



Influential People in Contemporary Thai Fashion

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Abstract

“Influential People in Contemporary Thai Fashion” is the title of a thesis in the level of Doctor of Arts Program in Arts and Culture Research, Srinakharinwirot University. Its purpose is to find out who are people or group of people that have the power and influence over alterations of Thai fashion and in what power related models, and how Thai fashion alteration phenomenon occurred. The researcher is able to summarize those who have influence over Thai contemporary-fashion changes into 2 eras: The contemporary consumerism era and the contemporary globalization era.

Keywords : Thai Fashion, Contemporary Thai Fashion, Influential People in Contemporary Thai Fashion.

Introduction

In Thailand, Thai costume development alters in accordant with conditions of social, economy and ruling politic as the principle. During the modern Rattanakosin period, the costume alteration first started from the royal household and then spread out to general commoners. The change is in the rhythm of gradually step by step. It is noticeable that close retinues in the royal household who were called high-class people would be distinctly seen as pioneers of costume during such period. Thai costume alterations are along with policies stipulated by the king institute. There were stipulations of policies concerning

costume which were the most influent alteration in Thai costume history.

Backgrounds of Thai costume alteration are in the accordant with the currents of politic and ruling at times the country opened contact with western countries which were seeking for colonies and usurping power in both economy and ruling politic. HRH King Rama IV understood the concept of westerners and readjusted some customs and traditions to cope with tendency of foreign policies. This was up until after Thai costume alteration after ruling revolution. The policy of culture building of the country had stipulated several conventions called nationalism.

It caused the model of Thai costume to be more westernization. This is taken that Thai costume alteration is the result of policies of the power holders whose background based on the political power as the principle. Holding of costume fashion was all altered and revolved along with currents of western fashion continuously up until now.

At the beginning, it can be summarized that Thai costume started from accepting the long distinct and influent western fashion model which was brought into Thailand as no other options. In another word, Thai costume was accepted all western culture and fashion model without adaptation. (Anotai Cholachatpinyo. 2004) The past Thai Fashion Change Process during the period of significant change there is still no study and research about the future and past of the change and who is the influential people that caused the significant change, including how it affects Thai fashion coterie and social at present. This thesis will study the aforementioned matters pass through significant changing events in each period of the history of Thai contemporary costume.

Aims

The researcher has the following aims:

1. To study who are people or group of people that have power and influence over alteration of fashion in Thai Fashion Change Process
2. To study what model the powerful and influential people have on Thai Fashion Change Process in the power-related of the influential people in Thai contemporary fashion and how Thai fashion alteration phenomenon occurred.

Research Concept Criteria

The researcher used concept issue on Thai Fashion Change Process and the social-related power, using the guideline of rhetoric

research and concept of fashion works distribution that can be the influence and significant variation in changing models of fashion that have power-related base with people in Thai fashion coterie, that how they affect the process of change in Thai contemporary costume and present Thai fashion and why they are so.

The study is through significant changing events in the period of Thai contemporary costume history.

Research Methodology

In this research the researcher has proceeded as followings:

The researcher opted to use quantitative method to history-related study and research, types of development to see alteration progress from events or any phenomena within the specific period in the phenomenology criterion. The interesting phenomenology may be social-level experience. In here means study of Thai fashion influential people who related to changes of Thai contemporary costume. The study is made on the process of Thai fashion change during the specific period, together with the prototype of Thai Fashion Change Process, to see if there were any people or group of people who had significant power or influence on Thai costume alteration (Thai contemporary fashion) during each period. And to see what power-related models that affected present Thai fashion. These were by study of documents, interview and field study. The researcher had guidelines in analysis to answer the research questions on the issue of Thai contemporary fashion:

- Creation process and origin of Thai contemporary fashion
- Which significant phenomenon that caused change to Thai contemporary fashion?

- Who were people or group of people that caused alteration to Thai contemporary fashion?

