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SYNTHESIS OF NANO-TITANIUM DIOXIDE BY SOL-GEL METHOD
FOR PHOTOCATALYSIS APPLICATION

Miss Kannikar Juengsuwattananon



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By	Miss Kannikar Juengsuwattananon
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Thesis Advisor	Associate Professor Supatra Jinawat, Ph.D.
Thesis Co-advisor	Sitthisuntorn Supothina, Ph.D.

Accepted by the Faculty of Science, Chulalongkorn University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master's Degree

 Dean of the Faculty of Science
Professor Piamsak Menasveta, Ph.D.)

THESIS COMMITTEE

 Chairman
(Associate Professor Saowaroj Chuayjuljit)

Supatra Thesis Advisor
(Associate Professor Supatra Jinawath, Ph.D.)

S. Supothina Thesis Co-advisor
(Sitthisuntorn Supothina, Ph.D.)

Dujreutai Pongkao Kashima Member
(Dujreutai Pongkao Kashima, D. Eng.)

Pornapa Sujaridworakun. Member
(Pornapa Sujaridworakun, D. Eng.)

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The purpose of this research was to develop nano-titanium dioxide (TiO₂) for photocatalytic application. The TiO₂ was synthesized by a sol-gel method from tetrabutyl orthotitanate solution in the presence of hydrochloric or nitric acid. Synthesis parameters such as concentration, water content, aging time, as well as the type and amount of hydrolysis catalyst were manipulated to optimum value in order to obtain desired phase structure and properties of the TiO₂ photocatalyst. It was found that higher concentration of Ti precursor led to faster sol formation and greater yield of the TiO₂ particles. Increasing water content and prolong aging time resulted to rapid anatase-to-rutile phase transformation and caused the crystal growth. Hydrochloric catalyst was found to promote the formation of rutile phase while nitric catalyst promoted the formation of the anatase phase. The as-synthesized TiO₂ powders were calcined at 300 - 700°C for 4-10 h to induce the crystallization as well as to burn out any residual organic matters. The TiO₂ sol was then coated on Al₂O₃ beads and glass tubes to reduce the amount of the TiO₂ catalyst and for easy recovery. The resulting photocatalyst had good efficiency for Cibracron Red dye removal. The photocatalytic efficiency was found to relate with phase composition, crystallite size, as well as specific surface area. Incorporation of vanadium into the TiO₂ retarded anatase-to-rutile phase transformation but did not improve photocatalytic efficiency.

Department of.....Materials Science.....Student's signature.....*กานต์ จึงสวัสดิ์*
Field of study.....Ceramic Technology.....Advisor's signature.....*Supatra*
Academic year.....2005.....Co-advisor's signature.....*S. Supothina*

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ศูนย์วิทยทรพยากร
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

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ศูนย์วิทยทรัพยากร
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย