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Historical Development of Consumerism in Thai Society

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Contents

	Page
Preface	XIII
Acknowledgements	XIV
Chapter 1. Historical Development of Consumerism in Thai Society	
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Research Objectives	5
1.3 The Field of Research	5
1.4 The Contribution of this Research	5
1.5 Data and Research Methodology	5
1.6 Theoretical Framework	6
1.7 Review of the Literature	16
1.8 Consumerism: Its Meaning and Development in Thai Society	19
Chapter 2. Four Basic Necessities in the Era of Social Establishment	
2.1 The Era of Social Establishment	23
2.1.1 Society as a Whole	23
2.1.2 The Population	24
2.1.3 The Economy and Foreign Trade	26
2.1.4 Social Structure	29
2.2 Characteristics of People's Consumption of the 4 Basic Necessities in the Era of Social Establishment	30
2.2.1 Housing (Shelter)	30
2.2.1.1 General Characteristics of Housing in the Establishment Era	32
a. Aquatic Society	32
b. Locations	33
c. Houses on both the Water and on Land	33
2.2.1.2 Houses: Differences between Classes	35
a. Houses of the Governing Class	35
b. Housing among the Governed Class	36

2.2.1.3	Types of Houses	38
2.2.1.4	Limitations in Housing Construction	38
2.2.1.5	Materials, Technologies and Labour	39
2.2.1.6	Factors Influencing Differentiation: Beliefs, Values and Social Regulations	40
2.2.2	Clothing	41
2.2.2.1	Clothing: Social Classification Controller	42
a.	Clothing for the Governing Class	42
b.	Clothing for the Governed Class	44
2.2.3	Food	47
2.2.3.1	Food: the Social Class Differentiation	51
a.	Food of the Governing Class	51
b.	The Foods of the Governed Class	53
2.2.4	Medicine	54
2.2.4.1.	Varieties of Healthcare Knowledge	54
2.2.4.2.	The Era of Royal Doctors and Unofficial Doctors, or <i>Mò Chaloey sak</i>	56
2.2.4.3.	Ways of Thinking on the Causes of Illness among People in the Past	58
2.2.4.4.	The Differentiation of Terms: Medical Scriptures, Royal Medical Textbooks, and Textbooks	59
2.2.4.5.	The Fundament of Western Medical Treatment	59
2.2.4.6.	Medicine and Social Class	61
a.	Governing Class: Potential for Collecting Medical Textbooks	61
b.	The Governed Class: Oral Traditions and Received Wisdom Concerning Health Care	62
2.3	Conclusion: People's Consumption of the Four Basic Necessities during the Era of Social Establishment	63
 Chapter 3. The Four Basic Necessities in the Era of Change and Reform		
3.1	Population Change	66
3.2	Changes in Perception	67
3.2.1	Changes in Ideology	67

3.2.1.1	The Changes in Social and Religious Ideology	67
3.2.1.2	The Transformation of a Political Idea: from the Universal King to an Absolute Monarchy	73
3.3	Imperialism and Colonialism	74
3.4	The Abolition of Slavery	77
3.5	Influence of Western and Novelty in Thai Society	77
3.6	Economic Change: International Trades	79
3.7	The Increase in Imported and Exported Goods in Thailand	80
3.8	Changes in Physical Geography	84
3.9	Consumption of the Four Basic Necessities in the Era of Change and Reform	85
3.9.1	Housing	85
3.9.1.1	Varieties in Housing	86
3.9.1.2	Characteristics of Housing in Bangkok, from the Address Registration Survey by the Department of Post and Telegraph	87
3.9.1.3	Styles, Prices and Standards of Housing, and Economic and Social Status	88
3.9.1.4	Towards the International	89
3.9.1.5	Decreasing Popularity of Thai Houses	91
3.9.2	Clothing	91
3.9.2.1	Symbol of Modernization	91
3.9.2.2	Concepts of Time, Place and Clothing	93
3.9.2.3	Imitation of Western Values	93
3.9.3	Food	94
3.9.3.1	Western Eating Cultures	95
3.9.3.2	Eating Out	96
3.9.3.3	Chinese and Thai Eating Habits: Developments and Changes	97
3.9.3.4	The Creation of Nutrition Awareness	98
3.9.4	Medicine	98
3.9.4.1	Thai Traditional Medicine and the Growth of Western Medicine	98
3.9.4.2	O-sotsala; Thai-Style Pharmacies	100

3.9.4.3	Healthcare: Relaxation through Travel	100
3.9.4.4	Sanitation: Cleanliness and Water Supplies	101
3.10	Conclusion: The Consumption of the Basic Necessities in the Era of Change and Reform	102
Chapter 4. The Four Basics Necessities during the Era of Democracy and Nationalism		
4.1	The Era of Democracy and Nationalism: Overview of the country	104
4.2	People’s Consumption of the Four Basic Necessities during the Era of Democracy and Nationalism	106
4.2.1	Housing	106
4.2.1.1	Settlement	107
4.2.1.2	The Allocation of Housing to Low-income Persons	108
4.2.2	Clothing	109
4.2.2.1	<i>Ratthaniyom</i>	110
4.2.3	Food	115
4.2.3.1	<i>Ratthaniyom</i> : The Noodle and the Developing Nation	115
4.2.3.2	Specifying the Times for Eating	116
4.2.3.3	The Cessation of Betel-chewing	117
4.2.3.4	The Policy of Increasing Agricultural Production	117
4.2.3.5	Nutrition Propaganda “Good Food and Good Life”	118
4.2.3.6	Food and Changing Times	118
4.2.4	Medicine	119
4.2.4.1	A Joining of Medical Practices in Thai Society	119
4.2.4.2	The Birth of the Ministry of Public Health	121
4.3	Conclusion; People’s Consumption of the Four Basic Necessities during the Era of Democracy and Nationalism	122
Chapter 5. The Four Basic Necessities in the Era of Development and Consumerism		

6.2 Advertising in Thailand	158
6.3 An Analysis of Advertising with Relation to the Four Basic Necessities from 1957 to 1997	159
6.4 Methodology	159
6.5 The Hypothesis Adopted in the Analysis	162
6.6 Presentation of Data Analysis	162
6.7 Quantitative Analysis	163
6.7.1 Data form all Samples Related to the Four Basic Necessities between 1957 and 1997 (4 Decades)	163
6.7.2 Samples of Data over the Four Decades between 1957 and 1997	163
6.7.3 Conclusions from the Quantitative Analysis	187
6.8 Qualitative Analysis	187
6.8.1 An Analysis of Slogans by Interpretation	190
6.8.2 Conclusion of the Analysis of Slogans	197
6.9 Conclusion: An Analysis of the Content of Advertisements	199
 Chapter 7. Conclusion: Historical Development of Consumerism in Thai Society	
7.1 Development toward Consumerism	202
7.2 Changes in the Consumption of the Four Basic Necessities: from Simple to More Complex	205
7.3 The Cultural Phenomenon of Consumerism in Thai Society	207
7.4 What Similarities or Differences Are there between the Four Basic Necessities in Each Period of Time	209
7.5 Why and When Did the Four Basic Necessities Become Commodities with Cultural Value and Purpose,	209
 Appendix I. Questions in the Criteria for Analysis of the Content of Advertisements	
	211
Appendix II. Example of Advertisement in 1961	213
Appendix III. Short Chronology	216
Bibliography	218

Table

	Page
Table 2.1 Ethnic composition of Siam's Population according to various estimate in the nineteenth centuries	25
Table 3.1 The Population of Bangkok during 1900-1929	66
Table 3.2 Thai export in 1867 (the reign of King Rama IV)	81
Table 3.3 Thailand's imported goods in 1867	82
Table 3.4 Thailand's imported and exported goods in 2000	83
Table 3.5 Quantities and values of Thai Rice exports	83
Table 3.6 Residential houses on the roadsides in Bangkok in 1883	87
Table 5.1 Changes in population in Thailand from 1911-1960	125
Table 5.2 Population of 2 largest cities in Thailand	126
Table 5.3 Expansion in the economy from 1961 to 1995	127
Table 5.4 Gross National Product (GNP) per head, average per year at market price from 1960 to 1996	127
Table 5.5 Income distribution of the Thai population divided into 2 groups according to level of income; specifically, the group with 20% highest income and 20% lowest income	128
Table 5.6 Development of the advertising industry (1986-1995)	131
Table 5.7 Changes in types of dwelling between 1970 and 2000	132
Table 5.8 Spending in the advertising industry by various media	133
Table 5.9 Real estate advertising budget in various media (Year 1995)	134
Table 5.10 Death rate, infant death rate, and average life span in Thailand	148
Table 6.1 Data form all samples of advertising relating to the four basic necessities between 1957 and 1977 between 1960 and 1993	163
Table 6.2 Advertisements 1957-1967 that do or do not contain slogans	164
Table 6.3 Advertisements 1968-1977 that do or do not contain slogans	164
Table 6.4 Advertisements 1978-1987 that do or do not contain slogans	164
Table 6.5 Advertisements 1988-1997 that do or do not contain slogans	164
Table 6.6 Type of phrases in slogans in the first decade (1957-1967)	165
Table 6.7 Type of phrases in slogans in the second decade (1968-1977)	165
Table 6.8 Type of phrases in slogans in the third decade (1978-1987)	166
Table 6.9 Type of phrases in slogans in the 4td decade (1988-1997)	166

Table 6.10 The numbers of advertisements with or without promotion in the first decade (1957-1967)	167
Table 6.11 The numbers of advertisements with or without promotion in the second decade (1968-1977)	167
Table 6.12 The numbers of advertisements with or without promotion in the third decade (1978-1987)	167
Table 6.13 The numbers of advertisements with or without promotion in the fourth decade (1978-1987)	168
Table 6.14 Types of promotion in the first decade (1957-1967)	168
Table 6.15 Types of promotion in the second decade (1968-1977)	169
Table 6.16 Types of promotion in the third decade (1978-1987)	169
Table 6.17 Types of promotion in the fourth decade (1978-1987)	169
Table 6.18 Types of concept appearing in advertisements in the first decade (1957-1967)	170
Table 6.19 Types of concept appearing in advertisements in the 2nd decade (1968-1977)	170
Table 6.20 Types of concept appearing in advertisements in the third decade (1978-1987)	170
Table 6.21 Types of concept appearing in advertisements in the fourth decade (1988-1997)	171
Table 6.22 Logic of concepts appearing in advertisements in the first decade (1957-1967)	172
Table 6.23 Logic of concepts appearing in advertisements in the 2nd decade (1968-1977)	172
Table 6.24 Logic of concepts appearing in advertisements in the third decade (1978-1987)	172
Table 6.25 Logic of concepts appearing in advertisements in the fourth decade (1988-1997)	172
Table 6.26 The impact of headlines in the first decade (1957-1967)	174
Table 6.27 The impact of headlines in the second decade (1968-1977)	174
Table 6.28 The impact of headlines the third decade (1978-1987)	174
Table 6.29 The impact of headlines the fourth decade (1988-1997)	174
Table 6.30 The main formats for product description in advertisements in the first decade (1957-1967)	175

Table 6.31 The main formats for product description in advertisements in the second decade (1968-1977)	175
Table 6.32 The main formats for product description in advertisements in the third decade (1978-1987)	176
Table 6.33 The main formats for product description in advertisements in the fourth decade (1988-1997)	176
Table 6.34 Foreign languages appearing in advertisements in the first decade (1957-1967)	177
Table 6.35 Foreign languages appearing in advertisements in the second decade (1968-1977)	177
Table 6.36 Foreign languages appearing in advertisements in the third decade (1978-1987)	177
Table 6.37 Foreign languages appearing in advertisements in the fourth decade (1988-1997)	178
Table 6.38 The occurrence of English words in advertisements in the first decade (1957-1967)	179
Table 6.39 The occurrence of English words in advertisements in the second decade (1968-1977)	179
Table 6.40 The occurrence of English words in advertisements in the third decade (1978-1987)	179
Table 6.41 The occurrence of English words in advertisements in the fourth decade (1988-1997)	179
Table 6.42 Use of illustrations in advertisements in the first decade (1957-1967)	180
Table 6.43 Use of illustrations in advertisements in the second decade (1968-1977)	180
Table 6.44 Use of illustrations in advertisements in the third decade (1978-1987)	181
Table 6.45 Use of illustrations in advertisements in the fourth decade (1988-1997)	181
Table 6.46 Characteristics of the postscript in the first decade (1957-1967)	182
Table 6.47 Characteristics of the postscript in the second decade (1968-1977)	182
Table 6.48 Characteristics of the postscript in the third decade (1978-1987)	182
Table 6.49 Characteristics of the postscript in the fourth decade (1988-1997)	182
Table 6.50 Identifying the manufacturer's name in the first decade (1957-1967)	184
Table 6.51 Identifying the manufacturer's name in the second decade	

(1968-1977)	184
Table 6.52 Identifying the manufacturer's name in the third decade (1978-1987)	184
Table 6.53 Identifying the manufacturer's name in the fourth decade	
(1988-1997)	184
Table 6.54 Establishment of confidence in a product in the first decade	
(1957-1967)	185
Table 6.55 Establishment of confidence in a product in the second decade	
(1968-1977)	185
Table 6.56 Establishment of confidence in a product in the third decade	
(1978-1987)	186
Table 6.57 Establishment of confidence in a product in the fourth decade	
(1988-1997)	186

Preface

A brief observation of present-day Thailand will reveal that it is permeated by consumerism: people formulate their goals in life partly through the acquisition of things that they do not really need. Many become enmeshed in the process of acquisition and imitation, and derive their identity to some extent from the possession and consumption of what they buy and exhibit. This phenomenon has led to many economic, social and cultural problems in Thai society. Yet we rarely step back to examine how this phenomenon has developed, what it brings about and why it has occurred. A study of the Historical Development of Consumerism in Thai Society in the context of the consumption of the four basic necessities of housing, clothing, food and medicine should greatly promote our understanding of many aspects of this phenomenon. The period of time covered in this study stretches from the beginning of the Rattanakosin in 1782 A.D. to the economic crisis in Thailand in 1997 A.D. Such a span of time should be adequate to give us a clear picture of the changes in consumption in Thai Society.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Historical Development of Consumerism in Thai Society

1.1 Background

The cultural phenomenon of consumerism – a culture of consumption has been seen to develop during the transformation of a pre-capitalist into a capitalist society, where market competition and the power of information technology have been dominant.

It is a result of the transformation of social relationships, which leads to changes in many aspects of human life, including politics, social structures, modes of thought, and the general lifestyle. Different forms of consumerism are manifest at different times and places, and in different social systems. For example, the forms of consumerism in the U.S., Thailand and Japan are different not only from each other but also from those of other countries. Nonetheless, one thing they have in common is the period of time over which consumerism became a crucial part of their existence. What we eat, where we live and spend our leisure time, how we interact and build relationships with other people, as well as how our identity is defined are governed by the idea of consumerism.

Steven Miles made the point that consumerism is ubiquitous and ephemeral. It is arguably the religion of the late twentieth century. It apparently pervades our everyday lives and structures our everyday experience and yet it is perpetually altering its form and reasserting its influence in new guises.¹

In addition, Cambell² explains that the basic idea of consumerism or consumer society is to encourage one's desire to acquire luxury goods and leisure services. At the same time, there has been an increasing profusion of both natural and man-made objects produced specifically to satisfy our craving for acquisition, enjoyment and possession. It has been said that one of the outcomes of the industrial revolution was that a lot of new consumer goods were produced. The ever growing need to sell one's goods resulted in the expansion of world trade. The Europeans' discovery of the New World facilitated the export and import of enormous amounts

¹ Miles, Steven. *Consumerism as a Way of Life*. London: Sage, 1998, p.1.

² Cambell's mentioned in Russell W. Belk. *Collecting in a Consumer Society*. London: Rutledge, 1995, p. 4.

of goods and an impulse was given for the circulation of desire-fulfilling luxuries for modern-minded people.

Sue L. T. McGregor³ notes that consumerism is the dominant culture of a modernizing invasive industrialism which stimulates - yet can never satisfy - the urge for a strong sense of self to overlay the *angst* and sense of inadequacy in the human condition. As a result, goods, services, and experiences are consumed beyond any reasonable need.

It could be said that consumerism is one of the main factors leading to many (social/personal) problems because it encourages many people to formulate their goals in life in terms of the acquisition of goods that they do not (really) need for subsistence or for traditional display. They become enmeshed in the process of acquisition – shopping – and derive some of their identity from a procession of new items that they buy and exhibit. They always need more than they can afford so they can never be happy.

Therefore, an understanding of the nature of consumerism in each society, what it means and how it has developed, will give us a better understanding of (our own?) society, and offer some solutions to the problems.

Looking at present day Thai society, we see that a number of people find themselves badly caught up in the stream of consumerism. Many features of this society have become transmuted into commodities that can be priced and easily obtained. These include knowledge, beauty, even nature, and many aspects of social phenomena. People become obsessed with their purchasing power, trying to acquire them by any means. An example of this is seen in young girls turning to prostitution. Others turn to crime – stealing, burglary, even selling drugs – in order to get money to purchase their desired goods, goods such as cars, mobile phones and brand-name products. This kind of behaviour is not restricted to pleasure-driven people: even some monks, who are generally regarded as being self-sufficient, will sell holy relics and collect money for religious services and practices for their personal gain, going on to spend the money on superfluous items. In addition, these monks will neglect

³ Sue L. T. McGregor, 2003. *Consumerism as a Source of Structural Violence*. Accessed May 19, 2005 at <http://www.kon.org/hswp/archive/consumerism.html>).

their holy practices through their indulgence in self-gratification. Such corrupt and sinful behaviour can often be witnessed in news reports.

There are a number of other economic and social problems that result from consumerism. The expansion of large superstores, such as Tesco-Lotus, Big C, or Macro, for example, drives small retail stores out of business. The growth of the entertainment industry – in areas such as music, fashion and film – replaces and destroys long-established traditional culture. The wide variety of commodities available and accessible to everyone leads to overspending and debt. Through advanced marketing techniques, including powerful advertising, people's desires are manipulated, with the result that they will do anything to fulfil their pleasure-driven necessities. Some examples of this have already been mentioned.

As the problems associated with consumerism are substantial I believe that it is necessary to conduct a thorough study on the historical development of consumerism in Thai society. I will attempt to identify its characteristics and processes of transformation, in the hope that this will enhance our knowledge and understanding of the root problems. Finally, it will enable all process concerned to find better and more effective solutions, at least in order to alleviate the problems correctly and effectively.

Since the symptoms of consumerism are most apparent in highly developed areas, this study will focus on Bangkok, the capital and the most highly developed part of Thailand. Choosing Bangkok as the area of study will enable me to understand the socio-cultural transformation toward consumerism, its origins, its development and its growth patterns. Bangkok is not only the capital of Thailand; it has also been the centre of all political and economic power and development since the fall of the Ayutthaya Kingdom. Over the last 200 years, Bangkok has become the most capitalist and consumer orientated city in Thailand.

To understand the historical development of consumerism in Thai society I will focus on people's consumption of the four basic necessities⁴ of life in Bangkok in each selected period.

⁴ Buddhist concept, the four basic necessities of life for Buddhist priest (requisites) is resources or means of support on which the monastic life depends. It is called *nisai si* (นีสัย สี่); 1. โภชนา คือ ข้าวที่ได้มาด้วยกำลังของแข็ง (alms-food of scarps; food obtained by going on the alms-gathering, 2. บังสุกุลจีวร : ผ้าที่เข้างตามกองขยะหรือตามป่าช้า (discarded cloth taken from the rubbish heap or the charnel ground; rag-robbs, 3. รุกขมูลเสนาสนะ: อยู่อาศัยโคนไม้ (dwelling at the foot of a tree), 4. ปุติมุตตเภสัช: ยาน้ำมูตรนำ (medicines pickled in state urine; ammonia as a medicine) quoted in Buddhism Dictionary, Codified Edition by

The major reason for selecting the four basic necessities of life, that is, housing, clothing, food, and medicine, is that they have been a primary necessity to all human life from the beginnings of human existence, and it will illustrate the fact that patterns of consumption vary from period to period.

In the past, people satisfied these four basic necessities through manual labour, so consumption was self-sufficient and had the sole purpose of maintaining life. Nowadays, all four basic necessities are satisfied by capital assets, labour and machines. These necessities come to include more than what is needed to maintain life, and embrace commodities that can be easily purchased in the marketplace, and which exist in many forms, of varying quality and availability. The market operates on many levels, not only concerning the quality of goods, but also with regard to the social meaning they acquire. In this sense, it is fair to say that the four basic necessities have been transformed from what is needed to support human life to luxurious commodities that indicate social status. The result of this transformation is consumerism. As the connection between the four basic necessities and consumerism is apparent, I believe that the investigation and examination of the four basic necessities from past to present will enable me to develop a better understanding of consumerism in Thai society. In this study, I intend to answer two key questions:

1. Are there any similarities or differences in the changes in the four basic necessities in each selected time period?
2. When and why have the four basic necessities in human life been transformed into a luxurious commodity that can be priced and used to express social/cultural meaning in the age of consumerism?

In order to answer the above questions, I divide the development of consumerism in Thailand into four periods – according to general historical study - as follows:

1. The era of social establishment (1782–1851), or the early Rattanakosin Period (Reign of King Rama I–III)
2. The era of change and reform (1851–1932), or the middle Rattanakosin Period. (Reign of King Rama IV up to the Democratic Revolution)
3. The democratic era (1932–1956), from the Democratic Revolution to after the end of World War II

4. The era of economic/social development and consumerism (1957–1997), or the era of economic/social development up to the Asian Economic Crisis

1.2 Research Objective

To examine the historical development of consumerism in Thai society by focusing on the Rattanakosin Period.

1.3 The Field of Research

Consumerism comprises many aspects of which it is not possible to examine all thoroughly. Therefore, the area of research will be limited to the investigation of the people's consumption of four basic necessities in each time period of Bangkok society from the beginning of the Chakri Dynasty (1782) to the Asian Economic Crisis (1997).

1.4 The Contribution of this Research

It is hoped that it will contribute a better understanding to how consumerism in Thai society has emerged, how and why it has been developed and what forces sustain it. This knowledge will allow us to understand how Thai society developed to what it is today.

1.5 Data and Research Methodology

The methodologies employed in this research study can be divided into two steps. The first step is to review the relevant literature, both primary and secondary sources, in order to gain a clear picture of the characteristics of consumption as well as the 4 basic necessities in each time period. This step appears in Chapters 2-5. The second step constitutes the analytical part of the research. The contents of advertisements relating to the four basic necessities are analysed, with focus on advertisements that appeared in the media from 1957 to 1997. This step will provide additional data, quantitatively and qualitatively, on the characteristics of consumption as well as the four basic necessities themselves. This analysis appears in Chapter 6.

The reason why advertising is included in the analysis is that the concept and practice of capitalism have been more widespread in Thai society since 1957 than in any other period. During the last 50 years Thai society seems to have become very materialistic, since everything can be manufactured and purchased. This opens up

various opportunities for the consumer to acquire commodities. In addition, the international nature of economics and modern society makes Thai society sensitive to the culture and ideas of other countries. It even intensifies capitalist trends. One of the most important mechanics of capitalism is to be found in marketing and advertising. It can dictate to consumers what products to buy and how and where to obtain them. The above discussion has led me to include advertising in this study because it should provide a deeper understanding of capitalism, as well as aiding my analysis.

As already mentioned, this study is divided into two parts. In the first, in order to reach precise conclusions, meticulous care with research data has been necessary. This data includes photographs, literature, interviews, and advertisements from a variety of sources, as follows:

- the General Section of the National Library (Bangkok);
- the Microfilm Section of the National Library (Bangkok);
- the National Archive (Bangkok);
- Chulalongkorn University Library (Bangkok);
- Burapha University Library (Chonburi);
- Thammasat University Library (Bangkok);
- relevant government and private agencies.

For the second part, sociological and economic methodologies have been employed. The data used comprises advertisements that appeared in the media from 1957 to 1997. It will be analysed qualitatively and quantitatively. This should make the conclusions of the thesis clearer. The details of the analyses appear in chapter 6.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

Consumption is a foundation of the present century where the majority of the population has access to the growing consumerist fruits of the productivist tree. Consumption is the vital engine of contemporary society. The competition for status, according to Weber (quoted in Peter Corrigan, *The Sociology of Consumption*, 1948:1), is organized around modes of consumption, not production as Marx (1975) had argued. Werner Sombart, Emile Durkheim and Thorstein Veblen at the turn of the twentieth century all claimed that consumption was a decisive force behind modern capitalism, its dynamism and its social structure. More recently, Anthony

Giddens has presented consumerism as the simultaneous cause of and therapeutic response to the crisis of identities emanating from the pluralisation of communities, values, and knowledge in ‘post-traditional society’. Post-modernists like Baudrillard understand consumption as the semiotic code constituting post-modernity itself: ultimately, signs are consumed, not objects.⁵

From the remarks above, it is obvious that consumerism has become an essential and contemporary aspect of our lives. Therefore, I focus on consumption in order to study historical development of consumerism. In order to accomplish this task, I employ the concepts of “consumption society” developed by Robert Bocoock, Grant McCracken, and Jean Baudrillard; and the link between patterns of life and consumer culture.

1.6.1 Robert Bocoock’s Approach

Robert Bocoock (1993:15)⁶ writes about the development of modern consumer society in: *Consumption: Key Ideas*. He divides it into four periods:

1. Early patterns of consumption: the patterns of consumption in the second half of the seventeenth century were steered by the puritanical values that were a potent element in England, North America and Australia. Puritanism affected these nations as a set of deeply embedded values, shared by many members of the elite groups in these countries. It sustained the growth of capitalist economics because puritans re-invested the profits they made, rather than spending them on a luxurious life-style. These cultural values, Weber argued, aided the development of British capitalism in the early eighteenth century. (Robert Bocoock 1993:13). Bocoock referred to the Theory of the Leisure Class of Thorstein Veblen. This study states that the term *consumers* was formed at the end of the 19th century in America and Europe. Veblen called them “a new leisure class”. They looked to the lifestyles of the upper classes in Europe and tried to emulate them. However, there is a difference between this “new leisure class” and the European upper classes. Unlike the latter, they display their new-found wealth in what Veblen calls, ‘conspicuous

⁵ Quoted from Frank Trenman. “Beyond Consumerism: New Historical Perspectives on Consumption”, in: *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 39. No. 3, 2004, p. 374.

⁶ Bocoock, Robert. *Consumption: Key Ideas*. Routledge: London and New York, 1993, p. 15–32.

consumption'. The major purpose of consumption in this period is to establish social identity.

2. Industrial capitalism and consumption: During this period, Europe had advanced in knowledge and technology. The Industrial Revolution in the late 19th-20th century had transformed Europe into an industrial and urbanized society and paved the way for consumerism in the era of capitalism and industrialisation.
3. Later developments: World War II and the Depression in the first half of the 20th century resulted in a disruption of the development of consumerism. When the war was over (in the middle of the century) however, the development of consumerism continued. As the United States of America had won the war, she led the world into mass consumption, which is one of many patterns of consumerism. The reason why consumerism in American society has moved to mass consumption can be explained as follows:
 - 3.1 Fordism: The Ford automobile industry pioneered new production methods that led to mass consumption, and employing a system with a clear division of labour, that enabled firms to manufacture an ever-increasing number of varied and demand-responsive products.
 - 3.2 The advent of media technology made communication easier. It facilitated consumers' access to services and products. As a result, service and merchandise industries grew rapidly. In addition, the rapid growth of the entertainment industry transformed entertainment from a form of merchandise into one of culture.
 - 3.3 Baby boom: This phenomenon occurred straight after World War II. The extra members of the population became primary customers for the film and music industries. Post World War II teenagers lived their lives recklessly, encouraged by a variety of products and services that were abundant at the time.
4. The new consumer: During the 1970s and '80s, there was a significant change in the development of consumerism when mass consumption shifted to social segment- or group consumption and individual consumption. The latter form is more profound, more fragmented, and more compelling than the former. New kinds of groups have emerged for whom consumption plays a central role in their way of life. It was not so much the external characteristics

of these groups that were new and distinctive characteristics that were measured by such variables as age, gender, ethnic origin or socio-economic class, defined by occupation—but rather the internal dynamics of these new groups. These internal dynamics affected what might be called the social construction of a sense of identity among group members (Robert Bocock 1993: 27–28). The consumption pattern, the way people choose to buy or utilise products, becomes an indicator for differentiating one particular group from others. Individualization through consumption patterns as a tool for expressing people’s sentiments or images of themselves becomes a common phenomenon all over the world. In addition, specialized products that can respond to particular necessities, as well as a variety of political beliefs and the idea of the division of labour all enhance the occurrence of individualism.

Finally, Bocock concludes that by the end of the 1980s capitalism had become the ideal system for most people in the western hemisphere. (Robert Bocock 1993: 32). This is because consumption is a set of social, cultural and economic practices, together with the associated ideology of consumerism as practised by millions of ordinary people. (Robert Bocock 1993: 2). Therefore, consumption, in late twentieth-century western forms of capital processes involves cultural signs and symbols, and is not simply an economic, utilitarian process. (Robert Bocock 1993:3)

1.6.2 Grant McCracken and the view of consumption

Grant McCracken, in *Culture and Consumption* (1988), states that a revolution in consumption will lead to a revolution in industry. Furthermore, in a modification of Simmel’s Trickle-down Theory (1904), he proposes a theory of consumption vs. fashion. This theory states that conflict is an engine or a force for social innovation. It can be seen as a struggle between different groups in the society. A subordinate group in the society tries to elevate its status by imitating styles of dress of a superordinate group. At the same time, the superordinate group tries to differentiate itself from the subordinate group by developing new dress styles and fashions. McCracken saw some weaknesses in this theory, and adds several new observations:

- Instead of viewing this phenomenon merely as an economic conflict, this theory can be applied to social position, gender, subculture, race, and age conflicts.

- Social hierarchy is not merely a difference in social position.
- The subordinate group does not imitate all styles and characteristics. In other words, they do not copy everything from the superordinate groups. Instead, it is a process of adaptation. Although they do copy some styles, their original identities still remain.
- Cultural context has to be taken into account (McCracken, 1988: 94-98).

It can be seen that the concepts mentioned above are about communication using the language of contemporary merchandizing in society. It also indicates that people do not consume any products just for the purpose of using them. Their consumption is about expressing their individual identities in order to interact with others. The language of merchandizing is based on cultural divisions. It is a code, socially recognizable through the knowledge base that has been passed on for generations. The judgment that the consumption of luxurious goods is nonsense and the view of consumption as solely an economic activity which should be separated from cultural study are not quite correct. This is because culture and consumption are closely related to each other. In western society (which is considered to be well developed) culture is tied to consumption. Without consumable goods, the new society would lose important tools that help reproduce, express, and manage its culture. The world of design, product development, advertising, and creative fashions are the key authors of our universal culture. Those things give form to our universe, and lend it life and vitality. The practical meaning of consumable goods and their creative meaning are the result of the consumption process and are critical to the scaffolding of our contemporary truth. Again, without consumable goods, a definition neither of the self nor of collective consciousness can be made (Featherstone, 1991: xi).

1.6.3 Baudrillard's Approach to the Consumer Society

This study employs Baudrillard's approach to the study of the consumer society, particularly in the analytical section in chapter 6. Jean Baudrillard⁷, a renowned French sociologist proposed an approach to the study of Consumer Society in his studies of social change and transformation after World War II. In his three books

⁷ Jean Baudrillard is a famous French sociologist, cultural critic, and theorist of post modernity.

(*The System of Object: 1968; The Consumer Society: 1970; For A Critique of Political Economy of Sign, 1972*), which will be discussed in sub-chapters 8.31–8.33, he describes current capitalist society as a society of consumption, a new culture of consumption in capitalism, a consumption of sign – especially in the media, fashion, and technology – it becomes an essential part of the commodification process. Furthermore, consumption replaces production as an important economic function. He states that contemporary capitalism is different from primitive economic societies as people place their emphasis on cultural goods over production and social reproduction. Therefore, we are not able to understand history, politics, economics, or other social phenomena unless the role of culture, the commodification process and social logic under contemporary capitalism are fully understood.

He also saw that use value is no longer practical under exchange values in current society as proposed by Marx. According to Marx's analysis, use value is the real value that reveals the alibi behind the apparent value of objects produced by the system.

Baudrillard points out that the concept of human necessities related to utility value is not quite clear. This is because humans hardly know their natural necessities, which essentially are transformed into consumption necessities through social mechanisms. As a result of this transformation, society has entered an era in which the logic of differentiation is the key to consumption. In addition, traditional consumption has been transformed into a consumption of signs, in which the form of the commodity is dictated by signs through a symbolic code. That is, the relationship of objects to their function loses its relevance and is replaced by the logic of meaning or the logic of signs. So the logic of meaning is actually at the heart of the development of capitalism (Jhally, 1990)⁸. Baudrillard proposes that we should employ a symbolic code as a tool for analysing the development of capitalism.

Baudrillard's concept has its origins in the year 1929, during the Great Depression. To resolve, or at least alleviate, the economic problems, Sir John Maynard Keynes proposed a (later influential) economic solution. His idea was to deploy the forces of consumption. For instance, the sales tax was lifted in order to enhance purchasing power. Through mass production a considerable amount of mediocre commodities were produced and promoted in order to reduce costs. As for

⁸ Jhally, S. *The Codes of Advertising: fetishism and the political economy of meaning in the consumer society*. London: Routledge, 1990. p. 9.

consumers, people mainly bought the same products that they would have if there had been no social class distinctions. During that time, the rapid development of mass production technology led to an overproduction of goods. Consequently, market demand and consumption needed to be stimulated across the country.

After World War II, commodities were more consumer-driven and markets became more segmented. The determinants of market segmentation also changed from general indicators such as salary and occupation to more specific ones. These included:

- more specific groups, such as housewives and children;
- indicators of a non-economic character: the need to consume is related to taste, one's aspirations, imagination, and inspiration. This is attained by imbuing the product with specific or non-specific associations through the use of signs. That is, the value of products or commodities is not defined economically, but on an abstract social level.
- the key to marketing success is differentiation. Firms attempt to create uniqueness in their products, whose design and manufacture is then subjected to various testing procedures. As a consequence, the consumer market becomes segmented and products become specialized.

From the above mentioned phenomenon, Baudrillard concluded that, in order to understand consumption behaviours the analyses should be based on value building or the so-called consumption of signs. Commodities are not merely products, they become social codes or the tools for transferring cultural messages between consumers. This value building and differentiation creates an endless cycle of consumption.

1.6.3.1 The System of Objects

In his first book, Baudrillard elucidated the new social order. He used the word "Modernist" to denote the new environment that results from the increase in objects and consumption in a society under the sign of modernisation and environment structure (ambience). By "object system" is meant the system of commodities that is the key component of a consumption society with relation to products, advertising and credit, as well as the consumer behaviour resulting from capitalism.

He proposed that values created by the system or certain structures become attached to objects in the consumption society. Objects are defined by their usage, and prices are utilized as a part of atmosphere in value system.

He also stated that changes in sign or meaning are the result of new meanings being assigned by the society, and not of an increase in quantity of the objects. In the traditional system, the meanings of objects are assigned according to how they serve their goals. Baudrillard considered the functions of objects as follows:

1. Primary Function: What is the function of the objects in everyday life?
2. Pulsions: How do the objects respond to people's motivations and basic necessities? In other words, how do they respond to human requirements?
3. What is the symbolic relationship between humans and objects?

Human life has been determined by the stimulation of a considerable amount of information and commodities. The relationship between humans and objects (commodities) is even greater than among humans themselves. Therefore, commodities become part of the object system that relates to the system of necessities. Hence, consumption becomes the centre of the individual's way of life. When we apply a consumption-signifier analysis to factors such as happiness, wealth, success, human dignity etc., consumption is revealed as a manifestation of satisfaction, need, and utility maximization. Using a socio-cultural approach with emphasis on the creation of artificial necessities through advertising, Baudrillard concludes that "consumption is the virtual totality of all objects and messages ready-constituted as a more or less coherent discourse" or "consumption means an activity consisting of the systematic manipulation of signs".

1.6.3.2 The Consumer Society

Baudrillard describes how people compete by showing off their styles of consumption and their wealth (based on possessions). In his analysis he concludes that the "logic of social differences", through commodity purchase and usage, will become the determinant of human social differences.

According to Baudrillard the systems that create consumption comprise:

- rationalization,
- homogenisation,
- systematisation,

- the creation of hierarchies.

Individuals' activities can be defined through their consumption behaviours as a sign, and the consumption society as a system of signs.

Therefore, the necessities of a consumer society are not the necessities to utilize the objects, but the necessities to create social differences. This means that necessities have become infinite in present day society. In addition, these necessities are not even real. They are artificially created through culture. And, in our present society, consumption has replaced production and has become a key to individual behavioural structures.

1.6.3.3 For A Critique of Political Economy of Signs

A Critique of Political Economy of Signs is regarded as a complement to Marx's theory. Marx analysed political economy in terms of the middle class and commodities, which mainly comprised the analysis of the conflict between use value and exchange value. Marx did not mention the sign exchange, which is critical to Baudrillard – the differences result from sign value and commodity worship with an emphasis on culture as signifier and code.

In general, consumption objects are imbued with an intrinsic meaning, which can be separated into two levels: those of utility and culture. This intrinsic meaning is created by society and can be changed repeatedly. The focus of this study is on cultural meaning because, under the dominance of sign value, consumption and display become the logical reason for themselves. Hence, the characteristics and direction of social processes, which are still displayed, are important parts of a consumption society. The major characteristic of a consumption society is the rapid increase in commodity signs through the assignment of new meanings to commodities. The new meanings are integrated into the consumers' lifestyle. Consequently, consumption, for Baudrillard, is both the signifier and the signified.

Commodities, therefore, comprise a system of values which compresses both exchange value and sign value. The system of necessities places the commodity structure into a system of sign values that is determined by rules, codes, and social logic.

The method suggested by Baudrillard for understanding the consumption objects that exist in a society is perfect for the understanding of the position of

objects. In other words, we need to determine the relationship between objects and other sign systems. In addition, we need to determine how those objects become part of the structure of social behaviour. He believes that a profound examination of the objects will reveal how they can be used to differentiate social status. When technological development has advanced to the point of satisfying basic human necessities, people will seek to fulfil other abstract and psychological desires through dreams, beliefs, oral transmission, imagination. This unconscious attitude to objects can be called the consumption of images.

Baudrillard also proposed a consumption theory in terms of the logic of consumption. This consists of four types:

1. A Functional Logic, (of the Use Value), i.e. the logic of utility. This is simply a tool.
2. An Economic Logic, (of the Exchange Value), i.e. the logic of equivalence, of the market, or simply of commodities.
3. A Logic of Symbolic Exchange, i.e. the logic of ambivalence, for example in the exchange of gifts, or simply of symbols.
4. A Logic of Sign Value, i.e. the logic of difference, of status, or simply of signs.

The logic of sign value is the determinant of consumption, and the determinant of the characteristics of a consumption society is the occurrence of this sign value. Baudrillard believes that the consumption society is the society in which consumption is the universal value, and indeed it can satisfy people at an individual level. Baudrillard proposed a theory of necessities and consumption, in which he argued that necessities are created by society and capitalism. Human necessities exist because every system creates necessities, as human necessities are artificially, not naturally, created. Hence, the use value does not have any social meaning. It is the exchange value that is real in the dimensions of consumption and culture. That is, the analysis of consumption becomes possible when it is based on the analysis of the logic of production in society and symbolic exchange. Baudrillard pointed out that an increase in fetishism follows the development of a society. This is because fetishism continues to grow and finally outgrows exchange value. The abstract or symbolic value of an object replaces its intrinsic value.

1.6.4 Lifestyle and Consumer Culture

Consumerism as a culture defines the characteristics of an individual, his/her mode of expression, and his/her identity. Behavioural traits (such as personal hygiene, dress, verbal expression, leisure interests, eating habits, choice of car or house) are the determinants of the individual's taste and life style. When discussing this issue, there are two important points that need to be mentioned. Firstly, on a cultural level, which is related to economics, commodities are not merely a tool of communication but also a method of communication. Secondly, one has to consider the cultural community in the context of supply and demand, cost calculation, competition, and monopoly on the level of life style (Featherstone, 1992:83). In addition, the key concept of consumerism comprises the replacement of a natural commodity value with an exchange value in the context of capitalism which transforms commodity into sign, so that finally a new meaning emerges (Baudrillard, 1975). This process is stimulated by the dynamics of the new market mechanism, which continuously creates all kinds of fashions, forms, feelings, and new experiences that motivate people of every age and social status to seek opportunities to enrich and express their identities.

1.7 Review of the Literature

Literature pertaining to this study can be categorized into two groups: studies of the social and cultural aspects of consumption; and historical studies of cultural consumerism.

1.7.1 Studies on Consumption in Society and Culture

As capitalism moves forward, society has been transformed into a consumption society. The main characteristic of a consumption society is that a sign of the commodity (not the commodity itself) is consumed. To fully understand this phenomenon, analyses of all dimensions (not only the economic dimension) have to be considered. A number of studies considering social and cultural dimensions have emerged. For example, the study by Stuart Ewan, *Capital of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of the Consumer Culture* (1976) focuses on the important phenomena in the 20th century of “mass consumption” and “modern advertising” or so-called mass culture. Also, the study by Mike Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and The Postmodern* (1991), examines the role of the media,

advertising and images. This study deals with the development of new forms of the market and the expansion of consumption culture, as well as of lifestyle. He proposes three characteristics of consumption culture, as follows:

1. Regarding the expansion of capitalism: There is an increase in material culture in the form of consumption, deriving from leisure activities and consumption influenced by western culture.
2. From the social aspect: Commodities are viewed as a tool for establishing a higher level of fulfilment, and status through display, and as a method of maintaining differentiation, with the aim of establishing social bonds.
3. Emotional aspects: Desire and pleasure lead to the creation of an image of consumption culture, which results in many forms of consumption.

Therefore, if the logic of capital is the result of production, then the logic of consumption is the result of consumption as the determinant of social relationships. In addition, Featherstone notes that the occurrence of a culture of consumption is not merely the result of advanced production; it is also the result of the western symbolic goods that in effect are the result of overproduction. Furthermore, we need to consider the relationship between economic and social culture. In other words, desire and pleasure need to be considered.

Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood in *The Word of Good* (1979) found that form and direction by which commodities are used to express the sign of differentiation as well as as a tool for social communication (such as food, clothing, cars, and houses) are determined by social sign. The form of commodities is, therefore, used to express social relationships. Hence, demand cannot be considered only in its physical characteristics. Structure in a sign system necessities to be added into the context as well. They conclude that, to fully understand a materialistic consumption culture, it is important to consider object, commodity, production, exchange and consumption in the context of culture.

In *The Code of Advertising: Fetishism and the Political Economy of Meaning in the Consumer Society* (1990), Sut Jhally analysed advertising as the expression of object which is related to basic human behaviours. He found that advertising brought people together under the complexity of social status and symbolic meaning. The differences between physical and mental necessities determine how people choose to use objects. Advertising enters into the equation as the process for matching

necessities and commodities. It also creates ambiguous structures in having a sign of commodities. Therefore, the sign of commodities is mostly the result of advertising. Without it, commodities become merely usable objects without any social meaning. It is obvious that advertising plays a major role in modern society, in which the symbol of necessities, culture, and the dynamics of capitalist economy are intertwined with information and advanced capitalist society. Once we understand the role and function of advertising in the advanced capitalist society, we will see that it has a major role in defining people's pleasures and necessities.

For the investigation of a consumerist culture in Thailand, Yui Nakamura conducted a study, *The Dynamics of Consumer Culture and Lifestyles of the Thai Metropolitan Youths: A Case Study of Junior and Senior High School Students in Metropolitan Bangkok (1996)*. Nakamura examined the process by which companies' marketing activities create symbolic consumption, and the impact of symbolism on consumption among female high school students in Bangkok. She also conducted some social psychology research on the socialization and communication processes associated with the lifestyle of these female high school students in Bangkok. In her study the economic and social status of the students were also taken into account. The results indicate the consumption of cartoon products as merely a subculture rather than a counter-culture. In other words, their form of consumption is not in opposition to the mainstream culture, which is based on the market system. In addition, most of the samples selected for the study did not consume only for the sake of using the products, the sign of the products was also significant.

1.7.2 The Historical Study of Consumerist Culture

In his work *Consumerism in World History (2001)*, Stern points out that the desire to acquire luxury goods and leisure is a basic force in modern life. The intention of this book is to explore both the historical origins and the worldwide appeal of this relatively modern phenomenon. By relating consumerism to other issues in world history, Stern tries to examine society and consumer experience in many parts of the world such as the West, Japan and Russia. In his book, 'consumerism' is defined as the lure of material goods, it first emerged in eighteenth-century Western Europe, and from there was exported to the rest of the globe.

Somrak Chaisinghagananon, in a study entitled *Taste: Language in Thai Society in the Age of Consumerism (2001)*, attempted to understand how consumerist

culture manifests itself in Thai society through consumption selection and the process of acquiring objects (so-called taste). It is an attempt to understand “taste” at a social level especially with respect to the way people dress. Somrak is of the opinion that taste is a social language used to express class conflict in a society. At first, taste is created, taught, and cultivated, until it eventually becomes a wall preventing other classes from joining the traditionally high-class society. Later, it becomes a cage preventing those high society people from freeing themselves from their luxurious lifestyle. As the economic situation changes, we may see a formerly wealthy family still trapped in a lavish lifestyle that they can no longer afford. Moreover, in Thai society, wealthy families are divided into the traditional ones and the ones who have only recently come into their wealth, and we are seeing an increasing merging of families of equal wealth through marriage. Thus, taste is used to define different classes in society. Since society today is governed by democracy, people are free and have equal rights to consume, but they are also trapped by the idea of climbing to a higher social class through the acquisition of more and more objects. So, again, taste becomes the social language that continues to grow alongside the consumption society.

1.8 Consumerism: Its Meaning and Development in Thai Society

Before tracing and explaining the development of consumerism in Thai society in the following chapters, we should first attempt to understand the meaning of “consumerism” in the context of Thai society, because a grasp of the origin and development of a term can help us appreciate the conceptual changes that take place in a society, since a language is a sign system representing the collective understanding of the people in that society.

The term “consumerism” or, in Thai, *bòriphok niyom* was introduced into Thailand only recently. According to *Pallegoix Dictionarium Lingue Thai*, neither the first Thai dictionary, printed in 1854, nor *Dr. Bradley’s* version, which was printed 19 years later in 1873, nor the 1950 and 1970 versions of *Royal Institute Thai Dictionary*, contained such a term; we find only two separate words, *bòriphok* and *niyom*, in different entries. The word as a compound noun appeared in the *Mathichon Thai Dictionary (2004)* with the following definition: *bòriphok niyom* (consumerism) – A value system of people who love spending money for the sake of

consumption. Apart from this, such a term has been defined by Witthaya Chiangkun in the following texts:-

1. The Thai language Terminology on Political Economy (1989, p.37) – Latthi b̀rìphok niyom, from the English “consumerism”: the impulse of the consumer in an economic system whose task it is to increase the production of consumer goods in terms of quantity, type and quality in response to increased demand. It is in the nature of a capitalistic society that people desire to sell more goods in order to gain more profits. It results in an increase in the production of goods as well as in an attempt to motivate people to consume more.
2. A New Description of Modern Terms for an Understanding of the Modern World (2004) — “consumerism” has two meanings: 1. a belief that consumption is the basis of good development in the economy; 2. the protection of consumer rights, such as in the movement of Ralph Nader, consumer rights activist, and his followers, in the 1960s.

These are the current interpretations of the term “consumerism”, which reveal the true ideology of capitalism, i.e., to motivate more consumption, and to consume according to the meaning of the object (for the consumer) rather than to the extent to which it is in demand. However, if we verify its meaning we find that in the past the word *b̀rìphok niyom* did not exist. In the *Dictionarium Lingue Thai* of Bishop Pallegoix we find only *b̀rìphok*, spelled differently, and *niyom*. The meaning of the first word is “to eat, to take food, aliments and clothes”, whereas that of the latter is “love, joy, approbation”. Apart from this, we see that many words are derived from the word *kin*, which means “to eat”, such as *khòng kin* (food), *kin cai* (to doubt), *kin naeng* (to doubt), *kin dòk* (to take a loan, interest), *kin khao* (to eat rice), *kin khao chao* (to have breakfast), *kin khao klang wan* (to have lunch), *kin khao yen* (to have dinner), *kin lüa* (not to eat everything), *tham kin* (to earn one’s living), *kin kamrai* (to make a profit). In Dr. Bradley’s *Dictionary of the Siamese Language* (1873), there is no entry of the word *b̀rìphokniyom* either. What we do find is the word *kin* with more derivatives:-

kin, b̀rìphok is an action by which people and animals put food into their mouths and chew and swallow it (through the throat.)

kin kamrai is to get more money from the capital.

kin kap is to eat food together with rice; or food that is eaten with rice.

kin ngan is a guest who helps the host of a ceremony in the performance of his duties, such as at a wedding.

kin cai is to doubt or to have some doubt in one's mind, for example to suspect that someone has stolen one's belongings.

kin chòn is to eat food with a spoon.

kin sòm is to eat food with a fork.

kin di is to eat with pleasure or with no negative outcome.

kin dòk is to take the money a debtor pays to a creditor.

kin dip is to eat raw food; the name of a kind of banana that is better eaten while still green.

kin müang is to rule over or govern a province (*müang*). A commoner who rules over or governs a city is said to "eat the city" (the literal translation of *kin müang*).

kin ruai is to eat as rich people do.

So, from these definitions of the Thai concept of *kin*, i.e. "to eat", we see that Thai people in those days ate sufficiently but also only according to their necessities. Furthermore, some words related to *kin* in Dr. Bradley's Dictionary are given as follows:-

kin lamop means to eat too much.

kin lüa means to eat until one is full, yet there is food left.

bòriphok is defined as to use; to eat until one is full.

When we put the words *bòriphok* and *niyom* together, the meaning of the terms is clear; it can be defined as to love or to have joy in using something or eating sufficiently. The two words given in these two early dictionaries show us that society in the Early Rattanakosin Period, which was on the threshold of the social and economic changes that came with the Bowring Treaty, was still free from the concept or the ideology of consumerism. The exact meaning of the words *bòriphok niyom* at that time is merely "to love to eat". This can be compared with the *Thai dictionary* (1902) published by the Ministry of Education during the reigns of Kings Rama V and Rama VI, which provides definitions of the two words as follows:-

bòriphok means to use, to eat;

niyom means wish, desire, want.

When the two words are put together, the compound means "a wish or a desire to use something or to eat". At this point, one can appreciate that there were some social

changes during that period that can be derived from the slight changes in the meanings of the words. This also reflects some of the ideology of consumerism, an ideology that motivates people to wish or desire to have, to hold or to possess things.

