lin and John Law, 'We Have Never Been Latecomers!? Making Knowledge Spaces for East Asian Technosocial Practices', *East Asian Science, Technology and Society: An International Journal* 9 (2015): 117–126.

¹¹⁷ Lin and Law, 'We Have Never Been Latecomers!? Making Knowledge Spaces for East Asian Technosocial Practices,' 120-21.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Dumouilin Kevran, Kleiche-Dray, and Quet, 'Les STS ont-elles un Sud ? Penser les sciences dans/avec les Suds,' 297.

¹²⁰ Madeleine Akrich, 'The De-Description of Technical Objects,' in *Shaping Technology/Building Society*, edited by W. Bijker and J. Law (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), 208.

¹²¹ Kjetil Fallan, *Design History: Understanding Theory and Method* (Oxford: Berg, 2010), 13.

¹²² Louise Allison Court and Leedom Lefferts have applied Pierre Lemonnier's method of '*chaînes opératoires*'. Taking the example of ankave drums in Papua New Guinea, Lemonnier has argued that

Following the concept of *chaînes opératoires* common to archaeology and cultural anthropology, they deconstructed the different steps of pottery making, looking at ‘technology as an embodied behaviour’ – that is, the postures and actions adopted by artisans to achieve a range of specific tasks. Similarly to Akrich, they considered ‘the behavioral patterns involved in production and their impact on the item produced’ which helps to identify the interactions between the artisans, their gestures and the materials.¹²³ Informed by these examples of scripting and post-colonial ANT, this thesis aims to map the silk sector, navigating from macro-geopolitical systems to micro-processes of production. Conversely, it navigates from the fibre to the economy of silk and trade, while integrating makers and consumers as key agents and producers of knowledge.

In addition to network theory, this thesis uses cultural geography to establish a strong sense of place, to fully situate the research geographically and historically in the specific territories of silk production and consumption in Cambodia and Long Beach, California. Geographer David Delaney has established that territories find ‘their manifestations in their historic specificity’.¹²⁴ In other words, territories are interdependent with the processes of cultural, social and political transformations that cross them and affect their nature.¹²⁵ As exemplified at the beginning of this chapter, in discussing Koh Dach island, this thesis opts for a located ethnographic analysis grounded in maps and descriptions, treating the spaces of silk weaving as ‘human social creations’, and ‘significant cultural artefacts’.¹²⁶ Moreover, Delaney focuses on macro- and micro-territorial structures,

each step of the production sequence must be detailed to perceive the ‘material dimension of technical behaviours’. See Pierre Lemonnier, ‘Mythiques chaînes opératoires,’ *Techniques & Culture*, 43-44:1 (2004): 1-2 ; Louise Allison Cort and Leedom Lefferts, ‘An Approach to the Study of Contemporary Earthenware Technology in Mainland Southeast Asia,’ *Journal of the Siam Society* 88:1&2 (2000): 205.

¹²³ Cort and Lefferts, ‘An Approach to the Study of Contemporary Earthenware Technology in Mainland Southeast Asia,’ 205.

¹²⁴ David Delaney, *Territory, A Short Introduction* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 20.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, 23.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, 10.

‘where individual humans as embodied beings organise themselves with respect to the social and material world’.¹²⁷ In this situated framework, this thesis is particularly concerned with the relationship between materiality and the people forming the silkscape, starting with weavers as key agents of knowledge.

Cambodian silk weavers work in rural areas, either independently, within their own family or neighbouring villagers, or as part of craft NGOs, which creates a diversity of situations in terms of family dynamics, social and material interrelations and economic transactions. However, weaving in Cambodia is also a practice commonly passed on from mother to daughter at a young age through observation, oral instruction, copying, and repetition. Looking at ‘the makers’ individual processes, strategies, and tactics of knowing’, Trevor Marchand has developed a rich canon of scholarship on the different forms of knowledge produced through craft practices.¹²⁸ To Marchand, ‘making things is therefore making knowledge. By carefully studying these micro-processes, we stand a better chance of describing the mechanisms of social and cultural change’.¹²⁹ This strong emphasis on engaging closely with weavers’ work provides a unique lens into the revitalisation and survival of Cambodian cultural practices in the context of post-conflict economic and social reconstruction.

Marchand’s edited volume *Making Knowledge* emphasises non-Western ethnographic studies such as those of Indian mat weavers and Khazak female embroiderers to focus on the mechanisms of skills learning and how this is communicated by the artisans from verbal to physical forms of communication.¹³⁰ Along with discourses on weavers themselves, this thesis therefore examines the role of the embodied and the tacit in making and wearing silk. Marchand suggests that ‘the body plays a more crucial role in the making of all forms of

¹²⁷ Delaney, *Territory, A Short Introduction*, 10.

¹²⁸ Trevor Marchand, ed. *Making Knowledge: Explorations of the Indissoluble Relation Between Mind, Body and Environment* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2010), 15.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, 112.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, 15.

knowledge than what can be revealed through ethnographic observation alone'.¹³¹

Embodiment is also a key concept when considering wearing silk and how it directly mediates the immigrant experience in the context of displacement. Anthropologist Daniel Miller stated powerfully that 'a study of cloth should not be *cold*; it has to invoke the tactile, emotional, intimate world of feelings'.¹³² In this regard, Miller and co-author Mukulika Banerjee evocatively described the experience of wearing a *sari* for an Indian woman: where the fabric holds and drapes, and how the cloth is negotiated as an interface between the woman's body and identity and the outside world.¹³³ Similar to the *sari*, wearing a silk *sampot* offers a specific experience of draping on Khmer women's bodies, tied around their waist and worn for special occasions.

The analysis of intimate expressions of Cambodian cultural identity through dress could be deepened through autoethnography 'to produce aesthetic and evocative thick descriptions of personal and interpersonal experience'.¹³⁴ For instance, dance scholar Priya Srinivasan uses her experience as a dancer to explore Indian dance in transnational contexts, suggesting that 'the sweating sari is a metonym for the dancing body as labor'.¹³⁵ Citing dancer Susan Foster, Srinivasan advocates for 'an examination of discourses by and through the body by focusing on its corporealities, where bodily reality is seen not as a 'natural or absolute given but as a tangible and substantial category of cultural experience'.¹³⁶ This approach is key in considering the unspoken intimacies between the wearer, the body and silk in the context of displacement and cultural loss. As argued by Ebihara, Ledgerwood and

¹³¹ Marchand, *Making Knowledge: Explorations of the Indissoluble Relation Between Mind, Body and Environment*, 17.

¹³² Daniel Miller, *Stuff* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), 41.

¹³³ Daniel Miller and Mukulika Banerjee, *The Sari* (Oxford: Berg, 2003), 23-44.

¹³⁴ Carolyn Ellis, Tony E. Adams, and Arthur P. Bochner, 'Autoethnography: An Overview,' *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 12: 1 (January 2011), Article 10 <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1589/3095> [Accessed June 29, 2020]

¹³⁵ Priya Srinivasan, *Sweating Saris: Indian Dance as Transnational Labor* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011), xi.

¹³⁶ Srinivasan, *Sweating Saris*, 71; Susan Foster, 'Introduction,' in *Corporealities: Dancing Knowledge, Culture, and Power*, ed. Susan Foster (New York: Routledge, 1995), x.

Mortland, embracing cultural symbols of Cambodianness in the diaspora takes a specific meaning. This central premise creates the possibility of considering silk cloth as a metonym for Cambodian identity and embodiment of family attachments, memories, and trauma.¹³⁷

Polyphonic and multidisciplinary methodology

This thesis seeks to engage with subjectivities produced from a plurality of vantage points. To engage a diversity of voices, from Cambodian to foreign, organisations to people, textile artefacts to materials, polyphony has been the leading discursive method across every chapter of this thesis. In music, the term polyphony describes a musical piece comprised of two or more lines of melody. In literature, linguistic scholar Mikhail Bakhtin used the term 'heteroglossia' to describe 'a series of complex interrelationships, consonances and dissonances', a system used to create polyphonic novels enriched by multiple layers of semantics.¹³⁸ Historian James Clifford reclaimed Bakhtin's theory to conceptualise the idea of a polyvocal ethnographic approach to vocalise cultures as 'an open-ended, creative dialogue of subcultures, of insiders and outsiders, of diverse factions'.¹³⁹

Moreover, this approach aligns with the decolonial work devised by semiotician Walter Mignolo and sociologist Rolando Vazquez. They have encouraged the humanities to reposition Western-centric claims historically and challenge patterns of coloniality.¹⁴⁰ To

¹³⁷ Ebihara, Ledgerwood, and Mortland, *Cambodian Culture since 1975: Homeland and Exile*, 9.

¹³⁸ Mikhail Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel,' in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 276-282.

¹³⁹ James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 46-54 ; James Clifford, 'On Ethnographic Authority,' *Representations*, 2 (Spring, 1983): 136).

¹⁴⁰ Walter Mignolo and Rolando Vazquez, 'Decolonial AestheSis: Colonial Wounds/Decolonial Healings,' *Social Text Online*, July 15, 2013, https://socialtextjournal.org/periscope_article/decolonial-aestheSis-colonial-woundsdecolonial-healings/ [Accessed November 3, 2019]

this end, Mignolo argues for 'a relocation of the thinking and a critical awareness of the geopolitics of knowledge'.¹⁴¹ For a design historian working with oral sources and Cambodian communities, polyphony provides a framework that rebalances inequitable agencies and creates invaluable space for indigenous voices. Combined with the deconstructing methods of script and ANT, polyphony enables the reevaluation of the discourses conveyed by stakeholders in the silk industry that mirror the legacies of colonialism and foreign influences. Once polyphony is engaged, marginal voices – in this case, those of Cambodian silk practitioners and Cambodian American wearers – can regain space.

Working inter-culturally in a non-Western context with communities requires a production of a knowledge that is representative of the local context and the people who are participating in the research. Educator Linda Tuhiwai Smith's pioneering contribution to decolonising methodologies advocates for a position of reciprocal respect to overcome the way that 'the collective memory of imperialism has been perpetuated through the ways in which knowledge about indigenous peoples was collected, classified and then represented in various ways back to the West'.¹⁴² As a researcher, working within this ethical framework presents its own challenges and opportunities. Artist, filmmaker and scholar Trinh T. Minh-ha has stated: 'I do not wish to speak about, only to speak nearby'.¹⁴³ By this, she meant 'a speaking that does not objectify, does not point to an object as if it is distant from the speaking subject or absent from the speaking place'.¹⁴⁴ Speaking near Cambodian voices, not over them, with weavers and wearers has been a constant concern.

I am not Cambodian, but of French and Vietnamese origin, with professional experience in

¹⁴¹ Walter Mignolo, 'The Geopolitics of Knowledge and the Colonial Difference,' *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101:0 (Winter 2002): 67.

¹⁴² Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books, 1999), 1-2.

¹⁴³ Nancy Chen, "Speaking Nearby": A Discussion with Trinh T. Minh-Ha,' *Visual Anthropology Review*, 8:1, (Spring 1992): 86-87.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. ; Trinh T. Minh-Ha, *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 6.

textile design and documentary. This personal trajectory has strongly informed my methodological and strategic choices in the conduct of this project. Since 2005 I have visited Cambodia on several occasions, both as a designer working on local textile artisanal projects with craft companies and as a reporter on cultural and women's stories in 2012-13. This thesis builds on this prior engagement and familiarity with Cambodian silk practices and expands my position as insider/outsider, by adding the specific set of analytical and research tools of design history and ethnography.

In terms of advantages, having trained in weaving during my MFA in Textile Design from 2004 to 2006 has helped me understand the techniques of the weavers in Cambodia, especially in relation to the tie-dye process involved in *hol* making. They have been able to demonstrate their skills instead of having to describe every action. My professional experience as a designer in Cambodia facilitated my access to certain workshops, as this benefited from pre-established relationships of trust.

There were still challenges in fostering equitable relationships and collecting data, especially in relation to the issues of Khmer language and translation. Simply put, 'the translation is an interpretation' that 'must maintain its link to the original'.¹⁴⁵

Anthropologists have long discussed the complexities and power relationships involved in working interculturally, acknowledging translation as its intercultural subdiscipline.¹⁴⁶

Catherine Tihanyi pointed to 'the opposite pull of the necessity of being faithful to the original and the risk of being unintelligible to their target readership, and of being faithful to their readership and the risk of symbolically annihilating their informants'.¹⁴⁷

In this thesis, English is used by the owners of craft companies and Khmer by weavers. I took one year of Khmer classes to learn the basics of the language, to help my understanding

¹⁴⁵ Catherine Tihanyi, 'Ethnographic and Translation Practices', *Anthropology News* 43:6 (2002): 5-6.

¹⁴⁶ Tullio Persio de Albuquerque Maranhão, and Bernhard Streck, *Translation and Ethnography: The Anthropological Challenge of Intercultural Understanding* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2003), xv.

¹⁴⁷ Tihanyi, 'Ethnographic and Translation Practices.'

of specific vocabulary and build trust during the interviews. It did not replace working with local interpreters to ensure a clear and nuanced understanding of these interactions. Dealing with two kinds of translators (insiders in the communities or outsiders hired for the task) brings its own set of benefits and disadvantages. Insiders know the people but often add information to contextualise the answers. Outsiders may struggle more to understand their interlocutor's realities while offering a distanced position that is helpful in focusing on people's words. In each case, ensuring a process of translating that bridged gaps between English and the weavers' answers in Khmer has been crucial in order to maintain the authenticity of their voices and work towards polyvocality.

Different forms of inter-subjectivity are also explored in this thesis via a multidisciplinary approach, using historical research, ethnography, participatory methods such as Action Research, which I explain further, and interviews in conjunction with object-based and material studies. In design history, fieldwork is understood as a short-term research trip following specific objectives, which differs from forms of long-term immersion specific to other fields such as anthropology. Five separate periods of fieldwork were carried out between 2016 and 2018, three phases in Cambodia for a total of twelve weeks and two in Long Beach for three weeks. In January 2017, July 2017 and March 2018 in Cambodia I observed the day-to-day operations of several weaving workshops based in Siem Reap and Takeo provinces. Research in villages in Koh Dach in Kandal province and in different communes in Takeo province was also conducted to meet individual weavers working from home. I did not focus on sericulture and silk farmers. In April 2017 and February 2018 in Long Beach, the Cambodia Town Culture Festival provided a dynamic setting in which to observe Cambodian Americans wearing silk. Interviews with silk consumers, dressmakers and Khmer classical ballet dancers explored the role of silk in the expression of cultural identities in an immigrant context.

Ethnographic work was anchored in participant observation combining times of immersion

and analysis, described by anthropologist Tim Ingold as a position where ‘the researchers stand both ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ the field of inquiry at one and the same time’.¹⁴⁸ I relied on different methods of qualitative research such as informal conversations with weavers and silk shop owners, meeting with local informants as a way of learn about the sector and its main players, and direct observation in weaving workshops, markets, and shops. On specific site visits, I combined discussions and the examination of personal items belonging to my informants. Along with periods spent in observation, visual documentation through photography and film have provided additional layers of methodology to examine the materiality of silk and making processes beyond interviews. To continue unpacking the complexities of the silk network, this thesis uses visual diagrams and charts to translate data on the evolution of fibre production, distribution networks, and the different business models of craft NGOs. A workshop on fibre analysis at the Quai Branly Museum in Paris on October 11 and 12, 2017 informed the study of silk from a physical perspective presented in Chapter One.¹⁴⁹ The use of a high-definition microscope to capture digital photography at different degrees of magnification revealed the differences between a single thread of fine silk before degumming and one after degumming under the polarising microscope.

In Cambodia, a total of eighteen weavers were interviewed (eleven with recorded and transcribed interviews, seven informally) and seven craft company representatives (one with a recorded and transcribed interview, six informally). In Long Beach, eight women wearing silk were interviewed (two dressmakers and one dancer, producing recorded and transcribed interviews; two silk clients, two dancers and a Long-Beach based anthropologist informally).¹⁵⁰ Research carried out during periods of fieldwork has carefully respected the ‘Do no harm’ ethical principles of ethnographic work, ensuring that the different

¹⁴⁸ Tim Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2013), 5.

¹⁴⁹ See Elena Phipps discussing the value of microscope examination for textile analysis in Phipps, *Looking at Textiles: a Guide to Technical Terms* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2012), 11-12.

¹⁵⁰ See the list of interviews in the bibliography under Oral Sources.

communities and individuals involved in this research were properly informed and protected. This project received clearance from the RCA Research Ethics Committee. Recordings of the interviews, along with their transcription, are kept safely in a folder secured by an encrypted password. None of the people interviewed requested to remain anonymous but the option was offered to them. In several cases, weavers only gave their first name. The information sheet and consent and data processing statement were both translated into Khmer by Vathanak Sok, a London-based Khmer instructor, and given to the Khmer-speaking participants.¹⁵¹ When interviewees were illiterate, interpreters explained the project's objectives and asked for consent at the beginning of the recording. The procedure has also included obtaining a signed confidentiality agreement from the interpreters.

In the past decade, taking a cue from experimental archaeology and anthropology, the fields of history and design history have explored the intersections of theory and practice in the study of making processes.¹⁵² How can skills that are lost or missing be accounted for? The Weaving Knowledge project developed by Pamela Smith in Thailand for PhD students in the humanities exemplifies the use of apprenticeship and autoethnography to approach textile craft techniques from the inside.¹⁵³ However, these methods were not suited to engaging with contemporary Cambodian silk weaving under a decolonial agenda. The goal is not to substitute myself for the weavers' existing expertise, but to recentre subjects as producers of knowledge and implement a relationship which would benefit them directly and support their community. This has encouraged me to choose participatory forms of research such as Action Research. Action Research is concerned with

¹⁵¹ See the models of consent forms in Appendix A4.

¹⁵² For design history, see Glenn Adamson, *Thinking Through Craft* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2007), *The Design History* journal special issue 'Dangerous Liaisons: Relationships between Design, Craft and Art,' 17:3 (September 2004).

¹⁵³ *Weaving Knowledge*, <https://weavingknowledge.org> [Accessed October 5, 2020]

‘understanding, creating and advancing knowledge’.¹⁵⁴ It is emphasised as a process of problem-solving defined by cycles of action and reflection, ‘bringing together theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people’.¹⁵⁵ The Action Research project presented in Chapter Three focuses on the planning and documenting of the production of four original *sampot hol* by Krama Yuyu, a small-scale weaving workshop located in the village of Ta Pouk in Siem Reap province. The leading weavers at Krama Yuyu learned the art of weft ikat as teenagers and had stopped practising for a decade, due to a lack of opportunity, and then moved to cotton weaving. Covering the costs of silk materials and labour, the project has given weavers the time to rehabilitate these unused skills. As the convenor, I supported the planning of the action, documented the making process of *hol* with film and photography and helped weavers reflect on the outcome through interviews. Archaeologist Bollwerk and her colleagues explain that co-creation entails ‘a reciprocal relationship [...] in which power is shared equally and that multiple perspectives and types of knowledge are acknowledged and integrated’.¹⁵⁶ Here, the co-creation of knowledge enables this community of weavers to develop their skills and sense of recognition by emphasising their agencies. This project aims to illuminate the links between ancient and updated weaving know-how gained through matrilineal transmission, body memory and tacit knowledge.

Sources

¹⁵⁴ Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt, ‘Action Learning and Action Research: Paradigm, Praxis and Programs,’ in *Effective Change Management through Action Research and Action Learning: Concepts, Perspectives, Processes and Applications*, ed. Shankar Sankara, Bob Dick, and Ron Passfield (Lismore: Southern Cross University Press, 2001), 15.

¹⁵⁵ Hilary Bradbury and Peter Reason, *The SAGE Handbook of Action Research Participative Inquiry and Practice* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2008), 4.

¹⁵⁶ Elizabeth Bollwerk, Robert Connolly, and Carol McDavid, ‘Co-Creation and Public Archaeology’, *Advances in Archaeological Practice* 3:3 (2015): 181.

To build a polyvocal exploration of the Cambodian silkscape, I have drawn on a diverse range of primary sources beyond the oral, which reflects the multidisciplinary nature of a design history approach; this includes, in particular, film, photographs, archival documents and museum artefacts. During fieldwork, I also produced new documentation of primary research, collecting a corpus of interviews and informal conversations supported by abundant visual documentation, as detailed earlier.

The scarcity of silk textiles in post-conflict Cambodian collections has significantly diminished the available knowledge of styles and motifs that can be drawn directly from historical artefacts. When the National Museum of Cambodia (NMC) reopened in Phnom Penh in 1980, only seventy-two rare examples of silk textiles had been recovered from the 399 textile artefacts and dance costume elements that had been collected before the KR regime.¹⁵⁷ The museum has acquired a hundred additional pieces through donations since the late 2000s.

Alongside examples from these significant museum collections of textiles in Cambodia and internationally, the objects and forms of knowledge this thesis addresses have also been encountered in the field. In Cambodia, study visits to shops and markets in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, combined with research in silk weaving workshops in rural areas in Siem Reap, Takeo and Kandal provinces, provide the majority of the primary sources for my thesis. This includes collecting silk fibre and cocoons used in Chapter One and the four ikat pieces produced in the Action Research project in Chapter Three, to photography and films of the workshops, silk producers and making processes. I also produced two short films, *The Silk Chronicles: Warp and Weft*, based on footage shot in July 2017 at Krama Yuyu. In the third and longest period of fieldwork in Cambodia, support from l'Ecole Française d'Extrême

¹⁵⁷ Khun Samen, and Touch Hab, 'Textiles in the Collection of the National Museum of Cambodia', IKTT Seminar program 'Hol, the Art of Cambodian Textile', Siem Reap, Cambodia, December 12-13, 2003. *Institute for Khmer Traditional Textiles*, http://iktt.esprit-libre.org/en/2004/09/abstract_part_2_textiles_in_th.html

Orient facilitated access to the NMC textile collection and the National Library, also on site, which holds acquisition records and object catalogues dating from the French protectorate era. In Phnom Penh, the Bophana Audiovisual Resource Centre, founded by Cambodian documentarist Rithy Panh, provided film footage on Cambodian silk practices. Research was also conducted at the National Archives, which contains vast documentation on the history, sociology, anthropology, and culture of the French Protectorate and post-independence eras; and at the archives of the UNESCO Phnom Penh office to identify data about early development programmes for silk weaving. This thesis also makes use of articles from Cambodian newspapers aimed at a local and English-speaking audience, mostly *The Phnom Penh Post* and the *Khmer Times*, and official reports published by NGOs and governmental and international agencies, which outline the development of silk production since the 2000s.¹⁵⁸

A similar process was followed in Long Beach, California, to produce visual documentation and gather interviews, focusing especially on the 2017 Cambodia Town Culture Festival, which included a costumed parade and a public performance of Khmer classical ballet. The local Cambodian Community History and Archive Project holds documentation about the Cambodian American community, including ethnographic and linguistic research conducted by co-founders Susan Needham and Karen Quintiliani, local newspapers and ephemera and numerous photographs donated by community members. The study of silk and its role in Cambodian American identities is supported by additional

¹⁵⁸ *The Phnom Penh Post* is a Cambodian-based independent daily newspaper founded in 1992 by the American publisher Michael Hayes and owned by Ross Dunkley, an Australian national, since 2008. *Khmer Times* is an English-language newspaper founded in 2014 by Malaysian Mohan Tirugmanasam Bandam and owned by his company Virtus Media Pte. See Thik Kaliyann, 'Spinners and silk weavers win support from EU,' *The Phnom Penh Post*, 4 October 2010, <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/lifestyle/spinners-and-silk-weavers-win-support-eu> [Accessed October 30, 2016] ; Sok Chan, 'Local silk industry seeks Chinese support,' *Khmer Times*, 3 May 2017, <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/13243/local-silk-industry-seeks-chinese-support/> [Accessed September 29, 2019] ; Sok Chan, 'Japan pledges to boost silk industry,' *Khmer Times*, April 4, 2017, <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/8527/japan-pledges-to-boost-silk-industry/> [Accessed September 29, 2019].

interviews from practitioners of Khmer classical ballet from Khmer Arts Academy, a local tailor and a wedding dress designer and their clients.

Chapter summary

To provide a fresh perspective on the Cambodian silkscape, this thesis is articulated around four key themes which provide the structure for the four chapters, examining how silk-making, through its history and geography of production and consumption, has been informed by trade and cultural exchanges; the agency of stakeholders forming the socio-economic network of the silk sector; the agency and knowledge of the weavers activated and transmitted in their praxis, and the embodied experience of Cambodian-American silk wearers who engage with issues of acculturation in the diaspora of Long Beach, California. My thesis follows two separate yet complementary narratives, one of loss in the first two chapters and one of reclamation in the third and fourth chapters, to consider the conditions of the revitalisation of the silk sector through some of its main agents.

Chapter One examines the meanings of Cambodian silk and how Cambodia may be defined through silk following a geopolitical perspective. Silk woven cloths enfold regional history and geography, through the lens of their material, spatial, political and economic positioning through time. Moving chronologically, this chapter traces how the historiography of silk in Cambodia was formed in response to successive waves of cultural influences, exchanges, and internal and external conflicts, from the first account of silk weaving from a Chinese envoy at the royal court of Angkor in the late thirteenth century to the KR regime in the 1970s and its aftermath. A selection of key artefacts from museum collections in and outside Cambodia illustrate the shifting value of Cambodian silk as a commodity traded via Southeast Asian, Indian, Chinese, and European networks.

Landscapes of production and the ways these territories responded to periods of political upheavals are explored to inform the continuity of silk practices through time.

Chapter Two discusses the emergence of major actors in the silk weaving sector from 1991 to 2018 under the NGO and social enterprise models, some of which received the early support of transnational sponsors such as UNESCO. The chapter builds on a series of case studies detailing the histories and systems of a selective sampling of Cambodian-based workshops founded respectively by the French, the Japanese and Cambodians, which have implemented local training programmes in sericulture and silk weaving. The reformation of the silkscape under local and global prerogatives redefines discourses of Cambodian authenticity, tradition, and crafts. These preservationist agents have crafted their interventions into humanitarian discourses aimed at preventing poverty and cultural loss, developing new methods of production and distribution for export and tourist markets and establishing standards. This chapter will explore how these monopolistic positions raise issues of ownership and agency to acknowledge how earlier models pertaining to colonialism and trade routes which were discussed in the previous chapter have shaped patterns and policies in the 1990s under the scope of soft power. This examination is necessary to outline the systemic dominance of these stakeholders and how, by default, it shows the absence of weavers as actors in the conversation.

Chapter Three thus turns its focus on weavers in Siem Reap and Takeo provinces, to examine mechanisms of matrilineal transmission of silk knowledge in the practice of silk in response to phenomena of globalised flows, and the dominant position of transnational bodies exposed in Chapter Two. Centred around the Action Research project carried out with a weaving workshop in the Siem Reap area, observations and documentation of the process of the *hol* technique are combined with interviews with the weavers to highlight their strategies to remobilise silk weaving practices they had set aside for a decade.

Dynamics of transmission and reclamation of skills also reveal forms of tacit and 'embodied

learning' conceptualised by Trevor Marchand.¹⁵⁹ Furthermore, this chapter demonstrates ways in which skills are passed on within the family, the village and via two specific training programmes, which raises issues of vocation, ownership and authority in silk practices. Chapter Three highlights how the silk weavers who were interviewed deal with issues of agency and knowledge in the face of a changed contemporary context.

Finally, Chapter Four focuses on a period of fieldwork conducted in Long Beach, California, among the Cambodian diaspora on the occasion of Cambodian New Year celebrations in April 2017. Long Beach is considered to be the largest demographic concentration of Cambodian immigrants outside Southeast Asia, counting about 50,000 people. The diasporic community is regarded as an activate site of heritage, identity and performance, where Cambodian silks are showcased for their aesthetic and cultural value. Interviews with a selection of members of the community and auto-ethnography will inform how silk dress intimately participates in rituals such as weddings, Buddhist ceremonies, and the practice of Khmer classical ballet as an embodied experience. The painstaking process of silk costuming links the emotional transaction of clothing to issues of cultural affirmation, memory and nostalgia. This study highlights the various ways in which diasporic communities reclaim and engage their displaced bodies by wearing and consuming silk garments, developing individual and collective approaches to reconnect with their Cambodian identity. Ultimately, this thesis highlights the human geography that forms the silk sector, demonstrating how a polyvocal exploration de-links existing monolithic narratives on Cambodian identity as well as Cambodia's cultural heritage. To better understand the contemporary silkscape, this exploration will start by establishing the historiography and geography of Cambodian silk production to reveal a heritage of cultural cross-currents and geopolitical conflicts.

¹⁵⁹ Trevor Marchand, 'Muscles, Morals and Mind: Craft Apprenticeship and the Formation of a Person,' *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 56:3 (2008): 246.

Chapter One

Cambodian silk polyphonies: historiography, geography, and materiality (802-1990)

Introduction

When Cambodia returned to an independent political system following the Paris Peace Accords in 1991 and the elections in 1993, the country also reopened to international exchanges, forming new alliances with foreign investors and close neighbouring countries. Silk production resumed in Cambodia under a new context, by sourcing materials in China and Thailand while also competing with these major silk producers. This chapter unravels new ways to examine Cambodia's histories and geographies, using silk as a lens through which to view issues of national identity, cultural heritage and material culture. This geopolitical examination supports the argument that the history and physiognomy of Cambodia as a land jointly form the social and cultural systems that still prevail in the contemporary era. It will do so by identifying the complex cross-currents of power taking place in Cambodian history and their effects on silk production, from the early modern era to French colonisation in the nineteenth century, the years of independence, and the KR regime in the modern era. It also explores the influence of foreign cultures– especially China, India, Thailand, Vietnam, and France– on silk practices, styles and trade, looking at how these interactions affected the crafting of narratives of Cambodian traditions and national identity. Moreover, this historical critical overview contributes to an understanding of the dynamics of contemporary models of silk craft development.

Following the trail of silk fibre production from macroscopic and microscopic perspectives further supports the consideration of how silk practices have been enmeshed in Cambodia's geography. How did silk shape Cambodia's landscape, and, reciprocally, how has the land and its peoples shaped Cambodian silk? The materiality of silk – in particular, the indigenous quality of Khmer golden silk – informs, in archaeologist Julian Thomas' words, how 'material culture represents at once ideas that have been made material, and natural substance that has been rendered cultural'.¹⁶⁰ Finding inspiration in the field of cultural geography, the concept of territory applied to Cambodia is considered from multilayered angles. In geographer David Delaney's words, this involves 'seeing territories as more than static, inert things and instead focus[ing] on the dynamic social processes and practices through and in relation to which territorial forms emerge or are transformed'.¹⁶¹ During the KR regime, Cambodian society, as well as the territory, know-how, and material culture of silk, was shattered. This chapter's geopolitical and historical study examines the extent to which silk-making has responded to a cycle of construction, destruction, and reconstruction in space and time, or whether it responds more to the paradigm of a palimpsest, where remnants of past areas and practices overlap with new developments and locations for silk.

A panoptic set of perspectives is explored to reevaluate the definitions of Cambodia's historiography and geography through silk. Michael Brand, Asian art curator, stresses the importance of textiles in the construction of Southeast Asian cultures as a 'dominant art form', stating that 'for centuries, textiles have been the primary medium of artistic and cultural communications within Southeast Asia'.¹⁶² Instead of producing a typology of Southeast Asian textiles country by country, Brand argued in the early 1990s for

¹⁶⁰ Julian Thomas, 'The Trouble with Material Culture,' *Journal of Iberian Archaeology* 9/10 (2007): 4. Also cited in Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture*, 20.

¹⁶¹ Delaney, *Territory, A Short Introduction*, 12.

¹⁶² Michael Brand, in *Cultures at the Crossroads: Southeast Asian Textiles from the Australian National Gallery*, ed. Robyn Maxwell (Canberra, ACT: Australian National Gallery, 1992), 5.

a multcentred study, borrowing James Clifford's expression of 'multicultured juncture' and applying it to Southeast Asia.¹⁶³ Brand proposes that the region should be considered as a textile hub. This chapter therefore reinstates Cambodia within the Southeast Asian fabric and emphasises the parallel movements of appropriation, domination and adaptation that impacted on local textile production.

In terms of external influences, French colonisation changed the local geopolitics, establishing the idea of a modern nation state in Cambodia, a nineteenth-century European concept in which, according to Eric Hobsbawm, 'the equation nation = state = people, and especially sovereign people, undoubtedly linked nation to territory, since structure and definition of states were now essentially territorial'.¹⁶⁴ The idea of Cambodia as a nation with defined borders, people, culture, and artefacts is examined to reveal how Cambodian crafts and making were shifted towards Western colonial models, and how the commerce of silk has enmeshed with colonisation.

Moreover, this chapter builds on anthropologist John Ter Horst's exploration of the sericulture chain in Cambodia. Ter Horst followed the trail of imported silk fibre traded by ethnic Chinese communities based in Vietnam after the civil war, challenging the idea of silk as a national production.¹⁶⁵ The marginal nature of silk weaving, relying on sparse quantities of domestic Khmer silk and the peripheral position of Cambodia away from the main centres of sericulture in Asia, contradicts the narrative of silk as a historically key Cambodian artisanal product.

Two major typologies of textile objects, the *krama*, the cotton gingham cloth worn by the common people, and the ceremonial *sampot hol* (weft ikat hip wrap) are discussed, demonstrating how they embody these modern historical geopolitical shifts [Figs.10-11].¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ Ibid. ; Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture*, 213.

¹⁶⁴ Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 19.

¹⁶⁵ Ter Horst, *Weaving into Cambodia*, 125-62.

¹⁶⁶ See appendix A3.

While the silk *sampot* became a commodity under diplomatic and colonial agendas, the *krama* takes a political meaning when it is used in the KR militia uniforms in the 1970s. Examining a selection of objects from museums supports the expanding of the narratives revolving around the *krama* and *sampot hol*.

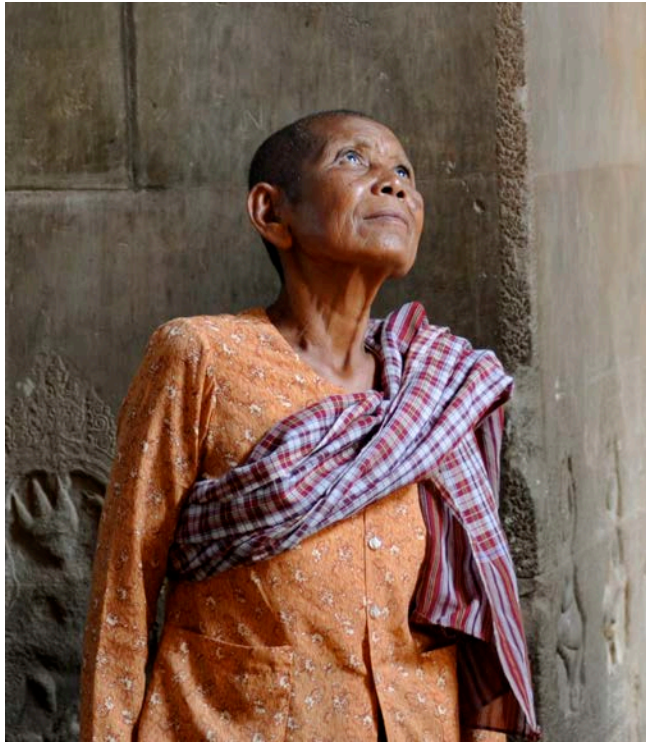


Fig.10 Woman wearing a krama cloth around her chest in Angkor Wat, Siem Reap. Author's photograph, 2012.



Fig.11 Theory and Chenda Heng, weavers at Krama Yuyu showing a sampot hol from their collection, Ta Pouk, Siem Reap. Author's photograph, 2017.

Crossing theoretical territories: metageography, design history, and voices

The necessity to combine history with geography to redefine geopolitics and national identities through crafts builds on the foundational work of historians and geographers Martin Lewis and Kären Wigen. These authors have rightly critiqued various dominant metageographies such as East/West, First and Third World, or West/Rest binarism. Metageography is a 'set of spatial structures through which people order their knowledge of the world' that reproduces major arbitrary geographical separations, often bounded by colonial history.¹⁶⁷ To deconstruct these preconceived perceptions of space and nation, the authors reengage with concepts of world regional frameworks – core, semiperiphery, and periphery – that are used by world-systems theorists and historians. In

¹⁶⁷ Martin Lewis and Kären Wigen, *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography* (Berkeley: University of California, 1997), x.

this chapter, Lewis and Wigen's critical perspective is an invaluable resource for nuancing the various geopolitical representations of Cambodia and the Southeast Asian region.

Locating research geographically and positioning its scope with regard to global history is also a key theoretical question in the current history of design field. Where do you speak from, to whom, and how? These seemingly obvious questions become more complex when discussing cultures which usually stand at the periphery of Western-centric perspectives, 'unfamiliar countries', as Spanish design thinker Anna Calvera qualifies them in the *Journal of Design History*.¹⁶⁸ Calvera advocated a geographical approach to the field, opening up design experiences located at the margins. She outlined the theoretical challenges for local and regional historians to present their work to an international audience, defining peripheral histories as 'those left aside' from 'the geographical point of view': that is, 'the nations and cultures whose design activities and achievements are still unknown abroad'.¹⁶⁹ Calvera encouraged design historians to contextualise their regional stories within global history 'to manage and to draw a new outline of the map of design useful enough to build upon a World History that allows a global understanding of the subject'.¹⁷⁰ This call to recentre Cambodia remains necessary for a country that is *unfamiliar* in the fields of crafts, textile and design history globally. Therefore, a further goal of this chapter is to outline the flows of influence which have impacted on silk production, but also to point the diversity of voices expressing these multiple perspectives that integrate Cambodia's history within a regional and global view.

Calvera's work refers to Tony Fry's seminal article 'A Geography of Power: Design History

¹⁶⁸ Anna Calvera, 'Local, Regional, National, Global and Feedback: Several Issues to Be Faced with Constructing Regional Narratives,' *Journal of Design History* 18, no. 4 (2005): 372.

¹⁶⁹ Calvera, 'Local, Regional, National, Global and Feedback: Several Issues to Be Faced with Constructing Regional Narratives,' 372.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*; See also Shu-mei Shih on pursuing a postcolonial 'coup d'état' which 'involves the enlargement of the frame of reference and discourse from the national to the transnational terrain, in which there are more possibilities of empowerment for the immigrant and the minority', Shu-mei Shih, *Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations across the Pacific* (Berkeley: University Presses of California, 2007), 42-3.

and Marginality', published in 1989. Fry addressed the concept of margins in design history in terms of both location and power, stating that 'being on the edge of centres of political or economic power thus becomes defined as powerlessness, irrespective of physical distance from any centre of power'.¹⁷¹ Being in the margins means standing outside the main networks and access to markets, as the recipient, not the actor, of trading exchange. Fry uses Australia as an example. A former British colony and settler nation differs from Cambodia, a former French colony. However, his description of Australia's move towards independence by building a modernity by fragments, and the way that constant discourses of tradition create 'partly a culture of despair', are both relevant to Cambodia.¹⁷²

This polyphony of authorities on silk develops a topography that expands the general understanding of geography to become, in Fry's words, 'a disposition of mind, matter, and space upon a material, geophysical, and cultural terrain'.¹⁷³ The overarching geographical approach enables a shift from different scales, from the infinitely small to the infinitely large, from the material to the immaterial, from the past to the present, and also addresses the spatial imbalance between rurality and urbanity which prevailed through time. It explores the effects of shifting the perception of silk from a resource to a terrain and combining it with the history of the social. Within this paradigm this chapter is interested in locating Cambodian silk as a site where materials, artefacts, as much as human experience and social identities, have been reshaped through time.

Silk fibre and fabrication process

¹⁷¹ Tony Fry, 'A Geography of Power: Design History and Marginality,' *Design Issues* (Autumn 1989): 15.

¹⁷² *Ibid*, 25, 21.

¹⁷³ Fry, 'A Geography of Power: Design History and Marginality,' 30.

This section focuses on Cambodian silk as a fibre to explain what kind of material it is and what its production entails. Silk fibre is the result of a chain of processes rooted in the natural environment. In Cambodia, an indigenous species of domesticated polyvoltine *bombyx mori* moths produce eggs which, fed by mulberry leaves, grow into silkworms which form cocoons of golden silk [Fig.12].¹⁷⁴ This species also exists in other parts of mainland Southeast Asia – in Thailand, Laos and Vietnam, in particular.

Although the origins of silk in Cambodia remain undated, the archeological finds in Ban Chiang village in the Northeast area, Udon Thani, are proof of a sericulture history in Thailand dating back to 4000 BCE, as old as the first evidence of Chinese silk production.¹⁷⁵ This does not prove there was silk on Cambodian land, but shows that it was cultivated in mainland Southeast Asia.

The life cycle of a golden silkworm lasts for about forty-eight days (ten days for the egg's incubation period, twenty-eight days for the worm to grow, and ten days for the pupa in its cocoon to turn into a moth to repeat the cycle.¹⁷⁶ From these cocoons, silk threads are extracted in boiled water, reeled, refined in different qualities and washed, to be dyed and woven into textiles [Fig.13].

¹⁷⁴ Polyvoltine: term describing how the *bombyx mori* silk moth produces more than one brood of eggs in a year. See also Appendix A2 and Figure 4.

¹⁷⁵ Jennifer Sharples, and Amornrat Rifenberg, *Thai Silk* (Bangkok: Post Books, 1994), 15.

¹⁷⁶ Cambodia Ministry of Commerce and ITC, *Cambodia National Silk Strategy*, 4.



Fig.12 Polyvoltine bombyx mori cocoons in mulberry branches, Koh Dach island. Author's photograph, December 2016.



Fig.13 Artisanal silk thread extraction from cocoons in boiled water, Koh Dach island. Author's photograph, December 2016.

According to Cambodian botanist Pauline Dy Phon, Cambodian species of *bombyx mori* feed on two kinds of mulberry leaves, the *mon thom* (*Morus alba*) and *mon toch* (*Morus australis*).¹⁷⁷ Bernard Dupaigne also asserted that in the late 1960s the importation of Japanese mulberry trees with bigger leaves, apparently via Thailand, supplanted the local species.¹⁷⁸ Khmer golden silk gives less silk thread than white mulberry silk of coarser quality – about four hundred metres per cocoon versus a thousand metres – and is only processed by hand. The yellow pigment contained in the sericin, the gum secreted by the silkworm's spinnerets located on its head, which binds the two silk-protein filaments of fibroin, washes out at the degumming stage. The yellow coating appears clearly in this

¹⁷⁷ Dy Phon, *Plants used in Cambodia*, 894.

¹⁷⁸ There is little to no information about the conditions of these imports. Dupaigne, 'L'élevage des vers à soie au Cambodge', 117; 'Mulberry Trees,' March 1, 1996, *Khemara*. <http://www.cambodia.org/clubs/khemara/mulberry.htm> [Accessed March 21, 2020]

image of a golden silk cocoon from a golden silk producer based in Siem Reap under an Olympus S2x7 high-definition microscope [Fig.14].

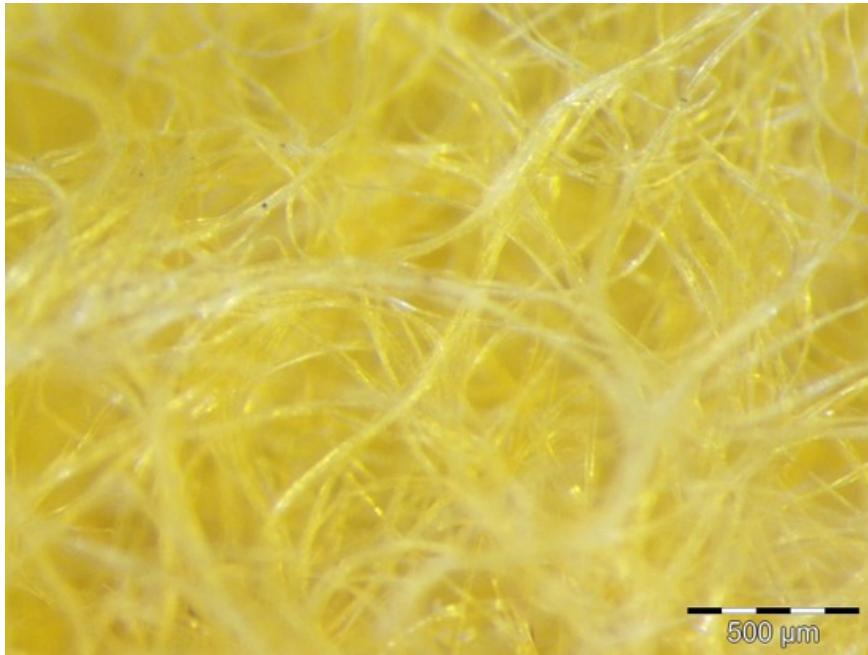


Fig.14 Entangled silk filaments from a golden silk cocoon from Siem Reap: microscope view. Author's photograph, October 2017. Courtesy Musée du Quai Branly.

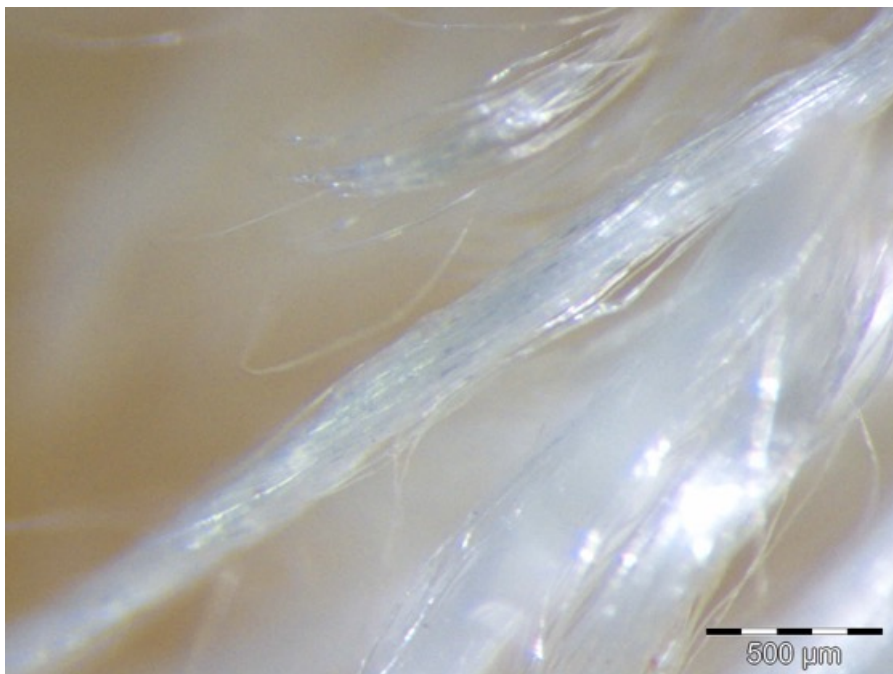


Fig.15 Degummed fine silk from Siem Reap: microscope view. Author's photograph, October 2017. Courtesy Musée du Quai Branly.



Fig.16 Different qualities of silk yarn: from raw silk to the left to fine silk on the right before degumming, Koh Dach island. Author's photograph, December 2016.

Figure 15 shows the white lustrous silk threads in the degumming stage, once the sericin has been washed off, under the same microscope at the Musée du Quai Branly textile laboratory. The threads are then ready to be dyed and woven. The first layer of the silk threads in a cocoon, raw silk, represents 20 per cent of the cocoon and is commonly used to make table runners and domestic textile products. The second layer, once properly reeled, gives different qualities of fine silk and is used to make scarves, *krama saut* (silk *sarung*) and

sampot [Fig.16].

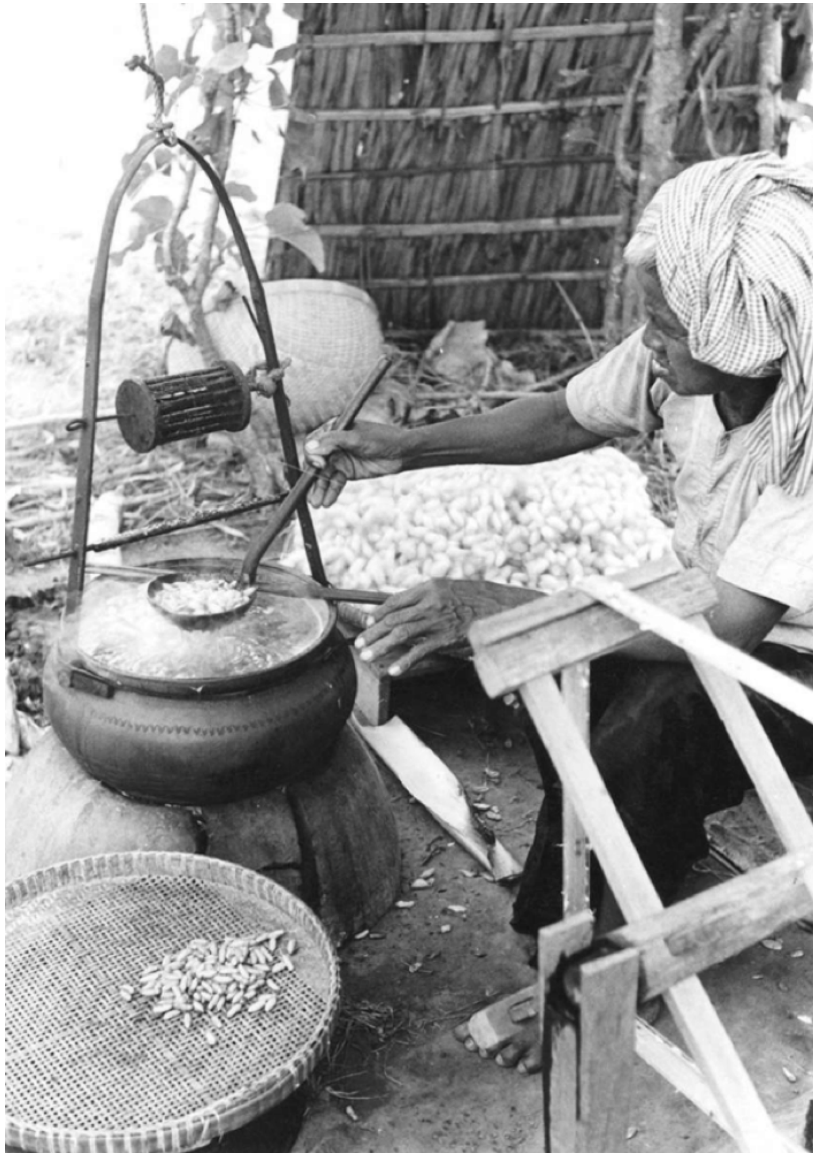


Fig.17 Unwinding silk cocoons, Bati Commune, Takeo province, 1968. Photograph courtesy of Bernard Dupaigne.

In Figure 17, a photograph taken in Bati commune in Takeo province in 1968, Dupaigne documented the process of silk extraction and spinning conducted by women in their homes, a similar process to that which I observed in Koh Dach in 2017.¹⁷⁹ Dupaigne meticulously described the interdependence of mulberry tree farming, domestic sericulture,

¹⁷⁹ See Figure 5 for a map of silk regions in Cambodia.

spinning and weaving in a village specialising in high-end silks for an urban clientele.

Human activity links these separate processes, materials and spaces together to form an interrelated ecosystem.

Cocoon producers were usually in charge of silk reeling and would sell silk yarn.

Independent peddlers, potentially also silk producers, would travel from village to village offering silk materials to women without access to local sericulture. Weavers also purchased silk from Chinese wholesalers and received commissions from shop owners. Dupaigne's study exposed a fragile rural economy with numerous obstacles; one that could easily falter due to silkworm disease, lack of farmable areas for mulberry trees, competition with imported silk fibre, or Buddhist imperatives to not kill worms, a religious belief also noted by Jean Delvert.¹⁸⁰ The shift towards industrialisation in the 1950s, reinforced by the lack of public and private investment in agriculture, pushed the rural and urban worlds further apart. The human, material and spatial components of the landscape of silk production, unlike that of other fibres such as cotton and jute, stood at the margins of industrialisation.¹⁸¹ These structural weaknesses only increased with the subsequent political havoc in the 1970s.

This distribution of roles, tasks and processes still exist in present-day Cambodia.

Independent smallholder sericulture farmers are mostly men, who cultivate mulberry trees, breed silkworms, and produce yarn manually (reeling and spinning). They were estimated to only a hundred people in 2016. The overall number of silk weavers (mainly women) was estimated to 5,000 in 2016. When they do not purchase pre-dyed silk yarn, weavers are in charge of its processing from degumming to bleaching and dyeing.¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ Dupaigne, 'L'élevage des vers à soie au Cambodge,' 130; Delvert, *Le paysan cambodgien*, 282 ; See also Michael Vickery's anecdote about silk weavers in the remote village of Banteay Chmaar at the border of Thailand in 1962, Michael Vickery, *Cambodia 1975-1982* (Bangkok: Silkworm Books, 1999), 2.

¹⁸¹ Slocomb, *An Economic History of Cambodia in the Twentieth Century*, 105-6.

¹⁸² Cambodia Ministry of Commerce and ITC, *Cambodia National Silk Strategy*, 8-9.

This section has shown the specificities of Cambodian golden silk fibre and the complexities of processing it. This micro-perspective now leads to a macro-perspective on the historical and geographical study of silk production, starting from the early history of silk in Cambodia.

Geopolitical and material junctures in the Khmer Empire (802-1431 CE)

As explained in the Introduction, Cambodia's entire history consisted not only of a series of conquests, alliances, and conflicts with neighbouring countries, but also of empires that attempted to dominate the Southeast Asian region and appropriate local resources (men, goods and lands) and trade routes. The geographical position of Cambodia in Southeast Asia, surrounded by Thailand, Vietnam, and Laos, close to China in the north and Myanmar and India in the west, has markedly defined its history and the formation of its civilisation. For six centuries the Khmer Empire occupied a dominant position while facing numerous wars with its neighbours [Fig.18]. It fought the Cham Kingdom from the tenth to the twelfth century and the Thai Kingdom of Ayutthaya in the fourteenth century, leading to the Khmer Empire's progressive decline in the mid-fifteenth century.¹⁸³

¹⁸³ Chandler, *A History of Cambodia*, 59, 79.

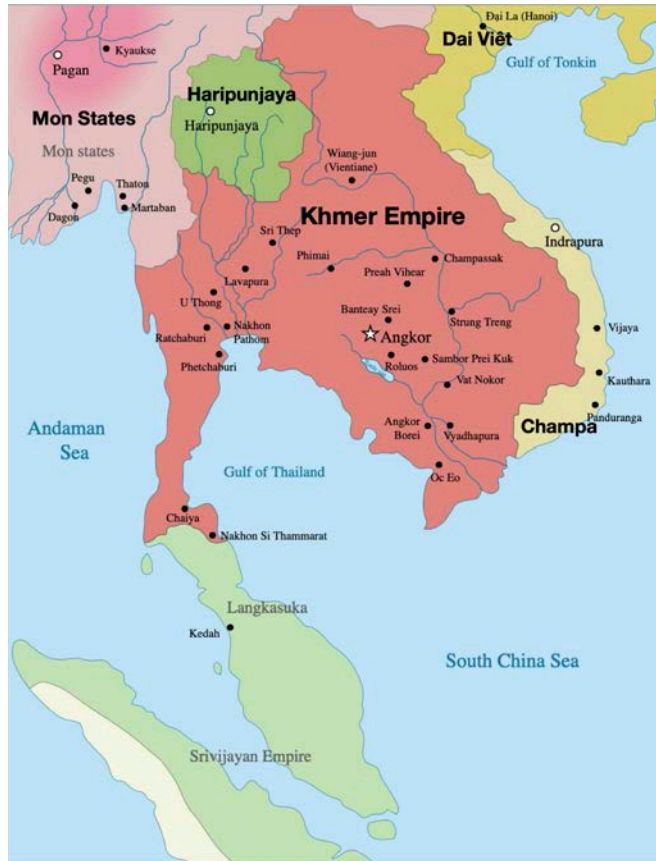


Fig.18 Map of Southeast Asia in 900. Wikimedia Commons.

European scholarship in the eighteenth century has considered the Southeast Asian region as 'Farther India', before becoming 'Indo-China', the intermediary region between India in the west and China in the north.¹⁸⁴ Lewis and Wigen commented that applying the term 'Indo-China' to Southeast Asia reflected the 'mixture of Chinese and Indian cultural influences' while also 'implicitly denying it a region on its own'.¹⁸⁵ However, their analysis replicated this perspective by defining the 'nature of Southeast Asian civilisation as 'derivative', a unified patchwork more than a cohesive region, which has been disproved by historians such as Anthony Reid.¹⁸⁶ Reid stressed the limits of the interactions with China and India in the formation of Southeast Asian civilisations, which all developed their own

¹⁸⁴ As 'colonialism brought continuing adjustments to European's view of this area's geographical contours' the joint term Indochina was reclaimed by the French to designate their Asian colonies'. Lewis and Wigen, *The Myth of Continents: a Critique of Metageography*, 171.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, 171.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, 174.

‘features of material culture and social structure’.¹⁸⁷ This section examines to which extent China and India influenced Cambodian textile production and use in the Medieval era. It also establishes connections with other key players in the region such as Siam.

The earliest reference to Cambodian silk come from the account of Chinese official Zhou Daguan. He was sent to the royal court of Angkor under King Indravarman III (1295-1308) ‘as part of an official delegation sent by the Chinese Emperor Temür during the Yuan Dynasty’.¹⁸⁸ In his observations, he argued that Cambodians had mastered neither sericulture nor weaving technologies, except for backstrap weaving, working only with cotton and kapok. Textile scholar Gillian Green has identified these indigenous weavers as the Khmer Loeu ethnic group, a hill tribe which still inhabits the remote areas of Ratanakiri and Mondulakiri today.¹⁸⁹

Stressing the interconnectedness of production between Angkor and the Siamese, Zhou claimed that silk was imported and processed by Siamese weavers established in the Angkor Empire, who produced the dark-coloured damask silk worn by Cambodians. He also stated that Siamese women could ‘stitch and darn, so when local people have torn or damaged clothing they ask them to do the mending’, which made them local tailors.¹⁹⁰ Zhou’s comments about the role of Siamese weavers in Cambodia’s textile production, has yet to be supported by visual or material evidence. However, the presence of Siamese artisans at the Angkor court could be explained by the presence of Khmer overlords in the Siamese territories that now form modern-day Thailand. In the tenth and eleventh centuries, the Angkor Empire dominated the Lavo Kingdom (modern Lopburi) and the Isaan

¹⁸⁷ Anthony Reid, *A History of Southeast Asia: Critical Crossroads* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), 26.

¹⁸⁸ Zhou Daguan, Peter Harris, trans., *A Record of Cambodia: The Land and Its People*, vii.

¹⁸⁹ Green, *Traditional Textiles of Cambodia*, 28.

¹⁹⁰ Zhou, *A Record of Cambodia: The Land and Its People*, 75-76.

area, which were mostly occupied by Khmer and Tai populations before the Tai people rebelled to form their own kingdom of Sukhothai in 1238.¹⁹¹

A Chinese man coming from a country with a powerful silk industry, Zhou's testimony focuses on the value of this material as a commodity and expression of status. At the Angkor court, textiles held functional purposes, especially for religious and royal ceremonies. Imported silks from China, red and green taffeta, were donated to monks to make parasols and decorate palanquins.¹⁹² He described the courtiers' regal attire as made of expensive textiles obtained through exchanges in the region with Cambodia's main competitors, Siam, Champa and 'the Western Seas', which most likely means India.¹⁹³ This account, chronicled by a foreign envoy, puts China, Siam, and India on the map as Cambodia's main interlocutors in the medieval silkscape.

Gillian Green's work is useful in considering connections between Chinese and Cambodian textile designs. She cross-checked key elements of Zhou's report with abundant visual evidence found on sculptural images to form a clearer picture of the textiles produced in the thirteenth century, looking at all-over patterns incorporating different motifs (vines, stars, waves, stripes, diamonds and different types of flowers) determining ranking through regalia.¹⁹⁴ There are similarities between the medallion motifs on stone and wood carvings depicting medallions on Angkorian temples to different groups of textiles found in China in the Tang (618-907) and Song (960-1279) dynasties. For instance, these medallions decorating a stone lintel of a doorway at Angkor Wat photographed by Green have shown strong similarities with this painted hemp artefact from the Aurel Stein collection held at the V&A [Figs.19-20]. Discovered in Dunhuang, a major archaeological site of the Silk Road in China, this large textile with a cream ground used to cover a Buddhist statue features a

¹⁹¹ Christopher John Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit, *A History of Ayutthaya: Siam in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 23.

¹⁹² Zhou, *A Record of Cambodia: The Land and Its People*, 61.

¹⁹³ *Ibid*, 50.

¹⁹⁴ Gillian Green, 'Indic Impetus? Innovations in Textile Usage in Angkorian Period Cambodia,' *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 43, no. 3 (2000): 277-313.

bold central lotus flower. Green has also pointed to a silk samite fragment enclosing lotus flowers in its roundels which, ‘with a pearl medallion enclosing a fully open lotus, is almost identical to the sculpted forms’.¹⁹⁵ Stylised petal-shaped lotus were also prominent motifs on Chinese *sancai* (‘three colours’) glazed vessels produced during the Tang Dynasty, mainly for export.¹⁹⁶ This limited evidence supports Zhou’s testimony and historical records of points of contact between China and Cambodia in the twelfth century.¹⁹⁷



Fig.19 Pair of carved lotuses under a lintel, Angkor Wat. Photograph by Gillian Green, 2005.

¹⁹⁵ Green described the canopy as made of silk, but the V&A website indicates it is hemp. The dimensions of 105cm x 91cm also differ from Green, citing Susan Whitfield in stating it is a 139-metre square piece. See Gillian Green, ‘Angkor Vogue: Sculpted Evidence of Imported Luxury Textiles in the Courts of Kings and Temples,’ *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 50, no. 4 (2007): 438 ; Susan Whitfield, *The Silk Road: Trade, Travel, War and Faith* (Chicago: Serindia, 2004), 269 ; Victoria and Albert Museum, ‘Collections: The Stein Collection,’ <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O92230/the-stein-collection-canopy-unknown/> [Accessed March 13, 2020].

¹⁹⁶ Nigel Wood, *Chinese Glazes: Their Origins, Chemistry and Recreation* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 199, 206. ; Regina Krahl, ‘Tang: Exuberance in Colour,’ *Christies*, October 26, 2020 <https://www.sothebys.com/en/articles/tang-exuberance-in-colour> [Accessed June 10, 2021]

¹⁹⁷ Green, ‘Angkor Vogue: Sculpted Evidence of Imported Luxury Textiles in the Courts of Kings and Temples,’ 442.



Fig.20 Canopy from the Stein Collection, Victoria & Albert Museum. Discovered in Dunhuang; made 7th to 9th century. Plain woven hemp, painted. Copyright: Government of India; Victoria & Albert Museum.

The elaborate garments depicted on Angkorian sculptures are testament to the variety of styles worn by the Angkor court for domestic, ritual and military use.¹⁹⁸ Sculpted figures showcase different types of lower garments such as the narrow cloth of indigenous production, skirt-cloth and hip-cloth, following different pleating methods. On Figure 21, the *devata* is wearing a translucent hip wrap with a field of small flowers revealing her legs, with the patterned edges flaring around the waist. This kind of textile would not be made of coarse kapok on a backstrap loom by indigenous Khmer Loeu people, but most likely of

¹⁹⁸ See Sappho Marchal's visual study of dress and ornaments of sculpted *devata* originally published in 1928. Sappho Marchal, *Costumes et parures khmères d'après les devatâ d'Angkor-Vat* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997); Green, 'Indic Impetus? Innovations in Textile Usage in Angkorian Period Cambodia,' 295.

patterned silk or fine cotton muslin that would have been imported, possibly from India or China. Green argues in this sense, that the backstrap-woven cloth would be used 'by commoners and ascetics, could be constructed from narrow lengths of cloth such as those woven by indigenous Khmer weavers. The other, portrayed on deities and elite requiring wider weft widths, could not'.¹⁹⁹



Fig.21 Devata (celestial being) wearing lightweight patterned silk on a bas-relief in Angkor Wat, Siem Reap, 12th century. Author's photograph, 2012.

¹⁹⁹ Green, 'Indic Impetus? Innovations in Textile Usage in Angkorian Period Cambodia,' 283.

Another set of debates relates to the Indianisation of Cambodian textile practices in Angkorian times. Historians such as Georges Coedès and later Ian W. Mabbett, along with art historian John Guy, have long established India's cultural influence on Cambodian civilisation since antiquity. Coedès coined the term 'Indianisation' to designate how Indian kingdoms propagated in the Southeast Asian region, which led to the expansion of the arts, customs and religions of India and the use of Sanskrit.²⁰⁰ In the first century to the sixth century CE, the state of Funan located in the Mekong Delta developed a statecraft following Indian models in terms of administrative and technological advancements in a slow process of cultural synthesis.²⁰¹ Hinduism became the state religion until Jayavarman VII, which also influenced the production of religious art and architecture. Nuancing the concept of Indianisation, David Chandler suggests that Indian culture was undeniably formative of Cambodia, without fully defining it, assessing that 'elements of life that are traceable to India were merely components of the sum', which is the angle supported by this thesis.²⁰²

From the tenth century onwards under the Chola dynasty, powerful guilds of merchants from South India and linked to local craftspeople were involved in active long-distance trade with Southeast Asia through the Indian Ocean.²⁰³ Historian Tirthankar Roy asserts that Indian textiles were produced for the elite class of Southeast Asian powers, including the Khmer Empire. Roy adds: 'this market was so secure and profitable, and India so far away, the trade encouraged import substitution' with local production coming mainly from Cambodia and Java.²⁰⁴

²⁰⁰ George Coedès, Sue Brown Cowing and Walter F. Vella, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996), 15.

²⁰¹ Kenneth Hall, 'The "Indianization" of Funan: An Economic History of Southeast Asia's First State,' *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (1982): 84-85.

²⁰² Chandler, *A History of Cambodia*, 13.

²⁰³ Upinder Singh, *A History of Ancient and Early Medieval India: From the Stone Age to the 12th Century* (Noida, India: Pearson, 2019), 602.

²⁰⁴ Tirthankar Roy, *India in the World Economy: From Antiquity to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 43.

Green compared motifs on Indian mordant-dyed Indian cotton cloths and Khmer motifs on twelfth and thirteenth-century bas-reliefs and sculptures. Indian textiles were exported to Egypt from as early as the ninth century to the seventeenth century for domestic use and were found in the archaeological site of Al Fustât, near Cairo, in a series of excavations starting from 1912.²⁰⁵ Some of these textiles were made in Gujarat, India, resembling patterns from Jain paintings and architectural elements in this region. These early examples of Indian cloths matching the Khmer Empire timeline helped Green find visual correlations. The medallion motif shares a common aesthetic with motifs carved on an Angkor temple, described by Green as cash medallions, and Indian fragments which could resemble this later example from the Cooper Hewitt Museum [Figs.22-23].



Fig.22 Cash medallions, Preah Khan. Photograph by Gillian Green, 2006.

²⁰⁵ These textiles were then dispatched to major museums internationally, including The Textile Museum in Washington, the Metropolitan Museum in New York, the V&A in London and the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. Ruth Barnes, 'Indian Trade Cloth in Egypt: The Newberry Collection,' *Textile Society of America Symposium Proceedings* (1990): 594. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/tsaconf/594> [Accessed March 19, 2020]

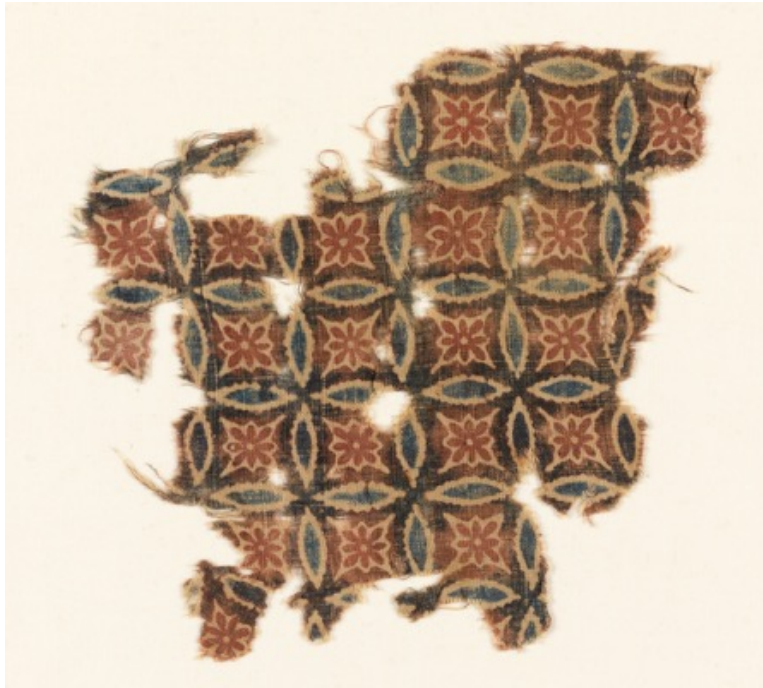


Fig.23 Block-printed cotton textile produced in India from Fustat, Egypt from a later period (18th century) showing similar medallion patterns, Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum.

Furthermore, there are important commonalities in dress between upper cloths specific to the representation of Khmer soldiers on bas-relief, in the form of long jackets, cropped bodices and sashes, which also appeared and Indian images dating as far back as the fourth century CE.²⁰⁶ Draped and pleated skirt cloths found on Angkorian sculptures were also part of early Indian forms under the name *antariya*, the ancient name for *dhoti*, for instance during the Gupta empire (mid-to-late third century CE to 543 CE).²⁰⁷ Epigraphic vocabulary in Sanskrit and ancient Khmer showed a shared repertoire of terms for clothing which could apply to 'the Hinduised ritual of the Khmer court'.²⁰⁸

However, the Cambodian textile culture of that period does not fully mirror Indian dress.

Breast bands and head scarves present on Indian dress were not typical of Khmer clothing

²⁰⁶ Green, 'Indic Impetus? Innovations in Textile Usage in Angkorian Period Cambodia,' 295.

²⁰⁷ Sulochana Ayyar, *Costumes and Ornaments as Depicted in the Sculptures of Gwalior Museum* (Delhi: Mittal, 1987), 90.

²⁰⁸ Green, 'Indic Impetus? Innovations in Textile Usage in Angkorian Period Cambodia,' 293.

imagery on sculptures, potentially due to differences of climate, 'customs concerning modesty, and status; and the persistence of indigenous Khmer customs'.²⁰⁹

This section has foregrounded the idea of well-developed trade between the Angkor Kingdom and other surrounding powers. India was a powerful trade partner whose stylistic influence in textile design and dress remained predominant over Medieval Cambodia. China was actively positioned diplomatically and as a main exporter of silks, but did not influence the style of Cambodian garments. Besides Zhou's testimony that states the presence of Siamese weavers who could have shared their know-how to local weavers, there is no evidence of a development of indigenous silk practices in Cambodia. The Siam Kingdom, Java, and Champa were also established as prized suppliers of manufactured textiles of the Angkor court.²¹⁰

In the thirteenth century, these imports most likely enriched Cambodian textile culture with technical innovations in weaving and opened the Khmer Empire elite to a repertoire of styles and motifs beyond indigenous textile practices.

In the fourteenth to the fifteenth century onwards, an increasing quantity of low and high-value silk textiles from China were imported throughout Southeast Asia, including Cambodia, especially tabby weave, pongee and satin silk cloths.²¹¹ Textile connections between the Siamese and the Khmer appear to have solidified later in the early modern era with the establishment of the Kingdom of Ayutthaya.

²⁰⁹ Green, 'Indic Impetus? Innovations in Textile Usage in Angkorian Period Cambodia,' 296.

²¹⁰ Ibid, 302-303.

²¹¹ Derek Heng, 'Distributive Networks, Sub-regional Tastes and Ethnicity: the Trade in Chinese Textiles in Southeast Asia from the Tenth to Fourteenth Centuries CE,' in *Textile Trades, Consumer Cultures, and the Material Worlds of the Indian Ocean*, eds. Pedro Machado et al. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 173-174.

The Thai influence over Cambodia (1430-1860)

This section further introduces the main players in the formation of Cambodian silk production during the early modern era. Khmer Empire entered a period of conflict with its neighbours, especially the Siamese kingdom. The rivalry between Cambodia and the Kingdom of Sukhothai (1238-1438) intensified with the sacking of Angkor capital city in 1431, which pushed Khmer rulers to move their capital city to Krong Chaktomuk, the ancient name for Phnom Penh, and finally to Longvek in Kampong Chhnang Province. In the sixteenth century, the Siamese kingdom of Ayutthaya (1351-1767) invaded Cambodia in 1591 in response to the Khmer Empire attacks. This Siamese-Cambodian War (1591–1594) resulted in the sacking of Longvek and the capture of members of the Cambodian royalty until the early 1600s when Khmer king Suriyophear returned to his court in Udong and eventually reclaimed authority over his kingdom.²¹² Wars, migration and geographic proximity between Udong and Ayutthaya led to increasing cultural exchanges between Siamese and Cambodian people. Chandler explains: ‘until the end of the sixteenth century, ‘Phnom Penh’ (or ‘Lovek’ or ‘Udong’) and ‘Ayudhya’ considered themselves participants of a hybrid culture’ relying on ‘Hinduized kingship, and Theravada monarchic accessibility’.²¹³ This also led to the adoption of common elements in dress and textiles.²¹⁴ This map of Asia in the eighteenth century demonstrates the fragmentation of mainland Southeast Asia into smaller kingdoms, as well as the reduced size of Cambodia and its proximity to Ayutthaya, Vietnam, the Mughal Empire and the Qing Empire [Fig.24]. Located on an island accessible by river, the capital of Ayutthaya was considered one of the largest cosmopolitan cities, with a population of up to one million in the late 1700s, with waves of

²¹² Michael Vickery, “‘1620’, A Cautionary Tale” in *New Perspectives on the History and Historiography of Southeast Asia, Continuing Explorations*, eds. Michael Arthur Aung-Thwin and Kenneth R. Hall (London: Routledge, 2011), 157-166.

²¹³ Chandler, *A History of Cambodia*, 80.

²¹⁴ Green, *Traditional Textiles of Cambodia*, 34.

travellers from neighbouring countries (Chinese, Indian Muslims, Malay Muslims) and from Europe (Dutch, French, Portuguese, and English).²¹⁵ This was an ‘exceptional moment’ for ‘the effects of cultural exchange’.²¹⁶ The metropolis became a platform for storing and trading cloths – Indian textiles in particular – but also a centre of production for craft goods, including silk, on intra-Asian and global levels, until it was destroyed by the Toungoo Burmese Dynasty in 1767.²¹⁷



Fig.24 Map of Asia and Southeast Asia in the 18th century. Wikimedia Commons.

King Narai, who ruled over Ayutthaya from 1656 to 1688, granted extraterritorial rights to the Dutch East India Company, which consolidated the expansion of Southeast Asian trade

²¹⁵ Chris Baker, ‘Markets and Production in the City of Ayutthaya before 1767: Translation and Analysis of Part of the Description of Ayutthaya,’ *Journal of the Siam Society*, 99 (2011): 40-41. London was the most populated European city, with approximately 600,000 people. In comparison Beijing’s population was about 659,000 in 1647. See Han Guanghui, *The Historical Population and Geography of Beijing* (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1996). Also cited in Lillian M. Li and Alison Dray-Novey, ‘Guarding Beijing’s Food Security in the Qing Dynasty: State, Market, and Police,’ *The Journal of Asian Studies* 58, no. 4 (1999): 995.

²¹⁶ Reid, *A History of Southeast Asia: Critical Crossroads*, 138-139.

²¹⁷ Chris Baker, and Phongpaichit Pasuk, *A History of Ayutthaya: Siam in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 121, 125.

with European nations and further asserted the Dutch monopoly over the region, especially in relation to the prices of Indian cloth.²¹⁸ Cambodia participated in these maritime commercial exchanges 'with the prosperity of its elite dependent on seaborne overseas trade conducted in large part by European traders, Chinese, and ethnic Malays operating out of Sumatra and Sulawesi'.²¹⁹ Cambodians were also active players in textiles.²²⁰ An eighteenth-century Thai document called *Athibai phaen thi phranakhon si ayutthaya* (Description of Ayutthaya) provides information about the city's economic organisation before its fall in 1767, including data about trade and listings of markets and craft settlements. The section about visiting traders describes 'Khmer with carts from Battambang transport[ing] bastard cardamom, cardamom, silk, benzoin, lac, tin, rhino horn, *phum* [ikat] silk cloth, Vietnamese silk, *thong phrai* [gold], red gems, and other goods that come from the Khmer region'.²²¹

Wearing *sampot chawng kbun* in Cambodia and *chong kraben* in Siam, a unisex lower garment made of an uncut cloth wrapped around the body and legs and tucked at the waist, became the norm in both royal courts in the seventeenth century.²²² A known representation of the Siamese dress was passed on by Simon de La Loubère, a French diplomat who spent four months at the Ayutthaya court in 1687 and wrote a diary of his travels illustrated by forty engravings.²²³ His contribution is a source well-regarded by

²¹⁸Prapassorn Posrithong, 'Indian Trade Textiles as a Thai Legacy,' in *The Sea, Identity and History. From the Bay of Bengal to the South China Sea*, ed. Satish Chandra and Himanshu Prabha Ray (New Delhi: Manohar, 2013), 332-333.

²¹⁹ Chandler, *A History of Cambodia*, 88.

²²⁰ Green, *Traditional Textiles of Cambodia*, 16. ; Conway, *Thai Textiles*, 98.

²²¹ Baker, 'Markets and Production in the City of Ayutthaya before 1767: Translation and Analysis of Part of the Description of Ayutthaya,' 57.

²²² Conway, *Thai Textiles*, 30-31.

²²³ Simon de la Loubère. *Du Royaume de Siam*, Vol.1 (Paris, 1691), 72-29. It is unclear in the book whether de la Loubère drew the illustrations himself.

scholars such as historians David K. Wyatt and Ronald S. Love, who consider that de la Loubère's writings offer a nuanced and accurate perspective on life in Ayutthaya.²²⁴

The top part of Figure 25 shows two Siamese mandarins, high-ranking officials, wearing a tunic as an upper cloth and a *chong kraben* lower cloth; one of them wears a *lomphok*, a pointed hat worn by royalty and nobility. In the lower section, a woman is shown dressed in a *pha nung* (hip-wrap), bare chested and with a *pha sabai*, an upper body wrap worn over the shoulder. These representations of Siamese dress are consistent with the ones appearing on extant illustrations in Buddhist Thai manuscripts from the Ayutthaya period, such as manuscript Or 14068 depicting the Ten Birth Tales held at the British Library [Fig.26]. While these manuscripts retell the mythical stories of the life of the Buddha, they also incorporate information about Siamese customs of the time, including fashion.²²⁵ In this painting the female figure carrying a parasol wears a *pha nung* patterned at the hem and a *pha sabai* over her chest. The man on the left also wears a *pha nung* with floral motifs in blue-red-white colourway which may be Indian chintz, a major textile import in Siam.²²⁶ Other illustrations from this folded book show commoners such as male hunters wearing loincloths or worshippers in *chong kraben*..

²²⁴ David K. Wyatt, 'Introduction,' in *The Kingdom of Siam*, Simon de La Loubere, (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1986), viii-ix ; Ronald S. Love, "Simon de La Loubère: French Views on Siam in the 1680s," *Journal of the Siam Society* 82/2 (1994): 156.

²²⁵ Henry Ginsburg, *Thai manuscript painting* (London: British Library, 1989) 46, 97, 100.

²²⁶ Mattiebelle Gittinger, *Master Dyers to the World: Technique and Trade in Early Indian Dyed Cotton Textiles* (Washington: The Textile Museum, 1982), 163.



Fig.25 Engraving from *Du Royaume de Siam* by Simon de La Loubère (1642-1729), illustrator unknown, pp. 72-76.



Fig.26 Detail of a painted page of the Ten Birth Tales from the Thai manuscript Or 14068 f3v, late 18th century. British Library.

Figure 27 is a Cambodian painting of the lives of Gautama Buddha, filled with saturated colors, gilding, and decorative patterns, which also offers a representation of eighteenth-century dress similar to the Thai style described earlier. The bottom section, part of the Great Departure scene, shows a set of garments similar with the ones discussed in the previous figure. The two men lying down on the left-hand side wear a *sampot chawng kbun* in solid red and yellow. The standing man and the one kneeling both wear a *sampot* patterned with a lattice of stylised flowers. The female figure lying in the background wears a *sampot* wrapped around her waist adorned with a *phkaa chan* (four-petaled flower) motif. These Cambodian and Thai dress forms also share similar-sounding names. For example, the *pha nung* an unpatterned silk hip wrap in Thai, resembles the term *phamaung* in Khmer, indicating a similar length of solid-coloured silk tube skirt for festivities. The Thai *pha sabai* (sash) exists in Khmer dress under a similar-sounding name *sbaay*.²²⁷

²²⁷ Conway, *Thai Textiles*, 45.

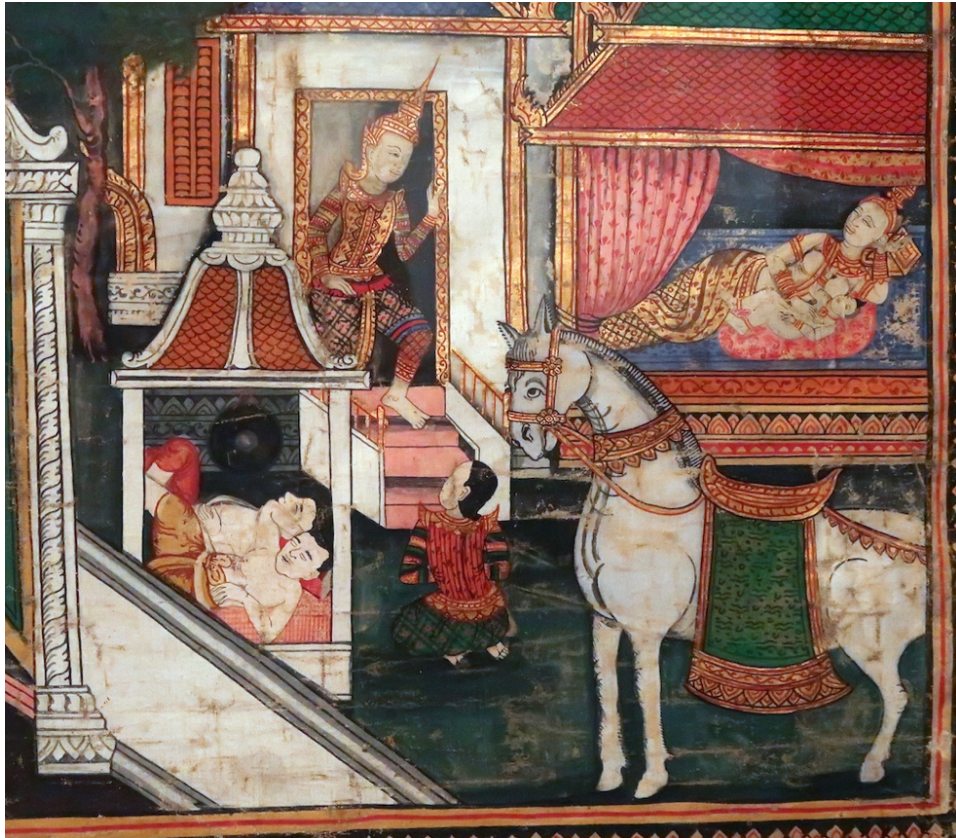


Fig.27 Detail of a painting about the life of Gautama Buddha, Cambodia, 18th century. Catalogue number 961.3.305, Asian Art Museum of Toulon, France, Wikimedia Commons.

Besides Siam, Cambodia also interacted with other Asian powers in the seventeenth century, which affected its textile production. During the reign of Khmer ruler Ramadhipati I (r. 1642 -1649), Cambodia intensified its relationships with Champa kingdom. Active traders in the region, Cham people started making their way to Cambodia after the collapse of Champa in 1471 due to Vietnamese invasions.²²⁸ Ramadhipati I married a Malay princess and converted to Islam, bringing weavers from the Cham communities to work at the royal court to weave the technique of *hol*, a highly decorated silk cloth obtained by tying and dyeing weft silk threads in successive colours before weaving the threads on the loom to create intricate motifs.²²⁹ Textile historian Michael C. Howard has argued that this style ‘was

²²⁸ Alvin Cheng-Hin Lim, ‘Ethnic Identities in Cambodia,’ in *The Handbook of Contemporary Cambodia*, eds. Katherine Brickell and Simon Springer (London: Routledge, 2017), 362.

²²⁹ Michael C. Howard, *Textiles and Clothing of Việt Nam: a History* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2016), 80.

similar to textiles woven in Sumatra, the Malay Peninsula, and southern Thailand, and was probably introduced from there, with local modifications especially in regards to motifs'.²³⁰ Howard also states that under Ramadhipati I, Cham weavers also produced *hol* textiles outside the royal court in the countryside, which facilitated the spread of this technique and style in Cambodia.

Phnom Penh became an important marketplace for imported luxury goods for the Cambodian elite, relying on the Chinese and Japanese diasporic communities to build sourcing networks of silk yarn.²³¹ Ter Horst has indeed pointed out the underdevelopment of sericulture in Cambodia at the time, explaining that the country mostly relied on imports for its domestic consumption and was considered as an active trading platform for Tonkinese, Chinese and Japanese silks, a trend which continued up to the modern era.²³²

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were a period of high instability for Cambodia, which suffered repeated invasions from Siam and Vietnam. In exchange for their military support, Cambodia bridged a political alliance with the Nguyễn dynasty which ruled over the southern part of Vietnam since 1570. In 1628, the death of King Jay Jettha II, who had married the Vietnamese princess Ang Chuv to secure this alliance, precipitated Cambodia's collapse, opening the way to internal conflicts and foreign covetousness in the eighteenth century.²³³ The sacking of Phnom Penh by the Siamese in 1772 turned the Khmer kingdom into a vassal state of both Siam and Vietnam. While Siam occupied Cambodia's western provinces, the Vietnamese exerted administrative control over the eastern regions. The Vietnamese empire encouraged its own people to resettle in Cambodia, along with ethnic Chinese communities living in Vietnam. Rural Vietnamese settlers mainly worked in

²³⁰ Howard, *Textiles and Clothing of Việt Nam: a History*, 80.

²³¹ Hall, 'The Coming of the West: European Cambodian Marketplace Connectivity, 1500-1800,' in *Cambodia and the West, 1500-2000*, 13; Bernard Philippe Groslier, Michael Smithies, trans., *Angkor and Cambodia in the Sixteenth Century, According to Portuguese and Spanish Sources* (Bangkok: Orchid Press, 2006), 123.

²³² Ter Horst, *Weaving into Cambodia*, 89-90.

²³³ Vickery, '1620', *A Cautionary Tale*, 157-166.

the fishing sector along the rivers and in sericulture, expanding the practice in Cambodia.²³⁴ Simultaneously, Chinese silk merchants and producers arrived in Cambodia, quickly integrating and taking over the production chain.²³⁵ This early settlement proved instrumental in the development of silk up to the 1990s, and will be further discussed in this chapter.

Throughout the eighteenth century fine Indian cottons continued to be objects of prestige, with designs adapted for different markets, notably the Siamese court, and used as diplomatic gifts.²³⁶ Silk brocades were woven in India, based on Thai designs, and imported into Siam, while other silk goods were imported from Japan and Iran.²³⁷ The Indian double ikat *patola* were also highly regarded textiles produced in Northern India and traded all over Southeast Asia from Indonesia to Siam.²³⁸ However, the demand for silks changed progressively in Siam in favour of Chinese luxury goods and locally-woven textiles destined for nobility and royalty.²³⁹ By the nineteenth century, Cambodian *hol* textiles also emerged as tributary gifts and prized goods for courtiers at the Thai court.²⁴⁰ Cambodia also produced deerskins and timber products, which were prized commodities.²⁴¹

The examination of a selection of museum objects illustrates the linking Cambodian *hol* textiles to the Siamese court. Penny Edwards argues that in nineteenth-century Cambodia, silk *sampot* were material manifestations ‘integral to the indigenous sociopolitical

²³⁴ Ramses Amer, ‘The Ethnic Vietnamese in Cambodia: A Minority at Risk?’, *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 16, no. 2 (1994): 212.

²³⁵ Ter Horst, *Weaving into Cambodia*, 97-98.

²³⁶ John Guy, *Woven cargoes: Indian textiles in the East* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1998), 127.

²³⁷ Sharples and Rifenberg, *Thai Silk*, 18.

²³⁸ Alfred Bühler, ‘Patola Influences in South East Asia,’ *Journal of Indian Textile History* 4 (1959): 1-46.

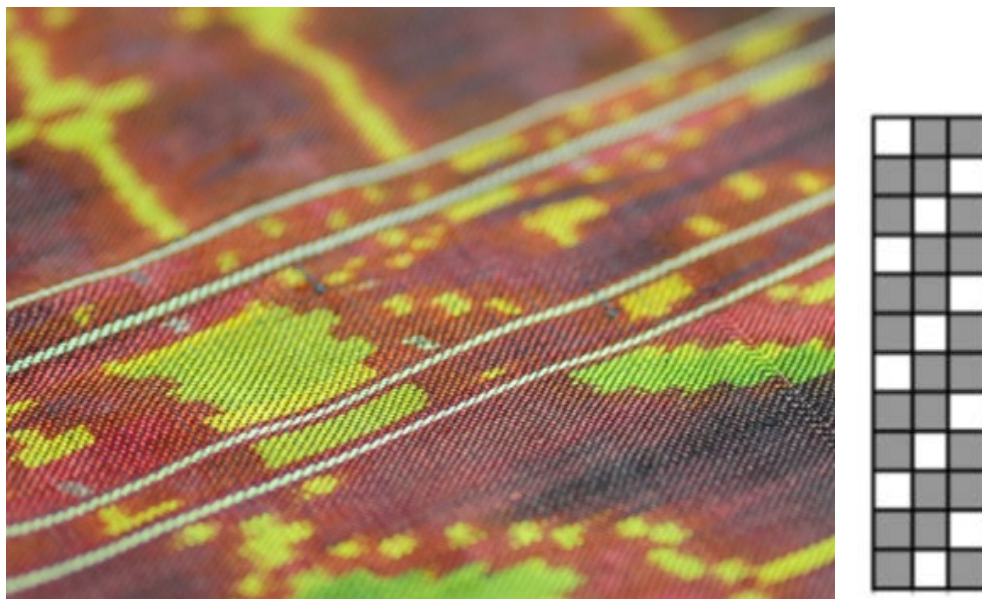
²³⁹ Guy, *Woven cargoes: Indian textiles in the East*, 146.

²⁴⁰ Mattiebelle Gittinger and Leedom Lefferts, *Textiles and the Tai Experience in Southeast Asia* (Washington DC: The Textile Museum, 1992), 170.

²⁴¹ Kenneth R. Hall, ‘The Coming of the West: European Cambodian Marketplace Connectivity, 1500–1800,’ in *Cambodia and the West, 1500-2000*, ed. T.O Smith (London: Palgrave Macmillan 2018), 25.

hierarchies' in Cambodia, embodying power relations and status. The trading of *sampot* also reveals the global connections involved in their production and consumption.

One typical feature of Cambodian *hol* is an irregular weft-faced 2-1 twill weave structure that requires a minimum of three shafts, as shown in this detail, a feature identifiable in the following example of *hol* [Figs.28a-b].²⁴² In Thailand, silk weft ikat (*mudmee*) is usually woven on two shafts in plain weave, except for weavers of Khmer ancestry in the area of Surin who also wove in uneven twill.²⁴³



Figs.28a-b Close-up of an irregular twill weave structure on a sampot hol, Musée du Quai Branly. Author's photograph, January 2017; Diagram of the 2-1 twill weave (two wefts up, one weft down) forming diagonal lines, by the author.

The *sampot* in Figure 29, dating from 1855 and held at the V&A, is one of the oldest Cambodian silk examples in museum collections in the world. It was originally received from Singapore and presented to the India Museum in 1855 by King Mongkut of Siam, the year of the Bowring Treaty between Siam and Britain. Also known as the East India Company Museum, its collections were transferred in 1979 to the South Kensington

²⁴² Green, *Traditional Textiles of Cambodia*, 62.

