



**FOOD: THE INFLUENCE OF BUDHISM AND WESTERN CULTURE
ON THE EATING TRADITIONS OF SIAM
IN THE RATTANAKOSIN ERA**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to study the process of identity formation of the Siamese elite during the reigns of king Rama IV to Rama V (1851-1910) through the practice of eating culture, especially table manners and the use of spoon and fork replacing the traditional table manner eating food with hands or *perb-kae*.

It is clear that traditional table manners in Thai society had their roots in the disciplinary-ascetic practice of the Buddhist monk, especially the monastery regulation concerning eating manners which required self composure at all times and places: e.g. not to eat too much, not to eat large mouthfuls, not to spill food while eating, not to eat greedily, not to eat hurriedly and noisily, etc. These Thai table manners were first observed, practice and taught among the elite and later became standardized behaviour to demarcate difference in terms of social class. The process of the formation of class identity thus emerged, emphasizing the idea of "*phu-dee*" (literal meaning "decent people") or the elite class as the basic tenets of class.

The coming of the fork and spoon into table manners as a social practice of the Siamese elite from the reign of Rama IV onward in effect transformed Thai table manners of eating with hands, which had previously been common practice in Thai society from the king to the ordinary people, to become the everyday-life practice of the lower-class or the common people only. At the same time, the spoon and fork became signs of a higher civility, according to the idea the "*new phu-dee*" which signified the idea of the 'modern' elite at that time (which did not necessary have the same meaning as the "English gentleman" in European culture). Table manners using spoon and fork among the Siamese elite during the king Chulalongkorn reign, especially among the group that had never spent time abroad in Western society, were often misunderstood, with confusion as to the function or utility of the utensils, while some people even still used their bare hands along with the Western utensils in the table dining.

However, the Western culture of festivity and dining or *kin-liang* brought the women of the elite class to the dining table. The sharing of the dining table between men and women at

dinner parties gradually became normal, which in effect changed the courting culture of the elite. At the dinner party the female members of the elite had the opportunity to socialize more broadly than in their formal circle, and they could access the news, knowledge, and construct networks of relationship with other social groups which had otherwise been previously impossible. Therefore, we could say that the Western culture of the dinner banquet had its hand in changing the courting environment and sexual relationships of the Siamese elite.

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation does not contain any materials which have been used for the work of any other degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge; this dissertation does not contain any materials previously published or written by another person unless indicated in the references.

The total word count of this dissertation, including footnotes, is 16,412.

Sign: __

Date: 2nd January 2006

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SUPERVISOR CERTIFICATION

I, Chollada, certifies that I have read the final draft of the dissertation of Narisa Mortero and am satisfied that, on the basis of subject matter and technical presentation, the thesis is worthy of examination.

Signed: _

Date: ____ 1st August 2006 _____

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation aims to contribute to the understanding of changes in the eating customs of the Siamese elite during the reigns of king Rama IV and Rama V (1851-1910) in the Rattanakosin Era. The study focuses on the social and cultural factors which established an eating etiquette in the Siamese aristocracy which differed from other social classes and which became a part of the process of identity formation among the upper class. What follows is a consideration of the general background, objectives, and purpose of the study.

Research Background

Four requisites important for human comfort are provisions, clothing, shelter, and medicines. However, when considering the primary needs of life for both humans and other living things, food is obviously a first priority. Humans and animals need to eat for their survival; therefore they are not different in this respect. However, in her book *'The ritual of dinner: The origin, evolution, eccentricities and meaning of manners'* the author Margaret Visser, gives reasons why humans differ from animals; first, humans learned to adapt and change their way of life from hunting and gathering food to producing food by farming, agriculture, and husbandry. Thus, humans could control certain products, increase the quantity of food and also keep it longer. Secondly, humans learned to share food or prey with others and did not immediately eat prey after hunting but brought them to their dwelling places and shared the food among family members in order.¹ Interestingly, this learning process did not merely separate humans from animals but also humans from humans. Environmental and ecological factors caused humans to adjust to the world around them; this process is known as geographic determinism. Humans learned to

¹ Visser, Margaret. *The Ritual of Dinner: The Origins, Evolution, Eccentricities and Meaning of Manners*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), 1.

develop ways of gathering and obtaining food and also developed different cooking techniques in different regions. Other important factors are social and cultural factors, communication between groups through trade and travel. Humans learned to adapt and respond to social, economic and psychological demands. Also geographical factors cannot be disregarded, for instance, people who lived in the mountains or other remote areas far from trading routes, would have not been influenced by the same social and cultural groups as people living along the trading routes. These external factors are very important to the development of food culture among a group of people.

An obvious example is Ayutthaya, the capital city of Siam and an important pier and the centre of trade by sea in the past. Ayutthaya opened its doors granting foreigners social and cultural access much more than other cities in Southeast Asia. This allowed Ayutthaya opportunities and advantages over the other cities to adopt and assimilate new knowledge and techniques. The technique of using eggs to make desserts is believed to be an influence from Portugal. Before foreign influence Thai desserts consisted of flour, sugar and coconut cream. Later these were adapted and new flavors and techniques were adopted by following western styles, examples are *thong yib*, *thong yod*, and *foi thong*. The new desserts became symbolic of precious foods because of the yellow color of the desserts which compares with gold. Thus they were identified with monks, the royal families, and were limited to consumption only by the upper class.