Nowadays, we see more changes in the definition of the word *bòriphok*. The *Royal Institute Dictionary* (1950), defines it as follows:-

Bòriphok (verb) to eat, to consume, to use, to spend money.

This illustrates the extended meaning of the word: (to be) to use too much or more than the need requires. And the change in the meaning of *niyom* is expressed thus:-

niyom (noun) (formal) stipulation, (*Pali*) respect.

When these words are combined the new term can be roughly defined as “respect of consumption”.

In the Thai Thesaurus (1978), the definition of *bòriphok* is extended in the following manner:-

bòriphok 1 (verb): to devour, to taste, to eat, to partake.

bòriphok 2 (verb): to use, to consume.

niyom : to stipulate, to like, to respect, to admire.

So we see that the meaning of this term has been extended and also now contains more negative connotations. This may reflect the social development with regard to “consumption”. We have arrived at the point where people enjoy or indulge in consumption without limit.

In conclusion, the change in meaning of *bòriphok* and *niyom* over different periods may reflect the change in attitudes of people regarding consumption, from possession in sufficiency in the feudal period to redundancy or exaggeration in the period of Thai capitalism.

Chapter 2

Four Basic Necessities in the Era of Social Establishment

The study of the characteristics of people's consumption of the four basic necessities in each period of the Rattanakosin era is one tool we can employ to understand the historical development of consumerism in Thai Society. Owing to the long span of time of the Rattanakosin era, I have divided it, as explained in the previous chapter, into 4 periods. My analysis has been made using evidence from several documentary sources, and taking particular note of the varying circumstances and conditions relevant to time and place, and also of advertising. It is hoped that this may lead to a better understanding of this aspect of the culture of consumption.

This chapter will be devoted to the characteristics of people's consumption of the four basic necessities in the era of social establishment (1782–1851), or the early Rattanakosin period (King Rama I–III). The area of study is Bangkok.

In order to get a clear picture of those characteristics, I will divide a group of people from this period into two broad social classes, those of the *governing* and the *governed* social classes. The content of this chapter will be divided into 3 main parts. The first will broadly discuss 4 ground issues of Bangkok society, that is, society as a whole, population, economy and foreign trade, as well as social structure. The second part will demonstrate the characteristics of people's consumption of the four basic necessities, which include, housing, clothing, food, and medicine. The third part will comprise the conclusion concerning the relationship of people and objects in this era.

2.1 The Era of Social Establishment

2.1.1 Society as a Whole

In 1782, the role of king Taksin came to an end and the Chakri dynasty was established. The Chakri dynasty was guided by a strong sense of continuity with the Ayutthaya dynasty and therefore based the legitimacy of its authority on an imitation of the Ayutthaya dynasty and reproduction of the latter's style of government¹.

¹ quoted in Toru Yano, "Politic Structure of a "Rice-Growing State" in: Yoneo Ishii (ed.) *Thailand a Rice-Growing Society*. Honolulu: The University of Hawaii Press, 1975, p. 118.

Once the new kingdom had been founded, the king's first priority was to establish security and stability, and to prolong the prosperity of Ayutthaya that had held sway prior to the destruction (ruin) of 1767 C.E. They were successful: even though their power had been under threat from various groups, such as officials loyal to King Taksin, or the rebellious Prince Anuwong, the stability of Thai politics was secured. Up to the reign of King Rama III the kingdom had never been at war, not even with Burma, and had thus gradually expanded and prospered. Meanwhile, the streaming into Southeast Asia and Thailand of Western civilization on the one hand, and the diversity of population on the other, had resulted in society gradually adjusting and changing its general outlook on life. This created a social reform in the next era, which will be discussed in chapter 3.

2.1.2 The Population

During the reign of King Rama I, the kingdom was structured in the same way as other post war societies. It was seriously damaged, economically weakened and the population had dramatically decreased. To rebuild the country the government needed a high budget both for reconstruction and for weapons of defence. As a consequence of the inefficient tax collection system and the weakness of the post-war control of commoners, the government had insufficient funds to cope with these expenses. So it became the policy to gather people up and encourage an increase in the population, which was seen as a source of income that could create wealth and stability of the kingdom².

Estimates of the population made by Westerners visiting the country in the 19th century (see table 1) reveal a diversity of peoples living together in Bangkok and the surrounding areas, indeed in the whole of the Thai state. These included Siamese, Laotians, Chinese, Malays, Khmers. Karians etc. The largest group were the Siamese, and second and third were the Laotians and Chinese respectively. However, Skinner (1957) and Sternstein (1965) have remarked that the proportion of Chinese, estimated by Westerners visiting in that period, such as Roberts, in Malcom 1835 and Bishop Pallegoix (1855)³, were much higher. Looking at the details we see some

² For more details in Volker Grabowsky. "Forced Resettlement Campaigns in Northern Thailand During the Early Bangkok Period", in: *Journal of the Siam Society*, Vol. 87, Parts 1 & 2, 1999, p. 45–86.

³ Volker Grabowsky. *An Early Thai Census Translation and Analysis*. Institute of Population Studies: Chulalongkorn University, 1993, p. 3.

differences in the estimates made. For instance, Crawford calculated that Thailand in the early Rattanakosin period had a population of approximately 5 million, while Roberts and Malcom gave figures of around 3 million, Pallegoix and Rosny of 6 to 7 million respectively.

Table 2.1 Ethnic composition of Siam's Population according to various estimates in the nineteenth centuries

Race/year Source	1822 Crawford, p.102	1835 Roberts, from Malcom, p.146	1839 Malcom, p.145	1855 Pallegoix, p.2	1855a de Rosny, p.116	1855b de Rosny, p.177
Siamese	4,200,000	1,600,000	1,500,000	1,900,000	1,600,000	3,500,000
Lao	-	1,200,000	800,000 ^c	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
Chinese	700,000	500,000	450,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,520,000
Malay	15,000	320,000	195,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,200,000
Khmer	50,000	-	-	500,000	600,000	620,000
Mon	42,000	-	-	50,000	40,000	40,000
Karen	-	-	-	50,000	160,000 ^b	35,000 ^b
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	5,007,000	3,620,000	2,945,000	6,000,000	5,900,000	7,915,000 ^a

a Minimum figure.

b Including Karen and other nationalities.

c Called "Shans"

Quoted in Volker Grabowsky. *An Early Thai Census Translation and Analysis*. Bangkok: Institute of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University, 1993, p. 23–24.

In addition to the figures in table 1 we have the records of some other non-Thais who studied the population of early Bangkok, including Skinner and Terwiel. Skinner reported that the population during the reign of Rama II in Bangkok alone was between 50,000 and 70,000, increasing to one hundred thousand in the reign of Rama III owing to the immigration acceptance policy. Terwiel examined the population figures for Bangkok in the early Rattanakosin period from various sources and concluded that they gradually increased in the reigns of Rama III and IV from approximately 50,000 to 100,000.

Even though the various population groups cannot be specified, we can conclude that in the early Rattanakosin Period:

- The population was not very high in the post-war period. People were scattered, so an increase in population would take time.
- The population was composed of a variety of ethnic groups. This may have resulted from the policies of rounding up and transfer on people employed to increase the population; or the Bangkok area may already have been diverse.

2.1.3 The Economy and Foreign Trade

In the early Rattanakosin period, during the reigns of Kings Rama I-III, society and its administration were identical to those of the Ayutthaya period. The economy was based on agriculture—rice growing, weaving, fishing, basketry and farming. The population earned their living from plentiful resources, so labour was important. A barter system was more important than trading. Domestic trading was still low. The major source of income for the nobility in this period was from shipping. Evidence for this can be found in *Collected Royal Proclamations of the Fourth Reign*⁴

... [I]n the reigns of Kings Rama I-II, junk trade under the royal patronage was the major income used to pay salary. If the profit from the junk trade was low, the printed clothes or gold would be used instead of paying salary...

Nithi Iaosiwong⁵ concluded that corruption among the Royal Shipping officers was a significant cause of loss of revenue: nobles' businesses, and the Lord of the treasury (Det Bunnak), profited while waiving losses to Royal Shipping.

The Thai economy began to show some differences to that of Ayutthaya in the reign of King Rama III. For instance, shipping was expanded to other countries such as China, India, Vietnam and Cambodia, which had more effect on society and the economy than in the reigns of King Rama I and II. Domestic trade was also expanded. The Chinese played an important role by acting as the middle men, bringing goods into accessible local areas. One of the largest sources of the country's income at that time was foreign trade: the government imposed levies in kind on goods for export. Apart from head taxes—money collected instead of labour, other sources were: *Phukpi* (ฝูกปี) –money collected from Chinese workers, goods paid as a

⁴ *Collected Royal Proclamations of the Fourth Reign*. Vol. 2, B.E. 2401-2404 (1858-1861), p. 136.

⁵ Nithi Iaosiwong, *Pak kai kap bai rüa: A Historical Study of Literature in Early Rattanakosin*. 2 ed., Bangkok: Praeo, 1995, p.108.

tax in the place of labour, shipping tax, fees collected from farming or from the distilling of alcohol, forestry tax, tax for the erection of casinos, etc. Important were also the customs taxes. Business with other countries increased in significance. As Nithisays in “Pak kai kap bai rüa”, “international trading was more important to the survival of the governments in early Rattanakosin period than it was to any government in Ayutthaya”⁶

Mr. John Crawford⁷, who visited Bangkok in the reign of King Rama II, said that, “the worthiest income of the kingdom and main profit of government officers were international trades done on the Choaphraya River”.

Furthermore, King Rama III had made it royal policy to support civilian business, as we see in the Thai document [จ.ร.3-1/จ.ร.1191(Cò.Rò.3-1/ Cò.Sò.1191)]: “his majesty had always thought that his people would all have advantages from trading”.

Accordingly, the expansion of international trade, the influx of foreigners and the introduction of cheaper shipping fees all increased. The first foreign department store in Bangkok, a British-owned store named *Hunter and Haze*, was established during this reign.⁸

While important sources of government revenue in the Ayutthaya period were to be found in the labour force, tribute taxes and forest products, which were handed over to the royal warehouse (operated as a monopoly), in the Rattanakosin era, by contrast, particularly in the reign of King Rama III, international trade from shipping and the tax resulting there from, and profits from monopoly businesses were vital. The royal warehouse was repealed in order to allow free trading.

The main causes for the improvements in international trade in this reign were to be found in the ineffectiveness of collecting taxes in kind and corvée, and the fact that it was the post-war period. At that time, the shortage of labour was the critical concern for the government. Hired Chinese labour was the solution, especially in the reign of King Rama III. Skilled work such as that done by ships’ carpenters, shipping crews, traders and sugar factory workers was in the hands of Chinese. It could be said that the influence of labour from Chinese immigration constituted the core economic mechanism in the development of the society because

⁶ Nithi Iaosiwong, *ibid.*, p. 104.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.108.quoted in The Crawford Paper, p. 46.

⁸ Chai Rüangsin. *Economic Aspects of Thai History from 1809-1910*, 1998, p. 309-331.

they enjoyed professional privileges, were not conscripted corvée labourers and were allowed unrestricted travel, unlike Thai people who were bound by corvée labour.⁹ In the time that they had been there the Chinese had created a large supply of goods.

As the same time, Europe and North America were growing in economical and technical expertise with the invention of the steam locomotive, the telegraph and printing. The use of steam ships to transport both goods and people, telegraph communication and automation shortened production times, increased the demand in supply and distribution sources, and finally led to colonization¹⁰.

Meanwhile, a change in the types of import and export goods and an increase in their quantity led to inadequacies in the traditional management of the tax system. Many of the products were mass produced goods, which required more labour in their manufacture, such as agricultural and industrial products, so labour was used in this way more than collection system.¹¹ The increase in quantity of imported and exported products in the early Rattanakosin period led to a change in the commercial environment and paved the way to a capitalist society. Most imported products were brought in for domestic use, and although the Royal Warehouse was the middle man in buying and selling government goods, as it had been in the Ayutthaya period, people could now buy many goods directly from junks docked on the Chophraya River. This was a novel experience, which people took advantage of, but its economic potential for society was still limited. As mentioned earlier, Thai, or Siamese, economics in the earlier this time did not present a static picture. It was not a self-sufficient society, but had been based on a commercial economy since the Ayutthaya period. As Suthachai Yimprasert¹² mentioned in a specialist article in the *Müang Boran Journal*, Ayutthaya Economy from 1569–1757: non self-sufficient economies, the Ayutthaya economy had been non-self-sustaining, and by a natural continuation the early Rattanakosin economy would have been non-self sustaining or non-self sufficient as well. But it may be argued that Thai society from the early Rattanakosin up to the revolution in 1932 was a traditional society with its own dynamic. Business with China was at its peak in this period and trade through

⁹ Waraphòn Ciochaisak. *Economy Policies in the Third Reign*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 2004, p. 4.

¹⁰ Chai Rüangsin, *ibid.*, p. 309-311.

¹¹ Nithi Iaosiwong, *ibid.*, p.114.

¹² Suthachai Yimprasert. "Ayutthaya Economy during 1569-1757: A Non Self-Sufficient Economy", in: *Müang Boran Journal*. Vol. 31, No. 1, 2005, p. 69-71.

shipping with other regions was also extensive. The three groups of people involved in shipping were the King, government officials and Chinese traders. All were closely related through family ties, business, and political benefits.

Even though a purely export-based economy had not yet developed, people started to produce goods for sale more than ever before. This was an important foundation for the expansion of rice export after the Bowring Treaty. The change had a direct effect on the self-sufficiency of the economy. Large numbers of people were affected by the financial markets, especially in Central Thailand where routes of communication were more convenient than the other regions.

Gradually, over time, more people lived more of their lives in the market economy rather than within the old structure of labour indenture and royal service. Nidhi Iaosiwong's describes it as society becoming 'bourgeois', especially in the capital.¹³

2.1.4 Social Structure

As noted earlier, the society of this period era concentrated on the development and perpetuation of the prosperity of the Ayutthaya. So all the Chakri kings at this time set to building Bangkok in the Ayutthaya style. As result, Bangkok, the capital of Rattanakosin, was full of temples, palaces and other beautiful architectural structures, as Ayutthaya had been in the past. It could be said that conditions in the early Rattanakosin period, particularly social structures, were no different from those in the Ayutthaya - social structures still adhered to the Ayutthaya pattern. The "Laws of the Civil and Military Provincial Hierarchies: *Phra Aiyakan Tamnaeng Na Phonlariian, Pra Aiyakan Tamnaeng Na Thahan Huamüiang*" established by King Trilokanat, was still in use as a principle for organizing social relationships.¹⁴ It was the hierarchical system known as the *sakdina*¹⁵. According to the *sakdina* system, people can be divided broadly into two classes:

¹³ Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit. *A History of Thailand*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p.33-34.

¹⁴ *The Three Seals Code*. Fine Art Department, 1978, p. 108.

¹⁵ The *sakdina*, called by Dr. Quaritch Wales "dignity mark" was the most important and the most refined index of the status of its possessors. It range from 100,000 for the *upparat* (highest government position for a prince, generally occupied by the royal son, brother, or uncle), 10,000 for a minister, to 25-10 for a *phrai*, and 5 for a *that* (slave). Quoted in Akin Rabibhadana. *The Organization of Thai Society in the early Bangkok period, 1782-1873*. 1969, p. 22.

- 1) The governing class: at the top of this class was the king, then came members of the royal family and nobles or government officials who were entitled to more than 400 *rai* ($2\frac{1}{2}$ *rai* = 1 acre) and were responsible for policing the people and protecting them.
- 2) The governed class: This class comprised *phrai* and *that*. The *phrai* were commoners or ordinary people bound by the state to pay tributes and a labour corvée. The main duty of the *phrai* was to provide manpower for production and construction to the state and *nai*. In addition, the *phrai* were allowed to be farmers, traders, soldiers, craftsmen etc. As for *that*, they were slaves and belonged to their owners and could be traded or exchanged.

The governing class comprised a small group of people who received benefits in the form of tributes taxes and corvée labour from the *phrai* and *that* for their own consumption. Thus, this class was able to own more wealth and goods than the governed class who made up the major part of the population and were strictly controlled by the governing class.

In accordance with this social structure, I have also divided my study groups into the two sub-groups of governing and governed classes, the governing class, consisting of the king, royal families, government officials and priests; and the governed class: the *phrai* and *that*. A consequence of the differences in social status of the two classes was the development of different consumption characteristics of the 4 basic necessities, which I will try to explore.

2.2 Characteristics of People's Consumption of the 4 Basic Necessities in the Era of Social Establishment.

2.2.1 Housing (Shelter)

Architects define houses as buildings that people and their families use to live, eat and sleep in. The term does not include offices, theatres, temples, bus stations etc. In contrast, ordinary people think of houses as buildings that they use not only to protect themselves from harm, and for rest and sleep, but also as areas they can use as a work space. A *house* might not even be a permanent building, if it is not suitable as a work space, as among, for instance, roaming tribes in prairie land, or Gypsies in Europe. From the idea of house, which has both broad and narrow associations, I

take the word “house”. In this study, I will use the word “house” on the sense of “shelter”.

First of all, for a better understanding and to avoid confusion, let’s clarify the meaning of the word “house”. The word *ban* or house, according to the Thai Dictionary (The Royal Academy, 1950), means a residence located outside the capital that can be either tangible or intangible. Most people understand the word *ban* as *rüan*. Sathian Koset¹⁶ defined the word *ban* as

[A]n area reserved for building something for residence with some space around it. Therefore, *ban* is a residence including a house and another building. The word “*ban*” is for one household only, but if many households or *rüan* are located in a group and *bans* are built in the same style, then they are called a *muban* (village). This is the origin of the phrase “building *ban* and creating *rüan*”.

Thus, the word *ban*, according to this explanation, refers to the building that the people live in and the surrounding area.

In other words, a *ban* is an area of land - a building and its environment. A *Rüan* is any building used as a residence, for instance, a prison, a matrimonial home, a floating house, a house next to the river. *Rüan* is an abstract noun which is equivalent to the word “home” in English. *Ban* is a short form of village. People often confuse *ban* and *rüan* as having the same meaning, and that a village is merely a group of residences next to each other. We nowadays sometimes use the word *ban* for *rüan* but this depends on the context. For example, someone asks Mr. Kò, “Do you have a *ban*?” and then “Do you have a *rüan*?” These two questions are different. In the first question, *ban* means the building; the latter, *rüan*, refers to his family or marital status¹⁷. In general, a human residence is called a *ban* or *rüan*; the residence of a king or an ordinary god would be called a castle, a palace or a hall. A higher god’s residence would be called a “shrine”¹⁸. The Royal family’s residential estates would be called “palaces”, and the buildings on those estates “halls”.¹⁹

¹⁶ Sathian Koset. (Phraya Anuman Ratchathon). *A study of Thai Custom and Thai Life in the Past*. Bangkok: Khlang Witthaya, 1972, p. 53.

¹⁷ Bandit Chulasai. *Ban Thai (The Thai House)*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 1997, p. 2.

¹⁸ Sasiwimon Santiratpakdi. *Screen from Life in the Sipaendin: The True Life of Court Ladies, Villagers and Western Fashions behind the Novel’s Scenes*. Bangkok: Amarin Printing and Publishing Press, 2004, p. 193.

¹⁹ Chai Rüangsin. *Social Aspects of Thai History from 1809-1910*. 4 (ed.) Bangkok: Silapa-Bannakan, 2002, p. 54.

In this study, “house” means a building and its surrounding area.

2.2.1.1 General Characteristics of Housing in the Establishment Era

a. Aquatic Society

Living conditions on the swampy side of Bangkok have a unique character, described as “aquatic” by a western traveller: Although people inhabited the riverbank, they lived on the water rather than on land. George Finlayson, who visited Bangkok between 1821–1822, depicted the conditions of the inhabitants as follows:

[T]he Siamese may be said to be aquatic in their disposition. The houses rarely extend more than two hundred yards from the river, and by far the greater number of them are floating on bamboo rafts secured close to the bank. The houses that are not so floated are built on posts driven into the mud, and raised above the bank...To every house, floating or not, there is attached a boat, generally very small, for the use of the family. There is little travelling but what is performed by water, and hence the arms both of the women and the men acquire a large size from the constant habit of rowing.²⁰

Owing to the geographic conditions and climate of Bangkok the Early Rattanakosin period was an aquatic society. The physical structure of the city depended mainly on the digging of canals for many purposes such as transportation channels, the expansion of the city and for economic and strategic purposes.

During the reigns of King Rama I-III, the digging and fixing of canals on Rattanakosin island and the surrounded areas was for transportation and government commissions. Furthermore, the main transportation channel was for water transportation.²¹ As Bishop Pallegoix²², a French priest visiting and working Bangkok during the reigns of Kings Rama I-III noticed,

²⁰ George Finlayson, *The mission to Siam and Hue* (London: John Murray, 1826), p. 212. quoted in Tadayo Watabe (1975:36). “Politic Structure of a “Rice-Growing State” in Yonio Ishii (ed.) *Thailand A Rice-Growing Society* Honolulu: The University of Hawaii Press.

²¹ See more details in Kitti Tanthai. *Canals and the Thai Economy (1824-1910)*. Master Thesis. Chulalongkorn University, 1977, p. 30-56.

²² Bishop Jean-Baptiste Pallegoix. *Description of the Thai Kingdom, or Siam (Description du royaume Thai ou Siam)* Translated by San. T. Komolabut. 2 ed. Bangkok: Kaona Press., 1977, p. 56.

[T]here was no car in the capital. People used boats. Rivers and canals were the only means of transportation. Brick roads were found only downtown where shops and markets were.

b. Locations

In the early part of the construction period, populations that migrated from Ayutthaya integrated with local populations. King Rama I gave a royal order for palaces for the royal family to be built, along with government officers' mansions around the grand palace and ordinary people's houses around the city along both banks of the Choaphraya River.

With the increase in the population during the reigns of Kings Rama II and III, the people built their houses around the grand palace's walls and along inner canals such as the Khlòng Rungmai, Khlòng Talat, Khlòng Ròpkrung, Khlòng Ongang, Khlòng Banglamphu and along both banks of the Choaphraya River²³. Foreigners always lived in the area outside the walls, where the direction of the current was out to sea. Nit Hiyachiranun and group²⁴ explained this as coming from the belief of the importance of the head compared with the rest of the body; it naturally led to the reserving of the important areas of the land for the most important people. Thus, the distribution of land was arranged according to the hierarchy of importance of the persons.

c. Houses on both the Water and on Land

c.1 Houses on the Water, or Houseboats (*rüan phae*)

The way of life in this period, which depended heavily on the river and canals because of the geographic and weather conditions, resulted in a unique residential construction – the houseboat, or *rüan phae*. These fascinated foreigners visiting Bangkok at the time, especially on the Choaphraya River²⁵. Frederic Arthur Niels, who was in Bangkok during the reign of King Rama III, had estimated the numbers of houseboats in Bangkok at around 70,000, and the people living in them at

²³ Bandit Chulasai, *ibid.*, p. 52.

²⁴ Nit Hiyachiranun et al., "Roads: Their Evolution over 200 years," An abstract from an academic seminar in Celebrating Two centuries of the Rattanakosin. Conference Room Information, Chulalongkorn University 21-22 June 1982, Unpublished documents, p. 4-5.

²⁵ George Winsor Earl. *The Eastern Seas or Voyages and Adventures in the Indian Archipelago in 1832-33-34*. London: Wm. H. Allen and Co., 1837, p. 160. Quoted in Frederic Arthur Niels. *Life of Living in Siam through the Eye of Foreigners during B.E. 2383-2384*, p. 27.

approximately 350,000²⁶. Later, Townsend Harris²⁷, an American Ambassador, and B. J Terwiel²⁸ argues that these numbers were too high, and that a more accurate estimate would be a few thousand.

No matter what the exact numbers of houseboats were, however, it showed how dependent on the water the Siamese way of life was.

c.1.1 Major Groups of Houseboats in Bangkok

c.1.1.1 Groups of Permanent Domicile Houseboats (Movable Address)

These houseboats were easy to move or elevate onto the land. After they had been thus elevated, people put in columns, transforming them into tall stilt houses. These then formed communities. A wide range of people lived in the houseboats — foreigners, government officials and ordinary people, and most of them were traders. Neils²⁹ remarked that the houseboats were mainly shops, and that the best shops were on houseboats. The average houseboat had 2-3 rooms. The main room was in the front and was open for the purpose of displaying products; these could include rice, meat, sweet meats, printed clothes, paper umbrellas, varieties of fruits, pots and pans, and imported goods from India, China, Malaysia and even Liverpool. As a consequence, these houseboat communities took on the form of floating markets. Even though most of the houseboats were shops, other professions, such as shoemakers or dressmakers, were represented³⁰.

c.1.1.2 Groups of Migrating Houseboats

These groups included freight and merchant vessels and movable houseboats, used by both merchants and people travelling to Bangkok to buy goods.

c.2 Houses on Land

Most people lived on land but their houses had to have easy access to the water. Most houses were on the riverbank or within 200 yards of the water³¹. At that time, only palaces and temples had a strong construction. The majority of houses

²⁶ Niels calculated that there was around five people living in each. See Federic Arthur Niels. *Life of Living in Siam through the Eye of Foreigners during B.E. 2383-2384*, p. 28.

²⁷ Townsend Harris. *The Complete Journal of Townsend Harris: First American Consul and Minister to Japan*. Translated by Nuntha Woranatiwong. Bangkok: Fine Art Department, 1972, p. 69.

²⁸ B.J Terwiel. *Through Travellers' Eyes: An Approach to Early Nineteenth-century Thai History*. Bangkok: Duang Kamol, 1989, p. 230.

²⁹ Federic Arthur Niels. *Life in Siam through the Eye of Foreigners during B.E. 2383-2384*, p.32.

Quoted in George Finlayson, *The Mission to Siam and Hue, 1821-1822*. Singapore: Oxford University and The Siam Society Press. 1988, p. 212-213, George Windsor Earl. *The Eastern Seas or Voyages and Adventures in the Indian Archipelago in 1832-33-34*, p. 160, 176;

³⁰ George Finlayson, *ibid.*, 115.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

were similar, owing to the lack of variety in building materials, wood being the most common material in use. The economy was not strong enough to support an improvement in building methods. Even though the general way of life was not distinctly different from before, there was still a difference in social status and lifestyle between the royal family and upper-class people and ordinary people.

2.2.1.2 Houses: Differences between Classes

a. Houses of the Governing Class

Population numbers in Bangkok in the early Rattanakosin period were very low. Thus, types of buildings were limited. Most buildings were either temples or government buildings. People's houses, government officials' residences or even those of Buddhist priests within the temples were all alike. The only differences were in size, materials and decoration. Tadayo Watabe³² remarked, regarding upper-class houses, that "*The high government officials' residences were of brick and mortar*".

High-class residences were used for many purposes other than purely for living in, such as welcoming guests, producing goods or as places of work-clinics, schools, courts of justice and places of entertainment³³, as in Europe before the industrial revolution. As Peter Corrigan mentioned "before the great transformation, many productive activities took place at home: people engaged in their crafts or trades there, and merchants did their buying and selling".³⁴

Although the residences of the governing and the governed classes were alike, those of the governing class were much larger to offset the owners' status, especially of the royal family. These groups had the right to build fancier houses than other groups. Only the king and higher royal family members were allowed to own brick buildings. Commoners had no right to imitate them. Furthermore, as Sathian Kosetpointed out, rich people usually lived in *rüan krüang sap*, neatly built wooden houses. The core elements - columns and roof foundations - were made of wood, and partition walls and roofs were made of other materials such as bamboo or atap.

³² Tadayo Watabe, "Political Structure of a "Rice-Growing State" in Yonio Ishii (ed.) *Thailand A Rice-Growing Society* Honolulu: The University of Hawaii Press, 1975, p. 36.

³³ Phutsadi Thippathat. *Ban (The House) in Rattanakosin I during the reign of King Rama I-III (B.E. 2325-2394)*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 2002, p. 52-54.

³⁴ Peter Corrigan. *The Sociology of Consumption*. London: Sage Publishing, 1997, p. 97.

Completely wooden houses were called *rüan pha kradan* – the best classical Thai houses.³⁵

As mentioned earlier, royal family members' residences were called “palaces” or ‘*wang*’ and a house within the residence was called a ‘*tamnak*’. These royal residences were made of both wood and brick. Their status was symbolized by red partition walls and the roofs were usually fancy; gold and stained glass decorations, pointed roofs and four-gable-end roofs were reserved for the king and the crown princes³⁶. As the French missionary Bishop Pallegoix³⁷, who lived in Bangkok for 30 years from 1829, had noted, the residences of upper-class people and other rich people's houses were very attractive and had tile roofs.

From the point of view of the foreigner, the society was clearly stratified. Sir John Bowring³⁸ noted his feelings on social classification in Siam in “The Kingdom and People of Siam”:

... [T]he dwelling of the Siamese represents far more than I have seen in any other part of the world the grades of their social condition. From the beautiful stone palaces of the Kings, crowded with every European comfort and luxury, and ornamented with every decoration which either the eastern or western world can supply, to the shaking bamboo, palm covered hut of the present, whose furniture consists only of a few vessels of coarse earthenware or wicker work, and a mat or two spread upon the floor, the difference of position upwards or downward may be distinctly traced. Removed from the very lowest rank, in the Siamese houses will be found carpenters' tools, a moveable oven, various cooking utensils both in copper and clay, spoons of mother-of- pearl, plates and dishes in metal and earthenware, a large porcelain jar, and another of copper of fresh water. There is also a tea set, and all the appliances for betal-chewing and tobacco-smoking, some stock of provisions and condiments for food.

b. Housing among the Governed Class

From the descriptions of Thai houses in documents and diaries of Westerners who visited Ayutthaya during the reigns of King Prasatthong(1629–1656) and King Narai (1656-1689) we see that Thai people had a simple way of life. Most houses were simple huts or bamboo dwellings with a raised basement. These houses were

³⁵Sathain Koset. *Customs of House Building and Marriage*. Bangkok: The Social Sciences Association, Press of Thailand, 1971, p. 79–81.

³⁶ Bandit Chulasai, *ibid.*, p 28.

³⁷ Bishop Pallegoix, *ibid.*, p 190–192.

³⁸ Sir John Bowring. *The Kingdom and People of Siam*. London: John W.Parker and Son, 1969, p. 107–108.

easy to construct and disassemble and foreigners were amazed by them. As La Loubère³⁹ observed,

In Ayutthya, 300 houses were constructed in 2 days and 3 houses were disassembled within a hour in order to make a view for the grand palace.

Another type of house was the so-called *rüan pha kradan*. As for foreigners, Moors and Chinese lived in one-story brick buildings. This was typical of the early Rattanakosin. To quote Bishop Pallegoix⁴⁰ again:

... [R]esidences of poor people had a simple construction. They had 3-rooms and one story, with a high basement and a bamboo ladder. Partition walls were made of bamboo and the roofs were made of attaps with bamboo roof foundations. The basements were used as storage spaces for rice grain, water and household equipment. Rich people had teak floors and ‘mai teang’ columns, joists and beams. ...

In general, the Thai house had a raised basement because of the advantages against flooding as well as for storage. The basement was used for varieties of activities such as weaving, pottery and basketry. The raised basement also served to protect people from wild animals at night. Bishop Pallegoix has spoken in detail of the people living Bangkok in the early Rattanakosin:

[M]erchants liked to live on the water in shops made totally of wood on a bamboo raft.”⁴¹

... [T]here were 3 types of houses in Bangkok. The first type was the brick building. The second type was the wooden house. And the third type was the bamboo house that caused fire and could be severely damage...⁴²

...[A] quarter of the population lived in all kinds and sizes of boats. Most of them were merchants who always travelled or did their business in the capital. They were accustomed to living in houseboats and went on land only when necessary ...⁴³.

This clearly illustrates that the houses of the governed classes were different from those of the governing class. The houses of governed class people were made of simple materials like bamboo, those of the governing class of more valuable materials, mostly wood and cement. Furthermore, since people lived by the water, it

³⁹ de La Loubere, Simon. *A New Historical Relation of the Kingdom of Siam*. London: T. Hornne, 1691, p.29. Quoted in Anthony Reid, p. 65–66.

⁴⁰ Bishop Pallegoix, *ibid.*, p. 190–192.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 190–192.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

became an important element in their lives, a vital tool for living. They used it for drinking, bathing and commuting. Thus in areas away from the water the population density was thinner. This is in contrast to the present day. People tend now to live closer to roads and streets than by rivers, as this is more convenient.

2.2.1.3 Types of Houses

Phutsadi Thippathat⁴⁴ concluded that there were five types of houses in early Rattanakosin as follows:

1. Boats were movable floating houses and they were used as shops.
2. Houseboats or *rüan phae* were houses that looked like on-land Thai houses without columns and were on bamboo rafts, called *phae luk buap*. They floated along the Choaphraya River and along the distributing canals. All classes of people, citizens, merchants, and government officials, lived in them.
3. *Rüan Kriiang Phuk* were huts or bamboo houses. Varieties of materials were used as partition walls and roofs. Common people and poor people lived in them.
4. *Rüan Kriiang Sap* were houses that were of a wooden structure. Different types of material were used for partition walls and roofs. All wooden houses were called *rüan kriiang pha kradan*. Rich people lived in them.
5. Chinese brick houses mostly belonged to Chinese people. Large numbers of Chinese brick houses were found in the reign of King Rama III.

2.2.1.4 Limitations in Housing Construction

a. Usage and Style

Generally speaking, the utilization of space in most Thai houses was similar. Kitchens and kitchen activities were kept separate for reasons of safety and hygiene: soot from cooking, ventilation and the danger of fire were all factors. People also had no bathrooms at that time. They used pots or went out to the fields when they needed to go to the toilet. Bathing was done outdoors or in the water river?⁴⁵ In Sunthòn

⁴⁴ Phutsadi Thippathat, *ibid.*, p. 60.

⁴⁵ *Ban Thai* (The Thai House). Collected Fund Foundation. 1997, p. 44-47.

Phu's *Sawadi Raksa*⁴⁶ we read how it was recommended to take a bath in the water river:

อนึ่งว่าถ้าจะลงสระสนาน ทุกห้วยธารเดือนถ้ำและน้ำไหล

Whenever you take a bath, in any river

พระพักตร์นั้นหันล่องตามคลองไป ห้ามมิให้ถ่ายอุจจาระปัสสาวะ

Turn your face upstream, don't defecate or pass urine into the river

อย่าผินหน้าฝ่าฝืนขึ้นเหนือหน้า จะต้องรำพร้าพัดชดมาปะ

Keep your face above the water to avoid being hurt

เมื่อสร้งน้ำสำเร็จเสร็จธุระ คำนับพระคงคาเป็นอาจิณ

When you have finished your business, always salute to the river

The design of houses in general was the same, with variations in size, material and decoration. This was because of the belief that going against the teacher's words brought *nok kru*, or bad luck, and the beauty of the houses were undisputable.⁴⁷

Although most people were unfamiliar with western public health concepts, housing design at that time still reflected people's attitudes to health matters. Furthermore, the reluctance to oppose tradition had a strong influence on the restrictions of design and construction compared, for example, with present forms.

2.2.1.5 Materials, Technologies and Labour

In those days the only industries were minor domestic industries. There were no powered sawmills. Building work could only be carried out using human labour. The limitations imposed by materials, equipment and available technology resulted in an inevitable style. For instance, the high ceiling roofs were a direct result of the use of the material atap and the small clay tiles employed to prevent leaking and rotting. Clay tiles were employed because clay was easy to find and the production techniques were limited). In addition, the transport of materials was difficult. Logs had to be small and were brought in by voluntary workers⁴⁸ (*kan kò sang*).

⁴⁶ Uthai Chaiyanon, *Rattanakosin's Literature 1-2-3*. Bangkok: Nam Phon, 2002, p 84.

⁴⁷ Ban Thai, *ibid.*, p.47.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.47.

2.2.1.6 Factors Influencing Differentiation: Beliefs, Values and Social Regulations

At this time, social classification and social hierarchy were the factors influencing differentiation in the construction of houses. People believed that they were born with a difference in social status because of the karma from their past lives. Van Vliet (1636:83 quoted in Anthony Reid. p 37) tells us, “In Ayutthaya, only temples and Palaces were painted or gilded.”

Class structure and social hierarchy were used in the early Rattanakosin period as tools of social control and to maintain the social order. This was expressed in various ways. For instance, common people were forbidden to have wooden houses with fancy decorations, or the crown prince’s palaces were not allowed to have the pointed roofs that were reserved for the king⁴⁹.

As we have already seen, the restrictions in the use and design of houses, as well as materials, technology and labour, were factors that prolonged the differences in the housing of different classes of people. On the other hand, beliefs, and social values and regulations also played a significant role in this.

As mentioned earlier, the main concern for people building houses at that time was their practical use. (The houses of the governing class, however, were designed to symbolise the differences of the social classes). Ordinary people’s houses were designed as a necessary element for living, not as class identification. They were constructed according to the lifestyle. For example, living in boats and building houseboats was a natural consequence of living near the water. Using wood in the construction of houses resulted from the abundance of forest. Houses were built to be used. Regulating factors such as beliefs, social values and attitudes and the limitations in resources, technology, social status and the economy of the governed class were highly instrumental in determining the consumption and possession of houses. These factors meant that the governed class was not able to duplicate the fancy houses of the royal family or the governing class. Even though the differences in housing of different social classes were not immediately obvious, the governing class maintained their social status.

⁴⁹ Chatri Prakitnonthakarn. *Politics and Society in the Fine arts and Architecture*. Art and Culture Special Edition. Bangkok: Matichon Press, 2547, p. 245–246.

Thus, it can be said that the cultural expression of status and potential among the governed class, or common people, was not differentiated. In comparing the two classes, however, we see that the governing class had the capability of demonstrating its level of culture and its right to consume more valuable, more beautiful, and higher quality objects than the governed class. Because they constituted only a fraction of the governed class, they used their houses as symbols of their status. Houses were not used as a code in any other symbolic communication in the individual imagination, as they were in consumerism.

2.2.2 Clothing

Clothing in the early Rattankosin period was derived from the late Ayutthaya since most people had migrated from Ayutthaya. Knowledge, beliefs and customs were no different⁵⁰. Clothes had been associated with the Thai way of life and beliefs since ancient times. With respect to beliefs, for example, wearing new clothes on a Monday, Wednesday, Thursday or Friday in the phase of the waxing moon on the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 12th, or 13th of the month, or the waning moon on the 2nd, 3rd, 6th, 9th, or 15th brought good luck. Dreaming of wearing new clothes was also considerate to be luck⁵¹.

Clothing could also reflect the general social condition of the kingdom. In times of peace, people had time to take care of their clothes, could be inventive and create new and attractive garments. But in times of war clothes had to be practical and tight fitting. Phongphaka Kurowat⁵² divided clothing into three categories:

1. Dress according to royal regulations. This was for men and women of the royal family and higher government officials, the nobility included. The bun was in trend for women.
2. Commoners' dress was *congkraben*⁵³. Men in northern parts had long hair. In the reign of King Narai, men had short hair, called "*mahatthai style*", and women had long hair, until the reign of King Borommakot, and wore a wrap-around shawl.

⁵⁰ The Subcommittee for Documents Collecting. *Thai Art and Culture. 1 Vol*, "Customs, Tradition and Culture in the Rattanakosin" Rattanakosin Commemorates 200 Years, Bangkok, 1982. p. 4.

⁵¹ Phrachit Sakunatasana. *Folk Culture and Thai Tradition*. Bangkok : Phumi Panya Press, 2003, p. 17.

⁵² Phongphaka Kurowa. *A Hand Book on the History of Clothing*. 5th ed. Bangkok: Ruamsan, 1997, p.54.

⁵³ *congkraben* is to thread the roll ends of a cloth between legs and bring it up to the back

3. In war time, in the late Ayutthaya, both men and women had to fight. The style of clothing had to be adjusted to accommodate escape. Women were required to have short hair and wear a shawl, called *ta beng man*⁵⁴.

Furthermore, differences in people's status and wealth were demonstrated in the use of fabrics in house decoration. As La Loubère (1691: 30 quoted in Anthony Reid, p 77) noted, in the city of Ayutthaya the French ambassador's house had printed fabrics on the walls and white muslin on the ceiling.

2.2.2.1 Clothing: Social Classification Controller

a. Clothing for the Governing Class

In early the Rattanakosin period, the culture of clothing adhered to the Ayutthaya style. Ladies in the royal household wore gold-printed *phanung* with a pleated embroidery wrap-around shawl and had short hair⁵⁵ (*wai choeng*). Normally, men wore a silk *phanung* [*pha muang –congkraben*: ผ้าม่วงโจงกระเบน] with no shirt. In winter, during an audience with royalty, men would wear a high-neck long-sleeved front-buttoned shirt⁵⁶.

In addition, one had to dress according to one's rank. This applied especially to high-ranking persons. As an example of the aristocrat dress code according to the Palatine Law⁵⁷,

Queen พระอรรคมเหสี	wears a golden silk blouse, golden footwear นุ่งแพรลายทองทรงเสื้อ
Minor queen พระราชเทวี	wears <i>darakòn</i> silk blouse, golden footwear นุ่งแพรดารากรทรงเสื้อ รองพระบาททอง
Children of the king ลูกหลวง	wear golden chintz blouse, without footwear เสื้อโกศลายทอง (ไม่สวมรองพระบาท)
Grandchild of the king หลานหลวง	wears a blouse of lesser quality <i>darakòn</i> silk เสื้อแพรดารากรเลว

⁵⁴ *ta beng man* is to wrap a pieces of cloth around the back and the breasts and tie the ends around the neck.

⁵⁵The Subcommittee for documents collecting. *Thai Art and Culture*. 1 Vol., *ibid.*, p. 4.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁵⁷ Sompob Manarangsarn. *Economic Development of Thailand before and after the Political Reform of 1892*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 2001, p. 41, quoted in Somrak Chaisingkananon. *Tastes; Language in Consumerism Era of Thai Society*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 2001, p. 7.

Concubine of the king พระสนม	wears silk of any colour เสื้อแพรสีต่าง
Wife of the prime minister or of high nobility ภรรยาข้าราชการชั้นผู้ใหญ่กว่าเสนาบดี	wears <i>kaoropphaya</i> silk นุ่งแพรเคารพย
Wife of a minister ภรรยาข้าราชการชั้นเสนาบดี	wears <i>cam- ruat</i> silk สวมเสื้อนุ่งแพรจ้าวจ
Lady of the court นางใน	pleated cloth, wrap shawl; <i>sabai</i> นุ่งจีมห่มสไบ

This dress code was only for special occasions. Usually, ladies would all dress the same. It was improper to dress above their station.

As can be seen, the dress code of the governing class was consistent with their role and responsibilities, and demonstrated their social status and what was expected of them. It was not possible for the governed classes to imitate it. This does not apply to casual dress which was alike for both classes. The governing class would pay attention to quality, aesthetic values, refinement, smartness, tidiness, simplicity, elegance and accoutrements. For example, high class ladies' clothing was finely woven and made from expensive materials such as silk or silver or gold thread. Some clothes were embroidered or decorated with export value materials and specially-woven local textiles⁵⁸. An upper-class ladies' wrap-around shawl was called "*pha song sa phak*: ผ้าทรงสะพัก" and made of *pha phrae*: ผ้าแพร. The word "*pha phrae*" was used to denote silk coming from abroad to differentiate it from local Thai silk. This silk came in both thick and thin varieties, including *pha phrae krabuan cin*: ผ้าแพรกระบวนจีน, *phae lo lai*: แพรไล่ลาย and *phae kim tuan* silk: แพรกิมต่วน etc⁵⁹.

Upper-class women wore silk wrap-around shawls in beautiful colours and other decorative wrap-around shawls such as *pha tat*: ผ้าคาด, *pha krong thong*: ผ้ากรองทอง, *pha pak din ngoen/ din thong*: ผ้าปักดินเงินดินทอง. And finely woven *pha nung* such as *pha yiarabap*: ผ้าเยียรบับ, *pha yok*: ผ้ายอก, *pha khem kap*: ผ้าเข็มขาบ *pha khian thong*: ผ้าเขียนทอง,⁶⁰ etc. Even in casual wear, upper-class women wore finely printed high

⁵⁸ Suwadi Thanaprasitphattana. Women's Clothing and the Manufacture of Woven Products in Thai Society in the Rattanakosin. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 1999, p.11.

⁵⁹ Suwadi, *ibid.*, p.16.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 16-18.

quality clothes, for example, panung called “*pha lai*: ผ้าลาย” . *Pha lai* was a high quality Indian cotton with Thai motif’s such as *lai phum khao bin*: ลายพุ่มข้าวบิณฑ์, *lai kan yaeng*: ลายก้านแย่ง, *lai thapanom*: ลายเทพนม, *lai kinari*: ลายกินรี, etc, *printed on it*. This was specially ordered by the royal household, made for upper-class Siamese and was not for sale. It took the form usually of a royal gift or a gift from a very high-ranking government official to a subordinate. Ordinary people would not be able to buy or possess such clothes. According to *pha yua tani*: ผ้ายั่วตานี, *pha pum*: ผ้าปุม, also known as *pha pum som pak*: ผ้าปุมสมปัก this could also be of Khmer silk. As mentioned in the Three Seal Codes, differently printed clothes were assigned to the different ranks and statuses of government officials.⁶¹ The upper-class women’s wrap-around shawls were neatly pleated using a pleating machine, or by hand, and scented in perfumed chests⁶².

b. Clothing for the Governed Class

Having to earn a living or serve in the labour force meant that people of the governed classes did not have much time to be concerned about clothing. Ordinary people wore fewer clothes, and in dark colours. At home women wore tube skirts or *congkraben* with tight-fitting front-buttoned long-sleeved blouses and a strip of cloth worn around the bosom. Undergarments were not popular among men or women.⁶³ Evidence of modes of dress can be gleaned from wall paintings and foreigners’ observations. The wearing of topless clothes by middle-aged women is indicative of their simple lifestyle and is also consistent with the warm climate. The practice was, however, frowned upon by foreigners. As Bishop Pallegoix⁶⁴ says, “after two years of marriage, young women took off their breast clothes at home. It was an offensive custom to Europeans, but rather common to Thai people”.

Generally, people wove their own clothes and bartered with them within the community. The quality was not good enough for export. As Crawford⁶⁵ pointed out, weaving was done by women. The products were not as good as those from Java or Celebes, so there was no demand abroad for Thai garments. Imported clothes were

⁶¹ *The Three Seals Code*, *ibid.*, p 46.

⁶² Anek Nawikamun. *Clothing in the Rattanakosin*. Bangkok: Müang Boran, 1992, p. 45.

⁶³ The Subcommittee for documents collecting, *Thai Art and Culture*. 1 Vol., *ibid.*, p. 5.

⁶⁴ Bishop Pallegoix, *ibid.*, p. 183.

⁶⁵ Chai Rüangsin. *Economic Aspects of Thai History from 1809-1900*. 1998, p. 107.

popular, especially those from India. As Chai Rüangsin's⁶⁶ observes, clothes were the goods most in demand by Chinese merchants in the countryside, followed by ceramic ware and house decoration. These goods were imported. Clothes from India and ceramics from China were popular. Imported goods were cheaper than local products. It seems, from Chai Rüangsin and Crawford, that the consumption value of imported goods among Thai people had been steadily growing for a long time, although it was already in the Thai people's blood.

Regulations forbade the governed classes imitating upper-class dress styles. As clearly stated by Sunthòn Phu⁶⁷: common women should not dress above their station

จะนุ่งห่มดูพอสมศักดิ์สงวน ให้สมควรรับพัศตร์ตามศักดิ์ศรี

The manner of dress should be appropriate to one's status or rank

จะคัดหน้าทาแป้งแต่งอินทรีย์ คุณวิถีนื้ออย่าเหวี่ยงเกิน

Make up your face, dress your body to suit your skin colour

จะเก็บไร้วางผมให้สมพัศตร์ บำรุงศักดิ์ตามศรีมิให้เขิน

Have your hair suit your face, nourish your honour according to your status

เป็นสุภาพราบเรียบแลเจริญ คงมีผู้สรรเสริญอนงค์ทรง

Women who dress in a pleasing way may attract attention and praise

He also did not agree with young women of the governed class who liked to wear chintz imitating this dress code. In his poem⁶⁸ he says

จนวนุ่งเจียมห่มเจียมเสียมหึงม อย่ากระหึ่มยศถาอำชมาสัย

Take care when dressing, don't dress according to your whim

อย่านุ่งลายกรายกรุยทำลุยไป คัวมิใช่ชาววังมิบังควร

Don't wear chintz or walk with affected grace, this is not proper for you, who are not courtesans

Even though there were regulations and teachings on dressing above one's social class, women in the governed classes in Bangkok liked to wear Indian

⁶⁶ Chai Rüangsin, *ibid.*, p. 216

⁶⁷ Sunthòn Phu. *Women's Proverb, Sawatdi Raksa Rhymse, and Musical teaching*. 11th ed. Ceremony of Royal Cremation of Sub Councillor Sri Khun Yan Yong Kitcakòn. Bangkok: Phetkasem Printing, 1939, p.8.

⁶⁸ Sunthòn Phu, *ibid.*, p. 8.

imitation printed clothes called *pha nòk yang*: ผ้านอกอย่าง. As Bishop Pallegoix⁶⁹ says, “the clothes consisted of large pieces of Indian printed fabric, worn with a belt and pulled from the front under the legs and tied at the back....”

On special occasions, common or governed class people usually dressed well, according to the occasion, in woven clothes.⁷⁰

As we have seen clothing was important for social classification, especially on special occasions in the community. Common or governed class women dressed smartly. Furthermore, attitudes to dress/traditions had reflected the importance of dressing well for the sake of not being derided. As in a Northern Thai saying⁷¹,

ผู้กินได้กิน	บ่มีใตตามไปส่องท้อง
ผู้กินได้เอื้อไต้ย่อง	ชาวบ้านเป็นแค้น

which means, the distress you suffer through hunger will go unnoticed, as no-one will bother to look into your stomach the distress you suffer through being badly attired will be immediately apparent and will bring shame on you

In everyday life, women wore tube skirts or *congkraben* with *pha thap* but no blouses. Men wore *congkraben* without a shirt. Furthermore, it was believed that wearing the right colour clothes on the right day brought good luck. As given in Sawadiraksa, by Sunthòn Phu⁷², red should be worn on Sunday, ivory on Monday, purple on Tuesday, red-orange on Wednesday, green or yellow on Thursday, smokey grey on Friday and black on Saturday.

Dress at that time reflected social classification in a similar way to that in Europe in the 18th century. Richard Sennett tells us that⁷³ “in eighteenth-century London and Paris it was easy to tell social status from street clothes because these were very highly codified and deliberately indicated the public status of an individual, for example their occupation”.