²⁴³ Conway, *Thai Textiles*, 93, 161; Green, *Traditional Textiles of Cambodia*, 104.

Museum, future V&A.²⁴⁴ This *chawng kbun* is three metres long, with a red twill ground and polychromic lozenge motifs. It features patterned borders adorned with *yantra* motifs, which are 'protective devices against physical and spiritual harm' consisting of 'abstract signs, or letters of the Khmer alphabet' [Figs.29a-b].²⁴⁵ This object exemplifies the sophisticated technical know-how achieved by Cambodian weavers by the mid-nineteenth century and materialises a geographic and historical itinerary, from Cambodia to the King of Siam to the British East India Company to the V&A.



Figs.29a-b Sampot chawng kbun hol gifted to the India Museum by King Mongkut; detail of borders of yantra, c. 1855, 5640(IS). Victoria & Albert Museum.

Other fine examples of *hol* as Siamese royal offerings are held at the Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institute, in Washington D.C. King Mongkut donated six

²⁴⁴ Victoria and Albert Museum, 'Collecting South Asian textiles at the V&A,' <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/c/collecting-south-asian-textiles/> (Accessed May 31, 2021)

²⁴⁵ Green, *Traditional Textiles of Cambodia*, 143.

textiles including a set of four Khmer *hol* textiles to the American president, Franklin Pierce in 1856.²⁴⁶ His brother Prah Pin Klao, viceroy of Siam, donated eleven textile pieces, some of which of Indian and Chinese provenance.²⁴⁷ Given to commemorate the signing of the Harris Treaty between Siam and the United States these artefacts embed interwoven dynamics of foreign influence in their production and design.

Green identifies lattice and close-packed spots central fields as typical patterns responding to Siamese sensibilities, modelled on mordant-dyed and painted cotton textiles from India.

One of the donated pieces' central field comprised of simple spots is reminiscent of the *saudagiri* style, a type of Indian block-printed trade-cloth of lesser quality specifically destined for the Thai market, with repeated motifs such as the *bhuti* (single flower) and *jaal* (trellis) [Figs.30a-b].²⁴⁸ Figure 31, a nineteenth-century printed cotton cloth from India, offers a visual comparison.

To identify the pieces as Khmer and not Siamese, Green focuses her attention on their uneven twill silk ground, a Cambodian specificity, and on the design scheme of these *hol* hip wraps. Green explains that for Cambodian *hol* textiles, 'the central field is bounded along its side by two patterned borders contained in the band between central fields and borders [...] [which] generally do not extend beyond the central field to the warp ends as they do with Siamese silk weft *hol* hipwrappers'.²⁴⁹ This fits the design of the pieces E-81 and E-83 in the Harris Treaty collection at the Smithsonian.

²⁴⁶ Lisa McQuail, *Treasures of Two Nations: Thai Royal Gifts to the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1997), 90.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 89.

²⁴⁸ Green, *Traditional Textiles of Cambodia*, 109 ; Eiluned Edwards, 'Lasting impressions: Indian block-prints and global trade,' *Textile Society of America Symposium Proceedings* (2016): 101.

²⁴⁹ Green, *Traditional Textiles of Cambodia*, 110, 117.; Gittinger and Lefferts, *Textiles and the Tai Experience in Southeast Asia*, 165-167.



Figs.30a-b Sampot hol in saudagiri style; detail of the central field. Catalog Number: E83, from King Mongkut to President Pierce, ca. 1856, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution.



Fig.31 Textile in the saudagiri style, printed and resist-dyed, India, 19th century, Accession: IPN.960, Victoria & Albert Museum.

A *hol* donated by Prah Pin Klao likely woven in Cambodia, displays a motif of confronting *nak* or *naga* in *pali* (snake), identified by Green as a common element on *sampot hol chawng*

kbun worn by men ordinands.²⁵⁰ Therefore, she assumes this piece was not commissioned to fit Siamese taste, but most likely woven by a Cambodian weaver versed in this style, and for Cambodian use [Figs.32a-b].²⁵¹ Green also briefly mentions that this *naga* pattern was also found on Balinese textiles, resembling men's hip wraps *Kampuh* from Buleleng.²⁵² Further research indeed shows that, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Balinese noblemen's ceremonial hip wraps called *saput songket* or *kampuh songket*, in brocaded silk with metallic threads, showcased similar central fields patterned with paired *naga* as seen in this example [Fig.33].²⁵³ However, the inventory of gifts formulated by the Siamese court designates the Prah Pin Klao's gift as *P'um k'amane* (Khmer silk cloth in Thai), which confirms its Cambodian origins.

Overall, this assortment of textiles may have been offered by the Kingdom of Cambodia to the Siamese court as a sign of deference and tributary donation or were commissioned or purchased by the Thai court directly from Cambodian weavers. The variety of their design schemes and patterns speak to the fluidity of styles circulating from South to Southeast Asia and the integration of high-quality Cambodian *hol* textiles in Siamese sumptuary codes and diplomatic relationships.

It was in this context of Siamese economic and cultural domination that the French arrived as new key players in Southeast Asia. France started to expand its colonial territory in the peninsula, occupying the south of Vietnam from the Mekong Delta in 1858. Facing the risk of being dismantled and incorporated into the Kingdom of Siam, Cambodia requested protection from the French.

²⁵⁰ Green, *Traditional Textiles of Cambodia*, 117-127.

²⁵¹ *Ibid*, 109.

²⁵² *Ibid*, 109, 183.

²⁵³ Brigitta Hauser-Schaublin, Marie-Louise Nabholz-Kartaschoff and Urs Ramseyer, *Balinese Textiles* (London: British Museum Press, 1991), 48.



Figs.32a-b Sampot hol with confronted naga in the central field, from Prah Pin Klao to President Pierce, c. 1856 in Lisa McQuail Treasures of Two Nations: Thai Royal Gifts to the United States of America, Fig.100.



Fig.33 Saput songket with confronted naga, early 19th century from Singaraja, Bali, TONYRAKA Art Gallery Twitter, 2019.

French colonisation and the crafting of a Cambodian national culture (1863-1953)

This section continues to explore how foreign influence and geopolitics, this time French colonisation, reshaped the historiography of Cambodian silk and shifted its position on domestic and international levels. As historian John Tully states, ‘at the turn of the nineteenth century, few Europeans were aware of Cambodia’s existence. It sat on the periphery of their known world’.²⁵⁴ France only began to consider controlling Cambodia when they feared that the British, who had signed treaties with Siam, would express a strategic interest. In 1863 King Norodom Prohmbarirak signed an agreement acknowledging the French protectorate, which guaranteed that he could keep the Cambodian territory intact [Fig.34]. By taking Cambodia under its wing, France asserted its position over the region to diminish the growing influence of Siam.

The French also used their colonies to take advantage of local resources and create commercial opportunities with Asia, especially China, its primary market, Japan, Singapore, and the Dutch East Indies.²⁵⁵ Overall, this share of exports largely exceeded the exports to metropolitan France. In the mid-1800s French sericulture was suffering from *pébrine*, a silkworm disease, and was facing aggressive competition from Chinese and Japanese imports.²⁵⁶ Settling in Southeast Asia offered the possibility to use local silk fibre production to supply silk manufacturers from Lyon in France, and get a share of the silk export market.²⁵⁷ According to a colonial report published in 1923 written by Delignon, a silk plant

²⁵⁴ John Tully, ‘Cambodia in the Nineteenth Century: Out of the Siamese Frying Pan and into the French Fire?’ in *Cambodia and the West, 1500-2000*, ed. T.O. Smith (London: Palgrave Macmillan Limited, 2018), 37.

²⁵⁵ Pierre Brocheux, and Daniel Hémery, *Indochina: an Ambiguous Colonization, 1858-1954* (Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press, 2011), 176-177.

²⁵⁶ Ter Horst, *Weaving into Cambodia*, 99 ; The Cévennes area provided more than half of the silk cocoon production, about twenty-six thousand metric tons of cocoons a year; See Jacques Anquetil, *La soie en Occident* (Paris: Flammarion, 1995), 189.

²⁵⁷ Brocheux and Hémery, *Indochina: an Ambiguous Colonization, 1858-1954*, 38 ; Charles Robequain, trans. Isabel A. Ward, *The Economic Development of French Indochina* (London: Oxford University Press, 1944), 233.

owner in Vietnam, before 1899 only 3,886 kilos of raw silk were destined for France out of the 185,402 kilos produced in Indochina (Cambodia and Southern Vietnam counting for 14,061 kilos).²⁵⁸ Cambodian and southern Vietnamese silk was mostly exported to China and Thailand, two major producers and consumers.



Fig.34 Map of countries forming French Indochina in 1900. Wikimedia Commons/ Author's image.

With their keen fascination for Angkor Wat and vestiges of the Khmer Empire, the French entertained nostalgic notions of this glorious Cambodian history, by contrast considering early twentieth-century Cambodian culture to be decadent. In 1913, architect and conservator Henri Marchal echoed the negative idea perpetuated by French colonials

²⁵⁸ Louis Delignon, 'La production de la Soie en Indochine.' *Revue de botanique appliquée et d'agriculture coloniale*, 3^e année, bulletin n°24 (31 août 1923) : 532.

that Cambodian people were ‘indolent and apathetic [...] with no aptitude for commerce or the industry’, yet he contended that they also showcased ‘natural dispositions for the arts’.²⁵⁹ Marchal stressed the potential of reviving Cambodian arts under a modern form, which ‘as declining as they could be, could feed decorative motifs for industries such as ceramics, woodwork, wallpapers, stained glass, jewellery, embroidery’.²⁶⁰ Under this mindset, the French investment in Cambodian handicraft production aimed to develop artisanal products marketable to a French audience yearning for exotic goods from the colonies.

The French colonial subjectivities towards Cambodian culture are further exemplified by the involvement of Georges Groslier (1887-1945), a French artist, architect and educator [Fig.35]. He was the first French child to be born in Cambodia, was educated in France and spoke Khmer fluently. In a perspective that nuances Marchal’s assertion on Cambodian artistic decline, Groslier considered that these arts were disappearing because local elites disdained their products, instead purchasing French goods. While he noted that ‘many women know how to weave and dye boldly coloured silks which are essential to every home’, he also regretted that ‘cotton percales and floral fabrics imported from Britain [were] replacing local textiles’.²⁶¹ He added:

‘While the popular masses have kept their arts, they are unable to practice them. They keep their traditions but can no longer apply them. [...] Abandoned by their indigenous rulers and pagodas, they wait for the great power of the Occident to intervene and irremediably disperse their fragile treasures, yet still remembered, from the Angkorian era’.²⁶²

Despite a patronising tone, Groslier’s concern for craftspeople and their skills sounds sincere and explains his commitment to implement a new artistic education strategy.

²⁵⁹ Marchal, ‘L’art cambodgien moderne,’ 69.

²⁶⁰ Ibid, 74.

²⁶¹ Groslier, ‘La reprise des arts khmers,’ 400-401. Translated by the author.

²⁶² Ibid, 402.

Moreover, he judged previous Cambodian-led initiatives supporting local craftsmen as ‘for some without a future, the others ineffective’.²⁶³



Fig.35 George Groslier in his office in Phnom Penh holding a carved figurine, Cambodia, 1926. Photograph by Martin Hurlimann. Wikimedia Commons.

Until the early twentieth century, the royal workshops’ function was ‘to fulfill orders from the king and the court, they included painters, sculptors, silversmiths or weavers, and were particularly requested for the preparation of dance costumes for the Royal Ballet’.²⁶⁴ From 1907 to 1917, the Cambodian government started to expand and redefine the arts and crafts under royal patronage, realising the sector’s commercial potential: ‘the workshops of the Palace [were] grouped together within the ‘Royal Manufactory’, created to provide new economic outlets to the craft sector. It had two sections, one of ‘jewelry and art objects’, the other of ‘sewing, embroidery and weaving’.²⁶⁵ King Sisowath assigned his son Prince Monivong as the manager of the jewelry department.²⁶⁶

²⁶³ Groslier, ‘La reprise des arts khmers,’ 395.

²⁶⁴ Abbe, ‘Le Développement des Arts au Cambodge à L’Époque Coloniale: George Groslier et L’École des Arts Cambodgiens (1917-1945),’ 8.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Edwards, *Cambodge: The Cultivation of a Nation, 1860-1945*, 147-148.

It is in this context that Groslier was commissioned by the French Governor General Albert Sarraut to establish a craft training programme for Cambodians, L'Ecole des Arts Cambodgiens (The School of Cambodian Arts), in 1918 with a cultural rescue agenda in mind to 'educate the foreigner and reeducate Khmer people'.²⁶⁷ By 1920, the school was combined with the museum Albert Sarraut in new buildings established near the Royal Palace, with the agreement of King Sisowath.²⁶⁸

To Groslier, this initiative aimed 'to fix artistic practices in their current state, to study them and help them; while founding an active and true museum'.²⁶⁹ He was the director of the School of Cambodian Arts from 1920 to 1922 and remained in charge of artistic training pedagogy until 1944, with the assistance of André Silice, a French artist. This organisation implemented six workshops open only to Cambodians, welcoming up to 165 apprentices, led by Cambodian master craftsmen. It included drawing and architecture, sculpture, woodworking and gold plating, a foundry, silversmithing and weaving. In 1924, the weaving workshop counted twenty-five young women, who appear in this archival photograph taken on site and made into a postcard produced by the French administration [Fig.36].²⁷⁰

There is an apparent paradox in wanting to preserve indigenous customs when the colonial power itself is an active agent of change, bringing deep modifications to the Cambodian cultural landscape: changes which were mostly unwelcome to the colonised. Anthropologist Renato Rosaldo, who worked specifically on the Philippines, coined the terms 'imperial nostalgia' to describe this paradoxical yearning for an untouched indigenous past embedded in the colonial civilising mission. Rosaldo's nuanced perspective demonstrated how this type of ideology can simultaneously be 'compelling, contradictory, and pernicious'.²⁷¹

²⁶⁷ Groslier, 'La reprise des arts khmers,' 402; Susan Falls and Jessica Smith, 'Branding Authenticity: Cambodian Ikat in Transnational Artisan Partnerships (TAPs),' *Journal of Design History* 24, no. 3 (2011): 7.

²⁶⁸ The museum eventually became Phnom Penh National Museum in 1953.

²⁶⁹ Groslier, 'La reprise des arts khmers,' 398.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 403.

²⁷¹ Renato Rosaldo, 'Imperialist Nostalgia,' *Representations* 26 (1989): 110.

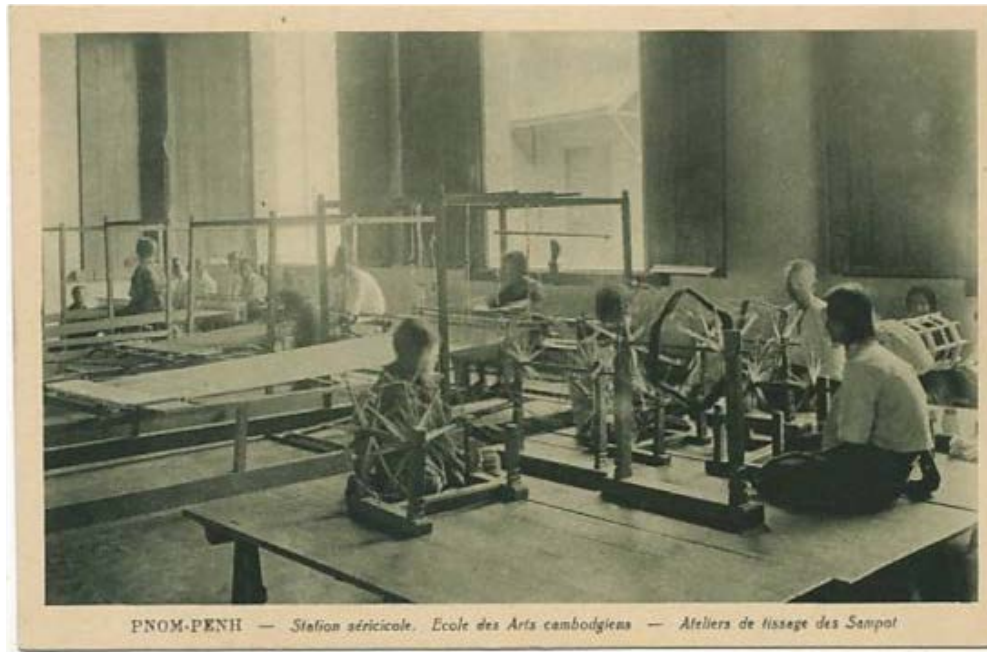


Fig.36 Postcard of a photograph showing the silk spinning and weaving workshop at the School of Cambodian Arts, c. 1924.

The Musée Albert Sarraut became a tourist attraction for Europeans who had settled in Southeast Asia and international visitors attracted by Angkor Wat. Groslier created the museum's textile collection with pieces found across the country, prime examples of silks from the School of Cambodian Arts, and ceremonial brocades and dance costumes from the Royal Palace. In the 1924 General Collection catalogue, each textile object was listed with a full description in French and an acquisition number starting with N.: for example, 'N.49-Sampot hol, silk, 1.97x0.90. For women, Red warp. Silk weft in yellow, green, purple forming horizontal stripes'.²⁷² Each object was linked to a card written in French with more data about the piece: its donor, material, price of purchase in certain cases, dimensions, and acquisition date.²⁷³

With the idea to provide work for the trained artisans, Les Corporations Cambodgiennes

²⁷² In French: 'N.49 - Sampot hol, soie. 1.97x0.90. Pour femme. Chaîne rouge. Trame soie teinte jaune, vert, violet formant bandes transversales.' See *Catalogue Général du Musée du Cambodge* (Musée Albert Sarraut), 'N. Etoffes et vêtements' (Hanoi, 1924), 194-207, courtesy of The National Museum Library.

²⁷³ See catalogue card for object 258H in the N category, *sampot hol*, acquired by the museum in January 1927, Courtesy of the National Museum Library.

(Cambodian Corporations) were established in 1919 to produce artefacts with French customers in mind, which Groslier defined as ‘a rich client base, avid for exoticism and always ready to acquire souvenirs and testimonials of faraway countries that they visited’.²⁷⁴

At the time, weavers mostly produced three-metre-long textiles for clothing to be draped as *sbaay* or *sampot*.²⁷⁵ While other textile techniques existed in Cambodia, such as solid silk *phamaung* and brocaded *rbauk*, the Corporations Cambodgiennes invested specific efforts into the development of multicolored weft ikat *sampot hol*, reproducing antique examples collected at the museum for the rarity of their technique. Le Service des Arts (Arts Service), an organisation emerging from the School of Cambodian Arts, acted as the intermediary between customers and artisans, receiving orders, purchasing raw materials, and ensuring a controlled sales price.²⁷⁶ With this programme, Groslier repurposed ancestral knowledge owned by indigenous artisans to establish a colonial model of production and distribution. *The Colonial Revue* reported that from 1921 to 1925, three thousand silk *sampot*, following high quality standards established and encouraged by the *résident supérieur* (local French governor), were ordered for a successful turnover of 47,500 piastres, the currency in French Indochina, which went wholly to the weavers.²⁷⁷

The promotion of Les Corporations Cambodgiennes’ silks extended to French metropolitan contexts outside Cambodia. Edwards demonstrated that French colonisation brought a particular notion of nationalism to Cambodian dress and textiles, ‘mark[ing] such objects as “national” and fix[ing] them in a bounded geocultural sphere’.²⁷⁸ Colonial pavilions were used in the 1889 Exposition Universelle in Paris to communicate essentialist attitudes to its colonies; *expositions coloniales* (colonial exhibitions) were then launched in 1896 in Rouen.

²⁷⁴ Groslier, ‘La reprise des arts khmers,’ 415.

²⁷⁵ Ibid, 420.

²⁷⁶ Ibid, 418.

²⁷⁷ A.V. Dunet, ed., ‘La sériciculture au Cambodge,’ *La Revue Coloniale* 2 no. 15 (Décembre 1925): 2-3.

²⁷⁸ Edwards, *Cambodge: The Cultivation of a Nation, 1860-1945*, 145.

In the 1922 edition in Marseille, the Cambodian section of the Indochina pavilion featured a spectacular large-scale architectural reproduction of Angkor Wat, used as set and stage for Cambodian dancers who had been brought specifically to perform.²⁷⁹ The fair was a propaganda tool to demonstrate what the organising committee called the 'living history of [French] colonisation' and 'the general synthesis of [French] efforts' in Indochina.²⁸⁰ Cambodian silks were also sold at the Indochina pavilion.

Fashion scholar Jennifer Craik has argued that 'Western cultures draw on the exotica of non-Western cultures and past cultures to add an element of frisson to the everyday culture'.²⁸¹ She adds: 'the idea of the exotic implies a sense of magic'.²⁸² In the grandiose set replicating the mythical Angkorian temples in Marseille, the French audience embraced this curated experience of otherness and appreciated a selection of Khmer arts and crafts labelled as authentic by the colonial power by their connection with the Khmer empire.²⁸³

As detailed in a *Vogue* article published in 1927, silk *sampot hol* produced for the French market were said to be directly inspired by Cambodia's heritage: 'next to the gods of Angkor and ancient textiles, modern artisans under an astute and intelligent French management, are fortunately inspired by old designs to revive Khmer art'.²⁸⁴ *Sampot hol* competed with other exotic commodities, such as the popular 'Spanish shawls' produced in China with

²⁷⁹ Isabelle Flour, 'Orientalism and the Reality Effect: Angkor at the Universal Expositions, 1867–1937,' *Getty Research Journal* 6 (January 2014): 71.

²⁸⁰ Penny Edwards, citing the Commissariat Général de l'Exposition Nationale Coloniale de Marseille. See Edwards, *Cambodge: The Cultivation of a Nation, 1860-1945*, 154-55 ; Commissariat Général de l'Exposition Nationale Coloniale de Marseille, *Exposition nationale coloniale de Marseille* (Marseille, 1922), 9-10.

²⁸¹ Jennifer Craik, 'Exotic Narratives in Fashion,' in *Modern Fashion Traditions*, eds. Angela Jansen and Jennifer Craik (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 100.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, 97.

²⁸³ A report on Marseille's Colonial Exhibition of 1922 detailed that Cambodian silk textiles were showcased inside the Angkor Wat replica both in the artistic and economic exhibition spaces. Antique Cambodian silks, referred to as 'true master pieces in applied arts', were showcased with lacquerware, jewellery, textiles, and sculptures from Laos and Vietnam on the first floor. Products from the School of Cambodian Arts were showcased with other colonial schools. On the ground floor, silk textiles from Cambodia and Vietnam were part of the economic exhibition. See Pierre Guesde, *L'Exposition Nationale Coloniale de Marseille décrite par ses auteurs* (Marseille: Commissariat Général de l'Exposition, 1922), 50-51, 89-92.

²⁸⁴ J.R.F, 'Les sampots cambodgiens,' *Vogue*, 1 January 1927, 54.

Chinese-inspired bold and colourful patterns.²⁸⁵ This article offered its readers an enthusiastic depiction of *hol* produced by the School of Cambodian Arts, as if they were a regional product. Buying *sampot* meant buying French: 'these textiles with remarkable designs are 'from home', because our colonies produce them'.²⁸⁶ The article also discussed the involvement of the House of Rodier, a textile company established in 1848 in Lyon, which had commissioned Georges Groslier to produce *sampot hol* to be sold in France as shawls and decorative hangings [Fig.37]. This connection between French manufacturers and Le Service des Arts in the 1920s demonstrates how indigenous textiles, originally a domestic product for local consumption, was integrated beyond Cambodia into the broader territory of the French luxury market. The colonial civilising mission is clearly stated in this article: 'it is to the French metropole to help indigenous populations to exploit the wealth of our colonies, first condition of their prosperity and for the development of civilisation'.²⁸⁷



Fig.37 Silk pictorial pidan woven at the School of Cambodian Arts produced for Maison Rodier, *Vogue*, 1 January 1927, 44.

²⁸⁵ J.R.F, 'Les sampots cambodgiens,' 42. See also Sarah Cheang's research on Chinese robes and shawls worn by Western women as loungewear in the domestic space of their homes. Sarah Cheang, 'Chinese Robes in Western Interiors: Transitionality and Transformation', in *Fashion, Interior Design and the Contours of Modern Identity*, ed. Alla Myzelev and John Potvin (Farnham: Ashgate, 2017), 129.

²⁸⁶ Author's translation. J.R.F, 'Les sampots cambodgiens,' 42.

²⁸⁷ J.R.F, 'Les sampots cambodgiens', 52.

The ways in which Cambodian silks were championed by the French colonial power demonstrate the nature of French colonialism and how discourses of the civilising mission were enmeshed with trade. Discussing the work produced by Vietnamese painters in colonial fine arts schools in Vietnam, Nora Taylor identified the difficulty of clearly designating this artistic production, concluding that it could not be considered nationally Vietnamese, nor indigenous, nor French, but as hovering ambiguously between these definitions.²⁸⁸ Similarly, Cambodian silks for colonial trade conserved the handmade quality of Cambodian craftsmanship: ‘remarkable, long, meticulous, and difficult fabrication’, but shifted in terms of use and cultural identity to become hybrid objects.²⁸⁹

Materiality of the silk landscape during Independence (1950-69)

After delinking the effect of orientalist discourses and French colonialism on silk as artefacts and craft, this section explores how Cambodia’s postcolonial history affects the spatial realm by exploring the geography and topographical features that support silk production. Moving into the second half of the twentieth century and the period of national independence, this section examines silk as a resource entangled with Cambodia’s land, territory, and history. It continues to unravel the formative patterns of Cambodian silk within debates on cultural exchanges and national identity. In that sense, looking at the complex interrelation between mulberry trees, silk farming and silk weaving, and how this impacted on the morphology of the landscape, defines silk as a Cambodian culture, and, reversely, defines Cambodia through silk.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁸ Nora Taylor, ‘ORIENTALISM/OCCIDENTALISM: The Founding of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts d’Indochine and the Politics of Painting in Colonial Việt Nam, 1925-1945,’ *Crossroads: an Interdisciplinary Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 11, no. 2 (1997): 33.

²⁸⁹ J.R.F, ‘Les sampots cambodgiens’, 52.

²⁹⁰ See the concept of cultural landscape first developed by Carl Sauer in which nature is modified by human actions, which therefore impacts on its morphology. Carl Sauer, ‘The Morphology of a Landscape,’ in *Human Geography: An Essential Anthology*, eds. J. Agnew, D. Livingstone, and A. Rodgers (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 309.

Japan became an industrialised and military power during the Meiji era (1868-1912), with regional reach in Asia which fuelled its imperialist aspirations.²⁹¹ Japan's active expansion began in the 1930s with the invasion of Manchuria, and accelerated during the Asia-Pacific War after the Pearl Harbor attack in 1941. From 1941 to 1945, the Vichy French colonial administration remained nominally present in Cambodia while Japanese troops occupied the territory. During these years, the Japanese encouraged Norodom Sihanouk, who was crowned Cambodian king in 1941, to seek independence. Japan strategically promoted the rhetoric of Pan-Asianism and the ideals of Asian solidarity to encourage Southeast Asian countries towards independence, thus weakening the incumbent French and Dutch colonial forces.²⁹² At the end of WW2, after Japan surrendered, France reestablished control over Cambodia, but eventually granted the country independence in 1953. Japan then officially established diplomatic relations with Cambodia once it became an independent nation in 1953.²⁹³

Norodom Sihanouk abdicated to his father Norodom Suramarit in 1955 to be able to rule as Cambodia's prime minister with his political party Sangkum Reastr Niyum (People's Socialist Community) until 1970. This period, known as Sangkum, was marked by important economic and industrial developments while Sihanouk attempted to mitigate his country's involvement in the Vietnamese conflict. Aid from France, the former colonial power, and Britain continued to be instrumental in Cambodia's development, especially in terms of industry, infrastructure and energy production, which shows the prevalence of Western

²⁹¹ Peter Nicholas Tarling, *A Sudden Rampage: The Japanese Occupation of Southeast Asia, 1941-1945* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 11-12.

²⁹² Sven Saaler and Christopher Szpilman, 'Pan-Asianism as an Ideal of Asian Identity and Solidarity, 1850-Present,' *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 9, no. 17:1 (2011): 7; Tarling, *A Sudden Rampage: The Japanese Occupation of Southeast Asia, 1941-1945*, 39.

²⁹³ Hideo Sasagawa, 'Japan's Involvement in Cambodia during World War II,' in *Vietnam-Indochina-Japan Relations during the Second World War*, ed. M. Shiraishi, and al. (Tokyo: Waseda Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, 2017), 71.

imperialist ties to the region in the early years of independence.²⁹⁴ Despite major efforts towards education and industrialisation, Cambodia remained an agricultural country relying on rice and rubber, its two main pillars, while cotton and mulberry raw silk remained minor commercial crops.²⁹⁵

In the early 1960s, sericulture and silk weaving were both active in the southwest region in Prey Kabas and Tani. This map drafted by geographer Jean Delvert shows some of these overlapping areas with different artisanal productions (silk, cotton, metalware, natural dyes, basketry and pottery) located south and west of Phnom Penh at the borders of the Mekong and Tonlé Sap rivers [Fig.38a-b].²⁹⁶ Like cotton, mulberry trees grew on well-irrigated regions along the southern banks of the Mekong River. Cotton and silk weaving was practised by women in villages during the dry season because it was 'one of the only resources available' in areas with limited arable lands, to complement rice farming.²⁹⁷

Connecting local resources to the land also connects them to their populations. Figure 38a also shows extended zones of silk weaving activity along the Mekong River, Cambodia's most populous area. The number of weavers and their concentration in different *srok* (districts) correlate with areas of sericulture in three main zones: south of Phnom Penh, in Kandal and Takeo province, around the Tonlé Touch River and in a few remote *phum* (villages) in Battambang and Oddar Meanchey provinces.²⁹⁸ In these neighbouring regions to Vietnam, Cambodian silk production was led by Sino-Khmer and ethnic Vietnamese communities in Kandal, Takeo, and Prey Veng provinces.²⁹⁹

Relying on extensive periods of fieldwork from 1968 to 1970, Dupaigne identified two types of production in those regions. In Takeo, family-owned silk farms raised silkworms during the rainy season from July to November. In Kandal and Prey Veng, intensive rearing centres,

²⁹⁴ Slocomb, *An Economic History of Cambodia in the Twentieth Century*, 77.

²⁹⁵ Ibid, 101.

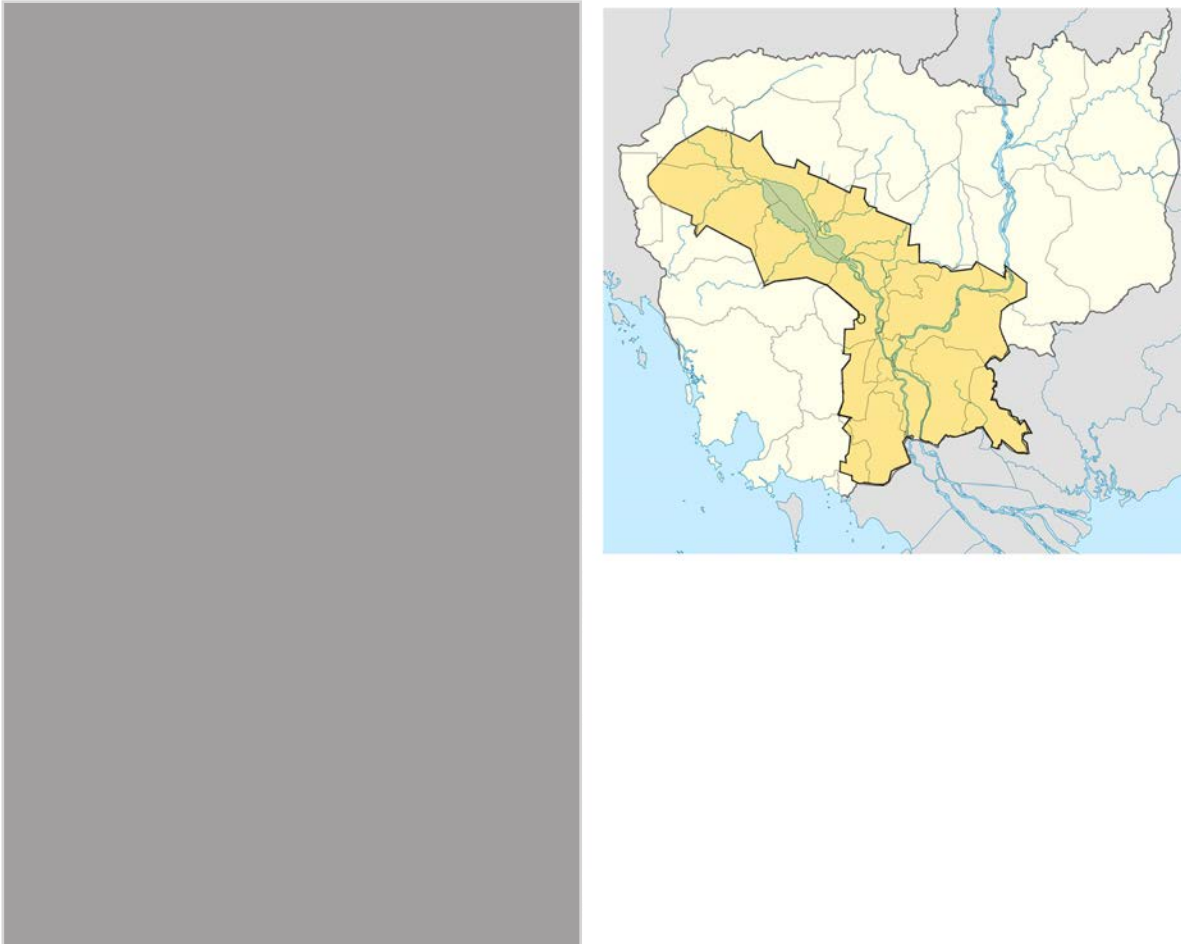
²⁹⁶ Delvert, 'Carte 7 Industries rurales' in *Le paysan cambodgien*, 738.

²⁹⁷ Delvert, *Le paysan cambodgien*, 286.

²⁹⁸ See map, Figure 5.

²⁹⁹ Delvert, *Le paysan cambodgien*, 283 ; Ter Horst, *Weaving into Cambodia*, 100.

mostly maintained by Vietnamese immigrants on the Bassac river and lower Mekong, operated about twelve cycles a year for trade before the 1970s, a practice that resumed in the 1980s.³⁰⁰



Figs.38a-b Left: Carte '7. Industries rurales' showing cotton and sericulture areas, in conjunction with weaving, mat weaving, metalwork, makleua dyeing, basketry and ceramics. Right: location of the area studied by Delvert in Cambodia.

Deconstructing the production chain provides a trajectory in which political agency intersects with successive and interdependent material technologies, which then dictates the constraints of silk design and the conditions of the trade. From a Cambodian viewpoint, perspectives on crafts were linked to the politics of rurality and economic policies. On one hand, economic theorist Khieu Samphan centred his argument on revalorising the

³⁰⁰ Ter Horst, *Weaving into Cambodia*, 112.

peasantry, crafts (including weaving) and small industries, advocating for the redistribution of wealth into a rural economy established under Marxist principles of state-supported cooperatives. Khieu Samphan's doctoral thesis, published in 1959, became the foundational ideology for the KR dictatorship.³⁰¹

On the other hand of the political spectrum, artisanal textile practices were also praised as in the 1959 Technicolor film *Femme Cambodgienne*, one of the first films directed by Prince Sihanouk, who produced a total forty fiction and propagandist films in his life.³⁰² There is little information about the context of *Femme Cambodgienne's* making. Sihanouk originally produced films with foreign and diplomatic audiences in mind. Moreover, cinemas were opening extensively in the country in the Sangkum era and the first Cambodian film to be publicly screened dated from 1958.³⁰³ Eventually, Sihanouk wanted his films to be shown to large Cambodian audiences. Historian Milton Osborne shares that spectators were forbidden to leave the theatre during these screenings.³⁰⁴ It is likely that *Femme Cambodgienne*, a twenty-minute film narrated in French, was screened to Cambodians as well as foreigners. It portrays Cambodian women as a metaphor for Cambodia's fertile land, with the voiceover repeating the phrase 'fertility of the woman, fertility of the soil'.³⁰⁵ Viewers saw women in action as working, diligent bodies, performing repetitive gestures of planting the soil dressed in black peasant clothing and a red gingham *krama*. A female weaver wearing a *sampot phamaung* is shown spinning yarn, preparing the warp with bobbins of white silk thread wound on warping bars, and weaving a two-tone *rbauk* (damask) silk on a wooden loom in a workshop [Figs.39a-c].

³⁰¹ Khieu Samphan, trans. Laura Summers, 'Underdevelopment in Cambodia,' in *Indochina Chronicle* 51-52 (September-November 1976): 4.

³⁰² Milton Osborne, *Sihanouk: Prince of Light, Prince of Darkness* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1994), 177-179.

³⁰³ Roger Nelson, 'The Power of Sihanouk and the Power of Cinema: A Filmed Execution in Cambodia, 1964,' *ACT 77* (April 2019), <http://act.tnua.edu.tw/?p=7255> [Accessed June 24, 2021]

³⁰⁴ Milton Osborne, *Before Kampuchea: Preludes to Tragedy* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1979), 57.

³⁰⁵ Sihanouk was a known Francophile. French remained Cambodia's diplomatic language at the time.

Femme Cambodgienne embodies the way the Sangkum retained elements of French culture, combined with pre-colonial nostalgia, to produce a new vision of Cambodian modernity relying on gendered representations of emancipated Cambodian women. In a montage, the film ties together the Angkorian heritage with carved *apsara* dancers and contemporaneous women working as farmers and weavers, linking ancestral activities, such as crafts, with the modern professions of factory worker, judge, nurse, and academic. The film ends in the countryside, with female farmers operating tractors instead of ploughs, showing that in Sihanouk's vision, rurality (with the support of new technologies) remains the central feature of Cambodia's national, political and social structure.³⁰⁶

While silk weaving and textiles are recognised as key features of Cambodian culture in political discourses, the data on textile production in the Sangkum remains sparse. For instance, the March 10, 1960 issue of the *Journal Officiel du Cambodge* (Cambodia Official Gazette) showed that cotton, kapok and stick lac were major exports while textiles were imported in high quantities, with no reference to silk material.³⁰⁷ Economic historian Margaret Slocomb also contends that 'the reality behind the statistics was not as spectacular as the official reports would have the reader believe. Too often, it seems, politics intervened to thwart sound economic intentions'.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁶ *Femme Cambodgienne à l'heure du Sangkum* (1959), Dir. Samdech Norodom Sihanouk, Produced by Khemara Pictures, Cambodia, Available at CNC http://www.cnc-aff.fr/internet_cnc/Internet/ARemplir/Fiches/corpus_Indochine/FilmsSihanouk.html

³⁰⁷ Published monthly in French by the government to share decrees, ministerial actions, budget announcements and imports and exports data. Royaume du Cambodge, *Journal Officiel du Cambodge* 10 (March 10, 1960): 276-78.

³⁰⁸ Slocomb, *An Economic History of Cambodia in the Twentieth Century*, 106.



Fig.39a Women wearing a krama scarf farming rice, from Femme Cambodgienne à l'heure du Sangkum (1959), Dir. Samdech Norodom Sihanouk.



Fig.39b Weaver wearing a sampot phamaung warping white silk thread on a wooden warping device, from Femme Cambodgienne à l'heure du Sangkum (1959).



Fig.39c Woman weaving a sampot rbauk, from Femme Cambodgienne à l'heure du Sangkum (1959).

Dismantlement of the silk territory (1970-1979)

Pol Pot had spent time in China in 1966 before the Chinese Cultural Revolution had started. In resetting Cambodian history to Year Zero, the KR shared a number of ideological aspects with the Great Leap Forward, combined with nationalism and peasantism.³⁰⁹

Cambodia's territory was reorganised into six zones, consisting of thirty-two regions, all controlled by the CPK, which kept the country in near autarky [Fig.40].³¹⁰ Hundreds of thousands of villagers were separated from their native towns and families, deported to different regions and put to forced work in larger cooperatives. Urban populations were

³⁰⁹ Ben Kiernan, 'The Cambodian Genocide, 1975-1979,' in *Century of Genocide: Critical Essays and Eyewitness Accounts*, eds. Samuel Totten, William S. Parsons, Israel W. Charny (New York: Routledge, 2004), 355-56.

³¹⁰ Kiernan, 'The Cambodian Genocide, 1975-1979,' 343.

forced to evacuate the city centres. DK invested in the centralisation of goods, production and distribution via 'large-scale collectives coupled with irrigation projects and a system of (poorly-planned and constructed) reservoirs and dams was initiated, to foster higher produce yields, and to permit multiple crops'.³¹¹ These strategies led to an inefficient rationalisation of the agricultural terrain, and the population suffered severe famine.



Fig.40 'Administrative zones of Democratic Kampuchea 1975-78', Library of Congress. Federal Research Division, Cambodia: A Country Study, c.1990, Public Domain.

Representation of silk practices were part of early Khmer Rouge propaganda messages following Khieu Samphan's pro-craft ideology. The CPK's Four-Year Plan

³¹¹ Tyner, *The Killing of Cambodia: Geography, Genocide and the Unmaking of Space*, 118.

document drafted during the 1976 standing committee meeting briefly outlined methods of propaganda and information. The plan was to rely on ‘radio broadcasting: organise general listening sessions using loudspeakers for all important places and mobile work brigades’ and ‘films: of the revolutionary movement’s present and past, especially the present. Organise many groups to produce many films to show to the people in general’.³¹² Art historian Stephanie Benzaquen Gautier argues that DK films were used for mass instruction in rural areas, screened to the population to propagate the regime’s agricultural, industrial and military achievements.³¹³

This 1975 Foreign Broadcast Information Service *Daily Report*, transcribing KR news, aimed to describe actions towards the development of the domestic textile industry:

...while tilling and harrowing the land in the campaign to grow the rainy season rice crop, our brothers have [...] cleared several hundred hectares of land to grow cotton and mulberry trees to feed their silkworms for the development of the textile industry. To develop the textile industry, our brothers in every village, district, and production group have built mechanical and manual looms. In some places they have built semiautomatic looms.³¹⁴

An eleven-minute-long black-and-white silent newsreel called ‘News from Democratic Kampuchea’ and produced by the DK government in 1977 promotes a similar agenda. It shows fields of cotton being picked by hand, women working in mulberry tree fields collecting leaves and feeding silkworms, artisanal silk weaving and eventually shifts to the promotion of industrial scale cotton weaving [Figs.41a-b]. Despite a few inscriptions in Khmer introducing the different parts of the film ‘Artisanal weaving’, ‘Industrial weaving’ and ‘End’, the only information about a location is the name ‘State Textile Factory 1’ indicated at a facility’s entrance. Close-ups on women show them dressed in black garb with

³¹² David Chandler, and al, eds, *Pol Pot Plans the Future: Confidential Leadership Documents from Democratic Kampuchea, 1976-1977* (New Haven: Yale University, 1989), 114.

³¹³ Stéphanie Benzaquen-Gautier, *Images of Khmer Rouge Atrocities, 1975-2015: Visualizing the Crimes of the Pol Pot’s Regime in Transnational Contexts of Memory* [PhD Thesis] (Amsterdam: Imaginary Museum Projects, 2016), 23-24.

³¹⁴ Foreign Broadcast Information Service, FBIS IV, May 7, 1975: H2, Also in Karl D. Jackson, ed, *Cambodia, 1975-1978: Rendez-vous with Death* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 62.

a *krama* as a headscarf, the KR uniform that is discussed later, and often smiling and operating in sync, which speaks to the constructed nature of the film. Female weavers in neat lines on the floor operate silk spinning wheels, followed by a sequence showing women preparing warp threads from a bobbin rack in a workshop, weaving *krama* scarves on manual looms. Without showing the ikat process, this ends with a range of finished *sampot hol*, zooming on the diversity of geometric and stylised woven motifs. The final part focuses on a textile factory scene where workers are producing yardages of undyed and dyed cloth on mechanised looms [Figs.41c-d-e].³¹⁵



Fig.41a Women collecting cotton balls in the fields, from Les Actualités cambodgiennes, 'Tissage artisanal et industriel du textile sous le régime khmer rouge', January 1, 1977, INA.

³¹⁵ Les Actualités Cambodgiennes, *Tissage artisanal et industriel du textile sous le régime khmer rouge*, January 1, 1977 <https://www.ina.fr/video/VDD06002101/tissage-artisanal-et-industriel-du-textile-sous-le-regime-khmer-rouge-video.html> [Accessed September 16, 2017].



Fig.41b Feeding silkworms with mulberry tree leaves, Les Actualités cambodgiennes (1977).



Fig.41c Women in KR black garb spinning silk thread, Les Actualités cambodgiennes (1977).



Fig.41d Sampot hol textiles displaying the diversity of geometric and stylised ikat motifs, Les Actualités cambodgiennes (1977).



Fig.41e Workers entering the State Textile Factory 1, Les Actualités cambodgiennes (1977).

Data about textile production, imports and handicrafts in this period is limited and relies on few testimonies and fragmentary sources. As Slocomb argues, 'the DK period remains a

highly contentious field of study [in terms of economy] because there are no reliable, verifiable statistics'.³¹⁶ DK rulers considered that cotton was an important crop and a light industry supporting the regime's efforts to clothe its population: 'we would like everyone to have two sets of clothes, that is eight meters of cloth per annum. To achieve this, we will have to increase our manufacture'.³¹⁷ Silk is not discussed in the Four-Year Plan. There are major discrepancies between the film's display of intentions regarding textile production in 1977 and the reality of artisanal and industrial weaving under the regime.

Industrialised cotton spinning and weaving had developed in the Sangkum via the main state textile factory, Société Nationale du Textile, opened in 1960 in Kampong Cham with Chinese funding, that was soon followed by a second spinning factory in Battambang in 1966.³¹⁸ Weaving factories in Phnom Penh continued to operate during the DK period. In a political speech in 1978, Pol Pot claimed that jute and cotton were thriving.³¹⁹ There is no clear data on the market distribution for this production and the effect of governmental policies.

Attempts to increase production and self-sufficiency were not successful. According to Kiernan, trade between Cambodia and Thailand was still continuing in 1976 as Cambodia imported medical supplies and *krama* scarves through the border checkpoint of Poipet in the north of the country.³²⁰ Cambodia also imported large quantities of black cloth and dyes from China until 1978, followed by shipments of blue cloth. In the last years of DK, blue clothes were allegedly used to identify their wearers as originating in the Eastern zone of Cambodia: they were often designated as Vietnamese and persecuted.³²¹

³¹⁶ Slocomb, *An Economic History of Cambodia in the Twentieth Century*, 175.

³¹⁷ Chandler, and al, eds., *Pol Pot Plans the Future: Confidential Leadership Documents from Democratic Kampuchea, 1976-1977*, 98, 151.

³¹⁸ Remy Prud'homme, *L'Économie du Cambodge* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1969), 96; Slocomb, *An Economic History of Cambodia in the Twentieth Century*, 107.

³¹⁹ *Ibid*, 207.

³²⁰ Ben Kiernan, *The Pol Pot Regime: Race, Power and Genocide in Cambodia Under the Khmer Rouge, 1975-79* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 144-145.

³²¹ *Ibid*, 406.

Charles H. Twining, former US ambassador to Cambodia, assesses that between 1975 and 1978:

The rule of thumb in Democratic Kampuchea seems to have been one set of new clothing per person per year. Clothing not made in cottage industry or taken off persons who were executed came presumably from the operating textile factories. For those textile workers unable to produce all of their own food needs, food from clothing-deficient areas could perhaps be regarded as their 'compensation'.³²²

Facing a major shortage of resources, Cambodians had to rely on bartering.³²³ Twining describes a situation of silk bartered in 'a village in which some people raised silkworms, gathered the silk, and wove it, sending it to destinations well outside the immediate area in exchange for foodstuffs'.³²⁴ While the film (Figure 41) from the first years of the regime shows sericulture and weaving as a common practice, silk was a scarce resource that was not invested upon.

Only a few areas of sericulture were retained, especially Phnom Srok district in Banteay Meanchey province in the north of Cambodia.³²⁵ Most mulberry trees in the country were cut down and sold.³²⁶ In the late 1970s, the 'unmaking' of silk production and weaving practices was also linked to the forced displacement of artisans and farmers.³²⁷ This is exemplified by Sotheap, a former weaver interviewed by Ter Horst, who grew up in Takeo province in the early 1960s and moved with her family to work in a textile factory in Battambang in the late 1970s.³²⁸

³²² Twining, 'The Economy,' 122.

³²³ Kiernan, 'The Cambodian Genocide, 1975-1979,' 365.

³²⁴ Twining, 'The Economy,' 122.

³²⁵ Khmer Silk Villages, *On the Golden Silk Trails*, 6. ; Roth Meas, 'Hope for traditional silk farmers,' *The Phnom Penh Post*, 28 December 2010 <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/lifestyle/hope-traditional-silk-farmers> [Accessed June 1, 2021] ; Morimoto briefly mentions Koh Treng in Kampong Cham near the Mekong river. Morimoto, *Silk Production and Marketing in Cambodia. Research Report for the Revival of Silk Weaving Project*, 17.

³²⁶ Kikuo Morimoto, 'Traces of War: The Revival of Silk Weaving in Cambodia,' *Textile Society of America Symposium Proceedings* (2002): 404-409.

³²⁷ I borrow the concept of unmaking from geographer James Tyner who argues that 'before the Khmer Rouge constructed their own communist spaces, they deliberately set out to deconstruct, or unmake, previous spaces'. Tyner, *The Killing of Cambodia*, 110.

³²⁸ Ter Horst, *Weaving into Cambodia*, 18.

The KR pushed their agenda further by controlling the dress of the population. Before the dictatorship, women's everyday wear was commonly a shirt with a colourful Malay-style printed sarong tube skirt, and silk was worn for religious and festive celebrations. Shirts and trousers were everyday wear for men, and sometimes colourful silk shirts and silk wrapped trousers in the *chawng kbun* style for ceremonies. Imported Western clothing was popular amongst city-dwellers, with shapes that were more fitted, and bold 1960s patterns.³²⁹ By 1976, the population was forbidden to wear clothing that was either colourful or made of silk. Clothes had to be dyed in dark, muted tones, using mud, charcoal or dyestuff obtained from *makleua* (ebony fruit).³³⁰

This thesis supports the hypothesis that, according to KR ideology, silk was associated with the elite, whereas cotton carried a proletarian connotation. A reference to acts of voluntary destruction appears in the documentary *Cambodge, le cri de la soie* (Cambodia, the cry of silk) which describes KR factions burning silk looms because they were symbols of a decadent culture.³³¹ The production and storage of silk was only permitted in limited quantities, for diplomatic gifts to foreign officials. Moreover, 'ministry officials assigned to greet such visitors were permitted to go to a special storeroom to borrow silk clothing shirts for men and *sampot* for women to attend diplomatic receptions'.³³² The use of silk was only reclaimed by CPK high-ranking cadres for public events involving international visitors. In his memoirs, Y Phandara recalled attending a musical performance in Phnom Penh for, amongst others, representatives of the Sweden-Kampuchea Friendship Association

³²⁹ Muan and al., *Seams of Change*, 105-106.

³³⁰ Chileng Pa and Mortland, *Escaping the Khmer Rouge: A Cambodian Memoir*, 102. In the aftermath of the regime, black-clad clothing still stirred some painful memories associated with the KR regime, especially amongst elderly people. See Vann Chan Simen, 'Back to Black Fashion Stirs Memories,' *The Phnom Penh Post* 31 August 2001 <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/back-black-fashion-stirs-memories> [Accessed March 24, 2020]

³³¹ *Cambodge, le cri de la soie*, Dir. Butta, Carmen, Arte GEIE, 2005. <http://international.mediatheque-numerique.com/films/360-geo-reportage-cambodge-le-cri-de-la-soie>

³³² Muan and al., *Seams of Change*, 112-113.

and ambassador Daouda Kourouma of the Republic of Guinea in 1978.³³³ Used to wearing ragged dark clothes, he was astounded that the crowd of attendees was wearing colourful dress: he noticed dozens of young women wearing bright silk *sampot* and fitted bodices. The unfitted black cotton pyjamas inspired by common peasant garb became the national uniform as an embodiment of the new proletarian and collective order. Men, women and young people enrolled in KR militias became an anonymous, homogeneous army in black uniforms. Chinese khaki army fatigues were also common as military uniform. Survivors of the KR regime, such as Chileng Pa, reacted with terror at the sight of them.³³⁴ They often wore a *kadep* (cap) inspired by Chinese Communist Party caps, black sandals made from rubber tyres and a *krama* scarf.³³⁵

KR officials appropriated the widely used *krama* in red and white gingham, turning it into a symbol of their rule. The red scarf had been part of the sartorial identity of new movements in postwar communist countries such as the Soviet Union and China, which may have inspired DK leaders. The reference to the colour red in Khmer 'Rouge' also appeared in recurring mentions of blood in DK's national anthem, as a 'metaphoric call for revenge'.³³⁶ Reproductions of these uniforms are displayed in the permanent gallery of the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum in Phnom Penh.³³⁷ The Killing Fields genocide site of Choeung Ek displays similar reproductions, in which the red of the *krama* and the black garments create a stark visual contrast [Fig.42]. Andrew Mertha, expert in Cambodian politics, has found that the State Warehouse department located in Phnom Penh even had an office dedicated to storing *krama* cloths for delivery across the country to CPK organisations, evidence of the

³³³ Y Phandara, *Retour à Phnom Penh : Le Cambodge du Génocide à la Colonisation* (Paris : Editions A.-M. Métailié, 1982), 131-135.

³³⁴ Chileng Pa and Mortland, *Escaping the Khmer Rouge: A Cambodian Memoir*, 68.

³³⁵ Muan and al., *Seams of Change*, 105-106.

³³⁶ Nicholas A. Robins and Adam Jones, *Genocides by the Oppressed: Subaltern Genocide in Theory and Practice* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009), 95.

³³⁷ Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum is currently rethinking its permanent display. In 2021, the museum will remove these reproductions that are hung next to real victims' clothing without labels. This juxtaposition is recognised as confusing for visitors.

importance of this cloth in the dictatorship's ideology and its embodiment through dress.³³⁸ After only four years of the KR rule, the fundamentals of Cambodian social organisation and economy had been shattered. The 1970s marked a radical transformation of social codes of dress and modes of textile production, deliberately erasing traditional customs and dismantling local textile crafts in terms of resources, workforce, skills, and spaces of production.



Fig.42 Reproductions of women's and men's Khmer Rouge uniforms (black garments, krama, and rubber-tyre sandals) exhibited at the Choeung Ek Killing Fields, Phnom Penh. Wikimedia Commons.

³³⁸ Andrew Mertha, *Brothers in Arms: Chinese Aid to the Khmer Rouge, 1975–1979* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014), 50.

Multiple agencies in reconstructing the silk industry (1980-1990)

This section focuses on the reconstruction of the post-war silk industry and how it involved the agencies of many organisations, both international and domestic, cultural institutions and communities. The Vietnamese, former KR allies until 1977, invaded Phnom Penh on January 7, 1979, overthrowing the CPK's full control over Cambodia and, as the acting government, creating the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) led by Heng Samrin. The aftermath of DK was then marked by Vietnamese occupation, political instability and complex internal conflicts until 1989. Nearly two million people perished between 1975 and 1979, which fundamentally changed Cambodia's demography. The situation was compounded by the refugee crisis at the Thai border and a massive exodus abroad, both of which are explored in Chapter Four on the continuation of silk practices in the context of displacement and diaspora.³³⁹ Certain regions that were still under the domination of KR guerrillas remained inaccessible until the mid-1990s [Fig.43].

According to the NSS, 'only about fifteen hectares of mulberry trees were found alive' after the collapse of the dictatorship.³⁴⁰ However, this data most likely dates from a later survey produced by PASS in the mid-1990s as discussed in the Introduction. There is no available survey or full data focusing on the silk sector under the PRK, only fragmented information. Michael Vickery provides a broad view on the state of the Cambodian textile industry in the mid-1980s, reporting that the PRK Minister of Industry Meas Samnang acknowledged issues of production and supply.³⁴¹ The leading textile factory of Tuol Kork in Phnom Penh produced cotton cloth but operated under capacity, due to the insufficient supplies of raw

³³⁹ Barbara Crossette, 'Thai Refugee Camp, Door of Hope, Will be Closed,' *The New York Times*, December 30, 1986, <https://www.nytimes.com/1986/12/30/world/thai-refugee-camp-door-of-hope-will-be-closed.html> [Accessed March 28, 2020].

³⁴⁰ Cambodia Ministry of Commerce and ITC, *Cambodia National Silk Strategy*, 9.

³⁴¹ Michael Vickery, *Kampuchea: Politics, Economics, and Society* (London: F. Pinter, 1986), 147.

cotton across the country. As a result, the country relied on major donations of cloth from the Soviet Union, Vietnam and European countries.³⁴²



Fig.43 Map of Cambodia in the 1980s showing the Thai border, regions and zones of Khmer Rouge activity. Author's map.

Money was abolished under the KR and reinstated in March 1980. Handicrafts were practiced by families and individuals, outside of the state's direct control, which loaned them cash via the national banks to encourage domestic commerce.³⁴³

Weaving resumed in village and could be profitable. Vickery discusses the example of a woman in 1984 'just outside Phnom Penh [...] who worked full time on her loom, turning out a type of *sarong*; and her monthly income over expenditure for materials was 1,800 *riel*,

³⁴² Vickery, *Kampuchea: Politics, Economics, and Society*, 149.

³⁴³ *Ibid*, 137.

the equivalent of three top salaries and worth 360 kg. of rice'.³⁴⁴ Oral histories collected by educator Carol Wagner and social scientists Heidi Dahles and John Ter Horst in the early 2000s offer several stories of displaced villagers responding by enacting different strategies of survival. Thavery learned weaving with experienced female weavers who wove silk skirts in 1979-1980 when she returned to her home village in Takeo after the dictatorship collapsed. She eventually managed to save enough money to 'buy the materials to build a loom' to become a professional weaver.³⁴⁵ Sotheap returned to her home in Veal Veang in 1979 and resumed weaving, buying a new loom on credit from the middleman, bartering her textiles for rice in Phnom Penh markets.³⁴⁶ Others learned silk weaving as a secondary activity when moving to a silk-producing region. My own fieldwork in Ta Pouk village, on the outskirts of Siem Reap, in July 2017 provides an example of this, in Chendy Heng, sixty years old and mother of Chenda and Theary from Krama Yuyu workshop. Chendy, originally from Phnom Penh, had to evacuate to Kandal province under the KR. She eventually married and resettled in Takeo province, and she learned how to weave from her parents-in-law.³⁴⁷

As these stories show, Cambodian weavers encountered major economic and demographic challenges in the post KR era. Nevertheless, silk weaving resumed in the early 1980s relying especially on imported silk yarn from silk spinneries in Tan Chau, a Vietnamese silk centre located south of Takeo across the border. The survey by Ter Horst, Dongelmans and Seng, citing agronomists Pujebet and Peyre, does not discuss whether the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia facilitated the expansion of trade routes with Vietnam, but this seems plausible even though it involved Chinese silk yarn wholesalers.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁴ Vickery, *Kampuchea: Politics, Economics, and Society*, 134.

³⁴⁵ Carol Wagner, *Soul Survivors: Stories of Women and Children in Cambodia* (Berkeley, CA: Creative Arts Book Company, 2002), 195;

³⁴⁶ Dahles and Ter Horst, 'Weaving into Cambodia: Negotiated Ethnicity in the (Post-colonial) Silk Industry,' 119.

³⁴⁷ Chendy Heng, Interviewed by Magali An Berthon, Ta Pouk, Cambodia, 2017.

³⁴⁸ Boris Dongelmans, Bunly Seng and John Ter Horst, *Silk Weaving in Cambodia. A National Census* (Phnom Penh: Centre for Advanced Studies, 2005), 10.

Therefore, the reformation of the sector in the early 1980s was linked to Sino-Khmer importers who maintained a monopoly on silk fibre by selling large quantities to Cambodian wholesalers situated in Phnom Penh around the Central, Russian, Olympic and Old Market.³⁴⁹ This data complexifies the idea of the revitalisation of silk as a national traditional product in which 'Khmer' equals 'Cambodian', as promoted in the NSS report.³⁵⁰ Ter Horst and Dahles outline the reformation of an 'ethnically complex Cambodian silk weaving industry' involving complex trade networks with Cambodia's borderlands and involves wholesalers, middlemen, silk weavers and retailers.³⁵¹ Cambodians returned to a more prominent use of the patron-client system, known as *khsae* (threads), which had cemented Cambodian society long before forced collectivisation. This inequitable patrimonial system favours families and organisations with the most power and connections. It disadvantages individuals at the margins or who are deprived of a solid social footing. Within power relationships that imply loyalty and obligation, one person is indebted to another within a family or a business. The silk industry has resumed under this typology of hierarchical relationships, operating a vertical line of command from silk merchants to intermediaries to weavers.³⁵² Ter Horst's study emphasises the reassertion of old models 'in which a small wholesalers group dictates the cross-border silk yarn trade and the quantity and quality of production and trade of *sampot*'.³⁵³

According to the NSS, in 1990 there were only about two hundred and fifty Cambodian silk farmers producing indigenous golden silk by working independently on the limited agricultural land available, which necessitated a reliance on silk yarn imports.³⁵⁴

³⁴⁹ Ter Horst, *Weaving into Cambodia*, 115-116 ; Dongelmans, Bunly Seng and Ter Horst, *Silk Weaving in Cambodia. A National Census*, 11.

³⁵⁰ The foreword opens with: 'the history of silk production is intricately linked with the history of Khmer tradition, culture and identity.' Cambodia Ministry of Commerce and ITC, *Cambodia National Silk Strategy*, ix.

³⁵¹ *Ibid*, xiv.

³⁵² Ter Horst, *Weaving into Cambodia*, 163.

³⁵³ *Ibid*, 164.

³⁵⁴ Cambodia Ministry of Commerce, and ITC, *Cambodia National Silk Strategy*, 14.

This was also confirmed in Kikuo Morimoto's 1995 report commissioned by the UNESCO office in Phnom Penh: 'prior to 1970, many villages in Cambodia were raising silkworms, which were reeled and woven into fine traditional fabrics. Except for Kampot and Kampong Speu provinces, most of the weavers in Cambodia now use silk yarn imported from Vietnam'.³⁵⁵ The commissioning of this report also establishes two new major actors in the reconstruction of the silk industry: Morimoto himself and UNESCO. Their role is further discussed in Chapter Two.

From January to March 1995, Morimoto conducted fieldwork to assess the state of silk weaving and sericulture in Cambodia. He covered thirty-six villages in Phnom Penh, Kampot, Takeo, Kandal, Kampong Speu, Kampong Cham, Prey Veng and Siem Reap provinces and interviewed fifty-six weavers, with the exception of Battambang and Banteay Meanchey provinces, which were still unsafe and occupied by KR factions [Fig.44].³⁵⁶ The lack of study in Banteay Meanchey unfortunately limits his assessment of this major Cambodian sericulture area. Morimoto briefly discusses a style of silk sarongs from Phnom Srok in Banteay Meanchey that were sold in Siem Reap shops.³⁵⁷ He also lists the sponsoring agency United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) / United Nations Office for Project Services - CAREERE as the main supporter of local raw silk production in this area.³⁵⁸ Morimoto focuses on the experiences of weavers and locating textile techniques that were still practised in villages. His research concludes that the topography of pre-1970 silk making had been heavily altered in certain zones with the disappearance of silkworm eggs and silk yarn production in the key centres of Kandal and Kampot, while weaving skills had survived in numerous villages, especially in Takeo province, in which weavers mostly relied on imported silk yarn from Vietnam.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁵ Morimoto, *Silk Production and Marketing in Cambodia. Research Report for the Revival of Silk Weaving Project*, 21.

³⁵⁶ Ibid, 1.

³⁵⁷ Ibid, 20.

³⁵⁸ Ibid, 31.

³⁵⁹ Ibid, 13.

These elements show that the severe destruction resulting from the KR actions was not complete, which permitted the slow recovery of the silk sector. Processes of silk making, from the mulberry trees and the silkworms to the fibre and weaving, were still known by a number of weavers. The Cambodian silk landscape in the 1980s thus operates as a palimpsest, a space that shows evidence of the erasure and superimposition of silk practices. It carries the traces of past activities, rewriting the agrarian lands and demographic distribution co-opted by the KR, and producing a new configuration of silk based on raw fibre imports, trade networks with Vietnam via ethnic Chinese wholesalers, and foreign key players.

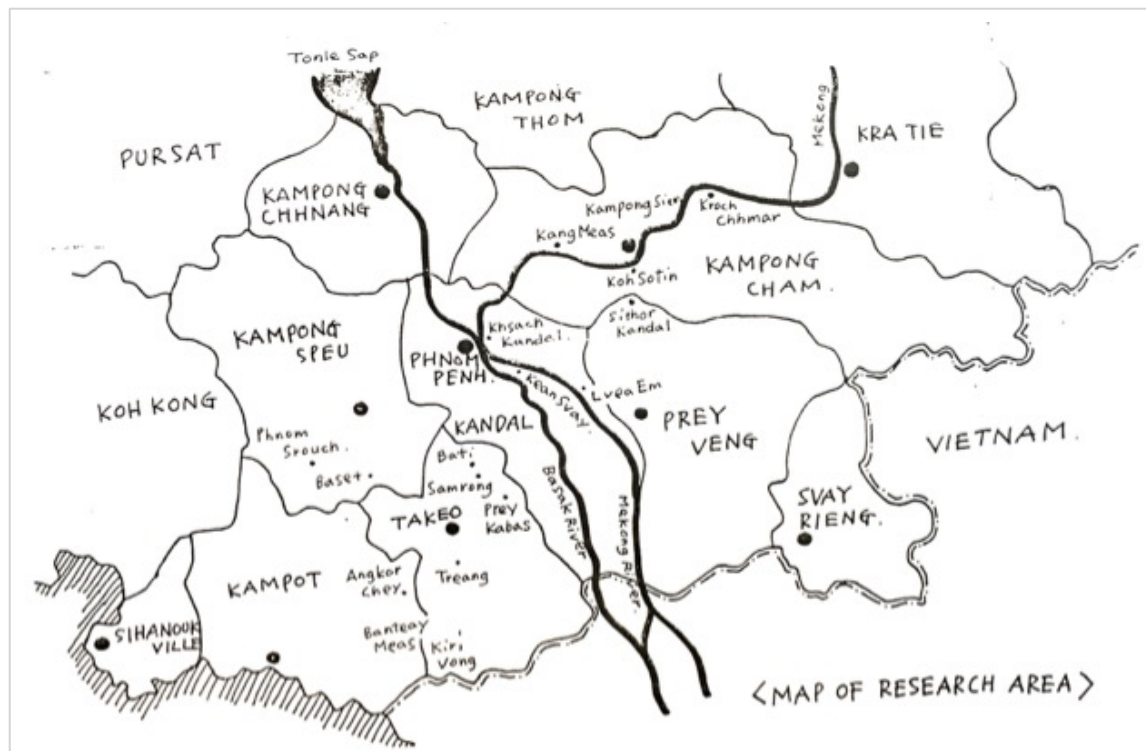


Fig.44 Research map of Morimoto's silk survey for UNESCO (Source: Morimoto, 1995).

This section now explores how the National Museum of Cambodia (NMC) dealt with the preservation and collection of silk artefacts since the 1980s and how it affected technical, cultural and visual knowledge on silk practices. In the aftermath of the KR regime and the political instability that ensued the looting of Khmer cultural artefacts increased.

The KR guerrillas retreated into the forests at the Thai border and developed trading networks with Thailand in the late 1980s, exchanging gems and timber for weaponry.³⁶⁰ It seems highly likely that silks were also exchanged through these channels and ended up in Thailand. In the 1990s, significant trafficking of antiquities, especially statues, carved temple lintels and pottery pillaged from archaeological ruins, took place due to ‘the lack of effective law enforcement, weakening of societal prohibitions, destruction of the economy’.³⁶¹ Artefacts were sold internationally to museums and private collectors. To limit this extensive looting, in 1991 Cambodia eventually ratified three conventions for the protection of cultural property: the 1954 Hague Convention, the UNESCO Convention and the World Heritage Convention.³⁶²

By keeping artifacts, expanding their collection, and making pieces available to scholars and the public, museums have played a role in the revitalisation of silk in the post-conflict era. It is explored here through the lens of the only public collection of Cambodian textiles in Cambodia. While only one museum collection is explored in detail, other museums were considered internationally. In 2017-2018, study visits also took place at the Quai Branly Museum, the V&A, the British Museum, the UCLA Fowler Museum in Los Angeles, the private collection Tilleke and Gibbins in Bangkok, and the MGC Asian Traditional Textiles Museum in Siem Reap. Contacts were also taken remotely with the Queen Sirikit Museum of Textiles in Bangkok, the Bank of Chiang Mai Museum, the Fukuoka Museum to learn more about their collections.³⁶³ These visits also helped map Cambodian collections around the world and formulate a broader understanding of their range and specificities.

³⁶⁰ Joshua Birch and Julie Kornfeld, *Picked Clean: The Legality and Politics of Cambodian Cultural Heritage Objects* (Phnom Penh: Documentation Center of Cambodia, 2014), 7, http://www.dccam.org/Abouts/Intern/Cambodia_Cultural_Heritage_Objects_Research_Paper.pdf [Accessed May 2, 2017]

³⁶¹ Ibid, 8.

³⁶² UNESCO, ‘Text of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage,’ 2003, <https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention> [Accessed January 20, 2019].

³⁶³ In 2017 it was not possible to plan a study visit at the Horniman due to the redisplay of their gallery of World Cultures. 2018 was dedicated to field work in Cambodia.

The National Museum of Cambodia (NMC), formerly Phnom Penh National Museum, was abandoned and closed from 1975 to 1979. Led by French keepers until, the museum progressively gathered an important collection of Cambodian antiquities (stone, metal, wood and ceramics) from the pre-Angkor and Angkor periods.³⁶⁴ The museum's collection also included silk textiles, holding about 399 pieces and dance costume elements collected between 1918 and 1951 under French keepers. Weaving tools dating from the School of Cambodian Arts in the 1920s were collected from the weaving workshop, most likely by Groslier, to document silk weaving processes in the manner of an early ethnographic museum [Fig.45]. This includes a richly sculpted wooden floor loom carved with decorative *naga* heads and tails, along with sculpted wood shuttles, pedals, ikat tying stands, four pairs of loom tension devices, and one silk thread winder, all on permanent display in the galleries.

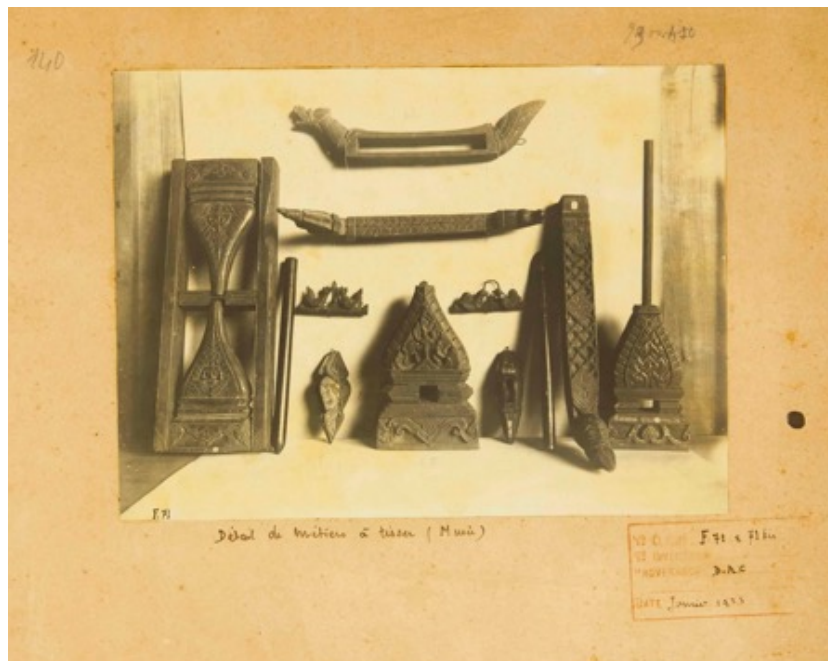


Fig.45 Decorated wood carved elements of a Khmer loom collected in the 1920s. Photograph, January 1923, National Museum of Cambodia archives.

³⁶⁴ 'Control of the National Museum and Arts Administration was ceded by the French to the Cambodians on 9 August, 1951 and following Independence in 1953, the then Musée National de Phnom-Penh was the subject of Bilateral accords (7 November 1956). From 1956 to 1966, the museum continued to flourish under the direction of Madeleine Giteau, Conservatrice du Musée National.' http://www.cambodiamuseum.info/museum_history.html [Accessed March 28, 2020]

The closing of the museum kept the collections relatively spared, though they were largely stored in the basement which suffered from floods and pest infestations. While the museum had faced years of neglect, it reopened to the public on April 13, 1979 under the leadership of Kann Man.³⁶⁵ Only ten of the pre-1975 museum's staff had survived, resulting in a significant loss of knowledge about the museum's history and objects. Chea Thay Seng, the first Cambodian curator to be appointed in 1966, died at S21 prison in 1976.³⁶⁶ In the years following the reopening during the CPK, the hypothesis supported by the museum's staff, especially Hab Touch, Deputy Director of the museum in 2000, is that about two-thirds of the textile and costume artefacts were stolen and resold.³⁶⁷

In a symposium on Cambodian textiles organised by IKTT in 2003, Hab Touch assessed that NMC only recovered seventy-two flat textiles and a costume collection of between thirty and forty pieces, mostly accessories for Cambodian dance (belts, necklaces, hairpieces, two embroidered fans) and theatre costumes such as shirts, trousers and shoulder pads. What is left from the original pre-KR collection consists of multicoloured *kiet plangi* headscarves made by Cham-Malay ethnic groups, and only two Khmer *sampot hol*, but no *pidan*.³⁶⁸ There are also five ceremonial *sampot* dating from the 1910s, such as this brittle *sampot sarabap*, a red silk brocaded with supplementary weft in gold metallic threads, kept folded in a storage box due to its condition [Fig.46].

³⁶⁵ National Museum of Cambodia, *Museum History*

https://www.cambodiamuseum.info/museum_history.html [Accessed March 28, 2020]

³⁶⁶ Philippe Peycam, *Cultural Renewal in Cambodia* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 35.

³⁶⁷ Khun Samen, and Touch Hab, 'Textiles in the Collection of the National Museum of Cambodia.'

³⁶⁸ Ibid.



Fig.46 Sampot sarabap at the National Museum of Cambodia folded in the textile storage room. Object number N.38. Author's photograph, April 2018.

There are multiple agents involved in maintaining and expanding this collection, with people from France, Japan, the United States, and Australia, which hosted a large Cambodian diaspora in the 1980s. The Collection Inventory Project (2004-2010) was funded by the US-based Leon Levy Foundation in collaboration with the Center for Khmer Studies to conduct a full digital inventory and condition report of the museum's 14,000 objects in eleven categories, with stone, ceramics, and metal as the main categories.³⁶⁹ The project drew on all 'existing registration methods used by the museum at different times in the past, including several French card catalogue systems, Khmer handwritten inventory lists and a pre-existing database'.³⁷⁰ The Australian team of experts assigned to the project, Catherine Millikan and Darryl Collins, also led a training programme in museum practices and

³⁶⁹ National Museum of Cambodia, *The Leon Levy Foundation/CKS Collection Inventory Project of the National Museum 2004-2010* https://www.cambodiamuseum.info/en_projects_activities/cip.html [Accessed March 28, 2021]

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

maintenance for the NMC staff.³⁷¹ While they provided frameworks and methods developed in Western institutions, foreign experts adjusted to the situation on site and actively participated in the institution's recovery efforts.

The textiles are in the care of Kong Kuntheary, who studied archaeology at the Cambodian Royal University of Fine Arts in the 1990s. She worked at the Ministry of Culture in 1987 and joined the museum in 1994. After living in Japan for some years with her husband, she returned to the museum in 2006 and was appointed to the Textile department in 2015.³⁷² Textile expert Gillian Green donated eighty *hol* pieces and four *pidan* in 2009, followed by two more *sampot sarabap* in 2010.³⁷³ This acquisition was handled by an in-house team including Kuntheary, supervised by two Australian specialists working at the NMC at the time. In 2011 the non-profit organisation Caring for Young Khmer (CYK), which trains weavers in Takeo province to master the art of *pidan*, also donated twenty-seven pieces, some of which reproduced lost objects from the museum, based on photographs.³⁷⁴ The museum organised several exhibitions of these *pidan*, such as the show "Revitalizing Khmer Treasure – Pidan: Pictorial Ikat Silk" in 2014. Since early 2017, the entire collection of 235 pieces has been kept in a climate-controlled storage room on the museum's second floor, and pieces have been fully inventoried. In comparison, the largest collection of Cambodian silks is located outside Cambodia, at the Musée du Quai Branly in France with nearly four hundred pieces of Cambodian textiles, fragments, and garments, mostly from the late nineteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century.³⁷⁵

The NMC has allocated a limited space for Cambodian nationals and tourists to access silk-

³⁷¹ Australian War Memorial, *Staff of the National Museum of Cambodia pose with Australian National Gallery* <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C958319> [Accessed June 28, 2021]

³⁷² Kong Kuntheary, informal interview with Magali An Berthon, April 2018, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

³⁷³ Gillian Green, personal email conversation, April 1, 2020.

³⁷⁴ All the textiles from the collection were photographed and integrated with the museum database in 2016-2017 and made available to the public. Yukiko Yonekura, 'A Field Survey for the Protection of Endangered Weaving Technique and Motifs of the Traditional Cambodian Pictorial Ikat Silk Pidan,' *Gakuen* 919 (2017): 38.

³⁷⁵ Musée du Quai Branly, 'History of the Collections' <http://www.quaibrantly.fr/en/collections/all-collections/history-of-the-collections/> [Accessed May 2, 2019].

related artefacts in the galleries exhibiting the carved loom, tools, two modern *pidan* hangings, and one brocaded silk [Fig.47]. In 2018, a display of Khmer classical ballet objects dating from the 1920s Sisowath era was added, featuring embroidered elements of a male costume and an embroidered *sbaay*, as part of a collaboration between the museum and researchers from l'Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient [Fig.48]. These initiatives supported by multiple internal and external actors pertain to cooperation projects with positive impact, all turned towards redeveloping and supporting the NMC textile collection and the museum's team in a way that fosters autonomy in leadership and ways to care about the objects.



Fig.47 Two contemporary pidan produced and donated by CYK on display at the National Museum of Cambodia, Author's photograph, April 2018.



Fig.48 Khmer ballet costume elements on display at the National Museum of Cambodia. Author's photograph, April 2018.

In comparison, Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum was established in 1979 and opened to the public in 1980. From 1979 à 1988, research, organising the archives, and museography at the museum was led by the Vietnamese special advisor Mai Lam.³⁷⁶ The museum was established on the secret S-21 KR prison site in Phnom Penh, where about 18,000 prisoners were killed during the dictatorship leaving behind thousands of textiles and clothing remains. The museum holds thousands of photographic and paper records of the prisoners and the prison's operations in their archives. Since 2018, the textiles and garments have been reclaimed in an ambitious textile conservation project supported by the US Embassy and designed by American textile conservator Julia Brennan, in collaboration with in-house

³⁷⁶ Anne-Laure Porée, 'Tuol Sleng, l'histoire inachevée d'un musée mémoire,' *Moussons* 30 (2017) <http://journals.openedition.org/moussons/3961> [Accessed 4 July 2021]

conservation specialist Kho Chenda.³⁷⁷ There are only two silk scarf fragments in the three thousand pieces found on site, the majority of which consist of machine-made military uniforms, caps, belts, male trousers and shirts, and a range of more unusual fragments, often patched and mended. While the NMC collection connects with a history of ancestral textile practices, royalty and colonialism, the pieces at Tuol Sleng tell the history of war, torture, and hardship associated with the KR regime and the PRK.

Conclusion

In this chapter, silk is an invaluable focal point to inform Cambodian histories and geographies, a lens through which to contemplate issues of territoriality, national identity and cultural influences. Examining the history of Cambodian silk has highlighted the successive, sometimes overlapping, foreign agendas of China, India, Thailand, Vietnam, and France that influenced silk practices through periods of diplomacy, trade, wars, colonisation, migration and exchanges. Cambodian textile crafts have developed in response to competitive trade networks in the Southeast Asian region, hybridisation of dress styles and textile techniques with India in the thirteenth century and Siam in the seventeenth century, and adaptation to new markets with the French colonisation. Local sericulture and textile production have also faced moments of regression in response to internal crisis during the KR regime and the post-conflict Vietnamese occupation in the 1980s. This study nuances the idea of silk as an ancient Cambodian tradition unchanged since the Khmer empire, destroyed during the KR regime and relaunched in the 1990s. To challenge the binary notion of silk disappearance and revival in the twentieth century, this chapter identifies the palimpsest as a paradigm to qualify and understand the re-formation and

³⁷⁷ US Embassy in Cambodia, *U.S. Assistance for Cambodian Cultural Preservation* <https://kh.usembassy.gov/education-culture/u-s-government-assistance-cambodian-cultural-heritage-preservation/> [Accessed March 25, 2020].

continuity of the silk sector and weaving practices. It also highlights the sustainance of structural patterns such as the patron-client relationships of *khsae*, major silk yarn imports from ethnic Chinese in Vietnam, and the positioning of the polychromic *sampot hol* as a Cambodian commodity, which have continued to infuse the contemporary silk landscape. Textile experts Gabriele Mentges and Lola Shamukhitdinova contend that textiles occupy the entangled position of material, social, cultural and economic intermediaries involving a wide range of actors, which provides ‘insight into spaces of relations and spaces of memory, as well as into the structures behind established cultural patterns’.³⁷⁸ After two decades of civil war, the reopening of the country to foreign investment in the early 1990s reshuffled the cards in terms of political and economic influences, implementing new flows of population, trade and resources. The next chapter highlights the transnational, international and local actors involved in the silk sector since the 1990s to unravel further the cultural influences and agencies engaged in silk in a context of post-conflict reconstruction.

³⁷⁸ Gabriele Mentges and Lola Shamukhitdinova, eds., *Textiles as National Heritage: Identities, Politics and Material Culture* (Münster: Waxmann, 2017), 12.

Chapter Two

Key players in silk weaving: networks and narratives (1991-2018)

Introduction

This chapter deepens the focus on the geopolitical perspective taken in Chapter One to examine the actors who have formed the Cambodian silk network since the 1990s, most importantly transnational organisations, foreign NGOs and domestic initiatives. This study of the contemporary silkscape examines the revival of silk weaving in connection with the exponential growth of international NGOs arriving in Cambodia by 1992, especially from the United States, Japan, and Europe.³⁷⁹ The reopening of Cambodia internationally and the national elections in 1993 set a new paradigm. The introduction of these NGOs has redistributed the influence of regional competitors such as Thailand, Vietnam, and China on silk production in Cambodia. In addition, the return of tourists in conjunction with heritage strategies has also changed the physiognomy of handicraft production. Today, most people know Cambodia only as a paradoxical country with two historical cornerstones: the centuries-long Angkorian Empire's expansion (802-1431 CE) and the short and destructive near-autarkic KR regime from 1975 to 1979. These 'two contradicting histories and geographies' are materialised in the present by the flow of tourists seeking both the splendours of the archaeological ruins of Angkor Wat near Siem Reap and the genocide sites of Tuol Sleng prison and the Killing Fields mass grave in Phnom Penh.³⁸⁰ Of the six million

³⁷⁹ John Bennett, *Meeting Needs: NGO Coordination in Practice* (Abingdon: Earthscan, 1995), 179; 'Less than 4 percent of Cambodian non-government organisations were founded in the 1980s or earlier'. See Louise Coventry, 'It's Complicated': Cambodia's NGOs and International Donors,' *The Asia Dialogue*, August 7, 2017, <https://theasiadialogue.com/2017/08/07/its-complicated-relationships-between-cambodian-ngos-and-international-donors/> [Accessed April 20, 2020]

³⁸⁰ Brickell, Springer, and Sok Udom Deth, *The Handbook of Contemporary Cambodia*, 17.

international visitors Cambodia hosted in 2017, about 77 per cent came from Asia and the Pacific, an essential aspect of this chapter's discussions.³⁸¹

Three stages in the chronology of the revitalisation of silk in the post-KR era can be identified in terms of actions and key players. First, this chapter explores the 1990s network of transnational agencies, especially UNESCO, who invested early in sericulture and silk weaving skills development. Compensating for the limited national support for the Cambodian craft sector, these active agents have combined funding, foreign expertise and a turn towards tourism to encourage the sustainable recovery of silk production. Second, the chapter considers the rise of two ambitious Cambodia-based projects founded by French and Japanese actors in the mid-1990s, Artisans Angkor (AA) and the Institute for Khmer Traditional Textiles (IKTT) respectively, which have become established leaders in the sector to the present day. Finally, the chapter analyses the emerging presence of Cambodia-owned actors in this network from the 2000s, from larger consortia to medium-scale initiatives such as Color Silk, which have developed a hybrid model of social enterprise in which foreign and local approaches intersect.

While this chapter expands the polyphony of voices on Cambodian silk, it remains centred on the sector's network of stakeholders described in this chapter, which allows an examination of the exceptionalism or interconnectedness of each initiative. There are numerous artisanal projects dedicated to textile production in Cambodia. The goal is not to provide an exhaustive list, but to focus on the most significant organisations exemplifying the restructuring of the economic, social and cultural landscape of silk in recent decades [Fig.49]. Gender is also part of this study, in considering the role of women within the silkscape and their strategies as company owners.

Anthropologists Clare Wilkinson-Weber and Alicia Ory Denicola have called for a critical

³⁸¹ Ministry of Tourism, *Tourism Statistics Report, March 2018* (Phnom Penh: Ministry of Tourism, 2019), https://www.tourismcambodia.com/img/resources/cambodia_tourism_statistics_2018.pdf [Accessed May 4, 2019]

stance towards the leading discourses on craft production in the marketplace. They ask: 'Who claims the right to speak about craft? In so doing do they suppress other voices? [...] How does this emerge from or even contradict habitual practice?'³⁸² By emphasising the key players' monopolistic position and perspectives in Chapter Two, it places the makers of Cambodian silk textiles in the role of the workforce, as the recipients of development and training programmes. While some weavers' perspectives are included in this chapter, their relative absence is acknowledged and will be actively balanced in Chapter Three, in which weavers' voices, knowledge and potential for agency form the sole focus.

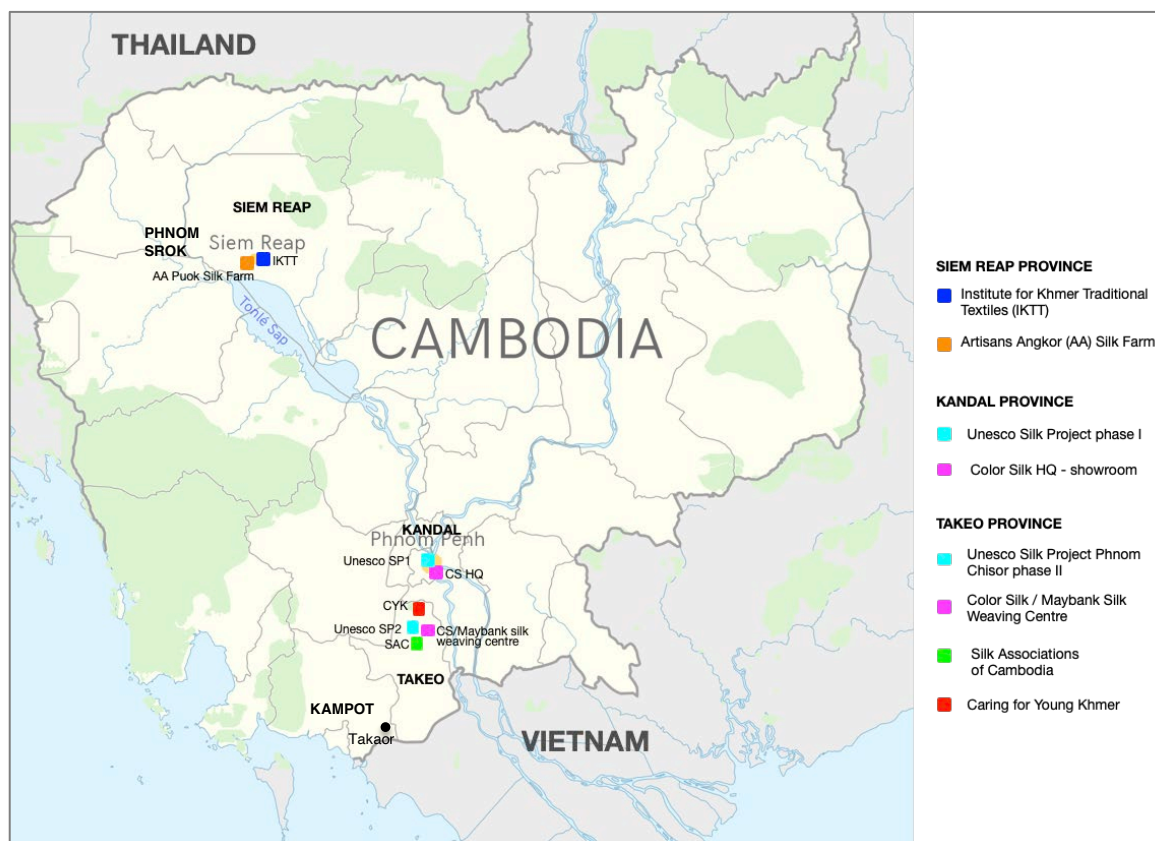


Fig.49 Map locating the organisations presented in Chapter Two. Author's image.

³⁸² Wilkinson-Weber, and Ory DeNicola, *Critical Craft: Technology, Globalization, and Capitalism*, 4.

Conceptual and methodological approach to exploring the Cambodian silkscape

The thesis Introduction defines the silkscape as an expandable space crossed by flows of various agents, beyond the common binarism between nature and culture, human and non-human, local and global, and centre and periphery. It builds on Appadurai's concept of -scapes and further theories of the network, specifically Actor-Network Theory (ANT), to expose a multitude of agencies within global encounters.

Even though Appadurai and Latour's respective theories are rooted in Western worldviews, the use of their thinking is justified in this chapter, which overtly engages with international stakeholders, post-colonial history, and Western perspectives on the silk production chain.

Appadurai aims to disrupt notions of a globalised world and commodities by looking at the phenomena of flows and disjunctures and the deterritorialisation of local communities.³⁸³

ANT, developed by sociologists John Law, Bruno Latour and Michel Callon, deconstructs social entities by revealing the equal importance of human and non-human actors of different natures (groups, actions, objects, facts, and social or scientific studies) to challenge pre-established social patterns.³⁸⁴ Decolonial thinking is used when engaging with

Cambodian concepts of society to consider the silk network, and the chapter also includes

the voices of some weavers. These theoretical approaches, in conjunction with

methodologies of historical research and ethnography, have resulted in the collection of

particular data: biographies of the organisations' founders, commercial communication and

marketing strategies, interviews, official reports, site visits, participant observation and

³⁸³ Appadurai, 'Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy,' 296.

³⁸⁴ Latour, *Reassembling the Social: an Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*, 9.

semi-structured interviews gathered during three periods of fieldwork in Cambodia in winter 2016, summer 2017, and spring 2018.³⁸⁵

The network of silk-related exchanges explored here also includes materiality, processes and products as part of the same chain.³⁸⁶ Design historian Kjetil Fallan uses the concept of script, originally developed by sociologist Madeleine Akrich, to understand 'how a product's utilitarian functions, aesthetics expressions, social meaning and cultural identities are constructed'.³⁸⁷ Writing the script of silk weaving products consists of tracing the production chain from the raw material to the weaving stage. It could also mean scripting each company's structure from its genesis to its production and distribution system. An invaluable expression of this scripting process was found during a research trip in Northern Thailand which I undertook in 2016 in parallel with the PhD.³⁸⁸ The joint interdisciplinary project between the British Council in Thailand and the Royal College of Art focused on documenting contemporary textile crafts in Tai Yuan and Tai Lue weaving communities in villages around Chiang Mai and Nan provinces. By interviewing craft community founders and visiting each site, social designer Peewara Jitsukummongkol, one of the researchers co-leading the project, drafted each organisation's business model in compelling sketches. The example here shows Studio Naenna, a Chiang Mai-based private enterprise founded by Australian textile expert Patricia Cheesman [Fig.50]. Taking

³⁸⁵ The interviews with key representatives were all conducted in English, English being the language promoted by the company founders and institution officials in Cambodia, with the exception of Chin Koeur, who spoke Khmer. In comparison, the following chapter, which focuses on the voice of the silk makers, will present a series of interviews conducted in Khmer with a translator.