Many eating customs and traditional practices have evolved and transferred to and from various cultural groups around the world. Food is not only the main factor for life but also has a role in social and cultural formation and is a boundary line between social classes, geographical areas, ethnology, nations, gender, age and religions.² At the same time, food also has a role in human emotional satisfaction and self-consciousness. As a result, social factors and history are important to the study of eating manners in different social groups because it illustrates the way people evolved culturally. Indeed, there is little attention paid to studying this aspect compared to

² Goode, Judith. *Food in Folklore, Cultural Performances, and Popular Entertainments: A Communications-Centered Handbook*. Edited by Richard Bauman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 223

the immense research focusing on dietetics. The first research study of diet among Thai people was by Thai-American researchers in 1960. The study found Thai people consumed low quantities of fat. Another study in 1975 found a lack of calcium, vitamin B1 and B2 in the diet. Later research in 1986 showed rural Thais consumed more carbohydrate and proteins than urban people and a survey in 1995 by the dietetics association of Thailand showed the same result.³

The study of Thai consumption patterns can be linked to studies of Thai nutrition such as the unbalanced diets, and food contamination. The studies can be separated to three types. First, research on malnutrition such as avitaminosis, deficiency diseases, and under-weight firstborn infants. Secondly research on excessive substances in the diet such as high cholesterol. Third, research on food contamination focused on additives, flavorings, hygiene, and sanitation.⁴ The research uses the primary hypothesis relating to the quantity of protein, fat, carbohydrate, minerals, and various vitamins to indicate a normal nutritive condition and health of individual people and society. A healthy population is an essential factor to economic growth and stability thus the research in these areas is enormous. I found that most studies indicated the deficiency of protein amongst poor people, excessive consumption of fat and sugar which is normally associated with western food, and the trend to consume less vegetables and fruit among Thai people.⁵

The number of studies about Thai cuisine in the area of social and culture influences are much less when compared to dietary studies. The relevant research can be divided into three groups as follows.

³ Veerawaitaya, Veena, and Sa-nga, Damapong. *Consuming Behavior: Re-think of knowledge, situation and the factors related to Thai cultural project for good healthy*. (Nontaburi: Sumnak Pattana vichakarn Kromkanpath, public health ministry, 1998), 14-16

⁴ Veerawaitaya, 17-21.

⁵ Veerawaitaya, 88-89.

The first group

These are studies of national cuisines focusing on beliefs and national behavior related to food. An example is '*Food beliefs and consuming behaviors of Ka-rieng people*' by Mr. Thanunsak Viengsarasin. The study was carried out in the village of Supanburi and the results show three beliefs on food behavior among people in the village. First is an ecological belief, involving rice and corn cultivation and the custom of sacrifice to the spirits or making offerings. Second is a social and status belief where the author describes how men have right to eat first and how some dishes are forbidden for women. Third is a dignity belief involving the vegetable *yod-fah* which is praised as an honor vegetable and is reserved only for the elderly.⁶

Another research study is of food behavior in the Muslim community. The research found assimilation between Muslim eating manners and their way of life in a big city like Bangkok. Some young Muslims and working Muslims have to associate with non-Muslims and have eaten food against their religious laws such as pork or alcohol. This behavior is against the principles of Islam; however the Muslim community still maintains its identity by, for example, eating together after worship of God's kindness to create community union.⁷

Studies of indigenous foods focusing on cooking methods, condiments and ingredients found in particular regions are also included in this research group. The identity of a particular region is reflected through the food in the area, thus most research has gathered menus and information on cooking methods. An example is Southern food where people are fond of highly seasoned food, spicy food from dried and fresh chilies, very salty food from shrimp paste and fish sauce, and extremely sour food from tamarind and sour fruit. Only in Song-kla province are people fond

⁶ Viengsarasin, Thanunsak. *Juu-ta-or: Food Beliefs and Consuming Behaviors of Ka-rieng people: Case study of Bankroey Danchang district Supunburi* (The Master of Anthropology dissertation of Silpakorn University, 1990).

⁷ Hongpong, Noungruthai. *Case study of Food and Muslim Identity: Chumchon Mussayid Bantoukdin*. (The Master of Arts dissertation of Silpakorn University, 1998)

of sweet food.⁸ Another example is the study of Northeastern food in kon-kan province. The study found a local custom of eating raw meat such as chicken because it symbolized the brave hearts of men.⁹

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⁸ Sorutjanapant, Ampai. *The Southern Food*, (Songkla: Rajbhat Songkla, 2001), 11-13.

⁹ Kaewnii, Sunetre. *The Culture of eating cow-buffaloes of indigenous northeastern: The case study of Bankumkrung Houa Kranuon Konkan Province*. (The Master of Social science dissertation of Mahasarakam University, 1996)

¹⁰ Viengsarasin, Thanunsak. *Juu-ta-or: Food Beliefs and Consuming Behaviors of Ka-rieng people: Case study of Bankroey Danchang district Supunburi* (The Master of Anthropology dissertation of Silapakorn University, 1990).

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This group is quite similar to the first group by selecting a particular community as a case study. The research of this group studies on a particular place famous for prominent foods or unique ingredients to try to understanding change in the community. However, there is little research paid to this aspect. An example is the case study of food center at *taprachan* community by Paveewan Norapanlop. This community has a long history of more than a century but a modern change in the community is the replacement of traditional outlets by food chains such as Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), Pizza Hut, McDonald, and Burger King.¹⁴

The Third Group

This group provides data to illustrate social and cultural changes relating to food and eating customs of Thai society in the past. The research provides historical fragments of food culture and collected data on food beliefs, habits, behavior, customs, festivals, life-style, etc. thus they are useful for my dissertation as a data base and primary source of information. An example of

¹² Sorutjanapant, Ampai. *The Southern Food*, (Songkla: Rajbhat Songkla, 2001), 11-13.

