



The Buddhist Scriptures Box: The Preservation of Identity, Values, and the Management of the National Intangible Cultural Heritage by the Community in Lanna

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Abstract

This is qualitative research using documentary research and field surveys. It aims to study the structure, pattern, craftsmanship techniques, and patterns of the Buddhist scriptures box in Lanna. The study was conducted across 61 temples, including 21 in Chiang Mai, 21 in Lampang, and 19 in Lamphun, resulting in the examination of 103 Buddhist scripture boxes (26 in Chiang Mai, 46 in Lamphun, and 31 in Lampang). Keys informant in-depth interviews, focus groups, and activities related to Buddhist art, a total of 30 persons, including 22 abbots or monks, 4 community leaders/village scholars, 4 academics of Buddhism, art, and culture, and 2 Lanna craftsmanship. The research employed three primary instruments: 1) Buddhist scripture box surveys, 2) Interview forms, and 3) Focus group approaches. The findings were presented through an academic seminar and a descriptive lecture following data collection, analysis, and synthesis into categories.

The results revealed that Buddhist scripture boxes consist of three parts: the base, body, and lid, with designs categorized into box designs and chest designs. Craftsmanship techniques encompassed six methods: 1) gilding technique, 2) lacquer and vermilion technique, 3) woodcarving technique, 4) glass decoration technique, 5) lacquer moldings technique, and 6) painting technique. In terms of patterns, Dhamma scripture boxes in Chiang Mai and



Lamphun provinces displayed similar floral motifs, such as the royal lotus and gardenia flower patterns, often complemented by stalks, branches, leaves, and animal designs. Angel patterns were popularly employed to adorn the center body, door panel, and side lid. In contrast, Dhamma scripture boxes in Lampang Province exhibited unique patterns, including Lanna flower pot patterns, flora patterns, and angel patterns, making them distinguishable from other regions.

Keywords: The Preservation of Identity, The Dhamma seats, The Buddhist Scriptures Boxes, National Cultural-Wisdom Heritage, The Lanna Traditional Altars (Sattaphan)

Introduction

A type of Buddhist art of worship was created by the Lanna people out of faith for performing rituals, storing the Buddha's teachings, and for decorations such as Dhamma Seats, Dhamma scripture boxes, the Lanna Traditional Altars (Sattaphan), Holy scripture halls, etc. (Mani Payomyong and Sirirat, 1995). Suppose these artifacts are ancient and have exquisite patterns. In that case, they become of interest to tourists, scholars, researchers, and lovers of local antiques, which are an important part of promoting religious and cultural tourism (Prateep Peuchthonglang et al., 2015, 2017, 2018; Nakorn Pragnrit et al., 2020). These works of art reflect the local cultural identity, indicating the beliefs, values, and worldviews of the Lanna people, distinct from other cultures. Additionally, they hold value for both the mind and society in various aspects, which is why the Lanna people have continuously developed and preserved their local identity. Researching the mechanism for maintaining this identity, including the value, artisanal wisdom, and management of the intangible cultural heritage of Buddhist arts, is particularly interesting. These arts are among the worship instruments created by faith and then utilized in various fields (Sirisak Abisakmontri and Thanikarn Worathammanon, 2016; Kanjana Cholsiri and Watchara Wiangcahi, 2018).



Dhamma scripture boxes are used to store palm leaf scriptures, which record the Buddha's teachings for monks to read and perform the Dhamma. The Lanna Traditional Altars (Sattaphan) are used to light candles to worship the triple gems according to the Lanna tradition. Therefore, these items are considered forms of worship that express the Lanna people's faith in Buddhism (Phramaha Charan Yawinan, 2006). In the northern provinces of Chiang Mai, Lamphun, and Lampang, many temples still maintain such forms of worship. Some temples are in perfect condition, some are in disrepair, and some are registered as antiquities or artifacts by the Fine Arts Department (Prateep Peuchthonglang et al., 2012; 2017; 2020). Some temples are preserved as museums for community tourism. Many researchers, scholars, and students interested in studying these artifacts visit these temples because they organize religious and cultural tourism, leading to a trend of religious and cultural tourism in the community. This reflects the mechanism for maintaining the artisanal wisdom identity and managing the community's intangible cultural heritage, which must be systematically managed with community participation (Kannika Khamdee, 2015; Phra Nakhon Prangrit et al., 2022).

This research paper presents findings on the storage of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) data, specifically regarding Dhamma scripture boxes. Data is stored randomly or added to existing data. Additionally, this research supports and encourages the registration of certain Buddhist arts as National Intangible Cultural Heritage in the field of traditional craftsmanship, a type of folk art. The Bureau of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), the Department of Cultural Promotion, and the Ministry of Culture have continuously upgraded ICH management to be valuable and systematically preserved, meeting international standards (Phrasuthirattanabandit, 2021). The researcher has collected data and has extensive experience in researching these issues, integrating other disciplines such as social sciences, Buddhism, Fine Arts, and Cultural Heritage Management. Furthermore, there was cooperation from monks, local wisdom scholars, Lanna craftsmen, and related agencies and organizations in the area, such as the Provincial Administration Organization, Provincial Cultural Office, Provincial Buddhist



Office, Lanna Craftsmen Club, and Provincial Tourism and Sports Office. The results of this research can guide policymaking, and develop, and create economic value based on cultural capital, which continuously impacts the development of communities in various aspects.

Research Objectives

It aims to study the structure, design, craftsmanship techniques, and patterns of Buddhist scripture boxes in Lanna. Additionally, it examines the mechanisms of identity preservation and the management of national intangible cultural heritage, specifically “Dhamma scripture boxes,” by communities in Lanna.

