

PRESERVING THE CULTURAL HERITAGE A STUDY OF THE SILVERSMITH IN INLAY LAKE, MYANMAR*

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Abstract

Culture plays multiple roles in the development of tourism and is a key tourism resource. Living culture within the local community can be defined as cultural heritage which combines the two concepts of historical ancient monuments and living heritage; arts and crafts. Knowledge and skills community recognizes as part of their cultural heritage may act as a tourist attraction to the place (UNESCO, 2006). Tourists engage with the cultural heritage as a part of their experiences, explore the traditional craftsmanship as it was performed in the distant past. This paper provides the first comprehensive study on the traditional silversmith handcraft in Inlay Lake from the cultural point of view. The study area is the *Heya-Ywama* village, which is the main silversmith site in the Inlay Lake, Myanmar. The study describes the intangible cultural practices from the tangible silverwares and explores the authenticity and commodification of cultural heritage. The results show that the *Innthal* people perceive the traditional silversmith as a part of their cultural heritage and it is an authentic heritage craft handed over to new generations, however, lack of literature on traditional methods, intellectual concerns and outside investments are presented as finding results.

Key words: Culture, Living Culture, Cultural Heritage, Authenticity, Commodification, Heritage Craft, Traditional Silversmith, Handcraft

Introduction

The Inlay Lake is Myanmar's top flagship tourism destination that attracts thousands of visitors annually and has received at least 250,000 domestic and international visitor arrivals during 2013-2014. As Myanmar's combined cultural and natural tourism area, the Inlay Lake provides significant income for local, regional and national economies.¹ Tourism

¹ Destination Management Plan for the Inlay Lake Region 2014-2019, Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, Myanmar.

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development has great potential for employment opportunities and poverty alleviation for Myanmar. World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) estimates direct and indirect tourism made up 300,000 jobs in 2012 and expects to rise to 366,000 jobs in 2022.²

During the regime of *King Tharlun* (AD 1629), the four villages named (1) *Nampan* (2) *Ywaggyi* (3) *Naungtaungand* (4) *Heya-Ywama* were founded in the Inlay Lake. The name of Inlay Lake said to have originated from these four villages (Lay-Ywar) is accepted to be the most valid evidence. Nowadays, there are 35 village tracts in the Inlay Lake; *Heya-Ywama* village is the main source of silversmith since the ancient times. Today, it is a famous site in tourist itineraries for sightseeing of silversmith workshops and showrooms. These workshops and showrooms are selling to both international and domestic tourism markets. The traditional silversmith in Inlay Lake generates high contributions to destination image, income and employment for local community and tourists' attraction.

This research is intended for the preserving of the traditional silversmith in Inlay Lake as an authentic heritage craft of the ethnic lake dwellers, *Innthar*. The study focuses on tourism product development, employment and welfare of the local community especially craftsmen who are employed in silversmith. Also the study is expected to encourage the appreciation of silversmith by both local community and tourism markets, and also encourage future studies in tourism and handcrafts.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this research are;

- To describe the traditional silversmith handcraft in Inlay Lake
- To express the authenticity and commodification of cultural heritage in both tangible and intangible ways
- To explore the interaction between tourism, handcrafts and cultural heritage within the community
- To find out the necessary factors for preserving the silversmith for the future.

² World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2013, Myanmar.

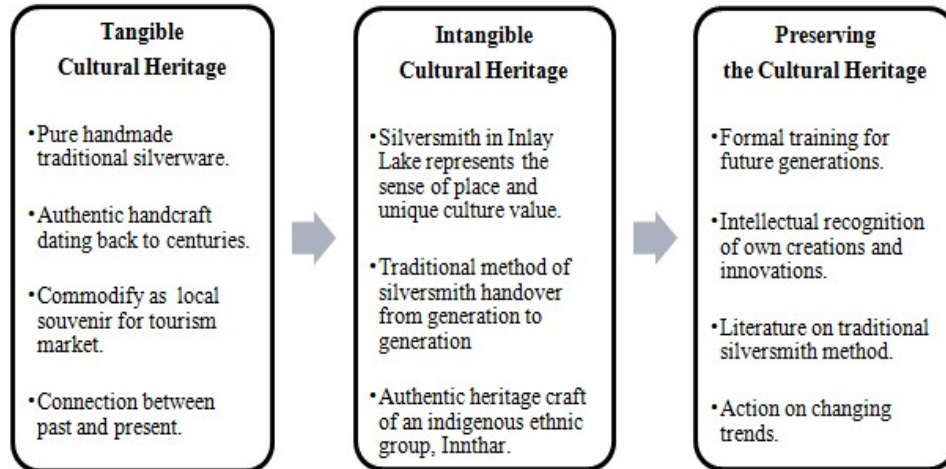


Figure 1: Research Framework Model for Preserving Cultural Heritage

In this study, the tangible silverware are presented as the heritage craft that is produced from intangible practice passed down from generations. That will be considered as the main hypothesis of the study to analyze why the silversmith in Inlay Lake can be regarded as the authentic heritage craft and how silversmith contributes to the life of craftsmen and the community. Then, this study will conclude with the recommendations and the necessary factors to preserve the silversmith in Inlay Lake for the future within the balance of authentic heritage craft and tourism product.

