



# Identity and Wisdom of Decorative Patterns on the Religious Buildings in Keng Tung, Republic of the Union of Myanmar

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The study on the Identity and Wisdom of Decorative Patterns on the Religious Buildings in Keng Tung, Republic of the Union of Myanmar is a study and analysis of the forms and patterns of the decorations on religious buildings in Keng Tung, Republic of the Union of Myanmar. Qualitative research methods were used in collecting the documents and field research data in Keng Tung. The populations of the study were experts, practitioners and related people in Keng Tung. The research tools used were surveys, observations and interviews. The data was analysed using ideology on identity and wisdom, structural-functional theory and cultural-diffusion theory. The result was presented using descriptive analysis. From this study it was found that most production of the decorative patterns on religious buildings is based on the wisdom of local sculptors that had been passed down. Burmese sculptors played an important role in the creation of the religious buildings decorations in recent eras, especially those from Mandalay. The identity of the patterns of religious buildings in Keng Tung can be categorised into two major categories of local Keng Tung patterns. This group of patterns originates from the traditional art form of Keng Tung, influenced by the Lanna arts. During the 21<sup>st</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> Buddhist centuries, traditional patterns from the Tai Khoen people mixed in with the Lanna influence and led to the kind of art that consists of the relationship between history, society and culture.

**Key words:** *Identity, Wisdom, Decorative Patterns of Religious Buildings*



## Introduction

Keng Tung is a historical city that coexisted with many ancient civilisations in Southeast Asia. The city had different roles and importance in each era, which can be seen by its different names mentioned in different myths and chronicles. Keng Tung was known as Kheun city, Khoen city or Khemarat city (Wichienkeo & Reungrangsi, 1995). Keng Tung is situated along the long border up until Sipsong Punna. It is considered a border city connecting Yunnan region of China and Tai Yai group of Lanna. The majority of the population of Keng Tung is from Tai Khoeun ethnic group or what is known in Tai language as Tai Khoeun. The word “Tai” is put in front of any ethnic group that is from the same ethnic group of the people in Thailand. Additionally, there are also a variety of ethnic groups that are under the rule of Keng Tung such as Tai Leu, Tai Yai, Tai Laem, China, India, Aka, Lahu, Leesaw and Kachin people who are living within the Kheun river basin, under the main influence of Tai Khoeun.

Historically, Keng Tung used to be a city under the rule of the Lanna Kingdom. Traces of this can be seen from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Buddhist century. The social and cultural characteristics of Keng Tung were influenced by Chiang Mai city, which is the capital of Lanna Kingdom. The influence came from the fact that the two cities had close relationships. Keng Tung is like the outpost of the Lanna Kingdom (Setthakun, 1994). Later from the 22<sup>nd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> Buddhist centuries, Keng Tung fell under the rule of Burma, which caused the social and cultural influence from Burma to play an important role. This was also due to the pattern set out by the royal court of Burma. There were many political changes in Keng Tung during that period of time since Keng Tung was a critical strategic point in this region. The Panglong agreement was signed between Burma, Tai Yai, Kachin and Kheun people in Panglong city, Shan State in order to break free from the British in 1947 and after it gained the freedom, the Burmese government included Keng Tung and Tai Yai outpost cities in Shan state to be parts of Burma until today.

Throughout the establishment of Keng Tung city, since before the 18<sup>th</sup> Buddhist century, Buddhism has been playing a role in creating a relationship with the area and has always reflected the important role of Buddhism in Keng Tung. This is the reflection of the traditional social and cultural status that has always existed alongside Buddhism and has brought in the development of Keng Tung and made it impossible for other religions to be spread and take over Buddhism because the people in Keng Tung have a strong belief in Buddhism (Norkat, 2008). Arts also spread in with the Buddhist culture since arts were interesting tools that teach people to follow the Buddhist teaching. Apart from spreading knowledge through verbal and written language, drawing is another kind of tool to communicate the understanding and the faith of Buddhism to people, especially through the patterns that exist on the religious buildings in Keng Tung.



Religious buildings include the structures, as well as the moveable objects, that relate to the religion, such as the buildings constructed from bricks, stone, in forms of palaces, viharas, stupas and all artistic objects such as the sculptures, carved stone or wood pieces and paintings. In Keng Tung, viharas are the most religious buildings for the people Sanyakiatikun (2017). The viharas of Keng Tung are situated within the temple area according to the Keng Tung culture. Therefore, viharas are the buildings that people of Keng Tung dedicate themselves to decorating both on the exteriors and the interior. Because of the three architectural components: the base, the main structure, and the cupola, the architectural structure is called a religious building. The functions of religious buildings are for usage of the structure themselves and the aesthetic values. There are also implications on the beliefs that connect society and culture, especially the local architectural wisdom of Keng Tung people.