Research Methodology

This is a qualitative research that was conducted in 21 temples in Chiang Mai, 21 temples in Lampang, and 19 temples in Lamphun, totaling 61 temples. The research involved examining 26 Dhamma scripture boxes in Chiang Mai, 46 in Lamphun, and 31 in Lampang, amounting to 103 Dhamma scripture boxes. Key informants included 30 individuals: 22 abbots or monks, 4 community leaders or village scholars, 4 academics specializing in Buddhism, art, and culture, and 2 Lanna craftsmen. These participants were selected through purposive sampling. Three types of research instruments were used: 1) Buddhist scripture box surveys, 2) interview forms, and 3) focus group approaches. Data from all areas were analyzed using content analysis, and the content was validated through expert review to ensure the accuracy of the findings. Descriptive reports were prepared to disseminate the findings, and research articles were submitted for publication in academic journals at national and international levels. Additionally, a comprehensive research report containing valuable insights was compiled.



The Findings

The Dhamma scripture box in Lanna is a sacred item created by the Lanna people to store Dhamma scriptures. These boxes are often adorned with motifs and inscriptions related to Buddhist stories and teachings, which are structured and formatted carefully. The craftsmanship techniques and patterns of the Dhamma scripture boxes are as follows:

1. Structure of Dhamma Scriptures Boxes in Lanna

Dhamma scripture boxes in Lanna are primarily made from wood. This is the most common material used for these boxes, with the entire structure being crafted entirely from wood. In the case of ancient scripture boxes, they are constructed using wooden dowels. This method ensures that the box is both sturdy and flexible, especially for the Lung-shaped scripture boxes. The creation of these Dhamma scripture boxes requires the skilled wisdom of the craftsmen who make them. The Dhamma scripture boxes in Lanna have two main structural elements as follows:

1) **The base of the Dhamma scriptures box can be divided into two types according to the style of the Dhamma scriptures box as follows:**

1.1) The base of the Dhamma scriptures box found in Lanna is mainly made of 4 wooden legs on all 4 corners of the box. The appearance of wooden legs and scripture boxes have both a pig leg base style with drawers and without drawers and a couch leg type. It is also popular to make a columnless box base which looks like a set of lotus-flower-shaped pedestals for a Buddhist image base with plexiglass around the wooden belly. Some boxes are stenciled with hatch grooves in the wooden belly layer, and others are made into lotus bases or inverted cornices stacked on cutting board bases.

1.2) The base of the Dhamma scriptures box is usually made into a set of lotus-flower-shaped pedestals for a Buddhist image base (Pad-base) or a set of cutting board bases in front of the stacked boards, reducing the shape as if it were a throne platform supporting the body of the Dhamma scriptures box. This style of base consists of a cutting board base in front of the board, an

inverted cornice layer, and an upturned lotus layer. It is a base without pillars and is found mainly in Dhamma boxes in the form of Dhamma scriptures boxes in the Lung and square shape. There is also a base pattern with regulars at the four corners of the box, which is not very popular. This style of the base consists of 4 wooden legs fixed at 4 corners, stacked with another layer in front of the board supporting the body of the Dhamma box, similar to a table on which the Dhamma scripture box is placed.

Table 1: The Structure of Dhamma Scriptures Boxes

The Base of Dhamma Scriptures Boxes		
1. The Base of Dhamma Scriptures Boxes		
<p>A set of lotus-flower-shaped pedestals for a Buddhist image base (Pad-base)</p> 	<p>Bua Thala Base (Lotus Base)</p> 	<p>Pig Leg Base</p> 
1. The Base of Dhamma Scriptures Chests		
<p>A set of lotus-flower-shaped pedestals for a Buddhist image base (Pad-base)</p> 	<p>Bua Thala Base (Lotus Base)</p> 	<p>In Front of the Board Base</p> 



2) The body of the Dhamma scripture box is divided into two types according to the style of the Dhamma scripture box:

2.1) Scripture box type: This type resembles a horizontal square box with two front doors. Some boxes are decorated with openwork woodwork along the edges, featuring patterns resembling grille designs, arranged consecutively on all four sides. These are most commonly found in the temples in Pa Sang District, Lamphun Province, such as Wat Nong Ngueak and Wat Rong Chang. Some boxes have an upper edge decorated with lotus petals arranged in succession, as seen in the Dhamma scripture box of Sung Men Temple, Sung Men District, Phrae Province.

2.2) Scripture chest type: There are two types of scripture chests: The first feature is a Lung-shaped chest that features a wide upper part with an outward-facing mouth. The lower part tapers downwards. The second characteristic is a square-shaped chest that has a square or horizontal cabinet-shaped body.

2.3) The Lid of the Scriptures Chest: There are three shapes for the lids of the scripture chest, consisting of 1. The canopy-shaped lid looks like a wide mouth lid with upper corners that converge, forming a cone or rhombus shape, similar to a castle canopy. Some lids of this shape have ornamental tops used for both Lung-shaped and square-shaped scripture chests. 2. Cross-sectional shape lid appears as a wide-mouth lid with slightly angled sides, resembling a trapezoid commonly used as the lid for Lung-shaped scripture chests. 3. Board face-shaped lid that has a horizontal square-shaped lid on all four sides.

2. The Design of the Dhamma Scriptures Box

The design of the Dhamma scriptures box in Lanna can be classified into two types:

1) Scripture Box Type: This type is characterized by a large, square, and horizontally shaped box. The base is commonly made into various types of stands, such as a pig's leg base (with or without drawers), a contorted leg type, a set of lotus-flower-shaped pedestals for a Buddhist image, and a single pillar type. The trunk of most boxes features two front doors with a chest on the



door. The upper part of some scripture boxes is decorated with carved wood grain and stencils in a grille shape. The lotus petal shape is arranged continuously along the upper edge of the Dhamma scripture box. The door, which opens and closes, is made of solid wooden panels. In the 25th-century Buddhist style, glass was used as a material to make the Dhamma scriptures box more translucent.




