

When Thursday, October 25, 6.00 – 8:00 p.m.
Where Building 9, Conference Room 5

Presented by the General Institute for the Environment, Konan University



Dr. Chinatat Nagasinha
Vice-director,
Environmental Education
Centre, Phranakhon
Rajabhat University,
Thailand.



Dr. Siriwat Soondarotok
Dean, Chaibadanpipat
College, Thailand



Prof. Fumiaki Taniguchi
Director, General Institute
for the Environment
Department of Human
Sciences, Konan University

Academic Lecture





Ethnic Clothes & Living Together with Nature from the Viewpoint of Eco-friendly Clothing Education

Thailand is a country in Southeast Asia with a long history stretching back for thousands of years. Thailand is also well known for her cultural legacy in terms of food, clothing, arts, and so on. These cultural elements are all part of our manmade or artificial environment. These cultural elements have changed with time through adaptation to the changing environment. A study of clothing culture is a way to understand how people adapted to their environment and provides us with a better understanding on our ancestors.

According to archeological evidence, the people living in the area now referred to as Thailand have known how to use and make clothes for more than 5000 years since the prehistoric era. Historical papers from China also record facts about Siam and the Siamese, including the clothes of the king, people and government staff since 1762. The records indicated that Thai people were able to make many kinds of clothes and also import clothes from foreign countries for their consumption. Clothes in Thailand were separated into three kinds according to the users. The first kind was used in for religious purposes or by monks, the second kind was those used for the king and royal family, and the last kind was for everyday use by lay people. One's status was clearly shown by the clothes one wore. The king sometime gave clothes as rewards to his men.

Thai clothing changed through time to fit both the social and natural demands of the environment. A city or town located near any larger kingdom was normally and naturally affected by the neighbouring civilizations. For example, the Nanjao kingdom was affected by China, and Lopburi was affected by Khmer. Thai clothing also changed due to situation and location. In the Lanna era, Thai people moved down to the south from Nanjao and clothing changed due to the higher temperatures. Again, during Ayudhya era, there were many wars with neighbors and clothing changed to meet the needs of war time. The biggest change was when Thai opened relations with Western countries. King Rama V went to Europe twice to visit European countries in order to improve Siam and find allies. His clever strategies saved Siam from colonization, but Siam lost many lands to British and France in return. Western-style clothing was introduced and popularized by the royal families and high ranking officials. After that period, Western clothing was more popular and more common among the lay people. During the crossover period, clothing styles were changed from a totally Thai style to partly Western and, finally, totally Western style. At the moment, Thai people wear Thai-style clothes only for special occasions or ceremonies. The change has occurred not only in the towns and cities, but also in the hill tribes in the rural areas. Thailand has many ethnic groups living in the rural areas; for example, the Mon, Thaiyuan, Lao, and many other hill tribes. In the last 10 years many hill tribes, such as the Karen, Mhong and Lahu, have changed their dress to a modern style and wear their ethnic clothes only on special occasions.

In conclusion, Thai clothing has a long history and has changed through time according to both social and natural pressures. At present, Thai people wear Western or modern styles of clothing and only wear Thai-style clothes for special occasions or ceremonies. These changes have not only occurred in the cities and towns, but also among the ethnic groups such as the hill tribes.

Free and open to the public| Seating is Limited.

For more information on this lecture phone 078-435-2368.