The Cambridge Dictionary vocabulary 'handcraft', the synonym of 'handicraft', will be adopted and perceived as the study usage. Handcraft can be defined as a skilled activity in which something is made in a traditional way with the hands rather than being produced by machines in a factory, or an object made by such an activity. The primary data of the study includes the perceptions and conditions of the workshop owners, senior craftsmen, stakeholders and community members. All of them are the indigenous lake dwellers, *Innthar* and their handcraft skills are passed-down from generation to generation and the traditional silversmith method is handed over in informal learning from their ancestors. This study is based on the perceptions of (12) workshops owners, (2) senior craftsmen, (3) local stakeholders and (1) executive member of community development organization. Therefore, this

study would be only applicable to the silversmith in Inlay Lake and not the same for the silversmith in other regions of Myanmar.

Literature Review

Cultural Heritage

Culture is the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of a society or social group and it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyle, way of life, value systems, traditions and beliefs. The UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) stated that culture takes diverse forms across time and space. The global diversity of cultures and the unique experiences they can provide is a key resource for the tourism sector; a resource which would appear to be limitless.³

Heritage is not just the past but also a representation or a reinterpretation of the past.⁴ That is, heritage is a process through which individuals and groups negotiate the social position and place within particular societies. Heritage thus becomes a cultural tool that nations, societies, communities and individuals use to facilitate self, identity and belonging and it becomes a cultural and social framework for dealing with the past and present.⁵ At global, national and local levels, heritage is used to define a sense of place.

Cultural community is a community that distinguishes itself from other communities by its own culture or by a variant of the generic culture. Among other possible extensions, a nation can be a cultural community.⁶ Living culture within these communities can be defined as cultural heritage which combines the two concepts of historical ancient monuments and living heritages. Therefore, cultural heritage is the legacy of tangible physical artifacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from

³ Mike Robinson & David Picard, *Tourism, Culture and Sustainable Development Programme*, Division of Cultural Policies and Intercultural Dialogue, Culture Sector, UNESCO.

⁴ Dallen J., Timothy and Gyan Nyaupane, *Cultural Heritage and Tourism in the Developing World, A Regional Perspective*, Routledge, 2009.

⁵ Laurajane Smith and Natsuko Akagawa, *Intangible Heritage*, 2009.

⁶ Laurajane Smith and Natsuko Akagawa, *Intangible Heritage*, 2009.

past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations.⁷

Tangible Cultural Heritage

Tangible heritage includes buildings and historic places, monuments, artifacts and handcrafts which are considered worthy of preservation for the future. Objects are important to the study of human history because they provide a concrete basis for ideas, and can validate the history. Preserving the tangible heritage demonstrates recognition of the necessity of the past and of the things that tell its history and the place. Preserved objects also draw people in and give them a literal way of touching the past. Tangible cultural heritage is much more concerned with the historic buildings and monuments along history.

Current and dominant definitions about ‘tangible cultural heritage’ establish an international hierarchy of cultural relevance, status and sense of place. Tangible culture is seen much more to refer to ways of life and everyday practice, not only being manifest in buildings, sites and monuments. The conservation of cultural heritage focuses more on the protection and care of artworks, crafts and museum collections. Conservation activities for the art and craft works focus on preventive conservation, examination, documentation, research, treatment, and education. The scope of arts and crafts preservation becomes vital.

Intangible Cultural Heritage

Intangible cultural heritage is not preserved in States’ archives or national museums. It is preserved in communities whose members practice and manifest its forms. If the tradition is still alive, vital and sustainable in the community, it is safeguarded. The parameters, definitions and applications of intangible cultural heritage are severally and collectively premised on the recognition of local and indigenous communities.⁸ The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH, 2003) defines the

⁷ M. Arbach, *Tangible Cultural Heritage*, As-Sawda Site in Yemen.

⁸ Laurajane Smith and Natsuko Akagawa, *Intangible Heritage*, 2009.

intangible cultural heritage as; practices, experiences, knowledge and skills that communities recognize as part of their cultural heritage.

UNESCO's guidelines identify five categories of intangible cultural heritage including traditional craftsmanship. The intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, the interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.⁹ The community itself becomes a phenomenon and mechanism whose continuity is sustained by the intangible heritage that is enacted. It is a cyclical and continuous phenomenon and process premised on community-based knowledge and hence the importance of ensuring that it is the community's responsibility to safeguard this invaluable intangible resource:¹⁰

Authenticity and Commodification

Mac Cannell (1973) introduced the concept of authenticity to sociological studies of tourist motivations and experiences decades ago. Mac Cannell proposed that touristic consciousness is motivated by its desire for authentic experience, authenticity in the sense of 'original' or 'real'.¹¹ Commodification means making something as a product for commercial use. From the tourism perspective, commodification refers to the use of culture and cultural artifacts to make a significant amount of income and profit for a tourism destination. The interaction between tourists and local people that occurs at a certain level without losing the actual meaning, context and significance of the culture can be regarded as authentic culture.

Cultural authenticity is acknowledged as an essential driving force that motivates tourists in travelling to distant places. Authentic culture is not something which is prepared for the tourists; it is natural and existed in host society and an integral part of their culture. In this study, culture and social

⁹ Henrietta Marrie, *The UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Protection and Maintenance of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Indigenous People*.

¹⁰ Laurajane Smith and Natsuko Akagawa, *Intangible Heritage*, 2009.

