

Tai Lue Dress from the Homeland in China to Thailand, Laos, Burma, and Vietnam

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History of the Sip Song Pan Na

The Lue are the people of the Sip Song Pan Na, which is now in China. The historical document *The Geneology of the Lords of Saenwi Sip Song Pan Na* compiled by Thao Khwang Saeng and Ai Kham begins the account of the lords of Saenwi Sip Song Pan Na at the time of Phaya Jueang. It states that when Phaya Jueang had completed his wars and consolidated his conquests, he established his palace in the village of Ai Lan of the Lua people, and this thus came to be known as Chiang Lan. Subsequently, in the year 522 of the Lesser Era (B.E. 1703, A.D. 1160), the name was changed to Chiang Rung. Phaya Jueang became king at the age of 32, reigned for 21 years, and died at the age of 53 in the year 542 of the Lesser Era (B.E. 1723, A.D. 1180).

The Kingdom of Sip Song Pan Na was divided into 12 (*sip song*) regions (*pan na*):

1. Chiang Rung and Mueang Ham
2. Mueang Chae, Chiang Lu, Mueang Awng, and Mueang Ngat
3. Mueang Hun and Mueang Phan
4. Mueang Joeng and Mueang Rai
5. Mueang Law, Mueang Mang, and Mueang Ngam Lang Nuea
6. Mueang La and Mueang Ban
7. Mueang Hing and Mueang Bang
8. Mueang La and Mueang Wang
9. Mueang Phung and Mueang Yuan
10. U Tai and U Neua
11. Chiang Thawng, Baw La, I Ngu, and Yi Phang
12. Mueang Luang and Mueang Khiao

In the year 1275 of the Lesser Era (B.E. 2456, A.D. 1913), during the reign of Jao Mawm Kham Leu, the Sip Song Pan Na was divided into eight districts: the seat of the first was Chiang Rung; that of the second was Mueang Chae; that of the third, Mueang Hun; that of the fourth, Mueang Luang; that of the fifth, Mueang La; that of the sixth, I Nu; that of the seventh, Mueang Hing, and that of the eighth, Mueang Khwan Fang.

Subsequently, in the year 1289 of the Lesser Era (B.E. 2470, A.D. 1927), during the reign of Jao Mawm Suwannaparakhrang, the Sip Song Pan Na was divided

into seven districts: Chiang Rung, Mueang Rai, Mueang Chae, Mueang La, Mueang Hing, Saeng Min (Yi Phang), and Chiang Nuea.

The Geneology of the Lords of Saenwi Sip Song Pan Na lists the kings of the Sip Song Pan Na from Phaya Jueang to Jao Mawm Kham Lue, covering a period extending from 522 to 1312 of the Lesser Era (B.E. 1703-2493, A.D. 1160-1950), or 790 years, during which time 41 kings reigned.

The Dress of the Tai Lue in the Sip Song Pan Na in China

The jacket, or *suea pat*, has long sleeves and is made of cotton dyed with indigo. In winter, jacket made of wool or velvet, called *suea kop*, is worn.

There are two types of tube skirt (*sin*).

1. *Sin ta lue* has two seams. The widths of the horizontal bands of design are equal. A lower border (*tin*) of black, indigo, or green cloth is sewn to the body of the skirt.
2. *Sin ta yon* has horizontal bands of design of equal width down the length of the skirt.

The Dress of the Tai Lue in Burma

The skirt worn by noble ladies on special occasions, called *sin mai kham*, has two seams made of silk woven with gold or silver threads. The lower border is of Chinese silk embroidered with floral motifs.

The Dress of the Tai Lue in Thailand

1. The Dress of the Tai Lue in Nan Province

1.1 The Tha Wang Pha, Chiang Klang, and Pua District style

The jacket, or *suea pat*, has long sleeves and is made of cotton dyed with indigo. The front placket and the cuffs are decorated with red borders.