Guidelines in data collection used in study and research are primary sources, secondary sources and field study by insight key information interview, together with observations in both participation and non- participation in the Thai contemporary fashion activity were taken as the guidelines in analysis of final research in team of analytical description according to the criteria of study and research by dividing study sequences as followings:

1. Data Collecting Sequence

The researcher studied and researched from two characteristic of data sources:

1.1 Primary sources – The researcher studied from historical documents, documents, paintings, academic documents, text books, theses, analytic works, articles and other related media.

1.2 Secondary sources – The researcher studied by collecting field data in areas to follow up works of group of people in the fashion coterie in their activities related to Thai fashion coterie, such as designing, working process, fashion show and fashion week (Thailand Fashion Week). This sequence used participant and non-participant observation. Interviewed specific issue questions from the above concepts in the group who gave key information, by dividing into two groups:

1. Interviewed and listened to designers of Thai contemporary costume in the fashion coterie in relevant to the process of Thai fashion change and with events or phenomena that occurred in the Thai fashion coterie in Thai society in such period, of following issues:

- Creation and original process of Thai contemporary fashion

- Which significant phenomenon that caused alteration to Thai contemporary fashion?

- Who were people or group of people that caused change to Thai contemporary fashion?

2. Interviewed for data collection from people in the fashion coterie concerning Thai Fashion Change Process, i.e. models, authors or fashion reporter groups. Data required were events or phenomena occurred in Thai fashion coterie related to historical data of following issue:

- Creation and original process of Thai contemporary fashion

- Which significant phenomenon that caused alteration to Thai contemporary fashion?

- Who were people or group of people that caused change to Thai contemporary fashion?

2. Data Analysis Sequence

This study and research used quantitative method analysis in historical study and analysis. The researcher emphasized to narrate reality, phenomenology by study from primary and secondary sources along the process and sequence of aforementioned data collection. There were quantitative data analysis activities of relative pattern, 1. Data reduction, 2. Data display using quantitative data display in form of narrative text, complied with time sequence, 3. Conclusion and verification. Edit the conclusion to be creditable to verify research summarize with triangulation examination. Using analytic description presentation. (Suphang Jantawanich. 1988)

Results and Discussion

The researcher summarized the influential people in contemporary Thai fashion into 2 eras: 1. The influential people in contemporary Thai fashion in consumerism era and 2. The influential people in contemporary Thai fashion in globalization era.

1. The influential people in contemporary Thai fashion in consumerism era

It started from the past of Thailand in accepting the high-level fashion and culture directly from western countries. During the dressing period of Thai in the modern Rattanakosin which call the Thai society in such period as the Thai reformation Society. Thai Reformation society period was the result of increasing middle-class people in Thai society. These middle-class people had some wisdom characteristics to show symbol of modernity. There was acceptance among the educated new generation of concepts, social progress with the belief that there should be improvement and change in Thai society in several aspects. These would lead the country to “Civilization” equal to modernized countries. Prosperity and progress of western countries were all important samples. Up until the era of ruling revolution Thai society had changed. There were changes in tradition and culture of dressing to cope with new realm of governing as per the main policy of the country’s leader, Field Marshal Por Phibulsongkram. Therefore, the influential people in Thai contemporary fashion during the consumerism era of modern Rattanakosin up until after the revolution were groups of high-society, starting from the royal household and state power. The purpose was to improve culture to prosper equal to westerners. The process of Thai fashion change was of the process of fashion distribution which was the acceptance in traditional fashion adoption or in the trait originated

from influence distribution in trickle-down theory which is the top-down spread. (Jones..2005)

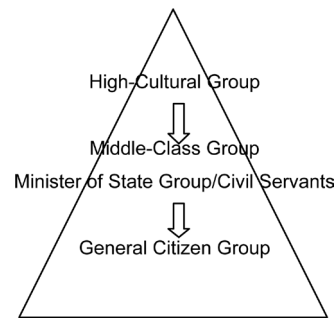


Diagram of Influence Spread of Thai Contemporary Fashion in the Consumerism Social Era