2) The Dhamma scriptures chest can be classified into three subtypes:

2.1) The Lung-shaped Dhamma Scripture Chest: This very popular shape in Lanna Dhamma scripture boxes consists of three parts. The base is usually in the shape of a set of lotus-flower-shaped pedestals for a Buddhist image or a cutting board base in front of a stacked board, forming a platform to support the chest body. The body of the chest is wide at the upper part, with an outstretched mouth, tapering into a square plan at the lower part. The upper part has a lid, usually shaped like a cross-sectional lid, board-shaped lid, or canopy-shaped lid.

2.2) The Square-shaped Dhamma Scripture Chest: This type has a square chest shape. The base is typically made in the shape of a set of lotus-flower-shaped pedestals for a Buddhist image base, a cutting board base in front of a stacked board, and various types of stands. The body of the chest is shaped like a square box or a horizontal square. The lid of the chest is also a horizontal square shape resembling the face of a board.

2.3) The Castle-shaped Dhamma Chest: This shape has the same base and body structure as the Lung and Square Scriptures Chests but features a lid in the shape of a castle canopy. This design makes the Scripture Chest quite tall and exquisite.

Table 2: The Design of the Dhamma Scriptures Boxes

Design of the Dhamma Scriptures Boxes			
Designs of the Dhamma Scriptures Boxes	Designs of the Dhamma Scriptures Boxes		
	Castle-shaped	Lung-shaped	Square-shaped
			

3. Craftsmanship Techniques for Decorating the Patterns of the Dhamma Scriptures Box

Dhamma scripture boxes in each Lanna area exhibit unique patterns, structures, and ornamental designs. Some Dhamma scripture boxes have complex structures, requiring various decorative techniques to create beautiful, clean, and proportionate designs. The commonly used techniques for decorating the patterns of Dhamma scripture boxes are as follows:

1. Most Dhamma scripture boxes in Lanna are adorned with gilding patterns on various surfaces, including the base, body, and lids. In the past, gilding techniques involved applying gilded patterns on a lacquer layer and a vermilion or tail background, known in Lanna as the “Lai Kham” technique or gilding work. The gilding techniques used on Dhamma scripture boxes include:

1) Stencil gilding (Lai Kham Work): This technique involves creating patterns on paper, gouging them into grooves using a chisel to make a mold, and then applying them to the surface of the boxes to be gilded. It is commonly used on the vermilion layer of chest or box bodies with smooth surfaces. The stencil gilding technique often decorates various layers of bases, the body of the



cabinet or chest with patterns such as floral designs, tall or regalia patterns, and angel motifs, as well as the lid of the Dhamma scripture chest.

2) Stencil Gilding and Scraping: This technique builds upon stencil gilding by scratching the pattern with a sharp tool, such as pointed steel, to create more intricate designs. The lines are scraped on the gilded stripes to produce clear outlines and richer shapes. In Lanna, this technique is known as Hai Lai gilding or Hai Lai Scratch Pattern (Thapakorn Kruanraya, 2020). This method involves scraping lines that decorate the face, body, and ornaments of human patterns, groups of angels, flora, and tall ornaments or regalia. Examples include the lines on the Buddha's face and body, lines outlining human and angel faces, body ornaments, leaf stem lines, and pagoda-shaped lines.

3) Scratching Gilding: This technique involves gilding a work surface and then scratching lines onto the gilded surface to create various patterns. The process is similar to creating patterns on lacquerware. In the Lanna Dhamma scriptures box, it is popular to gild the lacquer and vermilion layers before scratching the pattern, similar to writing vermilion on a gilded surface.

4) Gilding-Lacquerware Painting Pattern: This traditional Thai craftsmanship technique involves writing patterns in lines, and then applying lacquer and gilding. This method is used to decorate the body of the Dhamma scriptures box and the Dhamma scripture chest. This technique is commonly used to create offerings for Dhamma scriptures among lords and deacons, as seen in the lacquerware painting on the Dhamma scriptures box of Sung Men temple, Sung Men District, Phrae Province, and the Dhamma scripture chest of Wat Sri Komkham Cultural Hall, Muang District, Phayao Province.

5) Smooth Surface Gilding: This technique involves gilding the surface of the scripture box without adding ornamental patterns. The surface is often backed with a lacquer or vermilion layer before gilding. In the Dhamma scriptures boxes, smooth surface gilding is frequently found in the Dhamma scripture chest styles. It is common to gild only certain parts, such as the body, the lid, and the base, including an inverted cornice, upturned cornice, and plexi-



glass with a wooden belly.

2. The Technique of Painting the Lacquer and Vermilion Layers: The technique of painting lacquer and vermilion layers is fundamental for creating a backing paint to decorate the Dhamma scripture box. It is popular to apply lacquer and vermilion layers to various surfaces before decorating the Dhamma scriptures boxes with different patterns or using lacquer or vermilion colors as ornamental patterns. The techniques are as follows:

1) Applying a Lacquer Layer and Painting Vermilion Over It: This method is commonly used as a backing paint on the surface of the Dhamma scriptures boxes. After applying the lacquer and vermilion layers, the surface is then gilded with stencils or scratched gilding. The vermilion color enhances the brightness and shine of the gilded pattern.

2) Painting the Vermilion Layer and Applying Lacquer Over It: In this technique, the surface of the Dhamma scriptures box is first painted with vermilion. A specific lacquer layer is then applied over it to highlight the pattern, resulting in a brighter and more luminous finish.

