

CHANGE OF WOMEN'S COSTUMES IN CHIANG MAI SOCIETY
(1879-1933)



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สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

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สังคมเชียงใหม่ ระหว่าง พ.ศ. 2422 – 2476 โดยศึกษาปัจจัยต่าง ๆ ที่ส่งผลกระทบต่อให้มีการ
เปลี่ยนแปลงในการแต่งกาย เนื่องจากการแต่งกายเปรียบเสมือนเงาสะท้อนถึงสังคม เศรษฐกิจ
และบทบาททางสังคมสตรี จึงได้ศึกษาอิทธิพลของปัจจัยเหล่านี้ที่เพื่อเข้าใจกระบวนการของ
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จากการศึกษาพบว่าในช่วงเวลาดังกล่าวได้มีการเปลี่ยนแปลงของการแต่งกายสตรีใน
สังคมเชียงใหม่ เช่น การสวมเสื้อแบบชาวตะวันตก ในขณะที่เดียวกันวัฒนธรรมของการนุ่งซิ่น
ยังคงเป็นที่นิยมอยู่ การเปลี่ยนแปลงที่เกิดขึ้นมีสาเหตุมาจากปัจจัยภายใน ได้แก่ การขยายตัว
ทางเศรษฐกิจของเชียงใหม่ และปัจจัยภายนอก ได้แก่ อิทธิพลจากพระราชสำนัก การตั้งอำนาจ
สู่ศูนย์กลางกรุงเทพ ฯ เช่นการปฏิรูประบบการศึกษา การสร้างทางรถไฟสายเหนือ และการ
เปลี่ยนแปลงการดำเนินชีวิตของชาวเชียงใหม่ รวมทั้งบทบาทของเจ้าดารารัศมีซึ่งเป็นผู้นำใน
การผสมผสานวัฒนธรรมดั้งเดิมของชาวล้านนากับวัฒนธรรมตะวันตก โดยเฉพาะในประเด็น
การแต่งกายสตรีนั้น เจ้าดารารัศมีมีบทบาทในการอนุรักษ์ผ้าซิ่นพื้นเมือง ในขณะที่เดียวกันได้
แนะนำการสวมเสื้อและการตกแต่งอื่น ๆ แบบตะวันตก เพื่อเป็นสัญลักษณ์ของความ “ศิวิไลซ์”
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The purpose of this thesis is to examine and discuss the internal and external factors which evidently influenced the changes of women's costumes in Chiang Mai society between 1879 – 1933. This thesis also attempts to examine the changing economy of Chiang Mai society including various factors which contributes to these changes. Since costumes are reflected through its society, economy, politics and roles of women, the integration and method involving the combinations of these factors are studied in detail.

It was found that although many changes have occurred to the costumes of Chiang Mai women, such as the introduction of western blouses. The traditional *pha sin*, or tube-skirt remained unchanged and untouched by the 'new' values during the phase of these changes. The changes occurred as a result from factors examined in this thesis. The internal factors include the growing numbers of foreign merchants and Chiang Mai's economy. The external factors which derived from the influences of the Central Palace, as well as the "centralization" plan which consequently affected the reformation of the educational system and the expansion of the northern line railway. Together with these factors Chao Dara-Rasamee who played a significant part of a "cultural leader" was examined. Chao Dara-Rasamee became a dominant figure who contributed to the survival of northern cultures today. As a cultural leader she tried to integrate Chiang Mai's traditional cultures and Western cultures together. This could be clearly seen in the case of women's costumes, which Chao Dara-Rasamee attempted to preserved traditional *pha sin* and introduced Western blouses as a sign of "civilization" to the society of Chiang Mai

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CHAPTER I.
INTRODUCTION.

Rationale

The study of costumes and the way people dress is an important element in a culture which could lead to the understanding of its society, also reflecting its traditions, values, political and economical change at that time.

One of the most important social changes in Thailand was the introduction of the modern Western knowledge and technology including Western lifestyles and ways of living. Ever since the 19th century, Western influence has spread into Thailand by means of capitalism, international trade and Western civilization. For a long period of time, changes have occurred in many areas of the social aspects in Thailand. Consequently, one of the interesting areas to study this transition is through costumes. This could be done by observing how the way Thai people dressed have gradually changed over a period of time and examining the possible factors that has influenced this change.

Many studies have been made and various texts have been written on this area of costumes, such as *Karn Teang Kai Satree Kub Hutakarm-To-Pa Nai Sangkom Thai Samai Rattanakosin* (1999) by Suwadee Thanaprasitpatana and *Karn Teang Kai Samai Rattanakosin* (1982) by Anek Nawikamul. However, the extent of which these researches had been

carried out only limited in studying Bangkok or areas around the central part of Thailand.

Therefore, it is of my interest to study further into this area by looking beyond Bangkok and examine the changes of women's costumes in Chiang Mai society over the period between 1879-1933.

Throughout its history, Chiang Mai has been the centre of power and culture of the Lanna Thai Kingdom as can be seen through the prosperity of its religion, art and culture, the economy, agriculture and trade. It was also considered one of the richest and most fertile cities in the upper northern region.

The distinguishing feature of Chiang Mai lies in its being able to maintain and preserve the unique art and culture of the Lanna Thai people. Although in some periods, the city fell under the rule of Burma (A.D.1558-1774), the Burmese culture did not have a lasting influence on the culture of Chiang Mai. As westernization spread across Bangkok, there is evidence that this confrontation also had an effect over Chiang Mai.

Objectives

This thesis will attempt to examine the changes of women's costumes in Chiang Mai society through its external and internal factors with the limitation of studying urban communities in the Amphor Muang of Chiang Mai city itself or those who refer to themselves as *khon muang*. It is believed that changes which occurred in a specific place is most likely to

originate from its centre, such as city centre of Chiang Mai, and from there it is believed to have spread.

This thesis will focus on the former northern Thai Kingdom of Chiang Mai. The Chiang Mai valley was the site of the largest and most important of northern Thai Kingdoms. These Kingdoms were located in the region today called northern Thailand, but called "Western Laos" by nineteenth century missionaries and foreign observers.

Based upon the understanding of its northern culture and traditions, I shall draw upon both archival sources and oral histories in order to present and argue the factors which are believed to influence the changes of women's costumes.

Therefore, this thesis will examine the changes in women's costumes of Chiang Mai society from 1879 to 1933 in correlation with studying the social, political, economical and cultural environment of Chiang Mai. This study will also add to a new dimension and new understanding of Chiang Mai society from a historical point of view. In addition, this research is intended to reflect the values of women's costumes as an outcome of the social changes in Chiang Mai at that period of time.

Theoretical Framework

This thesis will begin with examining the underlying factors which could be the essence of this change. By examining and studying under the historical perspective and by gathering evidences of costumes worn by

women and men traditionally, the modernization process of Chiang Mai will be touched upon.

The first part of this thesis will examine the historical and traditional perspectives of Chiang Mai in terms of costumes, economy and society. Therefore, readers can picture the society from the period after Chiang Mai became a vassal state of Siam. Very significantly, we can also observe the costumes of Chiang Mai people during that time while looking into the lifestyles of its people. This chapter will be an overview of the traditional phase of Chiang Mai, providing background and historical sources for the analytical parts of the thesis in the next chapters.

Once we are able to gather the necessary information on the historical and traditional perspectives of Chiang Mai, the different influences leading to the changes in costumes will be examined. This part will include information on Chiang Mai and its trades, at the same time, trying to understand its economy and changes during this period of modernization. The different factors are characterized either as internal or external influences. This main chapter aims to gather all possible explanations for the changes in women's costumes in Chiang Mai society between 1879-1933. The chapter is divided into four parts: the first part will concentrate on the structure of Chiang Mai economy at that time, focusing particularly on its trading relationships with neighbouring lands and goods imported into the Chiang Mai.

Secondly, the roles of the American Presbyterian Missionaries, who lived in Chiang Mai, are considered as one of the most useful first-hand

evidence for this explanation. It is believed that these missionaries introduced western knowledge and technology to Chiang Mai and its people, similarly to central Thailand. These missionaries conducted evangelistic work along with providing social services by means of providing medical care and education to achieve their missionary objective of converting people to adopt the Christian teaching.

The third part will examine in details the influences of the central palace, through its centralization framework. In other words, the cultural shaping through political domination. The fourth part of this chapter looks into the changing lifestyles of the Chiang Mai people. These changes of lifestyles include the introduction of cinemas, local newspapers, and other forms of medias.

Finally, the role of Chao Dara-Rasamee, the Lanna Princess who became a consort of King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) will be examined. From this detailed casestudy of Chao Dara-Rasamee, we are faced with political intentions, as well as cultural bonds between Lanna and Siam. Since Chao Dara-Rasamee is well loved and respected by both lands, it is interesting and insightful to examine her role as she travels between two lands, intentionally, politically and culturally transferring traditions and cultures.

Hypothesis

How women dressed in Chiang Mai society from 1879-1933 and the changes in these costumes, could be regarded a symbolic outcome of preserving traditional ways of living and at the same time, trying to

“modernized” themselves through the influence of westernization, such as the emergence of missionaries, educational system, role of elites, and the expansion of foreign communities within the society itself. It cannot be stated that this transition has resulted in an entirely new culture but nevertheless, an adaptation and preservation of the traditional culture. We have seen from historical evidence that numerous previous adaptations have been made to the Thai society including costumes.

Sources

Data and information collecting will be done by examining primary and secondary sources. For instance, missionary reports and experiences from foreign travelers, such as Carl Bock (1884), is one of the many useful sources in this study. Both Thai and English books and sources are used as references, including cremation volume and thesis. Collections of photographs and historic mural paintings from local Chiang Mai temples, such as the **Wat Phra Sing**, **Wat Phumin** and **Wat Nong Bua** will also be observed. In addition, historical photographs from the National Archives of Thailand have also been collected to provide observable evidences.

CHAPTER II.

HISTORICAL AND TRADITIONAL PERSPECTIVES.

By observing the background of its history and society, Chiang Mai is historically considered to be consisted of people from different races and cultures, which combined the local people of Chiang Mai today. The blending of various cultures could be observed through the costumes of the locals. Although the different groups of people living in Chiang Mai have their own ways of dressing and expressing their identities, there are also common types and styles of costumes which could be used to label the northern people of Thailand. In this chapter, I will examine the northern women's traditional costumes and its background. Also, the society of Chiang Mai in its traditional perspectives, such as the roles and status of women in the society will be touched upon. The different classes of women also influenced the way they dressed and their hairstyles, due to their different roles and activities. A clear picture of how Chiang Mai women were traditionally dressed will be gained from this chapter, and how their lives affected and influenced their costumes. Consequently, the traditional perspective is vital in order to further examine and understand the *changes* to these traditional costumes.

Background Of Chiang Mai History and Its Society.

The history of the Lanna Kingdom started with King Mangrai (1239-1317), who began his career in 1259 as the ruler of a minor Tai city-state and, during a twenty year period, extended his power over various other minor states in northern Thailand until he became an important figure in the region. In 1281 he conquered the ancient and powerful city-state of Haripunjaya and cemented his dominance over a large territory. After these conquests, Mangrai proceeded to enliven the cultural life of his emerging kingdom by importing craftsmen and artists from other states and by promoting the Buddhist religion. In 1296 he also began the construction of a new capital, Chiang Mai (new city), for his Lanna Kingdom. By the time of his death in 1317, King Mangrai had laid the foundations for a Buddhist state of regional importance with Chiang Mai as its centrepiece. By the end of the fourteenth century, the Lanna Kingdom achieved both political stability and experienced the flowering of an impressive Buddhist culture. Chiang Mai became a widely recognized centre of Buddhist art and learning.

The period of power and cultural flowering lasted for only a brief era, however, and in the early sixteenth century the Lanna Kingdom entered a phase of permanent decline caused in large part by incompetent political leadership. In 1558 the Burmese invaded and captured Chiang Mai, bringing to an end the Mangrai dynasty. For the next two hundred years the region suffered through a long era marked by Burmese domination, war, revolt, internal dissension, unrest, repression, and cultural decline.

In 1774, the Thai forces under the command of Chao Kawila successfully drove the Burmese out of Chiang Mai, after being under its control for more than 200 years. From that time onwards, Chiang Mai became a dominion of Siam. Phraya Cha Ban was appointed to rule Chiang Mai whereas Chao Kawila was made Phraya Kawila and sent to rule over Lampang, where he was helped by his six younger brothers who were appointed officials to assist with the administration of that city.¹

At the end of the Thonburi period, Phraya Cha Ban passed away and Chiang Mai became a deserted city. When King Rama I ascended the throne and established Bangkok as the new capital, he appointed Phraya Kawila as ruler of Chiang Mai. At that time Chiang Mai was deserted. The villages had returned to forest and the fields were overgrown. It was a place without people – a wilderness for elephants and tigers. Phraya Kawila's duty was to rebuild the city. In 1782, he brought people from Lampang and constructed *Wiang Pa Sang* as a temporary settlement while reconstructing Chiang Mai. As Chiang Mai had long been a ghost town, Phraya Kawila first had to gather people who had fled to the jungles and bring them back to Chiang Mai. This period was known as “putting vegetables in the basket and people in the city.”²

As Phraya Kawila fought with nearby villages and once defeated, the people of these villages were brought back to Chiang Mai. Phraya Kawila

¹ Kannika Promsao. **Chiang Mai: Seven Hundred Years.** 1996.

² เก็บผักใส่ช่า เก็บข้าใส่มือ ง

brought Tai Yai, Tai Leu, Tai Khoen and Tai Yong from Sipsong Panna to settle in Chiang Mai. Different groups were located in different places in the city according to their skills and abilities. For instance, craftsmen were settled in different parts of the city – such as the Tai Khoen who were settled in the Wua Lai Road area which was to become renowned for its lacquer and silverware. Those who had no craft skills were settled outside the city. Phraya Kawila resided at *Wiang Pa Sang* for fifteen years and was able to re-establish the new city of Chiang Mai in 1796. Once he had completed his duty of repopulating Chiang Mai, he moved to reside in the city.

Because of the many different origins of the people who repopulated the city, Chiang Mai became a community of mixed races. Apart from the original inhabitants, the Lua who spoke the Mon-Kmer language, and the Tai groups, there were also the Kha and Burmese. Today almost fifty percent of the people living in Chiang Mai are descendants of the Tai Leu, Tai Yong and Tai Khoen. Each ethnic group originally established itself in communities according to race, but, as the races and cultures mixed over time these people have gradually forgotten their original language and culture and all became known as Tai Yuan. Moreover, they came to call themselves the “*khon Muang*” (city people). These people speak their own dialect generally referred to as “*kham Muang*” (city language), and have a distinctive cultural identity.³

³ Klaisri Nimarnhaemin, “*Keb Pug Sai Sa Keb Ka Sai Muang*” in *Lanna Thai Kadee*, 1980. Also refer to Songsak Prangwattanakul, *Karn Taeng Kai Puen Muang Kong Lanna*, 1992.

This blending of various cultures was partially and naturally influenced by the two hundred years of Burmese rule over Chiang Mai. Not only did the Burmese attempted to take over the people of Lanna, but at the same time, they also introduced many of their own customs and traditions, artistic styles, beliefs, fashions and cuisine. For example, the custom of tattooing practiced among men and ear piercing among women was adopted from the Burmese, as was the custom of ordaining as a novice rather than as a monk.⁴

Women's Traditional Costumes

From the historical perspective described above of the structure of Chiang Mai society in the past, it can be seen that mixed races of people and cultures built up the majority of the society. Therefore, this understanding could lead us to believe that the costumes of women in the society during this period were based on the combinations of various races, such as the group of people who settled in Chiang Mai during the period of “putting vegetables in the basket and people in the city”.

The Tai wore a costume which was similar for nearly all groups, but which differed in detail, application and decoration. Basically, the women wore a *pha sin* (or tube skirt) with or without a top depending on their home climatic conditions. The *pha sin* of the women differ very much from group to group which will be discussed later.

⁴ Kannika Promsao. **Chiang Mai: Seven Hundred Years**, 1996.
Saguen Chotisukrat, *Prawat Phra Chao Kawila*, 1972.

The largest group of people who lived in Lanna during this period were the Tai Yuan. Often, researchers would tend to discuss the costumes of Tai Yuan and use it to describe how Lanna women dressed in general. It is important to bear in mind that studies about Tai Yuan costume are restricted by the lack of actual examples, but evidence of methods of dress since the late 19th century can be seen in the mural paintings in old temples such as the *wihan lai kham* at **Wat Phra Sing**, the *wihan* at **Wat Bua Khok Luang** in Chiang Mai.

The characteristic of the *pha sin* of the Tai Yuan is that the stripes are evenly spaced and worn with the warp wrapped around the body so that the stripes are horizontal and the *pha sin* is joined once only. The waistband is red and sometimes has an extra band of white but the hem of the *pha sin* is left plain black or red. For special occasions, a decorative *tin chok* is added. The majority of the Tai Yuan *pha sin* are made in cotton and only a few have been woven in silk, due to the fact that the Tai Yuan did not produce silk. This is most likely due to their strict form of Buddhism which did not allow the rearing of silk.⁵

The creation of a single length of silk is an intricate and time-consuming process. The process of producing silk could be considered by some Buddhists as an improper act. This is due to the fact that silk derives from silkworms. The silk caterpillar goes through four stages in its life cycle: egg, larva to caterpillar, pupa or chrysalis and moth.

⁵ Songsak Prangwatthanakun and Praticia Naenna. **Chiang Mai's Textile Heritage**, p. 36.

Rearing the silkworms determines the quantity and quality of the silk, since they are fragile creatures that need cosseting. After mating, the female deposits 300-500 grey pinhead-size eggs. Two or three days later she dies. Once hatched, the young larvae will begin to feed. By the end of the feeding cycle, they will consume 500 times as much as when it was newly hatched. When fully satiated, the caterpillars raise their heads to indicate the commencement of spinning. In spinning the cocoon around itself, a process that takes 2-3 days, the worm works in a figure-of-eight motion, distributing the gummed thread evenly and winding from the outside to the centre. The cocoon effectively becomes the worm's shroud.

The Thai pupa remains inside its cocoon for about 23 days. When spinning is complete, the cocoons are boiled or steamed in order to kill the pupa, to prevent it from metamorphosing into a chrysalis, which would break the thread upon emerging from the cocoon. When the cocoons are pressed under the boiled water, the silk threads float to the surface and are swiftly reeled onto a wheel for frame 10-20 filaments at a time.⁶

This whole process would, therefore, be considered sinful or wrongdoing to the Tai Yuan since they are Buddhists. Thus, their silks were probably reared by Tai Lue or Tai Lao people living in the region and may have been woven by some Tai Yuan. However, many *pha sin*, in particular the full brocaded central sections, were woven in Nan and Chiang Tung for the Chiang Mai market.

⁶ Sharples, Jennifer. **Thai Silk**, p. 30-32.

It is important to also examine various groups of Tai who lived in Lanna during this period. One of the other group which settled in Chiang Mai or Lanna area were the Tai Lue who have migrated from Sipsong Pan Na. The Tai Lue women that came from Muang Ngoen, Laos, wore a special blouse decorated with trimmings made in discontinuous supplementary weft designs added to the neck. There are two styles, one for special occasions (or the winter) with a red lining and called *suea kop long daeng*.⁷ Some are made of velvet with a silver medallion hanging from both sides at the waist. The unlined shirt is called *suea dam* (black shirt). The Tai Lue *pha sin* is distinctive in style whereby the decorative part falls in the main body of the *pha sin* and the hem piece is completely plain.

Usually, the difference between *pha sin* of the Tai Yuan and Tai Lue lies in the hem piece. As mentioned earlier, Tai Yuan women preferred to have their *tin chok*, whereas the *tin sin* of the Tai Lue are completely plain with no *chok* at all.

The so-called Lao living in Lanna are in fact various Tai groups that have emigrated from Laos. Their *pha sin* has vertical stripes or supplementary warp patterns with either a plain or decorative hem piece called *tin sin* which is completely decorated. Also, there is only one side seam (Fig.1).⁸

⁷ เสื้อ ก๊อบ หล่องแดง

⁸ Please refer to Fig. 1 for a comparative study of the *pha sin* of the three Tai groups living in Lanna.

Through a long period of integration and cultural adaptations such as marriages between the different Tai groups and passing down of mixed cultures, the traditional costumes of the northern people, namely Chiang Mai, slowly have been formed. It is not surprising that these different backgrounds and cultures would mix including their costumes, which consequently created the traditional Lanna-style costumes. It can be hypothesized that some of the traditional costumes which derived from the combinations of various Tai groups, as mentioned above, have been altered from the original style. For example, the Tai Lue or other groups of Tai who lived in the the most northern part of Lanna would wear head cloths and blouses. However, due to the changing climate, when the costumes have been combined with other Tai groups, these head cloths had been left out since the weather in Chiang Mai is warmer. In addition, due to the warm climate, the blouses have also been neglected. It is assumed that later the piece of head cloth was used to wrap around the body instead of the head. Its functions was to primarily wipe the sweat and to protect them from the dirt. This Lanna-style costume, which women in Chiang Mai wore traditionally would be discussed in detailed in the following part.

The Chiang Mai women wore a horizontally striped *pha sin* or tube skirt which was tucked at the waist or above the waist and worn long down to the ankles. They are mostly hand woven cloths worn in unique styles with great skills. Although cotton was the fabric of ordinary villagers and everyday life, silk was the most important prestige fabric. In general the Tai Yuan used cotton more than silk. Silk are considered to be closely

associated with the elite, but it appears to have been exclusively woven by women affiliated directly with the court. According to Bowie (1992), only two areas of the court itself are known to have woven silk are the towns of San Khampaeng and Hot.⁹

Unlike cotton which was grown in the upland regions of northern Thailand in sufficient amount for the export, raw silk was an item for import. The silkworm was only found or cultivated in a few specific areas in mainland Southeast Asia. As Fraser-Lu writes :

*Thailand, the greatest producer of silk in Southeast Asia, has historically traded in silk with its Kampuchean and Burmese neighbours. The Kampuchean and Lao peoples have also traditionally raised silkworms for domestic use. Burma has not produced a great deal of silk. The best quality silk has always been imported overland from China.*¹⁰

Thus, the primary region for silkworm cultivation was northeastern Thailand and areas of Cambodia. Wild silkworms were collected in northern Thailand and some silkworms were cultivated during the nineteenth century

⁹ Katherine A. Bowie. "Trade and Textiles in Northern Thailand: A historical perspective" from **Textiles of Asia: A Common Heritage**, 1992.

¹⁰ Taken from Katherine A. Bowie. "Trade and Textiles in Northern Thailand: A historical perspective" from **Textiles of Asia: A Common Heritage**, 1992. Fraser-Lu, Sylvia. "Handwoven Textiles of Southeast Asia." Singapore : Oxford University Press, 1988 : p. 188.

in the town of Hot. However by far the bulk of the raw silk used in northern Thai courts was imported. As Bock explains:

*The cocoons of the wild silkworm are collected, and employed in the manufacture of native silk fabrics. The quality is coarse, and the supply insufficient for the home demand, considerable quantities of silk being bought from the Yunnan traders in exchange for the Lao cotton, of which far more than enough for local consumption is grown.*¹¹

Nevertheless, silk *pha sin* could still be seen in the society which could suggest that silk *pha sin* were still demanded, probably more by the higher class because they would have more money to spend. Thus, it can be seen that silk were regularly imported from other areas or countries, such as from Burma and from Yunnan traders.

In the past every woman could weave, including those from higher status families. Every woman owned at least one *tin chok* for special occasion, which in most of the cases, they would make themselves.

There are two ways to wear the *pha sin*; first, at the waist the tube could be folded from the left to right or vice versa. Second, there could be two folds crossing over at the front and tucking and rolling over at the waist. Wearing a silver belt was optional and the village women took little care to fold their *pha sin* to create a straight hem, but preferring to tuck them right up under their breasts.

¹¹ Carl Bock. **Temples and Elephants**, p. 324

Chiang Mai's traditional *pha sin* design structure was composed of three basic parts: the waistband, the main body and the hem piece (Fig. 2). The waistband was usually in two parts, red and white and made in cotton.

The main body of the *pha sin* was usually horizontally striped in cotton or silk with one side seam. The stripes, being in the warp, were arranged with even spacing known as *sin ta*¹² or *sin kan*¹³ sometimes using a twisted yarn known as *pan kai*¹⁴ or *hang krarok*¹⁵. More rarely, some *pha sin* had two side seams but this was due to technical restrictions whereby a supplementary brocade decoration was desired and had to be put in the weft. The resulting *pha sin* was worn with the brocade in horizontal stripes requiring two side seams. The hem piece was either plain in colour, usually red or black or decorated in supplementary weft over the upper half. The latter were called *tin chok*¹⁶.