¹¹ Hery Sigit Cahyadi, *Authenticity and Commodification of Culture at Puri Anyar Kerambitan*, Bali Province, Indonesia, Bandung Institute of Tourism, Indonesia

life are the main factors to be analyzed to fulfill the research purposes for preserving the silversmith in Inlay Lake. There are no fixed criteria to judge value and authenticity of cultural property; it must be evaluated within the cultural context to which it belongs. The meaning of authenticity acknowledges the logic behind the processes of commodification, so, the challenge that tourism faces is promoting authenticity.¹²(Mac Cannell, *Staged authenticity*, 1973, Pg. 589-603)

Many scholars say that the changing of culture by attracting tourists will cause the loss of a culture's authenticity through commodification and cultures that are performed as tourist attraction will lose its originality.¹³ While commodification, on the other hands, means the eradication of local culture for the advantage of external social actors, with little returns for the local welfare. It is also argued that commodification does not necessarily destroy the meanings of cultural products, although it may change it or add new meanings to old ones.¹⁴

In this study, silversmith represents one of the good resources for tourism in Inlay Lake, but, with the expected increase of demand, the quality of the production and cultural value will decrease, and the 'practice commodified'. So it needs to preserve the quality of production and the originality of cultural heritage, in order to meet the authentic tourist experience without losing in terms of quality and cultural value. The Nara Document on Authenticity (1994) addresses the need for a broader understanding of cultural diversity and cultural heritage as it relates to the conservation. It emphasizes respect for other cultures, values, and the tangible and intangible expressions that form part of the cultural heritage.¹⁵

¹² MacCannell, *Staged authenticity: Arrangements of Social Space in Tourist Settings*. American Journal of Sociology 79(3): 589-603, 1973.

¹³ Wang, N, *Rethinking Authenticity in Tourism Experience*, Annals of Tourism Research, 26(2)349-370, 1999.

¹⁴ Erik Cohen, *Authenticity and Commoditization in Tourism*, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel, 1988

¹⁵ UNESCO Publishing, *The UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*, Paris, November 2001.

The Heritage Craft

The UNESCO definition of handcraft is that artisanal products produced by artisans, either completed by hand, or with the help of hand tools or even mechanical means, as long as the direct manual contribution of the artisan remains the most substantial component of the finished product. Handcrafts are made from raw materials and can be produced in unlimited numbers. Such products can be utilitarian aesthetic, artistic, creative, culturally attached, decorative, functional, traditional, religiously and socially symbolic and significant.¹⁶

Craft, and the preservation of the skills that produce it, has a vital and intrinsic role to play in sustaining cultural heritage. 'Heritage craft' can be defined as practices which employ manual dexterity and skill, and an understanding of traditional materials, designs and techniques to make or repair useful things, which involves a high degree of hand-skill and produces useful objects including those products associated with material culture through to the production of artifacts.¹⁷ All civilizations have developed their own traditional methods of producing goods and these have been passed generation over generation, surviving even in highly industrialized societies. Generally, the less developed the country, the more authentic the handcrafts they produce, and the larger the number of people involved in the production and marketing.

Handcraft villages are based on tourism for the following reasons; (1) Higher prices for handcrafts and craftsmen's income increase, (2) Marketing, so that more tourists know the products and buy more handcraft souvenirs, (3) Job creation for local community and poverty alleviation, (4) Preservation of tradition and cultural heritage. The International Conference on Tourism and Handicrafts held in Tehran, Iran, in May 2006 was the first international conference with specific focus on the linkage between tourism and handcrafts. The main objectives of this conference initiated a wide range of UNWTO

¹⁶ *International Symposium on Crafts and the International Market*, UNESCO/ITC, Manila, Philippines, 1997.

¹⁷ Hilary Jennings, *Towards a Definition of Heritage Craft Prepared for Creative & Cultural Skills*.

objectives, including poverty alleviation, job creation and progress for women and the role of local tourism in the preservation of traditional craft.¹⁸

A craft can be regarded as a heritage craft by the following criteria; (1) Taking shape, existing and having a long-standing development in the country, (2) Assembly producing, forming craft villages or streets, (3) Having generations of skillful workers and craftsmen, (4) Having the stable technique of craftwork (5) Using the nation's materials (6) Being the typical and original product of the place with high value and quality, being the artistic and cultural products and the nation's cultural heritage with own identity¹⁹

The Award of Excellence for handicrafts (formerly known as the Seal of Excellence) was established in South East Asia in 2001 as a joint initiative by UNESCO and the ASEAN Handcraft Promotion and Development Association (AHPADA). A product that is granted the 'Award of Excellence' meets the highest level of craft excellence and is distinguished as a benchmark for craft production. As a source of exchange, innovation and creativity, cultural heritage craft can be regarded as the common heritage of people in the community and should be recognized and affirmed for the benefit of present and future generations. An international panel of crafts experts (2007) evaluates submissions based on the following four criteria;

- Excellence: Demonstrated excellence and standard-setting quality in craftsmanship.
- Authenticity: Expression of cultural identity and traditional aesthetic values.
- Innovation: Innovation in design & production, both traditional and contemporary.
- Marketability: Marketability of crafts with potential for the tourism markets.

¹⁸ UNESCO Publishing, A Report on the International Conference on Tourism and Handicrafts, 2006.

¹⁹ Hilary Jennings, *Towards a Definition of Heritage Craft Prepared for Creative & Cultural Skills*.