3) Applying a Lacquer Layer or Vermilion Layer Without Embellishments: This method involves applying lacquer or vermilion in simple, unadorned lines. It is often used to separate stripes, create borders, or apply a flat color without ornamentation. Examples include adorning the cornice wire and the wooden belly layer of the base of the Dhamma scriptures boxes, or the borders and lids of the Dhamma scriptures chest.

4) Writing Lacquer and Writing Vermilion: This technique involves applying lacquer and vermilion to create patterns on the surface of the piece. It is often seen in lacquerware and weaving, commonly referred to as Krua Rak Krua Hang (Thapakorn Kruanraya, 2020). In the context of the Dhamma scripture box, this technique is used by applying a lacquer layer and writing patterns with vermilion, as found in the technique of writing vermilion on the lacquer layer and gilding it into the Lanna flower pot pattern of the Dhamma scripture chest at Wat Pa Chuam, Mae Tha District, Lampang Province.



3. The Woodcarving Technique: The woodcarving technique is not very popular for Dhamma scriptures boxes in the Lung-shaped form, but it is used to decorate various parts of the box, including the base, body, and upper part. These parts consist of the box's edges, doors, walls, and the upper body, often carved into various patterns, both in relief and high relief. The woodcarvings found in the Dhamma scriptures cabinets have two main characteristics:

1) Carving Patterns on Wooden Panels: Wooden panels are carved into various patterns, such as angel motifs, four-petal guard flower designs, or floating flower patterns. These carved panels are then assembled into different parts of the Dhamma scriptures box. This style of carved woodwork is often used to decorate the body and lid of the Dhamma scriptures box.

2) Carving Directly into the Wooden Structure: This technique involves carving various patterns directly into the wooden parts of the Dhamma scriptures box. It is commonly used to carve the body, upper part, and base of the box. In the body of the box, wood carvings are often found along the edges of the wooden frame, the chest of the box, and the wooden walls. Patterns such as inverted lotus, supine lotus, guarding flowers, and Chinese wrench designs adorn the edges and walls of the Dhamma scriptures boxes. In the upper part of the body, wooden carvings often decorate the edges, planks, or flared mouths, featuring intricate patterns such as angel motifs and Manta (lunar eclipse) patterns, which correspond to the heavenly theme. Burmese art scriptures found in Lanna temples often use wood carving techniques with floral patterns, like canthus leaf moldings and vegetable petiole designs, to decorate the upper edge of the arch of the Dhamma scriptures box. The base of the box frequently features carved patterns like lion bases and lotus designs. The wooden belly layer is often carved with transparent patterns or openwork designs, creating hatches or grooves in various patterns. These grooves are then decorated with glass, adding to the embellishment of the wooden belly layer at the base of the box.

4. Glass Decoration Technique: The glass decoration technique involves adorning various shapes of glass on the surface of the Dhamma scriptures



box, enhancing its visual appeal with shiny, colorful accents. This decoration can be applied to different parts of the box, including the base, body, upper part, and lid. The most popular types of glass used to decorate Dhamma scriptures boxes in Lanna are leaded glass (cracked glass) and stained glass. The specific techniques are as follows:

1) Decoration with Leaded Glass (Cracked Glass): Leaded glass is relatively flexible, bending easily, and is commonly used to decorate various parts of the Dhamma scriptures boxes, including both smooth and concave surfaces. Lacquer, shellac rubber, and small nails are used as binders to attach the glass to the structure of the boxes.

1.1) Leaded Glass Decoration in Carved Wood Grain Grooves: The wood is carved into a pattern, and then the leaded glass is placed into the grooves, making the design stand out beautifully. This technique is often found in striped grooves in various parts, such as inverted cornice grooves, the upturned cornice at the base of the Dhamma scriptures box, the petal pattern groove on the body, and the lid of the Dhamma scripture chest.

1.2) Leaded Glass Decoration on a Flat Surface: Glass, typically in triangular shapes, is arranged in full succession on the flat surface of the Dhamma scriptures box. This type of decoration is often found at the base of the Dhamma scriptures box, used to embellish the base layer in front of the board, cornice wire, and wooden belly layers.

2) Stained Glass Decoration: Stained glass is generally found on flat or sloping surfaces that meet the wooden structure of the Dhamma scriptures box. Unlike leaded glass, stained glass is hard and cannot bend, making it suitable for flat or straight-sloping surfaces. Stained glass is often used to create geometric shapes such as triangles, squares, rectangles, and rhombuses, arranged in successive colors along different parts of the Dhamma scriptures boxes.

5. Lacquer Molding Technique: In the creation of Dhamma scripture boxes, the use of the Rak Kra Nae technique is relatively rare. This technique



requires significant skill and involves rather complicated methods. Most lacquer molding found in the decoration of Dhamma scripture boxes consists of paste-style sculptures. These sculptures are typically molded into lines arranged or coiled into floral patterns, or formed into flower patterns, stems, and leaves, which are then attached to the workpiece. Pointed tools are used to draw the lines of the petals, stalks, and leaf stems, giving the lacquer sculpture a more realistic appearance. Next, these sculptures are gilded and decorated with mirrors to enhance their beauty. This technique is popular for sculpting and decorating the base, the body, and the lid of Dhamma scripture chests. Notable examples of lacquer molding decoration can be found in Lampang province, such as in the Dhamma scripture chests of Wat Pong Sanook Nuea in Muang District, Wat Lai Hin Luang, and Wat Phra That Lampang Luang in Koh Kha District.