From these observations, even though the social and cultural characteristics of Keng Tung are influenced by Lanna and Burmese arts and created its own art form, the root of the local wisdom of Keng Tung has been accumulated through the experience from the past to the present. This local wisdom emphasised the relationship between the Keng Tung people and the Buddhist architectural work that helped Keng Tung to be unified through their unique characteristics. Especially in Keng Tung, where there is a strong faith in Buddhism, the decorated patterns according to the religious architecture are filled with wisdom, the Buddhist beliefs, the community livelihood, valuable culture and tradition, and form a unique characteristic of Keng Tung.

The rationale and the importance mentioned above led to this study on the identity and wisdom in the decorative patterns on religious buildings in Keng Tung, Republic of the Union of Myanmar. This study is a compilation of the knowledge on Burmese arts and a source for future fine art studies within the ASEAN countries, especially in the dimension of identity and the wisdom of the patterns used in the decoration of religious buildings.

## **2. Research Objectives**

2.1 To study the decorative patterns of religious buildings in Keng Tung, Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

2.2 To analyse the identity and the wisdom in the decorative patterns on religious buildings in Keng Tung, Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

## **3. Research Methods**

The objective of this research is to study the decorative patterns on religious buildings in Keng Tung and analyse the identity and the wisdom of the decorative patterns. The scope of

the research is to study ten religious buildings in the form of viharas in Keng Tung. These temples are ancient temples that have been continuously renovated and are currently being used. The populations for this research were 1) the experts that were chosen through a selective sampling method. The experts are directly related to the decorative patterns of the religious buildings in Keng Tung. 2) The practitioners who created the decorative patterns on the buildings and 3) related people acquired through ransom sampling from the general population of Keng Tung. The research tools used were surveys, observations and interviews. The data was compiled and analysed under the research frameworks which consist of the ideology on identity, the ideology on wisdom, the functional-structure theory, and the cultural diffusion theory. The results were presented using descriptive analysis.

#### **4. Results of the study**

This research was done according to the following objectives.

##### ***4.1 The form of the decorative patterns on religious buildings in Keng Tung, Republic of the Union of Myanmar.***

From the study of the patterns in all three components: cupola, main structure and the base, it can be analysed that the patterns that exist on religious buildings in Keng Tung can be categorised into seven categories: kranok patterns, flora patterns, patterns of people, animal patterns, architectural patterns, storytelling patterns and geometric patterns.

Kranok patterns that were found were in the shape of leaves with curling points. These patterns seem like they received the influence from Lanna, which is the influence in the early era that came into Keng Tung along with Buddhism. Additionally, there were also some Kranok patterns that were influenced by Burmese arts, which came in a later era. Most kranok patterns that were found have curling heads with markings all around.

Flora patterns are the patterns found of lotus flowers, flowers in general, vines, lotus flowers with tips like shapes of flames and lotus with stems and tips like shapes of flames. The lotus came from the symbols of Buddhism, which signify fertility. Additionally, there were also patterns of pots with flower drawing and Purna-ghata, which signify success and peacefulness. These are the patterns influenced by Lanna arts.

Animal patterns that exist in the decoration of the viharas show many kinds of animals. The animals were both real and mythical animals. The patterns were a mixture of two or more kinds of animals. It was found that this kind of pattern was influenced by the Lanna, Chinese, Burma and local Keng Tung arts. The influence of Lanna was lions and garudas. The influence of China was qilins, dragons and Asian Arowana. The influence of Burma was the lions, garudas, rabbits and peacocks. There were also local mythical animals of Keng Tung,

such as the elephants and Hatsadilings. These patterns were used as decoration and telling stories from Buddhism in Keng Tung. There were also patterns according to the beliefs and the symbols of ones' birth date, which is a local belief of Keng Tung.

Patterns of people that were found consist of two groups: firstly people from literature such as Vessantara Jātaka, monks or ordinary people; and secondly supernatural beings such as angels, mother earth, Lord Buddha and giants. Architectural patterns that were used mostly consist of Chulamani Chedi and were decorated on the walls.

Storytelling patterns were mostly patterns on the walls using the Lai Kham technique, such as the story of Lord Buddha's past lives, history of Lord Buddha, Jataka tales, Vessantara Jātaka tales and Sujawannawualuang.