³⁸⁶ John Law, 'Actor-Network Theory and Material Semiotics,' April 25, 2007, 2, <http://www.heterogeneities.net/publications/Law2007ANTandMaterialSemiotics.pdf> [Accessed May 1, 2020]

³⁸⁷ Fallan, *Design History: Understanding Theory and Method*, 9; See also Latour, 'A cautious Prometheus?', 13; Akrich engaged with technical objects and considered them as the recipients, sums, and results of the designer's agency, assessing that 'like a film script, technical objects define a framework of action together with the actors and the space in which they are supposed to act'. Akrich, 'The De-Scripture of Technical Objects,' 208.

³⁸⁸ This British Council research project 'New for Old: Southeast Asia Research Residency' took place in Asia over the month of December 2016 and led to the exhibition 'On the Line' at the Aram Gallery, London in June 2017.

inspiration from the scripting value of diagrams, this chapter also uses a variety of graphics to represent, when suitable, the structure of the key silk players. As the coming together of method and theory, these diagrams illuminate the various influxes of investment and influence across the silkscape.

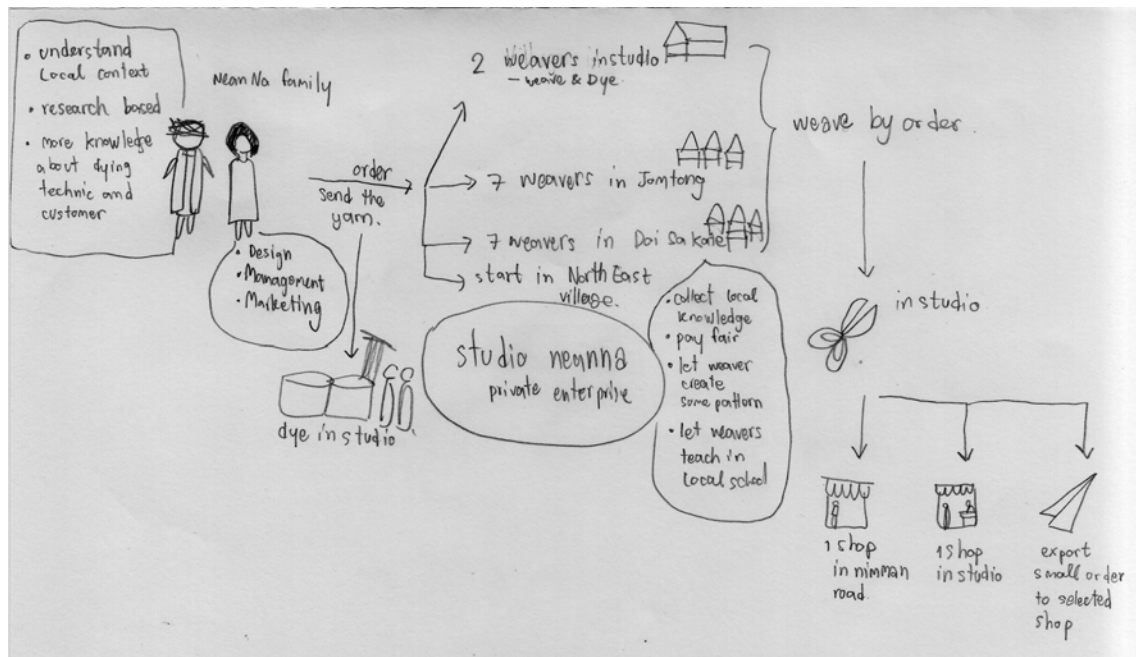


Fig.50 Diagram of the business model of Studio Naenna, a Chiang Mai-based private enterprise, sketched by Peewara Jitsukumongkol for the 'New for Old': Southeast Asia Research Residency, December 2016.

Domestic and transnational forms of khsae in post-conflict Cambodia

The concept of network developed by Latour's approach to social theory was applied to the world of materials by anthropologist Tim Ingold. He defined a material world made of flows, an infinity of lines in becoming, which is applicable to the context of crafts and weaving. Ingold expanded the meaning of the term 'network' to '*réseau*' used in the French translation, and also '*filet*', or 'net'.³⁸⁹ In this understanding, the network becomes an unlimited web, continuously creating new connections. Coincidentally, the Khmer

³⁸⁹ Tim Ingold, 'La vie dans un monde sans objets,' *Perspective*, 1 (2016): 18.

translation for the term ‘connections’ is *khsae*, which literally means ‘cords’ or ‘threads’, and refers to the contractual links established between people and families in Cambodia. This textile metaphor linking materiality and semiotics, mapping things and concepts alike, is common in other cultures. For instance, the French language also relies on textile terminology to describe social connections: the phrase *lien social* means ‘social bond’ and *tisser des liens* means ‘to weave connections’. While Chapter One discussed the importance of *khsae* as a major underlying feature of Cambodian society that was reactivated in the post-KR era, this chapter is interested in expanding the polysemic translation in Khmer of the term ‘network’. This section aims to articulate the entanglement of *khsae* – that is, all the relationships which form the silk sector – by juxtaposing multiple micro-narratives of history, cultural influence and development. This approach follows Walter Mignolo’s thinking to provide a ‘decolonial option, as a non-normative space, as a space open to the plurality of alternatives’.³⁹⁰ Moreover, historian Trudy Jacobsen has positioned *khsae* as a power relation established spatially ‘between a family based in the centre and individuals inheriting the relationship on the periphery’.³⁹¹ The invisible channels, from one individual to another to a group, find material expression in the production and transfer of silk resources. This section therefore discusses how these social ties were manifested in the silk sector from a local to a global perspective, but also through material, knowledge, and economic transactions.

As we have seen in Chapter One, silk threads travelled from Vietnam to Cambodia via networks of ethnic Chinese wholesalers in the 1990s, which hints at how numerous actors and intermediaries have activated the Cambodian silk chain locally and beyond borders. As key agents of this system for the domestic market, ‘middlemen’, a general term to designate intermediary entrepreneurs, either men or women, have played an essential

³⁹⁰ Mignolo and Vazquez, ‘Decolonial AestheSis: Colonial Wounds/Decolonial Healings.’

³⁹¹ Jacobsen, *Lost Goddesses: The Denial of Female Power in Cambodian History*, 5.

role in rural areas. Central figures in handicraft cottage economies, they make a profit by connecting each actor of the chain. For silk, they buy raw materials from suppliers, loaning them to weavers, to whom they pass orders, collect and pay for the finished products, minus the cost of materials, and eventually sell these to retailers [Fig.51]. Ter Horst established that by the 2000s ‘wholesalers-middlemen guilds control[led] close to 75 per cent of the production in the large silk weaving areas of Kandal and Takeo, providing yarn on credit’.³⁹² He also established that in 2008, a hundred middlemen were dealing with twenty thousand subcontracted weavers over the country. In ANT, control and power do not trickle from the top down, but are activated through the different agents of the network. The prevalence of middlemen in the silk chain demonstrates the diversity of Cambodian actors and dynamics that existed before the involvement of international funding bodies.

Moreover, in a 2011 evaluation of the silk sector, the ITC experts noted the lack of development of the silk chain, considering the central role of intermediaries as a weakness, leading to ‘high transaction costs, which is a competitive disadvantage on international markets’.³⁹³ As craft consultant John Ballyn contends, the ‘artisan/middleman relationship is complex’ and under scrutiny, as they are often ‘more beneficial to middlemen than crafts producers’.³⁹⁴ This relationship will be further examined in Chapter Three from the viewpoint of independent weavers.

³⁹² Ter Horst, *Weaving into Cambodia*, 164.

³⁹³ International Trade Centre, *Report: Mid-Term External Evaluation Cambodia Sector-Wide Silk Project (Phase II)* CMB/49/05A, 13.

³⁹⁴ John Ballyn, ‘A Cultural Economic Analysis of Crafts: A View from the Workshop of the World,’ in *A Cultural Economic Analysis of Craft*, ed. Anna Mignosa and Priyatej Kotipalli (New York: Springer, 2019), 192.

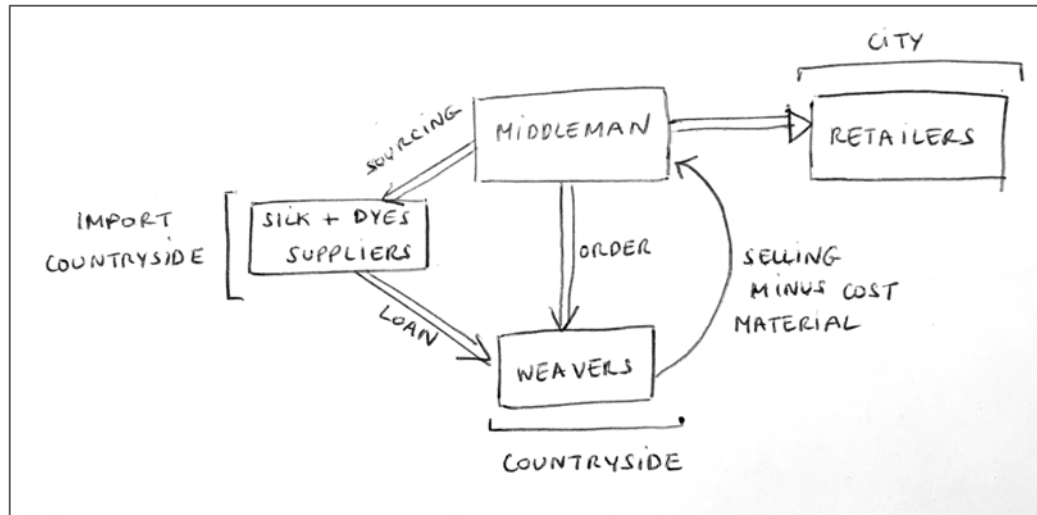


Fig.51 Diagram of the middleman business model. Author's image.

The role of middlemen and the patron-client structure of *khsae* are specific features of the Cambodian silk network. This thesis aligns with Ter Horst's claim that 'the hierarchical organisational structure of the silk weaving industry jeopardises the neo-liberal argument that free-market-based networks have replaced the command-based socialist ones in Southeast Asia'.³⁹⁵ It is therefore important to outline the tensions between the local structure of the silk sector when it resumed, and more specifically the changes brought by foreign intervention after the 1990s, and the effects of this on the geographical limits of how the Cambodian silkscape can be imagined. One example of this reconfiguration is Kikuo Morimoto, IKTT's founder, who purchased silkworm eggs in Surin, Thailand, in 1995 to support the silk farm he had started in Kampot province in Cambodia. While Vietnam supplied silk yarn via ethnic Chinese wholesalers, Thailand continued to be Cambodia's competitor and provider of silk, especially via the Northeastern province of Surin, where large Khmer communities had settled at the Cambodian border [Fig.52].³⁹⁶ Morimoto also sourced natural dyestuffs from Thailand which were unavailable in Cambodia at the time.³⁹⁷

³⁹⁵ Ballyn, 'A Cultural Economic Analysis of Crafts: A View from the Workshop of the World,' 164.

³⁹⁶ From the seventh to the thirteenth century, the region of Isan in present-day Northeast Thailand was part of the Khmer Empire.

³⁹⁷ Kikuo Morimoto, *Bayon Moon: Reviving Cambodia's Textile Traditions* (Siem Reap: Institute of Khmer Traditional Textiles), 66, 69.

He used Thailand as a model for silk production and relied on Khmer communities in Thailand to learn about silk textile techniques.



Fig.52 Map of Thailand, highlighting the region of Surin at the border of Cambodia and Thailand. Wikimedia Commons.

Defining foreign agencies in the Cambodian silkscape

Beyond domestic socio-cultural particularisms, in the post-KR era, transnational networks of institutions, NGOs and social enterprises supported by foreign investments have reshaped the Cambodian silkscape under new forms of patronage. Examining the background on Cambodia's governance in the early 1990s may explain the involvement of

specific countries and organisations in the cultural heritage and silk sectors. Following the Peace Agreements signed in Paris in 1991, the UN temporarily took over the administration of Cambodia with the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia.³⁹⁸ Its mandate from 1992 to 1993 focused on organising elections, restoring human rights, security and civil administration, and dealing with the closing of refugee camps and the repatriation of displaced populations in Cambodia.

The UN also supported the restoration of Cambodia's cultural heritage after the civil war through UNESCO, with the sponsoring of multilateral donors. In 1989 Norodom Sihanouk, official chairman of the UN-approved coalition government-in-exile in China, had formulated an appeal with UNESCO to alert the international community to the need to safeguard Angkor Wat.³⁹⁹ This campaign linked the preservation of Angkor Wat, its recognition as UNESCO World Heritage site and the peace building process in Cambodia. At the first international conference on Angkor Wat, which took place in Tokyo in 1993, it was decided that the International Coordinating Committee for the Safeguarding and Development of the Historic Site of Angkor would be co-chaired by France and Japan, who would also organise the activities, with UNESCO covering all the costs of conservation expertise.⁴⁰⁰

France, through the intermediary of the Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient, funded the restoration of the Angkor Thom and Baphuon temples and implemented major projects to restore the sculptures, with the NMC. On the other hand, the restoration of the Bayon temple was led by the Japanese Government Team for Safeguarding Angkor, in collaboration with Apsara Authority, the Cambodian agency in charge of the Angkor archaeological sites

³⁹⁸ Trevor Findlay, *SIPRI Research Report No.9, Cambodia: The Legacy and Lessons of UNTAC* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 11-12.

³⁹⁹ Jo Gillespie, 'Natural and Cultural Heritage in Cambodia,' In *The Handbook of Contemporary Cambodia*, ed. Katherine Brickell and Simon Springer (London: Routledge, 2017), 401.

⁴⁰⁰ UNESCO, *ICC-Angkor: 15 years* (Phnom Penh: UNESCO, 2011), 30-31.

since 1995.⁴⁰¹ In addition to France and Japan, as the leading country in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Thailand remained a central partner of this conservation effort, along with Australia.

The safeguarding initiative of Angkor Wat marks the early investment of France and Japan in the Cambodian heritage sector. Keiko Miura, a heritage studies scholar who worked in the Culture Unit of the UNESCO Office in Cambodia from 1992 to 1998, added: ‘from this period on, France (former colonial power) and Japan (new regional power) have become key players in the reconstruction of Cambodia’.⁴⁰² Japan and France have remained among Cambodia’s main donors in the form of Official Development Assistance, a term describing the flow of international aid to promote ‘economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective’.⁴⁰³ According to the OECD, up to the present France remains Cambodia’s fourth highest donor via humanitarian support to private investments, after the Asian Development Fund, Japan, and the United States [Fig. 53].⁴⁰⁴

Simultaneously, the elections in 1993 opened the way to bilateral and multilateral donors’ investment, which, in turn, brought an increasing number of local and international NGOs to emerge. International NGOs moved from focusing on humanitarian service delivery programs in the 1980s to the 1990s, to development work in education, agriculture and health.⁴⁰⁵ This brings the issue of soft power into play – that is, according to international

⁴⁰¹ Ibid, 24; Within the UNESCO/Japanese Funds-in-Trust, Japan led the conservation and restoration of the Royal Plaza, Bayon and Angkor Wat from 1994 to 1999 for a budget of 9,600,000 USD. See Embassy of Japan in Cambodia, *Japan’s Cooperation in the Field of Preservation of Cultural Heritage in Cambodia*, March, 2017, <https://www.kh.emb-japan.go.jp/angkor/angkor-e.htm> [Accessed May 1, 2020]

⁴⁰² Miura, ‘World Heritage making in Angkor. Global, Regional, National and Local Actors, Interplays and Implications,’ 12.

⁴⁰³ OECD, *Official Development Assistance – Definition and Coverage*, <http://www.oecd.org/development/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/officialdevelopmentassistancedefinitionandcoverage.htm> [Accessed 3 November 2017]

⁴⁰⁴ OECD, Official Development Assistance by donor in USD million in Cambodia, 2017-2018, <http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/aid-at-a-glance.htm> [Accessed on October 3, 2020]

⁴⁰⁵ Asian Development Bank, *Civil Society Briefs: Cambodia* (Phnom Penh: Cambodia Resident Mission, 2011) <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/28965/csb-cam.pdf> [Accessed May 10, 2021]

relations expert Joseph Nye Jr, the relationships built around fostering a mutual advantage between two nations.⁴⁰⁶ The variety of craft companies presented here interrogates soft power approaches in the revitalisation of silk production since the 1990s, revealing issues of authenticity and ownership. The early involvement of France and Japan in cultural initiatives led to the arrival of NGOs to revive local craft projects, such as the French-owned AA and the Japanese IKTT in Cambodia, discussed later.

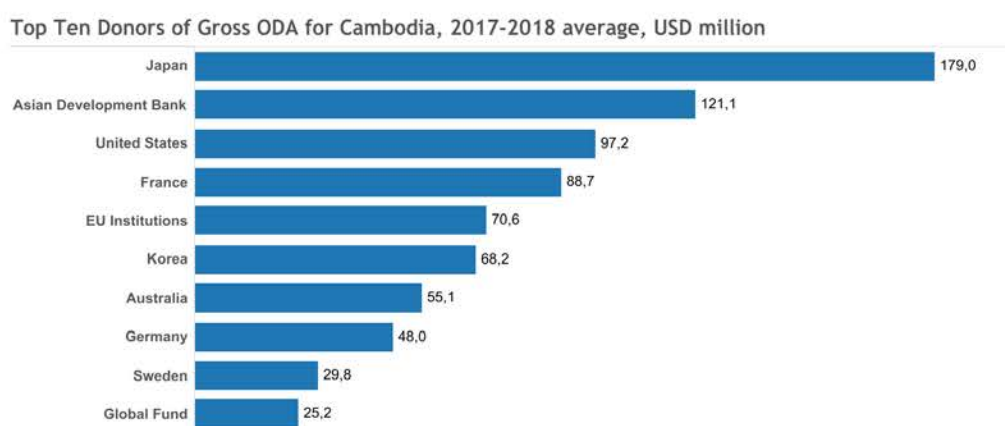


Fig.53 Official Development Assistance by donor in USD million in Cambodia. OECD, 2018.

The United States, third ODA top donor, has invested heavily in Cambodia, and was essential in funding the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, putting the KR actions on trial in 2003 with UN support. However, the silk sector has attracted few American projects. The most noticeable American-owned initiative is Weaves of Cambodia, a non-profit organisation located in the remote village of Preah Vihear in Stung Treng province and founded by Bud Gibbons, a member of the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation. The organisation first provided 'prosthetics to victims of land mines and

wheelchairs to other handicapped individuals'.⁴⁰⁷ The project shifted to vocational training for disabled women and silk weaving, bringing in American textile designer Carol Cassidy, an authority in the Southeast Asian textile world, for training and guidance. Cassidy founded the pioneering weaving organisation Lao Textiles in Vientiane, Laos in 1990. Cassidy then took over the direction of Weaves of Cambodia in 2001.⁴⁰⁸ Due to the limited activity of US-owned projects in the Cambodian silk sector, there is no full case study focusing on the influence of the United States in this chapter.

What is significant, however, in the example of Weaves of Cambodia is the business model with which the project was developed. NGOs have been the main type of organisation in the silk sector in Cambodia. Fashion scholar Katalyn Medvedev has discussed their predominance in Cambodian fashion production, 'occupy[ing] a space between government, market, and civil society' and pursuing 'a long-term transformative and social justice agenda that benefits the local civil society'.⁴⁰⁹ Moreover, social scientist Louise Coventry contends that NGOs are another expression of the Cambodian *khsae*, which explains 'how and why [they] have taken up the space for civil society and why smaller, community-based organisations have been slower to emerge'.⁴¹⁰ The patron-client relationships and the lack of governmental support have encouraged the prevalence of foreign-funded NGOs that are 'unlikely to have an empowered constituency'.⁴¹¹ Coventry suggests that that NGOs thus lack the capacity to challenge existing power relations in Cambodia and fail to significantly address issues of poverty and marginalisation.⁴¹² The complex role of NGOs and their impact, broadly questioned by Coventry and more specifically by Medvedev, animates this

⁴⁰⁷ Deborah Deacon and Paula Calvin, *War Imagery in Women's Textiles: An International Study of Weaving, Knitting, Sewing, Quilting, Rug Making and Other Fabric Arts* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2014), 152.

⁴⁰⁸ Carol Cassidy, phone interview with Magali An Berthon, October 2, 2018.

⁴⁰⁹ Medvedev, 'Cambodian fashion NGOs: are they doing good?', 149.

⁴¹⁰ Louise Coventry, 'Civil Society in Cambodia: Challenges and Contestations,' In *The Handbook of Contemporary Cambodia*, ed. Katherine Brickell and Simon Springer (London: Routledge, 2017), 54.

⁴¹¹ Coventry, "It's Complicated": Cambodia's NGOs and International Donors.'

⁴¹² Ibid.

chapter of the thesis. It also asks to what extent the silkscape reflects transnational influences over Cambodia's geopolitical, social, and economic system, by examining how it applies to organisations such as AA and IKTT, looking at their funding and development schemes.

The other business model recurring in this chapter is the social enterprise, a concept emerging in the United States in the 1990s, primarily designating 'market-oriented economic activities serving a social goal' and encompassing a wide range of initiatives 'from for-profit business engaged in corporate philanthropy to non-profit organisations engaged in mission-supporting commercial activity'.⁴¹³ The EMES International Research Network for Social Enterprise has provided a framework of action and ethos for this model. A social enterprise is a project with a high degree of autonomy, managed independently, producing goods and/or services, with a significant level of risk and a minimum level of paid workers and paid activities.⁴¹⁴ It must be beneficial to the community, include a collective dimension in its leadership and management, and implement strategies of limited profit distribution.⁴¹⁵ With the erosion of the foreign-donor funding system since the mid-2000s, a number of NGOs have shifted to a hybrid economic model negotiating between a non-profit and for-profit status. The rise in the number of social enterprises was the result of Cambodia's economic growth in a diverse range of fields in tech and environmental sectors.⁴¹⁶ In practice, in Cambodia the term 'social enterprise' does not correspond to a specific legal status. For instance, AA (the French-Cambodian leader of the sector) and Color Silk (a more recent Cambodian-owned project) have different profiles, yet they both claim to follow the specific guidelines of social entrepreneurship. According to the *Asian Women Social*

⁴¹³ Jacques Defourny and Marthe Nyssens, 'Defining Social Enterprise,' in *Social Enterprise: At the Crossroads of Market, Public Policies and Civil Society*, ed. Marthe Nyssens (London: Routledge, 2006), 4.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid, 5-6.

⁴¹⁵ Carlo Bozarga and Jacques Defourny, eds., *The Emergence of Social Enterprise* (London: Routledge, 2001), 56-57.

⁴¹⁶ In the 2010s, Phnom Penh has seen the rise of co-working spaces and business incubators, such as Impact Hub Phnom Penh, which foster start-up projects and social businesses.

Entrepreneurs Network Report, social enterprises in Cambodia may be branches of NGOs, registered as associations with Cambodia's Interior Ministry, or as businesses with the Ministry of Commerce.⁴¹⁷ The local Social Enterprise Cambodia initiative, supported by Impact Hub Phnom Penh, digitally mapped social enterprises registered on the website according to activity, from agriculture, responsible tourism, health, environment and fashion to handicrafts, and included Color Silk.⁴¹⁸ This platform recognised the 'complexity of models aiming to combine social and economic objective'.⁴¹⁹ It is the owner's responsibility to declare the enterprise as social and provide factual elements supporting this claim. The wide spectrum of silk actors between macro and microstructures, from transnational agencies, NGOs and social enterprises adds to the complexity of defining the Cambodian silkscape and grasping its local and global ties.

UNESCO: generating silk revitalisation initiatives under transnational input

The UNESCO Office in Cambodia played an essential role in building projects and creating synergies with local and international actors. A UNESCO internal report established the guidelines for the 'Revival of Traditional Silk Weaving' programme launched in August 1992 for five years, broken into three phases: 'Research and Academic Input into the Royal University of Fine Arts and Documentation', 'Organization of Silk Weaving Courses', and finally 'Outreach/Extension Services'.⁴²⁰ The project aimed 'to revitalize traditional silk weaving and refine the product as one of the most important living but seriously

⁴¹⁷ The Nippon Foundation, *Asian Women Social Entrepreneurs Network Report* (Tokyo: The Nippon Foundation, 2015), 22-23.

⁴¹⁸ Social Enterprise Cambodia, *Handicrafts and Fashion Map*, <http://socialenterprisecambodia.org/maps#> [Accessed January 4, 2018]

⁴¹⁹ Social Enterprise Cambodia, *FAQ*, <https://socialenterprisecambodia.org/#faq> [Accessed March 20, 2017]

⁴²⁰ UNESCO Phnom Penh, internal report 'Revival of Traditional Silk Weaving,' 1993, UNESCO Phnom Penh Archives.

deteriorated cultural traditions in Cambodia'.⁴²¹ In terms of actors, the plan was funded by the UNESCO World Decade for Cultural Development, the Soka Gakkai International of Japan and the UK government. Led by the UNESCO Office of Cambodia, it received the support of Cambodia's Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts. The UNDP and the International Labour Organization oversaw the third phase, in partnership with NGOs and UN volunteers on site, to support silk farmers and weavers, facilitate credit and offer training in marketing.⁴²² In 1993 UNESCO commissioned a collaborative survey led by scholars from Sophia University in Tokyo and colleagues from the Royal University of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh on the cultural practices of shadow-puppet theatre, dance and handicrafts in villages around Angkor's temples.⁴²³ It aimed to collect data and provide recommendations for cultural preservation policies.⁴²⁴ From this first assessment, the UNESCO Office in Phnom Penh implemented projects on silk. One of these was Khemara, considered the first indigenous NGO, founded in 1991; in 1995 it received funding from UNDP and Princess Marie Ranariddh for a five-year plan to revitalise sericulture and weaving and support rural women. Established via the international organisation Oxfam, Khemara benefited from direct connections between its founder, Mu Sochua Leiper, and her husband, Scott Leiper, former UNDP Senior Programme Advisor in Cambodia. Mu Sochua Leiper was born in Phnom Penh in 1954. She was sent to Paris to study in the early 1970s before relocating to the United States, where she earned a bachelor's degree in Psychology from San Francisco State University and a Master's in Social Work from the University of California, Berkeley.⁴²⁵

⁴²¹ Ibid.

⁴²² UNESCO Phnom Penh, internal report 'Revival of Traditional Silk Weaving.'

⁴²³ UNESCO defined Intangible Cultural Heritage in its 2003 convention as 'the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage.' See UNESCO, *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, 2003, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001325/132540e.pdf> [Accessed December 20, 2017]

⁴²⁴ The Japan Foundation, *The Activity Report (1997) Part 2 - IV. Preserving, Documenting or Increasing Public Access to Tangible*, 1997, <https://www.jpf.go.jp/e/project/intel/archive/ac/97/con2-4.html> [Accessed 2 November 2017]

⁴²⁵ Helen O'Connell, *Oxfam Focus on Gender: Women and Conflict* (Oxford: Oxfam, 1993), 45-47.

Khemara focused on improving women's rights and supporting their advancement in leadership positions, 'drawing upon Western concepts of feminism in its approach'.⁴²⁶ The silk scheme implemented weaving training for women based in the Kampong Speu and Phnom Penh areas while providing them with basic literacy and numeracy education, partnering with regional women's associations.⁴²⁷

In the early 1990s, local markets had been identified as lacking a locally-produced high-end silk offer, privileging instead imported styles such as Indonesian cotton batiks and Lao silk *sarung*.⁴²⁸ UNESCO therefore aimed to help weavers, especially women and physically disabled individuals, learn ikat and natural dye techniques to produce elaborate marketable silk products. UNESCO first invited American textile scholar Leedom Leeferts to lecture at the Royal University of Fine Arts, conduct research with students, and assess the requirements for reviving the field in January 1993 'in the face of the lack of an expert on Cambodian textiles'.⁴²⁹ The second stage focused on training in sericulture, weaving and marketing. Leav Sa Em, a renowned sixty-year-old male master weaver who had survived the KR regime and was working for the Royal Court, was recruited to lead the weaving training programme. Originally from Prey Kabas commune in Takeo province, Leav Sa Em learned the art of polychromic *hol* and *pidan* from his mother, which was uncommon for a boy.⁴³⁰ During the dictatorship he worked as a farmer, a *krama* cotton weaver, and a cook in

⁴²⁶ Trudy Jacobsen, 'Riding a Buffalo to Cross a Muddy Field: Heuristic Approaches to Feminism in Cambodia,' in *Women's Movements in Asia: Feminisms and Transnational Activism*, ed. Mina Roces and Louise Edwards (London: Routledge, 2010), 215-16.

⁴²⁷ Heng Sok Chheng, 'Reviving the Traditions of Khmer Weaving,' *The Phnom Penh Post*, November 3, 1995, <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/reviving-traditions-khmer-weaving> [Accessed January 1, 2018] ; Khemara still exists and focuses social services and advocacy for children's care and access to education. Silk weaving activities have stopped. Founder Mu Sochua moved to politics, becoming the first woman to head the Ministry for Women's and Veterans' Affairs from 1998 to 2004 in Hun Sen's coalition government, then joining the opposition, acting as the Vice President of the Cambodia National Rescue Party until 2017.

⁴²⁸ Barbara Crossette, 'An Ancient Silk Trade Is Reborn,' *The New York Times*, April 20, 1997 <https://www.nytimes.com/1997/04/20/travel/an-ancient-silk-trade-is-reborn.html> [Accessed October 12, 2019]

⁴²⁹ UNESCO Phnom Penh, internal report 'Revival of Traditional Silk Weaving,' 1993, UNESCO Phnom Penh Archives.

⁴³⁰ Born in 1933, Leav Sa Em continued his weaving activity in his workshop until he died in 2003. Lon Nara, 'Silk Weaving Trade of Liv Sa Em Under Threat,' *The Phnom Penh Post*, 26 October 2001

Battambang before returning to Phnom Penh in 1982 and opening his workshop, expanding it from three to twenty looms by 1993.⁴³¹ For UNESCO, Leav Sa Em welcomed up to ten apprentices at a time to his house in Phnom Penh for five months before they returned to their home towns.⁴³² In an interview for *The Phnom Penh Post*, he explained that he relied on his trainees' motivation, hoping to turn them into accomplished weavers. 'If they have talent, or they are truly interested in this art, then they can learn very quickly', he said.⁴³³ UNESCO Cambodia would then support the weavers and distribute their products at the Phnom Penh office. Between 1992 and 1996, seventy-two women followed the training.⁴³⁴ In parallel, the agency promoted sericulture by sending trainees to the International Centre for Training and Research in Tropical Sericulture in Mysore, India, for eight months.⁴³⁵ There is no available information that tracks the breadth and outcome of this sericulture project.

UNESCO's weaving initiative continued in several forms until the early 2000s. Kiri Schultz, programme officer from 1995 to 1997, reported that the project was intended to be adapted to different communities and lasted until around 2005. Silk weaving could not be a viable off-season activity in every province, due to competition from regions specialising in weaving and the scarcity of silk yarn supplies. As a result, UNESCO also implemented a duplicable cotton-weaving project.⁴³⁶ Leav Sa Em moved to train weavers in Phnom Chisor

<https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/silk-weaving-trade-liv-sa-em-under-threat> [Accessed November 12, 2019]

⁴³¹ Keiko Miura, UNESCO correspondence with Tomoko Tsurumi, staff writer at *Asahi Shinbun*, August 11, 1993, UNESCO Phnom Penh Archives ; *K'Sai Chivit: Threads of Life*, Dir. Feingold, David A., Documentary Educational Resources, 1994.

⁴³² Andrea Hamilton, 'Tapestries of History,' *The Phnom Penh Post*, 18 June 1993
<https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/tapestries-history> [Accessed October 30, 2016];

Veronique Dauge, official correspondence with Cambodia's Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, December 24, 1992, UNESCO Phnom Penh, UNESCO Phnom Penh Archives.

⁴³³ Andrea Hamilton, 'Tapestries of History.'

⁴³⁴ Noella Richard, *Handicrafts and Employment Generation for the Poorest Youth and Women* (Paris: UNESCO, 2007), 64.

⁴³⁵ Veronique Dauge, official correspondence with Cambodia's Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts.

⁴³⁶ Kiri Schultz, 'Traditional Arts and Crafts for the Future,' *Museum International* 54, no.1-2 (2002): 60.

commune in Takeo province, about 55 kilometres south of Phnom Penh.⁴³⁷ One of these trainee weavers, Chin Koeur, went on to become a successful silk entrepreneur, which is why her story is explored in more detail below. UNESCO continued to let the weavers who were still active sell their products at the Phnom Penh branch until the mid-2010s.⁴³⁸ There was no follow-up from the agency to determine the continuity of practice and the long-term success of the training. Today, it remains difficult to assess the long-term economic and social impact of the 'Revival of Traditional Silk Weaving' programme,

In addition, UNESCO became a hub, linking programme officers, individual consultants and UN volunteers with NGO founders and representatives from Cambodian ministries of trade and culture. In a parallel example, Gabriele Mentges has explored the complex role of UNESCO in the *heritagisation* of national handicrafts in Uzbekistan. Her analysis revealed that, in a similar way to the Cambodian context, this transnational organisation had 'provided non-financial means, but mostly material and technical support instead', based on the 'personal interests and preference of UNESCO actors in the field'.⁴³⁹ UNESCO Cambodia corresponded with numerous burgeoning key craft projects, including IKTT and AA, two key studies in this chapter. In 1993, Charles Maisonnave Couterou from La Ligue Française de l'Enseignement (The French League for Education) also reached out to build a partnership to develop sericulture in Kralanh district, Siem Reap province, anticipating the future AA project.⁴⁴⁰ UNESCO, after commissioning Morimoto for the silk survey in 1994, continued to exchange with him, also introducing him to other actors of the

⁴³⁷ Cheang Sokha, and Duncan O'Brien, 'Unesco promotes Phnom Chisor,' *The Phnom Penh Post*, August 13, 2004, <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/unesco-promotes-phnom-chisor> [Accessed May 1, 2020]

⁴³⁸ Prom Chak, informal conversation, March 15, 2018, Phnom Penh: UNESCO office.

⁴³⁹ Gabriele Mentges, 'The Role of UNESCO and the Uzbek Nation Building Process,' in *Heritage Regimes and the State*, ed. Regina F. Bendix, Aditya Eggert, and Arnika Peselmann (Gottingen: Universitätsverlag Gottingen, 2013), 216-17; About the heritagisation of textiles, see also Ayami Nakatani, 'Politics of Boundaries and Heritagization of Handwoven Textiles in Indonesia,' in *Fashionable Traditions: Asian Handmade Textiles in Motion*, ed. Ayami Nakatani (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2020), 79-97.

⁴⁴⁰ Charles Maisonnave-Couterou, official correspondence with Richard Engelhardt, UNESCO Phnom Penh, Feb 17, 1993, UNESCO Phnom Penh Archives.

sector.⁴⁴¹ UNESCO also supported the Pidan Project, implemented by the Japanese NGO Caring for Young Khmer in 2003, which will be discussed in relation to knowledge transmission in Chapter Three.⁴⁴²

Pursuing its mission to support Cambodia's handicrafts, as part of the country's intangible cultural heritage, UNESCO's local branch took on the role of a governmental body by investing in the research, training of producers, and distribution of silk products. At the core of the Cambodian silkscape early in the mid-1990s, UNESCO's strategy of assistance relies on vetting and distributing endorsements to initiatives while connecting with foreign funding bodies interested in investing on silk developments. One exchange of letters in the UNESCO archives shows how UNESCO recommended the New Zealand-founded NGO Rehab Craft Cambodia to receive funding from the New Zealand government for the implementation of a sericulture project in 1996.⁴⁴³ While playing into 'the actual political structures, regional networks combined with kinship affiliations', the organisation contributed to bringing new players who have consequently strongly redefined the sector to the present.⁴⁴⁴ The effectiveness and success of these synergies remain difficult to quantify materially, economically and in the long term. By 2005, UNESCO Cambodia's influence had declined, to the benefit of the ITC, EU, and foreign-owned NGOs.

Beyond the reports kept in the UNESCO archives integrated into this thesis, its legacy lies more in developing models of training programmes responding to discourses of poverty reduction and the preservation of traditions. UNESCO policies pursued the dual objective of reclaiming 'deteriorated traditions of Cambodia' while improving the socio-economic

⁴⁴¹ Kiri Schultz, official correspondence with Colin McLennan/ Rehab Craft Cambodia on sericulture, April 19, 1996, UNESCO Phnom Penh, UNESCO Phnom Penh Archives.

⁴⁴² Michelle Vachon, 'Group Promotes Art of Pidan Silk Weaving Paintings,' *The Cambodia Daily*, December 27, 2003. <https://english.cambodiadaily.com/news/group-promotes-art-of-pidan-silk-weaving-paintings-849/> [Accessed 14 December 2017]

⁴⁴³ Khamliene Nhouyvanisvong, official correspondence with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade Cooperation Division of New Zealand, July 16, 1996, UNESCO Phnom Penh, UNESCO Phnom Penh Archives.

⁴⁴⁴ Mentges, 'The Role of UNESCO and the Uzbek Nation Building Process,' 222.

conditions of 'disadvantaged groups with confidence and dignity within their traditional cultural context', considering it was 'much needed in present-day Cambodia'.⁴⁴⁵ This narrative fostered a pervasive rhetoric combining ideas about reviving a national heritage with economic survival, which has continued to inform the public communication implemented by silk craft companies in Cambodia.⁴⁴⁶

Besides UNESCO, other UN agencies, including the Food and Agriculture Organisation and especially ITC, invested in silk training programmes, parcelling up the silkscape and multiplying the number of actors. ITC, the joint agency between the World Trade Organisation and the UN, was founded in 1964 with the goal of expanding the trading capacities of the 'least developed countries' and small and medium enterprise competitiveness. ITC was involved in the Cambodian silk sector from 2003 when it implemented the Export-led Poverty Reduction Programme and the Cambodia Sector-Wide Silk Project from 2010 to 2012. ITC bridged international partnerships by seeking funding from the New Zealand Agency for International Development and the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs.⁴⁴⁷ Despite this international brokerage performed by UN-related agencies in Cambodia, particular nations emerged to become leading voices in the resurrected silk sector, especially the French, with AA, and the Japanese, with IKTT.

Artisans Angkor (AA): French patronage as a leading voice of the silk sector

This section and the one that follows examine how two key players, AA and IKTT, built their activity and maintained their dominant position by shaping relations with other

⁴⁴⁵ UNESCO Phnom Penh, internal report 'Revival of Traditional Silk Weaving,' 1993, UNESCO Phnom Penh Archives.

⁴⁴⁶ This narrative of heritage and hybridisation has been pervasive in post-colonial Cambodia. See Michael Falser, *Cultural Heritage as Civilizing Mission: From Decay to Recovery* (New York: Springer, 2015), 7-8.

⁴⁴⁷ International Trade Centre, *Report: Mid-Term External Evaluation Cambodia Sector-Wide Silk Project*, 5.

actors in the field, emphasising training, handicraft production and sales. By identifying the major strategies they employed to enable them to reach the status of leaders in Cambodia's artisanal silk products, it is possible to demonstrate the complex agencies operating within the local silk industry. This section also examines how AA and IKTT, through their leadership, positioning, products and discourses, have also crafted dominant discourses on hand-made silk as a token of Cambodian traditions and national identity.

AA is a French initiative, grounded in international development policies, which transitioned from an NGO-led project in 1992 to a semi-public enterprise in 2003. In 1992, La Ligue Française de l'Enseignement launched a programme called Chantiers-Ecoles de Formation Professionnelle in the area of Siem Reap, near the tourist site of Angkor Wat, with funding from the EU and the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and French Cooperation, under the approval of the Cambodian Ministry of Education. The aim was to encourage young Cambodians to play a role in their country's reconstruction effort by learning manual skills in construction and agriculture and participating in the restoration of Angkor's temples, which showed promising tourist potential.⁴⁴⁸

As shown in Figure 54, the Chantiers-Ecoles programme was coordinated by Charles Maisonnave-Couterou, a French educator who taught in Cambodia in 1958 and returned to the country in 1987 for La Ligue, and directed on site by Jean-Pierre Martial, a French engineer.⁴⁴⁹ Inspired by the French model of Les Compagnons du Devoir, a mentoring system dating from 1941 based on the transmission of manual know-how from master journeymen to a community of apprentices, the programme received the support of volunteer *compagnon* instructors who helped to implement nine workshops in construction

⁴⁴⁸ National Polytechnic Institute of Angkor, *About CEFP*

http://www.npia.info/html/whatcefp.php?p_lang=en [Accessed October 27, 2017]

⁴⁴⁹ Charles Maisonnave-Couterou died in 2009. Jean Pierre Martial stayed in Cambodia and opened the Maison Polanka hotel with his wife, a silk shop owner, in Siem Reap. Charles Maisonnave-Couterou and Roland Biache, *Ligue Française de l'enseignement et de l'Éducation Permanente, Les chantiers écoles de formation professionnelle, Siem Reap - Cambodge, Rapport d'exécution 1991/1996* (Paris : Confédération générale des œuvres laïques, 1996), 14.

and handicrafts, including masonry, woodwork, metalwork, electricity, plumbing, carpentry, and stone-cutting, led in Khmer and French. The first year provided training for 130 young people. By tracing the company's history rooted in two distinctively French associations, namely La Ligue and Les Compagnons du Devoir, and the active presence of French funders, this study articulates the project's hybrid nature between France and Cambodia.

By 1995, the Chantiers-Ecoles team turned to silk when Maisonnave-Couterou realised that one of the districts near Puok village in Siem Reap area had been 'used for the traditional production of mulberry trees, silkworm breeding, cocoon treatment, dyeing, and weaving'.⁴⁵⁰ Finding inspiration in the revitalisation of silk in the Cévennes, France, in the 1970s, Chantiers-Ecoles consulted French silk expert Michel Costa and agronomist Alain Peyré to carry out the project in Cambodia.⁴⁵¹ This led to the foundation of the National Silk Centre in Puok, to manage sericulture training and farming. The project received funding from the Agence Française de Développement (French Development Agency) via the *Projet d'Appui au Secteur de la Soie* (Silk support programme). Internal reports show that about 4,320 mulberry plants were grown on two and a half hectares in Puok in 1995, with a plan to increase this to 25,000 plants the following year. Chantiers-Ecoles continued to expand silk weaving training, marketing, and product development. The organisation aimed to integrate its apprentices further into Siem Reap's local economic fabric.⁴⁵² The main funder, La Ligue, progressively withdrew. The National Silk Centre, overseeing training, moved to Cambodia's Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training, a transfer presented in Figure 55.

⁴⁵⁰ Maisonnave-Couterou and Biache, *Les chantiers écoles de formation professionnelle*, 17.

⁴⁵¹ National Polytechnic Institute of Angkor, *About CEFP*.

⁴⁵² Maisonnave-Couterou and Biache, *Les chantiers écoles de formation professionnelle*, 17.

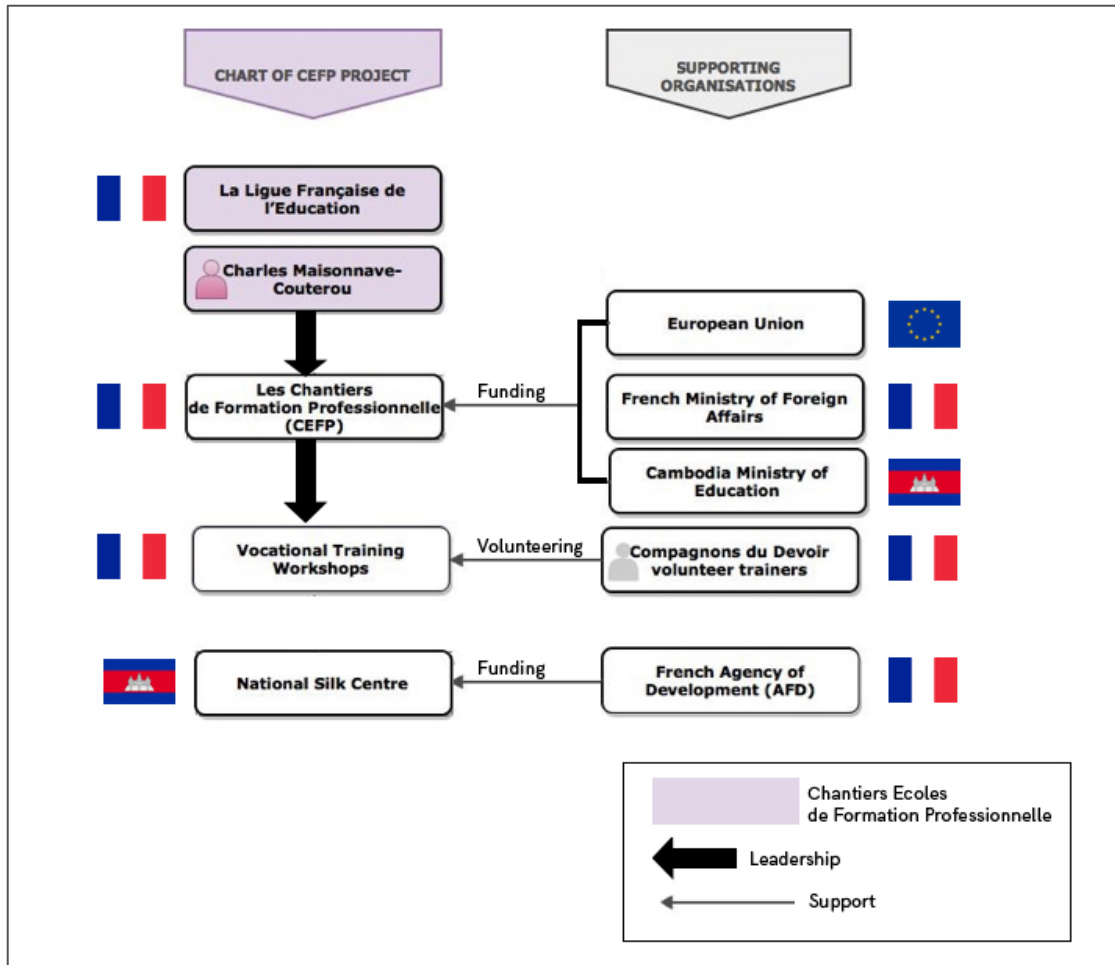


Fig.54 Chantiers Ecoles de Formation Professionnelle chart showing structure and network of founders from 1990 to 1995. Author's image.

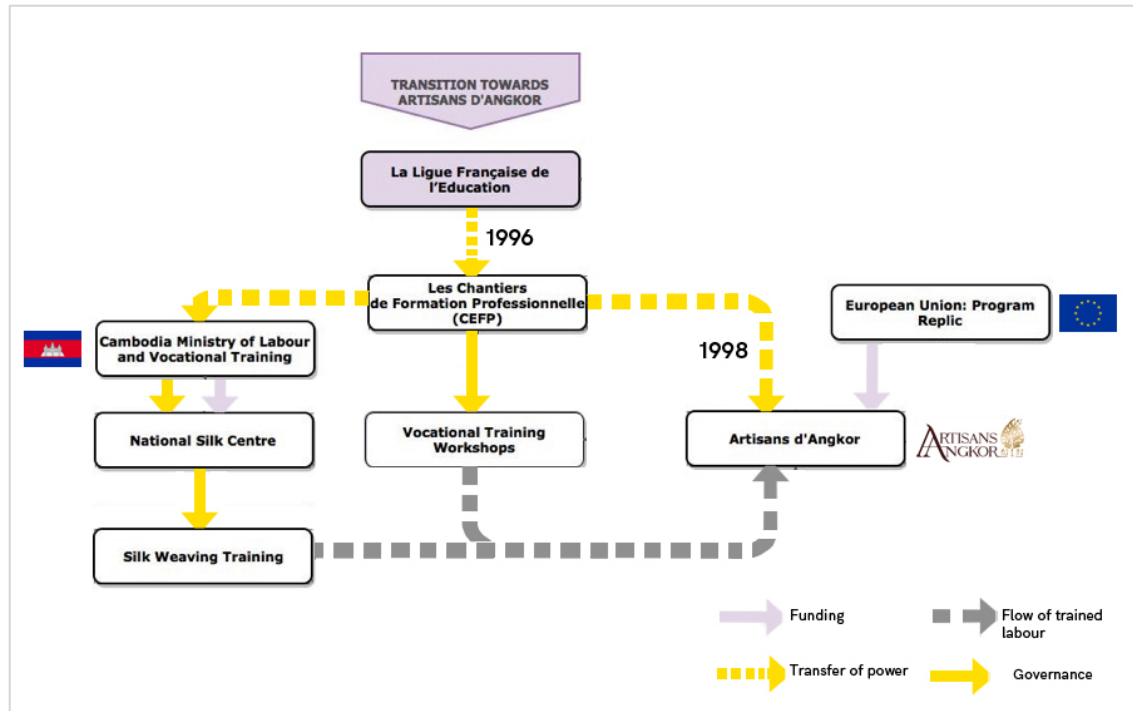


Fig.55 Transfer of leadership of Les Chantiers Ecoles between 1995 and 2000, from La Ligue Française de l'Education to the Cambodia Ministry of Labour and the National Silk Center, leading to the foundation of Artisans d'Angkor. Author's image.

This progressive transfer created the conditions for Chantiers-Ecoles' autonomy and the establishment of an independent craft project under the name Artisans d'Angkor (AA).⁴⁵³ With EU support as part of the two-year REPLIC programme, AA expanded handicraft production to silk goods, metalware, wood and stone carving. The silk programme relied on local networks in villages in collaboration with village chiefs, as it does today. Weaving recruits are between eighteen and twenty-five years old with no prior knowledge of textiles, and have often had little access to education and employment. After apprentices complete their training as a group, they continue to practise individually for a further three months. AA has built workshops in the selected villages, providing looms, materials, and a workshop leader controlling all the products, collecting them from the workshop and checking quality.⁴⁵⁴ While ensuring tight-knit relationships in rural areas, AA also worked on

⁴⁵³ The French spelling was later simplified into 'Artisans Angkor' to facilitate its pronunciation for a foreign clientele.

⁴⁵⁴ Pav Eang Khoing, informal interview with Magali An Berthon, April 2, 2018.

distribution, and opened two shops in Siem Reap and Phnom Penh attracting mid- to high-range tourist and expat consumers.

Once EU funding stopped, AA transitioned into a semi-public company with the status of a social enterprise, keeping its ties with France. In 2003 the firm's shares were divided between four parties: 30 per cent to the Cambodian government, 20 per cent to the employees, 10 per cent to a group of investors, and 40 per cent to VINCI, a leading French multinational company in the concession and construction business which also handles Cambodia's main airports [Fig.56]. This shows how the backing of powerful key players in Cambodia and France ensured AA's leading position in the sector, branded as a Cambodian company in its communication. AA's website states: 'Artisans Angkor is a Cambodian company that was created at the end of 1990', which 'has become a real showcase of Khmer handicrafts'.⁴⁵⁵ This narrative is also prominent in tourism-related publications and in the Cambodian press for an English-speaking audience. In 2018, Chea Vannak in *Khmer Times* describes AA as 'the country's biggest seller of traditional arts and culture products, which are crafted by local artisans in forty-eight workshops across Siem Reap and Phnom Penh'.⁴⁵⁶ VINCI's role as majority shareholder has remained confidential in most of AA's communication. This information only appears on VINCI's website on a page dedicated to its involvement in Cambodia. The Cambodian government's political ownership of a third of the company's shares has been important in endorsing AA as a state-recognised authority on Cambodian crafts. With its products displayed in the largest retail spaces in major airports, the company represented Cambodian culture for an international crowd of visitors. AA reached financial equilibrium in 2005, which enabled it to launch an in-house training

⁴⁵⁵ Artisans Angkor, *Beliefs: Our Story in Brief*, <http://dev.artisansdangkor.com/beliefs-1-77-our-story-in-brief.php> [Accessed 30 October 2017]

⁴⁵⁶ Chea Vannak, 'Showcasing Khmer traditional crafts to visitors,' *Khmer Times*, December 5, 2018 <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/556095/showcasing-khmer-traditional-crafts-to-visitors/> [Accessed 10 May 2020]

programme on silk weaving and tailoring while maintaining a partnership with the National Silk Centre on sericulture. Presenting itself as the largest private sector employer in Siem Reap province, in 2017 the company was providing work ‘to over 1100 people, including about 800 artisans’, half of which were involved in silk accessories and garments.⁴⁵⁷

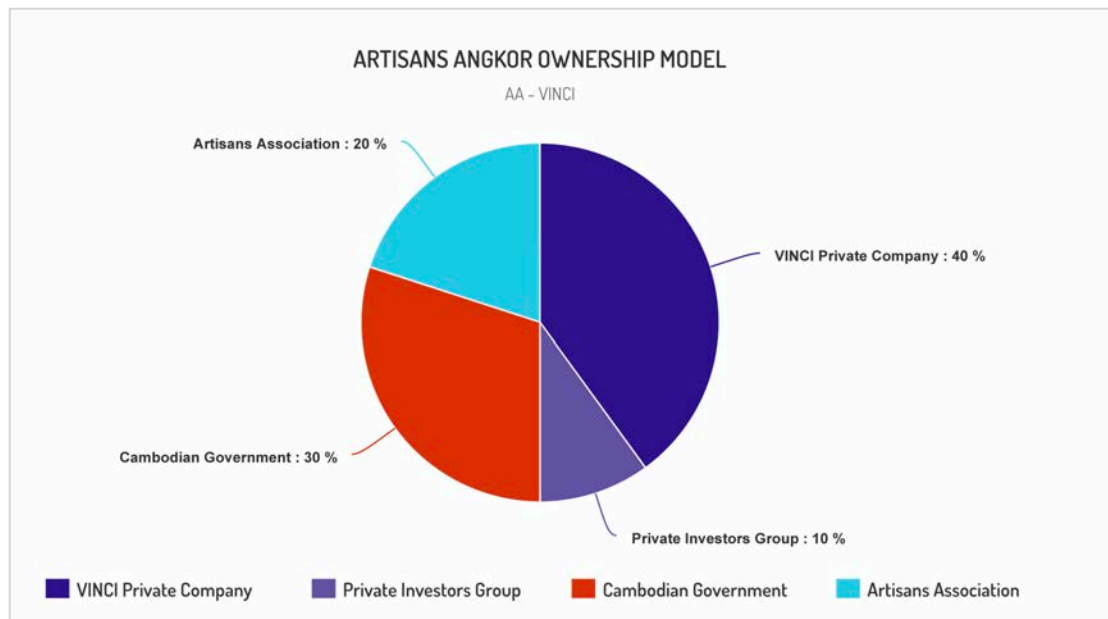


Fig.56 Artisans Angkor's ownership model since 2003. Author's image.

Looking at AA's leadership shows frictions between a Cambodian brand identity, a large Cambodian workforce, and a French monopole in terms of management and design strategies. Since its foundation, AA has been supervised by a French CEO designated by VINCI, mainly employing French staff in managing positions.⁴⁵⁸ The same dual situation exists in the design leadership strategy. Designing with a foreign clientele in mind has been the prerogative of Western designers and Cambodians trained in Europe, while production

⁴⁵⁷ Artisans Angkor, *Beliefs: Our Story in Brief*; Statistics on employment in Siem Reap are not available, but geographer Robin Biddulph has confirmed the information. Robin Biddulph, 'Social Enterprise and Inclusive Tourism. Five Cases in Siem Reap, Cambodia,' *Tourism Geographies*, 20, no. 4 (2018): 615.

⁴⁵⁸ Cambodianess, *Workplace: Cambodia*, January 30, 2020
<https://cambodianess.com/article/bridging-cross-cultural-gaps-in-the-workplace-cambodia>
 [Accessed 10 May 2021]

has remained in Cambodian hands. This division of labour has prevailed in foreign-owned craft companies established in non-Western countries. Anthropologists Susan Falls and Jessica Smith have defined this type of project as a Transnational Artisan Partnership, a structure combining philanthropic and artisanal practices implementing 'working relationships between Third-World artisans, skilled in crafts, and organisations (either for-profit or not-for-profit) that are funded, managed and/or run by First-World designers, activists or entrepreneurs'.⁴⁵⁹ Citing the example of the way Indian crafts responded to capitalism in the 1990s, Ory DeNicola and Wilkinson-Weber have noted the emergence of designers in the craft sector as mediating figures 'rhetorically position[ed] on the fulcrum of a compelling opposition between innovation and tradition'.⁴⁶⁰ As AA moved progressively towards the social enterprise model, the company employed in-house designers trained in French design schools, as well as fashion and textile design consultants, to design marketable craft products. The first designer employed to develop handicrafts was Lim Muy Theam, a Cambodian artist trained in interior design and painting in Paris, who was AA's artistic director from 1997 until 2010. During this time, Eric Raisina, a French-Malagasy fashion designer who had also trained in Paris, was commissioned to create the silk clothing collection. Since 2010, craftsmen from all sectors, except silk, have responded to design guidelines implemented by Svay Sareth, Cambodian artistic director and renowned contemporary artist, born in 1972 and trained in a French fine arts school.⁴⁶¹ For silk, the successive designers have worked closely with Pav Eang Khoing, Silk Director, since 2003.⁴⁶² Originally from Kampong Cham, Pav Eang Khoing was hired as an assistant in silk production in 2001 and pursued a Master's degree in management in 2005 while

⁴⁵⁹ Susan Falls and Jessica Smith, 'Branding Authenticity: Cambodian Ikat in Transnational Artisan Partnerships (TAPS),' *Journal of Design History*, 24, no. 3 (2011): 1.

⁴⁶⁰ Wilkinson-Weber, and Ory DeNicola, *Critical Craft: Technology, Globalization, and Capitalism*, 82.

⁴⁶¹ Artisans Angkor, *Our Artistic Team: We Care for Beauty*, <http://www.artisansdangkor.com/beauty-23-114-our-artistic-team.php> [Accessed 30 October 2017]

⁴⁶² Disclaimer: I worked as a textile and fashion consultant for AA in 2012, developing a capsule collection 'In the Mood for Boheme' consisting of handmade silk womenswear, menswear and childrenswear products.

working at AA. He has overseen creative collaborations, managing the production chain built around a large network of in-house artisans, about two hundred and thirty workers in three weaving and two sewing workshops at the company's silk farm in Puok, with ten people tying material for ikat patterns and seventeen people in charge of dyeing. He has also coordinated ten people in raising silkworms and preparing the cocoons, and twelve more in spinning thread.⁴⁶³ The Silk Director also works closely with a team of weavers to create new textile designs. He is shown here with a woman from the tying team at AA's silk farm, checking the quality of her work [Fig.57]. In interview, Pav Eang Khoing shared his ambition to achieve the company's mission to provide work for the largest number of people by expanding productivity and sales.⁴⁶⁴ His demeanour here expresses the seriousness of managing large clusters of artisans while dealing with production imperatives for efficiency and innovation. His stance as he looks over a seated weaver tying weft ikat threads also illustrates the dynamics established between Pav Eang Khoing and his team. His position of authority reflects normative ideas of social hierarchies in Cambodia, which are still prevalent in daily etiquette. Buddhist scholar Erik Davis has stated that 'hierarchical and dependent relations seem necessary in Cambodia to get almost anything accomplished'.⁴⁶⁵ This requires children to respect their parents and students to respect their teachers, and applies to work relationships as well, between a manager and his employee.

⁴⁶³ Pav Eang Khoing, informal interview with Magali An Berthon, April 2, 2018, Siem Reap, Cambodia.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁵ Erik W. Davis, 'Imaginary conversations with mothers about death,' in *At the Edge of the Forest, Essays on Cambodia, History, and Narrative in Honor of David Chandler*, ed. Anne Ruth Hansen and Judy Ledgerwood (Ithaca, NY: Southeast Asia Program Cornell University, 2008), 226.



Fig.57 Pav Eang Khoing checking the work of a weaver tying an ikat pattern at AA workshop, Puok, Siem Reap, Cambodia, April 2, 2018. Author's photograph.

The French colonial era of the 1920s and post-conflict humanitarian development in the 1990s demonstrate fundamentally different contexts. There is, however, a continuity in certain strategies which indicates how neocolonial models are still at play in the silk sector; especially amongst French policymakers. Neocolonialism is 'widely used to refer to a form of global power in which transnational corporations and global and multilateral institutions combine to perpetuate colonial forms of exploitation of developing countries'.⁴⁶⁶ In the silk sector, it may refer to schemes indirectly maintaining the cultural and economic influence over local production via the monopole of foreign donors, the application of development policies and marketing strategies, and the imposing of Western taste and designs. Fashion scholar Katalina Medvedev also identifies a form of 'benevolent, faith-based neocolonialism'

⁴⁶⁶ Sandra Halperin, 'Neocolonialism,' *Encyclopedia Britannica*, May 6, 2020. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/neocolonialism> [Accessed 10 May 2020]

promoted by Western Christian craft organisations such as Stung Treng Women's Development Center and Rajana Association, 'link[ing] to moral and cultural agendas rather than economic or structural ones'.⁴⁶⁷ In its ties with VINCI as the major shareholder and the reliance on French-trained in-house designers, AA's structure and positioning show some aspects of French paternalism.

Falls and Smith identified Georges Groslier's initiative of the School of Cambodian Arts in the 1920s as the primary example of a Transnational Artisan Partnership tying the revitalisation of endangered crafts to the reclaiming of Cambodia's Angkorian splendour. Similarly, in a 1995 report, Maisonnave-Couterou praised the Siem Reap area as 'a major site of Khmer culture, a legacy of the creative artistic effort of the Cambodian Kings and their people'.⁴⁶⁸ This justified the localisation of the Chantiers Ecoles in Siem Reap, not far from Angkor Wat as a marketing strategy and positioning focused on tourist-based consumers coming to visit the temples. AA also announces its linkage with Cambodia's history by stating 'Proud of our Angkorian heritage' on its website.⁴⁶⁹

AA's position as a Cambodian brand appears uncontested; the Cambodian press praise its success and recognise its key role in the socio-economic development of the Siem Reap area. In 2019, *Khmer Times* journalist Taing Rinith describes AA as 'the outstanding guardian of traditional arts and crafts'.⁴⁷⁰ Positioned as the champion of 'traditional Cambodian crafts', the social enterprise has claimed in its recent communication that it is 'way more than just a

⁴⁶⁷ Medvedev, 'Cambodian Fashion NGOs: Are They Doing Good?', 149.

⁴⁶⁸ Maisonnave-Couterou and Biache, *Les chantiers écoles de formation professionnelle*, 6.

⁴⁶⁹ Artisans Angkor, *Beliefs: Mission Statement* <http://www.artisansdangkor.com/beliefs-mission-statement.php> [Accessed May 2, 2021]

⁴⁷⁰ Taing Rinith, 'Artisans Angkor the Outstanding Guardian of Traditional Art & Craft', *Khmer Times*, September 3, 2019, <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50639644/artisans-angkor-the-outstanding-guardian-of-traditional-art-craft/> [Accessed May 2, 2020]

tourist attraction or souvenir shop', adding it 'should not keep Cambodian history and traditions as a simple 'background' to sell products'.⁴⁷¹

To describe the commodification of cultural artefacts as expressions of colonial nostalgia, Edwards used the qualifier 'memorabilia', 'glamorised' versions offering a 're-evocation of the context that produced such images' which are 'excised from their historical context'.⁴⁷² Merriam-Webster defines memorabilia as 'things that are remarkable and worthy of remembrance' and 'things that stir recollection or are valued or collected for their association with a particular field or interest'.⁴⁷³ In the early twentieth century, colonial memorabilia referred to artefacts collected in the colonies, relics, and trophies transferred outside their original context to a personal collection or museum, or to the homes of a metropolitan clientele.

It could be proposed that AA's products are modern forms of this kind of memorabilia evoking the Angkorian heritage. Falls and Smith have indeed considered that Transnational Artisan Partnerships appeal to Western aesthetic sensibilities while also relying on 'the promotion of an Orientalist logic'.⁴⁷⁴ AA channels discourses of authenticity, embracing elements that clearly refer to antique Cambodian aesthetics in the designs, while mediating Cambodian culture to a foreign clientele. On the company's website, handicrafts are directly associated to references to Cambodian culture and traditions. In this quote below, the term 'traditional' appears twice and the term 'crafts' in the form of crafts, craftsmen and craftsmanship appears three times:

'We are devoted to maintain Arts & Crafts in Cambodia, which is why all our products were handmade in traditional Cambodian workshops by craftsmen and women who master their ancestors' craftsmanship skills. Our designs are always

⁴⁷¹ Artisans Angkor, *What Being a Social Enterprise Really Means*, <http://dev.artisansdangkor.com/beliefs-2-79-what-being-a-social-enterprise-really-means.php> [Accessed May 2, 2020]

⁴⁷² Edwards, *Cambodge: The Cultivation of a Nation, 1860-1945*, 10.

⁴⁷³ 'Memorabilia', *Merriam-Webster*, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/memorabilia> [Accessed May 2, 2020]

⁴⁷⁴ Falls and Smith, 'Branding Authenticity: Cambodian Ikat in Transnational Artisan Partnerships,' 2.

deeply related to Cambodian culture (traditional symbols, patterns and landscapes)'.
⁴⁷⁵

The self-declared Cambodianness of AA's products is apparent in portable small-scale carved stone and wooden reproductions of the Angkor Wat statues, scenes of the Reamker on lacquered panels, and shawls and *pidan* in polychromic ikat with a 'truly Cambodian' touch.⁴⁷⁶ Dealing with 'novel situations by referencing old situations', in Hobsbawm's words, the brand has produced Cambodian crafts connecting to the collective imaginary of the Khmer empire.⁴⁷⁷ The literal mimicry of Angkorian art is evident in the craft company's souvenirs reproducing King Jayavarman VII's head, a *devata*, a lion statue from Bakheng temple and jewellery inspired by different Angkorian temple bas-reliefs and statues held at the NMC. This reference to the Khmer Empire is more striking in carved products than in the silk woven products, as seen in this shop display [Fig.58].

In 2017 AA was selling a large range of textile products, including accessories, womenswear and menswear, woven and printed home textiles, pillows and throws, but also a wide selection of home decor gifts, all in saturated tones. They were marketed as high-quality souvenirs targeting urban upper-middle-class Cambodians, Cambodians from the diaspora, and international clients outside the tourist market. Silk accessories range from solid-coloured silk chiffon scarves at 15 USD to complex designs of handwoven shawls in polychromic ikat for 1500 USD. The pieces are labelled with names evocative of the main Cambodian weaving techniques, such as *hol*, *rbauk* for damask, and *sarabap* for brocade, as described in Appendix A3.

⁴⁷⁵ Artisans Angkor, Traditions : Our Great Legacy, <http://www.artisansdangkor.com/traditions-our-great-legacy> [Accessed May 2, 2021]

⁴⁷⁶ Artisans Angkor, *Royal Fans and Umbrellas*, <http://dev.artisansdangkor.com/traditions-21-106-royal-fans-umbrellas.php> [Accessed May 2, 2020] ; The Reamker is an epic tale adapted from the Hinduist Ramayana, which was depicted on the walls of Angkor Wat temple and portrayed in Khmer dance.

⁴⁷⁷ Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, 2, 7.

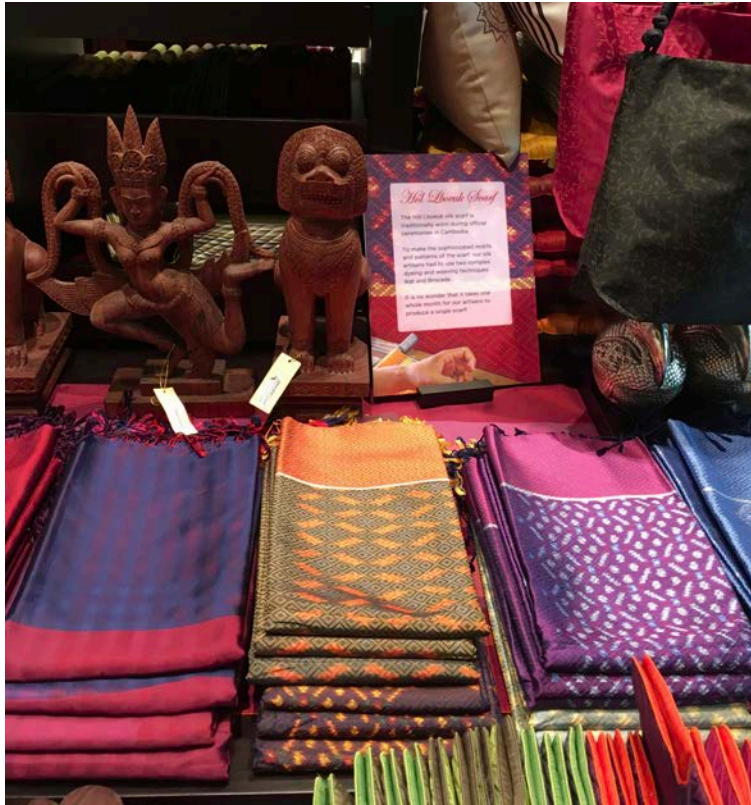


Fig.58 Lion statue based on Bakheng temple sculpture and hol rbauk silk products on display at the Artisan Angkor shop, Siem Reap, Cambodia, December 25, 2016. Author's photograph.

Silk, and Chinese silk in particular, has been the epitome of *oriental* sophistication from a Western perspective, with a perceived preciousness associated with luxury and femininity.⁴⁷⁸ Chapter One highlighted how Cambodian silks have been traded since at least the seventeenth century and repurposed as national crafts and prized commodities under the French in the 1920s. In the twenty-first century, AA still plays into this imaginary to sell high-end Cambodian handwoven silk textiles for tourists.⁴⁷⁹ Customers are offered complimentary guided tourist tours at the AA silk farm in Puok village to see demonstrations of silkworms breeding, silk yarn reeling and spinning, ikat tying, dyeing and weaving [Fig.59]. The tour sells the concepts of authenticity and quality through the curated

⁴⁷⁸ Sandra Niessen, Carla Jones and Ann Marie Leshkovich, *Re-orienting Fashion: The Globalization of Asian Dress* (Oxford: Berg, 2005), 10.

⁴⁷⁹ Artisans Angkor, *History of Silk in Cambodia*, <http://dev.artisansdangkor.com/people-16-111-history-of-silk-in-cambodia.php> [Accessed May 2, 2020]

performance of handmade processes, showing artisans at work and displaying the processing of indigenous golden silk and natural dyes.⁴⁸⁰

It should be noted that, although all the textile products are handwoven, the dyes are chemical and fibre is of mixed origin, from Cambodia and other Asian countries. Only 10 per cent of the pieces are made of Cambodian golden silk produced by AA and purchased from silk farmers in the Phnom Srok area. The company sources 80 per cent of its silk of industrial white quality from a specific supplier in China; the remaining 10 per cent is raw silk from Vietnam.⁴⁸¹



Fig.59 Artisans Angkor guide presenting the tying of hol at the Silk Farm, Puok, Siem Reap, Cambodia, December 25, 2016. Author's photograph.

⁴⁸⁰ Magali An Berthon, 'Cultural Authenticity,' *Bloomsbury Encyclopedia of Design*, Vol. I, 2016, <https://www.bloomsburydesignlibrary.com/encyclopedia-chapter?docid=b-9781472596178&tocid=b-9781472596178-BED-ONLINE-021&st=> [Accessed May 2, 2020]; See also Laurel Kendall, 'Intangible Traces and Material Things: The Performance of Heritage Handicraft,' *Acta Koreana*, 17, no. 2 (December 2014): 539.

⁴⁸¹ Pav Eang Khoing, interview with Magali An Berthon.

Examination of AA's history, production and distribution, in conjunction with product designs, raw material sourcing and the company's communication, has revealed the multi-layered picture of the leading craft company in Cambodia. AA's strategy indicates the power relations between international funding, French interests and Cambodian governmental support in the silk network. In two decades, AA has transitioned from a vocational training programme under French patronage into a contemporary model of social enterprise, integrating foreign support while cultivating its Cambodian roots. Through a complex web of institutional and commercial connections, AA has also relied on a large workforce to increase its production, departing from the common model of silk weaving as a cottage industry led by individuals or community workshops. AA's design and marketing strategies reveal that it is anchored in orientalist discourses of tradition tying contemporary craft products to the Khmer empire era.

The Institute for Khmer Traditional Textiles (IKTT): authority under Japanese patronage

Compared to AA, the IKTT project has remained smaller in scale while similarly dealing with multiple national and international actors since its foundation in 1996, especially via the personality, history and leadership of its founder, Kikuo Morimoto. The ways in which Morimoto negotiated multiple influences, especially his Japanese upbringing, also matter in the shaping of his silk project and offers another model of Transnational Artisan Partnership. Exploring these connections opens new perspectives on the silkscape relating to networks, foreign influence, ownership and authenticity. This section combines ANT with ethnographic research methods to explore the range of sources associated with IKTT storytelling, including the founder's memoirs and press articles. In the field, I conducted two site visits in December 2016, one to the IKTT shop in Siem Reap and one to the workshop, where I interviewed weavers and talked with Morimoto before his death in

July 2017. In addition to these periods of PhD research, I had met Morimoto earlier in 2012 for a documentary film project I was working on, and which provided additional material for me to reflect on.⁴⁸²

Born in 1948 in Kyoto, Japan, Kikuo Morimoto trained for five years as a *yuzen* kimono textile artist, painting on silk fabric using resist-dye methods, an art he continued in his later years. He is pictured here showing one of his pieces at his house in Chot Sam village [Fig.60]. The strongest influence in terms of craft ideology, economic strategy and network of influence in the construction of his project was unequivocally Japan. In his memoirs, he stated: 'I was educated in the textile world in Kyoto'.⁴⁸³ Kyoto's flourishing craft culture remained an essential model for Morimoto.⁴⁸⁴



Fig.60 Kikuo Morimoto in his house showing one of his yuzen silks, Chot Sam village, Cambodia, 2012. Author's photograph for Tissus & Artisans du Monde project.

⁴⁸² Magali An Berthon, 'Kikuo Morimoto, l'âme de l'ikat,' *Tissus & Artisans du Monde*, 2012, [Accessed May 1, 2020]

⁴⁸³ Kikuo Morimoto, *Bayon Moon: Reviving Cambodia's Textile Traditions* (Siem Reap: Institute of Khmer Traditional Textiles, 2008), 43.

⁴⁸⁴ See Tamara Hareven's historical description of Nishijin silk weaving guilds in Kyoto: Tamara Hareven, *The Silk Weavers of Kyoto: Family and Work in a Changing Traditional Industry* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002) 25-32.

A textile artist and entrepreneur, he initially settled in Thailand in 1983, where he worked as a volunteer in refugee camps at the north-east Thai border, training Lao weavers in natural dyes.⁴⁸⁵ He was a relief worker for the Japan International Volunteer Center, an NGO established in 1980 that sent Japanese volunteers to Thailand to assist displaced people in the region.⁴⁸⁶ This photograph shows Morimoto in the foreground working for the Japan International Volunteer Center on a well-drilling project in Aranyaprathet in Eastern Thailand, on the Cambodian border, in 1983 [Fig.61].

In 1977, Japanese prime Minister Takeo Fukuda had laid the foundations of Japan's active foreign policy, later known as the Fukuda doctrine, while on tour with member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.⁴⁸⁷ Japan pledged to support cooperation and peace in Southeast Asia, in the context of the Cambodia-Vietnam conflict. As a result, from the early 1980s, Japanese NGOs prioritised 'the humanitarian aspect, the promotion of repatriation of refugees, and assistance for the reconstruction of Cambodia'.⁴⁸⁸

When he was in Thailand, Morimoto visited the Northeastern province of Surin, in Isaan, at the Cambodian border, where he met Khmer communities and started collaborating with weavers. After the camps closed, he stayed in Thailand and in 1988 opened a shop, Bai Mai, in Bangkok, where he sold ethnic Khmer silk products from Surin. In 1990, he produced a report on natural dyes in Northeast Thailand for The Textile Museum in Washington, DC and taught from 1992 to 1995 at the King Mongkut Institute of Technology, Bangkok.⁴⁸⁹ From the silk report commissioned by UNESCO Cambodia

⁴⁸⁵ Louise Cort and Leedom Lefferts, 'Foreword,' in *Bayon Moon*, Kikuo Morimoto (Siem Reap: Institute of Khmer Traditional Textiles, 2008), x.

⁴⁸⁶ Japan International Volunteer Center, *About JVC*, <https://www.ngo-jvc.net/en/about-jvc/> [Accessed May 3, 2020]

⁴⁸⁷ Sueo Sudo, 'Manila Speech, 18 August 1977,' Appendices, in *The Fukuda Doctrine and ASEAN: New Dimensions in Japanese Foreign Policy* (ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 1992), 241–47.

⁴⁸⁸ Deth Sok, Udom Sun, and Serkan Bulut, eds. *Cambodia's Foreign Relations in Regional and Global Contexts* (Sankt Augustin: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2018), 189.

⁴⁸⁹ This information comes from Morimoto's biography on the IKTT former website Esprit Libre IKTT, which is still active. It has been reused verbatim in multiple articles, conference bios, and on websites. See IKTT, *Morimoto, Kikuo Biography*, April 22, 2004 [Accessed May 2, 2020]

discussed in Chapter One, Morimoto was inspired to start his own venture, a local NGO reviving sericulture, weaving and natural dyes. He instituted a silkworm breeding project in Takaor village, in Kampot province, in 1995 and then opened a workshop, the Institute for Khmer Traditional Textiles (IKTT), in Phnom Penh in January 1996, receiving support from the Toyota Foundation to conduct more field research.⁴⁹⁰

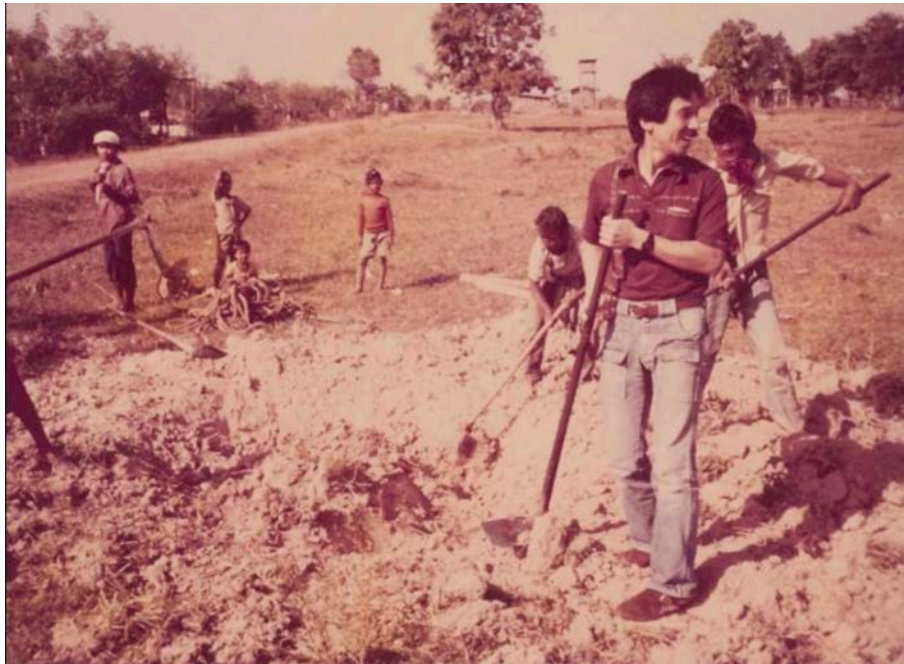


Fig.61 Kikuo Morimoto (foreground) working on a well-drilling project at Aranyaprathet in eastern Thailand, 1983. Photograph courtesy of IKTT.

Morimoto recruited five experienced female master weavers, some of whom he had met through the UNESCO survey project, who agreed to communicate their skills to a new generation of weavers.⁴⁹¹ Morimoto referred to these women as ‘the silk grandmothers’,

⁴⁹⁰ Molly Harbarger, ‘Silk Dyer Kikuo Morimoto, Resurrecting a Cultural Ecology,’ *Kyoto Journal* 73 (2009) <https://kyotojournal.org/wp-content/uploads/newwebimages/backissues/73/Morimoto.html> [Accessed April 20, 2020]

⁴⁹¹ Numbers have been inconsistent from one source to another, IKTT website mentions five weavers in 1996, while press articles speak of a dozen weavers.

elevating these elders to the rank of master weavers.⁴⁹² Of a woman he met in 1995 he wrote: 'she may be the best textile artist in all Cambodia– indeed, of the level of deserving to be called Living National Treasure'.⁴⁹³ In Japan, the highest attainment of craft mastery is the title of 'Living National Treasure' (*Ningen Kokuho*), also known as the 'Holder of Important Intangible Cultural Properties', which recognises individuals' mastery of artisanal and artistic practices at the highest level.⁴⁹⁴ Art historian Michele Bambling has contended that, despite its title, this governmental programme, established in 1950, is not intended to venerate artists but to ensure the transmission of skills of high artistic quality.⁴⁹⁵

Morimoto's acknowledgement of the grandmothers' value reflects his Japanese cultural background and his interest in preserving craft skills.

To invite them to work with him, Morimoto recalled: 'I brought these old pieces of silk fabric and asked the grandmothers if they could make something similar. I told them I would pay three or four times what the middleman paid and to please do the best work they could'.⁴⁹⁶ Offering much higher wages, he also convinced them by enrolling their families, engaging them, too, in keeping the practice alive. Some of these 'grandmother' weavers came from Takeo province and were working in their home villages. For example, Chan Sot, quoted in *PBS*, valued the chance to work with silk and brought her daughter along to the IKTT workshop.⁴⁹⁷ Om Chea, who appeared in a documentary film featuring the awardees of the Rolex Awards for Enterprise in 2004, explained how she followed Morimoto with a mission

⁴⁹² Emily Taguchi, 'Rough Cut: Cambodia: The Silk Grandmothers, Interview with Kikuo Morimoto,' *PBS*, 2007. https://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/rough/2007/06/cambodia_the_si.html [Accessed March 2, 2020]

⁴⁹³ Morimoto, *Bayon Moon*, 47.

⁴⁹⁴ Michele Bambling, 'Japan's Living National Treasures Program: The Paradox of Remembering,' Perspectives on Social Memory in Japan, eds. Tsu Yun Hui, Jan van Bremen, and Eyal Ben-Ari (Kent, UK: Global Oriental), 149. ; Kida Takuya, Cynthia Takayama (trans.), 'Traditional Art Crafts (Dentō Kōgei),' in Japan: From Reproductions to Original Works,' *The Journal of Modern Craft* 3, no. 1, (2010): 19-35, 21.

⁴⁹⁵ Bambling, 'Japan's Living National Treasures Program: The Paradox of Remembering,' 149.

⁴⁹⁶ Morimoto, *Bayon Moon*, 47.

⁴⁹⁷ Taguchi, 'Rough Cut: Cambodia: The Silk Grandmothers,' *PBS*, June 28, 2007.

to pass on her knowledge of *hol* to weaving apprentices [Fig.62].⁴⁹⁸ Morimoto also enrolled silk farmers from Phnom Srok and Kampot, such as Pan Dam, whom I met in December 2016 at IKTT. Her whole family were working in sericulture in Kampot when Morimoto visited to buy silkworms in the late 1990s, which is where he recruited Pan Dam to come and work in Siem Reap. As a result, these weavers and silk producers left their hometown and did not continue their practice in a traditional set up. Internal migration is a common phenomenon in Cambodia for men and women. In 2013 58.4 per cent of migration was rural-rural movements, 24.5 per cent rural-urban and 12 per cent urban-urban.⁴⁹⁹ Although Morimoto provided these silk producers the means to continue their practice and the possibility to increase their livelihood, one could argue that their move uprooted their practice and deprived their hometown community from their skills and experience.

⁴⁹⁸ *RAE 2004:11th Rolex Awards for Enterprise - 2004 Laureates* long form, produced by National Geographic Channel, distributed by TVE Asia Pacific, 2004.

⁴⁹⁹ Unesco Bangkok, *Overview of Internal Migration in Cambodia* (Bangkok: Unesco, 2018), 3-4. <http://bangkok.unesco.org/content/policy-briefs-internal-migration-southeast-asia> [Accessed May 2, 2021]



Fig.62 Om Chea, weaver, right of picture, in still from RAE 2004:11th Rolex Awards for Enterprise, National Geographic Channel, distributed by TVE Asia Pacific, 2004.

In 2000, Morimoto relocated his workshop to the tourist town of Siem Reap, because of the high rents in Phnom Penh. He moved IKTT to a typical Cambodian wooden house on stilts with a limited staff and two looms.⁵⁰⁰ In 2002, Morimoto bought five hectares of wasteland near Chot Sam village in the north of Siem Reap to establish the Wisdom from the Forest village project, a self-sufficient facility guaranteeing control over the land and the ‘whole process’ of silk-making, from mulberry tree plantations and silkworm rearing to spinning, dyeing, and weaving.⁵⁰¹ IKTT ambitiously claimed to restore ‘the natural environment with people’s life together’ with a specific interest in producing natural resources of native golden silk, cotton, indigo trees and natural dye plants.⁵⁰² In a 2002 photograph Morimoto poses with a team of specialists in charge of demining the land, a common practice that resulted from the US mass bombing of the region during the Vietnam

⁵⁰⁰ Morimoto, *Bayon Moon*, 91.

⁵⁰¹ Berthon, ‘Kikuo Morimoto, l’ame de l’ikat.’

⁵⁰² IKTT, *Information: Action Plan 2003-7 - Project for Wisdom from Forest*, April 27, 2004 <http://iktt.esprit-libre.org/en/2004/04/action-plan-20037.html> [Accessed March 13, 2020]

War, to clear it for construction and facilitate reforestation [Fig.63]. This underlines how the village was built from scratch under Morimoto's supervision, modelled on Takaor village in Kampot, with a majority of workers also coming from this region, located 420 kilometres from Siem Reap.⁵⁰³ The composition of the IKTT team of makers, created through internal migration, challenges the idea of a settlement in an authentic village already populated by local skilled weavers. It underlines the inherent artificiality in the project's origins and the contingent nature of reproducing the conditions of traditional Cambodian weaving.



Fig.63 Kikuo Morimoto, second right, with a team of specialists in charge of demining the land for the future 'Wisdom from the Forest' site near Chot Sam, Siem Reap, 2002. Courtesy of IKTT.

⁵⁰³ Morimoto, *Bayon Moon*, 77; IKTT, *Action Plan 2003*, <http://iktt.esprit-libre.org/en/2004/04/action-plan-20037.html> [Accessed May 19, 2020] ; see map Figure 53 to locate Takaor village.

During this period of construction at Chot Sam, production continued in the Siem Reap workshop. By 2016, when I visited, the village had expanded and now occupied 23 hectares. Morimoto, who lived on site with the weavers' families, told me the organisation was financially stable, with two weaving workshops and two shops, in Siem Reap city and Chot Sam village, as shown on this map given to tourists at the Siem Reap shop, with directions to the village [Fig.64].⁵⁰⁴

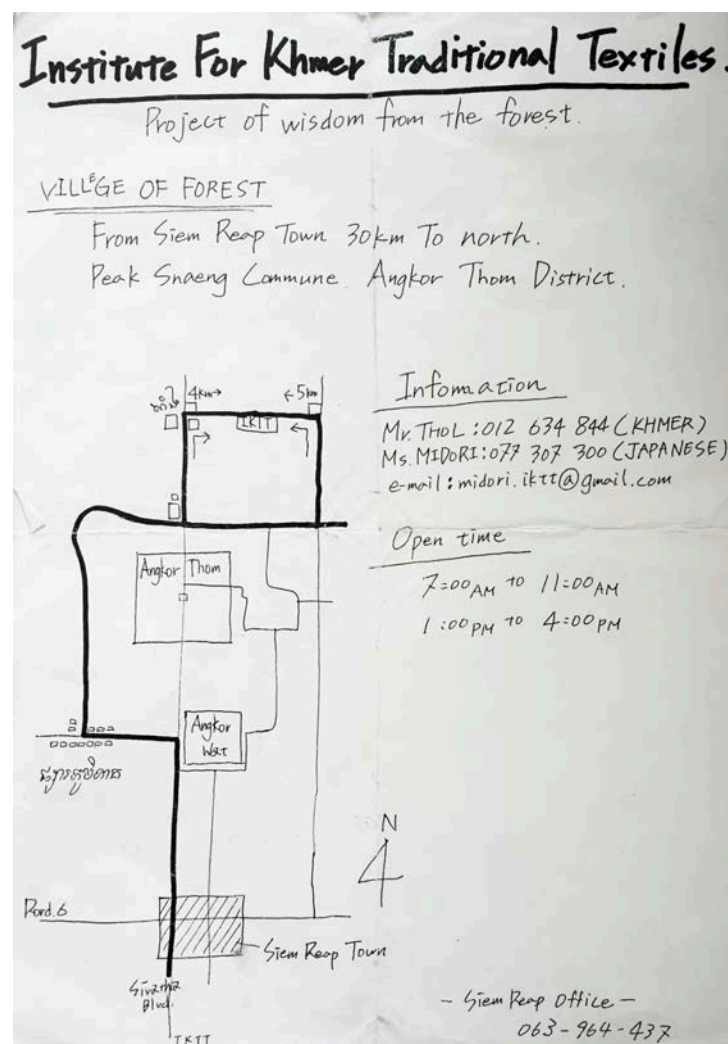


Fig.64 Map showing directions to access to the 'Wisdom from the Forest' project from the shop in Siem Reap, collected in 2016: IKTT.

⁵⁰⁴ Kikuo Morimoto, Informal interview with Magali An Berthon, December 2016, Chot Sam, Siem Reap.

Data on the structural, financial and economic setting of the IKTT craft organisation is conspicuous by its absence. There is no published information about the precise business model under which Morimoto established IKTT, nor how he managed to fund the project's first years. Morimoto communicated extensively with the foreign press, especially Japanese and American reporters, and with the Cambodian press for an English-speaking audience. His memoirs also communicate his philosophy about working with the weavers, the artistry of *sampot hol*, and the revival of indigenous silk and natural dyes.⁵⁰⁵ However, the IKTT lacks the transparent communication inherent to NGOs backed by donors or social enterprises. Besides presenting itself as a non-political and non-profit Cambodian organisation in its early communication and first website, it did not specify its status, nor did it publish annual reports about its revenue and funding schemes.⁵⁰⁶

It is possible to identify IKTT's chronology, early development and future goals from 2003 to 2007 from a detailed action plan for the Wisdom from the Forest village provided on IKTT 's former website, which also states that 'IKTT [did] not have big donors' and relied on individual donations and sales.⁵⁰⁷ The major form of sponsorship that was evidently received by IKTT was the prestigious 11th Rolex Award, receiving a 100,000 USD prize in 2004, which also marked a turning point in IKTT's international recognition, and would certainly have enabled further expansion.⁵⁰⁸ According to Morimoto, annual sales reached an average of 300,000 USD in 2007 and the benefits were said to be shared among the farmers and weavers, giving no further information about the distribution of salaries.⁵⁰⁹ In a

⁵⁰⁵ Morimoto, *Bayon Moon*, 102.

⁵⁰⁶ IKTT, *About Institute for Khmer Traditional Textiles (IKTT)*, http://iktt.esprit-libre.org/en/aboutus_top.shtml [Accessed March 12, 2020] ; Harbarger, 'Silk Dyer Kikuo Morimoto, Resurrecting a Cultural Ecology.'

⁵⁰⁷ IKTT, *Information: Action Plan 2003-7 - Project for Wisdom from the Forest (PWF)*.