The society at this time was, as in the Ayutthaya period, a society of the aristocracy. People always dressed properly, according to their social status and rank. The clothes of the governing class would unfailingly be elegant and of high quality

⁶⁹ Bishop Pallegoix, *ibid.*, p. 143.

⁷⁰ Suwadee, *ibid.*, p. 26.

⁷¹ The Subcommittee for documents collecting, *Thai Art and Culture. 1 Vol.*, *ibid.*, p. 43

⁷² The Subcommittee for documents collecting, *Thai Art and Culture. 1 Vol.*, *ibid.*, p. 25.

⁷³ Richard Sennett (1978 [1976]) quoted in Peter Corrigan. *The Sociology of Consumption*, 1997, p. 161.

material and tailoring. The clothes of the people of the governed class were suited to the climate and their profession. Although the governed class had been conditioned by social, economic and political influences to dress according to their position in society, some would imitate the dress styles of the governing class. They were particularly influenced by aesthetic and religious considerations. In conclusion, it can be said that the clothes of most people at the time served a practical purpose, governed by everyday concerns rather than cultural ones. It was common consumption concepts rather than cultural consumption. Clothes were an indicator of social status in an aristocratic society, and not of identity, personal taste or lifestyle, as in the present day.

2.2.3 Food

Hunger is a basic human drive and is independent of when or where one lives. But what and how we eat is a cultural phenomenon, acquired and developed by a process of learning, reflection and the collecting and passing on of experience to society on economic, social, political and environmental contexts. This means that each society develops its own types of food that differ in taste, appearance and odour. This is a social and cultural process and is not influenced by instinct. Thus, economic, social and political conditions mould eating culture, while at the same time foods can reflect existing economic, social and political conditions. Food culture trends shifts and changes, through imports and trade as well as through the normal mixing and adjusting of tastes in the existing culture. This creates a uniqueness in each culture. Studying eating culture as a part of social and technological developments helps better understand social history.⁷⁴

Anthropologists focus on types and productions of food as an illustration of the evolutionary steps in the management of human social relationships, called Modes of production. The modes of production have 5 steps⁷⁵:

1. hunting and gathering,
2. horticulture,
3. pastoralism,

⁷⁴ Charadchai Ramitanon. *Eating Culture of Northern Thai: Namphrik and Local Vegetables of Lanna*. Biodiversity and Indigenous Knowledge Studies Centre for Research and Sustainable Development. Faculty of Social Science. Chiang Mai University, 2000, p. 22.

⁷⁵ Charadchai Ramitanon, *ibid.*, p. 2.

4. agriculture,

5. industry.

Applying this Modes of Production model, we can categorise Thailand in the early Rattanakosin as an agricultural state employing human labour technology. The environment played an important role in human life, especially concerning food, medicine, materials for tools, clothing and housing. In this type of society men gave particular consideration to some production processes such as ploughing and raking. The provision of a labour force was achieved through marriage. Strong young men were married into families by arrangement⁷⁶. Women were educated to be virtuous: their marriage would secure more labour and social linkage benefits. One of the important qualities expected in a woman was the ability to cook, as we see in the saying, “good cooking ability makes your husband love you to death”.

Thailand had been well-known as an agricultural society from the time of Sukhothai, as shown in the saying, that “there were fish in the water and rice in the fields”. Fish and rice were core ingredients for the Thai people. Rice was significant in terms of legends, customs, ceremonies, and other traditional practices, which were instrumental in the formation of people’s lives, maxims and beliefs. It formed a social and cultural foundation. Ayutthaya law illustrates the importance of rice, which was categorized as more than just a kind of food in section 33⁷⁷ by the order: those who destroyed fences or let livestock into others’ rice fields were to be whipped and paraded while saying the words “do not do as I do” for three days. The justification for such a punishment was that they insulted the goddess of rice, who fed them. Even in the present day fish and rice are very important in Thai life, as we see in the saying “*khao pla-ahan*”, “*kin khao kin pla*”, or “*kap khao kap pla*”.

Thai attitudes to food are related to their belief system. Folk beliefs concerning health together with culture values played an important role in determining the consumption behaviours of the people. For instance, pregnant women and patients should refrain from eating certain foods. Foods were generally categorized into the two groups of hot and cold. and then further divided in the same manner as the elements: earth, water, air and fire.⁷⁸ This was used to explain food

⁷⁶ Charadchai Ramitanon, *ibid.*, p. 12–13.

⁷⁷ Kannikar Phromsao and Nantha Benchasilarak. *Thai Cuisine*. Chaingmai: Wannarak, 1999, p. 19.

⁷⁸ Banja Yodkamnoen. “Beliefs and Consuming Habits of Northern in Thailand” in Sanit Samarkarn. (ed.) *Society and Culture in the North of Thailand*. Bangkok: The Social Sciences Association. 1978. p. 32.

related-sicknesses, where any imbalance in the elements of the body could cause infection. Thus, when eating, one had to take the balance between food and the bodily elements into account. The tastes of foods were categorized into four types⁷⁹, also in accordance with the bodily elements:

1. Sweet foods were earth, and included rice, corn, nuts, dates and beef. They were good for the spleen, blood circulation and digestion.
2. Sour foods were water: sour prunes, olives, pomegranates and dog meat fell into this category. They were good for the liver, gallbladder and for treating intestinal problems.
3. Bitter foods were fire, and included foods such as bitter fruit and lamb. They were good for the heart, preventing organ accumulating water and for detoxification.
4. Spicy foods were air; such foods might be chillies, ginger, shallots, onions and garlic. They were good for the kidneys, the bladder, for softening body tissues and for stimulating the intestine.

Thai eating culture started out simple; later it was developed and modified, especially within the grand palace, the centre of eating culture.⁸⁰ As Anthony Reid⁸¹ notes, fundamental to all classes was the washing of the hands before and after a meal, and only eating with the right hand. By the 19th century differences in eating behaviour had evolved. According to Pallegoix⁸², “the king and royal family members were different from his people only in the luxury of the dining utensils and the variety of dishes”. Dorine Fernandes⁸³, a Philippine food historian, observed, in the Thai food section of “Sweet News” that it is lucky that the Thai food tradition has not become extinct. Thai food is linked to a tradition of Court cuisine that is not found in other countries in Asia.

Apart from rice and fish, meat, vegetables and fruit were important sources of food in Thailand. In ancient times, Thai people had consumed the meat of large

⁷⁹ Phrayong Ananthawong. *The Novel of the Tip of the Chopstick 1 (niyai plai takiab)* Bangkok: Suwiriyan Press. 1989. p. 10.

⁸⁰ Kannikar, *ibid.*, p. 19.

⁸¹ Anthony Reid. *Southeast Asia in the Commercial Era A.D.1450–1680: Territory under the Wind*. 1 Vol. The Thailand Research Fund, 1988. p. 43.

⁸² Pallegoix, *ibid.*, 218

⁸³ Quoted in Kobkaew Natphinit. “Eat and live as Thai” in *Thai Cultural Journal*. Vol. 37 No. 4 (April.- May. 2000), p. 44–45.

animals. The main dishes were *namphrik*⁸⁴, fresh vegetables and fish. Large animals were slaughtered only on special occasions such as festivals commemorating meritorious deeds and feasts of ordainment. It was a sin to kill, according to Buddhist teaching. The popularity of eating the meat of large animals came with the use of spices. The habit of eating pork, chicken and duck meat came from China. Vegetables and fruit were easy to find in Thailand because of abundance of the land. One dish that had to be on the table everyday was *namphrik*, a sauce for dipping fish and vegetables. It is assumed that this *namphrik* was made from peppers rather than chillies since peppers were of Thai origin whereas chillies were imported into Thailand in the Ayutthaya era by foreign merchants⁸⁵.

The expression, “you are what you eat” reflects the central influence food had on people’s lifestyle. The north-eastern saying⁸⁶ concerning the importance of food compared with other things tells us that the misfortune of having no clothes was tolerable, as one could hide in one’s house, but an empty stomach was something one could not bear.

The dishes in this period were not very varied; most dishes were quite simple. Food was rather dry, so forks and spoons were not necessary. The normal eating method was known as “*Poep khao*”: one used four fingers, the thumb, index finger, middle finger and ring finger to pick up rice and put it in one’s mouth, during which one’s fingers should not become soiled with food higher than 1 inch. Family members would dine together, except in rich families, where the head of the family would eat alone.⁸⁷ When eating, people would sit on mats or carpets and all the dishes would be placed on trays, except the rice and water bowls, which were placed at the side⁸⁸.

In addition to ordinary food, the betel palm was a vital chewing snack for Thai people. Both men and women chewed betel and developed black teeth, which were considered a sign of beauty, especially among the women. Sir John Bowring⁸⁹,

⁸⁴ Maj. Gen. M.R. (Mom Ratchawong) Kukrit Pramoj. *Namphrik*. Bangkok: Siam Rat Press.,1992, p. 7.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 72.

⁸⁶ The Subcommittee for documents collecting, *Thai Art and Culture*. 1 Vol., ibid., p. 43.

⁸⁷ Waraporn Ciochaisak. *Thai Foods and lifestyles from World War Two to the Present*. The Thai Study Institute: Chulalongkorn University. 1996. p. 3.

⁸⁸ The Subcommittee for documents collecting, *Thai Art and Culture*. 1 Vol. ibid., p 59

⁸⁹ Sir John Bowring. *The Kingdom and People of Siam*. Vol I. Oxford University Press ,1969, p. 113–114.

an Englishman staying in Thailand at that time, noted the importance of chewing betel for the Thais:

... [T]he consumption of the areca and the betel nut is enormous throughout Siam. A Siamese who is tolerably well off is scarcely ever seen without the nut in his mouth; and he is invariably attended by servants who carry a supply of the material, with all the needful paraphernalia, whose costliness depends upon the opulence and rank of the possessor. Among the nobles, the boxes are almost invariably of gold; and in the case of the very highest ranks, they are covered with diamonds or other precious stones, and are constantly in a state of passage from the hands of the servants to their masters, and back again when the want of the moment has been supplied...Betel-chewing blackens the teeth, which is considered a recommendation in Siam; it purifies the breath, and is said to preserve the tooth's enamel when used moderately and without an undue quantity of quicklime. The betel is such a necessary of life in Siam, that were the choice offered to a hungry Siamese of food, or his favourite betel, there is no doubt he would reject the first, and ask for the second in preference.

As mentioned above, we will see that betel was important to Thai people in matters of beauty, class, merit and respect.

2.2.3.1 Food: the Social Class Differentiation

a. Food of the Governing Class

- **Fine Art: Palace Aesthetic Style Monopolized**

In Thailand, the palace cuisine was set as the standard of the art of eating, which reflected elegance, refinement and innovation. As noted by La Loubere,⁹⁰ a French ambassador visiting the country during the reign of King Narai, “*Ayutthaya's court held reception with more than 30 beautiful, well-prepared Chinese dishes, such as some garnished with pineapples painted as dragons*”. The grand palace kitchen accumulated knowledge and experience through training and teaching in the palace over a long period of time. Palace style food was considered high class; it highlighted the relationship difference between the royal family and common people, and lent an air of sanctity and auspiciousness to royal ceremonies.⁹¹ Examples can be found in *khanom tom daeng*, *khanom tom khao*, a dessert served at a

⁹⁰ La Loubere quoted in *Foods: Resources and Arts of Thai*. Export-Import Bank of Thailand. 2003, p.100.

⁹¹*Foods: Resources and Arts of Thai*. 2003, p.96.

sacred ceremony for angels, and *krayasat*, also a dessert, served at the royal celebration of the 10th month. King Rama V believed that King Rama I had first introduced *khao thip* into this ceremony. From this we can assume that the royal ceremony of making *khao thip* had been around since the Ayutthaya.⁹²

The royal kitchen in the reign of King Narai employed the best chefs, among them Chinese and Indian chefs who were able to cook Chinese, Japanese, Persian, Indian and European food.⁹³ Thai traditional dessert recipes were made from flour, sugar and coconut milk. Later, the recipes were combined with western ones by mixing egg yolks into them. Lady Wichayen, the Japanese-Portuguese wife of Chaophraya Wichayen, a Greek, invented some new kinds of dessert. She was employed as *Thao Thongkeepmar* or *Wiset*, the royal cook. She incorporated her knowledge into the local knowledge and invented the well-known desserts, *thòngyip*, *thòngyot*, *phoithong*, *thòngprong*, *thòngplu*, *thòngmoon*, *khanom ping*, *khanom farang*, *khanom khai thao*, *khanom mòkang*, *sampani* and *sangkaya*.⁹⁴

The preparation of Thai entrees and desserts was the responsibility of women. They were trained to be good housewives. Upper-class women would have more knowledge and expertise than ordinary women such as court ladies. This is because ordinary women were not trained as extensively as upper-class women.⁹⁵

- **The Origins of Chinese Cuisine**

During the period of reconstruction the society needed labour. The shortage of labour led to a policy of inviting immigrants into Siam, especially Chinese. There is a saying that Siam has benefited from Chinese labour in city construction and development from that time right up to the present day. Many Thai people nowadays have Chinese ancestors and have adopted Chinese values. The Chinese brought their own customs and traditions with them when they came into Thailand. One of them was the Chinese cuisine. Chinese food culture had already been in Thailand for quite some time, but it gained significance in the Siam royal kitchen in the reign of King Rama III. Many Chinese communities were established and trade with the Chinese grew. Chinese people gave chickens and ducks to the

⁹² Ibid., p. 98.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 100.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 100.

⁹⁵ Thai Art and Culture. 1 Vol., *ibid.*, p. 44.

king. His Majesty fed them to monks in the Chinese New Year.⁹⁶ Furthermore, Chinese merchants sold goods in remote areas. After the Bowring Treaty, the fiscal economy became very strong. Money was used as a medium for exchanging goods. Foodstuffs and other supplies were sold such as *khanom can-ap*, vegetables, fruits, salt, shallots, onions, garlic, betel, shrimp paste, sugar, sickles, knives, kerosene, noodles, pork meat, clothes etc⁹⁷.

b. The Foods of the Governed Class

- **Equality in Deliciousness Taste**

Although the dishes of the governed class may not have been as aesthetically pleasing as those of the governing class, the quality of flavour would have equalled them. The ingredients were almost the same. Apart from the main dishes of rice, fish and *namphrik*, one would also have found meat, vegetables, fruit and desserts etc. However, the care needed in food preparation by common women for temple ceremonies was more important than at any time before.

Thai entrees could be categorized into 4 types:

1. Soup or curry, such as *tomyam*
2. Stir fry, *yam pla*
3. *Krüangkiang* such as fishcakes, *hòmok*, salted fish
4. *Krüangcim* such as *loan*, *namphrik*.

In Thai society, it can be said that women of both classes were taught and trained in the housekeeping skills of cooking, food decoration, sewing and the preparation of fragrant water, owing to the social values at the time. The differences would be apparent in the care, elegance and creativity, since court women had more time than common women and received special training.

- **Common People's Food sellers: *hap re***

Thai people at that time preferred home-cooked meals. Evidence of *hap re* is first found in the reign of King Rama III. These *hap re* originated in casinos, where gamblers spent a lot of time and did not have the time to go home to eat. The food seller or *hap re* would prepare food and put it in her baskets.⁹⁸ When the casinos

⁹⁶ *Foods: Resources and Arts of Thai*, 2003, p. 102.

⁹⁷ John Crawford. *Journal of an Embassy to the Courts of Siam and Cochin China*. London: Oxford University Press, 1967, p. 412. quoted in Waraporn Ciochaisak, *ibid.*, p. 6.

⁹⁸ Tui Chumsai. *Eat Well for Live Well*. Bangkok: Khaw Pang Press, 1978, p. 247.

were abolished *hap re* increased and spread around the community, and then from one community to another. Nowadays, it is said that nowhere has as many food sellers or *hap re* as Thailand.

As mentioned earlier, the differences in types of foods of both classes were negligible. One mainly ate rice, fish and *namphrik*. The significant differences were in the orderliness and care in preparation, and that the types of foods served to the governing class were more varied, since they had more time and money. They also had better training opportunities to develop their expertise and creativity, while people of the governed class had to spend much of their time in earning their living.

The guiding principles in food preparation were mostly concerned with everyday living and creating the right flavours, odours and appearance. Eating culture was not used as the symbol of class difference that it was in the consumerism era.

2.2.4 Medicine

The Buddhist saying “*Aroka ya parama rap ha*”, meaning, it is best not to get sick, is always true.

In employing the word “medicine” in this study, concepts of healthcare have been included. The Thai word means “state of happiness”, and covers conditions in physical, psychological, and social dimensions.

2.2.4.1 Varieties of Healthcare Knowledge

Thai people in the past had healthcare concepts that were consistent with their customs and culture. Herbs were used for eating, in steam therapy and massage. Thai diagnostic methods made use of Indian, Chinese, Greek, Arab and Muslim medical knowledge and theories. The principle of the 4 elements, earth, water, air and fire, regulated the human body. Illnesses could be caused by overheating (as in fever and pregnancy), dangerous loss of heat (e.g. in labour), or by air that was excessively hot or humid. Thai methods of treatment focussed on cooling rituals and medicines, together with the treatment of the spirit, or *khwan*. This was well accepted, both in its values and its results, by everybody, even by foreigners. Crawford (1820 I: 329) and Pallegoix (1854 I: 342) both thankfully accepted that Thai and Indonesian medicines were at least not dangerous (quoted in Anthony Reed, p. 56). La Loubere, referring to Thai methods of treatment using massage, said that, “*in Siam, the expert would*

stretch the patients' bodies by pressing the patients' bodies with the feet, and children were used for pregnant women." In La Loubere's opinion, even though Thai medical practice was not as scientific as Western practices were, illnesses could nevertheless be cured: "medicine might not be as scientific, but this did not worry the Siamese. The traditional Thai practices had been passed on from the ancestors and had never changed. They did not concern themselves with the symptoms of each disease. Many were cured." (cf. Crawford 1820 I: 328 quoted in Anthony Reed, p. 55). It was something that had been passed on from one generation to the next and had existed for a long time. As Prince Saowaphang⁹⁹ has explained in previous studies, "it was taught in the family. Some doctors were other doctors' assistants for years and had seen and practiced many methods of treatment. The principles of medical practice were, first study herbs and their qualities, then books, and then practice diagnosis with the teachers before attempting a diagnosis alone."

Phrathip Chumpon¹⁰⁰ has discussed methods of treatment in Thai society at that time: "in Sukhothai, there was an unofficial doctor, or *mò chaloeyisak*, in each community. This doctor treated patients by the use of herbs and by Buddhist treatments and sorcery. Furthermore, a priest in every temple had learned Thai medicine, and treated patients". Medical treatment had been important for people in this society for a very long time. As noted in parts of Ayutthaya's Law, "The Laws of the Civil and Military Provincial Hierarchies": *Phra Aiyakan Tamnaeng Na Phonlariian, Phra Aiyakarn Tamnaeng Na Thahan HuaMüang* in 1455 A.D.¹⁰¹, about the *sakdina* of the royal doctor, "*Phra si mahosot ratcha phattaya thibòdi si ongkharak, Caokrom phataya na* had 1600 *rai*."

Western medical practice had been coming into Thailand since the Ayutthaya period. There was a royal doctor in King Narai's court, whose name was Mr. Phuamat. At the same time, this French missionary played an important role in publicizing western practices by bringing in medicines and medical textbooks.¹⁰² This French missionary established the first small clinic, for three or four patients at a time, located near the Catholic Church, in Ayutthaya in 1669. Three years later, the

⁹⁹ Phra Ong Chao Si Saowaphang. "Doctor and Physician " *Traditional Beliefs* 4th Sections. Bangkok: Sophonthiptadsanakorn Press, 1921, p. 22.

¹⁰⁰ Phrathip., *ibid.*, p. 54.

¹⁰¹ *Tamra Phra Narai Osot*. In Memory of the Royal Cremation of Khaisri Thangtiao. 1980, preface page.

¹⁰² Phrathip, *ibid.*, p. 95.

number of patients had increased to 15¹⁰³. Even though the first hospital was established in the city of Ayutthaya, there were no professional doctors. Treatment was in the hands of missionaries, who were trained in medicine and surgery. The first professional doctor was Dr. Chabonneau, a French physician, who was with the French missionary who arrived in Ayutthaya in 1676.¹⁰⁴ After the reign of King Narai, Western medical practice was prohibited because foreigners became involved in political issues (in the reign of King Phraphetracha). Some were evicted from the kingdom and some were taken into custody. Dr. Chabonneau took care of treating foreign prisoners¹⁰⁵. Apart from Thai and Western medical treatments, the Ayutthaya period made use of others, such as Chinese and Indian. In a racist note from La Loubere we learn, “the Indian doctors were delusive and the Chinese doctors were even worse.”¹⁰⁶

As we have seen, medicine and medical philosophies from the Ayutthaya up to the early Rattanakosin periods were varied. They covered Chinese herbs, Indian medicine, Western surgery and Thai supernatural beliefs. After the second defeat against Burma, some medical documents were lost or destroyed. Doctors were killed or captured. Some knowledge disappeared. Fortunately, unofficial doctors and priests in the countryside collected and preserved medical textbooks. Medical treatment in the early Rattanakosin period had been derived from the Ayutthaya¹⁰⁷, and therefore displayed a wide variety of knowledge.

2.2.4.2 The Era of Royal Doctors and Unofficial Doctors, or *Mò Chaloeisak*¹⁰⁸

At this time, Western medical practice was not well known in Thai society. Both royal and unofficial doctors were in great demand. The differences between these two types of doctors highlight the authority enjoyed by the doctors who had been bound to the government powers from times past. In contrast, in the present day, a doctor has to have a license to treat patients. The royal doctors, who were appointed by the government, had a better opportunity to improve their social status and to

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 97–98.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p.107.

¹⁰⁸ Somphorn Phutriyanon. *Basic Knowledge of Thai Traditional Medicine: Herbs and Thai Traditional Medicine*. Department of Medical Service. Ministry of Public Health. 3 (ed.), 1999, p. 17.

accumulate honours and wealth than unofficial doctors. The unofficial doctors were equal to priests, exorcists and doctors who had not attended a medical school.

- **The royal doctors** were experts, and served in the royal medical office. They were aristocrats and earned their living by treating the King and courtiers, and others, according to royal orders. The royal doctor's training was systematic and he therefore gained people's trust. The royal doctors were trained from a very young age. They would be assigned to assist a royal doctor, and when they were fully trained and were experts in diagnosis they would be given a post. The royal doctor enjoyed more privileges than the unofficial doctor in many ways. For instance, the royal doctor who carried a red staff as a symbol of his profession, was allowed to collect herbs from wherever he wished. If there was a shortage of herbs at the palace, and if none could be found in the capital, Chao Phraya Chakri would decree that they should be collected in the countryside and sent to the royal medical office. The royal doctors earned their living from treating royal family members or government officials at the royal orders. Even though they would not charge for any treatment ordered, the patients nevertheless paid large amounts of money to show their gratitude.
- **The unofficial doctors** or *mò chaloeisak* were those who did not serve in government office. They were freelance. They were trained by their predecessors or learned from the existing textbooks and practised until they were experts. Most unofficial doctors enjoyed a good reputation and had many students, both common people and priests. Most were men (except midwives, who were usually old women). They were both doctor and pharmacist: the doctor would examine, diagnose, and prepare the medicine. He would carry with him a bag filled with herbs. If he agreed to treat a patient, he would have him get ready some *khuan khao*, which consisted of rice, bananas and betel, and 6 salueng of money, or 1.50 baht. All of these things together were called *kha khuan khao*, or, "the tribute money to the medical teacher" (Chiwaka Komaraphat). The doctor might ask the patient to collect the herbs and pay for other spices. He got paid only if the patient was cured: the patients' families would pay a charge of *khakhuankhoa* plus 3, rich patients would offer rewards to doctors in order

to get good treatment (if they were cured). A reputable doctor could ask for payment in advance; this was called *kha poet lamya*. What a unofficial doctor earned would depend on the community. The law allowed for him to be paid with other things if the patient did not have any money. Thus, earnings were not stable, and these doctors usually had secondary jobs.

The unofficial doctors, who were both common people and priests, could be elevated to the position of royal doctor if their abilities got noticed. They would be given a post in the royal medical offices, or in the city offices.

Two more types of popular doctors in the countryside, who were not officially categorized, were: *mò klang ban*, and the priest doctors. The *mò klang ban* were able to treat common illnesses. The priest doctors had knowledge of Thai medical treatment, and they did not expect payment. The medicines that were used were *ya kaew*, *ya lom* and *ya that*.

As previously mentioned, the profession of unofficial doctor was not financially stable. The market was in the position to choose the best quality and service. Furthermore, there was a distinctive line between the royal doctors in the governing class, and the village, or priest, doctors of the governed class. The governing class always had better opportunities for improving their lives than did the governed class.

2.2.4.3 Ways of Thinking on the Causes of Illness among People in the Past

Somkiat Wanthana¹⁰⁹ has mentioned that according to the beliefs of people in the early Rattanakosin illness was caused by the actions of spirits. In addition, the differences in the hypotheses as to the causes of disease could be due to differences in diagnosis. For example, as can be seen in khlong lookanit¹¹⁰: โคลงโลกนิติ,

“หมอแพทย์ทายว่าไข้ ลมคุณ”

A physician diagnoses the cause of an infection as a stroke

¹⁰⁹ Somkiat Wanthana. “Political of History, Society and Economy of Thai’s Health Care System”. in Komatara Cüngsathiansap (ed.). *Frontiers of Knowledge in the History of Medicine and Thai Public Health*. Bangkok: Health Systems Research Institute, 2002, p. 185.

¹¹⁰ Quoted in Dhammakait Kanari. “ Doctor Sem Pringpoungkaew and History of Medical and Thai’s Public Health Care System in contemporary periods”. in Komatara Cüngsathiansap (ed.) *Frontiers of Knowledge in the History of Medicine and Thai Public Health*. Bangkok: Health Systems Research Institute, 2002, p. 251.

โหราว่าเคราะห์แรงรุม โทษให้

An astrologer diagnoses the cause of an infection as ill fortune

แม่มคว่าผีกุม ทำโทษ

A sorceress diagnoses the cause of an infection as caused by a demon

ปราชญ์ว่ากรรมเองไซ้ ก่อสร้าง มาเอง

A learned man diagnoses the cause of an infection as caused by one's own *karma*

So people's ways of thinking about illness were partially bound up with supernatural beliefs, by Western standards. And later they had to step aside for the scientific thinking that came with colonization.

2.2.4.4 The Differentiation of Terms: Medical Scriptures, Royal Medical Textbooks, and Textbooks

The differences in terms used for Thai medical textbooks were a result of their sources and the processes of writing. The books that explained symptoms, treatments and the qualities of herbs bound together in palm leaves were called scriptures or “*khamphi*.” These were made using the same methods as for making Buddhist scriptures. Furthermore, the Indian scriptures on medicines and treatments, the Ayurveda, that were fundamental to Thai medicine, came into Thailand via Buddhism. These kinds of medical textbook were called “*khamphi phathaya*”¹¹¹. The word *khamphi* comes from the *Ma kot*; มคธ language; it was a religious or astrological text book; as a sign of respect it would have been later transcribed and copied into a *samut khòì*¹¹². These textbooks were called *tamra*. The addition of the word “*phra*” in front of the word “*tamra*” was an inherent sign of respect for a book: however, it would also be added in the case of a book that had been passed on to the common people by a member of the royal family .

2.2.4.5 The Fundament of Western Medical Treatment

In the reign of King Rama III, the first Protestant missionary, funded by the London Missionary Association, came to Bangkok to spread Christianity and donate

¹¹¹ Pharadi Mahakhan. *The Studying and Collection of Folk Medicine Textbooks in Chonburi, Bangsaen*. Srinakharinwirot University, 1989, p.6.

¹¹² *Samut khoi* is a leperella manuscript made of the wood of the khòì tree.

medicines; he was followed by an American missionary. The government decided to forbid people to accept books from them.¹¹³ Some important evidence on the introduction of western medical treatment comes from an advertisement for quinine¹¹⁴ in the Bangkok Reader in February 1845:32, 157 years ago. Anek Navikamun wrote about this advertisement in his book, *Thai Advertising in the Past: Kosana Thai Samai Raek*, page 14, that it was the first advertisement in Thailand. In this advertisement the benefits of quinine as a cure for malaria were promoted. In summing up, the journal wrote that this medicine could be bought at Hunters' store in the Hunter Building, and that now it was sold at the same price at Dr. Bradley's house. In addition, the first smallpox vaccination was available.

We have already alluded to the Indian and Chinese influences on Thai medicine. The treatments and use of herbs, such as in massage, the application of compresses and the preparation of herbal infusions, were alike. Each doctor would apply the methods according to his ability. Using observation, careful diagnosis and the expertise of doctors, Thai medical treatment was accordingly advancing. In addition, the civilizing effect that Westerners brought with them led to Thais adopting and exchanging the new medical knowledge. The reputation of western medicine was boosted when Dr. Bradley introduced such western techniques as vaccination, surgery and injection, which he first practised on converted Chinese. His success led to an acceptance of such techniques by government officials and nobles and the Siamese in general.¹¹⁵ Dr. Bradley published the first western medical textbook in Thai, *khamphi kan raksa: a medical textbook for pregnant women*, in which he discussed obstetric diseases and treatments.¹¹⁶ However, the western treatment was only popular among high-class people.

Most Thai doctors were not interested in western treatments. One exception was Krom Luang Wongsathiratchasanit. He was the 49th son of King Rama II. He studied with Dr. Bladley and qualified as a western doctor. He was a member of the New York medical institute.¹¹⁷ When he wrote his medical textbook at Chetuphon

¹¹³ Somphorn Phutriyanon, *ibid.*, p. 19.

¹¹⁴ Sanyaphong Suwanasit. *On the Route...a Half Century...Thai's Advertising*. Bangkok: Tipping Poys, 2002, p. 6.

¹¹⁵ Sanchai Saengwichian (ed). *One Hundred Years of Siriraj: History and Development*. Bangkok: Mahidol University, 1988, p. 23.

¹¹⁶ Saowapha Phornsiriphong and Pornthip Usapharat (ed). *Transcription and Transference of Thai Medical Knowledges*. Bangkok: The War Veterans' Organization, 1994, p. 47.

¹¹⁷ Saowapha Pornsiriphong and Pornthip Usapharat, *ibid.*, p. 47.

temple, its style was very different from that of the part. He had analyzed the older textbooks and developed them. Later, following generations analysed his book in turn using scientific methods. These contained detailed explanations of the uses and qualities of all herbs.¹¹⁸

2.2.4.6 Medicine and Social Class

a. Governing Class: Potential for Collecting Medical Textbooks

After the War with the Burmese, the early medical practices were suppressed. However, King Rama I ordered medical textbooks to be compiled. According to wall inscriptions at Wat Phra Chetupon Wimonmongkhonlaram or Wat Pho, the king had given instructions for the inscription of herbal drug recipes onto the wall of the temple, including pictures of ascetics performing training exercises (body twisting) to illustrate therapeutic methods.¹¹⁹ The royal dispensary (where the royal doctors worked) was re-established as it had been in the Ayutthaya. The doctors who treated common people were called *mò chaleiyasak*¹²⁰ (unofficial doctors). In the past, medical training had been transmitted via a teacher-student relationship. After King Rama I ordered Wat Po to be restored, training became more popular. Wat Pho was filled with detailed medical textbooks.¹²¹ In the reign of King Rama II, in 1812, these were compiled again. His Majesty thought, “the existing medical textbooks were confused and there were only a few professional doctors. It was difficult for young people to study.”¹²² The book compiled by Phra Pong-Amarin, the chief doctor, was called “*Tamra Rongphra-Osot*.”¹²³ It was handed to Krom Luang Wongsathirachsanit and has been with the Sanitwong family ever since.¹²⁴

During this reign, there was a cholera outbreak (cholera being called at that time “*Khai Phang Yai*”¹²⁵) and 30,000 people died. As noted in the Rattanakosin chronicle by Prince Damrong Rachanuphab¹²⁶, the epidemic lasted for 15 days. The

¹¹⁸ Phrathip Chumpon. *History of Thai Traditional Medicine*. Bangkok: Matichon Press, 2002, p. 153-154.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

¹²⁰ Somphon Phutriyanon, *ibid.* p. 16

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ Phrathip Chumpon, *ibid.*, p.108.

¹²⁴ Phrathip Chumpon, *ibid.*, p.117.

¹²⁵ Phrathip Chumpon, *ibid.*, p.108.

¹²⁶ *Annals of Bangkok in the Reign of King Rama I and II*. The National Library Edition, Bangkok: Khlang Witthaya, p. 608.

corpses that did not have any relatives to bury them were cremated. The total number of dead came to 30,000, two thirds of whom were women.

One year later, King Rama II ordered the medical inscriptions to be executed on the wall at Wat Jomthong or Wat Rach-ored that had been restored by Prince Cetsadabòdin.¹²⁷

In the reign of King Rama III, Thai medical practice recovered, together with other practices. The King ordered a meeting of sages, noble men, and experts in different subjects, such as writings on medicine and massage, poetry, archaeology, history, literature, customs, religion and proverbs, etc. The fruits of their endeavours were inscribed on the stones at Wat Po in 1832 for the benefit of the people. At that time, there was a lack of medical textbooks. Wat Pho was said to be Thailand's first university.¹²⁸ The medical knowledge that was inscribed can be categorized as follows¹²⁹:

1. The subject “physical exercise” (of ascetics) was concerned with physical exercise as a prevention against stiffening of the body and fatigue.

2. The subject of “medical science” was the study of Thai medical practices, and based theories of disease on the four elements, which related to housing, the seasons, the days, times of the day, food, the treatment of symptoms, diagnosis and treatment with medicine.

3. “Pharmacy” was the study of the qualities of herbs and spices.

4. “Massage” included the study of the structure of the human body and the creation of charts of the nervous system.

The compilation of such textbooks helped perpetuate medical knowledge. Thai people were only taught within the family, so the study of medicine was very hard for those who were not members of a doctor's family.¹³⁰

b. The Governed Class: Oral Traditions and Received Wisdom Concerning Health Care

The knowledge of the governed class was made up from local wisdom acquired by self-study, and was not written down. It belonged to everybody, and was for

¹²⁷ Prathip Chumpol, *ibid.*, p. 120-121

¹²⁸ Prati, *ibid.*, p. 123.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 124–125.

¹³⁰ Somporn Phutriyanon, *ibid.*, p. 20.

everyone's use.¹³¹ The priests possessed knowledge on medicines and treatments, and worked in the communities' temples. Srisak Wanliphodom writes, "in the temples, there were textbooks made from palms, medical textbooks included. The treatments used were not in those textbooks. The study of medicine would be in the form of oral traditions."¹³²

In general, Thai people knew how to look after their health. This is shown, for example, by Nithi Iaosiwong¹³³ in his study on the north eastern people's "Kalam", or northern people's "Khuet", or the "Salang" from central Thailand, which were forbidden foods. What pregnant women or people with abscesses, for example, should or should not eat was common knowledge. Furthermore, his study dealt with beliefs in ghosts. From this we see that knowledge concerning health care was not only in the hands of doctors, as it is in the present day.

As mentioned earlier, the early Rattankosin society had a unique knowledge base on health care of its own. It developed through a blending of Indian and Chinese philosophies over time. Since its perpetuation was difficult, and with the introduction of highly developed Western medical technology, this traditional knowledge base was eventually confronted with suspicion and misgivings, especially among Western practitioners. Their knowledge was based on rational principles, and it gradually found acceptance in Thai society.

2.3 Conclusion: People's Consumption of the Four Basic Necessities during in the Era of Social Establishment

In this era, most of the changes that occurred were in politics or foreign policy and economics. People's way of life and the material world were only gradually changing because the affecting factors were limited. For instance, there were no new means of transport, and communication with the West was limited. When compared with the Ayutthaya, the early Rattanakosin period was an era in which society experienced enormous changes. From the point of view of the controlling nature of the social

¹³¹ Srisak Walliphodom. "Thai Medical Treatment in the Dimensions of Society and Culture" in Komatara Cüingsathiansap (ed.) *Frontier of Knowledge in History of Medicine and Thai's Public Health*, Bangkok: Heath Systems Research Institute, 2002, p. 36.

¹³² Srisak Walniphodom, *ibid.*, p.36.

¹³³ Nidhi Ewseewong. "The Body of Knowledge in the History of Medicine and Thai Public Health" in Komatara Cüingsathiansap (ed.) *Frontiers of Knowledge in the History of Medicine and Thai Public Health*. Bangkok: Health Systems Research Institute, 2002, p. 26.

structure, and the country's economic philosophy, it was a self-sustaining economy. It experienced changes within itself. The labour force had fallen when compared to the amount of land. One part of the production was just enough to cover the necessities of each family, and the other part was used up in tributes. Most people were tied to exploitation and had no time to be concerned with consumption. The upper-class or governing classes of rich people did have the time to consider the differences in consumptions. They tried to create, control and monopolize symbols of aesthetic and social class differences in order to maintain class power. In the late reign of King Rama III Siam began to make the change from a self-sustaining society to one of free trade. This was consistent with the internal and external developments, and the general developments in the world at the time. It could be said that Siam at that time was being affected by the influence of globalization.

From this study, we have seen that the relationship between people and objects with respect to the consumption of the four basic necessities was consistent with social hierarchical structure of a self-sustaining agricultural society beginning to become active in trade. Thus, the people focussed more on producing than on consuming. Furthermore, this being an aristocratic society, it did not develop the consumerist concepts that require wide varieties of choice in the market, and people focussed more on the value of consumption rather than of production, which would enable them to create tools for social differentiation. At the time, only a few people could afford the conveniences of life, a beautiful house, expensive clothing, beautifully garnished foods, good doctors and high quality medicines. Most people were commoners or slaves. Their lives were determined by the need to earn a living. Fortunately, the land was rich with natural resources. People could live content and peaceful lives. The acceptance of diversity knowledge made the society flourish.

In conclusion, the consumption of the four basic necessities at this time was symptomatic of a culture of consumption dependent on definite ranks and duties. The logic of people's consumption highlighted the usage benefits. The consumption that highlighted the symbolic logic applied only to some, including minority, groups. The symbolic logic was consistent with the status of the persons. The symbols of aristocracy clearly set the rights, duties and roles for everyone. No one could act outside the social conventions. Thus, the culture of consumption in this era was self-sustaining, and consumerism did not yet exist.

After this, the society could not remain isolated. There was now a flow of social and cultural exchange and communication with other societies. Siam was gradually absorbing new cultures and concepts. This resulted in many social changes in that country. The influx of western culture and the weaknesses caused by conflict within the society, as well as the maintenance of a small group of benefits, became the important fuel that transformed the consumption of the four basic necessities from the basic necessity of living to over indulgence in the next era.

Chapter 3

The Four Basic Necessities in the Era of Change and Reform

This chapter deals with the consumption of the four basic necessities in the era of change and reform, i.e. during the reigns of Kings Rama IV–VI in the Rattanakosin period, in continuation from the previous chapter, in which we saw how the period of social establishment had paved the way for extreme change and reform in this era. The prosperity and wealth of the country during the reigns of Kings Rama IV-VI resulted from gradual developments and changes on social, cultural, economic and political levels in the earlier period. The social, cultural, economic and political order had to shift with the expansion of a commercial economy, a loosening of labour ties, the power of colonization, and the vitality of civilization.

3.1 Population Change

Bangkok at this time was expanding. According to Dr. Terwiel's calculations, the population in Bangkok during the reigns of Kings Rama I to III was approximately 50,000 – 100,000.¹ And from 1909-1929, while King Rama IV was on the throne, the population had increased from 500,000 to 713,384. (see Table 1).

Table 3.1 the Population of Bangkok during 1900-1929

Year	Population
1909	500,000a
1910	440,000b
1919	508,786b
1920	345,000c
1927	518,400d
1929	713,384b

Sources:

- a) United States Government, Department of Commerce and Labour, Commercial Relations of the United States with Foreign Countries in the Year 1907, Vol.1, North and South America, Asia, Australia, and Africa. Washington: Government Printing Office, p. 561.
- b) Thailand Statistical Yearbook, various Issues

¹ Terwiel, B.J. *Through Travellers' Eyes: An Approach to Early Nineteenth Century Thai History*. Bangkok: Duang Kamol Press, 1989, p 223

- c) Sternstein, Larry, the Distribution of Thai Centres in the Mid Nineteenth Century. *Journal of Southeast Asian History* P.67
- d) Sternstein, Larry, “A Critique of Thai Population

Data”, *Pacific Viewpoint* 6 (1) p.26 and 30

Reference from: Porpant, Ouyyanont, *Bangkok Economic History and Cheap Labour Development (1855-1980)* p. 13-14.

In the early reign of King Chulalongkorn, the population of Bangkok was approximately 400,000, but later it rose to approximately 600,000 people.²

3.2 Changes in Perception

The advances in transport and the expansion of colonial power made communication between Thais and people from many other countries much easier now than it had previously been. The resulting new perception and understanding of the outside world was one of the major factors in the immense changes that took place in Thai society at this time.

3.2.1 Changes in Ideology

3.2.1.1 The Changes in Social and Religious Ideology

a1. *Traiphum* cosmology is rejected in favour of scientific theories.

Before the reign of King Rama IV, Thai people believed in the *Traiphum* cosmology which came from the principal text of Buddhism, the *Tripitaka*. The *Traiphum* offered an explanation of the world and the universe based on the religion’s scripture, which was believed to have been written by King Pramaha Thamarach Litai of the Sukhothai Kingdom and later modified by Boròmmakot of Ayutthaya. According to the *Traiphum*, the universe’s center, or vertical core, was “Mount Meru.” This was surrounded by 7 circles of mountains, and each circle of mountains surrounded an ocean; these were called “*Mahanathi Sithandòn*”. Beyond these were the four continents of Utara Guru, Phuppa Vitheha, Amòn Koyan and Chomphu. Of these, Chomphu was in the south. Angels lived on the top of Mount Meru, in a hierarchical system according to their divine status: those with a strong *charisma* in

² Phutsadi Thippathat. *Ban (The House) in Rattanakosin II during the reign of King Rama IV-V (B.E.2394-2453)*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 2002, p.117.

the higher strata and those of a weaker *charisma* on the lower levels. The supreme angel was Indra. Underneath Mount Meru were the city of beasts and hell, and beyond this the fish Anon supported the core of Mount Meru.³

The *Traiphum* enabled Thai people to explain many phenomena that they did not understand at that time. For example, natural events such as thunder and lightning were explained by acts of angels in the sky, or disasters like earthquakes by the turning of the fish Anon. This belief also had a decisive influence on the political and administrative concept of the Cakravartin. The Cakravartin or universal sovereign was the ideal monarch, whose justification lay in the idea of the “King of Righteousness or dhammarāja”: The King claimed to be a Bodhisatta, a spiritually superhuman being who had accumulated great merit over previous lives, had been reincarnated in order to rule with righteousness, and would become a Buddha in the future. Through righteousness he may attain the distinction of a Cakravartin. He had absolute power over other kings in the universe. The influence of the concept of the Cakravartin is seen in numerous examples of traditional painting, city planning, architecture, such as the Pagoda of the Temple of the Dawn, and the Wat Suthat and Wat Chai Watanaram.⁴

The world view as based on the *Traiphum* cosmology had been an important concept in Thai society for a long time. But with the reign of King Rama IV the kingdom grew and advanced more than it had in previous times and this concept was no longer satisfactory in explaining the unknown. It was gradually discredited and finally rejected.

For instance, when the American missionary John Taylor Jones brought the modern world map into Thailand, the aristocracy was forced to acknowledge that the earth was round, in contradiction to the teaching of the *Traiphum* cosmology. As remarked in the “Book of Multifarious Duties” by Chao Praya Thipakòrawong (Chaem Bunnak), first edition, from 1857:

³ Chatri Prakitanonthakan. *Politics and Society in the Fine Arts and Architecture*. Bangkok: Mathichon, 2004, p. 39-40. See also English translation of *Traibhummi Ka Kā* by Reynolds&Reynolds.

⁴ Chatri Prakitanonthakan, *ibid.*, p. 44.

[T]here are many explorers nowadays. They try to prove that the earth is round and circles the sun in space. This is different from the ancient beliefs that we learned from the Traiphum⁵

Not only Chao Praya Thipakòrawong noticed the shift in perceptions from the *Traiphum* concepts to those of modern scientific theories. Changes resulting from people's new perspectives also made themselves felt, for example, in the works of art of the time:

1. In contrast to Traditional Thai painting, the new works adopted perspective, which focussed more on representing light and shadow. The two-dimensional figures of traditional painting were replaced by three-dimensional forms. Similarly, space became more atmospheric. Landscapes were painted in the perspective of the "bird's eye view" of Western art. The finest example of Thai perspective painting from that time comes from the artist Khru-In-Khong.⁶ These changes affected not only painting, but also sculpture, one outstanding example of which is the *Phra Nirantrai*. Remarkable was the realistic portrayal of details such as the ears and the striped robe.⁷

2. Artists started to represent themes other than the biography of Lord Buddha, the *Jatakas* and the *Traiphum*. They took up subjects concerning real people, focussing on real situations and places, for example King Rama IV's trip to pay homage at the great pagoda at Nakorn Pathom. There were also paintings dealing with the new biography of Lord Buddha, which turned to studying Lord Buddha in a more human dimension than as a divine god, as the trend had been previously. The paintings would take real events in history into account. This is a clear illustration of the new rationalist and realist perceptions.⁸ Besides the evidence from painting, we see the changes in Thai attitudes reflected in areas such as biographic writings, recorded events, the deeds of historically important people, all of which illustrate the turning inward of attention onto the self. The prominent concept found in writing at the time

⁵ Thipakòrawong, Chao Phya. *The Book Multifarious Duties* Phranakorn: Khurusapha, 1971, p. 101.

⁶ Chatri Prakitanonthakan, *ibid.*, p. 21.

⁷ M.R. Suriyawut Sukhsawadi. *Buddha Sculptures in Royal Palace*. Bangkok: Amarin Printing, 1982, p. 353.

⁸ Nithi Iaosiwong. *Pak Kai Kap Bai Rüa: A Historical Study of Literatures in Early Rattanakosin*. 2nd ed., Bangkok: Praeo, 1995, p. 449–500.

was that of humanism, in which the human being was the centre of interest and human actions were more focused on.⁹

3. Artists started to paint the heroic acts of kings from the past, and their royal duties, as taken, for example, from the biography of King Rama V. A specimen of this style of painting can be found in the wall paintings in the Marble Temple.¹⁰ Besides this, there was a trend in the sculpting of true-to-life statues of the kings of the period. For instance, King Rama IV commissioned the “Royal Statue 63” from Mr. Emile François Chatrousse, and later, from *Luang Thep Rotcana*, another work in painted plaster and cement. This was the first example of a monarch being sculpted while he was on the throne.¹¹

a2. Universal Acknowledgment of Scientific Theory

Universal scientific theories offered explanations for social phenomena based on a rational framework, could be empirically tested and had a significant body of evidence to support them. This had a strong influence on Thai aristocracy at that time, as seen in the “Book of Multifarious Duties”, which gives an explanation for how rain occurs:

... [E]arth, air and sea water act as distilling machine. Water from rivers and the sea is turned into air and floats up to the higher, cooler air; when the hot air meets with the cool air it is turned into clouds and condensed into rain...¹²

Belief in scientific concepts discredited the *Traiphum*, which thereafter lost its credibility. Any irrational ideas were opposed by upper-class people. King Rama IV argued, for example, that ancient folk tales about Indra having built and Vishnu having cast spells on houses, cities, and important images of Buddha were irrational: “they were just exaggerated and abnormal sayings.”¹³ In discussing a topic on, say,

⁹ Chatri Prakitanonthakan, *ibid.*, p. 36–37.

¹⁰ Chatri Prakitanonthakan, *ibid.*, p. 22.

¹¹ Apinan Poshyannanda. *Western Styles of Painting and Sculpture in the Thai Royal Court*. Bangkok: Amarin Printing Group, 1993, p. 18–21.

¹² Thipakòrawong, Chao Phraya, *ibid.*, p. 22–23.

¹³ King Mongkut. *Collected Royal Explanations of King Mongkut, Section : Ancient Remains and Antiques*. Bangkok: Bòrannakadi Samosòn, 1914, quoted in: Attachak Sattayanurak, *The Transformation of Historical Consciousness and the Changes in Thai Society from the Reign of King Mongkut to 1932 A.D.*, Master Thesis, Chulalongkorn University, 1988, p. 48.

buildings, he would start by asking by whom they had been built, where, why, and in which reign.¹⁴ In addition to this, according to the principles of the *Thammayut* sect¹⁵, any beliefs that could not be explained by scientific reasoning should be dismissed. Buddhist theories of the *Thammayut* sect focussed on old scriptures or the Tripitaka (the true doctrine of Buddhism) rather than on other textbooks.¹⁶ They promoted a happiness and well-being that was self-verifying. Heaven and hell were now explained in terms of psychology rather than as real places, as witnessed in the saying “*sawan yu nai ok narok yu nai cai*”¹⁷ (heaven and hell are in the mind), and the opinion became current that this life’s goals should be achieved in this life rather than the next.¹⁸

a3. The Acceptance of the Idea of Civilization

An ideal model of civilization was taken as the measurement for developing Thai society into being civilized after the Western fashion. In the past, Chinese culture had been seen as the highest point in civilization. Siamese, Burmese and Vietnamese were placed second, third and fourth respectively.¹⁹ In the reign of King Rama III, after the victory of Great Britain over China and Burma, Thai people’s opinions of Westerners changed: they began to admire rather than disparage them.²⁰ Thai people began to absorb “civilized” culture, taking an interest in everything from Western countries. At the same time, people were in fear of the Western menace of colonization in Asian countries. An illustration of this fear is to be seen King Rama III’s words on his death bed:

...[T]here will be no more wars with the Burmese and the Vietnamese. There will be trouble only with the *farang* (Europeans). Take good care; do not fall into their traps.

¹⁴ King Mongkut, quoted in Attachak Sattayanurak, *ibid.*, p. 49.

¹⁵ New Buddhist sect was founded by King Rama IV.

¹⁶ Nithi Iaosiwong, *ibid.*, p. 496.

¹⁷ King Mongkut. *Collected Royal Writing of King Rama IV*. Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University, 1968, p. 38.

¹⁸ King Mongkut, *ibid.*, p. 38.

¹⁹ Srisuphon Chuangsakun. *Change within the Sangha: A Case Study of Dhammayuttikanikaya (1825–1921)*. Master Thesis, Chulalongkorn University, 1987, p. 34.

²⁰ John Crawford, *Journal of an Embassy from the Governor General of India to the Courts of Siam and Cochin-China*, quoted in Vilailakha Thaworn Tharasan. *Thai Elite and Westernization*. Bangkok: Ancient City Press, 2002, p. 24.