Geometric patterns were also found as decorative patterns such as straight lines, curved lines, rhombus and Star of David.

#### ***4.2 The identity and wisdom in the decorative patterns in Keng Tung, Republic of the Union of Myanmar.***

4.2.1 From analysing the wisdom in the decorative patterns on religious buildings in Keng Tung, the ideology on the analysis of wisdom was used. The different kinds of wisdom that relate to the creation of patterns were wisdom on the structure of the patterns, wisdom on materials and techniques in the creation of patterns, wisdom in the production of the patterns, and wisdom on incorporating ideology and beliefs in the patterns. The analysis of the decorative patterns was done on ten temples: Luang Hua Kwang royal Temple, Chiang Chan temple, Phra Kaew temple, Chiang Yeun temple, Luang Pa Daeng royal temple, Luang Yang Kwang royal temple, Intabuppharam temple, Phra that Luang Chom Kham temple, Phra Sing temple and Chiang Ngam temple. The following is the result of the study.

It was found that on the wisdom of the structure of the patterns, the characteristics of the structural components of the patterns, the cupola was decorated starting from the gable apex with clay potteries and carved and stencilled works. For the Mek Tung, Mek Lai, Side Wall and Mek Yoi pattern are decorated with lotus flowers, angel figures, Hatsadilings, nagas, bird of paradise along with the floral patterns along the roofs. This shows beauty from the duplicated placements of different shapes in different parts in a pattern. As for the main building of the vihara, the placement follows the Buddhist pattern with the plaster base of Buddha images as the main component in the middle of the temple, around one span of the pole from the back of the temple, with the pulpit and the monk cushion seats to the right. The decorative pattern on the interior was found from the ceiling, the door and window facades, the walls, Kong Khiew, and poles. The plaster bases were decorated with Lai Khum patterns, carvings, metal stencils, lacquering, and decorated with jewelry. Other patterns were Kranok

patterns, flora patterns, patterns of people, patterns with stories and geometric patterns. From the decorations on the designated positions according to the architectural principles that reflect the Buddhist ideology and beliefs, it can also solve the problem of empty spaces by adding beauty to them.

For the wisdom of the materials and the technique in creating patterns, nine techniques were identified: 1) metal carving and the stencil technique. The main materials used were thin metals, bronze, zinc and aluminium. 2) For the techniques of clay potteries and ceramics the materials were dark clay and minerals to cover the surface. 3) For the Klai Kham techniques the main materials were gold leaves, paper and lacquer. 4) For the carving and stencilling technique the materials were teak. 5) For the fresh stucco technique the main materials were traditional and conventional cement. 6) For the stucco and stained glass techniques the main materials were traditional and conventional cement and stained glass. 7) For the lacquering and jewellery techniques the main materials were lacquer, ashes and jewellery. 8) For the lacquering technique the main materials were lacquer and ashes; and 9) for the paste-on stained glass technique the main materials were thin pieces of glass.

For the wisdom in pattern production, there were nine methods: 1) the carved and stenciled metal sheet technique. Earlier, this technique was completed in Mandalay. Currently, this technique is done as a part of the conventional local arts in Keng Tung. 2) The Keng Tung ceramics technique. The Keng Tung ceramics are in green and brown colours. This type of work was created as a local Keng Tung art, which was passed down by the local craftsmen. The main area for this type of production is in the Yang Kuang area, Keng Tung. 3) The Lai Kham production technique. The Lai Kham production technique is the local Keng Tung art form, which was passed down by the ancestors and is still being practiced amongst a group of craftsmen. 4) The carved and stencilled technique. This type of work was created as the local Keng Tung artwork. Currently, it is difficult to find both the craftsmen and the materials. These products still have to be ordered from Mandalay. 5) The fresh stucco production process. The fresh stucco production has to rely on craftsmen with specific skills. This kind of art was created in Keng Tung by both Burmese and Thai Yai craftsmen. 7) The lacquering production technique. Outsiders created this kind of production. The materials and the craftsmen are from other cities in Myanmar. 8) The lacquering and jewelry production process. This process is also done by outsiders. The materials and the craftsmen are from other cities in Myanmar. 9) The paste-on stained glass production process. This process is created by outsiders. The materials and the craftsmen are from other cities in Myanmar. In conclusion, most of the production process was created by the Keng Tung local craftsmen who had passed down their skills and knowledge, and some processes are done by outsiders who came to Keng Tung.