2. The influential people in contemporary Thai fashion in globalization era

The influential people in contemporary Thai fashion are the result from Thai developing society. It was the society during the period that Thailand entered the economic and social development according to the concept of the free world after the World War II together with the centralized ruling concept. It was continued from the country reformation period that emphasized development of the capital area as the core center. These concepts made rural Thai people to hold the living style of urbanite as their standard. This resulted the costume model of general Thai people to be more international, holding the core center model as the spread of modernization. That is Bangkok, the capital of country. And from the country’s industrial growth as to tendency of economic development, more and more industrial plants were established. This made Thai women in lower-class society families flocked in to be laborers in the industrial factories in the central area.

From the study of phenomenon that influenced change in contemporary Thai fashion during the period of influential people in

contemporary Thai fashion in globalization era, the conclusion would be that the influential people in contemporary Thai fashion who caused change to Thai fashion were not any people or group of people but they were events that were phenomena with models of influence creation processes that caused alteration in contemporary Thai fashion as followings:

1. Group of fashion leader who used the self express process
2. Fashion muse in people who promoted fashion motivation or role models

3. The space that was representation of ideal space

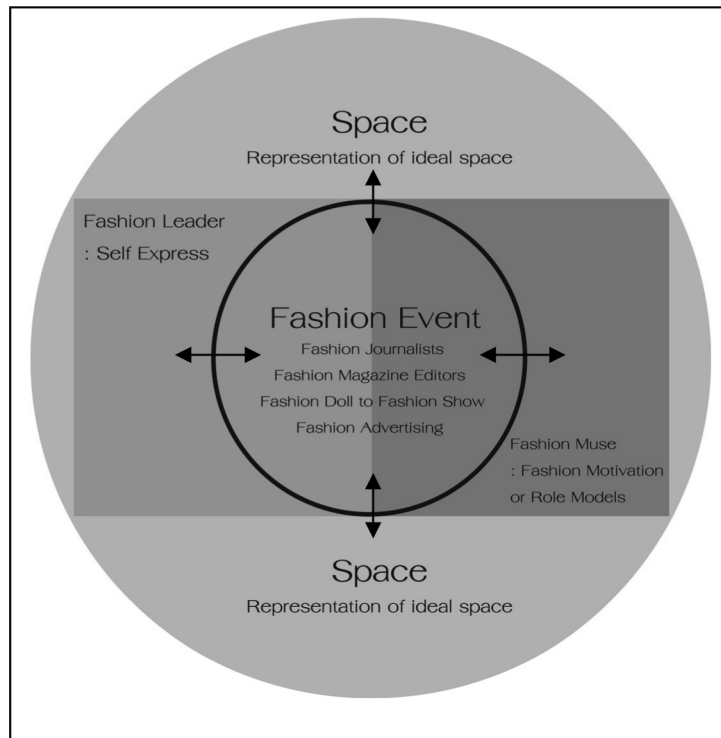
4. Fashion events

In these four factors, there were things that helped to promote them such as authors or fashion journalists, fashion magazine editors, fashion dolls and fashion shows and fashion advertisings. (Kawamura. 2005) Researcher had concluded the sequence of occurrences the influence the changes of Thai contemporary fashion in the period of influential people in contemporary Thai fashion in globalization era as following.



The process and model of influence creation that caused change to contemporary Thai fashion were summarized by the researcher as the new body of knowledge in influence

creation for alteration of contemporary Thai fashion with unique identity in Thai fashion model, as shown in the following diagram:

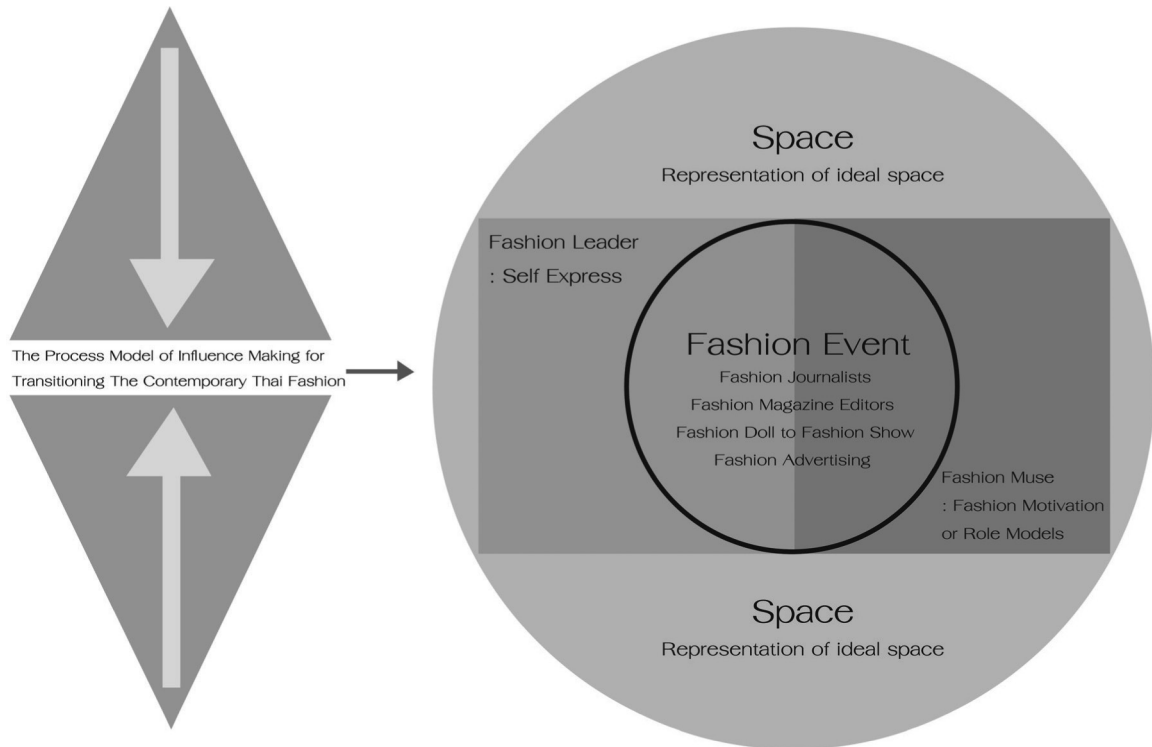


The Process Model of Influence Making for Transitioning the Contemporary Thai Fashion

New body of knowledge obtained from the result of the reach is the process model of influence making to cause transitioning the contemporary Thai fashion. It should have following process:

Space creation process is the representation of ideal space of the new generation to express creative fashion idea. There is appearance of fashion leader with self express process in unique identity. There is the prototype of fashion muse that is the role model to promote distinct

fashion motivation or role models in any period of time to activate motivation in three necessary models. Creation of influence model; to cause transitioning the contemporary Thai fashion will be complete when all models are in the space of fashion event with following promotion group: 1. Authors or fashion journalists, 2. Fashion magazine editors, 3. Fashion dolls and fashion shows and 4. Communication for fashion advertisements. All models will support each other in reverse directions.



Thai Fashion Spread Process in Contemporary Thai Fashion in Globalization Era

Spread of Thai fashion in contemporary Thai fashion in globalization era will be in the form of trickle-down theory or vertical spread of top-down together with the acceptance of the fashion spread in the reverse adoption form with the trickle-up spread that have the center points of both characteristics. (Katz. 1963) That is the spread in horizontal level with the model of influence creation that causes alteration to Thai

fashion in form of all-directions spread. This is in harmonious with mass dissemination fashion spread, in both from high-society people down to the mass and small cultural group in Thai society, such as fashion leader group, fashion muse group, space and fashion event group. Each group has its own influence but more or less depends on media who are the center of expression and fashion spread.

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