THE SILVERSMITH AND CRAFTSMEN IN INLAY LAKE

General Tourism Data of Inlay Lake

According to the data of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, international tourist arrival to the Inlay Lake Region is growing year by year. Figure-2 shows the growth trend in arrivals to the Inlay Lake Region: significant growth can be seen in 2013/14 due to political changes in 2011.²⁰

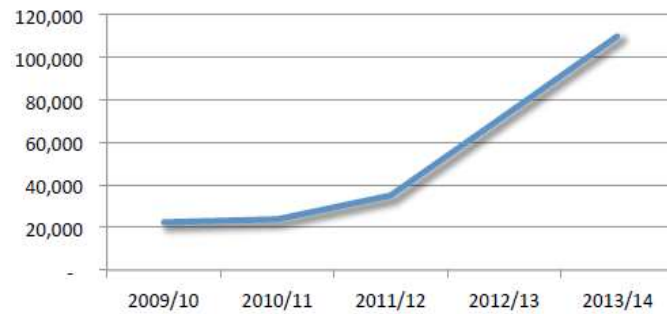


Figure 2: International Tourist Arrivals to Inlay Lake
Source: Ministry of Hotels and Tourism

The visitor arrivals by both domestic and international tourism flows are strongly increasing. Figure-3 shows monthly international arrivals based on 12 months, July 2013 to June 2014, a total of 110,245 visitors to Inlay Lake and *Nyaung-shwed* during this period.²¹ It shows the high and low seasons clearly.

²⁰ Destination Management Plan for the Inlay Lake Region 2014-2019, Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

²¹ Department of Hotels and Tourism, *Taunggyi*, Ministry of Hotels and Tourism

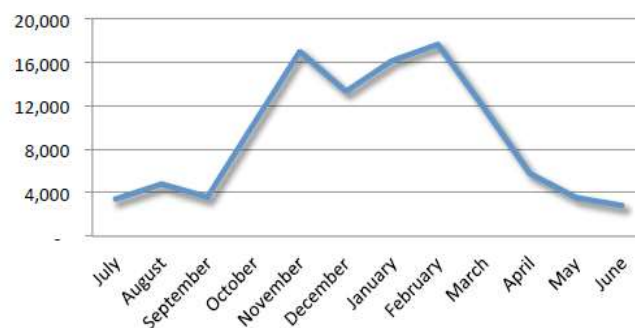


Figure-3: *Nyaung-shwe* and Inlay Lake International Tourist Arrivals per Month (2013-2014)

Source: Ministry of Hotels and Tourism

The Silversmith in Inlay Lake

Craft production is central to the Inlay Lake region experience. Many handcraft products have been produced in and around the Inlay Lake for centuries. According to the evidence found in the silverware with time inscriptions, the silversmith in Inlay Lake started over 170 years ago; however, it can be considered as earlier than the pre-inscriptive period of the time.²²

Table-1: The Earliest Silverwares Found in Inlay Lake with Inscriptions of Time

No.	Time		Kinds of Silverware
	AD	Myanmar Year	
1	1844	1206	A small bowl with floral motif designs (ceremonial wares)
2	1928	1290	A lime box (betel wares)
3	1934	1296	A <i>Mae-Kyaung-U</i> bowl (ceremonial wares)
4	1938	1300	A silver spoon
5	1940	1302	A lime box with half-moon shaped

Source: The History of Handcrafts in Inlay Lake Region, *Taunggyi University*, August 2004

²² Daw Kyi Kyi Cho, Daw Sein Mi, Daw Khin Nyo Win and Daw Naw Barni, *The History of Handcrafts in Inlay Lake Region*, Department of History, Taunggyi University, Page- 6-9, August 2004.

The destination management plan for the Inlay Lake (2014-2019) described the value of tourism as one of the measurements of the benefits that tourism brings to an area. A study conducted in 2012 by the Institute for International Development (IID) concluded the following estimated annual value of tourism in the Inlay Lake Region in Figure-4. According to the study of IID, handicrafts generate 3 million \$ value in the total tourism value of 23.5 million \$. It shows handicrafts in the Inlay Lake had 12.8% of total tourism value in the region.²³

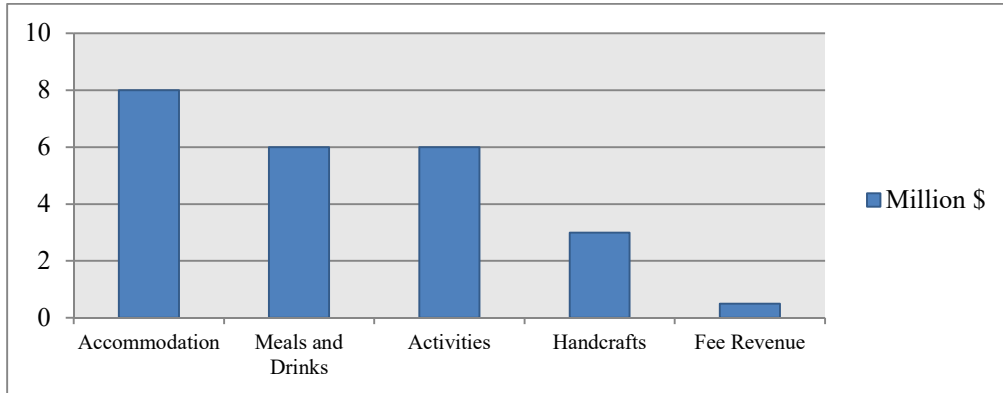


Figure-4: Estimated Annual Value of Tourism in the Inlay Lake Region

Source: Destination Management Plan for the Inlay Lake

Methods and Instruments of Silversmith in Inlay Lake

There are two types of traditional silversmith according to methods and skills, but both are the same in basic method.

- (1) **The major silversmith**, which need high professional skills, knowledge, concentration and interest especially for religious wares and special orders. Major silversmith is time consuming and major silverwares are less in demand because the religious wares are expensive and used only by higher income local people.