¹³ Kaewnil, Sunetre. *The Culture of eating cow-buffaloes of indigenous northeastern: The case study of Bankumkrung Houa Kranuon Konkan Province*. (The Master of Social science dissertation of Mahasarakam University, 1996)

¹⁴ Norapanlop, Paveewan. *Thai Food Culture: Case study of Taprachan Community*. (The Master of Anthropology Dissertation at Thammasat University, 1993)

this group is '*Krungthep Mearwannee*' ('Bangkok Yesterday') which gives data of Bangkok food in the reign of king Rama 5 to Rama 6.¹⁵

The *Krayaniyai* is a book of collected information on food and eating from the other documents, books, and the experiences of the author such as the origin of fast food called *kao-kang*¹⁶ (Rice with curry) which the author discovered from the Ayutthaya records. *KrueThai or Thai kitchen* gives information of kitchen utensils, tools, and equipment used for cooking and eating such as the various types of ancient food containers used by Thai people in the past.¹⁷ The book *Kanom Mae-ear*, is of collected data of the history of the variety of Thai desserts and the methods and techniques of making Thai and Chinese desserts including desserts served at festivals and rituals.¹⁸ The book *Tumra Mae-krue Huapaa* is the first cook book in Thailand, published in the reign of king Rama 5 and provides information on Thai menus and general knowledge of cooking tips at the time.¹⁹

For my point of view, the research from the last group introduced various viewpoints of social and culture matters because they provide direct information on ingredients, cooking methods, chefs, consumers, food sensation, etc. Thai people in the past did not normally write books relating to food due to the fact that food was something very close to everyone's daily life. People ate everyday and were familiar with their own customs and way of life so not many books were written about food in Thai history. This dissertation begins from the idea of the importance of primary data on food culture and aims to illustrate food culture of Thai society in the past to the reader.

¹⁵ Kanjanakapant, [Sa-nga Kanjanakapant]. *Krungthep Mearwannee (Bangkok Yesterday)*. (Bangkok: Sarakadee Publishing, 2000), 209-223.

¹⁶ Plainoi, Sombat, [S. Plainoi]. *Krayaniyai*, (Bangkok: Matichon, 1998), 44, 101-102.

¹⁷ Plainoi, Sombat, [S. Plainoi]. *KrueThai*, (Bangkok: Tonorr Publishing 1999 Ltd., 1999), 63-66.

¹⁸ Plainoi, Sombat, [S. Plainoi]. *Kanom Mae-ear*, (Bangkok: Banditkarnpim, 1984).

¹⁹ Tanpuying Plien, Pasakornwong. *Tumra Mae-krue Huapaa, Vol.5*, (Bangkok: Sirichareon Publishing, 1932).

Research Objectives

1. To study and collect information on food and eating styles of Thai cultural society in 1851-1910.
2. To explore the social and cultural changes related to food behavior on social class, particularly the Siamese elite in 1851-1910.
3. To analyze the eating etiquette and identity formation of the Siamese elite.

The Scope of Study

This dissertation aims to study the area of standardized eating etiquette and identity formation of the Siamese elite during 1851-1910. The reason for choosing this period is because at this time Siam had formally opened its doors and welcomed western influence and adopted new eating customs, ingredients and cooking techniques to Thai society amongst the upper class. It was also the first time that Thai society had published books so there are some chronicles and historical fragments available which were useful for this dissertation.

This dissertation is divided into two sections:

1. First section: A study of the religious beliefs which were the primary influence for eating culture and etiquette of Thai people and of the Siamese elite in the Rattanakosin era.
2. Second section: A study the evolution of identity through food behavior and table manners such as the adoption of knives, spoons and forks to Siam society.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This dissertation uses qualitative methodologies. It includes primary information from historical fragments, chronicles, royal writings and royal trips, and contemporary memoirs, secondary information from research of historical social conditions and food culture. This thesis investigates this research by analyzing collected data in each particular study area.

The related and relevant research

In my primary search to gather information for this dissertation, I have discovered various case studies that relate the Thai cuisine to historical, social and cultural factors which influenced the food culture of Thai society.

A physiological anthropology research study about food beliefs and festivals is '*Food Beliefs and Food Behaviors of Northern Thais*' by Benja Yoddumnoen. The research aimed to study the role of food beliefs, festivals and rituals which determined edible or taboo foods of the Northern region. The research found the following principles concerning edible and forbidden foods within Northern Thais.

"Guava fruit or Ba-mun (Mun means stable, stick, durable) is forbidden for women when pregnant and giving birth because they believe a baby will be stuck and hard to deliver".

“Grilled and roasted foods are forbidden for pregnant women because this food is parched and dry and will be cause the diner to be dejected”.

“Eating cucumber, vermicelli or water melon when exhausted or losing water is not allowed because the food is cold and will cause the body to get worse”.

“Eating food such as Phak-plung (a kind of vegetable) is a symbolic of prestige for pregnant women and after some pounding this vegetable is rubbed along the birth canal when women give birth. Therefore, while it is good for women it is forbidden for men to eat.”²⁰

The research concludes that the above principles have been influenced by three factors; religion, health and disease, and social attitude. Although this research focused on food beliefs of a particular time period of Northern people, it shows that eating culture plays a major role in determining their decisions to eat or not. Another interesting research is '*Ka-lum: the forbiddance of Northeastern Thais*'. The word *ka-lum* means forbiddance and much research has done food such as the forbiddance of eating rice without side dishes.²¹

Research by Penny Van Esterik studied the food culture of Thai society in the past. The author tried to find the meaning and identity of food beyond Thai cuisine from the past to the present day. She found the oldest evidence was written in a Marco Polo memorandum about the Yunnan people who consumed raw minced meat and liver with a condiment consisting of salt, hot water, garlic, and various spices. This dish is similar to *Larb*, a dish of Laos, Chan, Thai, Bali, and Timor. Other evidence from a later period indicates the development of Thai cuisine in the Ayutthaya period which was the first time Thai cuisine became hierarchical and classified as either the 'high

²⁰ Yoddumnoen, Benja. *Food Beliefs and Food Behaviors of Northern Thais in Benja Yoddumdoen, Chanya Settaboot and Krittika Archowanitjakun: Theory and The study of Physiological Anthropology*. (Bangkok: News Publication and population study project of social and population research, Mahadol University, 1987), 109-133

²¹ Jureemat, Siripant, and Krittiya, Archowanitkun. *Ka-lum: the forbiddance of Northeastern Thais in Benja Yoddumnoen, Chanya Settaboot and Krittiya Archowanitkun, Theory and the study of Physiological Science Anthropol sociology*. (Bangkok: News Publication and Population study project of social and population research, Mahadol University, 1987), 134-154.

cuisine' of palace food (*aahaan chaaw wang*) or 'low cuisine' of village food (*aahaan chaw baan*). In the reign of king Narai in the Ayutthaya period, Thai food such as curry and desserts were influenced by India and Cambodia and techniques for making desserts by France and Portugal.