Whatever they have invented, or done, which we should know of and do, we can imitate and learn from them, but do not wholeheartedly trust them.²¹

After the reign of King Rama IV Western cultures became symbols of advancement and civilization in Thailand²² and were always used as the trend in promoting the country's development. Thai people began to understand that Thailand was a small country among much bigger, more powerful and more civilized countries.

King Chulalongkorn's visit to Europe served not only to gain an insight into the advancement of other countries but was also symbolic of his seeking acceptance from such powerful nations. It was an effort to elevate Siam's level of civilization to that of Western countries.²³ One means to that end was in learning to dress, act and adopt the manners of westerners.²⁴ However, Thai people at that time had difficulty in blending modern values with the existing traditions and beliefs. In a speech by King Rama V we hear:

... [I]t was not right to use the European ideas of government in governing Siam. The fundamental methods were not the same. It is the same as copying European wheat planting methods for planting rice in Thailand. It did not work because the foundations of the government work were different...²⁵

His majesty, King Chulalongkorn, in his policies on development, tended to accept Western culture while at the same time preserving Thai culture. As His Majesty said:

... [I]t was time to tend to our Kingdom. Activities that should be cut off had to be cut off. Activities that should be added had to be added. No whole kingdom could be transformed in one stroke. And the methods that were used in one kingdom could not be used in the other kingdom without adjusting them. ...²⁶

²¹ Chao Phraya Thipakòrawong. *The Royal Chronicles, Bangkok Era, the Third Reign*. Bangkok: Khurusapha. 2 Vol. 1961, p. 188, quoted in Akin Rabiphadana. *The Organization of Thai Society in the Early Bangkok period, 1782-1873*, Newyork: Cornell University, 1969, p. 125.

²² Chatri Prakitanonthakan, *ibid.*, p. 115.

²³ Sunet Chuthintharanon. "The Royal Visit to Europe A.D. 1897: Symbolic Meaning" in Research Project on *Europe and King Chulalongkorn : Opportunity, Conflict and Change*. Vol. 3. Bangkok: The Thailand Research Fund, 1997, p. 63-67.

²⁴ Chatri Prakitanonthakan, *ibid.*, p. 120.

²⁵ King Chulalongkorn, "King Chulalongkorn's Explanation on Harmony" in *Foundation of Thai Civilization*. Bangkok: Thamasart University Press, 1973, p.175.

²⁶ King Chulalongkorn, *ibid.*, p.177.

3.2.1.2 The Transformation of a Political Idea: from the Universal King to an Absolute Monarchy

In the reign of King Chulalongkorn, the role of the King as an emperor living in a sacred kingdom that was the centre of the earth and the universe could no longer respond to the changes being experienced in social and political life. The real power of the king was limited to the Capital and surrounded areas. In the more remote areas his power was only in name²⁷ which caused problems such as insufficient taxation. This led to instability in the power of the King. Government powers were in the hands of the governors and high-ranking officers. Internal political problems and the threat of Western invasion were the key factors that forced King Chulalongkorn to improve his own status: he did this by changing the system of power relationships, so that the king's authority could be exercised throughout the kingdom. Power was transferred from government officials and local governors to the king as a centralized power who thus became an absolute monarch.²⁸ The government reform of 1892 did away with the *Catusadom*, the “four great offices” and many high-ranking officials, replacing them with twelve equal-ranking officers of state.²⁹

In 1894 cities and dominions were strictly under the supervision of the Ministry of the Interior. The Government had been significantly divided into ministries in the Western style, along functional lines which led to the vanishing of the powers of local and court officers.³⁰ Furthermore, there were efforts to create an awareness of centralizing the history, the study of archeology, arrangement, religion, the arts and architecture.³¹ However, promoting the ideology of an absolute monarchy was not easy. Problems occurred, including resistance resulting from these changes, for example the so called holy man³² revolt which took place in some cities, and resistance from priests.³³

²⁷ Attachak Sattayanurak. *The Change of Thai Elite's Worldview from the Reign of King Mongkut to 1932 A.D.* Bangkok: Chulaongkorn, 1998, p. 29.

²⁸ Chatri Prakitanonthakan, *ibid.*, p.157–158.

²⁹ Prince Damrong Rachanubhap. *Thesapiban*. Bangkok: Matichon, 2002, p. 8.

³⁰ Chatri Prakitanonthakan, *ibid.*, p. 158.

³¹ Chatri Prakitanonthakan, *ibid.*, p. 165.

³² The meaning of the holy man in Thai and Laos was *phu mi bun* (ผู้มีบุญ) “man of merit” or *phu wiset* (ผู้มีเวทย์) “man with supernatural powers”.

³³ Chatri Prakitanonthakan, *ibid.*, p. 160–161.

3.3 Imperialism and Colonialism

In the reign of King Rama IV, imperialism spread into Asian countries. After the Opium War between Britain and China from 1839–1842 the might of China had been decreased. Thus, King Rama IV decided to stop paying tributes to China and pay more attention to learning from the British and other Europeans.³⁴ Gaining knowledge and making adjustments in order to cope with changes were the important policies at the time. Thailand's economic turning point came in 1855 when Thailand signed a treaty with Great Britain, the "Treaty of Friendship and Commerce" (Bowring Treaty).

The principle of free trade set forth in the treaty put an end to the royal trade monopolies; the taxation system on which the state machinery had rested had to be modernized; and rice exports were liberalized and grew rapidly in response to the increasing demand on the international rice market.³⁵

It could be said that the signing of the treaty was the beginning of a process of modifying, changing and opening up Thai society for new impulses. The reign of King Rama IV was the foundation period for reform in the country. The labour force was diminished, outdated culture was modified and the country was generally improved. His Majesty King Rama IV accepted Western influences instead of avoiding or fiercely resisting them as neighboring countries did.³⁶

There were now more Western foreigners in Thailand than in previous times. The Bangkok Calendar Magazine of 1862 had given the number of foreigners in Thailand as 102: 58 Europeans and 44 Americans.³⁷ This gave rise to new kinds of businesses such as hotels, post offices, the renting of houses, banks, insurance offices, foreign restaurants, photographic shops, car and boat rental services, English newspapers, bread and sweet factories, soda factories, ice factories, imported book

³⁴ La-orthong Amarinratana. *The Sending of Students Abroad from 1868-1932*. Master Thesis. Bangkok: Chulaongkorn University, 1979, p. 123.

³⁵ Toru Yano. "Political Structure of a "Rice-Growing State" in Yoneo Ishii (ed.). *Thailand: A Rice-Growing Society* Honolulu: The University of Hawaii Press, 1975, p. 52.

³⁶ Pharadi Mahakhan. *Rattanakosin in the Age of Country Reform (B.E. 2394–2475)* Bangkok: Wattapanich, 1984, p. 11, quoted from A.B Griswold. *King Mongkut of Siam*. Translated by H.S.H. Prince Subhadradis Diskul, Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University, 1965.

³⁷ Chai Rüangsin. *Economic Aspects of Thai History from 1809–1910*. Bangkok: Thaiwatthana Panich, 1998, p. 327.

shops, and establishments for clubs and associations.³⁸ Besides Westerners, Chinese were also instrumental in the social changes in Siam. Skinner (1961:10) noted that the real beginning of mass Chinese immigration to Siam occurred between 1882 and 1910, when close to a million Chinese poured into Thailand, of whom about 370,000 stayed permanently. The Chinese population in Bangkok alone soared to between 200,000 and 300,000, including local-born, while the Chinese proportion of the total national population approached 10% by 1910.³⁹ In addition, estimates made by Pallegoix and Bowring in 1854-1855 suggest that roughly half of the population of Bangkok, that is, about two million out of three or four million people, were Chinese.
40

The influx of Chinese immigrants, particularly into Bangkok in the fourth reign, contributed significantly to the population increase in Siam, and most were certainly engaged in commercial activities.

Compared with the previous reigns, Siam in the reign of King Rama IV had greatly changed. As noted in Chao Phraya Thipakornrawong's version of *The Royal Chronicles*

... [T]he capital was abundant and rich. It rained seasonally. There were many merchants and stores, goods that one had never had or seen before, and trade was being carried out by international traders. Exported rice was as high as 300 ships, and in some years as high as 400 ships. The citizens could sell rice to international traders in quantities of as much as 80,000 carts or more. Taxes collected were 6,000–7,000 units of money; and money collected from rice could be to a value of up to 4,000–5,000 units of money. This meant that the citizens were rich (...).⁴¹

At the turning of the reign, as King Rama V came to power, Siam had been significantly transformed in all aspects. These included social, economic and

³⁸ Chai Rüangsin, *ibid.*, p. 328.

³⁹ G. William Skinner. *Leadership and Power in the Chinese Community of Thailand*. 2th ed. New-York: Cornell University Press, 1961, p.10.

⁴⁰ Shigeharu Tanabe. "Land Reclamation in the Chao Phraya Delta". in Yonio Ishii (ed.), *Thailand: A Rice-Growing Society*. Honolulu: The University of Hawaii Press, 1975, p. 52. [Quoted from Jean Baptiste Pallegoix. *Description du Royaume Thai ou Siam*. (Paris, 1854): vol. 2, p. 60; Sir John Bowring, *The Kingdom and People of Siam* (London: Parker, 1856), vol. 1, pp. 85, 394.]

⁴¹ Chao Phya Thipakõnwong. *The Royal Chronicles, Bangkok Era, The Fourth Reign, B.E. 2394–2411 (A.D. 1851–1868)*. 2 Vols., Bangkok: Khurusapha, 1961.

government reforms aimed at elevating the country's level of progress and fighting colonialism.

More socio-economic changes in Siam can be seen in historical evidence concerning the founding of the Post Office from the Royal Announcement of Rama V:

... [T]rade was increasing more than usual. Both citizens and foreign traders communicated every day in order to do business ... If trade had grown in any country, that country had to establish post and telegraph businesses, which means of communication made trading more convenient. ...⁴²

David K. Wyatt (1994: 278) summarised the major reforms accomplished by King Chulalongkorn as follows:

1. By announcing the progressive abolition of hereditary slavery and by severely restricting the conditions under which the nobility could hold debt-bound servants, the King undertook to free the ordinary Thai farmer from traditional constraints on his political and economic life—an action which struck against the chief source of the nobility's wealth, which was their control over manpower.
2. The King established special law courts to clear the enormous backlog of litigation in Bangkok and its concomitant delays, which oppressed all the litigants involved and profited the noblemen and petty officers who controlled the myriad jurisdictions of the King's legal system.
3. The king worked to build up the financial resources available to the central government, at the expense of numerous private pockets, by attempting to centralize collection and disbursement records, by standardizing rates of taxation, by ordering that tax collections farmed out to private individuals be let by public auction, and by establishing a central audit office.
4. The king moved to consolidate his own political support against the old men left in office by his father by establishing two advisory councils to consider public legislation and policy, the Council of State and Privy Council.

⁴² *Sarabanchi* part I is an index explaining the official government grading for post office employees in Bangkok. 2 ed. Bangkok: Tonchabab, 1998. See detail in Jirawat Seangthong. *Everyday Life of The Siamese in Bangkok, 1883–1932*. Master Thesis. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 2003, p. 11.

3.4 The Abolition of Slavery

One important change in this period was the abolition of slavery, which had been present in the society for a long time. This created a middle class, the *kradumpi*, or bourgeois, a new generation of government officials or freelance farmers who produced a surplus that led to an improvement in production in the Thai economic system. Thus it could be said that this was the period when the middle class was born, which later became the group that most profoundly influenced the culture, politics, economy and society of Siam, or Thailand.

3.5 Influence of Western and Novelty in Thai Society

King Chulalongkorn's visits to Europe played an important role in the transformation of the upper-class way of life. The style of dress adjusted to European styles as in the wearing of socks and shoes. Women's hair was now worn short instead of long. Government officials wore modern dress and stood up during an audience with the King. The Royal family started using tables and chairs and dining in the European manner. The upper-class were the first group to experience the influence of Western fashions and tastes and imported goods through foreign stores in Bangkok such as Bad Man Store, Windsor Store, and S.A.B. Store.⁴³

Examples of imported goods were scent bottles, lavender perfumes and colognes, rose water and perfumed hair-styling oil. Furthermore, this social group had a chance to experience other technologies such as vehicles, electricity, communication devices, and other modern conveniences. They now had more articles to enhance and show off their social status. Furthermore, Bangkok was one of the biggest markets in Asia.⁴⁴ Chai Rüangsin, analyzing documents compiled from the Bangkok Times in 1910, noted:

[T]he Thai people had seen and used more modern consumption goods than ever before. The Maquald Company sold kerosene. The Hild and Sund Company sold rice milling machines and grindstone. The Edward Company sold Oliver typewriters both in Thai and English. S.A.B. sold watches and jewelry. E.Z. Monold sold Bayad-Klemang and Unique automobiles. The Bangkok Manufacturing Company established soda, ice and

⁴³ Chai Rüangsin. *Economic Aspects of Thai History from 1809–1910*. Bangkok: Thai Watthana Panich, 1998, p. 331.

⁴⁴ Chai Rüangsin, *ibid.*, p. 331.

ice-cream factories. G. Cruiser sold an American house paint. B. Grim, located on Pak Klong Market, sold pharmaceuticals and eye-glasses. The Bemayer Company sold Lion Brand canned milk. Harry A. Badman sold Junior typewriters, recorded discs and Ambrose cigarettes. The Windsor Company sold German automobiles. The Borneo Company sold German beer, canned milk and Pate records in Thai, English, German, French and Italian. J.D. Mc.Arthur sold gasoline, diesel and kerosene boat engines. Keim Hou Heng sold English books and children's and adult clothing. The Oriental Store established factories that sold bread, sweets and aluminum kitchenware. Bangkok Doc sold machine mills, Michelin tyres and Ford automobiles. Fraser and Neif established a soda factory. The Aragon Company sold Whisky. Louis Leonowin Company sold Dunlop tyres. Key Cheing sold Dòk Lumpung recorded discs, which carried more than 300 Thai songs. etc.⁴⁵

Chai Rüangsin went on to illustrate the great changes in the lifestyle of urban people at the time:

... [T]here were many big stores in the capital such as the British-owned Ramsey Store which carried clothing, Kim Seng Lee sold gold jewelry, Badman Store sold furniture supplies, clothing and accessories, and the German merchant Mr. Miller's store, B. Grimm and Co. sold the same types of goods as the Badman Store...⁴⁶

In the reign of King Rama V, Western meeting places known as clubs began to find their way into Thai society, something that had not been known before; and holiday resorts offering mental and physical relaxation, beginning with houseboat amenities and advancing to beach or countryside facilities, also began to be built. These Western tastes, popular among the high society, brought with them new living styles which had an effect on how one organised one's time in daily life, whether working or resting. As a result, patterns of consumption were employed by people as a tool for creating and displaying their character.

Improved communications in the reign of King Rama VI meant that the influence of Western culture played a more important role in Thai society than previously. Communications with Western countries were increased in business, finance and foreign investment. Thailand became a member of the League of Nations, which was resulted of the developments in the economy and society in

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

general. Furthermore, Rama VI was the first king to receive a good education abroad and was able to live in England for some time. He used his experience to affect changes in Thailand, such as the improvement and expansion of education, and providing for Thai students to travel abroad to study. During his reign, 303 Thai students were placed in foreign countries.⁴⁷ He used large amounts of money from the royal treasury to send administrative officers overseas. His achievements also included the improvement of the *sukhaphiban*, a form of local government at a lower level than municipal level; the setting up of the Department of Municipal Affairs, the water supply system,⁴⁸ Chulalongkorn Hospital, the Sowabha Institute, Sam Sen Power Plant, Chulalongkorn University, the Family Name Act of 1913, the Measurement Act of 1923, the Population Survey Act, 2460 B.E. and the modification of the Vehicle Registration Act.

3.6 Economic Change: International Trades

In the past, Thailand's trade had been mainly with the east, especially with China. Sino-Thai trade was an important source of government revenue, as was the general change from the system of corvée to payment in cash as a means of discharging one's obligation to the state.⁴⁹ Because of the policy of encouraging Chinese immigration since the time of King Taksin, throughout the early nineteenth century the inflow of Chinese migrants increased and the Government excused them from the corvée, which would disrupt their trading activities, and instead levied a triennial head tax. The Government gradually found this a better way of raising revenue than royal trading monopolies, which it eventually abandoned in favour of hiring more and more Chinese entrepreneurs as tax-farmers.⁵⁰

As for the year 1850, it has been said that the population was wholly engaged in agriculture, and rice was the principle crop.⁵¹ The amount of rice produced was enough to feed the native population and to supply the failure of the rice crop in

⁴⁷ La-orthong Amarinratana, *ibid.*, p. 162.

⁴⁸ Monraethai Chaiwiset. *Art and Culture: Social History-Toilets and Sanitarywares in Thailand*. Bangkok: Matichon Press, 2002, p. 158.

⁴⁹ Klaus Wenk. *The Restoration of Thailand under Rama I, 1782–1809*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1968, p. 123, quoted in Hong Lysa. *Thailand in the Nineteenth Century Evolution of the Economic and Society*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1984, p. 1.

⁵⁰ Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit. *A History of Thailand*. Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 33.

⁵¹ James C Ingram. *Economic Change in Thailand Since 1850*. Stanford, 1971, p. 8.

Southern China.⁵² Besides rice, textile fibres, peppers and forest goods were produced for export.⁵³ By the reign of King Mongkut (1851–1868), sugar plantations had been developed, and were said to be “everywhere” in the kingdom. They had, however, been developed not by the Thais, but by Chinese settlers.⁵⁴

From the reign of King Rama IV onwards, Thailand’s international trade had been developed and expanded and become the biggest source of government income. The most important exports were rice, teak and tin.⁵⁵ Both export and domestic trade were mostly with the Chinese and Europeans; in particular, almost all rice export was under the operation of the Chinese. Teak production was operated by European export companies using Chinese labour. Teak was also produced for domestic use such as in the construction of houses, the manufacture of furniture and ship building.⁵⁶ Imported goods consisted mostly of consumer goods and luxury goods from Europe and the United States. The most important sources of imported goods were the Hong Kong and Singapore markets.⁵⁷

3.7 The Increase in Imported and Exported Goods in Thailand

From tables 3.2 and 3.3 we see that 80 types of goods were exported, most of which were agricultural goods, the rest being forestry commodities that had been exported since the Ayutthaya period. Imported goods consisted mostly of luxury items for the governing classes. Table 3.4 shows the goods exported in 1900 Rice was the number one export, worth three quarters of other agricultural goods. It was produced mainly for export, and the quantity was increased to 15,220 units in 50 years from 1875 to 1910. Table 3.5 shows that rice generated the highest income because rice had previously been prohibited for export and the high demands of imported goods forced the farmers to produce more, to pay for those goods. The changes in the import and export quantities illustrate the economic change from a self-sufficient economy to one based on agriculture for trade.

⁵² George B. Bacon. *Siam, the Land of the White Elephant*. New York, 1892, p. 84.

⁵³ James C. Ingram, *ibid.*, p. 10-11.

⁵⁴ Sir John Bowring. *The Kingdom and People of Siam*, Vol. I, London, 1857, p. 203–204.

⁵⁵ Anchalakorn Komonsewin. *Thailand’s Foreign Relations in the Reign of King Vajiravudh (B.E. 2453-2466)*. Master Thesis. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 1975, p.179.

⁵⁶ Mayuri Nokyungthong. *The Economic Problems of Thailand during the Reign of King Rama II (A.D. 1925–1935)*. Master Thesis. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 1975, p. 34–38.

⁵⁷ Anchalakorn Komonsewin, *ibid.*, p. 179–180.

Table 3.2 Thai exported goods in 1867 (at the end of the reign of King Rama IV)

Import lists		
1. rice (ข้าว)	27. blackwood (ไม้พะยุง)	53. deer tendon and deer gut (เอ็นกวาง และกวางทราย)
2. pepper (พริกไทย)	28. sappanwood (ไม้ฝาง)	54. birds' nests (รังนก)
3. chilli (พริกขี้หนู)	29. teak (ไม้สัก)	55. rhinoceros leather (หนังแรด)
4. ginger (ขิง)	30. nutmeg (กระวาน)	56. gem stones (หินมีค่า)
5. sesame (งา)	31. wax (ขี้ผึ้ง)	57. lead (ตะกั่ว)
6. palm sugar (น้ำตาลปึก)	32. rhinoceros horn (นอแรด)	58. bird feathers (ขนนก)
7. areca nuts (หมาก)	33. deer horn (เขากวาง)	59. wood oil (น้ำมันไม้)
8. zallaca, the sweet variety (ผลเสลงใจ)	34. buffalo horns (เขากวาง)	60. pine tree oil (ยางสน)
9. sago (สาหร่าย)	35. shimps (กุ้ง)	61. shrimp paste (กะปิ)
10. corn (ข้าวโพด)	36. diopyros (ไม้มะเกลือ)	62. rubies (ทับทิม)
11. sugar (น้ำตาล)	37. tortoise shell (กระดองเต่า)	63. stick lacquers (แล็กเกอร์ แท่ง)
12. indigo (คราม)	38. mangrove bark (เปลือกโกงกาง)	64. trepangs, leech (ปลิง)
13. coconut oil (น้ำมันมะพร้าว)	39. tin (ดีบุก)	65. saffires (แซฟไฟร์)
14. shallots (หัวหอม)	40. iron (เหล็ก)	66. salt (เกลือ)
15. cigarettes (ยาสูบ)	41. sting ray skins (หนังปลากระเบน)	67. gold dust (ผงทอง)
16. peanuts (ถั่วลิสง)	42. leather (หนังตัวลิ้ม)	68. elephant bone (กระดูกช้าง)
17. coffee (กาแฟ)	43. <i>met ku kraban</i> (เม็ดลูกกระบान)	69. tiger bone (กระดูกเสือ)
18. hemp (ต้นป่าน)	44. pine oil (ยางสน)	70. buffalo skins (หนังควาย)
19. cotton pants (นุ่น)	45. wood oil (ยางไม้)	71. elephant skins (หนังช้าง)
20. black and white shark fins (หูฉลามขาวและดำ)	46. sea slugs (ปลิงทะเล)	72. annatto, vermilion (ชาด)
21. aloe vera (ต้นหางจรเข้)	47. dried fish (ปลาแห้ง)	73. topaz (บุษราคัม)
22. antimony (แร่พลวง)	48. fish oil (น้ำมันปลา)	74. torch (ไต้)
23. waxen medizine from pine tree (ยาขี้ผึ้งสนหอม)	49. ivory (งาช้าง)	75. tortoises (เต่า)
24. gum benzoin, gum bejamin (กำยาน)	50. rattan (หวาย)	76. cow skins (หนังวัว)
25. eaglewoods, oloeswood (ไม้กฤษณา)	51. lacquer (แล็กเกอร์)	77. books (หนังสือ)
26. yellowwood (ไม้เนื้อเหลือง)	52. dried mussels (หอยแมลงภู่แห้ง)	
total exported 29,385,000 Francs		

Source: Phra Siam Thuranurak 2000: 33–35, quoted in Suwit Theerasasawat. *Culture Arts special edition History of agricultural technology*. Bangkok: Matichon, 2005: 341.

Table 3.3 Thailand's imported goods in 1867

Import lists	
1. opium (ฝิ่น)	36. copper sheets (แผ่นทองแดง)
2. Chinese cigarettes (ยาสูบจากจีน)	37. sewing thread (ด้าย)
3. tea (ชา)	38. gold and silver thread (เส้นทองและเส้นเงิน)
4. Chinese cooking oil (น้ำมันปรุงอาหารจากจีน)	39. gin (เหล้าจีน)
5. wheat flour (แป้งสาลี)	40. remnants of metal (เศษโลหะ)
6. Chinese preserved garlic (กระเทียมดองจากจีน)	41. Chinese hanging clocks (นาฬิกาแขวน จากจีน)
7. cannons (ปืนใหญ่)	42. paintings (รูปภาพ)
8. sword bayonets (ดาบปลายปืน)	43. floral chintz (ผ้าลายดอก)
9. guns (ปืน)	44. <i>Langu</i> dresses (เครื่องแต่งกาย(ลิ่งกู))
10. iron slings (เหล็กเส้น)	45. eye-glasses (แว่นตา)
11. knives (มีดต่าง ๆ)	46. <i>Sisen</i> (สีเสน)
12. zinc (สังกะสี)	47. mirrors (กระจกเงา)
13. European metal ware (ภาชนะโลหะจากยุโรป)	48. Chinese ink (หมึกจีน)
14. alum (สารส้ม)	49. umbrellas (ร่มกันฝน)
15. beer (เบียร์)	50. parasols (ร่มกันแดด)
16. accessories (เครื่องประดับ)	51. blinds (บังตา)
17. blue working shirts from Prussia (เสื้อทำงานสีฟ้าจากปรัสเซีย)	52. photos, picture (รูปถ่าย)
18. Japanese boxes (กล่องจากญี่ปุ่น)	53. Chinaware (เครื่องเคลือบ)
19. brandy (บรั่นดี)	54. face powder (แป้งฝุ่น)
20. camphor (การบูร)	55. rum (เหล้ารัม)
21. cinnamon (อบเชย)	56. soaps (สบู่)
22. wool plaid clothes (ผ้าขนสัตว์คาวาสกี้อด)	57. keys and locks (กุญแจ)
23. nails (ตะปู)	58. Chinese silks (ผ้าไหมจากจีน)
24. floor tiles (กระเบื้องปูพื้น)	59. cotton (ผ้าฝ้าย)
25. cloves (กานพลู)	60. canvas (ใบเรือ)
26. pigments (สี)	61. Chinese gold and silver vests (แจกันทองและเงินจากจีน)
27. platinum (ทองขาว)	62. velvets (ผ้ากำมะหยี่)
28. brass (ทองเหลือง)	63. dark red paint (สีแดงเข้ม)
29. red and green clothes (ผ้าสีแดงและเขียว)	64. decorated goods (สินค้าประดับ)
30. eaux de colognes (โอเดออร์โกโลญจ์)	65. tools from Europe (เครื่องมือจากยุโรป)
31. gum benzoin (กำยาน)	66. tinder boxes (ชุดจุดไฟ)
32. perfumes (เครื่องหอมต่าง ๆ)	67. crystal glass (เครื่องแก้ว)
33. heartwood of sandalwood or dyospyros (แก่นไม้จันทน์)	68. windows (หน้าต่างกระจก)
34. ceramic ware (ภาชนะเคลือบ)	69. wines (เหล้าองุ่น)
35. tin plate (เหล็กทึบ)	70. paper (กระดาษ)
total export 34,024,000 Francs	

Source: Phra Siam Thuranurak 2000: 33–35, quoted in Suwit Theerasasawat. *Culture Arts special edition History of agricultural technology*. Bangkok: Matichon, 2005: 34.

Table 3.4 Thailand's imported and exported goods in 1900

Lists	Millionn Bahts	Percentage
1. exported goods		
1.1 rice (ข้าว)	60	76.92
1.2 teak (ไม้สัก)	4.5	5.77
1.3 fish products (สินค้าปลา)	2.75	3.52
1.4 peppers (พริกไทย)	1.45	1.86
1.5 cow skins and horns (หนังวัว, เขาวัว)	1.3	1.67
1.6 silk and silk threads (ผ้าไหม และไหมดิบ)	1 7	1.28 8.97
Total export	78	100
2. imported goods		
2.1 clothing (เครื่องนุ่งห่มต่าง ๆ)	11	11.11
2.2 iron machinery (เครื่องเหล็ก เครื่องจักร)	55	55.28
2.3 dollar coins for Siamese money (เหรียญดอลลาร์สำหรับหลอมทำเงินตราสยาม)	5	5.03
2.4 opium (ฝิ่น)	3.6	3.62
2.5 gunny-sacks (กระสอบป่าน)	2.3	2.31
2.6 sugar (น้ำตาล)	1.5	1.50
2.7 kerosene (น้ำมันก๊าด)	1.25	1.26
2.8 alcohol (สุรา)	1	1.00
2.9 other (สินค้าเบ็ดเตล็ด)	18.85	18.94
Total export	99.5	100

Source: Thongbai Yimsuwan 1998: 86–97, in a reference from the Department of Siam Geographic Education, printed in 2001; Quoted in Suwit Theerasasawat. *Art and Culture: The history of agricultural technology*, special edition. Bangkok: Matichon, 2005: 343.

Table 3.5 Quantities and values of Thai Rice exports

Time	Export Quantities/Year (1,000 units)	Export Value/ Year (1,000 Bahts)	Average price per unit (Bahts)
2400–02	990	n.a	n.a
2403–07	1,840	n.a	n.a
2408–12	1,630	n.a	n.a
2413–17	1,870	5,110	2.7
2418–22	3,530	10,110	2.9
2423–27	3,580	9,610	2.7
2428–32	5,320	15,080	2.8
2433–37	7,250	23,780	3.3
2438–42	8,000	36,410	4.6
2443–47	11,130	61,280	5.5
2448–52	14,760	81,020	5.5
2453–57	15,220	81,230	5.3

Source: Ingram 1978: 59 referred to by Suwit Theerasasawat in: *Art and Culture: the history of agricultural technology special edition*. Bangkok: Matichon, 2005: 344.

3.8 Changes in Physical Geography

From an Aquatic Society to a Land-based Society

In the reign of King Rama IV, the city expanded with the building of the Phadung Krungkasem Canal and many roads such as Charoenkrung Road, Bumrungmüang Road and Phoengnakhon Road. Areas such as that from the mouth of Phadung Krungkasem Canal up to Silom, Bangrak and Surawong, which had previously been suburbs, now became the districts of commerce, European embassies and foreign residences. People changed from living on and around the water to living on the land, and housing now spread along the roads instead of the riverbanks. From the late reign of King Rama IV to the early reign of King Rama V, prices of land along the roads increased, and forward-looking investors bought up land in Bangkok and divided it into smaller lots for sale. For example, in 1888 Chaosao Yom, the son of Phraya Phisansombutbòribun (Chaosao Yim), acknowledging the need among European and Chinese merchants for big houses and shops along the roads, bought up the abandoned land between Silom Road and Ban Thawai. Then he hired Chinese labourers to dig a large canal from Chao Phraya River eastwards to the Hao Lampong Canal and used the soil to build a road. He divided the land into smaller pieces and sold them to the people. He reaped high returns, and was soon imitated by others.⁵⁸

Actually, land prior to the issuing of deeds had always belonged to the King. His Majesty had the right to give it away to anyone he wished, which usually meant members of the Royal Family or government officials, so little land belonged to ordinary people.⁵⁹ Government officials and Royal Family members owned the two largest pieces of land, paid for from the Privy Purse. Houses with areas of surrounding land were thus limited to the high society. The exploitation of land was little compared to the quantity available. Most landowners rented their land out or

⁵⁸ Phutsadi Thippathat, *ibid.*, p. 52–54.

⁵⁹ Oratip Tessiri. *Land Holding in Thailand from 1901 to 1932: A Case Study of Monthon Krungthep*. Master Thesis, Chulalongkorn University, 1981, p. 21–29.

built houses for rent. Immigrants moved in and out of these rented houses or rooms, and this led to a high density of housing in some areas.

As already mentioned, Thailand in this period underwent many reforms and changes, both intentional and unintentional, and many factors came into play, such as population, idealism, politics, culture and economics, as well as geophysical changes. This came about through the confrontation with colonialism and the integration of its influence. The face of Siamese society now looked tremendously different from in the early Rattankosin. This is consistent with Akin's conclusion that the same factors that led to change in the Rattanakosin resulted in the changes and reforms that we see in this period. Akin (1969: 125–126) summarized six factors that encouraged changes in the social organization of the society. The first was the lesson learned from the bitter experience of failure in the Burmese wars and the fall of Ayutthaya. Secondly, a new danger was being faced by the expansion of colonial powers. Then, the influx of Western ideas due to increased contact with European nations, especially through the establishment of the printing press as a means of communication. The fourth factor was the change in the economy due to the increase in international trade; the country became more prosperous and the cost of living rose. Fifth, the influx of Chinese labour with its consequences for the *corvée* and internal trade; and finally, the major changes made in the system of taxation in the reign of King Rama III.

3.9 Consumption of the Four Basic Necessities in the Era of Change and Reform

3.9.1 Housing

Sir John Bowring, a European who lived in Siam in the early reign of King Rama IV, described the houses of Siamese at that time:

...[T]here are a few houses in Bangkok built of stone and brick; but those of the middle class are constructed of light bamboos, and roofed with leaves of the atap palm.⁶⁰

Later, as the city developed, more houses were built, along with roads and canals. The longest and most important road was Chareonkrung Road. The building of roads led

⁶⁰ Sir John Bowring. *The Kingdom and People of Siam*. Vol I. reprinted, Oxford University: 1977, p. 403.

to the development of sophisticated communities, and markets along the roadsides became popular.

At the time, housing styles were strongly influenced by Chinese and Western culture. For instance, Chinese residences had the main building in the middle, facing the river or the road. The ancestors' altar would be placed in the middle of the main building. Bedrooms and kitchens were in separate buildings. The ground floor was used for storage. Western houses were designed to suit Western lifestyles. The leading class in the society adopted Western culture and applied it to their own style of living. Commoners lived in houses of the earlier style, but made from different building materials concordant with the new construction methods.⁶¹ In the reigns of King Rama V and King Rama VI the socioeconomic conditions of the rich and of people of lower income were very different. A house was a symbol of its owner's status. The houses of the rich were luxuriously designed and decorated in the Western style and the rooms were partitioned according to use. Chinese and Western furniture such as cabinets, chairs, tables and beds was used when receiving guests, so that they did not have to dine and sleep on the floor as they had done previously. This trend later spread to other classes of the society.

3.9.1.1 Varieties in Housing

With the growth of the city many roads, like Yaowarat and Raichadamnoen Road, and the Palace were built. The influence of the West found its way into housing design. Architecture became more diverse. Houses were either separate buildings owned by commoners or upper-class people, where the extent of the grounds indicated the wealth of its owners, or rows of houses or shop-houses styled on Western and Chinese models. These comprised both one-storey and two-storey blocks with between five and ten houses in a row. Most of these were for rent on the major roads. The growth and expansion of the city gradually wiped out the agricultural areas in Bangkok and replaced them with residential, commercial and industrial areas. The first flats, owned by a foreign tram company, were created at

⁶¹ Phutsadi Thippatha. *Ban (The House) in Rattanakosin 4 during the reign of King Rama VII-IX (B.E. 2468–2503)*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 2003, p. 194.

this time. They were situated in a building with shared corridors, bathrooms and stairs.

3.9.1.2 Characteristics of Housing in Bangkok, from the Address Registration Survey by the Department of Post and Telegraph

In 1883 an “address registration survey” was carried out and four indexes were published for postmen in Bangkok. The importance of these indexes was that they characterized houses at the time by social status and gave an illustration of the way people lived, their occupations, and the economic situation.⁶² Table 3.5 gives evidence of the variety of housing on the roadsides of Bangkok in 1883. We have already seen that the houses at that time were more varied than those in the early Rattanakosin. The classifications in the survey were a good illustration of the economic and social status of house owners, bamboo houses being owned by commoners and brick houses by members of the Royal Family and government officials.

Table 3.6 Residential houses on the roadsides in Bangkok in 1883

Housing Styles	Quantities	Housing Styles	Quantities
Sheds owned by commoners (โรงของ สามัญชน)	2,095	Panya Houses (เรือนปั้นหยา)	47
Brick houses owned by commoners (บ้านตึก/เรือนตึกของสามัญชน)	1,077	Palaces (วัง)	37
wooden wall houses (เรือนฝากระดาน)	769	<i>Rüanfathang</i> (เรือนฝาฉิ่ง)	31
Brick houses owned by Privy Purse officers (บ้านตึก/เรือนตึกของพระคลังข้างที่)	638	Row-houses for royal family members and government officials' families (ห้องแถวสำหรับคนของเจ้านาย/ข้าราชการ)	31
<i>Rueantae/ khattae</i> (เรือนขัดแตะ/ ฝาขัดแตะ) (weaving bamboo strips in to partition)	590	<i>Rüanfasamruat</i> (เรือนฝาสำรวจ)	10
Brick house owned by royal family members and government officials (บ้านตึก/เรือนตึกของเจ้านาย/ข้าราชการ)	435	Houseboats (เรือนแพ)	5
Sheds owned by royal family members and government officials (โรงของเจ้านาย/ขุนนางข้าราชการ)	335	Corrugated- iron-roof-houses (เรือนหลังคาสังกะสี)	4
<i>Rüanpha Krachaengòn or house having the screw-pine partition</i> (เรือนฝากระแซง อ่อน)	253	row-houses for general labourers (ห้องแถวสำหรับคนงานทั่วไป)	2
Bamboo houses (เรือนไม้ไผ่)	253	Boats (เรือ)	2
Atap houses (เรือนจาก/ฝาจาก)	225	-	-
Wooded houses (เรือนไม้)	148	unclassified houses (ไม่ระบุประเภทเรือน)	44
Sheds owned by Privy Purse officials (โรงของพระคลังข้างที่)	48	Not available (ไม่รายงาน)	302

⁶² Quoted in Jirawat Saengthong, *ibid.*, p. 13–14.

Source: Second index; populations in provinces, roads and alleys for Bangkok postmen.

Houses could be classified according to social groups into broad two groups: those owned by the commoners and those owned by rich and well-situated people who including the Royal Family or high-ranking government officials and merchants or rich Chinese tax collectors (holders of Government monopolies) and foreigners merchants who having their shop in Bangkok and consul officers.

Phussadee classified residential housing in Bangkok into three categories as follows:⁶³

- Houseboats and Thai-style houses owned by commoners
- Chinese-style houses owned by Chinese
- Western-influenced houses

However, in the reign of King Rama V, the houses owned by commoners were the same style as in the early Rattanakosin (King Rama I–III). They still had one storey, an open space of the area underneath the raised dwelling and high gable roofs. These houses, which were easy to build, could be constructed by Thai craftsmen; the materials (woods) were abundant locally.

3.9.1.3 Styles, Prices and Standards of Housing, and Economic and Social Status

The style and character of housing at this time may be classified according to the prices and standards from the lowest to highest, as follows:⁶⁴

1. *Rüankhüangphuk* with atap partitions and atap roofs. (เรือนเครื่องผูก ฝาจากหลังคาจาก)

2. *Rüankhüangphuk* with solf *krachang* partitions and atap roofs. - เรือนเครื่องผูก ฝากระแซงอ่อน หรือฝ้ายสำหรับหลังคาจาก

⁶³ Phutsadi Thippthathat. *Ban (The House) in Rattanakosin II during the reign of King Rama VI–V (B.E. 2394–2453)*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 2002, p. 180.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

3. *Rüankhüangphuk* with bamboo partitions and attap roofs. (เรือนเครื่องผูก ฝาตะ
(ไม้ขัดตะ) หรือ ฝารวก (ไม้รวก) หลังคาจาก)

4. *Rüankhüangsap* with self *krachang* partitions and attap roofs. (เรือนเครื่องสับ
ฝากระแซงอ่อนหรือฝาสำหรวด หลังคาจาก)

5. *Rüankhüangsap* with wooded partitions and attap roofs. (เรือนเครื่องสับ ฝาไม้เนื้อ
หลังคาจาก)

6. *Rüankhüangsap* with wooden board partitions and attap roofs. (เรือนเครื่องสับ
ฝากระดาน หลังคาจาก)

7. *Rüanfakradan* with wooden board partitions and tiled roofs. (เรือนฝากระดาน
หลังคามุงกระเบื้อง)

8. *Rüantükkhat* or brick houses with tiled roofs. (เรือนตึกขัดตะถือปูน หลังคามุงกระเบื้อง)

The houses of low-income people were single dwellings with small porches and areas outside the house. People of a higher income owned houses with separated kitchens which had nip palm leaf roofs and partitions made from strip of woven bamboo. The building materials had changed. For instance, iron wire was used instead of wood, iron was used instead of wood for the gratings in front of windows, rope and nails were used instead of wooden pegs and dowels. The clay and wooden tiled roofs were replaced by cement tiled roofs and zinc roofs. Carved wooded boards were used for decoration, in ventilation and for the eaves. Some Thai-style houses had arched zinc roofs.⁶⁵ Residences of the high-classes were slightly different from the houses of lower class people in size, numbers of dwellings and building materials. For example, higher class residences had big wooden board partitions and contained groups of dwellings. Many were Western-influenced in style,⁶⁶ such as the big two-storey rectangular brick houses with balconies. They might be L-shaped, T-shaped, U-shaped or S-shaped with tiled gables, half-hip roofs or hip roofs; or “gingerbread houses” with extravagantly carved wooden decoration of Western, Burmese and Muslim influence.⁶⁷

3.9.1.4 Towards the International

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 180.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 187–188.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 212–213.

In the reign of King Rama IV, the city had developed and many Western-style buildings had been erected; the King ordered the construction of a forty-room two-story building near the Grand Palace,⁶⁸ to be furnished and decorated with European items. As the royal court was the model and standard of taste in the arts this became the first example of Western furniture and culture in Thai homes.⁶⁹

In the reign of Rama V, Western style houses were popular. They had curved paths, balconies and formal gardens. Although the use of motor cars was not yet widespread,⁷⁰ they may also have ramps in front of them for boarding and alighting from cars or carriages. Some of building materials had to be imported by ships. These included iron and concrete from England and Germany, cement from Singapore, marble from Italy, stained glass and mirrors from Belgium and France, and other materials such as Chinaware, chandeliers, metalware, plumbing supplies and paints from England, Germany, and Denmark. Relatively few materials were imported from the United States of America owing to the high shipping costs.⁷¹ The master craftsmen were foreign government employees. At first, the foreign architects had designed their houses with chimneys and cellars, which were not suitable for this country. Then, as they began to understand the climate, they adjusted their designs accordingly, to include features such as cantilevered slats covering the windows and walkways, verandas or windows with louvres and ventilation panels.⁷² Thai craftsmen took up the designs and techniques from the foreigners and started to incorporate Western styles into their own designs, as can be seen in the Phraya Pradit Amornpiman (พระยาประดิษฐ์อมรพิमान), Phaya Aphaironnalit (พระยาอภิธรรมฤทธิ), Phraya Wiangnainarüban (พระยาเวียงไฉนฤบาล) and Luang Nawakitkoson (หลวงนาวากิจโกศล). There was a home decoration company called the Sitthipan Shop. The craftsmen were Chinese, Thai and Thaway.⁷³ The strong influence of Western and Chinese culture on upper-class houses in the reign of King Rama V was indicative of the trend towards internationalism. The houses of the lower classes retained the former styles, but with imported or new materials.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 17.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 105.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 228.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 241.

⁷² Ibid., p. 249.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 247.

When King Rama VI was on the throne Thailand imported the concepts of domestic sanitary systems, though these were not popular among the commoners because the costs were high and they had to be imported.⁷⁴ Lower- and middle-class people were accustomed to Western living. Domestic furniture was of international design: tables, chairs, beds, closets and dressers. The bedrooms did not yet have screens, but were equipped with four-poster beds with mosquito nets.⁷⁵

The trends and fashions of Western living had influenced Thai architectural design concepts, though they were not yet fully adjusted to the climate of Thailand.

3.9.1.5 Decreasing Popularity of Thai Houses

In King Rama VI's reign the popularity of Thai-style houses fell. The designs were similar to those from the previous reign, but had been influenced by Western architecture. In general, the buildings were single houses on areas of land whose size depended on the owners' status. There was no development in housing, but tracts of land were divided up for sale. Separate buildings or rows of houses could be found along the roads in the down-town areas.⁷⁶

The possession and consumption of housing in the era of change and reform illustrates the wide variety of symbols on levels of culture such as progress, fashions, luxuries or sanitation in the Western sense. The house was no longer a space for living, working, sleeping and eating, but a tool or symbol of struggle, conflict and the search for a new identity, as well as being an expression of one's lifestyle, especially for upper-class and well-educated people.

3.9.2 Clothing

3.9.2.1 Symbol of Modernization

In the early part of King Rama IV's time in office Thai people still did not like to wear shirts, and were cajoled by foreigners. The King had foreseen the changes in society and tried to adjust existing Thai culture to cope with these changes. For

⁷⁴ Phutsadi Thippathat. *Ban in Rattanakosin III during the reign of King Rama VI (B.E. 2453–2468)*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 2003, p. 180.

⁷⁵ Phutsadi Thippathat. *Ban in Rattanakosin III*, ibid., p. 130.

⁷⁶ Phutsadi Thippathat. *Ban in Rattanakosin. III*, ibid., p. 37–40.

example, he ordered that government officials should wear shirts and sit on chairs during an audience with him.

Sir John Bowring, first in Thailand in 1855 referred to the dress code at the time thus:

... [T]he ordinary dress of the Siamese is a long piece of cotton or printed cloth, passed round the waist and between the thighs, the ends of the cloth being stuck in behind. There is no covering over the head or upper part of the body; and the legs and feet are quite naked. The higher classes sometimes wear sandals, and have generally a piece of white cloth hanging loosely about the shoulders, which they sometimes use to wrap round their head. Young women employ a sort of silk scarf to screen the bosom. ...⁷⁷

With King Rama V an improvement in the Siamese character had to be established because of the fear of foreign insult. Following His Majesty's European visits, He changed the dress code of court officials. For instance, he abolished the use of *Pha Sompak*, Khmer clothes, and ordered *Phamuang*, which had been popular until 1935, to be worn instead,⁷⁸ He ordered women to stop wearing the *Pig* hair style and to cut their hair short. Some women, such as His favourite consort, Chaokhun Prayun, were allowed shoulder length hair. Women started to wear western-style makeup. The men's hair style, Mahatthai (parted topknot), was done away with, and they adopted a short hairstyle.⁷⁹ Many new styles of clothing were invented at that time, for example the Ratchphatan suit (button-up coat), a blazer with 5 buttons and lace blouses. European dressmakers were established such as Ramsey Seck Field on Bamrungmüang Road.⁸⁰

The women at that time wore high-neck, sleeved Filipino blouses. The wearing of *Phayok* and *Tat* was restricted to formal occasions. In the late part of his reign, women stopped wearing tube skirts in favour of *congkraben*. Women of the royal court wore *congkraben* with Western high-neck long-sleeved draped lace blouses,

⁷⁷Sir John Bowring. *The Kingdom and People of Siam*. Vol.I, Oxford University Press, 1969, p. 215.

⁷⁸ Phuongphaka Kurowat. *A Hand Book: History of Clothing*. Bangkok: Ruamsan, 1997, p. 82.

⁷⁹ Phuongphaka Kurowat, *ibid.*, p. 87.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

printed socks and coloured high-heeled shoes. Men wore Western trousers and the sun helmet.⁸¹

3.9.2.2 Concepts of Time, Place and Clothing

When society changed attitudes also changed; for instance, exposing some parts of the body became a source of shame, whereas it had been acceptable in the period before for women to go topless. Clothing now had to be chosen appropriate to the time and place, whether it be sports wear, a bathing suit, formal dress, evening dress, or a nightgown.⁸² The *Tunlawiphakphotcanakit*⁸³, Vol. 5,⁸⁴ tells us, in connection with the uniforms of the ministerial officials, that His Majesty preferred them to wear coloured silk shirts during an audience with Him, as follows:

Royal family members wore yellow-green shirts,

Ministry of Defense officials wore dark purple shirts,

Ministry of Interior officials wore dark green shirts,

Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials wore dark blue shirts,

Royal pages wore iron-grey shirts,

Royal scribes and royal astrologers wore white shirts.

3.9.2.3 Imitation of Western Values

In this period, Thais dressed like Western people and applied and integrated their styles into the Thai culture. This had its beginnings in the royal court, where, for example, the men, who had previously worn long-sleeved shirts, now changed to wearing a *Ratchphatan*, or button-up coat with *congkraben*, socks, shoes and a hat. The King assigned the coloured shirts to government officials, as described. Hair

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Quoted in Somrak Chaisingkananon. *Tastes: Language in Consumerism Era of Thai Society*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 2001, p. 172.

⁸³ *Tunlawiphakphotcanakit* was a monthly Thai newspaper edited by Thianwan in the reign of king Rama V.

⁸⁴ Phuongphaka Kurowat, *ibid.*, p. 80.

styles changed from the *Mahatthai* to the *Rong Song*⁸⁵ style. Women's dress changed: blouses were decorated with bows and *filipino* sleeves with *congkraben*, socks and high-heeled shoes; they wore coloured gems-stone accessories after the Western fashion; they no longer wore the *Pik* style, but adopted a shoulder-length hair style or a perm.⁸⁶

By the time of Rama VI, the styles had become those of long hair, buns, tube skirts and white teeth. Women's blouses had a deeper neck than the ones worn in the last reign, elbow length sleeves and silk scarves. They had permed neck-length hair, or single style with hair accessories. In the late part of his reign, they took to wearing long hair and adopted the Western bun. Men wore the same style of clothing as in the previous reign.⁸⁷ Women who still wore *congkraben* were persuaded to wear tube skirts which were now called "*phathung*" instead of "*phasin*" as previously. Fashion-minded people would wear ready-made tube skirts which resembled the modern skirt. Wearing ready-made tube skirts was a turning point in the wearing of skirts.⁸⁸

To recapitulate, the tremendous changes we have seen in clothes and dress styles can illustrate the power a new culture exerts in being accepted. In this case it was Western culture, which, starting from the higher classes, spread downward to the lower classes. The existing power structures and beliefs, which obstructed the development of new ideas, declined. The values of Western culture were used as cultural symbols to negotiate, resist and fight for power in defining one's own concept of civilization.

3.9.3 Food

The saying "*the best thing that can happen is to live in a Western house, eat Chinese food and have a Japanese wife*" sits well with the Thai people nowadays. It was not the same in the past because life then was relatively simple. The food that created sayings such as "*numprik phaktom*"⁸⁹ and "*kinkhao kin pla*"⁹⁰ was simple. In those

⁸⁵ *Rong Song* is a hair style short in bac; fashion of wearing the hair in a long tuft or bunch.

⁸⁶ Phuonphaka Kurowat, *ibid.*, p. 84–85.

⁸⁷ Phuonphaka Kurowat, *ibid.*, p. 106.

⁸⁸ Suwadi Thanaphasitphattana. *Women's Clothing and the Manufacture of Woven Products in Thai Society in the Rattanakosin*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 1999, p.100.

⁸⁹ *Namprik* means a sauce of shrimp paste and chili, eaten with vegetable and fish, *Paktom* means vegetable which is boiled.

⁹⁰ Eat rice and fish.

days natural resources were plentiful. There was fish in the water and rice in the fields. Vegetables were easy to find and there were many ways of cooking them. When communication with other countries forced the culture to change the simple eating culture of the Thai people had to change with it. For example, in the reign of King Rama IV, rice milling factories were established which produced white rice. Thai people stopped hand milling rice because the white rice from the factories was more attractive.⁹¹ Whiteness was also popular with regard to teeth. People brushed their teeth white, until they finally stopped chewing betel nuts.