⁵⁰⁸ Rolex Awards, *Kikuo Morimoto: A Village Devoted to Silk*, 2004, <https://www.rolex.org/rolex-awards/cultural-heritage/kikuo-morimoto> [Accessed March 12, 2019]

⁵⁰⁹ Jeff Kingston, 'Japan's Savior of Khmer Silk,' *Japan Times*, Nov 11, 2007, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/life/2007/11/11/travel/japans-savior-of-khmer-silk/#.XreVoC97TOQ> [Accessed March 20, 2020]

2012 interview for the website *The Entrepreneurs' Ship*, Morimoto spoke of the struggle to fund IKTT, and hinted at his method for fundraising:

'Basically, I thought it could operate without relying on donations. However, since I was never financially blessed, it was a struggle to raise the funds we had to some degree. We came out of the struggle from temporarily borrowing funds, from relatives and friends. Other ways to raise capital is to borrow the capital necessary for the development of the business through authorities.'⁵¹⁰

This quote demonstrates a flexible and pragmatic approach to funding, without providing a clear outline of the supporting partners forming IKTT's network.

Similar challenges are encountered in assessing the number of textile artisans working for the organisation since it started. The number of artisans is usually a clear indicator of a company's scale, but also of the positive impact of non-profit projects pursuing social, cultural, and economic development. Here is a review of a chronology of conflicting key data on the workforce that was found. According to the Rolex Awards for Enterprise, in 2002 Morimoto brought twenty-three weavers with their families to the Wisdom from the Forest village.⁵¹¹ In contrast, the IKTT action plan 2003-2007 stated that there were three hundred trainees working for the organisation in 2003, divided in three sections: research, silk textile production, and sales.⁵¹² The employment growth appeared exponential, since by 2009 an article in the *Kyoto Journal* indicated a higher number of five hundred workers were divided into twenty-four groups of different specialisms, which included a carpentry group making looms and tools.⁵¹³ When I interviewed Morimoto in 2012, he said that forty families lived in the village, including fifty children who attended the local school founded by IKTT.⁵¹⁴ When I visited again in December 2016, the guide, Asya, said there were about

⁵¹⁰ 'Social Entrepreneurs @ Work: Kikuo Morimoto (Institute for Khmer Traditional Textiles)', *The Entrepreneurs' Ship*, October 17, 2012, <http://www.entrepreneurship.org/blog/social-entrepreneurs-work-kikuo-morimoto-institute-for-khmer-traditional-textiles> [Accessed May 3, 2020]; Morimoto, *Bayon Moon*, 105.

⁵¹¹ Rolex Awards for Enterprise, *Project Update: The Long Road to Silk Revival*, Kikuo Morimoto, 2004 Laureate, May 18, 2016.

⁵¹² IKTT, *Information: Action Plan 2003-7 - Project for Wisdom from the Forest (PWF)*.

⁵¹³ Harbarger, 'Silk Dyer Kikuo Morimoto, Resurrecting a Cultural Ecology.'

⁵¹⁴ Berthon, 'Kikuo Morimoto, l'âme de l'ikat.'

seventy women working on site and in surrounding villages.⁵¹⁵ Finally, the IKTT website spoke of ‘two-hundred and fifty people, of which about a hundred have been with the company for ten years’.⁵¹⁶ These ebbs and flows in the workforce and the lack of transparency on employment conditions may reflect struggles to maintain sales, as well as a scaling down in the most recent years.

As a whole, this lack of factual data corroborates the free form of the original project and the loose policies common to numerous non-profit organisations which developed organically in the 1990s. This may also reflect life in rural Cambodia, where family members work together and all benefit informally from the *boklak angkar* (NGO), reproducing the *khsae* social structure. IKTT has favoured instead a form of communication emphasising storytelling, centred around the personality of its founder, under the objectives to continue a rigorous and ‘authentic’ artisanal production process in terms of materials, dyes, and skills.

As with AA, the IKTT has therefore strategised the ‘heritagising’ of Cambodian silk handicrafts, thus opening up a network of international connections in the academic and museum world. The publication of Morimoto's memoirs was prefaced by scholars Leedom Lefferts (who consulted for UNESCO), and Louise Cort (Curator for Ceramics at the Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, whose museum shop has distributed IKTT's products since 2003).

Morimoto became a renowned advocate for Cambodian textiles, especially *sampot hol*. Even the organisation's abbreviated title, ‘IKTT’, when read aloud, sounds like the word ‘ikat’. He also participated in numerous talks and panels, including the 2002 Textile Society of America Symposium held in North Hampton, Massachusetts, and in the exhibition ‘Cambodia Dyeing and Weaving’ at the Fukuoka City Museum of Art in Japan in 2003. In

⁵¹⁵ Asya, informal conversation with Magali An Berthon, December 29, 2016, Chot Sam village, Siem Reap, Cambodia.

⁵¹⁶ IKTT, *Our Story* <https://www.ikttearth.org/our-story> [Accessed May 2, 2020]

December 2003 IKTT co-organised, with the Center for Khmer Studies, an American-Cambodian research institute, a groundbreaking symposium entitled “‘Hol’ the Art of Cambodian Textiles’, funded by the Japan Foundation Asia Center and Hong Kong Textile Society, in Siem Reap.⁵¹⁷ This gathering of Cambodian museum experts and international scholars exemplifies the range of partnerships established by Morimoto for IKTT, connecting the United States, Japan, and Cambodia in particular.

Inspired by both Pop art of the 1970s and animism, Morimoto consciously acknowledged that the originality of his project was a combination of ‘interlocking threads’ of influence.⁵¹⁸ A textile artist, entrepreneur and expert, Morimoto has been celebrated by the international press as the Japanese ‘saviour’ of Cambodia’s silk. A *Japan Times* article hyperbolically states: ‘he has almost single-handedly saved the silk-weaving industry of Cambodia, a tradition that was nearly lost during three decades of war and neglect’.⁵¹⁹ This discourse perpetuates a Japanese paternalist model that fails to engage with the notion that Cambodians themselves could rebuild their silk industry. Morimoto’s relentless commitment to supporting silk and providing opportunities for his workers is not in question here. However, his individual approach positioned him as a cultural broker appealing to a niche market of international customers. Morimoto’s preservationist approach, intertwining silk weaving, eco-conscious agriculture and rurality, embraces discourses combining cultural heritage, nostalgia for past traditions and natural resources.

This narrative is clearly described in Morimoto’s memoirs *Bayon Moon*:

‘The traditions of Cambodian silk weaving, on the brink of vanishing during the twenty years of civil war, have at last begun to come to life again. [...] It also amounts to the revival of human knowledge accumulated over a thousand years, and the renewal of the forest of Angkor’.⁵²⁰

⁵¹⁷ Institute for Khmer Traditional Textiles, and Center for Khmer Studies, ‘‘Hol’ the Art of Cambodian Textiles: A Blending of Two Aesthetics, the Khmer and the Cham Senses,’ *Symposium Proceedings*, December 12-13, 2003 (Siem Reap: Center for Khmer Studies, 2004).

⁵¹⁸ Morimoto, *Bayon Moon*, 86-88.

⁵¹⁹ Kingston, ‘Japan’s Savior of Khmer Silk.’

⁵²⁰ Morimoto, *Bayon Moon*, xx.

It links the revival of ancestral traditions to the danger of disappearing due decades of war with the Angkorian era as a historical backdrop. This narrative is repeated with mild variations in different sources, including in the report 'Traces of War':

'The Institute for Khmer Traditional Textiles aims to restore and perpetuate the traditional textiles industries in Cambodia, with the cooperation of old women who conserved precious traditional techniques throughout the turmoil of the country'.⁵²¹

Moreover, this vision of Cambodian silk 'traditions' meshes with Morimoto's Japanese understanding of craftsmanship rooted in the enduring Mingei (folk craft) philosophy founded in 1934 by Japanese philosopher Soetsu Yanagi and potters Hamada Shōji and Kawai Kanjirō, defining a rustic aesthetic of functional artisanal objects in natural materials. Transcending the realm of crafts, Mingei aimed to create a holistic model of maker communities 'in harmony with nature'.⁵²² As design historian Yuko Kikuchi argues, Yanagi developed an orientalist discourse validated by Occidental theories to extract the concept of Japaneseness in crafts.⁵²³

This rhetoric of nostalgia for a bucolic, pre-industrial era reemerged in Japan in the late 1990s. Anthropologist Ayami Nakatani has examined the rising consumption of Southeast Asian handicrafts as an expression of nostalgic taste for a not-too distant exoticism. Stories about the making processes and cultural entanglements of these products were heavily advertised in women's magazines.⁵²⁴ In this mindset, artisanal objects from Cambodia became the material embodiment of a relatable 'otherness' and found their authenticity in their techniques and materials as well as in 'the context of their making'.⁵²⁵

⁵²¹ Morimoto, 'Traces of War: The Revival of Silk Weaving in Cambodia,' 409.

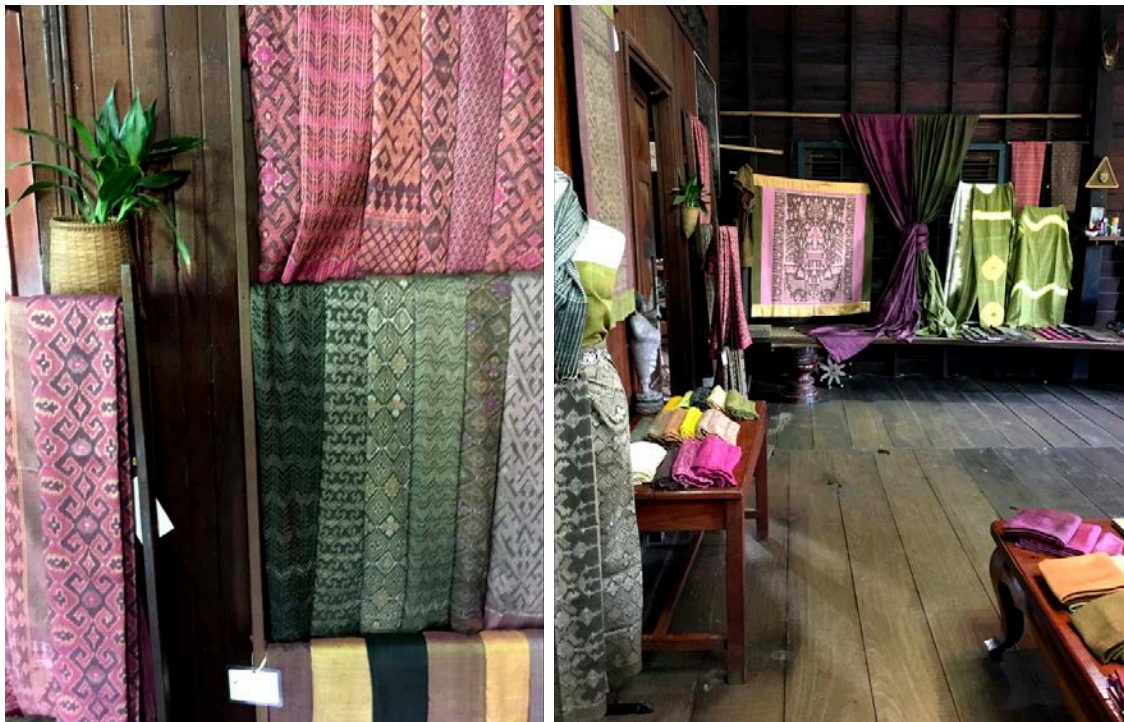
⁵²² Brian Moeran, 'Social Organization and the Mingei Movement,' *Pacific Affairs*, 54, no. 1 (Spring, 1981): 47-8. ; Soetsu Yanagi, *The Unknown Craftsman: A Japanese Insight into Beauty* (New York: Koshanda America, 1989)

⁵²³ Yuko Kikuchi, 'Hybridity and the Oriental Orientalism of Mingei Theory,' *Journal of Design History* 10, no. 4 (2007): 348.

⁵²⁴ Ayami Nakatani, 'Exoticism and Nostalgia: Consuming Southeast Asian Handicrafts in Japan,' *IAS Newsletter* 30, March 2003, 20.

⁵²⁵ *Ibid.*

In the IKTT shops the ikats are sold as either unique pieces or limited runs for between 50 USD for the smallest pieces to nearly 1000 USD for the most elaborate. These artefacts exhibit a handcrafted aesthetic, blending the subdued sheen of artisanally-produced indigenous golden silk and the nuanced touch of naturally dyed hues. They contrast with other, shinier, brighter silks on the market that use industrial silk yarn and chemical colours, seen in AA's products [Figs.65a-b, 66].



Figs.65a-b Selection of hol silks in natural dyes on display at the IKTT shop, Siem Reap, Cambodia, December 2016. Author's photographs.



Fig.66 Artisans Angkor's brightly-coloured silk products, January 2017. Author's photograph.

In terms of network, Japan has been a major outlet for the organisation. Morimoto explained in 2009 that IKTT had a branch in Tokyo consisting of buyers and a spokesman to help to 'create opportunities for selling the work, not to ask for handouts'.⁵²⁶ To attract a larger international audience, IKTT had also astutely developed two separate websites, one in English and one in Japanese [Figs.67-68]. Morimoto visited his home country every year to lecture and represent IKTT, forging long-term collaborations with private companies such as Muji to develop projects on natural indigo dyeing.⁵²⁷

Nakatani has argued that 'Asia is distanced from Japan both temporally and culturally', in the paradox that Japanese 'exoticise themselves as Asian/Oriental, in which case they are merged with the rest of Asia but, at the same time, they objectify and present

⁵²⁶ Harbarger, 'Silk Dyer Kikuo Morimoto, Resurrecting a Cultural Ecology.'

⁵²⁷ Muji, *Top Executive Face-to-Face Talk with Kikuo Morimoto* <https://ryohin-keikaku.jp/eng/csr/interview/002.html> [Accessed May 2, 2020]

the latter as their cultural other'.⁵²⁸ This could explain the rise of Japanese tourism in Cambodia. In 2015, Japanese visitors constituted the sixth most numerous group in terms of foreign arrivals: there were about 193,000 Japanese visitors, of which two thirds came for leisure.⁵²⁹ Japanese-led craft organisations such as IKTT have integrated this clientele into their network by providing a mediated experience of rural Cambodian culture. While they came to Siem Reap for the Khmer Empire splendours, a regular flow of visitors, especially Japanese, also added IKTT as a destination, even though the weaving centre lies off the usual tourist route. Groups regularly visit the Wisdom from the Forest village to experience life in a rural handcraft village, staying overnight in a simple homestay, discovering artisanal production processes and eating with the local workers. In 2016, it cost 30 USD to spend one night at the village, breakfast included, and the same price for activities such as planting a mulberry tree and attending a tie-dye workshop. Until he died, IKTT charged 200 USD for a one-hour lecture by Morimoto with a group of attendees.

In addition, Morimoto received numerous visitors to the village: textile collectors, scholars, business and institutional representatives, photographers and filmmakers, volunteers and many tourists, including myself in 2012 and again in 2016.⁵³⁰ Meeting him in 2012 was simple.⁵³¹ I contacted him by email to discuss my documentary project, to which he agreed; I met him first at IKTT's shop in Siem Reap, where he offered to take me to the Wisdom from the Forest village the following day.⁵³² A charismatic and amiable spokesperson for IKTT, Morimoto was convincing in his advocacy for a holistic approach to Cambodian golden silk, *hol* weaving, and natural dyes. His eagerness to share the values and story of IKTT, along with the discovery of the workshop spaces and working weavers,

⁵²⁸ Nakatani, 'Exoticism and Nostalgia: Consuming Southeast Asian Handicrafts in Japan,' 20.

⁵²⁹ *Phnom Penh Post*, 'Cambodia Pushes for More Japanese Tourism,' August 18, 2016, www.phnompenhpost.com/business/cambodia-pushes-more-japanese-tourism? [Accessed May 2, 2020]

⁵³⁰ See the book *Tree of Life* (2015) by Junji Naito and *Cambodian Textiles* (2018) by Utagawa Tatsuhito, the last documentary film before Morimoto's death.

⁵³¹ In 2016, he was quite frail from cancer and was only able to talk briefly.

⁵³² Berthon, 'Kikuo Morimoto, l'âme de l'ikat.'

guaranteed an engaging experience, similar to other accounts of textile colleagues in the field who had met him under similar circumstances.

Since Morimoto died in July 2017 at the age of sixty-nine, the organisation has been run by Midori Iwamoto, who was taken on in 2015 as a project manager and deputy representative dealing with daily operations. She now has the challenging task of pursuing Morimoto's legacy while continuing to engage and support the community of artisans working for IKTT. Active since 1995, the organisation's positive impact on the promotion of silk weaving has been undeniable. However, its reach in terms of production and economic impact on local populations remains difficult to assess. The next section turns to Cambodian-owned initiatives on a different scale and explores the involvement of women as stakeholders in the silkscape.

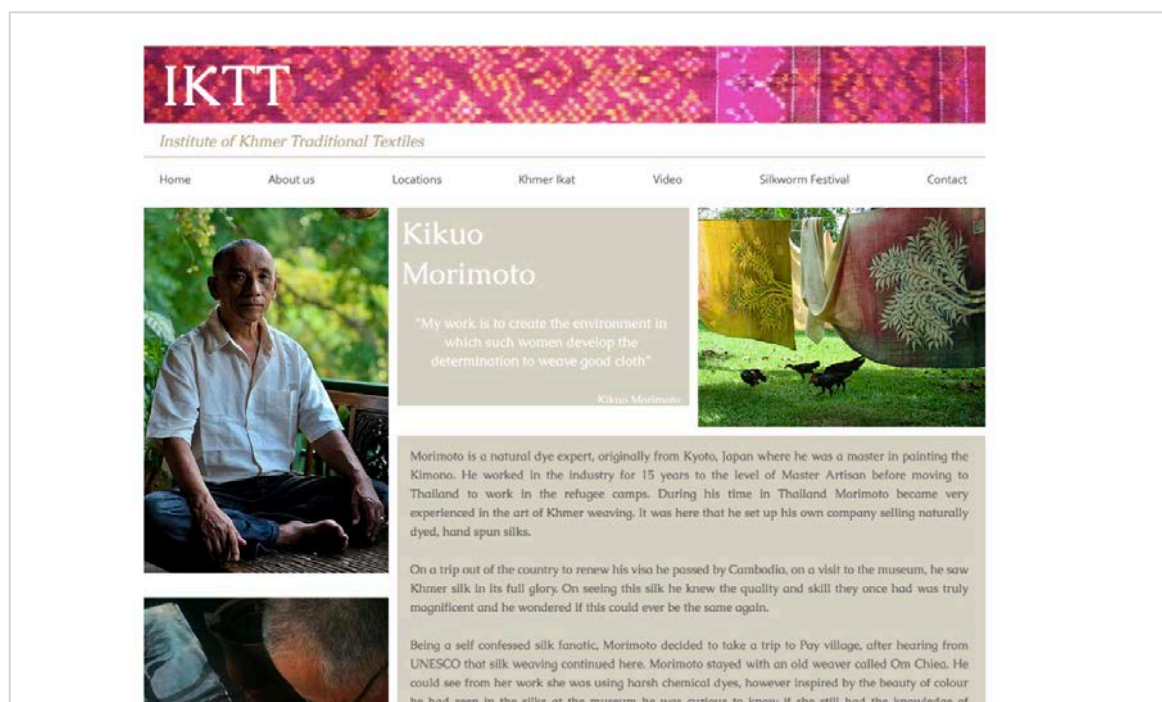


Fig.67 IKTT website with Kikuo Morimoto's biography in English, aimed at an international audience, 2017, <http://www.ikttearth.org>



Fig.68 IKT.T website home page, Japanese version, 2017. Morimoto is on the left of this undated archival image. <http://www.iktt.org>

Cambodian initiatives: between macro-consortium and micro-enterprises

A third wave of development in the silk sector, after the early investment of transnational agencies and the establishment of leading foreign-backed NGOs, has been Cambodian-owned enterprises. Since the early 2000s, the silk sector has been marked by two overlapping movements of expansion and segmentation, divided between larger membership associations, foreign-owned actors and Cambodian-owned enterprises such as Silk Associations of Cambodia and Color Silk. Shifting the focus to Cambodian initiatives offers the possibility of examining the agency of national approaches and their influence in the global network and advancing towards the exploration of Cambodian voices involved in the silk market. Key considerations here are the extent to which these companies fit the general paradigm of silk crafts built by foreign and transnational prerogatives, and whether they contradict dominant discourses, renegotiate them, or provide alternative strategies.

According to the NSS, the majority of the weaving workforce in Cambodia operates in about two hundred and fifty small and medium enterprises and NGOs.⁵³³ This fragmented landscape suffers from a lack of cooperation between these various actors, who often compete for funding and customers. The NSS also positions Thailand as one of Cambodia's major competitors with Laos and Vietnam on silk goods, especially destined to the tourist market. It assesses that: 'Cambodia could aim at competing with Thailand and Viet Nam by pursuing a differentiation strategy towards high-end hand-made silk products'.⁵³⁴ In response, several groups have aimed to strengthen the industry and establish ethical guidelines as a way to support the producers, as much as attracting a domestic and export market. Among these national stakeholders, Artisans Association of Cambodia, a membership-based organisation, was established in 2001 through the coordinated efforts of the World Rehabilitation Fund, the UN Development Programme and the International Labour Organization. It currently consists of forty-eight companies involved in the Cambodian craft sector, representing more than two thousand workers.⁵³⁵ Some of these companies are led by French, Japanese and Korean founders. Members all respond to fair-trade principles defined by the World Fair Trade Organization, working towards a variety of goals such as empowering people with disabilities, preserving Khmer culture, protecting against human trafficking, fighting poverty and supporting local communities. The majority of members deal with textile production, including the projects discussed in this chapter, such as AA, IKTT, and Color Silk. Other initiatives produce recycled accessories, wood carvings and souvenirs.

Artisans Association of Cambodia has been led by Men Sinoeun since 2003. Originally from Phnom Penh, he had a career in law and public administration and development, from Care

⁵³³ International Trade Center and Cambodia Ministry of Commerce, *Cambodia National Silk Strategy*, 11.

⁵³⁴ *Ibid*, 22, 48.

⁵³⁵ Artisans Association of Cambodia, *Catalog 2017-18: AAC Member Profiles* [Accessed May 2, 2020]

International in 1993 to the Disability Action Council under the aegis of the Cambodian Ministry of Social Affairs in 1999.⁵³⁶ His organisation provides training in marketing, commercial strategy, design, trends, costing and shipping, and quality control. It also participates in international fairs such as Maison & Objet in Paris, NY Now in New York and Bazaar Berlin, and helps companies compete with other Southeast Asian craft countries (principally Myanmar, Laos, and Thailand).⁵³⁷ I interviewed Men Sinoeun in July 2017. He stressed that the silk sector would benefit from more investment from the Cambodian government and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to support silk weavers and raise their wages. Artisans Association of Cambodia has also advocated simplifying export procedures and the procurement of certificates of origin for Cambodian entrepreneurs, in order to facilitate exports.⁵³⁸

Silk producers have built their own networks with mixed results, still relying on the financial support of an umbrella of international institutions, especially ITC. Among these the Cambodia Silk Forum, a membership organisation of twenty of the main producers of Cambodian silk products, including IKTT, remained active until the early 2010s. It provided limited support to local businesses, organising regional fairs, focusing on silk farming and gathering funding from ITC.⁵³⁹

Khmer Silk Village Association developed under the aegis of the Agence Française du Développement between 2002 and 2005. Gathering silk farmers and weaving communities in villages, the association focused on increasing silk yarn production to compete with

⁵³⁶ Men Sinoeun, informal interview with Magali An Berthon, July 2017, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

⁵³⁷ Artisans Association of Cambodia, *Catalog 2017-18: AAC Member Profiles*.

⁵³⁸ OECD, 'Aid for Trade Case Study World Bank: Women Entrepreneurs in Cambodia,' *OECD World Trade Organization*, 2010 <https://www.oecd.org/aidfortrade/47803414.pdf> [Accessed 26 December 2017]

⁵³⁹ 'How to Buy Khmer Quality Silk,' *Cambodian Silk*, <http://www.cambodiansilk.net> [Accessed May 2, 2020]; 'Cambodia's Silk Road to Poverty Reduction,' *International Trade Forum Magazine*, 2(2006), <http://www.forumducommerce.org/Cambodias-Silk-Road-to-Poverty-Reduction/> [Accessed May 1, 2020]; See also Chun Sophal, 'Silk Weavers Struggle as Cost of Thread Increases,' *The Phnom Penh Post*, 6 May 2010 <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/business/silk-weavers-struggle-cost-thread-increases?> [Accessed May 1, 2020]

thread imports and enhance weavers' capacity to cater for export markets.⁵⁴⁰ Working on the entirety of the production chain and managed by an experienced team, Khmer Silk Village emerged as a privileged partner for the larger funding body ITC to operate the Cambodia Sector-Wide Silk Project in 2010-2012 with communities in the field, leading training programmes in weaving, sericulture, and marketing as well as purchasing and distributing finished silk products. However, the co-op has not communicated its activities via its Facebook page since 2013, and the website has been deactivated.

More recently, the foundation of the National Silk Board, a government-private sector partnership launched in 2013 under the Ministry of Commerce, with the support of ITC, responded to this need for more coordination, regulation and centralisation to boost investor confidence and emphasise competitiveness. Issues in synergy and cooperation between Cambodian ministries delayed its official formation until 2014.⁵⁴¹ The group only started its activity in 2015, with the redevelopment of local sericulture as its first priority. This led to the publication of the NSS 2016-2020 report, which is the most comprehensive and recent study of the silk industry, and a key source for this thesis.⁵⁴²

⁵⁴⁰ Susan Falls and Jessica Smith, 'Good Hands: Silk Weaving and Transnational Partnerships in Cambodia,' in *Textile Economies: Power and Value from the Local to the Transnational*, ed. Walter E. Little, Patricia A. McAnany (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2011), 216-18; International Trade Centre, *Report: Mid-Term External Evaluation Cambodia Sector-Wide Silk Project*, 38.

⁵⁴¹ Chan Muyhong, 'National Silk Board Delayed as Ministries Fail to Coordinate,' *The Phnom Penh Post*, June 12, 2014 <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/business/national-silk-board-delayed-ministries-fail-coordinate> [Accessed May 1, 2020]

⁵⁴² A number of projects have emerged from NSS, especially the opening of the Khmer Silk Centre at the Royal University of Phnom Penh in 2019, focusing on improving and increasing domestic sericulture and engineering innovative outlets. This project has been funded by UNDP to procure materials and equipment in rural areas and the Japanese government. See Voun Dara, 'Khmer Silk Centre opens at RUPP,' *The Phnom Penh Post*, June 6, 2019, <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/khmer-silk-centre-opens-rupp> [Accessed May 2, 2020]; UNDP Cambodia, *Cambodia's New Silk route: Boosting Livelihoods and Recapturing a Rich History*, 2018 https://www.kh.undp.org/content/cambodia/en/home/presscenter/articles/2018/cambodia_s-new-silk-route--boosting-livelihoods-and-recapturing-.html [Accessed May 2, 2020]

In parallel with these macro-consortia marking the recognition of the silk sector's economic potential, the silkscape continued to expand with new Cambodian-owned initiatives. As this chapter has shown, foreign funding bodies have had a multiplying effect on the silk industry, feeding a bloom of numerous domestic initiatives, with varying degrees of success. Despite the prominence of female-led small and medium enterprises in the Cambodian craft sector, women have struggled to access entrepreneurship and higher levels of management.⁵⁴³

This final section compares two projects, Silk Associations of Cambodia and Color Silk, owned by Cambodian women and established in the continuity of these early developments. This study considers how gender is part of the distribution of agencies in the network, as well as responding to foreign models of development. Moreover, discourses on gender representation are also linked to ideas of nostalgia. Jacobsen has argued that feminism in Cambodia emerged in the 1950s despite the customary discourse that kept women in inferior positions following *Chpab Srei*, a nineteenth-century code of conduct defining the ideal behaviour of *srei krup leakkhana*, the virtuous woman.⁵⁴⁴ The 1980s saw the reassertion of this conservative thinking as a form of nostalgia for pre-colonial times. The re-legitimation of this gender stereotyping happened at the same time as the rise of the first post-conflict women's associations influenced by the return of exiled Cambodian women from refugee camps and Western countries.⁵⁴⁵ The resistant attitude towards women working in management roles has persisted in Cambodian society, and is only slowly changing in the younger generation.⁵⁴⁶

⁵⁴³ OECD, *Aid for Trade Case Study World Bank: Women Entrepreneurs in Cambodia*, OECD World Trade Organization, 2010. <https://www.oecd.org/aidfortrade/47803414.pdf> [Accessed May 2, 2020]

⁵⁴⁴ Jacobsen, *Lost Goddesses: The Denial of Female Power in Cambodian History*, 182, 231.

⁵⁴⁵ Jacobsen, 'Riding a Buffalo to Cross a Muddy Field: Heuristic Approaches to Feminism in Cambodia,' 215-16.

⁵⁴⁶ The Nippon Foundation, *Asian Women Social Entrepreneurs Network Report* (Tokyo: The Nippon Foundation, 2015), 22-23.

Chin Koeur provides an example of a female owner whose business originates from the UNESCO silk project in Phnom Chisor presented at the beginning of this chapter. This former trainee (forty-five-year-old in 2018) opened her own company in 1996 as a weaver and middlewoman in her home village of Kanhjang in Takeo Province. When I interviewed her in March 2018 during a field trip in Takeo province, she showed me her laminated UNESCO certificate which attested, with her name and picture, to a seven-month training conducted from May to October 1995 in Phnom Penh under master weaver Leav Sa Em's apprenticeship, an 'easy going' master supportive of 'someone who really wants to learn' [Fig.69].⁵⁴⁷ She kept the certificate in a translucent plastic folder, with other Cambodian awards she had received in her career for the best *hol* design, within range of the warehouse where she had set up her business. The space had a desk and a few chairs, one loom, some weaving and tying supplies, stored products on shelves, and motorbikes. This certificate was not on display in the office, but she had kept it in pristine condition for more than twenty years, which shows the value and pride she associated with this object. Chin Koeur had only a rudimentary knowledge of weaving learned at school in 1995 when she started the UNESCO training, which recruited individuals from impoverished families, uneducated backgrounds and orphans. It was 'difficult to prepare the threads, that she had no experience before. And learning [was] hard for her'.⁵⁴⁸ This programme provided her with the foundation skills to undertake all the stages of Cambodian silk weaving, especially the *hol* and *pidan* techniques, from designing patterns to warping, spinning silk, tying and dyeing it with natural and chemical dyes and weaving on the loom.⁵⁴⁹ At the final ceremony marking the end of her training, she was given this certificate and a *sampot hol kbun*, which she eventually sold to buy silk yarn at the market and start her first orders.⁵⁵⁰ Each time she

⁵⁴⁷ Chin Koeur, Interview by Magali An Berthon, trans. Prom Chak, March 17, 2018, Kanhjang, Cambodia.

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid ; See Appendix A2.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid.

finished a new piece, she would bring it to UNESCO to sell on site, and would use the money to create a rolling fund.



Fig.69 Chin Koeur's certificate, dated October 1995, for silk weaving training under master weaver Leav Sa Em, Kanhjang village, Takeo, March 17, 2018. Author's photograph.

Chin Koeur's evolution in the silk business has been motivated by pragmatism and reactivity, relying on the resources available to her in the 1990s and the support of UNESCO Cambodia. She pursued additional training on natural dyes at CYK, the Japanese-led NGO providing weaving programmes in the Takeo region. Then she started working with her sister and mother, managing to build more capital and launch her own business, Silk Associations of Cambodia, in her village of Kanhjang in 1996 [Figs.70-71].⁵⁵¹ To produce more, she hired other weavers based in her area, whom she paid by the piece. She

⁵⁵¹ Kanhjang village is part of Sla Commune, Samraong District, in Takeo Province. According to the 1998 census of Cambodia, Samraong District had a population of 101,455. National Institute of Statistics, *General Population Census of Cambodia 1998, Final Census Results* (Cambodia: Ministry of Planning, 2002), 268.

progressed from weaving to designing, training, management, and distribution. Twenty years later she was working with 'fifty looms', which meant fifty weavers, who could produce about three *kbun* per loom – about one hundred and fifty pieces monthly [Fig.72]. Chin Koeur said that 'she has now no time to weave, just focus on designing [...] She hires like her mother to start to do this grid [the tying], and then she will send this grid to other persons to design, and then she just checks it to correct the design. And after that she sends it to the person who dyes'.⁵⁵²

Besides her participation in the UNESCO programme and my visit to her premises, I was not able to cross-check any of the information provided by Chin Koeur. The guide who introduced me to her, Prom Chak, a programme officer assistant at UNESCO in Phnom Penh, originally from Phnom Chisor, had known her since the UNESCO project. They had built a relationship of trust, which validates the authenticity of Chin Koeur's testimony. The value of her responses lies in her expressions of confidence and sense of ownership in her practice as a weaver and entrepreneur.

⁵⁵² Chin Koeur, Interview by Magali An Berthon.



Fig.70 Silk Associations of Cambodia sign at the entrance to Chin Koeur’s house and office, Kanhjang village, Samraong District, Takeo province, March 17, 2018. Author’s photograph.

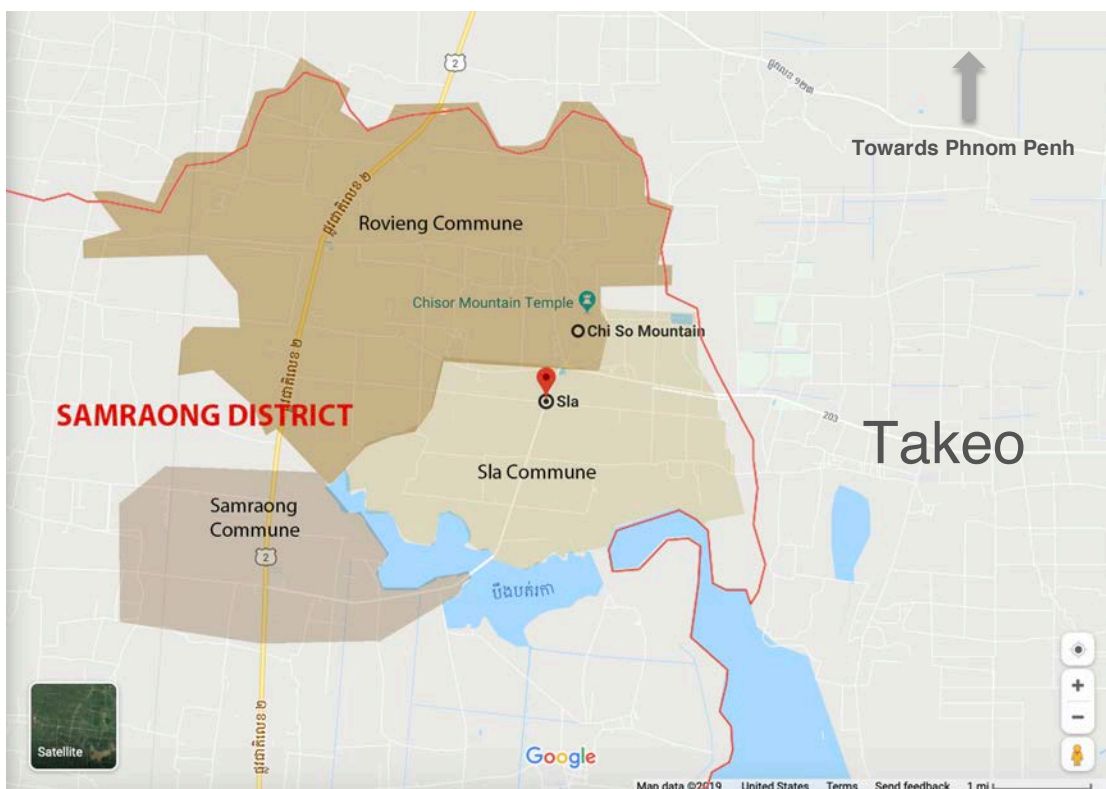


Fig.71 Samraong District, Takeo province, including Phnom Chisor and Sla, Cambodia, based on a Google Maps view.

In terms of her position within the silkscape, despite bearing the title of ‘association’, Chin Koeur’s business has relied on her sole ownership and central role of designer and middlewoman. She has engaged a dynamic set of relations. Chin Koeur develops the designs, passes orders to weavers who work ‘only for her’, providing them with raw materials on credit, and receives the finished products before selling them to shops. While she has been working on a larger production scale, she has continued to purchase raw materials in Phnom Penh, including pre-dyed silk threads.⁵⁵³

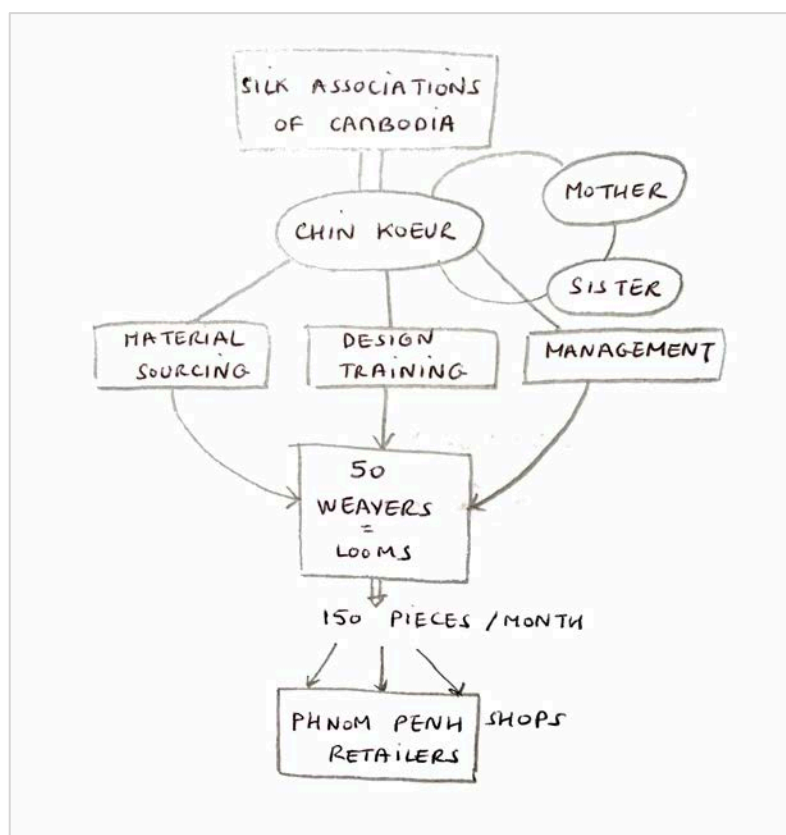


Fig.72 Silk Associations of Cambodia’s business model, based on interview with Chin Koeur. Author’s image.

Chin Koeur’s case demonstrates that certain actors cannot be reduced to one clearly defined role. Her mobility between the countryside and the capital city indicates how she had

⁵⁵³ Chin Koeur, Interview by Magali An Berthon.

transformed herself from her original position of weaver, a more static role assigned to a loom that relies on middlemen for materials sourcing, orders, and sales. In her interview, she expressed concern about the price of imported silk from Vietnam or Thailand, and what it meant for her business. She could not understand why it had doubled in recent years, costing 70 USD for one kilo, despite the Cambodian government's statement 'that to import [silk] there is no tax'.⁵⁵⁴ She explained that 'she always complains to the people who sell the silk. But... And the government said they don't charge the import tax, but that's still expensive'.⁵⁵⁵ This situation has forced her to raise the price of her products to a minimum of 200 USD for one *hol kbun*. From other testimonies collected in the field, these are high prices for complex polychromic cloths for the local market, if one includes after the mark-up applied by the final seller. The textile shops in Psar Orussey market in Phnom Penh may offer a useful price comparison. In August 2017, the shop owner at number 33, street 141, explained that prices differed depending on the complexity of *hol* patterns and the number of colours used. For a two-colour piece, it was 100 USD for a full *kbun* (three and a half metres), and half of this for a *sampot samloy* (a half piece). For a multi-coloured piece, the dealer charged 200 USD for a *hol kbun* and half of this for a *sampot samloy*.

For her product designs, Chin Koeur has moved from copying ikat patterns from different villages, a practice common to middlemen choosing styles and bringing them to weavers, to designing new motifs. In that sense she has positioned herself as a designer, and not simply a buyer, delivering new models each month and becoming recognised for her style. She declared 'not copy[ing] the other patterns, just designs by herself. [Otherwise] after, very difficult to sell'.⁵⁵⁶ To source ideas and colourways she has relied on her sellers' feedback in Phnom Penh, who communicate customers' taste and requests. Chin Koeur has focused on *hol*, working on tying and dyeing patterns: she is shown here posing with a bundle of yarn,

⁵⁵⁴ Chin Koeur, Interview by Magali An Berthon.

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid.

next to her UNESCO certificate [Fig.73]. With the help of her mother, she has provided sets of pre-tied and dyed weft yarn (*kiet*) to weavers who are paid 60 USD to weave a *kbun* for her. In rural areas, middlemen usually pay weavers about 90 USD to make a piece from start to finish, including tying and dyeing, and the weavers have to deduct the cost of raw materials.⁵⁵⁷ By paying them only for weaving, without dyeing, Chin Koeur has accelerated production and ensured control over the designs, a method also applied at AA, which has separated workers in two teams, one for tying and dyeing and the other for weaving.⁵⁵⁸ Moreover, Chin Koeur has trained a selection of weavers in tie-dye to secure a skilled workforce able to fulfil her company's orders. This speaks to her creative mindset: she has positively utilised her UNESCO training and expanded her skills from solo weaver to design manager.

There are, however, signs that Chin Koeur's company has not fully evolved from the conventional model of middleman-weaver relationship. By paying by the piece, she has maintained pressure on weavers to produce rapidly, without the security of a salary.⁵⁵⁹ She perpetuates the hierarchical *khsae* system by not including her fifty weavers in leadership. For sales, Chin Koeur provides an example of how the domestic market works. She has worked with shops in Phnom Penh which in turn sell to local buyers, Cambodians who live abroad and Cambodians exporting to Europe and the United States: 'for example the people who live abroad, they like this style, they like this colour, and then they call the seller in Phnom Penh. The seller in Phnom Penh just sends the photo of the colour to her'⁵⁶⁰. She works on these orders immediately, subcontracting the weaving and shipping the pieces back to Phnom Penh, using the flexibility of artisanal production to her advantage.⁵⁶¹ Aware

⁵⁵⁷ Depending on the complexity of the pattern, for a two-color ikat piece this whole process of dyeing and weaving may take between two to three weeks for a weaver. It would take a minimum of a month to complete a polychromatic silk ikat.

⁵⁵⁸ Pav Eang Khoing, informal interview with Magali An Berthon.

⁵⁵⁹ For a detailed description of the middlemen's activities, see Ballyn, 'A Cultural Economic Analysis of Crafts: A View from the Workshop of the World,' 191.

⁵⁶⁰ Chin Koeur, Interview by Magali An Berthon.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid.

of the need to bypass shop sellers to increase profit, Chin Koeur has considered how to distribute her products directly to customers. She has plans to open a shop with her daughters in a house she has bought in the south of Phnom Penh and by selling in person in Thailand. Silk Associations of Cambodia has remained organically a family business, rather than an association, developing from her practice as an individual weaver concentrating on a domestic market, using the early UNESCO support to establish her activity.

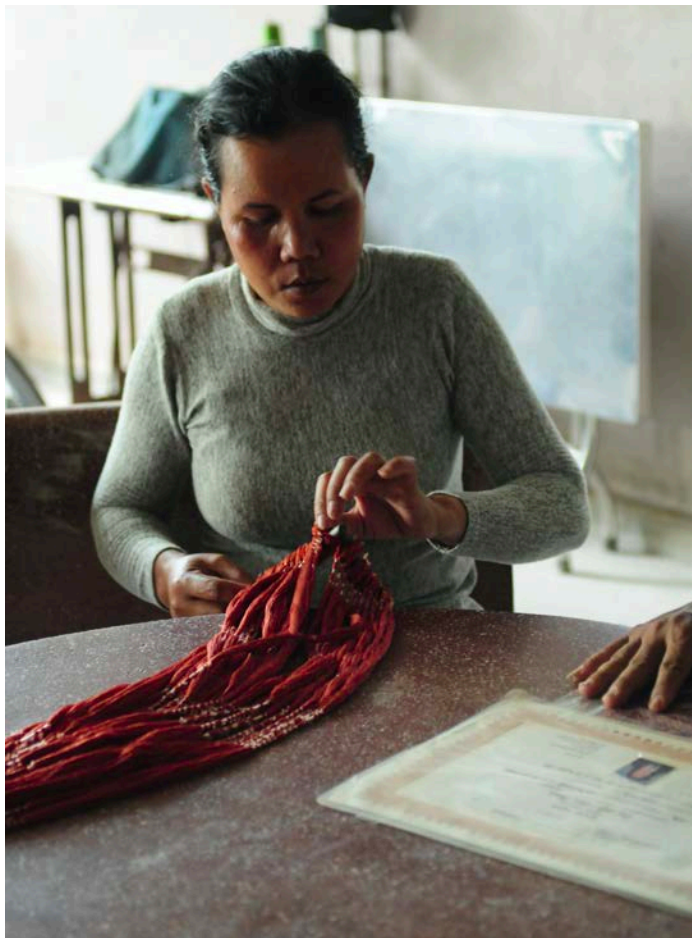


Fig.73 Chin Koeur working on a tied bundle of weft silk yarn in her workshop, Kanhjang village, Samraong District, Takeo province, March 17, 2018. Author's photograph.

In comparison, Color Silk, a Cambodian-owned social enterprise founded in Phnom Penh by Ngorn Vanntha, a thirty-seven-year-old Cambodian woman, fosters a different approach grounded in social entrepreneurship, digital communication, and export-oriented

production. The roots of this organisation are also in Takeo province where the founder grew up, in a family of silk weavers and traders.⁵⁶² Ngorn Vanntha went to high school in Phnom Penh and earned a Masters in Business Administration at the Royal University of Law and Economics. She worked as an IT analyst for a private company until she won the National Business Plan Competition in Phnom Penh, organised by the National University of Management in partnership with the international consulting firm McKinsey. Her proposal was based on the observation that looms were disappearing from villagers' houses due to rural exodus. Her plan was to create employment opportunities for female weavers in Takeo by undercutting middlemen and expanding distribution channels.⁵⁶³

Ngorn Vanntha started Color Silk in 2009 with personal funds. For her first order, she recruited ten weavers from Prei Kabas district in Takeo to develop silk samples destined for the US market. Following the codes of social entrepreneurship, Ngorn Vanntha has operated as Managing Director and Chairman of the Board.⁵⁶⁴ One key aspect of Color Silk is its female leadership. Ngorn Vanntha learned about weaving at a young age and has benefited from higher education. Nevertheless, she experienced pressure and doubts from her own family and in-laws, despite her husband's early approval. In interview in August 2017 she confided: 'nobody listened to me in the beginning'.⁵⁶⁵ This illustrates the prevalence of gendered cultural norms, even among educated Cambodian women, who are still relegated to a domestic role of homemaker and mother. To gain recognition and support, Ngorn Vanntha strategically entered a series of US competitions for social innovators, which successfully put Color Silk at the forefront of the export market. In 2010, Ngorn Vanntha was honoured by the YouthActionNet® Global Fellowship programme launched by the

⁵⁶² Prom Chak, UNESCO office programme assistant and originally from the same area in Takeo, told me that Ngorn Vanntha's family was known as local middlemen trading silk. In her interview, Ngorn Vanntha described her family as silk weavers.

⁵⁶³ Ngorn Vanntha, informal interview with Magali An Berthon, August 2, 2017, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

⁵⁶⁴ Stephen Paterson and Yim Keorithy, 'Developing an Innovative Business Model: The Case of Color Silk Enterprise in Cambodia,' *ASEAN SME Case Study Project*, June 21, 2013, 18-19.

⁵⁶⁵ Ngorn Vanntha, informal interview with Magali An Berthon.

International Youth Foundation, a Baltimore-based non-profit organisation supporting global youth empowerment since 1990. She was offered a twelve-month fellowship and was invited to a week-long networking programme in Washington, D.C., and received a grant acknowledging her project's social impact in the Phnom Penh area. In 2011 she received the support of the International Youth Foundation-Starbucks Shared Planet Youth Action Grant.⁵⁶⁶ One of Color Silk's board members, Reagan Hudgens, is an American digital specialist acting as an advisor for the silk company on optimising distribution and client relationships, which could explain the company's US positioning.⁵⁶⁷ Ngorn Vanntha was then honoured nationally at the Cambodian Young Entrepreneur Awards 2015, organised by JCI Cambodia and Young Entrepreneurs Association of Cambodia.

In parallel with its social business structure, with a showroom and office in Phnom Penh, Color Silk set up a foundation in 2011, providing free training workshops in silkworm farming, yarn processing, weaving and dyeing for vulnerable disabled and illiterate young women. This development has activated another range of support and connections around the empowerment of women. The project started with a weaving centre in Sla commune in Takeo, followed by a larger construction near Phnom Chisor, built in March 2016 with the support of Maybank Foundation, the philanthropic branch of the Malaysian bank Maybank [Fig.74].⁵⁶⁸ This project was supported by the ASEAN Foundation as part of Maybank Women Eco Weavers' Southeast Asian programme.⁵⁶⁹ The centre was ceremonially opened in August 2017 by Chan Sorey, Secretary of State, Ministry of Women's Affairs, and Datuk

⁵⁶⁶ International Youth Foundation, *International Youth Foundation & Nokia Honor 20 Youth Leaders*, 2010, <https://www.iyfnet.org/blog/international-youth-foundation-nokia-honor-20-youth-leaders> [Accessed 3 January 2018]

⁵⁶⁷ Changemakers Ashoka, *Color Silk Enterprise: Silk Weaving*, 2015 <https://www.changemakers.com/globalgoals2015/entries/color-silk-enterprise> [Accessed May 2, 2020]

⁵⁶⁸ Maybank Foundation, *Press release: Launching of the Maybank Silk Weaving Training Centre, Cambodia*, Maybank Foundation <http://maybankfoundation.com/index.php/how-we-work/press-releases/item/launching-of-the-maybank-silk-weaving-training-centre-cambodia> [Accessed 12 December 2017] ; See the map in Figure 75.

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid.

Mohaiyani Shamsudin, Maybank's Chairman. Maybank's presentation at the opening of this training centre portrayed Ngorn Vanntha as a 'vision weaver' who is 'crafting futures on a forgotten way of life', shifting to a discourse of innovation within tradition.⁵⁷⁰

Grounded nationally and internationally with this two-part structure, by 2017 Color Silk had been able to train about 480 weavers, integrating them as 'members' operating from home with the status of micro-entrepreneur in seven villages in Takeo province. As part of their normal practice, the organisation provided the weavers with materials at no cost, loaned money to set up looms, and paid piece rates above the market prices.⁵⁷¹ The weavers have managed to earn an average income of 200 USD per month.⁵⁷² The organisation has also worked with three hundred and fifty farmers who grow mulberry trees to help increase domestic sericulture.

⁵⁷⁰ Ngorn Vanntha featured on the Maybank Silk Weaving Training Centre for the Maybank Foundation Facebook page, July 26, 2017. Source: Maybank Foundation (Facebook). <https://www.facebook.com/Maybank/photos/a.168159803216857/1640555265977296>

⁵⁷¹ 'About Us,' *Color Silk*, <https://colorsilkcommunity.wixsite.com/colorsilk-cambodia/color-silk-enterprise> [Accessed May 2, 2020]

⁵⁷² Robin Spiess, 'Silk training centre weaves an opportunity for rural women,' *The Phnom Penh Post*, August 2, 2017 <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/business/silk-training-centre-weaves-opportunity-rural-women> [Accessed January 28, 2021]



Fig.74 Maybank Women Eco Weavers programme at the Maybank Silk Weaving Training Center, Sla commune, Takeo province, n.d. Photograph Color Silk Foundation.

As shown on Color Silk’s website, weavers produce a wide range of silk products such as yardage in solid colours and patterned using the *hol* technique, *sarong*, scarves, bags and clothes, creating new styles that are presented to customers each month [Fig.75].

Approximately 65 per cent of Color Silk products are made to order for a wholesale market with a roster of clients who are mostly based in the EU (Germany, in particular), Japan, United States and Singapore; the rest is sold to retailers in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, a strategy which differs from that of other players in the sector focused on the tourist market [Fig.76].⁵⁷³ While facing strong competition from Asian producers from China, Vietnam and Thailand, Ngorn Vanntha has, however, succeeded in exporting products and integrating international consumers into the company’s distribution network. Clients, including buyers and fashion designers, are able to make custom orders and select styles online.

⁵⁷³ Sok Chan, ‘Traditional Silk Industry Struggles to Keep its Shine,’ *Khmer Times*, March 10, 2016, <http://www.khmertimeskh.com/news/22615/traditional-silk-industry-struggles-to-keep-its-shine/> [Accessed on December 15, 2017]

This model, which combines Cambodian leadership and international business strategies, appears in the company's approach to problem solving, goal-oriented diagnosis, and its clear impact objectives to tackle issues of internal migration, poverty reduction and the empowerment of rural women. For instance, in 2015 Color Silk provided details of its salary levels, business plan, expected growth, anticipated increase of the number of trainees, and the content of their training on its online application for a young social entrepreneurs award on the social innovation network Ashoka.⁵⁷⁴



Fig.75 Range of Color Silk ikat fabrics in a variety of colourways and patterns, Color Silk website, Accessed May 2, 2020.

⁵⁷⁴ Changemakers Ashoka, *Color Silk Enterprise: Silk Weaving*, 2015, Accessed May 2, 2020 <https://www.changemakers.com/globalgoals2015/entries/color-silk-enterprise>

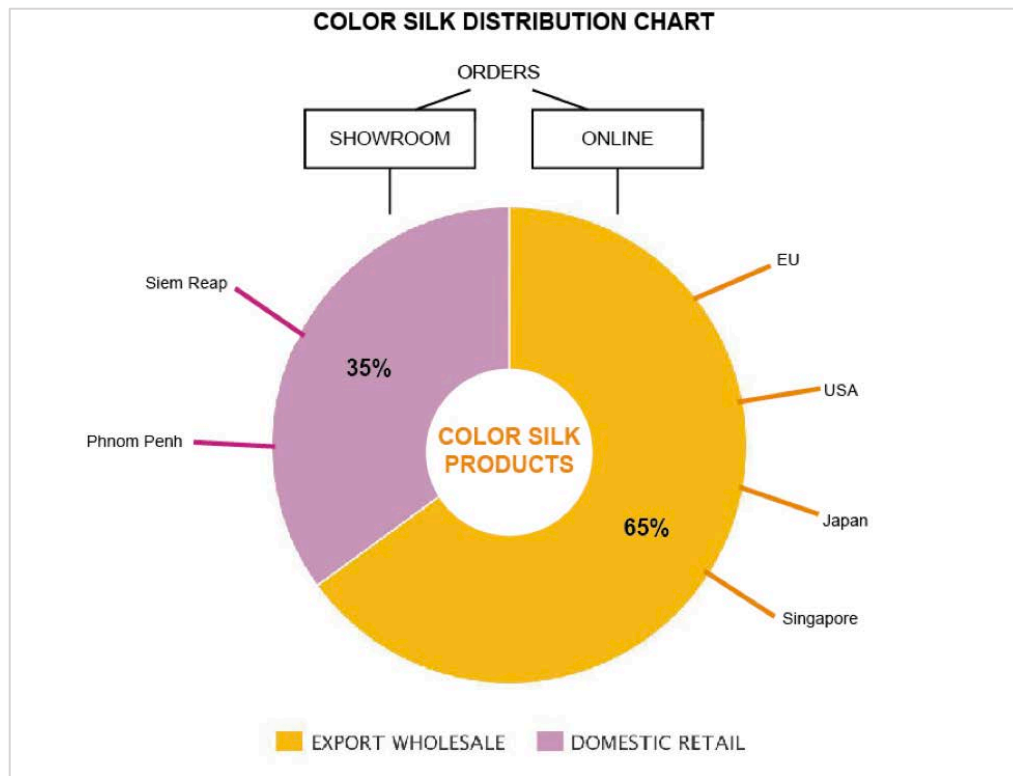


Fig.76 Distribution of Color Silk's export/wholesale and domestic retail products. Author's image.

The publicising of this data quantifying impact differs from the previous models examined in this chapter, especially in Chin Koeur's informal model or IKTT's imprecise data. In the case of Color Silk, the heritage aspect of Cambodian silk weaving has receded behind the imperatives for quantifiable social impact. On the 'About' page of Color Silk's website, 'preserving a Cambodian silk heritage' comes last in the company's target objectives.⁵⁷⁵ Furthermore, Color Silk is active on social media, with a Facebook page with 13,261 followers and 410 followers on Instagram, presenting debates around the ethical fashion movement, which advocates for more transparency in the garment manufacturing supply chain and supports textile workers' rights in developing countries.⁵⁷⁶ For its participation in the 2017 iteration of the online global campaign 'Who Made my Clothes?', an initiative of the

⁵⁷⁵ 'About Us,' *Color Silk*.

⁵⁷⁶ Color Silk Cambodia, 'Story,'

https://www.facebook.com/pg/colorsilkcambodia/about/?ref=page_internal [Accessed October 8, 2017]

London-based non-profit organisation Fashion Revolution, Color Silk promoted the Cambodian origins of its products and its artisanal approach, sharing pictures of weavers holding signs stating in English 'I made your clothes' [Fig.77].



Fig.77 Color Silk weavers for the Fashion Revolution 2017 campaign 'Who made my clothes?', April 2017, Color Silk Facebook page.

Chin Koeur and Ngorn Vanntha share similarities. They are both female Cambodian entrepreneurs working with weavers in Takeo province. Color Silk was part of the same 2015 tour that Mao Thora, Secretary of State, made to Silk Associations of Cambodia. They both avoid cultivating post-colonial and post-conflict discourses praising the revitalisation of a dying craft common among foreign-owned companies. This section has explored how, as women entrepreneurs, they have overcome their marginalised position within the Cambodian gender hierarchy through two different approaches. Silk Associations of Cambodia has focused on increasing production for a domestic market, finding recognition for its creative designs by pursuing a middleman-weaver relationship on a larger scale without investing in fair-trade practices. Color Silk, on the other hand, has capitalised on a potent model cultivating a social entrepreneurship ethos to foster international partnerships and reach global fashion markets.

Conclusion

By contextualising diverse perspectives through a series of case studies, this chapter has located Cambodian silk within regional, national, and global frameworks, deconstructing and mapping the networks and discourses associated with silk since the 1990s. Neo-colonial discourses combining issues of cultural heritage, nostalgia for past traditions and authenticity have sustained the involvement of foreign-owned and transnational initiatives. The strong influence of foreign voices – French and Japanese in particular – often rely on revivalist binary discourses of poverty reduction and cultural revival linked to the Angkorian heritage and the destruction wrought by the civil war. The contemporary politics of the Cambodian silk network aggregates numerous stakeholders nationally and internationally, with overlapping, competing, and sometimes complementary roles such as government agencies, workshop founders, independent and employed weavers, suppliers and local and foreign customers, including tourists. Coming from disparate backgrounds, each craft company examined in this chapter appears as a cultural broker negotiating with an array of connecting actors, drawing from local and foreign influences. Silk textiles also carry an agency. From tokens of Cambodian culture, they have become products of recontextualised tradition that appeal to non-local markets.⁵⁷⁷

Power relations are unevenly distributed in the network: they are concentrated in the hands of transnational funding bodies, NGOs, and social enterprises to support sericulture and larger weaving projects, and rely on tourist consumption. Their prominent position in the silkscape has partially mimicked the Cambodian overarching patron-client dynamic. Simultaneously, the network is fragmented into small-scale initiatives in which informal activity in domestic production remains dominated by middlemen.

⁵⁷⁷ Falls and Smith, 'Branding Authenticity: Cambodian Ikat in Transnational Artisan Partnerships,' 5.

Design theorist Rajeshwari Ghose stressed the importance of developmentalists fostering ‘autonomous and indigenous development’ in Asian developing countries, providing a sense of equitable self-reliance in the designs adopted, but also in the materials, processes, advertising, and product manufacturing.⁵⁷⁸ For an industry that is centred on artisanal practices, the makers themselves are kept at the periphery of dominant discourses and leadership. In the face of history, successive waves of conflict, colonisation and unbalanced social structures and economic models, their role has remained underestimated and marginalised from the chain of command.

Decolonial theory and non-normative spaces will be key frameworks in Chapters Three and Four to directly engage with weavers and weaving practices, as well as issues of embodiment, skills transmission, and expressions of cultural identity. Weavers have also appeared in this chapter when practice and skills transmission have been discussed, with the example of Leav Sa Em’s work for UNESCO, the silk grandmothers co-opted by Morimoto, and even Chin Koeur, who developed her position within the network. This chapter has offered a limited decolonial perspective on the pre-existing structure of *khsae* and how it challenges Western views in terms of agency within the network.

The examples of the entrepreneurs Chin Koeur and Ngom Vanntha point to the heterogeneity of Cambodian perspectives and the role of artisans not as objects of economic policies but as active subjects of their own practice, in charge of the transmission of their skills in silk production. The following chapter therefore explores ways to further challenge existing narratives by reinstating silk producers as experts and possessors of knowledge, giving a greater space within the polyphony of the silkscape to the voices of weavers.

⁵⁷⁸ Rajeshwari Ghose, ‘Design, Development, Culture, and Cultural Legacies in Asia,’ *Design Issues* 6, no. 1, Design in Asia and Australia (Autumn, 1989): 44.

Chapter Three

Weavers: Dynamics of Knowledge Production through Practice, Embodiment, and Memory

Introduction

Wilkinson-Weber and Ori Denicola have posited that 'craft, like history, is a tool that people use to negotiate their roles and places within the material and social environment'.⁵⁷⁹ After mapping the sector on a macro-level and identifying the key agents who were the architects of the Cambodian silk-scape since the 1990s in Chapter Two, Chapter Three turns its focus on actors remaining at the margins of the silk network, namely the silk weavers who are predominantly (66 to 87 per cent) women.⁵⁸⁰ Weavers are not often in control of their own narrative, relegated to a passive workforce in need of support in numerous funders' reports and NGO's communication. Besides the extensive NSS survey which spends several pages describing Cambodian weavers' demography, weavers are overwhelmingly referred to as a generic anonymous group.⁵⁸¹ They are mainly called 'the weavers', to a lesser extent 'women' as on Color Silk website, and at times 'the beneficiaries' as in: 'the beneficiaries did without exceptions appreciate the services provided by the project'.⁵⁸² Assessments pointing out either the weavers' weaknesses or the benefits gained from specific programmes are common. For example, the Cambodia Sector Wide Silk Project report establishes that the 'technical skills of weavers are relatively weak as compared to

⁵⁷⁹ Wilkinson-Weber and Ori Denicola, *Critical Craft: Technology, Globalization, and Capitalism*, 1.

⁵⁸⁰ International Trade Center and Cambodia Ministry of Commerce, *Cambodia National Silk Strategy*, 5.

⁵⁸¹ Cambodia Ministry of Commerce and ITC, *Cambodia National Silk Strategy*, 9-10. ; Artisans Angkor, *Silk Weaving* <http://www.artisansdangkor.com/people-16-95-silk-weaving.php> [June 29, 2021]

⁵⁸² Color Silk, *About Us: Color Silk Enterprise* <https://colorsilkcommunity.wixsite.com/colorsilk-cambodia/color-silk-enterprise> [June 29, 2021] ; International Trade Center, *Mid-Term External Evaluation: Cambodia Sector-Wide Silk Project (Phase II) CMB/49/05A*, 40.

competitors in neighbouring countries'.⁵⁸³ Moreover, a 2006 article from the *International Trade Forum Magazine* stressed that weavers need assistance:

'The 20,000 weavers will emphasize improving the quality of their weaving as well as their ability to supply silk cloth in sufficient quantity and in a timely manner. They will be assisted by weaving experts and international designers'.⁵⁸⁴

When specifically cited, individual weavers are presented in response to the funder's development programme: 'two years ago Heng knew little about the market demand for the silk scarves and smooth fabric she produced. Since, ITC's silk project has helped her to increase her monthly income to between US\$ 800 and US\$ 1,000'.⁵⁸⁵ This chapter draws instead on their voices and practices as primary material to examine, as advocated by anthropologist Trevor Marchand, 'individual processes, strategies, and tactics of knowing – and not knowing – within broader environmental, social, and political frames of reference'.⁵⁸⁶

To answer these questions on knowledge and agency, the chosen methodology for this study is grounded in ethnographic work, visual documentation and interviews undertaken in rural areas of Cambodia over three periods of fieldwork [Fig.78]. In December 2016, I interviewed IKTT weavers in Siem Reap. In August 2017, I met three trainee weavers at the Japanese Caring for Young Khmer (CYK) NGO's weaving centre in Trapaing Krasaing commune, Bati district, Takeo province. Independent weavers in Phnom Chisor area, Takeo, were also interviewed in March 2018. Alongside these interviews, the Action Research (AR) method was explored in a collaborative project with the Cambodian textile organisation Krama Yuyu (KY) in Ta Pouk village, near Siem Reap, during 2017. This project forms the

⁵⁸³ ; International Trade Center, *Mid-Term External Evaluation: Cambodia Sector-Wide Silk Project (Phase II) CMB/49/05A*, 16.

⁵⁸⁴ International Trade Centre, 'Cambodia's Silk Road to Poverty Reduction,' *International Trade Forum* - Issue 2/2006 <https://www.tradeforum.org/Cambodias-Silk-Road-to-Poverty-Reduction/> [June 29, 2021]

⁵⁸⁵ ITC News, *Feature Story: Improving the Livelihoods of Cambodian Silk Entrepreneurs*, March 1, 2013 <https://www.intracen.org/layouts/2coltemplate.aspx?pageid=47244640256&id=73349> [June 29, 2021]

⁵⁸⁶ Marchand, *Making Knowledge: Explorations of the Indissoluble Relation Between Mind, Body and Environment*, 15.

core focus of this chapter, to further examine the weavers' strategies of knowledge transmission and production that are present in the act of weaving itself, and consider how these skills can be vectors of economic and social empowerment.

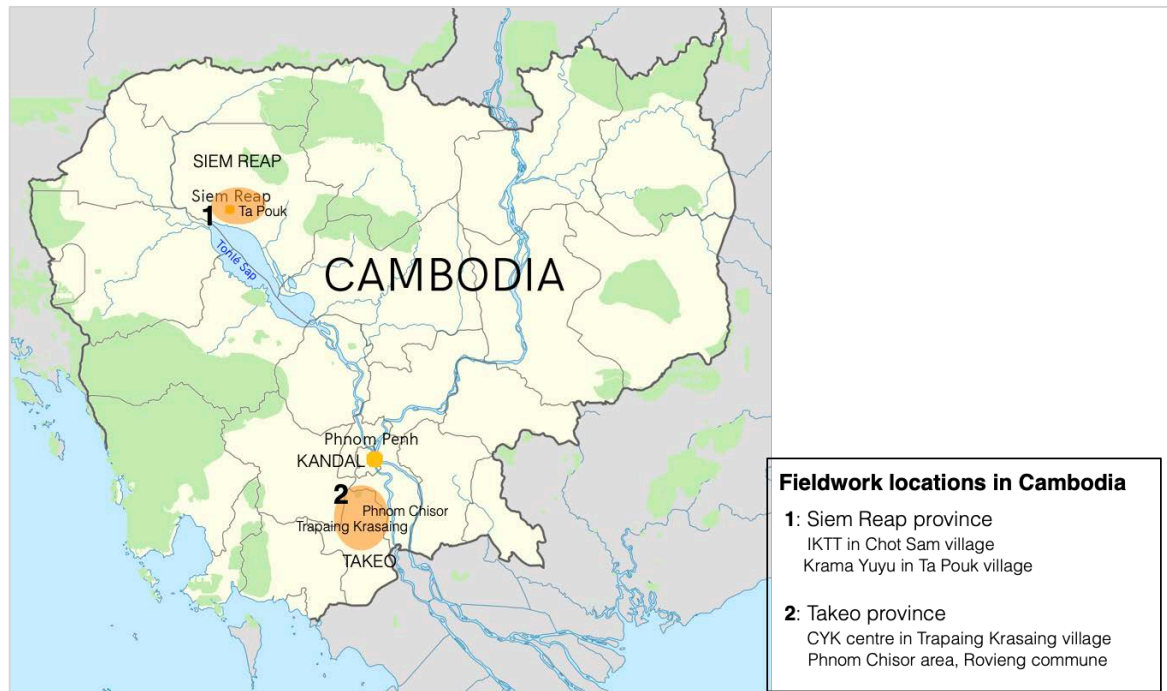


Fig.78 My fieldwork for this chapter is concentrated in two provinces: Siem Reap in the north, Takeo in the south. Wikimedia Commons.

The small scale and founding aims of KY were key to the selection of this company for the AR project. KY was founded in 2006 by Tomoko Takagi, a Japanese woman now in her late forties with experience in landscape architecture and textile curation in Northern Japan, to provide employment opportunities for local weavers. Tomoko recruited Chenda Heng, first as her assistant and then as the manager of the workshop. Between 2006 and 2009, KY consisted of only four members, Tomoko, Chenda, Theary (Chenda's sister) and another weaver.⁵⁸⁷ After 2010, the workshop expanded and Chenda trained new recruits, which left her less time to create new designs. KY has been registered as a private enterprise at the Cambodian Ministry of Commerce since 2013. In 2017, the company had a

⁵⁸⁷ Tomoko Takagi and Chenda Heng, informal conversation, December 23, 2016, Ta Pouk, Cambodia.

staff of thirty-five female weavers specialising in cotton *krama*. Due to its small scale, the workshop had been giving priority to on-demand production for exports. Chenda and Theory learned *hol* silk weaving as teenagers in Takeo province from their mother. However, they had not practised silk weaving for more than a decade and were only working with cotton at KY.

To explore how these weavers could remobilise their unused skills, the AR project focused from July to October 2017 on the planning and production of four *sampot hol*, conducted by Chenda and Theory with the support of co-founder Tomoko. As a researcher, I engaged in identifying the weavers' needs and how the AR project could support them, as well as facilitating the funding and planning of the action between February and June 2017. A specific period of fieldwork was devised to enable me to explore a new and very particular methodology. From July 24 to July 30, 2017, I was present on site and focused on intensive documentation there of how weavers dealt with the warp and weft ikat preparation processes, using film and photography as key methodological tools, in addition to further interviews.

The spoken and embodied narratives of these weavers are engaged to explore their roles and strategies in the face of the history of Cambodia's loss and revitalisation of its silk production, and how they negotiate with different methods of learning, practising and passing on these skills. Marchand has demonstrated that 'knowledge necessarily extends to other domains including emotional, sensorial, spatial and somatic representations' and is 'communicated between actors, most evidently with the body'.⁵⁸⁸ Knowledge is thus considered in the weavers' oral traditions, as much as in their bodies and testimonies collected in the field, to examine skills learning in apprenticeship and community work. Presenting a palette of definitions of silk artisans as 'knowing bodies' aims to nuance and

⁵⁸⁸ Marchand, 'Muscles, Morals and Mind: Craft Apprenticeship and the Formation of Person,' 257.

expand theoretical concepts of embodiment in a Cambodian context.⁵⁸⁹ In this sense, silk craftsmanship becomes the site of ‘embodied learning’ in a dialogue between materials, tools, and the weaver’s body. It opens up this analysis to a range of concepts, such as tacit knowledge and materiality of making, which will be illustrated in the following sections.⁵⁹⁰

The chapter will first focus on how the project with KY was chosen and set up around interviews, visual documentation and AR methodologies. An examination of societal and structural issues encountered by independent and staff weavers and apprentices across Cambodia, such as hierarchical dynamics, lack of mobility, gender distribution, and globalisation, will complement the critical contextualisation, leading to an analysis of the AR project with KY weavers. The project’s findings will then initiate debates around issues of vocation and agency regarding knowledge formation, building on comparative examples from other periods of fieldwork.

The diversity of conversations that this chapter builds on, and the range of profiles of the female weavers, whether independent weavers, following training programmes in an NGO, or hired by a craft company, aim to form a multilayered portrayal of the Cambodian weaving workforce. This approach uses polyphony as a strategy towards de-simplifying cultural and social representations of this workforce. The consideration of weavers’ individual and collective agencies aims to challenge the inequitable hierarchies within silk production and place makers again at the heart of the silkscape.

Action Research and yarning: developing dialogic methodologies

Educator Linda Tuhiwai Smith has pioneered important decolonising guidelines for conducting research with indigenous groups and encouraging them in a process of self-

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁰ Marchand, *Making Knowledge*, 2.

determination 'expressed through a wide range of psychological, social, cultural and economic terrains' [Fig.79].⁵⁹¹



Fig.79 'The Indigenous Research Agenda', in Smith, Decolonizing Methodologies, 1999, Figure 6.1, 117.

While Smith addressed the perspective of the Maori peoples, the Indigenous Research Agenda presented in this figure could also be applied to other ethnic groups. In the chart, Smith notes four directions to aim towards: 'decolonisation, healing, transformation and mobilisation. They are not goals or ends in themselves but processes which connect, inform and clarify the tensions between the local, the regional and the global'.⁵⁹² Additionally, the 'four major tides are represented in the chart as survival, recovery, development, self-determination'.⁵⁹³ This agenda is advanced through a community-based approach, which 'assumes that people know and can reflect on their own lives, have questions and priorities

⁵⁹¹ Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 116.

⁵⁹² Ibid.

⁵⁹³ Ibid.

of their own, have skills and sensitivities which can enhance (or undermine) any community-based projects'.⁵⁹⁴ This model puts the accent on focusing on the process over the outcome of the action, as Smith believes that 'processes are expected to be respectful, to enable people, to heal and to educate'.⁵⁹⁵

The methodologies engaged in this chapter have aimed towards similar objectives, especially through the use of participatory AR, by engaging with a non-hierarchical way to record the sensorial and material experience of textile practices and working with a community of weavers. According to education scholar Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt, the researcher's role in AR is 'to know, understand, improve or change a particular social situation or context for the benefit of the people who are also the 'participants' (not just 'subjects') in the inquiry and who are affected by the results and solutions.'⁵⁹⁶ The participatory quality of the project is central, involving each participant 'practically, intellectually and emotionally in the cause for which the research is conducted'.⁵⁹⁷ This paradigm helps to 'recognise that knowledge is socially constructed and created from within, and for, a particular group or context'.⁵⁹⁸ In this sense, the study of making processes adds an embodied component to my analysis, allowing bodies to become another of the 'voices' in the polyphony.

Film was therefore selected as the best research and practice method for capturing and recording bodily expressions. As visual anthropologist and documentary filmmaker David MacDougall contends, 'unlike knowledge communicated by words, what we show in images has no transparency and volition – it is a different knowledge, stubborn and opaque, but

⁵⁹⁴ Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 125, 127; See also Ernest T. Stringer, *Action Research: A Handbook for Practitioners* (Los Angeles: Sage Books, 2014), 8.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid, 127.

⁵⁹⁶ Zuber-Skerritt, 'Action Learning and Action Research: Paradigm, Praxis and Programs,' 7.

⁵⁹⁷ Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt and Lesley Wood, *Action Learning and Action Research: Genres and Approaches* (Bingley: Emerald Publishing, 2019), 8.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid.

with a capacity of the finest detail'.⁵⁹⁹ MacDougall has encouraged historians and anthropologists to consider photography and film 'not as adjuncts to formulating knowledge' but in their capacity to 'embrace the knowledge of being'.⁶⁰⁰ In this regard, the use of film in the AR project will be treated as an additional layer of methodology to record the performance of making and underline the embodied nature of silk weaving.

AR is a research methodology that aims for impact and change, specifically designed to address the needs of a particular group in context, led in dialogue with a project coordinator. It is therefore important to understand how the idea for the project emerged from a discussion I had in December 2016 with Tomoko Takagi and Chenda Heng at the workshop in Ta Pouk village. I have known members of KY since 2014, when I worked on the development of *krama* scarves as a textile designer for the French company Krama Krama. We had since remained in touch and worked on a number of other textile design projects. When I visited in December 2016, now conducting interviews as a postgraduate researcher, Chenda explained to me, with Tomoko's help in translating, how as teenagers she and her sister Theory learned how to make *hol* from their mother, Chendy, and how they both gave up silk weaving in 2006 in favour of simpler techniques of cotton *krama* weaving. Tomoko expressed interest in developing silk products at KY, based on Chenda and Theory's expertise. She explained how they lacked the funding and time to produce ikat samples to present to potential buyers. Chenda also responded enthusiastically to the idea. From this starting point, Tomoko and I reconvened in February 2017 by email to discuss how this preliminary discussion could turn into a common project combining research and practice, in which KY weavers could be supported. In turn, she discussed the feasibility, cost and timetable for the project with Chenda. Once Chenda had established the average cost

⁵⁹⁹ David MacDougall, *The Corporeal Image: Film, Ethnography, and the Senses* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), 5-6.

⁶⁰⁰ MacDougall, *The Corporeal Image: Film, Ethnography, and the Senses*, 5-6.

and time, I applied for and obtained 750 USD of funding from Friends of Khmer Culture, a US-based foundation which supports artistic and cultural preservation projects in Cambodia. In return, Friends of Khmer Culture required a full report on the action and pictures of the final silk samples, which I delivered in November 2017. This award covered the cost of fine silk and chemical dyestuff raw materials and paid for Theory and Chenda's labour, following Krama Yuyu's rates, to make four polychromic silk *hol kbun*.

According to educators Altrichter, Posch and Somekh, the purpose of Action Research 'is not simply to describe, interpret, analyse and theorise – the stuff of traditional research – but to act in and on a situation to make things better than they were'.⁶⁰¹ The main participants were KY master weavers Chenda and Theory, who were in charge of creating and producing the silk samples, and co-founder Tomoko, who facilitated the sourcing of materials, organisation, costing and planning, communication between Chenda and me, translation on site, and myself as the researcher and co-convenor. This project also included four other staff weavers (Sarin, Salat, Srei Pon, and So Kim) to assist Chenda and Theory with the dyeing and weaving processes, Chendy, Chenda and Theory's mother, who participated in an interview, and Yu, a graduate student from Siem Reap who I hired as a translator for one day's interviewing during my visit on site [Figs.80-81].

⁶⁰¹ Herbert Altrichter, Bridget Somekh, and Peter Posch, *Teachers Investigate their Work* (London: Routledge), 1993, 4.



Fig.80 Group at Krama Yuyu. Left to right, translator Yu, weaver Theary, former weaver Chendy, weaver Chenda, Magali An Berthon, co-founder Tomoko Takagi. Author's photograph, Ta Pouk village, Cambodia, July 26, 2017.



Fig.81 Heng Chenda, centre, with Sarin, Salat, Srei Pon, and So Kim working on the warping. Author's photograph, Ta Pouk village, Cambodia, July 24, 2017.

The focus of the action was to enable the participants to work together to explore their unused skills in silk weaving. My main interest as the researcher was to observe the

strategies that the weavers were using to re-engage with their silk knowledge, especially with *hol*. This technique involves intricate dyeing processes and uses uneven twill as a base structure woven on a three-harnesses loom. AR methodologies are organised in successive stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting.⁶⁰² In the timespan of the project, I observed the action during one week of fieldwork in July 2017. I followed the planning, preparation, beginning of the action and completion by receiving regular email updates from Tomoko until the completion of the project in October 2017.

To explore the weavers' discourses as alternative voices, interviews are another key source and research method in this chapter. Over my three periods of fieldwork, I recorded twelve oral testimonies following a semi-guided qualitative format. In addition, I had twelve informal discussions with facilitators, weavers, and translators.⁶⁰³ These interactions created dialogic encounters that work towards meaningful exchanges. This approach resonates with an Australian-based research project on building conversations on health-related issues led with Aboriginal communities in 2016, offering indigenous groups a self-reflective platform 'to challenge themselves, question their own internalised powerlessness, and develop opportunities to gain a sense of control within their lives (including the environments in which they live and work)'.⁶⁰⁴ In the culture of Aboriginal people, yarning refers to a cultural form of discussion in a respectful meaningful exchange, of which each dialogic moment is called yarn.⁶⁰⁵ Textile metaphors are common in numerous cultures to

⁶⁰² Zuber-Skerritt, 'Action Learning and Action Research: Paradigm, Praxis and Programs', 7; Zuber-Skerritt and Wood, *Action Learning and Action Research: Genres and Approaches*, 5.

⁶⁰³ In December 2016, I visited IKTT where I had discussions with Pan Dam, Jok Kiang and Om Lai. In July 2017 I worked with KY weavers, especially Chenda Heng, her sister Theary and mother Chendy. In August 2017, I interviewed Am Sai, Now Saraem, and Pheach at CYK training centre in Trapaing Krasaing, Takeo province. In March 2018, I met with So Ai, Kamon, Pon, and Yuon Sophon in Phnom Chisor villages, Takeo province.

⁶⁰⁴ Bronwyn L. Fredericks and al., 'Engaging the Practice of Yarning in Action Research,' *Action Learning and Action Research Journal*, 17, no. 2 (2011): 9.

⁶⁰⁵ 'Yarning is more than just a light exchange of words and pleasantries in casual conversation. A yarn is both a process and an exchange; it encompasses elements of respect, protocol and engagement in individuals' relationships with each other.' See Fredericks, and al., 'Engaging the

describe social dynamics. Indeed, we have seen in previous chapters how *khsae* relationships in Cambodia, hierarchical social strings, are still present in the silk sector. Here, yarning opens up the idea of building equitable exchange between participants, including myself, to overcome the complex power dynamics in ethnographic fieldwork and give more space to my interlocutors' experiences.

Admittedly, it was difficult to achieve in shorter encounters, when I had only a day at CYK weaving centre or in Phnom Chisor area to meet several weavers. I have been more successful in implementing this quality of exchange with Chenda and Theory at KY, because I had more time to build trust over a week's fieldwork visiting the workshop. I arrived early at 8am, when the workshop opened, and stayed until it closed at 5pm, including spending lunchtime with Tomoko, Chenda and Theory each time I visited. This offered time to discuss silk-related, but also more personal, topics, in an informal manner. Moreover, inviting Chendy – Chenda and Theory's mother – to an interview allowed this family of weavers to discuss and add to each other's thoughts, instead of simply answering my questions.

Chendy, sixty years old at the time of the project, has lived as a Buddhist nun in a temple near Bakong village about 5 kilometres away from the workshop. Chendy and Chenda – and Theory, to a lesser extent because she is shyer – also engaged with Yu, the translator, to explain certain details of weaving techniques and dyeing to him, as if they were teaching him as well. At a certain point everyone was speaking at the same time, and some jokes came together. Chendy was telling a story of how she had sold a few silk *sampot* in her village: 'the people who bought the *kben* did not give all the money, they gave some and kept some'. They told her: 'I will pay you later'. I asked: 'are they still in Bakong?'; Yu translated:

practice of yarning in Action Research,' 8; Sjharn Leeson, Catrin Smith and John Rynne, 'Yarning and Appreciative Inquiry: the Use of Culturally Appropriate and Respectful Research Methods When Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women in Australian Prisons,' *Methodological Innovations* Vol.9 (January 2016): 1-17.

'she says that she sees them everyday!', at which we all laughed.⁶⁰⁶ These little moments kept us all engaged and my interlocutors showed an eagerness to share their experiences.

The extent to which meaningful and equitable exchanges could be achieved cannot be assessed without a discussion on translation. My reliance on Khmer translators presented certain challenges to the sharing of perspectives (both mine and the weavers'), and this should counter any tendency to consider the weavers' voices as fully unedited sources. I have worked with male translators who I was introduced to through my professional network in Cambodia: Rothmono, who helped at the CYK training centre in Takeo province, and Yu for KY at KY in Ta Pouk village near Siem Reap. I met Prom Chak at the Phnom Penh UNESCO office. I had only one female guide, Asya, an IKTT employee with rudimentary English skills who was assigned to accompany me during my visit in December 2016 at the Wisdom from the Forest project.

My translators shared with me what they had understood the weavers to say with their own level of English, which differed in fluency. I identified certain terms in Khmer, which I integrated into the interview transcripts; I also included moments of hesitation and laughs.⁶⁰⁷ This offered a way to increase the representation of the weavers' voices, by including the analysis of nonverbal communication. This technique comprises 'kinesics (i.e., behaviors reflected by body displacements and postures), proxemics (i.e., behaviors denoting special relationships of the interviewees/interviewers), chronemics (i.e., temporal speech markers such as gaps, silences, and hesitations)'.⁶⁰⁸ To evaluate the sense of engagement, I consider my interlocutors' physical language, their availability, and, for some weavers, the desire to show me textiles they had woven.

Moreover, it is necessary to address the difference between working with a translator hired

⁶⁰⁶ Chendy Heng, Chenda Heng, and Theary Heng, Interview by Magali An Berthon, trans. Yu and Tomoko Takagi, July 26, 2017, Ta Pouk, Cambodia.

⁶⁰⁷ See Appendix A6.

⁶⁰⁸ Magdalena Denham and Anthony John Onwuegbuzie, 'Beyond Words: Using Nonverbal Communication Data in Research to Enhance Thick Description and Interpretation,' *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 12, no.1 (2013): 671.

for a specific visit, such as Rothmono and Yu, and an intermediary bringing me to a specific place and facilitating my encounters with weavers. Working with Asya was incidental, but has provided invaluable insights into IKTT and the weavers. Asya, in her early twenties in 2016, had been working for IKTT for a few years. She worked at the shop in Siem Reap while also stitching handkerchief hems. She had come to Siem Reap from Kandal province with her mother when she was three years old. Her aunt and grandmother both worked at the centre. A member of the community, Asya knew all the weavers personally and was able to approach them in an appropriately respectful manner to ask them my questions.⁶⁰⁹

The dynamics of this translator-researcher relationship, however, were most significant with Prom Chak, a forty-eight-year-old programme assistant at UNESCO Phnom Penh. Prom Chak had participated in the Phnom Chisor weaving initiative in the early 2000s, as discussed in Chapter Two. In turn, he thus connected me, an outsider foreign researcher, to weavers, including his niece Kamon, in different villages in this area. Prom Chak's late father had been a commune leader in Samraong District and his mother, from Prey Kabas district, was a silk weaver.⁶¹⁰ His background in the region was important in creating a bridge of knowledge between me and the weavers during the interviews.

Prom Chak often added his own knowledge to the conversations, sharing, for example, that he knew that the prices for silk *hol* would decrease before Khmer New Year.⁶¹¹ It was also apparent that his presence was welcomed by the weavers. The meeting with Pon provides a key example. Immediately after he introduced us to her, Prom Chak said to me: 'she says she recognises me from the face of my father'.⁶¹² Pon made herself available to discuss her activity in detail for nearly half an hour, double the time spent with the three other weavers we met in their homes. It was not possible for me to read the difference between having a

⁶⁰⁹ Asya, informal conversation, December 26, 2016, Chot Sam village, Siem Reap, Cambodia.

⁶¹⁰ Prom Chak, informal conversation ; See map, Figure 75.

⁶¹¹ Ibid.

⁶¹² Pon, interviewed by Magali An Berthon, trans. Prom Chak, Phnom Chisor area, Takeo Province, March 17, 2018.

female or a male translator in these exchanges. This dynamic with the translator is another way to approach and understand the particular kind of polyphony at work in this chapter. The weavers' voices were layered with other Cambodian voices, including male and female translators' voices.

Establishing the needs of Cambodian silk weavers to set up the Action Research project

This section establishes a series of key observations made during the three periods of fieldwork, which outline the issues encountered by Cambodian weavers to inform how the AR project on silk skills transmission was set up with KY weavers, and for what purpose. The perpetuation of silk practices is linked to rurality, access to markets, globalisation and weaving as a gendered activity. In villages, Cambodian women generally carry the "double duty" [of] engaging in agricultural labor or wage employment, and taking care of the household tasks'.⁶¹³ Women are also often the only wage earner in the household.⁶¹⁴ As the primary carers for their children, they use their income, an average of fifty to seventy USD per month, in particular to buy medical supplies and send the children to school. When the families are too poor, they will only send their boys to school and girls will take over household tasks.⁶¹⁵ This data leads to questions about the value of craft activities as a source of income for female weavers, and how they gain or lose agency within the silk network. It is therefore reflected in the choice of testimonies, solely of women, presented across this chapter, who all come from villages located in two regions– Siem Reap in the north and Takeo in the south.⁶¹⁶

⁶¹³ Judy Ledgerwood, 'Women in Cambodian Society,' Center for Southeast Asian Studies, *Northern Illinois University* <http://www.seasite.niu.edu/khmer/ledgerwood/women.htm> [Accessed November 2, 2020]

⁶¹⁴ Ibid.

⁶¹⁵ Mary N. Booth, 'Education and Gender in Contemporary Cambodia,' *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 4, no.10 (August 2014): 44.

⁶¹⁶ See Figure 5 for these regions. In this gendered distribution of roles in the household, men sometimes participate in weaving-related tasks to assist women weavers at home. They work on a

From these challenges, this chapter considers the changes and continuity in silk practices in contemporary Cambodia. It examines the ways in which weaving knowledge is perpetuated by passing through matrilineal lineages, as prevailed before the civil war, and the modes of adaptation that the weavers themselves have engaged in to increase their agency.

Whether trained in NGOs or working independently from home, the women I met during fieldwork split their time between weaving activity and other tasks such as taking care of the household and children, and sometimes farming. They recognised that silk weaving generates insufficient income. However, it has remained one of the only activities for elderly women and mothers who need to balance their time with other duties in villages.⁶¹⁷ Yuon Sophon, a fifty-one-year-old weaver from Phnom Chisor, in response to the question ‘would she do something else than weaving?’ explained that ‘now the old women, they can only do this, weaving’ [Fig.82].⁶¹⁸ Other women, younger or in good health, do not usually pursue weaving unless they have to care for their children. Also based in Phnom Chisor, Pon, sixty-five years old in 2018, in response to the question ‘how many pieces does she do per month?’, said ‘two *kbun*, sometimes only one *kbun* because busy with the grandkids’ [Fig.83].⁶¹⁹ So Ai, thirty-nine years old, divided her time between weaving, raising her four children and working in the rice fields while her husband worked as a farmer and in construction [Fig.84]. In response to a comment on silk being an expensive material to use, Kamon, thirty-six years old, considered that ‘she [has] no choice, because she needs to take care of her [two] children, so this is the job that she can work and also take care of her children [...] and cook for them’ [Fig.85].⁶²⁰ And Chenda from KY, thirty-seven at the time of

limited number of stages, such as tying ikat weft threads, dyeing, and making the heddles for the loom.

⁶¹⁷ Soumhya Venkatesan, ‘Rethinking Agency: Persons and Things in the Heterotopia of “Traditional Indian Craft,” *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 15 (2009): 86.

⁶¹⁸ Yuon Sophon, Interview with Magali An Berthon, translated by Prom Chak, Phnom Chisor, Takeo province, March 17, 2018.

⁶¹⁹ Pon, Interview with Magali An Berthon; So Ai, Interview with Magali An Berthon, translated by Prom Chak, Phnom Chisor, Takeo province, March 17, 2018.

⁶²⁰ Kamon, Interview with Magali An Berthon, translated by Prom Chak, Phnom Chisor, Takeo province, March 17, 2018.

the project, was a single mother of one teenage son, while her sister Theory, twenty-nine, had just had a baby. Weaving and managing the workshop was their only revenue.⁶²¹



Fig.82 Yuon Sophon working on her loom, Samraong District, Takeo province. Author's photograph, March 17, 2018.



Fig.83 Pon in her house showing a bright blue sampot hol she has woven, Samraong District, Takeo province. Author's photograph, March 17, 2018.

⁶²¹ Tomoko Takagi and Chenda Heng, informal conversation, December 23, 2016, Ta Pouk, Cambodia.



Fig.84 So Ai with one of her woven silks, Samraong District, Takeo province. Author's photograph, March 17, 2018.



Fig.85 Kamon weaving a sampot hol at home, Samraong District, Takeo province. Author's photograph, March 17, 2018.

To access a distribution market, weavers build close relationships with a middleman (*jhmaun kandal*), who provides materials, orders, and sales. While patronage connections were examined in Chapter Two from a macro perspective between and inside organisations, in this chapter the experience of *khsae* is examined from the weavers' point of view to underline issues of mobility and autonomy. Anthropologist Soumhya Venkatesan, who carried out extensive research with mat-weavers in Pattamadai, South India, has stressed that the nature of weaving requires the practitioner to be physically present 'at the loom, which is firmly fixed in space within the home'.⁶²² Due to their household and family care duties, rural weavers have little opportunity to circulate. So Ai, Yuon Sophon and Kamon from Phnom Chisor all said that they had never been to Phnom Penh to sell their products and simply relied on a middleman. It was not even clear what level of mobility they had within Takeo province, especially considering the extent of the daily chores that tied them to the home.