The delicate and decorative dishes prepared for the king and royal family is known as อาหารชาววัง (*aahaan chaaw wang*), whereas อาหารชาวบ้าน (*aahaan chaaw baan*) are dishes that are easily prepared and cooked using local seasonal ingredients. The difference between these two types of cuisine lies in the different amount of cooking time, the quality of food, exotic ingredients, and the skill and craftsmanship (i.e. carving skills) to produce each dish. Additionally, อาหารชาววัง (*aahaan chaaw wang*) is never eaten in its raw or natural form without being transformed into a decorative dish which usually balances different flavors in a harmonious blend and made rather sweet, whereas อาหารชาวบ้าน (*aahaan chaaw baan*) usually consists of a small number of main dishes consumed with a large amount of rice.

Basic Thai cuisine consists of rice (steamed rice and sticky rice), dried or fresh fish, local fresh vegetables such as garlic, shallot, herbs, spices etc. Only a few cooking utensils are used, and more time is spent preparing dishes than cooking them. According to Esterik most Thai food has always been cooked by steaming and frying rather than grilling and boiling. Therefore, his research focuses on the ingredients chosen to cook อาหารชาวบ้าน (*aahaan chaaw baan*) and อาหารชาววัง (*aahaan chaaw wang*), particularly herbs and ingredients which have medicinal qualities. The oldest Thai medical science, influenced by India, mentions that the best way to cook healthy food by using less time to maintain the herbs flavors and medicinal properties. Thai cuisine is based on harmonious flavors of herbs and various kinds of spices rather than the flavors from cooking techniques using chicken stock or meat juices as in western cuisines.

Esterik's point of view is concurred by modern trends in Thai cuisine which are symbols of healthy food consisting of various kind of vegetables and herbs rather than meat. These natural

ingredients are always cooked fresh and cooked extremely quickly – the ingredients retain both their freshness and their nutrients. Even though the author focused on food identity and structure, he promoted many Thai dishes as national dishes independent of the influence of foreign cuisines. Examples are *tom-yum kung*, *mussaman*, *ho-mok*, *mee-krob*, *yum noer*, *nam-prik*, *sungkaya*, and *thong yib*. He also stated that the attempt to create an 'authentic' Thai cuisine by Prime Minister Jompon Por Piboonsongkram in 1937 had caused a decrease in local food varieties.²²

Another interesting study concerns *Pla-too* (Thai mackerel) by Thanyarat Samutthiya. The study explored the journey of *Pla-too* from the sea until served on a dining table. Moreover, the study gave information of the vital role of *Pla-too* in Thai society. In the late Ayutthaya period the consumption of *Pla-too* rapidly increased in the reign of King Rama 4 to King Rama 7, due to the development of land and water transportation. The fish *Pla-too* was numerous, cheap, and very tasty and was undoubtedly popular for every social class especially *Pla-too todd* (deep fried mackerel), which was a favorite dish for King Rama 4 and King Rama 5.

The research also described how to cook and consume *Pla-too* in the original styles such as grilling, roasting, drying, and preserving. When Chinese first migrated to Thailand in the Thonburi era, they brought a new cooking technique called deep-frying. This technique was adopted into Thai kitchens and is still used up to the present. There is evidence that deep-fried *Pla-too* served with *nam-prik* (shrimp paste dip sauce) was popular in the reign of King Rama 6 to King Rama 7 even though *nam-prik* has been a universal dish in every household since the reign of King Rama 3. Additionally, with the perfect blend of food and culture between *Pla-too todd* and *nam-prik* made the dish a national food of Thailand.

²² Esterik, Penny Van. *From Marco Polo to McDonald's: Thai Cuisine in Transition in Food and Foodway* 5, 2 (1991), 1-7

This research also describes *Pla-too* dishes which are still popular and those which are on the wane by considering old and new recipes. In the reign of King Rama 5 *Pla-too* was cooked in different ways; *Pla-too* curry, fresh *Pla-too* with tamarind soup, *Choo-chee Pla-too Sod* (fresh *pla-too* with red curry). The latter dish had been developed since then by altering the cooking process such as using deep-fried *pla-too* instead of the fresh and using boiled coconut juice for its fragrant smell. There were also two other popular boiled *Pla-too* dishes, *Pla-too tom kem* (sweet and salt fish), and *Tom-som Pla-too* (sweet and sour soup). Prayoon Uluchata states that *Pla-too* replaced *Pla-chon* after World War II and *Pla-too todd* (deep-fried *Pla-too*) had been developed into many new dishes such as *Pla-too todd sod zai* (stuffed deep-fried *Pla-too*), *Pla-too choob pang todd* (tempura *Pla-too*), and *todd-mun Pla-too* (*Pla-too* fish cake). Additionally, Siamese also consumed steamed *Pla-too* with fresh and pickled vegetables (a cooking style influenced by Cambodia) and also *grilled Pla-too* known *Ngob Pla-too*.

Some later cook books have included *nam-prik pla-too* (*pla-too* with chili sauce) either by pounding *pla-too* mixed with chili sauce, or deep-fried *pla-too* served with chili sauce as a side dish. Furthermore, *pla-too* can be cooked and served as a snack called *meang pla-too* (*pla-too* with fermented leaves of tea-plants for chewing).²³

Last but not least is the research of high Chinese cuisine written by Thanetre Wongyannawa in *the transitory of high Chinese cuisine in Bangkok: A journey to a democratic food?* The study stated that high Chinese cuisine in the reign of King Rama 5 was called *Kao-lao* which was normally composed of many dishes. However, in the reign of King Rama 6, the meaning of *kao-lao* was changed to Chinese soup and was not food for the upper class anymore because it was available everywhere as street food. Examples are *preaw-wan* (sweet and sour vegetable), *peek-kai lao-daeng* (red wine chicken wings), *lukchin-kung phat phaksopon* (stir-fried bok choy with shrimp dumpling), *ped-yang fai-daeng* (stir-fried roast duck).