As for the philosophy of ideology and beliefs relate to decorative patterns, the craftsmen created a pattern that reflects beauty as well as integrated ideology and the belief in

Buddhism, for instance, the story of Lord Buddha and the previous life of Lord Buddha. The purpose of decoration is to beautify parts of the vihara to replicate the residence of the Lord Buddha. There is the main Buddha image as the representation within the vihara. This building is therefore built to reflect the elegance, the sacred, and to pass on the blessing to all Buddhist believers and communicate the full meaning of Buddhism.

According to the tradition, the patterns and the values held by the craftsmen in Keng Tung, (apart from the decorative patterns that tell stories of the myths and cultural beliefs and society of Keng Tung); also reflect the uniqueness of the local area, for instance, the Sujawannawualuang or the history of Keng Tung. Most patterns were created using Lai Kham techniques to create a more golden reflection within the temples. This is a kind of beauty that also communicates the sacred, the faith and the peacefulness.

To summarise, the wisdom of the decorative patterns in Keng Tung analysed through all four aspects can be categorised into two groups based on the craftsmen wisdom. Firstly there was the patterns from Keng Tung traditional wisdom, which was influenced by Buddhism and came to Keng Tung in an early era. This includes the materials, the techniques, the production process, and the ideology and beliefs. The second category is the wisdom that came in a later era, which received the influence from Burmese arts that were integrated into the patterns on the religious buildings today.

#### ***4.2.2. The Analysis of the Identity of the Patterns on Religious Buildings in Keng Tung.***

From the analysis, the patterns can be categorised into seven different groups: Kranok patterns, floral patterns, patterns of people, animal patterns, architectural patterns, pattern with stories, and geometric. It was found that each group received influence from the arts in nearby areas. The patterns also relate to history, society and culture of nearby kingdoms, such as Lanna, Burma and China. As for the wisdom in the decorative patterns on religious buildings, there are two main groups: the traditional Keng Tung wisdom that received the influence from Lanna such as the materials, the techniques, the production process, as well as the beliefs and the wisdom in the later eras influenced by the Burmese arts. This integration created decorative patterns in religious buildings in Keng Tung today. The researcher had analysed the characteristics and identity of the patterns in religious buildings in Keng Tung based on the influence of the arts and wisdom in choosing the techniques and materials, the ideology and the beliefs, and different points in history, which led to two groups of identities.

4.2.2.1 The local Keng Tung identity which is the patterns from the traditional art in Keng Tung and received the influence from Lanna in the 21<sup>st</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> Buddhist century. From the study, the local Keng Tung or Tai Khouen art is a mixture of the traditional belief of the Tai Khoeun people in Keng Tung integrated with the Lanna influence, which relates to the history, the society and the culture; especially in bringing in religion from Chiang Mai into

Keng Tung. There were some renovations and developments of the craftsmen in each era according to the skills of each craftsman. There are changes and integration of the Lanna arts in the decorative patterns in the religious buildings in Keng Tung, such as vine patterns, Kranok patterns, flower patterns, Hatsadilings patterns, lion patterns and Kalasha patterns. These patterns were integrated with the Lanna arts into the form of decorative patterns in the viharas in Keng Tung today while maintaining the form of local Keng Tung identity, which was influenced by Lanna arts.

4.2.2.2 The conventional local Keng Tung identity is a group of artistic patterns in the later Keng Tung era that were influenced by Burmese arts from the 25<sup>th</sup> Buddhist century to today. From the 25<sup>th</sup> Buddhist century, Keng Tung became part of Burma, both a political and religious relationship. The Burmese kingdom expanded its influence through the education process from the Burmese royal court. The crown prince of Keng Tung, who would become the next leader, played an important role in bringing Burmese culture into Keng Tung. Therefore, Keng Tung arts have had a clear influence from Burmese from that time until today. Most viharas in Keng Tung had continuously been renovated, which caused changes and the integration in terms of arts. The influence of Burmese arts over the local arts in Keng Tung was, for instance, the decorative patterns in the viharas were made through metal sheets carving and stencilling, which is an outstanding identity today. The roofs were decorated to show a unique identity in the composition, characteristics of the patterns or the colours used. The decoration caused the cupolas to shine elegantly. These patterns have been popular since the mid-25<sup>th</sup> Buddhist century through the cultural diffusion from Mandalay Burma. They were the new kind of arts that came in and were used in decorating the viharas and other religious buildings in Keng Tung.

## 5. Conclusion

The study of the decorative patterns and the analysis of the identity and the wisdom of the patterns on religious buildings in Keng Tung, Republic of the Union of Myanmar, show the following conclusions.