For special occasions a *pha sin tin chok* was worn. This is a *pha sin* with a decorative hem piece or *tin chok* classically woven with a lower plain red section and upper supplementary woven section made on black background. The characteristics or designs of the *tin chok* of the Tai Yuan could vary from one location to another. They could be distinguished in

¹² ชีน ต ำ

¹³ ชีน ก ำ น

¹⁴ ป ้น ไ ก่

¹⁵ ป ้น ห ำ ง ก ร ร อ ก

¹⁶ ต ีน จ ก

terms of colour, special features, patterns, etc. Religious ceremonies and rituals are considered to be very important features in the lives of the people of Chiang Mai or for all of the people in the Kingdom of Thailand. Therefore, it is not surprising to see villagers, especially women, putting on their best clothes to go to temples or for any of the religious gatherings.

The ordinary *pha sin* of the old women was called *sin lae*¹⁷ or *sin kan kho khwai*¹⁸. This was plain black with two horizontal broad stripes in red placed near the waistband and the hem. A young missionary once described how women of Chiang Mai traditionally dressed as follows:

*This skirt worn to the ankles is less than two yards around, the same width from top to bottom. It is drawn smoothly around the waist, laid in a large plait in front and deftly knotted as only a Laos¹⁹ woman can do, - no pins, no buttons, no hooks or eyes. The style most commonly seen has a broad band of plain brown at top and bottom with very wide strip between of brown and yellow stripes running around. It may be of cotton or silk, homespun or purchased in the market.*²⁰

¹⁷ ซีน แห ล้

¹⁸ ซีน ก่า น ค อ ค วาย

¹⁹ Laos in this article refers to the northern Thai “Lao” people called by the western and central Thai (Siamese).

²⁰ “**Laos Women**” from The Laos News. January 1904 (vol. 1, No. 1) pg.31.

In addition to dress, textiles were also used for a variety of household items and on various ritual occasions. Although the poorest villagers often did without, amongst ordinary villagers, textiles were also used for making mattress covers, pillow covers, blankets, bedsheets, and mosquito nets. Cloth and clothing played an important role in ritual prestations. For villagers one of the most significant of these prestations was the offering of articles of clothing to parents, grandparents, and other elderly relatives on the fourth day (Day of the Year's Mouth or *wan paak pii*) during the New Year's ceremonies held in mid-April. Another very significant village ritual occasion in which cloth played an important role was the ordination ceremonies for the Buddhist monkhood. At the time of the ordination, the novice was paraded about the village in the aristocratic clothing (usually borrowed from a wealthy villager who owned a silk *phaa toi*) to symbolize the Gautama Buddha's birth into a royal family. During the initiation ceremony, he was given the yellow monastic robes. These robes may have been purchased, but in many cases village women wove, stitched and dyed the robes.

Cloth also figured importantly in the lives and rites of the wealthy. In addition to owning more and fancier quality clothes, wealthier families also had more and better household items. Instead of just having enough mattresses, pillows, and other bedding items for family needs, wealthier families had additional bedding sets for receiving guests. Furthermore, the guest bedding was more likely to have embroidered ends and complex, time-consuming weaves, and was considered an object of display. The

possession of ornate pillows seems to have been another particular important component of elite households.

However, a common practice among women of all classes in Chiang Mai society was the possession of at least one piece of *pha sin tin chok*. Not only were these *pha sin* used in special and religious occasions, but most women would preserve their piece for their children to make merit for them when they passed away. Therefore, *pha sin tin chok* is considered a very important clothing since it is believed that after making merit for the deceased ones, their loved ones will receive that particular item. In addition, the *pha sin tin chok* was used traditionally as a token for women to offer to their mother-in-laws or respected elders, especially during the Songkran festival.²¹

It is also interesting at this point, to examine the costumes of Chiang Mai women to those women from central Siam. Carl Bock stated in his journal that the women of Siam were dressed similar to the men. This was very uncommon to Westerners like Carl Bock himself since it was very difficult to distinguished between men and women in those days as he stated in his journal:

The women and men, I may here say, dress very much alike in Siam; and now that the fashion prevails amongst both sexes to cut

²¹ Katherine A. Bowie. "Trade and Textiles in Northern Thailand: A historical perspective" from **Textiles of Asia: A Common Heritage**, 1992.

*their hair short, and to brush it back, the females often look for all the world like men.*²²

Central Siam women, both higher and lower class, wore *jong kraben*²³, or a piece of cloth worn in a trouser-like manner and a piece of shoulder cloth worn in similar manner as the north (Fig 3). However, for special events and occasions, these higher class women wore *pha nung*²⁴ which they wore pleated in the front (Fig.4). Since the costumes of the two classes were very similar, the higher class women emphasized more on the quality and beauty of their clothes. This was done through their jewellerys, and high priced products such as imported gold and silver silk and clothes decorated with valuable ornaments.

Another difference between the northern and central was their hairstyle. Northern women in those days kept their hair long, so long that some reached their feet, while central women cut their hair into what was known as the ‘winged-style’.²⁵ This was what made the central women similar to the men. Carl Bock even stated in his journal that the way northern women were traditionally dressed had great style and the tight-fitting jackets which were later introduced spoiled the “pleasing appearance”:

²² Carl Bock. **Temples and Elephants**, p. 38.

²³ โจ่งกระเบน

²⁴ ผ้า นุ่ง

²⁵ ผมปีก

[But] this innovation spoils the pleasing appearance of the women in their ordinary dress. No women in the East wear so simple and at the same time so becoming in attire as the sin and pahtong of the Laosians. When the colours are nicely blended – and to do the ladies justice they generally are – the effect is very pleasing, the garment showing off to the advantage the erect and well-balanced bodies of the women, and not hampering their naturally free and graceful movements.²⁶

Different social class is also another factor which could determine how women were dressed. Therefore, it is important to study the lifestyles of women in different classes, such as higher and lower (commoner and village) women. Traditionally, the status of women in Chiang Mai were divided into two main groups, namely the *governor group* or higher class women and the *governed group* or the lower class women. The roles and lifestyles of these two groups of women will be examined further in this chapter.

It is important to understand the history of Chiang Mai not only to be able to picture the society in the past but another objective which is required for this research is how the society was formed, what the different roles for women were and how these roles affected the way they dressed. Consequently, it is important at this point, to examine how women of the traditional era were dressed and what their costumes were.

²⁶ Carl Bock. **Temples and Elephants**, p. 327.

Higher Class Women Of Chiang Mai.

Higher class women usually referred to the families of the northern rulers or the northern court women. The main role of the higher class women in the past was the role of a leader which required her to be side by side to her husband or the ruler. At the same time, they also had to support the welfare of the royal institution and the line of hierarchy. Higher class women were considered to be the 'face' of the society and the role model for every other women in the nation.

Another major role of the higher class women in Chiang Mai during the time Lanna was incorporated into the Kingdom of Siam which was considered to be very important, was the role of politically bonding the relationships between Siam and Lanna together. Many historical evidence and writings have been recorded that Lanna court women were offered to the rulers and kings of Siam for marriage or as minor wives²⁷. There is evidence that these 'offerings' of high status women to Siam could be found from as early as King Rama I. Princess Sri-Anocha, the sister of Phra Chao Kawila, the first ruler of Chiang Mai was offered and married to the brother of King Rama I.

It is also very important to consider that Chiang Mai women or northern women in general appeared to have more power and control as well as carry more important roles when compared to women of neighbouring lands or countries. For example, only evidenced in the history of Chiang

Mai that a woman once ruled the land. Phra Nang Jiraprapa was selected by men officials to temporarily rule Chiang Mai from 1545-1546 after her husband's death, Phaya Ket, the ruler of Lanna.²⁸ Therefore, it can be seen that Chiang Mai women especially higher class women, were not regarded as 'inferior' but were also likely respected and had control in some areas.

Higher class people who were considered wealthier when compared to the lower classes or villagers, were likely able to afford more foreign goods, such as textiles or clothings. Since silk are considered very expensive in those days, only the higher class people could afford to buy it. Some comparative insight into the cost of silk skirt over a cotton skirt is made possible from the account of the British traveler Carl Bock:

*When the 'body' is made of silk, this border is made of the same material, often beautifully interwoven with gold and silver threads. These rich borders sometimes cost as much as sixty rupees a piece, while the whole garment, when made entirely of cotton, strong and durable as it is, does not cost more than one and a half to two rupees.*²⁹

Nevertheless, it can be surmise that on ordinary days, members of the aristocracy likely wore cotton rather than silk clothing. They nonetheless wore fancier and better quality clothing than ordinary villagers. Nineteenth century paintings which have survived showed the aristocratic women

²⁷ Jiraluck Jongsatitmun. *Wikrit Tang Wattanatham : Koranee Karn Prabprean Ka Niyom Kong Chumchon*, p.26.

²⁸ Sarusawadee Ong-sakul. *Prawatsart Lanna*, p. 206.

²⁹ Carl Bock. *Temples and Elephants*, p. 326.

wearing *pha sin* with horizontal stripes like the commoners, but with gold threads and a decorative *tin chok* border; the skirts of commoners usually had plain, solid colour borders.

In addition, it is interesting and rather surprising to note that the majority of women from the royal family in this period were skilled weaver. They would usually weave their own clothes, such as pillowcase or cloths to offer the monks. At the same time, they would also demand weaving from their servants under their control.

Since textiles are considered to provide a glimpse into their labour time and cost, it is not surprising that women, whether from higher or lower classes will want to weave their own cloths in order to "show-off" their own talents and skills. This can be seen in Carl Bock's account of his description of the Chao Operat's wife:

*She lived in a large, roomy, teaked-built house, and was always busy making silken garments, while one of her slaves worked at the loom spinning silk thread. The Chao Operat, as rumour has it, is very rich, having a good deal of cash, besides some sixty elephants; but even a wealthy princess is not exempt from the necessity for making the silken garments which are the symbol of her rank, any more than the poor women can do without weaving her cotton clothes.*³⁰

³⁰ Carl Bock. **Temples and Elephants**, p. 322.

According to Carl Bock, the "upper classes" women were also skilled in embroidering the cushions or pillows which took the place of chairs. It can be seen here that weaving is very symbolic since not only they can show the skills of the weaver, but the patterns of the cloth can also signify its wearer. Therefore, even the wealthiest or upper class women had to weave for themselves. It is also interesting to note that there were not many distinctions between the costumes of women from the upper class and the lower class. However, the slight differences could be observed from the priceless jewellerys, or the quality and fabric of the costumes.

Commoner and Village Women Of Chiang Mai.

For both men and women who lived in the villages of Chiang Mai city in those days, it is acceptable and a common sight to be seen, as well as go out and about bare-breasted. The *pha sin* was usually worn with a light coloured shoulder cloth wrapped around the upper body, tied in various ways: horizontally around the body underneath the two breasts (Fig. 5); around the neck with both ends hanging down the front over the breasts (Fig. 6); around the neck with one end hanging down the back or over one shoulder only covering one breast which is known as *sawai laeng*³¹ or *biang bai*³² (Fig. 7). This particular method was used for visiting the temple. In the

³¹ สะหว่า ย แห่ลิ่ง

³² เบี้ย ง บ้ำ ย

final method, the shoulder cloth would be loosely wrapped around the neck with both ends hanging towards the back (Fig. 8).

Most of the written records and evidence which described to us the lifestyles and daily routines of the common village women were mostly taken from records of the American missionaries. Since these missionaries lived closely to the lives of the village people and were, therefore, able to give accurate and reliable descriptions through direct observance. One of the recordings of the American missionary clearly gives us the picture of the roles of village women inside and outside of their homes. It was recorded that at dawn these women would cook the rice that they have soaked overnight in water and carry a basket containing rice, fruits, vegetables, etc. to sell in the market. Then, around 09.00 am. they would return home for breakfast. Many times during the week, these women would go out to find wood, pick vegetables and bamboo shoots. Since fishing was only possible 6 months per year, these women would spend quite some time fishing and in some cases, they could even spend up to a day. If they had young children, they often would tie them up onto their backs while looking for the fish. Dinner for the villagers would be around 08.00 p.m. In addition to the daily routine described above, during the day these women would also spend time weaving and looking after their children.³³ At the same time, Bock also described the lifestyles of the villagers in Chiang Mai:

³³ microfilm: *Women's Work for Woman*, vol. 16, 1901: 132

*While the women are engaged in these duties, or the similar ones of drying fish, weaving, and making clothes, the men now and then go into the forest with their cattle and elephants, cut wood, collect bamboo, or gather grass for roofing, never forgetting before going to work to make their offering in the nearest temples.*³⁴

By examining what Chiang Mai women traditionally wore could tell us many things about their daily lives and how they live from day to day. For example, not only were the pieces of cloth worn with the *pha sin* functioned as protective devices for the body, i.e. from the weather and dirt, but we can learn from it that women in previous days did not just stayed at home and performed their “duties” only in the household sector. On the other hand, these clothes also functioned as supportive devices for the women’s breasts when they go out of their houses to work in the fields or when they go to the market.

In Fig. 9 and 10, for example, it can be observed that when women traditionally go out to the market they would walk and carry baskets on their shoulders which contained food or materials for sale. It would be unimaginably uncomfortable to walk bare-breasted for quite a distance, at the same time, carrying heavy load of basket everyday to and from the market. The functions of these shoulder cloths could served as the following functions, one, used to support the breasts, from underneath or sideways, depending on the occasion or the wearers’ satisfaction (as in Fig. 5 and 7);

³⁴ Carl Bock. **Temples and Elephants**, p. 318.

and two, to help support the weight of the baskets on the women's shoulder (as in Fig. 6, 7 and 8). Other functions could be as simple as to use these shoulder cloth as multi-purpose cloths, i.e. for wiping their faces when sweating or wiping their mouths, hands and so on. Therefore, when we examine the functions of costumes, it is as important to study the lives of the people in that particular society since their daily activities could determine what they wore and how it was worn.

As Bock (1884) stated in his journal that the market place in Chiang Mai were run by women, whether selling or purchasing goods. This lifestyle can also suggest how these local women would dress themselves:

*Along the main streets, on both sides, is one long file of women, who have come from the suburbs or neighbouring villages to sell their produce. As in the island of Bali, the women do all their selling.*³⁵

Since Chiang Mai is situated in the northern region of Thailand, it is not surprising that the weather is slightly cooler during the cold season. Therefore, the people of Chiang Mai had to prepare themselves for this season by using another piece of cloth known as the “*pha tum*”³⁶ to wrap around their bodies and protect themselves from the cold wind and weather. When comparing the higher class and the commoner or village women it is interesting to point out that the commoner were more openly exposed. This was stated so due to the evidences that were collected from old photographs.

³⁵ Carl Bock. **Temples and Elephants**, p. 229.

³⁶ ผ้า ๓ ชั้น

Lower class women were seen photographed bare breasted while no photographs were found with higher class women taken bare breasted. Furthermore, being bare breasted were not only seen limited to older women, sometimes younger women, possibly teenagers, were also photographed bare breasted (Figure 11). Therefore, this clearly points out that the lower class society regarded bare breasted women as normal, which could be seen even amongst younger women.

However, blouses were not completely neglected in Chiang Mai society during that time. Blouses that were usually worn in the society during this time were made of white cotton, round-necked, straight sleeved, open at the front, either full or halfway, closed with buttons or tie-strings, with or without pockets (Fig.12 and 13). Blouses for older people were worn fitted, similar to an inner garment, with a low round neck, sleeveless with obviously sewn seams (Fig. 14) or as a strapless blouse called *suea ok*³⁷ which just went around the bust (Fig. 15). For going to the temple, these blouses were worn with the shoulder wrap *sawai leang*³⁸(Fig. 16). Younger people wore a blouse called *suea ba hot*³⁹, which was a loosely fitting blouse, sleeveless, with shoulder straps and with gathers front and back falling from the neck binding (Fig. 17).

It is important to note that for commoners or village women, the

³⁷ เสื่อ อ ก

³⁸ สะหว่า ย แล้ง

³⁹ เสื่อ ป่า ห้อย

occasions for wearing blouses were only limited on special occasions, such as going to the temple for merit making ceremonies. At home, these women likely wore their shoulder cloths to wrapped around the upper body instead of shirts or blouses. In most cases, village women would not even wear anything or cover their breasts.

One very interesting remark was made about the reason behind why the women of Chiang Mai started to wear shirts. The writer stated that it was due to the period after the Shan rebellion in 1902⁴⁰. It mentioned that once the Shan had taken control and captured Phrae city, the Thai government had to send soldiers from Bangkok and from Pitsanulok to defeat the Shans. Hundreds of soldiers were sent to join with the many other soldiers from different areas including local soldiers. As a result, it was recorded that these soldiers that were sent from other regions of the country up north, took advantages of the northern women and did not behaved politely towards them. This was probably due to the different backgrounds and unfamiliarity of the northern society and culture. Consequently, from that time onwards, northern women became more alert and aware of their safety and therefore, started to wear blouses in their everyday lives. Unfortunately, this explanation could not be academically verified, however, it could be a very interesting point for further research.

It is important to point out that blouses were worn simply for protection and convenience. Bare-breasted were not considered

⁴⁰ Boonserm Satrapai, *A-deed Lanna*, 1977.

inappropriate but to put on a blouse was to make them polite, such as when going to the temple or other religious occasions.

Hairstyles

Chiang Mai women traditionally often grow their hair long and put them up in a bun just above the upper neck. Hair on the front part of the head was neatly combed and tied back, whereas the bun is tightly secured with a pin made from twisted metal strips and curved into a U-shape. These pins were made from gold, silver, bronze or other types of metal depending on the status of the owner.

In addition, it has been observed that another hairstyle was also popular amongst these northern Thai women. The hair in the front and in the centre of the head are pulled back neatly and tightly, then by using a finger, the hair at the sides are slightly tucked out. Chiang Mai women were very distinctive from men in terms of hairstyles when compared to women of different regions, especially in central Siam. The women of central Siam would wear their hair short and dressed similarly to men. However, as the young American missionary puts it:

....there is no mistaking the Laos woman, however, in dress or manner. Her only garment may be a skirt but it is worn gracefully, and with her long hair neatly combed she is distinctively feminine.⁴¹

⁴¹ **“Laos Women”** from The Laos News. January 1904 (vol. 1, No. 1) pg.31

Thus, one of the most observable features, which distinguished the women of Chiang Mai to the women of central Siam at this particular period, is their long hair. Interestingly, it is stated that one of the traditions adopted from the Burmese which also claimed to shaped the customs of Lanna is the performance of devoted wives to their husbands. In order for wives to show extreme respect and devotion, they had to pay homage to their husbands' feet and sometimes had to wipe their husbands' feet with the women's long hair.

*The women allow the hair to grow long, and, after plentifully smothering it with grease, they tie it up in a neat knot at the back of the head, never without a wreath of flowers encircling it. Sometimes, a bunch of flowers or an orchid is also stack in at the side, or fastened above the ear.*⁴²

Jewelleries

For those women who were in higher status, they often wore flower pattern necklaces made from silver, gold or alloy of gold; the amount of necklaces wore depended on the status of the women. Also, women would be seen wearing large sized earrings which required large earlobe piercing.

⁴² Carl Bock. **Temples and Elephant**, p.327

This was known as *laan hu*.⁴³ As for ordinary village women, they would place a rolled up piece of leaf or *bai lan*⁴⁴ through the hole of the pierced earlobes.

On the other hand, others who came from higher social class would replace the leaf with rolled up gold, silver, alloy of gold, bronze or other types of metals through their earlobes, same technique as the *bai lan*. In addition, some women would attached precious stones or other decorative objects by burying it into the metal. This particular piece of earring is referred to as *ra-kut*.⁴⁵

It is believed that having big ears are regarded as a sign of longevity and are appreciated by the locals. Therefore, this can also be another explanation why the fashion of piercing the ears is universal among both men and women in Chiang Mai:

*This fashion of stretching the ear-lobes and the practice of carrying flowers, cigars, and other articles on the top of the ear, causing the upper part of the ear to project from the side of the head, makes the naturally large ears of the natives look still larger.*⁴⁶

The tradition of wearing large earrings in their earlobes was also another custom adopted from the Burmese lifestyles. Apart from earrings,

⁴³ ลานหู

⁴⁴ ไบลาน

⁴⁵ ระกูด

⁴⁶ Carl Bock. **Temples and Elephant**, p. 225.

some other basic jewellery for Chiang Mai women consisted of bangles – made from twisted silver or gold strips or made in various designs, again, the amount worn depended on the status of the wearer. Also, anklets were also popular amongst these women and were often worn in special occasions such as new-home celebrations or merit making ceremonies at the temple fair.

*Gold or silver bracelets are worn on state occasions, either plain, or in a twisted pattern like a rope, or formed of a series of small rings or links.*⁴⁷

In addition to other jewellery mentioned above, women in those days would also wear the hair bracelets⁴⁸ which could be made of gold or simply flowers. These bracelets were used to wrap around the hair bun on top of the women's head as evidenced in drawings of women from old mural paintings.

In summary, it can be seen that women of Chiang Mai dressed themselves uniquely. Although their costumes are considered traditional but when we examine their roots closely, we can observe that from the history of Chiang Mai they were also influenced by various races. Chao Kawila, the first ruler of Chiang Mai, gathered different people from different places as evidenced from the period of “putting vegetables in the basket and people in the city”. The women of Chiang Mai would place a lot of emphasis on costumes on special occasions, for instance, wearing *pha sin tin chok*, when

⁴⁷Carl Bock. **Temples and Elephant**, p. 328.

⁴⁸ ส ร ี อ ย พ ื น ม ว ย

attending to temples on religious festivals or even on occasions purely to give alms to the monks.

We have seen that the population of Chiang Mai city itself is a combination of mixed races.⁴⁹ During this period, Chiang Mai society has not yet directly been highly influenced by outsiders, namely western and central powers. Surely, it can be stated that the women's costumes described above are of traditional costumes or clothes that Chiang Mai women wore before any major impacts with different cultures.

Different social classes of women is also another factor which could influence the costumes. Therefore, in this chapter the lifestyles of women from higher and lower classes were examined. Higher class women played significant roles in the political arena. They acted as political bonds between Siam and Lanna, which improved the relationship between the people of both lands. Also, it can be seen that their economic roles differs vastly to the roles of the lower class women.

Higher class women did not perform daily housework by themselves, obviously, they had their servants and workers do take care of their chores. However, some of the higher class women were engaged in teak and other forms of trading businesses. It is these higher class people who owned the majority of land in Chiang Mai and made most of the profits from selling

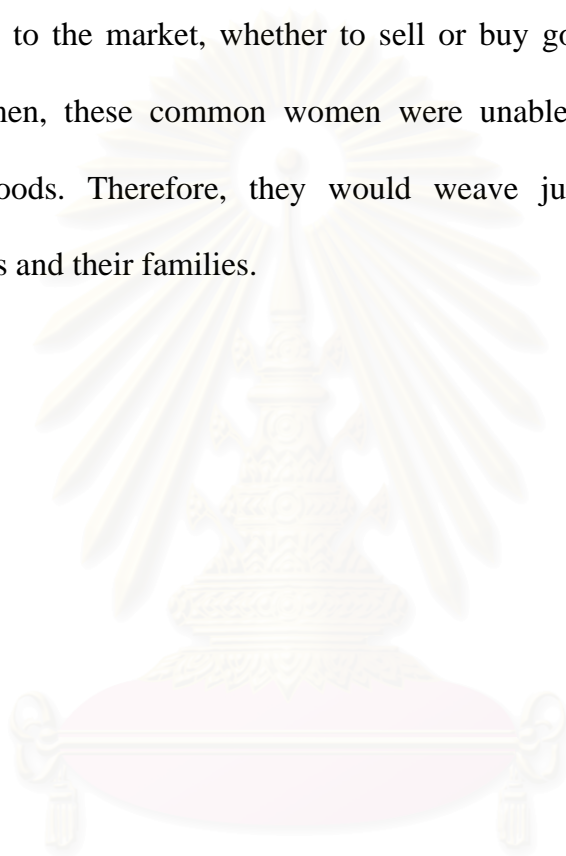
⁴⁹ For further details of this period, please refer to the following literatures:

Klaisri Nimarnhaemin, "*Keb Pug Sai Sa Keb Ka Sai Muang*" in *Lanna Thai Kadee*, 1980.

Arunrat Wicheankeaw. **Chiang Mai Society In the Early Bangkok Period: An Analysis Based on Northern Thailand Palm Leaf Manuscripts.** 1977.

teak. Therefore, they were able to buy foreign textiles and goods such as silk, cotton and yarn which became popular only between the higher class women.

On the other hand, the lower or village women, spent their daily lives working inside and outside of their homes. One of the major daily activity was going to the market, whether to sell or buy goods. Unlike the higher class women, these common women were unable to afford high priced foreign goods. Therefore, they would weave just enough clothes for themselves and their families.



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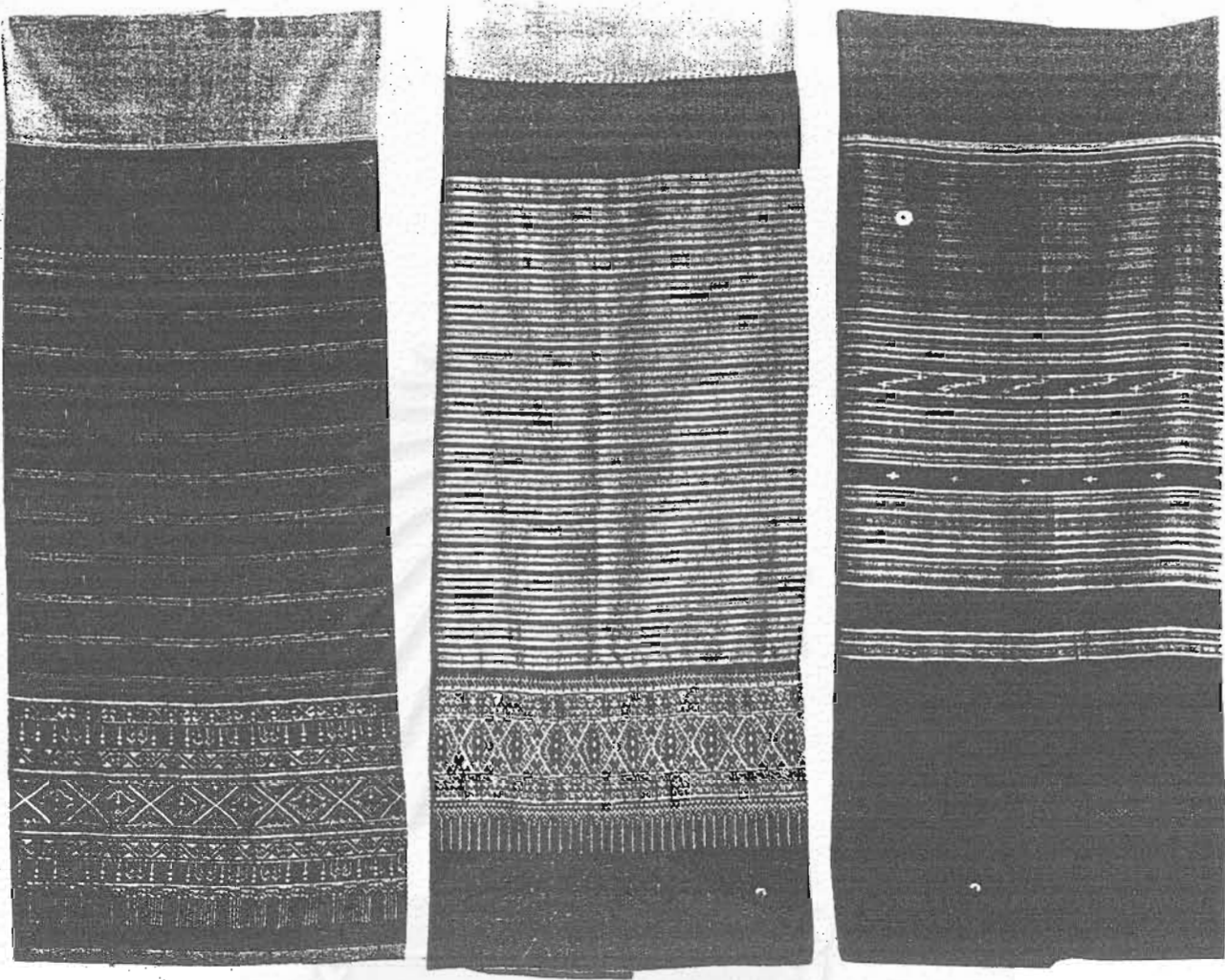


Fig. 1

Comparative study of the *pha sin* of the three Tai groups living in Lanna. Left: Lao Phuan *pha sin* from Hat Sieo showing the fully decorated tin chok typical of the Lao; Centre: Tai Yuan *pha sin* from Mae Chaem showing the typical *tin chok* of Tai Yuan leaving half of the hem plain red; Right: Tai Lue *pha sin* from Chiang Kham district showing their typical style for the hem in plain indigo.

(photograph from **Lan Na Textiles: Yuan Lue Lao**, 1987)

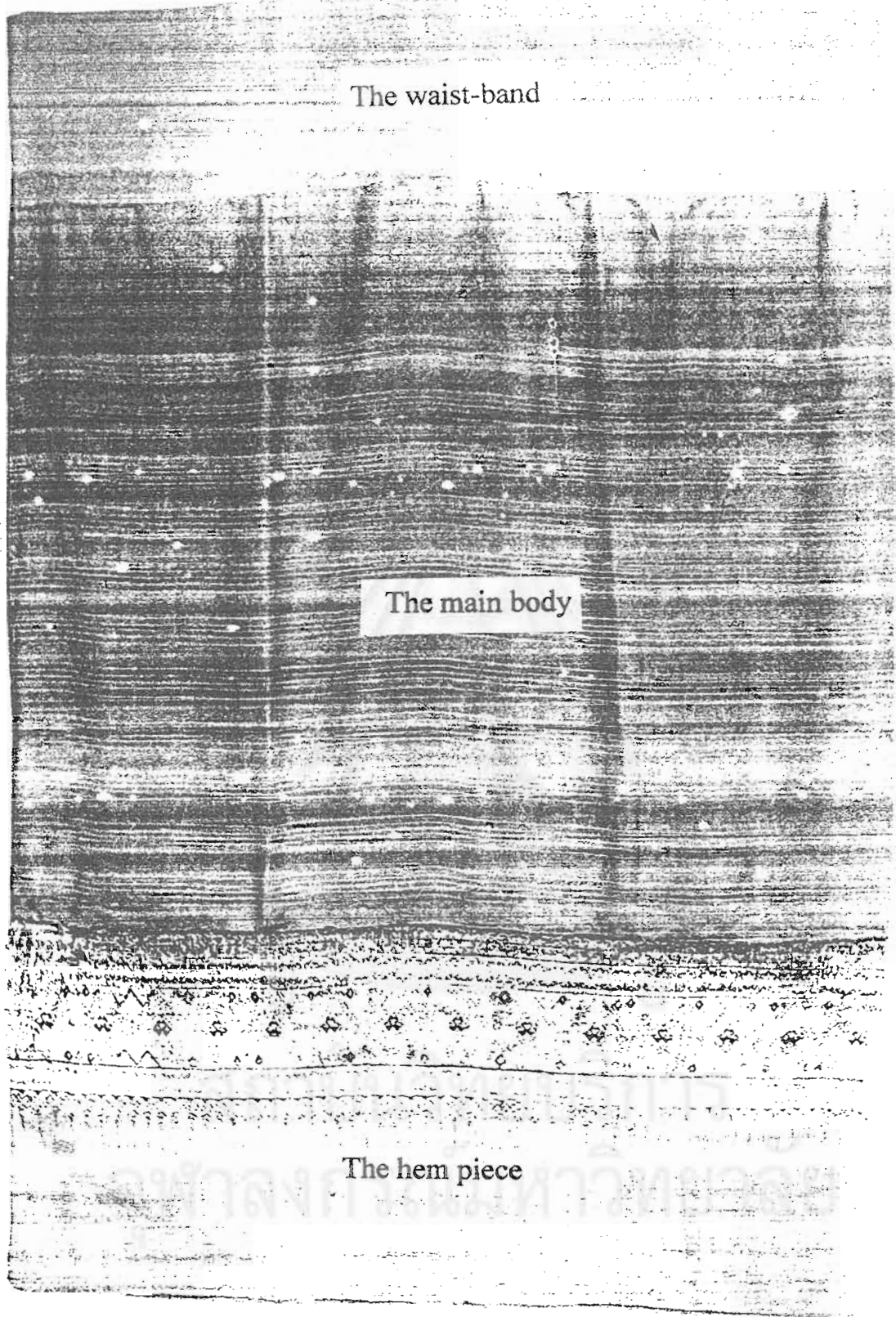


Fig. 2

three basic parts of Chiang Mai's traditional *pha sin*

(photograph from **Chiang Mai's Textile Heritage**, 1990)



Fig. 3

Mural painting at Wat Thong Thammachat showing how women in Bangkok wore their shoulder cloth along with the *jong kraben* and the 'winged-style' hair.

(photograph from *Karn Teang Kai Satree Kub Hutakarm-To-Pa Nai Sangkom Thai Samai Rattanakosin*, 1999)

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Fig. 4

Picture of King Rama IV's Queen shown dressed in full costume. Notice the hairstyle and the gold silk shoulder cloth. Example of how higher class women in Bangkok dressed.

(photograph from *Karn Teang Kai Satree Kub Hutakarm-To-Pa Nai Sangkom Thai Samai Rattanakosin*, 1999)



Fig. 5

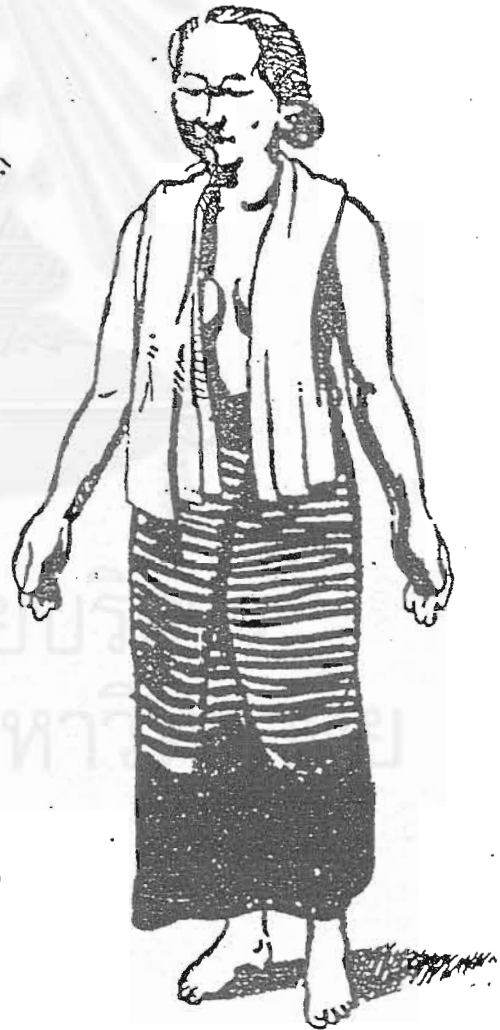


Fig. 6

(photographs from *Karn Teang Kai Puen Muang Chiang Mai*, 1997)



Fig. 8



Fig. 7

(photographs from *Karn Teang Kai Puen Muang Chiang Mai*, 1997)



Fig. 9

Women carrying goods to sell in the market, taken around 1897-1907.



Fig. 10

How village women dressed before 1917 when going to the market.

(photographs from *A-deed Lanna*, 1977)



Fig. 11

Photograph of a young village girl.

(photograph from *A-deed Lanna*, 1977)



Fig. 12



Fig. 13

(photographs from *Karn Teang Kai Puen Muang Chiang Mai*, 1997)

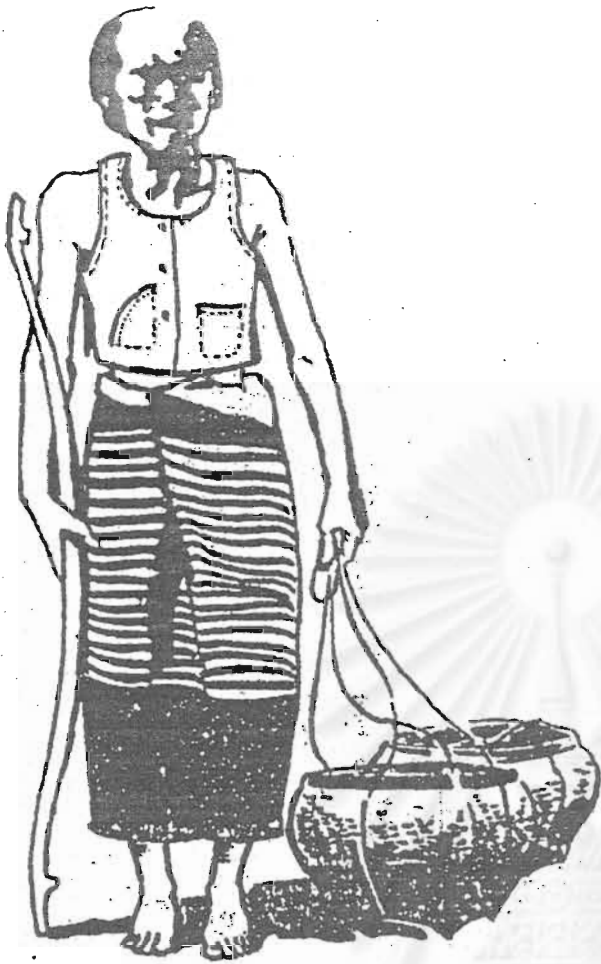


Fig. 14



Fig. 15

(photographs from *Karn Teang Kai Puen Muang Chiang Mai*, 1997)



Fig. 16



Fig. 17

(photographs from *Karn Teang Kai Puen Muang Chiang Mai*, 1997)



Fig. 18

The lady's appearance displays some strong Burmese influence particularly in her hairstyle.

(photograph taken from *Wat Phumin and Wat Nong Bua*, 1986)



Fig. 19

In this area we have people who might have come down from the hill to trade forest products with what they need in the hill. The man in front has tattooed thighs, and the man in the middle smokes a long pipe. The lady in the back wears long skirts with horizontal stripes, and carries heavy loaded basket on her back.

(photograph taken from **Wat Phumin and Wat Nong Bua**, 1986)

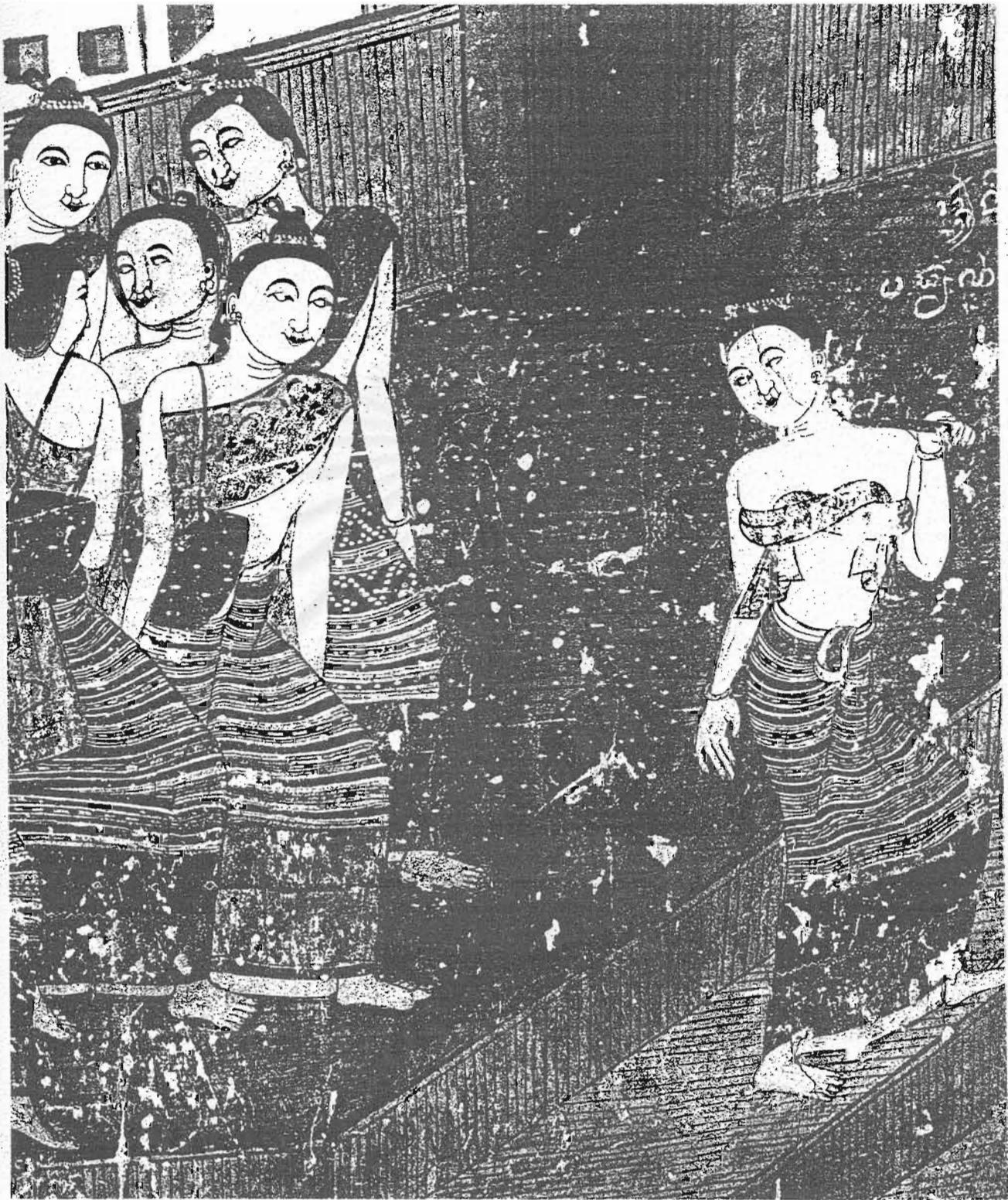


Fig. 20

A group of young Lanna women.

(photograph taken from **Wat Phumin and Wat Nong Bua**, 1986)



Fig. 21

The woman carrying baskets over her shoulder wears her hair in a bun on top of her head like the Burmese or Mon ladies. Her hair is tightened with a hairpin.

(photograph taken from **Wat Phumin and Wat Nong Bua**, 1986)



Fig. 22

Traditional costume of higher class Chiang Mai women's costume.

(photograph from the National Archives, Thailand)



Fig. 23

Costumes of women from Central Siam during the reign of King Rama V. Central women would often dress in this manner when at home or when they did not have to attend public functions. Notice the short hair and the trouser-like *jongbraben* which contrasts with the northern *pha sin* and long hair.

(photograph from the National Archives, Thailand)

Traditional costumes of Lanna men and women from mural paintings.
(Photographs taken from *wihan lai kham*, Wat Phra Sing, Chiang Mai)



