

# 34 IN THE LIMELIGHT

## THE SPLENDOUR OF TAI TEXTILES

A regal fashion show of traditional outfits modelled by celebrities to raise money for a charity under royal patronage **By Pichaya Svasti**

**S**himmering like stars in a cloudless sky were hundreds of Tai textiles, which revealed their distinctive beauty to the public during the 1st Glamour of Thai Textiles in Siam Fair, held at the Royal Thai Navy Auditorium last Saturday night.

Gracing the memorable evening was HRH Princess Soamsawali, who looked gorgeous in her green silk evening dress. After visiting an exhibition on Tai textiles, the princess enjoyed a charity fashion show from which part of the proceeds went to the Thai Red Cross Society's "Save A Child's Life from Aids Project" under her royal

out their best on the catwalk. To name a few, Chiang Mai's Cultural Council executive Chao Pakhinai na Chiang Mai and businesswoman Rapiphan Suansomjit donned royal outfits of the Lanna Kingdom. Peru's honorary consul to Chiang Mai ML Preeyapun Sridhavat sported a Tai Lao royal's gold-embroidered *sabai* and pink *sin* (lower garment), decorated with red floral motifs.

Next was the show of apparels of Tai peoples who lived on the Salween river (or Khong river) basin. Representing the Tai Yai were traditional dancers wearing a pink and purple blouse with silver-coloured embroidered borders.

An exciting intro to the Tai Khoen from the ancient kingdom of Keng Tung, or Khemmarat, was a traditional dance on a legendary white animal called a "tuato".

Then, the audience was mesmerised by a naga dance of the Tai Lao, who strongly believe the existence of the mythical naga, and weave the naga motif onto their mud-mee silk and cotton textiles.

Another part features the traditional outfits of the Tai Leu who are famous for the *koh* and *jok* techniques, and the Tai Yuan, who are well-known for their *teen jok* skirt borders.

The highlights were six sets of finales: The Tai Yuan; the Tai Yai; the Tai Leu; the Tai Khoen; and the Tai Lao wedding gowns, and what similar to Chao Dararasmī, a Lanna princess who became a consort of King Rama V, liked to wear.

Dressed like a Tai Yai princess was celebrity Buppapa Snidvongs na Ayudhya. She sported a fitted blouse and a 80-year-old silk *sin loontaya-archik*, woven with silver threads and embroidered with silver sequins in the wavy mountain and floral motifs.

After that, another personality, Apipawadee Snidvongs Kruasophon, took to the catwalk in a Tai Khoen princess's outfit — a Chinese silk *seua pat* in gold and a *sin mai kham* in which the lower border is woven with gold and silver threads in the images of *sabun-nga* flowers.

Posing as Tai Lao royals were couple Chidchai and Kimiko Phansaen.

Ruangnatcha Chaisithicharoen was the last to grace the runway. Dressed like Chao Dararasmī, she donned a beautiful lace blouse and a *sin loontaya-archik* with the Chiang Mai Court's special motifs. Her Japanese "split peach" hairdo was popular among court ladies in the old days.

Two hours before midnight, the party came to an end amid loud applause from more than 100 viewers who enjoyed the splendour of Tai textiles. ■



HRH Princess Soamsawali views the exhibition, accompanied by David Lyman, chairman of Tilleke and Gibbins.



Chao Duangduan na Chiang Mai, fifth right, and other celebrities in exquisite Tai garments.



Chidchai and Kimiko Phansaen sporting wedding gowns for Tai Lao royals from the Tilleke and Gibbins Collection.



Tai Lao's Naga dance. Tai Khoen's To dance.

patronage. About 450 Tai textiles on display there belong to the Tilleke and Gibbins Collection, as well as other collectors including Chao Duangduan na Chiang Mai, Akkadej Piabthiam, Anchalee Sripasang, Assoc Prof Songsak Prangwatanakul, Komol Panichphan and Polcha Kosayodhin. Highlights were a number of century-old textiles, especially Tai royals' wedding gowns.

Throughout the fashion show, the beautiful sounds of traditional Tai music filled the air. After a warm-up Lanna-style poem recital, the first part of the show started with attires of some groups of Tai people who lived in Southeast Asia in the old days. More than 20 celebrities brought



Chao Pakhinai na Chiang Mai in a royal Lanna outfit.



Peru's honorary consul to Chiang Mai ML Preeyapun Sridhavat.



Supranee Wongsanapakul in a Tai Yai costume.



Lions Chiang Mai Mae Raming Club chairwoman Rapiphan Suansomjit.



Thananan Wilson, the 2006 'Sri Achiwa Award' winner for fashion and design.



Chatthima Harnpatchaikul in the Tai Yai 'sin loontaya-archik'.