²³ Samutthiya, Tunyarat. *Pla-too* and Food Behaviors in *Thai Society in Junlasarn Thai Kadeesuksa* 19, 2 (Nov. 2004 – Jan. 2005), 7-28

In the old days, lard was the main ingredient for stir-fried and deep-fried dishes. In 1957 vegetable oil replaced lard in Thai kitchens as it was considered healthier. Lard can make food look more appetizing and fragrant; however Thai consumers were alerted to consider their nutrition and health even though vegetable oil was more expensive. The development of refrigeration helped the freshness of meat, before meat such as chicken and pork was kept in wooden box shelving on ice tubes so they were kept fresh but not frozen as now. The industrial revolution caused an increase in food production, such as chicken farms, even though these chickens had less quality than before, they were widely eaten. In Thailand, it was hard for customers to obtain fresh sea fish in the restaurants until the beginning of 1980 when the *Tien* Chinese restaurant used new marketing strategy by allowing customers to choose fresh sea fish from a big glass tank and cooked in the restaurant kitchen. The custom of eating fresh sea fish to order at high Chinese class restaurants is still popular in Thailand.

People have different tastes so it is inevitable that any dish can be adjusted or changed to suit all palates. Unlike many Chinese restaurants in Thailand, Thai chefs have a strong rule to cook every dish in the old style as they believe that changing the flavor means the food is not delicious and that it is the only way to maintain their cooking traditions. However, in Bangkok nowadays, the situation has changed and all businesses believe the customer is king. While Thai food is becoming more widely known around the world for its unique taste, foreign foods such as Western fast food, European, Japanese and Korean food are an expanding food choice of Thais creating new and exciting dining. For example, some of the popular fast foods like KFC, Pizza Hut, and Chester Grill in Thailand have created new menus in response to new food trends and customer needs. Examples are *Tom-yum* pizza, sticky rice and fried chicken burger, hot and spicy fried chicken. The author concludes that while food choice and variety have retrenched the number of conservative chefs, consumers also have greater freedom and choice.²⁴

²⁴ Wongyannawa, Thanetre. *The transitory of high Chinese cuisine in Bangkok: A journey to a democratic food? In Junlasarn Thaikadee Suksa* Vol.19, 2 (Nov. 2002 – Jan. 2003), 42-51.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

There are several methods which can be used to research questions about food and eating. First, the science of dietetics, which is in agreement with government policy, uses standard scientific methodology. This methodology indicates food is vital nourishment for the body giving energy, strengthening the body, and reinforcing bone, teeth, and muscle. Food has been extolled as a medicine to resist disease when consumed in proper proportions and without disregarding nutrition, sanitation, or hygiene.

Research using dietetics methodology has discovered the fact that there are six primary or vital elements necessary to human body; protein, carbohydrate, fat, minerals, vitamins, and water. Undoubtedly, most research attempts to discover consuming behavior of people in society focusing on the proportions of these imperative elements in a meal. Some research aims to change the eating habits of people in selected study areas such as social and cultural process reflecting government policy, or studies which aim to create new recipes beneficial to the consumer. Thus, it can be said that, indulgent eating by color, flavor, or taste, without considering nutrition and hygiene, is categorized as poor eating behavior.

There have been many studies done in Thailand using this methodology such as, *Food behavior of Kondaeng village Houylan district Dokcumtai Payao*.²⁵ The study stated that eating behavior of *Kondaeng* villagers is at risk of causing deficiency disease because of eating raw meat. Another study, *New way of life: the case study of consuming behavior of teenagers in Bangkok*, found most teenagers had a proper nutrition but some young students refuse to eat entrails and beans which are sources of protein, calcium, and vitamin B2. Another problem discovered is that most

²⁵ Charoenrat, Siranee. *Food behavior of Kondaeng village Huelan district Dokcumtai, Payao*. (The dissertation of volunteer graduation Thammasart University, 1990)

young people in Bangkok are addicted to carbonated drinks like Pepsi and Coke which contain lots of sugar that can cause obesity. As a solution, the researcher recommended that related organizations should promote family activities such as family cooking and family dining to not only solve the health problem but the social problem as well.²⁶ However, this recommendation did not account for internal factors such as family problem, social status, lifestyle, etc.

A second type of research methodology 'structuralism' is a powerful method for theoretical research on social food science. Prominent researchers using the structural psychology method are the anthropologists Mary Douglas and Claude Levi-Strauss, and the conventional philologist Roland Barthes. Mostly, the research is based on the concept that the palate is beyond social-cultural influence, like Mary Douglas stated that food and eating have been established, and controlled by cultural society.²⁷ While the research concentrates on cultural analysis, the weak point is overlooking to mention the factors relating to the changes in taste which has occurred throughout human history. However, I will use this methodology to describe the historical phenomenon which occurred within Thai society in the late 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century.

The study by the anthropologist Mary Douglas separated nutritive principles from the aesthetics of eating. She categorizes the aesthetics as prosody, melody and dance, whereas food preparation, cooking methods, and serving etiquette are controlled by the principles of hygiene and safety.²⁸ Another interesting theoretical research by the famous anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss applied the principle of linguistics to his research and described the meaning of binary opposition. He stated that, every word has a meaning only when compared with opposing words, such as black and white, dark and light, or male and female. He also believed that food has

²⁶ Vitsawatheeranont, Ampawan. *New way of life: the case study of consuming behavior of teenagers in Bangkok*. (Social Development Dissertation Budit Pattana Boriharnsaat Institute, 1998), 134-151.