Fig. 24

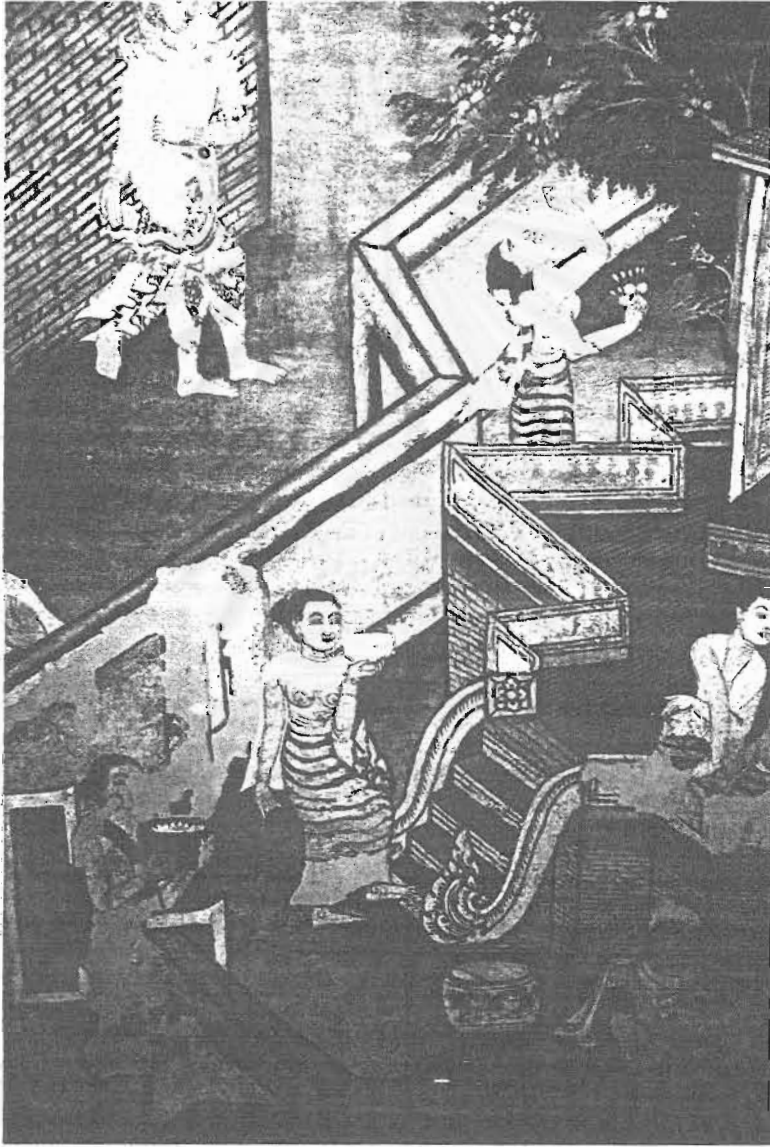


Fig. 25



Fig. 26



Fig. 27

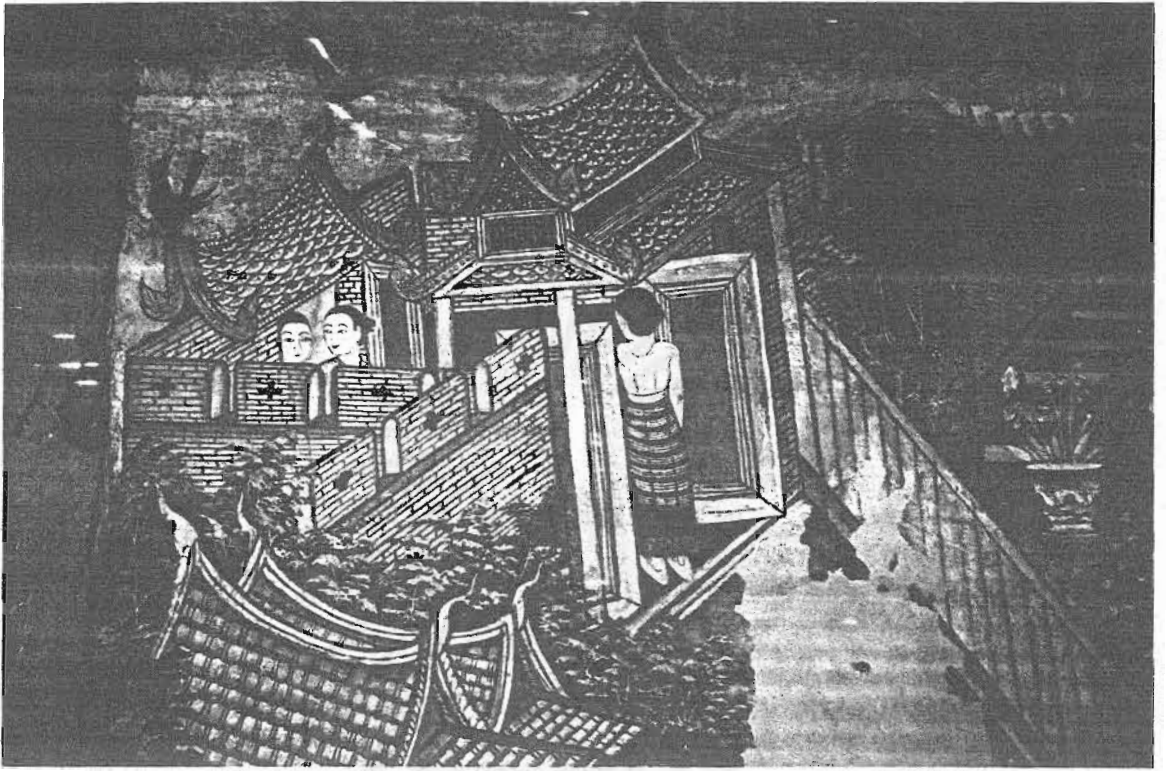


Fig. 28

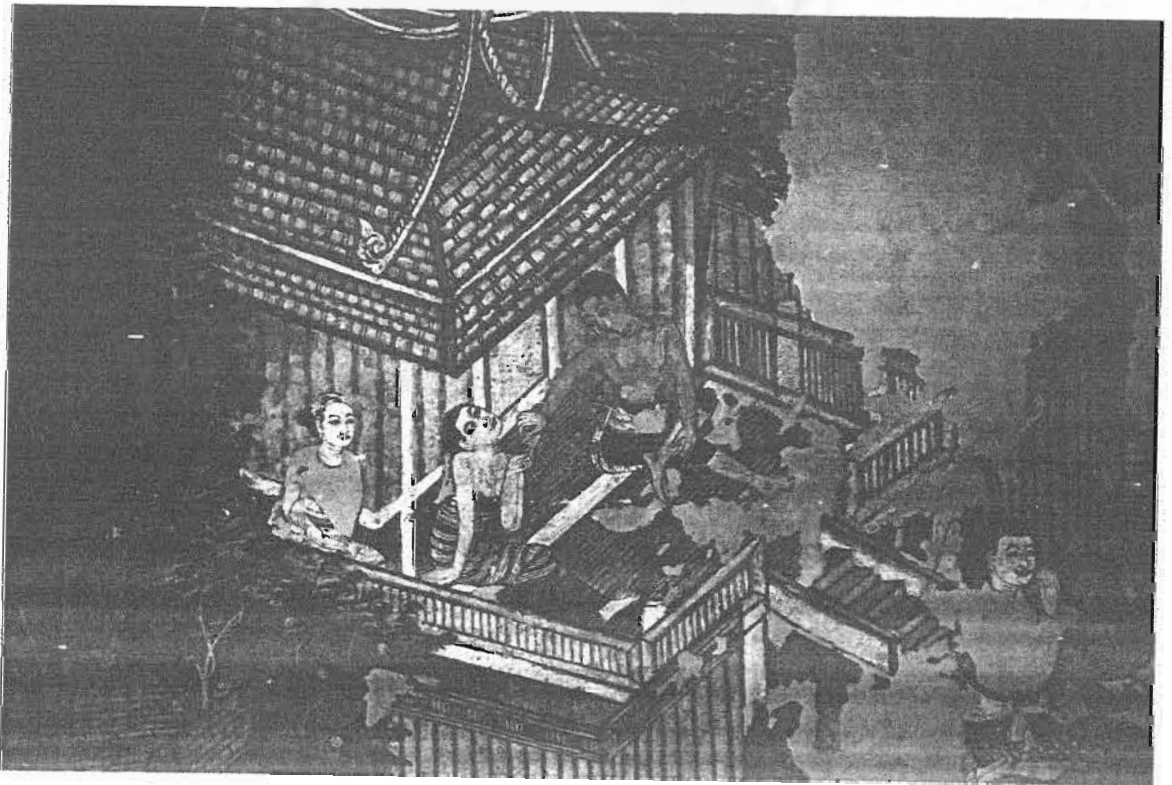


Fig. 29



Fig. 30

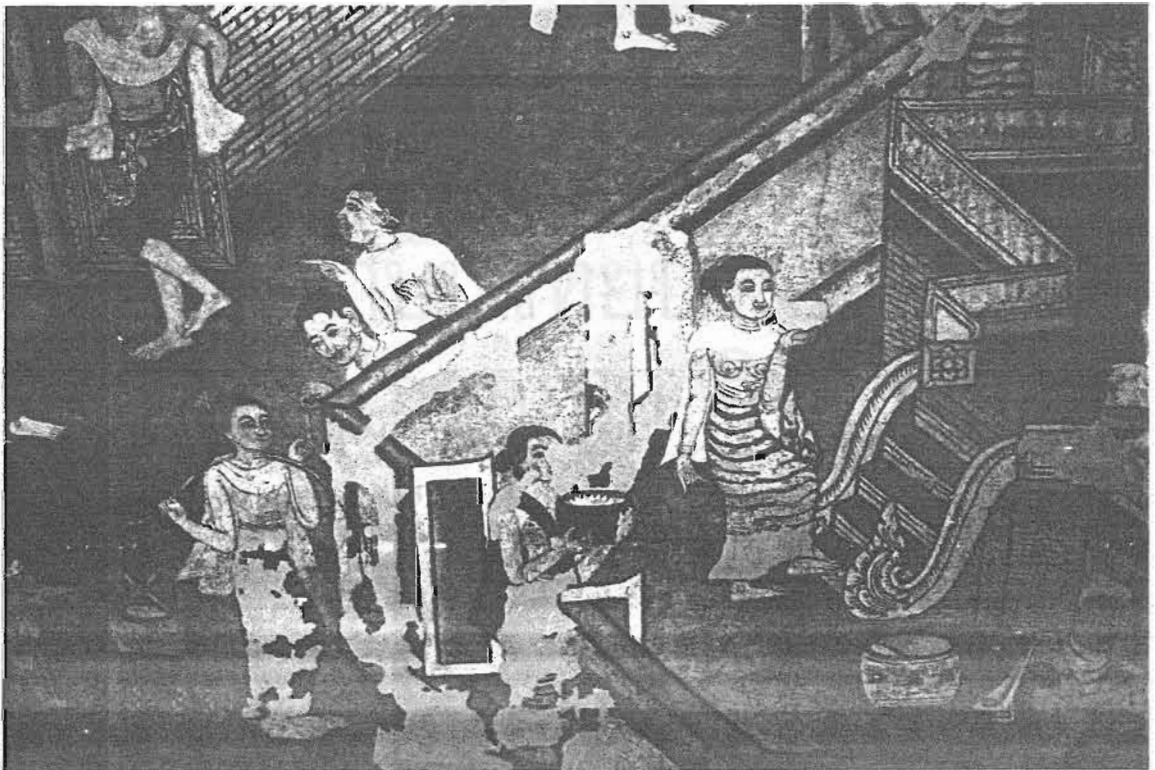


Fig. 31

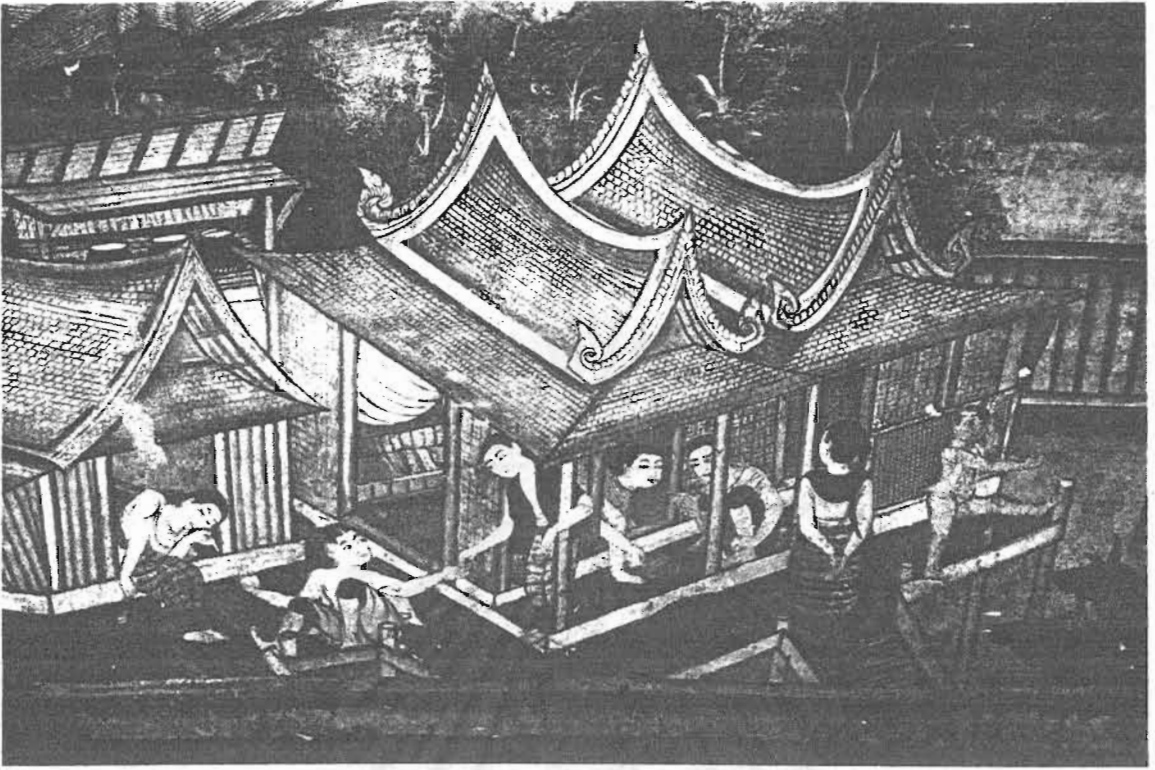


Fig. 32



Fig. 33

CHAPTER III.
FACTORS INFLUENCING CHANGES IN TRADITIONAL
WOMEN'S COSTUMES.

Since we can observe that there are changes to traditional women's costumes in Chiang Mai, it is important to examine how and why these changes have occurred. Therefore, in this chapter the different factors which are evidenced to have influenced the changes in traditional women's costumes in Chiang Mai were examined. First, the changes in the Chiang Mai economy was examined which influenced people of all level in the society. Second, the central palace is also believed to have influenced on these changes since changes also took place in the palace at that time due to King Rama V. Then, the roles of the American Presbyterian Missionaries were discussed to find evidence for their influences on the locals of Chiang Mai. Finally, the last part of the chapter focused on the changes of lifestyles and introduction of the new forms of entertainments and medias to Chiang Mai society.

The reflections of women's costumes examined through internal conditions.

It is important to begin examining the changes of women's costumes by looking into the internal conditions of Chiang Mai society at that time. Various factors could be extracted from the internal conditions of the society, in other words, factors which existed within Chiang Mai society and internal when compared to other factors examined in this thesis.

When Chiang Mai was rebuilt in 1782 by Phraya Kawila, who later became the first ruler of Chiang Mai during a period known as “Putting Vegetables in the Basket and People in the City”, people from mixed races were brought into the new city to reside. These people consisted of Tai Yai, Tai Leu, Tai Khoen and Tai Yong from Sipsong Panna, who not only came to settle down but also brought along their customs and traditions with them. One of these traditions was their costumes. Along with the Burmese influence which have long been a part of Chiang Mai city, various kinds of costumes could be seen worn by people in Chiang Mai during this time. Therefore, the tradition of wearing blouses and shirts were not something new to the locals, as discussed in Chapter II, since various people from different races already wore blouses as part of their costumes, such as the Tai Yai and Lua.

We have also learned from the previous chapter that trading were done by local merchants of each village. For instance, goods were brought into Lanna for the higher class people from Bangkok by boat, such as ready-made shirts, clothes and threads. Once they arrived in Lanna, local merchants would buy these goods and passed them to different villages around the Lanna Kingdom. Therefore, the different costumes brought about by different races of people who lived in Lanna during this period were obviously passed on to different parts of Lanna and even Chiang Mai itself.

One main influence of the changes of women’s costumes in Chiang Mai society during the period of 1879 to 1933 was the growing vast number of foreign merchants in Chiang Mai. After signing the Bowring Treaty in

1855, Chiang Mai became one of the most important centre of trade in Lanna. It was recorded that during the reign of King Rama V, there was a huge market area in the city centre of Chiang Mai, which extended from Wat Phra Singh to Ta Pae Road. Every morning local vendors will prepare their goods on both sides of the pavements. Their goods were usually consisted of agricultural goods collected from nearby villages, such as rice, tobacco, wax, flowers, fruits, dried fish, etc. It is also interesting to note that the majority of local vendors were women. Only the pork stalls were run by men. Behind the stalls of the women vendors, foreign merchants, such as Burmese and Chinese, could be seen selling umbrellas, vegetables, cotton, silk, muslin textiles, bronze and wooden trays, and various kinds of silverware.¹

Around two thirds of goods traveled up north and to Chiang Mai were taken by boat from the capital city, Bangkok. The rest of the goods were taken to Chiang Mai by horses and cows from Muang Malamaeng and from there were distributed to various cities.

Foreign merchants who traveled to Chiang Mai consisted of Burmese-Mon and Chinese. Tai Yai merchants were the ones who controlled the stalls in the market before the Chinese merchants became their main competitors. Traditionally, these Tai Yai merchants would sell clothing materials and costumes in the market around specific areas of Ta Pae Road, however, due to the increased numbers of Chinese merchants in Chiang Mai, the markets became busier and later goods from different

¹ Sarusawadee Ong-sakul. *Prawatsart Lanna*, p. 140

merchants were sold in the same market rather than in separate places as before.

As mentioned earlier, the Bowring Treaty opened up Thailand to free trade and at the same time encouraged western companies, especially English companies, to trade with Bangkok in place of the existing Chinese merchants. Consequently, these Chinese merchants had to flee up north in order to regain their business.

Goods from other countries that were also available to the Chiang Mai market apart from Chinese and English goods, were from Germany and Japan which were less expensive than English goods. However, goods imported from these countries comprised of luxury and convenient goods, such as cigarettes, perfume, animal fur, straw hats, bicycles, motorcycles, cars, etc (Fig.1). The table below shows the amount of foreign population in Chiang Mai between 1919 and 1929:

Race	1919	1929
Siamese	1,308,698	1,442,213
Chinese	3,626	6,989
Indian and Malaysian	902	1,522
Burmese	28,698	28,498
Cambodian	2	101
Japanese	6	16
Whites	107	126

Others	-	69,927
Race	1919	1929
Total	1,342,036	1,549,392

(Source: Statistical Year Book. No. 8, pp.26 and No. 15, pp. 46)

Therefore, the changes of women's costumes during this period of time could partly be determined by the interactions of foreign merchants in Chiang Mai. As described above, local women vendors and those who bought goods from the market, could be influenced by foreign merchants who sold foreign goods, including clothing materials such as silk and cotton. Not only did the women of Chiang Mai encountered with foreign goods from the Chinese and Burmese merchants, but at the same time, western products which by then, had poured into the capital of Bangkok, were heavily streaming into Chiang Mai. This was done through the lead of high status figures, such as Chiang Mai royals and government officials who had frequent contacts with Bangkok. From this, it can also be added that the influence of foreign merchants and trade in Chiang Mai had impacted on all classes of women in Chiang Mai society since the lower and upper classes were both dominated by these foreign merchants and goods.

Not only were foreign goods available to the Chiang Mai society, however, there is evidenced that goods such as the *pha sin* were introduced and sold to foreign merchants. Grandma Dang, a Chinese line tradesman who lived in Chiang Mai during that time, stated how *pha sin tin chok* were traded

by the northern royal family to pay off their debts and how she further traded these *pha sin* with foreign merchants,

...in some occasions when they ran out of silver and gold ornaments, Chao will bring a big bulk of pha sin tin chok to pay for their debts instead. Grandma would separate the gold and silver tin chok hem piece and gather them in a pile to sell to Western merchants. “ I don’t know what purpose and why and they bought hundreds and thousands of these cloths”²

It can be seen that during this period many changes have occurred in terms of trading, whether by land, boat or railway. It would be pointed out that the people of Lanna were exposed to various kinds of goods that were imported into their land. This included Western goods which came through Bangkok and goods that came directly from Burma and China through the north. Since the Lanna people of all classes were now more aware of the emerging changes in their society, it has unknowingly prepared them to face with the emergence of other changes that would spread into their society in the future. Not only those changes that would affect their costumes, but also other changes that would influence their new lifestyle.

Since foreign and new goods were easily available to many people in Chiang Mai, the habits of producing goods only enough for themselves and their families have slowly changed. Villagers started to produced goods, such as textiles, to a wider market. This could be seen especially with rice

² Withee Panichpan. *In Memory of Grandma Dang Panichpan*, p. 8.

since it is the main type of agriculture in Lanna. Therefore, some villagers who were able to sell their goods to the market were now starting to make profit and earn more money to spend on foreign goods. For example, those considered to be from a common village families were able to buy torches, soap, candles, matches, lamps, plates and spoons and even to some point, they were able to afford foreign cigarettes. This shows that the lifestyles of commoners are changing, whereby in the past, only the upper classes were able to afford these foreign and new goods.

Since these villagers had to spend more time producing goods for the market, obviously, they would have less time to produce the everyday goods that they once had to produce by themselves in the past. Therefore, to make life easier these villagers, especially women, would instead buy instant goods to reduce their working time. An example of the goods they would now buy is costumes, usually imported ready made from Bangkok.

This change of lifestyles suggested that the people of Chiang Mai were now more open up to receiving western cultures, which poured in from Bangkok into the Lanna society. However, it is understood that this influence only expanded among the city people, thus upper and middle classes, but did not spread to the people who lived in villages far from the city until 1932 when the economy began to expand further.

Influences Through Missionaries.

One of the most important social changes which occurred to Chiang Mai was the arrival of the American Presbyterian missionaries since 1861.

These missionaries started out in Thailand in 1835-1850 and made some significant contributions to the progress of Thai society by setting up a Medical House to treat all kinds of illness to the Thai and the Chinese patients, as well as initiating a printing business issuing the newspaper Bangkok Recorder to distribute news and general messages among the Thai elites.³ Later, in 1868, Reverend Daniel McGilvary, Reverend Jonathan Wilson and Rev. Noah A. McDonald began to expand to other regions by setting up a separate committee called the Lao Mission.

When the first missionaries went to Chiang Mai, then, they entered a region which had only recently emerged from centuries of unrest with no hope of attaining even a shadow of its former greatness. It remained isolated from the larger world by a long journey up river, which could take as long as three months to complete. McGilvary and Wilson planned to take as much of the West with them to Chiang Mai as possible. They felt they needed a large supply of medicines and a doctor to help with the station's work. They wanted a printing press. They believed that their success would depend in part upon erecting western-style missionary homes and a chapel⁴. Therefore, it can be stated that the American Presbyterian missionaries in Northern Siam initiated or contributed to an impressive range of westernizing social changes because they designed all their activities towards that end. In no

³ Pannee Auansakul et. al. **Christianity and Chiang Mai Society**, 1996.

⁴ Herbert R. Swanson. **This Seed: Missionary Printing and Literature as Agents of Change in Northern Siam, 1892-1926.**

other way, they believed, could they introduced the total environment necessary for their churches to flourish and triumph.

Upon their arrival in Chiang Mai, Daniel and Sophia McGilvary attracted large crowds of spectators, and they used these crowds as a forum for preaching their religion. They preached more, however, than just a new religion: their evangelistic message and style advocated the ways of the West. These missionaries assumed that in order to convert the northern Thai to Christianity they must replace northern Thai culture with American culture. Hence, their educational, medical, and technological activities were directed at creating a “proper” cultural environment for establishing Christianity in northern Siam. These missionaries allied themselves with the growing political power of the Siamese government and helped to increase that power. Their preaching and promotion of an alien religion weakened traditional structures and values. McGilvary, for example, taught his listeners something of astronomy and geography to prove the superiority of western learning to that of traditional northern Thai Buddhist cosmology. He then tried to associate Christianity with that superiority and, thus, win converts. Since the people of Chiang Mai were not familiar to these new ideas and especially to “foreigners”, it is dependent on their judgements whether they believed and trusted in what the missionaries had to say or, on the other hand, they totally ignored and refused these new teachings.

It is important to bear in mind that the people of Chiang Mai or Lanna at this period, did not have the sense of “national identity”. Although taken as a part of Thailand, they were not regarded by the Siamese as the

same race since these people were still referred to as the “Laos”. Therefore, it was not surprising that as soon as the missionaries came into Chiang Mai society, the people quickly adopted the new culture since their sense of national identity were not quite strong as the Siamese.

The group of people in Chiang Mai, which the missionaries had the most opportunities to encounter, were the small community of northern Thai Christian men and women, converts and the daughters of converts. These people usually lived in close proximity to the distinctive culture of missionary homes and institutions and experienced the fundamental change in their social lives. This close influence could be stated to have the most influence and changes on the women more than men. Women’s education provides an outstanding example of the Laos Mission’s educational role in westernization. Traditional northern Thai religion stigmatized women with an inferior status and limited their participation in religious activities, which deprived them of formal education opportunities since education was closely associated with religion. It is believed that women played key roles in creating Christian homes, raising Christian children, supporting local churches, and teaching in church schools. It also believed that only educated women could do all these things well. Thus, the mission went out of its way to educate women. As a result of this beliefs, Christian women, converts and sometimes, daughters of converts achieved literacy before other women. They were the ones with opportunities to attended the first girls’ schools. From their number came the first salaried class of women, namely professional teachers. The following quote shows that missionaries

supported the education of women and saw a distinction in those who were educated:

*The girls who have been in the school are easily picked out in a crowd, their faces being much more intelligent and brighter than those who have not had the advantage of study and contact with refinement.*⁵

As the missionaries provided northern women with increasing opportunities in their social lives which satisfied them, people then began to compare the traditional ways to this new and exciting practice which could help them open themselves up to the existing world. In Buddhism, women could not be monks. Society, in fact, frowned upon and distrusted the few women who could read for fear that they would write love letters to boys. American culture, on the other hand, made women's roles the exact opposite of their roles in northern Thai society. Consequently, these women would start to look up to the missionaries and follow their actions, believing that whatever they did was for the best. Once the villagers lose faith on their traditional beliefs, they would turn towards something new that was available to them instantly.

One of the ways in which the missionaries could present their Western ideas and beliefs to the northern people was by creating schools in the society. As early as 1870, McGilvary wanted to establish a mission school on the premise that a strong church required a strong school system. In

⁵ The Laos News, October 1904, p. 104.

1873, Sophia McGilvary started a small literacy class for young girls that led in three years to the founding of the mission's first school. The mission took an important step in 1879, when two young missionaries, Edna S. Cole and Mary M. Campbell, turned Sophia McGilvary's small literacy class into a boarding school, namely the Girls' school. This school was known as the Girls' school until 1909 when Prarachaya Chao Dara-Rasamee⁶, the daughter of the 7th ruler of Chiang Mai, first returned to visit her homeland after serving as a royal consort of King Chulalongkorn in Bangkok for twenty-two years. During her visit, the school administrators requested her to name the Girls' school. Consequently, Prarachaya then requested for the honour of King Chulalongkorn to name the school instead and, thus, the name *Prarachaya Girls' School* was given (Figure 2)⁷. However, later on, Prarachaya Girls' School changed its name to Dara Academy School which is still used up to today. Nevertheless, when it was first established, this boarding school acted as one of the most important medium or outlet for Western influences, mainly missionary influences onto the locals. The missionaries' schools taught literacy, western-style academic subjects including Siamese and English, western music, and industrial and domestic training.

The Prarachaya Girls' School soon became a success. By October 1879, it grew to include 25 full-time students, 18 of whom boarded at the

⁶ พระราชชายา เจ้าดารารัตน์ มี

⁷ Chulalongkorn University, *Dara-Rasamee Sai-yai Ruk Song Paen-din*, p. 198.

school. Later in August 1888, the number of girls increased to 61 students and 54 out of this number were boarders. We can study from missionary reports, in the Laos News journal, what was taught in the Girls' school:

*The industries practised are, cooking, torchon lace making, crocheting, tatting, sewing, embroidery, weaving, and gardening. The sales of the product indicate the success of the branch of the school.*⁸

The Girls' school became well known and gained a good reputation as it followed the government curriculum. Nearly all of the boarders were from Christian families and were members of the Church. It was also stated that one girl from a government school entered the mission school because her father wanted her to come to this school as in his opinion, they taught better than the government schools. From this, it could be noted that the mission schools were well accepted by the public and the people of Chiang Mai and were more favoured once compared to the existing government schools at that time.

Young girls who attended the Prarachaya Girls' school were also taught home economics which could be strongly associated with the way they were dressed and their costumes. Some of the trainings which were associated with costumes could be examined from the following record:

Our industrial training in Prarachaya Girls' School begins with practice work on the various stitches in the lower grades. Later these stitches are used in making garments which they all try to

⁸ The Laos News, October 1904, p. 82

*make of commercial value. After becoming a good plain seamstresses the girls learn to cut and make their own jackets, either by hand or machine, and then pass on to other work, crocheting, embroidering, torchon lace and weaving.*⁹

Obviously, it can be said that the American missionaries who taught at all missionaries' schools in Chiang Mai, had quite an influence on the way children were dressed to school. Following the opening of Prarachaya Girls' school in 1879, the missionaries opened about 7 other schools in Chiang Mai:

1. Ban Pa Koi School
2. Hom Luang School
3. Nong Fan School
4. Chang Kam School
5. Tan Khi Quai School
6. Tong Peng School
7. Ban Pao School¹⁰

From this, it can be pointed out that the missionaries stationed at Chiang Mai had control over the main schools in Chiang Mai. Thus, their western ideas and ways of running things could easily be passed over to the parents and children of Chiang Mai, including the way they dressed and their costumes as seen from the following descriptions:

⁹ The Laos News, April 1915, p. 59

¹⁰ The Laos News, October 1904, p. 10

A sewing class of women, under the director of Mrs. J.W. McKean has been especially interested in crocheting of baby shoes. There was quite an air of excitement as the shoes took shape in their hands – under Mrs. McKean’s direction. One said of the tassels, “In the old days we should have said that the spirits made them”.¹¹

These women’s excitement suggested that sewing shoes or even wearing shoes was something new and unfamiliar to them. Traditionally, Chiang Mai people, whether young or old would go around with their bare feet. Therefore, by learning how to make shoes from the missionaries, these people were able to familiarized themselves with shoes and later wore them themselves.