²³ Destination Management Plan for the Inlay Lake Region 2014-2019, Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

- (2) **The minor silversmith**, which need normal professional skills, knowledge, and less concentration than the major one. Minor silversmith is less time consuming and in higher demand in both domestic and international tourists markets as souvenirs and jewellery and relatively cheaper than the major silverwares.

The main handwork in major silversmith is the use of hammer to shape and create the blown picture on the silverwares. The minor silversmith can use some mechanical tools or electrical devices in lamination and ductile silver craftworks; it can be said that the minor silversmith is easier than the major silversmith. Major silverwares are usually in traditional designs but some differ in design according to special orders. The main traditional instruments used in the silversmith of Inlay Lake are; various sizes of hummers, various hand tools and furnace (fire place). For the furnace the traditional term *Pyoung-Kout* (a kind of manual blowing instrument) was used in ancient times, but today only blowing machines or motor machines are used.

Raw Material and Silver Purification

Nowadays, most silversmith workshops buy ready-made purified silver and only senior craftsmen can do the traditional silver purification method. This traditional method of silver purification was handover from generation to generation. In ancient times, the craftsmen began the learning of traditional silversmith method from the silver purification and refining pure silver from the silver ore, so, all the craftsmen learnt all the production stages of silverwares. But today, ready-made pure silver can be bought easily and most of the new generations do not need to learn the method of purifying and refining of silver from the ores.

Raw material silver ores are mainly from *Namtu* Mine and *Baw Sine* Mine. These two Mines are the biggest mines in Myanmar and the raw ores from these mines are distributed to other parts of the country. The silver ores contain four kinds of metal; Silver, Copper, Zinc and Aluminium. For the silver purification process, firstly, the ore stones are cut and crushed into pieces and put into the crucible cup and melt in 2000°C temperature. Zinc and Aluminum are light and evaporate fast, so, only two metals copper and silver remain inside the cup. To separate the silver from the copper, the metal

mixture is put in a bottle of Nitric Acid. After two days, the Copper is completely dissolved and changes colour to blue leaving a pure Silver residue at the bottom.²⁴

Current Condition of Silversmith in Inlay Lake

The silversmith in Inlay Lake is a traditional handcraft with a long history. There are two popular silversmith regions in Myanmar; *Ywar-Taw* in *Sagaing* Division, Central Myanmar and Inlay Lake in Southern Shan State. The prominent feature of Inlay Lake's silversmith is purely handmade and made of quality silver. The global environment and social networks affect the silversmith with the challenges of design innovation, mass production and invitation for expanding to international markets. The price of silver in Inlay Lake is higher than the world silver price because they sell the traditional handmade crafts, not silver, so, they are not valued by the weight of silver.

The silversmith workshops and showrooms in Inlay Lake are operated as small and medium enterprises (SMEs) or private home businesses. The capital investment for a silversmith workshop and showroom needs at least 100,000 US\$. The handcrafts in Inlay Lake rely completely on the tourism market, so, the more visitors to the region the more sales of handcrafts; it contributes to the livelihood of local craftsmen, workshops and showrooms.²⁵ The major silversmith craftsmen earn their livelihood by doing what they love and make a good living from sales, commissions and craftwork charges.²⁶

Varieties of Silverwares

The silverwares of the Inlay Lake can be categorized in *three* groups in terms of utility and production methods. Before 1988, the silverware of

²⁴ Daw Kyi Kyi Cho, Daw Sein Mi, Daw Khin Nyo Win and Daw Naw Barni, *The History of Handcrafts in Inlay Lake Region*, Department of History, Taunggyi University, Page- 6-9, August 2004.

²⁵ U Tun Tun Oo (43), Owner, *Mya-Hinthar* Silversmith Workshop and Showroom, *Heya-Ywama* Village.

²⁶ Hilary Jennings, *Towards a Definition of Heritage Craft Prepared for Creative & Cultural Skills*.

Inlay Lake is famous only for religious wares and for the *Sao Pwa* (the Chief of the region) and very rarely as normal household ware. Only after 1988 did they come to be used as household equipment and jewellery.²⁷

Religious Wares

Religious silverware are mostly produced by major silversmith. Religious wares include silver Buddha statues, silver stupas, relic holders and silverwares for offerings to the Buddha and for religious ceremonial use. Religious wares can be regarded as the highest and the most difficult craftwork in silversmith. Religious wares are of high demand in religious ceremonial occasions. The complete set of religious wares for offerings to the Buddha include: the alms-bowl with cover (*Soon-Oat*), the alms-bowl without cover (*Soon-Oat*), the big tray (*Doung-Lann*), the flower pot, the drinking water cup, the rice tray with stem (*Soon-Kalat*), the crispy tray with stem (*A-Kyaw-Kalat*), the snack cup (*Saw-Shay*), the flat tray with stem (*Kalat-Pyar*), the cup for tooth-brush (*Tan-Pu*), the water pot (*Yay-Kayar*) and the small water cup.

The famous religious silverwares are the big tray (*Kalat-Kye*), the big bowl (*Pha-Lar-Kye*), the flower pots, the water glass, the arch tray (*Kalat-Khone*), the flat tray (*Kalat-Pyar*), the flower tray (*Pann-Kalat*), the relic holders (*Swal-Taw-Kyote*), the water goblet (*Yay-Takaung*), the Bodhi Banyan Leaves, Silver Stupas (*Ngwe-Sati*), Buddha Statues and stands for enshrined Buddha statues.