²⁷ Douglas, Mary. *Culture In Annual Report 1977-78 of the Russell Sage Foundation*, (New York, 1978), 59, Cited in Stephen Mennell, *All Manner of Food: Eating and Taste in England and France from the Middle Ages to the Present*, 2nd ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 6.

²⁸ Douglas, Mary. *Food as an Art Form*, *Studio International*, (September 1974), 84, cited in Stephen Mennell, *All Manner of Food: Eating and Taste in England and France from the Middle Ages to the present*, 7.

invisible codes hiding in visible cultural waiting for people to explore and interpret. He compared a secret code within food with English grammar and added that this principle can be applied not only for study of food but also other subjects such as art, politics or philosophy.²⁹ Levi-Strauss used his theory to study the legends of the American Indian on the topic, *The Raw and the Cooked*, to discover the secret codes hiding in their eating customs. He found that lines drawn between the meaning of nature and culture can be explained through food triangle models as described below.

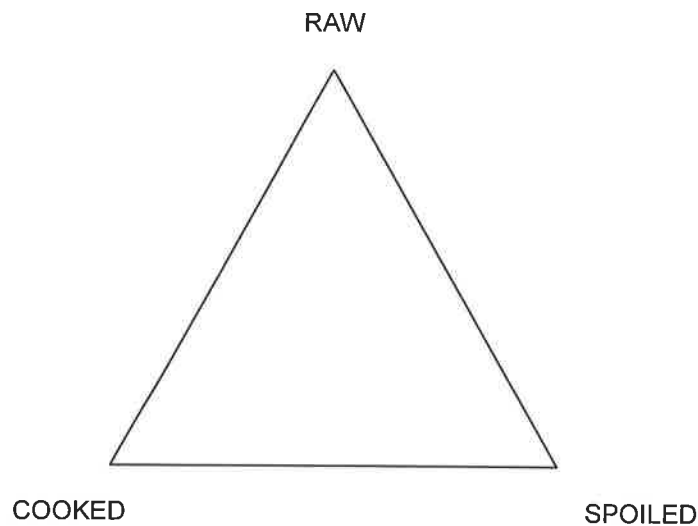


Figure 1 the Culinary Triangle Model

The model interprets 'raw' food as food in its natural state, 'cooked' food as raw altered from its natural state and made edible, and 'spoiled' food as abandoned raw or cooked food left to spoil and become inedible. The author developed this theory to describe cooking methods through the Cooking Triangle Model described below.

²⁹ Levi-Strauss, Claude. *Structural Anthropology*, (New York: Doubleday, 1967), 85-86.

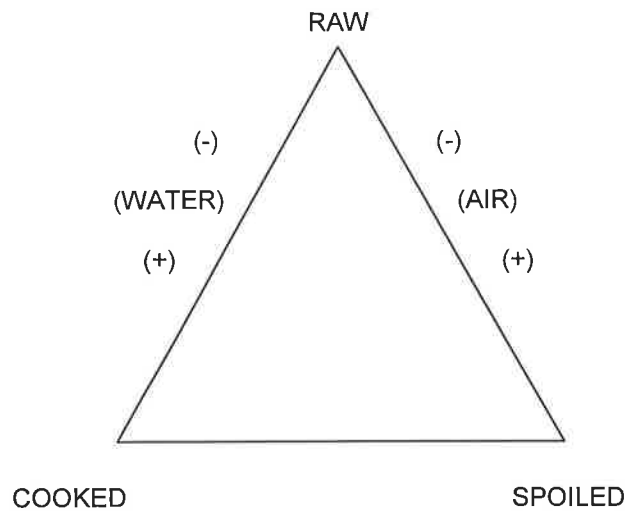


Figure 2 the Triangle of Cooking methods Within the Culinary Triangle Model

Figure 2 indicates that food cooked by roasting and smoking have adjacent conditions similar to 'raw' food as opposed to boiling which is a cultural invention. However, when considering the cooking results, roasting and boiling are closer to the natural condition than smoked food because smoking attempts to preserve food without spoilage, whereas roasting is a cooking method aimed at maintaining the taste and flavor close to the natural condition. The author stated boiling, especially stewing, is a method of cooking to soften food almost to the stage of spoilage, such as chicken stew.³⁰

However, frying can be used with the culinary triangle model because frying uses a pan which is considered to be a cultural invention the same as boiling. However, frying can also be considered as a natural condition because to fry you have to use oil which is a condition between water and air. Therefore, the culinary triangle model seems to be nonsense for general purposes due to its attempt to suit all cooking techniques but is regarded as important by sociologists and anthropologists who have faith in Levi-Strauss's theory. However, Levi-Strauss did not use his

³⁰ Levi-Strauss, Claude. *The Culinary Triangle*, in Carole Counihan and Penny Van Estrik (eds.), *Food and Culture: A Reader Digest*. (New York: Routledge, 1997), 28-35.

theory to explain food in European society. He stated that farmers are economical so they believe that boiling is the best way to maintain the flavor of meat and its nutrition, whereas grilling and roasting were popular amongst the upper class. The author added that it was not necessary to use the culinary triangle model to explain this because it was dependent on the society and not to an individual or his caste.³¹ Also Levi-Strauss said that it was not complicated to assume that the upper class would be disgusted to eat the same food as the lower-class. In short, the attempt to prove that boiling was an economical method, whilst grilling and roasting were an extravagant method, had not been proved by the theory of Levi-Strauss's model.³²

Another Anthropologist, Mary Douglas, used her theory to understand the cultural meaning within groups and social communication concerning food and eating as a code reflecting the social structure of westerners and other groups. She added that classifying food should be linked to the understanding of the social context, food edibility and prohibition, and the social boundaries. Douglas viewed food as a microcosm of social structure and boundaries which can affect social regulation and life style of people in society.³³ She analyzes the relationship between her theory and the meaning of food in her daily life from the first meal to the last meal in a day. Food is provided in an orderly scheme from Monday to Sunday, food is provided in a repeating scheme again and again, even on Lent, birthdays, wedding days or any other festive days. There are no exceptions, food is provided and presented using the same scheme in our circle of life.³⁴

The establishment of having food together in Christmas which is so important custom within a year, and family eating in every Sunday is the most important activity within a week, are the way to classify the relationship between the prime meals, the subordinate meals and snack for tea time like biscuits, cookies which thought to be an inferior meal of English standard. In other word, food, meals, and eating indicated the power relationship amongst various groups within family

³¹ Levi-Strauss, Claude. *The Origin of Table Manner*, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1978), 484

³² Mennell, Stephen. *All Manner of Food: Eating and Taste in England and France from the Middle Ages to the Present*, 10.