In addition, it is interesting to observe that when these girls attended school, they would have to wear clean clothes or even their best clothes. This is the same case when people went to churches on Sundays and had to put on their best clothes like the Americans. For the children, instead of wearing a loose blouse with no sleeves as seen worn by children in their daily lives, fashionable or western style blouses and shirts became more popular (Fig. 3). Thus, this provided for the start of school uniforms or uniformity in the children’s costumes (Fig. 4).

Shoes and stockings also became common necessities and part of the local’s costumes. Fig. 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 shows that students as well as teachers at the Prarachaya Girls’ school considered wearing shoes and stockings as part of their costumes. In addition, changes could also be observed in the

¹¹ The Laos News, January 1906, p. 64

hairstyles. Instead of styling their hair the traditional way – put up in a bun – some students have short hair, some braided their hair and even some used hair ribbons which were never taken as part of the traditional Chiang Mai costume culture (Fig. 10). However, even in the midst of these changes, most of the children and women still grew their hair long. Long hair could thus be taken as the symbol and culture of the northern people despite the many changes which occurred in their society.

Uniforms, as influenced by missionaries, could also be seen in the scope of the American Presbyterian Missionary's public health work. Western medicine and public health was first introduced to Chiang Mai and the Northern Region of the country in 1867 by Rev. Daniel McGilvary, whom later opened a Drug Dispensary House. In 1886, the Presbyterian Board allocated an amount of money to construct a hospital but unfortunately, the amount was far too inadequate for a hospital. Therefore, the Chiang Mai missionary decided to modify the Drug Dispensary House into a hospital. The hospital was named The American Mission Hospital and went into service in 1888. It was the second hospital in Thailand and was the first regional hospital.

As the American Missionary Hospital reached its limit and in order to cope with the people's need for hospitalization, Dr. E. C. Cort who arrived in 1908, began to think of building a new hospital. Having gained approval from the missionaries, he received a sum of donation from Mrs. Silas McCormick, and additional amounts from the royal families in the

North and the well-to-do people in Chiang Mai. He bought a 50 rai (hectare) piece of paddy land which became the location for the hospital. In order to honour Mrs. Silas McCormick, the hospital was named “McCormick Hospital”.

Nursing classes were also taught in the McCormick Hospital and from old photographs, it can be seen that uniforms were worn (Fig. 11, 12 and 13). These uniforms were clearly western style, which comprised of wearing hats, shoes, stockings and skirts, instead of the traditional *pha sin* that these women usually wore. Thus, this indicates that American missionaries played important roles in shaping the ‘new’ style of dressing to a group of people in Chiang Mai, which consequently created changes in the way people were dressed.

The American Presbyterian Missionaries did not only had close contacts with the locals, but on the other hand, these missionaries also had good relationships with the high status personalities and rulers of Chiang Mai. This could be seen from the co-operativeness of the people in high status or royalty towards some of the missionaries’ activities, such as the laying of the foundation stone ceremonies for missionary schools.

Actually, during King Mongkut’s reign between 1851-1868, he maintained cordial relations with the missionaries and used them to help introduce western ideas and technology into his nation. There were some political reasons behind the encouragement of missionaries to enter Chiang Mai by the central government. Since 1867, the French controlled portions of Indo-China and the British dominated Burma, an old and powerful rival

of Siam, with frightening ease. Siam felt it could no longer allow its northern states the autonomy they had enjoyed for decades, and therefore, in 1870, it initiated the long process of integrating northern Siam politically and culturally into the Siamese state.¹² To that end, one scholar argues, the Bangkok government encouraged the Presbyterians to go to Chiang Mai to weaken its traditional political and social structures. That the missionaries did, in fact, have far reaching influence in the North, implies that Bangkok used them successfully.¹³

Consequently, the missionaries and high status figures of the Thai society were likely to be in good terms with each other. Therefore, it can be stated that missionaries did not have influences on the locals but on the upper classes as well.

Influences From The Central Government Through Centralization.

In 1899, when Chiang Mai changed from a vassal state to a province of Thailand in the reign of Rama V¹⁴(1868-1910), many changes in dress and influence from both central Thailand and abroad started to have taken place. This change of status was a strategy for Siam to establish national unity amongst its scattered conquests. This change had in many ways, affected the political as well as social aspects of Chiang Mai. Western ideas

¹² David K. Wyatt. **Thailand: A Short History**, p. 194.

¹³ Nigel Bralley. **The Origins of the Siamese Forward Movement in Western Laos 1850-92**, p. 109-19.

¹⁴ In 1899, Chiang Mai's status towards Siam changed from being a **prathetsarat** to **monthon phayap**.

and technology was firstly introduced to the people of Chiang Mai during this period. This included educational reform up to the extent of the introduction of a rail service for passengers and goods between the capital and the provinces.

Due to the impact of westernization, which initially spread during the reign of King Rama V, namely King Chulalongkorn¹⁵, the locals were encouraged by the centralized government in Siam to adapt themselves in order to create a modernized country and citizens. The reason behind the need to modernized, started from reign of King Rama V onward, that is colonial powers often regarded Asian nations as being uncivilized and barbaric. In order to escape from being colonized while the neighbours had not been able to do so, Thailand needed to gain acceptance from Westerners by showing them that Thailand is also another civilized country and need not be colonized to become modern.

Modernization is a normative expression. What is regarded as modern varies from person to person, from cities to cities and from one country to another. The term “modernization” in the view of Western nations is how they behaved and what their countries have got, while for others, the word “modernization” may mean another. However, colonial powers used their belief of modernization as a reason to justify the practice of colonization.

Thus, in order for the Thais to be regarded as a civilized country, the modernization process had to be one, which resembles that of Western

¹⁵ Sapa Wattanatham Changwat Chiang Mai, *Karn Taeng Kai Puen Muang Nung Yong Jiang Mai*, 1997.

countries. However, the westernization process of Thailand was not an evolution like those of the west but rather an accelerated one. Such modernization process had resulted in a westernized society rather than a unique character.

During that particular period, European influence was the dominating trend as played in politics and of course, in costumes. These influences of westernization in Siam came about as a result of King Rama V's numerous visits to Europe and neighbouring countries since 1897. This was done as an attempt to struggle the strength of western colonial powers of that time, and to avoid Siam being viewed as uncivilized or barbaric country in the eyes of westerners. The signing of the Bowring Treaty in 1855, resulted in trade liberalization together with the opening up of the country to foreigners. Thai royalties were the one who started the trend of dressing, which combined Thai style with that of the west (Fig. 14). Others who were closed to or had the opportunities, would then started to follow the fashion and thus, it expanded to a larger public.

The majority of Siamese, led by the King and the royal family gave great importance to the change of costumes, especially when a huge number of westerners kept pouring into Siam and looked upon traditional costumes as a sign of uncivilized and far behind culture. This was due to the fact that the wrap-around cloths and winged-styled hair did not distinguish the male from the female. At the same, it was thought that the traditional costumes were too revealing once compared to the costumes of western ladies.

Therefore, the Victorian style costumes, which were already fashionable in the west, became popular among the women in Siam.

During King Chulalongkorn's reign, one of the first changes in costume for men took place when he ordered his servants or soldiers to wear proper shirts when they were to enter the throne hall or see him. As for the women, he started by requesting the ladies in the palace and his consorts to dress in western fashion in the occasion where they had western visitors. However, this order of dressing was only temporary and limited to only when they had western visitors. Thus, western costumes were not seen worn in the court ladies' everyday lives. This was done to show and proved to the westerners that the people of the royal court knew and understood western cultures very well.

In addition, King Chulalongkorn noticed that western-style suits for the men were not appropriate to the climate of Siam and, thus, ordered tailors to make suits that would be more appropriate to the hot climate of the region. The design that they came up with as a result of the King's request was known as the "*Rajapattan*" design. These "*Rajapattan*" suits were designed to have buttons all the way up to the neckline so that men would not have to wear another shirt underneath or scarves as they would in the west. The word "*Rajapattan*" came from combinations of the words "*Raja*" and "pattern" which literally meant "royal pattern" since it was the King who first initiated the design.

As for the court women in Siam, King Chulalongkorn suggested that they change their top from wearing traditional shoulder cloths or wrap-around cloths to wearing long sleeved blouses with waist-length hem. This type of blouse was to be worn with the traditional *jongkraben* as well as long stockings and boots. Later, this design was altered and began to be decorated with embroidery. Since the Victorian-style dresses were becoming popular in the West, blouses for the women of Siam in this period also adopted this particular fashion. This type of blouse was then known as the “leg of mutton” style because it had wide sleeves towards the shoulder and gradually narrowing until it fitted the wrists. The “leg of mutton” style blouses were usually decorated with embroidery or small bows and ribbons (Fig. 15).

Consequently, along with many other western ideas and culture which poured into Chiang Mai society during that period through the central administration, namely Bangkok, the influence of clothing from the centre became well known. Later, these costumes became more easily available to the people of the north, especially Chiang Mai. These “central fashion” of the capital were combinations of materials, styles, and designs from foreign trends. It can be stated that the main influence of change towards the traditional Chiang Mai costumes was through the introduction of westernization, which by that time had spread extensively over Bangkok. Obviously, the group of people who brought these influences started from the royal family or the upper class people who had in many ways, close contacts with the upper classes of the Chiang Mai people.

Firstly, there are many examples from the past of Lanna women who were married or had relationships with Siam princes or high position government officials. The first Lanna princess who was married to the brother of King Rama I was Princess Sri-Anocha, sister of the first ruler of Chiang Mai.¹⁶ This marriage was a start of a great relationship between the Chakri dynasty and the rulers of Chiang Mai. Later, other Lanna princesses were recorded to have had relationships with princes from the royal family of Siam, such as Chao Ubol-Wanna (Fig. 16) and Princess Thippawan Krisdakorn. Princess Thippawan not only lived in Bangkok but she was also the wife of the Thai Ambassador to France and England. Therefore, she was more exposed to foreign culture especially directly to western cultures.

Secondly, in some cases, apart from marriages between Lanna princess or higher class women and Siam princes and high position government officials, there have been evidence that some Lanna princess were adopted by Siam royal family.¹⁷

Also, another cultural exchange took place when central administrators or government officials were sent to settle in Chiang Mai to act as the connections between Lanna and Siam. This was done after signing the first Chiang Mai Treaty in 1874. Once again, some of these men were married to upper class Lanna women and some had to move back to Bangkok once their term was over. From this, it is possible to state that during this time, these women would have adopted the central influence,

¹⁶ Chulalongkorn University, *Dara-Rasamee Sai-yai Ruk Song Paen-din*, p.7

which included their costumes, through direct contacts with Bangkok and its people.

Therefore, it is not surprising that many direct exchanges of culture between Lanna and Bangkok have taken place during this time. One very important key figure who acted as a medium between these two cultures could be no one else other than Prarachaya Chao Dara-Rasamee herself. As the youngest daughter of the seventh ruler of Chiang Mai, Prarachaya served at the Royal Palace as a royal consort of King Chulalongkorn since 1886. Chao Dara-Rasamee's betrothal to King Chulalongkorn and her position as overseer of internal palace affairs goes beyond the normal matching that occurs in royal joinings. As the daughter of Chiang Mai's King Intra-Wichanontra and princess of the Lanna Kingdom, her betrothal and marriage marked the merging of the two oldest Tai Kingdoms in Southeast Asia. After her returned to Chiang Mai in 1916, Chao Dara-Rasamee also made many contributions to the Lanna culture, including introducing westernization which she adopted from Bangkok. One of the most significant introduction made to the people of Chiang Mai, especially the upper class was the western-style blouse, jewelleryes and hairstyles. Consequently, a detailed analysis and study of the roles of Chao Dara-Daramee and women's costumes in Chiang Mai will be examined in the next chapter.

It is important to note that the influence from the Royal Palace only took place on the people of the upper class. This is due to the restricted

¹⁷ Jiraluck Jongsatitmun, *Wikrit Tang Wattanatham : Koranee Karn*

relationships which only limited the upper class of Lanna to meet with the upper class of Siam.

Since the reign of the seventh ruler of Chiang Mai, the educational system of Chiang Mai were still based on traditional ways. Wats, or temples, were the only places where people could send their sons to study. Later, the people of Chiang Mai were introduced and opened up to different prospectives since the opening of missionary schools, as described above. However, Lanna language and English were the only languages used and taught at these schools since the Thai language or central language were not required and necessary for the people of Chiang Mai.

Later, during the reign of the eighth ruler of Chiang Mai, some changes have occurred. Since this period, the central administration began to put emphasis on education because it was their aim to produce learned population in order to served as government officials which was required and urgently needed at that time. During the first period, some Lanna languages were still taught but since the government encouraged its people to study the central language more because government officials were required to used only the central language. Therefore, the Lanna language were slowly forgotten when people began to pay more attention to the central language.

As part of the unity reform plan of the central administration, educational reform was considered the best way to achieve this unity and establish a feeling of nationalism. Therefore, Lanna schoolchildren were

thus required to learn the central Thai dialect. Towards the end of King Rama V's reign, various cities outside Bangkok wanted to established the "Thai language schools". With the co-operations of local merchants as well as civilians, some money were donated which were contributed in building these schools in their cities. School curriculum were based on the central administration and textbooks including some teaching materials were distributed from the centre.¹⁸ The influence of costumes could be also seen in these textbooks. Since these textbooks were written and printed by the central administration, its contents clearly reflected its lifestyles. For instance, the drawings reflected the way central people were dressed and it also reflected the change of costumes. The earlier textbooks included drawings of women wearing tube skirts or *pha sin* which indicated how people were traditionally dressed. Since these textbooks were distributed to government schools all over Thailand, the contents in these textbooks were likely to have influence on the students as well as teachers who used them. This could also be applied to the people of Chiang Mai. Once they were acquainted with the changes in costumes from Bangkok through these textbooks, they would have applied these changes to themselves as seen through the changes in their costumes.

Also as part of the centralization plan, the extension of the railway from Bangkok to the north of Thailand in January 1921, provided an important means of transportation which enabled these Chinese merchants to traveled up north to Chiang Mai more conveniently. The new railway

¹⁸ Chiang Mai Teacher's College. *Lanna Kub Karn Suksa Bab Mai*, 1984.

changed the trading relationships between Lanna and Burmese which before this railway was built, these two were considered to be main trading partners. However, the efficiency of the new railway made it more convenient to bring in ready goods from Bangkok and these goods were instantly distributed throughout Lanna.

Goods that were imported into Lanna from Bangkok during this time consisted of clothings, chinaware, glassware, gas oil, salt, matches, medicines, liquor, cigarettes and bicycle. Therefore, with the increased in trading through the railway, trading by boat became less popular¹⁹.

The Chinese merchants were the only group of merchants who traded with Bangkok by boat. This was due to their familiarity to boats and good connections with the existing Chinese merchants in Bangkok. Goods that were sent from Chiang Mai to Bangkok consisted of animal skins, animal horns and oil. On the other hand, goods that were sent to Chiang Mai from Bangkok consisted of clothes, textiles, matches, soap, metal and salt. Textile materials that were imported to Chiang Mai from Bangkok were mainly Chinese silk. Therefore, it is not surprising to be able to observed Chinese-style costumes worn among the locals of Chiang Mai. Thus, during the reign of King Rama VI, Chinese silk trousers available in various colours were popular as well as satin textiles. In the same period, Chinese-style blouses

¹⁹ Julatas Kitibutr. *Setakij Nakorn Chiang Mai Jag A-deed – Su Anakot*, p. 40.

were also popular especially sewn with Chinese-style buttons made from fabric²⁰.

Although considered to have an abstract influence on the changes of costumes, however, it is important to study the changes in the lifestyles of Chiang Mai people which resulted from centralization and modernization from the central part. This changes of lifestyle was portrayed in the people of Chiang Mai's interests to learn about the outside world through reading newspapers. There were local newspapers, such as the Sri Chiang Mai Newspaper, which was first released in 1927 and newspapers from Bangkok. Reading the newspaper gave the people of Chiang Mai the opportunities for them to learn about the world around them, such as new events, ideas and fashion. Therefore, newspapers could be another important factor which influenced and shaped the women of Chiang Mai to learn more about the fashion and costume industries in Bangkok.

It is also vital to examine the entertainment sector as part of another influence, which hypothetically, also led to the change of women's costumes in Chiang Mai. Therefore, the history of entertainment must be examined, namely the history of Thai cinema since this type of entertainment was found to have the most western-style influence onto the Thais and consequently, the women of Chiang Mai, in terms of costumes.

The history of cinema in Thailand dates back to the year 1897 when

²⁰ Kana Thamngarn Thamnu Bumroong Silpa-Wattanatham Klum Sathaban Udom Suksa Pak Nuea. *Rai Ngarn Karn Seminar Rueng Krueng Taeng Kai Puen Muang Pak Nuea*, p. 30.

the first film was shown in Bangkok by a group of French travelling showmen. The Bangkok Times, which was the major daily newspaper of the time, reportedly advertised the premiere of “Le Parisian Cinematograph” on June 10, 1897 (B.E.2440) at M.C. Alangkarn Theatre. That year marked the dawn of the “travelling showmen era” which was to last nearly a decade. Besides the French, a group of Japanese showmen arrived in 1904. By 1905 the first movie-house was constructed in Bangkok by a Japanese investor. The years 1907 through 1916 witnessed the birth and growth of movie theatres owned by Thai entrepreneurs throughout the country. Competition among these theatre owners led to the rise of theatre circuits in 1913. Just before the decade ended, Thai businessmen had learned to monopolize the distribution and exhibition arms of the budding industry through the integration of two major theatre circuits in 1919.

Up to this time, there had been no records of serious film production except for a few cases of “hobby” filmmaking by amateurs.²¹ The first film produced in Thailand appeared in 1923. **Nang Sao Suvan/Survarna of Siam** was made by American filmmaker Henry McRae of Universal Company. Featuring a Thai cast of characters, it told the story of the romance between Survarna, daughter of a well-to-do family, and Nai Klahan, a poor man who later turned out to be heir of an equally wealthy

²¹ Some innovative theatre owners were believed to try their hands at making shorts to accompany the longer films shown at their theatres. Other amateurs included members of the royal family who had the privilege of experimenting with their own equipment long before commoners. In fact, filmmaking as part of royal activities reportedly appeared as early as 1900.

family. The film was an earnest attempt to portray Thai lifestyle set against the exotic scenery of the north. The second feature-length film, **Chang/The Elephant** (1925), was also a production of a Hollywood filmmaking unit. It was produced and directed by Merian C. Cooper of Paramount Inc. and had Ernest B. Schoedsack as cinematographer. Again using a Thai location and a Thai cast, it told the story of the natives' struggle to survive among the wildlife and wild lifestyle in North Thailand. Consequently, since the two feature films mentioned above were both based on the lives and settings of Northern Thailand, there is no doubt that both films were likely to be distributed to Chiang Mai for entertainment amongst its people, especially for the Northern royalties. There was evidence that movie theatres did exist in Chiang Mai in 1927, such as the Uppapong Theatre.

Therefore, as soon as feature-films were firstly introduced to Chiang Mai, it can be presumed that it had influence on the change of costumes of the Chiang Mai women. First of all, these films were mostly produced and picked out by westerners, by Americans producers, and hence, what the characters in the films wore would probably have western influences even though these actors/actresses were Thais. At this point, western influences had spread strongly throughout the Bangkok, as seen from the costumes of royal women and also other court ladies.

In summary, the way Chiang Mai women dressed have changed from the traditional way such as wearing *pha sin* and uncomplicated cloth tops, to wearing skirts and blouses. This change was resulted from westernization

and modernization, as well as other factors which influenced the change of women's costumes. The factors examined in this chapter were the ones analyzed to have contributed to the influence of these changes in costumes. The first factor was the emergence of foreign merchants and trades which introduced to the people of Chiang Mai foreign goods, including clothing materials and costumes itself. It was seen that Chinese silk became popular at this time. Therefore, Chinese-style trousers and blouse were in fashion, especially to the upper classes since they were the ones who could afford high priced foreign goods. However, during this period it could be seen that foreign goods, especially clothings, were not something new to the society in Chiang Mai regardless of classes. When goods were sent to Chiang Mai city they were also distributed to distant villages by local merchants. Therefore, it could be stated that the people of Chiang Mai of all classes were used to the introduction of new changes that came from various places around them.

In addition, the vast expansion of the economy made the lifestyles of the people in Chiang Mai changed, especially common villagers. Instead to producing goods just enough for their needs as in the past, these villagers were now producing goods they could sold in the market. With the increase in their income, they were able to afford different and foreign goods that were imported from Bangkok, such as clothes and costumes. This way, the women would not have to produce and weave their own clothes since it would save them time and they usually cost less.

The second factor examined was the roles of the American Presbyterian missionaries on the people of Chiang Mai. These missionaries brought along with them westernization and had the opportunity to introduce new western concepts and ideas directly to the people of Chiang Mai. One of the main changes brought about by these missionaries were the establishment of missionary schools, which became the centre for teaching and spreading western practices. At these schools, girls began to wear uniforms, which later consisted of western style skirts, hats and stockings instead of the traditional costumes.

The influence from the central government through centralization was also examined. Due to King Chulalongkorn's view that Siam had to adopt some of the western cultures so they would not be regarded as uncivilized or barbaric, he ordered basic changes to the costumes of both men and women in Siam. His initiation started with the men and women in the court and those in the royal family, which later spread among high class officials in Bangkok. Since westernization has impacted on the women of Bangkok the majority being the higher class, this change has also spread to Chiang Mai which similarly resulted in the shift of traditional women's costumes to the adaptation of westernized costumes. The exchange of cultures through marriages and adoptions of Lanna princesses and Siam princes and government officials also added to the influence from the central palace to Lanna. However, this influence was only limited among the upper class people and probably had very few effects on the common villagers.

The reformation of the educational system which came from the central administration, more or less affected the changes of women's costumes through school textbooks and teaching materials. Since school children who attended the government schools were taught with the central curriculum which included the use of their textbooks, they as well as their teachers, were exposed to the new dimension of costumes through the drawings and pictures in these textbooks. The so-called westernized textbooks which was later printed, contained in them drawings of girls and women who wore 'skirts' rather than the traditional *pha sin*. This shows that even the slightest factor, such as school textbooks, could have influenced on the change of women's costumes.

Through the process of centralization, an extension of the northern line railway was built, which made it more convenient and efficient to contact with the central government. As a result, foreign goods were further brought into Chiang Mai society since within the central part, adoptions have already been made.

Finally, the last factor examined was the entertainment sector, such as the movies, which also had an affect on exposing new trends in costumes to the women of Chiang Mai. Since the first movie in Thailand, **Nang Sao Suvan/Survarna of Siam** (1923) was written based on the north of Thailand, it was likely to have influenced the change of costumes not only once shown to the public of Chiang Mai, but also during the film making stages done in the north.

As we move away from the historical perspectives of women's costumes in Chiang Mai society, it could be clearly seen that the main change that took part in their costumes were the women's blouses and shirts. Due to westernization and the influenced of the above factors, Chiang Mai women have adopted the Siamese style of dressing, which came as a result of westernization and modernization. On the other hand, the traditional *pha sin* were still worn throughout the different classes of the society. Higher class women would wore more elaborate *pha sin* with silk and *tin chok*, whereas the common women of the villages would wear cotton or printed *pha sin* which came from India.

Although the changes in women's costumes of Chiang Mai society could be observed after the impact of various internal and external influences, nevertheless, these changes could be considered as partly an adaptation of westernization and new trends. These adaptations, however, did not completely changed of traditional ways of dressing or costumes, but were purely combinations if various styles, trends, concepts, etc. which was exposed to the women of Chiang Mai during that period along with the attempt to struggle in able to survive in the fast changing world.