3.9.3.1 Western Eating Cultures

King Rama IV was the first to introduce new modes of conduct by bringing in western habits such as sitting on chairs. In the past people had sat on the floor. Yüea Wichaidis mentioned the first use of chairs in an article on the changes in society:

...[A]t first, when people in the royal court started using chairs, some people did not know how to use them. Women sat on the chairs with folded legs and men with crossed legs. Until King Rama IV had the royal announcement made on how to use the chairs...⁹²

We saw in the last chapter that Thai people had previously eaten with their hands. Three fingers, the thumb, index and middle fingers were used. Spoons and forks were first used by priests and members of the royal family when King Rama V returned from Europe.⁹³ Prince Damrong Rachanuphap explained this matter:

... [I] noticed, regarding eating on fooded dishes arranged on Toog, that a spoon and a two slit fork were always placed on the dish. If the Toog was for a priests, a pearl spoon was placed for curry or other liquid dishes. Forks were used to cut the food into pieces. The fork on the left hand was used to stabilize the food and one used the right hand fork to tear the food up. The fork was used in order for the left hand to stay clean. Foreigners only started using forks and knives a short time ago. I recall watching a movie about King Henry VIII, in which they still ate with their hands in England in 1800 B.E. In ...[T]hailand, we started using forks and knives after His Majesty King Rama VI came back from Singapore. In 1870, His Majesty ordered a dinner at Paisantuksin Hall. Some of the Royal Family used forks in their left hands to stabilize the food and knives in

⁹¹ Kannika Phromsao and Nantha Benchasilarak. *Thai Cuisine*. Chiangmai: Wannarak, 1999, p. 18.

⁹² Yüan Wichaidit. *Journal of Thai Culture*. Vol 14. No. 12 . April 12, 1975, p. 3.

⁹³ Quoted in Kannika Phromsao and Nantha Benchasilarak, *ibid.*, p. 23.

their right hands to cut food into small pieces, which had been referred to in an insulting way as “Phlangsom,” from the use of the two-slit fork...⁹⁴

When the Thai people first started learning to use spoons and forks, especially the royal family, could be very funny, as remarked in a New Year dinner party poem from 1874, from which I quote the conclusion:

[T]hose who were used to eating with forks and knives did it properly, but those who had never done it before were clumsy with the forks and knives...⁹⁵

Furthermore, King Rama V had translated recipes from English and French cookbooks such as soup, stew, steak, sauce, salad sandwiches and desserts and tried to cook some of them with the aid of his minor wives.⁹⁶

In the reign of King Rama IV lemonade and soda were first made in Thailand. Ice was imported in the latter part of his reign. The first ice factory was established in the reign of King Rama V by *Phraya Pakdinòraset* of *Nai Loet* and was called the *Nai Loet* ice factory. Sathain Koset⁹⁷, in *Revise the Past (Fün Kwam Lang)*, reports on ice first coming into the country:

... [T]he people had never seen it before and did not believe that it could be made. The Government had to display it publicly at the National Museum in Salahathaisamakom...

Western eating culture was gradually absorbed into Thai culture and applied and adjusted to satisfy Thai tastes.

3.9.3.2 Eating Out

Thai people in the past had not eaten out. In the Ayutthaya the only people who ate out were the royal labourers because their places of work were far from home. In the early Rattanakosin, the only people who ate out were Government officials. Sò Plainoi⁹⁸ spoke in detail about the grocers who sold ready-made dishes to Government officials; from the ancient documents he learned that they were called

⁹⁴ Quoted in Prince Narisara Nuwatwong. *The Prince's Messages*. No. 26, Bangkok: Prajan Printing, 1949, p. 7.4.

⁹⁵ Conclusion from *New Year Dinner Party Poem in 2417 B.E. Special Issue*, 1932.

⁹⁶ Kannika Phromsao and Nantha Benchasilarak., *ibid.*, p. 19.

⁹⁷ Sathain Koset. *Revisiting the Past (Fuen Kwam Hlang)*. No.2. Bangkok: ThianWan Printing, 1985, p. 202.

⁹⁸ Sò Plainoi. *Days Passed and Nights Lost*. Bangkok: Pimkham, 2000, p. 46.

Kha-o, with a long vowel, which sounded like the northeastern “*Khao*” with a short vowel; this later changed to “*Khao*” after the political reform. He concluded⁹⁹ that food stalls were first established in the reign of King Rama V. The food was sold in a set, each set being placed on a wooden or brass table. The prices varied: the set on the wooden table would be cheaper than the brass table set. Each set included a bowl of curry and a stir fry dish. Dessert sets were also for sale. The difference between the food stalls in the past and at this time was that the curry and stir fry dishes would have been on separate plates in the past, but now it was served on one plate. The food stalls were found in communal places, which formerly would have been Chinese casinos. Eating in a restaurant was a Chinese habit, not popular with the Thais because it was expensive. Later, however, eating out became more popular among Thai people. The Chinese established restaurants whose names ended with “*Hao*”.¹⁰⁰

3.9.3.3 Chinese and Thai Eating Habits: Developments and Changes

As society changed, lifestyles and types of food became more varied. The Chinese who lived and worked in Thailand had contributed to changes in Thai cuisine as follows:

1. Growing Chinese vegetables. There were not many types of Chinese vegetable but they were much more popular than the local varieties.¹⁰¹ In his famous cookbook, Tamrasaiyoawapha, M.L. Teo Chonlamak, noted that there were 225 local vegetables, while only 16¹⁰² Chinese vegetables were popular such as Chinese kale, cabbage, white cabbage, green mustard, lettuce, coriander, green onions, leeks and turnips etc. Despite the high number of local vegetables, people only liked a few of them, and some were no longer growing.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ Sò Plainòì. *The Thai Kitchen*. Bangkok: Public Business Printing, 1994, p. 46.

¹⁰⁰ Sò Plainòì, 1994, *ibid.*, p. 51.

¹⁰¹ Deja Siriphat. “Tree and Grass” in *Local Doctor*. Vol.13, No, 145 (May 1991), p. 78.

¹⁰² Deja Siriphat, *ibid.*, p. 79.

¹⁰³ Waraphòn Ciochaisak. *Foods and Thai Way of Life since World War Two until the Present*. Thai Studies Institute: Chulalongkorn University, 1996, p. 8.

2. Meat, especially pork, was popular but usually only the Chinese prepared it. Thai people liked Chinese food, as a result of which Chinese boiled rice shops and food stalls such as noodle stalls were established.¹⁰⁴

3.9.3.4 The Creation of Nutrition Awareness

While King Rama VI was on the throne some of the Royal Family who had graduated from Europe put the European eating culture into practice and tried to create nutrition awareness.¹⁰⁵

As already discussed, food had been influenced by Chinese and Western culture. Upper-class people had introduced various dishes and attitudes to nutrition. The society had gradually absorbed the new eating habits, although the foreign cuisine had been modified to satisfy the Thai palate. Food was used as a group symbol to identify the differences in socio-economic status resulting from the expansion of the economy and the new values arriving from abroad. It was easy and convenient to buy.

3.9.4 Medicine

3.9.4.1 Thai Traditional Medicine¹⁰⁶ and the Growth of Western Medicine

Because of many changes which led to the assimilation of various aspects of Western civilization, while he was in office King Rama IV tried more to adopt Western medicine for Thailand: especially obstetric practice following the advice of Dr. Samuel Reynolds M.D., or “Mo Hao”, the most prominent medical doctor at the

¹⁰⁴ Waraphòn Ciochaisak, *ibid.*, p.10.

¹⁰⁵ Thanatsò. *Retroactive Eating*. Bangkok: Prasertwatin Press, 1978, p. 49–52.

¹⁰⁶ Thai Traditional Medicine (TTM) means the tradition philosophies of knowledge, and modes of practice to care for Thai people’s health and to cure their diseases and illnesses, which are congrous with the Thai way of life and Thai culture. Modes of practice in TTM are composed of : herbal medicine using such as: decotions, pills, stream bath, massagin with hot herbal compress; manual therapy or massage; traditional healing of bone injuries; application of Buddhism or rites and rituals to mental health care; traditional midwifery; traditional practices to maintain good health; and natural therapy. The elements of TTM are derived from the systematic accumulation and tranfered knowledge and experiences by mean of word of mouth, observation, making record, training and instruction at institutions of TTM. (Quated in Pennapha Subcharoen. *The History and Development of Thai Traditional Medicine*. National Institute of Thai Traditional Medicine, Department of Medical Services, Ministry of Public Health, 1995, p. 52.

time, who was said to enjoy a certain favour with the King. However, the adoption failed because the majority of the public remained faithful to the old traditions and cultures. Nevertheless, the upper-classes and well-educated people did turn their interest to Western medicine, as the King had.

In King Rama V's time traditional recipes for drugs were studied and edited again and then were recorded and stored at the "*Hò Phrasamutluang* or the Royal Library".¹⁰⁷ In addition, there was an attempt to find both Thai and foreign drug recipes for collection, such as the version by Phra-ongchao Sai Sanitwong. It can be said that Thai medicine was still supported at this time: it was taught and practised at the Borworn Palace Medical Department.

In 1887, the first public hospital, Sirirat, was founded, combining both Western and Thai traditional medical practices. However, Western medicine at the time was not very popular among Thai people. Patients were allowed to choose which treatment they wished and because they had previously believed that hospitals were a place of death, they feared going to them. The Government had to devise some tricks to persuade people to go to the hospital, such as paying them money or offering gifts.¹⁰⁸ There was also the suggestion of bringing in for treatment the beggars from Sampheng who had cancer around their shins, as there was a method for curing them. However, no beggars came to the hospital because they did not want to be cured. They even got very angry. They thought that if they got well, they would lose their livelihood.¹⁰⁹ At this time, there were only two hospitals that employed Western methods; the Sirirat and the Bangrak hospital. While the general hospitals stuck to traditional Thai practices.

Later, because there was a shortage of staff in hospitals and help from missionaries, who had played an important role in the development of medicine and public health, a medical school was established in 1890, by Prince Damrong Rachanuphap; this eventually became a medical college.¹¹⁰ At first, both Western and Thai traditional medical practices were combined. A course in traditional Thai medicine was then incorporated into its three year curriculum. In 1895, the first

¹⁰⁷ Sompon Phutriyanan, *ibid.*, p. 24.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ Sò Plainòì. *Days Passed and Nights Lost*, p. 41.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

medical textbook, called Paetsart Sonkhra, was printed. The series consisted of three volumes combining Western and traditional Thai medical doctrines. A new edition of this text appeared in 1904, in which the section on traditional medicine was virtually omitted.

By the early reign of King Rama VI, the fear of Western medicine decreased. Meanwhile, the study of Thai medical practice had been done away with both in the hospital and the medical college, since studying both practices at the same time confused the students. In 1923, the issuing of the Medical Licence Act brought Thai medical practice to an end and it could no longer flourish. The objective of this act was to protect people from non-scientific practices.¹¹¹

3.9.4.2 O-sotsala; Thai-Style Pharmacies

In 1891, the first two pharmacies of the department of nursing, called *O-sotsala*, were set up. The first pharmacy was bought up from the missionaries and sold only foreign medicines. The second sold only Thai medicines. These *O-sotsala* were also government medical storeshouses. They were extended to other provinces, and served as pharmacies and doctors' practices. Further, in 1902, a new kind of pharmacy was established. This was a Government *O-sotsala*. Here a German pharmacist was hired to produce and distribute medicines to Government agencies. In the same year, the *O-sotsapha* was established to produce low price medicines for sale to people in the suburbs. In their early phase, the *O-sotsapha*, was not very popular among Thai people because it only produced foreign medicines. Later, it was producing ten types of Thai medicine.¹¹² However, this *O-sotsapha* was merged with the *O-sotsala* of the Government in 1906.¹¹³

3.9.4.3 Healthcare: Relaxation through Travel

During King Rama IV's time in power many foreigners visited and lived in Thailand. Concepts concerning holidays and the cleanliness of the city were devised. According to the evidence, some foreign consuls co-signed a petition to the King

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 30–31.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Somphon Phutriyanan, *ibid.*, p. 28.

requesting the building of roads. In the petition they argued that they were unable to travel, and this was bad for their health. As we see in one part of the petition,

... Europeans used to travel on horses and they were healthy. When they were in Bangkok, they found there were no roads to ride horses or to drive cars on. They often got sick. ...¹¹⁴

With the coming to power of Rama V, Thai people began to learn the benefits of travel, as in Western aspects of healthcare. Prince Phanurangsi observed¹¹⁵ that holidays abroad were good for the health: people who took holidays returned to work with More energy.

However, it was mostly only Government officials and wealthy people who travelled. Villagers or commoner people were too involved in earning their living and had not the time nor the money for it.

3.9.4.4 Sanitation: Cleanliness and Water Supplies

On the matter of sanitation, King Rama IV made an announcement forbidding the disposal of decomposing animals into the rivers and canals because people had to use the water from these sources. Foreigners felt offended when they used this water. A fresh water supply system was created in the late reign of King Rama V. In 1897, he ordered the Sanitation Department to provide clean drinking water in the city. With Rama VI, on November 14, 1914, an official body regulating the water supply was opened.¹¹⁶

From the above discussion on medicine, we have seen that the reigns of Kings Rama IV-VI were a time of important changes and reform, a time in which Thai society was being tested, a time of power struggles in which decisions were made concerning the life and death of its citizens. It was a selection process. Owing to the influence of empirical science which was accepted by the west, Thai concepts of healing and healthcare were rejected and this opened the way for the full

¹¹⁴ Thepchu Thapthong. *Photo of the Retrospective Bangkok History*. Bangkok: Wacharin Printing, 1996, p. 63.

¹¹⁵ Quoted in Sò Plainòì, *ibid.*, p. 72.

¹¹⁶ Thepchu Thapthong, *ibid.*, p. 76.

development of Western medical treatment, until it was questioned again in the modern era.

3.10 Conclusion: The Consumption of the Basic Necessities in the Era of Change and Reform

The consumption of the four basic necessities in this era was related to new concepts such as “civilization”, “Westernization” and fashion. The consumption of materials were applied as symbols of social status, especially by upper-class people, who had better opportunities for their display than the governed class. They also tried to monopolize power through the acquisition of newer, better, more luxurious, and ever different and more tasteful objects. These they would use to strengthen their social and economic status; then they would pass the process on to other groups. In the period of King Rama V the way the upper-classes lived in terms of the consumption of the four basic necessities was driven by Western impulses. This period also saw more changes in social, political and economic structures and advances in both technology and education. Bangkok had become an international centre because of its level of progress, facilities, well developed communications and the growing infrastructure, the expansion of business, the growth in investment and the rise of the middle class. These changes had resulted in a shaking up of the status of upper-class people, especially in the late reign of King Rama V. With King Rama VI, the consumption of the four basic necessities of upper-class people that were used as an expression of quality, taste, luxury and expensiveness had become the commercial goods that commoners were able to buy. The consumption of the four basic necessities that had previously expressed high social and economic status were no longer able to confirm this. Thus, we could argue that the differences in status witnessed in the aristocratic system of the early Rattakosin had faded, and been replaced by the power of money. Wealthy and middle-class people sought new ways to create an identity, and goods were used as tools to this end and in the negotiation of power between the social classes. The middle class began to adopt values relating to the purchase and use of commercial goods and symbolic consumptions in order to express their economic and social status, in the same way that the upper-class had done previously.

Before looking at the next era, we can summarize that the period we have been discussing saw a reduction in the differences in social status that we had seen in the early Rattanakosin. We see the beginning of a possession and consumption in Thai society that cannot confirm social and economic status. The housing, clothing, food and medicine that people possess and consume no longer provide them with an identity. Money now gives people the power to do what they want. The line between the classes has started to blur.

Chapter 4

The Four Basics Necessities during the Era of Democracy and Nationalism

This chapter continues the study of people's consumption of the four basic necessities with the period 1932–1957, the time from the overthrow of the absolute monarchy to after the end of World War II or before the first using economic and social plan.

4.1 The Era of Democracy and Nationalism: Overview of the Country

In the earlier chapters we have seen that Thai society was continually changing and developing. However, the changes intensified after the signing of the Bowring Treaty in 1855¹, during the reign of King Rama IV. This treaty abolished the remnants of royal monopolies, equalized the dues on Western and Chinese shipping, granted extraterritorial rights to British citizens, and allowed the British to import opium for sale through a government monopoly.² After the Bowring treaty, Thais also had to sign the same treaty with other Western countries. This consequence increased Thai society's exposure to the West and the principle of free trade. Then international trade was increasing even more. To protect the benefits of the country from the expansion and influence of Western powers, political reforms had been in place since the reign of Kings Rama IV-VI. Since then, the country had rapidly developed and changed following Western models. With the growth of international trade, Thailand had experienced a gradual transformation from a self-sufficient economy to a capitalist one. By the early reign of King Rama VII, Thailand was already bound up with the world economy.³ The impact of international contacts and trade, and the changes within Thai society itself, had contributed as the main impulse to modernization and civilization in Thai society, particularly in Bangkok. Since then,

¹ Vachara Sindhuprama. *Towards the Development of Consumerism in Chiang Mai: A Reflection Seen through Advertisements in the Newspaper Sri Chiang Mai (A.D. 1927)*. *Journal of Liberal Arts*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Jan.-June), 2001, p. 118–119.

² Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpanich. *A History of Thailand*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 45.

³ Phutsadi Thippathat. *Ban in Rattanakosin IV during the reign of King Rama VII-IX (B.E.2325–2394)*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 2003, p. 1.

Bangkok had become the most important city and the capital of Thailand as well as the main city of change. However, the changes in Bangkok did not occur rapidly. It was, rather, a gradual process. Resulting from westernization, colonization and modernizing and civilizing influences, the monarch's role also became more limited. The power of the King, the royal family and the aristocracy were all challenged. Later, they would be referred to as the “group of the old power”. Finally, the old power had to give way to a new social power grouping, which came about thanks to the developments in education that had been in progress since the reign of King Rama V. Some people in this grouping had studied in Thailand, some had been sent abroad, but both of these educated groups nurtured ideas of change and progress. Then, in 1932, a political revolution occurred and the administration was changed from an absolute monarchy to an oligarchy (but not a democracy). Nevertheless, this revolution was seen as a victory by the upper middle class. Liberty and equality began to blossom and the supremacy of the aristocratic line came into question. Ascribed status no longer had the authority it had had in the past, but the power of money and an individual's qualities such as virtue, knowledge and skills took on importance. Meanwhile, the political power of the aristocracy was declining, although they maintained their cultural influence. Courteous and aristocratic conduct was taken as the standard (*phudi*: refined person), and people were no longer punished for imitating aristocratic behavior (as far as the law and money allowed), as they had been in the past. Beyond this, they also had the right to pursue their individuality; this would include criticizing all social issues. However, these unqualified rights that people enjoyed were short-lived, because of the weakness of the social and economic situation after the revolution. Ordinary people's income was still low. Their domestic finances would just suffice for them to survive. Saving levels were low, and so their potential for the acquisition of luxury goods was limited. Only a minority would have been able to afford these. At this time, then, the standard of living among people in the upper, middle and lower classes was unclear. The social structure was still relatively unchanged.

During the Second World War Thai politics entered a “dark age” of democracy in Thailand. The political situation changed fundamentally. People enjoyed less liberty; they were obstructed from political activities; they turned their concentration on entertainment activities instead, which at that time would have included social gatherings, balls, fashion shows and beauty contests, and were

organised at both a national and a local level. All these activities would also have been held in universities.⁴

During World War Two the Thai economy declined. Field Marshal Plaek Phibun Songkram, the third Prime Minister of the democratic regime in Thailand, tried to find a solution by initiating many policies aimed at helping the people. One of his outstanding policies was to limit the commercial role of foreigners, especially the mercantile Chinese, since these groups had enormous influence in the Thai economy. As Phanit Ruamsilapa's study on "*Economic Development Policy in the time of Marshal Phibun Songkram (2481–2487 B.E.)*"⁵ observed, before World War II commercial business had been in the hands of Chinese merchants in at least 85-90% of the business sector. The limiting of Chinese and Western commercial influence did not only help to improve Thai commerce, it also helped Marshal Phibun maintain his political power. With the growing influence of contemporary fascist and nationalist models, Marshal Phibun projected the ideal of a strong state and a modern society. He had launched a plan of nation building to encourage Thai people's national enthusiasm and pride. To be civilized in the manner of Western countries was one of his ideals. Towards this aim, on the one hand he tried to get rid of the old beliefs and traditions, and on the other he created a new culture in the Western style. In this way, many aspects of Thai culture were altered in daily life including dress, health and food.

One consequence of these changes was a large impact on people's consumption of the four basic necessities in this period.

4.2 People's Consumption of the Four Basic Necessities during the Era of Democracy and Nationalism

4.2.1 Housing

In the reigns of Kings Rama 7 and 8 (1925–1946) people had lived mainly in single houses, as in previous times. Commercial buildings were popular and were often

⁴Suphattra Kobkitsuksakun. *Miss Thailand on Historically Changing Roads*. Master Thesis, Thammasat University, 1990, p. 122. See also Hong Lisa (1988).

⁵ Phanit Ruamsilapa . *Economic Development Policy in the time of Major General Pleak Phibun Songkram (2481–2487 B.E.)*. Master Thesis, Chulalongkorn University, 1978, p. 39.

located near a road.⁶ After 1936, the Government brought in the Contribution Act in order to encourage confidence in building securities and for the benefit of city planning. The content of the act was concerned mostly with fire safety, health and sanitation. During World War II the economy weakened, people became poor and many houses were destroyed, especially in Bangkok. Because Bangkok was the most heavily damaged area, many people left their houses and evacuated to the countryside.

After the War many people returned to Bangkok, so the need for housing was high. Indeed, Bangkok was the area where most new houses were built, most of them with the limited budget of the time. The houses were small, simple and in a limited area. They were naturally different in style from those of previous times. Because many architects had graduated in the West, many various and, in the eyes of the locals, strange building concepts arose.⁷

4.2.1.1 Settlement

In the reign of King Rama 7, Bangkok was divided into two provinces; Phra Nakhòn (lit., “the city”) was on the west bank of the Chaophraya River and Thonburi was on the east. In addition, there were four provinces on the outskirts of Bangkok, namely Nonthaburi, Minburi, Phrapradang and Samutprakan.⁸ The difference between these two areas of Bangkok was that Phra Nakhòn was more civilized than Thonburi, because more people lived there and it was a hub of business activity. The most expensive land was in the centre of Phra Nakhòn; this was called the “old town”. The building of houses in extensive grounds, as in the past, was not possible here. Landowners in the old town had to choose between selling their land and building rows of houses, because in the space a row of houses would occupy a landowner could live and run his business. Those who chose to sell moved to another area

⁶ Phutsadi Thippathat. *Ban in Rattanakosin IV during the reign of King Rama VII-IX (1782–1851)*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 2003, p. 7. quoted in Maneeratan Yamprasert. The Administrative Role of Chao Phraya Yommaraj (Pan Sukhum) during the Reign of King Vajiravudh. Master Thesis, Chulalongkorn University, 1977, p. 121.

⁷ Phrakòn Angsasingha, A Lecture given at the American Association of Thailand, November 26, 1957.

⁸ Phutsadi Thippathat. *Ban in Rattanakosin IV during the reign of King Rama VII-IX(1782-1851)*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 2003, p.7. quoted in Maneeratan Yamprasert. The Administrative Role of Chao Phraya Yommaraj (Pan Sukhum) during the Reign of King Vajiravudh. Master Thesis, Chulalongkorn University, 1977, p. 33–36.

where land was still cheap. There, they were able to build large houses on large pieces of land. The most popular place people moved to was the district on Sukhumvit Road, or “Bangkaphi field”. In the past, this area had been a slum. It was inhabited by skilled and unskilled worker and other lower class citizens. The land was very cheap here. Rich people keen on accumulating land could not resist it. For example, a certain Mr. A. E. Na Na bought a huge tract of land here. Today, it has become one of the most expensive areas in Bangkok and is known as Na Na road. However, it has also become the most crowded area since the reign of King Rama 7.

4.2.1.2 The Allocation of Housing to Low-Income Persons

At the end of World War II the government of Field Marshal Phibun Songkram tried to help low-income people build houses through the introduction of a “Government Housing” project. It was the first government housing project in Bangkok. There were various styles of houses such as flats, single houses, townhouses and so on. Examples of Government Housing Project residences were the townhouse, for war veterans and people who had lost their houses during the War, located on Rachawithi Road and Rangnum Street, and built in 1951; and the single houses located in Pithsonuloke, built in 1954. At this time, three areas had been allocated by the Government Housing scheme for hire purchase: (1) Sukhumwit Road, named Phibun West, contained 258 houses built in 1955, (2) Rama Road, named Phibun Wathana, contained 228 houses built in 1956, (3) Mahamaek Field contained 52 houses built in 1952.⁹

We have already mentioned that the economy was weak during this period. The economic, social and cultural situation could be clearly identified by the types of housing. We have also seen that small houses located in the limited areas were popular, and that the increase in land prices made the building of large houses with extensive grounds unfeasible. However, some economically well-situated people were able to maintain the old style of house construction by moving to cheaper areas. This did, however, lead to an expansion of the city. The city centre of Bangkok become increasingly larger.

⁹ Anek Nawikamun (ed.). *Clothing in the Rattanakosin Period*. Bangkok: Müang Boran, 1982, p. 100 [=Series Book Two Centuries of Bangkok No.3].

4.2.2 Clothing

In the reign of King Rama VII, Thai women's dress adopted Western styles. Typical at that time was the wearing of sleeveless shirts and having the hair permed or cut in a bob. Thai women stopped wearing silk shawls. They changed to wearing knee-length skirts and mother hubbard dresses with short sleeves. Government officials would wear a blue piece of cloth wrapped around the legs and a button-up coat, long socks, shoes and a felt hat or sun helmet. On trips overseas they would wear a jacket with lapels, trousers and a necktie in the Western style. However, these changes in dress style applied only to the king's household and groups of high-level Government officials. The Thai commoner still wore *cong kraben*, upper garment and went bare foot.¹⁰

Western culture was strongly influential in changing Thai clothing, in particular through films. The perm was a direct product of western influence. In Thai, it was called "*phom kliin*". In the past, creating waves in the hair had been achieved using the poker from a charcoal brazier. This method, however, was unsatisfactory owing to the fact that it was not permanent, and also because of the risk of accidents. But now, there was a development in the fashion of perming and beauty salons. Perming oil was imported from western countries, the evidence of which can be seen in many advertisements during the reign of King Rama VII.

As we saw before, in spite of the revolution, the new government had maintained its patterns of conduct from the era of aristocracy; refined manners had become the social standard [refined person or "*phu di*"]. The old code of the nobility was reproduced through education. It became an ideal way for people to develop themselves. The image of noble behaviour implied the wearing of clothes appropriate to the occasion in order to show respect to the people one met.

The reign of King Rama VIII saw the beginnings of change. Modes of dress were changed to comply with international standards, as witnessed in Marshall Phibun's statement in "New Thai", May 5th 1941:

...to dress like civilized people was one part of the improvement in the culture. Civilized dress led the people to comport themselves correctly. In other words, civilized dress led the people to have a good mind, not an uncivilized mind like people in Africa.¹¹

¹⁰ Phongphaka Kurowat. *A Hand Book on the History of Clothing*. 5th ed. Bangkok: Ruamsan, 1997, p 106-7.

¹¹ New Thai Journal. May 5. 1941, p. 100.

The repositioning of Thai dress to match international standards commenced when the People's Party urged all Government ministries, bureaus and divisions to support the discouragement of *congkraben* for all male Government servants in favour of trousers.¹² It was felt that *congkraben* were inappropriate, and that the fact that its people still wore this kind of attire brought shame on Thailand, which had been an independent country for a long time and was about to become a “civilized” country. This was because *jongkraben* was the popular attire in colonial countries such as Cambodia, which was a vassal state of France. *congkraben* were thus considered a symbol of outdatedness and inferiority to western countries.¹³

In recognition of Thailand's success in the treaty with France on the Indo-Chinese border in March 1941, the Thai Government had sent a message to all Thai women urging them to stop wearing *congkraben* and to wear tube skirts instead. They were also asked to change their hairstyle from very short to long hair. All these things are now considered as a symbol of Thailand becoming a civilized country.¹⁴

By the time of Marshal Phibun's regime, men's dress had been completely transformed into a western style, although that of women was still a mixture of traditional Thai and Western styles.

4.2.2.1 *Ratthaniyom*

In 1941¹⁵ the government of Marshal Phibun issued the “*ratthaniyom*”, translated as “cultural mandates” or “state edicts”, on people's dress:

Thai people should not appear in public inappropriately dressed, such as wearing only underwear or even unclothed.

1. Appropriate dress for Thai people was:
 - 1) Dress appropriate to one's station and;
 - 2) Dress according to international standards;
 - 3) Dress in the traditional popular style;

¹² The National Archive. King Rama 7-8 Reign. 2 series / 242, 20 / 328

¹³ Luang Vajitvathakan. *Sermon in Radio Broadcasting*. “*Clothing Problems*.” 12 April 1941, quoted in Phibun Kanjanakit (ed.). *A 100th Commemoration of Prime Minister Field Marshal Phibunsongkram*. Lopburi: Artillery Center, 1997, p. 1094–1103.

¹⁴ Suwadi Thanaprasitphattana. *Women's Clothing and Manufacture of Women Products in Thai Society in Rattanakosin*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 1999, p. 101.

¹⁵ Suwadi Thanaprasitphattana, *ibid.*, p. 101.

To make it easier for people to follow these instructions, the Ministry of the Interior issued the following additional suggestions and advice on what the appropriate dress would be:

Dress in Thailand was divided into three styles:

- 1) Common dress
 - 2) Casual wear
 - 3) Working dress
 - A. Regular
 - B. Special
 2. Common dress was what one would normally wear in public.
 3. Casual wear constituted sports wear or social attire.
 4. Regular working dress could also include sports or social attire.
 5. “Special working dress” referred to dress for special occasions, and uniforms to be stipulated by each individual office.
 6. Common dress for men comprised:
 - 1) hat;
 - 2) jacket or button-up coat, in the case of a jacket, it should be accompanied by matching shirt and necktie;
 - 3) trousers in accordance with international standards;
 - 4) shoes, boots and socks.
- Furthermore, dress for the municipality or local area comprised a hat, coat, trousers or shorts and shoes
7. Common dress for men should be of a plain color, not flashy
 8. Common dress for women included:
 - 1) hat;
 - 2) coat, jacket or overcoat;
 - 3) sack or skirt;
 - 4) boots or shoes.
 9. Regular working dress for men included:
 - 1) hat;
 - 2) shirt;
 - 3) trousers or shorts;
 - 4) shoes or boots.
 10. Regular working dress for women include:

- 1) hat;
- 2) coat, jacket or overcoat;
- 3) sack or skirt;
- 4) boots or shoes;

11. Regular working dress for men and women should be in grey, indigo or khaki when working outdoors, and blue when working indoors.

The dress of all men and women had to be in accordance with the style set by the Government. Men had to wear jackets, trousers, cover-heel shoes, socks and hats. Women had to wear skirts, jackets, strap shoes or cover-heel shoes, optionally also socks, and a hat. The Government also prescribed the colour of uniform for people from each occupation for each occasion.

From this edict, one may notice that Field Marshal Phibun's government placed emphasis on the hat as an important part of modern dress. This period has therefore been called the period of "hat-wearing leading Thailand to civilization". The Government determined the occasions on which women should wear a hat as follows:¹⁶

...[A] hat should be made of straw, cloth, silk, woolen fabric, palm leaves or pine wood. A hat's colour should be harmonious with the colour of the clothes. It may not have a character of a beach hat, sleeping hat, men's hat or a hat with a strap under the chin like a children's hat. A woman's handbag should match the dress, shoes, hat or belt. The handbag should not be decorated with sparkling objects or be in a silver or golden colour, except for a gala ball or a royal ceremony. ...

Hats were classified by occasion into two categories:

A general hat was a hat for wearing to work, to make people look well mannered and to protect them from rain, sunlight and dew. It was a simple hat with a small brim or with no brim at all, dull in colour and with few ornaments. It should be made of a material that was easy to find in Thailand, like pandanus leaves (ใบเตย), *lamciak* leaves (ใบลำเจียก), palm leaves, bamboo (ไม้ไผ่), straw (ฟาง), reed (กก) or fabric (ผ้า), and it may be

¹⁶ Phibun Kancanakit (ed.). *A 100th Commemoration of Prime Minister Field Marshal Pibulsongkram*. Lopburi: Artillery Center, 1997, p. 381–384.

adorned with flowers to make it more attractive. A special hat was a hat that one wore as an addition to one's clothing. This kind of hat might be decorated with some ornaments, such as feathers or flowers, and many others. This hat would be worn on special occasions only, such as going for a walk or going to a party.

As noted, men's dress was completely transformed at this time to conform with the international style. They usually wore trousers, or knee-level or two-inch-under-the-knee-level shorts. These were a casual form of dress that they wore when they were going to play sports or going to a club.

The Government also ruled on what one should wear on special occasions, such as for a cremation. In this case¹⁷:

1. Men
 - A. The upper part of the left sleeve had to be bound around with a piece of black cloth roughly 1-10 centimeters wide
 - B. Refined dress should follow the national policy: white clothes, pants (if wearing a white shirt, it should fastened with a black necktie), black shoes and black socks. Also, the upper part of the left sleeve should be bound with a piece of black cloth roughly 1-10 centimeters wide
2. Women - refined dress should follow national policy; all clothes should be black in colour.

In 1942, a National Culture Commission was established to define and disseminate Thai culture. The Government persuaded Thai women to wear hats to demonstrate that they were as civilized as people in other civilized countries around the world¹. We see this, for example, in a radio program from that time, “*Nai Man and Nai Khong*”: the two names joined form one the composite, *mankhong*, or “security”. The whole programme consisted of dialogues between *Nai Man* and *Nai Khong* aimed at promoting the Government's policy. Slogans included “*Hats lead the nation to power.*”¹⁸

These methods of persuasion were not only carried out on the radio, but also in newspapers. Many articles, such as those in Nikorn Pramonwan, Prachachart and so on, were published with the aim of promoting standards of dress. The main

¹⁷ Ibid., p.381-384.

¹⁸ Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpanich. *A History of Thailand*. New York:Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 135.

objective of all these articles was to persuade Thai women to wear a skirt and hat, and the men to wear trousers.

The political situation at that time was not stable, with conflict and struggle between the old and new power groups. At the same time, outside the country, there had been fighting between the Allied and the Axis camps. Alongside the growing influence of the contemporary fascist model, Marshal Phibun projected the ideal of a strong military leadership guiding a united and orderly society to modernization and expansion in order to survive in a world of nationalist influence. To create a civilized nation was an important policy for this government.

A standard of dress was one aspect of this policy that could act as a symbol of civilization. As can be seen from Phibun's statement at the end of World War II:

[T]he Government had this policy during the War because it wanted to present to Japan the idea that Thailand was a civilized nation. To protect the country from the influences of Japan, which would include, for example, the wearing of the Kimono, international dress was instituted. It would also demonstrate that Thailand had the freedom to do anything it wished and act like Western countries.¹⁹

The result was that Government officials and people of the middle class or otherwise in high social positions were forced to change their dress behaviour. Many of them spent a lot of money on expensive clothes, until the Government sent out a caution. In a speech from that time we hear:

[P]eople should not wear expensive clothes just to celebrate having the constitution. Expensive clothes are unnecessary in a time of emergency.²⁰

It can be seen that the most remarkable feature of dress during this period was that it was a symbol of social and cultural competition. It stood for civilization and international standards. Under the *ratthaniyom* edicts, the Government controlled modes of dress among Thai people, in fact people's whole attitude to dress changed consistent with the developments in world society and communications.

¹⁹ Advertising News. 16 April. 1941, p. 30.

²⁰ Advertising News. 16 April, 1941, p. 32.

4.2.3 Food

In the previous era, the court had been a centre of training for Thai women in the skill of housekeeping, needle work and cooking. The training of Thai girls in the court brought them esteem and they took this knowledge with them when they returned to their homes. With the revolution in 1932, in the reign of King Rama 7, these girls had to leave the court. Knowledge of court practices had been widespread among common citizens, whose lifestyle was simple and who were not interested in food decoration like the court officials. The common people modified court practices to suit their own circumstances, for example by simplifying them.²¹ In this period court cuisine, which was a secret technique, had been transmitted to many groups of people in Thai society. Therefore, many people had more opportunities to enjoy such foods and learn how to make them than in the past.

When Phibun, whose aim it was to create a nation-state, was Prime Minister, he issued the state edicts, which took over, controlled and changed people's daily life. The freedom of life disappeared, and gave way to life under state control. The main idea of the edicts was to set a standard of conduct. One aspect of this concerned the consumption of food.

4.2.3.1 *Ratthaniyom*: The Noodle and the Developing Nation

In 1939, Thailand was impacted by the economic depression following World War II. Phibun's government at that time persuaded Thai people to consume Thai goods, in order to promote the role of Thais in the economy over that of foreigners. It proclaimed the fifth premise of the state edicts,²² "Thai make, Thai sell, Thai use, Thai eat", with the aim of persuading Thai people to consume home-produced products.²³ In accordance with the fifth edict, the Government encouraged Thai people to consume noodles, hoping that it would create business, as it believed the noodle to be clean, cheap and good for the health.²⁴ The Government publicised the benefits of consuming noodles for all Thai people in a radio broadcast on the 7th November 2482 B.E. The statement read:

²¹ Kannika Phromsao and Nantha Benchasilarak. *Thai Cuisine*. Chiang Mai: Wannarak, 1999, p. 20–21.

²² Anek Nawikamun. *The Photo Album of Thailand under Prime Minister Pibulsongkram 1939*. Bangkok: Nora Press, 2001, p. 17.

²³ *Cultural Study Experience*. Teaching Material. Unit 7–15. Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University. Bangkok: Chuanchom Press, 1990, p. 377.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 330.

... [W]ould like all Thai people to consume noodles because the noodle is a good food containing all things, rice, nuts and sour, salty, and sweet favors which all are produced in Thailand. The noodle is nutritious, good for the health, clean, cheap, easy to buy, and tastes good.²⁵

It encouraged people not only to consume noodles but also to sell them. It further ordered Government agencies to make sure this policy was effective. The result was that all of the headmasters in the country and the officials in the Ministry of the Interior, as well as district officers, were given the task of organising the sale of noodles. In addition, it ordered the Public Welfare Department to give advice on the practice of growing sprouted peas, as the Agriculture Department had written. The suggestion was distributed to all areas of the country.²⁶ Actually, the making of noodles had come to Thailand with the trade with and immigration of the Chinese. But it had not been popular. The noodle first gained popularity under the regime of Marshal Phibun. The manufacture of noodles was an occupation reserved for Thai people.²⁷ As a consequence of that policy, noodles have been popular everywhere in Thailand ever since.

4.2.3.2 Specifying the Times for Eating

During the era of nationalism, or *ratthaniyom* period, the Government had been active in determining and organising people's lifestyles in many areas. They even dictated the times of day for particular activities, as can be seen from *Ratthaniyom* edict no.11, from 8 September 1941, which prescribed a timetable dividing people's daily lives between work, eating, leisure, and sleep.²⁸ The content of this edict included eating not more than four meals a day, sleeping 6-8 hours, exercising for at least one hour, working on unfinished work in one's free time in the evening, conversing with family members and taking time for self-study by listening to the radio or reading newspapers.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Kannika Phromsao and Nantha Benchasilarak. *Thai Cuisine*. Chaingmai: Wannarak, 1999, p. 57.

²⁸ Anek Nawikamun, *ibid.*, p. 18–19.

4.2.3.3 The Cessation of Betel-Chewing

In the previous chapter, we saw that the chewing of betel had been an important Thai tradition for a long time. The aversion to betel-chewing began during the period of Kings Rama IV-VI, although it was still allowed. By the period of nationalism it had been prohibited. The Government forbade people from selling or planting betel trees. The chewing of betel has since then fully disappeared from Thai society. Part of the Government's reasoning can be seen from Phibun's announcement, in which he says,

... [P]eople who chew betel have an uncivilized appearance, as though they had blood in their mouths from eating fresh meat. When people chew betel they have to chew slowly like buffalo; it gives them bad breath, irregular teeth, makes them look older than they are, numbs the nerves of the tongue, gives them diarrhea and cancer, and makes them look ugly...²⁹

4.2.3.4 The Policy of Increasing Agricultural Production

In 1939 the government of Prime Minister Phibun introduced an Act promoting the idea of the kitchen garden and the raising of animals, to aid people in supporting themselves and their families and becoming independent from the importing of goods.³⁰ To promote this Act, the Government offered rewards to people who were diligent and worked hard on the Prime Minister's birthday, the 14th of July (which was declared a public holiday).² The Government also encouraged people to grow crops such as cotton, nuts, castor oil plants and garlic, while the keeping of domesticated animals was also suggested for people who did not have the necessary skills for growing crops. Many kinds of animal were advocated, including cows, buffalo, pigs, ducks, chickens and other birds, and fish. This policy also covered monks' and priests' attendance in temples.³¹ When Thailand joined the War the Government sped the policy up and decreed which types of vegetable should be grown. These included parsnip, pumpkin, cucumber and the giant egg-plant. It also continued to support raising animals like pigs, ducks and chickens, while adding to its list frogs, geese, eels, fresh water snails, rabbits and pigeons. Increasingly, the production of hens' and ducks' eggs as well as fish was also promoted, and a Government handbook for "easy living" was issued,³ which explained some

²⁹ Thamsuk Nunnon. "Müang Thai in the Time of Believe in the Leader", in *Thammasat University Journal*, Vol. 6 (June-Sep.) 1976, p. 135.

³⁰ Thamsuk Nunnon, *ibid.*, p. 129.

³¹ Warapon Ciochaisak. *Thai Foods and Lifestyles from World War Two up to the Present*. The Thai Studies Institute: Chulalongkorn University, 1996, p. 23.

procedures of domestic production like the kitchen garden, or the manufacture of shrimp paste or fish sauce.³²

4.2.3.5 Nutrition Propaganda “Good Food and Good Life”

To promote the consumption of food with all five nutritional elements, and especially that of meat, was one of the most important policies of the Phibun Government in the period of nationalism. The setting up of a slaughter-house, a cheap food shop and a fresh food market in every district and sub-district was ordered.³³ Thai people’s eating culture had been developing at this time. The quality and the methods of consumption of food were regulated in a law in 1939.³⁴ This law prohibited people taking rice by hand. The use of the spoon and fork as well as sitting at a table while eating were also regulated. The study of nutrition was put onto courses at all levels by the Ministry of Education. Even so, the significance of nutrition was still unclear at this time. A certain knowledge and understanding of the essential nature of food for the human being already existed in the minds of Thai people: they knew that good food helped prevent them from getting sick.⁴ A serious interest in nutrition developed in Thailand when it was granted support funds from the Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO). In 1951 the National Nutrition Committee was set up to encourage the consumption of good food in Thailand.³⁵

4.2.3.6 Food and Changing Times

With the changes in the political and socio-economic situation, as well as the development policy of the Government, the lifestyle, beliefs and traditions of the Thai people had been changing rapidly. This included the consumption of food, especially in Bangkok, the country’s capital.

During this period, the integration and assimilation of culture among Thai people and between Thailand and other nations had been on the increase. This can be seen in the change in the use of condiments. Previously, the main condiment had been a kind of food for dipping, such as *namphrik* (chili sauce). Later, curry grew in popularity until it became a main part of the menu. As the process of cultural

³² Warapon Ciochaisak. *ibid.*, p.23.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *A Royal Decree Setting the National Culture B.E. 1945*. The Government Gazette, No. 59, Section 63, 24 September 1945.

³⁵ Warapon Ciochaisak, *ibid.*, p. 24.

assimilation continued, several types of food were adopted, especially Chinese foods such as stir fry, noodles and soups. These became the staple diet of the Thai people.³⁶ During World War II, a Chinese dish that was very popular was *khaw sia po / khow chea po*: [a kind of rice dish]. It came from Kwangtung.³⁷ Besides this, Chinese pickled fruits were also popular.³⁸

The cultural exchange within Thailand itself was also growing. *Isan* foods [foods from north-eastern Thailand] such as stick rice and papaya mix were brought to Bangkok around 1935 by people from the north east coming to work in Bangkok.³⁹ However, they were not as popular then as they have become nowadays.

As we have seen, the Thai people's manner of consuming food, socially and culturally, had been relatively simple in earlier times. The main diet had consisted of rice, vegetables and fish. But by now eating habits had undergone much change and development. The Government's promotional campaign had also contributed to them no longer being as simple as they had been; culinary norms had become complex. Thai people's concerns in eating were well for the sake of their health, though this was a slow development. Later, with growing Western influence and the increase in prosperity of the country, as well as the sponsoring of students abroad, Thai eating habits changed enormously. A period of culinary diversity had begun, and Bangkok has been the centre of this ever since.

4.2.4 Medicine

4.2.4.1 The Joining of Medical Practices in Thai society

As a consequence of the Government's attempt at encouraging confidence in Western medical practices and the setting up of the Sirirat Hospital, Thai people became more interested in and trusting of treatments from the West. During King Rama VII's reign, in 1923, the study of Thai traditional medicine was stopped by order of law. This led to a loss of interest in it among Thai people.⁴⁰ In 1939 the Government ordered a separation of therapeutics into Western and Thai traditional treatments.

³⁶ Pradit Hupcharoen and Group. *Domestic Science*. Bangkok: Aksònbandit. 1977, p. 8–9.

³⁷ Pradit Hupcharoen, *ibid.*, p. 24–25.

³⁸ Pradit Hupcharoen, *ibid.*, p. 11.

³⁹ Amphòn Hannapha. *Prakaiprük*. Bangkok: Klangwitthaya, 1966, p. 36.

⁴⁰ Somphon Phutriyanan. *Basic Knowledge of Thai Traditional Medicine on Herb and Thai Traditional Medicine*. Department of Medical Service. Ministry of Public Health, 3 (ed), 1999, p. 31.

- Western practice comprised the therapeutics which applied international standards of medical scientific methodology.
- The Thai traditional treatments were those that employed received knowledge from the ancients and did not apply medical scientific methodology.⁴¹

Scientific methodology became a powerful and crucial factor in the decision to separate Western and Thai practices. Even though the traditional knowledge had been accumulated over a long time, it was still seen as being out of date. This separation resulted in an enduring obstruction of Thai traditional treatments. However, ten traditional Thai medicines continued to be produced until 1941 when they too were abolished.

- The establishment of pharmaceutical factories

Before 1937, Thailand had to import Western medicines because there were no pharmaceutical factories in the country. In 1935, Dr. Tao Lapanukrom, head of the Department of Science in the Ministry of Economic Affairs, set up a pharmaceutical factory.⁴² His reasoning was firstly that Thailand had many kinds of herbs and national resources to produce its own medicines, and secondly that it would reduce the need for importing drugs from outside the country. During the World War II, in 1941, Thai people lacked consumer goods because of their inability to import them, and so medicines were very expensive. The new pharmaceutical factory was able to help the Government solve the problem of the lack of medicines in the country by producing them itself. However, after the World War II, these medicines were still expensive, so private factories were set up, though the drugs they produced were not of good quality. This induced the Government to introduce the policy of manufacturing Western drugs from Thai herbs. After consultations with Professor Dr. Charler, an expert on herbs from the Bayer Company in Germany, a lot of pharmaceutical research was done. The result was a collection of more than 400 types of medicines.⁴³

By selling medicines at low prices, the Government pharmaceutical factory was able to make good profits, and it gradually developed. Its development was

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² See <http://www.gpo.or.th/aboutus/before.htm>, (2/7/2006) p. 3.

⁴³ Somphon Phutriyanan, *ibid.*, p. 32.

aided by the production of a Smallpox Vaccine. From then on it continually progressed. In the year 1957 it made 7 million baht.

4.2.4.2 The Birth of the Ministry of Public Health

It was Prime Minister Phibun's policy to improve public health. The Ministry of Public Health was established after five government sittings. In 1934, it passed the Public Health Act. It decreed the setting up of municipalities in place of the sanitation of the local areas.⁴⁴

After World War II, in 1946, the government of Prime Minister Pridi Panomyong introduced the policy of building new hospitals in all the provinces in Thailand. The target was the construction of one general hospital in every province and of special hospitals according to necessity. When the Ministry of Public Health was established Thailand had only 23 general hospitals and three special hospitals, i.e. the Hospital for Mental Diseases, the Central Hospital, and Rachawithi Hospital.⁴⁵ The target of the named policy was achieved during 1951-1957. In this period 77 hospitals in 72 provinces were built with the support of the US Government through the USOM.⁴⁶

As already discussed, medical treatment had been divided into two types: Thai traditional and Western treatments. While Western medicine had been continually developed by the Government, Thai traditional practices had been denied support. The World War led to an increase in the urgency for medicines and the setting up of pharmaceutical factories by the Government and the private sector. In this way, medicines became a commodity whose price could be set. They were no longer only a basic human necessity.

⁴⁴ Thawisak Phüaksom. The Medicalised State: From Hospital to Basic Public Health Project. in *Politics Journal*. Vol. 24, No. 1, 2003, p. 217.

⁴⁵ Thawisak Phüaksom, *ibid.*, p. 218.

⁴⁶ Santi Tangrapikòn. *Hard Life is Prosperous Life*. p 163-165. quoted in Chaiyon Praditsin. *Political Economy of the Practice of Family Planning in Thailand*. Bangkok: Research Center and Text Book, Krik University, 1999, p. 61

4.3 Conclusion: People's Consumption of the Four Basic Necessities during the Era of Democracy and Nationalism

By this period, the absolute monarchy had been replaced by democracy, although democracy was short-lived because of the dictatorship which ensued. The political situation led to a limiting of the rights and liberties of the people. Although the *sakina* system had declined, some influence from its culture was still felt. This was embodied in the concept of “noble” behaviour. This idea had more potency when the Phibun Government issued the state edicts. The adoption of the culture of the rich, aristocratic attitudes and international standards were more strongly accepted as establishing social rank. Immediately after World War II, the economy of Thailand was not strong, and consumerism, or at least the consumption of luxury goods was not possible. However, society was enjoying more progress and improvements than at any time previously. More types of goods and foods were available. There was an increase in communications and cultural exchange in Thailand and with the world at large. In place of the ineffectiveness of the bartering system and the self-sustaining economy, a new form of economy gradually came into being. The capitalist economy brought an increase in the power of money, so that purchasing became one of the main means for acquiring both necessary and unnecessary goods.