Household Wares

Most of the household silverwares are ancient in design and just for exhibiting as antiques and decorations in cupboard and normally not for use. There are various kinds of household and utensil silverwares that are produced in both major and minor silversmith methods. The famous household wares include plates, spoons, forks, bowls, water cup, betel box, tray, ash-tray, cigar box, tealeaf box, soap box, tooth-stick box, salt box, jewellery box, and so on.

²⁷ Daw Kyi Kyi Cho, Daw Sein Mi, Daw Khin Nyo Win and Daw Naw Barni, *The History of Handcrafts in Inlay Lake Region*, Department of History, Taunggyi University, Page- 6-9, August 2004.

Some household wares used for entertaining guests like tealeaf-salad box, betel box and cigar box are also produced by major silversmith.

Jewellery

The jewellery is also made in silver of various designs, especially as rings, ear-plugs and ear-rings, bracelets, bangles, necklaces, locket, hair-decoration accessories and so on. *Innthal* people use various designs of fish in jewellery because fish is a part of their way of life and in ancient times they earned their living with traditional fishing using bamboo fishing nets on a traditional leg rowing boat.

Income, Lifestyle and Work Environment

The life of silversmith craftsmen in Inlay Lake shows the unity of *Innthal*, preserving the traditional culture, interest and respect in their works, efforts, intellectual and cultural heritage that defines them. *Innthal* are religious people and the prayer room is the holy place in a house. Most silversmith craftsmen earn their living from silversmithing only. The normal income of a craftsman is approximately 10,000 Kyats (approximately 8 \$) per diem. In some workshops, the craftsmen get wages instead of salary on the calculation of the craftworks they have done for a day or for a week (5 days market week). The wages of a craftsman depends on working capacity and skill.

The daily working hour of the permanent craftsmen is normally 8 am to 5 pm but for the freelance craftsmen it is more flexible because they work in their own workshop and charge for the craftwork according to the estimated production time. Some of the freelance craftsmen do other work in their free time. Silversmith showrooms in Inlay Lake have their own workshops but they need to buy from other workshops when there is a high demand during the peak tourist season. Therefore, all the silversmith showrooms and workshops in Inlay Lake are interrelated and form a cultural community.

All the senior craftsmen in the groups of silversmith welcome new generations to teach and handover the legacy of traditional silversmith methods. However, the lack of literature and records on traditional method over generations tend to be the handover of traditional silversmith method in

informal way. Some craftsmen have own creations and innovative designs but they have not been recognized for their own effort; they transmit their innovations to others in order to fulfill high demand.

According to *Innthar* culture, social life is the priority in the working environment. The workshop owners and craftsmen are mostly relatives. Most of the silversmith workshops are family businesses with relatives and new generations and the relationship between owners and craftsmen are thus flexible and reliable. All the craftsmen have holidays on every religious festival and religious holidays, e.g. *Phaung-Daw-Oo* Pagoda festival days and full moon days. The craftsmen can participate in religious ceremonies, donation ceremonies and festival events; they have full rights according to their traditional culture and social life.

Myanmar Souvenir Association

The Myanmar Souvenirs Association was established in 2012, its main objectives are to control the quality of souvenirs in Myanmar, to promote the use of local raw materials, to initiate the training programs for local craftsmen, to create employment opportunities for local people and to promote the growing demand in domestic and international markets. The main products of MSA are lacquer wares, silver wares and jewellery. MSA recognizes traditional silversmith of Inlay Lake as one of the traditional handicrafts in Myanmar, however, there are no formal records on the methods and kinds of handicrafts and the quality control system over the crafts.

The Methodology

Qualitative research is an investigative methodologies and techniques. It can be described as naturalistic, ethnographic, field, anthropological or observation research and this type of research gives emphasis on the value of looking on variables in their natural setting where they are commonly found.²⁸ The interview plays a vital role in this investigation that the researcher typically uses for gathering data. The descriptive method is used because this

²⁸ www.occupytheory.org

study is dependent upon people's creativity, habits, and desires. And also the lack of basic data from previous studies tends to focus on the qualitative research in describing the basic knowledge and forecasting the necessary information for the future.

This study is based on the ethnographic approach to qualitative data collection. Ethnographic approach studies the cultural phenomenon of human knowledge and behaviors in a particular cultural and natural setting, such as, attitudes, beliefs and practices. In data collection of this research, investigative exploratory on literature reviews, interviews and conversations with workshop owners and senior craftsmen were conducted to collect primary and secondary data. This study is the real situation in Inlay Lake from interviews with workshop owners, senior craftsmen, local stakeholders and local organization member.

The main source of data was individual interviews and in-depth interviews, which was prepared in semi-structured, open-ended questions. Deductive analysis and descriptive method is used for the conclusion and recommendation statements. The secondary data were gathered from the reference books, journals, reports, written notes and previous studies (which are not directly concerned with silversmith). Due to the lack of previous study for the silversmith in Inlay Lake, this study excludes analysis on the sales, income and taxation of the workshops and showrooms.

Results and Discussions

Opportunities and Risks of the Silversmith in Inlay Lake

The Inlay Lake is located in the nearby geographic locations with the two famous mines of Myanmar and the *Innthal* have high traditional handcraft skills. This could be the main reason for the originality and popularity of silversmith in Inlay Lake. In ancient times, silversmith craftsmen started their learning from the purifying and refining silver stage from the ore, but today, ready-made purified silver can be bought easily and the new generation craftsmen do not need to begin from the purifying and refining stage. Therefore, the traditional method of silver purification is at risk of decline today.