5.1 The study of decorative patterns on religious buildings in Keng Tung, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar found that there are decorations on all three main components of the buildings: the cupola, the main building and the base. There are seven main groups of patterns that were used as decorative patterns on religious buildings in Keng Tung: Kranok patterns, flora patterns, patterns of people, animal patterns, architecture patterns, patterns with stories, and geometric patterns.

5.2 The identity and the wisdom in the decorative patterns on religious buildings in Keng Tung, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, shows the structural wisdom in prioritising the roof and the main building by following the principle of architecture that reflects the



Buddhist ideology and beliefs. As for the wisdom on the use of materials and techniques, nine techniques had been identified. It was found that most of the production process was created by the local craftsmen in Keng Tung amongst whom the knowledge has been passed down. Some were craftsmen from Burma, especially from Mandalay. The wisdom on the Buddhist ideology and beliefs led to the creation of beauty that integrates the strong belief in Buddhism as the main principle. Additionally, some decorations tell the stories of the myths and Keng Tung social and cultural beliefs. The decorations create a unique local identity. The four aspects of the wisdom in decorative patterns can be analysed through the skills of the craftsmen and categorised into two groups. Firstly the traditional wisdom of Keng Tung, that was influenced by the Lanna during the first era when Buddhism came into Keng Tung. This includes the materials, the techniques, production process, as well as the ideology and beliefs. Secondly the wisdom in later eras that was influenced by Burmese arts was integrated into the decorative patterns found on religious buildings in Keng Tung today.

For the identity of the decorative patterns on religious buildings in Keng Tung, the identity of the patterns relates to the political influence between the Burmese and the Lanna kingdom since the 21<sup>st</sup> Buddhist century until today. In the early era, the process of cultural diffusion caused the Lanna Kingdom to play a role in the spreading of Buddhism. The people who played a role in this were the Buddhist monks. The Burmese kingdom expanded its influence through the education process of the Royal Court of Burma and the Crown Prince of Keng Tung at the time, who later on, become the next leader and played a major role in bringing Burmese culture into Keng Tung. The Lanna and the Burmese culture was an essential cultural root that has been developed and passed down to Keng Tung today as well as created its identity through the decorative patterns on religious buildings in Keng Tung. For the traditional identity of Keng Tung, the influence of Lanna in the earlier era relates to Buddhism that spread from Chiang Mai and can still be seen in Keng Tung. The identity of local Keng Tung influenced by the Burmese appeared later in the 25<sup>th</sup> Buddhist century. That was the time when Burma gained direct influence over the political and religious aspects, which created the conventional Keng Tung identity in the decorative patterns on both the new, renovated and traditional buildings. The decorative patterns on religious buildings in Keng Tung are therefore a reflection of the society and culture of the Tai Khoeun people of Keng Tung. It is a tool that shows the root of arts that help shape the identity of the people of Keng Tung up until today.

## **6. Discussion of Results**

The study of the decorative patterns on the viharas in Keng Tung shows the following patterns: Kranok patterns, flora patterns, patterns of people, animal patterns, architectural patterns, patterns with stories, and geometric patterns. It was found that most patterns were influenced by the nearby kingdoms in the early era, the strong influence of the arts from Lanna, China and Burma, as well as the local beliefs of the Keng Tung people. This reflects



the cultural diffusion of the arts that played an important role alongside politics, society and culture. More importantly, these patterns came in with the spreading of Buddhism in Keng Tung, especially the Ramanwong Buppharam and Lankavamsa Mai Pa Daeng sects. Since the time that Chiang Mai ruled over Keng Tung, decorative arts on religious buildings affect the Buddhist beliefs. Similar to the later era when Keng Tung fell under the rule of Burma, Buddhism from Burma played a role until it became the main culture today. This goes in line with the cultural diffusion theory by Clark Wissler (1923) and Alfred Kroeber (1963), who believe that the culture diffuses from the centre to the surrounding area that it reaches within the same geography and era. From this idea, we can see the culture spread in groups and spread to different areas where there are no obstacles; in different geography which humans could travel to (Wansiri, 1997). Therefore, the greatness of the Lanna kingdom of Lanna kingdom that gained the influence in the social and cultural aspects in the traditional era, especially the Lanna arts that affect the forms and patterns that exist in Keng Tung on Buddhist religious buildings. This includes the fact that Keng Tung fell under the rule of Burma, which had an impact on both politics and religion, and unavoidably affects the decorative patterns.