In contrast to the fixed location of the weavers, middlemen (men and women) appear as mobile agents empowered by their connections between the countryside and the distribution centres. Indeed, in sociologist Georg Simmel's theory, the figure of the 'stranger', or the 'trader', is developed in opposition to the handicraft 'producers of less mobility', which is what applies in Cambodia.⁶²³ Simmel's perspective remains grounded in a Western-centric view of the social world which considers mobility as a vector of progress, expansion, and intelligence.⁶²⁴ This narrative perpetuates a hierarchical system in which traders 'embodying the synthesis of nearness and distance' dominate craftsmen – in this case craftswomen – who are denied agency.⁶²⁵ This perspective is countered by

⁶²² Venkatesan, 'Learning to Weave; Weaving to Learn ... What?,' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* vol 16, no. 1 (2010): 166.

⁶²³ Georg Simmel and Kurt H. Wolff, *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1950), 403.

⁶²⁴ *Ibid* ; also referred in Venkatesan, 'Learning to Weave; Weaving to Learn ... What?,' 166.

⁶²⁵ Simmel, *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, 404.

repositioning weavers as key holders of knowledge with potent agency through their practice.

Middlemen have imposed conditions of business on the weavers, communicating information about the market and working closely with them while maintaining their hold. When they discuss their relationship with middlemen, the weavers I interviewed commonly used the word *pibak* (difficult) to express distrust, helplessness, and resignation. Yuon Sophon explained she was free to design any style she wanted, but she also said bluntly ‘we do work with middleman, so the price is always low’.⁶²⁶ I asked ‘what can she do so the middleman keeps good prices?’. She said: ‘it’s difficult because it’s like a contract’, ‘it’s difficult to increase the price’. To the question ‘will she continue weaving?’, she said that ‘she will continue. No choice. Even if the price is low, she has no choice’.⁶²⁷ Similarly, Chendy Heng, a participant in the AR project, said: ‘it is not easy to make one *kbun*. But the dealers who come to buy from the makers and then they bring it to the city and then they sell it, they make more profit than the maker’.⁶²⁸ Chendy produced up to thirty *kbun* a year, which she would sell for around 90 USD a piece to middlemen, who would then get about 120 USD per piece at the market.

During his PhD field research, Ter Horst interviewed weavers who felt they feared their middleman’s judgement on the products they would present for sale.⁶²⁹ The weavers I met did not express such apprehension, but they fully acknowledged the unequal relationship with their trader. For example, So Ai said: ‘yes, she does [have a good relationship with her middleman] but sometimes he increases the price of the silk material and then it drops’.⁶³⁰ This left an unsustainable shrinking margin of profit for weavers. Therefore So Ai acknowledged that ‘she has already asked the middleman not to drop the price otherwise

⁶²⁶ Yuon Sophon, Interview with Magali An Berthon.

⁶²⁷ Ibid.

⁶²⁸ Chendy Heng, Chenda Heng, and Theary Heng, Interview by Magali An Berthon, trans. Yu and Tomoko Takagi, July 26, 2017, Ta Pouk, Cambodia.

⁶²⁹ Ter Horst, *Weaving into Cambodia*, 19.

⁶³⁰ So Ai, Interview with Magali An Berthon.

people will stop producing'.⁶³¹ Weavers did not refer to their intermediaries by name, using instead the generic and anonymous term of 'middleman', positioning these individual merchants as an external force and figures of authority.

How could weavers achieve more autonomy? This question supports the setting up of the AR project and its goal to encourage women to reclaim the whole process of silk *hol* making, from sourcing to weaving, and to expand and share their skills, valorising their technical and creative knowledge. The women I interviewed were fully aware that they could get a higher price with direct access to raw materials and customers. Yuon Sophon admitted 'if she had money, she could buy the product just at the market around here, without going through the middleman. She could buy, take the material and then sell.'⁶³² For that she would need working capital to buy the raw materials and negotiate prices. For her part, Pon 'used to work with middlemen but she doesn't want to anymore... Difficult. You can sell a higher price by yourself'.⁶³³ She chose instead to buy her own materials and sell by herself. Pon did not explain how she could afford it. However, her house looked significantly larger than the other weavers' homes I visited in Phnom Chisor, which strongly suggests that she had more available means. Two of her daughters lived in adjoining houses, each with one loom on the ground floor under the stilted structure. Pon had identified several strategies to facilitate her work. First, she purchased industrially pre-dyed silk threads imported from Vietnam at the nearby market in Takeo instead of buying undyed fibre for the warp and dyeing it herself, a practice becoming more common amongst weavers.⁶³⁴ She also teamed up with her daughters, whom she had trained, until they got married. For simple ikat patterns, she subcontracted the stage of tying and dyeing the weft threads to other weavers in her village and only worked on weaving these weft threads onto

⁶³¹ So Ai, Interview with Magali An Berthon.

⁶³² Pon, Interview with Magali An Berthon.

⁶³³ Ibid.

⁶³⁴ See Appendix A2 for the detailed processes of *hol* weaving.

the loom. To increase her revenue, she worked faster: 'that can be done in one week', adding: 'that's why sometimes she also works at night'.⁶³⁵ For distribution, she explained that 'before she brought the products by herself in Phnom Penh' at the market, but she then opted instead to sell 'just to anyone, people who want to buy, people who come or sometimes she brings to the market in Takeo'.⁶³⁶ Pon moved away from the middleman-weaver contract to earn more from each sale. However, the cost of the raw materials has continued to increase, and her work has remained dependent on market demands. What stems from the weavers' experiences points to the necessity of challenging existing models of dependency towards middlemen to source more affordable materials, increase sales prices and reach customers.

Globalisation is another major factor affecting rural populations – and weavers – and is linked to mobility and economic survival, either marginalising them or forcing them to change their activities. As was seen in Chapter Two, the silk workforce has relied on imported raw materials from Thailand and Vietnam to compensate for the limited domestic sericulture. Moreover, since the mid-1990s, the globalisation of fast fashion production has led to the expansion of garment manufacture, which is mostly controlled by Chinese interests subcontracting for European and American multinationals on Cambodian territory, and is quickly becoming 'the backbone of the country's export-driven economy', responsible for '40 percent of Cambodia's GDP'.⁶³⁷ Benefiting from low-skilled cheap labour, about 1,522 sites were registered in Cambodia in 2017.⁶³⁸ Originally limited to the area around Phnom Penh and later slowly spreading to the other provinces of Kampong Speu

⁶³⁵ Pon, Interview with Magali An Berthon.

⁶³⁶ Ibid.

⁶³⁷ Robin Spiess,, 'A Sector Too Big to Fail?', *The Phnom Penh Post*, 5 April 2018 <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/business/sector-too-big-fail> [Accessed October 10, 2019]; Gillian Kane, 'Facts on Cambodia's Garment Industry,' *Clean Clothes Campaign*, 2014, 3.

⁶³⁸ Cheng Sokhorng, 'Industrial Sector Grows, but Still Reliant on Garment Factories,' *The Phnom Penh Post*, February 26, 2018 <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/business/industrial-sector-grows-still-reliant-garment-factories> [Accessed August 8, 2019]

and Takeo, this industry employed about 847,419 workers in 2017, a large majority of which were women, which has deeply impacted on villagers' lives, and challenged the continuation of silk weaving.⁶³⁹

The NSS report considered the industrial garment sector separately from the silk sector, as 'part of a different value chain without any major linkages to sericulture and silk weaving in Cambodia'.⁶⁴⁰ The work differs markedly from textile handicrafts in terms of products and production, relying on labour-intensive processes following the cut-make-trim industrial model.⁶⁴¹ However, to secure a more stable revenue, many weavers in rural areas have abandoned their activity in favour of jobs in sewing and tailoring in factories far from their home towns. This predicament is part of the larger issue of rural-urban migration which has affected the country generally.⁶⁴²

One example of these changes in activity in the countryside is provided by the Japanese NGO CYK, which has operated weaving training programmes for Cambodian youth and women in Trapeang Krasaing village, Bati district, Takeo province, since 2003 [Fig.86].⁶⁴³

⁶³⁹ "Work faster or get out': Labor Rights Issues in Cambodia's Garment Industry', *Human Rights Watch*, March 11, 2015 <https://www.hrw.org/report/2015/03/11/work-faster-or-get-out/labor-rights-abuses-cambodias-garment-industry> [Accessed on August 8, 2019]

⁶⁴⁰ Cambodia Ministry of Commerce and ITC, *Cambodia National Silk Strategy*, 5.

⁶⁴¹ NGOs, domestic and international press, and unionised activists protesting against the work conditions and low revenues of garment factory employees in Cambodia have pushed the government to raise minimum wages, which have increased from 61 USD in 2012 to 182 USD in 2018.

See Workers Rights Consortium, 'Cambodian Workers Seeking Higher Wages Meet Violent Repression,' [pdf] March 24, 2014, 9-15. <https://www.workersrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/WRC-Report-Crackdown-in-Cambodia-3.24.14.pdf>

⁶⁴² UNESCO, UNDP, IOM, and UN-Habitat, 'Overview of Internal Migration in Cambodia,' *Policy Briefs on Internal Migration in Southeast Asia*, (Bangkok: UNESCO Bangkok, 2016), 3.

⁶⁴³ In terms of management, CYK is operated by a Cambodian team with Srey Chan as country director and Pheng Sophal as administrator. The organisation receives the active support of Japanese advisors, especially Harumi Sekiguchi, who arrived in Cambodia in 1999 and first worked in refugee camps on the Thai border before taking on the role of director at CYK. Sekiguchi has now relocated to Japan and visits Cambodia regularly. CYK relies on sales, along with funding from Japan and additional support from Friends of Khmer Culture foundation.

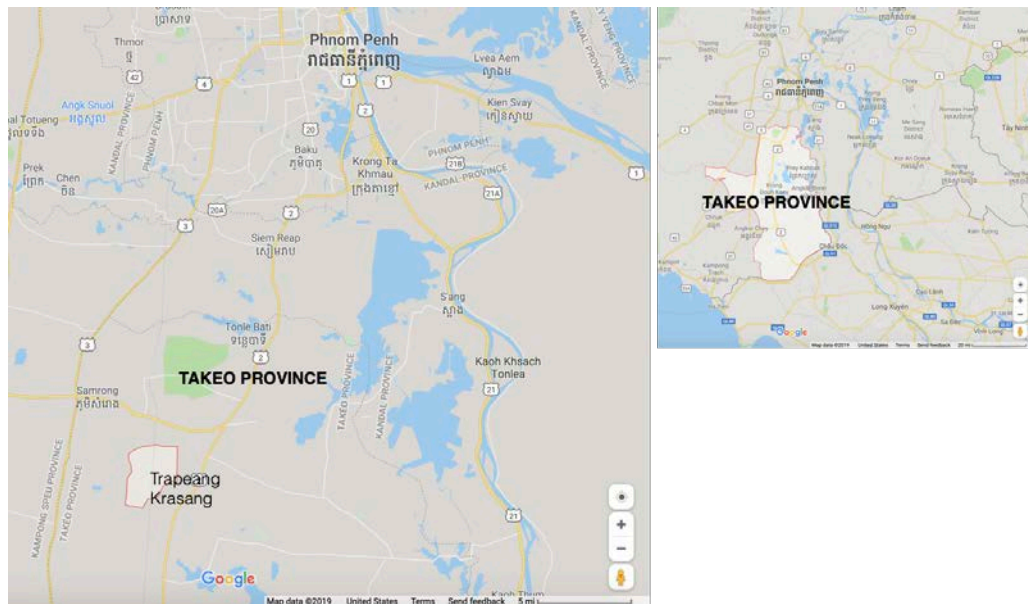


Fig.86 The CYK weaving centre is located in Trapeang Krasaing commune, Bati district, Takeo province. Google Maps, August 25, 2019.

I met three participants of CYK programmes: Am Sai, Now Saraem, and Pheach who were at the weaving centre in August 2017. They had registered for the advanced course in *pidan*, weaving pictorial hangings, that started in April 2017 [Figs.87-88-89].⁶⁴⁴ *Pidan* had been a prominent practice in Takeo province, but had nearly vanished by the early 1990s. Pheng Sophal, manager at CYK, explained that until 2008, the NGO provided ten training classes a year focused on different aspects of the weaving process, from warping, creating tie-dye patterns for weft ikat, mastering natural dyes, weaving and cost calculation. These programmes engaged up to two hundred female weavers from Takeo per year. After the training, CYK continued to support weavers by placing regular orders of silk *pidan* and *hol*, paying for the raw materials and selling the finished products in the NGO's shop in Phnom Penh. Demand for training has drastically decreased since then, due, according to Sophal, to the spread of garment factories throughout the province, in particular a plant that opened in

⁶⁴⁴ CYK sells these *pidan* as artworks and decorative items at a high price, ranging from 460 USD for a multicoloured piece in natural dyes and imported industrial silk to 1130 USD for a *pidan* in Cambodian golden silk in indigo. Harumi Sekiguchi, informal conversation, December 29, 2016, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

2015 near the CYK centre.⁶⁴⁵ When I visited in 2017, CYK had only implemented four training programmes: how to make a kimono (which Am Sai had followed), how to weave a *hol* cloth, a *hol* scarf, and *pidan* weaving.⁶⁴⁶ Sophal had also noticed that the last few independent artisans around Trapaing Krasaing were mostly producing nylon scarves, and had abandoned silk.⁶⁴⁷

Globalisation has brought Western modes of production to Cambodia. Examining contemporary forms of labour within a Western understanding of modern society, sociologist Richard Sennett has suggested that the rise of mass-production is a major cause of social inequality and precarity, leading to the phenomenon of ‘de-skilling’: that is, ‘the replacement of men by machines in industrial production, as complex machines replaced skilled craft labour’.⁶⁴⁸ In response, Sennett emphasises that craft practices are invaluable tools to re-skill societies, especially via community work. As discussed in the previous chapter with the examples of IKTT and AA, handicraft companies in Cambodia have sustained the idea that handicrafts are practices respectful of heritage and tradition. In this sense, choosing to work at a garment factory rather than practising hand weaving would threaten the transmission and continuation of silk practices.

⁶⁴⁵ Pheng Sophal, informal discussion, August 3, 2017, Trapaing Krasaing, Cambodia.

⁶⁴⁶ Am Sai, Interview with Magali An Berthon, trans. by Rothmono, August 3, 2017, Trapaing Krasaing, Cambodia.

⁶⁴⁷ Harumi Sekiguchi, informal conversation.

⁶⁴⁸ Richard Sennett, *Togetherness: The Rituals, Pleasures & Politics of Cooperation* (London: Penguin Group, 2012), 7-8; Deskilling is a term used in the sociology of work, stemming from the study of industrialisation and technological changes in the eighteenth and nineteenth century in Europe. See Florian Brugger and Christian Gehrke, ‘Skilling and Deskilling: Technological Change in Classical Economic Theory and its Empirical Evidence,’ *Theory and Society* 47 (2018): 663–689.



Fig.87 Am Sai weaving an indigo-dyed pidan, CYK weaving centre, Trapaing Krasaing, Takeo province. Author's photograph, August 3, 2017.



Fig.88 Now Saraem working on the tying frame for a special sampot hol order, CYK weaving centre. Author's photograph, August 3, 2017.



Fig.89 Peach sorting and collecting golden silk threads, CYK weaving centre. Author's photograph, August 3, 2017.

In contrast, Venkatesan has critically established the narrative of crafts versus industrialisation as an expression of Foucault's concept of *heterotopia*, which articulates 'utopian visions [...] through social practices, and how this process points to questions of power and agency'.⁶⁴⁹ Foucault has described heterotopia as a disruptive space 'with a precise and determined function within a society', bringing together opposing elements or discontinuous times into one site.⁶⁵⁰ Venkatesan's critique is concerned with narratives that promote nostalgic spaces for a pre-industrialised society, keeping craft producers in a passive role of perpetuating traditions and presenting them as 'victims of modernisation requiring assistance'.⁶⁵¹

⁶⁴⁹ Soumhya Venkatesan, 'Rethinking Agency: Persons and Things in the heterotopia of 'traditional Indian craft,' 78-79 ; heterotopia, from the Greek *hetero*, place, and *topia*, another: 'another place'

⁶⁵⁰ Michel Foucault, "Des Espaces Autres" (Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias), *Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité*, 5 (October 1984): 46-49; trans. Jay Miskowiec in *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (Spring, 1986): 25-26.

⁶⁵¹ Venkatesan, 'Rethinking Agency: Persons and Things in the Heterotopia of 'Traditional Indian Craft,' 87.

Lived experience in Cambodia has indeed revealed an alternative perspective to that of the silk heterotopia. The economic rationale behind craft making is a priority for makers. My research in Cambodia has revealed that the weavers have nuanced positions. Some of these women have expressed interest in working at the *roum tchak tak dey* (garment factory) instead of weaving, despite the health and safety issues in many of those factories.⁶⁵² Chenda's story illustrates how mobility and physical factors play an essential role in weaving activities. This master weaver at KY, who has led the AR project, grew up in Takeo province and moved several times. She arrived in Phnom Penh in her late teens, and when violence erupted in 1997 she left to work briefly in Kampong Cham province for a craft organisation.⁶⁵³ She said that at 'about eighteen years old, she worked one year in the garment factory' before returning to weaving. She added: 'it caused her leg pain, numbness. [...] So, her mother took care of her and took her to the hospital. And after that she got treated and her legs were better. And so, she could continue to work on weaving in Takeo'. She explained that 'she didn't like the garment factory much because of the chemicals and the situation in which she was working was not good for her, she only worked there to make money'.⁶⁵⁴ In 2005 she moved with her aunt to Siem Reap to continue weaving, followed shortly after by her younger sister Theary, and joined KY in 2006. Chenda's testimony epitomises the direct connection between matters of the body, weaving practices, and agency. Weaving is first an embodied matter, taking physical abilities and age as key deciding factors. Incidentally, to the question 'was she ever interested in working in a garment factory', Now Saraem, one of the trainees at CYK centre, answered 'she wanted to,

⁶⁵² Marta Kasztelan, 'Cambodia's Garment Workers Vulnerable to Unsafe Abortions,' *Guardian*, July 13, 2016 <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/jul/13/cambodias-garment-workers-vulnerable-to-unsafe-abortions> [Accessed August 8, 2019]; Khouth Sophak Chakrya, 'Nearly 300 Garment Workers Treated after Fainting at Takeo Factory,' *The Phnom Penh Post*, 10 July 2018 <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/nearly-300-garment-workers-treated-after-fainting-takeo-factory> [Accessed August 8, 2019].

⁶⁵³ Chenda could not remember the name of this organisation, assuming it was a *boklak angkar* (NGO).

⁶⁵⁴ Chendy Heng, Chenda Heng, and Theary Heng, Interview by Magali An Berthon, trans. Yu and Tomoko Takagi, July 26, 2017, Ta Pouk, Cambodia.

but [...] she is a little bit too old now so she is working here'.⁶⁵⁵

For So Ai and Yuon Sophon from Phnom Chisor, handicrafts were not considered to be a nobler option than the factory.⁶⁵⁶ Garment factories and domestic weaving practices were not in opposition, but simply two income-generating options for rural women in contemporary Cambodia. Yuon Sophon had started to teach her eighteen-year-old daughter how to weave. Nevertheless, for her three children, she hoped 'they might get a better job and a better place than this one'.⁶⁵⁷ While Now Saraem wove for CYK, her two daughters worked in factories, one in embroidery and the other in tailoring.⁶⁵⁸

Without re-evaluating craft practices with improved work conditions and alternatives to bypass the monopolistic role of the middleman, promoting Sennett's reskilling model is not sufficient to take Cambodian craftswomen out of poverty. They will continue to seek higher wages and leave their home towns.

The findings presented in this section explore female weavers' agency. The ways in which weavers experience household duties, economic strain, distribution challenges, mobility and factory work disrupt the discourses of tradition that animate the silkscape, as discussed in Chapter Two, emphasising that silk is an ancestral practice, a showcase for traditional Cambodian culture, and its 'importance [...] for economic development and the cultural heritage of Cambodia, as well as its importance for tourism promotion'.⁶⁵⁹ Female weavers negotiate the constraints of their dual role of caretaker and provider, their stifling dependence on middlemen and lack of access to sourcing and distribution. They aspire to better wages, and if their physical condition allows it they may consider factory work.

Transmitting their knowledge in weaving to their daughters serves two purposes, training

⁶⁵⁵ Now Saraem, Interview with Magali An Berthon, trans. by Rothmono, August 3, 2017, Trapaing Krasaing, Cambodia.

⁶⁵⁶ Now Saraem, Interview with Magali An Berthon ; So Ai, Interview by Magali An Berthon ; 'She says her health is not good to work at the factory so she does that, only weaving. Also her age is not acceptable to work at the factory'. In Yuon Sophon, Interview by Magali An Berthon.

⁶⁵⁷ Yuon Sophon, Interview by Magali An Berthon.

⁶⁵⁸ Now Saraem, Interview with Magali An Berthon.

⁶⁵⁹ Cambodia Ministry of Commerce and ITC, *Cambodia National Silk Strategy*, viii.

someone to help them and passing on marketable skills. From this evidence, the AR project with KY workshop was developed around expanding the weavers' strategies to regain agency within the silkscape through material sourcing, skills building, collaborative work and a form of yarning exchange fostered by interviews.

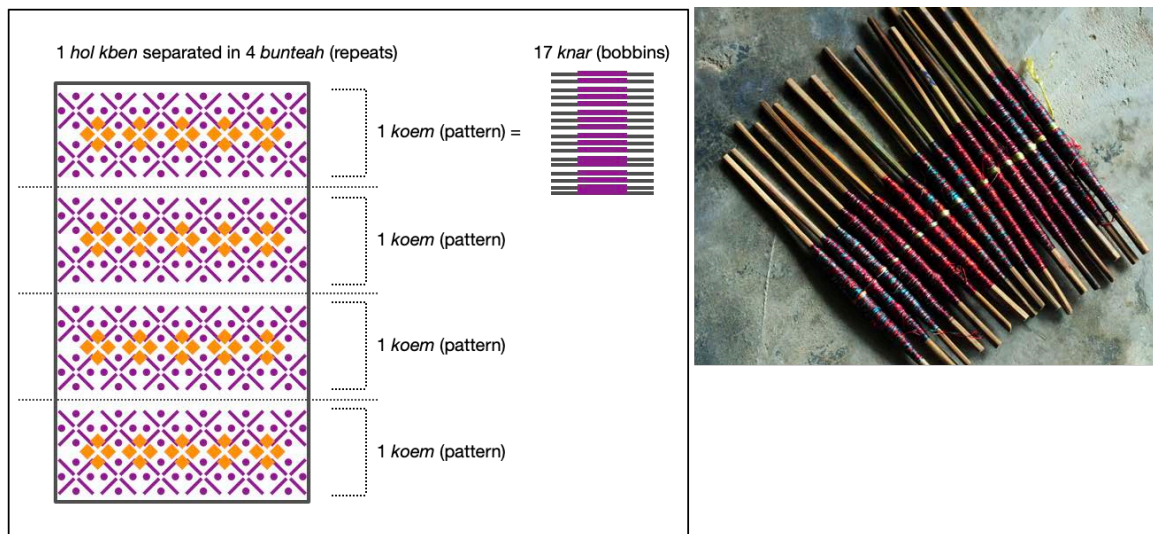
Planning the Krama Yuyu (KY) Action Research (AR) project

This section focuses on the planning of the AR project. KY workshop was organised around the joint leadership of Tomoko Takagi, supervising finances, commissions and administrative work, and Chenda Heng, overseeing textile training and production. For the AR project, Tomoko was interested in supporting the weavers in developing silk ikat samples, to identify the time, cost and processes needed to create a new line of silk products and reach potential new buyers.⁶⁶⁰

I did not intervene in the sourcing of materials, leaving the weavers free to decide what they would use according to their knowledge and experience. In the preparation stage, Tomoko worked on purchasing raw materials and organising the action with the weavers, including coordinating my visit for a week in July. Originally, the KY team had thought about making five ikat samples. In May 2017 they decided to reduce it to three pieces, to fit their cost and work capacity.⁶⁶¹ An unplanned fourth piece was made by Chenda at the end of the project. Each silk *kbun*, four metres long and one metre wide, was deconstructed by Chenda and Tomoko as follows: one piece is made of about four one-metre repeats (*bunteah*) of the ikat pattern (*koem*), each broken into seventeen bobbins (*knar*). For one *kbun*, this meant preparing four sets of seventeen consecutive *knar* of weft ikat threads, following a specific order to form the desired pattern during weaving [Figs.90a-b].

⁶⁶⁰ Tomoko Takagi, personal email exchange with author, June 11, 2017.

⁶⁶¹ Tomoko Takagi and Chenda Heng, personal email exchange with author, May 26, 2017.



Figs.90a-b Diagram of the design structure of one hol piece (kbun) as deconstructed by Tomoko and Chenda for the weaving process. Author's photograph of a set of seventeen bobbins (knar) representing one repeat (bunteah) of one pattern (koem).

The project started in May 2017, to be completed by August 2017. Due to other commissioned work, the weavers eventually finished weaving all the pieces later than originally planned, in October 2017, as shown in Figure 91. During the phases where I was not on site Tomoko acted as a co-researcher, facilitating exchanges with the weavers, taking pictures and informing me by email of key advances in the project. A preliminary scheduling chart from July 2017 provides a good example of her participation.⁶⁶² She prepared it in English and Khmer to explain the planning for approximately one month, from early July to mid-August, and the budget for materials and equipment of about 200 USD. The complex chart details each step of the weaving process, with the number of days and weaver for each task. It starts with warping (*pteah*) for six days' work. Then, it describes the work on weft threads for three *kbun* in separate stages: boiling silk, rolling silk bundles, tying the patterns (*koem*), dyeing, rolling into bobbins and weaving. The ikat designs were designated as *koem* with a letter, and underlined in different colours: orange for *koem* A, green for *koem* B,

⁶⁶² See Appendix A5.

blue/brown for *koem C*. This working document, serving several purposes, helped Tomoko and Chenda plan the weavers' workload, ensure the smooth functioning of the project and share with me the intricate process of *hol*.

2017	ACTION RESEARCH Project full planning	Participants for each task	Communication
May-June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning the action - Sourcing materials (silk and dyes) - Defining the design for each piece 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tomoko - Tomoko, Chenda, Theary - Chenda 	REMOTE Magali /Tomoko Emails exchanges with pictures, charts
July 1-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparing warp - Start tying <i>koem A</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chenda, Theary Assisted by Sarin, Salat, Srei Pon, and So Kim 	
July 24-30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Installing the warp - Making the heddles - Continuing the tying and dyeing of <i>koem A</i> - Tying and dyeing <i>koem B</i> - Dyeing second bath of yellow <i>koem B</i> - Spin weft threads <i>koem A</i> into spools - Start weaving - Interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Theary, Chenda, Sarin, Salat, Srei Pon, So Kim - Chenda, Theary - Chenda, Theary - Chenda, Theary - Chenda, Theary - Theary - Chenda - Chenda, Theary, Chendy, Tomoko, Yu (translator), Magali (interviewer) 	ON SITE Magali (observation) Tomoko (translation) Yu (translation)
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finishing tying and dyeing <i>koem B</i> - Tying and dyeing <i>koem C</i> - Finish weaving <i>koem A</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chenda, Theary - Chenda, Theary - Chenda 	
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finish weaving <i>koem B</i> - Weaving <i>koem C</i> - Editing of the films Warp and Weft 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chenda, Theary - Chenda, Theary - Magali, Remi Buono (editor) 	REMOTE Magali /Tomoko Emails exchanges with pictures
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finish weaving <i>koem C</i> - Tying and dyeing new ikat (not originally planned) - Weaving new ikat <i>koem D</i> - Taking pictures of each piece - Editing of the films Warp and Weft 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chenda, Theary - Chenda - Chenda - Chenda, Theary, Tomoko - Magali, Remi Buono (editor) 	

Fig.91 Action Research project full planning from May to October 2017.

My visit was planned from July 24 to 30, so that the project was advanced enough for me to be able to observe as many steps as possible and conduct interviews. One of these processes was preparing the warp threads, which has often been overlooked in the study of ikat textile techniques. Warping consists in preparing the needed amount of yarn in length and width that will be installed first on the loom. Theary oversaw the winding of the warp dyed yarn on spools. It took five days from June 15 to 21 [Fig.92]. From these spools, yarns

were rewound on a warping frame under an even tension, with a cross at each end of the frame to keep the warp ends separated and in order. This process was conducted on July 21.



Fig.92 Theary winding the black warp threads on spools, Ta Pouk village, June 2017. Photograph courtesy of Tomoko Takagi.

I was able to see what happens after this process including the rolling of the warp onto a beam, its passing through the reed and parts of its installation on the loom. More attention has been put on the tying and dyeing processes of the weft yarns, the weaving, and the study of ikat motifs, which is why I made a short documentary on what I observed of the warping process at the workshop, in addition to another film on weft.⁶⁶³ From August to October, I worked on the interview transcripts. I also collaborated with film editor Remi Buono to turn the footage from my fieldwork into two short films, which are explored further in the observation section.

⁶⁶³ See Green's extensive focus on weft designs in Green, *Traditional Textiles of Cambodia*.

In terms of equipment, one floor loom was set aside specifically for the project at the workshop. Besides giving timely help in some of the stages of the warp and dyeing processes, the rest of the staff continued to work on cotton *krama* orders on the other looms. The weavers informed me about material sourcing only when I arrived on site in July 2017. They had opted for fine mulberry silk, imported from Vietnam, purchased pre-dyed in black for the warp threads and undyed for the weft in Takeo province and shipped to Ta Pouk. Chenda and Theary were not familiar with golden silk.⁶⁶⁴ In assessing the quality of silk, Chenda explained that they wanted a fibre ‘to be soft, heavy, smooth and look beautiful’.⁶⁶⁵ Chenda also relied on her mother Chendy’s advice: she recommended using white fine silk from Vietnam. Discussing golden silk, Chendy said: ‘the process to obtain silk from the cocoon is difficult, and it takes so long, and now no one does it anymore’[Fig.93].⁶⁶⁶ This statement mirrors the observation in Chapter One that Cambodian weavers rely 99 per cent upon white silk and are less familiar with indigenous golden silk.⁶⁶⁷ The fast dyes were imported from Thailand and purchased from a textile shop in Takeo province. Chenda and Theary considered they were an inexpensive option, with quick results and bold colours, and because their mother, Chendy, and aunt, Somaly, had recommended them [Fig.94].⁶⁶⁸

⁶⁶⁴ Chenda Heng, informal conversation, July 26, 2017, Ta Pouk, Cambodia.

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁶ Chendy Heng, Chenda Heng, and Theary Heng, Interview by Magali An Berthon.

⁶⁶⁷ Golden silk needs to be thoroughly degummed to remove its yellow colour to be dyed, while industrially processed white silk is sold pre-washed and ready to be dyed.

⁶⁶⁸ Chendy Heng, Chenda Heng, and Theary Heng, Interview by Magali An Berthon.



Fig.93 Industrially-produced fine silk imported from Vietnam next to golden silk at Krama Yuyu workshop, Ta Pouk village, Cambodia. Author's photograph, July 24, 2017.



Fig.94 Empty packets of pink chemical fast dye from Thailand for the hol tie-dye process. Author's photograph, Ta Pouk village, Cambodia, July 24, 2017.

Chenda worked on designing three *sampot hol* with multicoloured patterns. For inspiration, she explained that she looked at some books she owns but ‘doesn’t usually use’, adding: ‘in the books there are simple designs that she noticed for *hol*’.⁶⁶⁹ She selected five different polychromic geometric *koem* (designs) with patterns of small and large scale, saying that ‘she cannot make another design, this is an easy one she can do, but for an animal or a bird it is more difficult for her’.⁶⁷⁰ She is seen here – photographed by Tomoko – drawing sections of these motifs on paper that deconstruct the key module for *koem* B to determine how she would reinterpret them on the tying frame [Figs.95a-b]. During the tying, she did not use the paper but kept the book open on the *sampot hol* picture she had chosen.



Figs.95a-b Chenda looking at *hol* motifs in books and drafting the tying patterns, Ta Pouk village, May 2017. Photograph courtesy of Tomoko Takagi.

⁶⁶⁹ Chendy Heng, Chenda Heng, and Theary Heng, Interview by Magali An Berthon.

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid.

Observing weaving during the Action Research project at Krama Yuyu

This section moves to the observation stage of the AR project. This period of fieldwork took place in the week of July 24, 2017, at KY indoor workshop in Ta Pouk village, which accommodates about thirty looms, large stocks of coloured cotton threads, a mini showroom space, and a dyeing area with pots and vats. I was staying in a hotel in Siem Reap, about 15km from Ta Pouk, and went to the facility with a tuk-tuk driver, staying from 8am to 5pm, including lunch. I spent three full days on site, spread across the week so that I could observe different kinds of tasks, as presented on this chart [Fig.96]. The goal was to document the key stages of making silk *hol* in addition to interviewing Chenda, Theary, and their mother Chendy. July 24 was dedicated to the warping stage and July 26 to the tying and dyeing of two designs *koem* A and B, followed by an interview session in which Chendy, who was only available to join that day. July 30 was spent in starting the weaving of *koem* A on the loom and interviewing Chenda, Theary, and Tomoko about their impressions of the silk weaving project. On the days when I was not present, weavers continued to work on specific steps such as tying and dyeing weft threads and making the heddles for the loom. I did not take part in the weaving process myself and used photography and film as tools to transcribe the embodied experience of *hol* practices reclaimed by KY weavers.

KRAMA YUYU Ta Pouk workshop	ACTION RESEARCH Planning week July 24-30, 2017	
	PROCESSES	PARTICIPANTS
July 24	Warping Passing threads through reed Tying and dyeing Koem B Dyeing first bath pink Koem B Tying Koem A	Chenda, Theary, Sarin, Salat, Srei Pon, and So Kim Chenda, So Kim Chenda Chenda, Theary, Sarin Chenda
July 25	Processes continue at the workshop - no observation Tying and dyeing Koem A/B	Chenda, Theary
July 26	Tying and dyeing Koem B Dyeing second bath yellow Koem B Tying and dyeing Koem A	Theary Theary, Chenda Chenda
	INTERVIEWS	Theary, Chendy, Chenda, Tomoko Yu, translator Magali, researcher
July 27	Processes continue at the workshop - no observation Making heddles on warp Tying and dyeing Koem A/B	Chenda, Theary Chenda, Theary
July 28	Processes continue at the workshop - no observation Making heddles on warp Tying and dyeing Koem A/B	Chenda, Theary Chenda, Theary
July 29	Processes continue at the workshop - no observation Making heddles on warp Tying and dyeing Koem A/B	Chenda, Theary Chenda, Theary
July 30	Preparing Koem B sets of <i>knar</i> Making heddles on warp Fixing the warp Weaving	Theary Chenda, Theary Chenda Chenda
	INTERVIEWS	Theary, Chenda Tomoko, participant/translator Magali, researcher

Fig.96 Chart of the AR observation and interview programme.

On July 24, Chenda, Theary and their team started preparing the pre-dyed black silk threads destined for the warp. Chenda and her sister Theary had helped their mother as teenagers but they had never completed all the stages of warping silk before. One of the later steps of warping consists of methodically winding the full width of the warp yarns, without tangling the threads, on a beam which will be placed on the loom, keeping an even tension in the process.⁶⁷¹ It was led by Chenda, Theary, Sarin, Salat, Srei Pon and So Kim, using the whole length of the workshop to keep the 17m-long warp in tension between two

⁶⁷¹ See Appendix A2.

wooden sticks at each end and operate the beaming process [Fig.97].⁶⁷² I recorded this action with a digital camera, which provided the footage for the short film *The Silk Chronicles: Warp*. While observing the process and filming, the main thing I noticed was that instead of giving verbal orders, Chenda physically moved each weaver around the warp threads, between the different stations. She then brought the warping board for winding. Each weaver moved in a coordinated manner, contributing to the straightening and separating of the warp threads running under and over the rods and rolling around the warping board. Chenda's instructions were mostly implicit, initiating each step and letting the rest of the team follow her lead instinctively, while also relying on their own knowledge of warping cotton threads.

In addition, the process of editing the film, and being able to watch the action several times, has enabled an additional layer of analysis around warping as a form of choreography. In the film, they swap places, eyes riveted on the warp, placing their hands and touching it with their fingers to check the tension. I used the split-screen effect in the editing to show the interplay between weavers and their movement within the workshop space [Fig.98].

⁶⁷² *The Silk Chronicles: Warp*, film, dir. Magali An Berthon, 2017 [TC 02:14]



Fig.97 Weavers in the warping process trying to keep the threads untangled, Ta Pouk village, Cambodia. Author's photograph, July 24, 2017.

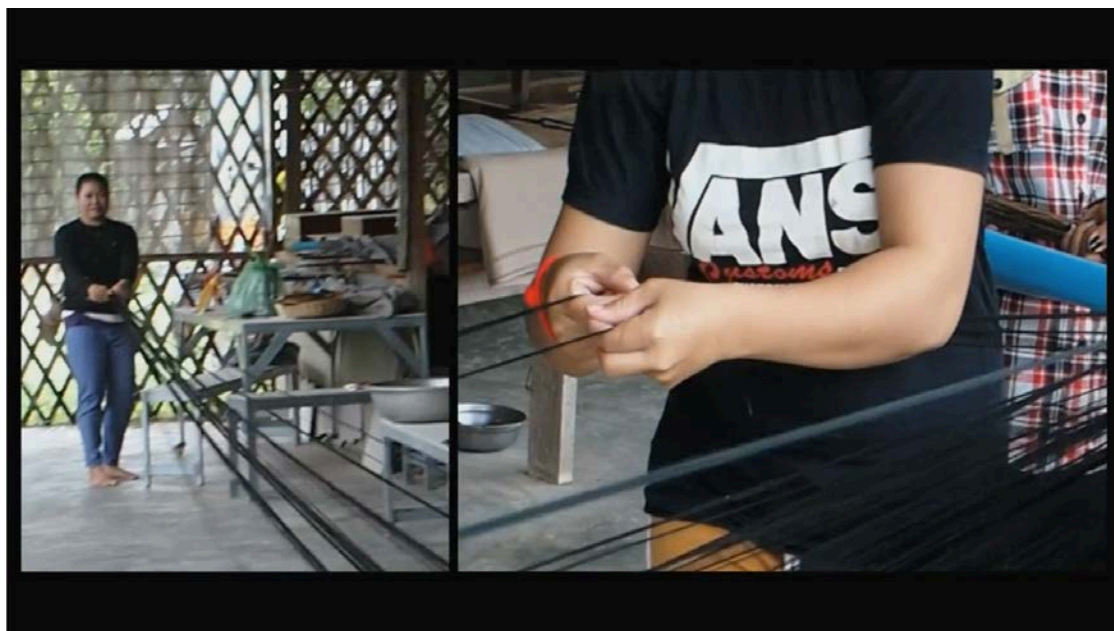


Fig.98 Split screen showing weavers on both end of the warp threads to keep the tension even. From The Silk Chronicles: Warp, film, dir. Magali An Berthon, 2017 [TC 01:10].

Once the warp had been beamed, the team moved to the drawing-in stage, which consists of drawing the warp ends through the harness' heddles or the reed in the order required by the design of the cloth to be woven.⁶⁷³ Chenda selected a metallic reed (*tchak tamani*) one metre wide.⁶⁷⁴ Theary sat on the floor and meticulously passed each warp end through each dent of the reed, with the help of another weaver [Fig.99]. They finished the process during the following day.



Fig.99 One weaver separating the threads and the other passing it through the reed's dent with a hook, Ta Pouk village, Cambodia. Author's photograph, July 24, 2017.

For the weft, the weavers worked on tying and dyeing the first two pieces, *koem A* and *koem B*, on July 24-26. To achieve the desired effect of polychromic patterns using the

⁶⁷³ Satya Narayan Dash, *Handloom Industry in India*, 109. The heddles are usually made of metallic wire or fine cord and are attached to the shaft of a loom. Warp threads are passed through each heddle to be evenly arranged, and follow specific weave structures, when shafts will lift up and down. The warp threads usually pass through the heddles first and then through the reed's dents. This stage of passing the warp ends through each dent to separate the threads evenly is called sleying. The reed is held by the beater. The shuttle holding weft threads will cross through the warp ends for the textile to be woven.

⁶⁷⁴ See Appendix A2.

resist-dye technique the weavers worked through four successive rounds of tying, dyeing in one colour and drying the tied skein. They manipulated the silk weft threads through several forms: on a tying frame, knotted into a bundle for dyeing, then turned into spools, and finally being woven on the loom. Across three days of observation over a week, I saw the various stages of the weft ikat process, including tying, dyeing and the step called *bauk*, which involves hitting dyed silk skeins in a metallic basin to allow the dye to go deeper into the fibre in spite of the knotted areas.

Again, filming provided a methodology to capture these gestures and analyse them.⁶⁷⁵

Reviewing the footage used to make *Weft* confirmed that these successive processes demand outstanding hand skills, precision and strength, but also mental skills such as anticipation, the ability to project and imagine, and adaptability to spatial and environmental constraints. On *koem* B, Chenda tied the weft threads meticulously with plastic strips to prevent the dye from colouring these areas. She proceeded to the first dye bath, a bright pink (*pkaa chu*) chemical fast dye from Thailand mixed with warm water, without gloves, which coloured her skin [Fig.100]. After successively plunging the silk bundle into a pink vat over a fire and leaving it to boil, the weavers rinsed it and left it to dry outside.

⁶⁷⁵ *The Silk Chronicles: Weft*, film, dir. Magali An Berthon, 2017 [TC 00:41-00:55]



Fig.100 Chenda and Theory's hands checking the quality of the pink dyeing process, Ta Pouk village, Cambodia. Author's photograph, July 24, 2017.

As stated earlier, this AR project allowed the weavers to implement their own strategies and focused on dynamics of knowledge in silk-making. While I refrained from intervening, I still raised my concern that this type of fast dye is considered harmful for the environment and toxic for the makers' health.⁶⁷⁶ Weavers did not wear protective goggles or gloves, and seemed unconcerned. Tomoko, for her part, took note of it. This health and safety issue will be addressed in the next section on the weavers' interviews and evaluation of the AR project.

On July 26, Theory started the second round of tying for *koem* B, installing the weft threads on an ikat bamboo frame to unmask certain areas and cover others with thin plastic strips in preparation for the next dye bath of yellow (*luong*) [Fig.101]. Theory's hand

⁶⁷⁶ Rebecca Moss, 'Mass Fainting and Clothing Chemicals,' *How We Get to Next* <https://howwegettonext.com/mass-fainting-and-clothing-chemicals-c352b94bb54b> [Accessed June 16, 2019]

movements were fast and precise. The film footage emphasises how each gesture seems to repeat the previous one, even though it ties a different area of the silk weft, wrapping the plastic strips tightly around the threads, cutting the remnants with a knife, and moving across the tying frame.⁶⁷⁷ Each knot builds on the previous one to repel the yellow dye and form the planned pattern on the weft. In that sense, this phase of observation demonstrates how the ikat motifs appearing on the final textiles are a product of repeated gestures of tying, dyeing, untying. As Ingold suggests, in craftsmanship ‘no two strokes are identical. And it is also why sawing has a rhythmic quality. For there to be rhythm, movement must be felt. Rhythmicity implies not just repetition but differences within repetition’.⁶⁷⁸ Theary set a specific pace for her practice in a dialogue between her hands, the plastic ties and the weft threads, in an embodied ‘monitoring of the task as it unfolds’.⁶⁷⁹

While she mastered tying, Theary struggled with dyeing, as she was less experienced. The yellow dye would not take. Her sister Chenda took over, checked the dye vat, added more chemical dyestuff and plunged the tied bundle more thoroughly.⁶⁸⁰ The weavers eventually obtained the desired effect, with some parts of the weft in bright yellow and other parts over-dyeing the pink areas to create a warm reddish-orange tone [Fig.102].

⁶⁷⁷ *The Silk Chronicles: Weft* [TC 03:20-04:20]

⁶⁷⁸ Tim Ingold, ‘The Textility of Making,’ *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 34 (2010): 98.

⁶⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸⁰ *The Silk Chronicles: Weft* [TC 05:00-06:43]



Fig.101 Theory on the second round of tying koem B, unmasking certain areas and covering others with plastic strips, Ta Pouk village, Cambodia. Author's photograph, July 26, 2017.



Fig.102 Split screen showing Chenda and Theory dyeing the tied pink silk skein in the yellow vat. From The Silk Chronicles: Weft, film, dir. Magali An Berthon, 2017 [TC 04:33].

Finally, once she had finished dyeing the silk skein for *koem A*, Theary transferred it to spools made of wooden sticks (*knar*) for weaving.⁶⁸¹ Holding the spool with her left hand and rolling the spinning wheel with her right, Theary wound the threads onto sets of successive spools, each set forming one repeat of the motif. Crouching on the floor, she followed the continuous movement of the thread, using her hands to operate the wheel, feeling the threads rolling around the spool with the fingers of her left hand, as shown in this close-up [Fig.103]. Touching helped her assess and adjust the right rhythm to wind the thread evenly on the spools.



Fig.103 Theary spinning the multicoloured weft silk threads for koem B on spools, Ta Pouk village, Cambodia. Author's photograph, July 30, 2017.

In my absence on July 28-29, Chenda and Theary installed the warp on the one loom mobilised for the project. On my final visit in July 30, Chenda finished this process and fixed the edges. She then proceeded to thread the heddles on three sets of rods to make three

⁶⁸¹ *The Silk Chronicles: Weft* [TC 06:59-09:40] See again Figure 90.

shafts [Figs.104a-b]. Cambodian weavers make non-reusable cord heddles by hand, whereas European looms have pre-made wire heddles. This step is often outsourced to other villagers, to make the process easier and faster.⁶⁸²

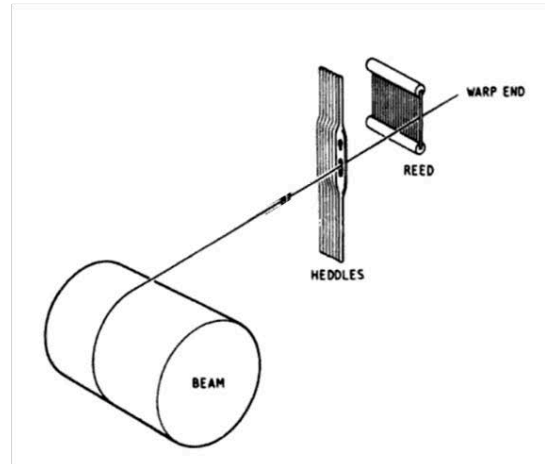


Fig.104a Chenda manually making the heddles on the loom, Author's photograph, Ta Pouk village, Cambodia, July 30, 2017. Fig.104b Diagram of where the heddles are positioned on the loom.

Resettling in the Siem Reap area has modified Chenda's and Theary's practice without the access to a network of subcontractors in neighbouring villages. Chenda explained: 'in Takeo province they have a couple of people, experts in doing this thing [heddles] [...] they will bring it to their house and they do it, after they're done, they bring it back to them [the weavers]'.⁶⁸³ In this case, heddles are done separately and looped around upper and lower

⁶⁸² Chenda and Theary Heng, Interview by Magali An Berthon about Chenda's village in Takeo Province, trans. Yu and Tomoko Takagi, July 30, 2017, Ta Pouk, Cambodia. ; Ter Horst, *Weaving into Cambodia*, 130.

⁶⁸³ Ibid.

rods. Once ready, heddles are directly installed and attached to the loom. The weaver then threads the warp ends through the heddles one by one and then ties the warp on the front beam of the loom, and then draws them through the reed. Subcontracting this process thus changes the order of the different steps.

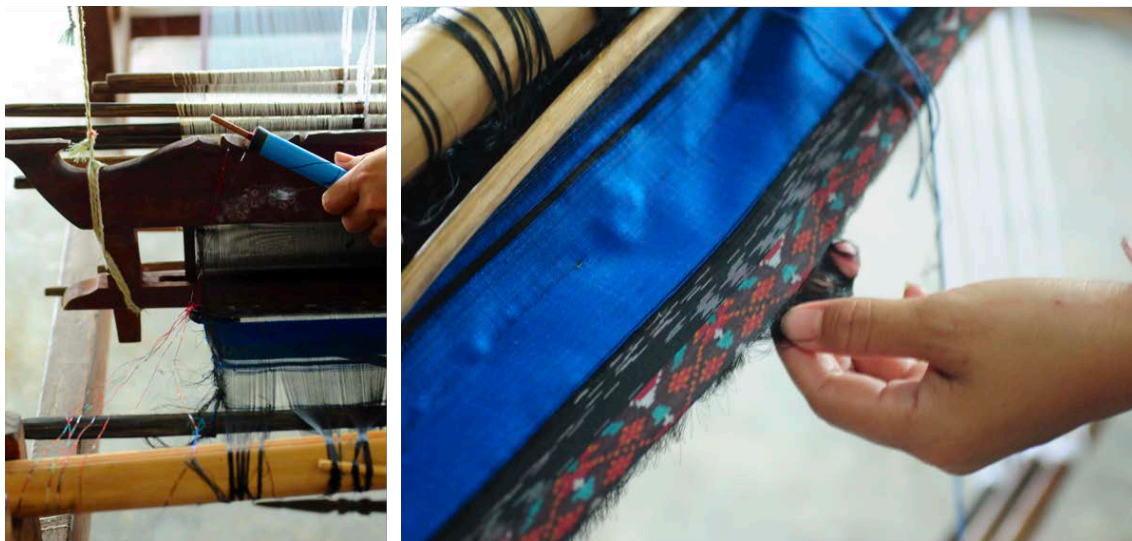
On the loom, Chenda spent time coating the warp, using a bristle brush (*praing*) dipped in water mixed with tapioca starch to protect the fine silk threads and help the process [Fig.105]. Tomoko, who was present, explained that tapioca starch strengthened the fibres. However, if the weather is too hot, the starch dries too fast and it can make the silk brittle. On the other hand, if it is rainy, the starch does not dry and also damages the silk. Marchand has rightly argued that it is impossible to deny the impact of the environment on the learning experience. By environment, he means 'artifacts, tools-to-hand, and raw materials; space, place, and architecture; paths and boundaries; time-frames and temporal rhythms; light, darkness, and weather'.⁶⁸⁴ The weaving workshop, operating under specific weather conditions, became a micro-environment to which the weavers actively responded.

Once the warp was ready, Chenda wove about 12cm of blue and black segments to start. She then used the first spool of the *knar* set of 17 spools prepared by her sister in the shuttle to compose the ikat motif repeat on the loom [Fig.106]. By the end of the day, she had managed to weave a segment of 5cm (on a 1m width) as shown in this picture [Fig.107]. *Hol* textiles are woven from the reverse. The exterior side of the fabric can be seen when the warp is unrolled from the loom. On an uneven twill, while both sides are showing the ikat patterns, the reverse is darker (showing more of the warp threads) and the exterior side is brighter (showing more of the weft threads).

⁶⁸⁴ Marchand, *Making Knowledge*, 2.



Fig.105 Chenda coating the warp with water mixed with tapioca, Ta Pouk village, Cambodia. Author's photograph, July 30, 2017.



Figs.106-107 Left: A spool of the knar for koem A is put in a shuttle and passed though the warp. Right: Chenda's hand showing the multicoloured section she has woven. Author's photographs, Ta Pouk village, Cambodia, July 30, 2017.

This period of observation has focused on the weavers' decisions and actions. This section is based on memories of my direct observations during fieldwork, that were also captured in note-taking and photography. It also relied on the reviewing of film footage and the editing of *Warp* and *Weft* as methodological tools to explore weaving as a gestural practice. The films provide a material illustration of tacit knowledge. Following philosopher

Michael Polyani, Iwo Zmyslony developed a linguistic analysis of the term ‘tacit’, defining it as ‘quiet’, or ‘without the use of speech’, from the Latin adjective *tacite*. More broadly, Ingold has argued that ‘tacit’ has a range of meanings, ‘from the silent through the unspoken to the implicit’.⁶⁸⁵ Acknowledging that the weavers’ voices have been mediated by translation, the use of film offers a more direct access to the weavers’ bodies as producers of knowledge and how silk *hol* processes are enacted in a specific space and environment. The technical description of *hol* weaving and the visual analysis of a selection of finished pieces (seen in Chapter One) are enhanced by witnessing the complexity of thought and skill put into weaving, shown through the hands and bodies of the weavers.

Handicraft production inherently involves the performance of making.⁶⁸⁶ In Chapter Two, the performance of handicrafts, for instance at the AA silk farm in Puok, was used to signify the authentication of Cambodian silk weaving to a tourist audience. At KY, weavers performed silk ikat weaving to implement the project, but also for my benefit, as researcher and observer. These ideas will be further developed in Chapter Four, where embodied knowledge is explored through the use of silk in ceremonial events, dance and cultural events in the context of the Cambodian American diaspora.

Weavers’ interviews: agencies in knowledge and skills transmission in the Action Research project

As detailed in Figure 96, the observation phase was complemented by interviews on July 26 and 30. On July 26, the interview took place during the lunch break for about an hour and a half, and involved Chenda, Theary, their mother Chendy, translator Yu, Tomoko, and myself. On July 30 the interview was more informal, taking place throughout the day and

⁶⁸⁵ Ingold, *Making*, 109.

⁶⁸⁶ See Kendall, ‘Intangible Traces and Material Things: The Performance of Heritage Handicraft,’ 550.

involving Chenda, Tomoko and myself. For example, I talked to Chenda, with Tomoko's help, while she was working on the loom.

The July 26 interview between Chenda, Theary and Chendy illuminated their strategies to re-engage unused know-how and the importance of skills transmission within the family.

The discussion also revealed the ways in which reclaimed and old knowledge were mobilised in the reenactment of *hol* weaving practices. Weavers used a series of tactics to achieve the silk *hol* project, such as relying on their body memory and their former training, seeking advice from their family, discussing with each other, and rehearsing the steps.

Chendy explained how she learned silk weaving, saying she 'is originally from Phnom Penh. But during the Khmer Rouge period she was evacuated to Kandal province. But after that she got married and moved to Takeo. And then she learned, she started to make the weaving and the silk'.⁶⁸⁷ To the question 'why weaving' she said: 'Takeo province is the area for weaving, so it was a way to make a living'.⁶⁸⁸ In Takeo, she learned with Eung, her mother-in-law. For a year, she 'watched her weaving every day, and then she eventually was able to do it [...] First she started to do tying, things like that. And after she started weaving'.⁶⁸⁹ She added 'it was complicated to make a living with weaving [...] besides weaving, she was also growing rice'.

She had six children and trained both her daughters. Chenda started at twelve: 'it was not perfect. She only learned how to do this, the tying. But after she turned fourteen she learned to weave. But she was tiny and she could not reach the floor with her feet, so it was difficult to weave'.⁶⁹⁰ For Theary it was 'when she was about sixteen or seventeen years old when she was in high school. After she left school and started to focus on weaving'. Chendy added 'it's easy to learn. They just need an example and they can do it'.⁶⁹¹

⁶⁸⁷ Chendy, Chenda, and Theary Heng, Interview by Magali An Berthon.

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁹¹ Ibid.

She moved to Siem Reap to follow her daughters in 2005.⁶⁹² She brought with her from Takeo a repertoire of weft ikat motifs in the form of spools of dyed silk threads, with which she poses in this picture [Figs.108a-b]. She said: 'this is the silk they roll to make a spool. That belongs to her, her collection'.⁶⁹³ To the question of what the patterns for each were, she answered that 'she doesn't remember now. It's all mixed up. This one she knows. She made a diagram with the colour and she remembers. But some others it's mixed up together'.⁶⁹⁴

During the interview, the Heng family was eager to share their knowledge and build on each other's thoughts, discussing these ikat spools: 'these come from Takeo from ten years ago. And she [Chendy] has kept them in Bakong. After she left Takeo, she made a couple, three *kbun* that she has sold'.⁶⁹⁵ As ikat patterns yet to be woven, these spools materialise Chendy's knowledge to tap into and reclaim. Chendy stopped weaving silk around 2006, because her 'eyes started to be blurry' and she needed glasses. She became a nun in 2016. Illustrating how silk knowledge is grounded in a matrilineal relationship, Chendy considered that she had 'transferred all of her knowledge to her daughters, everything about weaving and the *hol*'.⁶⁹⁶ Passing on silk weaving skills was directly predicated on economic necessity, while also being considered a means to gain autonomy. Chendy admitted that she 'is *sabay chet* (happy) [...], she doesn't have to worry. Her daughters can survive by themselves and depend on themselves. No need to ask her for money'.⁶⁹⁷ Chendy was also pleased to see Chenda 'teach people [at KY] how to do weaving. So maybe they will teach to the next generation. So the skills will not go away'.⁶⁹⁸

⁶⁹² For more on elderly internal migrations in Cambodia, see: [Sabina Lawreniuk](#) and Laurie Parsons, 'Mother, Grandmother, Migrant: Elder Translocality and the Renegotiation of Household Roles in Cambodia,' *Environment and Planning A* 49, no. 7 (2017): 1664-1683.

⁶⁹³ Chendy, Chenda, and Theary Heng, Interview by Magali An Berthon.

⁶⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁸ Ibid.



Figs.108a-b Chendy Heng showing her collection of silk ikat spools brought from Takeo province, Ta Pouk village, Cambodia. Author's photograph, July 26, 2017.

Moving to Chenda and her knowledge on *hol*, she remembered how to tie and design *hol* patterns because she 'practised a lot from 2006 to 2007'.⁶⁹⁹ To prepare for the AR project, Chenda said:

'it's difficult to bring back the memory to make the *hol*. For the *krama* she can do it, but for the *hol* she had to research and learn a lot [...] when she did not remember, she asked her mother or the auntie in Takeo province to get more information on how to make it [...] she asked only about dyeing colours, between natural dyeing and chemical dyes. She wanted to know about how to do it'.⁷⁰⁰

About collaborating with her sister Theary, Chenda said it was:

'team work, for this project she is working with her sister. It's going well. Sometimes they ask each other, learn from each other. Because sometimes she forgets and Theary remembers. And then the opposite. So they ask each other'.⁷⁰¹

Chenda said that 'in the future if this project works well, she is willing to create some more and design more. Not only this pattern but maybe animal design or... She is also willing to

⁶⁹⁹ Chendy, Chenda, and Theary Heng, Interview by Magali An Berthon.

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁰¹ Ibid.

learn more also'.⁷⁰² To select people to train, she would look for qualities of patience and perseverance, but also a real interest in learning and practising.

The weavers successfully produced four distinctive polychromic silk *kbun* in the weft ikat technique, which they had not practised for more than a decade. Tomoko communicated with me by email and sent me pictures of Chenda and Theary showing the final samples in October 2017. Tomoko did not specifically share their feelings about these *hol* pieces, except in one email, in which Chenda thought that making the *hol* pieces had gone well, but had taken a long time. This was also expressed in the July 26 interview. Chenda said then: 'I did not have any problem with any of the stages, but all take a long time. [...] the longest process is to tie and dye and wash [the silk threads]'.⁷⁰³ On her end, when asked what she thought about while weaving, Theary expressed feeling demotivated at times, stating that 'sometimes while she's working she's thinking it's taking so long and the cost of the *hol* is very cheap. So she stops for a little. And after that she has the desire to work on it again, so she goes back to it'.⁷⁰⁴ The work is arduous. In her emails from August, Tomoko explained that the dyeing process of silk wefts and the threading of the warp took longer than anticipated. Chenda and Theary also had to change the reed because it was damaging the threads, which delayed the process by another few days.

However, the study of these *hol* samples designs reveals the agency of weavers in the ways they approach their skills to either follow traditional styles or innovate. *Koem* A, B and C are fine silk *hol* textiles in a polychromic combination in deep red and orange tones with blue and white accents, with all-over geometric motifs and contrasting borders [Figs.109-110-111]. *Koem* C displays a larger and more intricate decorative framework, playing with successive stripes of red, yellow, purple and orange, with additional triangle motifs and a line of white dots. For these pieces, Chenda and Theary followed the principles

⁷⁰² Chendy, Chenda, and Theary Heng, Interview by Magali An Berthon.

⁷⁰³ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid.

of colour and composition learned in Takeo province in their youth. Asked why she used a black warp (*pteah khmao*), Chenda explained that she found it beautiful and that it enhanced the other colours after weaving. She spontaneously stated that ‘a long time ago when they made *hol* like this, they made it black and red, in the traditional way’.⁷⁰⁵

What is striking is how these compare to *koem D*, which was developed in a completely different style. After the three pieces were completed, and despite their time-consuming process, Chenda decided to use the remainder of the silk warp to make a fourth *kbun*. In July, Chenda had stated: ‘I want to do my own design’ for the last piece. Tomoko emailed me in September to seek my opinion on the design. I wanted to let her choose, but to help I suggested that she could look into her early cotton pieces for KY in ikat and natural dyes for ideas.⁷⁰⁶ In the end, Chenda experimented with neutral tones of grey and black, deconstructing motifs she had developed in the past with stripes and experimenting with a larger scale [Fig.112]. The result showcases the weaver’s versatile personality and ability to innovate. It was only after Chenda and Theary had completed the three pieces according to their idea of ‘traditional *hol*’ that Chenda felt empowered to create a more personal style, following her technical knowledge of *hol* while expanding it with a bold repertoire of new designs and hues.

⁷⁰⁵ Chenda Heng and Tomoko Takagi, Interview with Magali An Berthon about making heddles, trans. Yu, July 26, 2017, Ta Pouk, Cambodia.

⁷⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

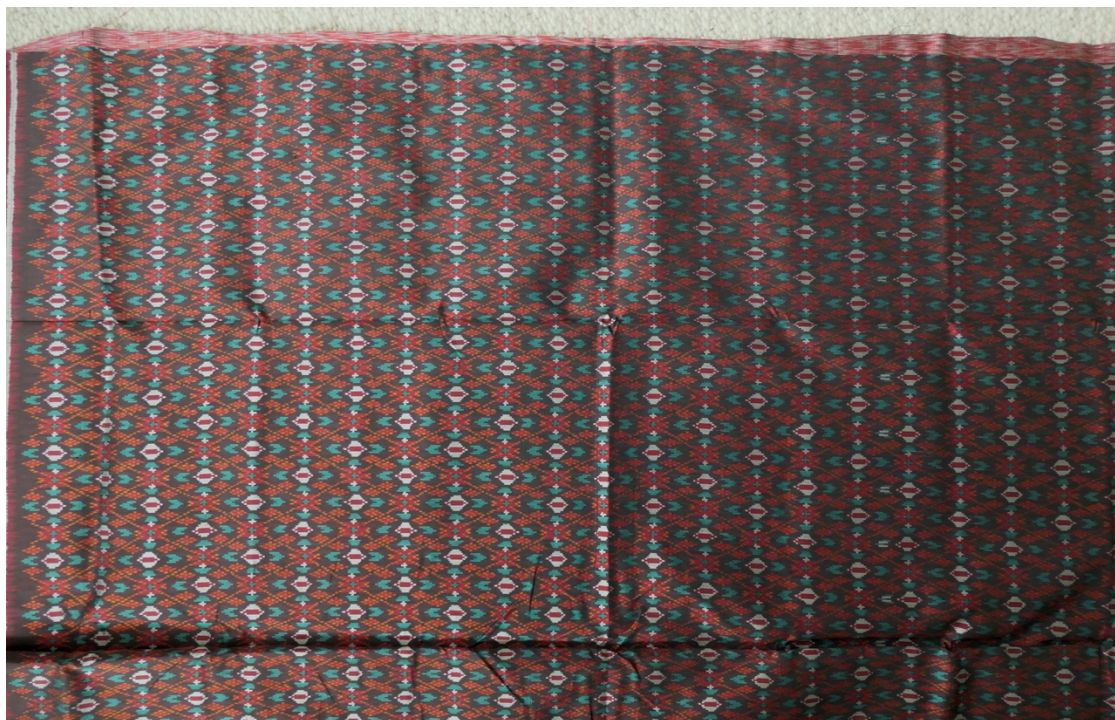


Fig.109 Detail of the finished hol kbun koem A, October 2020.



Fig.110 Detail of the finished hol kbun koem B, October 2020.



Fig.111 Detail of the finished hol kbun koem C, October 2020.



Fig.112 Chenda with the fourth kbun she wove in neutral tones and mixed patterns. Photograph courtesy of Tomoko Takagi.

Chenda and Theary have re-engaged with a practice learned at home in Takeo in a reconfigured context, by collaborating with Tomoko and four other weavers at the KY workshop in Ta Pouk, creating new dynamics of collective work and skills transmission. The ways in which weavers (Chenda with Theary, Chendy in support and other members at KY), rely on each other is key to support their learning and practice. As Marchand writes, the 'social nature of knowledge [...] is realised on-line: *in* communication and, more generally, *in* interaction'.⁷⁰⁷ Knowledge-making and cultural transmission exist in a movement between individual and collective experience, in which embodied knowledge reconnects social interactions with crafts practices.

The fruitful discussions that happened between me and the makers during the interviews reinforced the added value of dialogue, which is by itself a producer of knowledge. By enabling the weavers to articulate, through practice and interviews, how they mobilised different forms of knowledge, from tacit knowledge, body memory and family memory to collective skills, their status as experts was legitimised. It is clear that this AR project, as a practice-led initiative, can be part of a progressive shift in methodologies of research with indigenous groups. Going back to Smith's Indigenous Research Agenda (see Figure 79), the AR project clearly accompanied the participants during three of these processes: *healing*, in terms of reclaiming a lost practice; *transformation*, by questioning the weavers' knowledge, memories and positionality, and *mobilisation*, by inviting them to be active agents of the reclamation process, deciding on planning, resources, design, and the distribution of tasks. Inclusivity could be increased by engaging weaving groups further in documenting their practice themselves, or interacting with local researchers, which my position as outsider researcher did not allow. For example, in community-based projects, Smith encourages the integration of 'insider' indigenous researchers working within their own communities,

⁷⁰⁷ Marchand, *Making Knowledge*, 11.

which presents a new range of ethical challenges around reflexivity, neutrality, and objectivity.⁷⁰⁸

The project with KY represented only one cycle of AR, which could be followed by a new cycle of testing new implications and modified premises in the future. Considering issues of health and safety around materials, the use of Thai fast chemical dyes in particular, Tomoko understood that toxic dyestuffs could affect weavers, as well as putting potential customers off. She explained by email that for a second cycle she was looking at safe chemical dyes from the German brand DyStar, as well as considering using natural dyes, acknowledging that both options would be more costly. KY has been considering developing a collection of silk scarves, to diversify its offer to reach a higher-end market and attract potential new buyers. The second cycle of AR could adjust the production process and material sourcing to make it more time-efficient and sustainable and use *hol* designs for marketable silk products. This would require additional funding, which remains a major constraint in indigenous, rural, and community-based contexts. KY was, it seems, hoping I could help them with funding again. Tomoko wrote that the other weavers at KY who had not engaged in the project had expressed interest in learning silk weaving.

However, in an email exchange with Tomoko in July 2019, I found out that Chenda Heng had left KY in Spring 2019. The reasons were not communicated to me. Theary was expecting a baby and would only resume her weaving activities at the beginning of 2020. She would be the only weaver with silk ikat knowledge at the workshop. This last update has undermined the positive effects of the AR project in reviving silk knowledge in the long term, limiting the possibilities of transmitting these techniques to the rest of the weavers at KY.

⁷⁰⁸ Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 127.

Weavers' voices on memory, knowledge, and taste in silk practices

With the examples of Chendy keeping her old spools of ikat yarn and Chenda rehearsing specific steps of *hol* weaving she had learned as a teenager, the AR project has highlighted how memory informs the weavers' knowledge on silk.⁷⁰⁹ This section now turns to my other periods of fieldwork to examine further the role of memory in the formation of knowledge and taste. The interviews with Yuon Sophon and Pon, the older weavers from Phnom Chisor, exemplify the connection between weaving experience and past memories. The trauma of the KR regime was never directly addressed in the conversations, but periodisation referring to the 'Pol Pot era' was frequent as a cornerstone marking the notion of a 'before' and 'after' the regime.⁷¹⁰ When asked about the chronology of her weaving activity, Pon replied that she 'married just before Pol Pot regime. She just learned at that time. Studied at school also and learned weaving. She was moved to live in another city. So after the Pol Pot regime, she moved back, started weaving again [because] it was the only skill that she had'.⁷¹¹ About silk fibre, Pon said: 'when she was young, her mother she used to do silk by herself, produced by the local worms', a process Pon never really successfully mastered, and which she has chosen not to pursue, by buying imported industrial silk.⁷¹² Asked whether her children would continue weaving, Yuon Sophon said they would not. She talked about 'before', an undetermined past which referred in this case to before the expansion of garment factories in Takeo province. She said '*before*, every house had a loom, but not only one loom, but even three looms also, in the past. But *now* the women go to work for the factory.'⁷¹³ Her comment lacked any form of nostalgia. These accounts are lived

⁷⁰⁹ Communication scholar Svend Brinkmann, with Dorthe Kirkegaard Thomsen, has argued that the memories shared in interviews are subjective: 'rather, [the interviewee] is talking about a specific memory of an experience'. See Svend Brinkmann, *Qualitative Interviewing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 38.

⁷¹⁰ Pon, Interview with Magali An Berthon.

⁷¹¹ Ibid.

⁷¹² Ibid.

⁷¹³ Yuon Sophon, Interview with Magali An Berthon.

experiences of Cambodia's history, and they participate in the formation of a collective memory. The elderly weavers at Phnom Chisor situated their present practice in contrast to ideas about ancient ways.

At CYK training centre in Trapaing Krasaing village, Bati district, Takeo, Pheach, in her mid-thirties, had arrived with her youngest daughter to collect golden silk threads [Fig. 89]. At CYK, Pheach was given free materials – dyes and golden silk – and a decent commission for *pidan* weaving. Besides being motivated by these good working conditions, Pheach was unusual in the way she expressed a deep vocation for weaving.⁷¹⁴ She said that 'not only she likes it, but she loves it. Because it's customs, it's Khmer. It's Khmer customs. It is the identity of Cambodia. She really really loves weaving'.⁷¹⁵ To the question 'what do you like about weaving?' she answered that 'her only inspiration is doing what the Khmer ancestors have been doing and she wants to continue'.⁷¹⁶ She was the fourth generation of weavers in her family: 'up until her mother, this is what her grandmother told her, her mother is the third generation of weavers. But before she doesn't know if they were weavers or not. [...] They [the family] started even before the KR regime. During the KR regime, weaving has stopped like everywhere else. But after the KR they began again'.⁷¹⁷ Her family worked with golden silk until about 1993 and then switched to Vietnamese silk, which explains why Pheach had never tried weaving with this material until joining CYK. Pheach also recalled childhood memories about *pidan* textiles:

'When she was younger, a small child, she used to see *pidan* in the pagoda. But she doesn't see it anymore [...] she saw a *pidan* on the walls of a pagoda. when she's making the same thing like that, she feels a sense of pride in what she is doing [...] *pidan* was beautiful'.⁷¹⁸

Pheach's love for silk weaving is connected to her childhood memories and how she has

⁷¹⁴ Pheach, Interview with Magali An Berthon, translated by Rothmono, August 3, 2017, Trapaing Krasaing, Cambodia ; CYK pays an average of 170 USD per *pidan* piece to the weavers.

⁷¹⁵ Ibid.

⁷¹⁶ Ibid.

⁷¹⁷ Ibid.

⁷¹⁸ Ibid.

established her identity as a Cambodian woman. Wanting to continue a typically Cambodian practice she deems beautiful has also been a motivation to seek training and learn *pidan* at CYK.

By focusing on the production of *hol* textile samples, the AR project has also linked silk with questions of taste, style and views on Cambodian culture. During the interviews accompanying the fieldwork in Phnom Chisor weavers also showed the textiles they made for Cambodian female consumers. To find ideas, they said they were discussing with each other, listening to their middlemen's requests, and looking at the popular styles produced by their neighbours. So Ai made this *hol poar* in bright lime green and salmon pink in chemical dyes with a decorative frieze of stylised flowers and geometric shapes [Fig.113]. She found inspiration by copying old patterns developed in her village and by following her middleman's recommendation. In her experience, young Cambodian customers preferred lightweight patterns and bold colour combinations, and were attracted to this style of design.

Pon showed me a two-tone electric blue silk *sampot hol*, which she liked, saying it was 'a new style, more popular for the young people (*khmein khmein*) [...] but [that] she would never wear' [Fig.114].⁷¹⁹ To explain her definition of the traditional 'old style' of *hol*, Pon insisted on showing me a precious kept stack of *sampot* from her personal collection, including the first hip wrap she had woven for her personal use, which she 'wore a lot' for ceremonies such as weddings and Buddhist gatherings at the pagoda [Fig.115].⁷²⁰ It was a multicoloured *hol* in brownish tones and natural dyes that she deemed suitable for a woman of her age.

⁷¹⁹ Pon, Interview with Magali An Berthon.

⁷²⁰ Ibid.



Fig.113 So Ai and Prom Chak holding her latest piece in a bright acid green and salmon pink motifs, Samraong District, Takeo province. Author's photograph, March 17, 2018.



Figs. 114-115 Left: Sampot hol poar woven by Pon in electric blue. Right: Stack of sampot from Pon's collection, including the first hip wrap skirt she wove for herself on the top, Samraong District, Takeo province. Author's photographs, March 17, 2018.

For So Ai and Pon to pose with their textiles in my photographs thus demonstrates their willingness to be recognised for their work, colours, and motifs. While most artisans sell all of their production, Pon was eager to present her own collection of *sampot*. She

expressed her appreciation for silk as a material, but also her understanding of Cambodian dress codes and the value of good quality products. To the question ‘why does she like silk?’ she answered: ‘it’s traditional. It’s like for party or wedding, it’s the style’.⁷²¹ This sense of appreciation also transpired in my encounter with Kamon, thirty-six years old in 2018. When I met her, she was weaving a *hol* piece ‘not for sale, because this is for a wedding party so she prepares for herself’.⁷²² She added that ‘the pattern, she copied from the neighbours’.⁷²³ It was a five-colour pattern of small flowers with a border of stylised centipedes [Figs.116a-b]. Kamon explained that she would keep this piece ‘forever, and for another party, use again and again’.⁷²⁴ She had already made three silk ensembles for herself and four for her mother. She explained that ‘silk is beautiful (*saart*)’ and needed for ‘traditional clothes [...] in the wedding in the morning, people wear tube skirts with *hol*’.⁷²⁵



Figs.116a-b Kamon working on her sampot hol piece for a wedding and close-up, Samraong District, Takeo province. Author’s photographs, March 17, 2018.

Listening to the weavers sharing memories from their past experiences and childhood,

⁷²¹ Pon, Interview with Magali An Berthon.

⁷²² Kamon, Interview with Magali An Berthon.

⁷²³ Ibid.

⁷²⁴ Ibid.

⁷²⁵ Ibid.

discussing the textiles they produce and wear, shows that weaving is not just motivated by economic incentives. Silk textiles are linked to local collective customs and embedded in the weavers' lives. The Cambodian weavers I met in these three periods of fieldwork mostly weave to sell, but some occasionally weave pieces for themselves to be worn at parties, ceremonies, and weddings. The sales price of silk textiles also varies depending on the time of the year. For instance, before the New Year which is a high season for weddings and Buddhist ceremonies, weavers accept to sell their pieces to middlemen at a lower price because they need the money to attend these events.⁷²⁶ Similarly, Chendy explained that weavers married to farmers sell *hol* pieces at a cheaper price during the rice harvesting season from November to January, to help raise funds to support the harvesting effort.⁷²⁷

Activating knowledge through community, matrilineal connections and apprenticeship

The interview between Chenda, Chendy and Theory in the AR project also directly relates to the way in which family dynamics of transmission, support and interdependence are essential activators of silk knowledge. In Cambodia, weaving apprenticeship is embedded in a rural familial environment and hierarchical relationships, whether it takes place in people's houses in villages or in craft companies' facilities.

Looking at the transmission of silk skills entails examining the nature of the relationships involved in practice and learning. At KY, Chenda explained how she was trained by her mother in her youth. To prepare for the AR project, Chenda reactivated this chain of knowledge by contacting her again for guidance on the technique of ikat tie-dyeing. In Phnom Chisor, women of different ages, such as Kamon, Yuon Sophon and Pon, learned silk practices in the family with a loom installed on the ground floor of their houses on stilts. So

⁷²⁶ Pon, Interview with Magali An Berthon.

⁷²⁷ Heng Chendy, Chenda, and Theory, Interview by Magali An Berthon.

Ai learned with a neighbour at the age of fifteen, since her mother did not know how to weave.⁷²⁸ She stated that ‘sometimes she needs the people in the village to help. For the tying she does herself. But to prepare the *ptey* [warp] then she needs the neighbours. At least six people to hold the threads’, as demonstrated during the AR observation phase.⁷²⁹ So Ai also trained her four children to help her with spinning. Passing on textile knowledge to the family thus serves several goals: it provides income-generating know-how for the children’s future and secures skilled help at close range to support the family activity.

The Wisdom from the Forest village built by IKTT in Chot Sam near Siem Reap, presented in Chapter Two, offers a comparison. The village has accommodated weavers and their families, some local and some from other provinces. As Derks argued, ‘processes of female labour migration’ in Cambodia are the result of ‘a complex interplay among individual, household, state and global levels’.⁷³⁰ When Morimoto recruited the ‘silk grandmothers’ to train apprentices and move to the village, some brought their children and grandchildren into the organisation. Conversely, other elderly women followed their children who were already part of IKTT. Among them was Om Lai, fifty-seven years old in 2016, who was originally from Takeo and learned dyeing, tying and weaving from her mother. Her own daughter was already working at IKTT when she joined in 2012 [Fig.117].

⁷²⁸ So Ai, Interview by Magali An Berthon.

⁷²⁹ Ibid.

⁷³⁰ Derks, *Khmer Women on the Move*, 10.



Fig.117 Om Lai (on the right) dyeing silk skeins with other weavers, IKTT village, Kna Sanday commune, Banteay Srei district, Siem Reap province. Author's photograph, December 26, 2016.

Jok Kiang, thirty-seven years old, had been working at IKTT for fifteen years when I visited and was one of the most skilled *hol* weavers at the workshop [Fig.118]. She came from Ang Rovieng village in Takeo province, moving with her grandmother, who also came to work for IKTT. While her eighty-four-year-old grandmother has now retired and returned to Takeo, Jok Kiang has started to teach one of her three children, her thirteen-year-old daughter, how to do the tying.

Pan Dam, seventy-three years old in 2016, was mentioned in the previous chapter [Fig.119]. Her whole family was involved in sericulture in Kampot when Morimoto convinced her to come work for him in Siem Reap. As the most experienced sericulture expert at IKTT, she then trained everyone in the silkworm-rearing team, as well as her four daughters, who also came to work with her.⁷³¹ In the case of Pan Dam and her daughters, it was as much an economic rationale as the possibility of pursuing a family activity with the support of a

⁷³¹ Om Lai, Jok Kiang, and Pan Dam, Informal conversations, trans. Asya, December 26, 2016, Chot Sam, Siem Reap, Cambodia.

wider structure. Men are also involved with IKTT's operations. A newspaper article describes in 2009 'a carpentry group mak[ing] weaving tools such as looms and build[ing] traditional-style wooden Cambodian houses' in which a seventy-five-year-old carpenter trained other men to continue after his retirement.⁷³² A small group of workers produced banana ash used as dyestuff. In 2017, the husband of Hop Sam, a thirty-seven-year-old weaver, was overseeing the electrical system at the village. Other men worked in the fields surrounding the workshops also tending to tinctorial plants.

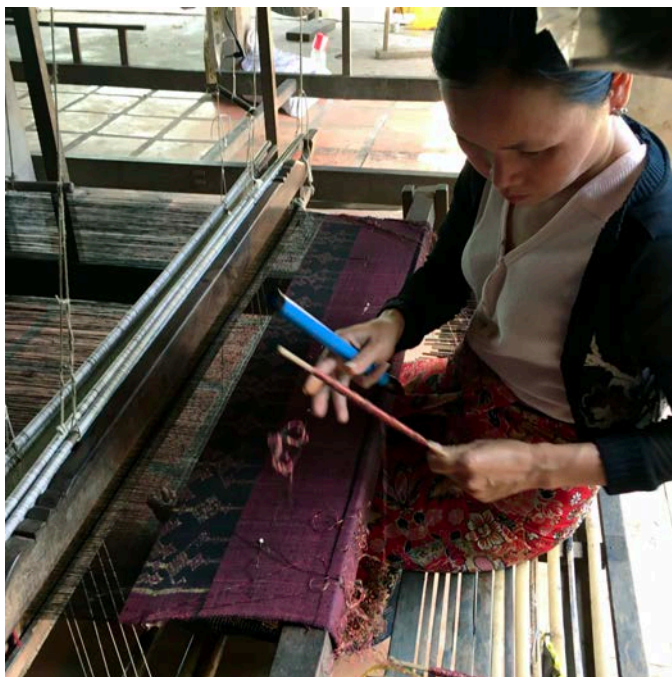


Fig.118 Jok Kiang working on a hol textile, IKTT village, Kna Sanday commune, Banteay Srei district, Siem Reap province. Author's photograph, December 26, 2016.

⁷³² Harbarger, 'Silk Dyer Kikuo Morimoto, Resurrecting a Cultural Ecology.'



Fig.119 Pan Dam at the silkworm nursery, IKTT village, Kna Sanday commune, Banteay Srei district, Siem Reap province. Author's photograph, December 26, 2016.

As contended by Falls and Smith, the Wisdom from the Forest village has operated as a utopian craft site surrounded by lands and forests, exploiting the codes of rural life and reproducing community ties and matriarchal lineages.⁷³³ This self-sufficient collaborative society responds to Venkatesan's concept of a heterotopia in which the position of makers is highly managed.⁷³⁴ IKTT has thus created a complexity of agencies for the weavers who navigate daily between their roles as women, mothers, daughters, craftswomen, and members of the organisation.⁷³⁵ New recruits have learned from more experienced makers,

⁷³³ Falls and Smith, 'Branding Authenticity: Cambodian Ikat in Transnational Artisan Partnerships,' 5.

⁷³⁴ Venkatesan, 'Rethinking Agency: Persons and Things in the Heterotopia of "Traditional Indian Craft,' 83.

⁷³⁵ 'In a place like Siem Reap, where the links to tradition were severed completely, it would be difficult to revive this sort of training [mother to daughter transmission]. The role of mother is taken by the old women masters of the teachers, while the role of big sister falls to the woman in the experienced team.' In Morimoto, *Bayon Moon*, 117.

progressively evolving in their apprenticeship. The cross-generational transmission has been extended to staff members' children, who are following art education classes and Japanese language lessons, with the possibility of working for the organisation in the future.⁷³⁶

As recipients and participants of IKTT, weavers are not deprived of their agency. Under Morimoto's input, Katalin Medvedev noted during her time of fieldwork at IKTT in 2008 that 'some of the women [...] praised [Morimoto's] support for the workers' creativity and ability to improvise and develop their own technique as well as his encouragement of them as co-creators'.⁷³⁷ By choosing to come to the village and inviting family members to join, weavers have become active prescribers of their enskilment. The dynamics of knowledge are enacted differently between KY members at the workshop, villagers and neighbours in Phnom Chisor and at IKTT, which has hybridised NGO practices with matrilineal forms of textile education common to Cambodian villages. What is notable in all these different contexts of weaving, which offer variations of family and women-bound apprenticeship, is that weavers emerge as decisive agents to ensure the continuation of silk craftsmanship.

Conclusion

The focus on knowledge transmission in this chapter has repositioned weavers at the heart of the silkscape by exploring their experience in regard to learning and sharing silk skills and ways of sustaining their activity. The combined use of ethnography, interviews and AR over several periods of fieldwork has provided the primary material for this study,

⁷³⁶ Medvedev, 2015, 'The Roots of Change in the Contemporary Cambodian Fashion Scene,' 22. Morimoto did not explain why he insisted Japanese would be taught. My guess is that it would help the children gain transferable skills for interacting with tourists and buyers if they joined IKTT in the future or worked in tourism. It may also have to do with reproducing education as Morimoto had experienced it, as a Japanese man who grew up in Kyoto and trained as a *yuzen* apprentice.

⁷³⁷ Ibid.

shifting from a macro view of the silk sector, as explored in Chapter Two, to a micro-level approach. Focusing on the actions and voices of the weavers has developed further the polyphonic perspective on silk built throughout this thesis. This methodology has helped to challenge stereotypical representations of weavers, who resist any generalisation as a uniform social group. Their subjective experiences reveal alternative narratives. The weavers' prescriptive behaviours are linked to ideas of female Cambodian selfhood and social and cultural representations, while also summoning different forms of empirical, emotional, and remembered strategies that engage with collective and individual forms of memory.

Weavers face a system rooted in structural inequity, taking part in a production landscape reformed within the context of the tremendous post-civil war loss of skills and globalisation that caused the spread of the industrialised garment industry, the inflated cost of materials, and difficult access to markets. Caught between the input of sponsoring organisations, the constraints imposed by middlemen and their gendered social role as caretakers, weavers have been cornered into a dependent position to continue producing and selling, which automatically jeopardises the continuation of their craft. This research has identified areas of agency and empowerment for the weavers, following Venkatesan's argument that contemporary craftspeople should be reconsidered 'as new social beings with specific agentic capacities'.⁷³⁸

Zuber-Skerritt has suggested that in AR, 'variables are not predetermined and controlled, but are taken on board as they arise from the data', which echoes Marchand's view on the potential in shared activities for 'misinterpretation, or new interpretation' to 'carry forward ideas and practices in novel directions'.⁷³⁹ By implementing and documenting the production of four *hol* textiles, the AR project has shown how memory of past practice and

⁷³⁸ Venkatesan, 'Rethinking agency: persons and things in the heterotopia of 'traditional Indian craft,' 93.

⁷³⁹ Ibid. ; Marchand, *Making Knowledge*, 112.

embodied knowledge are mobilised and transmitted during the process of re-learning silk weaving. Using the workshop as a locus for creative reconstruction, KY weavers have produced silk knowledge by activating body, memory, family, and professional levers. The project successfully engaged different interlocutors tied by various social bonds: the family of Chendy, Chenda and Theary, co-founder Tomoko in the supportive role of facilitator, six staff weavers as trainees and collaborators, Yu for translation, and I in the role of researcher and interviewer. The reclaiming of silk knowledge, neglected for more than a decade, and the possibility of verbalising and reflecting on this experience through interviews, has shown how weavers can be actors in their own enskilment. The epilogue to the AR project, describing how Chenda eventually and abruptly left KY and how Theary, on leave for her pregnancy, could no longer weave silk, illustrates, however, the difficulty of ensuring the transmission of this knowledge and its continuity. It questions the extent to which women can take charge of their agency and identity in Cambodian society through weaving and achieve self-reliance. The silk sector will need to enact structural changes to secure more autonomy and support for the weaving workforce.

Beyond the interviews collected in Cambodia, this study has explored how the weavers' bodies provide an essential source of knowledge by looking at tacit exchanges, the repetition of gestures and the negotiation with the materiality and techniques of *hol* making. MacDougall has stated that in documentary film-making, 'there are other bodies to be considered, as well – those of the spectator and the filmmaker, and even the body of the film itself'.⁷⁴⁰ The use of film-making and the reviewing of footage has supplemented the oral voices, mediated by translation, to incorporate movement and weavers' bodies in the understanding of silk knowledge. Other aspects of embodiment through silk will be explored in Chapter Four, considering how the art of dressing can become a tool for identity

⁷⁴⁰ MacDougall, *The Corporeal Image: Film, Ethnography, And the Senses*, 15.

and cultural expression. This exploration will take place in the diasporic community of Cambodia Town in Long Beach, California.

Chapter Four

Silk Embodiment: crafting Cambodian identity in the global diaspora

Introduction

In a context of forced migration leading to a dramatic loss of bearings, the act of reclaiming textile and dress cultural practices, a core issue in this thesis, takes on another dimension. Chapter Three worked towards an affirmative recentring of Cambodian weavers within the silkscape, especially through the study of knowledge transmission. This chapter pursues the examination of embodiment and empowerment through silk practices by establishing its scope outside national borders. Considering the Cambodian silkscape as a network that also connects the global and the local, I shift the perspective to refugee and migrant diaspora populations to explore the cultural, aesthetic and material role of silk and consider the dynamics of ‘transformation and persistence’ necessitated by the aftermath of the Cambodian civil war.⁷⁴¹ What have diasporic communities kept or abandoned from Cambodian culture, and how have they engaged with silk as a way of negotiating tensions in the formation of their immigrant identities?

Since the late 1980s, the main Cambodian communities established in Europe and the United States have adjusted to their host country while trying to preserve strong connections with Cambodia, and remain active in the practice of numerous cultural and religious customs. Ebihara, Mortland and Ledgerwood have outlined how contemporary Cambodian identity is realised between an innate attachment to the homeland and adjustments to new influences:

⁷⁴¹ Ebihara, Mortland, and Ledgerwood, eds., *Cambodian Culture since 1975: Homeland and Exile*, 22.

‘Although Khmer culture is changing in new environments, the fact remains that first-generation Khmer immigrants continue to view ‘reality’ in the new world through the lens of patterns of meanings and relationships learned in their natal country’.⁷⁴²

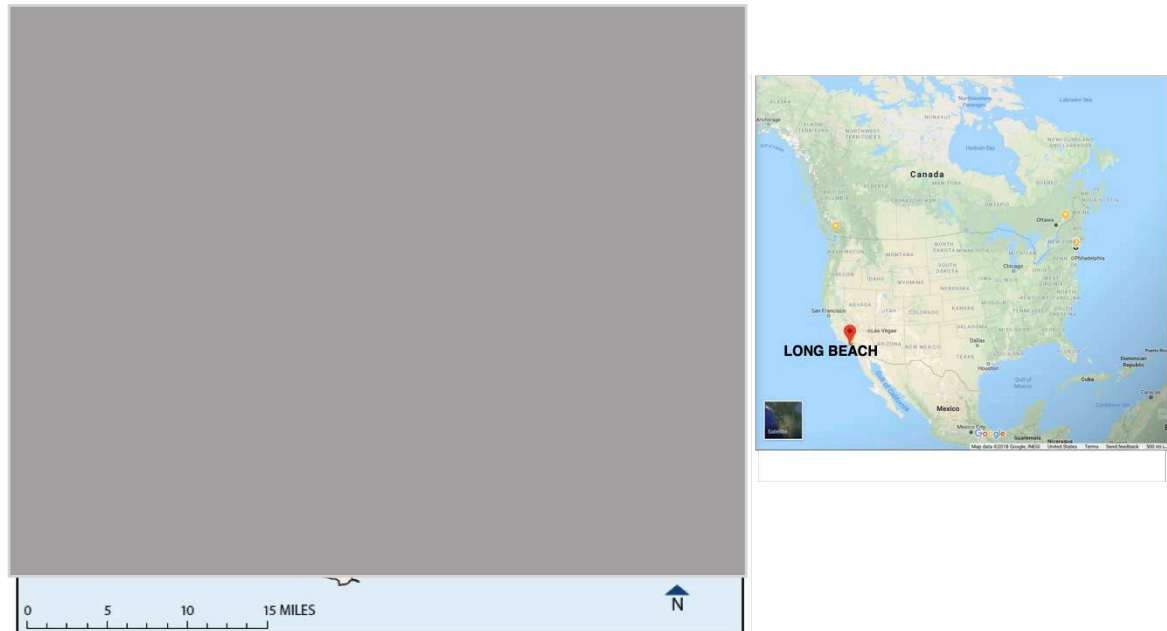
Despite the temporal and geographic disconnection, the various expressions of Cambodian culture articulated in a new country always seem to exist in reference to the homeland, an idea reinforced by sociologist Jeremy Hein, who has observed that ‘among immigrants, values and norms emerge from the group’s adaptation to historical and structural conditions both prior to and after migration’.⁷⁴³ Hein thus posits the main dichotomies experienced by the diasporic subject between here and there, past memories and present realities. In a history of displacement and conflict, silk is, therefore, examined in its material and cultural, as well as emotional and physical, dimensions as embodying diasporic identity.