The situation described above shows that people's consumption of the four basics necessities at that time had changed from the essence of life to being a sign whose meaning always relates to other social systems like, in these cases, modernization, westernization and dignified behaviour. We can conclude that the change in each of the four basic necessities was as follows:

Firstly, traditional houses made way for a new style of building according to the progress of architecture. However, the houses of ordinary people were small because of the limitations of the economy, in contrast to the houses of the higher social classes. These were still built in extensive grounds as they had been in the past and could represent the owner's identity. They were indicative of many aspects of their lifestyle, including taste, modernism or Westernism.

Secondly, during the nationalist period an international standard of dress was introduced. Along with the flow of information and communications, Thai traditional dress fell in line with international models.

Thirdly, foods were also affected. The policies of the nationalist government and the influence of cultural exchange led to a greater variety in foodstuffs and dishes. Most notable was Chinese food. With the development of science and technology, Thai people gradually became familiar with the significance of health and nutrition.

Fourthly, the essential nature of medicine was exploited more than with the other basic necessities. People acquired medicines mainly by purchasing them, as witnessed by the spread of pharmaceutical factories. In addition, Western treatments were promoted more than the traditional Thai treatments. The Government neglected to improve or promote them, so they retreated into the background and have become a symbol of the ancient style ever since.

Chapter 5

The Four Basic Necessities in the Era of Development and Consumerism

This chapter examines the consumption of the four basic necessities from 1957 to 1997. It covers the period of development in Thailand toward Western standards up to just before the economic crisis in 1997.

In this period, on the advice of the United States of America, the National Economic and Social Development Plan was introduced as a guideline to bring prosperity to the country. The plan was first implemented in 1961. So far, Thailand has gone through nine plans, and is currently on its tenth.

The country has seen some rapid developments on social, economic and cultural levels, while Thai people's familiarity with consumption through purchasing has been increasing. Moreover, the relationship between people and objects has begun to be more differentiated, which will be explained in detail later.

For this chapter, various data has been cited to enhance our understanding of people's consumption of the four basic necessities. The chapter is divided into four parts: first, a discussion of the prominent factors involved in the changes in Thai society, including population, economy and people's income. Then we turn our attention to the development of the advertising industry which has an enormous impact on the culture of consumption. Next, we focus on the change in people's consumption of the four basic necessities. Finally, a sketch of the relationship between people and objects is outlined.

5.1 An Overview of the Society

As a consequence of implementing the economic plan, Thailand had to place the emphasis, in developing the country, on industrial advancement. Natural resources were employed to accelerate the growth of the society. People had more opportunities to improve their financial and social status. Many of them seemed to be familiar with the behaviour of showing off their fortunes through their lifestyle and material possessions, particularly groups of people in urban areas. With the decline of ascribed status and the rise of achieved status, this behaviour later became a major means of enhancing social status for people on all levels, even in rural areas.

5.1.1 Population

One of the more interesting changes that occurred during this period was the increase in the population.

Table 5.1 Changes in the population of Thailand from 1911-1960

Year	Population	Percentage increase per year	Number of years the population take to double
1911	8,266,408	-	-
1919	9,207,355	1.3	-
1929	11,506,207	2.2	37
1937	14,464,105	2.9	-
1947	17,442,689	1.9	-
1960	26,257,916	3.2	23
1970	34,397,374	2.7	-
1980	44,824,540	2.3	-
1990	54,548,530	1.5	45
2000	62,405,000	0.9	-

Source: Santhat Süamsi. *Social Demography*. 2 ed. Bangkok: Samcroenphanich .1998, p 81. Reference from Arnold, et al. 1977, National Statistics Office and National Economic and Social Development Board 1995, United Nations 1994.

From Table 5.1, looking at the figures, we find that the population in Thailand increased slowly in the first phase, then rapidly in the later stage, which was the period in which the country was developing under the lead of the United States. In 1960, there were around 26.25 million people in Thailand, increasing at a rate of 3.2% annually. The population had been changing in such a way that while the numbers increased, they took ever less time to double. However, after 1960, the rate of increase slowed owing to the lower rate of births and deaths that resulted from the achievements of medicine and public health as well as from attempts by the Government to control the population of the country. However, it was still increasing enormously compared with the limited availability of land and natural resources.

When considering the population figures for Bangkok (refer to Table 5.2), we find that in 1947 the city had less than one million inhabitants. By around 1988 it had more than 6 million. Comparing this with Chiang Mai, the second largest city, we

discover that in 1947 Bangkok private city was 20 times larger in terms of population than Chiang Mai, and increased to 26 and 55 times in 1967 and 1988 respectively¹.

Table 5.2 Population of two largest cities in Thailand

1947		1967		1988	
Bangkok	781,662	Bangkok	2,614,356	Bangkok	6,155,269
Chiang Mai	38,214	Chiang Mai	81,579	Nakhorn Ratchasima	204,982

Source: R. Thomlinson. *Thailand's Population: Fact's Trends, Problems and Policies*, Bangkok, 1971, p. 58. Thailand Statistical Yearbook 1989.

The increase in population in Thailand, including Bangkok, has resulted in a boost in the demand for products and services, especially the four basic necessities, which are vital for every human being, especially in a big city like Bangkok.

5.1.2 Economy and Income of the Population

From 1957, people in Bangkok started to enjoy their lives; they could work, study, engage in leisure activities and consume and buy things to American standards; this was due to the influence of the Americans, who had come in to support Thailand with the concept of development. In fighting against the Communists who were in power in the Soviet Union and China at that time, the USA gave enormous support to Thailand, especially when Marshal Sarit Thanarat was Prime Minister. The first National Economic and Social Development Plan brought about the development of roads, electricity, the water supply and telecommunications. The Government mobilized capital and finances, accelerated the expansion of industry and gave its support in order to reduce imports. This turned the Thai economy into a completely capitalist system and made way for the adulation of money. Development, an ideal goal of government, had made people realize the power of money, that it can create happiness, as revealed in the slogan, “work is money, money is work that gives happiness.” This was an elusive and fragile ideal of capitalism which was able to transform happiness, peace of mind, and the simplicity of Thai society into materialism. This was also reflected in the objectives set for improving the country: “a good water supply and lighting system, good roads, full employment and a clean

¹ Quoted in Porphant Ouyyanont. *Bangkok Economic History and the Development of Cheap Wage Labour*. *Journal of Thammasat Economics*, Vol. 14, No. 1, (March 1997), p. 13.

city.”² The aim was to turn Bangkok into a large capital city and a centre of development and prosperity. This made it significantly different from other regions. It became a centre of education and public services and a great demand for labour was created, attracting people from rural areas to find jobs in Bangkok, where they adopted an urban lifestyle. The rapid expansion of urbanism in Bangkok made it distinct from other parts of Thailand.

An idea of the development and growth of the Thai economy can be gleaned from the figures for economic expansion (Table 5.3) and Gross National Product (GNP) per head per year (Table 5.4).

Table 5.3 Expansion in the economy from 1961 to 1995

Year	1961-1965	1966-1970	1971-1975	1976-1980	1981-1985	1986-1990	1991-1995	Mean
Expansion in Economy (% increase)	7.24	8.21	7.11	7.27	5.46	10.48	8.28	7.72

Source: National Economic and Social Development Board

Reference from Thai Government Scholarships Student Association. *Thai Vision on Public Health*. 1997, Appendix 2, p. 112.

Table 5.4 Gross National Product (GNP) per head, average per year at market price from 1960 to 1996

Year	1960	1962	1964	1966	1968	1970	1972	1974	1976	1978
GNP/capital /Baht	1,989	2,199	2,409	3,063	3,326	4,058	4,420	6,916	8,136	10,85

Year	1980	1982	1984	1986	1988	1990	1992	1994	1995	1996
GNP/capital /Baht	14,065	17,012	19,287	21,157	28,256	38,582	48,166	60,436	67,433	75,525

Source: National Economic and Social Development Board

Reference from Thai Government Scholarships Student. *Association. Thai Vision on Public Health*. 1997, Appendix 2, p. 112.

From Table 5.3, we can see that the Thai economy has constantly been expanding at a high pace. And Table 5.4, shows that the GNP per head per year has also been increasing, especially in 1986. GNP per head per year increased rapidly and continuously from 2,157 baht to 28,256 baht in 1988, 38,582 baht in 1990,

² Phronphirom Chiangkul. *Modern Thai History*, Vol.1, Bangkok: Odeon Store, 1992, p. 151-152.

48,166 baht in 1992, 60,436 baht in 1994, 67,433 baht in 1995, and 75,525 baht in 1996. Nevertheless, the income of the population was not equally distributed, but was instead highly polarised (as in Table 5.5).

Table 5.5 Income distribution of the Thai population divided into 2 groups according to level of income; specifically, the group with 20% highest income and 20% lowest income

Population Group	Income in various years (% of total income)						
	1962	1975	1981	1986	1988	1990	1992
Group with 20% highest income	49.8	49.26	51.47	55.63	55	57.3	59.5
Group with 20% lowest income	7.9	6.05	5.41	4.55	4.51	4.1	3.8

Source: National Economic and Social Development Board

Reference from Thai Government Scholarships Student Association. *Thai Vision on Public Health*. 1997, Appendix 2, p. 115.

Table 5.5 indicates that the gap between the richest and the poorest continued to increase except in 1988 when it was slightly less than in 1986; this is also shown by the difference in figures, respectively: 41.0, 43.21, 46.06, 51.05, 50.49, 53.2, and 55.7. From these figures we can deduce that development created a small group of very rich people on the one hand, and a large group of very poor people on the other. The conditions of such an economy and society had an impact on the ability of people to consume and buy products and services as well as on their attitudes and tastes.

The above information suggests a division of society into 3 major groups: 1. the noblemen or the traditional elite, and the new elite (*hai-so* from English High Society), 2. the middle class, and 3. the “grassroots” group. The noblemen or traditional elite were those with royal blood or bureaucrats who could sustain their financial status. This group of people had been traditionally trained in culture, customs and manners. They adopted Western civilization and were classified as well-educated by local and international studies. This group was understood to have good taste. The new elite had emerged from Chinese merchants who had had success in various areas such as the rice trade, fishery, finance and banking. This group tried to improve their own status by giving their children a good education both in Thailand and abroad. They created business and family connections through marriage with businessmen and noblemen and enjoyed attending social events and parties. The middle class was associated with various types of career that result from the growth

of education and the subsequent increase in literacy. They achieved success in their careers and upgraded their economic and social status. They enjoyed positions as engineers, executives in management, clerks, secretaries, professors, doctors, lawyers, merchants and businessmen. They tended to have professional skills, were well educated and commanded a salary high enough to satisfy their needs. After the Fifth National Economic and Social Development Plan, which greatly boosted the economy, the middle class gained more influence in society. Their purchasing power made them a target of the advertising industry because they tended to consume for their image³. The last, “grassroots”, group, included those of a low income and represented the majority of the population. They were blue-collar workers such as construction workers, maids, taxi drivers and factory workers. They were poor and needy.

5.2 The Development of the Advertising Industry in Thailand

With the expansion of capitalism in this era, various industries in Thailand grew and developed greatly, but one industry that had a great influence on the society and its culture was the advertising industry.

The advances in and rapid growth of technology that aided the spread of globalisation also facilitated an exchange between cultures. The media’s influence penetrated into many areas. Advertising was used as a tool for controlling consumer behaviour. It played an important role in stimulating and changing it to fit the needs of manufacturers. In this capitalist society manufacturers produced huge amounts of a variety of products in a short time; therefore, the marketing concept of generating products to serve customers’ needs was not applicable here, and the only way for them to draw customers’ attention to their products was through advertising. This gave the advertising industry lots of room to prosper. Advertising has been shown to exert a considerable influence on consumers’ purchasing decisions.

As Jhally (Jhally, 1987:1) argued that advertising is the most influential institution of socialization in modern society. In addition, advertising is recognized

³ Monruethai Chaiwiset. *Art and Culture: Social History-Toilets and Sanitary Wares in Thailand*. Bangkok: Matichon Press, 2002, p. 257.

as one of the most potent mediated sources of valorized symbolic meaning (Lannon and Cooper 1983; McCracken 1987; Mick and Buhl 1992.)⁴

Advertising was a concept that emerged and developed in Western countries almost two centuries ago and first appeared in Thailand in the Third Reign. The mass media arose, and a newspaper was published. The first Thai newspaper was run by Dr. Dan Beach Bradley, and went under the name of “The Bangkok Recorder.” The paper also carried advertising, though only in text form and without any images as we see today.

During the Fourth Reign one saw comparatively few advertisements because of the small number of publications. In the reign of Rama V three publications appeared devoted solely to advertising, namely, the Bangkok Daily Advertiser, the Siam Daily Advertiser and the Siam Weekly Advertiser.

As society developed and business expanded, the communication of news and information to the public became important. As a result, the first advertising agency, run by foreigners, was established by the name of Siam Advertising Co. Ltd. Later, in 1930, the first radio station was set up. Thus, advertising was modernized as more outlets were created for it. During the Second World War, however, the advertising business stagnated. After the War, the economy recovered, and a local advertising agency was established by the name of Groak Advertising Co. Ltd. Later, with the setting up of a TV station in 1954, the business began to prosper more than ever.⁵

The general purpose of advertising is to announce something, to impart information, or to persuade people to buy products or services. The Royal Institute Dictionary defined advertising as to make known to the public, to announce. In the past, to advertise equally meant to notify: “*caeng khwam*: แจ้งความ”. Dr. Seri Wongmontha⁶ defined advertising in capitalism as the activity of the mass media towards the aim of persuading consumers behaviour having suit for the progress of business to sell products or services to adopt a behaviour that allows a business to sell products or services by using reason and strategy through a medium in a limited time and space and with a specified advertiser. Therefore, advertising gives

⁴ Quoted in Kritsadarat Wattanasuwan. “It isn’t Just for image: The Lived Meaning of Luxury Brand Consumption among Wealthy Thai Teenagers, in *Thammasat Review*. Vol. 4, No. 1, 1999, p. 26.

⁵ Pattamawan Netrabukkana. *A Socio-Economic Context of Housing through Media Analysis*. Master Thesis, Chulalongkorn University, 1996, p. 49–50.

⁶ Quoted in Siriphòn Sombunburana (ed). *Culture of Consumption*. Bangkok: Krik University, 1995, p. 81.

consumers access to information which at the same time stimulates a demand for a product or a service.

Advertising had developed into a form of industry by around 1957. Between 1963 and 1965, agencies from Japan and the USA opened branches in Thailand. This led to it undergoing a rapid growth, especially in 1967, when the Advertising Association was established, and it reached a peak during 1977-1982. Using skilled personnel and many years of experience, several agencies run by Thais were set up, but between 1983 and 1991 advertising businesses faced a downturn due to the impact of the economic slow-down of 1983-1985. Later the situation improved, and giant foreign advertising agencies came in to join up with Thai firms. Even though the business was impacted by

Table 5.6 Development of the advertising industry (1986-1995)

Year	Advertising industry(Million Baht)
1986	4327.60
1987	5073.00
1988	6497.90
1989	8632.60
1990	11346.70
1991	14322.80
1992	17473.00
1993	23062.20
1994	30608.70
1995	31274.50

Source: The Advertising Book 9 (1980-1990) Media Data Resource Co. Ltd. Quoted in *Than Set Thakij* (27-30 Jan 1991), p. 42.

the Gulf War in 1990-1991, it endured and finally reached a peak again, as can be seen in Table 5.6, which illustrates the growth of the advertising industry in Thailand from 1986 to 1995.

5.3 Changes in People's Consumption of the Four Basic Necessities in the Era of Development and Consumerism

5.3.1 Housing

5.3.1.1 Housing: Tracing Changes in the Definition of Types of Dwelling in Censuses of Population and Housing.

A population census in Thailand has so far been conducted ten times. The first was in 1902, the second to fifth censuses were concluded in 1919, 1929, 1937, and 1947 respectively, by the Ministry of the Interior. The National Statistics Office carried

out its first census, the sixth so far, in 1960, and in 1970 it was combined with a census of housing.⁷ Every ten years after that the censuses of population and housing have been conducted together; these were the seventh to the tenth times, in 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000 respectively.

Table 5.7 Changes in types of dwelling between 1970 and 2000

1970a	1980b	1990c	2000d
1. Detached house	1. Detached house	1. Detached house	1. Detached house
2. Row house	2. Duplex	2. Town house	2. Town house
3. Apartment	3. Row house	3. Apartment	3. Apartment
4. Room	4. Apartment	4. Brick row house, row house	4. Brick row house, row house
5. Boat	5. Room	5. Room	5. Room

Sources:

- a) 1970 Population and Housing Census, p. XII,
- b) 1980 Population and Housing Census, p. 33-34,
- c) 1990 Population and Housing Census, p. 28,
- d) 2000 Population and Housing Census, p. 27.

By studying censuses from the past, this researcher noticed changes in the definition of “types of dwelling” in each one from 1970 to 2000, which may reflect changes in housing styles in Thailand.

From Table 5.7 we can see that in 1970 a boat was categorized as a type of dwelling, but after 1970 it was removed from the list. This is probably due to the fact that Thai people once lived in houseboats, because the country was full of rivers and people lived next to them, and later, as the country developed, lifestyles changed. Moreover, in 1980, the “Duplex” appeared. This was any structure of two units attached by a common wall; it could be of one storey or more. A decade later, the term “Duplex” had changed to “Town House”, which was defined as any structure of two or more units attached by a common wall and having one or more storeys, with a space in front for parking or for other purposes. The difference between these two, then, is that the Town House now has a parking space. The parking lot, which had originally been conceived for rich people’s houses, has become an important item for the middle class. In this era of development, the demand for the Town House has increased and also extended to a lower class group. The middle class now has a

⁷ *Population and Housing Census*. National Statistical Office. Office of the Prime Minister Thailand, 1990. Introduction.

greater potential for satisfying its needs in a way that was once only possible for the minority upper class.

5.3.1.2 Housing and Advertising

The advertising of housing and real estate was highly competitive during the time that the advertising industry was growing. Looking at the figures for spending in advertising in Table 5.8 we can see that the industry has growing continuously especially the growing of advertising in TV and Newspaper. Table 5.9 shows the real estate advertising budget in various media. We can see that large amounts of the budget are spent in media like posters, newspaper, magazine because adverts need to provide lots of information about products and promote them well, which is appropriate to the printed medium.

5.3.1.3 Changes in Housing in the Era of Development

As mentioned earlier, during the 7th and 8th Reigns houses were generally of a detached type. Then rows of terraced houses started to become popular and were often built on the road in community areas. In 1936, the Control of Construction Act,

Table 5.8 Spending in the advertising industry by various media

Year	TV (Million Baht)	Newspapers (Million Baht)	Magazines (Million Baht)	Cinema (Million Baht)	Total (Million Baht)
1980	951.0	325.0	139.0	102.0	1517.0
1981	1162.0	437.0	150.0	109.0	1858.0
1982	1358.0	501.0	146.0	104.0	2109.0
1983	1767.0	758.0	166.0	119.0	2810.0
1984	2433.5	417.6	345.6	65.5	3816.2
1985	2729.6	1097.2	479.6	24.8	4331.2
1986	2612.3	1199.3	501.3	14.7	4327.6
1987	3022.5	1386.5	652.1	10.9	5073.0
1988	3853.7	1802.2	836.0	6.0	6497.9
1989	4957.9	2650.1	1016.4	8.2	8623.6
1990	6502.1	3620.9	1211.8	11.9	11346.7
1991	8180.2	4607.4	1508.1	27.1	14322.8
1992	10119.3	5449.2	1876.4	28.1	17473.0
1993	13082.7	7547.2	2416.5	25.8	23062.2
1994	16607.8	10817.6	3162.3	21.0	30608.7
1995	18482.9	10221.3	2549.5	20.8	31274.5

Source: The Advertising Book 9 (1980–1984) Media Data Resource Co., Ltd.

Quoted in *Than Set Thakit* (27–30 Jan 1985), p. 42.

Table 5.9 Real estate advertising budget in various media (Year 1995)

Medium	Year 1995 (Million Baht)
Newspaper	362.62
Posters etc. in public spaces	2434.49
TV	468.85
Magazine	211.59
Total	6737.56

Source: Information Centre for Competitive Business, Data Bank

Year 1995, quoted in *Competitive Businesses* (22-28 January 1996), p. 41.

(A.D. 1836) was issued to enhance safety, fire prevention, sanitation, and public health. The country was destroyed by the Second World War, so people needed new houses, and as the economy had not yet recovered, they had to save money and time in building them, so they tended to be small and simple, rectangular in shape, and decorated only enough to serve basic functions. The Government also supported people with middle to low incomes by providing housing in the form of terraced houses.⁸

With more architects graduating abroad and coming back to Thailand, houses in this period were completely different from those in the past. In 1960, many different types of building were owned by the Government and state enterprises in Bangkok such as the State Railway, Thailand Tobacco Monopoly, and Siam Cement.⁹ The development of the country led to a better economy and so the people benefited. Those financially better situated started to invest in housing again to demonstrate their social status. As we have seen, there were three major social groups at this time: noblemen and the new elite, or the upper-class group (high income); the middle-class group (moderate income); and the lower -class or grassroots group (low income). Changes in types of dwelling occurred for each group, but they were different from each other.

The noblemen and the new elite (*hai-so*) usually owned large luxurious houses that were beyond their requirements and were used for social gatherings. These houses varied in appearance according to the owner's taste and style of architecture. They were usually large brick or teak houses with beautiful gardens and extensive grounds, and were well taken care of by servants. This group tended to live

⁸ Phutsadi Thippathat. *Ban in Rattanakosin IV during the reign of King Rama VII-IX (B.E.2325-2394)*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 2003, p.190.

⁹ Phutsadi Thippathat, *ibid.*, p. 29.

in the capital in the Silom and Sukhumvit areas. They bought highly priced, high quality products, mostly of foreign brands, which they obtained in the Wangburapha or Ratchaprasong districts. They enjoyed spending weekends and holidays in the country, which was one reason why rest-houses in Hua-Hin and Pattaya were so popular.

The middle-class group had quite similar needs to upper-class people, i.e. to show off their splendid lifestyle and show off their higher living standards. In Thai society, one flaunted one's luxurious lifestyle in order to demonstrate one's status and to gain acceptance in one's social class.¹⁰ Around 1957, a housing project was started, which should fulfil middle-class people's dream of owning land and a house of their own. They dreamt of living in a comfortable and modern Western-style house. Some of this middle -class group preferred to live in terraced houses in the business areas: they would use the ground floor for business purposes and the upstairs for living in. When they became more prosperous they would buy a detached house or a house in the housing project. Around early 1957, the size of a plot of land was about 200-800 square meters (100-400 square *wa*), and a residence would be built with a separated building for servants. But by 1977 it had been reduced to only around 100 square meters (25 square *wa*) or smaller and without a separated building for servants. It would also be provided with better utilities from the housing project such as electricity and a water supply.¹¹ Around early 1987, the Thai economy was growing more than ever before, and the real estate business also reached its peak in 1991-1992. Land and houses had become very expensive and were indeed over-priced. Because detached houses had become so expensive more types of accommodation with a common wall or common area began to be built for middle-class groups and above, such as twin houses, terraced houses, town houses, apartments and condominiums. From 1957 onwards, many shopping malls began to appear, including the Central, Siam Centre, Ratchadamri Arcade, and Intra Pratunam Shopping Complex. Thai Dimaru, a Japanese department store, was opened in 1967. In 1977 came Sogo, I-Setan, Jusco, Sunny Supermarket as well as large shopping malls like MBK, Robinson, and The Mall.

¹⁰ Nithi Iaosiwong. *Culture of Thai Middle Class: The Middle Class in the Current of Democracy*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 1993, p.50.

¹¹ Phutsadi, *ibid.*, p. 366–369.

People of the “grassroots” group generally lived in rented houses or cheap rented rooms in crowded areas and slums. They usually lived in the less pleasant parts of private and public areas rotten.

5.3.1.4 Construction Skills and Materials

Houses in this period were designed by Thai architects and were therefore better suited to the climate than those designed by foreigners. They were built to face into and catch the wind, were well-shaded with cool eaves, were raised on stilts to prevent flooding, and had a balcony. Later, air conditioning was introduced, which made architects less bound to weather conditions and freer to attend to fashions in the Western style.¹²

Due to a shortage of wood and a rise in its price, along with advances in construction technology, house construction during this period gradually changed, and ready-made materials manufactured in factories began to be used. These came in a variety of quality and sizes and were cheaper than wood; for example, people used plain plaster or cement tiles for walls and ceilings and ready-made floor tiles instead of wooden flooring, etc. Builders started using reinforced concrete for flat roofs. The angles of roofs gradually became less steep. Also widely used were the *Vibulsri* tile, a small plain tile, as well as pantiles and corrugated sheets of *Asbestos* cement, which were long and light in order to reduce the size of roofs. Roofs became steeper again with the introduction of *Monia* tiles and fired clay tiles coated with lichen-free materials, which were small and came in a variety of colours. The high roofing of the past became popular again. People usually also installed something for a particular purpose: mosquito nets on the insides of doors and window frames to keep mosquitoes away and steel netting to thwart burglars. In addition, old-style houses were modified and became popular again.¹³

As already mentioned, apart from the enormous increase in the population, many other changes were seen in Thailand and the rest of the world with the advances in technology, the economy, politics, society and culture. As a result, people had more choices in living their lives. They were no longer dominated by the idea of social class, but rather by the influence of money in a capitalist system. Therefore, the house in this period underwent a social transformation from a

¹² Phutsadi, *ibid.*, p. 202–204.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 211–213.

necessity for living and a clear symbol of feudal class to a symbol of an individual's liberty in possessing and expressing a style of consumption, which could represent his identity, lifestyle, taste, social status and wealth. In other words, nowadays, a house is considered to be a symbol of social meaning rather than something with utility value, as it was in the past.

5.3.2 Clothing

Because of the lack of freedom of political expression when the dictatorship government was in power, in the period from 1957 to 1972 people turned their attention to entertainment activities. The three most popular types of activities were the ballroom party, the beauty contest and the fashion show. The first international fashion show in Thailand took place in 1969. The fashion industry in Thailand was very alert as can be seen from the many high quality fashion magazines that were available, for example Siam Fashion published in 1969, Rin, Ruam Fashion published in 1970, and Thai Fashion published in 1971.¹⁴

Clothing became a tool of opposition, for example, in resisting or at least expressing one's opposition to the Government's attempt to impose a so-called civilized dress code through, for example, the wearing of flowered silk trousers outdoors or at social events. On the other hand, women did follow the Government's stipulation when they replaced the *Phathung* (Thai style of ankle-length skirt) with a modern skirt. This skirt became the symbol of a new role and status for woman in society, that of a more educated, working woman who was less dependent on men.¹⁵ Clothing and costume developed a lot at this time and became more varied with, for instance, the new-look skirt, crinoline, the mini skirt, the pleated skirt and the micro skirt, then, later, the development of hot pants and very short skin-tight trousers.

Later, fashion changed again and elastic trousers with heel straps and knee-length trousers for informal occasions were introduced. The skirts that became popular after the mini skirt and the pleated skirt were the midi, or a calf-length skirt and the maxi skirt, or heel-length skirt, which people could wear on both ordinary and special occasions. These kinds of skirt could be slightly modified by adding small or large pleats, or could be well-fitting with front, back or side slits as

¹⁴ Somrak Chaisingkananon. *Tastes: Language in Consumerism Era of Thai Society*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 2001, p. 136–137.

¹⁵ Sang Phathanohai. *Thoughts in a Cage*. Bangkok: Klangwitthaya. 1856, p. 243–244.

appropriate and depending on one's inclination. Blouse styles were adjusted to match the skirts; they were now designed as well-fitting or skin-tight waist-level blouses. Their collars also came in various forms, including the V-collar, U-collar, narrow collar, round collar, deep collar, bird's wing collar, sailor collar, shirt collar and the Hawaii collar.

Men's dress also changed in accordance with fashions overseas. For example, the Aulaine style was influenced by Rock n' Roll singers and movie stars, with its outstanding characteristics of low-waist skin-tight trousers, large belts with large buckles and very skin-tight shirts. Politics was under a lot of pressure at this time, in the form of critical events and situations: the extreme unfriendliness between countries practising liberal capitalism on the one hand and communist socialism on the other; the Cold War; the Korean War; the racial massacres in Cambodia and Vietnam. Thailand enacted Article 17 in an attempt to control political expression; many books were outlawed and taken off the market. Students' main responsibility was to study for a degree, it was argued. Extra-learning activities focussed mainly on entertainment as a reaction against political ignorance and as a way of expressing one's freedom through consumption¹⁶. As a result, many adolescents expressed their freedom by dressing in bizarre styles. Fashion at this time also clearly reflected the new alien culture in Thai society, for example in the miniskirt (popular among various groups in big cities, such as government officials, working people or teenagers girls) that was very popular in 1968; or the micro, that was even shorter than the miniskirt¹⁷ (popular among singers and dancers). The Government reacted to this intolerable situation when the Prime Minister's office enforced a dress regulation for female Government officials, effective from July 1, 1973. This forbade the wearing of skirts above knee level by female officers and introduced the midi skirt and maxi skirt for balls and special functions.¹⁸

In the 1970s Thai men generally dressed like hippies, with long hair, t-shirts, jeans, sandals and carrying a satchel. Most were trying to find an alternative lifestyle by opposing social customs and traditions and refusing to wear a jacket, a uniform or a necktie. They tried to express themselves as a new independent generation. Some

¹⁶ Somrak Chaisingkananon, *ibid.*, p. 187.

¹⁷ Anek Nawigamun, "Thai Costume in the Reign of King Rama IX" in *Ban*. Vol.10, (April 1983), p. 51-56.

¹⁸ Somrak Chaisingkananon, *ibid.*, p. 187.

groups stopped taking baths or combing their hair; some less extreme groups would spend their time doing nothing but dancing and singing, or gathering to fight with others; and some groups became active in criticizing society. Vocational students preferred wearing *dave* trousers (slim, narrow legs), whereas university students or working people preferred *mod* trousers (narrow above knees, becoming wider down to ankles). This fashion was the origin of the expression, “Dave for warriors, Mod for scholars”. After this, men’s trousers took on the sailor or uncle’s style with straight, wide legs like the navy uniform. Jeans, the symbol of American culture, were also very popular at this time, as was simply dressing according to one’s activity, whether playing tennis, swimming or ballroom dancing.

In 1960, eight styles of women’s royal attire: were kindly designed on the orders of H.R.H. Queen Sirikit: Thai Rüan Ton, Thai Chitlada, Thai Amarin, Thai Borombhiman, Thai Chakri, Thai Chakkapat, Thai Dusit and Thai Siwalai, which Thai women adopted as a women’s national dress. Men still dressed in an international style, with long sleeved shirts, neckties, jacket and trouser suits of the same fabric and colour for various occasions, and Safari or Inspection dress. In 1979, H.R.H. Queen Sirikit kindly gave permission to a designer to take H.R.H. King Bhumiphol’s costume as a model to redesign the men’s national dress known as *Phraratchathan*. This was to be worn with international-style trousers and came in three designs: short-sleeved, long-sleeved with a tie-belt, and long-sleeved without a belt.

When Marshal Sarit died, Marshal Thanom became Prime Minister, and Thailand’s economy fell into decline. Students’ yearning for freedom, which had been obstructed for over ten years, was aroused again. They turned their attention from entertainment to politics. They led a boycott against Japanese and American products and encouraged Thais to use Thai-made products and wear clothes made from cotton because Thailand was facing a great disadvantage in the balance of trade. This was followed, on 14 October 1973, by a student demonstration calling for democracy. Thereafter, Thai society fell into a cycle of protests, demanding rights and democracy. Young men and women used clothing as a code for their opposition. They wore their hair long and badly groomed, wrinkled shirts, jeans, slippers, carried a satchel to communicate their simple lifestyle and rejected extravagance. A Unisex fashion emerged. Women stopped wearing bras to express their freedom over their bodies. The situation continued until a student riot was suppressed in 1976. Then the

old power group returned to power. Social frameworks and frontiers started to be questioned. Particularly, the aesthetic principles of upper-class people began to be expressed in new terms which referred to individuals' preferences according to their characteristics. New words were coined or adopted in this period such as "lifestyle", "one's own style", "chic", "avant-garde" etc.¹⁹

Finally, order returned to society and there was an attempt to develop the country into an NIC²⁰. The economy, which had been stagnating during the demonstrations and government controls started to recover with the support of policy 66/2522. There was a growth in investment from foreign countries and competition in business, especially in the expanding textile industry. Ready-made clothes became more popular. Many boutiques were opened while tailor's shops remained sluggish. Brand name products from foreign countries started to be manufactured and sold in Thailand under the leadership of local companies like Arrow, Wacoal, John Henry, Dapper, and Fly Now.²¹ Products were associated by advertisers with fantasy and the imagination in an effort to create a belief in, an identity with, and a differentiation of products. For example, Arrow had the slogan, "the identity of a distinguished man". At the same time, many products were copied from brand names to serve the needs of low-income people who wished to emulate the upper-class groups. These included Boe Bae market, Banglamphu, Pahurat, and Samphaeng.

Apart from the Unisex fashion, the trend toward globalisation also reduced the differences between nations. Therefore, the androgynous fashion of 1995 was specifically intended not to identify gender, race, religion or level of development of any country, but to reflect the true identity of the person who adopted it. The Hip Hop fashion was also widespread. It emerged among Afro-American teenagers, and was characterised by loose shirts and pants, over-large jeans, and the wearing of baseball caps reversed.²² As mentioned above, the fashion system became an important engine for the continual reinforcement and division of meaning, and the creation of new meanings in society. Other cultural standards were not able to survive. A cyclic current of novelty was created. Fashion creates taste. It hinders the symbolic expression of class, by which people can be identified by others through

¹⁹ Somrak, *ibid.*, p.191.

²⁰ NICs (Newly Industrialized Countries). It means nations that have recently moved from being quite poor to being middle-income countries, including South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong. Quoted in www.wwnorton.com/stiglitzwalsh/economics/glossary.html#n. June 9, 2006.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p.194.

²² *Ibid.*, p.192-197.

their dress. One found more and more minority groups with distinct identities, such as heavy-like group who wore leather clothes, teenagers wearing loose clothes, and preservationist groups, who wore locally-made undyed clothes.

In the face of all this, the *hai-so* retained the distinction of their class by living extravagantly and displaying this in brand names, expensive clothes and products from other countries.

5.3.3 Food

Since the end of the Second World War, there had been plenty of food, both in types of food itself and in restaurants, especially in Bangkok. There were now snacks as well as full meals, for example, breakfast consisted of *pathong-ko* with pig's blood soup, or *pathong-ko* with condensed milk, coffee, soft-boiled egg, bread with margarine, rice porridge, and fish or duck.²³ Major areas for the sale of food were Pratunam, Yaowarat, Ratchawong, and Pahurad. Both Chinese and Indian cuisines were represented, and one could find beverages like lemonade, ginger, and soda. Coffee was also becoming popular owing to the influence of the Chinese during the sixth reign. It was made from coffee beans and sold in "coffee shops". It became more popular in the seventh reign, with more varieties such as espresso with milk and iced coffee as we see today. In this period, people ate three meals a day, and sometimes a snack might be added between meals in some families. As society developed, the size of families changed: from the extended family to the single family consisting of only the father, the mother, and their children. Types of meal changed too; they became more varied and not every meal was now eaten with rice. Usually, the last meal of the day, when all the family were back from work or school, would be given more attention.

The changes in food and eating styles started in Bangkok and spread to other big cities. Simple styles of food were no longer popular. People were more interested in food with flair and a novel taste. Women at this time had to work away from home, so the role of the housewife diminished. There was also a shortage of maids to do their housework, but advances in technology meant that the housewife was now equipped with many electrical kitchen appliances that facilitated cooking, such as the

²³ Waraphòn Ciohaisak. *Thai Foods and Lifestyles since World War Two until the Present*. Thai Studies Institute: Chulalongkorn University, 1996, p. 27.

refrigerator, oven, electric rice cooker, grinder, etc. Nevertheless, women rushing to and from work had no time for cooking, so food delivery services were established.²⁴ Also, many take away meal businesses were opened which made life more convenient. According to a survey from the National Statistics Office on the cost of living since 1957, expenditures of middle class families were made up of around 41-51% for food and beverages; housing costs were 17%, clothing 8%, transport 8%, and the rest was miscellaneous expenses.²⁵ So we see that Thai people spent around half of their income on food.

5.3.3.1 Nutrition and Health Concerns

The changes in the styles of food were linked to social, economic, and political conditions. As these conditions changed, styles of food consumption changed with them. Lury believes that the way an individual consumes food can alter his social status. (Lury 1996: 80-81). Lifestyle or consumer behaviour can also reveal the consumer's social status. This is called "positional goods" (Urry 1995: 129).

Health awareness was a device people could employ in competition with people from other classes. It could make people from all classes equal by exploiting human beings' fear of death as a major driving force. This is one of the crucial techniques of conflict and campaign of modern times.²⁶ An awareness of nutrition in cooking had been awakened by the principles of nutrition taught in schools when the cooking curriculum and home economics were widespread after World War I. However, this had placed emphasis only on eating food by category, and quality of flavour had not been assigned the same importance as nutritional value. Now the Government started to encourage people to take up a healthy diet. Since an announcement on public health policy in 1934, it had taken more than 30 years for people to wake up to health matters. Such matters came to represent a new identity for the new social classes. During the time when Marshal Thanom Kittikajorn was in power, a new generation educated abroad and influenced by American culture

²⁴ Kasem Tangthongsak. "Pinto Food: Thai Style Business Service Should Be Preserved", in *Magazine Features*. 2th year, Vol. 18, July 1986, p. 141-142.

²⁵ Tui Chumsai. *Eat Well for living well*. Bangkok: Khaofang, 1993, p. 211.

²⁶ Thanat Wongyannawa. "Uncertainty of High Class Chinese Food in Bangkok: Traveling toward Food Routh "Democratic". *Art and Culture*. Febuary. Vol. 24. No. 4, in: www.matichon.co.th/php?srctag=0605010246&srctday=2006/01/06.

appeared. These modern people's identity with America was reflected in the food and beverages, i.e. soft drinks, fast foods and other products that they consumed.²⁷

As a result of the Government's long attempt to increase people's awareness of good health, lard was now considered harmful for the heart and caused high blood pressure. Lard, a favourite ingredient of Chinese cuisine, had been replaced by vegetable oil, which was more expensive. Since the time of Marshal Thanom, many restaurants had given more attention to healthy food. As the use of vegetable oil increased it became an important ingredient in Chinese cooking, even though it did not have a good smell and was just as greasy as lard. Apart from this, monosodium glutamate, lard, and formalin, which were used to keep food fresh, and synthetic ingredients became a major concern for people. They became more aware of the phenomenon of the healthy diet in 1990. (Komart Chuengsatiansap 1999:2-3) Nutrition became a more important aspect than ever before owing to the developments in science that steered society with its rational thinking. Even though concerns about nutrition became important, it was discovered from some research that Thai people mostly ate to satisfy their hunger and were not very aware of nutrition at all.²⁸ In a study conducted at the Faculty of Economics, Chulalongkorn University, Salinee Worabantoon found that with an increase in income the proportion of expenditure on food decreased. Moreover, spending on food was mostly on ready-to-eat meals. Furthermore, children were facing nutrition and dentistry problems owing to the increase in the consumption of snacks.²⁹ This was an impact of advertising and of good distribution systems that delivered snacks to almost every part of the country.³⁰

5.3.3.2 Food in the Period of Haste

Food cooked in the household was being replaced by processed and fast foods. The economic conditions that had put pressure on women to work away from home

²⁷ Thanat Wongyannawa, *ibid.*

²⁸ Udom Kancanapakonchai. (Translation) "Problems of Experiment and Technological Practice in Food and Marketing of Agriculture Product in Thailand" in *Food*. Vol. 11. No.1 (January-March. 1979), p. 33.

²⁹ Salinee Worabantun. "A Study on Consumption Expenditure and Eating Habits of Bangkok Population" in Conference Report "*Thai Eating Behavior*" At Farmer Bank Head Office. Organised by Nutrition Institute. Mahidol University, 17-19 December 1984, p. 104.

³⁰ *Vision of Thailand on Public Health*. Bangkok: Thai Government Student Scholarship Association, 1997, p. 45.

meant that they had no time to cook for the family, so food businesses had come in to take over that role. Varieties of ready-to-cook foods and ready-to-eat meals such as instant noodles and instant rice gruel, foods that take less time to cook and eat, were sold in supermarkets and grocery stores.

One also saw a rapid growth of canned, packaged and snack foods in this period. With the increasing convenience of communications, cultural exchange between countries became ever faster and more present. Fast food can not only be prepared and served quickly and easily, it also comes in packaging that can be thrown away afterwards, and is therefore also known as junk food.³¹ This eating culture originated in the USA and quickly spread to Asian countries including Thailand around 30 years ago.³² Wimpy was the first establishment to sell hamburgers and orange juice at the Ratchaprasong Shopping Centre in 1965. It was followed by Hoberger, opened in 1977 at Siam Square.³³ The fast food business then became increasingly widespread in Thailand. About 20 years ago a cafeteria selling fried chicken called KFC was opened, and then followed by A&W.³⁴ Dunkin Donuts opened its first branch in Thailand in 1981 at Siam Square.³⁵ These foreign food businesses, which opened their branches in this country and collected a franchise fee, invested in advertising such as radio, TV, magazines, etc. to create and encourage the need for continuous consumption.

Furthermore, in order to increase profits they adjusted their products to match Thai people's tastes, as we see, for example, in pizza with spice minced meat or hamburgers with sweet basil. Further, sales were promoted through discounts, samples, and give-aways. Apart from fast food businesses owned by foreigners, there was also Thai-style fast food, as represented, for example, by food packed in plastic bags, the sale of curry with rice on streets and in alleys, all-night restaurants, and food vendors. These food sellers were mostly rural people seeking opportunity and fortune in this big city. This business did not need any high investment and the food sold was not expensive, and could benefit rural people and those on a low salary.

³¹ Waraphòn Ciohaisak. *Thai Foods and Lifestyle since World War Two until the Present*. Thai Studies Institute: Chulalongkorn University. 1996. p. 31.

³² Ratchani Yonniyom. *College Students' attitudes toward Fast Food Shop in Metropolitan Bangkok*. Master Thesis. Chulalongkorn University, 1987, p. 1.

³³ Ratchani Yonniyom, *ibid.*, p. 11.

³⁴ Kannika Phromsao and Nantha Benchasilarak. *Thai Cuisine*. Chiang Mai: Wannarak, 1999, p. 162–163.

³⁵ Ratchani Yonniyom, *ibid.*, p. 11.

This illustrates the life of struggle the ordinary people in this period led. As for the *hai-so*, they were familiar with Western food and dining at a table with fork, spoon and knife. If they were to have Thai food, they wanted it to be very well prepared, and not like ordinary Thai food. They would therefore mostly dine out at a luxury hotel or restaurant.

5.3.3.3 Awareness of Social Class and Food Consumption: Western, Chinese, Japanese cuisine

At this time, it was accepted that Western food, especially French cuisine, created an awareness of belonging to the upper-class, and so French food became a symbol of this. This belief was accepted not only among Thai people but by foreigners as well. Chinese food was considered by Thai people as prestigious food of high quality that could be related to financial status. But for foreigners, especially Westerners, Chinese food and Chinese restaurants represented ordinary food that was mainly intended to be taken home, and was thus considered a food for low-class people. During the transition from the 19th to the 20th century, one Chinese dish known to Thai people was “*kao hlao*”. *Kao hlao* was a menu made up of many dishes, and not just a soup without noodles as we have today. It has also been discovered that Chinese food and the eating of *kao hlao* were recorded in a recipe book by Madame Plian Phasakornwong, the first cook book in Thailand to be inspired by the “Book of Household Management” (1861) by Isabella Beeton. This book by Isabella Beeton had a major influence on the writing of recipes in England’s colonial countries.

Before the period of political change, especially during the reign of King Rama V and King Rama VI, high-class Chinese food was cooked only for the royal family and was called “Kaeng Kao Lao”. It would have consisted of, for example, bird’s nest soup, fish brain soup, deer’s tendon and fish-ball curry, duck’s feet with sea crab curry, sweet and sour chicken’s tongue and meat, fried shark’s fin, roasted pork, seafood rolls or Chinese fried cake. All of these were watery foods and would be served in a pot heated by a fire underneath; the fried food would be served on plates. The concept of Kao Lao as fried food, however, gradually changed to the soup that we see nowadays.

Before the Second World War, there were few Thai people who had tasted Japanese food, as Japanese restaurants were not represented in Thailand in the way Chinese restaurants were and Japanese food was not well known among Thai people.

The oldest Japanese restaurant that is still open today is the Hanaya Restaurant located in Siphraya, which was opened in 1938. From 1967 onwards, many Japanese restaurants were opened in Thailand but the food was very expensive because they had to import all the ingredients from Japan. In 1978, 21 restaurants in Bangkok were members of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce. One Japanese restaurant, Fuji, opened its first branch in the Central Department Store in 1983 but was not successful. Later, Fuji adjusted the taste of its food to suit the Thai palate and made it much cheaper, which meant that one now paid around 100 baht for one menu. This was very popular and today it has 29 branches. In 1997, more Japanese restaurants opened, like the Oishi Restaurant for example, which were, however, not owned by Japanese and whose owners had never even lived in Japan.³⁶ Nevertheless, Japanese cuisine became a symbol of the upper-class owing to its high prices: even though it was now much cheaper, Thai people still regarded it this way.

5.3.3.4 Consumerism and Food Culture

Consumerism is a concept that is associated with high speed and high quantity, whether in industry, fashion, or modernity or good taste, which can be seen in the changes in food culture in various countries. Take as an example the new look of Chinese food, especially in high class restaurants, that was seen in Thailand during the time of Marshal Salit Thanarat. The opening of the Princess Garden Restaurant, located near the Krung Krasem Cinema, brought a new level of culture to the Chinese restaurant business. This restaurant imported its chef, waiters and waitresses from Hong Kong and dispensed with the old tradition of having food served by people carrying trays to every table, which resulted in the food being cold and not nice to eat. This restaurant also introduced a Chinese bun (*salapao*) with a creamy stuffing, which made other types of stuffing like black bean and lotus seed stuffing lose their popularity. This creamy stuffing was made by mixing flour and egg together, which was very easy compared with the black bean and lotus types that took longer and were difficult to prepare. The practice of this restaurant reflected the consumerist ideal of enjoying something new, something from other countries, and modern. This trend was increasing greatly in Thai society and the impact was felt by

³⁶ Chomanat Sirisan and Worawut Cirasombat. *Development of Japanese Food in Thailand*. Faculty of Arts. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 2005, p. 27–31.

other Chinese restaurants, including relatively unknown restaurants like *Hoi Tian Lao*, which was the first Chinese restaurant to open since the Sixth Reign.

Another important factor that reflected the growth of consumerism at this time was the cooking utensils and technology that facilitated cooking, like the food grinder or the food processor. These appliances boosted the speed of cooking and made it possible to handle the increasing demands of consumers in this period of development.

5.3.3.5 Changes in Thai People's Cultural Values as Seen in Food Consumption Behaviour

The cultural values of food consumption are changing all the time. For instance, in the past people liked the fibrous meat of chickens: the chickens took a long time to rear, were allowed plenty of exercise and laid their eggs before they were slaughtered. But with the growth of the agriculture industry, chickens were no longer reared over a long time and did not get much exercise and so their meat became soft. This type of chicken was created to appeal to Thai teenagers.

Early in 1980, the Hong Kong-owned Tien Tien Chinese Restaurant on Phatphong Road was the first restaurant to display living sea fish in a tank as they were in Hong Kong. This gave customers the feeling that the food was fresh and free from formalin and so it became popular. At this time, the original taste of food, whether it be Chinese, Thai, Japanese, Vietnamese, or Western food, had to be adjusted to fit consumers' tastes. This is a basic concept of every chef who wishes his food to be popular, and his profits to rise. In this we see the power that consumers possess: if consumers favour a product it will survive in the market, if not, it will disappear.

We have seen above that food culture has been acquired and exchanged between societies with the advances in communication technology. The traditional foods of several countries were made known and familiar to Thai people, such as instant noodles, shrimp tempura, sushi and sukiyaki of Japan, or the Big Mac, fried chicken, French fries, and pizza from the West. At the same time, Thai food, like Tom Yam Kung, became also known to foreigners.

It can probably be argued that the cultural value of food is similar to other cultural forms in that, if it is adjusted to fit its environment and several other factors that have changed, it will persist in that environment, but if it cannot adapt, it will

disappear. *La-tiang* (ล่าเตียง), *sraeng-wa* (เสิ้งว่า), and *ma-aun* (ม้าอ้วน), for example, were difficult to cook and the taste was not popular. Few people knew what they were and consequently they will probably be forgotten by society.

5.3.4 Medicine

In this period of development, society was advancing in both knowledge and new technology with the purpose of enhancing the quality of life for the country's people. The continuation of several projects as well as the initiation of many new ones resulted in people in this period enjoying better health than ever before.

5.3.4.1 Health index

The Health Index gives us information on the sickness, death, and average life span of people. This is another set of interesting information that can help us in analysing the changes in medical treatment of Thai people in this period of development.

Table 5.10 reveals that the death rate of Thai people has been continually decreasing while the life span has increased, indicating a healthy condition in Thai society.

It can also be said that the development in the training of doctors and public health, as well as medical knowledge were highly advance in this period. However, there were many more factors that support the reduction in the death rate, as will be discussed in the following section.

Table 5.10 Death rate, infant death rate, and average life span in Thailand between 1960 and 1993

Year	Death rate	Infant death rate	Average life span	
			Male	Female
1960	12.8	-	54	56
1966	11.6	110	56	62
1970	9.4	94	56	60
1975	8.9	85	-	-
1980	8.4	43.3	59	63
1983	8.2	-	61	65
1992	5.9	35.5	66.4	71.8
1993	6.4	34.5	67.7	72.4

Source: Santhat Süamsri. *Social Demography*. 2 ed. Bangkok: Samcharoenphanit, 1998, p. 143.

5.3.4.2 The Setting up of District Hospitals

After the policy of setting up hospitals in every province had been carried out as outlined in Chapter 4, the Government had the idea of opening smaller scale, 10-25-bed hospitals in every Amphur (district). In 1970, during the 4th and 5th National Economic and Social Development Plans, there was a push to extend the public health service into rural areas by setting up a hospital in every Amphur and open a health centre in every Tambol³⁷ (neighborhood). Moreover, the Government also set up a public health foundation project, which was created from public health volunteer projects in each village between 1960-1970. This was an attempt at building a public health service that integrated with other services for maximum efficiency.³⁸ The policy was officially started by the Fourth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1977-1981). Afterwards, the traditional doctor was revived and became an alternative to the medical treatment that was currently accepted in Thai society.