For the wisdom in decorative arts on religious buildings in Keng Tung, it was found that the wisdom on materials, techniques, and the production process of most viharas had adapted their techniques and methods to be more conventional. This is true especially for the ideology and the beliefs that are related to the creation of decorative arts. Due to the fact that the craftsmen or the host of the project have strong faith in Buddhism, the creation of the patterns mostly relate to Buddhism. The myth and social and cultural beliefs are secondary. Other important aspects are the techniques that help created beauty. It can be noticed that the decorative patterns were created as part of Buddhist rituals. The viharas are therefore continuously maintained and renovated according to Burmese arts. Burmese craftsmen, therefore, played important roles in the creation of the decorations of the viharas. The craftsmen are, therefore, from the center of arts in Mandalay and also the origin in the passing on of the wisdom to the craftsmen in Keng Tung today. This goes in line with the research by Sanyakiatikun (2017), who stated that the art development of Keng Tung shows the process of acceptance and development of the craftsmen in creating the arts in Keng Tung. Currently, arts can still be produced by the local craftsmen in Keng Tung. There are also exchanges of the knowledge with other craftsmen in Myanmar as well as importing the materials to be produced locally.

The identity in the decorative patterns on religious buildings in Keng Tung shows that most viharas have two clear main groups of arts: groups with the local Keng Tung identity.

This traditional group of arts in Keng Tung received the influence of arts from Lanna during the 21<sup>st</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> Buddhist century. The second group is the conventional Keng Tung identity group. This is the group of patterns after Keng Tung had already received the arts influence



from Burma from the 25<sup>th</sup> Buddhist century to the present. This goes along with the identity ideology that says that identities are cultural uniqueness of the people and communities that were passed down by the ancestor and controlled by the mainstream culture of people who have more power. The development of the community or local cultural ideology believes that development is the process of “returning to the root,” or seeking the self and identity that had been forgotten or controlled. The development brought back the identity and turned it into the power to restore oneself with confidence and self-respect, knowledge, wisdom and the beautiful norm and tradition (Songbundit, 2006).

The artistic identity of Lanna and Burmese culture is, therefore, an important cultural root of the development process that was passed down to the current Keng Tung culture and creates the identity for the decorative patterns on religious buildings in Keng Tung. A group of local Keng Tung identity in the early era from Lanna was related to a Buddhist sect spread from Chiang Mai. The identity can still be seen in Keng Tung today. The group of conventional Keng Tung identity was influenced by Burmese arts since the 25<sup>th</sup> Buddhist Century. At the time, Burma had direct influence over politics and religion, which created the conventional Keng Tung identity in the decorative patterns on both the new, renovated and traditional buildings. Therefore, the decorative patterns on religious buildings in Keng Tung are a reflection of the social and cultural aspect of the Tai Khoeun in Keng Tung. It is the tool that shows the artistic root of the components in the creation of the self-identity of the Keng Tung people until today. This fact fits with the structural-functional theory by Talcott Parsons (Chantavanich, 2010) that mentioned that culture is the force that holds together the bases of society and related to the interaction of the doers. Additionally, it also helped to perfect the characteristics and the social system. Cultural systems are a part of the system within the norm and value. A cultural system is a pattern that consists of symbols. The patterns are in the form of an institution and a social system. For instance, they have the characteristics of symbols and are normally passed down from generation to generation, such as the Tai Khoeun culture in Keng Tung. Artworks that are related to Buddhism is therefore an important cultural tool that creates the patterns and helps the Tai Khoeun artistic identity to be known, especially when the strong local identity merged with the conventional culture and created an important structure and caused the Tai Khoeun social and cultural aspects of Keng Tung to be well-known and pass down to the new generations.

## **7. Suggestions**

### ***7.1 Suggestions for future research application***

The study of the identity and the wisdom in decorative patterns on religious buildings in Keng Tung is the study of the patterns, the identity and the wisdom of the patterns on religious buildings of Keng Tung, therefore the result from the study can be used for the following benefit:



7.1.1 Study the artistic characteristics of the decoration of religious buildings within the ASEAN countries for the benefit of students and people who are interested.

7.1.2 Create knowledge for the government and communities to use as a base for coming up with directions for the development of arts and the local cultural tourism in Keng Tung.

## **7.2 Suggestions for future research**

7.2.1 There should be research on the patterns within other ethnic groups within the Mekong region in order for the patterns to be compared.

7.2.2 There should be a study with the purpose of preservation and restoration of the local arts in Keng Tung and developed into the cultural learning space.

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