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A Comparative Study of Thai and Balinese Temple Festival Dress

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***Abstract*—**Aims of this research were to study Thai Buddhist temple festivals and Balinese Hindu temple festivals, to compare Thai Buddhist temple festival dress with Balinese Hindu temple festival dress, and to create the knowledge which can be useful for Thai attitudes and cultural perceptions, especially for Thai children and youth. The findings of the research disclosed that there are four temple festivals of Thai Buddhists in Thailand, namely Songkran Festival, Buddhist Lent Festival, Sart Thai Festival and End of Buddhist Lent Festival. In island of Bali, Indonesia, there are three Balinese Hindu temple festivals, namely Odalan Festival, Galungan Festival and Nyepi Festival. Thai Songkran Festival is similar to New Year Celebration in Balinese Nyepi Festival. Thai Songkran Festival and Sart Thai Festival have the same purpose as that of Balinese Galungan Festival in practice of dedicating merit to the spirits of deceased relatives. In these temple festivals, Thai Buddhist men will wear round collar outerwear and wide leg trousers or loincloths but will never wear headdresses, while Balinese Hindu men wear turbans or fabric headbands, shirts and Sarong, which are similar to Sarong of Thai Buddhist men in central and northern part of Thailand. Most of Thai Buddhist women wear Sarong like Balinese Hindu women but wear only round collar outerwear, while Balinese Hindu women wear diamond neck camisole as inner wear and shawl collar as outerwear**.**

***Keywords*—**Temple festival dresses, Thai Buddhists, Balinese Hindus.

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I. Introduction

NOWADAYS Thai people are facing several crises of value, ethics and behaviors which link to Thai way of life, thinking, attitude and virtue. These problems are the effects of foreign cultural expansion on multimedia. The creative media are much less dangerous and illegal media which spread over the whole country of Thailand. While Thai people, especially children and young people, are not aware of Thai custom and culture, social institutions such as family institution, religious institutions and educational institutions take less active role in the implantation of ethical virtues and the potential development of Thai people, especially children and young people. That is because the youth and their parents rarely have the opportunity to participate in traditional Buddhist temple festival activities even though Buddhism is Thailand's national religion [1]. These Thai people rarely have the opportunity to see the beauty of Thai traditional dress in the Buddhist temple festivals, and the importance of these festivals with Thai temple festival dress. The dissemination of precise knowledge about the temple festivals and the temple festival dress of Thai Buddhist and Balinese Hindu in Bali island of Indonesia, one country of ASEAN community and religious adhesive country like Thailand, will enrich attitudes and cultural perceptions of Thai people, especially children and young people. For these reasons, this research is conducted.

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II. Methodology

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

III. Results and Discussion

A. Thai Buddhist Temple Festivals and Balinese Hindu Temple Festivals

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

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

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Fig. 1 Thai Buddhist activities in Songkran Festival

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



Fig. 2 The large candle procession in Ubon Ratchathani Province

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



Fig. 3 Sart Thai Festival in Nakhon Si Thammarat

4) The end of Buddhist Lent Festival begins on the full moon day of the eleventh lunar month. Thai Buddhists celebrate this occasion by offering foods and other necessities to monks [3]. This ceremony is called "Dhevo Rohana Ceremony".



Fig. 4 Dhevo Rohana Ceremony

Bali Island, a province in the country of Indonesia, is known as "The Island of Gods", almost everything in this island are connected or based on Hindu believes and their gods [4]. There are 3 major Balinese Hindu temple festivals as follows [5]:

1) Odalan Festival is a Hindu ceremony to celebrate the birthday of a Balinese Hindu temple. The Balinese Hindu Odalan is regarded as a very special festival, not only the

religious celebration but also a social occasion and a major theatrical event.



Fig. 5 Odalan Festival

2) Galungan Festival is a 10-day festival, celebrated every 210 days. The Balinese Hindus believe that Gods and the spirits of their ancestors will return to the earth on Galungan day. They must be suitably welcomed. Women begin preparing a month before the festival such as weaving intricate decorations from coconut palm leaves, baking festive rice cakes and stockpiling packets of incense.



Fig. 6 Galungan Festival

3) Nyepi Festival. Nyepi Day is a Hindu Day of Silence or the Hindu New Year in the Balinese Saka calendar. On this day, Hindus do not leave their homes, cook or engage in any activity. Streets are deserted, and tourists are not allowed to leave their hotel complexes, no arrival nor departure flights at Ngurah Rai Airport in Denpasar of Bali and no tours activities. But on New Year's Eve, the villages are cleaned, food is cooked for 2 days, and in the evening as much noise is made as possible to scare away the devils. The Balinese Hindus enjoy the Nyepi Eve parades then settle back for the quietest New Year's Day of their life.



Fig. 7 Nyepi Eve parade

It may be concluded that

1) Thai Songkran Festival is similar to Balinese Nyepi Festival in terms of the purpose of the festival, which is traditional New Year celebration.
2) Thai Songkran Festival and Sart Thai Festival are similar to Balinese Galungan Festival in terms of the practice of dedicating merit to the spirits of deceased relatives and expressing gratitude to the deceased ancestors.

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B. Thai Buddhist Temple Festival Dress and Balinese Hindu Temple Festival Dress

Most of Thai Buddhist men wear round collar outerwear called "Mauhom", and Thai wide leg trousers or Thai loincloths. However, they don't wear headdress.



(a) Two men wear "Mauhom" and Thai wide leg trousers and build sand pagodas in Songkran Festival



(b) Two men wear "Mauhom" and Thai loincloths in Songkran Festival

Fig. 8 The temple festival dress of Thai Buddhist men

In contrast, Balinese Hindu men wear short sleeve shirts or long sleeve shirts, sarongs and headdress.



Fig. 9 The temple festival dress of Balinese Hindu men

However, Thai Buddhist men in Northeast region and some areas of Central region of Thailand wear the same sarongs as Balinese Hindu men in their temple festivals.



Fig. 10 The temple festival dress of Thai Buddhist men in Northeast region (left) and some areas of Central region of Thailand

In the temple festival dress of women, most of Thai Buddhist women wear the same sarongs as Balinese Hindu women. But Thai Buddhist women wear only collarless blouses with elbow length sleeve and front opening as the outer wears, while Balinese Hindu women wear the inner wears which have leaving the shoulders free and front opening, and wear the long-sleeved, lacy blouses as the outer wears.



Fig. 11 The temple festival dress of Thai Buddhist women (left) and the temple festival dress of Balinese Hindu women

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