Continuing the focus of Chapter Three on making and makers, this study first considers the extent to which refugee weavers have been able to sustain their craft in the circumstances of migration and relocation to the United States. Second, it focuses on Cambodian Americans who purchase, use, and wear silk to explore its performative power in public and private settings and uncover forms of bodily and emotional knowledge. This examination takes place in the Cambodian community of Long Beach, California, which, at about 50,000 people, is considered the largest demographic concentration of Cambodian immigrants outside Southeast Asia [Figs.120a-b]. Two periods of fieldwork in the Long Beach neighbourhood of Cambodia Town undertaken in April 2017 on the occasion of the Cambodia Town Culture Festival (CTCF) and the Cambodian New Year (*Choul Chnam Thmey*) celebrations and again in February 2018 provide the primary material for this ethnographic research. Silk clothing and accessories are mainly produced by Cambodian women and aimed at female consumers, and the relationship between femininity and silk is

⁷⁴² Ibid, 26.

⁷⁴³ Jeremy Hein, *Ethnic Origins: the Adaptation of Cambodian and Hmong Refugees in Four American Cities* (New York: Russel Sage Foundation, 2006), 33.

explored through a series of encounters: with a local tailor, a wedding dress designer and planner, and a group of young Cambodian American women learning and transmitting the art of Khmer classical ballet.



Figs.120a-b Geographic location of Cambodia Town in Long Beach, In Adebisi and al, The State of Cambodia Town Report (Los Angeles, CA: UCLA, 2013), 7 ; Localisation of Long Beach, CA, Google Maps, 2018.

Capturing the displaced experience through ethnography and embodiment

Continuing the methodological process adopted in Chapter Three, using interviews as a tool for self-determination, my interlocutors are considered as active mediators of their own culture, and the ways they have adapted to their reconfigured environment and retained economic and cultural bridges with their native country through dress are explored. The subjective and fragmented quality of the testimonies collected in the field, far from undermining this self-determination, plays an important role.

This chapter draws on notes and visual documentation made during periods of observation at the CTCF, at the Chanda Tailor tailoring workshop, in shops and streets in Cambodia Town, and during dance classes at the local Khmer Arts Academy (KAA). Using semi-guided

qualitative interviews, I have recorded three oral testimonies with Sok Chan, dressmaker, Khannia Ok, associate instructor at KAA and Kaylene Men, founder of Bridal Khmer, along with six informal discussions with young dancers, silk consumers and festival attendees. Advocating for an inclusive research approach, Hein has stressed the value of giving informants 'the right to speak for themselves'.⁷⁴⁴ In a comparative study of Cambodian and Hmong refugees in the US states of Wisconsin and Minnesota, he outlined the challenges for sociologists to interpret informants' personal opinions and 'understand a social world with which we often have little or no personal experience'.⁷⁴⁵ I approached my two periods of fieldwork in Cambodia Town in a similar manner, guided by my informants' experience and recommendations.

Moreover, ethnic identity as situational and dynamic is a central theme in this chapter. Grounding her analysis in the case of Filipino Americans immigrants in San Diego, Asian American sociologist Yen Le Espiritu considers that transnational immigrants 'are not deterritorialised, free-floating people. Instead, they continue to exist, interact, construct their identities, and exercise their rights within nation-states that monopolise power and impose categories of identity on local residents'.⁷⁴⁶ The condition of transnational immigrants exists in a dual movement which is both literal and symbolic. Espiritu asked: 'How do young Filipinos who have never been 'home' imagine the 'homeland'? And how do they recall that which is somewhere else, that which was perhaps never known?'⁷⁴⁷ Similarly, how do Cambodian Americans deal with a sense of 'home' and how does silk play a role in this experience and through which activities?

To facilitate the analysis of identity and cultural shifts among Cambodian immigrant groups, this study relies on Hein's generalisation in associating 'Cambodian' with 'Khmer',

⁷⁴⁴ Hein, *Ethnic Origins: the Adaptation of Cambodian and Hmong Refugees in Four American Cities*, 23.

⁷⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁶ Yen Le Espiritu, *Home Bound: Filipino American Lives across Cultures, Communities, and Countries* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003), 11-12.

⁷⁴⁷ Ibid.

considering that the Khmer ethnic group is dominant in Cambodian diasporic society compared to other ethnic minorities, such as Cham, Sino-Khmer and ethnic Vietnamese.⁷⁴⁸ Cambodian identity is both dynamic and set around a full range of distinctive features such as 'looking Khmer, speaking Khmer, observing Buddhism, acting properly, and acknowledging the heritage of the 'grandmothers and grandfathers' by following Khmer customs'.⁷⁴⁹ The Cambodian Americans I have interviewed in Long Beach all identified as belonging to either Khmer or Cambodian culture without distinguishing between them. One of my contacts, Mary Tan's husband, despite being Chinese Cambodian, put on a silk suit and attended the cultural festival.⁷⁵⁰

Looking at the theorisation of oral sources as primary material in other territories has helped to formulate a methodological approach that is both original and relevant to the Cambodian context. For instance, *Testimonio* is a form of oral and narrative methodology rooted in Latin American decolonial pedagogy that is underpinned by affirmation and empowerment, acting for the recovery of a community's knowledge production. Chicana and Chicano studies scholars Julia E. Curry Rodríguez and Kathryn Blackmer Reyes have established that 'although a *testimonio* is technically an account made by one person, it represents the voice of many whose lives have been affected by particular social events'.⁷⁵¹ In this sense, the space given to a selection of voices and stories in the person of Sok Chan, Khannia Ok, Kaylene Men and others, stands for the Cambodian American community of Long Beach, in resonance with the epistemology of first-person *testimonio*.

Further to the nature of narratives as research, Kamala Visweswaran, anthropologist of South Asian transnational and diaspora identities, has argued that 'ethnography, like fiction,

⁷⁴⁸ Yen Le Espiritu, *Home Bound: Filipino American Lives across Cultures, Communities, and Countries*, 32.

⁷⁴⁹ Carol Mortland, *Grace after Genocide: Cambodians in the United States* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2017), 150.

⁷⁵⁰ Mary Tan, informal conversation with Magali An Berthon, April 6, 2017, Long Beach. Pictured in Figure 139.

⁷⁵¹ Kathryn Blackmer Reyes and Julia E. Curry Rodríguez, 'Testimonio: Origins, Terms, and Resources,' *Equity & Excellence in Education* 45, no. 3 (2012): 528.

no matter its pretense to present a self-contained narrative or cultural whole, remains incomplete and detached from the realms to which it points'.⁷⁵² Visweswaran has highlighted how this incompleteness could provide information in itself, play a role in identity formation, and question the essence of the researcher-subject dynamics.⁷⁵³ Similarly, diasporic fiction with the writings of Monica Sok, autoethnography and embodied knowledge, in regards to silk dress and dance performance, have emerged as invaluable tools to reconstruct histories and identities, especially in the case of marginalised subjects. In this chapter, Cambodian American imaginings, voices and bodies form a polyphony indicating the multilayered significance of silk on the body as a potent component of contemporary Cambodian heritage.

The embodied perspective on silk use in the Cambodian diaspora borrows from Cambodian American art historian Boreth Ly's concept of sensorium 'where the senses provide a complex layering of experience'.⁷⁵⁴ Ly has argued that 'local Southeast Asian perspectives on objects and visions are more embodied and multi-sensorial' than in prevailing Western logocentric approaches.⁷⁵⁵ This approach addresses the agenda of a more decolonial inquiry that 'interrupts established Western habits of thinking about, viewing, and seeing ritual'.⁷⁵⁶ This means that my interlocutors' diverse experience of silk is also examined from their intimate perspectives linked to their emotions and sensations and in considering cultural and family events in the everyday life.

Autoethnography is a methodology used to emphasise a subjective and empathetic approach. Autoethnography demands, as Marchand contends, 'immersion, perceptual and kinesthetic awareness, careful reflection, persistent questioning, and a constant probing of

⁷⁵² Kamala Visweswaran, *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 1.

⁷⁵³ *Ibid*, 69.

⁷⁵⁴ Boreth Ly, 'Of Scent and Sensibility: Embodied Ways of Seeing in Southeast Asian Cultures,' *SUVANNABHUMI* 10, no. 1 (June 2018): 81.

⁷⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 68.

⁷⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 67.

the complex and multiple factors that constitute any field of practice'.⁷⁵⁷ The ways in which the *sampot* fits the body in movement is examined by recording my autoethnographic experience of dressing in a *chawng kbun* and taking part in a Khmer ballet dance class to get closer to the sensations of moving in silk clothing.⁷⁵⁸

This chapter also engages with the involvement of non-Cambodian intermediaries who have encouraged the continuity of Cambodian culture in local immigrant communities. Susan Needham, anthropologist and professor at California State University Dominguez Hills, exemplifies this mediating position, which differs from those encountered in Cambodian craft companies in earlier chapters: Kikuo Morimoto and Tomoko Takagi's positions, for instance. Needham's role appeared closer to that of a cultural broker in social services, that is, an individual possessing knowledge of the values and norms of different cultural groups with 'the ability to understand complex interpersonal dynamics [...] to effectively maneuver and transfer information and resources from one culture to another'.⁷⁵⁹ Needham has indeed built enduring relationships with Cambodian Americans of Cambodia Town for three decades, producing extensive ethnographic and linguistic research.⁷⁶⁰ In 2008, she co-founded the Cambodian Community History & Archive Project (CamCHAP), an archival centre in Long Beach, with Karen Quintiliani, Professor of Anthropology at California State University Long Beach. This centre has collected over two thousand photographs, English and Khmer newspapers, ephemera produced by Cambodian-led and Cambodian-serving organisations, and oral histories collected in the community.⁷⁶¹

⁷⁵⁷ Marchand, *Making Knowledge*, 10.

⁷⁵⁸ See also Priya Srinivasan, *Sweating Saris: Indian Dance as Transnational Labor* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2011), xi, 17-18.

⁷⁵⁹ Jacqueline Robinson and Suzie Weng, 'Cultural broker,' in *Encyclopedia of Human Services and Diversity*, ed. Linwood Cousins (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2014), 303. ; See also Mary Ann Jezewski, 'Culture brokering in migrant farmworker health care.' *Western Journal of Nursing Research*, 12, no. 4 (2010): 497. Cultural brokering is 'the act of bridging, linking or mediating between groups or persons of different cultural backgrounds for the purpose of reducing conflict or producing change'.

⁷⁶⁰ Susan Needham, Informal interview with Magali An Berthon, April 11, 2017, Long Beach, CA, USA.

⁷⁶¹ Ibid ; CamCHAP Facebook page, *About*

https://www.facebook.com/pg/camchaplb/about/?ref=page_internal [Accessed June 2, 2020]

Needham also founded the CTCF, discussed below. As well as being integral to the way interactions with Cambodian silk have developed at Long Beach, the introduction of these Caucasian American voices also provides an opportunity for further self-reflexivity about my own position as a researcher.

From refugee camps to resettlement: weaving practice in displacement

As discussed in the Introduction and Chapter One, under the KR regime weaving mostly stopped when the structure of Cambodian society was dismantled, and cities were evacuated, families separated, and villagers displaced to other rural areas and put to forced labour. This section considers how refugee weavers, as travelling bodies with specific sets of skills, were able to sustain their craft while resettling in the late 1970s in refugee camps at the Thai border and abroad in the United States by the 1980s. It considers the meanings of weaving for Cambodians outside Cambodia, operated in a new context as a means of survival, but also as a surviving cultural practice. The example of the weaver Em Bun will indicate the potentially healing power of weaving in reconstructing identity and community ties. Em Bun's story is unusual, as few weavers relocated and continued their practice in their host countries, and there is also an absence of scholarly literature on this topic.

Around 1978, when Vietnamese troops invaded Cambodia to overthrow the dictatorship, an estimate of 630,000 Cambodians fled for the Thai-Cambodian border and regrouped in refugee camps.⁷⁶² This massive exodus turned into long-term resettlement for most Cambodians, as the Thai government refused to let them migrate to Thailand, and most could not return to their homeland. Cambodia's chaotic situation was reflected in the

⁷⁶² James Lynch, 'Border Khmer: A Demographic Study of the Residents of Site 2, Site B and Site 8,' *Thai/Cambodia Border Refugee Camps 1975-1999 Information and Documentation Website*, 1989, <http://www.websitesrcg.com/border/camps/survey-1989.html> [Accessed October 15, 2018, 26]

camps scattered along the border and maintained by groups with diverse political agendas. Sites such as Nong Cham and Nong Samet were managed by the Khmer People's National Liberation Front, led by Khmer Serei, an anti-communist anti-monarchist resistance group. KR factions dominated Ban Charat, Sarong in the north, and Site 8, Borai and Ta Luan, south of Aranyaprathet in Prachinburi Province of Thailand.

The Khao-I-Dang camp opened near Aranyaprathet in 1979 and was managed by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the Thai government until 1993. It hosted up to 130,000 people and was the main platform for Cambodian refugees trying to emigrate to other countries. Site 2, the largest civilian camp mainly inhabited by followers of the Khmer People's National Liberation, was built in 1984 and coordinated by the UN Border Relief Operation [Fig.121]. While about 225,000 Cambodians managed to emigrate abroad, especially to the United States, France, Australia and Canada, approximately 100,000 Cambodians returned to Cambodia itself during the Vietnamese occupation. Another 100,000 refugees remained in camps until they were repatriated to Cambodia in May 1993.⁷⁶³

⁷⁶³ Carol Mortland, 'Khmer,' In *Refugees in America in the 1990s: A Reference Handbook*, ed. David Haines (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 240.

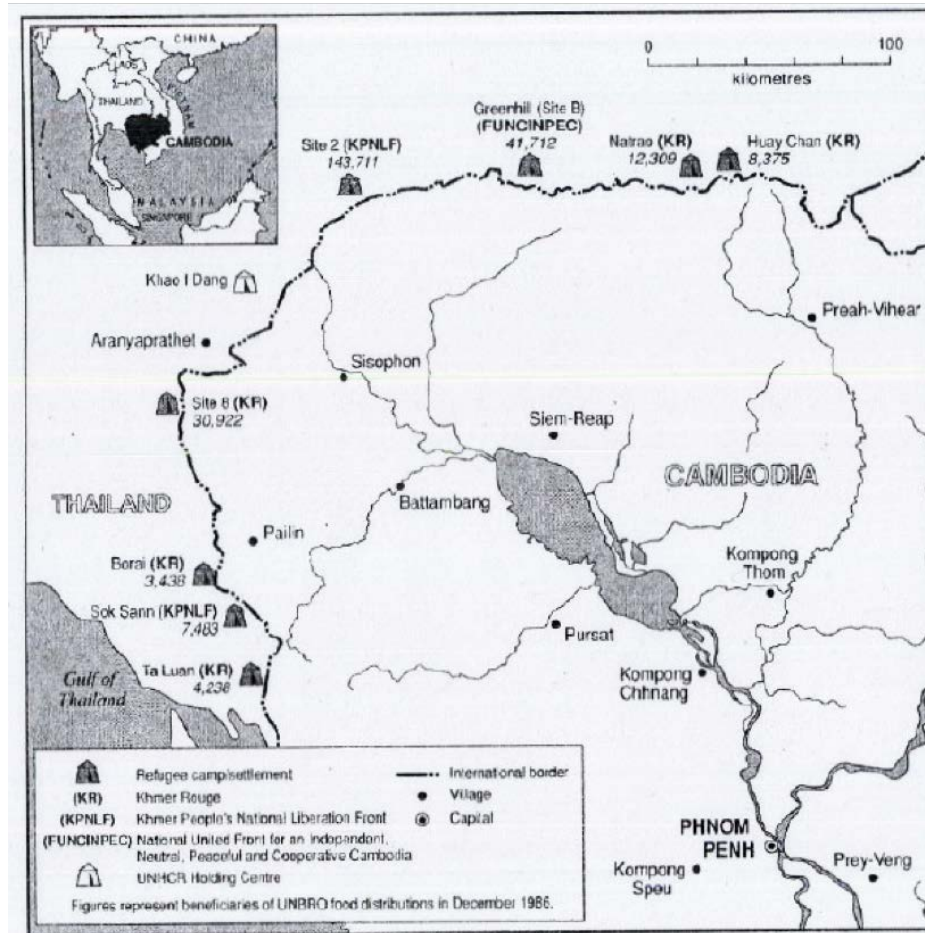


Fig.121 Map of Cambodian refugee camps on the Thai-Cambodian border, 1986. From Tony Jackson, *Just Waiting to Die? Cambodian Refugees in Thailand* (Oxford: Oxfam Research and Evaluation Unit, July 1987), 5.

James Lynch, regional representative of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in the 1980s, produced a demographic study of the Site 2, Site B, and Site 8 refugee camps: of the 15,525 people surveyed, at least two thirds had arrived on the border in 1979-1980 and the majority had remained in camps.⁷⁶⁴ Camp life was extremely challenging in terms of health, food, and safety. Nevertheless, religious ceremonies and cultural celebrations were progressively reintroduced, especially in the UN-supported camps. Dance, music and vocational training, including weaving and sewing, restarted in the resettlements, showing how quickly Cambodians resumed cultural and religious activities that had been stopped

⁷⁶⁴ Lynch, 'Border Khmer: A Demographic Study of the Residents of Site 2, Site B and Site 8,' 26.

during the KR regime.⁷⁶⁵ Migrant worlds are not dematerialised.⁷⁶⁶ Anthropologists Paul Basu and Simon Coleman have considered that displaced populations and things intersect in spaces of temporary or permanent relocation, in which ‘objects, possessions, and performances illustrate culturally rich modulations of mobility’.⁷⁶⁷ Moreover, Ebihara, Mortland and Ledgerwood have argued that in camps, Khmer refugees were left in a powerless state for extended periods, unable to ‘control the most basic activities of their lives: procuring food, water, and fuel’.⁷⁶⁸ In this unstable ethnoscape, the practice of pre-KR cultural rituals may have been attempts to secure a sense of home, in which Buddhism, dance and music ‘retained their importance attached to their original identification as ‘truly Khmer’’.⁷⁶⁹

There are rare mentions of weaving in camps in the literature.⁷⁷⁰ As we have seen, Kikuo Morimoto worked in refugee camps in Thailand with Lao weavers, and there are also a handful of testimonies from DK survivors. One of these concerns Thavery, presented in humanitarian Carol Wagner's *Soul Survivors*.⁷⁷¹ Like the weavers in Chapter Three, Thavery witnessed weaving practices at home when she was a child in Takeo province. She explained: ‘[my mother] and my older sister wove fancy silk skirts, both *hol*, which has a design, and *phamuong*, which is plain’.⁷⁷² In 1979, she returned to her home village where she learned silk weaving with neighbours. In 1990 she moved to Site 2 to be reunited with one of her sisters. She added: ‘I lived with Wan for nearly two years, because it was easier to earn money than in Cambodia. We wove cotton *sampot*’ until the camps closed.⁷⁷³ Thavery

⁷⁶⁵ In his survey of the refugees’ various occupations, Lynch identified several weavers among the camp residents.

⁷⁶⁶ Paul Basu and Simon Coleman, ‘Introduction: Migrant Worlds, Material Cultures,’ *Mobilities*, 3, no. 3 (2008): 317.

⁷⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 322.

⁷⁶⁸ Ebihara, Mortland, and Ledgerwood, eds., *Cambodian Culture since 1975*, 20.

⁷⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 9, 23.

⁷⁷⁰ Lynch, ‘Border Khmer: A Demographic Study of the Residents of Site 2, Site B and Site 8,’ 51-54.

⁷⁷¹ Wagner, *Soul Survivors*, 190-201.

⁷⁷² *Ibid*, 192.

⁷⁷³ *Ibid*, 196.

eventually moved to Phnom Penh in 1993 to teach weaving at Khemara, the NGO discussed in Chapter Two. Thavery discussed silk and weaving: 'silk used to be produced in my home province in Takeo, but the KR cut down the mulberry trees that the silkworms fed on, so now I have to buy silk thread from Vietnam'.⁷⁷⁴ She specialised in *pidan* weaving, explaining: '[it] is the most difficult weaving to do. [...] We have to tie four hundred tiny bundles of silk to do the whole story and the weaving is six or seven meters long. I've never done the whole story by myself, just parts of it'.⁷⁷⁵

In the camps, weavers adapted to the cheap materials available on site, weaving products such as cotton or polyester *krama* cloths that required simple techniques. The scarf in Figure 122 was made at the UN-backed Khao I Dang refugee camp and was purchased by an Australian migration officer and later donated to Museums Victoria, Australia. This is a typical *krama* handwoven cloth in a bright, chemically dyed plaid of pink, blue, green, and yellow, contrasted with a black stripe. This artefact exemplifies how, despite few first-hand accounts, weaving was likely to have been a common manual activity in the camps. Weavers produced items for their personal use and to sell to other refugees in the camps, and in this case to foreign visiting officials. The rare material and testimonial evidence of weaving also demonstrates the transient nature of craft practices in refugee camps as temporary spaces of production. Weaving was present in the local economy of survival and bartering.

⁷⁷⁴ Wagner, *Soul Survivors*, 197.

⁷⁷⁵ *Ibid.*



Fig.122 Krama woven in Khao I Dang refugee camp, Thailand, 1987-1989, acquisition number HT 31980, donated by Jennie Robert, Courtesy of Museums Victoria / CC BY.

The resettlement of Cambodian refugees has reshaped the weavers' practice. More than 150,000 Cambodians relocated to the United States in three separate waves between 1975 and 1993, along with Vietnamese, Hmong, and Laotian populations, as part of the Southeast Asian refugee movement.⁷⁷⁶ The first wave of 4,600 Cambodians arrived immediately before Cambodia collapsed under KR control in 1975. Linguistic anthropologist Nancy Smith-Hefner stated that 'families bundled up clothing, cookware, medicine, and sacks of rice. They hastily hid gold, jewellery, family heirlooms, and other valuables'.⁷⁷⁷ Cambodians were dispatched to locations determined by the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement.⁷⁷⁸ The second immigration wave started in late 1978 during the Cambodian-Vietnamese War, when factions from the Socialist Republic of Vietnam were forcing Pol Pot

⁷⁷⁶ Lan Dong, 'Cambodian American Performing Arts and Artists' in *Asian American Culture: From Anime to Tiger Moms*, 126.

⁷⁷⁷ Smith-Hefner, *Khmer American: Identity and Moral Education in a Diasporic Community*, 8.

⁷⁷⁸ Sucheng Chan, 'Cambodians in the United States: Refugees, Immigrants, American Ethnic Minority,' *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of American History*, Sept 2015

<https://oxfordre.com/americanhistory/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199329175.001.0001/acrefore-9780199329175-e-317> [Accessed September 30, 2018]

out of power. Finally, the largest wave of about 60,000 refugees resettled between 1980 and 1982, when DK fell, with further regular influxes in the following years.⁷⁷⁹ After 1994, the US refugee programme was terminated. Cambodians who arrived in the country came as immigrants.⁷⁸⁰ According to the Pew Research Center, the Cambodian population in the United States was approximately 300,000 people in 2015.⁷⁸¹ Cambodian Americans in the early immigration waves often returned to the camps as volunteers for international agencies. They would buy silk *sampot* and bring them back to their communities in the United States as gifts.⁷⁸² Since that time, Cambodian Americans have often returned to Cambodia. Mortland has estimated that by 'the mid-1990s' about '20 per cent of resettled Khmer had visited the homeland'.⁷⁸³ These contacts between the two countries accelerated in the early 2000s with the availability of more affordable flights.

Em Bun (c. 1916-2010) is as a rare known example of a Cambodian weaver who resumed her practice after emigrating to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania in 1981, aged sixty-five. She was born in Takeo province, started observing her grandmother and mother working on the loom as a child, and then learned weaving with her mother when she was sixteen.⁷⁸⁴ Before the KR regime she was a weaver and a farmer, and was in charge of raising

⁷⁷⁹ Smith-Hefner, *Khmer American: Identity and Moral Education in a Diasporic Community*, 8.

⁷⁸⁰ Sucheng Chan, *Remapping Asian American History* (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2003), 202 ; See also Sucheng Chan, and Audrey U. Kim, *Not Just Victims: Conversations with Cambodian Community Leaders in the United States* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 20-23, 31.

⁷⁸¹ Ariana Rodriguez-Gitler, 'Cambodian population in the U.S., 2000-2015,' *Pew Social Trends* <http://www.pewsocialtrends.ORG/AUTHOR/ARODRIGUEZGITLER/> [Accessed July 18, 2018]

⁷⁸² Ter Horst, *Weaving into Cambodia*, 117.

⁷⁸³ Mortland, *Grace after Genocide: Cambodians in the United States*, 217.

⁷⁸⁴ The National Endowment for the Arts states: 'Em Bun learned to weave from her mother when she was about ten years old,' while Monica Sok, Em Bun's granddaughter, writes that she learned from her mother at age sixteen. National Endowment for the Arts, 'NEA National Heritage Fellowships' <https://www.arts.gov/honors/heritage/em-bun> [Accessed June 10, 2021] ; Monica Sok, 'The Weaver in My Poems: A Remembrance of Em Bun,' *NEA Arts Magazine: National Endowment for the Arts*, 2017 <https://www.arts.gov/stories/magazine/2017/1/nea-jazz-mastersnea-national-heritage-fellowships-celebrating-35-years/weaver-my-poems> [Accessed June 15, 2021]

silkworms and reeling silk threads.⁷⁸⁵ In 1979 she fled with her four daughters and two sons to a refugee camp in Thailand.⁷⁸⁶ Resettled in Harrisburg, she started to experience depression and isolation due to the language barrier she experienced.

Carol Mortland observed that 'some Khmer women are committed to preserving traditional weaving. [...] Weavers talk of weaving their experiences into their work and describe the comfort weaving brings them', adding that 'weaving exhibits and demonstrations are popular'.⁷⁸⁷ This indicates how weaving can be explored as a source of embodied comfort, as well as a cultural activity reengaging communities. In Harrisburg, Em Bun tried unsuccessfully to weave on an American loom.⁷⁸⁸ Eventually she received support from Joanna Roe, a local Presbyterian church member who obtained a grant from the Dauphin County Historical Society and commissioned the construction of a Cambodian-style loom from a local company, Woodlore Builders. The loom was built 'according to plans sent from the Khaw-i-Dang refugee camp via the International Rescue Committee'.⁷⁸⁹ Em Bun's family attested that this was a turning point for her emotionally. By returning to a practice that had defined her since childhood, with familiar tools and equipment, she was able to reconstruct part of her identity and find a sense of healing and home. She started weaving again on the loom that was installed in her basement, using materials purchased with the grant and leftover silk from a tie factory in central Pennsylvania [Fig.123].⁷⁹⁰ She wove *sampot* for her family and received commissions from other Cambodian women living on the East Coast.

⁷⁸⁵ Jeanette Krebs, 'Woman Weaves Anew,' *Patriot News* (Harrisburg, PA.) (June 19, 1990, 149): 146; Michael Tennesen, 'Silk and Ceremony,' *Modern Maturity* (October/November 1991): 17.

⁷⁸⁶ Em Bun, *Masters of Traditional Arts*

http://www.mastersoftraditionalarts.org/artists/41?selected_facets=name_initial_last_exact%3AE [Accessed September 14, 2019]

⁷⁸⁷ Mortland, *Grace after Genocide: Cambodians in the United States*, 234.

⁷⁸⁸ Monica Sok, 'The Weaver in My Poems: A Remembrance of Em Bun.'

⁷⁸⁹ Janice G. Rosenthal, 'Cambodian Silk Weaver,' *Threads Magazine* (December 1990/January 1991, 32): 22.

⁷⁹⁰ National Endowment for the Arts, 'NEA National Heritage Fellowships.'



Fig.123 Em Bun weaving on her loom in Harrisburg, PA. Photograph, Blair Seitz.

In homage to her grandmother (*lokyeay*), poet and writer Monica Sok recalled that Em Bun skilfully wove silk skirts in the *phamaung* style with a shot silk effect: 'She dyed two colors and wove them together, so a third color could shine'.⁷⁹¹ Recognition from her peers helped her regain her social position in a new environment. She shared her silk-weaving knowledge with one of her daughters, Lynn Yuos, and other Cambodian women in Harrisburg.⁷⁹²

Em Bun's work was recognised by the National Endowment for the Arts in 1990, the highest distinction in folk and traditional arts in the United States [Fig.124]. She was also distinguished as a master weaver by the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. In a National Heritage Fellowship Concert video in 1990, she is interviewed briefly, showing a green, red,

⁷⁹¹ Sok, 'The Weaver in My Poems: A Remembrance of Em Bun.'

⁷⁹² Rosenthal, 'Cambodian Silk Weaver.'

and white large checked piece in the *krama saut* style, explaining with pride that it took her two days to weave it.⁷⁹³

The National Endowment for the Arts stated that Em Bun ‘has helped fellow Cambodian immigrants maintain contact with their heritage and has been a catalyst for the preservation of Cambodian traditional arts in the United States’.⁷⁹⁴ Em Bun was commended beyond her own practice, and for turning her contribution into a vehicle to transmit Cambodian culture, echoing the sense of vocation expressed by Pheach, weaver in Takeo for CYK, in Chapter Three.



Fig.124 Em Bun (left) at the 1990 National Heritage Fellowship Concert, Washington, D.C. Photograph courtesy of the National Endowment for the Arts.

Sok’s writing emphasises her grandmother’s impact on the Cambodian American community. She mused: ‘I wonder how many Cambodians got married wearing my

⁷⁹³ See appendix A3 on *krama saut*. Em Bun, 1990 National Heritage Fellowship Concert, Washington, D.C., courtesy National Endowment for the Arts <http://mastersoftraditionalarts.org/artists/41> [Accessed September 15, 2020]

⁷⁹⁴ National Endowment for the Arts, ‘NEA National Heritage Fellowships.’

grandmother's silk, how many lives she touched by connecting them with our culture'.⁷⁹⁵ 'At Cambodian weddings in Cleveland, Ohio, where her relatives lived', Sok continued, 'she wore her own fabrics, showing off dark purple hues while my mother donned a traditional golden skirt'.⁷⁹⁶ Touching Em Bun's designs, several Cambodian women would ask, '*Where did you get this?*'⁷⁹⁷ Through touch, these women relived a familiar sensory experience of Cambodianness. Em Bun also found the emotional rewards she needed in her craft, anchored in tangible reality.

Further, the connection between craft, body, and family transmission is compellingly materialised in Sok's poetry, evoking again the concept of a Southeast Asian sensorium. Her grandmother's story provided a reservoir of symbolic narratives tied to Sok's kinship and sense of self. It inspired her poem 'The Weaver', published in 2017, in which Sok recalls sitting by her grandmother and watching her weave in silence as she mourns the loss of her eldest son to the KR regime:

'[...] Every day I saw this old woman from the Octopus Tree
weaving at her loom, rivers and lakes
underneath her hair'.

Sok subtly connects the idea of silk threads to hair, to the visual image of the river, metaphorically presented as a refuge for her grandmother to keep her lost son. Em Bun, by using her 'body as a vehicle of being-in-the-world', in Merleau-Ponty's terms, interlaces pieces of herself, her own hair, in her textile designs to transcribe how she found solace in artisanal work through a bodily practice:

'She threaded the loom
with one strand of her long silver hair,
[...] It made her happy
as she worked on silk dresses
and her hair never ran out'.⁷⁹⁸

⁷⁹⁵ Sok, 'The Weaver in My Poems: A Remembrance of Em Bun.'

⁷⁹⁶ Sok, 'The Weaver in My Poems: A Remembrance of Em Bun.'

⁷⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁹⁸ Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception*, 71; Monica Sok, 'The Weaver,' *Adroit Magazine*, 24 (2017) <http://www.theadroitjournal.org/issue-twenty-four> [Accessed September 15, 2018]; See

In this poem, the transference of silk weaving skills operates on a symbolic level from grandmother to granddaughter, one artist to the other. While Em Bun could weave but not speak English, Sok could not weave but used English to reconnect with her Cambodian lineage: 'She was the weaver in my family, and I am the poet'.⁷⁹⁹

By drawing together her own memories of her grandmother and her grandmother's practice, Sok explored what drama scholar Ketu H. Katrak has defined as 'simultaneity of geography': that is, 'the possibility of living here in body and elsewhere in mind and imagination'.⁸⁰⁰ Katrak has established that this superimposition of geographies is a key framework of analysis for South Asian diasporic writing, applicable here to the Cambodian diaspora.⁸⁰¹ Poetic licence allowed Sok to imagine and reconstruct her grandmother's mind-body experience, bound by grief and resilience, and reclaim her own family history. By practising silk weaving, sharing with her family, showing her silk designs at events and disseminating them to other Cambodian American women, Em Bun, with no access to English, regained a personal and social role that helped her live in Harrisburg. The public appreciation of her contribution by contrast also highlights the absence of a wider movement reviving Cambodian craftsmanship in the United States, despite the significant community of Cambodian immigrants.

Em Bun's example also emphasises the importance of demonstration and performance in the pursuit of Cambodian silk crafts and its recognition in diasporic communities. A handful of events in California in the late 1980s and early 1990s involving

also Monica Sok, 'Ode to the loom,' *The Offing*, June 19, 2019 <https://theoffingmag.com/poetry/ode-to-the-loom/> [Accessed June 20, 2020]

⁷⁹⁹ Monica Sok, 'The Weaver.'

⁸⁰⁰ Ketu Katrak, 'South Asian American Literature,' in *An Interethnic Companion to Asian American Literature*, ed. King-Kok Cheung (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 201.

⁸⁰¹ *Ibid*, 201-202.

demonstrations of weaving confirms this hypothesis. *Apsara: The Feminine in Cambodian Art* is considered to be the first exhibition dedicated to Cambodian culture in the United States, part of Los Angeles' City Roots Festival that showcased the cultures of many immigrant groups, including Mexicans, Koreans, Guatemalans, Vietnamese and Filipinos.⁸⁰² Curated in 1987 by cultural broker Amy Catlin, ethnomusicology professor at the University of California, it took place at the Woman's Building, a non-profit arts and education centre supporting women's rights in Los Angeles.⁸⁰³ As shown in a film documenting the event, two members of the Khmer Women Weavers Studio of Long Beach offered a demonstration for the guests, working on a floor loom on *krama* cloths [Fig.125]. The exhibition's accompanying publication featured interviews with Cambodian American women artists from Southern California, including a singer, a dancer, a fashion designer, an altar maker, and Phan Ith, one of the weavers at the exhibition.

⁸⁰² Susan Auerbach, 'The Brokering of Ethnic Folklore,' in *Creative Ethnicity, Symbols and Strategies of Contemporary Ethnic Life*, ed. Stephen Stern, and John A. Cicala (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1991), 224.

⁸⁰³ The Woman's Building, open between 1973 and 2001 in Los Angeles, was co-founded by the American feminist artist and educator Judy Chicago.



Fig.125 Weaver working on her loom, screenshot from the Khmer Dance and Music Project video archive: Apsara exhibit by Amy Catlin, filmed on December 6, 1987 during the open house day.

Originally from Battambang, Phan Ith learned weaving in a refugee camp at the Thai border. In the United States, while maintaining a job at an electronic assembly factory she continued weaving in her spare time to remember her past life in Cambodia [Fig.126]. She stated: 'weaving is like a memory of what most of my life was, and how we could take care of ourselves'.⁸⁰⁴

The Khmer Women Weavers studio produced polyester *krama* scarves [Fig.127]. According to the exhibition catalogue, they also wove silk styles such as *phamaung*, *anlounh*, and *krama saut*.⁸⁰⁵ Besides the 'Apsara' event, a group of weavers also participated in a demonstration at the United Cambodian Community Center for the opening night of a vocational and technical school in Long Beach in the early 1990s.⁸⁰⁶ Figure 128 shows one

⁸⁰⁴ Amy Catlin, ed., *Apsara: The Feminine in Cambodian Art* (Los Angeles, CA: The Woman's Building, 1987), 26.

⁸⁰⁵ Ibid, 27.

⁸⁰⁶ Needham and Quintiliani, *Cambodians in Long Beach*, 66-67. Founded in 1977, United Cambodian Community is a non-profit agency which plays an essential role in the area, providing a wide range of social services for the local community with a specific focus on healthcare and community engagement.

woman in *sampot hol* spinning thread on a spindle, with looms set up for weaving in the background. Bonnie Lowenthal, who worked for United Cambodian Community, recalled that the weaving project received a grant awarded by the National Endowments for the Arts, which supported the purchase of several looms.⁸⁰⁷ One of these looms was installed at the Long Beach Senior Center, where women could come and produce cotton *krama* scarves. According to Lowenthal the project had been initiated by the local Arts of Apsara cultural association. It mostly involved elderly women with prior knowledge of weaving, and was short lived.



Figs. 126-127 Left: Phan Ith weaving at Khmer Women Weavers studio in Long Beach.; Right: Series of krama scarves made by the Khmer Women Weavers' Project, Long Beach, in Amy Catlin, Apsara: The Feminine in Cambodian Art, 3, 26.

By the time of my first visit to Long Beach in 2017, neither this project, nor the Khmer Women Weavers' Studio, still existed. These two events, however, point to the significance of weaving practices in the late 1980s, when Cambodian refugees first settled in the United States. Continuing these skills was part of the process of reclaiming Cambodian culture for

⁸⁰⁷ Bonnie Lowenthal, informal phone conversation with Magali An Berthon, Long Beach, 2017. It is not clear to this date whether this project was an extension from the Khmer Women Weavers Studio or a separate project altogether.

first-wave diasporic communities. Potential explanations for the difficulty of continuing these skills in a new environment included the complexity of the techniques, and potentially the lack of availability of younger generations to train. Weaving was apparently continued by elderly Cambodian women, and did not lead to the foundation of vocational schools or training programmes. In the diaspora, demonstrating weaving to exemplify the vitality of Cambodian culture had seemingly overridden the necessity to advance the craft itself. Silk has more consistently continued to exist in immigrant communities through its use for dress and cultural ceremonies. The performative power of silk clothing, therefore, provides the focus of the rest of this chapter, in an analysis of CTCF, the rituals offered by wedding ceremonies and the practice of Khmer classical ballet in Long Beach.



Fig.128 Weaver demonstrating cotton spinning at the United Cambodian Community Center on Anaheim Street, Long Beach, CA, in Needham and Quintiliani, Cambodians in Long Beach, 66.

Cambodia Town: a platform of encounters for silk dressmakers and wearers

The diasporic territory of Cambodia Town in Long Beach, California is used to

examine the emotional role of silk dress among Cambodian immigrants through the themes of loss, memory, nostalgia, and imaginaries. My interlocutors are a dressmaker and a wedding dress designer and their clients. This study is grounded in insider perspectives of Cambodians living in Cambodia Town, with their shops as micro-sites of research to analyse the local dynamics of silk consumption.

The history of a Cambodian presence in California began in the 1950s and 1960s, when Cambodian students enrolled in engineering and other technical courses at the Los Angeles and Long Beach campuses of California State University.⁸⁰⁸ Once these educational programmes ended, the majority returned to their homeland, leaving only a few Cambodians in the region. These first connections, however, played a critical role in the establishment of a larger Cambodian community in Southern California following the mid-1970s Cambodian civil war. Mirroring the global exodus of Cambodians around the world, the first Cambodians arriving in Long Beach were mainly refugees who escaped in 1975. The second wave took place in the early 1980s.⁸⁰⁹ In subsequent decades, Cambodians arrived in large numbers in the Long Beach area to join family members, leading to the formation of a large community.⁸¹⁰ Today, Long Beach is a multicultural city with official statistics revealing a large Hispanic community, about 42 per cent of the population, and two important African American and Asian groups, each respectively around 13 per cent of the population.⁸¹¹ The city has 19,998 residents of Cambodian descent, about 4 per cent of the city's population. However, as Cambodian Americans often show a reluctance to register for the census, the real estimate is around 50,000 people, making Long Beach the

⁸⁰⁸ Chan, *Cambodians in the United States: Refugees, Immigrants, American Ethnic Minority*, 13-14 ; Needham and Quintiliani, *Cambodians in Long Beach*, 9.

⁸⁰⁹ Needham and Quintiliani, *Cambodians in Long Beach*, 7.

⁸¹⁰ Chan, *Cambodians in the United States: Refugees, Immigrants, American Ethnic Minority*, 120.

⁸¹¹ United States Census Bureau, *QuickFacts Long Beach city, California 2017*.
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/longbeachcitycalifornia,US/PST045217> [Accessed September 28, 2018]

Cambodian capital of the United States.⁸¹² The Cambodians who settled in Long Beach in the 1980s have had a significant impact on the city's political life. The quarter in the east side of the city was commonly called Little Phnom Penh. With the commitment of activists who advocated for Cambodian recognition from 2001, the City Council agreed to designate the section of the Anaheim Street corridor between Junipero Avenue and Atlantic Boulevard 'Cambodia Town' in 2007 [Fig.129].



Fig.129 City sign for Cambodia Town, delineating the Cambodian ethnic neighbourhood of Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, 2017.

⁸¹² In comparison, the city of Paris, France and its suburbia, especially Torcy, has welcomed about 40,000 Cambodian immigrants, according to the census issued by the French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies in 1990. They are, however spread over a large suburban territory without coalescing into a centralised zone as is the case in Long Beach. In absence of more recent numbers, the 2012 census on immigration in France indicates that only 2.8 per cent of the French population were born in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam combined, representing a total of 161,000 people. See INSEE, 'Immigrés selon le pays de naissance en 2012.' [Accessed on October 1, 2018]

It was ‘the first ethnic designation in the city’s history and the first Cambodia Town in the nation’.⁸¹³ Asian immigrants as a whole represent nearly a quarter of the population in Cambodia Town.⁸¹⁴ The neighbourhood was plagued by a wave of violence in the 1990s between Cambodian and Mexican gangs, challenging the myth of Cambodian Americans being part of the Asian American ‘model minority’.⁸¹⁵ Mirroring the main statistics on Cambodians as a group in the United States, young people’s education rate in the Cambodian community of Long Beach is very low: about 65 per cent of young adults do not complete high school. Issues relating to public safety have decreased since the late 2000s in the neighbourhood, and a strong network of associations supports underprivileged elders and youth in particular. One of these is the Khmer Arts Academy (KAA), a dance organisation offering Khmer classical dance training to young locals, founded in 2002 by master dancer Sophiline Cheam Shapiro and her husband John Shapiro. This prime example of the rich associative life in Long Beach will be explored in more detail later in this chapter.

Susan Needham introduced me to Mary Tan at the Cambodia Town Culture Festival in April 2017. A silk enthusiast, Mary offered to introduce me to her dressmaker Sok Chan in Cambodia Town, whom she had known for about nine years. A visit to her tailoring workshop Chanda Tailor offers another situated examination of the kind of silk economy operating in this neighbourhood. It was invisible from the street, located in the back room of an empty office on Anaheim Street. There, I met again with Mary Tan who helped me with translation during our meeting, because Sok did not speak English fluently. This led to an

⁸¹³ Needham and Quintiliani, *Cambodians in Long Beach*, 7.

⁸¹⁴ Alimat Adebisi and al., *The State of Cambodia Town Report* (Los Angeles: UCLA, 2013), 9.

⁸¹⁵ *The Gangs of Cambodia Town*, Latino USA / NPR, broadcast October 31, 2014
<https://www.npr.org/2014/10/31/360501617/the-gangs-of-cambodia-town> [Accessed October 1, 2018]

informal group conversation rather than a one-to-one interview, speaking with Mary in English and Chan in Khmer.⁸¹⁶

Chan, fifty-seven years old in 2017, has been in Long Beach since 2004. She explained: 'I followed my husband who wanted to go to Long Beach [...] lived in Phnom Penh and then moved here [Cambodia Town] because other Cambodians live here. And in California the weather is similar to Cambodia'.⁸¹⁷ She was born in Battambang and worked as a dressmaker in Phnom Penh. She was able to put these hand-sewing skills to use in California by opening her own tailoring service in Long Beach [Fig.130].⁸¹⁸ Her husband 'works in a school. At the office, like a janitor fixing everything in the school, not as a teacher'.⁸¹⁹ They had two sons, who have since returned to Phnom Penh with no wish to continue her tailoring business. She continued: 'when my husband retires, I want to retire too'.⁸²⁰ Chan makes gowns and two-piece ensembles in silk and lace for weddings, Buddhist ceremonies and events, with the help of three Cambodian seamstresses. Chan confided that her business was stable but not fully profitable; she received most orders during the main Khmer celebrations that are considered auspicious times to get married, such as Cambodian New Year in the spring and the Water Festival and the Buddhist holiday *Pchum Ben* in the autumn. To the question 'how many times would a customer come to the shop to buy', Chan answered: 'mostly one or two times a year. Sometimes they have different occasions in the year'.⁸²¹

Chan sourced her silk textiles once or twice a year in Cambodia, keeping active connections with her homeland. Clients select a fabric, costing between 70 and 100 USD per yard, to which Chan adds the cost of labour, about 150 USD for a lace top and silk *sampot* ensemble.

⁸¹⁶ Chan's case is not an isolated one in the immigrant community encountering 'the existence of a bilingual barrier', as 'over half of the Cambodian population report that they speak English 'less than very well' or 'not at all'. Adebisi and al., *The State of Cambodia Town Report*, 10.

⁸¹⁷ Sok Chan, Interview by Magali An Berthon, trans. Mary Tan, April 6, 2017, Long Beach, CA, USA.

⁸¹⁸ Ibid.

⁸¹⁹ Sok Chan, Interview by Magali An Berthon.

⁸²⁰ Ibid.

⁸²¹ Ibid.

A full set, including fabrics and tailoring, ranges between 300 to 400 USD. As a result, her clientele has remained mostly limited to better-off middle-aged Cambodian American women. It remains unaffordable for younger clients. Chan explained that the majority of her customers would only come once or twice a year to buy a new custom-made outfit for a special occasion. Women usually chose a classic silk tube skirt in *phamaung* or *hol* and a fitted bodice, either in an embroidered fabric or lace. Mary Tan, who cheerfully admitted visiting Sok Chan four to five times a year and ordering up to six silk ensembles, sounded like an exception. Mary gave more details about her orders: ‘sometimes Chan starts from her catalogue and sometimes she designs. My outfit is only from her designs. Only traditional style’.⁸²²

Sok Chan’s workshop appears as a small pocket of cultural interactions where women can meet, communicate their taste for high quality fabrics and Cambodian-style dress, and engage with their roots. During my visit, Nancy Lee, forty-four years old, arrived for a fitting. We discussed in English. She had commissioned a silk ensemble for a fundraising event for Dream Beyond Foundation, a non-profit organisation she founded in Santa Ana, California.⁸²³ Nancy Lee had opted for a sophisticated variation of a purple *phamaung* style, with an asymmetric bodice in thick twill silk, ruffled at the bottom and patterned in gold, and a matching tube skirt [Fig.131]. In terms of designs, Sok Chan offered a range of styles in a catalogue to choose from, from classic to more innovative shapes. Nancy Lee’s confident choice demonstrated her ability to rework Cambodian dress codes in a fashionable way. Introducing Khmer fashion style as formal wear for fundraising and professional events departs from the more common use of Cambodian dress in traditional ceremonies. Nancy pursued the dual goal of expressing her deep appreciation for Khmer silk

⁸²² Ibid.

⁸²³ Nancy Lee, informal conversation with Magali An Berthon, April 6, 2017, Long Beach, CA, USA.

while overtly promoting Cambodian identity in public on any occasion possible, through her dressed body.



Fig.130 Sok Chan in her shop Chanda Tailor, Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, April 6, 2017.



Fig.131 Sok Chan adjusting Nancy Lee's purple dress at Chanda Tailor workshop, Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, April 2017.

In her study of ethnic dress in diasporic migration, fashion theorist Margaret Maynard determined that movements of population had created new forms of expressions of ethnic identity, which would 'not mirror precisely practices in the homeland, rather using a range of sources to shape new ways of doing things'.⁸²⁴ Nancy Lee's testimony indeed shows how diasporic silk consumption is invested with a new significance through travel and connections with Cambodia. She explained how she regularly bought handwoven silk yardage in selected markets in Phnom Penh regardless of the price and brought them back to her seamstress in Long Beach to create new outfits.⁸²⁵ Similarly, Sok Chan purchases a wide range of handwoven silk fabrics, solid-coloured *phamaung* and polychromic *hol* yardages, as well as lace, during her annual Cambodian trips, working with a specific list of

⁸²⁴ Maynard, *Dress and Globalisation*, 72.

⁸²⁵ Lee, infomal conversation with Magali An Berthon.

suppliers and middlemen [Fig.132]. She mentioned Surya market, Olympic, O'Russey in Phnom Penh as her preferred markets. She added: 'all the fabrics I buy are produced in Takeo. They are made there and brought to Phnom Penh' with 'Takeo and Prey town as number one' in quality, but she did not visit weavers directly.⁸²⁶ Her clients trusted her and did not ask for a formal certification of the origins of the silk they purchased as Cambodian. Mary Tan also had strong opinions about the good silk shops in Cambodia, finding products from Koh Dach of poor quality, with which Sok Chan agreed.



Fig.132 Stacks of hol poar yardages at Chanda Tailor, Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, April 2017.

These seemingly mundane debates about the quality and provenance of silk stem from longstanding trade exchanges between Cambodia and its diaspora, ever since the establishment of refugee camps at the Thai border. Ter Horst describes the story of Youn Malis, a textile dealer based at the Central Market in Phnom Penh, interviewed in 2004, who sold silk to tourists, including numerous Cambodian Americans. Her sister living in Boston

⁸²⁶ Sok Chan, Interview by Magali An Berthon.

also ordered silk scarves and *sampot hol* to sell in the United States. In reality, Youn Malis sold ‘machine-made [replicas] from Laos, Burma and Thailand’ while presenting them as Khmer products.⁸²⁷

This story of deliberately misleading purchasers with imported mass-produced silks, compared with the example of Em Bun’s peers touching her silk *sampot* at weddings asking where she found it, suggests how Cambodian Americans have been searching for an authentic experience of Cambodian silk that activates a sense of belonging. Provenance and authenticity are conflated through the purchase of silk *from* Cambodia to initiate and materialise a direct connection with the home land, with the possibility of eliciting an emotional, nostalgic response. Chapter Two addressed issues of authenticity in the context of Cambodian silk crafts produced by foreign-owned NGOs. Here the discussion is brought into the context of the Cambodian American consumer. Ter Horst has indeed argued that due to the conditions of their exodus, Cambodian immigrants ‘framed a diasporic consciousness around the silk industry as authentic Khmer’.⁸²⁸ In our discussion in Sok Chan’s workshop, Nancy Lee praised the beauty of what she referred to as ‘*our* silk’, drawing attention to the level of craftsmanship, and complaining that it had been undervalued. The noticeable use of the possessive pronoun indicates how she, as a Cambodian American, reaffirms her Khmerness and sense of pride through the use of carefully sourced artefacts. In her mind, the definition of Cambodian silk is broad. It is silk purchased and made in Cambodia, tailored in Cambodia Town by a Cambodian woman into a Khmer fashion ensemble. Through this transaction, Cambodia Town, as an ethnic neighbourhood, and its inhabitants are symbolically incorporated into the transnational map of Cambodian identity.

Silk products are versatile ‘evocative objects’, in Sherry Turkle’s words, with the

⁸²⁷ Ter Horst, *Weaving into Cambodia*, 232-235.

⁸²⁸ *Ibid*, 232.

empathetic potency to embody fluid and multiple roles.⁸²⁹ Chapter Three documented weavers demonstrating their attachment to the textiles they wove. In Cambodia Town, testimonies reveal that the act of wearing silk garments also contributes to the reconstruction of diasporic imaginings. To Nancy Lee, each of her Cambodian dresses was unique and she wore them only once, as opposed to Kamon in the previous chapter who would wear the *sampot hol* she had woven again and again. As for the new purple dress she was buying from Sok Chan, she said that after wearing it for her event she would then keep it in her closet, adding that silk skirts were 'easy to fold'.⁸³⁰ Similarly, Mary Tan confessed: 'Sok Chan says that I have a lot of textiles in my house! I have three closets of dresses from Chanda. [...] I have *hol* and *phamuong*. You see, one set, I wear only one time'.⁸³¹

Mary grew up in Cambodia and had a Chinese Vietnamese mother and Malaysian father. She survived the KR regime and arrived in Cambodia Town in February 1982, though she has since relocated to Orange County. Like many other Cambodian refugees, she brought none of her precious belongings when she fled to the United States with her husband, and especially no textiles. Mary's passion for silk has emerged from her childhood, as she remembered seeing silk farmers spinning and reeling silk threads in the area of Banteay Chmaar in the 1960s. It seems likely that because she saw silk weaving as a child, in our conversation she often asserted that the silk gowns' main materials were inevitably handwoven. Silk occupied an emotional space in her memories of Cambodia, so much so that when she returned to her home country for the first time in 1999 she bought as much silk as she could and was pleased to find precious fabrics at an affordable price, bringing her a form of solace.

⁸²⁹ Sherry Turkle, *Evocative Objects: Things We Think With* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), 5, 9.

⁸³⁰ Lee, informal conversation with Magali An Berthon.

⁸³¹ Mary Tan, informal conversation with Magali An Berthon, April 6, 2017, Long Beach, CA, USA.

The testimony of Cambodian American wedding planner and designer Men Kovady ('Kaylene') has articulated further the emotional connection between silk, memory and trauma. I first met Kaylene at her Khmer Bridal booth at CTCF. I was struck by her dress, one of her designs, a cream white and blue silk ensemble that revisited the *phamaung* style [Fig.133]. On a lightweight cream blouse printed with painted effects, she wore a sophisticated pleated sash that asymmetrically crossed her chest, adorned with a jewelled brooch. Her *sampot* was of the same royal blue and worn simply folded around the waist. She agreed to be interviewed in English and I met her again at her shop located on Pacific Highway in Cambodia Town. Born in Phnom Penh and settling in the United States in 1981 at the age of five, Kaylene is a self-taught designer who collaborates with a number of Cambodian seamstresses in Long Beach to create custom-made wedding dresses for rental and purchase.⁸³² She also organises jewellery and flower arrangements for her clients. Like Sok Chan, Men Kaylene returns to Cambodia twice a year to source fabrics, garments and accessories from specific vendors in Phnom Penh which she sells at her shop in Long Beach, from Khmer-style laced *aor* (bodices) and sequined *phuy* or *sbaay* (sashes) for the tops to polychromic *sampot hol*, brocaded *sampot sarabap*, and plain *sampot phamaung* and *chawng kbun* for skirts and trousers [Fig.134].

Arriving first in Kansas with her mother and siblings to reunite with her father who was already in the United States, Kaylene moved to California after high school and settled in Cambodia Town in Long Beach. After university, she worked as an interpreter for the United Cambodia Community agency where she 'I was learning about [her] own culture', translating for Cambodian refugees telling their experience of the KR regime.

Kaylene became emotional in retelling her life story. She explained: 'lucky I don't remember much about the war. I don't remember much because I was too young [...] but I remember the sadness, the crying. I remember some images you know? But I didn't know how to put it

⁸³² Men Kaylene, Interview with Magali An Berthon, April 11, 2017, Long Beach, CA, USA.

into words'. 'The memory all comes back. It is just there you know', she whispered, 'and you don't know what it is like, what triggers it'.⁸³³ To explain her interest in Khmer weddings, Kaylene talked about a childhood memory of wedding in Cambodia that marked her:

'I remember the first wedding that my mom right after the war 1979. And I remember everybody cried so hard. [...] And I was awakened by their cries because I was a child. And I don't understand why until later I learned that the majority of people that were there were all women and children, and all their husbands, their loved ones, had passed away. And they remembered the wedding songs'.⁸³⁴



Fig.133 Men Kaylene at her booth at the Cambodia Town Culture Festival, Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, 2017.

She also recalled how as an interpreter she accompanied former Cambodian Minister of Culture Chheng Phon (1930-2016) on his visit to California in 1993. She remembered that in

⁸³³ Ibid.

⁸³⁴ Ibid.

a public speech to the Cambodian community, he commended the importance of wedding ceremonies as celebrations of all five senses with the music, lavish clothes and flowers.⁸³⁵

She was struck by Chhen Phon's reference to the forced weddings that happened during the KR regime. Between 1975 and 1979, hundreds of thousands of ceremonies were organised in villages between women and men who were randomly matched as part of a state-sponsored programme. Such atrocities negatively impacted on the meaning and the practice of marital unions in Cambodia in the wake of the dictatorship.⁸³⁶

On a more positive note, her interest in silk was sparked by encounters with her mother's friends:

'I see my mum's friends that came since 1975 and how refined they are and the way they dress Cambodian [...] the way they put together the clothes, it just seemed so refined and so elegant. [...] they taught me: "this is the finest silk". Or these are the best silks made from Banteay Srei or from Kampong Cham or from Koh Dach, you know. So, they showed me how the thread, the silk, how you can create them in a different way, how can you touch, feel by the texture of it'.⁸³⁷

Kaylene assisted her sister who worked as a make-up artist at weddings: 'I discovered [the wedding] by accident. My sister, she is in the beauty business and I was her driver'. To learn about the art of dressing, she also observed dance troupes performing during weddings: 'I liked to watch the dancers how they dressed, the teacher, just four yard of cloth they can make it into beautiful skirts any style they want'.⁸³⁸ She eventually started her own business

⁸³⁵ It is not fully clear where this speech was given. Kaylene Men was most likely referring to Chheng Phon's visit to the University Theater at Cal State University, Long Beach to attend a dance performance in December 1993. See 'Cambodian Dancers to Perform Sunday,' *LA Times*, December 2, 1993 <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1993-12-04-ca-63781-story.html> [Accessed June 1, 2020]

⁸³⁶ In a 2011 study conducted with 222 Cambodians who were civil parties at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia against two former KR leaders Nuon Chea and Khieu Samphan, more than a half of the interviewees were forced into marriage. See Judith Strasser and al., eds., 'A Study about Victims' Participation at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia and Gender-Based Violence under the Khmer Rouge Regime,' *Transcultural Psychosocial Organization Cambodia* (September 2015): 13.

⁸³⁷ Men, Interview with Magali An Berthon.

⁸³⁸ *Ibid.*

as ‘a hobby’ selling Khmer fashion and planning weddings in the 2010s and it then became a sustainable professional endeavour.⁸³⁹

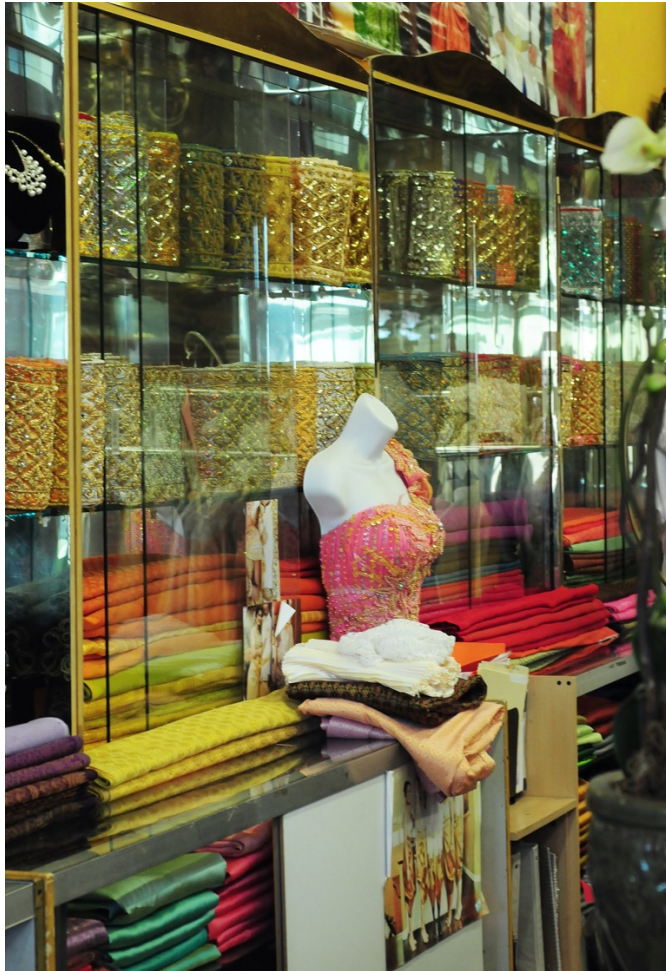


Fig.134 Embroidered sbaay and solid silk sampot on display at Khmer Bridal, Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, 2017.

In her discourse, Kaylene linked the trauma of the KR regime to the social and cultural power of marriage in the immigrant context of Long Beach. Her commitment to creating the most lavish wedding ceremonies has been compounded by her personal experience of *snaam*, which means ‘scar’ in Khmer and designates the mark of traumatic past memories. Kaylene considers the wedding as the binding moment that brings the

⁸³⁹ See also the written portrait of Men Kaylene in Long Beach’s local press: Anne Artley, ‘Local Female Entrepreneurs Mirror Growing Trend of Diversity,’ *Long Beach Business Journal*, February 26, 2018 <https://lbbusinessjournal.com/local-female-entrepreneurs-mirror-growing-trend-of-diversity> [Accessed December 2, 2020]

family and the community together and 'ties the past, the present, and the future'.⁸⁴⁰

Similarly, Smith-Hefner has praised the rich sophistication of Khmer weddings in the diaspora of Boston despite the 'culture being affected, even haunted, by recent history'.⁸⁴¹

She saw the popularity of traditional weddings as 'a deliberate and dignified effort by Cambodian elders to re-create families, community, and a Khmer culture in the United States'.⁸⁴²

Dress plays an essential role in this moment of cultural reunion shaped by family loyalties. The variety, care and sophistication of the chosen silk ensembles convey a sense of luxury during the ceremony. The bridal couple, families, and guests showcase (or borrow for the occasion) their finest clothes. Khmer weddings in Cambodia usually last three days, sometimes reduced to one day, and takes place at the bride's home. During that time, the bridal couple changes into different styles of silk ensembles, often in matching colours, up to seven times. The bride picks different types of lace or sequined *aor* blouse with a silk *sampot* carefully folded around the waist and held by a gold belt, which demands the help of a family member to get dressed. One of the ensembles may be a Western-style white gown. The groom wears different styles of silk jackets with a silk *sampot chawng kbun* in shantung or brocade.

The bridal couple's final outfits are inspired by Cambodian regal attire, in Kaylene's words, 'when you dress like the king and queen'.⁸⁴³ It is often worn for the final wedding ritual in which strings are tied round the couple's wrists.⁸⁴⁴ In Kaylene's shop, these ensembles for newlyweds were displayed side by side on mannequins [Fig.135]. The bridal dress comprises a golden silk *phuy* fitted asymmetrically from the shoulder to the hip and a

⁸⁴⁰ Men, Interview with Magali An Berthon.

⁸⁴¹ Smith-Hefner, *Khmer American: Identity and Moral Education in a Diasporic Community*, xii.

⁸⁴² Ibid.

⁸⁴³ Men, Interview with Magali An Berthon.

⁸⁴⁴ Ed Davies, 'Cambodian couple finally tie the knot with glittering ceremony after pandemic curbs ease,' Reuters, February 3, 2021 <https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/cambodian-couple-finally-tie-knot-with-glittering-ceremony-after-pandemic-curbs-2021-02-04/> [Accessed August 2, 2021]

sampot sarabap hip wrap draped in the *ka'at kbal neak* pleating style. The groom's suit includes a white silk *rbauk aor pay* (long-sleeved blouse) with a silk *rbauk* jacket, called *aor ko trung*, with a golden sequinned collar.⁸⁴⁵ A wedding picture from Gillian Green's seminal book *Traditional Textiles of Cambodia* shows strikingly similar ensembles, illustrating how this specific style, inspired by royalty, is intended to evoke an unchanging ceremonial wedding tradition [Fig.136].



Fig.135 Groom ensemble on the left and bride dress the right on mannequins at Khmer Bridal shop, Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, 2017.

⁸⁴⁵ Green, *Traditional Textiles of Cambodia*, 194.



Fig.136 Bride and groom photographed on their wedding day. In Green, Traditional Textiles of Cambodia, 194.

Kaylene's work at Khmer Bridal places her in a mediatory position in the Cambodian American community of Long Beach, taking on the role of keeper of Khmer wedding rituals, especially for young people, describing herself as 'a keeper of tradition showing a certain way of doing things'.⁸⁴⁶ Kaylene had developed her own style, slightly changing the codes of Cambodian ceremonial fashion. She consulted wedding fashion trends in the United States and Cambodia, looking at social media and celebrity weddings. In her shop she chose which textile products to distribute, to which she attached specific culturally conservative discourses. Positioning herself as an authority on Khmer wedding fashion, Kaylene stated that 'certain things you shouldn't mess with', criticising the change of taste in Cambodia as much as the Americanisation of Cambodian American weddings. She regretted a 'loss of

⁸⁴⁶ Men, Interview with Magali An Berthon.

culture' through the following of certain trends she considered inappropriate for such a ceremony.

Even though Kaylene acknowledged that in Long Beach area the majority of her clients entered into interracial marriages, she praised the 'very unique [Khmer] art of dressing' that is 'very feminine and doesn't reveal too much'.⁸⁴⁷ In this wedding portrait, displayed on the shop's walls, the newly-wed couple posing in Khmer-style outfits are a Caucasian American man and a Cambodian American woman [Fig.137].⁸⁴⁸



Fig.137 Portrait of former clients in an interracial marriage seen at Khmer Bridal, Cambodia Town, Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, 2017.

⁸⁴⁷ Men, Interview with Magali An Berthon.

⁸⁴⁸ Fashion scholar Cheryl Sim has studied ethnic hybridity in dress practices in Canada in the Chinese diaspora, especially how young brides have experienced wearing Chinese dress or a more Americanised style at their wedding. Her study shows the ways in which the research on wedding dress practices could be expanded in the Cambodian diaspora in Long Beach by conducting interviews with women about their weddings. See Cheryl Sim, *Wearing the Cheongsam: Dress and Culture in a Chinese Diaspora* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), 103-104.

Mortland has suggested that Cambodian American weddings are situated moments in which gender dynamics and references to ancestral ways have been reinforced. Discourses on appropriate female dress stem from a more pervasive conversation about how Cambodian women, especially as spouses, are expected to behave with obedience to their husband, as well as in their family and the community.⁸⁴⁹ Despite the social ruptures resulting from migration, the persistence of these codes of conduct perpetuating prescriptive female roles in the diaspora mirror gendered positions in contemporary Cambodia.⁸⁵⁰

Through her approach to wedding fashion, Kaylene has reaffirmed and shared her ideals of modesty rooted in traditional cultural representations while demonstrating an attachment to a Cambodianness that resists Americanisation.

Staging silk at the Cambodia Town Culture Festival (CTCF)

This section examines silk wearing practices in the context of CTCF 2017, addressing ways in which festival participants negotiate and perform their Cambodian identity through silk dress. Considering the impact of globalisation on ethnic representations, Maynard has regarded ethnicity as a fluid process that is 'flexible in different places and at different times', embedded in 'day-to-day cultural transactions and connectedness'.⁸⁵¹ Ethnic dress offers possibilities of appropriation and resistance, but also hybridity through exchanges with other minorities and everyday Western fashion styles. At festival times, the ethnic neighbourhood can be seen as a public space for the display of ethnic pride which produces

⁸⁴⁹ Mortland, *Grace after Genocide: Cambodians in the United States*, 113-115.

⁸⁵⁰ See Katherine Brickell's article on the persistence of gender bias in Cambodia. Brickell, 'We don't forget the old rice pot when we get the new one,' 446-451.

⁸⁵¹ Maynard has argued that ethnicity is changeable, referring to anthropologist Richard Jenkins who promoted the potential transactional nature of ethnicity. See Maynard, *Dress and Globalisation*, 69 ; Richard Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity: Arguments and Explorations* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1997), 51.

specific forms of expression of Cambodian heritage. Cambodia Town has become the stage for numerous public events since the arrival of the first wave of refugees in the mid-1970s. This community engagement has crystallised around the Cambodian New Year celebrations, which take place in mid-April, following the Theravada Buddhist tradition. In Long Beach, the first event of this kind took place in April 1976 at Wilson High School, gathering Cambodians and non-Cambodians around a dance performance.⁸⁵² Quickly gaining popularity, this key event hosted other cultural performances and Buddhist rituals led by local monks. It became an outdoor event in the late 1980s, ultimately moving in the 1990s to El Dorado Regional Park, where thousands of Cambodian Americans from California and all over the United States gather every year.⁸⁵³ Cultural heritage scholar Olivia Cadaval showed that ethnic festivals have often been considered an extension of ‘the neighbourhood’s long-standing tradition of activism’, where individuals from the community would assume leadership roles.⁸⁵⁴ Through these numerous events punctuating the life of the neighbourhood, Cambodia Town has become ‘the stage for immigrant modes of expression and experimentation [letting] a sense of community identity and history emerge’.⁸⁵⁵

Since 2008, Cambodia Town’s programme for Cambodian New Year has included CTCF. This open-air festival has been coordinated by Cambodia Town Inc., a local non-profit organisation managed by Cambodian Americans of Long Beach and dedicated to ‘revitalizing the neighborhood by attracting more businesses, visitors and tourists’ and supporting the ‘social and economic well-being of residents and business owners in Central Long Beach’.⁸⁵⁶ Susan Needham, a board member of Cambodia Town Inc. at the time,

⁸⁵² Needham and Quintiliani, *Cambodians in Long Beach*, 68.

⁸⁵³ *Ibid*, 69.

⁸⁵⁴ Olivia Cadaval, ‘Making a Place Home: The Latino Festival,’ in *Creative Ethnicity, Symbols and Strategies of Contemporary Ethnic Life*, ed. Stephen Stern and John A. Cicala (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1991), 204.

⁸⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 206.

⁸⁵⁶ ‘Mission,’ *Cambodia Town* <http://www.cambodiatown.com/> [Accessed 25 October 2018]

initiated the project and remained the main organiser for seven years. She was inspired by her experience at the Folk Festival in Lowell, Massachusetts, and wanted to create an event bringing together the community around Cambodia Town's main street of Anaheim, where a number of Cambodian American-owned shops, supermarkets, restaurants, and tailors such as Chanda Tailor are located.⁸⁵⁷ CTCF has been specifically designed for a Cambodian American audience coordinated by Cambodian Town Inc., thus avoiding the pitfalls of 'stereotyping traditionality' which often occurs in multi-ethnic festivals curated by folklorists for a general public.⁸⁵⁸ It attracts on average a thousand Cambodian and non-Cambodian visitors every year.

In his seminal work on ethnic groups, anthropologist Fredrik Barth has deconstructed the common idea that ethnicity should be categorised within strict geographic boundaries and that ethnic groups would only exist within limited social interactions with outside units.⁸⁵⁹ Barth emphasised instead that ethnic groups would be defined as 'categories of ascription and identification by the actors themselves'.⁸⁶⁰ In the specificity of CTCF, the festival's attendees are considered in the ways they define their Cambodian culture by cultivating specific discourses, imaginings, and performances, in which dress actively participates.

When I visited in 2017, the festival was located on the central square near Mark Twain Library on Anaheim street [Fig.138]. Buddhist monks welcomed visitors for blessings in a shrine set up for the occasion. Attendees could enjoy a variety of Khmer food in the main food stands, sit to eat, wander in the alleys to visit stalls hosted by local associations and shop owners, and watch shows happening on the main stage. The festival did not

⁸⁵⁷ Needham, Informal conversation with Magali An Berthon.

⁸⁵⁸ Auerbach, 'The Brokering of Ethnic Folklore,' 224.

⁸⁵⁹ Frederick Barth, ed., *Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Long Grove: Waveland Press, 1998), 10; Also cited in Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity: Arguments and Explorations*, 51.

⁸⁶⁰ Barth, ed., *Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*, 10.

include a craft section, as has often been the case in ethnic festivals, such as the Hmong International New Year in Fresno and the Asian Cultural Festival of San Diego.⁸⁶¹ Under a bright sun, the library's forecourt was filled by an intense crowd of families and friends meeting, creating a lively social fabric. With micro-histories come micro-sites of exploration. CTCF offers a specific location in which to analyse the intersection of silk with Cambodian American community life. In this case, the divide between 'front stage' and 'back stage' performance established by Erwin Goffman to address the variety of social roles enacted in public and private arenas is challenged.⁸⁶² Participants perform as a group while reclaiming their ethnic identity as individuals in a geographic location where these expressions are blurred and crossed. Cadaval has rightly argued that cultural festivals in immigrant contexts offer 'a temporary centre of power', unifying space and 'generating action, during which symbols and traditions are manipulated, cultural forms are given expression, relationships are negotiated and new identities are forged'.⁸⁶³

⁸⁶¹ According to Needham, there was an only one unsuccessful attempt in 2012 to invite Cambodian nationals to sell artisanal products, which did not garner much interest from the attendees. Needham believed that Cambodian American locals would rather shop in a few dedicated stores in Long Beach or wait to go to Cambodia themselves. See Needham, Informal conversation with Magali An Berthon.

⁸⁶² Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in the Everyday Life* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1956), 76-78.

⁸⁶³ Cadaval, 'Making a Place Home: The Latino Festival,' 205.

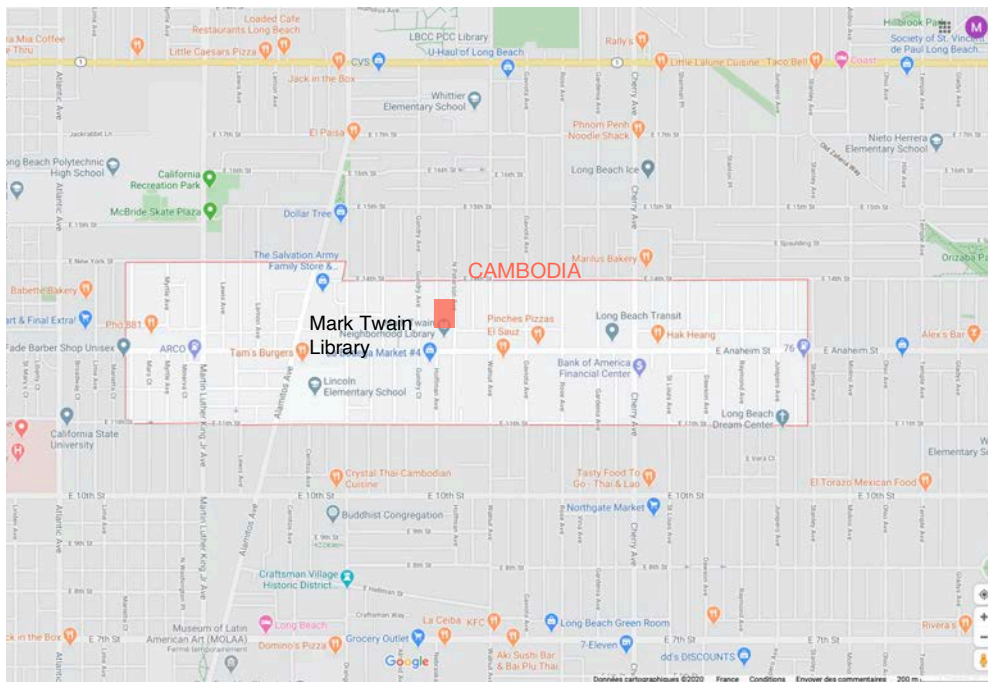


Fig.138 Map of Cambodia Town, Long Beach, CA, Google Maps, 2018.

Wearing silk for ceremonial and religious occasions is customary in Cambodia, a practice reactivated in the diaspora. By my own estimate, only a minority of male and female attendees in silk: shirts in a variety of vivid hues for men, dresses and tube skirts for women. Visitors, and not only Cambodian Americans, clad in these sophisticated patterned and solid-coloured silk garments were, however, very visible in the crowd, and overtly communicated their ties to Cambodian culture through dress in a social and public space. In this picture, Mary Tan is in a matching bright green ensemble she commissioned from Sok Chan, standing with Susan Needham, who is also dressed in a more classic Cambodian style [Fig.139]. With her white *aor* and colourful *sampot hol*, Needham, as an anthropologist founder of the CTCT and CamCHAP archives, provides an example of a non-Cambodian cultural broker following local dress protocols. Mary Tan displays her passion for silk with this ensemble picked especially for the festival. She wore a custom-made bodice with an open neckline and long sleeves in crisp silk with a green and white cotton *krama* tied asymmetrically on the shoulder. Her tube skirt featured a polychromic hand-

painted frieze of bold confronting peacocks and stylised florals on a bright acid green ground with red, yellow and gold accents mimicking an ikat effect. She exemplified how female attendees intentionally wore striking variations of the Cambodian ensemble of the fitted bodice and tube skirt in solid hues, brocade, or *hol*, all remarkable for the care and playfulness invested in dressing up in bright colour combinations,



Fig.139 Dr Susan Needham and Mary Tan both in Cambodian dress, Cambodia Town Culture Festival. Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, April 2017.

A dozen women, probably all in their sixties and dressed alike with a lacy blouse, a silk *sampot hol* and a sash were invited by the festival as first generation of Cambodian female immigrants to Long Beach [Figs.140a-b]. The majority of women dressed in silk at CTCF

indeed appeared to be more mature, an observation confirmed by Susan Needham, who stated that younger people seemed less interested in Cambodian-style fashion.⁸⁶⁴



Figs. 140a-b Left: Female festival-goer with a matching silk ensemble and a green silken sash. Right: Women dressed in the typical ensemble: laced aor and silk sampot hol, at the Cambodia Town Culture Festival, Long Beach, CA. Author's photographs, April 2017.

A smaller number of men were wearing silk garments, mostly short-sleeve shirts or tailored jackets on black trousers. Pasin Chanou, one of the festival's main organisers and chairman of Cambodia Town Inc., wore a green silk shirt bought in Cambodia during one of his annual visits. Mary Tan's husband, a Chinese Cambodian, was wearing a turquoise jacket in shot silk, matching his wife's outfit [Fig.141].

⁸⁶⁴ This generational divide about dress is also prevalent in Cambodia. See Kim Samath and Yin Vannith Touch, 'Why do women wear sexy clothes in pagodas?'



Fig.141 Mary Tan's husband wearing a jacket in shot silk and holding a gilded mokot, Cambodia Town Culture Festival, Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, April 2017.

At the festival, dress also allowed the expression of the pluralities of immigrant lives. Jenkins has demonstrated that ethnic identity responds to two processes of identification. The external definition is provided by a group or external individual; the process this section here addresses is the internal definition, when 'actors signal to in- or out-group members a self-definition of their nature or identity'.⁸⁶⁵ While typical Cambodian ensembles were still relevant for elders in the community, a large number of visitors wore a cotton checked *krama* scarf on Western-style casual outfits such as jeans and t-shirts. Affordable and versatile, *krama* scarves are common items in the Cambodian diaspora.⁸⁶⁶ At CTCF, this cloth has the additional function of signalling the visitors' sense of affiliation with Cambodian identity. Cambodia Town Inc. had commissioned from Cambodia a special *krama* embroidered with the Cambodia Town logo to sell in Long Beach. I noticed about

⁸⁶⁵ Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity: Arguments and Explorations*, 53.

⁸⁶⁶ Mortland, *Grace after Genocide: Cambodians in the United States*, 233.

fifteen people, mostly members of the organising committee, who were wearing this design [Fig.142].



Fig.142 Dressed in red, woman participant wearing a Cambodia Town krama with an embroidered logo of Cambodia, Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, April 2017.

At CTCF, some younger people dressed in silk were also quite visible in the crowd. They were either participants in the parade or Khmer classical ballet dancers invited to perform. One of them was Sokhomsan Chakravatin, 'Chakra', fourteen years old, who stood out in the crowd in his dance attire. He was wearing a white fitted silk shirt with seamless shoulders, a red shoulder cloth (*sbaay*), and bright orange silk wrapped trousers in the *chawng kbun* style. He moved slowly, holding a red pleated silk fabric in his hand, a kite-shaped ornament called a *sloek po* to perform slow gestures [Fig.143]. He danced for the Cambodian American veterans who stood around him in a blessing posture in front of a Buddhist shrine. He then performed again on the main stage to represent his dance company KAA (discussed below).



Fig.143 Chakra performing in front of Khmer Veterans, Cambodia Town Culture Festival, Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, April 2017.

Besides Chakra, young participants were dressed specifically for the parade, the festival's most popular event, which ran on Gundry Avenue near the Library. Needham and Quintiliani have underlined that the first parade stemmed from mobilising 'a stronger Cambodian community that had developed political ties as well as the multigenerational and multi-ethnic coalition needed'.⁸⁶⁷ Parades are not part of Cambodian culture. In the realm of political culture in the United States, parades have been defined instead by historian Mary Ryan as 'a characteristic genre of nineteenth-century civic ceremony', which ritualised a collective movement publicly walking the city's streets.⁸⁶⁸ Through this

⁸⁶⁷ Needham and Quintiliani, *Cambodians in Long Beach*, 74.

⁸⁶⁸ The history of American parades has generated a robust canon of scholarship looking at nationalism, identity formation and civic expression in the public sphere since the early Republic. See Mary Ryan, 'The American Parade: Representations of the Nineteenth-century Social Order,' in *The New Cultural History*, ed. Lynn Hunt (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989), 131-154 ; Simon Newman, *Parades and the Politics of the Street: Festive Culture in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 3 ; David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: the Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 3-14,

gathering, the paraders claimed their affiliation to a specific community by marching in units and displaying codified decoration, symbols, and clothing. By the late 1800s, these marches developed into gatherings representing specific ethnic groups' rights and identities, 'organising the diverse population of the city into manageable categories'.⁸⁶⁹

Moreover, cultural historian Vanessa Agnew has established that in the context of refugees and genocide the reenactment of history-themed scenes is a form of reappropriation of the past whose value lies in 'its capacity to find new and inventive modes of historical representation'.⁸⁷⁰ Agnew also argued that 'body-based' testimonies combining historical references, movement and dress are more informative about present representations than the past.⁸⁷¹ What I witnessed myself was a procession of people offering the embodied performance of a reimagined Cambodianness, in a balancing act between entertainment, self-expression, storytelling and historical reenactment.

The Cambodia Town parade consisted of volunteers who had applied to participate. The first group was solely male, and performed *robam Chhay Yam*, a Khmer folk dance common in Cambodia in religious processions before people enter the pagoda. Participants walked at a dynamic pace to the music, playing drums and cymbals. They wore colourful masks and were dressed in shiny silk-like (most likely synthetic) costumes, a bright blue satin tunic and red satin calf-length pants, tied at the waist by a cotton *krama* [Fig.144].

⁸⁶⁹ Ryan, 'The American Parade: Representations of the Nineteenth-century Social Order,' 152-153.

⁸⁷⁰ Vanessa Agnew, 'What is Re-enactment?,' *Criticism*, 46, no. 3 (2004): 335.

⁸⁷¹ *Ibid*, 328, 335.



Fig.144 Robam Chhay Yam, performers at the Cambodia Town Culture Festival parade, Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, April 2017.

The second group, male and female, presented the parade's centrepiece, the reenactment of King Jayavarman VII's rule during the Khmer Empire. This section was led by two main male and female performers as the king and queen, proudly sitting on a throne together on a majestic wooden float decorated with gold-painted ornaments topped with a parasol and pulled by several men dressed in white [Fig.145]. They were surrounded by a crowd of participants, some preceding the convoy holding large colourful flags and others dressed as soldiers carrying hand-painted cardboard shields.

Jayavarman VII is considered the great builder of the late twelfth-century Angkorian era, defeating invasions from Kingdom of Champa, converting the state to Mahayana Buddhism, and ordering the ambitious construction of religious sites in Angkor Wat.⁸⁷² He first married Jayarajadevi and then, after she died, her sister Indradevi. Performers did not seek historical

⁸⁷² Chandler, *A History of Cambodia*, 55. There is a small number of carved representations of Jayavarman VII in archaeological sites and museum collections, including a stone carved head with a smiling face held at the Guimet Museum, Paris.

truth in their attire, stemming from representations of dress depicted on antique Angkorian statues. The volunteer playing the king was bare-chested, with a metallic embroidered collar around his neck and a gold *sampot* skirt gathered towards the front and secured with a jewelled belt. He wore a golden headpiece and cuffs on his upper arms and wrists. The queen was dressed as an *apsara*, the female dancing deity on Angkorian bas-relief, a familiar character in the Khmer classical dance pantheon. She wore a skin-toned fitted bodice adorned with a large embroidered collar and a green *sampot sarabap* in silk and metallic thread wrapped around her waist and pleated into a central band held by a red and gold belt. She also wore a gold headpiece with a white flower on her ear, along with chunky golden bangles on her ankles and wrists.

Certain participants had sneakers and flip-flops on their feet and some of the costumes looked of poor quality. Nevertheless, the overall aesthetic and energy conveyed by all the performers prevailed, turning the procession into an effective living painting. After the main procession, the parade closed with a dozen of young girls carefully dressed by their parents in silk bustiers and matching silk *sampot chawng kbun*. Waving small flags of Cambodia with the recognisable Angkor Wat silhouette, they were supervised by a handful of women in full Cambodian attire [Fig.146]. The group of early immigrant elderly women in *sampot hol* closed the parade and the festival-goers rejoined the main CTCF square.



Figs.145 Actors performing King Jayavarman VII and his queen on a float at the Cambodia Town Culture Festival parade, surrounded by their court, April 2017, Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph.



Fig.146 Group of young girls dressed in silk bodices and sampot chawng kbun at the Cambodia Town Culture Festival parade, Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, April 2017.

For anthropologist Penny Van Esterik, the playful make-believe of urban ethnic festival offers participants the possibility to replay myths and assert specific values. She stated that 'when the dream is threatened, there is a need to work through the myths again, and play them out in a ritual context'.⁸⁷³ The decision to reconstruct the epic life of King Jayavarman VII through an embodied participatory approach via the march in costumes and props is a strong indication of how Cambodian Americans of Long Beach wish to portray themselves in a public space and reclaim a more desirable heritage.⁸⁷⁴

Khmer antiquity and Angkor Wat are used to crystallise Cambodia's historical heritage in their personal narratives.⁸⁷⁵ The parade reflected diasporic attachment to this immemorial past, showing different subject positions and agencies in relation to issues of tradition and imagination. Angkor Wat, both as decor and imagined space, has become a recurring motif in the Cambodian immigrants' lives, especially during Cambodian New Year. This photograph from the CamCHAP archives shows a hand-painted Angkor Wat pasteboard used as a backdrop for the *Apsara* dance performance of Heng Leng, beautician and founder of the Cambodian Art Preservation Group, for the New Year celebrations in Long Beach in 1980 [Fig.147].

⁸⁷³ Penny Van Esterik, 'Celebrating Ethnicity: Ethnic Flavor in an Urban Festival,' *Ethnic Groups* 4 (1982): 224-25.

⁸⁷⁴ Van Esterik's perspective mirrors Agnew's comment that 'reenactment's emancipatory gesture is to allow participants to select their own past in reaction to a conflicted present': see Agnew, 'What is Re-enactment?,' 328.

⁸⁷⁵ Mortland, *Grace after Genocide: Cambodians in the United States*, 151.



Fig.147 Apsara performance for Cambodian New Year in Long Beach in front of a painted backdrop of Angkor Wat, ca. 1980. Photograph courtesy of CamCHAP archives.

Historian Michael Falser has determined that the mythology of Angkor that prevailed under the French protectorate was reactivated in Cambodia's decolonising period after the 1950s. Falser stated that 'these imaginations were [...] directly incorporated and continued as supposedly true, pure and original elements into Cambodia's Hobsbawmian, and highly creative, self-reinvention process as a neo-Angkorian nation-state built upon a revived, pure and authentic antiquity'.⁸⁷⁶ In 1962 Queen Sisowath Neyrirath Kossamak, Norodom Sihanouk's mother, created the *Apsara* dance (*robam Apsara*) for her granddaughter Princess Norodom Buppha Devi, the royal troupe's first prima ballerina.⁸⁷⁷ Inspired by the

⁸⁷⁶ Falser has argued that Angkor Wat has become 'the performative stage for Cambodia's newly 'imagined [decolonised] community'. Michael Falser, 'Cultural Heritage as Performance: Re-enacting Angkorian Grandeur in Postcolonial Cambodia (1953–70),' in *Cultures of Decolonisation, Transnational Productions and Practices, 1945–70*, ed. Ruth Craggs and Claire Wintlein (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 149.

⁸⁷⁷ Tony Phim-Shapiro and Ashley Thompson, *Dance in Cambodia (Images of Asia)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 41.

iconography of Angkor Wat bas-reliefs showing *apsara*, celestial dancers, Queen Kossamak designed this choreography and costumes for the modern stage, in which performers materialise out of a temple's wall to dance before retreating again in the stone.⁸⁷⁸ In 2010, Buppha Devi (1943-2019) confirmed: 'the delicate *Apsara* dance was part of the reconstruction and revival programme; however contrary to popular belief, it has a comparatively recent history'.⁸⁷⁹ On Figure 148 she is performing this dance in the costume imagined by her grandmother. Her tight-fitting bodice in a nude colour aims to mimick the sculpted figures' naked upper bodies.



Fig.148 Princess Buppha Devi performing an *apsara* piece, c.1960s. Photograph courtesy of The National Archives of Cambodia.

⁸⁷⁸ Michael Falser, *Angkor Wat – A Transcultural History of Heritage: Volume 1: Angkor in France* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020), 217.

⁸⁷⁹ Norodom Buppha Devi, 'Royal Dances of Cambodia — Revival and Preservation,' in *Beyond the Apsara*, ed. Stephanie Burrige and Fred Frumberg (London: Routledge, 2010), 4.

The CTCF parade does indeed challenge the idea of the continuity of an authentic and clearly defined Khmer cultural heritage, but it does so by embracing a sense of invention and folklore in a public space. By re-enacting a royal scene from the Khmer Empire as both a playful and a serious endeavour with no pretence of realism: the participants demonstrate a creative position towards their sense of ethnic identity using silk-like costumes as vehicles of expression. The festival shows how silk has entered the realm of performance to accompany and embody diasporic imaginings.

Rituals in movement: Silk embodiment in Khmer classical ballet

This chapter's final section focuses on the embodied nature of Khmer classical dance practice, its codified art of dressing and complex typology of silk dress and how it has developed in the Cambodian community of Long Beach. It is based on working specifically with young female members of the KAA dance company in April 2017 and February 2018, using ethnographic methods that combined interviews, participant observation and auto-ethnography, to grasp silk costumes' shifting cultural value in a diasporic context in relation to issues of loss, memory, and identity. To understand the significance of classical dance for the Cambodian diaspora, the exact nature of this loss deserves detailed attention.

In Cambodia, dancers are either civil servants who belong to the Royal Ballet of Cambodia or are performers for the tourist industry; young Cambodian Americans who join dance classes are often encouraged by their parents or are curious about their heritage. How does the combination of performance and silk embellished garments participate in the re-appropriation and 're-membering' of a culture disrupted by conflict, displacement and immigration?⁸⁸⁰

⁸⁸⁰ The term 're-membering' is borrowed from anthropologist Barbara Myerhoff, who worked in particular with elderly Jewish populations of Southern California: 'To signify (a) special type of recollection, the term 'Re-membering' may be used, calling attention to the reaggregation of members, the figures who belong to one's life story'. See Barbara Myerhoff, 'Life History Among the

The description of the *Apsara* costume in the previous section underlines the importance of dress in the performance of Khmer classical ballet. This art form relies on highly elaborated costumes. Garments are made of separate handmade pieces in colourful shimmering silk satin, velvet or brocade that is heavily adorned with gold thread embroidery and studded with sequins. Accessories (crowns, belts, bangles, necklaces) are also made of gold or silver. Specific characters performing tales from the Reamker also wear painted masks. Colour schemes depend on the roles. Figures 149a, b and c show the typologies of different costumes (male and female, giant and monkey) as part of a promotional UNESCO publication dedicated to protected intangible heritage art and craft forms in Cambodia. The pictures illustrate the complexity of these costumes and the level of craftsmanship necessary for each piece from silk *sampot sarabap* (brocaded hip wraps), silk satin bodices, and a sequinned silk velvet *sbaay* (dance sash) worn over the right shoulder for the princess and *apsara* roles to *chawng kbun* trousers or silk breeches, embroidered padded jackets, and panelled belts for the roles of the prince and the giant.

Elderly: Performance, Visibility and Re-membering,' in *A Crack in the Mirror. Reflective Perspectives in Anthropology*, ed. Jay Ruby (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), 111.



Figs.149a-b-c L-R: Male and female roles in costume; Giant (Yeak); Monkey (Sva) in costume. Photographs courtesy of UNESCO, 2004.