5.3.4.3 The Renaissance of the Traditional Thai Doctor

After a long decline in the popularity of traditional medical treatment, the Government found new interest in it, and in 1979 offered more support for research and development in the fields of Thai herbs and traditional medicine. This came about through the support of the World Health Organization (WHO), which, in 1977, had organised a meeting to set a policy and plan for the support and development of the traditional physician. This was to include several training courses for traditional doctors, and the announcement of Alma-Mata on the public health foundation, stating the aim to push member countries to integrate their traditional treatments and herbal remedies as part of the development of public health foundation.

The Government also set up a national herb committee, with the commencement of the Fourth National Economic and Social Development Plan. In 1982 Professor Auy Katsing, M.D. set up the Foundation for the Promotion and Restoration of Thai Traditional Medicine to promote and revive the knowledge of traditional medical treatments. He also wanted to recruit people finishing high school into studying basic science and then studying traditional medicine for 3 years. This would earn them a qualification equivalent to the normal doctor's diploma, but they

³⁷ Santi Tangrapikon, *ibid.*, p. 253.

³⁸ Tawithong Hongwiwat et al. "Thai Primary Health Care Project Analysis" in: *Medical Social Sciences*, Vol. 3, (October-December 1981), p. 8-54.

would possess the knowledge and skills to treat with both Thai traditional and primary Western methods. They would be able to communicate with Western doctors and admit and transfer patients to them. In 1989 the Thai Traditional Medical Revival Program was established in an attempt to provide the services of Thai traditional medicine. In accordance with a Government resolution, the Ministry of Public Health set up a Thai medical and pharmaceutical centre to determine, and co-ordinate with others, the development and promotion of Thai medicine and pharmaceuticals.³⁹

5.3.4.4 Results of Developments and Changes in the Conditions of Health in Thai People⁴⁰

After the introduction of the development plan in Thailand, there were more changes in the health conditions of people in Thai society, both positive and negative

1. Positive Aspects:

- a. There was a higher investment in health, for example, the expenditure on health had increased faster than economic growth rate. This resulted in the proportion of health spending GNP increasing continuously from 3.5% in 1979 to 6.3% in 1991. The increase in health investment in both private and Government sectors can be seen in the increase in the budget of the Ministry of Public Health from 4.2% in 1987 to 6.7% in 1996. This higher health investment led to the expansion of health foundation structures, both in Government and private sectors. For example, in the Government sector, a health centre was set up in every sub-district (*tambon*), in some Tambons more than one; a hospital was established in every Amphor, provincial hospitals were upgraded to hospital centres; one also saw modern services, specialized doctors, advanced equipment in hospitals in Bangkok, both in University Departments and ministries, an increase in medical and public health personnel, increasing the proportion of public health

³⁹ Somphon Phutriyanan, *ibid.*, p. 36–39.

⁴⁰ Conclusion from *Vision of Thailand on Public Health*. Bangkok: Thai Government Student Scholarship Association, 1997, p. 37–53.

staff to the general population. In the private sector, there was a great expansion of hospitals.

- b. There was an attempt to create more health guarantees for people by starting, in 1975, to subsidize low-income people on medical treatment and to cover children, senior citizens, students and others in need of support. Several acts on health were issued to create more health guarantees for citizens, for example, the act of the Workmen's Compensation Fund in A.D.1964 The act of the Social Security Fund in A.D.1990, the act of Car Accident Protection from A.D.1992, etc.
- c. With the opening up of the market, as well as economic cooperation with other countries, more health care technology was coming into Thailand in this period. At the same time, Thailand also exported more health products and services to regional and world markets.
- d. There were fewer problems with diseases that can be protected against with vaccines. This was because of the more effective campaigning undertaken to encourage people to be immunized. And those diseases that had been a problem in the past, such as hemorrhagic fever, cholera and hepatitis, tended to decrease.

2. Negative Aspects:

- a. Development caused an expansion in industry, which led to an increase in health problems caused by work, such as poison from chemicals, deafness due to the loud noise in factories, and damage to and loss of body organs. Besides the side-effects from the expansion of industry, an impact was felt from the tourism industry, for instance an increase in infectious diseases from sexual activity, especially AIDS, which has no cure or vaccine. It has been estimated that around 700,000 people have so far been infected, with another 100,000 new patients each year. This group consists mainly of labourers, farm labourers, fishermen, and young men and women.
- b. Due to the imbalance between increasing population and development in several areas, especially in health care, the

distribution of resources and foundation structures in the health service was not equal. For example, skilled doctors were usually available only in large hospitals in big cities.

- c. The growth of foundation structures, a better financial status, together with freedom in buying medicines without a prescription made Thai people use medication inappropriately and more than necessary.
- d. It was found during this period that more diseases became drug-resistant, for example, Malaria became resistant to quinine and mephorquine, bacteria became resistant to antibiotics. Moreover, new diseases such as AIDS appeared and some diseases such as tuberculosis or elephantiasis that were thought to have been eradicated returned and were now more lethal.

From the above, we see that the overall health care of Thai people improved in this period while the death and sickness rates were reduced. Knowledge, the training of doctors and advanced technical medical equipment all contributed to an improvement. Both traditional and Western practices aimed at continually improving their standards. One of the great successes in this period was the ideology of a modern medical knowledge that can penetrate into communities and villages all over the country and change the lifestyle of people who in the past had not liked to go to hospital. Now there was no longer any need to advertise or induce people to go to the hospitals.

5.4 Conclusion: People and Objects

We have seen above that Thailand in this period had undergone a complete change from the past. Development had brought advancement and progress to Thai society. The highly advanced economy turned Thailand into a completely money-driven society with a degree of capitalism. Society and culture were changing very quickly with the advances in communications, and especially telecommunications, which were reducing the world to a global village. Cultures were exchanged and spread very quickly. Together with political cooperation, American, Japanese, and Chinese cultures had been incorporated to create distinct strains within Thai culture, and especially the middle-class and the nouveau- riches enjoyed success from the

economic boom. They were searching for their own position in society, the means to form their own social status. And as they were neither upper-class nor lower-class, they were forced to create their own identity and social group: there was no longer any place for them in the Thai feudal system. As a result, the search for signs that would help in establishing their own identity was extremely important. The relationship between signs and social identity produces changes in the culture of consumption.

Things that had previously been essential for living had now been assigned new meanings; for example, a house now functioned to reflect a luxurious and modern lifestyle; clothing to identify the unique taste of the people who wore them; packaged food to represent modernity, fast living, attitudes to nutrition, and belonging to a new generation; medicine could be employed as a sign of medical progress and advanced technology, or to indulge one's aspirations and imagination, as in, for instance, the use of medicines and vitamins to lose weight and so become slim and attractive. In the age of consumerism everything can be gained or bought with money. We can see that Thai society in this period had many problems to face, social problems such as petty and serious crimes, health problems caused through work, traffic jams, etc. The question that arises is how we can deal with and solve these problems.

The relationship between various signs in the society and the social classification of the consumption of the four basic necessities is varied and very complicated. People do not consume a product or service because they want it, but seek some meaning that is tied to it. For example, the decision to buy a house from an advertisement that stresses its luxury and class value is steered not by a need for that particular house, but by a meaning that is attached to it. One tries to satisfy an emotional need that is of a cultural rather than a practical nature. Together with the role of advertising in assigning value and meaning to products, therefore, selling in this period becomes the selling not only of a product but also of the meaning tied up with it. The negative side of this consumer behaviour is that a never-ending need to consume is created, because products are continually being imbued with new meanings. This strategy enables manufacturers to distribute more products to consumers and reduce any over-supply in the market. Market channels became more segmented and differentiated as the advances in production technology help in the manufacture of various kinds of product that can respond to people's unlimited

cultural needs. Therefore, a consumption focussing on the logic of the different and various signs being used for communication among people in the changing society is established, finally resulting in the formation of a society of consumption.

Since, as concluded earlier, advertising is rapidly developing and plays an important role in persuading the masses to consume, in the next chapter the researcher will analyse the primary sources of evidence for the advertising of the four basic necessities from 1957 to 1997, in both quantitative and qualitative aspects, in order to illustrate the characteristics of consumerism at present, the era of development and consumption. It will help make the researcher's overview of the study of the historical development of consumerism in Thai Society clearer and more perceptive.

Chapter 6

An Analysis of the Content of Advertising Relating to the Four Basic Necessities

“Consumption is the virtual totality of all objects and messages ready-constituted as a more or less coherent discourse. If it has any meaning at all, consumption means an activity consisting of the systematic manipulation of signs.”

Jean Baudrillard 2005: 218

In chapters 1–5 we studied people’s consumption of the four basic necessities in Thai society over the last two centuries. The study revealed a picture of development from a simple to a complicated pattern of consumption, especially in the fourth period, which was a time of enormous transformation and change in Thailand.

We will see that consumption has today been given precedence over production. The most important aim of the manufacturer in the present age is to create a desire to consume, whether the goods he produces are rational or not. In addition, in the process of consumption, not only is the object to be purchased apparent, but also intangible qualities connected with the emotions or with one’s social aspirations, which become attached to and associated with it. Goods, then, can now be sold to meet the requirements of the consumer not only in the dimension of the four basic necessities, but also in the dimension of what is not necessary for a subsistence, i.e. in the dimension of advantage buying or the dimension of emotion. They can continually meet new and unusual requirements.

Apart from this, we see the influence of industrial development. Thanks to industrial development, and in the atmosphere of a free economic system, manufacturers can now produce goods very rapidly and on a vast scale. But competition is high in both the production of goods and the selling of them, and manufacturers cannot sell everything they produce. In order to sell their goods they have to explore consumers’ desires. This they achieve by creating brand new desires, and the production and export mechanisms to support them. The task of advertising thus becomes not only to inform the consumer of the availability of a particular product on the

market, but to build and expand his need for that product. The change from informing to influencing the consumer has occurred quickly, in step with advances in technology. The advantage for us is that advertising as an important primary source provides a good historical record of many social phenomena, including the consumption of the four basic necessities, and a study of this consumption in the fourth period in the context of advertising can enhance our overall understanding of consumption culture in Thailand over that period. An analysis of advertising should reveal something of people's ideas and way of life. The qualitative and quantitative analyses are therefore applied in this context.

Because of the importance of advertising, we feel that this study might not be complete without an analysis of it, and for this reason Thai advertisements are one of the main issues of this chapter.

In this chapter, all the historical sources that I cite of advertising relating to the four basic necessities were published between 1957 and 1997, or in the fourth period, in the Thai Rat newspaper (Daily Newspaper) and other Thai magazines (Monthly Magazines) such as *Ban* (House), *Ban lae Suan* (House and Garden), *Klai Mò* (Near Doctor), *Kan Rüan* (house work), *Ahan lae Sukhapap* (Food and health). It is my opinion that the study of advertising in particular will enable a better understanding of the historical development of consumerism in Thai society.

6.1 The Influence of Advertising in Modern Society

Advertising is the most influential institution of socialization in modern society. It seems to play a key role in decision-making, mediation and the creation of needs among people. Apart from that, it structures and controls the cultural behaviour of people in everyday life. As Leiss (1978: 18) argued,

... [A]dvertising is an important factor in the way people attempt to satisfy their needs through the consumption of products. We can say that advertising rose to prominence in the modern society as a discourse through and about objects which concerns a specific universal relationship between people and objects. This relation between people and objects has been described as one of 'objectification' — we objectify ourselves and our lives in the materiality of the concrete world. ...

while Herbert Marcuse (1972b) believes that this objectification is not merely a small part of what constitutes the human experience, but is its deeper foundation. In fact,

objectification lies at the basis of what we can call a distinctive human experience, the mediation of human need through objects. In addition, Jean-Paul Sartre (1972: 79) writes that

the crucial discovery of dialectical investigation is that man is “mediated” by things to the same extent as things are ‘mediated’ by man’. While it seems obvious that things are mediated by humans – in that without us things might have existence but not meaning – and that in this sense things need people, it is equally true that humans need things.

Advertising then, as a discourse concerning objects, deals with one of the fundamental aspects of human behaviour.

The many critics of advertising claim that it is a tool through which consumers are controlled and manipulated by the manufacturers of goods to desire things for which they have no real need. The imperative for this creation of demand comes from the huge number of goods that capitalism as a system is able to deliver. To avoid stagnation and the ultimate demise of capitalism through a depressed economy, manufactures have to ensure that what is produced is also consumed.

Advertising is the main weapon that manufactures use in their attempt to ‘produce’ an adequate consuming market for their products. To this end advertising works to create false needs in people. (false needs because they are the needs of manufactures rather than consumers).

Stuart Ewan in his important book ‘Captains of Consciousness’ (1976) argues that in the early years of this century the need to create desires in the newly enfranchised consuming public necessitated a shift away from a stress solely on products, to a context where it was the relationship between people and products that was important. This meant that advertising integrated the consumer into a rich and complex web of social status and symbolic meaning.

At the same time, Raymond Williams (1980: 185), the well-known cultural theorist and historian, believes that this social and symbolic significance conferred on goods by advertising shows us that it is wrong to regard modern society as being too materialistic, as putting too much emphasis on the possession of goods. Rather, we are in fact not materialistic enough. If we were sensible materialists, in that part of our living in which we use things, we should find most advertising to be of an insane irrelevance. Beer in itself would be enough for us, without the additional prom-

ise that in drinking it we show ourselves to be manly, young at heart or neighbourly. A washing machine would be a useful machine to wash clothes, rather than an indication that we are looking forward to owning an object of envy to our neighbours. But if these associations sell beer and washing machines, as some of the evidence suggests, it is clear that we have a cultural pattern in which objects are not enough in themselves, but must be validated, if only in fantasy by association, with social and personal meanings which in a different cultural pattern might be more directly available.

In addition, Theodor Levitt (1970: 87) equates advertising with art, which by definition presents a ‘distortion’ or interpretation of reality with the aim of influencing an audience to think in a particular way – beyond functionality and practicality to abstraction.

Therefore, the message of advertising must reflect the symbolism of the person/object relationship. The symbolism of advertising reflects a deeply felt human need. And the consumption of goods always takes place within a social context where different interests are being played out. Goods are used in the negotiation of social life, and act as meaningful ‘markers’ of social categories. It is to be assumed that all material possessions carry social meaning, and a central part of any cultural analysis should concentrate upon their use as communicators.

6.2 Advertising in Thailand

In “**Thai Advertising in the past**”, Anek Nawikamun (1990: 16) on the character of early Thai advertising, concludes,

In the early days, particularly in the reign of King Rama IV, advertisers used a simple style of language, similar to that used in the writing of news items. Later, the language became more sophisticated and attuned to the rhythm and the current mood of society.

As in the fourth era, Thailand was going through a period of national development. Thai society has been changing rapidly in every way. Advertising had been developing in leaps and bounds. It changed the way products are presented. An image of a product was now created expressly to attract our attention, in contrast with the past, when advertising had focused on an explanation of the advantages and benefits of a

product, and was relatively simple and uncomplicated. Direct association and simply-worded messages are its distinguishing features.

6.3 An Analysis of Advertising with Relation to the Four Basic Necessities from 1957 to 1997

For the purposes of clarity, I have divided the analysis in this chapter into two parts:

1. **Quantitative analysis:** an analysis of the content of advertisements relative to the elements of the four basic necessities. The criteria were taken from the shared characteristics of those elements, which will be explained later (see detail in 4.11). The analysis looks at how such advertisements were presented.
2. **Qualitative analysis:** an analysis, through a case study, of advertising relative to the four basic necessities according to Baudrillard's logic of consumption. His theory takes the consumption of signs as a trend. The analysis seeks to discover the patterns that the logic of consumption has adopted, any changes that may have occurred, and how it creates signs through the media. It also includes an analysis of the shift of the main task of objects to the creation of meaning through connotation. For this qualitative analysis, a pattern of descriptive analysis was used together with secondary information and related documents.

6.4 Methodology

For the analysis I have proceeded as follows:

1. **Data Sources:** the selection of advertisements relating to the four basic necessities, housing, clothing, food, and medicine, from the "Thai Rat" newspaper and relevant magazines, such as those on the subject of the house or home, food, medicine or fashion that were published from 1957 to 1997. Because these sources provide a good indication of the way in which such products were presented at that time, they should enhance our understanding of the historical development of consumerism. Added to the information mentioned earlier, the scope of the data should enable satisfactory comparisons, analyses and deductions.
2. **Population Sampling:** "Population" for this study constitutes advertisements relating to the four basic necessities from newspapers and magazines pub-

lished from 1957 to 1997. According to the large amount of population in those sources, each type of source will first be divided into four decades: 1.) 1957–1967; 2.) 1968–1977; 3.) 1978–1987; 4.) 1988–1997. In each decade, data from each source was not collected from each year. Rather, from each source, four years were chosen to represent the population for analysis, that is, two years from the first five years and two from the last five. Next, data from these four years was categorized for each chosen source respectively; later, the data being presented for each year was randomised as far as possible. Finally, the data for each advertisement in each segment of the categorized sources was studied.

3. **Collection Method:** collection of data on advertisements from microfilm, newspapers, and forty years of stored magazines.
4. **Tools of Analysis:** as this study involves quantitative and qualitative analysis, the tools for analyse are divided into two parts.

4.1 Tools for Quantitative Analysis:

Here I have chosen four criteria (see details in 4.11), comprising the shared characteristics of advertisements relating to the four basic necessities to compile questionnaires (see details in appendix I) for analysis of the form and substance of the advertisements. All the data from advertisements relating to the four basic necessities was collected into tables to refine the analysis.

- **The Criteria for the Analysis of Advertisements:**

The criteria were set according to the trends in economics, and consistent with Baudrillard's "Logic of Consumption". Despite the varying features of advertisements for different types of products, some characteristics are shared by all advertisements relating to the four basic necessities, namely, the **slogan, promotion, the concept, and the owner company**.

These may be defined thus:

1. Slogan: Messages aimed at creating an image for a product. These messages create an implied product of more value than the original whose purchase should be beneficial to the buyer. This characteristic is regarded as a type

of psychological property established by an advertiser in the quest to persuade consumers to buy the products.

2. Promotion: Procedures that owners of products apply to enhance their chances of selling them. The major examples are price reductions, exchange, free distribution, and addition. This characteristic is of more benefit to the consumer; it is a strategy connected in a sense to exchange value.
3. Concept: The main idea to be promoted in a product. In the context of an advertisement this is realised in the manufacturer's attempt to present his product's features as unique. It has to be matched to a consumer in the target group in accordance with the logic of consumption of that advertisement. It can form a relationship between the consumer and the product and is applied to all products advertised through the mass media. The product's uniqueness becomes its most prominent feature or its selling point in accordance with the logic of consumption through Symbolic Value and Sign Value, because the invention and distinction of uniqueness is the most important criterion of consumption in consumer societies.
4. Owner companies: Owners who produce or distribute such products. The intention of the owner companies is to make the image or the name of the company the selling point in advertisement which enhances the reputation and the perceived reliability of the company. This is referred to as the "expansion of symbolic value".

After collecting data on these four shared criteria, I have formulated a questionnaire (Appendix I), and, taking all evidence into consideration according to each criterion, recorded and presented the derived values in a table of frequencies, as explained later.

4.2 Tools for Qualitative Analysis:

for an analysis of the sample cases of advertisements relating to the four basic necessities in each decade, Baudrillard's logic of consumption is complemented by secondary data and all related documents.

6.5 The Hypothesis Adopted in the Analysis

Advertising exerts an influence on the “added value” within a product that is intended to enhance other values besides utility in a consumer society. It amplifies a product’s spiritual value by imbuing it with a new meaning and bestowing on it a distinctive identity and exclusiveness. This induces a perpetual desire in the consumer to buy the product. Referring back to Chapter 1, and Baudrillard’s ideas on social consumption, we remember that he divided the Logic of Consumption into four types, as follows:

1. A Functional Logic, (of the Use Value), i.e. the logic of utility. This is simply a tool.
2. An Economic Logic, (of the Exchange Value), i.e. the logic of equivalence, of the market, or simply of commodities.
3. A Logic of Symbolic Exchange, i.e. the logic of ambivalence, for example in the exchange of gifts, or simply of symbols.
4. A Logic of Sign Value, i.e., the logic of difference, of status, or simply of signs.

Therefore, for the analysis of the content of advertisements in this Chapter I take the hypothesis that advertising in a consumer society will focus on image, or sign value, symbolic values, and exchange values more than on use values. The more consumerism expands, the less advertising focuses on use value.

6.6 Presentation of Data Analysis

This analysis was, for presentation purposes, divided into two parts:

1. Quantitative analysis: presented in the form of tables together with descriptions,
2. Qualitative analysis: this is an analysis of the slogans by interpretation, accompanied by the results of the quantitative analysis, and presented in a descriptive form for greater clarity.

6.7 Quantitative Analysis

6.7.1 Data form all Samples Related to the Four Basic Necessities between 1957 and 1997 (4 Decades)

Table 6.1 Data form all samples of advertising relating to the four basic necessities between 1957 and 1977

Four basic necessities	Years					Total 40 years	%
	1957-1967	1968-1977	1978-1987	1988-1997			
Housing	4	10	35	40		89	29.3
Clothing	15	12	27	28		82	27.0
Food	4	4	13	32		53	17.4
Medicine	15	5	30	30		80	26.3
Total	38	31	105	130		304	100.0
%	12.5%	10.2%	34.5%	42.8%		100 %	

Table 6.1 shows the amounts of data categorized by the four basic necessities between 1957 and 1977. We find that the data from each decade can be arranged from more to less, as follows: the fourth decade, the period from 1988 to 1997, has the largest number of examples in advertising relating to the four basic necessities, a total of 130 examples or 42.8%. The third decade, between 1968 and 1977, comes in second place with 105 examples or 34.5%. This is followed by the first decade, from 1957 to 1967, with 38 examples or 12.5%, and, finally, the second period, between 1968 and 1977, which has the smallest number, 31 examples or 10.2%. Looking at the numbers of examples in each category over the four decades, we see that housing has the most examples, with 89 or 29.3%. Then comes clothing with 82 examples or 27.0%, followed by medicine, 80 examples or 26.3%, and lastly food, which has 53 examples, or 17.4%.

6.7.2 Samples of Data over the Four Decades between 1957 and 1997, Followed by 14 Questions Derived from the Shared Characteristics of Advertising Relating to the Four Basic Necessities

Question 1. Advertising that does or does not contain slogans

Table 6.2 Advertisements 1957–1967 that do or do not contain slogans

Four basic necessities	Examples	Slogans	
		Do	Do not
Housing	4	1	3
Clothing	15	5	10
Food	4	1	3
Medicine	15	1	14
Total	38	8	30
	100%	21.0%	79.0%

Table 6.3 Advertisements 1968–1977 that do or do not contain slogans

Four basic necessities	Examples	Slogans	
		Do	Do not
Housing	10	5	5
Clothing	12	7	5
Food	4	4	0
Medicine	5	1	4
Total	31	17	14
	100%	54.8%	45.2%

Table 6.4 Advertisements 1978–1987 that do or do not contain slogans

Four basic necessities	Examples	Slogans	
		Do	Do not
Housing	35	20	15
Clothing	27	13	14
Food	13	6	7
Medicine	30	9	21
Total	105	48	57
	100%	45.7%	54.3%

Table 6.5 Advertisements 1988–1997 that do or do not contain slogans

Four basic necessities	Examples	Slogans	
		Do	Do not
Housing	40	15	25
Clothing	28	18	10
Food	32	24	8
Medicine	30	9	21
Total	130	66	64
	100%	50.8%	49.2%

From tables 6.2–6.5 we see that the numbers of examples that do or do not contain slogans are as follows:

Advertisements relating to the four basic necessities in the first decade (1957–1967) were likely to be of the “no slogan” type, around 79.0%.

The majority of advertisements relating to the four basic necessities in the second decade (1968–1977) were of the “no slogan” type: about 45.2%.

The majority of advertisements relating to the four basic necessities in the third decade (1978–1987) were of the “no slogan” type: about 54.3%.

Advertisements relating to the four basic necessities in the period 1968–1977 were mostly in the region of the “have a slogan” type, with about 50.8%.

The data from the fourth decade indicates a greater use of slogans than in decade before. Since slogans comprise the messages aimed at enhancing the value of products through the creation of an image we may argue that Thai society in the fourth decade had reached a point in its development where it became a consumer society: there was a *conscious* attempt to enhance the spiritual values of products.

Question 2. Types of phrases in slogans

Table 6.6 Type of phrases in slogans in the first decade (1957–1967)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Types of Slogan		
		Short phrases	Long phrases	Medium-length phrases
Housing	1	1	0	0
Clothing	5	0	4	1
Food	1	1	0	0
Medicine	1	0	0	1
Total	8	2	4	2
	100%	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%

Table 6.7 Type of phrases in slogans in the second decade (1968–1977)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Types of Slogan		
		Short phrases	Long phrases	Medium-length phrases
Housing	5	3	0	2
Clothing	7	2	0	5
Food	4	3	0	1
Medicine	1	1	0	0
Total	17	9	0	8
	100%	52.9%	0.00%	47.1%

Table 6.8 Type of phrases in slogans in the third decade (1978–1987)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Types of Slogans		
		Short phrases	Long phrases	Medium-length phrases
Housing	20	15	0	5
Clothing	13	13	0	0
Food	6	4	0	2
Medicine	9	7	0	2
Total	48	39	0	9
	100%	81.3%	0.00%	18.7%

Table 6.9 Type of phrases in slogans in the fourth decade (1988–1997)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Types of Slogans		
		Long phrases	Long phrases	Medium-length phrases
Housing	15	15	0	0
Clothing	18	17	0	1
Food	24	20	1	3
Medicine	9	8	0	1
Total	66	60	1	5
	100%	90.9%	1.5%	7.6%

From tables 6.6–6.9, the details of phrases found in slogans in each decade (1957–1997) are as follows:

Typical of slogans in the first decade (1957–1967) were long phrases, approximately 50%. The rest, medium-length and short phrases, took up the same amount, i.e., 25% each.

The majority, that is, about 52.9% of slogans in the second decade (1968–1977) contained short phrases. Medium-length phrases came next with 47.1%; there were no more long phrases.

In the third decade (1978–1987), slogans contained a large number of short phrases, 81.3% – a significant increase from the previous two decades. Medium-length phrases came in second place with 18.7%. As in the decade before, there were no longer any long phrases.

Slogans in the fourth decade (1988–1997) were composed mainly of short phrases, i.e., 90.9%. 7.6% were made up of medium-length phrases. Long phrases came last with 1.5%.

The data indicates the importance of the short-phrased slogan, which became ever more evocative and concise. The number of short slogans increased from 25% in the first decade to 52.9%, 81.3%, and 90.9% respectively in later decades. It could

be said that manufacturers, in maximising the efficiency and effectiveness of their methods, have tried to develop the most quick, pertinent and economical means to incite trust and induce a desired attitude in the buyer. This should yield the most profit and benefit.

Moreover, this data reveals not only an effort in the creation of a sign-consuming society; it also indicated an increasing social symbolic consumption occurring with new manufacturer.

Question 3. The numbers of advertisements with or without promotion

Table 6.10 The numbers of advertisements with or without promotion in the first decade (1957–1967)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Promotion	
		with	without
Housing	4	3	1
Clothing	15	5	10
Food	4	0	4
Medicine	15	5	10
Total	38	13	25
	100%	34.2%	65.8%

Table 6.11 The numbers of advertisements with or without promotion in the second decade 1968–1977

Four basic necessities	Examples	Promotion	
		with	without
Housing	10	2	8
Clothing	12	2	10
Food	4	1	3
Medicine	5	0	5
Total	31	5	26
	100%	16.1%	83.9%

Table 6.12 The numbers of advertisements with or without promotion in the third decade (1978–1987)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Promotion	
		with	without
Housing	35	11	24
Clothing	27	6	21
Food	13	1	12
Medicine	30	0	30
Total	105	18	87
	100%	17.1%	82.9%

Table 6.13 The numbers of advertisements with or without promotion in the fourth decade 1988–1997

Four basic necessities	Examples	Promotion	
		with	without
Housing	40	8	32
Clothing	28	10	18
Food	32	5	27
Medicine	30	0	30
Total	130	23	107
	100%	17.7%	82.3%

The details from tables 6.10–6.13 can be summarised as follows:

The majority advertising in the first decade (1957–1967) was conducted without promotion, i.e. about 65.8%

Advertising in the second decade (1968–1977) was still predominantly without promotion: 83.9%

Advertising in the third decade (1978–1987) was on the whole without promotion, 82.9%

Advertising in the fourth decade (1988–1997) was also mostly without promotion, 82.3%.

Advertising in each decade was chiefly of the “no promotion” type. When comparing just the amounts of promotion, we find that the first decade had the largest amount (table 6.10). This suggests that, in the early period of development, manufacturers used promotion strategies that had exchange value in the persuasion of consumers. As society progressed, they adopted new methods. The amount of advertising with promotion necessarily sank in later decades, since the newer approaches in advertising were more advanced. It was no longer necessary to concentrate on promotion to encourage sales, as had been the case at first.

Question 4. Types of promotion

Table 6.14 Types of promotion in the first decade (1957–1967)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Types of Promotion				
		Discount	Premium	Privilege	Service	Others
Housing	3	0	0	3	2	0
Clothing	5	0	2	3	0	0
Food	0	0	0	0	0	0
Medicine	5	0	3	0	2	0
Total	13	0	5	6	4	0
	100%	0	38.5%	46.2%	30.8%	0.0%

Table 6.15 Types of promotion in the second decade (1968–1977)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Types of Promotion				
		Discount	Premium	Privilege	Service	Others
Housing	2	1	0	2	1	0
Clothing	2	0	1	1	0	0
Food	1	0	1	0	0	0
Medicine	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	5	1	2	3	1	0
	100%	20.0%	40.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%

Table 6.16 Types of promotion in the third decade (1978–1987)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Types of Promotion				
		Discount	Premium	Privilege	Service	Others
Housing	11	2	4	5	4	0
Clothing	6	4	0	1	1	0
Food	1	0	1	0	0	0
Medicine	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	18	6	5	6	5	0
	100%	33.3%	27.8%	33.3%	27.8%	0.00%

Table 6.17 Types of promotion in the fourth decade (1988–1997)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Types of Promotion				
		Discount	Premium	Privilege	Service	Others
Housing	8	2	4	3	0	0
Clothing	10	6	1	3	0	0
Food	5	1	3	1	0	0
Medicine	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	23	9	8	7	0	0
	100.0%	39.1%	34.8%	30.4%	0.0%	0.0%

The data in tables 6.14–6.17 can be summarised thus:

Promotion in the first decade (1957–1967) consisted mainly in giving privileges to consumers (46.2%), giving a premium (38.46%), or offering added service (30.8%)

Promotion in the second decade (1968–1977) still concentrated heavily on giving privileges (60%). Premiums (40%) came in second place. Discounts and added service amounted to the same, i.e. 20% each. Privileges and discounts were the main types of promotion in the third decade (1978–1987) with 33.3%. Both approaches of giving premiums and extra service give the same figure, each 27.7%

Types of promotion in the fourth decade (1988–1997) were: discounts, premiums and privileges, in that order, with the following figures: 39.1%, 34.8%, and 30.4% respectively.

From these details it can be seen that the offer of privileges to consumers was used intensively to influence their purchasing decisions during the first-three decades, while the approach used most in the fourth decade was the discount.

Question 5. Types of concept

Table 6.18 Types of concept appearing in advertisements in the first decade (1957–1967)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Concepts				
		Western/AUS/US	Chinese	Thai	Japanese	Others
Housing	4	1	0	2	0	1
Clothing	15	10	1	2	2	0
Food	4	1	0	2	1	0
Medicine	15	5	3	3	1	3
Total	38	17	4	9	4	4
	100%	44.7%	10.5%	23.7%	10.5%	10.5%

Table 6.19 Types of concept appearing in advertisements in the second decade (1968–1977)

Four basic necessities	Example	Concepts				
		Western/AUS/US	Chinese	Thai	Japanese	Others
Housing	10	9	0	1	0	0
Clothing	12	8	0	2	2	2
Food	4	1	0	2	1	0
Medicine	5	3	0	2	0	0
Total	31	21	0	7	3	2
	100%	67.7%	0.0%	22.6%	9.7%	6.5%

Table 6.20 Types of concept appearing in advertisements in the third decade (1978–1987)

Four basic necessities	Example	Concepts				
		Western/AUS/US	Chinese	Thai	Japanese	Others
Housing	35	29	1	5	0	0
Clothing	27	23	0	2	0	2
Food	13	9	4	0	0	0
Medicine	30	27	1	2	0	0
Total	105	88	6	9	0	2
	100%	83.8%	5.7%	8.6%	0.0%	1.9%

Table 6.21 Types of concept appearing in advertisements in the fourth decade (1988–1997)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Concepts				
		Western/ AUS/US	Chinese	Thai	Japanese	Others
Housing	40	38	0	2	0	0
Clothing	28	26	0	0	2	0
Food	32	23	3	5	1	0
Medicine	30	23	1	2	0	4
Total	130	110	4	9	3	4
	100.0%	84.6%	3.1%	6.9%	2.3%	3.1%

Tables 6.18–6.21 indicate the types of concept that appeared over the four decades in the following fashion:

Types of concept that appeared in the first decade (1957–1967) were mostly of a Western style, including Australian and American, with a figure of 44.7%. The second place was occupied by Thai-style concepts: 23.7%. Chinese and Japanese have identical figures of 10.5%

Types of concept appearing in the second decade (1968–1977) were again mostly Western, including Australian and American: 67.7%. In second place were Thai concepts (22.6%), followed by the Japanese at 9.7%

The third decade (1978–1987) was characterised mainly by Western (including Australian and American) concepts, with 83.8%. In second place were Thai concepts again (8.6%), followed by the Chinese at 5.7%.

Types of concepts appearing in the fourth decade (1988–1997) were still predominantly Western, at 84.6%. In second place again were Thai concepts, with 6.9%, followed by Chinese and Japanese types at 3.1% and 2.3% respectively.

The above data suggest a strongly Western influence in types of concepts in advertising relating to the four basic necessities.

Question 6. Logic of concepts appearing in advertisements

Table 6.22 Logic of concepts appearing in advertisements in the first decade (1957–1967)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Types of Concept			
		use	exchange	symbolic	sign
Housing	4	2	4	2	1
Clothing	15	9	15	12	13
Food	4	3	4	2	0
Medicine	15	15	15	2	6
Total	38	29	38	18	20
	100%	76.3%	100.0%	47.4%	52.6%

Table 6.23 Logic of concepts appearing in advertisements in the second decade (1968–1977)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Types of Concept			
		use	exchange	symbolic	sign
Housing	10	5	10	10	7
Clothing	12	6	12	10	8
Food	4	3	4	4	4
Medicine	5	5	5	3	2
Total	31	19	31	27	21
	100%	61.3%	100%	87.1%	67.7%

Table 6.24 Logic of concepts appearing in advertisements in the third decade (1978–1987)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Types of Concept			
		use	exchange	symbolic	sign
Housing	35	22	35	28	26
Clothing	27	5	27	27	12
Food	13	6	13	10	5
Medicine	30	30	30	9	2
Total	105	63	105	74	45
	100%	60.0%	100.0%	70.5%	42.9%

Table 6.25 Logic of concepts appearing in advertisements in the fourth decade (1988–1997)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Types of Concept			
		use	exchange	symbolic	sign
Housing	40	4	40	23	21
Clothing	28	5	28	12	22
Food	32	3	30	10	15
Medicine	30	27	30	5	12
Total	130	39	128	50	70
	100.0%	30.0%	100.0%	38.5%	53.9%

From tables 6.21–6.25, the logic of concepts emerges as follows:

The logic of concepts appearing in advertisements in the first decade (1957–1967) was concentrated chiefly in the use of merchandise (76.3%). The lower positions were occupied by the sign-type of concept and the symbolic-type, with 52.6% and 47.4%, respectively.

The logic of concepts appearing in advertisements in the second decade (1968–1977) was concentrated mostly in the symbolism of merchandise, 87.1%. The lower positions were occupied by the use of merchandise, followed by the sign-type, at 67.7% and 61.3%, respectively.

The logic of concepts appearing in advertisements in the third decade (1978–1987) was mainly concentrated in the symbolism of merchandise, at 70.5%. In second place was the sign value of merchandise (42.9%), and in the third place was the use of merchandise, with 60%.

The logic of concepts appearing in advertisements in the fourth decade (1988–1997) was principally concentrated in the sign value of merchandise (53.9%). The lower positions were taken up by the symbolism and the use of merchandise, at 38.5% and 30%, respectively.

In the above data we see that the figure for exchange values remained stable and counted the highest scores among those four logic-types. Exchange values clearly represented the most important logic-type with respect to merchandise in every decade. Because they had a high position in advertising, and a certain value for trading, the figures for the exchange values of products remained stable in every decade. Moreover, we see that the figures for use values were high during the first decade, but went down in later decades. This indicates a change in emphasis to a consumption for benefits other than those directly obtained from such merchandise. However, the figures for other logic-types, i.e., the sign- and symbolic-types both increased and decreased. It cannot be clearly specified whether there was an emphasis of either logic-type in the developed society. Any conclusion in this respect would rely on the contemplation of other factors.

Question 7. The impact of headlines

Table 6.26 The impact of headlines in the first decade (1957–1967)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Impact of headlines	
		immediate	after reading
Housing	4	4	0
Clothing	15	11	4
Food	4	4	0
Medicine	15	11	4
Total	38	30	8
	100%	78.9%	21.1%

Table 6.27 The impact of headlines in the second decade (1968–1977)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Impact of headlines	
		immediate	after reading
Housing	10	8	2
Clothing	12	8	4
Food	4	3	1
Medicine	5	4	1
Total	31	23	8
	100%	74.2%	25.8%

Table 6.28 The impact of headlines the third decade (1978–1987)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Impact of headlines	
		immediate	after reading
Housing	35	30	5
Clothing	27	23	4
Food	13	12	1
Medicine	30	10	20
Total	105	75	30
	100%	71.4%	28.6%

Table 6.29 The impact of headlines the fourth decade (1988–1997)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Impact of headlines	
		immediate	after reading
Housing	40	38	2
Clothing	28	24	4
Food	32	25	7
Medicine	30	23	7
Total	130	110	20
	100%	84.6%	15.4%

The impact of headlines can be summed up as follows:

In the first decade (1957–1967) the immediacy with which one apprehended the meaning of a headline was high – there was little or no need to read the details of the advert. This is represented by a figure of 78.9%.

In the second decade (1968–1977), the rate at which the import of a headline was apprehended was still high – 74.2%.

In the third decade (1978–1987), this figure was still almost as high, at 71.4%.

In the fourth decade (1988–1997), the figure had even risen again to 84.6%.

So we see that in each decade the majority of headlines had an immediate impact.

Question 8. The main formats of advertisements

Table 6.30 The main formats for product description in advertisements in the first decade (1957–1967)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Main format			
		Text only	Picture Only	Text with illustration	Picture with description
Housing	4	2	0	2	0
Clothing	15	0	0	6	9
Food	4	0	0	1	3
Medicine	15	2	1	9	3
Total	38	4	1	18	15
	100.00%	10.5%	2.6%	47.4%	39.5%

Table 6.31 The main formats for product description in advertisements in the second decade (1968–1977)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Main format			
		Text only	Picture Only	Text with illustration	Picture with description
Housing	10	0	0	1	9
Clothing	12	1	0	2	9
Food	4	0	0	0	4
Medicine	5	0	0	4	1
Total	31	1	0	7	23
	100.00%	3.2%	0%	22.6%	74.2%

Table 6.32 The main formats for product description in advertisements in the third decade (1978–1987)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Main format			
		Text only	Picture Only	Text with illustration	Picture with description
Housing	35	0	0	2	33
Clothing	27	1	0	0	26
Food	13	0	0	0	13
Medicine	30	0	0	5	25
Total	105	1	0	7	97
	100.00%	0.9%	0%	6.7%	92.4%

Table 6.33 The main formats for product description in advertisements in the fourth decade (1988–1997)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Main format			
		Text only	Picture Only	Text with illustration	Picture with description
Housing	40	1	0	2	37
Clothing	28	0	0	3	25
Food	32	0	0	2	30
Medicine	30	0	0	5	25
Total	130	1	0	12	117
	100.00%	0.8%	0%	9.2%	90.0%

The main formats employed in each decade for describing products in advertisements can be detailed as follows:

The principal format adopted for product description in advertisements in the first decade was that of text with illustrations, with a figure of 47.4%. The method of using pictures with a description came in second place (39.5%). Text only and pictures only were used relatively seldom: 10.5% and 2.6% respectively.

In the second decade, the main format used was that of pictures with a description at 74.2%, followed by text with illustrations, 22.6%. Text only was still minimally represented, with 3.2%; no evidence was found for pictures only.

The chief format employed in the third decade (1978–1987) was that of pictures with a description (92.4%). Again, text with illustrations came next with 6.7%. The text only approach still existed, though only just: 0.9%. Again, no data was found for the method of pictures only.

The use of pictures with a description was the principle approach during the fourth decade, at 90%. It was followed by text with illustrations, 9.2%. Text only had dropped even further to 0.8%. As in the third decade, nothing was found on the use of pictures only.

The tables show quite clearly that the formats for product description rely heavily on the use of pictures. Since pictures are easier and quicker to apprehend than text their use has been taken by advertising designers as a standard method since at least the second decade. It reflects the attempt to induce in the mind of the prospective buyer ideas or images relating to the product, which the manufacturer then hopes will infiltrate his knowledge and belief systems.

We may claim that there is a continuous attempt, in using symbols, to connote other meanings to such products beyond their direct benefits.

Question 9. Foreign languages appearing in advertisements

Table 6.34 Foreign languages appearing in advertisements in the first decade (1957–1967)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Foreign languages			
		English	Chinese	Japanese	none
Housing	4	0	0	0	4
Clothing	15	10	2	0	5
Food	4	3	2	0	0
Medicine	15	5	3	1	6
Total	38	18	7	1	15
	100.00%	47.4%	18.4%	2.6%	39.5%

Table 6.35 Foreign languages appearing in advertisements in the second decade (1968–1977)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Foreign languages			
		English	Chinese	Japanese	None
Housing	10	4	0	0	6
Clothing	12	8	0	0	4
Food	4	2	0	1	1
Medicine	5	3	0	0	2
Total	31	17	0	1	13
	100.00%	54.8%	0%	3.2%	41.9%

Table 6.36 Foreign languages appearing in advertisements in the third decade (1978–1987)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Foreign languages			
		English	Chinese	Japanese	None
Housing	35	6	1	0	28
Clothing	27	20	0	0	7
Food	13	7	2	0	4
Medicine	30	29	2	0	1
Total	105	62	5	0	40
	100%	59.1%	4.8%	0%	38.1%

Table 6.37 Foreign languages appearing in advertisements in the fourth decade (1988–1997)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Foreign languages			
		English	Chinese	Japanese	none
Housing	40	12	1	0	23
Clothing	28	28	0	0	0
Food	32	18	0	2	14
Medicine	30	29	0	0	1
Total	130	87	1	2	38
	100.00%	66.9%	0.8%	1.5%	29.2%

Foreign languages were represented in advertisements over the four decades as follows:

In the first decade, the most common foreign language in use was English, at 47.4%. Next was “no use of a foreign language” in advertisements, with 39.5%. Chinese occurred marginally: 18.4%. Lastly, there was the use of Japanese, with a figure of 2.6%

In the second decade, during the period from 1968 to 1977, English was still widely used in advertisements relating to the four basic necessities, with 54.8%. “No use of a foreign language” came second, at 41.9%. Japanese was used more than in the first decade, with 3.2%. Nothing was found on the use of Chinese in this period.

English was again widely used in advertisements in the third decade: 59.1%. And “no foreign language” was still in second place, with 38.1%. There was a small amount of Chinese (4.8%). No Japanese use was found during this decade.

In the fourth decade, the most common foreign language was again English: 66.9%; and the degree of use had increased compared with the third decade. “No use of a foreign language” was at 29.2% (second place). Japanese in this period was at 1.5%. Finally, there was a 0.8% use of Chinese.

English was clearly the foreign language most widely used in advertising throughout the four decades, echoing Thai society’s acceptance and admiration of the West.

Question 10. The occurrence of English words in advertisements

Table 6.38 The occurrence of English words in advertisements in the first decade (1957–1967)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Occurrence of English words		
		medium	small	large
Housing	0	0	0	0
Clothing	10	1	9	0
Food	3	0	3	0
Medicine	5	0	5	0
Total	18	1	17	0
	100%	5.6%	94.4%	0%

Table 6.39 The occurrence of English words in advertisements in the second decade (1968–1977)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Occurrence of English words		
		medium	small	large
Housing	4	0	4	0
Clothing	8	0	7	1
Food	2	0	2	0
Medicine	3	1	1	1
Total	17	1	14	2
	100%	5.9%	82.4%	11.8%

Table 6.40 The occurrence of English words in advertisements in the third decade (1978–1987)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Occurrence of English words		
		medium	small	large
Housing	6	0	6	0
Clothing	20	3	17	0
Food	7	1	6	0
Medicine	29	2	27	0
Total	62	6	56	0
	100%	9.7%	90.3%	0%

Table 6.41 The occurrence of English words in advertisements in the fourth decade (1988–1997)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Occurrence of English words		
		medium	small	large
Housing	12	1	11	0
Clothing	28	0	25	3
Food	18	5	13	0
Medicine	29	6	22	1
Total	87	12	71	4
	100%	13.8%	81.6%	4.6%

The data given in tables 6.38–6.41 can be summarised as follows:

In 94.4% of advertisements in the first decade (1957–1967) a small number of English words were used in advertisements

A similar small number of English words was used in the second decade, in 82.4% of adverts. However, there was an increase in the use of large numbers of English words: 11.8%. There had been a rise in the use of large numbers of English words compared with the first decade.

In the second decade, the use of small numbers of English words was at 90.3%. Medium quantities of English words were also beginning to be used in this period: 9.7%.

The number of English words used in the fourth decade was still small, 81.6%, but the rate was starting to go down. The use of large numbers of English words, now at 4.6%, had increased since the third decade, while the occurrence of medium numbers of English words had also increased to 13.8%.

So we can conclude that despite Thailand's admiration of Western culture in general, the majority of advertisers preferred not to use English words in advertisements relating to the four basic necessities.

Question 11. Use of illustrations in advertisements

Table 6.42 Use of illustrations in advertisements in the first decade (1957–1967)

Four basic necessities	Illustration			
	Examples	Not used	Partial use	Extensive use
Housing	4	2	1	1
Clothing	15	0	6	9
Food	4	0	0	4
Medicine	15	2	4	9
Total	38	4	11	23
	100%	10.5%	29.0%	60.5%

Table 6.43 Use of illustrations in advertisements in the second decade (1968–1977)

Four basic necessities	Illustration			
	Examples	Not used	Partial use	Extensive use
Housing	10	0	0	10
Clothing	12	0	4	8
Food	4	0	0	4
Medicine	5	0	0	5
Total	31	0	5	26
	100%	0%	12.1%	83.9%

Table 6.44 Use of illustrations in advertisements in the third decade (1978–1987)

Four basic necessities	Illustration			
	Examples	Not used	Partial use	Extensive use
Housing	35	0	2	33
Clothing	27	0	0	27
Food	13	0	0	13
Medicine	30	0	0	30
Total	105	0	2	103
	100.0%	0%	1.9%	98.1%

Table 6.45 Use of illustrations in advertisements in the fourth decade (1988–1997)

Four basic necessities	Illustration			
	Examples	Not used	Partial use	Extensive use
Housing	40	1	2	37
Clothing	28	0	2	26
Food	32	0	2	30
Medicine	30	0	5	25
Total	130	1	11	118
	100%	0.8%	8.5%	90.7%

The Communication of information through illustrations in advertisements can be formulated as follows:

The use of illustrations in the first decade was fairly extensive: 60.5%. The partial use of illustrations came next, with 29%. 10.5% of advertisements employed no illustration

During the period 1968–1977 (the second decade) illustrations were still used to a large extent; the figure was again the highest at 83.9%. Second was the partial use of illustrations, with 12.1%. We have found no non-use of illustrations for this period

The situation was similar in the third decade, where illustrations were widely employed. The figures for the partial use of illustrations went down to 1.9%. The non-use of illustrations was not observed.

The ranking in the fourth decade again remained unchanged: extensive use, partial use, and non-use, respectively at 90.8%, 8.5%, and 0.7%.

The number of using illustrations being used in advertisements has greatly increased since the second decade, especially compared with the first decade, suggesting that the use of pictures has become a significant tactic in advertising.

Question 12. Characteristics of the postscript in advertisements

Table 6.46 Characteristics of the postscript in the first decade (1957–1967)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Type of Postscript				
		Brand name	Logo	Address w/o tel #	Address w/o tel #	Others
Housing	4	0	0	4	0	0
Clothing	15	9	0	4	2	0
Food	4	1	0	2	0	1
Medicine	15	1	0	10	0	4
Total	38	11	0	20	2	5
	100%	28.9%	0%	52.6%	5.3%	13.2%

Table 6.47 Characteristics of the postscript in the second decade (1968–1977)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Type of Postscript				
		Brand name	Logo	Address w/o tel #	Address w/o tel #	Others
Housing	10	8	7	10	0	0
Clothing	12	6	0	4	0	2
Food	4	2	0	0	1	1
Medicine	5	0	0	4	1	0
Total	31	16	7	18	2	3
	100%	51.6%	22.6%	58.1%	6.5%	9.7%

Table 6.48 Characteristics of the postscript in the third decade (1978–1987)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Type of Postscript				
		Brand name	Logo	Address w/o tel #	Address w/o tel #	Others
Housing	35	9	15	26	0	2
Clothing	27	13	3	6	1	8
Food	13	5	2	5	0	3
Medicine	30	17	6	9	3	1
Total	105	44	26	46	4	14
	100%	41.9%	24.8%	43.8%	3.8%	13.3%

Table 6.49 Characteristics of the postscript in the fourth decade (1988–1997)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Type of Postscript				
		Brand name	Logo	Address w/o tel #	Address w/o tel #	Others
Housing	40	26	21	39	1	0
Clothing	28	14	1	9	0	4
Food	32	15	10	14	0	5
Medicine	30	15	5	14	0	3
Total	130	70	37	76	1	12
	100%	53.9%	28.5%	58.5%	0.8%	9.2%

The characteristics of postscripts in each decade are as follows:

The majority of postscripts in the first decade were of the type giving an address and telephone number, with 52.6%, followed by the postscript with the brand name of the product: 28.9%. Another type of postscript was observed, i.e. the giving of an address without a telephone number, at 5.3%

During the period of 1968–1977, postscripts were mainly in the form of an address and telephone number: 58.1%. In second position was the brand name (51.6%). In this decade, logos of products or companies started to appear in advertisements, and give a figure of 22.6%. Furthermore, the address without a telephone number was still represented, at 6.5%

In the third decade, the majority of postscripts had become brand names: 41.9%; followed by the address and telephone number, at 43.8%. The use of the logo had been increasing, its percentage now being at 24.8%. However, we still find advertisers giving only an address (no telephone number): 3.8%, though these figures were down on the second decade

The greater number of postscripts in the fourth decade returned to the use of the address and telephone number (58.5%). The use of brand names fell to second place, with 53.9%, which was not very different from the first instance. Logos were employed to a greater degree than in the period 1978–1987, and now stood at 28.5%. Addresses without telephone numbers were found in small measure, about 0.8%.

