

An Experiment using Local Natural Dyes and its potential as a Livelihood Activity in Thua Thien Hue province of Central Vietnam

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1. INTRODUCTION

Vietnam has approximately 13200 species of plants because of its undulate land stretch from north to south and tropical climate. People have used various plants like herbs, grass and tree for daily life. My internship research in 2010 confirmed that there are close relationship between plants and local people's lives, moreover, each plant is used for multiple purposes that is not limited to foods and medicine but also ornamental for ceremony, coloring for food and materials. In addition, plants of surrounding environment seem to have close sources for local people and more possibility that what is generally known. Therefore, My next research in 2011 focused on natural dyes as one of potentials which surrounding plants have. Natural dyes is relatively popular in Japan, however in Vietnam, very little studies has been done with regards to natural dyes. Furthermore, there are the poor bracket in Thua Thien Hue province, and new approach is required to rise in the standard of their living or income. In this research, in order to confirm the potential of natural dyes in Vietnam, my aims were to understand Vietnamese culture of natural dyes deeply, to make a dyeing experiment with local plants, and to evaluate handicrafts of natural dyes.

2. METHODS

The study concerning natural dyes was performed in Thue Thien Hue province from 15th Aug. to 5th Nov. 2011. In order to understand Vietnamese natural dyes, information were collected by talking to the local people, particularly the minority group at the mountainous area. The experiment of dyes was conducted with a total of 25 species of plants were identified in several study sites of mountainous area and plain area. Finally, total of 20 silk scarves were dyed with each plant and evaluated by handicraft producer in Hue city.

3. RESULTS

A few old women of minority group had experienced dyeing with one plant in the past, however nobody continues to do now because of the Vietnam War, spread of synthetic dyes and their aging. On the other hand, the experiment showed that silk and cotton were dyed yellow, brown, gray and pink color with majority of tested plants and daily equipments. Additionally, interview to handicraft producer indicated silk scarves dyed with plants had potential would be souvenirs to foreign visitor in Vietnam.

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In Vietnam, it is possible to get colors from surrounding plants without chemical and special techniques as well as Japanese natural dyes. Each color is little different, depending on species, seasons, and conditions. Therefore, natural dyes is suitable for small scale work at home. Moreover, handicrafts of natural dyes seem to have value of goods from the aspect of Vietnamese producer. That's why it expects that natural dyes has potential lead the secondary source of income. In case of the poor bracket will start to do natural dyes, it is important to understand their surroundings, lives and vegetation more deeply.