There are two types of tube skirt. The *sin pawng* have horizontal bands woven using the *khit* or *mat mi* techniques (*mat mi* being called *mat kan* in Lue) alternating with bands of the solid base color. *Sin pawng* with *mat kan* strips are called *sin pawng kan*. The second type of tube skirt is called *sin man*. Again, there are bands woven with either the *khit* or *mat kan* techniques, but here the strips are not of equal width. *Sin man* woven with the *mat kan* technique are called *sin man kan*.

1.2 The Thung Chang and Chaloe Phra Kiat District style

The dress of the Tai Lue in these two districts is similar to that of the Lue of Xaignabouli Province in Laos. Men wear a long-sleeved black shirt with an erect collar decorated with borders of *jok* fabric and black trousers with broad legs called

kang ken sam duk, or on ceremonial occasions, a dhoti-like lower garment called *pha toi* made of cotton dyed with indigo or of silk.

Ladies wear a long-sleeved jacket of cotton dyed black or deep indigo. This jacket is longer than the *suea pat* of other areas. The front placket is decorated with borders of *jok* fabric, and the waist with strips of cloth of different colors on either side. The body and the lower border of the tube skirt are woven as one continuous piece. The lower border may be either black or red, the former being called *tin dam* and the latter *lep daeng*. A yellow design in either cotton or silk decorates the middle of the body of the skirt.

2. The Dress of the Tai Lue in Phayao Province

Lue women of Chiang Kham and Chiang Muang Districts wear a black *suea pat*, the front placket of which are decorated with colored borders. The center of the body of their skirts is decorated a small design called *lai phak waen* woven using the *kaw* or the *luang* techniques

3. The Dress of the Tai Lue in Chiang Rai Province

3.1 Chiang Khawng District styles

3.1.1 The Ban Si Dawn Chai style

The jacket is a *suea pat* with long sleeves in cotton dyed with indigo or in black Chinese silk. The front placket is decorated with colored borders and the lower edge is a cusp which comes to a point at the centerline of the body. This garment is called *suea pla khao*.

The tube skirt has horizontal bands, and the middle of the body has decorations made using the *kaw* or *luang* technique.

3.1.2 The Ban Hat Bai style

The jacket is a *suea pat* with long sleeves in cotton dyed deep indigo or in black Chinese silk. The front placket is decorated with colored borders.

The tube skirt has horizontal bands which are generally green alternating with either black or indigo. The middle of the body of the skirt has decorations made using the *jok* technique.

3.2 The Wiang Kaen style

The jacket is a deep indigo long-sleeved cotton *suea pat*.

The tube skirt has horizontal bands, usually green alternating with black or indigo. The middle of the skirt is decorated with the *jok* and *kaw* techniques with white warp yarns enclosing the areas in *jok*.

The Dress of the Tai Lue in Laos

1. The Dress of the Tai Lue in Bokeo Province

1.1 Muang Houei Xai styles

1.1.1 The Ban Pung and Ban Tha Fa style

The jacket is a *suea pat*. The front placket is decorated with silk or Chinese ribbon and with silver sequins. The lower edge comes to a point at the centerline of the body.

The tube skirt is a *sin ta lue* decorated with small patterns in *kaw*, *jok* and *khit*.

1.1.2 The Ban Na Kaeo style

The jacket is a *suea pat* with curved lower edges that are decorated with Chinese ribbon.

The center of the body of the tube skirt has small designs, and gold- or silver-colored metallic threads are incorporated into the weave in bands from top to bottom.

1.2 The Ban Nam Keung Muang Ton Pheung style

This style is worn by migrants now residing in Ban Hat Bai, Chiang Khawng District, Chiang Rai Province. The tube skirt, called *sin sam dawk*, is made of cotton woven with the *jok* and *khit* techniques in three broad bands.

1.3 The Ban Phon Thawng, Bokeo Province style

2. The Dress of the Tai Lue in Oudomxai Province

2.1 The Muang Baeng style

The jacket is a *suea pat* with red lining that can be seen in the folded cuffs of the sleeves.

The tube skirt is decorated with large *kaw* patterns or geometrical or animal designs in *jok*. The lower border of the skirts of unmarried ladies is made of pieces of red and of blue cloth sewn together or sewn on to the center of the border.