The giving of an address and telephone number has become the most important practice regarding postscripts in advertisements over the four decades., The use of brand names has gained in importance, although the percentage in the third decade was less than in the second decade. Moreover, it was noted that the use of logos has risen in each decade. This indicates an attempt on the part of manufacturers to create symbols and signs to communicate the unique features of their products. It also reveals some important properties of current social consumption.

Question 13. Identifying the manufacturer's name from advertisements

Table 6.50 Identifying the manufacturer's name in the first decade (1957–1967)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Manufacturer identified?	
		No	Yes
Housing	4	0	4
Clothing	15	5	10
Food	4	2	2
Medicine	15	1	14
Total	38	8	30
	100%	21.1%	78.9%

Table 6.51 Identifying the manufacturer's name in the second decade (1968–1977)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Manufacturer identified?	
		No	Yes
Housing	10	0	10
Clothing	12	6	6
Food	4	3	1
Medicine	5	1	4
Total	31	10	21
	100%	32.3%	67.7%

Table 6.52 Identifying the manufacturer's name in the third decade (1978–1987)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Manufacturer identified?	
		No	Yes
Housing	35	2	33
Clothing	27	18	9
Food	13	5	8
Medicine	30	15	15
Total	105	40	65
	100%	38.1%	61.9%

Table 6.53 Identifying the manufacturer's name in the fourth decade (1988–1997)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Manufacturer identified?	
		No	Yes
Housing	40	0	40
Clothing	28	16	12
Food	32	18	14
Medicine	30	9	21
Total	130	43	87
	100%	33.1%	66.9%

From tables 6.50–6.53, the details on identifying the names of manufacturers from advertisements in each decade are as follows:

In the first decade identifying the names of manufacturers was as much as 78.9% for advertisements relating to the four basic necessities

Identifying the names of manufacturers was still as high as 67.7% in the second decade

It was still at 61.9% in the years between 1978 and 1987, and in the fourth decade it has been rose up to 66.9%.

Thus we can conclude that the number of people being able to identify the names of manufacturers from advertisements was high in each decade when compared with those unable to identify them. Consequently, it can be said that giving information about a product's owner or manufacturer to a buyer was regarded as a very important factor by advertisers in each decade.

However, it can also be observed that the percentage in the first decade was higher than in other decades, when comparing only the ability to identify the owner's name in each decade.

Question 14. Establishment of confidence in a product

Table 6.54 Establishment of confidence in a product in the first decade (1957–1967)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Establishment of confidence in a product		
		Registered on the stock exchange	Registering of copyright or offer of a guarantee	None
Housing	4	0	0	4
Clothing	15	0	1	14
Food	4	0	0	4
Medicine	15	0	1	14
Total	38	0	2	36
	100.00%	0%	5.3%	94.7%

Table 6.55 Establishment of confidence in a product in the second decade (1968–1977)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Establishment of confidence in a product		
		Registered on the stock exchange	Registering of copyright or offer of a guarantee	None
Housing	10	0	1	9
Clothing	12	0	2	10
Food	4	0	0	4
Medicine	5	0	2	3
Total	31	0	5	26
	100.00%	0%	16.1%	83.9%

Table 6.56 Establishment of confidence in a product in the third decade (1978–1987)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Establishment of confidence in a product		
		Registered on the stock exchange	Registering of copyright or offer of a guarantee	None
Housing	35	0	2	33
Clothing	27	0	2	25
Food	13	0	2	11
Medicine	30	0	2	28
Total	105	0	8	97
	100%	0%	7.6%	92.4%

Table 6.57 Establishment of confidence in a product in the fourth decade (1988–1997)

Four basic necessities	Examples	Establishment of confidence in a product		
		Registered on the stock exchange	Registering of copyright or offer of a guarantee	None
Housing	40	26	1	13
Clothing	28	0	2	26
Food	32	0	3	29
Medicine	30	0	5	25
Total	130	26	11	93
	100.0%	20%	8.5%	71.5%

We can summarise the details of the establishment of confidence in products from tables 6.54–6.57 as follows:

In the first decade, manufacturers who did nothing to try to establish confidence in their products represented the highest percentage, at 94.7%, while those offering a guarantee and registering a copyright were found to be only 5.3%

In the second decade, the majority were still doing nothing: 83.9%. However, the figures for offering a guarantee and registering a copyright increased from 5.3% to 16.1%

In the third decade the order of those doing nothing and those offering a guarantee and registering was still the same: their percentages were 92.4% and 7.6%, respectively.

In the fourth decade, those doing nothing were still at the top, with 71.5%, though this percentage was down from the third decade. At one time, the issue arose of housing being promoted through being registered on the stock exchange. The percentage of this was 20%. As for offering a guarantee and copyright, these were still represented in this decade, by 8.5%.

The above data suggests that advertisements over these four decades were mainly of the type not aiming to create confidence in the buyer. If we just consider the figures for offering a guarantee and registering a copyright, we can say that the sellers attempted exclusively to create confidence through selling techniques. Even though the numbers were small, it is still noticeable that items such as houses were the only things that showed up in the registers of the stock market, perhaps because houses are expensive items that require high investment.

6.7.3 Conclusions from the Quantitative Analysis of the Content of Advertising Relating to the Four Basic Necessities in the Period from 1957 to 1997

Tables 6.1–6.57 represent questions on fourteen issues, each question separating the analysis of the four basic necessities into four decades. The first decade is the period 1957–1967. The second decade is between 1968 and 1977, the third is the period 1978–1987, and the fourth decade is between 1988 and 1997. The general picture of advertising in Thailand in relation to the four basic necessities is that advertisements over this period tend to change in form and substance. They show variations in substance, meaning, form, use of language and methods for attracting buyers. If we consider the four criteria established by the researcher separately, i.e., those of slogans, promotion, concepts, and owner companies, we can draw conclusions as follows:

1. With regard to slogans, because they were easy to remember and understand there was an increase in the use of slogans to communicate the prominent points of products. This is sometimes regarded as a presentation of the logic of symbolic exchange values and sign values. This can be seen from the great increase in the number of products being promoted with slogans from the first decade onward. From the second decade to the fourth decade the percentage increased from 21.1% to 54.8%, 45.7%, and 50.8%, respectively. Slogans were also increasingly modified to be more pertinent, concise and easy to understand. From 25% in the first decade, this increased over the next decades to 52.9%, 81.3%, and 90.9%, respectively. This reflects the attempt by advertisers to create not only an image for a product but also a belief in that product that will lead the consumer to buy it.
2. Promotion was used to stimulate the consumer's awareness of a product, and occurred in many forms. This was also regarded as a presentation of logic of

symbolic exchange values. There was a growth of the discount as a promotional tactic over time. The percentages went from zero in the first decade to 20%, 33.3%, and 39.1 % respectively in the subsequent decades. This reflected high competition in the market.

3. On the aspect of the concept, Western values have been applied in advertisements in each decade. The figures relating to the occurrence of Western or American or Australian values in advertisements have constantly risen, from 44.7% in the first decade to 67.7%, 83.8%, and 84.6% in the following decades. It was regarded as the presentation of logic of symbolic exchange values and sign values in advertising. Furthermore, it was found that the concepts that we see in advertisements have changed more in terms of exchange values symbol and sign values than use values.

Advertisements using only text have been less favoured because text cannot compete with images, which appeal directly to the imagination, in attracting attention to a product. This was also regarded as a presentation of logic of symbolic exchange values and sign values to enhance the value of a product. We saw that the figures for “text only ads” went down, starting from 10.53% in the first decade, to 3.2%, 0.9%, and 0.8% in the second to fourth decades respectively. It was also noted that the percentage of methods combining both text and illustrations went up from the first decade onwards: from 39.5% in the first decade to 74.2%, 92.4%, and 90.% in later decades.

The increasing use of the English language to convey a sense of modernity and Western style was also regarded as a presentation of the logic of symbolic exchange values and sign values. English was also the most popular foreign language with figures increasing from 47.4% in the first decade to 54.8%, 59.1%, and 66.9% in the later decades.

The use of postscripts in advertisements, such as brand names, logos, addresses and telephone numbers, was also regarded as a presentation of the logic of symbolic exchange values and sign values. They acted as an emblem, serving to make remembering products easier and distinguishing them from other products. The percentages of change for each type of postscript were as follows:

The use of brand names changed from 28.9% in the first decade to 51.6%, 41.9%, and 53.9% in later decades.

The use of logos increased from 0% in the first decade to 22.58%, 24.76%, and 28.46%.

Addresses and telephone numbers varied from 52.6% to 58.1%, 43.8%, and 58.5%. In addition, the offering of telephone numbers can reflect the development of communication systems, which facilitated the convenience of trade.

4. The ability to identify the name of a manufacturer was dependent on the creation of a credible image. It was also regarded as a presentation of the logic of symbolic exchange values and sign values to merchandise. The figures relating to the ability to identify manufacturers' names changed over time from 21.1%, to 32.3%, 38.1%, and 30.1% respectively. An effort to create confidence in a product has been seen only in small measure, for example with regard to large and expensive items such as houses, which people do not buy very often. The approaches sellers have tried in creating confidence, appeal, and distinction in their products have, however, been varied. Being registered on the stock exchange has shown the reliability of the owner company. This is another method that a house vendors would use to raise the value of a house.

The figures in the quantitative analysis also contain some data concerning form and substance that are of interest, such as whether manufacturers promote their products or not. It was noticed that the percentage of manufacturers using promotion decreased from the first decade. The figures were: 34.2%, 16.1%, 17.1%, and 17.7% over the four decades. It may be that the first decade constituted the beginning of a serious development in Thai society, and the initial period when manufacturers began to sell their goods concentrating on promotion techniques, one of the primary methods use to support advertising. However, as the society progressed, manufacturers implemented other approaches, such as the improvement of product quality and a concentration on the creation of an image, of a sense of distinction, luxury or modernity. This would explain the figures we have seen.

The figures also imply the conclusion that advertising nowadays endeavours to present values in a product other than those of direct utility. It is an attempt to de-

ploy the consumption logic of exchange values, symbolic exchange values and sign values, compounding them in the product to induce new meaning and spiritual values, the desire to consume more and various products, and a feeling of being self worth. This makes the decision to buy much easier and quicker than in the past. Since 1968, the four basic necessities have become a part of the product and its trading value, and are also exceptionally capable of communicating identity and individuality. It can be said that the relationship between goods or materials and persons in society has supplanted the relationship between persons and persons. A person can now apprehend the social position of another person without needing to know them, simply by chatting to them and observing the relationship between them and their possessions. These observations will reveal their lifestyle, taste in fashion, manners, beliefs, cultural affiliation and the class of people they choose to associate with. The collapse of the old nobility structure and the arrival of a financial power structure, or capitalism, have led to a continual increase in violence, with the result that the society has become one of sign consumption, in which the aim of consumption is no longer solely for utility, but for the acquisition or accumulation of meaning and personal distinction implicit in the material.

In the next section we will examine the qualitative analysis in order to clarify our conclusions.

6.8 Qualitative Analysis

In order to improve our conclusions from the analysis of advertising, the slogans themselves will be analysed using a method of interpretation. This should not only enhance the results of the analysis, but also lead to more precise and clear conclusions about the nature of Thai society in this period.

6.8.1 An analysis of Slogans by Interpretation

A slogan is a statement employed in an advertisement to create an image of a product which aims at increasing its value: it is a “term of benefit”. Or we can say that the advertisement adds a psychological qualification to a product through the slogan in order to attract and also give choice to the consumer. Therefore a qualitative analysis by interpretation of the slogan may reveal some perspectives of consumer culture in the period of development.

In the sampling of advertisements relating to the four basic needs over four decades, we found slogans as follows:

a. Samples of Slogans in the First Decade (1957–1967)

a1. Nakhòn Thon Village Advertisement

(*Siang Ang-Thòng*, 7 September 1961 (Microfilm 37/ Material Service Side033: ๓๗.37/ 033 ๗๓๖.))

“Good Land ‘Nakornton Village’ Cheap Price.”

a2. Megan Form Bra Advertisement

(*Siang Ang-Thòng*, 5 October 1961 page 15 (Microfilm 37/ Material Service Side33: ๓๗ 37/33 ๗๓๖))

“No Other Bras Are as Worth Your Money as Ours.”

a3. Miraculous Detergent Advertisement

(*Thai Rat* 4 November 1967 p. 10 (Microfilm 40/ Material Service Side 03: ๓๗ 40/03 ๗๓๖))

“When You Buy the Miraculous Detergent, You Will be Showered with Free Gifts”

We can see from the information in 6.61 Table 6.2, **that the absence of a slogan** was preferred at that time. However, looking at examples of slogans related to four basics necessities during 1957–1967, we may detect a reflection of the attitude of the society. The slogan for Nakhòn Thon village conveys two values: one is the use value of the land for house construction, and the second is the exchange value, that is, the land becomes a commodity with a value for exchange. It also emphasizes the cheap price. The slogan for the Megan Form Bra, on the other hand, conveys only one value, that of the exchange value. It stresses only that this product is worth the money. Now consider the slogan for the Miraculous Detergent. Even though the detergent is not one of the four basic necessities, it is connected to one of them, i.e., with clothing. This slogan does not offer any benefit of the product directly, but rather it offers the benefit of the exchange value in terms of a free gift. Considering

these examples of slogans in the context of Baudrillard's logic of consumption, we may say that slogans in the first decade (1957–1967) laid their main stress on exchange value.

b. Samples of Slogans in the Second Decade (1968–1977)

b1. “Golden V” Shirt Advertisement

(*Thai Rat*, 3 January 1974, p. 10. (Microfilm 40/13: ๓๗.40/13))

“Just See the Collar, You Know Its ‘Golden V’”

b2. Rina Jeans Advertisement

(*Thai Rat*, 3 January 1974, p. 10. (Microfilm 40/13: ๓๗. 40/13))

“You Can Go Anywhere if You Have Rina.”

b3. Viga Watch Advertisement

(*Thai Rat*, 5 January 1974, p. 8. (Microfilm 40/13: ๓๗. 40/13))

“Tough, Magnificent, More Accurate”

b4. A-yi-no-mo-to Yam-Yam advertisement

(*Thai Rat*, 10 January 1974, p. 10. (Microfilm 40/13: ๓๗. 40/13))

“Wonderful Taste, Like a Charm”

b5. Canned food advertisement

(*Thai Rat*, 26 January 1974, p. 8. Microfilm 40/13: ๓๗. 40/13))

“Convenience Is in the Can”

From 6.6 1 Table 6.3, we see that there are now more advertisements **with slogans** than in the previous decade (Table 6.2). This provides us with many more examples for analysis.

This group, from the second decade (1968–1977), allows an interpretation of the ideas current in the society in this period as follows:

Consider the slogan of the Golden V shirt. The stress here is on a sign value in the form of an image of the product's individuality and distinction: the statement advises us that we can identify the brand name from one small part of the product.

Now consider the slogan for Rina jeans; this also communicates a symbolic value and a sign value that are embodied in the jeans, and implies that whoever wears them will share these values. The wearer of these jeans displays his identity and his individuality.

Many values are represented in the Viga watch slogan; the word "tough" connotes use value as well as exchange value: the product will have a long life and is therefore value for money; the word "Magnificent" insinuates a symbolic value: the product itself is a symbol of the magnificence and distinction that many people dream of. It also represents the sign value: the individuality and uniqueness of personality one displays in wearing this watch.

While the A-yi-no-mo-to Yam-Yam slogan does not offer any direct benefit such as satisfying one's hunger, it does impart the symbolic value of the special, attractive flavour. By using the word *neramit* (literally, something being created by an angel), it appeals to the feelings and the imagination. Thus the product becomes a symbol of extraordinary power for the owner of it.

The slogan for the canned food advertisement clearly communicates symbolic value and sign value. The symbolic value is the comfort, quickness and ease. The sign value is embodied in the new method of preparing and cooking food, different from the old, traditional way. However, by putting emphasis on these values it does diminish other kinds of symbolic value and sign value such as the stylishness or the emotional value of the cooking procedure.

As discussed above, the function of the product has here changed from the previous decade. Now the slogan implies a social meaning. Regarding this in terms of the Baudrillard logic of consumption, we may say that the emphasis of slogans in the second decade is on symbolic exchange and sign value. The symbolic exchange of the theory is the lifestyle depicted in varieties of goods and products. It can reflect the high social and economic status of the consumer who uses these goods and products. In other words, it may even imply a high level of social development.

c. Samples of Slogans in the Third Decade (1978–1987)

c1. Pasuk village advertisement

(*Home*, a monthly journal on national housing, The sixth year, Vol. 64, February 1979)

“Pasuk village: Good House, in Good Condition both inside and out, Attractive Family Home”

c2. Classic villa village advertisement

(*Home and Garden*, The ninth year, No. 106, June 1985)

“Classic, Dignified, Strong”

c3. Sailom apartment advertisement

(*Thai Rat*, Monday 2 June 1986, p. 14.)

“Complete Comfort, Just Like in a Hotel”

c4. Noble sport shirt advertisement

(*Klai Mo*, The second year, February 1978)

“The Most Popular Shirt for People all over the World – Noble Sport Shirt”

c5. S’ fair shirt advertisement

(*Thai Rat* 12 March 1980, p.11.)

“World’s Leading Businessmen Admire European Shirt- S’ Fair”

c6. Vitamin B-complex B-cosium advertisement

(*Thai Rat* 10 March 1980, p. 3)

“B-Cosium, B-Complex Prevents Beriberi and Nourishes Your Nerves”

From the quantitative information discussed in 6.61 table 6.3, we saw that during this third decade the number of advertisements **with a slogan** was less than those **without one**. However, looking at the examples, we may conclude the following:

The slogan of the Pasuk village advertisement communicates two values for the house: one is the symbolic value, the happiness gained; the other is in the practical benefits derived from living in the house. The sentence “good house, in good condition both inside and out, attractive family home” tries to give an impression of the materials of the house, its toughness and quality, for example.

The slogan of “classic villa village” lays emphasis on the representation of symbolic value: the village is a symbol of classiness, dignity and authority. Added to this is the sign value of individuality, high social class, and uniqueness.

The slogan of the Sailom apartment advertisement clearly offers a symbolic value in the symbol of comfort. A picture of completeness and service are implicit in the words “like in a hotel.” At the same we are enticed by the sign value of the individuality, high social class and wealth of the residents.

In the Noble sport shirt and S’fair shirt advertisements the slogan again presents two kinds of value: symbolic value and sign value. The Noble sport shirt advertisement confers a symbol of universal popularity, the S’fair one of European style shirts. The sign value of the Noble sport shirt advertisement is its smartness, that of the S’ fair shirt is that it is the world’s leading shirt, and therefore is simply better than any others.

The slogan of the B-complex B-cosium vitamins tells us of the benefits of vitamins that nourish the nerves and prevent beriberi. This is typical of medical advertisements in that its emphasis is more on use value than on other values.

So we see that most advertisements over this decade express symbolic and sign values. The samples all contain slogans with connotations of happiness, classic looks, wealth, comfort, being a businessperson, and taste. The consumption of production creates a common code through which people can communicate their social classification. This characteristic, called “psychological consuming”, makes people in

a society believe that they get a “level of well-being” from advertised products. Nevertheless, some advertisements still refer to the benefit value in this decade.

The advertisement samples in the light of the Baudrillard logic of consumption lead us here to conclude that slogans in this decade particularly emphasize symbolic exchange value and sign value.

d. Samples of Slogans in the Fourth Decade (1988–1997)

d1. Rom Rüan Ville

(Thai Rat, 10 February 1991, p. 10)

“Cool Shade, Cool Place, and Privacy”

d2. The Resident Ville

(Thai Rat, 29 December 1995, p. 10)

“Welcome to the Empire of Cheerful Beauty”

d3. Cricket & CO shirts

(Marketing Review, The second year, 1989)

“European Men’s Wear and Traditional Men’s Clothing”

d4. Nike Shoes and Clothes

(Marketing review, The fourth year. No. 47 1991)

“Unified Fantasy”

“Another Level of Non-Stop Development from Nike”

d5. Pizza advertisement

(Thai Rat, 10 February 1991 p. 7)

“Makin’ It Great”

According to the quantitative information discussed in 6.61 table 6.4, there are more advertisements with slogans than without in this decade. When we consider the samples, the conclusions are as follows:

The slogan of the Rom Rüan Ville advertisement emphasizes the symbolic value of a “cool shade” and a “cool place”, and the sign value of privacy, which can induce an expectation of distinction in the event of becoming a resident.

The slogan of the Resident Ville advertisement conveys symbolic value: the symbol of the empire of happiness and beauty, a large exquisite area overflowing with contentment, that also bestows power and prestige on the owner.

The slogan of Cricket & CO shirts, Nike shoes and clothes, and the pizza advertisement all offer symbolic value along with sign value. One example is the phrase “European men’s wear”: not only is it a symbol of Europeanism; it also represents the uniqueness of European style, and is thus a sign value as well.

Regarding the above discussion, most of the advertisements here contain both symbolic value and sign value. The samples given offer us privacy, the empire of beauty and happiness, high class, Europeanism, taste, the supremacy of the imagination, and non-stop development, all of which connote social meaning. People in this society can share the feeling that the use of a certain product discloses their “social position”; this is a sign of class distinction. We can thus conclude that in this decade the Thai economy has reached the highest point of its development so far. Technology has advanced more than at any other time and is bringing about a fast transformation. The society is under the influence of desires that lead people to consume more than they really need, more so than in any other decade before. The slogans of advertising imbue products with associated meaning, a meaning that is a tool of business, through which social and economic status are expressed rather than the benefits received directly from the product. This creates a consumerism that focuses on the sign value and symbolic exchange value – the most important characteristic of “consumerism”.

6.8.2 Conclusion of the Analysis of Slogans

Looking back at the analysis of slogans over the given four decades, we can form a picture of consumer culture as follows:

First is the increase in different styles of consumption. In the past, the four basic necessities were used as a “code”, which clearly indicated one’s class; this was especially true of houses and clothes. Later on, as the economy and society changed, more middle classes came up, both from the old middle-class families and the newly-formed middle-class. Thus various patterns of living have developed and grown. Ever more different lifestyles that indicate people’s position in society are appearing. Particularly in modern Thai society, where people barely know or interact with each other, most people judge others from what they see of their consuming behaviour, such as what houses, watches, cars or clothes they own. The consuming styles thus create social relationships through the symbolic and sign values of products, and customers receive these values through the slogans created by manufacturers and advertisers.

Second is the creation of symbols that betray the economic and social status of the consumer. These symbols relate to wealth, modernity, Westernisation. Luxury is now either a desire or a fashion. According to my analysis, the four basic necessities now tend to be luxury goods rather than subsistence goods.

Third is the influence of consumerism. In the age of consumption, people consume fantasy, which means that their feelings play an important role in making decisions about whether to consume products or not. We clearly see that slogans from 1968 onward have tended to rouse the mindset and feelings of consumers by employing symbolic and sign values and associated meaning. These values may even be manifested in the product itself, in return for which the consumer will pay. Consumption behaviour during this period tends toward the consumption of luxury or products that can signify various things such as identity, wealth, class etc. These become signs of power. Consumption behaviour also becomes a method for creating or seeking differences with which to distinguish oneself from people in the same class. We may say that this method is one of consuming for social classification.

6.9 Conclusion: A Analysis of the Content of Advertisements Related to the Four Basic Necessities Appearing between 1957 and 1997

Our analysis has shown that advertising strategy in this era has shifted its attention from the physical features of a product to the “added value” within the product. From 1957 to 1967 advertisements focussed on the advantages of products themselves, and not any added image. However, in the later period, especially from 1977 onwards, they saw a significant change with the adding of more meanings relevant to the culture of the time, to create an images for products; these took the form of, for example, Western taste, elegance, modernity, and a good lifestyle. The added meaning in an advertisement is persuasive. A product can be differentiated from the others in the field and so attract customers. Thus advertising becomes the means for attracting customers, and at the same time imbues the product with a meaning beyond its original utility. As in the aforesaid analysis, the four basic necessities are no exception.

In this era, more advanced production technology has made it easier than in previous times to produce various designs of a product. So merchandise in the marketplace is available in varieties of colours, types, etc. Manufacturers have to find all possible ways to create needs and desires in customers so that their products will sell in great quantities. By the same token, it can be said that people are manipulated to consume the signs and symbolic values of products rather than the actual benefits of the products. For instance, a house is not only for living in but also indicates the owner’s taste; or Nike is not only a sport shoe but also a sign of distinction and superiority. It is fair to say that such consumption and possession of goods or products, which replace the traditional rituals, beliefs, and religions that once could effectively control behaviours of people in the traditional society, has become an important part of modern life. Because, by means of symbolic and sign values, people in society can express their identity through the consumption of products, or products can create and communicate social meanings for them.

Furthermore, consumption does not only respond to basic necessity requirements, but also to psychological, emotional, and social needs, which are changeable. In contrast, the purpose of consumption in the past was to survive or to live happily, in step with the level of production, technology, knowledge and belief of the society.

Meanwhile, the old tradition of social organization (*sakdina*) in Thai society has become ineffective. It has increasingly changed, to be typified by a form of awareness and acknowledgement of an individual's identity and of which group he may belong to, whether it be a business group, a government servants' group, a technocrat group, etc. This new social organization gives precedence particularly to one's character or to personal qualities that cannot change, such as sex or race, whether one is a teenager or in old age, homosexual, etc. It is the origin of differentiation. In order to maintain this differentiation, people take consuming patterns, lifestyle, taste, beliefs and social ideology as a means of establishing their identity and giving a pattern to the lives. As a protection against the crumble of the old social order, many new social groups have appeared, and we have seen ever more the building of a sense of security through consumption and possession.

We may say that our analysis of advertising over 40 years can explain how the consumption of the meaning "added into" products can eventually reflect the nature of consumerism in Thai society. Such a consumption of meaning can be seen as a means for locating social identity or for presenting cultural identity, so that people in a society can live in an atmosphere of complicated, unstable relationships, social status, and ways of life in urban areas with a rapid change from Tonney's *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*. For these reasons, the advertised product eventually loses its own values, and is gradually brought in to create a particular value among other values in the consumer society. The added value within a product attributed by advertising focusses more on symbolic exchange value and sign value than use value and exchange value.

Therefore I can conclude that the analysis of advertisements, both in the quantitative and the qualitative forms, has thrown light on the changes in the logic of consumption as related to Baudrillard's concept, by which, in each decade of the fourth era (1957–1997), the consumption of culture in Thai society has been increasingly changing towards a culture of consumerism. By which society now concentrates more on symbolic exchange value and sign value than on use value and exchange value. However, I still believe that consumerism did not only recently appear in Thai society. On the contrary, I think it has been rooted in Thailand for a long time and has been accumulating and transforming day by day, so that we can say that Thailand has become a fully fledged consumer society and it seems that it will con-

tinue to better further develop in the future. Thus, it is difficult for us to avoid or escape this situation. The best way to deal with it is to try as much as we can to understand the causes and effects, the strengths and the weaknesses of this phenomenon. Finally, we will find a way out of it; we may win in the end.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

Historical Development of Consumerism in Thai Society

The researcher has tried to gather all details and information from both primary and secondary sources in order to gain an understanding of the historical development of consumerism in Thai society over more than 200 years, from the foundation of Rattanakosin period up to the period of development. Considering the change in consuming styles and utilization of the four basic necessities, housing, clothing, food and medicine, the researcher can conclude the picture of the historical development of consumerism in the Thai society as follows:

7.1 Development toward Consumerism

Our research has shown that Thai society in the past was a self-supporting society strongly characterized by self-sufficiency rather than commercialism or heavy production. Thailand itself was not densely populated but it did have a wide diversity of people of different ethnic backgrounds, beliefs, religions, traditions, cultures, and environments. They were able to live together despite differences arising from efficient societal control mechanisms, namely the *sakdina* system and the Buddhist three-world cosmology associated with *karma*, or merit, which were vital in controlling society and driving it forward. The lower-class, which represented the majority of the society, tolerated excessive labour exploitation in order to render the minority upper-class comfortable and content, so the latter had a completely different social and economic status from the former. Besides this, the upper-classes in the past had kept aesthetics as their exclusive privilege to signify their social distinction; their culture was highly admired by the lower classes, who were nevertheless forbidden to imitate it. Nonetheless, the way of life of everyone in the society was relatively simple.

When this society entered into capitalism since King Rama IV, with the progress of society, the emergence of new technologies, an increase in the population and the degradation of natural resources, people's basic necessities changed. This can be observed from the fact that the four necessities of life now had to be procured with money and also contained new hidden meanings: they were now deployed as a

tool in communicating or displaying the lifestyle, taste, level of wealth, social position, or beliefs of different groups of people. The ideology of modernity became the major force for change in the society. As a result, previous societal mechanisms had to be adjusted accordingly. The upper-class's preferential status based on merit and authority was no longer valid in this changing society. Hence, they chose to maintain their status through their distinction as the model of culture, establishing a body of knowledge that inferred qualities of "civilization", or, at least, Western civilization, and which was typified in literature, music, sports, cultivated manners and the consumption of Western products. Moreover, a sense of nationalism widened the cultural gap between the upper and lower classes, between the royal lineage and the commoner, even further. The aesthetic standard of the upper-class was strictly maintained and comprehensively praised.

The change from absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy in 1932 put an end to the monarchy-based *sakdina* that had previously controlled society. The concepts of equal rights and freedom were at a high point. Equality became a social issue. Freedom of consumption became more intense with social advances around the world. Things that had previously belonged exclusively to the upper-class started to find their way into the market mechanism; anyone could now procure them if they wished, or at least if they had the financial means. New mechanisms appeared for controlling people's lifestyle, namely money, knowledge, skills and technology. With the decline of the *sakdina* system and Buddhist beliefs, changes took place more readily. However, some of the upper-class's ideology and the monopoly of aesthetics as a system of class differentiation still prevailed and also spread to various groups, especially those who were well-heeled and could show off their privileged social status through money.

When the country entered the period of "Believe in the leader, the country will be safe", Field Marshal Phibun accentuated nationalist feelings by introducing a new formal culture for the upper-classes, embodied in, for example, Thai national costume, hat-wearing and a curtailing of local practices such as betel-chewing or the wearing of *cong kraben*. This rise of nationalism was a welcome alternative to consumption as a means of creating a sense of identity. To be Thai, people had to change many things they had done in the past. This change concerned the autonomy of the sign or symbol, as we have already clearly seen from the changes in dress in that period (the wearing of hats, skirts and trousers etc.). The existence of the country

was marked by the establishment of a sense of difference from other countries, especially neighbouring countries. For example, *Cong kraben*, which had been a traditional Thai type of clothing for a long time, was now seen as the symbol of a colonized country, and so it was abolished. Furthermore, various upper-class ideals under the new guises and new names of taste, being *phudi* and so on were more intensely reproduced, emphasized and maintained in the society.

The strong sense of identity and individuality, as well as the aforementioned upper-class ideals led to an increasing number of people defining themselves through their patterns of consumption rather than through a work role. Their behaviour also revealed how they wished to be seen by others. This seems then to have been the time when consumption began to be of more significance than production; particularly when Thailand took on the concept of national development it was strongly encouraged, with the collaboration of advertising. Advertising began to be deployed to create desires that articulate people's sense of identity.

Identities had increasingly to be actively constructed by people for themselves, which they did through what they consumed. Such an articulation of identity was achieved, for example, through the clothes of Mods and Rockers; Mods wore suits with shirts and ties. Rockers wore black leather jackets and trousers. The articulation of identity also revealed class differences: Rockers were working class, while the Mods were more typically white-collar workers. As we have said, the purchaser of an item actively engages in trying to create and maintain a sense of identity through the display of his purchased goods. At this time, many people continued to desire to be purchasers, consumers, even when they could not afford to buy all the things and pleasurable experiences they might crave for that they saw in advertisements. Therefore, consumption was now to be seen as a process governed by the play of symbols, and not by the satisfaction of material needs as it had been previously. People began to consume symbols or signs (which they desired) rather than objects: a European house became a sign or symbol of modernity, elegance, luxury, its purely functional value was diminished. The more people consumed, the more they wanted to consume. This was an significant behavioural trait leading to the appearance of consumerism in Thailand in this period.

7.2 Changes in the Consumption of the Four Basic Necessities: from Simple to More Complex

In each period, the style of consumption of the four basic necessities in Thai society was characterised by two levels of consumption: 1) consumption to satisfy physical needs and to sustain life, and 2) consumption for cultural purposes. It was found in the study that over each period of time the proportion of intensity and meaning of those two levels changed. In other words, as the society developed, the proportion of intensity and meaning of the second level of consumption grew and became more complex, while the first level remained the same. This can be illustrated as follows:

During the period of the establishment of social foundation, or the beginning of the Rattanakosin period (the reigns of King Rama I to King Rama III), the consumption of the four basic necessities, both in physical and cultural terms, was important as a marker of the differences between the social classes, and as a reminder to people of their social rights and responsibilities, because the society at that time was not very technologically or economically advanced, although it had plenty of natural resources. The consumption of the four basic necessities as a physical requirement in harmony with nature was sufficient for everyone, as was their consumption on a cultural level. This was due not only to the low technological development but also to the presence of different races, religions and beliefs in the society and to the chaotic political situation. To maintain the social order, a clear line had to be drawn between classes, especially between the ruling class and ordinary people. This also facilitated the control of labour, which was a source of huge benefits. These class differences were clearly distinguishable in people's consumption of the four basic necessities. The ruling class's consumption comprised goods of better quality and higher value, which were also chosen to show individual differences between members of that class. Ordinary people's consumption, however, was relatively undifferentiated within their class, and was characterised by objects of identical features: their houses were built of similar materials and had a similar style, their household utensils were the same, although they varied according to the geography, climate, culture and traditions in different areas. Their clothes were always made of the same material and in the same design and quality, although they might reflect the specific character of each ethnic group. While people of all classes had to eat food, that of the ruling class was meticulously cooked and well decorated.

Everyone used the same folk medicines, but those of the ruling class would tend to be better and of a more effective kind.

When Thailand turned to capitalism in the period of change and reform (King Rama IV to King Rama VI), it experienced huge changes, both internally and from outside, and great progress in telecommunications, transport and technology in general. This resulted in smoother and faster social and cultural integration and exchange. Also, the Thai Government enforced a policy aimed at modernising and civilizing the country, in its fight against colonialism from the western world. All this led to the four basic necessities significance, and their meaning becoming more complex than it had previously been. They began to be consumed as commodities, then developed into symbolic products that could be obtained with money. They became a crucial tool of social competition and of the display of one's unique and superior circumstances. It is noteworthy that the consumption of the four basic necessities as a symbolic commodity in Thai society commenced from the upper-class and then slowly spread to other classes. For instance, the trend of Western clothes started with royalty and the aristocracy trying to present themselves as civilized people, and later spread to commoners who had studied abroad. The middle-class, with a higher level of education and a need to improve their status, would buy basic necessity articles in the same quality as the higher classes, or Westerners, in order to achieve this. Symbolic products became a feature of the society, but their consumption was limited to a minority who lived in the big cities. Moreover, the Thai economy at that time was affected by colonization, wars and the general state of disorder around the world, so this symbolic consumption did not happen on a large scale.

When Thailand, following the suggestion of the United States of America, implemented the Economic and Social Development Plan to strategically streamline changes and development, the country rapidly developed. The progress of capitalism and industry began to intensify. All kinds of commodities could now satisfy everyone's needs and the buying of goods was very easy, fast and convenient. Also, the development of the advertising industry led to commodities becoming imbued with new meaning, which it then constantly transformed and modified, so that people developed an incessant need of those commodities. In addition, owing to the fact that, because of environmental deterioration, people could no longer produce or obtain the four basic necessities from natural sources as easily as they had in the past,

the consumption of them as a commodity, particularly in the symbolic and display function that had previously been characteristic of only a small group, now became more intense, and spread to the majority of society. There was no shortage of commodities ready to satisfy the needs of all classes of people, whether in the various levels and styles of housing development, clothes or food, as well as in essential or even superfluous medicine.

The diversity of products produced for commercialisation had more cultural significance than merely serving as an indicator of social class and in establishing social order. Quite the opposite, it fed into people's endless desire brought about partly by social disorder such as crime or prostitution.

It is clear that the consumption of the four basic necessities has constantly been developed, altered and modified. At that time, these necessities have become a kind of commodity replete with meaning, an important entity that is particularly relevant to and plays a crucial role in our way of life. It can signal who we are, what we want, and what status we enjoy in society. And we communicate these things on a non-verbal level, because the meaning is created in and bound to the commodity in such a way that it is immediately conveyed to the consumer or user. So we see that the consumption of meaning, or cultural consumption, has become the crucial characteristic of the nature of consumption in the present day. This meaning is not static or fixed, but is constantly changing. Consumption has become a dynamic activity and can continually seduces people's obsessions with that meaning.

7.3 The Cultural Phenomenon of Consumerism in Thai society, which is currently causing several social problems, as mentioned in the introduction to this dissertation, is the result of changes in all its social aspects: of politics, the economy and the culture derived from capitalism. These phenomena can be clearly observed.

Thailand's implementation of national development was the critical point that strengthened and allowed the full unfolding of capitalism in that country. During this period, industrialism and mass production have expanded; everything has become commoditized and has assumed an exchange value so that it now has to be bought with money. Additionally, the advertising industry has been rapidly growing and consumption is used as a channel for maintaining social differences and upgrading social and economic status. Therefore, consumption is becoming a crucial activity

and a major aspect of the culture. Many people are driven by their emotions and aspirations and develop a strong desire to endlessly consume new commodities.

Besides this, economic development has brought about remarkable differences between life in the city and life in the countryside. We see pictures of young people migrating to the city, the exploitation of natural resources in the country for the benefit of city growth and development, the emergence of marginal groups such as labourers, street hawkers and slum dwellers, all of whom come from the countryside, and whose culture becomes labelled as low-class. The migration of labour, a vital resource for rural society, into the city, causes that rural society to collapse, while the city rapidly expands. We could thus liken Thai society to a deformed man with a large head and a thin body. People from the country living in the city cannot always adapt their social and cultural identity and their lifestyle to city life; they may develop a sense of alienation and feel isolated. However, they have no choice but to adapt, accept the change, and take on the standards and values of the city — another facet of the ideology of social classes that has always existed in Thai society — for their survival. And because there are always plenty of varied commodities to charm human desires they find their identity in the relationship between themselves and those commodities: they treat the consumption of products as a means of social communication to create and display an image of something they would like to be, following the deceit derived from the advances in communication technology, and from advertising, which attaches human values to commodity consumption.

Consequently, consumerism is becoming a very disputed issue and has spread to all parts of Thai society. It seems also clear that consumerism implies an acquisition of “taste” in order to demonstrate the consumer’s image to the fullest degree. The more “grand” his taste, the more confident in his own image and class position the consumer feels. This confidence hugely boosts consumerism’s capacity for pervading and taking root in Thai society in the present day.

In addition to the conclusions mentioned above, this study will help the researcher to answer two questions posed at the beginning:

7.4 What Similarities or Differences Are there between the Four Basic Necessities in Each Period of Time?

The similarity between the four basic necessities in each period of time is that they pertain commonly to the two levels of consumption characteristics: 1) consumption to satisfy physical needs and to sustain life and 2) consumption for cultural purposes. The gradual reduction of level 1 and increase of level 2 was the main feature of similarity in each period.

The difference between the four basic necessities in each period of time is that the intensity and meaning of consumption for cultural purposes developed from people's need for social classification intended to establish a social order, first into a consumption for cultural purposes intended to compete in that social order, and create or define a better meaning for people in the society, and then into the consumption of objects' meanings rather than their functions.

The difference mentioned above can be confirmed by the results of the study of advertisements in chapter 6, which indicates that in the period of development, advertisements focussed more and more on the exchange, symbolic and sign values of commodities rather than on their functionality or utility.

7.5 Why and When Did the Four Basic Necessities Become Commodities with Cultural Value and Purpose, While at the Same Time Being Used as a Means of Communicating and Demonstrating the Lifestyle, Taste, Wealth, Individuality or Any Other Ideologies of Various Groups in this Society, which Represents the Ideology of Consumerism?

The explanation for why the above-mentioned phenomenon occurred is capitalism. This has already been explained in detail and the researcher will not repeat it here. For the second part of the question, as to when it happened, the answer is that it happened when the society entered into capitalism, from the period of change and reform in the reign of King Rama IV, although it was not at first clearly realised. It became more plain when Thailand entered the period of acculturated economic development and social transformation. Then, consumption was considered an important activity and a real and major cultural attribute.

Thus we see that consumerism in Thailand nowadays is derived from capitalism. When Thai society was still simple and self-sufficient and the emphasis was placed on production for consumption, consumerism did not exist. But once it

embarked on a course of capitalism, consumerism began to grow and gain in strength.

Finally, the researcher thinks that this conclusion will be more complete if more aspects are studied, in the quest for a more comprehensive overview of the historical development of consumerism in Thailand.

Appendix I

Questions in the Criteria for Analysis of the Content of Advertisements

1. Does the advertisement contain a slogan?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. If there is a slogan, what form does it take?
 - a. short phrase
 - b. long phrase or sentence
 - c. medium-length phrase or sentence
3. Is there a promotional offer in the advertisement?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
4. If there is a promotional offer, what kind is it?
 - a. discount
 - b. premium
 - c. special offers e.g. free rental, premium exchange, no down payment
 - d. special services e.g. shuttle service
 - e. others e.g. the right to participate in a contest; offer of a refund if not satisfied
5. The concept in the advertisement implies which culture?
 - a. Western, Australian, American
 - b. Chinese
 - c. Thai
 - d. Japanese
 - e. others
6. What is the logic of the concept of the advertisement?
 - a. presenting the idea of functionality
 - b. presenting the idea of exchange value
 - c. presenting the idea of a symbol e.g. the symbol of modernity and taste
 - d. presenting the idea of distinction e.g. better, more outstanding, superior, more intelligent
7. The advertisement headline...
 - a. immediately tells you what the advertisement is about

- b. You have to read details or look at other elements to know what it is about
8. What is the main format in the description of the commodity in the advertisement?
- a. written details of that commodity only
 - b. use of pictures and symbols to illustrate the details
 - c. written details complemented by pictures and symbols
 - d. use of pictures and symbols complemented by written captions
9. Foreign languages appearing in the advertisement
- a. English
 - b. Chinese
 - c. Japanese
 - d. none
10. The occurrence of English in the advertisement
- a. medium
 - b. small amount
 - c. large amount
11. Were illustrations used to supplement information in the advertisement?
- a. not used
 - b. partial use
 - c. extensive use
12. The advertisement closes with
- a. brand name
 - b. logo
 - c. company or distributor's address with telephone number
 - d. company or distributor's address without telephone number
13. Was the name of the product's owner identified
- a. not identified
 - b. identified
14. Establishment of confidence in the product
- a. by being listed on the stock market
 - b. by registering its copyright or patent, or by offering a guarantee
 - c. none

Appendix II
Example of Advertisement in 1961
“Nakhòrn Thon Village” Good Land, Cheap Price

ที่ดินดี ‘หมู่บ้านนครธน’ ราคาถูก

ระเบียบการชำระเงินค่าที่ดินรวมทั้งค่าบริการ
 ผัง “ก”

เงินสด		
อาคารพาณิชย์ 20 ตารางวา	4,000 บาท	
ที่ดิน 60 ตารางวา	6,000 บาท	
160 ตารางวา	10,500 บาท	

เงินผ่อน

เงินมัดจำ	จำนวนเงิน	จำนวนเดือน
อาคารพาณิชย์ 500 บาท	200 บาท	20 เดือน
ที่ดิน 60 ตารางวา 300 บาท	190 บาท	20 เดือน
160 ตารางวา 400 บาท	290 บาท	40 เดือน
200 ตารางวา 500 บาท	390 บาท	40 เดือน
400 ตารางวา 1,000 บาท	1,100 บาท	40 เดือน

แผนผังข้อขายน้อยเดือนละ 190 บาท

คำนี้... (รายละเอียดโครงการ) ...

นายฉิม กงพระพรหม กรรมการผู้จัดการ
 บริษัทนครธน จำกัด ถนนวิภาวดีรังสิต กรุงเทพฯ 10150

แผนผัง “หมู่บ้านนครธน”

“Nakhòrn Thon Village” Good Land, Cheap Price

1. Conditions of Payment, and Service Charge

Plan “khò: ก”

Cash

Commercial Building	20 square wa ¹	4,000 Baht
Land	60 square wa	6,000 Baht
	160 square wa	10,500 Baht

By Instalment

Deposit upon signing contract		monthly instalment	month(s)
Commercial Building 500 Baht	200 Baht		20
Land 60 square wa 300 Baht	190 Baht		36

¹ 1 wa is equal to approximately 2 m, thus 1 square wa is about 4 square metres.

100 square <i>wa</i>	400 Baht	290 Baht	40
200 square <i>wa</i>	800 Baht	580 Baht	40
400 square <i>wa</i>	1,000 Baht	1,160 Baht	40

2. Conditions of Payment, and Service Charge

Plan “*kò:n*”

Cash

Commercial Building 20 square <i>wa</i>	4,000 Baht
Land 100 square <i>wa</i>	11,000 Baht

Instalment

Deposit upon signing contract		monthly instalment	month(s)
Commercial Building 500 Baht		210 Baht	20
Land 100 square <i>wa</i>	500 Baht	300 Baht	40
200 square <i>wa</i>	1,000 Baht	600 Baht	40
400 square <i>wa</i>	2,000 Baht	1,200 Baht	40

Those who are interested please contact Samakkithon Company Limited, 29 Prachatippatai Road, between Chalerm Wanchart Bridge and Wisut Kasat Junction, Phranakhòn.

Monthly Instalment: 190 Baht minimum

Samakkhithon Company Limited, the operating company, has allocated the first tract of land for residence and commercial use in accordance with plan “*khò*” from 9 July 1961. Many people from Phranakhòn, Thonburi, the far side of the inland region up-country and nearby bought large areas of land. It was our great pleasure to learn that they place such trust in our company believe in the company’s true intention.

Now that prices in respect of plan “*kò.*” land have fully stabilised, we are pleased to extend the same price plan to people of lower income to enable them to enjoy the same benefits. in order that they can afford the land as well. This land is fully supplied with running water and electricity, and a 12-metre wide asphalted concrete main road. The company reserves the right to deal with customers on a first come first served basis.

Mr. Lim Kongprasai, Managing Director

We are open daily, including Saturday and Sunday, from 08.00 a.m. – 06.00 p.m. On national holidays, shuttles to and from the plots are provided at 09.00 a.m.

Appendix III

Short Chronology of Thai History

- 1782 Rama I, founded the Chakri dynasty and founded Bangkok as the new capital of Siam
- 1826–1828 Chao Anuwong's war of independence results in destruction of Vientiane (Wiang Can) by Siam.
- 1833 First treaty was concluded between Thailand and the United States of America
- 1835 First printing press was set up by Dr. Bradley, an American missionary.
- 1851 Accession of King Rama IV (Phra Mongkut Klao) King Mongkut's appreciation of western power and familiarity with Western ideas led to the adoption of a policy of making treaty and territorial concession to the West and beginning of a process of Westernization in Thailand.
- 1855 Signing of new Anglo-Thai Friendship and Commerce treaty (Bowring Treaty), stipulating British trade and extra-territorial concessions
- 1856 Signing of American-Thai and France-Thai treaties with provisions substantially the same as those in the Anglo-Thai treaty of 1855. Similar treaties with other European nations viz. Denmark, Portugal, Netherlands, Prussia, Belgium, Italy, Swiss and Japan followed
- 1867 Thailand acceded to establishment of a French Protectorate over Cambodia, formerly vassal to Thailand. Other cessions of territory to France followed.
- 1868 Accession of King Rama V (Phra Chulachomklao). Chulalongkorn carried out an extensive Westernization programme.
- 1874 A decree of elimination of slavery
- 1891 First railway constructed in the country ran from Bangkok to Samut Prakan
- 1893 French gun boat blockade Gulf of Thailand; Luang Phrabang ceded to France.
- 1896 Bangkok-Ayudhaya railway, 1900 to Khorat, 1921 to Chiang Mai, 1922 link with Malaysia
- 1907 Franco-Siamese treaty establishes present frontiers of Laos (Mekhong River watershed)
- 1910 Accession of King Rama VI (Phra Mongkut Klao or Vajiravudh). Thailand entered World War I on the side of the Allies.
- 1921 Compulsory education declared
- 1925 Accession of King Rama VII (Phra Pok Klao or Prajadhipok) Prajadhipok considered granting a constitution.
- 1932 The abolition of absolute monarchy and start constitution monarchy (Democracy)
- 1935 King Prajadhipok abdicated. Young nephew Ananta Mahidol, was chosen as new king.

- 1941 During the World War II, Thailand reoccupied her lost territories in Cambodia, in Laos from Vichy French forces and the Burmese Shan State, and the northern Malasia from the British ruler.
- 1945 End of the World War II, Pridi came into power and won Allied recognition by repudiating declaration of war against Allies, promising reparations, and returning territories reoccupied during the War to British and French colonies.
- 1946 Accession to the throne of King Bhumibhol
- 1949 Change of the name of the country once again from 'Siam' to 'Thailand'
- 1954 Thailand, as part of anti-Communist expansion policies, participated in establishment of Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO)
- 1957 The first National Development Plan supported by America
- 1961 Six Year Economic Development Plan starts, new Industrial Investment Promotion Act and Industrial Finance Corporation Act promulgated
- 1970 Military Politics. Three men had risen to the leadership (The Thanom-Praphat-Narong Era)
- 1973 (14 October) The Thanom-Praphat-Narong military regime was overthrown by students demonstrations. The short-lived parliamenetary democracy deepened divisions of the society
- 1976 (6 October) The fusion of military power and royal legitimacy was to be re-established.
- 1979 Restoration of elections and parliament
- 1980 Prem Tinsulanond as prime minister; political policy to end insurgency
- 1984 Devaluation of Baht
- 1988 Chatchai Choonhavan becomes first elected prime minister
- 1991 Military coup by National Peacekeeping Council; Anand Panyarachun as prime minister
- 1992 May demonstration; Chuan Leekpai became prime minister
- 1997 Economic and financial crisis in Thailand

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Lebenslauf

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