Fig. 1

One of the stores along Ta Pae Road which belonged to a Japanese merchant. It can be seen that most of the goods sold in this store were goods exported from Japan.

(photograph from *Lanna Thai Nai A-deed*, 1979)



Fig. 2

The first schoolhouse of the Royal consort's school or Dara Academy School, was constructed in 1879 on the piece of land near Nawarat Bridge given by Chao Inthawichayanon, the ruler of Chiang Mai. It was the first girls' school in the North.

(photograph from *Christianity and Chiang Mai Society*, 1996)



Fig. 3

Blouses and shirts were first seen worn by school children of the Prarachaya Girls' school

(photograph provided by Dara Academy School, Chiang Mai)



Fig. 4

School uniforms worn by girls in Mattayom 1 and 2.

(photograph provided by Dara Academy School, Chiang Mai)



Fig. 5

Graduation photo of girls from Prarachaya Girls' School

(photograph provided by Dara Academy School, Chiang Mai)



Fig. 6

A group of students from Mattayom 6 (elementary 6), 1920
(photograph provided by Dara Academy School, Chiang Mai)

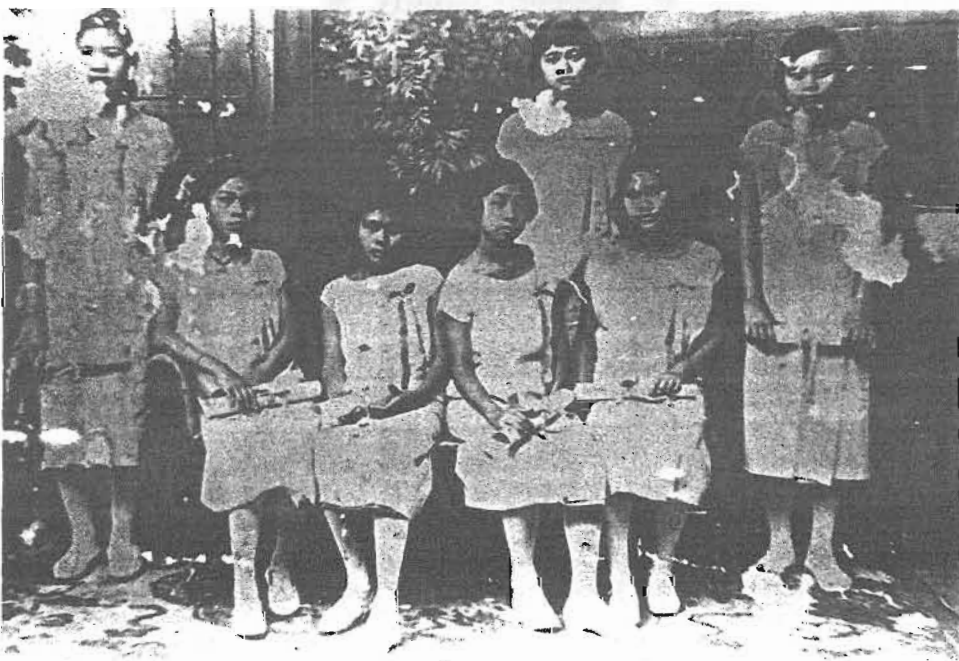


Fig. 7

Girls from Prarachaya Girls' School
(photograph provided by Dara Academy School, Chiang Mai)



Fig. 8

Teachers at the Prarachaya Girls' School, 1928

(photograph provided by Dara Academy School, Chiang Mai)



Fig. 9

Graduates of the Prarachaya Girls' School, 1923

(photograph provided by Dara Academy School, Chiang Mai)



Fig. 10

Girls from Prarachaya Girls' School

(photograph provided by Dara Academy School, Chiang Mai)



Fig. 11

Student nurses at McCormick Hospital during their anatomy study session in 1926.

(photograph from **Christianity and Chiang Mai Society**, 1996)



Fig. 12

The student nurses at McCormick Hospital giving health care to the public.
(photograph from **Christianity and Chiang Mai Society**, 1996)



Fig. 13

The first group of McCormick Student nurses, 1921-1927

(photograph from **Christianity and Chiang Mai Society**, 1996)

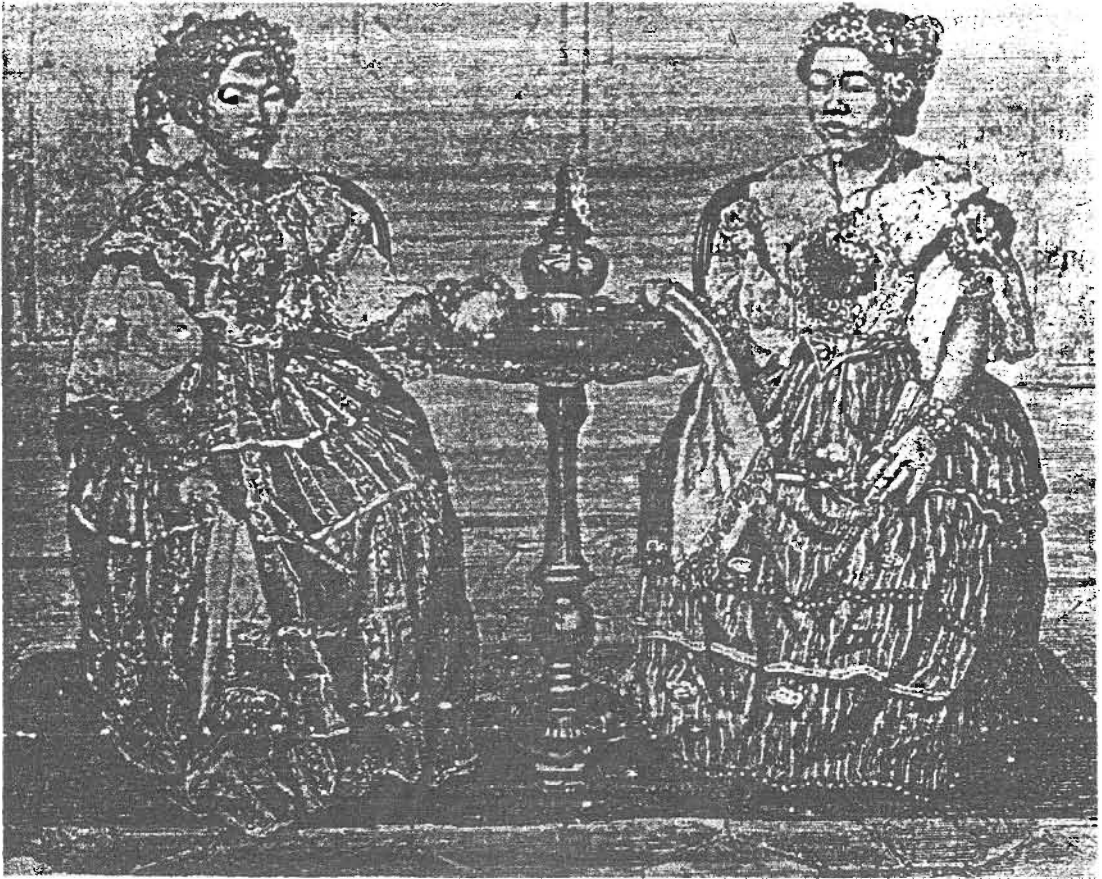


Fig. 14

Western drawing of King Rama V's consorts shown dressed in western style costumes.

(photograph from *Karn Teang Kai Satree Kub Hutakarn-To-Pa Nai Sangkom Thai Samai Rattanakosin*, 1999)



Fig. 15

Queen Sri Pacharinthira of King Rama V shown photographed wearing the “leg of mutton” blouse completed with stockings and shoes. This western style costumes were worn with the traditional Siamese *jongkraben*.

(photograph from *Karn Teang Kai Satree Kub Hutakarm-To-Pa Nai Sangkom Thai Samai Rattanakosin*, 1999)



Fig. 16

Chao Ubol-Wanna, daughter of King Kawilorot Suriyawong (1856-1870)

(photograph from *Chao Luang Chiang Mai*, 1997)



Fig. 17

Costumes of women in the Royal Palace during the reign of King Rama V which consisted of the “ham sleeves” biouses worn beneath the tightly wrapped shoulder cloth, lined stockings and shoes similar to the West.

(photograph from the National Archives, Thailand)

CHAPTER IV.

CHAO DARA-RASAMEE¹: THE RESPONSE TO EXTERNAL INFLUENCES.

In this chapter, we will examine a very important figure in which there are evidenced that Chao Dara-Rasamee played a very important part in shaping and influencing Chiang Mai and its culture. Chao Dara-Rasamee is the daughter of the seventh ruler of Chiang Mai who later became a consort of King Chulalongkorn. Chao Dara-Rasamee had to move and lived in the central palace where she served her duties for more than twenty years. During this time, she had absorbed the 'central' cultures and traditions, of which they became part of her ways of life.

Nevertheless, Chao Dara-Rasamee maintained her 'northern' identities while living in the central palace as could be observed in her costumes. This combination of cultures within the Princess became an important factor which had to be examined in order to find the influences in the changes of women's costumes in Chiang Mai society. After her return to Chiang Mai, Chao Dara-Rasamee became the leading figure of the society, not only politically but also culturally. We will look at her roles in maintaining the Lanna costumes and styles at the same time, study her adaptations of fashion from her experiences in the central palace. In addition, we will examine her roles and importance in Chiang Mai society

¹ *Chao* is the term used to refer to members of the royal family, especially the northern royal family. However, Princess Dara-Rasamee is also known

and schools. Since Chao Dara-Rasamee was the 'people's princess', respected by the society of Chiang Mai and Lanna of all classes, she should be considered one of the most important factor which influenced the changes of women's costumes in Chiang Mai society.

Chao Dara-Rasamee, Princess of Two Lands.

Chao Dara-Rasamee (Fig. 1) was born in 1873 as the daughter of King Intra-Wichanontra (Fig. 2), the seventh ruler of Chiang Mai's Kawila Dynasty. She was one of ten children, two of whom later became rulers of Chiang Mai. At the age of eleven she was formally betrothed to Siam's King Chulalongkorn, who had already ruled in Bangkok for 16 years by the time of this royal betrothal. In 1886, Chao Dara-Rasamee accompanied her father to Bangkok and was presented to King Chulalongkorn. Thereafter, she remained at the royal palace in Bangkok, joining the King formally in official royal matrimony.

Chao Dara-Rasamee became a highly respected royal consort and bore King Chulalongkorn one child, Princess Naga-Napeelee (Fig. 3), who unfortunately died at the young age of four. She lived at the royal palace and engaged in the internal affairs of the Siamese Royal Family for twenty-two years, and she was eventually granted the title of "Prarachaya" or "Great Princess" before she returned for her first visit home of Chiang Mai in 1908. However, only ten months after she returned to Bangkok in 1909 Chao Dara-Rasamee had to face the greatest tragedy due to King Chulalongkorn's

by her title "Prarachaya" or "Great Princess" appointed to her by King Chulalongkorn in 1908.

death on October 23, 1910. King Chulalongkorn's death marked the period of twenty-three years of Chao Dara-Rasamee's service to the King at the royal palace.

After the death of her husband, King Chulalongkorn, Chao Dara-Rasamee stayed for many years at the Dusit Palace in Bangkok. However, in 1914 she requested permission from King Vachiravuch, who ascended the throne in 1910, as King Rama VI, to return to Chiang Mai for good. Once arrived in Chiang Mai, Chao Dara-Rasamee spent the last nineteen years of her lifetime making charitable contributions to her homeland until her death in 1933.

Living In The Grand Palace.

One of the most praised and remembered event of Chao Dara-Rasamee in maintaining her Lanna nature was the way she dressed and carried out her daily activities in the Grand Palace. Despite of the fashion in central Siam, which in those days, women would wear a piece of cloth which they wore in a trouser-like manner known as *jong kraben*². As for their tops, these women wore *sabai*³, or coloured shoulder cloths, which were worn diagonally. The colours of the *sabai* worn each day depended on the different days of the week as stated in the novel **Si Phaendin** (Four Reigns) by Kukrit Pramoj (1981). In addition, the central women in those days would cut their hair short.

Despite what other women wore, Chao Dara-Rasamee proved her

² โจงกระเบน

³ สไบเฉียง

uniqueness by wearing only traditional Lanna costumes instead of the central fashion for women described above. Every women in Chao Dara-Rasamee's residence had long hair which they wore as a knot in the middle of their heads and wore traditional Lanna *pha sin* (Fig.4). It can be seen that there is one particular style of *pha sin* which Chao Dara- Rasamee often wore in photographs taken especially while she was living in the Central Palace. This style adopted the Burmese pattern known as the *lungi acheik* and to this a Chiang Tung hem piece would be added. In other occasions she would daily wear the traditional *sin lae* or *sin kan kho khwai*, or the horizontal broad striped *pha sin* (more descriptions in Chapter 1). Not only did Chao Dara-Rasamee made the *lungi acheik* and Chiang Tung hem piece a part of her costume, but her relatives and servants who followed her from Chiang Mai were also seen with this style *pha sin* (Fig. 5). This suggests that Chao Dara-Rasamee's costumes were not only worn by herself, but others around her were also influenced by this style. Most significantly, if we study Chao Dara-Rasamee's *pha sin* in details, we will discover that her official *pha sin* would be consisted of three important cultures embedded within its patterns which could be considered as the basic formation of her own identity. These identities are the traditional Lanna *pha sin* woven in the Burmese **lungi acheik** style and attached with the Chiang Tung style hem piece.

This distinction in costumes is a presentation of Chao Dara-Rasamee's pride in being a Lanna women, eventhough she had to travel far away from her home but the uniqueness of her culture was brought along with her. It was noted that Chao Dara-Rasamee's costumes was a

combination of many cultures and the central costumes was not directly a part of it. Starting with Chao Dara-Rasamee's hairstyle which was called the 'Japanese-style' because it originated from Japan, while the women in the central part had short hair or *dok kratum* style.

It can be gathered that since the reign of King Rama IV onwards, costumes were 'designed' or 'authorized' by the King himself. The authorization of costumes, whether for men or women, became a part of the ruler's decisions and duties. Since the Kings wanted foreigners, especially westerners, to regard Siam as a civilized nation, they tried to adapt the traditional costumes and appearances to western styles. However, it did not mean they completely took away the traditional style of costumes, but carefully added styles and fashion that seemed appropriate at that time. The following statement clearly shows how the Kings of Siam are considered important figures in the fashion of costumes:

*In those days, Chao Khun Prayulwong was looked upon as the lead of fashion for women in the grand palace. This is probably due to her closeness to the King [Chulalongkorn]. She would ask the King for his advice about fashion, which made her costumes different from the rest. Whatever she wore, others would follow without hesitation.*⁴

In addition, there are evidences from old photographs that during this time, royal consorts or women in the grand palace who came from nearby lands, such as Chao Dara-Rasamee herself, also started to wear embroidered

⁴ Suwadee Thanaprasitpatana, *Karn Teang Kai Satree Kub Hutakarm-To-Pa Nai Sangkom Thai Samai Rattanakosin*, p. 61.

and laced blouses with the traditional *pha sin*. Since Carl Bock also mentioned in his journal when he visited the north in 1881, that higher class women of the north began to wear blouses of western styles. This could mean that the changes of women's costumes amongst the higher and middle classes in the central part had spread to other areas of Siam. Nevertheless, the women still wore *pha sin* as did traditionally instead of the *jonkraben*, as would women in the central part.⁵

Chao Dara-Rasamee's introduction of the ham-sleeves blouses were not at all central Siamese costumes, however, it became a part of its fashion when King Chulalongkorn initiated it after his numerous visits to the West. Therefore, it can be pointed out that the origin of the ham-sleeves blouses came from the West, since this particular fashion became widely spread throughout England, Austria, Russia, Italy, etc. Therefore, the distinction here is that Chao Dara-Rasamee only adopted the 'international' fashion of that particular period via its spread in Bangkok and *not* the central's costumes directly.

Not only did she maintained Lanna's traditional costumes in the Grand Palace, but Chao Dara-Rasamee also encouraged those around her to practice other forms of Lanna's traditions, such as Lanna's traditional music. Nevertheless, Chao Dara-Rasamee also showed interests in central music and drama, which she eagerly encouraged the people around her to learn. Consequently, her residence became well known in the Grand Palace for the talents of its people to play music. Everyone who lived within her

⁵ Carl Bock. **Temples and Elephants**, p. 38.

compound were able to play at least one musical instrument including Chao Dara-Rasamee herself who played *sor duang*⁶, *sor u*⁷ and *jakay*⁸.

From many sources, it could be gathered that Chao Dara-Rasamee was quite well known in the Grand Palace as stated in **Si Phaendin**. She was known not only for her uniqueness but she was also well respected for her polite manners and her status as daughter of a northern ruler.

Thus, the acceptance Chao Dara-Rasamee as a person from a different culture in the Central Palace could be evidenced among the Thai royal gifts from King Chulalongkorn to the then President of the United States of America as a token of friendship. Among these gifts were a northern *pha sin* displayed given to American by King Chulalongkorn in 1876.⁹ This *pha sin tin chok* indicated that it was made for a high-ranking woman in a northern court. Therefore, it can be assumed that this particular *pha sin* could have belonged to Chao Dara-Rasamee since she was living in the Royal Palace during that time.

Moreover, the acceptance of the northern costumes by the Central Palace could further be seen during the reign of King Rama VI where the ruler and higher class citizens were more exposed and educated in western styles. The King Rama VI introduced a new value to the culture of Siam in the form of clothing. He wanted Siamese women to dressed similarly to those women in the West but at the same time preserved the traditional

⁶ ซอด้วง

⁷ ซออู้

⁸ จั๊วเข็

⁹ Lisa McQuail. **Treasures of Two Nation**, p.98.

culture and “Thainess”. Therefore, King Rama VI encouraged women, obviously starting from those closer to him such as his consorts and royal servants, to wear the *pha sin* since its characteristics and style were similar to the style of western skirts. This new encouragement of replacing the women *jong kraben* was to make sure that the costumes would clearly distinguished the male from the female. However, during this time *pha sin* were already worn by northern and northeastern women traditionally.

In addition, having long hair in order to put up into a bun was also encouraged since when compared to the original *dok kratum*¹⁰ style, having longer hair was then considered to be better since it was more similar to the hairstyle of western women. These new changes to the costumes and hairstyle of Siamese women during the reign of King Rama VI interestingly could be related to the role of Chao Dara-Rasamee, since she was still living in the Royal Palace during the initiation of the changes described above.

Incidentally, the same style of costumes encouraged by King Rama VI later during his reign (Fig. 6), were similar to the way Chao Dara-Rasamee and her northern relatives were dressed while living in the Central Palace. Thus, it could be imagined at this point, that the changes in the royal palace to some extent were influenced by Chao Dara-Rasamee’s presence in the Central Palace.

While living amongst the changes initiated by King Chulalongkorn as discussed above, it could be believed that Chao Dara-Rasamee was also influenced by these changes. Basically, King Chulalongkorn's concept of

¹⁰ ด อ ก ก ร ะ ฑู ม – s h o r t cut hairstyle just above the neckline.

wanting to be regarded as a civilized nation marked the changes and alterations of costumes in the central part. This could also be applied to Chao Dara-Rasamee's case - she also wanted Chiang Mai to be regarded as another civilized city, therefore, introduced the 'new' style of costumes to the people of Chiang Mai similar to what King Chulalongkorn did with the people in the palace.

It is interesting to note that although Chao Dara-Rasamee adapted the 'western' fashion initiated by King Chulalongkorn, however, she still wore the traditional 'Laos' *pha sin* which can be considered another sign of localism. Centralization of fashion in the central palace during that period was regarded as political according to Chao Dara-Rasamee since she still considered herself 'foreign'.

Therefore, to what extent can we measure Chao Dara-Rasamee's influence of central fashion into Chiang Mai? While she adopted some 'central' fashion such as the 'ham sleeves' blouses, she also maintained her traditional styles as seen in her *pha sin* and hairstyles. This integration of fashion from central and northern Thailand could possibly be interpreted that Chao Dara-Rasamee wanted Chiang Mai to also be regarded as civilized by wearing western costumes and at the same time, not centralized or being shadowed with central cultures by maintaining the *pha sin* as part of her costumes.

It is important at this point, to carefully examine the underlying purposes behind Chao Dara-Rasamee's intentions of preserving the northern costumes and cultures while living in the central palace and her roles in

influencing the changes of women's costumes when she returned to Chiang Mai.

First of all, Chao Dara-Rasamee's traveled to live in the central palace in 1886 could be regarded as a political arrangement between Chiang Mai and Siam. This incident could be traced back to the other perspective of the English influenced on the Chiang Mai royalties, which consequently affected directly on Chao Dara-Rasamee. It was noted that during Queen Victoria of England's reign in 1882, which at that time colonized Burma, many diplomats and officers were sent from the southern part of Burma to Chiang Mai to negotiate with Chao Intra-Wichanontra (seventh ruler of Chiang Mai). This negotiation concerned Queen Victoria's interest to adopt the young princess of Chiang Mai, Chao Dara-Rasamee.¹¹ It is interesting to point out that not long after this adoption news had spread, in 1883 King Chulalongkorn sent a pair of earrings and a set of diamond ring to Chao Dara-Rasamee as a token of engagement. This royal command of King Chulalongkorn could be considered as a result from overhearing the news of Queen Victoria's request to adopt Chao Dara-Rasamee. In his view, if Chao Dara-Rasamee was adopted it would meant that Chiang Mai would easily fall into England's control and would therefore, cause Siam to be in great difficulty. As a means to obstruct this agreement to take place, King Chulalongkorn had to announce his engagement to Chao Dara-Rasamee. As a result, still a young girl at the age of thirteen, Chao Dara-Rasamee had to leave her parents and home to live in a strange place where she had to make many adaptations and learned to survive.

Since at the beginning, Chao Dara-Rasamee was exposed to a different culture which could lead her to feel abandoned and pressured. Not only did she had to face the pains and agony of moving away from her loved ones, but as soon as she arrived in Bangkok, she was faced with some rather unpleasant encounters with the other consorts and princesses who also lived in the central palace. In those days, northerners were known to the central people as the 'Laos' and were often looked down upon as outsiders and uncivilized people. Therefore, it was not surprising that when Chao Dara-Rasamee moved into the palace, unpleasant happenings would happen to her. For instance, she would find a piece of paper with written omen in her drinking bowl or her bathing water would be covered with itching plants. These unpleasant incidents occurred occasionally to Chao Dara-Rasamee which caused her servants and surrounded relatives to be fully alert and aware of her all the time.¹² Due to these annoying incidents, Chao Dara-Rasamee had to be strong and should be praised for her bravery and courage.

However, when King Chulalongkorn found out that Chao Dara-Rasamee was badly treated¹³, he ordered peace so that no one should be unkind to Chao Dara-Rasamee for fear that if anything happened politically he might lose Chiang Mai to the English empire, which at that time had already taken control of nearby countries such as India and Burma. It can be suggested that due to these inexcusable behaviours and attitudes towards Chao Dara-Rasamee has led her to become more aware and protective of her

¹¹ Nongyao Karnjanajaree, *Dara-Rasamee Phra-prawat Prarachaya Chao Dara-Rasamee*, p. 38.

¹²Nan-Inpang. *Prarachaya Chao Dara-Rasamee*, p. 22.

own identity. Therefore, as a way of showing the people in the central palace that northern women are not inferior and are instead strong, she kept and promoted a very important part of the northern culture, which is its costumes, throughout the years she spent in Bangkok (Fig. 7).

In addition, King Chulalongkorn found opportunities to address Chao Dara-Rasamee to the public especially in official functions. For example, once Chao Dara-Rasamee was appointed by the King to assist him in hosting a welcome reception for the Princess of Saen Hwee province which was also a colony of the English empire at that time.

King Chulalongkorn stated that since Saen Hwee was situated nearby to the Lanna Kingdom and would have similar language and culture to Lanna, he requested Chao Dara-Rasamee to accompany him at the reception so she could share common interests with the Princess of Saen Hwee. On the other hand, another reason could be discovered behind King Chulalongkorn's initial statement as given earlier. A political perspective could be examined that King Chulalongkorn wanted to show the Princess of Saen Hwee that he has controlled of the Lanna Kingdom with the appearance of Chao Dara-Rasamee, Lanna's princess, as one of his consorts. Since Saen Hwee is also a colony of the British Empire this message should reach the British government which during that time had swept many of Siam's neighbouring countries, such as Burma and India as part of her Empire.

¹³ Nan-Inpang. *Prarachaya Chao Dara-Rasamee*, p. 24.