2.2 Muang Pak Tha styles

2.2.1 The Ban Hat Sa style

The jacket is a *suea pat* with very curved lower edges that are raised on both sides.

The middle of the body of the tube skirt is decorated with the *dawk hap* design in *jok*, a band of geometric designs, and bounded above and below by bands in *khit*.

2.2.2 The Ban Long Tong style

The jacket is a brightly colored Chinese silk *suea pat* decorated on the front placket and edges with multicolored binding.

On the tube skirt, geometric designs are woven using the *jok* technique.

2.3 The Muang Nga style

The jacket is a *suea pat* whose color harmonizes with that of the tube skirt, which has bands of indigo.

2.4 Muang Hun

3. The Dress of the Tai Lue in Xaignabouli Province

3.1 The Muang Ngoen style

The jacket is a long-sleeved cotton *suea pat* in black or deep indigo and is of greater length than *suea pat* worn elsewhere. The front placket is decorated with finely woven *jok* fabric, and a colorful cloth is worn over either shoulder.

The tube skirt is decorated with *jok* in yellow. The lower border of the skirt may be either black or red, the former being called *tin dam*, and the latter, *lep daeng*.

3.2 Muang Xieng Hawn styles

3.2.1 The Ban Si Phom style, including Ban Pa Wan, Ban Nam Lawm, and Ban Kae

The tube skirt is woven with the *khit* or the *jok* technique in many colors. The lower border of the skirt is black and red or completely red.

3.2.2 The Ban Na Awn and Ban Dawn Fueang style

The body of the tube skirt is woven using the *jok*, *kaw*, and *khit* techniques; the primary design is *dawk hap* in *khit* accompanied by *dawk bang* in *jok* and fish tooth designs in *kaw*. The lower border of the skirt is made of black cotton cloth.

3.3 Muang Xieng Lom styles

3.3.1 The Ban Kham and Ban King style

The *khit*, the *jok*, and the *kaw* techniques are used in weaving the brightly colored tube skirt.

3.3.2 The Ban Tham style

The tube skirt is woven with thick cotton yarn. The middle of the body is decorated with lozenges in *jok*. The lower border is made of black cotton cloth.

3.4 The Muang Xieng Khawp style

The tube skirt of Ban Doi Up Fa has many bright colors. The center of the body is woven using the *jok* technique.

4. The Dress of the Tai Lue in Louang Namtha Province

4.1 The Muang Na Lae style

The jacket is a *suea pat* decorated with strips of many different colors and woven using a variety of techniques.

The middle of the tube skirt has alternating bands of red and black, and the lower portion is made using a variety of techniques, *viz.*, *jok*, *khit*, *kaw*, *mat mi*, and *pan kai*.

4.2 The Muang Sing style

The jacket is a *suea pat* made of black Chinese silk and has a curved lower edge. It is decorated on the front placket and the edges with interwoven fine silver-colored metallic threads.

The tube skirt has a banded design using cotton, Chinese silk, and gold-colored metallic thread. The lower border is decorated with Chinese ribbon and strips of Chinese silk in various colors sewn on vertically.

5. The Dress of the Tai Lue in Phongsali Province

The jacket of Muang Ou (Ou Nuea and Ou Tai) is a fitting *suea pat* with a free waist. It is known as *seua ta paen* decorated Chinese ribbon, called *paen*, on the front placket and the edges.

Two tube skirts are worn. The outer one is short. The inner one is white and decorated with Chinese ribbon, and is thus known as *sin ta paen*.

6. The Dress of the Tai Lue in Louang Phabang Province

The jacket of Ban Na Yang is a *suea pat* made of black Chinese silk and decorated on the front placket with interwoven gold-colored metallic threads and at the waist with hanging strips of colored cloth or silver jewellery.

The Dress of the Tai Lue in Vietnam

Men wear long black trousers and a black long-sleeved shirt with an erect embroidered collar.

Ladies wear a black or deep indigo *suea pat* decorated with colored and flower print cloth strips. The body of the tube skirt has alternating bands of red and white and is decorated with designs in *jok* and geometric designs. The lower border is black cloth decorated with vertical strips of *jok* fabric and strips of flower print cloth.