6. Painting Techniques: In the decoration of Dhamma scripture boxes, painting techniques are used to create colorful patterns on various parts of the boxes. These techniques include traditional watercolor methods and modern plastic watercolors:

1) The watercolor painting technique: This technique is relatively rare in the decoration of Dhamma scripture boxes.

2) The plastic watercolor painting technique: This modern decoration technique is commonly used to paint in red, brown, and gold tones, depicting Buddhist stories or important events on various forms of Dhamma scripture boxes. This technique has gained popularity in modern times due to the availability and affordability of materials and the creativity it allows for young technicians. Notable examples include the Dhamma scripture chests of Wat Phrathat Hariphunchai and Wat Chedi Luang, which are painted red on a gold background. One side of these chests features a picture of the Doi Suthep Pagoda, created for the monks at the royal funeral ceremony in 1999.



4. Patterns of the Buddhist Scriptures Boxes

The patterns adorning Dhamma scripture boxes vary across different Lanna communities, each with unique designs tailored to fit the surface of various scripture box shapes, ensuring they look beautiful. The most popular pattern groups used to adorn Dhamma scripture boxes include flora, Buddhist beliefs, and literature motifs. Communities in Chiang Mai, Lampang, and Lamphun often share similar motifs, though the details may differ due to the artisan's influence and artistic traditions passed down through generations and trading contacts. Each area's patterns are distinctive, divided by province and research areas:

4.1 Chiang Mai Scripture Box Patterns

Decorative motifs on Chiang Mai's Dhamma scripture boxes predominantly feature floral patterns, including royal lotus and gardenia flowers, intertwined with stems, branches, and leaves. Animal patterns are often incorporated as well. Angel patterns are typically central, adorning the body of the scripture chest, the cabinet door, and the side lid, depicting angels in various gestures surrounded by floral patterns. Patterns related to Buddhist myths, beliefs, and literature are often arranged to tell a story, with significant characters depicted on the body of the scroll box in important scenes. Chiang Mai's Dhamma scripture boxes are notable for their intricate patterns, which are characteristic of each locality. Some patterns are influenced by Thai, Burmese, and Chinese art, blending these styles into unique designs.

1) Decorative motifs of Dhamma scriptures boxes influenced by Thai art: Observed from the binding of the flora pattern together with the angel pattern of the Dhamma scripture box of Wat Khao Tan Luang, the door of the box is a scripture decorated with angel patterns, standing leaning beside, one hand holds the sword and the other hand holds a vine of flowers decorated with garments in the style of angels in Thai art such as Kranok patterns, Krajang patterns, and Baited patterns. It is a template pattern inserted on the ornaments. The face of the angel has a line of the eyebrow, the nose, and the mouth, sep-



arated into parts, not connected, and looks slender, delicate, and beautiful. It is tied together with a pattern of gardenia flowers with branches and leaves surrounded by a Chinese and Thai pattern. For example, the Dhamma scripture box was built by Chao Noi Srivichai in 1885 when Lanna was under Siamese rule and there was contact with the elite. Therefore, Thai art forms are especially popular during this period. In addition, the work of the Thai Dhamma scriptures box of Chedi Luang Worawihan Temple decorated with floral and angel designs with Thai lacquer works patterns, was created as a sacrifice in the Prince Mahidol Adulyadej Crematorium. This traditional Thai Dhamma scripture box appears in important temples in Chiang Mai.

2) Decorative motifs of Dhamma scriptures box influenced by Burmese art: Notice from the group of angel designs decorated with boxes of Wat Khao Tan Luang Museum, San Sai District, Two boxes decorated with angel designs made of saluting by Wai, which have Burmese ornaments. The face of the angel is decorated and scratched with the lines of the eyebrow, the nose, and the mouth to look slender and harsh.

4.2 Lampang Scripture Box Patterns

Lampang province features unique and distinct patterns that differ from those in other localities, such as Chiang Mai and Lamphun provinces, where the patterns can be quite difficult to distinguish. The ornamental patterns popular in decorating Dhamma scripture boxes in Lampang province include Lanna flower pot patterns, flora patterns, and angel patterns, each with special and distinctive characteristics that set them apart from those in Lamphun and Chiang Mai. The key pattern groups in Lampang include:

1) **Ornamental Flower Patterns with Flower Pot and Angel Patterns:** These patterns are prominently found in the Dhamma scripture chests of Wat Phrathat Sadej, Muang District, and Wat Ban Luk, Mae Tha District. The two patterns are always decorated together. One side of the Dharma scripture chest depicts angels standing side by side, facing outward, and performing the wai gesture with curved, protruding flower stalks. The other side features a tall flower



pot with protruding flower stalks that curve symmetrically on both sides. The center of the flower pot is decorated with a lotus pattern, with the stem upright and the protruding rod curved. This pattern is common in the Dhamma scripture chests of Lampang province and is often decorated using the technique of gilding stencils and scraping the pattern to achieve fine body lines of angels and petals.

2) **Bat Pattern for Corners:** This pattern is mainly found in Lampang province and features a main stem resembling a bat raising its wings. Some boxes have stalks of coiled patterns similar to pig gut patterns, while others have branches and leaves connected in a pattern, commonly decorated in triangular frames or tied patterns in a triangular layout. These adorn the four corners of the Dhamma scripture chests at Wat Phra That Sadet, Wat Pong Sanook Nua, Muang District, Wat Phra That Lampang Luang, Wat Lai Hin Luang, and Wat Phra That Chom Ping, Koh Kha District.