³³ Douglas, Mary. *Deciphering Meal in Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik*, (eds.), *Food and Culture: A Reader*, 36.

³⁴ Douglas, 37-44.

and social such as English noblemen had always spent the time enjoy drinking with strangers and people from lower class but having food with the family's members, close friends, and the honor guests only.³⁵

The conventional philologist like Roland Barthes wrote the article called *Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption* by analyzing the change of white bread to brown bread that because of brown color is signified the soften, delicate much rather than white color.³⁶ Therefore, the articles of Barthes have coordinated the concept of the structuralism to explain food meaning from the various phenomenons without concerning the historical references such as the advertisement promoting the traditional flavor of Napoleon Brandy by reminding the consumers the meaning of tradition and authenticity. Therefore, thousands of French produces have been spread out to world market being honorable consumed upon French brands.³⁷

However, the concept of structuralism has a prime limit to find out the facts beyond the history such as to study social behavior or group behaviors which have never been studied before. The structuralism has refused to considerate the historical phenomenon so the explanation of social and group behaviors using this theory seemed to be not work well.³⁸ Also, the explanation of people in society love to eat food which is accustomed to theirs past like the comparison of old liquor in the new bottle, did not give any new ideas. Structuralism can not use to explain the changing of social historical development such as taste and flavor admiration written by Norbert Elias. Elias stated that taste and flavor admiration is a withdrawal of changing development,³⁹ which indicated a complete discontinuity which indeed food admiration of humanity has been changing all the time.

³⁵ Douglas, 44

³⁶ Barthes, Roland. *Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption in Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik*, (eds.), *Food and Culture: A Reader*, (New York: Routledge, 1997), 22.

³⁷ Barthes, 25

³⁸ Goody, Jack. *Cooking, Cuisine and Class*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 31

³⁹ Elias, Norbert. *What is Sociology?*, (London: Hutchinson, 1978), 111

From the limitation mentioned above will be lead to another important study called historical development methodology. This method is drawn in a primary concept that the needs and admiration matters of humanity have been originated from the social experiential process which has long been accumulated in one life's span then it became the admirable standardization among the next generation. Therefore, this methodology can not be separable from the study of historical development including the structural development such as the considerate of the historical conflicts to find out substances which determined and originated to the development then were transferred to the next generation as the custom practices. The historical development methodology therefore, can be used to explain the changing of the behavioral practices of people from generation to generation also finding out the factors affected to human's acknowledgement. The example is the research of Norbert Elias discovered the prime factors which caused the social and cultural development within the western European society since the middle age up to the present.⁴⁰

Another interesting article using the historical development methodology is the article of Sidney Mintz.⁴¹ He indicates that sugar consuming in Britain has so much meaning varied to the historical social; in the present sugar is cheap and normally consume in daily life whilst in the past sugar had first been brought to England was compared to a gold and was so expensive and luxury. So sugar consuming in the past was the symbolic of the power and wealthy until the 17th century the valuable of sugar had been declined then in 19th century sugar became the main ingredient for Englishmen especially labor class. Sugar immense consuming amongst English coolies in 19th century was the body need for energy much rather than the attempted to copy the consuming behavior of the noble class as mentioned in Mennell article.⁴²

For this dissertation, I have decided to use the historical development methodology as the method to find out the process of identity formation of the Siamese elite during the reigns of

⁴⁰ Elias, 114

⁴¹ Mintz, W Sidney. *Sweetness and Power: the Place of Sugar of Modern History*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), 95.

⁴² Mintz, 103-108.

Rama IV to Rama V (1851 – 1910) through the practice of eating culture, especially table manners and the use of the fork and spoon.

CHAPTER 4

EATING CULTURE AND TYPES OF DINING

This chapter considers the basis of the Buddhist concept of food which was the origin of eating practices in Thai society. The eating behavior of the Siamese which were controlled and influenced by Buddhism is included. I will focus on the Rattanakosin period (1851-1910) to explain the eating culture of different Siamese classes especially the factors that controlled eating etiquette and types of dining. In this chapter the information is divided into the following topics:

The influence of religion in controlling the eating behavior of Siamese society.

Other factors controlling the eating behavior of the Siamese.

Dining places.

Dining out.

Working and dining out.

Recreation and dining out.

The Influence of Religion in Controlling the Eating Behavior of Siamese Society

The worldly conditions of Buddhism has been praised to be more exalted than worldly happiness or the commoner's way of life and the code of monastic disciplines is the main reason why Buddhist monks and Thai layman differ greatly in deportment. Buddhist monks respect their strict eating regimen so that they can be released from the cycle of life; conversely the eating behavior of Thai layman is controlled by their lifestyle. Some Buddhist regimens are not practiced by Thai layman, such as the discipline of eating only two meals in a day or the prohibition of eating after midnight.