Chao Dara-Rasamee's Contributions To Chiang Mai Society.

Once arrived in Chiang Mai, Chao Dara-Rasamee performed various charitable tasks and activities which were considered very beneficial to the society of Chiang Mai and its people. She was also considered the "good pillar"¹⁴ of the city, as described by writers who studied her life and wrote about her. Chao Dara-Rasamee also visited many sites and places around the city and within the Lanna Kingdom. This suggests that although she did not spend many years living in Chiang Mai, she was still attached to its culture and wanted to learn more about the city and explore its culture and resources. These visits could be one of the many ways in which Chao Dara-Rasamee made herself well known to the people of Chiang Mai and announcing her greatness as the daughter of the previous ruler and sister of the ninth and existing ruler.

Also, Chao Dara-Rasamee is considered to be very knowledgeable about Chiang Mai and its history as she was often referred to or sought for advised regarding this area. Therefore, Chao Dara-Rasamee was able to use this knowledge and interest as a tool to understand the roots and culture of her own land including its people and society.

Moreover, Chao Dara-Rasamee is one of the most important figures in supporting the educational sector and reform in Chiang Mai. Even while she was still living in Bangkok, there was evidence that she sponsored and supported a couple of monks from Chiang Mai who were willing to seek

¹⁴ ศรีเ มื่อ ง - Nongyao Karnjanajaree. *Dara-Rasamee Phraprawat Prarachaya Chao Dara-Rasamee*, p. 104.

further Buddhist studies in Bangkok.¹⁵ Chao Dara-Rasamee also provided fundings for many schools in Chiang Mai, the most well-known was the Prarachaya Girls' School or later known as the Dara Academy School as described in earlier chapters.

Not only was Chao Dara-Rasamee engaged in multiple activities towards the society such as in the area of religion and education, she was also interested in rebuilding and reviving Lanna's traditions, at the same time, mixing and combining it with the traditions of the central part. Chao Dara-Rasamee was very much interested in the arts and cultures of both Lanna and Siam, which included tradition plays or drama, music, the arts of weaving and its techniques and various crafts.¹⁶ She would maintained and restored some of Lanna's traditions which she thought were valuable and unique, at the same time, some traditions from the central region or from other places that were considered different or interesting would be brought to be introduced and exposed to Chiang Mai society, for instance, traditional drama, such as **I-Nao** and **Phra Lor** (Fig. 8)¹⁷

In addition, Chao Dara-Rasamee was interested in agriculture and plants which can be clearly seen when she established the agricultural school in Chiang Mai. She was also interested in new plant species, as well as experimenting with cabbages which she encouraged local villagers to grow as a crop. Her success within this area can be seen when cabbages

¹⁵ Nongyao Karnjanajaree. *Dara-Rasamee Phra-prawat Prarachaya Chao Dara-Rasamee*, p. 111.

¹⁶ Chulalongkorn University. *Dara-Rasamee Sai-yai Ruk Song Paen-din*, p. 19.

¹⁷ Nongyao Karnjanajaree. *Dara-Rasamee Phra-prawat Prarachaya Chao Dara-Rasamee*: (1990), p. 116.

could be easily grown and found in Chiang Mai unlike before where they had to bring in cabbages from Bangkok. Chao Dara-Rasamee was also a member of the English Rose Society in England, which she was able to collect new kinds of roses to grow in her garden. Her favourite species is the big pink English rose which are lightly scented, which she named it "Chulalongkorn". This suggests that she can be considered an international figure, which only chose to pick out the best and appropriate customs of every culture. Also, this suggests that not only was she accepted by the locals in Chiang Mai but she was also accepted by the foreigners in their society.

Chao Dara-Rasamee's Influences On Women's Costumes In Chiang Mai.

The first introduction of westernization to Chiang Mai by Chao Dara-Rasamee evidently dated back even before she returned to Chiang Mai for good in 1914. This introduction was done through letters and telegrams written to her by King Chulalongkorn on her first visit to Chiang Mai in 1908. During Chao Dara-Rasamee's absent, numerous letters and telegrams were sent to her from King Chulalongkorn who expressed his concern about her safety and well being. Sometimes, gifts and food would be sent to Chao Dara-Rasamee, including new fashion or clothings that were becoming popular in Bangkok. For instance, it was noted in one of the telegrams that coloured stockings and shoes from Europe were becoming fashionable in central Siam. This fashion came about as a result from King Chulalongkorn's visit to Europe and introduced them to the people of Siam. Thus, when Chao Dara-Rasamee was away, King Chulalongkorn sent a pair

each for the different colours of stockings to her by boat from Bangkok.¹⁸ Therefore, Chao Dara-Rasamee's introduction of western clothings to Chiang Mai society could be seen from as early as 1908.

Later on, when Chao Dara-Rasamee returned to Chiang Mai in 1914 other forms of western clothings were further introduced to Chiang Mai society. Again, she brought along with her some traditions that were considered new and unfamiliar to the society of Chiang Mai from her experiences living in central Siam.

Although Chao Dara-Rasamee maintained to wear traditional Lanna's costumes in the Grand Palace but there was no doubt that she was also influenced by western fashion which during that period, especially during King Chulalongkorn's reign, poured heavily into the country. In Chiang Mai she introduced the European fashion of "ham sleeves" and Javanese neckline blouses worn with a silk Burmese tapestry weave *pha sin* (**lungi acheik** style) to which the Chiang Mai or Chiang Tung hem piece was added (Fig. 9). She also introduced the Chiang Tung *pha sin* for high ranking women. This style was a result of relations that developed between the Chiang Mai court and the court of Chiang Tung.¹⁹

If we look back to when Lanna, i.e. Chiang Mai was still under the Burmese control some 500 years ago, we can picture and predict the strong links and relationships that occurred amongst the nearby cities which were also under the Burmese rules, such as Burma, Chiang Mai, Chiang Saen and Chiang Tung. This long and historical relationships between Chiang Mai

¹⁸ Nongyao Karnjanajaree. *Dara-Rasamee Phra-prawat Prarachaya Chao Dara-Rasamee*: (1990), p. 64.

¹⁹ Songsak Prangwththankun. *Chiang Mai's Textile Heritage*, p. 42

and Chiang Tung was also noted through the tides in marriages between the rulers of these two cities. For example, Chao Intranontra, son of Chao Kaeow-Nawarat the ninth and last ruler of Chiang Mai was married to Chao Sukanta, the princess of Chiang Tung (Fig. 10).

It could also be seen that the Burmese-style *lungi acheik pha sin* could be seen worn by many dances who were trained and lived within Chao Dara-Rasamee's residence in Chiang Mai. Therefore, this suggests that these dances had revived Chao Dara-Rasamee's fashion which is one form of passing down a culture so later generations would be exposed to it (Fig.11).

Chao Dara-Rasamee also introduced a new hairstyle of Chiang Mai women which was known as the “Japanese style”, which was popular throughout Europe at that time. This hairstyle was complete with flowers and gold ornaments, diamond earrings and Western jewelleryes (Fig. 12). This was worn by the women of higher rank, while the villagers would decorate their hair with local flowers instead. Before this “Japanese hairstyle” was introduced by Chao Dara-Rasamee, Chiang Mai women already had long hair and put up in a bun, as described earlier. The “Japanese style” introduced was similar to the traditional style, however, the only difference is that the hair on the sides and front were more blown out than the original style. Also, it is interesting to notice that during the time Chao Dara-Rasamee returned to Chiang Mai, women’s hairstyles have already been changed from the traditional style, for example, some women

would have short hair and some still kept their long hair but did not put them up into a bun.²⁰

It could also be seen that during Chao Dara-Rasamee's period, various styles of *pha sin* from different places became popular such as the golden silk *pha sin* from Chiang Tung and the lungi acheik *pha sin* from Burma. *Pha sin* had long been the traditional costumes of Lanna women which required a lot of skills and patience in order to make a piece. Chao Dara-Rasamee noticed that this particular 'art' and culture was slowly forgotten due to various external factors of the growing economy, therefore, she tried to gather as many professional weavers from various places into her residence. These weavers were required to teach the skills and techniques of traditional weaving to women living in the residence of Chao Dara-Rasamee. The objective of this was to be able to pass on the skills and traditions to the younger generations in order to preserve the cultures and traditions, at the same time, creating skills for employment for the women.

The same thing was done to preserve the *pha sin yok dok*²¹ which was also considered to be one of Lanna's greatest art and culture and was rarely found left for later generations. Chao Dara-Rasamee owned this type of *pha sin* which she inherited from her mother and the only one left to be seen at that particular period. Therefore, Chao Dara-Rasamee kept this last valuable golden silk *pha sin* and used it as a model to create patterns for the same kind of *pha sin*. This particular 'art' and tradition would not have

²⁰*Taeng – Yong Karn Taeng Kai Kong Chao Lanna Samai Prarachaya Chao Dara-Rasamee*, 1993.

²¹ ผ้า ขึ้น ย ก ด อ ก

survived up to this very day if Chao Dara-Rasamee had not maintained its uniqueness by successfully re-tracing the original piece of *pha sin yok dok*.²²

Chao Dara-Rasamee also encouraged handicrafts, such as lace making. This could be seen when she bought lace making machines for the girls at the Dara Academy School (Fig. 13)²³. Lace making was considered something new to the Chiang Mai society, since traditionally, the people's costumes did not include this form of decorations. Traditionally, as described in previous chapters, costumes worn by the women of Chiang Mai consisted of only shoulder cloths or short-waist blouses worn with the *pha sin*. These cloths or blouses were not too elegant in terms of styles and its colours were usually very plain because they would normally used natural dye. The only elegant piece of costume would be the *pha sin* where women could add the *tin chok* or the hem piece depending on the status of the wearer.

Since during Chao Dara-Rasamee's return, the western style blouse was popular and they were usually decorated with frill and lace. However, this fashion was only popular within the higher class women because they were able to afford the imported goods. Therefore, it could be stated that Chao Dara-Rasamee also wanted to encourage this western fashion to a wider population since it could be viewed as a symbol for being "fashionable" and international. Thus, she started with the local schoolgirls at the Dara Academy school. This influence was also encouraged and influenced by the female missionaries living in the area, since they acted as models to the Western blouses and costumes at that time.

²² Wongsak Na Chiang Mai (ed.). *Chao Luang Chiang Mai*, p. 212.

In this period, more imported goods were sent to Chiang Mai by the railway because it was more efficient and convenient for both the suppliers and customers. A very good example of the kinds of goods sent by the trains that distributed to the changes of costumes in Chiang Mai society was the sewing machine.²⁴ These sewing machines could enabled women to sew their costumes more effectively and allowed them to create more style and fashion, whereas traditionally, most of the women's costumes were not 'sewn' together. However, if they required to be sewn, they were done with the hands.

All in all, Chao Dara-Rasamee did not only paid attention in the well-beings and lifestyles of the higher class or aristocrats, but she also had influence on the middle class or lower ends of the social classes in Chiang Mai. This could be seen since most of Chao Dara-Rasamee's activities were considered beneficial for all classes. For instance, by hiring professional weavers to teach those living in her residence was a start in spreading the knowledge of weaving to women in various classes. In addition, her encouragement in the Dara Academy School by providing the school with lace-making machines, not only made learning more efficient with up-to-date equipments but at the same time encouraged school girls to wear frills and laces outside the school. At this point, it is important to keep in mind that girls who attended the girls' school were consisted mainly of girls from

²³ Pannee Auansakul et. al. **Christianity and Chiang Mai Society**, p. 63.

²⁴ Julatas Kitibutr. *Setakij Nakorn Chiang Mai Jag A-deed – Su Anakot*, p. 40.

all classes of the society. This environment allows the students to interact regardless of class and, thus, exchange opinions as well as presentations of their costumes.

In addition, it can be seen that the costumes of Chiang Mai people began to merge with the fashion of Central Siam. Thus, during the reign of King Rama VII, fashion in Central Siam were known as the "Gatsby Style". This style could also be seen worn by women in Chiang Mai, as can be seen in the photographs provided in Chapter III (Fig. 8). Since the Gatsby style costumes were becoming fashionable in the central part, many women in the north were also seen in this style. It can be pointed out that the changes of fashion in the central part have in some ways influenced the costumes of women in the north. Therefore, the women in Chiang Mai had to keep up the central fashion in order to become fully fashionable

In summary, Chao Dara-Rasamee's contributions towards strengthening the political unity of the nation was considered of great importance at the end of the period of colonial expansionism in Asia. Towards the end of her life, Chao Dara-Rasamee maintained a very important role as the 'leader' of Chiang Mai and people of Lanna. She was considered to be one of the experts on the customs and traditions of the North. Appreciating the value of the ancient art and cultures, she revived delightful customs and festivals. This effort to maintained and preserved traditional culture was part of Chao Dara-Rasamee's hard work throughout her life, which she did for her land and people whom she left behind for more than twenty years. Since the old days, Chiang Mai society were used to the ruling of women as seen with Phra Nang Jiraprapa in 1545. Therefore,

the leading role of Chao Dara-Rasamee were easily accepted by the society and people of Chiang Mai. Although she was considered the sister of the ninth ruler of Chiang Mai, but her title of “Prarachaya” also added to her strength. This great strength could be observed, for instance, when King Rama VII visited Chiang Mai in 1926. The leading organizer of this visit in Chiang Mai was Chao Dara-Rasamee. This visit by King Rama VII marked a very important historical event since he was the first King of Thailand to visit the northern part and Chiang Mai.²⁵ Consequently, Chao Dara-Rasamee played a very important role during this visit. It was written that as soon as the visit was finalized, high-ranked royal officials of the Central Palace had to travel to Chiang Mai to seek for Chao Dara-Rasamee’s advise and opinions on how to properly receive King Rama VII and the Queen.²⁶ It was also written that Chao Dara-Rasamee led in official and religious rites, which suggested that her brother, the 9th ruler of Chiang Mai, had the minor role.

Due to this acceptance and authority, Chao Dara-Rasamee introduced westernization through costumes to the people of Chiang Mai. The “ham sleeves” blouses, silk Burmese tapestry weaved *pha sin* and the “Japanese hairstyle” all belonged in Chao Dara-Rasamee’s period and formed a new traditional costumes for the people of Chiang Mai (Fig. 14).

However, it is important to note that Chao Dara-Rasamee’s influence were highly fashionable only among the higher status women, namely her

²⁵ Although King Rama I and VI have visited this part of the Kingdom, however when they visited they did not reign Thailand as Kings.

²⁶ Nongyao Karnjanajaree. *Dara-Rasamee Phra-prawat Prarachaya Chao Dara-Rasamee*: (1990), p. 104.

relatives or wives of government officials, the middle class women and school girls. The village women would still wore their traditional costumes such as the shoulder cloths and cotton *pha sin*. Nevertheless, Chao Dara-Rasamee was well known to the people of all classes. It can be observed that the traditional Chiang Mai costumes as described in chapter 2 have been changed quite dramatically. Women began to wear socks or stockings, as seen worn by Chao Dara-Rasamee. In addition, western style blouses took over the traditional shoulder cloth. It can be seen that in special occasions, such as the visit to King Rama VII to Chiang Mai in 1921, the local people were dressed in a fashionable manner. The women instead of wearing the piece of cloth around their bodies wore blouses (Fig. 15, 16 and 17).

It can also be said that Chao Dara-Rasamee was very fond of her culture and identity that she never forgot to make it a part of herself, even through her costumes. Whether it be the traditional northern *pha sin*, the Burmese-style *lungi acheik*, or the Chiang Mai hem piece, they all portray the delicate arts and cultures of the lands surrounded and neighbour the Lanna Kingdom. Therefore, since these lands have long historical relationships with one another, it is not surprising that Chao Dara-Rasamee would adopt the best piece of part and culture from each area to combine her *pha sin*. In addition, this also suggests that this action of 'borrowing' cultures and arts from nearly lands is considered 'normal' and have been done since historical times. Chao Dara-Rasamee's efforts to preserve the traditional arts and cultures of Lanna, including traditional costumes is regarded as one her greatest achievements. She was able to collect, as well as identify, the

outstanding qualities of her homeland and at the same time adapt to the changing world in order to become more accepted by the outside cultures.

Thus, Chao Dara-Rasamee is considered the person who paved the roles and patterns of Chiang Mai women's costumes to create a sense of identity in Chiang Mai. In other words, she is a cultural leader who have integrated and combined various elements to make Chiang Mai a powerful cultural centre today.



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Fig. 1

Prarachaya Chao Dara-Rasamee (1873-1933)

(photograph from *Dara-Rasamee Sai-yai Ruk Song Paen-din*, 1999)



Fig. 2

Prachao Intra-Wichanontra, the seventh ruler of Chiang Mai (1870-1897)

(photograph from *Dara-Rasamee Sai-yai Ruk Song Paen-din*; 1999)



Chao Dara-Rasamee and
her new born daughter



Chao Dara-Rasamee with her
Daughter, "Sadech Chao Noi"



"Sadech Chao Noi" or
Princess Naga-Napeelee

Fig. 3 (photographs from *Dara-Rasamee Sai-yai Ruk Song Paen-din*, 1999)



Fig. 4

Chao Dara-Rasamee and her relatives in the Grand Palace. Notice that they all wore the traditional Lanna costumes and hairstyle.

(photograph from *Dara-Rasamee Sai-yai Ruk Song Paen-din*, 1999)



Fig. 5

Chao Dara-Rasamee and some of her relatives from Chiang Mai taken in the Central Palace. It can be seen that not only Chao Dara-Rasamee wore the lungi acheik pha sin, but this was also worn by those who surrounded her. It is also interesting to point out that those who were not northern wore the central jongkraben and had short hair.

(photograph from *Dara-Rasamee Phra-prawat Prarachaya Chao Dara-Rasamee*, 1990)



Fig. 6

Women's costumes in the Central during the reign of King Rama VI. Blouses were preferred to be worn which matched the designs of the *pha sin*. However, the styles depended on the individual's tastes.

(photograph from the National Archives, Thailand)

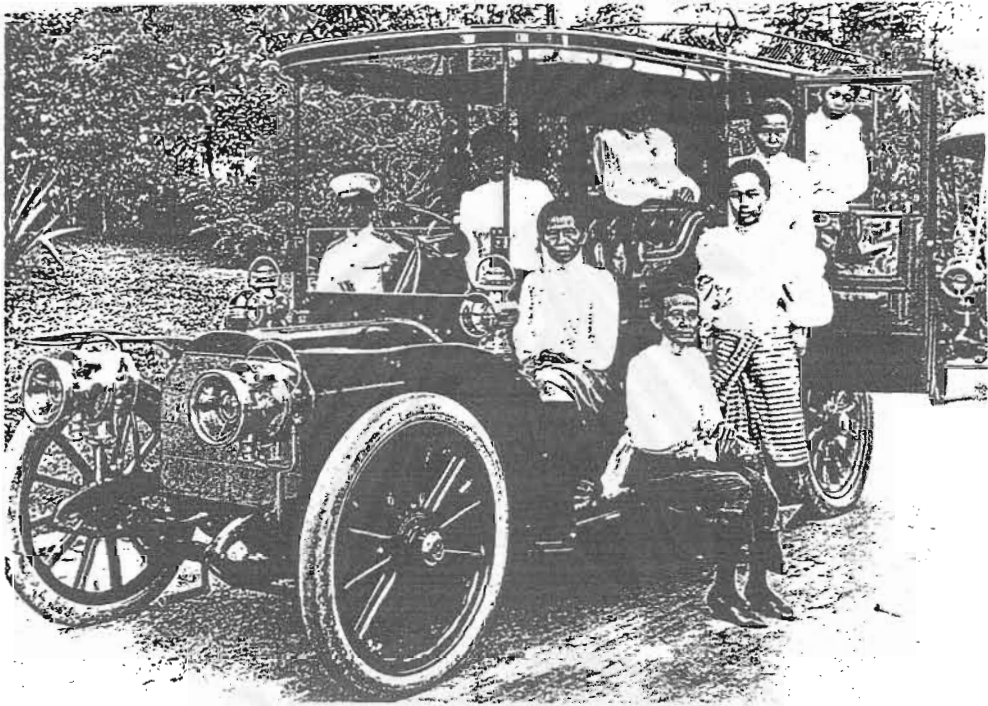


Fig. 7

Chao Dara-Rasamee taken with members of the Siamese royal family. It can be seen here that Chao Dara-Rasamee clearly distinguished herself from other ladies, which made her very proud of her own identity.

(photograph from *Dara-Rasamee Sai-yai Ruk Song Paen-din*, 1999)

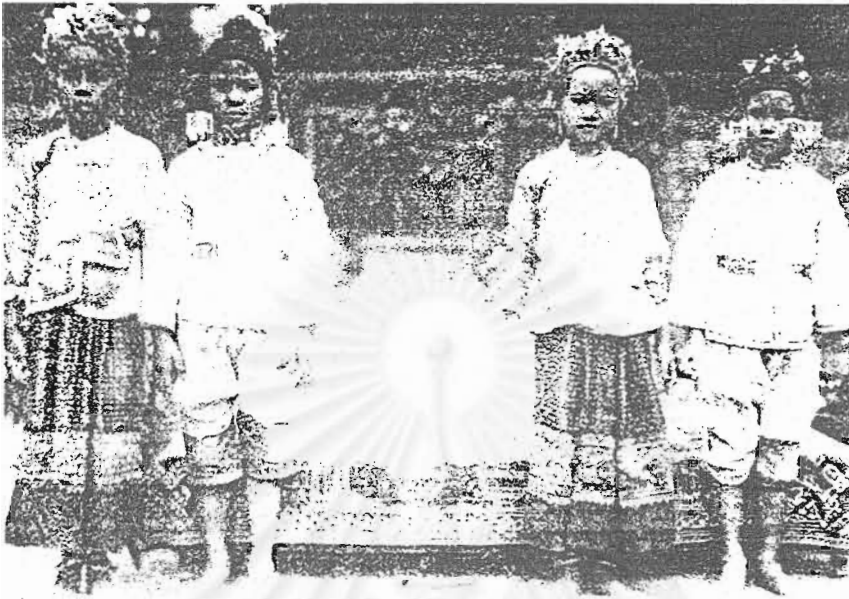
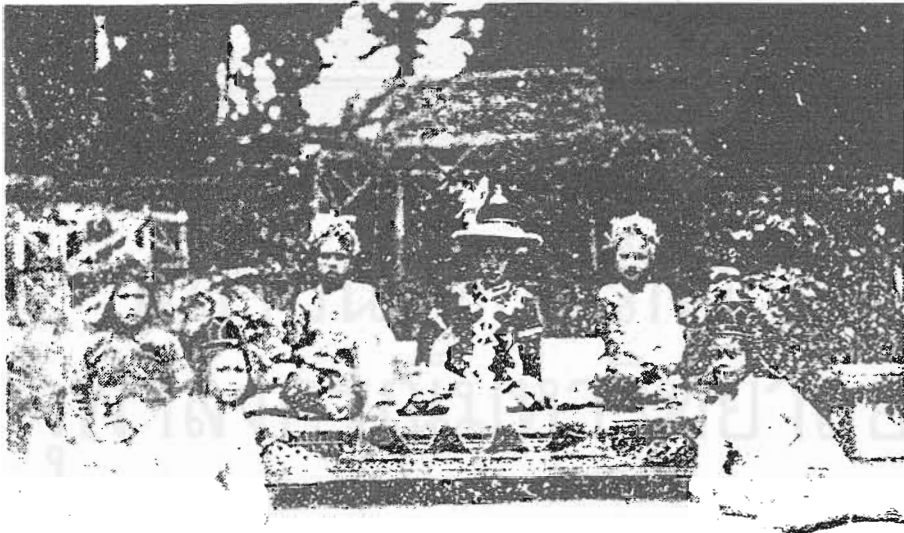


Fig. 8

Costumes in the play "Phra Lor" instructed by Chao Dara-Rasamee in 1932.