3) **Upturned Lotus Petal Pattern:** This pattern supports the body of the Dhamma scripture box in the form of a Lung shape, with small upturned lotus petals arranged continuously along the upper edge of the base. This decoration is primarily found in Lampang province, as seen in the Lung-shaped Dhamma scripture box of Wat Lai Hin Luang, Koh Kha District. Many boxes are decorated with various types of upturned lotus petals, wooden carvings with leaded glass in grooves, and Dhamma scripture boxes of Umlong Temple, Thoen District.

In addition, the lacquer technique used to decorate various patterns on the base of the Dhamma scripture box has been especially popular among Lampang province technicians in the past. Notable examples include the Dhamma scripture box of Wat Pong Sanook Nua, which features lacquer sculptures of angels pasted onto the box. The pattern formation of Lampang's Dhamma scripture boxes is quite detailed, reflecting the craftsmanship of many past artisans. Some motifs are influenced by Thai, Burmese, and Chinese art, blending these styles into unique designs.



4.3 Lamphun Scripture Box Patterns

Lamphun's Dhamma scripture box ornament from the research area is popular for decorating a group of flora patterns, which consist of royal lotus patterns, gardenia patterns, etc., together with branches, stalks, leaves, and angel patterns, both of which are very common patterns in Lamphun province, especially the Dhamma scriptures boxes of the district of the Yong people in Lamphun province, such as the Dhamma scriptures box of Wat Nong Ngueak and the Dhamma scripture chest of Wat Pa Sang Ngam, and Wat Rong Chang. The pattern is quite similar to the pattern of the Dharma scripture box of Chiang Mai. It is characterized by emphasizing the flora pattern as the main pattern tied together with the pattern of stalks, branches, and leaves and an animal pattern inserted into it. However, if it is a group of angel patterns, it is popular to decorate the central part of the body, the Dhamma scripture chest, the door, and the side lid of the Dhamma scripture box. However, due to the relationship of the group of people, contact with each other, and Buddhist relationships, the patterns of Lamphun and Chiang Mai provinces are quite similar and difficult to classify, such as the Dhamma scripture box of Wat Phrathat Hariphunchai or a temple in the city area of Lamphun. The motifs of the Dhamma scripture cabinet in Lamphun province have distinctive patterns as follows:

1) Varicose Heads Rambutan Moldings (Fern Leaf Patterns Adorning Dhamma Scripture Boxes): This pattern decoration is popular for covering the entire surface of each side of the Dhamma scripture box, featuring a central ornamental flower pattern. It includes curved varicose heads rambutan moldings with interconnected petioles. Some Dhamma scripture boxes also feature animal designs such as birds or chickens, as seen in the Lung-shaped and square-shaped Dhamma scripture boxes at Wat Pa Sang Ngam, Pa Sang District.

2) Lotus Flower Patterns: Two types of lotus flower patterns are commonly used for decoration: the royal lotus flower and the water lily flower. The royal lotus pattern is particularly popular for decorating Dhamma scripture boxes and chests of various shapes. 1) **Royal Lotus Flower and Flower Pot Pattern:**



This combination is found in several Lung-shaped Dhamma scripture boxes at Wat Phra That Hariphunchai. **Royal Lotus Flower Moldings:** These moldings resemble tangled petioles with lotus buds, blooming lotus flowers, fully bloomed lotus flowers, and lotus seeds with interlocking stems that fill the space on the sides of the Dhamma scripture box. This pattern can be seen in the Dhamma scripture boxes at Wat Nong Ngueak, Pa Sang District, Wat Phrathat Hariphunchai, Wat Phra Yuen, Wat Moo Poeng, Muang District, and the Lung-shaped Dhamma scripture box at Wat Ban Pang, Li District.









3) Angel Pattern Decoration on Dhamma Scripture Boxes: In Lamphun province, Dhamma scripture boxes often feature angel patterns influenced by the art of the Tai Lue people of Yong City, which incorporates elements from Burmese and Thai art. **Tai Lue-Inspired Angel Patterns:** These patterns, influenced by Burmese art, are seen in the square-shaped Dhamma scripture box at Wat Pa Sang Ngam. The angel is depicted in a sitting posture with one knee raised, and the body straightened in a wai posture, with layered garments and Burmese-style costumes. The angel's face features slender and sharp lines on the eyebrows, eyes, nose, and mouth. **Thai-Inspired Angel Patterns:** These patterns can be found on the Lung-shaped Dhamma scripture box at Wat Pa Sang Ngam, featuring an angel in a standing wai posture with a fire halo and Thai ornaments, observed from the use of Kranok patterns and Thai Krajang.

Each style of Lanna's Dhamma scripture box is decorated with patterns on different parts: the base, the body, and the lid. Each part of the structure of the box has a unique ornamental pattern, designed to suit the Dhamma scripture box's surface condition, proportion, and size. The patterns are divided as follows:

1) The most popular patterns that adorn the base of the Dhamma scriptures box are mainly flora and night patterns, such as four-petaled flowers, floating flowers, gloriosa lily guard patterns, chain guard patterns, and guard patterns in rhombic frames, curved stem patterns, coiled stem pattern, gardenia flower coiled stem pattern, inverted lotus petal pattern, upturned lotus petal

pattern, the gardenia flower pattern in the panel is a geometric pattern of various shapes as shown in table 3:

Table 3: The Ornamental Patterns at the Base of the Dhamma Scriptures Boxes

Ornamental Patterns at the Base of the Dhamma Scriptures Boxes			
<p>Gloriosa lily patterns</p> 	<p>Chain guard patterns</p> 	<p>Inverted lotus petal pattern, Upturned lotus petal pattern</p> 	 <p>Inner Flora in arched frame pattern</p>
<p>Floating Flowers Pattern</p> 	<p>Four-petaled flowers pattern</p> 	<p>Curved stem pattern</p> 	<p>Glass decoration Pattern</p> 

2) The popular patterns that adorn the body of the Dhamma scripture box are divided into nine groups as follows:

2.1) A group of motifs derived from beliefs is a group of patterns that focuses on Buddhist mottoes. Some designs replicate symbols and important events or characters of events to decorate the Dhamma scriptures box, such as Buddha images, pagodas, and regalia.