The results of the study show there are (4) groups of major silversmiths in Inlay Lake with (15) craftsmen. Among these craftsmen (11) are family members and only (4) are outsiders. So, the majority of the silversmith population in Inlay Lake is more or less a hereditary or family business. However, the learners in major silversmith are fewer and fewer today. Only some craftsmen who have a special interest do major silversmith work as professional craftsmen to maintain tradition and/or handover to generations of silversmith craftsmen. So, the traditional method of major silversmith is at risk at present.

All of the major silversmith workshops are located in *Heya-Ywama* village and the village has the potential to continue as a source of major silversmith through generations. However, one workshop named *Khaing-Shwe-Wahin Nam-Pan* village moved from *Heya-Ywama* village because the old place has less water in summer. This fact should be considered for further study because the receding of the water area and sedimentation is one of the big environmental challenges and risks of Inlay Lake.

There are a total of (12) silversmith workshops in Inlay Lake and the education level of the craftsmen are middle school level, high school level and graduate level. Interviews show only a few craftsmen are university graduates. So, the silversmith profession in Inlay Lake provides fairly equal employment to different levels of people with different educational standards, personality and language skills than other service providers in the tourism sector. However, the income of craftsmen from the handcraft profession is not very beneficial because the charges on each craftwork for craftsmen are quite low. The minimum income of craftsmen is 10,000 *Kyats* and the maximum is 100,000 *Kyats* per week; income depends on the skill, knowledge and experience of each craftsmen. A competitive system of commissions to tour guides and boat operators by showrooms has developed today which adds up to 30% to 40% of the purchase price. Therefore, in some cases, the commission of tour guides and boat drivers is more than what a craftsman charges and earns on silver ware.

According data from a previous study, there are there are total of (9) workshops in *Heya-Ywama* village. Survey results found another 3 more workshops and showrooms(2 in *Heya-Ywama* village and 1 in *Nam-Pan*

village), so, there are totally (12) workshops and showrooms listed as private small and medium enterprises. They are operated with permanent craftsmen. However, there are also many freelance craftsmen and home workshops, which are not listed. Normally, workshops have 5 to 20 permanent craftsmen and deal with freelance craftsmen in high demand season. Purchases from freelance craftsmen by each showroom are approximately about minimum 10% and maximum 30%. There are totally (97) permanent craftsmen in 12 workshops. The employment condition is 94% male and 6% female. Concerning age in the entire silversmith population, the youngest is 15 years old and the oldest is 92 years old. The work experiences of craftsmen are from young trainers to senior craftsmen with decades of experience. According to the data of the study, only (1) is a new business and all are generation businesses.

Handover of Traditional Method to Next Generations

The traditional craft of silversmith in Inlay Lake is hand over from generation to generation. Senior craftsmen teach to new generations in an informal way. By informal way means transmitting knowledge and skills in practical demonstrations one by one or by groups in the work place. Silversmiths around the age 30-50 craftsmen can be regarded as senior craftsmen according to their skill and knowledge. Those around age 15 can be regarded as apprentices for the new generation with vision inherited from the senior craftsmen or family members. No training or tuition fees are charged in banning the traditional silversmith craft in Inlay Lake. Senior craftsmen teach new generations the practical way and the learning environment is still alive in traditional informal way.

Product Diversification and Intellectual Recognition

As a source of exchange, innovation and creativity, cultural heritage can be regarded as the common heritage of people in a community and should be recognized and affirmed for the benefit of present and future generations. Own creations by senior craftsmen are transmitted to other craftsmen and juniors to fulfill the demand. There are no formal records or recognitions for

own creation of the craftsmen. The recognition of intellectual craft products can be an effective way for appreciation of crafts men and their creation.

Recognition should be initiated as an intellectual recognition certificate or award by the regional government or community organization concerned. It would require local government participation to coordinate the regional government with the local community to set up the principles and guidelines for the intellectual recognition certificate or award. The intellectual recognition certificate or award could contribute to 3 important factors;

- (1) The craftsmen would receive recognition as professional craftsmen
- (2) The workshops could claim originality of creation, gain good reputation and an effective marketing tool to attract tourists
- (3) The buyers buy reputable products of high quality, cultural authenticity and take pride in the place of origin and gain satisfaction.

Literature for the Traditional Silversmith Method

The community creates intangible heritage itself for the continuation of the community. The community itself becomes a phenomenon and is sustained by the intangible heritage that is enacted on community-based knowledge. The traditional craft skills which were once lost may be almost impossible to recapture. The loss of knowledge can be due to three reasons;

- (1) An initial failure to conserve existing knowledge
- (2) Lack of maintenance in literature
- (3) A failure to gather knowledge while it was available

The silversmith in Inlay Lake can be regarded as a heritage craft that needs to be preserved for future generations. The lack of literature on traditional methods is one of the weaknesses in failure to preserve cultural heritage and for future development studies.

Changing Times and Changing Trends

After the political changes in 2011, global awareness and visitor arrivals to Inlay Lake improved significantly. The emergence of social media and social networks also encouraged tourism development and the use of Visa Card and Master Card fostered the sale of silverware. The study data and results show that the silversmith generations in Inlay Lake want to preserve the traditional silversmith work as a pure handmade craft and do not want to change to or substitute with machinery techniques for mass production. However, to deal with international markets, the silversmith workshops in Inlay Lake may need machinery techniques to supplement traditional handmade methods for increased production to meet rising demand. It can affect the cultural authenticity of the traditional silversmith in terms of commodification.