The Siamese influence on Khmer classical ballet, including costumes, possibly since the domination of Ayutthaya Kingdom or later under King An Duong's ruling, has been a debate in scholarship since the early twentieth century.⁸⁸¹ Nonetheless, until the early 1900s, this century-old art form blossomed at the Royal Court of Cambodia: royal dancers were all female, living in the confines of the royal palace in Phnom Penh and performing solely upon the King's request. With the establishment of the French protectorate, the royal troupe toured in France in 1906, performing at Marseille's Colonial Exposition, which marks the point at which this art form, originally sacred and private, became a diplomatic tool within Western colonial cultures.⁸⁸² As stated earlier, under the Sangkum, Queen Kossamak 're-designed the costumes and ornaments, [...] revisited the old repertoire, as well as engaging in new creations'.⁸⁸³ She worked with artists from the University of Fine Arts of Phnom

⁸⁸¹ Hideo Sasagawa, 'Post/colonial Discourses on the Cambodian Court Dance,' *Southeast Asian Studies*, 42, no.4 (March 2005): 418-39 ; Paul Cravath, *Earth in Flower: the Divine Mystery of Cambodian Dance-Drama* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985), 150-152.

⁸⁸² Tony Phim-Shapiro and Ashley Thompson, *Dance in Cambodia (Images of Asia)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 41 ; Sasagawa, 'Post/colonial Discourses on the Cambodian Court Dance,' *Southeast Asian Studies*, 422.

⁸⁸³ Suppya Helene Nut, University of Nottingham Asia Research Institute, *The Royal Ballet of Cambodia: From Ritual to a National Identity*, January 9, 2019 <https://theasiadialogue.com/2019/01/09/the-royal-ballet-of-cambodia-from-ritual-to-a-national-identity/> [Accessed August 29, 2021]

Penh. She supervised the costume design and the embroiderers who lived in the royal palace and worked on site.⁸⁸⁴

Despite the political upheavals in Cambodia in the 1970s, dance remained a powerful cultural practice until 1975.⁸⁸⁵ The term 'royal dance' changed to *robam boran*, which means 'ancient dance'.⁸⁸⁶ In 1975 the KR regime put a stop to the practice, killing about 90 per cent of the students, teachers, and performers, especially at the Royal Ballet and the Royal University of Fine Arts.⁸⁸⁷ A report commissioned by the People's Revolutionary Tribunal for the trial of KR leaders Pol Pot and Ieng Sary for genocide stated that 'of the one hundred ninety five classical dancers, men and women, only forty-eight remain alive. Of the fifty-four dancers of the ballet corps, only four escaped death by a miracle'.⁸⁸⁸

Dance practice in post-genocide Cambodia and in the diaspora resumed in reaction to this massive human destruction and loss of knowledge, because, as former Minister of Culture Chheng Phon contended, it was 'the only way to fight emotional illness'. The damage was also material. Trained as a dancer and actor, Chheng Phon returned to Phnom Penh in 1981 for the first time. He 'found the school of dance in ruins, their antique, ivory-inlaid musical instruments burned and the fabulously valuable royal costumes and headdresses of gold and gems stolen'.⁸⁸⁹ Interviewed for the Khmer Dance oral history project produced by the Center for Khmer Studies in 2009, Sim Montha, former dancer and costume designer for the

⁸⁸⁴ Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library, 'Interview with Lim Sylvain and Sim Montha,' New York Public Library Digital Collections <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/fe8700a0-343a-0131-b8a9-3c075448cc4b> [Accessed August 30, 2021]

⁸⁸⁵ Sasagawa, 'Post/colonial Discourses on the Cambodian Court Dance,' 437.

⁸⁸⁶ The English translation changed to 'Classical Khmer Ballet', an appealing title for international audiences which erased direct allusions to royalty.

⁸⁸⁷ Lan Dong, 'Cambodian American Performing Arts and Artists,' 126. ; Judith Coburn, 'Dancing Back: Decimated by the Khmer Rouge, Bruised by Political Chaos and Threatened by a Frenzy of Modern Materialism, Will the Soul of an Ancient Culture Survive?' *LA Times*, 26 September 1993. [Accessed April 1, 2019]

⁸⁸⁸ Howard De Nike, John Quigley, and Kenneth Robinson, eds., *Genocide in Cambodia: Documents from the Trial of Pol Pot and Ieng Sary* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 326.

⁸⁸⁹ Coburn, 'Dancing Back: Decimated by the Khmer Rouge, Bruised by Political Chaos and Threatened by a Frenzy of Modern Materialism, Will the Soul of an Ancient Culture Survive?,' 4.

Royal Ballet since 1990, recalled that block prints made by artists to be pressed directly on the costume's fabric and outline the motifs with powder were destroyed during the dictatorship and never replaced.⁸⁹⁰ Since then, embroiderers have mostly worked directly on the fabric, visually copying the motifs.

The university eventually reopened, with one department dedicated to classical and folk dance.⁸⁹¹ Anthropologist Toni Phim-Shapiro and art historian Ashley Thompson found that Khmer dancers practised in very challenging conditions, trying to recreate from scratch the large typology of costumes required for each role, searching for discarded garments in Phnom Penh. 'They danced with tattered bits of cloth and cardboard crowns as costumes', replacing the lavish silk ensembles.⁸⁹² The desperation to keep the practice alive energised dancers to keep practising and dressing up, even in rags.

From the 1990s, Princess Buppha Devi worked tirelessly for the preservation of Khmer classical ballet and trained dancers at the Royal Ballet. Costumes have continued to be produced by hand by local artisans and designers associated with the Royal Ballet.⁸⁹³

UNESCO supported this effort by inscribing the art form in the List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2003, ensuring its conservation as a whole.⁸⁹⁴ It protected choreography, training techniques, and the various crafts associated with costume-making, such as embroidery, silk weaving, jewellery and mask-making.⁸⁹⁵

⁸⁹⁰ Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library, 'Interview with Lim Sylvain and Sim Montha.'

⁸⁹¹ In 1980, the academic institution reopened as the School of Fine Arts. It was reinstated with university status in 1989. The title 'Royal' was reapplied in 1993 with the return of the monarchy.

⁸⁹² Phim-Shapiro and Thompson, *Dance in Cambodia (Images of Asia)*, 43.

⁸⁹³ Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library, 'Interview with Lim Sylvain,' New York Public Library Digital Collections <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/26f0c810-3451-0131-067b-3c075448cc4b> [Accessed August 30, 2021]

⁸⁹⁴ *Royal ballet of Cambodia Representative List* (2008) Dir. UNESCO <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/RL/royal-ballet-of-cambodia-00060> [Accessed June 18, 2017]

⁸⁹⁵ UNESCO and Cambodia Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, *Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Cambodia* (Phnom Penh, 2004), 11, 23-25.

Dance also resumed in refugee camps at the Thai border and in immigrant communities established outside Cambodia, illustrating the crucial importance of this art form in Khmer culture.⁸⁹⁶ Figure 150, a photo given by a local donor to CamCHAP centre, shows three young Cambodian Americans in Long Beach in 1977 dressed in makeshift jewellery and dance attire as evidence of creativity and resourcefulness. The women are wearing *sampot chawng kbun* and bodices in a bright orange that is not the usual jewel tone used for dance textiles, and metallic printed floral fabrics from Thailand (information from Susan Needham) to make up for woven *sampot sarabap*. While the gilded accessories (collars and belts) are much less refined than handcrafted pieces from the Royal Ballet, the decorated *sbaay* mimicks more adequately the richly three-dimensional embroidered effects seen in Figures 149a-b-c.

Local dance companies placed great emphasis on finding materials that matched Khmer dance aesthetics as closely as possible, and in the late 1970s Thai textiles were easiest to find and looked similar enough.⁸⁹⁷ There are subtle differences between Thai and Cambodian forms of dance-drama. For instance, Sim Montha explained that silk colours are brighter and bolder in Thai dance costumes compared to Cambodian dance which favours darker tones. Embroidered decorations such as the flame motif are similar in both cultures but placed on costumes in a different way.⁸⁹⁸ Cambodian dance practitioners remain set on asserting their distinctive style.⁸⁹⁹ However, like the CTCF parade and Chheng Phon's testimony about reviving dance in Phnom Penh, presenting performance costumes even as imperfect reproductions remained essential.

⁸⁹⁶ Chan, *Survivors: Cambodian Refugees in the United States*, 59.

⁸⁹⁷ Needham, Informal conversation with Magali An Berthon.

⁸⁹⁸ Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library, 'Interview with Lim Sylvain and Sim Montha.'

⁸⁹⁹ Lath Reaksmey from Khmer Arts Academy showed me *sampot sarabap* made in Thailand donated to the organisation from another dance association and dating from the 1980s. The fabrics were bright, with colours (orange, yellow) that were unusual for Cambodian dance costumes, brocaded with synthetic lamé thread. Reaksmey was considering using them for less formal representations.



Fig.150 Dancers in costumes and accessories made from materials from Thailand, c. 1977, Long Beach, CA. Photograph courtesy of CamCHAP archives.

Khmer Arts Academy (KAA) dance studio in Long Beach was founded by Sophiline Shapiro (*née* Cheam) and her husband John Shapiro in 2002.⁹⁰⁰ Sophiline was born in 1967 in Cambodia and was only eight when the KR came into power [Fig.151]. She survived the dictatorship but lost her father and two of her brothers.⁹⁰¹ She enrolled in the first Khmer classical ballet class of the newly reopened University of Fine Arts under artist Proeung Chhieng's leadership and started her career at the Royal Ballet in 1981. Sophiline relocated to California in 1991 and began teaching dance in different Cambodian communities in the area.⁹⁰² She worked at Arts of Apsara in Long Beach before founding her own company. In

⁹⁰⁰ NEA National Heritage Fellowship 2009: Sophiline Cheam Shapiro, *National Endowments for the Arts* <https://www.arts.gov/honors/heritage/fellows/sophiline-cheam-shapiro> [Accessed June 10, 2020]

⁹⁰¹ She is also former Minister of Culture Chheng Phon's niece.

⁹⁰² Several Khmer classical ballet dance companies have existed in Long Beach, such as the Cambodian Art Preservation Group, which was active in the 1990s, and Spirit of Khmer Angkor Troupe in the 2000s. See Figure 147 showing Heng Leng's performance for the Cambodian Art Preservation Group.

2006 she resettled in Cambodia where she founded the company Sophiline Arts Ensemble in Takhmao, Kandal Province.

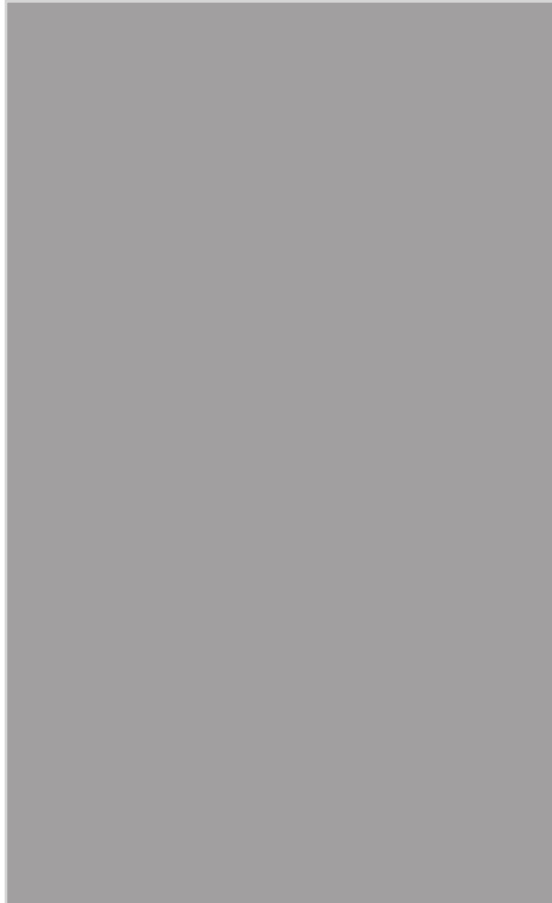


Fig.151 Sophiline Cheam Shapiro in 2009. Photograph courtesy of Alan Governor/ Masters of Traditional Arts.

In 2017, KAA's management roles have been passed to Lath Reaksmey, twenty-seven, and Ok Khannia, twenty-four, both trained by Shapiro. The idea behind KAA was to provide a welcoming space for young Cambodian Americans and help them reconnect with their parents' upbringing while transmitting the art of classical dance. Dance reunites the people and culture in the homeland with diasporic communities, linking community to communion. This idea can also be seen in the way that Proeung Chhieng has spoken about his dance troupe coming from Cambodia to perform to the United States for the first time after the KR

at the Los Angeles Festival in 1990: 'We might be separated by the forest, but we come from the same mother'.⁹⁰³

About connection and community, dance anthropologist Judith Hamera cited the bittersweet example of the Sem family, a Cambodian dancer couple with three children who had emigrated to Long Beach after living as refugees on the Thai border in Site 2. Struggling with their identity and memory loss due to forced exodus, the couple's testimonies were often approximate and marked by defiance, which Hamera argued emphasised their fetishisation of Cambodian culture through dance.⁹⁰⁴ She suggested that 'dance was the technology Ben and May [Sem] deployed to survive' as a personal ritual for reassurance.⁹⁰⁵ In her interview, KAA instructor Ok Khannia offered a positive counterpart to this account, stating that she is teaching more than an artistic practice, participating in a resilient movement of 'healing for Cambodians, moving forward and flourishing together'.⁹⁰⁶ Born to KR refugee parents in the United States, Khannia belongs to the second generation of Cambodian immigrants. As an instructor, she hosts children of the third generation, mostly young girls from four to seventeen from the Long Beach area, ensuring the continuance of Sophiline Shapiro's legacy [Fig.152]. The majority of students are of Cambodian origin or of mixed heritage. Khannia believes that parents who bring their children to KAA hope to increase their awareness of Cambodian culture as a whole, from the practice of dance itself to the language, food, music, and dress.

⁹⁰³ Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library, 'Interview with Proeung Chhieng,' *New York Public Library Digital Collections* [TC 22:19] <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/53cc0780-3451-0131-246e-3c075448cc4b> [Accessed July 18, 2020]

⁹⁰⁴ Hamera, *Dancing Communities: Performance, Difference and Connection in the Global City*, 150.

⁹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 168.

⁹⁰⁶ Ok Khannia, Interview with Magali An Berthon, April 6, 2017, Long Beach, California.



Fig.152 Ok Khannia (centre left) teaching a weekly class at Khmer Arts Academy, Cambodia Town, Long Beach, CA. Author's photograph, February 2018.

Textiles and dress play an essential role in dance practice in their interaction with the moving body. For dance rehearsals, students are required to wear a practice suit, usually a silk blouse (*aor lakhaoun*) and a dance skirt worn in a *kbun* style. It can be expensive to buy in the few textile shops in Long Beach, so they are allowed to bring a cotton or synthetic *sampot* instead [Fig.153].⁹⁰⁷ For performances on stage, silk is considered the only appropriate material. Describing the qualities of silk textiles needed for Cambodian classical dancing, instructors Khannia and Reaksmeay explained: 'It has to be strong, sturdy, flexible, and tightly woven'.⁹⁰⁸

To the question 'why do you think that silk is so important? Why not cotton or linen?', Khannia explained:

⁹⁰⁷ According to Khannia, a practice silk *sampot* can cost up to 60 USD.

⁹⁰⁸ Ok Khannia, and Lath Reaksmeay, Informal conversation with Magali An Berthon, April 6, 2017, Long Beach, CA, USA.

'It's just the feeling of the material puts you in a different place from cotton, which is something you would probably wear every day. Something that's comfortable to you, but silk is this luxury and this elegance. It is very elegant. So I think that's why it makes you feel all silky and just very confident'.⁹⁰⁹

Khannia's response combines the embodied feeling of silk and the luxury status associated to wearing this material. I asked if fake silk like polyester would feel the same, to which she answered:

'It wouldn't feel the same. And the way that this is catered to your body compared to buttons and zippers, all of that feeling comes from getting dressed and getting yourself into that character and embodiment of that spirit. [...] Once you've put on a crown or even just your shirt, or your jewelry, or your skirt, whatever it is that you're putting on as a costume piece, you have to assume the role. [...] That's why silk is so amazing, because you are transforming yourself and you can't get that with cotton right'?

This resonates with Sabrina Sun's testimony, a nineteen-year-old advanced student. She found getting dressed for performance challenging because of how tightly it is corseted to the body, making it difficult to move and breathe. Sabrina only associated silk with performance, and preferred to rehearse in a cotton *sampot*. However, she conceded that dressing in silk 'helped her to get into character' and feel ready to perform the different roles of the repertoire (*apsara*, prince or giant).⁹¹⁰

The intricacy and lavishness of the embellishments applied onto the fabrics remain essential elements of the costumes' aesthetic. However, Khannia's answers provide some insights into the importance of choosing silk over other ground materials in terms of feel, sheen, hand and prestige. Therefore, this section contends that it is the combination of silk, colours and intricate metallic embroidery work that gives costumes their value.

Moreover, in Khmer classical ballet, the costumed dancer re-enacts a repertoire of dance-drama tales from Khmer Empire mythology. In this sense, it is the combination of gestures and dress that creates the choreography through the body. Hamera has indeed

⁹⁰⁹ Ok, Interview with Magali An Berthon.

⁹¹⁰ Sun Sabrina, Informal interview with Magali An Berthon, April 6, 2017, Long Beach, CA, USA.

suggested that ‘performers wear technique, whatever their genealogical particulars, like clothes – not like costumes or props, though this may also be true – but like the clothes of loved ones who have passed on’.⁹¹¹ Following this metaphor, it could thus be argued that in Khmer ballet, the silk costumes that identify specific characters are activated through movement, and thus these become clothes that link the dancer to their sacred Cambodian ancestors.



Fig,153 Dance class with students in silk garments for practice at Khmer Arts Academy, Cambodia Town, Long Beach, CA. Author’s photograph, April 2017.

At KAA, handwoven silk hip wraps, headpieces (*mokot*) and metallic jewellery for performance on stage were ordered by Sophiline Cheam Shapiro in the early 2000s from a Cambodian workshop which had historically also worked with the Royal Ballet. These

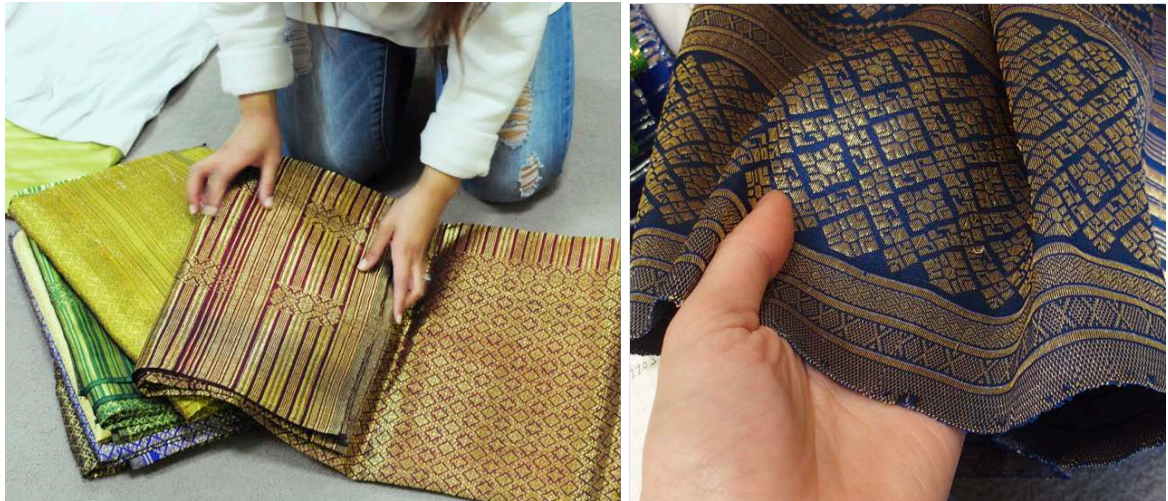
⁹¹¹ Hamera, *Dancing Communities: Performance, Difference and Connection in the Global City*, 8.

precious acquisitions included about twelve *sampot sarabap* with golden brocaded geometric flowers and lattice patterns: each colour (dark blue, green, purple, white, gold and orange) is associated with a specific character [Figs.154-155]. The company also owns a collection of solid-coloured *sampot chawng kbun*; a few silk collars; a handful of solid-coloured pleated sashes (*pahom*) and two full male ensembles with embroidered winged padded jackets [Fig.156]. The complete set is owned by the dance company as a group and kept with great care, worn by students for their shows in local venues.⁹¹² This collection of textiles operates as the material legacy of the master teacher to her successors, becoming a repository of the knowledge passed on to a new generation. On the transmission of clothes in times of mourning, Stallybrass has suggested that in the process, ‘identities are transferred [...] from a master to an apprentice’.⁹¹³ Through this gift from master Sophiline to Khannia, Reaskmey and their students, dancers carry a responsibility to honour the art of Khmer classical ballet and ensure its survival. Textile artefacts become here ‘inalienable possessions’ – in anthropologist Annette Weiner’s definition, ‘symbolic repositories of genealogies and historical events, their unique, subjective identity gives them absolute value placing them above the exchangeability of one thing for another’.⁹¹⁴

⁹¹² According to Khannia and Reaskmey, it would cost about 200 USD for a brocaded silk *sampot* and between 300 to 500 USD for an embroidered *sbaay*. Ok Khannia and Lath Reaskmey, Informal conversation with Magali An Berthon, February 17, 2018, Long Beach, CA.

⁹¹³ Peter Stallybrass, 'Worn Worlds: Clothes, Mourning and the Life of Things,' in *Cultural Memory and the Construction of Identity*, ed. Dahn Ben-Amos and Liliane Weissberg (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1999), 38.

⁹¹⁴ Annette B. Weiner, *Inalienable Possessions: The Paradox of Keeping-While-Giving* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992), 33.



Figs. 154-155 Left: Set of silk sarabap textiles belonging to Khmer Arts Academy purchased in Cambodia by Sophiline Cheam Shapiro, 2017; Right: Close-up of a shimmering silk sarabap patterned with scale-like gold motifs, February 2018. Author's photographs.



Fig.156 Prince's full costume in silk purchased in Cambodia by Sophiline Cheam Shapiro. Author's photograph, April 2017.

Stallybrass added that in mourning, the person has gone but ‘the clothes are preserved; they remain. It is the bodies that inhabit them which change’.⁹¹⁵ This notion can be compellingly applied to the Khmer ballet, for which each garment is produced in a generic size, following the principle of ‘one size fits all’.⁹¹⁶ Each piece is used and reused through time until it wears out, indefinitely attributed to one dancer according to his or her level of skills and merit, and each time specifically fitted to the dancer’s body before the performance.

The transformative quality of silk is particularly significant in the preparation process prior to the performance. The dancers need at least one or two people to help them dress. For a female performer, the silk bodice is fitted and tightly stitched on the dancer’s body on a cotton undershirt with white thread. The embroidered sash is then stitched over the bodice, as shown here in the image of Khannia preparing for a representation [Fig.157]. Part of the Khmer Dance oral history project in 2009, this picture is a still from a film showing the dressing process for a dance performance in Siem Reap. Here, the silk *sampot* fabric is folded into a skirt, pleated, draped around the waist and sewn onto the bodice to keep it in place [Fig.158].⁹¹⁷ Taking up to several hours, costuming is an integral part of the dancer’s physical and mental metamorphosis into mythical figures of the Khmer Empire pantheon.⁹¹⁸ On stage, the succession of shimmering, colourful, lavish silk ensembles provides a sensorial experience of otherworldly beauty [Fig.159].

⁹¹⁵ Stallybrass, ‘Worn Worlds: Clothes, Mourning and the Life of Things,’ 38.

⁹¹⁶ Ok, Interview with Magali An Berthon.

⁹¹⁷ Eileen Blumenthal, ‘The Court Ballet: Cambodia’s Loveliest Jewel.’ *Cultural Survival Quarterly* 14, no. 3 (September 1990): 35-38. <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/court-ballet-cambodias-loveliest-jewel> [Accessed on July 12, 2018]

⁹¹⁸ Ok, Interview with Magali An Berthon. ; See also Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library, ‘Make-up and costumes, 2009-01-13/15,’ New York Public Library Digital Collections. <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/3ef7d750-0381-0131-9fd1-3c075448cc4b> [Accessed July 20, 2020]



Fig.157 Ok Khannia getting dressed for a performance, 2016. Photograph courtesy of Khmer Arts Academy.



Fig.158 Pleating of the silk skirt on a dancer before a performance, The New York Public Library. 'Make-up and costumes, 2009-01-13/15'. Courtesy of New York Public Library Digital Collections.



Fig.159 Khmer Arts Academy students and instructors performing *Seasons of Migration* at the TuTu Foundation, Torrance, CA, 2017. Photograph courtesy of Khmer Arts Academy.

The theme of identity and bodily metamorphosis through dress has also been part of diasporic dance productions.⁹¹⁹ For the piece *Seasons of Migration*, created in 2005, Sophiline Cheam Shapiro addressed the immigrant experience of cultural clash in four movements: euphoria, rejection, adjustment and equilibrium. For 'Rejection', Sophiline reimagined the usual combination of the fitted bodice, pleated *sampot sarabap* and the hip-length draped *sbaay* to represent the character *Neang Neak*, the princess-snake. She created an exaggeratedly long *sbaay*, about three times longer it would typically be, to 'symbolise the serpent's tail and all she carries with her from the past'.⁹²⁰ This custom-made sash was made to exacerbate a feeling of otherness and mirror a story of the immigrant experience. By playing with its unusual length as a tail sliding on the ground, stepping on it and trying to tear it, the dancer conveys sensations of distortion and exaggeration in the performance,

⁹¹⁹ See Amanda Rogers, 'Advancing the Geographies of the Performing Arts: Intercultural Aesthetics, Migratory Mobility and Geopolitics,' *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol. 42, 4 (2018): 558-560.

⁹²⁰ Toni Phim-Shapiro, 'Cambodia's 'Seasons of Migration,' *Dance Research Journal* 40, no. 2 (Winter, 2008): 61.

embodying her character's struggles with her new environment [Figs.160a-b]. This hybrid 'sbaay-tail' materialises the way in which dress is used to transcend the dancer's identity and body.



Fig.160a Neang Neak piece from Seasons of Migration, performed by Keo Kuntheaom dancing with her extended sbaay, choreographed by Sophiline Cheam Shapiro, Jakarta, August 2009.



Fig.160b Detail of the long sbaay, Seasons of Migration by Sophiline Cheam Shapiro, Jakarta, August 2009.

What does wearing silk feel like from the inside? This section concludes by discussing the material and experiential nature of silk from the dancers' perspective. Anthropologists Mukulika Banerjee and Daniel Miller have offered a model of an embedded ethnographic description of a woman draping around her body a *pallu* – the upper half of a *sari* that covers the chest, and falls over the shoulder, that is often highly decorated.⁹²¹ Draping requires skill to keep the cloth in place. Negotiating modesty and femininity, Indian women use textiles as an interface between the body and the outside world.⁹²² The Cambodian *sampot* and Indian *sari* are both uncut cloths arranged around the body with draping techniques. I recorded my autoethnographic experience of a Cambodian dance class in which I myself put on a *sampot chawng kbun*. I was dressed by Khannia, who wrapped a full length of sturdy red silk fabric around my waist, firmly holding each side. She stepped back a few feet to create tension in her grasp. She then started to roll the edges of the cloth from top to bottom into a long rod shape, passing it between my legs towards my back. The hip wrap was secured with a cord and a metallic belt passed around my waist, holding the draped elements of the trousers. The top of the hip wrap was then tucked in closer to my belly. My body felt contained in the fabric, which simultaneously allowed and restrained my movements. The textile covers the body while focusing attention on the head, arms, hands, legs, and feet, which are the most important to the choreography [Fig.161].⁹²³ Being tightly held in the silk trousers modified my posture, pushed me to arch my back, keep my belly tucked in and my chest open. I am no dancer, so I struggled to sit on the floor, get back on my feet, turn and twist gracefully with my legs and hips in the *sampot chawng kbun*. I performed each gesture as precisely as possible, following master dancer

⁹²¹ Miller and Banerjee, *The Sari*, 23-44.

⁹²² Ibid, 25.; See also Suzanne Küchler and Daniel Miller, *Clothing as Material Culture* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2005), 15.

⁹²³ I am posing in this picture with Lath Reaksmey, my instructor for the day. See also Hamera, *Dancing Communities: Performance, Difference and Connection in the Global City*, 154. 'To reproduce classical stories, the body of the dancer becomes a complex intertext as the eyes, head, fingers, wrists, torso, legs and feet all speak through their specific, fixed repertory of poses at the same time'.

Reaksmey's lead, feeling the strain on my joints and hearing the rustling sound of silk. It was surprising to sweat while performing remarkably slow movements.

I also observed the students getting dressed in their practice *sampot*. Khannia emphasised 'the sense of pride in Khmerness', and 'the joy and excitement' she had noticed in her youngest students when they dress to dance.⁹²⁴ For example, Sabrina recognised feeling proud of being Cambodian and more connected to her family when she dances. She added: 'especially when I perform for my elders, it can be emotional'.⁹²⁵ By reshaping new dynamics of cultural identification and transmission, dance provides a performative space where young students materialise a direct connection to the culture of their parents and explore their own identity through dress and movement.



Fig.161 Magali An Berthon dressed in a sampot chawng kbun for dance practice with instructor Lath Reaksmey. Author's photograph, February 2018.

⁹²⁴ Ok, Interview with Magali An Berthon.

⁹²⁵ Sun, Informal interview with Magali An Berthon.

Conclusion

Performing arts scholar Diana Taylor has stressed that the study of ‘embodied practice as an episteme and a praxis’ offers ‘a way of knowing as well as a way of storing and transmitting cultural knowledge and identity’.⁹²⁶ This chapter has demonstrated how diasporic communities have used silk textiles sparingly, but with great intent, as a tool of expression and signifier of Cambodian identity, especially during public events. In important cultural moments such as the CTCF parade, celebrating the New Year, wedding ceremonies and dance, the wearing of silk dress offers an intimate expression of national identity, tangibly engaging in the imagining of a transnational version of Cambodia that would be healed, powerful, and reconciled. Moving away from nostalgic reenactments, Cambodian immigrants have nonetheless figuratively conflated past and present by embodying key figures from the glorious Khmer past, from *apsara* to kings and queens, and referring to the emblematic temple of Angkor Wat.

Hamera argues that ‘performativity becomes all at once a cultural convention, value, and signifier that is inscribed on the body – performer through the body – to mark identities’.⁹²⁷ Khmer classical ballet dancers indeed negotiate with a series of complex worlds through their bodies. Symbolically, they are mediators between earth and heaven, between a pre-KR glorious past and a post-civil war present that is marked by trauma, globalisation and transnationality. In Long Beach, dancers also negotiate between their American and Cambodian identity. Dress is a tool to reinforce notions of cultural pride and belonging, used to remodel the dancers’ relationship to their community. Silk material is more than a surface or a shell enveloping the bodies. The fabric plays the role of interface between the

⁹²⁶ Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 278.

⁹²⁷ Madison, Soyini, and Judith Hamera, *The SAGE Handbook of Performance Studies* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2013), xviii.

performers' inner self and the outside world, a contact zone to reconnect to their culture of origin while simultaneously performing what is considered the epitome of Cambodianness for an audience.

Operating through the lens of Cambodian diasporic groups has allowed me to examine the destructive patterns that have affected Cambodian culture, but also to consider its potential reconstruction. Cambodian American historian Sucheng Chan praises 'the strength of the Cambodian people', which shines 'despite the unremitting assaults on their autonomy, the people, culture, and society of Cambodia'.⁹²⁸ Additionally, ethnic identity scholar Vichet Chhuon, who has lived in Long Beach, underlined that 'being Cambodian means being a survivor, an activist, coming from an incredibly resilient tradition of people'.⁹²⁹ The term has appeared on several occasions in the interviews I conducted in Cambodia Town, especially in those by Khannia Ok and Susan Needham. Interestingly, the term 'resilience' also designates a mechanical property of textiles, their capacity to spring back to their original shape. In the diasporic realm, silk weaving in the early days of displacement and the continuation of dress practices have been dynamic tools to embody moments of collective resilience, in a dual movement of affirmation and resistance.

⁹²⁸ Chan, *Survivors: Cambodian Refugees in the United States*, 1.

⁹²⁹ Patricia Leigh Brown, "Trauma Rooted in Genocide, Cambodian Youth Confront 'Historical Forgetting,'" *KPCC-NPR*, March 28, 2013
<https://www.scpr.org/news/2013/03/28/36565/embargoed-trauma-rooted-in-genocide-cambodian-yout/> [Accessed September 21, 2018]

Conclusion

This thesis has established the historiography and geography of silk production and the way these have informed the contemporary Cambodian silkscape. Setting up this metageographical framework in Chapter One allowed me to trace how material resources, trade and distribution, as well as weaving skills, human experience and social identities, have been reshaped through time and space up to the post-conflict era. To address a globalised contemporary context, the thesis has identified three fields of exploration to outline dynamics of loss, exchanges, and revitalisation of silk practices, weaving knowledge, and modes of dress. These are: the major foreign-backed NGOs and craft companies involved in the sector and their founders, weavers working in these organisations and as independent, and Cambodian refugees and members of the Cambodian American diaspora in Long Beach, California. Silk was also examined under several forms: as a network of actors and chain of production, a fibre coming from *bombyx mori* golden cocoons, a fabric woven and dyed following ancestral techniques, especially with the polychromic *hol*, and finally a garment or accessory purchased in Cambodia by Cambodians, foreign tourists, and in diasporic communities. The macro and micro perspectives on silk and its role in the crafting of discourses on Cambodia's cultural heritage allowed the challenging of binaries, such as authentic tradition versus innovation, loss and recovery, the global and the local, craftsmanship and industrialisation and the colonial and post-colonial. This thesis directly and critically engages with a wide range of organisations and human and material actors of the Cambodian silkscape, in a comprehensive effort to highlight their agency in the revitalisation of the Cambodian silk in the post-conflict era.

Key conclusions and original contributions

The overarching conceptual argument developed in this thesis is that the Cambodian silk sector is regarded as a silkscape, that is, a network of exchanges, funding, goods, materials and actors that exceeds the borders of Cambodia. Expanding Appadurai's theorisation of flows and -scapes animating and forming global interactions, the examination of Cambodian silk production under a transnational dynamic perspective is a new contribution that provides the adequate framework to explore the post-conflict era. The destructive years of civil war and genocide in the 1970s indeed created a void in national leadership when Cambodia restarted the process of the restoration of peace in the early 1990s. The reopening of the country to foreign investment and humanitarian aid, which found interest and value in relaunching the silk sector, created a major disjuncture in the continuation of the practice and significance of silk. Therefore, as my research demonstrates, the Cambodian silkscape provides a common platform to locate numerous stakeholders – Cambodian weavers, middlemen, craft companies, international NGOs, sponsoring agencies and consumers (locals, tourists and Cambodians in diasporic communities). Due to a heavily declined workforce and the high share (99 per cent) of imported silk used to support the national production's needs, local silk farmers were not explored in depth in this study.

Since the 1990s, international funders have emerged as essential stakeholders of the Cambodian silkscape. Organisations under UNESCO's pioneering input, followed shortly by a majority of European and Japanese-sponsored NGOs, were able to access new economic ventures by securing funding and implementing ambitious capacity-building training programmes with rural communities. The cases of the Institute for Khmer Traditional Textiles (IKTT) and Artisans Angkor (AA), founded respectively by Morimoto (Japanese)

and Maisonnave-Couterou (French), for La Ligue pour l'Enseignement, have shown different responses to these political and economic changes. While IKTT has fostered high-end artisanal production that emphasises the preservation of the *hol* technique, locally produced silk fibre, and natural dyes, AA has flourished in a social entrepreneurship model, providing quality souvenir goods made of imported silk, bright colours and contemporary designs. The development of silk products by both companies has benefited from tourists arriving to visit Angkor Wat.

On the other hand, this thesis has shown examples of Cambodian-owned craft projects – Chin Koeur of Silk Associations of Cambodia and Ngorn Vanntha of Color Silk – which benefited in different ways from the transnational, governmental and humanitarian investments discussed above. That said, these two Cambodian women, both operating from Takeo province, have successfully developed businesses standing at opposite ends of the silkscape. Chin Koeur built a project from the early UNESCO training she received in 1995, embracing the position of weaver turned middleman and sourcing supplies of raw materials, commissioning other weavers in surrounding areas and paying them by the piece. Her organisation has expanded, yet perpetuated the hierarchical relationship between middleman and weavers creating products for a Cambodian domestic market. Ngorn Vanntha, not a maker but from a family of silk weavers and traders, has incorporated new global dynamics by emphasising social entrepreneurship, social media and export markets, combined with weaving and sericulture training programmes in Takeo, sponsored by the Maybank Foundation, a Malay benefactor.

The exploration of a selection of these various stakeholders' perspectives has also exposed wider discourses of heritage, culture, and development that locate silk textiles within Cambodian and global frames, thus reevaluating the narrative of silk production revival as a linear success. The heritagisation of Cambodia's main archaeological sites was

linked to the peace restoration effort, with the involvement of UNESCO and partnering countries, especially France and Japan. Support for Cambodian arts and crafts followed in the 1990s. The decline of silk fibre production and weaving workforce in the 1970-80s encouraged the intervention of foreign investors and sponsors and, to a lesser degree, the Cambodian government. The necessity to revitalise silk practices was reinforced by discourses emphasising silk as an ancient tradition dating from the glorious Khmer Empire era. While the goal was to support local Cambodian silk weavers, linking humanitarian efforts and poverty reduction to the discourses of tradition and heritage preservation (supported by organisations such as AA and IKTT) opened the way to a production destined to elite customers and foreign tourists. The attempts at revitalising local sericulture and weaving within this reconfigured paradigm changed the makers' strategies of raw material sourcing and sales, relying on the mediating role of NGOs and craft companies. Independent weavers who did not join these schemes would continue to work in their villages with middlemen.

Moreover, this monolithic narrative of preserving traditions from extinction may also be disputed in relation to notions of traditional crafts, authenticity and ownership which were outlined early in the thesis in Chapter One. The various material factors and processes of silk-making, from fibre sourcing to weaving, skills transmission and product distribution, have shown other realities of the contemporary Cambodian silkscape. For instance, local sericulture has been superseded by extensive fibre imports from China, Vietnam and Thailand. Moreover, despite major investment by craft NGOs and transnational agencies, rural weavers have faced the fast expansion of the garment industry, which has encouraged them to abandon their traditional activity to become factory workers.

The reformation of the Cambodian silkscape in the post-KR era materialises the complex dynamics of strategies that combine heritage and preservation policies to build peace and development. Silk sector policymakers have targeted 'underprivileged population groups –

mainly women living in farm households – with few alternatives’, considering that weaving can generate invaluable income through the production of high value-added textile products.⁹³⁰ Discourses advocating for the emancipation of non-Western people fit into what Mignolo has identified as the ‘rhetoric of modernity’ that is articulated from a Eurocentric perspective. It perpetuates patterns of coloniality; and tradition and modernity are in fact conflated notions.⁹³¹ The example of AA showcases the ways in which these discourses materialised into specific craft training programmes, product design, and marketing strategies to produce silk goods appealing to an international clientele. This approach resonates with the colonial methods employed during the French protectorate, by Georges Groslier with the School of Cambodian Arts in the 1920s.

The Cambodian craft *heteropia* (as analysed in Chapter Three), under the authority of international stakeholders, solidified the definition of silk as a national and traditional craft; and weavers are the suppliers of such traditional artefacts. The reconfigured paradigm of the silkscape appears as a transnational iteration of *khsae*, the patron-client social structure that animates Cambodian society that resumed after the KR regime. In this hierarchical social structure, weavers remain at the margins of leadership and entrepreneurship, trading their dependence on middlemen to attach themselves to craft organisations.

These socio-economic development programmes often fail to offer sustainable alternatives to inequitable patronising relationships that are detrimental to the makers. Despite important international investments in the sector, by the 2010s systemic issues were still plaguing its expansion, with fragile domestic sericulture, a high level of reliance on imported silk fibre and uneven standards in the quality of products. The 2016 National Silk Strategy observed a fragmented and poorly coordinated sector that relied solely on small and medium enterprises with little governmental support, preventing ‘the emergence of

⁹³⁰ Cambodia Ministry of Commerce and ITC, *Cambodia National Silk Strategy*, 5.

⁹³¹ Mignolo, ‘Delinking,’ 456, 472.

well-defined value chain stages from sericulture to weaving and design'.⁹³² The 2014 census recorded that, caught between the middlemen and craft companies' monopolistic roles, low income and the temptation of rural exodus, the number of weavers declined from 20,000 in 2005 to less than 5,000.

What has appeared here is that to promote specific discourses is to establish power dynamics under which specific representations and actions operate. Despite being the bearers of knowledge, these populations remain voiceless and spoken for. This thesis has demonstrated that it is essential to critically consider the space given to indigenous perspectives and recentre the debate on marginal voices. The methodological approach to achieve a polyvocal, more balanced, representation of the different actors animating the Cambodian silkscape was multifold. First, the use of oral testimonies and ethnographic research has helped reveal the similarities between weavers as a social group, as much as their differences, in the ways they deal with gender and family dynamics and economic and educational challenges, as well as their dependence on the *angkar* (organisation or NGO) or the middleman. In the reversal of established hierarchies, agency may take different forms in resistance, but also in adaptation. The interviews and fieldwork described in Chapter Three, especially in Takeo province, offer a study of female weavers' negotiation with the stereotyped gendered norms imposed on them, which resonates with Derks and Brickell's key findings on conditions for Cambodian rural women. Weaving knowledge was passed on to women from their mother, grandmother or another feminine figure in their village. In the interviews, weaving appears as one of the few options available with farming and working at the garment factory. Most of the weavers I interviewed in Takeo and Siem Reap provinces considered that weaving also offered them the possibility of working from home and continuing to care for their children – or grandchildren, in the case of Pon, in Phnom Chisor.

⁹³² Cambodia Ministry of Commerce and ITC, *Cambodia National Silk Strategy*, 1.

Beyond discussing their economic and family constraints, these weavers have shown agency via subtle signs of contestation against the cost of raw materials or the relationship with the middlemen, empowerment and resistance through their design choices, expressions of taste, a sense of vocation, and strategies to increase their income. The oral testimonies have been a useful research method to pursue subjectivities grounded in lived experiences, rather than factual historical evidence, to supplement my observations on the field. Among the unexpected oral sources I recorded in Cambodia, Pheach, a trainee at the Caring for Young Khmer (CYK) training centre in Trapaing Krasaing in Takeo, stood out for her genuine passion for silk connected with her childhood memories of discovering *pidan* hangings at the local pagoda. She felt she was honouring her upbringing by continuing to weave and receiving further training. Chenda from Krama Yuyu (KY) was the only one to discuss the physical pain of working at the factory, and how it affected her legs, which prompted her to move to Siem Reap to return to her weaving activities. These stories may seem anecdotal, but the interlacing of multiple realities, expectations and self-reflective statements delivered by these weavers have provided an essential alternative to the stakeholders' reductive discourses.

Second, while the Cambodian silkscape is a major conceptual contribution in this thesis, the use of Action Research (AR) is a methodological contribution which provides novel ways of exploring weavers' agencies in terms of praxis. The AR experiment was a major catalyst in my research to articulate tacit, embodied, memory-based, and collaborative forms of knowledge taking place in *hol* weaving in the confines of the Krama Yuyu (KY) workshop. Applied to Cambodian silk practices, this methodology aimed to invert the common hierarchy of knowledge that places scholars, NGOs, and governmental bodies as experts to consider how knowledge in its different forms is owned, inherited, and disseminated by the weavers. The project directly engaged with Chenda, Theary and Tomoko from KY, to consider the ways in which they could together remobilise their skills

and produce a series of *sampot hol*. While the AR project focuses on a small-scale endeavour which should directly benefit a selected group of participants, it also provided rich material for research such as descriptions of making processes, photographs, film footage, interviews, and four *sampot hol*. Periods of observation and documentation with Chenda, Theary and their team at their workshop showed the level of technical skills and artistry necessary to complete every step of *hol*, from warping silk threads to tying and dyeing weft threads in successive dye baths to weaving on the loom. The precise and lengthy descriptions of these steps in Chapter Three have provided a written transcript of the gestures and unspoken dynamics between the weavers at the workshop. Moreover, interviews between Chenda, Theary and their mother Chendy have illuminated the mechanisms of silk weaving apprenticeship, which starts at a young age in families. These informal methods of skills transmission in the household or village community have been the foundation of silk weaving as a cottage activity. A close examination of these exchanges reveals that Chenda and Chendy, in particular, positioned themselves from a place of authority, clearly articulating their relationship to materials, textile processes, and skills learning. Weaving is also collective work in which weavers are interdependent. This was demonstrated in the team work between sisters Chenda and Theary, in how Theary reached out for advice to Chendy, and in their reliance on other weavers in the workshop for the warping process. Exploring a context of drastic cultural, social, and economic challenges in silk production, this thesis has addressed the re-orienting of this sense of loss towards a positive future for making. The documentation and creation of four *sampot hol* by Chenda and Theary at KY participates directly in this creative output.

The study of the weavers' hand skills and body memory has offered another layer of knowledge about silk as an embodied practice that includes Cambodians from diasporic communities, beyond their position of consumers. Embodiment is a theme running across

this thesis to explore culture through identity, making and dress, and the linking of these to social, physical and material realms. In Chapter Three, embodiment emerged through the physical experience of weaving. Film was used in the videos *Warp* and *Weft* as a methodology to specifically capture this experience of silk weaving in movement, showing bodies and gestures – for example, untangling and folding the warp threads, or dyes staining the weavers' hands. In Chapter Four, issues of embodiment informed the ways in which Cambodian immigrants of Long Beach, California have considered and re-evaluated silk clothes as a metonym for Cambodian cultural identity. Wearing these garments sparked a sense of cultural identification and belonging, playing into Cambodian American imaginings of the home land. Here, silk clothes are used as tools for embellishment, representation, self-expression, and pride. In the emotions communicated by wedding dress maker Men Kaylene and avid buyer Mary Tan, silk has appeared as a nostalgic device to overcome the trauma of displacement and loss.

Chapter Four demonstrated how interactions between silk textiles and the body – the female body in particular – are experienced on an individual and sensory level, as much as on a social level with the community. One key example of these interactions is the moments of performance and dance during the annual cultural festival in Long Beach that reinforce the embodiment of the history and cultural values that tie the local Cambodian American community together. In the reenacting of the historical myths of the Khmer Empire, performance helps to reconnect Cambodian culture to the country's imagined legendary past. These reenactments have shown the crucial importance of dress, even with the shortage of silk fabrics, as was the case in the post-KR era, to embody these moments in a way that is both inventive and respectful of ancient beliefs and representations. By embodying celestial figures from the Khmer pantheon, the ballet dancers and students from the Khmer Arts Academy further this symbolic continuity between Cambodian history and the present, through their body, movement, and the silk fabric. Following an apprenticeship

delivered from a master to students, dancers pursue the legacy of those who disappeared during the KR regime. As a second skin, silk garments become intimate devices activated by the body through performance. They wrap, model and hold the dancing bodies in a dialogue between the dancers themselves and their audience, reconnecting Cambodian Americans with family and community roots.

Challenges and reflections

A selection of theories such as metageography, Actor-Network-Theory, Hobsbawm's invented traditions and crafts as sites of embodied learning were helpful in this thesis to analyse how threads of silk knowledge and Cambodian cultural identity have been sustained throughout history. The integration of Cambodian silk practices into contemporary debates on globalisation, decoloniality, knowledge and identity formation demanded to be put in dialogue with primary materials collected during periods of in-depth field research. This critical approach aimed to expand the study of Cambodian textiles beyond what already existed in literature which revolved in particular around Cambodian silk as a traditional practice, the significance of motifs, and weaving and natural dyes techniques.

Mignolo has argued that delinking the modernity/coloniality paradigm 'means to change the terms and not just the content of the conversation'.⁹³³ For me, this has also involved creating the space to reflect on my position as a researcher in terms of voice and approach. I found a tremendous – and humbling – value in working with research questions that maintain a position of openness in acknowledging and emphasising forms of knowledge about silk that are embedded in practice, the body, memory, and cultural and family dynamics. My approach, therefore, has been about developing an epistemological model that combines a

⁹³³ Mignolo, Walter, 'DELINKING', *Cultural Studies* 21, no. 2 (March 2007), 459.

plurality of perspectives by first addressing the dominant historic, geo-political narratives on silk and post-conflict Cambodia, moving into what Mignolo defines as the 'geo-politics of knowledge emerging from different historical locations of the world that endured the effects and consequences of Western imperial and capitalist expansion'.⁹³⁴ This polyphony of material, human, and historic voices has revealed pockets of agency and knowledge for weavers and wearers in the acts of making and performing, as well as in diasporic literature and more informal forms of exchanges in the community.

With periods of observation, recording oral testimonies in Cambodia and Long Beach, California, and collaborating with silk weavers at KY, this thesis has brought a diversity of perspectives to the forefront. The task did not come without challenges. I kept in mind Hamera's record of her incomplete and unsatisfying collaboration with the Sem family in Long Beach, which provided an invaluable example of ethnographic research as an imperfect balancing act of acceptance and adaptability. Bearing an ethical responsibility to respect the living communities with whom I have worked, working in the Khmer language with different translators added to this difficulty in the interviews to clarify and develop some of my interlocutors' answers.

This thesis has discussed my role as a researcher and the different positions I have embraced, such as participant observer, interviewer, co-convenor of the AR project, and autoethnographer through taking a dance lesson. In the AR project, I had to find the appropriate position to accompany weavers without substituting my own experience to theirs. This was achieved not by being trained in *hol* weaving by Chenda and Theary, but instead, by fostering their practice and finding the required funding to produce four *sampot*. More importantly, the thesis has intentionally opened substantial spaces for the accounts of weavers, wearers and dancers gathered in the field in Cambodia and the United States to illuminate the multiple layers that form the Cambodian silk landscape. At the intersection of

⁹³⁴ Ibid, 460.

history and geography, and in response to the coloniality of knowledge prevalent in Cambodian scholarship, this study addresses the remembrance and recovery of different and fragmented forms of knowledge about Cambodian silk production, and integrates the Cambodian American diaspora territory.

Future research

This study of contemporary Cambodian silk heritage and practices has opened rich avenues for further research. In terms of methods, autoethnography and film could be amplified as research practices to highlight further the embodied and physical aspects of dyeing and weaving silk cloths. In terms of actors of the silkscape, the thesis' core focus has been transnational sponsors, craft companies and their founders in Chapter Two, silk weavers in Chapter Three, and Cambodian American consumers in Chapter Four. Consumers in Cambodia, both locals and tourists, offer scope for further study because they are active agents in the silkscape. Exploring their roles would complement the knowledge of the dynamics operating in the Cambodian silk network that have been exposed in this thesis. Foreign-owned organisations mostly target the export and tourist markets. Examining the local market further would provide additional data on the middlemen's relationships with retailers and the habits, taste and profile of domestic consumers. While the thesis has discussed key numbers about silk fibre production in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in the Introduction and provided ground knowledge on the specificities of Cambodian silk, sericulture could be another area for future research. Following ter Horst's extensive work on how Cambodian intermediaries of Chinese ethnic descent sourced silk fibre in Vietnam, more research could be dedicated to the geopolitical, ethnographic and embodied study of sericulture practices in Cambodia. In the last census, dating from 2016, there were less than a hundred silk producers left in Cambodia, mostly

located in Banteay Meanchey, Oddar Meanchey and Siem Reap provinces.⁹³⁵ Sericulture is a family-based cottage industry which mostly involves men, in contrast with female-dominated silk weaving activities, and often led in addition to other farming activities.⁹³⁶ Moreover, these silk farming provinces are geographically close to Thailand, which is both a major silk competitor of Cambodia, with more developed indigenous sericulture in the Surin area, and a key destination for Cambodian rural exodus and immigration. Further research on these territorial tensions and the different gender distribution, as well as issues of skills transmission in sericulture through kinship, embodied knowledge, and body memory, could reveal further important facets of the Cambodian silkscape by building on this thesis' new approaches to silk histories and geographies.

⁹³⁵ Cambodia Ministry of Commerce and ITC, *Cambodia National Silk Strategy*, 5.

⁹³⁶ Tauch Atakama, 'Rencontrer des producteurs de vers à soie/cocons, identifier des personnes à interviewer, faire un état des lieux de la situation sur place,' unpublished report, 25 May 2018.

Appendices

A1. Khmer [phonetic]-English glossary of terms

andan: warping

angkar: organisation, NGO

anlounh: striped sampot

aor: tunic, shirt

aor lakhaoun: silk blouse for dance practice

baitung: green

boklak angkar: NGO

bunthea: skein of ikat silk

champoo: anato seeds, natural dyestuff giving a bright orange colour

chong kiet: weft ikat silk (see also *hol*)

chorchung: patterned hem of a *sampot*

Choul Chnam Thmey: New Year

con: child

dok dua: silk cocoon

garuda: eagle-headed mythical creature

hol: weft ikat silk

jhmaun kandal: middleman

kabbas: cotton

kadep: cap

kbun: four metres of woven fabric, wrapped trousers (see *sampot chawng kbun*)

kemi: chemical

khai: loom (also *tbanh kraneat*)

khai macin: semi-automatic stepping weaving machine

khieu: blue

khmei khieu: Blue Khmers; refers to Cambodians living in the diaspora (also *anekachun khmer*)

khmein khmein: youngster, youth

khsae: cords, threads; also refers to network of patron-client relationships

khum: commune

kinnari: winged human mythical creature

kiri: unit of weight equalling two kilograms

kiet: to tie, also to designate a type of tie-dye textile produced by Malay communities

knar: one bobbin representing one portion of an ikat pattern, spool

koem: pattern design / weave structure (only applies to silk)

komnat: cloth

kraham: red

krola: pattern

krama / kroma / kramar: cotton plaid scarf

krama saut: silk scarf

kansaengdai: handkerchief

khmau: black

krom: rough

krom samaki: solidarity group, rural cooperative during the 1980s Vietnamese occupation

krusaa: family

leak khmer: cochineal red

loeung: yellow

makleua: ebony fruit, natural dyestuff giving a black colour

nak - naga: mythical dragon or snake figure

nat: cloth

nylon: nylon, fishing wire

pdai: husband

phamaung: sampot in solid-coloured silk

phuy: long embroidered scarf for wedding

phum: village

pibaak: difficult

pibaak chet: unhappy

pidan: pictorial ikat hanging representing the lives of the Buddha

pka chuu: pink

poar: colour

praing: bristle brush

proh: man

prohut: garcinia tree bark, natural dyestuff giving a bright yellow colour

prolung: smooth

propun: wife

ptean: length unit

ptey: warp

robam: dance

roumtchak: factory

saamyok: synthetic

saart: beautiful

sabay chet: happy

sampot: hip wrap, tube skirt

sampot chawng kbun: long length of *sampot* worn as wrapped trousers

sampot sarabap: silk hip wrap brocaded with gold or silver threads

sampot rbauk: hip wrap in a patterned damask

sampot samloy: one length of *sampot* worn as a hip wrap

sau: white

saut: silk

sbaay: embellished asymmetrical silk sash worn for wedding ceremonies and Khmer classical ballet

sbekcheung: shoe

sdoeg kiet: frame to tie weft yarn in the *hol* process

slaak snaam: mark, trace, sign of trauma

sliakpeak: dress

srei: woman

srok: district

srouel: easy

tangkar tauch: floral lattice

taksmin: iron mordant

tchak tamani: reed

thkor: weaving harness through which the warp is threaded

umba: sewing thread

yantra: ritualistic symbol which incorporates Sanskrit writing

yeay: grandmother; elderly woman (also *lokyeay*)

wat: temple

A2. Technical glossary of weaving

- Beam: A beam is any of the horizontal rollers on which the warp yarn or finished cloth is wound and secured. The main beam is fitted onto the back of the loom, and the cloth beam is fitted directly under where the weaver is sitting.
- Beaming: Methodically winding the full width of the warp yarns without entangling the threads on a beam placed on the loom, keeping an even tension in the process.
- Brocade: Richly decorated woven textile patterned with supplementary weft threads, often made of silver or gold, to create the illusion that sections have been embossed into the fabric.
- Brocatelle: A jacquard weave fabric related to brocade, brocatelle is patterned in higher relief with a thicker and heavier hand.
- Heddle: Usually made of metallic wire or fine cords, heddles are loops attached to the shaft of a loom in which warp threads are passed through to follow specific weave structures, when shafts will lift up and down.
- Ikat: Deriving from the Malay word *mengikat*, or 'to tie', ikat is a textile technique in which the warp or weft threads, or both for the double ikat, are tie-dyed in complex motifs before weaving.

The weft ikat technique is realised in successive stages: the weft threads are tied following a pre-determined motif to allow certain sections to take the dye and others to repel it. After one round of tying and dyeing, the process is repeated with a different colour to create in the end a polychromic pattern on the weft threads. Once this step is completed, the weft threads are transferred to sets of spools and woven through the warp threads on the loom to create the weft ikat textile.

For the polychromic Cambodian *hol*, some areas are left in white undyed silk and then the weaver typically proceeds to the dyeing in this order: red, yellow, and blue. Red overdyed with blue gives dark purple, blue over yellow gives green.

- Lac dye: Deep red colorant indigenous to Southeast Asia, obtained from the crude shellac resin excreted by the lac insect *Laccifer lacca*.
- Mordant: A chemical or metallic compound used in dyeing to fix the coloring matter in natural dyes.
- Mulberry: Tree from the *morus* species which provides leaves upon which *bombyx mori* silkworms feed.
- Polyvoltine: Species of *Bombyx mori* silk moth which produces more than one brood of eggs in a year.
- Reed: Secured by the beater to the front of the loom, a reed is a frame with vertical narrow openings that resembles a large comb. It spaces the warp threads evenly, creates a guide for the shuttle, and helps pack the woven weft threads together.
- Sericulture: Cultivation of silk caterpillars intended to produce silk threads, especially from the domesticated species of *Bombyx mori*.
- Shot silk: Also called changeant or changeable silk, a taffeta silk fabric made from warp and weft yarns of two complementary or contrasting colours, producing an iridescent appearance.
- Silk: A protein-based fibre, silk is a continuous filament obtained from the cocoons of different species of moths and arachnids. In commercial use, the most common type of silk comes from the domesticated breed of *Bombyx mori* species.
- Skein: Bundle of silk threads
- Sleying: Passing warp ends through each dent of the reed to separate the threads evenly
- Twill: Weave structure carried out on minimum three shafts characterised by diagonal lines running at angles between 15° and 75°, interlacing the warps to create a diagonal ridge across the fabric.
- 2-1 twill: Irregular twill weave structure made by lifting two warp ends vertically over

weft picks and by floating one weft pick horizontally over warp ends on three shafts on the loom.

- Warp: Also called 'ends', the threads which lie along the length of the fabric. Warp must be prepared in advance and put on the loom.

- Warping: Preparing the warp, the first stage of weaving, consists of arranging a predefined number of warp threads following the desired length of the weaving.

- Weft: also called 'filling', the threads which are passed horizontally on the loom to create the interlacing of the yarns with warp.

- Weft tying: Step of the ikat process which consists of placing weft threads flat on a frame to proceed to the tying stage, following pre-defined patterns before proceeding to the dyeing stage.

A3. Visual lexicon of Cambodian textiles



Batik sarung: hip wrap skirt made in cotton decorated with Indonesian batik-style motifs.



Chorchung: supplementary weft patterns located at the bottom of a *sampot phamaung*.



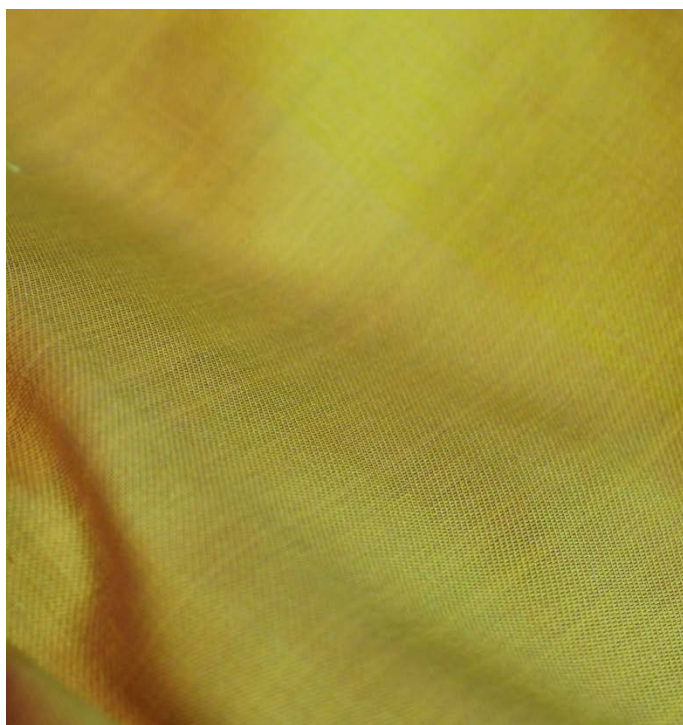
Kiet: tie-dyed silk textile worn as a head scarf by Cham Malay Muslim communities.



Krama saut: plaid-patterned silk hip wrap, often in green, red, and white, sometimes combining a silk warp and a cotton weft.



Krama: cotton or polyester gingham woven scarf.



Sampot phamaung: solid-coloured weft-faced twill (or taffeta) fabric, which sometimes incorporates a shot silk effect with weft and warp threads in contrasting colours.



Sampot anlounh: striped silk or cotton textile.



Sampot hol: polychromatic weft ikat silk hip wrap, usually in six colours white, yellow, red, blue, green, and purple.



Sampot hol poar: two-tone weft ikat silk in bright chemical dyes.



Sampot sarabap: supplementary weft patterned silk brocaded with metallic threads featuring geometric and stylised floral elements.



Sampot rbauk: patterned silk with supplementary weft threads in contrasting colours.



Hol pidan: figurative polychromic silk weft ikat used as a decorative and auspicious wall hanging often featuring Buddhist scenes and symbols.

A4a. Information sheet and consent forms for the interviews

INFORMATION SHEET

STUDY OF THE SILK SECTOR IN CONTEMPORARY CAMBODIA

We are sending you this information sheet because we would like to invite you to take part in our study. Please take time to read this information and ask us any questions you may have or if anything is unclear.

What is the purpose of the study?

In today's Cambodia, local artisans produce silk according to traditional knowledges and skills while mass-produced garments represent eighty percent of total exports. This culturally-valued practice faces the challenge of a fast-industrializing economy. How to mobilize this living knowledge and examine it in regards to Cambodia's historiography? This study aims to fill a gap in current knowledge about Cambodian silk in terms of production, craft, and use from the point of view of the producers and the main actors involved in the field. Along with the analysis of contemporary craft production we hope to provide a fuller picture of the history of silk and its importance in Southeast Asia. The study will also provide an analytical model that can be applied to the study of other craft communities.

Who is organising and funding the research?

The project is a major component of the PhD research being undertaken by Magali An Berthon under the supervision of Dr Sarah Cheang and Dr Martina Margetts. The research is based in the History of Design Department at the School of Humanities, Royal College of Art, London. The research is partially self-funded and supported by Techne / AHRC scholarship. It will result in a written thesis that will be examined for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Magali An Berthon has a wide experience of interview-based research in the field of textiles and crafts in Southeast Asia. This study has been approved by the Royal College of Art Research Ethics Committee.

Why have I been asked to take part?

We aim to interview different actors contributing to sericulture and the preservation of silk craftsmanship in Cambodia today: makers (mulberry tree farmers, silk farmers, textile dyers, weavers, and seamstresses), stakeholders involved in the field (business owners, manufacturers, governmental officials, and NGOs project managers), textile experts (museum curators, conservators, and historians). We hope to interview a wide variety of men and women: some still active and others who are retired. We will select participants according to their profession, their background, their geographic location in different parts of Cambodia, their motivation to take part in this project and upon recommendation.

Your participation

We believe that you have something important to say that will contribute to our study. We trust that the interview will provide you with an opportunity to share your experience, of the difficulties and the pleasures of your working in the field of silk. We will arrange an interview with you and will audio record / and or film the interview. It may last between one and two hours.

If you agree to take part, please sign a consent form.

INTERVIEW CONSENT AND DATA PROCESSING STATEMENT

If you consent to being interviewed and to any data gathered being processed as outlined below, please print and sign your name, and date the form, in the spaces provided.

- This project **STUDY OF THE SILK SECTOR IN CONTEMPORARY CAMBODIA** is being conducted by Magali An Berthon, research student at the Royal College of Art, London. It is partially self-funded and supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council Techne scholarship. The project is a major component of the PhD research under the supervision of Dr Sarah Cheang and Dr Martina Margetts.
- All data will be treated as personal under the 1998 Data Protection Act, and will be stored securely in a password protected area on my desktop computer.
- Interviews will be recorded by the researcher and transcribed by an independent transcriber who has signed a confidentiality agreement.
- Copies of interview tapes and transcripts used for the PhD will be offered to the Royal College of Art Data History of Design Archive under the same secured conditions. Data will be stored in Google Drive, for which the department has a security agreement.
- A copy of your interview transcript will be provided electronically/hard copy, free of charge, on any written request.
- Data collected may be processed manually and with the aid of computer software.
- Your personal details such as phone number and address will not be revealed to people outside the project.
- You will still be free to withdraw at any time and we will not ask you to give any reasons if you choose to do so.
- Participation consent:
Please tick the appropriate boxes.
 YES I agree to be interviewed. NO I refuse to be interviewed.
- Confidentiality and publication consent:
Please tick the appropriate boxes.
 - I may be identified in reports made available outside the research team and the AHRC, and in publications. Your words and image may be used in publications, reports, web pages, videos, and other research outputs.
 - My words and image may be used provided that they are anonymised.
 - I may not be identified in reports made available outside the research team and the AHRC, nor in any publications. My words and image may not be used.

Please print your name:.....

Signature:..... Date:.....

Contact for further information:

Magali An Berthon
00447494290993
magali.berthon@network.rca.ac.uk

Dr. Sarah Cheang
Sarah Cheang sarah.cheang@rca.ac.uk

Royal College of Art
Kensington Gore, London SW7 2EU

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT**STUDY OF THE SILK SECTOR IN CONTEMPORARY CAMBODIA**

I _____, an interpreter working with Magali An Berthon, agree to the following:

a) I will take all possible steps to protect the information I receive during the process of interpreting during the researching, interviewing and filming with the makers, manufacturers, and experts in the silk industry in Cambodia.

This means that I will not disclose any personally identifying information to anyone, unless: compelled to disclose specific information under a court order or competent of court.

b) I will not talk about or write about any of the individuals' names in any meetings or in any documentation including emails about the research project.

Interpreter

Signature

Name:

Date:

Place:

Witness/second signature (Magali An Berthon, project coordinator)

Signature

Name:

Date:

Place:

A4b. Information sheet for the interviews in Khmer

ព័ត៌មានបន្ថែមទាក់ទងនឹងការស្រាវជ្រាវ

ការស្រាវជ្រាវអំពីស្រ្តីនៅកម្ពុជាបច្ចុប្បន្ន

យើងខ្ញុំផ្តល់ជូនព័ត៌មានបន្ថែមខាងក្រោមនេះក្នុងគោលបំណងអញ្ជើញលោក លោកស្រីចូលរួមក្នុងការស្រាវជ្រាវរបស់យើងខ្ញុំ។ សូមលោក លោកស្រីមេត្តាអានព័ត៌មានខាងក្រោមនិងសាកសួរយើងខ្ញុំបើសិនជាលោកលោកស្រីមានចម្ងល់លើចំណុចណាមួយ។

គោលបំណងនៃការស្រាវជ្រាវ

ក្នុងប្រទេសកម្ពុជាបច្ចុប្បន្ននេះ សិប្បករក្នុងស្រុកផលិតស្បែកយោងទៅតាមចំណេះដឹងនិងជំនាញដែលមានពីបរមបុរាណមកដែលធ្វើអោយឧស្សាហកម្មខ្នាតធំនាំមុខនិងនាំចេញប៉ែតសិបភាគរយនៃការនាំចេញសរុប។ វិធីសាស្ត្រនិងការអនុវត្តបែបនេះកំពុងប្រឈមមុខនឹងការដើរទៅមុខយ៉ាងលឿននៃសេដ្ឋកិច្ចឧស្សាហកម្មបច្ចុប្បន្ន។ តើត្រូវប្រមូលប្រមូលចំណេះដឹងរស់នេះយ៉ាងដូចម្តេចដោយយោងទៅលើប្រវត្តិសាស្ត្រនិងភូមិសាស្ត្ររបស់ប្រទេសកម្ពុជាមួយនេះ។ ការស្រាវជ្រាវនេះមានបំណងបំពេញបន្ថែមលើចំណេះដឹងអំពីស្បែកកម្ពុជាដែលនៅមានចន្លោះផ្នែកផលិតកម្ម សិប្បកម្ម និងការប្រើប្រាស់យោងលើទស្សនរបស់ផលិតករនិងភាគីចំបងៗដែលពាក់ព័ន្ធក្នុងវិស័យនេះ។ ជាមួយគ្នានឹងការវិភាគនៃផលិតកម្មសិប្បកម្មបច្ចុប្បន្ន យើងសង្ឃឹមថានឹងអាចផ្តល់នូវរូបភាពពេញលេញពីប្រវត្តិរបស់ស្បែកនិងសារៈសំខាន់របស់វាក្នុងប្រទេសអាស៊ីភាគអាគ្នេយ៍។ ការស្រាវជ្រាវនេះនឹងផ្តល់គំរូសម្រាប់ការវិភាគដែលអាចយកទៅប្រើប្រាស់សំរាប់ការស្រាវជ្រាវនៅតាមសហគមន៍សិប្បកម្មនានា។

នរណាជាអ្នករៀបចំនិងឧបត្ថម្ភគាំទ្រការស្រាវជ្រាវនេះ?

គំរោងនេះជាផ្នែកមួយដ៏សំខាន់នៃការស្រាវជ្រាវបញ្ចប់ថ្នាក់បណ្ឌិតរបស់និសិក្ស ម៉ាហ្គាលី អាណប៊ីតុន Magali An Berthon មកពីមហាវិទ្យាល័យសិល្បៈមនុស្សសាស្ត្រនៅទីក្រុងឡុងដ៍ (Royal College of Art, London) ក្រោមការប្រឹក្សាយោបល់ពីលោកបណ្ឌិតសារ៉ា ឈាងនិងលោកស្រីបណ្ឌិតម៉ាទីណា ម៉ាហ្គេត។ ការស្រាវជ្រាវនេះអាចប្រព្រឹត្តទៅបានដោយមានការឧបត្ថម្ភពីអាហារូបករណ៍ក្រុមប្រឹក្សាតិចណេសិល្បៈនិងមនុស្សសាស្ត្រហើយការចំណាយពាក់កណ្តាលជាវិភាគផ្ទាល់ខ្លួន។ ទិន្នន័យដែលបានពីការស្រាវជ្រាវនឹងយកទៅប្រើប្រាស់ដើម្បីសរសេរនិក្ខេបបទដើម្បីបញ្ចប់

សញ្ញាប័ត្រថ្នាក់បណ្ឌិតផ្នែកទស្សនវិជ្ជា។ ម៉ាហ្គាលី អានប៊ីតុន (Magali An Berthon) មានបទពិសោធន៍ទូលំទូលាយ លើការស្រាវជ្រាវដោយផ្អែកលើបទសម្ភាសន៍ក្នុងវិស័យវាយភ័ណ្ឌនិងសិប្បកម្មក្នុងប្រទេសអាស៊ីភាគអាគ្នេយ៍។ ការស្រាវជ្រាវនេះបានទទួលការយល់ព្រមពីគណកម្មការនៃមហាវិទ្យាល័យសិល្បៈទទួលបន្ទុកការស្រាវជ្រាវដែល ប្រកបដោយក្រុមសិល្បិច ។

ហេតុអ្វីបានជាយើងសុំសម្ភាសន៍លោក លោកស្រី

យើងខ្ញុំមានគោលបំណងសម្ភាសន៍ភាគីសំខាន់ៗនានាដែលបានចូលរួមចំណែកដល់ការអភិរក្សសិប្បកម្មក្នុងប្រទេស កម្ពុជាបច្ចុប្បន្នរួមមាន **សិប្បករ** (អ្នកដាំដើមមន អ្នកផលិតសូត្រ អ្នកគ្រលក់ពណ៌អ្នកតម្បាញ និងអ្នកកាត់ដេរ) **ភាគីពាក់ព័ន្ធដទៃទៀតដូចជា** (ម្ចាស់អាជីវកម្មរោងចក្រផលិត មន្ទីររដ្ឋាភិបាល និងប្រធានអង្គការក្រៅរដ្ឋាភិបាល) **អ្នកជំនាញវាយណ្ណភ័ន** (អ្នកអភិរក្សសារមន្ទីរ អ្នកជំនាញអភិរក្សទូទៅ និងអ្នកជំនាញខាងប្រវត្តិសាស្ត្រ)។

យើងខ្ញុំសង្ឃឹមថាអាចសម្ភាសន៍អ្នកចូលរួមទាំងប្រុសស្រីចំរុះគ្នាដែលអ្នកខ្លះអាចនឹងចូលទិញផលិតផលកម្មក្នុង វិស័យនេះ។ យើងខ្ញុំនឹងជ្រើសរើសអ្នកចូលរួមផ្តល់បទសម្ភាសន៍យោងទៅលើវិជ្ជាជីវៈ ជីវៈប្រវត្តិ និងភូមិសាស្ត្រនានាក្នុង ប្រទេសកម្ពុជា ពីទីកន្លែងនិងការយល់ឃើញរបស់ពួកគេផ្ទាល់ចំពោះគំរោងនេះនិងយោងទៅលើការណែនាំពីបុគ្គល ដែលស្គាល់អ្នកដែលអាចសម្ភាសន៍បានផងដែរ។

ការចូលរួមរបស់លោកលោកស្រី

យើងខ្ញុំជឿថាលោក លោកស្រីមានព័ត៌មានសំខាន់ៗចូលរួមចំណែកដល់ការស្រាវជ្រាវរបស់យើងខ្ញុំ។ យើងខ្ញុំជឿជាក់ថា បទសម្ភាសន៍នឹងផ្តល់ឱកាសដល់លោក លោកស្រីដើម្បីចែករំលែកបទពិសោធន៍ ការលំបាកនានា និងភាពសោមន្ទ រីករាយចំពោះមុខបរិយាកាសនេះ។ យើងខ្ញុំនឹងរៀបចំការសម្ភាសន៍ជាមួយលោកស្រីដោយមានទាំងការចតសម្លេងនិង ការចតវីដេអូកុំឡុងពេលបទសម្ភាសន៍ផងដែរ។ បទសម្ភាសន៍នេះអាចនឹងតម្រូវអោយលោក លោកស្រីចំណាយពេល មួយម៉ោងទៅពីរម៉ោង។

បើសិនលោក លោកស្រីយល់ព្រមចូលរួមផ្តល់បទសម្ភាសន៍ សូមមេត្តាចុះហត្ថលេខាលើបែបបទដែលបានភ្ជាប់ មកជាមួយ។

បន្ទាប់ពីបទសម្ភាសន៍បញ្ចប់

បទសម្ភាសន៍ទាំងអស់នឹងត្រូវកត់ត្រាចម្លងនិងរក្សាទុកជាឌីជីថល។ ទិន្នន័យនឹងត្រូវរក្សាទុកនៅមហាវិទ្យាល័យសិល្បៈ កំឡុងពេលស្រាវជ្រាវដែលកំពុងសិក្សាដោយនិស្សិតឈ្មោះ ម៉ាហ្គាលី អាណប៊ែតុន (Magali AnBerthon)។ បទសម្ភាសន៍ និងកំណត់ត្រាទាំងឡាយនឹងត្រូវរក្សាទុកក្នុងម៉ាស៊ីនកុំព្យូទ័រការពារដោយលេខកូតសម្ងាត់ជាមួយនិងលក្ខណ៍ សុវត្ថិភាពត្រឹមត្រូវ។ ក្នុងករណីការស្រាវជ្រាវបែបនិទានកថាឈ្មោះបុគ្គលដែលត្រូវបានសម្ភាសន៍ទៅត្រូវបង្ហាញ ព្រមជាមួយនិងព័ត៌មានលំអិតអំពីកន្លែងដែលពួកគេធ្វើការ។ គោលបំណងគំរោងនេះគឺដើម្បីស្វែងយល់ពីរឿងរ៉ាវរបស់ បុគ្គលដែលពាក់ព័ន្ធក្នុងការងារផលិតសូត្រនិងដើម្បីស្វែងយល់ពីយុទ្ធសាស្ត្រនានាអនុម័តដោយភាគីពាក់ព័ន្ធក្នុងវិស័យ នេះ។ អាស្រ័យហេតុនេះវាពិតជាមិនប្រសើរឡើយសម្រាប់យើងខ្ញុំដែលត្រូវមិនបង្ហាញសក្ខីកម្មផ្តល់ដោយលោកលោក ស្រីអំពីបទពិសោធន៍ផ្ទាល់ខ្លួននិងព័ត៌មានលំអិតអំពីអង្គការដែលលោកលោកស្រីកំពុងធ្វើការជាមួយ ការប្រឈមមុខនិង ឪកាសនានាក្នុងវិស័យនេះ។ ការចូលរួមរបស់លោក លោកស្រីនឹងផ្តល់ព័ត៌មានដែលមានតម្លៃលើសលុបអាចជួយ បង្ហាញពីបទពិសោធន៍ផលិតសូត្រនៅកម្ពុជា។ ទោះបីយ៉ាងណាក៏ដោយចំពោះព័ត៌មានដែលលោក លោកស្រីមិនចង់ បង្ហាញដើម្បីការពារអត្តសញ្ញាណផ្ទាល់ខ្លួនរបស់លោកស្រីនឹងត្រូវដាក់ជាអនាមិកតាមការទាមទាររបស់លោក លោក ស្រីនិងដោយមានការយល់ព្រមជាមុន។ គ្មានព័ត៌មានណាមួយនិងក្នុងកាលៈទេសៈណាក៏ដោយនឹងត្រូវបង្ហាញដោយ គ្មានការយល់ព្រមពីលោក លោកស្រី។

គួរកត់សម្គាល់ផងដែរថាលោក លោកស្រីមានសិទ្ធិដកខ្លួនពីការស្រាវជ្រាវនេះគ្រប់ពេលហើយយើងនឹងមិនសុំអោយ លោកលោកស្រីផ្តល់ហេតុផលណាមួយឡើយ។

បទសម្ភាសន៍ដែលបានថតជាខ្សែអាត់សម្លេងនឹងត្រូវកត់ត្រាទុក បទសម្ភាសន៍ដែលបានថតជាខ្សែវីដេអូនឹងត្រូវកែ សម្រួល។ ការដកស្រង់សំដីក្នុងបទសម្ភាសន៍របស់លោកលោកស្រីអាចនឹងត្រូវបានប្រើប្រាស់ពេលបោះពុម្ពផ្សាយនិង ក្នុងរបាយការណ៍នានានៃការស្រាវជ្រាវនេះ។ គំរោងនេះជាផ្នែកមួយដ៏សំខាន់នៃការស្រាវជ្រាវថ្នាក់បណ្ឌិត។ បេកគំហើញគឺទំនងជានឹងត្រូវផ្សព្វផ្សាយក្នុងឯកសារស្រាវជ្រាវ សៀវភៅសិក្សានិងភាពយន្តឯកសារផ្សេងៗ។

សម្រាប់ព័ត៌មានបន្ថែមសូមទំនាក់ទំនង ម៉ាហ្គាលី អានប៊ីតុន (Magali An Berthon) តាមអាស័យដ្ឋានអ៊ីម៉ែល magali.berthon@network.rca.ac.uk និងលោកបណ្ឌិត សារ៉ា ឈាង (Dr. Sarah Cheang) តាមអាស័យដ្ឋានអ៊ីម៉ែល sara.cheang@rca.ac.uk

យើងខ្ញុំសូមថ្លែងអំណរគុណយ៉ាងជ្រាលជ្រៅចំពោះការចូលរួមរបស់លោក លោកស្រីក្នុងការស្រាវជ្រាវនេះ។ បើសិនលោក លោកស្រីសម្រេចចិត្តចូលរួមក្នុងការស្រាវជ្រាវនេះ សូមលោក លោកស្រីទទួលយកក្រុងដាសព័ត៌មានមួយសន្លឹកនេះទុកហើយប្រគល់ទម្រង់បែបទម្រង់ប្រមូលទៅ ម៉ាហ្គាលី អានប៊ីតុន (Magali An Berthon) ឬផ្ញើទៅកាន់អ៊ីម៉ែលរបស់គាត់។

A5. Chart provided by Tomoko Takagi with the tentative cost and timetable for the Action Research *hol* project, July 20, 2017.

Update 20July2017

Sampot Hol Project 2017

I. Material / Equipment

Iron Comb for Hol used \$30
 Stand for making small bundle \$15
 Fine silk Mok3 (3thread) for Warp 1kg \$60/kg=\$60
 Fine silk Mok8 (8thread) for Weft (2kg=1kiri) 1.5kg for 3kbun \$55/kg=\$82.5
 Dye Material Natural Dye and Chemical Dye etc warp dying in Takeo \$7 / 1kg
 Chemical dye powder \$0.125x27packs=\$3.375
 String for tie \$5

II. Process around 1month? for 1kbun 3hole for this project

1. Preparing Warp about 6days for 3 kbun

1. Dying and Boiling Fine Silk Mok3 with ash water for warp done (black : \$7 /kg)
2. Rolling silk bundle to spool 5days/1person (Theary) done
- 1-3. Arrange 1day/2persons 21July(fri.)
- 1-4. Rolling warp beam/ comb 0.5day/6persons / 0.5day/2persons 24July 8:30-9:00am
- 1-5. Making heddle 3days/1person (Chenda or Theary) 25-27July

Warp: Chemical dye

Weft: chemical dye only: A / chemical and natural dye mix

2. Preparing Weft Koem(about 20 knar)/kbun*3kbun 17.5-23.5days?

Before tying 4days?

- 2-1. Boild Fine Silk Mok8 with ash water 0.5days/2persons/3kbun done (Kim,Chamroen)
- 2-2. Rolling silk bundle to spool 3day/1person /3kbun 0.5kg(Theary)done,0.5kg(Kim) done
- 2-3. Making small bundles 2.5day/1person/3kbun 171knar/done (Chenda)

A:Koem2 17Knar=1Bunteah(=1pattern), 4Bunteah=1Kbun(=1hol)
 1Knar=100thread=200weavings, 4weaving/1kanar
 *100thread/knar*3bunteah+140thread/knar * 1bunteah
 36knar=3.5hr-40knar

B:Koem5 13Knar=1Bunteah(=1pattern), 4Bunteah=1Kbun(=1hol)
 1Knar=140thread=280weavings, 4weaving/1kanar

C:Original 17Knar=1Bunteah(=1pattern), 3Bunteah=1Kbun(=1hol)
 1Knar=140thread=280weavings, 4weaving/1kanar

Koem(about 20 knar/bunteah*3-4bunteah=1kbun) 4.5-6.5days*3kbun=13.5-19.5days

2-4. 1st Tying pattern 8days/1person/kbun Koem-A(2)

1st bunteah=17knar (Chenda done)
 2nd-4th bunteah (Theary done) 2days/bunteah
 * 2nd-4th bunteah are followed 1st.bunteah.

1st Tying pattern 8days/1person/kbun Koem-B(5)

1st bunteah=13knar (Chenda done)
 2nd-4th bunteah (Theary done) 2days/bunteah
 * 2nd-4th bunteah are followed 1st.bunteah.

1st Tying pattern 2-3days/1person/kbun Koem-C(original) 25-27July

1st bunteah=17knar (Chenda doing)
 2nd-3rd bunteah (Theary doing) 2days/bunteah

2-5. 1st. Dying 0.5days/1person/kbun Koem-C 25-27July

(Natural Dye and Chemical Dye both)

Koem-A (Chenda,Chantra pink chemical done) 0.5days

2-6. 2nd. Dying 0.5days/1person/kbun Koem-B 25-27July

(Natural Dye and Chemical Dye both)

Koem-A (Chenda,Chantra yellow chemical done) 2hr

* before 2nd. Dye cut some tied peaces (Chenda done) 1.5hr

2-7. Tying 2nd then 3rd. Dying . 6days/1person/kbun Koem-B,A 25-27July

(Natural ye and Chemical Dye both)

2nd.tying Chenda 2bunteah (done 2.5days)+Theary 2buntheah(done3days)

Koem-A (Chenda,Chantra green chemical done) 0.5days

after dry cut string (Chenda done) 0.5days

2-8. Rolling to Knar 0.5days/1person/kbun Koem-A 25-27July

*Depend on design

3. Weaving Koem(about 20 knar)/kbun 10-15days/kbun 28July~

KoemA=17Knar*4bunteah

KoemB=13Knar*4bunteah

KoemC=17Knar*3bunteah

A6. Excerpts from the interviews conducted in Cambodia and the United States

To be noted: M. stands for Magali. I use the initials of the translator in the transcripts. Khmer terms that I was able to identify appear in italics.

1. At Caring for Young Khmer centre, translated by Rothmono, Trapaing Kasaing, Takeo province, August 3, 2017.

Am Sai:

'M: And how difficult is it to learn *pidan*?

[*Rothmono translates*]

A: *Pibaak pibaak*.

R: She says that learning *pidan* is the most difficult, there are are so many pictures.

M: Motifs?

R: Yes, motifs.

M: And so, it was hard for her to learn that?

[*Rothmono translates*]

R: *Pibaak*.

M: It was her first time to make *pidan*?

[*Rothmono translates*]

R: Yes, it is her first time. She says that she has done many programmes already, but this is the first one where she started learning *pidan*'.

Now Saraem:

'M: So, what was she doing before?

R: She says that one of the reasons she decided to learn weaving is because she has never learned it before and wanted to experience it. She then decided to come.

[Rothmono translates]

R: She has done many kinds of small business: rearing chicken, cows, doing farming, selling things at the market.

M: OK, so farming and selling. And is she still doing that or is she a weaver full time?

[Rothmono translates]

R: She says she stopped all except doing farm. She has stopped doing everything else, the selling. And now she is doing this full time'.

Pheach:

'M: And does she like weaving, does she enjoy the practice?15:44

[Rothmono translates]

R: She said that not only she likes it, but she loves it. Because it's customs, it's Khmer. It's Khmer customs. It is the identity of Cambodia. She really really loves weaving.

M: Oh ok, does she wear *hol*, does she own *sampot kbun* that she has woven herself?16:38

[Rothmono translates]

R: No, she doesn't. Whenever she finishes one piece, she just sells it.

M: So, she is proud to be a weaver.

[Rothmono translates]

R: Yes, she is.

M: Do you think she will teach her daughters, her children?

[Rothmono translates]

R: She will teach them even though they might want to work. But she will teach them this because she loves it!'

2. Interviews of Chenda, Theary and Chendy, translated by Yu, at Krama Yuyu, Ta Pouk village, Siem Reap province, July 26, 2017.

Chendy:

'Y: Yes, she is disappointed that we are losing the *hol*, the traditional Cambodian *hol*. So it comes only from Thailand, imported from Thailand but different design and different quality. She says that you have to conserve this to bring up about the Cambodian *hol* or silk so that the new generation will know about it. Because now the young generation they don't know much about it.

M: Yes. And where did she get the silk fibre?

[*Yu translates*]

Y: They get the silk from Takeo but also some from Vietnam. She says they make it from China.

M: So, did she ever use the local silk, the golden silk?

[*Yu translates*]

Chendy: *Ot mien*.

Y: They didn't have some. She says that before they used to have but now no more, because the process to obtain silk from the cocoon is difficult, and it takes so long. Now no one does it anymore'.

Chenda:

'Y: She says it's also difficult to bring back the memory to make the *hol*. For the *krama* she can do it, but for the *hol* she had to research and learn a lot.

M: So, what did she have to do?

[*Yu translates*]

Y: For the *hol*, to learn again how to make, when she did not remember, she asked her mother or the auntie in Takeo province to get more information on how to make it.

M: And what did she ask, what were the questions?

[*Yu translates*]

Y: She asked only about dyeing colours, between natural dyeing and chemical dyes. She wanted to know about how to do it.

M: And for the tying part she remembered.

[*Yu translates*]

Chenda: *Tchaa*.

Y: Yes, tying she remembered'.

Theary:

'M: Do you they think about anything when they practice weaving? Do they dream, do they think about grocery shopping, or...?

[*Yu translates*] [*Everyone laughs*] Theary says that sometimes she thinks about other things, but I don't know what she's thinking about. So, I told her, maybe she's thinking about her boyfriend.

[*Theary explains*] She says that sometimes while she's working she's thinking it's taking so long and the cost of the *hol* is very cheap. So, then she puts it down and just walks away. And after that she has the desire to work on it again, so she goes back to it'.

3. Interviews of So Ai, Yuon Sophon, Kamon, Pon, and Chin Koeur translated by Prom Chak, in villages in Phnom Chisor, Takeo province, March 17, 2018.

So Ai:

'And does she enjoy weaving, is it something she enjoys doing or is it hard?

[*P: in Khmer*] *chol chet?*

[*Interviewee: in Khmer*]

P: She likes that job because this is the job she has learned a long time ago and is still doing that. But the problem now is that her health is not so good.

M: And has she been to Phnom Penh to see the shops?

[P: in Khmer]

[Interviewee: in Khmer]

P: Never. Only sells the production to the middleman'.

Yuon Sophon:

'P: She said: before, like every house had a loom, but not only one loom, but even three looms also, in the past.

M: Really? In the houses, like her mom had three looms?

P: But now the women go to work for the factory.

M: Would she work for the factory?

[P: in Khmer]

[Interviewee: in Khmer]

P: The Chinese factory.

M: But if she had a job there...?

[P: in Khmer]

[Interviewee: in Khmer]

P: No, she wouldn't'.

Kamon:

'M: And so, for example this piece, who ordered this piece?

[P: in Khmer]

[Interviewee: in Khmer]

P: This is a piece for her. Not for sale, because this is for a wedding party so she prepares for herself.

M: Oh, not for sale!

[Interviewee: in Khmer]

P: But the pattern, she copied from the neighbors. But this is just for her to wear for a wedding'.

Pon:

'P: She married just before Pol Pot regime.

M: Before Pol Pot. And she was a weaver before Pol Pot?

[P: in Khmer]

[Interviewee: in Khmer]

P: She just learned at that time. Study at school also and learned weaving.

M: And then Pol Pot arrived and it stopped. So nobody in this village was weaving during Pol Pot.

P: No'.

Chin Koeur:

'M: And another question is, where does she get the materials?

[P: in Khmer]

[Interviewee: in Khmer]

P: She says she goes to Phnom Penh and buys in Phnom Penh. And also the dyeing also from Phnom Penh. But she knows that the products come from Vietnam and Thailand.

M: From Vietnam and Thailand. How much would be *saut kilo*?

[P: in Khmer]

[Interviewee: in Khmer]

P: One kilogram is seventy dollars’.

4. Interviews of Ok Khannia, Sok Chan, and Kaylene Men, Cambodia Town, Long Beach, California, April 2017.

Ok Khannia (April 6, 2017):

‘K: As a kid, when I was getting dressed, my very first costume... I was scared because it was my very first performance. But it felt really... My mom was there dressing me for my first performance. That’s the only time, right! It just... Having your mom knowing what she is doing, and this is something that your mom is teaching you, and you’re not teaching your mum how to handle things or what a cashier is saying, you know, it was a different, a reversal, a role reversal. And that was for me Cambodian American, my parents don’t speak a lot of English. It was nice, because it was like: “Oh I’m being taught something by my parents.” [...] To see her helping my friends and dressing them, it was a wonderful feeling. It made me feel beautiful, I was really excited. I just felt so: ,This is Cambodian clothes! This is my clothes!’. I loved it, I fell in love with it. Sometimes I’d be walking around in the streets to the store in my *kbun*’.

Sok Chan, translated by Mary Tan (April 6, 2017):

‘Mary: Sometimes she starts from her catalogue and sometimes she designs. My outfit is only from her designs. Only traditional style.