(1)



(2)

Figure 1: The Lung-shaped Dhamma Scriptures Box at Wat Phra That Hariphunchai, Lamphun Province

Figure 2: The Lung-shaped Dhamma Scriptures Chest at Wat Phra That Sadet, Lampang Province

Source: Research Team

2.2) A group of patterns derived from Buddhist literature and other literature, such as Buddhist history patterns, Vessantara Jataka patterns, Vidhura Bandit Jataka patterns, and Ramayana patterns.



(3)



(4)



(5)

Figure 3: The Vessantara Jataka pattern on the Dhamma Scriptures box at Wat Si Khom Kham Cultural Center, Prayao Province

Figure 4: The Vessantara Jataka pattern on the Lung-shaped Dhamma Scriptures Box at Wat Chediluang Voravihan, Chiang Mai Province

Figure 5: The Ramayana pattern on the Lung-shaped Dhamma Scriptures Chest at Wat Umlong, Lampang Province

Source: Research Team

2.3) A group of angel patterns commonly adorn the center of the body of the Dhamma scripture box. The Lung-shaped Dhamma scriptures box features various poses such as angels performing Wai holding various flowers in a standing position doing Wai, a kneeling position to do Wai, and a Brahma pattern with three faces, making Wai holding a lotus flower.



(6)



(7)



(8)

Figure 6: The angel pattern on the Dhamma Scriptures box at Wat Khao Tan Luang, Chiang Mai Province

Figure 7: The angel pattern on the Lung-shaped Dhamma Scriptures Box at Wat Phra That Sadet, Lampang Province

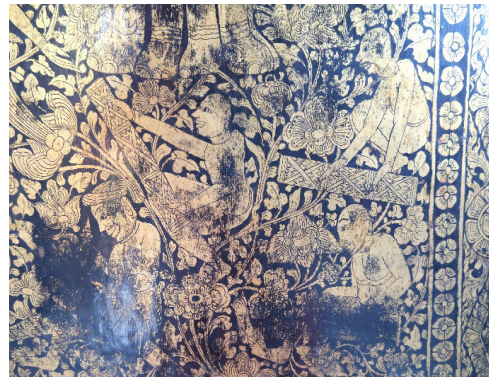
Figure 6: The angel pattern on the Lung-shaped Dhamma Scriptures Chest at Wat Pa Sang Ngam, Lamphun Province

Source: Research Team

2.4) A group of human patterns are commonly adorned in various poses, such as images of people playing musical instruments and a photo of people wrapping the Dhamma scriptures.



(9)



(10)

Figure 9: The human pattern on the castle-shaped Dhamma Scriptures Chest at Wat Phra That Hariphunchai, Lamphun Province

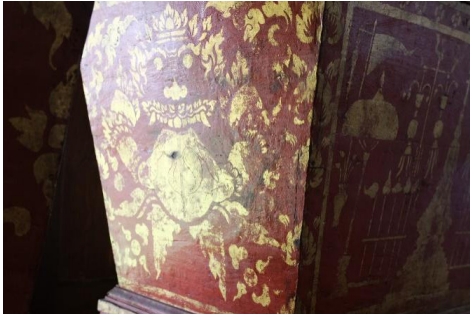
Figure 10: The pattern of people wrapping the Dhamma scriptures on the Dhamma Scriptures Box at Wat Sung Men, Phrae Province

Source: Research Team

2.5) A group of non-human motifs includes the following:

- The Manta (lunar eclipse) pattern is inspired by the legend of Phra Pritra in lunar and solar stories, where Chandadevabutr and Suryadevabutr were captured by Asurindrahu. In the Dhamma scriptures, half-manta patterns are often depicted as pretending to devour the moon or sun.

- Kala's facial pattern is influenced by Brahmin traditions. In Buddhism, the mask symbolizes that time will swallow everything, including itself. The face pattern represents a giant or monster making a gesture of spitting out flora or other patterns instead of the moon and sun.



(11)



(12)

Figure 11: The Manta (lunar eclipse) pattern on the Dhamma Scriptures Chest at Wat Phra That Hariphunchai, Lamphun Province

Figure 12: The Kala's facial pattern on the Lung-shaped Dhamma Scriptures Chest at Wat Mu Peng, Lamphun Province

Source: Research Team

- Lai Kinnara and Kinnaree: Kinnaranna, also called Kinnaron, are male nonhumans, Kinnaree in Lanna pronounced Kinnaree (Udom Rungruangsrri, 2007), is a female nonhuman living in the Himmaman forest. It has a half-human, half-bird appearance. The upper body is human, the lower body is a bird with wings and a tail. In the work of the Dhamma scriptures box, the Dhamma scriptures boxes are often decorated with Kinnara and Kinnaree making dance moves.



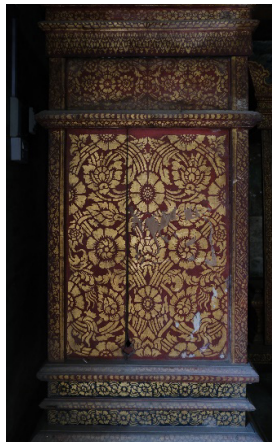
Figure 13: The Kinnaree's dancing pattern on the Lung-shaped Dhamma Scriptures Chest at Wat Chedi Luang Worawihan Chiang Mai Province

Source: Research Team

2.6) Flora pattern group: In the Dhamma scriptures box, this group of patterns is tied in the form of a bunch of floats intertwined in the entire area of the body of the Dhamma scriptures box, with branches, stalks, leaves, curled and intertwined with flower patterns, such as flower pot or Puranakata pot pattern, lotus flower bloom pattern, lotus bud pattern, artificial lotus pattern, gardenia flower pattern, acacia flower pattern, flora coiled stem pattern, and four-petal flower guard pattern in a rhombus frame.