The investments of outsiders and new businesses, such as, hotels, motor boats, handicrafts and souvenir showrooms, restaurants, resources and technologies into the Inlay Lake can affect the traditional craftsmanship and local community. The tourism income and benefit does not remain fully in the community and results in outflow of tourism income and benefit to outsiders. It tends to change socio-economic factors in Inlay Lake with many considerable factors. In this situation, the role of young people and younger generations in Inlay Lake becomes crucial. They need more knowledge, skills and education, especially in tourism development which is the main economy for the region today.

Interaction between Tourism, Handcrafts and Cultural Heritage

Tourism is the 21st century's number one industry, and handcraft is one of the fastest growing activities and together they create a logical and powerful combination. Visitors are inclined to buy locally produced often traditional craft as a souvenir; so, it should be true to its place, be locally derived and produced, being made of local materials, be authentic and of good quality, and of benefit to local makers. There are 35 village tracts in Inlay Lake but only a few villages on the tourists' itinerary and sites receive the benefits and welfare of tourism. Tourism is focused in only a few areas and as tourism grows there will be more pressure on different income and living

standard within the region. The regional and local government needs to maximize tourism's contribution to regional employment and income generation and to ensure that the social and economic benefits of tourism are distributed equitably.

As a Myanmar flagship culture zone, Inlay Lake needs to attract more cultural tourists in the future. To develop tourism on cultural heritage, it needs to bring intangible culture to life and create tangible products and meaningful experiences for visitors. This creation enables the tourists to take home a complete story about the traditional crafts of the local community and its relationship to local culture, as well as the physical souvenir itself. The lake dwellers, *Innthar* understand the importance of tourism on their regional economy, so, they appreciate the value of their traditional ways of living and cultural identities. However, they need proper management of their cultural identity and empowerment in decision making. The local community needs to know transparently the effects of outside investments, the allocation of tourism benefits and welfare to the local community and the contribution of tourism into the local economy, that will enhance living standards and community development.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The Inlay Lake is Myanmar's top flagship tourism destination that attracts thousands of visitors annually. Preserving the traditional handicrafts depends upon the craftsmen with a wide range of professional craft skills. The role of craftsmen is vital in the effective preservation of heritage craft. Therefore, the silversmith workshops and craftsmen in Inlay Lake should interact with the organizations of both public and private sectors as follow;

- Heritage craft businesses such as museums or historic sites.
- Heritage craft educational institutions such as the University of Culture, that are likely to contribute to skills development and transfer.
- Exhibitions that support workshops and craftsmen in advertising, marketing and sales.
- Supporting organizations such as the Myanmar Souvenir Association, Myanmar Tourism Marketing as well as with the regional government.

The literature record for the silversmith in Inlay Lake should be precise and also the tools and instruments used in the silversmith should be recorded precisely. Handover of traditional method to next generations should be gradual through more formal apprenticeships, supported by powerful and influential stakeholders, community development organizations and workshops. It should be initiated as a vocational training school in the region like the Myanmar Lacquer Ware College in *Bagan*.

The competitive system of commission to tour guides and boat operators by silversmith showrooms, in some cases, exceed payment made to skilled craftsmen. It can be said as that the silversmith craftsmen do not receive full benefit and this puts this profession at risk. Villages or township data concerning the number of home workshops and freelance craftsmen need to be accurate for analysis and future development studies. The silversmith industry in Inlay Lake is more of a generation business, so, it can be said as a living heritage of the place. However, as is has to rely mostly on tourism and visitor arrivals, can pose a risk for preserving authenticity in the future due to commodification as a tourism product rather than as a heritage handcraft.

There are no formal records or recognitions for original creations or innovations of the craftsmen. Recognition should be initiated in the form of a certificate or award for innovation or creativity. To do so, it would require local government participation to coordinate between the regional government and local community to initiate principles and guidelines for recognition. Another problem that is noted from this study is concerned with environmental factors. There is less water in summer and this fact should be considered for further study because the receding of water area and sedimentation is a big environmental challenge and risk for Inlay Lake.

The results show that the silversmith generations in Inlay Lake understand the value of heritage craft that reveals their ways of life and sense of place. In case to deal with international markets, the craftsmen should consider is to use machinery techniques for mass production for exporting and also to preserve traditional pure handmade methods for selling in the region. The improvement of technology also fosters the sale of silverwares, so, all the silversmith showrooms should make the effective use of VISA cards and Master cards with good internet connection.

The *Innthar* population was about 180,000 in 2016 and about 40% of total population relies on tourism sector directly and indirectly. The focus on tourism is in only a few areas and a few villages on the tourists' itinerary and only these sites receive the benefits and welfare of tourism development. So, the local authority needs to initiate the equal distribution of social and economic benefits from tourism. The investments of outsiders and new businesses affect the traditional craftsmanship and local community. The tourism income and benefit does not remain fully in the local community and causes outflow of tourism income and benefits to outsiders. Tourism may generate money, however looking at monetary value alone is not enough to answer the questions; where does it go and does it stay in the region and further study is recommended.

In conclusion, silversmith in Inlay Lake is the traditional cultural heritage of *Innthar*, handed over from generation to generation. It has been commodified as a tourist attraction in an authentic situation because it still use traditional methods and designs and it stands not only for economic benefit but also for a heritage craft that identifies the local community. The risks and opportunities discovered from this study and the necessary factors for preserving the silversmith suggest reasonable actions for the future of tourism development and handcraft preservation of the Inlay Lake. Future studies in tourism and cultural heritage are also recommended.

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