(photographs from *Dara-Rasamee Sai-yai Ruk Song Paen-din*. 1999)

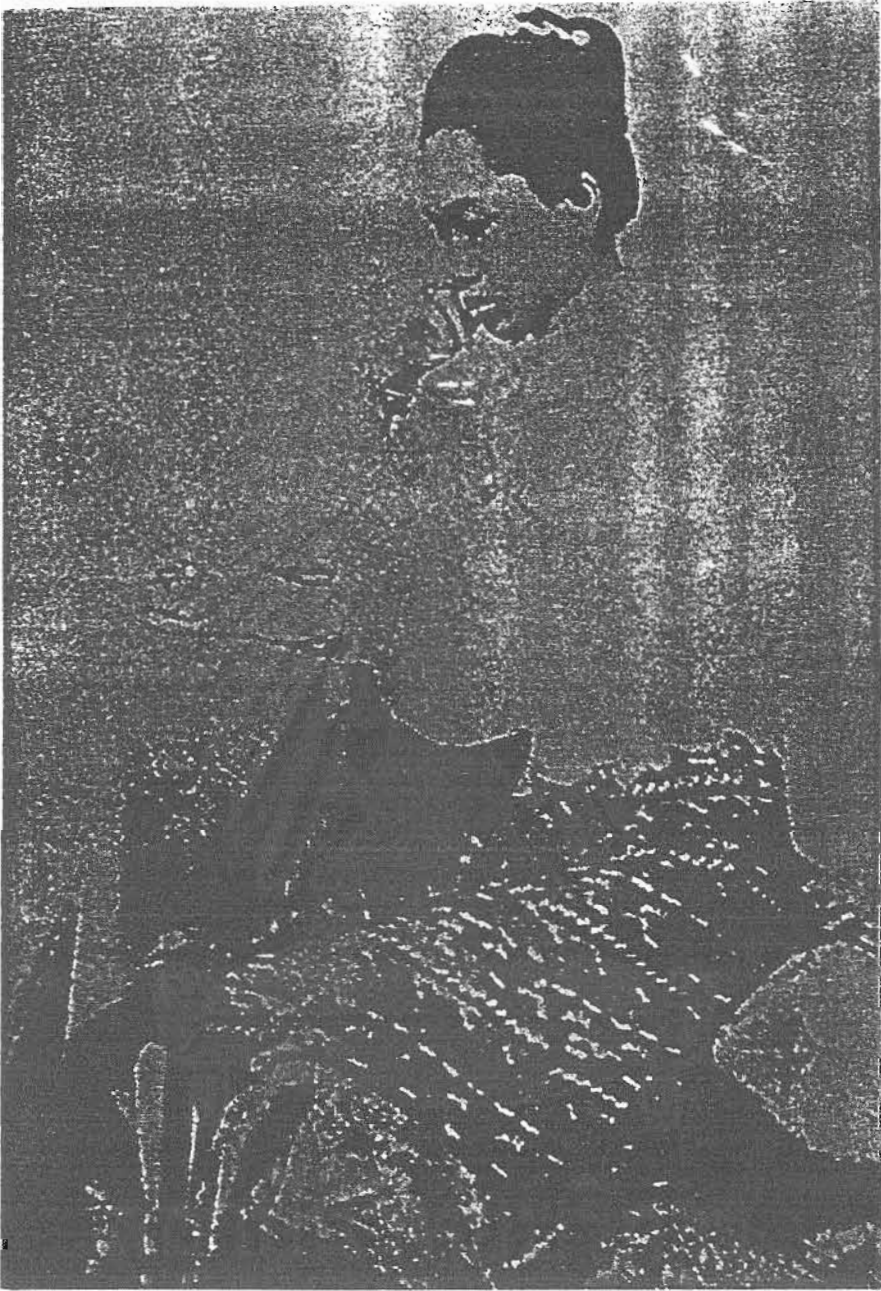


Fig. 9

Chao Dara-Rasamee wearing the *lungi acheik pha sin*.

(photograph from *Dara-Rasamee Sai-yai Ruk Song Paen-din*, 1999)



Fig. 10

Chao Intranontra, son of the 9th ruler of Chiang Mai and Chao Sukanta, princess of Chiang Tung on their wedding day.

(photograph from *Dara-Rasamee Phra-prawat Prarachaya Chao Dara-Rasamee*, 1990)



Fig. 11

Dancers wearing the Burmese style lungi acheik as a *pha sin*. Photographed in Chiang Mai in the later 19th century.

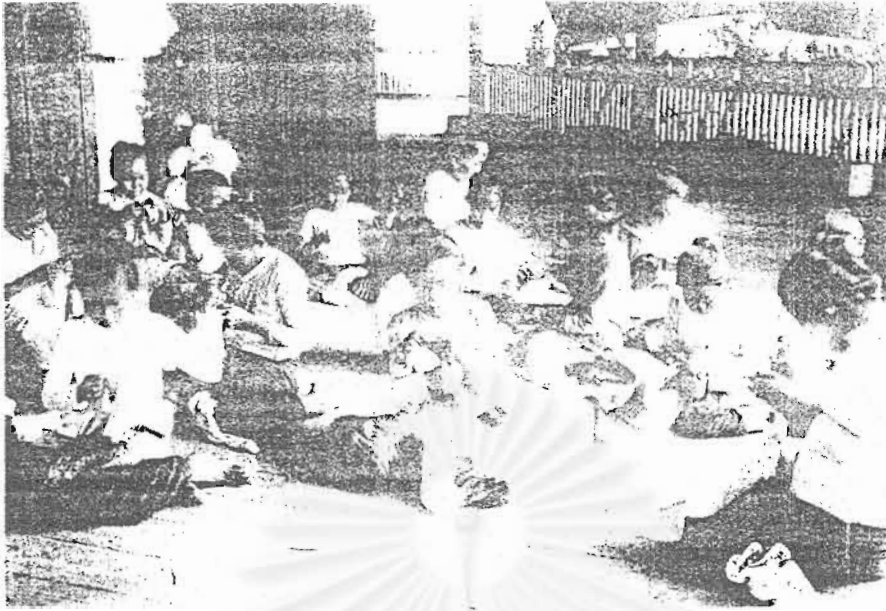
(photograph from **Chiang Mai's Textile Heritage**, 1990)



Fig. 12

A young woman photographed with the "Japanese hairstyle" and "ham sleeves" blouse.

(photograph from *Bupakaree Bucha*, 1968)



Embroidery class at the Royal Consort's School, Chiang Mai in 1910.



Practicing lace making from a machine bought for the school by Chao Dara-Rasamee.

Fig. 13 (photographs from **Christianity and Chiang Mai Society**, 1996)



Fig. 14

Chiang Mai's traditional costume during Chao Dara-Rasamee's period (1914)
(photograph from *Karn Teang Kai Puen Muang Chiang Mai*, 1997)



Fig. 15
Local people of Chiang Mai line up to pay respect to King Rama VII on his visit
in 1926.

(photograph from the National Archives, Thailand)

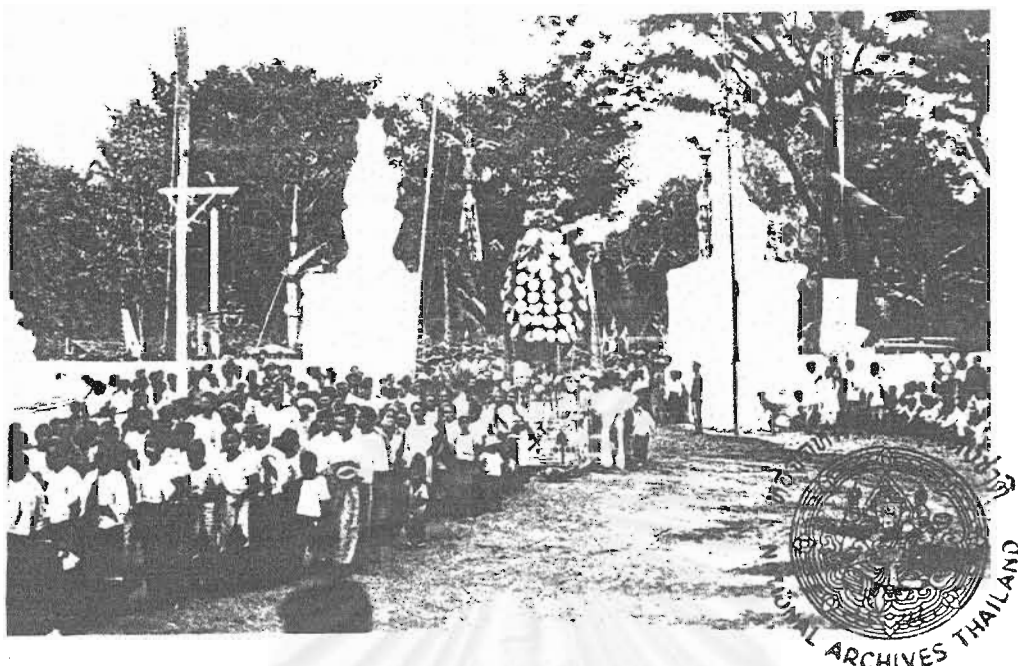


Fig. 16
A Chiang Mai road on the occasion of King Rama VII's visit to Chiang Mai, 1926.



Fig. 17
Chiang Mai women waiting for King Rama VII at the train station. 1926.

(photographs from the National Archives, Thailand)



Fig. 18

Chao Dara-Rasamee wearing the “ham sleeves” blouse with the Burmese style *pha sin* and “Japanese hairstyle”. A unique match and designs with the perfect combinations from the Burmese, Northern, Central and Western style costumes. (photograph from the National Archives, Thailand)



Fig. 19

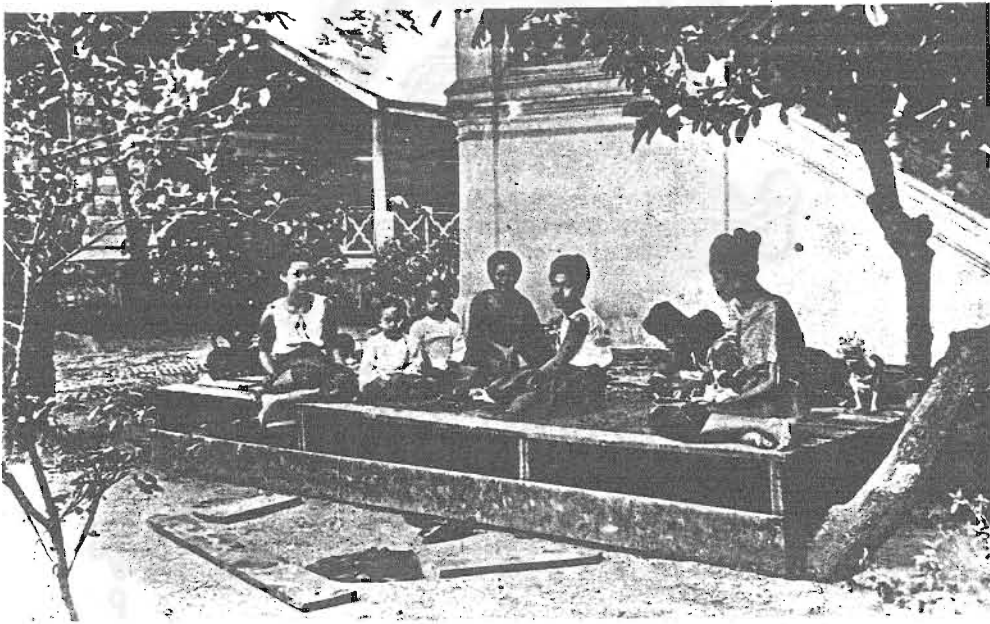


Fig. 20

Photographs of Chao Dara-Rasamee while living in the Central Palace. Northern and Central cultures could be seen combined in her costumes, such as the large Central style shoulder cloth and Northern style *pha sin* and hair.

(photographs from the National Archives, Thailand)



Fig. 21

Small girls dancing in a parade wearing traditional *pha sin* and shirts and the “Japanese hairstyle”, 1926.



Fig. 22

Girls from a local girl’s school seen paraded with their school uniforms in 1926. Notice that all girls wore hats and stockings but still wore the traditional *pha sin*.

(photographs from the National Archives, Thailand)



Fig. 23

The fashionable “Japanese hairstyle” popular during the reign of King Rama VI which Chao Dara-Rasamee introduced to the Chiang Mai society.

(photograph from the National Archives, Thailand)

CHAPTER V.

CONCLUSION.

Some of the main influences which led to the changes of women's costumes in Chiang Mai society between 1879-1933, as argued in this thesis, could be stated that they were resulted from the changing economy and politics of that time.

After the reformation of the new city period in 1796, Chiang Mai city was considered to be the city of mixed races and cultures. This blending of various cultures could also be easily observed through the costumes. Although these different groups of people share the same style of dressing, for instance, wearing the *pha sin*, however, many differences could be found amongst the similarities of these *pha sin*. This similarities formed the identity of the local group of people in the society known as the *khon muang*.

Nevertheless, the traditional costumes of the local women of Chiang Mai or *khon muang*, were distinct from costumes of women who lived in the central part of Siam. One of the main differences was what the central women wore to cover the lower parts of their bodies, known as the *jongkraben* or cloth wrap in trouser-like manner, as oppose to the *pha sin* worn by northern women. Another difference is the hairstyles. Central women had short hair and were often confused with men according to foreigners. On the other hand, northern women had long hair usually decorated with flowers and ornaments

and wore long skirt-like *pha sin*, which to some foreigners appeared to be more attractive and feminine.

During the earlier times of Chiang Mai, the status of northern women could be divided into two classes, the governor and the governed group (higher and lower classes). The higher class women of Chiang Mai were often offered to rulers or members of the royal family of Siam. They were made wives or consorts to these people. This 'tradition' is considered very important since it could bring the two lands together which signifies. On the other hand, lower class women of the north were made slaves and servants to the rulers and higher class families. They did not have important political roles like the higher class women but acted as the labour figures.

Basically, traditional Chiang Mai women wore horizontally striped *pha sin* or tube skirt worn long down to the ankles. These *pha sin* differed in decorations and materials depending on the status of the wearer. The higher status women, such as northern royal families or wives and daughters of noblemen would wear silk *pha sin*, which in the north was considered to have higher values than cotton. As for commoners and villagers, women would wear cotton *pha sin* which they would weave themselves. For the top part of the body, Chiang Mai women would traditionally wrapped themselves with shoulder cloths, in various styles depending on their suitability. Once again, the higher class women would have more elaborate pieces of shoulder cloth even when they were worn at home. To protect

themselves from the cold weather, another piece of shoulder cloth would be used to wrap the shoulders known as *pha tum*.

It would not be surprising to see the lower class women walking around or going to the market bare-breasted. To be seen in this manner were not done only by adults or aged women, however, young girls and teenagers were also seen bare-breasted out and about. The traditional hairstyles of northern women was putting their long hair into a bun just above their upper neck. Decorations or jewellerys were, again, depended on the status of the wearer. The wealthier women would decorate their hair with gold pins, while others substituted gold with wild flowers of different kinds.

Even after the signing of the Bowring Treaty in 1855, Lanna remained one of the most important centre of trade around the region. All kinds of goods were being traded and imported into Chiang Mai by merchants from nearby places. As more Chinese merchants moved to settled in Chiang Mai from Bangkok, they were the main people who controlled the stalls in the markets replacing the roles of the Tai Yai.

In the past, the lifestyles of Chiang Mai villagers were considered self-sufficient. They would grow their own crops as food and produce their own clothings. With the vast expansion of the economy, villagers were now producing goods they could sold in the market. With the increased income, people were able to afford different goods that were imported into their society from Bangkok, such as textiles and clothings. At the end, buying

ready made goods would cost less than producing their own clothes, it also saved them time of production. This change to the economy of Chiang Mai influenced the people of all classes. This period could be considered as the first step in introducing westernization to the people of Chiang Mai, which consequently prepared them for the new changes still to come in the near future.

The role of the American Presbyterian Missionaries who arrived in Chiang Mai since 1861 was also examined. These missionaries introduced the people of Chiang Mai society first hand westernization, which differed from the influence from the central palace because the missionaries were able to portrayed themselves to all classes in the society.

In 1879, the missionaries founded the first girls' school in Chiang Mai, later known as Dara Academy School. Through this girls' school, many of the missionary's western influences were portrayed onto the young local girls who attended the school. One of the earlier uniforms also introduced by American missionaries. School uniforms as well as nurses uniforms were encouraged as part of their daily lives, which obviously contributed to the changes of the local's behaviour of dressing. While living among the locals in Chiang Mai, missionary women wore their western costumes, which included tailored outfits such as dress and skirts. It is then believed that this would in many ways influence the change of local women's costumes since they were able to see for themselves the western costumes.

As westernization spread across Siam due to King Chulalongkorn's numerous visits to neighbouring countries and Europe, it could be observed that vast changes began to occur, not only to the capital – Bangkok – itself, but the effect also spread to Chiang Mai. The first change which happened to Chiang Mai was in 1899 when it transferred from being a vassal state to become a province of Thailand.

Westernization in Thailand started out in the capital of Bangkok. Costumes slowly began to change in the central part of Thailand when King Chulalongkorn requested women to adapt their costumes by adopting western influences. This new style dressing soon spread to Chiang Mai from in many ways. First, through Lanna women who were married to Siam men and lived in Siam, such as royal families and high government officials. And vice versa, through central administrators who were sent to settle in Chiang Mai after the signing of the first Chiang Mai Treaty in 1874.

Therefore, it could be seen that many of the influences to the changes in women's costumes in Chiang Mai society were due to the influence from the central administrators. . The influence of westernization from the central palace is considered one of the first influences on the changes in Chiang Mai women's costumes. However, this influence only affected women in the higher class of Chiang Mai society since they were the ones who could have easy access to the information and changing new trends of the central palace in Siam. Meanwhile, during this transition, most commoners and villagers in

Chiang Mai still wore their traditional blouses and shoulder cloths but were more aware of the changes.

In addition, the new education reformation plan had been set up and used as a curriculum throughout Siam including Chiang Mai. School in the north began to teach the central Thai language with the aid of textbooks and teaching materials published by the central administration. Therefore, new lessons for northern children were influenced by central pictures and central concepts, which included central ways of living and beliefs.

As part of the centralization plan, the extension of the railway from Bangkok to the north in 1921 also provided an important alternative for transportation. The new railway changed the trading relationships between Chiang Mai and Burma. In addition, the efficiency of the railway made it more convenient to bring goods from Bangkok in a much shorter time.

Due to this new lifestyle which slowly emerged into the society Chiang Mai, a new form of entertainment became popular – movies. It is no doubt that this new form of entertainment started out in Bangkok and later became known in Chiang Mai. The first movie in Thailand, **Nang Sao Suvan/Survana of Siam** was made in 1923 and the plot was based in the north of Thailand. Consequently, it was recorded that Chiang Mai also had a movie theatre in 1927, named the Uppapong Theatre.

The movies were, therefore, also considered another influence of the changes of women's costumes. Through these movies, fashion could be

advertised to the society and people who watched these movies would want to be like their stars including how they were dressed. In addition, the popularity of newspapers became one of the main sources of mass communications, which brought in news of different places around the area. Information on the latest fashion could also be found in these newspapers and fashion from the central also.

In addition, the role of Chao Dara-Rasamee was examined as one of the factors which influenced the changes of women's costumes . Chao Dara-Rasamee was the royal consort of King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) and was later appointed the title "Prarachaya" in 1908. Interestingly, the reasons behind Chao Dara-Rasamee's marriage could be regarded as political. Some of these political motivations could be seen through her costumes. While living in the royal palace she kept her northern identity by wearing traditional Lanna costumes such as the combinations of the Burmese *lungi acheik* and Chiang Tung hem piece, which reminded her and told others of Lanna's history. Also, at the same time she tried adapting to her environment by choosing only some of the western influence of clothes to match with her traditional costumes. It could be stated that Chao Dara-Rasamee influenced both the Lanna people and the central people in terms of costumes.

When she returned to Chiang Mai in 1914, she introduced to the people of Chiang Mai a new hairstyle known as the "Japanese style" and it is believed that this hairstyle was one of the many fashions which she adopted

while living in the royal palace at Bangkok. Chao Dara-Rasamee also revived the art of weaving women's fabrics with distinctive patterns of traditional Lanna style.

Also, Chao Dara-Rasamee encouraged girls at the Dara Academy school to lace making by providing them with lace making machines. Chao Dara-Rasamee was an important figure in Chiang Mai who was considered to be the connecting figure of both the northern and central lands even when she returned to Chiang Mai. This could be the reason behind the fact that she was much honoured, therefore, her people would follow her actions as could be true with costumes.

Consequently, the role of Chao Dara-Rasamee on Chiang Mai's women costumes is very significant since she not only tried to preserve its culture, but at the same time, encouraged development to Chiang Mai's fashion realm by bringing in the "internationally" accepted costumes. This was very important since going "internationally" could be considered as another means of being accepted by the modern values of westernization. Therefore, if Chao Dara-Rasamee could encouraged as much westernization as possible to the Lanna society, at the same time preserving the uniqueness of Lanna's culture, outsiders would perceive Chiang Mai as not being outdated or uncivilized. Thus, her role as a cultural leader strongly influenced her acceptance from the society of Chiang Mai.

Due to the many factors examined in previous chapters, it could be concluded that there have been changes to the costumes of Chiang Mai women from 1879-1933. Traditionally women wrapped themselves with shoulder cloths and wore *pha sin*, while some women of the village could be seen bare breasted. As the economy changed, different influences have contributed to these changes. People began to be familiar with sewn blouses of different styles and began to wear clothes that were new to them. Through westernization, higher class women led the fashion by wearing laced blouses and other western style clothings. Thus, the changes of costumes in Chiang Mai from the past and up to this very day could be drawn from the influence of the central fashion. There are evidence from photographs that in each era of fashion in the central part, whether it be the ham-sleeves blouse or the Gatsby style costumes, women in Chiang Mai who tend to keep themselves up-to-date will follow this fashion.

Nevertheless, it is important to point out that although many changes have occurred, the traditional costumes of Chiang Mai women were not entirely lost. The *pha sin* was still worn although worn with non-traditional tops. The hairstyle was also never entirely changed. Northern women still maintained their custom of having long hair and putting them up in a bun.

Up until this very day, northern people could still be seen wearing the traditional *pha sin* and having hair buns. However, this could mostly been seen among the local villagers or the commoner women. The explanation to this could possibly be that the simple style of the *pha sin* fits their daily lives and

routines, since they are convenient for them to wear while working in the fields or at home. Middle and higher class women, on the other hand, are also seen wearing the traditional *pha sin*, however on a less daily basis such as on special occasions like religious ceremonies or official social gatherings. Women who work outside their homes or work in a social environment are still concern about their costumes and social appearances. At the same time, the higher class women who are the image of Chiang Mai would wear the traditional *pha sin* to mark their identities. Therefore, it could be said that the women of Chiang Mai still consider its culture and arts very important part of their lives. In addition, the industry of weaving is still considered an important area in the north and Chiang Mai. In many villages today, women still weave for their families and for the market. It is still considered a way of life and a way of making a living for many families.

It could be concluded that the traditional costumes of Chiang Mai women are not completely overtaken by Western fashion but its uniqueness are still being preserved in its culture. As pointed out earlier, when compared to the present usages of the northern *pha sin* and central *jongkraben*, it could be seen that the *pha sin* were still worn by locals and women in Chiang Mai, whereas the *jongkraben* have been completely neglected. Therefore, it is interesting to observe this preservation as the world is still moving and societies are still changing. However, it can be stated that cultures would never change if the people believe that it is important. Along with many other factors, costumes are

considered to be a very important part of a culture as it collects and draws together the sense of identity which lies in every individual.



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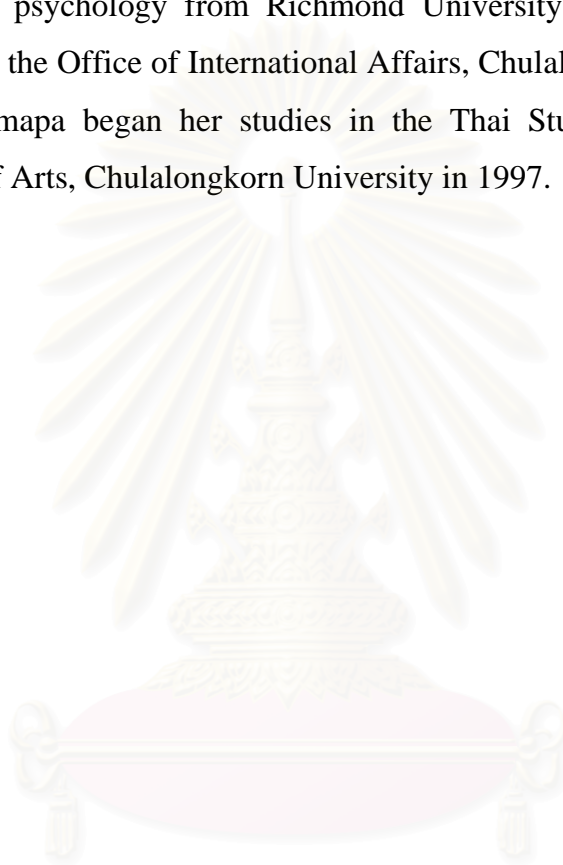
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