M: Do you think she is going to continue selling silk?

Sok Chan: I don’t know. (*Ot don te*). I want to retire!

M: When?

S: In five years. *Pram chnaam*.

M: And after you will close the business?

S: I think so.

M: Nobody will take over the business?

S: I don't know (*Ot don te*). When my husband (*pday*) retires, I want to retire too.

M: And she has no one in the family who wants to continue?

S: *Ote*. All of my kids are working, but not in textiles'.

Men Kaylene (April 11, 2017):

'K: I see some of the wedding planners, in Cambodia in majority, go for the trends, go for the money. And some of them they don't, culture, value, they lost it because they want to keep the money, the trends and find a way to make it more trendy. But I see that it's a loss in culture too. Trends and mix and match, and almost make the bride like a drag queen and that's to me, not appropriate, especially for the one that doesn't know. I told them: I can do this but this is not me. You can take the clothes and do that but if you want it to be Cambodian, this is the traditional way. And then I am very, how do you call that... not uptight..

M: Very specific?

K: Very specific!

Bibliography

Oral sources (fieldwork interviews 2016-2018)

- Asya. Informal conversation with Magali An Berthon. December 29, 2016. Chot Sam village, Siem Reap, Cambodia.
- Am Sai. Interview with Magali An Berthon. Trans. Rothmono. August 3, 2017. Trapaing Krasaing, Cambodia.
- Cassidy, Carol. Phone interview with Magali An Berthon. October 2, 2018.
- Chin Koeur. Interview by Magali An Berthon. Trans. Prom Chak. March 17, 2018. Kanhjang, Cambodia.
- Dupaigne, Bernard. 2018. Informal conversation with Magali An Berthon. Paris, France.
- Heng, Chenda. Informal conversation. July 26, 2017. Ta Pouk, Cambodia.
- Heng, Chenda and Tomoko Takagi with Magali An Berthon. Informal conversation. December 23, 2016. Ta Pouk, Cambodia.
- Heng, Chendy, Heng Chenda, and Heng Theory. Interview with Magali An Berthon. Trans. Yu and Tomoko Takagi. July 26, 2017. Ta Pouk, Cambodia.
- Heng, Chenda and Tomoko Takagi. Interview with Magali An Berthon about making heddles. Trans. Yu. July 26, 2017. Ta Pouk, Cambodia.
- Kamon. Interview with Magali An Berthon. Trans. Prom Chak. March 17, 2018. Phnom Chiso, Cambodia.
- Kong, Kuntheory. Informal Interview with Magali An Berthon. April 2018. Phnom Penh, Cambodia.
- Lee, Nancy. Informal interview with Magali An Berthon. April 6, 2017. Long Beach, CA, USA.
- Lowenthal, Bonnie. Telephone conversation with Magali An Berthon, April 14, 2017. Long Beach, CA, USA.
- Men, Kaylene. Interview with Magali An Berthon. April 11, 2017. Long Beach, CA, USA.
- Men Sinoeun. Interview with Magali An Berthon. August 2, 2017. Phnom Penh, Cambodia.
- Morimoto, Kikuo. Informal interview with Magali An Berthon, December 29, 2016, Siem Reap, Cambodia.
- Needham, Susan. Informal conversation with Magali An Berthon. April 11, 2017. Long Beach, CA, USA.

- Ngorn Vanntha, informal interview with Magali An Berthon, August 2, 2017, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.
- Now Saraem. Interview with Magali An Berthon. Trans. Rothmono. August 3, 2017. Trapaing Krasaing, Cambodia.
- Ok, Khannia. Interview with Magali An Berthon. April 6, 2017. Long Beach, CA, USA.
- Ok, Khannia and Reaksmey Lath. Informal conversation with Magali An Berthon. February 17, 2018. Long Beach, CA, USA.
- Om Lai, Jok Kiang, and Pan Dam. Informal conversations with Magali An Berthon. Trans. Asya. December 26, 2016. Siem Reap, Cambodia.
- Pav Eang Khoing, Interview with Magali An Berthon, April 2, 2018, Siem Reap, Cambodia.
- Pheach. Interview with Magali An Berthon. Trans. by Rothmono. August 3, 2017. Trapaing Krasaing, Cambodia.
- Pheap and Lim. Informal conversation with Magali An Berthon. December 30, 2016. Koh Dach, Kandal province, Cambodia.
- Pheng, Sophal. Informal conversation with Magali An Berthon. August 3, 2017. Trapaing Krasaing, Cambodia.
- Pich Vang. Informal conversation with Magali An Berthon. December 30, 2016. Koh Dach, Kandal province, Cambodia.
- Pon. Interview with Magali An Berthon. Trans. Prom Chak. March 17, 2018. Phnom Chisor, Cambodia.
- Prom, Chak. Informal conversation. March 15, 2018. Phnom Penh, Cambodia.
- Sekiguchi, Haruki. Informal conversation with Magali An Berthon. December 29, 2016. Phnom Penh, Cambodia.
- So Ai. Interview by Magali An Berthon. Trans. Prom Chak. March 17, 2018. Phnom Chisor, Cambodia.
- Sok, Chan. Interview with Magali An Berthon. Trans. Mary Tan. April 6, 2017. Long Beach, CA, USA.
- Sun, Sabrina. Informal interview with Magali An Berthon. April 6, 2017. Long Beach, CA, USA.
- Tan, Mary. Informal conversation with Magali An Berthon. April 6, 2017. Long Beach, CA, USA.

Yuon Sophon. Interview by Magali An Berthon. Trans. Prom Chak. March 17, 2018. Phnom Chisor, Cambodia.

Archival sources

London, Victoria and Albert Museum Archives, acquisition files for IS.15-2000, 5356(IS), IS.24-1960, IS.15-2000 and IS.7-2005.

London, Victoria and Albert Museum Archives, internal correspondence on David Knight silk textile donation, 1993.

Long Beach, CA, Cambodian Community History & Archive Project at Historical Society of Long Beach.

Phnom Penh, Bophana Audiovisual Resource Center, film and audio collection.

Phnom Penh, National Archives of Cambodia.

Phnom Penh, National Museum of Cambodia Archives.

Phnom Penh, National Library of Cambodia, acquisition records and collection catalogues from the National Museum of Cambodia.

Phnom Penh, Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum textile and paper archives.

Phnom Penh, UNESCO Cambodia Office, internal correspondence on UNESCO-led silk projects.

Primary sources (reports, interviews, films, websites, colonial sources)

Alan Governor Documentary Arts. 'Sophiline Cheam Shapiro 2009.' In *Masters of Traditional Arts*. Accessed June 20, 2018. <http://www.mastersoftraditionalarts.org/artists/300>

Artisans Angkor. *Beliefs: Mission Statement*. Accessed May 2, 2021. <http://www.artisansdangkor.com/beliefs-mission-statement.php>

Artisans Angkor. *Beliefs: Our Story in Brief*. Accessed October 30, 2017. <http://dev.artisansdangkor.com/beliefs-1-77-our-story-in-brief.php>

Artisans Angkor. *From an Educational Project to the Largest Employer in Siem Reap Province*. Accessed April 23, 2018. <http://dev.artisansdangkor.com/beliefs-3-80-from-an-educational-project-to-the-largest-employer-in-siem-reap-province.php>

Artisans Angkor. *Our Artistic Team: We Care for Beauty*. Accessed October 30, 2017. <http://www.artisansdangkor.com/beauty-23-114-our-artistic-team.php>

Artisans Angkor. *Royal Fans and Umbrellas* Accessed May 2, 2020. <http://dev.artisansdangkor.com/traditions-21-106-royal-fans-umbrellas.php>

- Artisans Angkor. *Traditions: the Tale of Angkor*. Accessed May 10, 2021.
<http://www.artisansdangkor.com/traditions-the-tale-of-angkor.php>
- Artisans Angkor. *History of Silk in Cambodia*. Accessed May 2, 2020.
<http://dev.artisansdangkor.com/people-16-111-history-of-silk-in-cambodia.php>
- Artisans Angkor. *Silk Weaving*. June 29, 2021. <http://www.artisansdangkor.com/people-16-95-silk-weaving.php>
- Artisans Angkor. *What Being a Social Enterprise Really Means*. Accessed May 2, 2020.
<http://dev.artisansdangkor.com/beliefs-2-79-what-being-a-social-enterprise-really-means.php>
- Artisans Association Cambodia. 2017. *AAC catalog 2017-2018 Member Profiles*. Accessed May 2, 2020.
- Ashoka Change Makers. *Unilever Sustainable Living Young Entrepreneurs Awards 2015: Color Silk Enterprise: Silk Weaving*. 2015. Accessed January 2, 2018.
<https://www.changemakers.com/globalgoals2015/entries/color-silk-enterprise>
- Asian Development Bank. *Civil Society Briefs: Cambodia. Phnom Penh: Cambodia Resident Mission, 2011*. Accessed May 10, 2021.
<https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/28965/csb-cam.pdf>
- Australian War Memorial. *Staff of the National Museum of Cambodia pose with Australian National Gallery*. Accessed June 28, 2021.
<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C958319>
- Cambodge, le cri de la soie*. [film] Dir. Carmen Butta. Arte GEIE, 2005.
<http://international.mediatheque-numerique.com/films/360-geo-reportage-cambodge-le-cri-de-la-soie>
- Cambodia: The Silk Grandmothers*. [film] Dir. Emily Taguchi. USA: Frontline World, PBS, 2007.
- Cambodia Ministry of Commerce, and ITC, *Cambodia National Silk Strategy*. Phnom Penh: Cambodia Ministry of Commerce and ITC, 2016.
- Cambodia Ministry of Tourism. 2019 *Tourism Statistics Report, March 2018*. Phnom Penh: Ministry of Tourism. Accessed May 4, 2019.
https://www.tourismcambodia.com/img/resources/cambodia_tourism_statistics_2018.pdf
- Cambodia National Institute of Statistics. 2002. *General Population Census of Cambodia 1998, Final Census Results*. Phnom Penh: Cambodia Ministry of Planning.
- Cambodia National Institute of Statistics. 2018. *Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey*. Phnom Penh: Cambodia Ministry of Planning.

- Cambodian Silk Forum. *How to Buy Khmer Quality Silk*. Accessed May 2, 2020. <http://www.cambodiansilk.net>
- Cambodia Town. 'Mission.' Accessed October 25, 2018. <http://www.cambodiatown.com/>
- Cambodian Community History & Archive Project Facebook page. *About*. Accessed June 2, 2020. [https://www.facebook.com/pg/camchapl/b/about/?ref=page internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/camchapl/b/about/?ref=page_internal)
- Caring for Young Khmer. *Background Caring for Young Khmer*. Accessed December 2, 2017. <http://www.caringforyoungkhmer.org/background/>
- Catalogue Général du Musée du Cambodge (Musée Albert Sarraut). 'N. Etoffes et vêtements.' Hanoi (1924): 194-207.
- Catlin, Amy, ed. *Apsara: The Feminine in Cambodian Art*. Los Angeles: The Woman's Building, 1987.
- CEDAC. 'About CEDAC.' Accessed August 29, 2019. <http://cedac.org.kh/en/about-cedac>
- CEDEP I - Cambodia High Value Silk. 'Study tour of SDC on silk sector to Takeo province.' *Cambodia High Value Silk Facebook page*. 2015. Accessed May 1, 2020. [https://www.facebook.com/pg/CEDEP-I-Cambodian-High-Value-Silk-141914845991104/photos/?tab=album&album_id=508217272694191&ref=page internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/CEDEP-I-Cambodian-High-Value-Silk-141914845991104/photos/?tab=album&album_id=508217272694191&ref=page_internal)
- Chileng Pa, and Carol A. Mortland. *Escaping the Khmer Rouge: A Cambodian Memoir*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2005.
- Color Silk Cambodia. 'Story.' *Facebook page*. Accessed October 8, 2017. [https://www.facebook.com/pg/colorsilkcambodia/about/?ref=page internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/colorsilkcambodia/about/?ref=page_internal)
- Color Silk Community. *About Us*. 2017. Accessed January 3, 2018. <http://colorsilkcommunity.wixsite.com/colorsilk-cambodia/color-silk-enterprise>
- Commissariat Général de l'Exposition Nationale Coloniale de Marseille. *Exposition nationale coloniale de Marseille*. Marseille, 1922.
- Crill, Rosemary. 'Internal correspondence 10/05/93.' Victoria and Albert Museum Archives. London: Blythe House. Accessed December 15, 2017.
- Dauge, Veronique. Official correspondence with Cambodia's Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts. December 24, 1992. UNESCO Phnom Penh. UNESCO Phnom Penh Archives.
- De la Loubère, Simon. *Du Royaume de Siam*. Paris : Abraham Wolfgang, 1691.
- Delignon L. 'La production de la Soie en Indochine'. *Revue de botanique appliquée et d'agriculture coloniale*, 3^e année, bulletin n°24 (31 août 1923): 530-37.
- Dunet, A.V. ed. 'La sériciculture au Cambodge.' *La Revue Coloniale* (2) n°15 (Décembre 1925) : 2-3.

- Embassy of Japan in Cambodia. *Japan's Cooperation in the Field of Preservation of Cultural Heritage in Cambodia*. March 2017. Accessed May 1, 2020. <https://www.kh.emb-japan.go.jp/angkor/angkor-e.htm>
- Femme Cambodgienne à l'heure du Sangkum*. 1959. Dir. Samdech Norodom Sihanouk, Produced by Khemara Pictures, Cambodia. CNC.
- Findlay, Trevor. *SIPRI Research Report No.9, Cambodia: The Legacy and Lessons of UNTAC*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Foreign Broadcast Information Service. 'FBIS IV.' May 7, 1975: H2.
- Gibbons, Budd and Jose Vahl. *Cambodian Sericulture Stocktaking Report: for Cambodian Sector-Wide Silk Project*. Geneva: ITC, 2008.
- Green, Gillian. Private email conversation with Magali An Berthon. April 1, 2020.
- Groslier, Georges. 'La reprise des arts khmers.' *La Revue de Paris*, t. 6 (Nov-Dec. 1925): 395-422.
- Guesde, Pierre. *L'exposition nationale coloniale de Marseille décrite par ses auteurs*. Marseille: Commissariat Général de l'Exposition, 1922.
- Hirth, Friedrich. W. Rockhill, trans. *Chau Ju-kua: his work on the Chinese and Arab trade in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, entitled Chu-fan-Chi*. St. Petersburg, 1911.
- INSEE. 'Immigrés selon le pays de naissance en 2012.' Accessed October 1, 2018. <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/1906669?sommaire=1906743>
- Institute for Khmer Traditional Textiles. *Project for the Wisdom from the Forest (PFW) Action Plan 2003-2007*. April 27, 2004. Siem Reap: IKTT. Accessed March 13, 2020. <http://iktt.esprit-libre.org/en/2004/04/action-plan-20037.html>
- Institute for Khmer Traditional Textiles. *Our Story*. Accessed May 2, 2020. <https://www.ikttearth.org/our-story>
- Institute for Khmer Traditional Textiles. *About Institute for Khmer Traditional Textiles (IKTT)*. Accessed March 12, 2020. http://iktt.esprit-libre.org/en/aboutus_top.shtml
- International Trade Center. *How ITC works*. Accessed April 2018. <http://www.intracen.org/itc/about/how-itc-works/>
- International Trade Centre. 'Cambodia's Silk Road to Poverty Reduction,' *International Trade Forum*, 2 (2006). Accessed May 1, 2020. <http://www.forumducommerce.org/Cambodias-Silk-Road-to-Poverty-Reduction/>
- International Trade Centre. 2011. *Report: Mid-Term External Evaluation Cambodia Sector-Wide Silk Project (Phase II)* CMB/49/05A. Geneva: International Trade Centre/ UNCTAD / WTO.

- ITC News. *Feature Story: Improving the Livelihoods of Cambodian Silk Entrepreneurs*. March 1, 2013. June 29, 2021. <https://www.intracen.org/layouts/2coltemplate.aspx?pageid=47244640256&id=73349>
- International Association of Genocide Scholars. 14th convention 'The Missing Picture': Rethinking Genocide Studies & Prevention.' July 14-19, 2019, Phnom Penh. Accessed November 16, 2019. <https://www.iags2019.com>
- International Youth Foundation. 2010. *International Youth Foundation & Nokia Honor 20 Youth Leaders*. Accessed January 3, 2018. <https://www.iyfnet.org/blog/international-youth-foundation-nokia-honor-20-youth-leaders>
- International Youth Foundation. *Starbucks™ Shared Planet™ Youth Action Grants*. Accessed January 3, 2018. <https://www.iyfnet.org/initiatives/starbucks-shared-planet-youth-action-grants>
- Jalin, H., PASS, BDPA. *The Silk Industry in Cambodia*. 2005.
- Japan International Cooperation Agency. *Press Releases: First Economic Census Completed in the Kingdom of Cambodia*. 2012. Accessed December 25, 2017. <https://www.jica.go.jp/english/news/press/2011/120313.html>
- Japan International Volunteer Center. *About JVC*. Accessed May 3, 2020. <https://www.ngo-jvc.net/en/about-jvc/>
- Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs. *Japan-Cambodian Relations*. 2016. Accessed April 2, 2017. <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/cambodia/data.html>
- Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library. 'Interview with Proeung Chhieng,' *New York Public Library Digital Collections*. Accessed July 18, 2020. <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/53cc0780-3451-0131-246e-3c075448cc4b>
- Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library. 'Interview with Lim Sylvain and Sim Montha'. *New York Public Library Digital Collections*. Accessed August 30, 2021. <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/fe8700a0-343a-0131-b8a9-3c075448cc4b>
- [Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library, 'Interview with Lim Sylvain,' New York Public Library Digital Collections. Accessed August 30, 2021. https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/26f0c810-3451-0131-067b-3c075448cc4b](https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/26f0c810-3451-0131-067b-3c075448cc4b)
- Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library. 'Make-up and costumes, 2009-01-13/15' *New York Public Library Digital Collections*. Accessed July 20, 2020. <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/3ef7d750-0381-0131-9fd1-3c075448cc4b>
- Johnson, J.H. *Relief Efforts for Cambodian Camps Fact Sheet.* *United States General Accounting Office*, 1991.

- J.R.F. 'Les sampots cambodgiens.' *Vogue*. (1 January 1927): 42-4.
- Kane, Gillian. 'Facts on Cambodia's Garment Industry.' *Clean Clothes Campaign*, 2014.
- Khemara. 'Mulberry Trees.' March 1, 1996. Accessed March 21, 2020.
<http://www.cambodia.org/clubs/khemara/mulberry.htm>
- Khmer Dance and Music Project: Apsara exhibit*. Dir. Amy Catlin-Jairazbhoy. December 5, 1987. Museum Long Beach Museum of Art Video Archive.
https://archive.org/details/calauem_000240
- Khmer Silk Villages. *On the Golden Silk Trails*. Cambodia: 2006.
- K'Sai Chivit: Threads of Life*. 1994. Dir. Feingold, David A., Documentary Educational Resources.
- Les Actualités cambodgiennes, 'Tissage artisanal et industriel du textile sous le régime khmer rouge,' 1 janvier 1977, Accessed September 16, 2017.
<https://www.ina.fr/video/VDD06002101/tissage-artisanal-et-industriel-du-textile-sous-le-regime-khmer-rouge-video.html>
- Loung Ung. *First They Killed My Father: A Daughter of Cambodia Remembers*. New York: HarperCollins, 2006.
- Maisonnave-Couterou, Charles. Official correspondence with Richard Engelhardt. UNESCO Phnom Penh. Feb 17, 1993. UNESCO Phnom Penh Archives.
- Maisonnave-Couterou, Charles, and Biache, Roland. 1996. *Ligue Française de l'enseignement et de l'Education Permanente, Les chantiers écoles de formation professionnelle, Siem Reap - Cambodge, Rapport d'exécution 1991/1996*. Paris: Confédération générale des œuvres laïques.
- Maybank Foundation. 2017. *Launching of the Maybank silk weaving training centre, Cambodia*. [Press release] Maybank Foundation. Accessed December 12, 2017.
<http://maybankfoundation.com/index.php/how-we-work/press-releases/item/launching-of-the-maybank-silk-weaving-training-centre-cambodia>
- Mey Kalyan. 'Final Report: Efforts to Revive the Silk Sector in Cambodia.' 13 February 2013.
- Miura, Keiko. UNESCO correspondence with Tomoko Tsurumi, staff writer at *Asahi Shinbun*. August 11, 1993. UNESCO Phnom Penh Archives.
- Mori, Kuniko. 'Morimoto silk report.' UNESCO routing slip. August 22, 1995. UNESCO Phnom Penh Archives.
- Morimoto, Kikuo. *Research Report: Silk Production and Marketing in Cambodia for UNESCO Cambodia, Revival of Traditional Silk Weaving Project*. Phnom Penh: IKTT and UNESCO, 1995.

- Morimoto, Kikuo. 'Traces of War: The Revival of Silk Weaving in Cambodia.' In *Textile Society of America, Silk Roads, Other Roads: Proceedings of the 8th Biennial Symposium of the Textile Society of America*. Northampton, MA: Textile Society of America, 2002.
- Morimoto, Kikuo. 2008. *Bayon Moon: Reviving Cambodia's Textile Traditions*. Siem Reap: Institute of Khmer Traditional Textiles (IKTT).
- Morimoto, l'âme de l'ikat*. 2012. [film, online] Dir. Magali An Berthon. France: Tissus & Artisans du Monde. Accessed February 9, 2017.
<http://tissusetartisansdumonde.fr/kikuo-morimoto-lame-de-likat/>
- Muji. *Top Executive Face-to-Face Talk with Kikuo Morimoto*. Accessed May 2, 2020.
<https://ryohin-keikaku.jp/eng/csr/interview/002.html>
- Musée du Quai Branly. 'History of the Collections.' Accessed May 2, 2019.
<http://www.quaibrantly.fr/en/collections/all-collections/history-of-the-collections/>
- National Endowment for the Arts. 'NEA National Heritage Fellowships.' Accessed October 10, 2018. <https://www.arts.gov/honors/heritage/fellows/em-bun>
- National Endowments for the Arts. *NEA National Heritage Fellowship 2009: Sophiline Cheam Shapiro*. Accessed June 10, 2020.
<https://www.arts.gov/honors/heritage/fellows/sophiline-cheam-shapiro>
- National Museum of Cambodia. 'Museum History.' Accessed March 28, 2020.
https://www.cambodiamuseum.info/museum_history.html
- National Museum of Cambodia. *The Leon Levy Foundation/CKS Collection Inventory Project of the National Museum 2004-2010*. Accessed March 28, 2021.
https://www.cambodiamuseum.info/en_projects_activities/cip.html
- National Polytechnic Institute of Angkor. 'About CEFP.' Accessed October 27, 2017.
http://www.npia.info/html/whatcefp.php?p_lang=en
- Nhouyvanisvong, Khamliene. *Official Correspondence with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade Cooperation Division of New Zealand, July 16, 1996*. UNESCO Phnom Penh, UNESCO Phnom Penh Archives, 1996.
- Norodom Buppha Devi. 'Royal Dances of Cambodia — Revival and Preservation.' In *Beyond the Apsara*, edited by Stephanie Burridge and Fred Frumberg, 1-13. London: Routledge, 2010.
- OECD. 2017. *Official Development Assistance – Definition and Coverage*. Accessed November 3, 2017. <http://www.oecd.org/development/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/officialdevelopmentassistancedefinitionandcoverage.htm>

- OECD. 'Aid for Trade Case Story World Bank: Women Entrepreneurs in Cambodia.' *OECD World Trade Organization*. 2010. Accessed December 26, 2017.
<https://www.oecd.org/aidfortrade/47803414.pdf>
- Pa, Chileng, and Mortland, Carol. *Escaping the Khmer Rouge: A Cambodian Memoir*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2005.
- PASS. *Cambodian Silk Sector*. 2004.
- Pioneering Individuals: Rolex Award Winners 2004: Reconnecting the Threads*. 2004. [film] Dir. Barnaby Peel. Swiss: Flashback Television Production, the Proudfoot Company, TVE Asia Pacific. Accessed February 17, 2017.
- Pou, Saveros. What is Khmerology? (in Khmer). Trans. Sotheara Vong. Public lecture hosted by the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and the Buddhist Institute. Phnom Penh: Unpublished, 1998.
- Rolex Awards. 2004. *Kikuo Morimoto: A Village Devoted to Silk*. Accessed March 12, 2019.
<https://www.rolex.org/rolex-awards/cultural-heritage/kikuo-morimoto>
- Rolex Awards for Enterprise. *Project Update: The Long Road to Silk Revival, Kikuo Morimoto, 2004 Laureate*. May 18, 2016.
- Royal ballet of Cambodia Representative List*. 2008. Dir. UNESCO. Accessed June 18, 2017.
<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/RL/royal-ballet-of-cambodia-00060>
- Royaume du Cambodge. *Journal Officiel du Cambodge* 10 (March 10, 1960): 276-78.
- Samphan, Khieu, Laura Summers, trans. 'Under-development in Cambodia.' *Indochina Chronicle* (September 1976): 1-28.
<https://archive.org/details/IndochinaChronicle51-52Sept.-Nov.1976/page/n9/mode/2up>
- Schultz, Kiri. Official Correspondence with Colin McLennan/ Rehab Craft Cambodia on Sericulture, April 19, 1996. UNESCO Phnom Penh, UNESCO Phnom Penh Archives.
- Social Enterprise Cambodia. *Handicrafts and Fashion Map*. Accessed 4 January 2018.
<http://socialenterprisecambodia.org/maps#>
- Social Enterprise Cambodia. *FAQ*. Accessed March 20, 2017.
<https://socialenterprisecambodia.org/#faq>
- Sok, Monica. 'The Weaver.' *Adroit Magazine* 24 (2017). Accessed September 15, 2018.
<http://www.theadroitjournal.org/issue-twenty-four>

- Sok, Monica. 2017. 'The Weaver in My Poems: A Remembrance of Em Bun.' *NEA Arts Magazine: National Endowment for the Arts*. Accessed June 15, 2021.
<https://www.arts.gov/stories/magazine/2017/1/nea-jazz-mastersnea-national-heritage-fellowships-celebrating-35-years/weaver-my-poems>
<https://www.arts.gov/NEARTS/2017v1-jazz-masters-national-heritage-fellowships-35-years/weaver-my-poems>
- Sok, Monica. 'Ode to the loom,' *The Offing*, June 19, 2019. Accessed June 20, 2020.
<https://theoffingmag.com/poetry/ode-to-the-loom/>
- Sudo, Sueo. 'Manila Speech, 18 August 1977' Appendices. In *The Fukuda Doctrine and ASEAN: New Dimensions in Japanese Foreign Policy, 1992*: 241–47. ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute.
- Tauch, Atakama. 'Rencontrer des producteurs de vers à soie/cocons, identifier des personnes à interviewer, faire un état des lieux de la situation sur place'. Unpublished report, 25 May 2018.
- The Gangs of Cambodia Town* [podcast] Latino USA / NPR. October 31, 2014. Accessed October 1, 2018. <https://www.npr.org/2014/10/31/360501617/the-gangs-of-cambodia-town>
- The Entrepreneurs' Ship. *Social Entrepreneurs @ Work: Kikuo Morimoto (Institute for Khmer Traditional Textiles)*. October 17, 2012, Accessed May 3, 2020.
<http://www.entrepreneurship.org/blog/social-entrepreneurs-work-kikuo-morimoto-institute-for-khmer-traditional-textiles>
- The Japan Foundation. *The Activity Report (1997) Part 2 - IV. Preserving, Documenting or Increasing Public Access to Tangible*, 1997. Accessed 2 November 2017.
<https://www.jpf.go.jp/e/project/intel/archive/ac/97/con2-4.html>
- The Nippon Foundation. *Asian Women Social Entrepreneurs Network Report*. Tokyo: The Nippon Foundation, 2015.
- The Silk Chronicles: Warp*, film, dir. Magali An Berthon, 2017.
- The Silk Chronicles: Weft*, film, dir. Magali An Berthon, 2017.
- Um, Katharya. 'Refractions of Home: Exile, Memory and Diasporic Longing.' In *Expressions of Cambodia: The Politics of Tradition, Identity and Change*, edited by Leakthina Toller and Timothy Winter, 86-101. London: Routledge, 2008.
- UNDP Cambodia. *Cambodia's New Silk Route: Boosting Livelihoods and Recapturing a Rich History*, 2018. Accessed May 2, 2020.
<https://www.kh.undp.org/content/cambodia/en/home/presscenter/articles/2018/cambodia-s-new-silk-route--boosting-livelihoods-and-recapturing-.html>
- UNESCO Cambodia. Internal report. UNESCO Phnom Penh Archives, 1993.

- Unesco Bangkok. *Overview of Internal Migration in Cambodia*. Bangkok: Unesco, 2018. Accessed May 2, 2021. <http://bangkok.unesco.org/content/policy-briefs-internal-migration-southeast-asia>
- UNESCO. *Text of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*. 2003. Accessed January 20, 2019. <https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention>
- UNESCO. *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*. 2003. Accessed December 20, 2017. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001325/132540e.pdf>
- UNESCO. *ICC-Angkor: 15 Years*, 2011. Phnom Penh: UNESCO.
- UNESCO and International Trade Centre (ITC). *Final report of the International Symposium on Crafts and the International Market: Trade and Customs Codification*, 1997. <http://uis.unesco.org/en/glossary-term/craft-or-artisanal-products>
- UNESCO and Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts. *Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Cambodia*, Phnom Penh, 2004.
- UNESCO, UNDP, IOM, and UN-Habitat. 2016. 'Overview of Internal Migration in Cambodia,' *Policy Briefs on Internal Migration in Southeast Asia*. Bangkok: UNESCO Bangkok.
- UNESCO Phnom Penh. Internal Report 'Revival of Traditional Silk Weaving.' UNESCO Phnom Penh Archives, 1993.
- United States Census Bureau. *QuickFacts Long Beach city, California*. Accessed September 28, 2018. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/longbeachcitycalifornia,US/PST045217>
- United States Embassy in Cambodia, *U.S. Assistance for Cambodian Cultural Preservation* Accessed March 25, 2020, Available <https://kh.usembassy.gov/education-culture/u-s-government-assistance-cambodian-cultural-heritage-preservation/>
- Victoria and Albert Museum. 'Collections: The Stein Collection.' Accessed March 13, 2020. <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O92230/the-stein-collection-canopy-unknown/>
- Victoria and Albert Museum. 'Collecting South Asian textiles at the V&A.' Accessed May 31, 2021. <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/c/collecting-south-asian-textiles/>
- VINCI. *Inauguration of the Phnom Penh and Siem Reap Airport Expansions in Cambodia*, March 17, 2016. Accessed November 3, 2017. [https://www.vinci-de.de/vinci/actualites.nsf/1027E7210730D32AC1257F7700599A46/\\$File/DP-EN-CAMBODGE.pdf](https://www.vinci.de/de/vinci/actualites.nsf/1027E7210730D32AC1257F7700599A46/$File/DP-EN-CAMBODGE.pdf)
- VINCI. *Accompagner durablement la croissance au Cambodge*, 1997. Accessed October 30, 2017. <https://www.vinci-airports.com/fr/accompagner-durablement-la-croissance-au-cambodge>

Wagner, Carol. *Soul Survivors: Stories of Women and Children in Cambodia*, Berkeley, CA: Creative Arts Book Company, 2002.

Watthan Artisans Cambodia. 'Information.' Facebook. Accessed August 28, 2019.
https://www.facebook.com/pg/www.watthanartisans.org/about/?ref=page_internal

Worker Rights Consortium. 'Cambodian Workers Seeking Higher Wages Meet Violent Repression.' 2014. <https://www.workersrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/WRC-Report-Crackdown-in-Cambodia-3.24.14.pdf>

Yanagi, Soetsu. *The Unknown Craftsman: A Japanese Insight into Beauty*. New York: Koshanda America, 1989.

Zhou Daguang, Harris, P., trans. *A Record of Cambodia: The Land and Its People*. Bangkok: Silkworm Books, 2007.

Newspaper articles

Artley, Anne. 'Local Female Entrepreneurs Mirror Growing Trend of Diversity,' *Long Beach Business Journal*, February 26, 2018. Accessed December 2, 2020.
<https://lbbusinessjournal.com/local-female-entrepreneurs-mirror-growing-trend-of-diversity>

Blumenthal, Eileen. 'The Court Ballet: Cambodia's Loveliest Jewel,' *Cultural Survival Quarterly* 14 (3) (September 1990): 35-38. Accessed on July 12, 2018.
<https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/court-ballet-cambodias-loveliest-jewel>

Brown, Patricia Leigh. 'Trauma Rooted in Genocide, Cambodian Youth Confront 'Historical Forgetting,' *KPCC-NPR*, March 28, 2013. Accessed September 21, 2018.
<https://www.scpr.org/news/2013/03/28/36565/embargoed-trauma-rooted-in-genocide-cambodian-yout/>

'Cambodia Pushes for More Japanese Tourism,' *The Phnom Penh Post*, August 18, 2016. Accessed May 2, 2020. www.phnompenhpost.com/business/cambodia-pushes-more-japanese-tourism?

'Cambodian Dancers to Perform Sunday,' *LA Times*, December 4, 1993. Accessed 15 September 2018. http://articles.latimes.com/1993-12-04/entertainment/ca-63781_1_p-m-performance

Chan Muyhong. 'National Silk Board Delayed as Ministries Fail to Coordinate,' *The Phnom Penh Post*, June 12, 2014. Accessed May 1, 2020.
<https://www.phnompenhpost.com/business/national-silk-board-delayed-ministries-fail-coordinate>

- Chan, Sok. 'Traditional Silk Industry Struggles to Keep its Shine,' *Khmer Times*, March 10, 2016. Accessed December 15, 2017. <http://www.khmertimeskh.com/news/22615/traditional-silk-industry-struggles-to-keep-its-shine/>
- Chan, Sok. 'GI Status Soon for 4 Products,' *Khmer Times*, November 2, 2016. Accessed September 10, 2019. <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/61763/gi-status-soon-for-4-products/>
- Chan, Sok. 'Japan Pledges to Boost Silk Industry,' *Khmer Times*, April 4, 2017. Accessed September 29, 2019. <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/8527/japan-pledges-to-boost-silk-industry/>
- Chan, Sok. 'Local Silk Industry Seeks Chinese Support,' *Khmer Times*, 3 May 2017. Accessed September 29, 2019. <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/13243/local-silk-industry-seeks-chinese-support/>
- Chan, Sok. 'Ancient Silk Farming Regains Growth with Proper Ecosystem,' *Capital Cambodia*, March 4, 2019. Accessed 24 September 2019. <https://capitalcambodia.com/ancient-silk-farming-regains-growth-with-proper-ecosystem/>
- Chea Vannak. 'Showcasing Khmer traditional crafts to visitors,' *Khmer Times*, December 5, 2018. Accessed 10 May 2020. <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/556095/showcasing-khmer-traditional-crafts-to-visitors/>
- Cheang Sokha, and Duncan O'Brien. 'UNESCO Promotes Phnom Chisor,' *The Phnom Penh Post*, August 13, 2004. Accessed May 1, 2020. <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/unesco-promotes-phnom-chisor>
- Cheng Sokhorng. 'Industrial Sector Grows, but still Reliant on Garment Factories,' *The Phnom Penh Post*, February 26, 2018. Accessed August 8, 2019. <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/business/industrial-sector-grows-still-reliant-garment-factories>
- Chun Sophal. 'Silk Weavers Struggle as Cost of Thread Increases,' *The Phnom Penh Post*, May 6, 2010. Accessed May 1, 2020. <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/business/silk-weavers-struggle-cost-thread-increases?>
- Coburn, Judith. 'Dancing Back: Decimated by the Khmer Rouge, Bruised by Political Chaos and Threatened by a Frenzy of Modern Materialism, Will the Soul of an Ancient Culture Survive?,' *LA Times*, 26 September 1993. Accessed April 1, 2019. <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1993-09-26-tm-39064-story.html>
- Crossette, Barbara. 'Thai Refugee Camp, Door of Hope, Will be Closed,' *The New York Times*, December 30, 1986. Accessed March 28, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/1986/12/30/world/thai-refugee-camp-door-of-hope-will-be-closed.html>

- Crossette, Barbara. 'An Ancient Silk Trade Is Reborn,' *The New York Times*, April 20, 1997. Accessed October 12, 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/1997/04/20/travel/an-ancient-silk-trade-is-reborn.html>
- Davies, Ed. 'Cambodian couple finally tie the knot with glittering ceremony after pandemic curbs ease,' *Reuters*, February 3, 2021. Accessed August 2, 2021 <https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/cambodian-couple-finally-tie-knot-with-glittering-ceremony-after-pandemic-curbs-2021-02-04/>
- Hamilton, Andrea. 'Tapestries of History,' *The Phnom Penh Post*, June 18, 1993. Accessed June 20, 2016. <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/tapestries-history>
- Harbarger, Molly. 'Silk Dyer Kikuo Morimoto, Resurrecting a Cultural Ecology,' *Kyoto Journal* 73, 2009. Accessed April 20, 2020. <https://kyotojournal.org/wp-content/uploads/newwebimages/backissues/73/Morimoto.html>
- Heng, Sok Chheng. 'Reviving the Traditions of Khmer Weaving,' *The Phnom Penh Post*, November 3, 1995. Accessed January 1, 2018. <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/reviving-traditions-khmer-weaving>
- Kasztelan, Marta. 'Cambodia's Garment Workers Vulnerable to Unsafe Abortions.' *The Guardian*, July 13, 2016. Accessed August 8, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/jul/13/cambodias-garment-workers-vulnerable-to-unsafe-abortions>
- 'Khmer culture,' *The Phnom Penh Post*, 21 September 2011. Accessed May 16, 2018. <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/lift/khmer-culture>
- Khouth Sophak Chakrya. 'Nearly 300 Garment Workers Treated after Fainting at Takeo factory,' *The Phnom Penh Post*, 10 July 2018. Accessed August 8, 2019. <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/nearly-300-garment-workers-treated-after-fainting-takeo-factory>
- Kim Samath and Touch Yin Vannith. 'Why Do Women Wear Sexy Clothes in Pagodas?,' *The Phnom Penh Post*, 21 September 2011. Accessed May 16, 2019. <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/lift/why-do-women-wear-sexy-clothes-pagodas>
- Kingston, Jeff. 'Japan's Savior of Khmer Silk,' *The Japan Times*, Nov 11, 2007. Accessed March 20, 2020. <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/life/2007/11/11/travel/japans-savior-of-khmer-silk/#.Wjf0YjKWJE4>
- Krebs, Jeanette. 'Woman Weaves Anew,' *Patriot News*. Harrisburg, June 19, 1990 (149): 146.
- Kyne, Phelim. 'Constructing Colonial Cambodia,' *The Phnom Penh Post*, March 17, 2000. Accessed March 15, 2020. <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/constructing-colonial-cambodia>

- Lon Nara. 'Silk Weaving Trade of Liv Sa Em under Threat,' *The Phnom Penh Post*, October 26, 2001. Accessed November 12, 2019. <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/silk-weaving-trade-liv-sa-em-under-threat>
- Ma, Laura. 'The Struggle for Gender Equality,' *The Phnom Penh Post*, August 30, 2013. Accessed December 24, 2017. <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/business/struggle-gender-equality>
- Mang Channo. 'Silk Sarong Weaving Supports Island Folk,' *The Phnom Penh Post*, May 6, 1994. Accessed 30 October 2016. <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/silk-sarong-weaving-supports-island-folk>
- Noble, Steve. 'A Quick-Fix Break on Koh Dach,' *Asia Life Magazine*, March 6, 2016. Accessed September 20, 2019. <https://www.asialifemagazine.com/cambodia/quick-fix-break-koh-dach/>
- Rann, Reuy. 'Imported Raw Silk Gets Cheaper,' *The Phnom Penh Post*, September 11, 2012. Accessed September 10, 2019. <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/business/imported-raw-silk-gets-cheaper>
- Sam Rith. 'Business Drop-Off Hits 'Silk Island',' *The Phnom Penh Post*, 29 October 2008. Accessed September 20, 2019. <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/business-drop-hits-silk-island>
- Spiess, Robin. 'A Sector too Big to Fail?,' *The Phnom Penh Post*, 5 April 2018. Accessed October 10, 2019. <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/business/sector-too-big-fail>
- Spiess, Robin. 'Silk training centre weaves an opportunity for rural women,' *The Phnom Penh Post*, August 2, 2017 <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/business/silk-training-centre-weaves-opportunity-rural-women> [Accessed January 28, 2021]
- Taing Rinith. 'Artisans Angkor the Outstanding Guardian of Traditional Art & Craft,' *Khmer Times*, September 3, 2019. Accessed May 2, 2020. <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50639644/artisans-angkor-the-outstanding-guardian-of-traditional-art-craft/>
- Tennesen, Michael. 'Silk and Ceremony.' *Modern Maturity* (October/November 1991): 17.
- Thik, Kaliyann. 'Spinners and silk weavers win support from EU,' *The Phnom Penh Post*, October 4, 2010. Accessed October 30, 2016. <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/lifestyle/spinners-and-silk-weavers-win-support-eu>
- 'The Silk Road to Koh Dach.' *Khmer Times*, July 29, 2016. Accessed September 20, 2019. <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/26250/the-silk-road-to-koh-dach/>

Vachon, Michelle. 'Group Promotes Art of Pidan Silk Weaving Paintings,' *The Cambodia Daily*, December 27, 2003. Accessed 14 December 2017.
<https://english.cambodiadaily.com/news/group-promotes-art-of-pidan-silk-weaving-paintings-849/>

Voun Dara. 'Khmer Silk Centre Opens at RUPP,' *The Phnom Penh Post*, June 6, 2019. Accessed May 2, 2020. <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/khmer-silk-centre-opens-rupp>

'Workplace: Cambodia,' *Cambodianness*, January 30, 2020. Accessed 10 May 2021
<https://cambodianess.com/article/bridging-cross-cultural-gaps-in-the-workplace-cambodia>

Secondary sources

Abbe, Gabrielle. 'La rénovation des arts cambodgiens, George Groslier et le Service des arts 1917-1945'. *Bulletin de l'Institut Pierre Renouvin*, 27 (Printemps 2008): 61-76.

Abbe, Gabrielle. 'Le développement des arts au Cambodge à l'époque coloniale : Georges Groslier et l'école des arts cambodgiens (1917-1945)'. *UDAYA, Journal of Khmer Studies*, 12 (2014): 7-39.

Adamson, Glenn. *Thinking Through Craft*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2007.

Adamson, Glenn, Giorgio Riello, and Sarah Teasley, eds. *Global Design History*. New York: Routledge, 2011.

Adebiyi, Alimat and al. *The State of Cambodia Town Report*. Los Angeles: UCLA, 2013.

Agnew, Vanessa. 'What is Re-enactment?' *Criticism*, 46, no. 3 (2004): 327-39.

Akrich, Madeleine. 'The De-Description of Technical Objects.' In *Shaping Technology/Building Society*, edited by W. Bijker and J. Law, 205-224. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992.

Aldrich, Robert. 'The Difficult Art of Exhibiting the Colonies,' In *Colonial Culture in France Since the Revolution*, edited by Pascal Blanchard, Sandrine Lemaire, Nicolas Bancel, Dominic Richard David Thomas, and Alexis Pernsteiner, 438-52. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2014.

Altrichter, Herbert, Peter Posch, and Bridget Somekh. *Teachers Investigate Their Work: An Introduction to the Methods of Action Research*. London: Routledge, 1993.

Amer, Ramses. 'The Ethnic Vietnamese in Cambodia: A Minority at Risk?' *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 16, no. 2 (1994): 210-38.

- Ang, Choulean. 'Psychologie de l'artisan khmer : une petite pièce à verser dans le grand dossier'. *UDAYA*, 6 (2005): 187-190.
- Appadurai, Arjun. 'Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy.' *Theory Culture Society* 7 (1990): 295-310.
- Appadurai, Arjun. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.
- Ayyar, Sulochana. *Costumes and Ornaments as Depicted in the Sculptures of Gwalior Museum*. Delhi: Mittal, 1987.
- Baker, Christopher. 'Markets and Production in the City of Ayutthaya before 1767: Translation and Analysis of Part of the Description of Ayutthaya'. *Journal of the Siam Society*, 99 (2011): 38-71.
- Baker, Chris, and Phongpaichit Pasuk. *A History of Ayutthaya: Siam in the Early Modern World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981.
- Ballyn, John. 'A Cultural Economic Analysis of Crafts: A View from the Workshop of the World.' In *A Cultural Economic Analysis of Craft*, edited by Anna Mignosa and Priyatej Kotipalli. 185-202. New York: Springer, 2019.
- Bambling, Michele. 'Japan's Living National Treasures Program: The Paradox of Remembering.' In *Perspectives on Social Memory in Japan*, edited by Tsu Yun Hui, Jan van Bremen, and Eyal Ben-Ari, 148-172. Kent: Global Oriental, 2005.
- Barnes, Brendon R. 'Decolonising Research Methodologies: Opportunity and Caution,' *South African Journal of Psychology* 48, no. 3 (September 2018): 379-87.
- Barnes, Ruth. 'Indian Trade Cloth in Egypt: The Newberry Collection.' *Textile Society of America Symposium Proceedings* (1990): 178-187.
- Barth, Frederick, ed. *Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*. Long Grove: Waveband Press, 1998.
- Basu Paul, and Simon Coleman. 'Introduction: Migrant Worlds, Material Cultures.' *Mobilities*, 3, no. 3 (2008): 313-330.
- Benett, Jon and Charlotte Benson. 'Cambodia: NGO Cooperation in a Changing Aid Context, 1979-1994.' In *Meeting Needs: NGO Coordination in Practice*, edited by Jon Benett, 166-184. Abingdon: Earthscan, 1995.
- Benzaquen-Gautier, Stéphanie. *Images of Khmer Rouge atrocities, 1975-2015: Visualizing the Crimes of the Pol Pot's Regime in Transnational Contexts of Memory*. [PhD thesis] Amsterdam: Imaginary Museum Projects, 2016.
- Biddulph, Robin. 'Social Enterprise and Inclusive Tourism. Five Cases in Siem Reap, Cambodia.' *Tourism Geographies*, 20, no.4 (2018): 610-629.

- Birch, Joshua and Julie Kornfeld. 'Picked Clean: The Legality and Politics of Cambodian Cultural Heritage Objects.' Documentation Center of Cambodia, 2014. Accessed May 2, 2017.
http://www.dccam.org/About/Intern/Cambodia_Cultural_Heritage_Objects_Research_Paper.pdf
- Blackmer Reyes, Kathryn and Julia E. Curry Rodríguez. 'Testimonio: Origins, Terms, and Resources.' *Equity & Excellence in Education* 45, no. 3 (2012): 525-538.
- Bollwerk, Elizabeth, Robert Connolly, and Carol McDavid. 'Co-Creation and Public Archaeology.' *Advances in Archaeological Practice* 3 (2015): 178-18.
- Booth, Mary N. 'Education and Gender in Contemporary Cambodia.' *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 4, no. 10 (August 2014): 42-50.
- Bouhours, Brigitte, and Roderic G. Broadhurst. *Violence and the Civilising Process in Cambodia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. R. Nice trans. *An Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.
- Bozarga, Carlo, and Defourny, Jacques. eds. *The Emergence of Social Enterprise*. London: Routledge, 2001.
- Bradbury, Hilary and Peter Reason. *The SAGE Handbook of Action Research Participative Inquiry and Practice*. Los Angeles: Sage, 2008.
- Brickell, Katherine. 'We Don't Forget the Old Rice Pot when We Get the New One.' *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 36, no. 2 (Winter 2011): 437-62.
- Brickell, Katherine, and Simon Springer, eds. *The Handbook of Contemporary Cambodia*. London: Routledge, 2017.
- Briggs, L. P. 'The Treaty of March 23, 1907 Between France and Siam and the Return of Battambang and Angkor to Cambodia.' *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 5, no. 4 (1946): 439-54.
- Brinkmann, Svend. *Qualitative Interviewing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Brinkmann, Svend and Dorthe Kirkegaard Thomsen. 'An Interviewer's Guide to Autobiographical Memory: Ways to Elicit Concrete Experiences and to Avoid Pitfalls in Interpreting Them.' *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 6, no. 4 (2009): 294-312.
- Brocheux, Pierre, and Daniel Hémerly. *Indochina: an Ambiguous Colonization, 1858-1954*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011.
- Brugger, Florian, and Christian Gehrke. 'Skilling and Deskillling: Technological Change in Classical Economic Theory and its Empirical Evidence.' *Theory and Society* 47 (2018): 663-689.
- Bühler, Alfred. 'Patola Influences in South East Asia.' *Journal of Indian Textile History* 4

(1959): 1–46.

Cadaval, Olivia. 'Making a Place Home: The Latino Festival.' In *Creative Ethnicity, Symbols and Strategies of Contemporary Ethnic Life*, ed. Stephen Stern, and John A. Cicala, 204-222. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1991.

Calvera, Anna. 'Local, Regional, National, Global and Feedback: Several Issues to Be Faced with Constructing Regional Narratives.' *Journal of Design History* 18, no. 4 (2005): 371-83.

Chan, Sucheng, ed. *Remapping Asian American History*. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2003.

Chan, Sucheng. *Survivors: Cambodian Refugees in the United States*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2004.

Chan, Sucheng. 'Cambodians in the United States: Refugees, Immigrants, American Ethnic Minority.' *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of American History*. Sept 2015. Accessed September 30, 2018.
<https://oxfordre.com/americanhistory/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199329175.01.0001/acrefore-9780199329175-e-317>

Chan, Sucheng and Audrey U. Kim. *Not Just Victims: Conversations with Cambodian Community Leaders in the United States*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2003.

Chandler, David. *A History of Cambodia*. Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 2000.

Chandler, David. *The Tragedy of Cambodian History, Politics, War, and Revolution since 1945*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991.

Chandler, David and al, eds. *Pol Pot Plans the Future: Confidential Leadership Documents from Democratic Kampuchea, 1976-1977*. New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1989.

Chea Huot and Sok Hach. 'The Cambodian Garment Industry.' *Cambodia Development Review* 5, no. 3 (July-September 2001): 1-8.

Cheang, Sarah. 'Chinese Robes in Western Interiors: Transitionality and Transformation.' In *Fashion, Interior Design and the Contours of Modern Identity*, edited by Alla Myzelev and John Potvin, 125-45. Farnham: Ashgate, 2017.

Chen, Nancy. "'Speaking Nearby': A Discussion with Trinh T. Minh-Ha.' *Visual Anthropology Review*, 8, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 82-91.

Cheng-Hin Lim, Alvin. 'Ethnic Identities in Cambodia.' In *The Handbook of Contemporary Cambodia*, edited by Katherine Brickell and Simon Springer, 359-367. London: Routledge, 2018.

Clifford, James. 'On Ethnographic Authority.' *Representations*, 2 (Spring, 1983): 118-146.

Clifford, James. *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and*

- Art. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988.
- Coedès, George, Sue Brown Cowing, and Walter F. Vella. *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996.
- Cort, Louise Allison and Leedom Lefferts. 'An Approach to the Study of Contemporary Earthenware Technology in Mainland Southeast Asia.' *Journal of the Siam Society* 88, nos. 1&2 (2000): 204-211.
- Cort, Louise, and Lefferts, Leedom. 'Appreciation.' In *Bayon Moon, Reviving Cambodia's Textile Traditions*, Kikuo Morimoto, viii-xii. Siem Reap: IKTT, 2008.
- Coventry, Louise. 'Civil Society in Cambodia: Challenges and Contestations.' In *The Handbook of Contemporary Cambodia*, edited by Katherine Brickell and Simon Springer, 53-63. London: Routledge, 2017.
- Coventry, Louise. "It's Complicated": Cambodia's NGOs and International Donors.' *The Asia Dialogue*. August 7, 2017. Accessed April 20, 2020.
<https://theasiadialogue.com/2017/08/07/its-complicated-relationships-between-cambodian-ngos-and-international-donors/>
- Craik, Jennifer. *Fashion: The Key Concepts*. Oxford: Berg, 2009.
- Cravath, Paul. *Earth in Flower: the Divine Mystery of Cambodian Dance-Drama*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1985.
- Dahles, Heidi, and John ter Horst. 'Weaving into Cambodia: Negotiated Ethnicity in the (Post)colonial Silk Industry.' In *Expressions of Cambodia: The Politics of Tradition, Identity, and Change*, edited by Ollier, Leakthina Chan-Pech, and Tim Winter, 119-132. London: Routledge, 2006.
- 'Dangerous Liaisons: Relationships between Design, Craft and Art,' special issue, *Journal of Design History* 17, no. 3 (September 2004).
- Dash, Satya Narayan. *Handloom Industry in India*. New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1995.
- Davis, Erik. 'Imaginary Conversations with Mothers about Death.' In *At the Edge of the Forest, Essays on Cambodia, History, and Narrative in Honor of David Chandler*, edited by Anne Ruth Hansen and Judy Ledgerwood, 221-248. Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program Publications Southeast Asia Program Cornell University, 2008.
- Deacon, Deborah and Paula Calvin. *War Imagery in Women's Textiles: An International Study of Weaving, Knitting, Sewing, Quilting, Rug Making and Other Fabric Arts*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2014.
- Defourny, Jacques and Nyssens, Marthe. 'Defining Social Enterprise.' In *Social Enterprise: At the Crossroads of Market, Public Policies and Civil Society*, edited by Marthe Nyssens, 3-25. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Delaney, David. *Territory: a Short Introduction*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005.

- Delvert, Jean. *Le paysan cambodgien*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1961.
- Denham, Magdalena A. and Anthony John Onwuegbuzie. 'Beyond Words: Using Nonverbal Communication Data in Research to Enhance Thick Description and Interpretation.' *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 12, no. 1 (2013): 670-696.
- De Nike, Howard, John Quigley, and Kenneth Robinson, eds. *Genocide in Cambodia: Documents from the Trial of Pol Pot and Ieng Sary*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012.
- Derks, Annuska. *Khmer Women on the Move: Migration and Urban Experiences in Cambodia*. Amsterdam: Dutch University Press, 2008.
- Deth Sok Udom, Kairat Moldashev, and Serkan Bulut. 'The Contemporary Geopolitics of Cambodia: Alignment in Regional and Global Contexts.' In *The Handbook of Contemporary Cambodia*, edited by Katherine Brickell and Simon Springer, 17-28. London: Routledge, 2017.
- Deth, Sok Udom, Sun, and Serkan Bulut. *Cambodia's Foreign Relations in Regional and Global Contexts*. Sankt Augustin: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2018.
- De Sousa Santos, Boaventura. 'Beyond Abyssal Thinking from Global Lines to Ecologies of Knowledges.' *Eurozine*, 29 June 2007. Accessed June 3, 2020. <https://www.eurozine.com/beyond-abyssal-thinking/>
- Dhamija, Jasleen, ed. *Berg Encyclopedia of World Dress and Fashion: South Asia and Southeast Asia*. Oxford: Bloomsbury Academic, 2010. Accessed November 22, 2019. <https://www.bloomsburyfashioncentral.com/products/berg-fashion-library/encyclopedia/berg-encyclopedia-of-world-dress-and-fashion-south-asia-and-southeast-asia>
- Dong, Lan, ed. *Asian American Culture: From Anime to Tiger Moms*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2016.
- Dongelmans, Boris, Bunly Seng and John ter Horst. 'Silk Weaving in Cambodia. A National Census.' Phnom Penh: Centre for Advanced Studies, 2005.
- Downey, Greg. 'Practice without Theory': A Neuroanthropological Perspective on Embodied Learning,' In *Making Knowledge: Explorations of the Indissoluble Relation Between Mind, Body and Environment*, edited by Trevor Marchand, 21-38. London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.
- Dumouilin Kevran, David, Mina Kleiche-Dray, and Mathieu Quet. 'Les STS ont-elles un Sud ? Penser les sciences dans/avec les Suds.' *Revue d'anthropologie des connaissances* 11, no. 3 (2017): 423-454.
- Dupaigne, Bernard. 'L'élevage des vers à soie au Cambodge.' *ASEMI*, XV, 1-4 (1984): 111-131).
- Dupaigne, Bernard. 'L'Élevage des vers à soie au Cambodge.' *Revue d'ethnoécologie* 14 (2018): 1-29.

- Dupaigne, Bernard. 'Weaving in Cambodia.' In *Through the Thread of Time: Southeast Asian Textiles: the James H.W. Thompson Foundation Symposium Papers*, edited by Jane Puranananda, 26-9. Bangkok: James H.W. Thompson Foundation, 2004.
- Dy Phon, Pauline. *Plants Used in Cambodia = Plantes utilisées au Cambodge = Rukkhajāti proeprâs knuñ prades Kambujā*. Phnom Penh, 2000.
- Ebihara, May. 'Book Review.' *American Anthropologist* No. 65 (1963): 1155-1157.
- Ebihara, May, Andrew C. Mertha, and Judy Ledgerwood. *Svay: a Khmer Village in Cambodia*. (1971) New York: Cornell University Press, 2018.
- Ebihara, May, Carol Mortland, and Judy Ledgerwood, eds. *Cambodian Culture since 1975: Homeland and Exile*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1994.
- Edwards, Eiluned. 'Lasting impressions: Indian block-prints and global trade.' *Textile Society of America Symposium Crosscurrents: Land, Labor, and the Port: Proceedings* (2016): 97-107.
- Edwards, Penny. *Cambodge: The Cultivation of a Nation, 1860-1945*. Honolulu: Hawaii University Press, 2007.
- Edwards, Penny. 'Restyling Colonial Cambodia (1860-1954): French Dressing, Indigenous Custom and National Costume.' *Fashion Theory* 5, no. 4 (2001): 389-416.
- Eicher, Joanne B. 'Introduction to Global Perspectives.' *Berg Encyclopedia of World Dress and Fashion*, edited by Joanne B. Eicher and Phyllis G. Tortora, 3-10. Oxford: Berg. In Bloomsbury Fashion Central, 2010. Accessed Dec. 8, 2020. <https://www.bloomsburyfashioncentral.com/products/berg-fashion-library/encyclopedia/berg-encyclopedia-of-world-dress-and-fashion-global-perspectives/introduction-to-global-perspectives>
- Eicher, Joanne B. and Sandra Lee Evenson. *The Visible Self: Global Perspectives on Dress, Culture, and Society*. London: Bloomsbury, 2015.
- Ellis, Carolyn, Tony E. Adams and Arthur P. Bochner. 'Autoethnography: An Overview.' *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 12, No. 1, Art. 10 (January 2011). Accessed May 16, 2017. <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1589/3095>
- Espiritu, Yen Le. *Home Bound: Filipino American Lives across Cultures, Communities, and Countries*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003.
- Esposito, Adele. *Urban Development in the Margins of a World Heritage Site: In the Shadows of Angkor*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018.
- Fallan, Kjetil. 'De-scribing Design: Appropriating Script Analysis to Design History.' *Design Issues*, 24, no. 4 (Autumn 2008): 61-75.
- Fallan, Kjetil. *Design History: Understanding Theory and Method*. Oxford: Berg, 2010.

- Falls, Susan, and Jessica Smith. 'Branding Authenticity: Cambodian Ikat in Transnational Artisan Partnerships (TAPS).' *Journal of Design History* 24, no. 3 (2011): 1-17.
- Falls, Susan, and Jessica Smith. 'Good Hands: Silk Weaving and Transnational Partnerships in Cambodia.' In *Textile Economies: Power and Value from the Local to the Transnational*, edited by Walter E. Little and Patricia A. McAnany, 201-219. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2011.
- Falser, Michael. ed. *Cultural Heritage as Civilizing Mission: From Decay to Recovery*. New York: Springer, 2015.
- Falser, Michael. 'Cultural Heritage as Performance: Re-enacting Angkorian grandeur in Postcolonial Cambodia (1953-70).' In *Cultures of Decolonisation, Transnational Productions and Practices, 1945-70*, edited by Ruth Craggs and Claire Wintlein, 126-155. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016.
- Falser, Michael. *Angkor Wat – A Transcultural History of Heritage: Volume 1: Angkor in France*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020.
- Flour, Isabelle. 'Orientalism and the Reality Effect: Angkor at the Universal Expositions, 1867-1937.' *Getty Research Journal*, 6 (January 2014): 63-82.
- Foucault, Michel. 'The Order of Discourse.' In *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, edited by Robert Young, 48-78. London: Routledge, 1981.
- Foucault, Michel. "Des Espaces Autres" (Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias). *Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité* 5 (October 1984): 46-49. Translated by Jay Miskowiec in *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 22-27.
- Foster, Susan, ed. *Corporealities: Dancing Knowledge, Culture, and Power*. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Fraser-Lu, Sylvia. *Handwoven Textiles of South-East Asia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Fredericks, Bronwyn L., and al. 'Engaging the practice of yarnning in Action Research.' *Action Learning and Action Research Journal*, 17, no. 2 (2011): 7-19.
- Fry, Tony. 'A Geography of Power: Design History and Marginality.' *Design Issues* 6, no. 1 (1989): 15-30.
- Ghose, Rajeshwari. 'Design, Development, Culture, and Cultural Legacies in Asia.' *Design Issues* 6, no. 1, *Design in Asia and Australia* (Autumn 1989): 31-48.
- Gillespie, Jo. 'Natural and Cultural Heritage in Cambodia.' In *The Handbook of Contemporary Cambodia*, edited by Katherine Brickell and Simon Springer, 399-409. London: Routledge, 2017.
- Ginsburg, Henry. *Thai Manuscript Painting*. London: British Library, 1989.
- Gittinger, Mattiebelle. *Master Dyers to the World: Technique and Trade in early Indian Dyed Cotton Textiles*. Washington D.C.: Textile Museum, 1982.

- Gittinger, Mattiebelle, and Leedom H. Lefferts. *Textiles and the Tai Experience in Southeast Asia*. Washington D.C.: Textile Museum, 1992.
- Goffman, Erving. *The Presentation of Self in the Everyday Life*. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1956.
- Goosens, Christophe. 'Les coopératives agricoles au Cambodge : du socialisme bouddhique a une coopération paysanne.' *Universud*. Accessed August 28, 2019. <http://www.universud.ulg.ac.be/les-cooperatives-agricoles-au-cambodge-du-socialisme-bouddhique-a-une-cooperation-paysanne/>
- Green, Gillian. *Traditional Textiles of Cambodia: Cultural Threads and Material Heritage*. Bangkok: River Books, 2003.
- Green, Gillian. 'Indic Impetus? Innovations in Textile Usage in Angkorian Period Cambodia.' *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 43, no. 3 (2000): 277-313.
- Green, Gillian. 'Angkor Vogue: Sculpted Evidence of Imported Luxury Textiles in the Courts of Kings and Temples.' *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 50, no. 4 (2007): 424-51.
- Green, Gillian. 'Textiles at the Khmer Court of Angkor.' In *Through the Thread of Time: Southeast Asian Textiles the James H. W. Thompson Foundation Symposium Papers*, Ed. Jane Puranananda, 10-25. Bangkok: River Books, 2004.
- Green, Gillian. *Pictorial Cambodian Textiles*. Bangkok: River Books, 2008.
- Groslier, Georges. 'La reprise des arts khmers.' *La Revue de Paris*, t. 6, Paris (nov-dec. 1925): 395-422.
- Gunn, Geoffrey. 'The Passing of Sihanouk: Monarchic Manipulation and the Search for Autonomy in the Kingdom of Cambodia.' *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 10, no. 5 (1) (2012): 1-26.
- Guthrie, Elizabeth, and John Amos Marston. *History, Buddhism, and New Religious Movements in Cambodia*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2006.
- Guy, John. *Indian Textiles in the East from Southeast Asia to Japan*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1998.
- Guy, John. *Woven Cargoes: Indian Textiles in the East*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1998.
- Guy, John. *Indian Textiles in the East, From Southeast Asia to Japan*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2009.
- Hall, Kenneth R. 'The "Indianization" of Funan: an Economic History of Southeast Asia's First State.' *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, March 1982, Vol. 13, no. 1 (1982): 81-106.
- Hall, Kenneth R. 'The Coming of the West: European Cambodian Marketplace Connectivity, 1500-1800.' In *Cambodia and the West, 1500-2000*, edited by T.O. Smith, 7-36. London: Palgrave Macmillan Limited, 2018.

- Halperin, Sandra. 'Neocolonialism.' *Encyclopedia Britannica*, May 6, 2020. Accessed 10 May 2020. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/neocolonialism>
- Hamera, Judith. *Dancing Communities: Performance, Difference and Connection in the Global City*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.
- Han, Guanghui. *The Historical Population and Geography of Beijing*. Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1996.
- Hareven, Tamara K. *The Silk Weavers of Kyoto: Family and Work in a Changing Traditional Industry*. Berkeley, CA: California University Press, 2002.
- Hauser-Schaublin Brigitta, Marie-Louise Nabholz-Kartaschoff and Urs Ramseyer. *Balinese Textiles*. London: British Museum Press, 1991.
- Hein, Jeremy. *Ethnic Origins: the Adaptation of Cambodian and Hmong Refugees in Four American Cities*. New York: Russel Sage Foundation, 2006.
- Heng, Derek. 'Distributive Networks, Sub-regional Tastes and Ethnicity: the Trade in Chinese Textiles in Southeast Asia from the Tenth to Fourteenth Centuries CE.' In *Textile Trades, Consumer Cultures, and the Material Worlds of the Indian Ocean*, edited by Pedro Machado et al., 159-180. London: Palgrave, 2018.
- Hinton, Alexander. *Why Did They Kill? Cambodia in the Shadow of Genocide*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004.
- Hobsbawm, Eric J. *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- Hobsbawm, Eric and Terence Ranger. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- Howard, Michael C. *Textiles and Clothing of Việt Nam: A History*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2016.
- Human Rights Watch. "Work Faster or Get Out': Labor Rights Issues in Cambodia's Garment Industry.' 2015. Accessed August 8, 2019. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2015/03/11/work-faster-or-get-out/labor-rights-abuses-cambodias-garment-industry>
- Institute for Khmer Traditional Textiles, and Center for Khmer Studies. 'Hol', the Art of Cambodian Textiles: Seminar Proceedings, 12-13 Dec. 2003, CKS hall, Wat Damnak, Siem Reap: Institute for Khmer Traditional Textiles and Center for Khmer Studies, 2004.
- Ingold, Tim. *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture*. London: Routledge, 2013.
- Ingold, Tim. 'La vie dans un monde sans objets.' *Perspective*, 1 (2016): 13-20.
- Ingold, Tim. 'The Textility of Making.' *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 34 (2010): 91-102.

- Jackson, K.D. ed. *Cambodia, 1975-1978: Rendez-Vous with Death*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989.
- Jacobsen, Trudy. *Lost Goddesses: The Denial of Female Power in Cambodian History*. Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2008.
- Jacobsen, Trudy. 'Riding a Buffalo to Cross a Muddy Field: Heuristic Approaches to Feminism in Cambodia.' In *Women's Movements in Asia: Feminisms and Transnational Activism*, edited by Mina Roces and Louise Edwards, 207-223. London: Routledge, 2010.
- Jansen, M. Angela, and Jennifer Craik. *Modern Fashion Traditions: Negotiating Tradition and Modernity through Fashion*. London: Bloomsbury, 2016.
- Jenkins, Richard. *Rethinking Ethnicity: Arguments and Explorations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1997.
- Jezewski, Mary Ann. 'Culture Brokering in Migrant Farmworker Health Care.' *Western Journal of Nursing Research* 12, no. 4 (1990): 497-513.
- Katrak, Ketu H. 'South Asian American Literature.' In *An Interethnic Companion to Asian American Literature*, edited by King-Kok Cheung, 192-218. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Kendall, Lauren. 'Intangible Traces and Material Things: The Performance of Heritage Handicraft.' *Acta Koreana*. 17, no. 2 (2014): 537-555.
- Kerlogue, Fiona, Rudolf G. Smend, Fulvio Zanettini, and Leo Haks. *Batik Design, Style & History*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2004.
- Kiernan, Ben. 'The Cambodian Genocide, 1975-1979.' In *Century of Genocide: Critical Essays and Eyewitness Accounts*, edited by Samuel Totten, William S. Parsons, and Israel W. Charny, 339-732. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Kiernan, Ben. *The Pol Pot Regime: Race, Power and Genocide in Cambodia Under the Khmer Rouge, 1975-79*. 3rd ed. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008.
- Kiernan, Ben, and Chanthou Boua. *Peasants and Politics in Kampuchea, 1942-81*. London: Zed, 1982.
- Kikuchi, Yuko. 'Hybridity and the Oriental Orientalism of Mingei Theory.' *Journal of Design History* 10, no. 4 (2007): 343-354.
- Kinzie, David. 'The 'Concentration Camp Syndrome' Among Cambodian Refugees.' In *The Cambodian Agony*, edited by David Ablin and Marlowe Hood. 332-354. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe Inc., 1987
- Klinger, Jane. 'When So Few Traces Remain,' *UMR Sirice* 2, no. 19 (2017): 93-104.
- Krahl, Regina. *Tang: Exuberance in Colour*, Christies, October 26, 2020. Accessed June 10,

2021. <https://www.sothebys.com/en/articles/tang-exuberance-in-colour>

Küchler, Suzanne, and Miller, Daniel. *Clothing as Material Culture*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2005.

Latour, Bruno. 'On Recalling Ant.' *The Sociological Review* 47, no. 1 (May 1999): 15–25.

Latour, Bruno. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Latour, Bruno. 'A Cautious Prometheus? A Few Steps Toward a Philosophy of Design (with Special Attention to Peter Sloterdijk).' In *Proceedings of the 2008 Annual International Conference of the Design History Society (UK) University College Falmouth, 3-6 September*, edited by Jonathan Glynne, Fiona Hackney and Viv Minton, 2-11. Boca Raton, FL: Universal-Publishers, 2009.

Law, John. 'Actor Network Theory and Material Semiotics'. *Heterogeneities*, April 25, 2007. <http://www.heterogeneities.net/publications/Law2007ANTandMaterialSemiotics.pdf>

Lawreniuk, Sabina, and Laurie Parsons. 'Mother, Grandmother, Migrant: Elder Translocality and the Renegotiation of Household Roles in Cambodia.' *Environment and Planning A*. 49, no. 7 (2017): 1664-1683.

Ledgerwood, Judy. 'Women in Cambodian Society.' Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Northern Illinois University Accessed November 2, 2020 <http://www.seasite.niu.edu/khmer/ledgerwood/women.htm>

Leeson, Siham, Catrin Smith, and John Rynne. 'Yarning and Appreciative Inquiry: The Use of Culturally Appropriate and Respectful Research Methods When Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women in Australian Prisons.' *Methodological Innovations* 9 (January 2016): 1-17.

Lemonnier, Pierre. 'Mythiques chaînes opératoires'. *Techniques & Culture*, 43-44, no.1) (2004) :1-17.

Lewis, Martin, and Kären Wigen. *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography*. Berkeley, CA: University of California, 1997.

Li, Lillian, and Alison Dray-Novey. 'Guarding Beijing's Food Security in the Qing Dynasty: State, Market, and Police.' *The Journal of Asian Studies* 58, no. 4 (1999): 992-1032.

Lin Wen-yuan, and John Law. 'We Have Never Been Latecomers!?: Making Knowledge Spaces for East Asian Technosocial Practices.' *East Asian Science, Technology and Society: An International Journal* 9 (2015): 117–126.

Love, Ronald S. 'Simon de La Loubère: French Views on Siam in the 1680s.' *Journal of the Siam Society* Vol.82, n.2 (1994): 155-164.

- Ly, Boreth. 'Of Scent and Sensibility: Embodied Ways of Seeing in Southeast Asian Cultures.' *SUVANNABHUMI* 10, no. 1 (June 2018): 63-91.
- Lynch, James. 'Border Khmer: A Demographic Study of the Residents of Site 2, Site B and Site 8,' Ford Foundation, 1989. Accessed October 15, 2018.
<http://www.websitesrcg.com/border/camps/survey-1989.html>
- Madison, Soyini, and Judith Hamera. *The SAGE Handbook of Performance Studies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2013.
- Maranhão, Tullio Persio de Albuquerque, and Bernhard Streck. *Translation and Ethnography: The Anthropological Challenge of Intercultural Understanding*. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2003.
- Marchal, Henri. 'L'art cambodgien moderne.' *Bulletin de la Société des Etudes indochinoises* 65 (2e semestre 1913): 69-75.
- Marchal, Sappho. *Costumes et parures khmers d'après les devatâ d'Angkor-Vat*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997.
- Marchand, Trevor. 'Vocational Migrants and a Tradition of Longing.' *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review: Journal of the International Association for the Study of Traditional Environments* 19, no. 1 (2007): 23-40.
- Marchand, Trevor. 'Muscles, Morals and Mind: Craft Apprenticeship and the Formation of a Person.' *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 56, no. 3 (2008): 245-271.
- Marchand, Trevor, ed. *Making Knowledge: Explorations of the Indissoluble Relation Between Mind, Body and Environment*. Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2010.
- Marshall, Grant, Schell, Terry, Elliott, Marc, and al. 'Mental Health of Cambodian Refugees 2 Decades After Resettlement in the United States.' *JAMA*. 294, no.5 (2005): 571-579.
- Marui, Masako. 'Cultural Heritage and Communities Coexisting: Public Archaeology in Cambodia, 1999-2009.' *Public Archaeology* 9, no.4 (2010): 194-210.
- Maxwell, Robyn. *Textiles of Southeast Asia Tradition, Trade and Transformation*. Melbourne: Australian National Gallery, 1990.
- Maxwell, Robyn. *Cultures at crossroads: Southeast Asian Textiles from the Australian National Gallery*. Canberra: Australian National Gallery, 1992.
- Maynard, Margaret. *Dress and Globalisation*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004.
- McQuail, Lisa. *Treasures of Two Nations: Thai Royal Gifts to the United States of America*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1997.

- Medvedev, Katalin and Brittany Reef. 'Picking Up the Threads: Model Approach Helps Cambodia Design a New Fashion Image.' *Women's Studies Quarterly* 41 nos. 1-2 (2013): 131-149.
- Medvedev, Katalin. 'The Roots of Change in the Contemporary Cambodian Fashion Scene.' *International Journal of Fashion Studies* 2, no. 1 (2015): 9-37.
- Medvedev, Katalin. 'Cambodian Fashion NGOs: Are They Doing Good?' *Journal of Textile Engineering & Fashion Technology* 1, no. 4 (2017): 148-151.
- Mentges, Gabriele, and Lola Shamukhitdinova. eds. *Textiles as National Heritage: Identities, Politics and Material Culture*. Münster: Waxmann, 2017.
- Mentges, Gabriele. 'The Role of UNESCO and the Uzbek Nation Building Process.' In *Heritage Regimes and the State*, edited by Regina Bendix, Aditya Eggert, and Arnika Peselmann. 216-17. Göttingen: University of Göttingen, 2013.
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *Phenomenology of Perception*. London: Routledge, 1962.
- Mertha, Andrew. *Brothers in Arms: Chinese Aid to the Khmer Rouge, 1975-1979*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014.
- Mignolo Walter and Rolando Vazquez. 'Decolonial AestheSis: Colonial Wounds/Decolonial Healings.' *Social Text Online*, July 15, 2013. Accessed November 3, 2019. https://socialtextjournal.org/periscope_article/decolonial-aesthesis-colonial-woundsdecolonial-healings/
- Mignolo, Walter. 'The Geopolitics of Knowledge and the Colonial Difference.' *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101:0 (Winter 2002): 57-96.
- Mignolo, Walter. 'Museums in the Colonial Horizon of Modernity, Fred Wilson's Mining the Museum (1992).' In *Globalization and Contemporary Art*, edited by Jonathan Harris, 71-85. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2011.
- Mignosa, Anna and Priyatej. *A Cultural Economic Analysis of Craft*. New York: Springer International Publishing, 2019.
- Miller, Daniel and Mukulika Banerjee. *The Sari*. Oxford: Berg, 2003.
- Miller, Daniel. *Stuff*. Cambridge: Polity, 2010.
- Mills, Tom. 'What Has Become of Critique? Reassembling Sociology after Latour.' *The British Journal of Sociology* 69 (2018): 286-305.
- Miura, Keiko. 'World Heritage Making in Angkor. Global, Regional, National and Local Actors, Interplays and Implications.' In *World Heritage Angkor and Beyond: Circumstances and Implications of UNESCO Listings in Cambodia*, edited by Brigitta Hauser-Schäublin, 9-31. Göttingen: University of Göttingen, 2011.

- Moeran, Brian. 'Social Organization and the Mingei Movement.' *Pacific Affairs* 54, no. 1 (Spring, 1981), 42-56.
- Mortland, Carol. 'Khmer.' In *Refugees in America in the 1990s: a Reference Handbook*, edited by David Haines, 232-258. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996.
- Mortland, Carol. *Grace after Genocide: Cambodians in the United States*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2017.
- Moss, Rachel. 'Mass Fainting and Clothing Chemicals.' *How We Get to Next*. Accessed June 16, 2019. <https://howwegettonext.com/mass-fainting-and-clothing-chemicals-c352b94bb54b>
- Muan, Ingrid. *Citing Angkor: The "Cambodian Arts" in the Age of Restoration 1918-2000*. (Unpublished PhD thesis, Columbia University, 2001).
- Muan, Ingrid. 'Playing with Powers: The Politics of Art in Newly Independent Cambodia.' *Udaya*, 6 (2005): 41-56.
- Muan, Ingrid, and al. *Seams of Change: Clothing and the Care of the Self in late 19th and 20th century Cambodia*. Phnom Penh: Reyum Publishing, 2003.
- Myerhoff, Barbara. 'Life History Among the Elderly: Performance, Visibility and Remembering.' In *A Crack in the Mirror. Reflective Perspectives in Anthropology*, edited by Jay Ruby, 99-117. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982.
- Naitō, Junji. *Inochi no ki: aikētī Morimoto Kikuo kanbojia dentō orimono no sekai = The Tree of Life*. Tōkyō: Shufunotomoshia, 2015.
- Nakatani, Ayami. 'Exoticism and Nostalgia: Consuming Southeast Asian Handicrafts in Japan.' *IAS Newsletter* 30 (2003): 20-21.
- Nakatani, Ayami. 'Politics of Boundaries and Heritagization of Handwoven Textiles in Indonesia.' In *Fashionable Traditions: Asian Handmade Textiles in Motion*, edited by Ayami Nakatani, 79-97. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2020.
- Needham, Susan, and Karen Quintiliani. *Cambodians in Long Beach*. Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2008.
- Nelson, Roger. 'The Power of Sihanouk and the Power of Cinema: a Filmed Execution in Cambodia, 1964.' *ACT 77* (April 2019). Accessed June 24, 2021 <http://act.tnnua.edu.tw/?p=7255> []
- Newman, Simon. *Parades and the Politics of the Street: Festive Culture in the Early American Republic*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997.
- Niessen, Sandra, Ann Marie Leshkovich, and Carla Jones. *Re-orienting Fashion: The Globalization of Asian Dress*. Oxford: Berg, 2005.

- Nye, Joseph. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2005.
- Nyssens, Marthe. ed. *Social Enterprise: At the Crossroads of Market, Public Policies and Civil Society*. London: Routledge, 2006.
- O'Connell, Helen. ed. *Oxfam Focus on Gender: Women and Conflict*. Oxford: Oxfam, 1993.
- Ong, Aiwah, and Michael Peletz, eds. *Bewitching Women, Pious Men: Gender and Body Politics in Southeast Asia*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995.
- Osborne, Milton. *Sihanouk: Prince of Light, Prince of Darkness*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1994.
- Paterson, Stephen and Yim Keorithy. 'Developing an Innovative Business Model: The Case of Color Silk Enterprise in Cambodia,' *ASEAN SME Case Study Project*. [Unpublished report] June 21, 2013.
- Peycam, Philippe. *Cultural Renewal in Cambodia*. Leiden: Brill, 2020.
- Phim-Shapiro, Toni, and Ashley Thompson. *Dance in Cambodia (Images of Asia)*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Phim-Shapiro, Toni. 'Cambodia's 'Seasons of Migration.' *Dance Research Journal* 40, no. 2 (Winter, 2008): 56-73.
- Phipps, Elena. *Looking at Textiles: A Guide to Technical Terms*. Los Angeles, CA: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2012.
- Polanyi, Michael. *The Tacit Dimension* [1966] Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2009.
- Porée, Anne-Laure. 'Tuol Sleng, l'histoire inachevée d'un musée mémoire.' *Moussons* 30 (2017). Accessed 4 July 2021. <http://journals.openedition.org/moussons/3961>
- Posrithong, Prapassorn. 'Indian Trade Textiles as a Thai Legacy.' In *The Sea, Identity and History. From the Bay of Bengal to the South China Sea*, edited by Satish Chandra and Himanshu Prabha Ray, 329-349. New Delhi: Manohar, 2013.
- Prud'homme, Remy. *L'Économie du Cambodge*. Paris : Presses universitaires de France, 1969.
- Richard, Noella. *Handicrafts and Employment Generation for the Poorest Youth and Women*. Paris: UNESCO, 2007.
- Reid, Anthony. *A History of Southeast Asia: Critical Crossroads*. Chichester: Wiley Backwell, 2015.
- Robins, Nicholas A., and Adam Jones. *Genocides by the Oppressed: Subaltern Genocide in Theory and Practice*. Bloomington, IL: Indiana University Press, 2009.

- Robinson, Jacqueline, and Suzie S. Weng. 'Cultural broker.' In *Encyclopedia of Human Services and Diversity*, edited by Linwood Cousins, 303-305. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2014.
- Robequain, Charles. *The Economic Development of French Indochina*. Trans. Isabel A. Ward. London: Oxford University Press, 1944.
- Rogers, Amanda. 'Advancing the Geographies of the Performing Arts: Intercultural Aesthetics, Migratory Mobility and Geopolitics.' *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol. 42, 4 (2018): 549-568.
- Rosaldo, Renato. 'Imperialist Nostalgia.' *Representations*, 26 (1989): 107-22.
- Ryan, Mary. 'The American Parade: Representations of the Nineteenth-Century Social Order.' In *The New Cultural History*, edited by Lynn Hunt, 131-154. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989.
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.
- Saaler, Sven, and Christopher W. A. Szpilman. 'Pan-Asianism as an Ideal of Asian Identity and Solidarity, 1850–Present.' *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 9, no. 17 (1) (April 25, 2011): 1-28.
- Sam-Ang Sam. 'Khmer Traditional Music Today.' In *Cambodian Culture since 1975: Homeland and Exile*, edited by May Ebihara, Carol Mortland and Judy Ledgerwood, 39-46. New York: Cornell University Press, 1994.
- Samen, Khun, and Touch Hab. 'Textiles in the Collection of the National Museum of Cambodia.' Paper presented at the Institute for Khmer Traditional Textiles Seminar Program, "Hol', the Art of Cambodian Textile,' Siem Reap, Cambodia, December 12-13, 2003. Accessed July 1, 2018 http://iktt.esprit-libre.org/en/2004/09/abstract_part_2_textiles_in_th.html
- Sasagawa, Hideo. 'Japan's Involvement in Cambodia during World War II.' In *Vietnam-Indochina-Japan Relations during the Second World War*, edited by M. Shiraishi and al., 71-83. Tokyo: Waseda Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, 2017.
- Sasagawa, Hideo. 'Post/colonial Discourses on the Cambodian Court Dance.' *Southeast Asian Studies*, 42, no.4 (March 2005): 418-441.
- Sauer, Carl. 'The Morphology of a Landscape,' (1925) In *Human Geography: An Essential Anthology*, edited by John Agnew, David Livingstone, and Alisdair Rodgers, 296-315. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.
- Schliesinger, Joachim. *Ethnic Groups of Cambodia, Volume 3: Profile of the Austro-Thai-and Sinitic-Speaking Peoples*. Bangkok: White Lotus Co Ltd, 2011.
- Schultz, Kiri. 'Traditional Arts and Crafts for the Future.' *Museum International*, 54 nos. 1-2 (2002): 56-63. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000126687>

- Sennett, Richard. *Togetherness: The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Co-Operation*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012.
- Sharples, Jennifer, and Amornrat Rifenberg. *Thai Silk*. Bangkok: Post Books, 1994.
- Shih, Shu-mei. *Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations across the Pacific*. Berkeley, CA: University Presses of California, 2007.
- Sim, Cheryl. *Wearing the Cheongsam: Dress and Culture in a Chinese Diaspora*. London: Bloomsbury, 2019.
- Simmel, Georg, and Kurt H. Wolff. *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*. Glencoe: Free Press, 1950.
- Singh, Upinder. *A History of Ancient and Early Medieval India: From the Stone Age to the 12th Century*. Noida, India: Pearson, 2019.
- Slocomb, Margaret. *An Economic History of Cambodia in the Twentieth Century*. Singapore: NUS Press, 2010.
- Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London: Zed Books, 1999.
- Smith-Hefner, Nancy. *Khmer American: Identity and Moral Education in a Diasporic Community*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009.
- SNV. 'Smallholders as true shareholders.' *Innovations Against Poverty: iAP Insights*, August 2018. <http://www.snv.org/public/cms/sites/default/files/explore/download/>
- Sophearith, Siyonn. *Pidan (Bitān) in Khmer Culture*. Phnom Penh: Reyum Publishing, 2008.
- Sor Sokny, Phat Chanmony, and Som Vannak. *Technique of Natural Dyeing and Traditional Pattern of Silk Production in Cambodia*. Phnom Penh: UNESCO and The Buddhist Institute, 2008.
- Soyini, Madison, and Judith Hamera, *The SAGE Handbook of Performance Studies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2013.
- Srinivasan, Priya. *Sweating Saris: Indian Dance as Transnational Labor*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2011.
- Stallybrass, Peter. 'Worn Worlds: Clothes, Mourning and the Life of Things.' In *Cultural Memory and the Construction of Identity*, edited by Dahn Ben-Amos and Liliane Weissberg, 27-44. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1999.
- Strasser, Judith and al., eds. 'A Study about Victims' Participation at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia and Gender-Based Violence under the Khmer Rouge Regime.' *Transcultural Psychosocial Organization Cambodia*, September 2015. <https://www.eccc.gov.kh/en/case/topic/2>

- Stringer, Ernest. *Action Research: A Handbook for Practitioners*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Books, 2014.
- Suppya Helene Nut and University of Nottingham Asia Research Institute. *The Royal Ballet of Cambodia: From Ritual to a National Identity*, January 9, 2019. Accessed August 29, 2021. <https://theasiadialogue.com/2019/01/09/the-royal-ballet-of-cambodia-from-ritual-to-a-national-identity/>
- Takuya, Kida. Trans. Cynthia Takayama. "Traditional Art Crafts (Dentō Kōgei)' in Japan: From Reproductions to Original Works.' *The Journal of Modern Craft* 3, no. 1 (2010): 19-35.
- Tarling, Peter Nicholas. *A Sudden Rampage: The Japanese Occupation of Southeast Asia, 1941-1945*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001.
- Taylor, Diana. *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003.
- Taylor, Nora. 'ORIENTALISM/OCCIDENTALISM: The Founding of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts d'Indochine and the Politics of Painting in Colonial Việt Nam, 1925-1945.' *Crossroads: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 11, no. 2 (1997): 1-33.
- Ter Horst, John. *Weaving into Cambodia: Trade and Identity Politics in the (post)-Colonial Cambodian Silk Weaving Industry*. Amsterdam: Eigen Beheer, 2008.
- Ter Horst, John. *Ikat Weaving and the Ethnic Chinese Influences in Cambodia*. Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2011.
- Thomas, Julian. 'The Trouble with Material Culture.' *Journal of Iberian Archaeology* 9/10 (2007): 11-23.
- Tihanyi, Catherine. 'Ethnographic and Translation Practices.' *Anthropology News*, 43 (2002): 5-6.
- Trinh T., Minh-Ha. 1989. *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt. *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004.
- Tuchman-Rosta, Celia. 'From Ritual Form to Tourist Attraction: Negotiating the Transformation of Classical Cambodian Dance in a Changing World.' *Asian Theatre Journal* 31, no. 2 (2014): 524-544.
- Tully, John. *A Short History of Cambodia*, London: Allen & Unwin, 2005.
- Tully, John. 'Cambodia in the Nineteenth Century: Out of the Siamese Frying Pan and into the French Fire?'. In *Cambodia and the West, 1500-2000*, edited by T.O Smith, 37-63. London: Palgrave Macmillan Limited, 2018.

- Turnbull, Robert. 'A Burned-Out Theater: The State of Cambodia's Performing Arts.' In *Expressions of Cambodia: The Politics of Tradition, Identity and Change*, edited by Leakthina Chau-Pech Ollier and Tim Winter, 133-150. London: Routledge, 2012.
- Turkle, Sherry. *Evocative Objects: Things We Think With*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007.
- Twining, Charles. 'The Economy.' In *Cambodia, 1975-1978: Rendez-Vous with Death*, edited by Karl D. Jackson, 109-150. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989.
- Tyner, James. *The Killing of Cambodia: Geography, Genocide and the Unmaking of Space*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2008.
- Ullrich, Polly. 'Workmanship: The Hand and Body as Perceptual Tools.' In *Objects and Meaning: New Perspectives on Art and Craft*, edited by Anna Fariello and Paula Owen, 198-214. Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2005.
- Van Esterik, Penny. 'Celebrating Ethnicity: Ethnic Flavor in an Urban Festival.' *Ethnic Groups* 4 (1982): 207-27.
- Venkatesan, Soumhya. 'Learning to Weave; Weaving to Learn ... what?' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* vol 16, no. 1 (2010): 158-175.
- Venkatesan, Soumhya. 'Rethinking Agency: Persons and Things in the Heterotopia of 'Traditional Indian Craft.' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 15 (2009): 78-95.
- Vickery, Michael. *Cambodia 1975-1982*. Bangkok: Silkworm Books, 1999.
- Vickery, Michael. '1620, A Cautionary Tale.' In *New Perspectives on the History and Historiography of Southeast Asia, Continuing Explorations*, edited by Michael Arthur Aung-Thwin and Kenneth R. Hall, 157-166. London: Routledge, 2011.
- Waldstreicher, David. *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2012.
- Wagner, Carol. *Soul Survivors: Stories of Women and Children in Cambodia*. Berkeley, CA: Creative Arts Book Company, 2002.
- Weiner, Annette B. *Inalienable Possessions: The Paradox of Keeping-While-Giving*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.
- Welters Linda, and Abby Lillethun. *Fashion History: A Global View*. London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2019.
- Whitfield, Susan. *The Silk Road: Trade, Travel, War and Faith*. London: The British Library, 2004.
- Wilkinson, Clare, and Denicola, Alicia Ory. eds. *Critical Craft: Technology, Globalization and Capitalism*. London: Bloomsbury, 2016.

- Wolfarth, Joanna. 'Hol Pidan: Cambodian Traditional Pictorial Silk Textile: Preservation and Development at the National Museum of Cambodia, 2016.' *Southeast of Now* 1, no. 1 (March 2017): 205–13.
- Wood, Nigel. *Chinese Glazes: their Origins, Chemistry and Recreation*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999.
- Wyatt, David K. 'Introduction.' In *The Kingdom of Siam, Simon de La Loubere*, Simon de la Loubere, i-ix. Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1986.
- Yagura, Kenjiro. 'Increasing Out-migration from Rural Cambodian Villages: Its Socio-economic Impacts and Underlying Factors.' *Center for Southeast Asian Studies Kyoto University Newsletter* 71 (Spring 2015): 9-11.
- Yonekura, Yukiko. 'A Field Survey for the Protection of Endangered Weaving Technique and Motifs of the Traditional Cambodian Pictorial Ikat Silk Pidan.' *Gakuen* 919 (2017): 37-58.
- Zmyslony, Iwo. 'Various Ideas of Tacit Knowledge—Is There a Basic One?' In *Knowing and Being: Perspectives on the Philosophy of Michael Polanyi*, edited by Tihamér Margitay, 30-49. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011.
- Zuber-Skerritt, Ortrun. 'Action Learning and Action Research: Paradigm, Praxis and Programs.' In *Effective Change Management through Action Research and Action Learning: Concepts, Perspectives, Processes and Applications*, edited by Shankar Sankara, Bob Dick, and Ron Passfield, 1-20. Lismore: Southern Cross University Press, 2001.
- Zuber-Skerritt, Ortrun and Lesley Wood. *Action Learning and Action Research: Genres and Approaches*. Bingley: Emerald Publishing, 2019.