(14)



(15)



(16)

Figure 14: The flora pattern on the Dhamma Scriptures Box at Wat Phra Yuen, Lamphun Province

Figure 15: The flora pattern on the Dhamma Scriptures Box at Wat Nong Nguek, Lamphun Province

Figure 16: The flora pot pattern on the Lung-shaped Dhamma Scriptures Chest at Wat Phra That Lampang Luang, Lampang Province

Source: Research Team

2.7) A group of animal motifs consists of sacred animals, Himmaphan animals, mythical creatures, and common animals. Examples include lion pat-

terns, bird patterns, bat patterns, tiger patterns, and three-headed elephant patterns.



(17)



(18)



(19)

Figure 17: The lion pattern on the Lung-shaped Dhamma Scriptures Chest at Wat Phra That Hariphunchai, Lamphun Province

Figure 18: The lion pattern on the Lung-shaped Dhamma Scriptures Chest at Wat Lai Hin, Lampang Province

Figure 19: The lion pattern on the Lung-shaped Dhamma Scriptures Chest at Wat Umlong, Lampang Province

Source: Research Team

2.8) A group of Chinese motifs includes the Awanzhijin pattern, the Chinese swastika, and the wrench pattern.



(20)



(21)

Figure 20: The Awanzhijin pattern on the Dhamma Scriptures Box at Wat Na Kuam Tai, Lampang Province

Figure 21: The Awanzhijin pattern on the Dhamma Scriptures Box at Wat Na Kuam Tai, Lampang Province

Source: Research Team

2.9) A group of general patterns refers to patterns that are commonly found in the work of the Dhamma scriptures box. Examples include a group of four-petal flower patterns, a group of scrambled stalks, such as a pattern of a funnel-like float filled with rice used as offerings, and a four-petal flower with a scrambled stem pattern.



(22)



(23)



(24)

Figure 22: The four-petal flower pattern on the castle-shaped Dhamma Scriptures Chest at Wat Pasak, Chiangmai Province

Figure 23: The four-petal flower with a scrambled stem pattern on the Lung-shaped Dhamma Scriptures Chest at Wat Phra That Hariphunchai, Lamphun Province

Figure 24: The four-petal flower with a scrambled stem pattern on the Lung-shaped Dhamma Scriptures Chest at Wat Mahawan, Lampang Province

Source: Research Team



Results from the survey on the status of the Dhamma scriptures box in Chiang Mai, Lamphun, and Lampang provinces, as well as in supplementary research areas, found that worship items being used to set up a museum-style exhibit for interested visitors are preserved and maintained by temples, communities, and networks. However, some worship items that are no longer in use have been abandoned, damaged, and deteriorated, primarily because they have been replaced with new ones. The value of use has diminished, and there are limited maintenance budgets and awareness of their value within the temples and communities.

5. The Preservation of Identity and Management Mechanism of National Intangible Cultural Heritage “Dhamma Scriptures Box” by the Community in Lanna

The preservation of the identity and management mechanism of the national intangible cultural heritage, the “Dhamma Scriptures Box,” requires the participation of temples, communities, cultural agencies, and educational institutions. This collaboration must be integrated continuously and driven simultaneously across four levels of mechanisms:

1. Management of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH): It should be managed according to academic principles, including recording, storing, creating databases, establishing museums, and managing knowledge regarding origins, patterns, and craftsmanship groups. A collection of antiques, Dhamma scriptures boxes, and Lanna traditional altars should be set up within temples to prevent theft.

2. The management of People: People are the creators of Buddhist art, including artisans and local scholars with technical skills. Knowledge must be managed, recorded, and transferred to ensure it is not lost. Raising awareness of the value of the Dhamma seat, Dhamma scriptures boxes, and Lanna traditional altars among interested individuals, artisans’ heirs, and the new generation is crucial. Temples and communities must be concerned about this.

3. Management of learning spaces: Creating learning spaces by pro-



viding opportunities for interested individuals, successors, or the new generation to engage in learning is essential. This can involve creating “cultural spaces” or artisanal learning spaces in artisans’ homes and passing on knowledge to successors to appreciate its value. To sustain the cultural and intellectual heritage and possibly give it economic value, users must help push towards becoming a soft power.

4. Management of Network: Community-led initiatives require cooperation from all sectors, including the community, government, and academic sectors. Effective management involves handling existing resources, people, display spaces, and networks collaboratively.

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Recommendations

This research has the following recommendations:

1) The management of ICH in Lanna is currently limited in its adherence to academic standards. Government agencies or educational institutions should collaborate with temples and communities to create databases utilizing modern storage methods.

2) Knowledge about the conservation and preservation of Lanna’s intangible cultural heritage should be disseminated according to academic prin-



principles. This can be achieved through training, demonstrations, or studying from well-managed learning sources to expand these practices to other temples.

3) Buddhist monks and communities who own ICH often do not fully understand the concept of “registered as a national intangible cultural heritage” and mistakenly believe that registration means the government will confiscate the Dhamma scriptures box belonging to the community’s temples. As a result, some temples and communities are reluctant to cooperate in collecting information. Relevant agencies should organize training sessions or create public relations media to foster mutual understanding between temples, communities, and conservation agencies.

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