As the result, the strict regimen of Buddhist monks has become a behavioral model for the Thai way of life. Generation by generation Thai people has been taught to live their lives close to the Buddhist ideals of contentment, quietude, peacefulness and temperance. Religious influence over the eating behavior of Thai people is also reflected to the concern for economical living as stated in Thai aphorism that "eat for living, do not live for eating". Moreover, Thais have always been encouraged towards good behavior and gracious eating manners such as, not to take big mouthfuls, be messy, or make noises when eating soup. Apparently, these edifications were similar to the way of the Buddhist monk in Thai society especially the concept of composed eating behavior, decorum, and to abstain from obvious desire.⁴³

In the past, Thai society had social inequalities derived from social status and gender oppression. The lower class could not express their opinion or protest against the upper class and women were required to be obedient and under their husband's command. Women were not allowed to eat with men. Examples mentioned in the metrical composition for women were 'prepare food for

⁴³ Chaophaya Prasadej Surentatipbodee. *Women Metrical Compositions From Wachirayan Book and Etiquette*, (Pranakorn: Krompanthi Taharnbok, 1961), printed for a memory of a cremation of Mrs. Poon Seangpin at Prayoonrawongsawas Temple, January 25, 1961), 2-3, 6.

your husband and wait till he has had enough, clean all utensils then you can eat', or 'do take care and wait till your husband has finished his meal then you can eat, do not eat before him because it is bad behavior'.⁴⁴ The reason why the social status of Siamese women in the past was not equal to men was because men could go into the priesthood and had a potential to reach nirvana. Besides that, the man was the head of the family and was the only who had power to make decisions thus, eating alone was one of the ways to manifest a male's power. Additionally, especially in aristocratic families, men ate alone on a white table cloth or sometimes other colors. This table manner was influenced by the eating manners of Indian Brahmin which was the highest caste of Indian society.⁴⁵ This does not mean that Siamese men were always dreary when eating alone, as stated in the story of Princess Rudivorawan of Siam "...my father was highly educated, so during his meal he always taught his son and daughter in various subjects..."⁴⁶

Other Factors Controlling the Eating Behavior Of The Siamese

It has been said that to eat greedily, hurriedly, filthily, to eat a lot, to eat when walking, or not to eat at the dining table for example were bad behaviors for the Siamese upper class. Besides this, the behavior of eating too much not only indicated bad manners but also the behavior of an indigent who was short of food. This can be shown in literary compositions such as the Chinese novel 'Siyingouy' which had been translated into Thai; it describes the main character 'Siyingouy' as a poor farmer who always ate too much. Another example is the main character from the famous Thai literary work 'Choo-Choke', he was a poor old Brahmin who had been given lots of food from the king but he died because of eating too much until his stomach was exploded.

⁴⁴ Choerchoun, Sriyapai, and Nol, Narakorn. *The collectors of Soontornpuu Sornying Sawasdeeraksa and Salakavee*, 4th editions, (Bangkok: Klangvittaya Publishing, 1977), 86.

⁴⁵ Nithi, Eawsriwong. *Houtoe-Hangtoe*, Matichon Soodsubda 17, 850 (December 3, 1996), 47

⁴⁶ Momchaoying Rudivoravan. *Buntoak Tanying Momchaoying Rudivoravan*, translated by Kaewsuan [pseudonym] The Treasures One: The Story of Rudivoravan Princess of Siam (Bangkok: Double nine Publishing, 2001), 13.

⁴⁷Although, readers would realize that eating too much indicated bad behavior and the poverty of the lower class, these characters were still impressive and convinced the reader to read until the end.

Undoubtedly, the image of etiquette from the behavior of eating a little and slowly became a table manner for Siamese aristocracy. The Siamese upper class had never experienced starvation and always had excessive food available so the idea of refraining from eating meat in the early Rattanakosin period was to dedicate merit for all animals and to share the merit with others. Furthermore, the behavior of not eating too much was also thought to be one way of selecting the best food in order of quantity, type, and quality for health. The princess of Siam, *Tanpuying Plien Passakornwong*, wrote the first cookbook of Siam domestic cooking techniques and royal recipes in the early 20th century. It mentions that,

*“...although I really want the cooks to know the variety of Thai food, the most important thing is to know how to cook the best dishes by considering the food quality and appropriate amount of each ingredient...”*⁴⁸

This indicates that the lack of available food was never a problem for the Siamese elite but that an overabundance of food was a problem. This led to the selection of food for quality through new cooking techniques to make delicious and luxurious food.

Additionally, the number of meals consumed per day by people of different classes was also different. In the past, the only people who had three-meals in a day were the elite or the Chinese merchants, whereas the commoners or farmers only ate two meals per day. It was common that Thai farmers ploughed the paddy field in early morning and in the late morning his wife would

⁴⁷ Mahavetsundornchadok Vol.13. 12th edition (Bangkok: Ongkarnkha Kurusapha, 1988), 306

⁴⁸ Pratinnabat Lae Jodmaihed 1, 2, (November 1, 2433), 62

bring him a lunch box which was the first meal for the day. The last meal was dinner when he came back home after finishing work. Not only the farmer ate only two meals per day but also the Siamese sailor who had a strict rule to eat only two times a day at 8 am in the morning and 4 pm in the afternoon.⁴⁹

In contrast, the 'inside' women, who gave allegiance as royal servants working inside the king's palace, were given a salary, clothes, and study materials for those who wanted to study. Beside this, the palace also provided luxurious meals four or more times a day⁵⁰.

The Dining Place

To answer questions about the Thai lifestyle in the last century like "Where were Thais eating?", or "What was the characteristic of the Thai dining room?" probably depended on the individual's class status. Undoubtedly, the dining rooms of the Thai kings were not only places for eating but were also sacred and not permitted to other people. The dining room for commoners was not sacred and most Thais used a vacant space in their houses such as an uncovered porch or verandah as a dining place. However, in Thai society, it can be said that the room or kitchen used for preparing and cooking food was more important than the dining place. This was explained in a royal letter by Somdej Kromphaya Dumrongrachanupab as he offered the assumption that a gathering of household members having food together, cooked from the same household kitchen, is the origin of the relationship called family.

⁴⁹ Captain Sawat, Chantane. *The Farmer Tale*, Vol. 9 (Bangkok: Ongkarnkha Kurusapha, 1966), 88-90; and Vol. 11 (Bangkok: Ongkarnkha Kurusapha, 1966), 433-434.

⁵⁰ Momloun Nong, Nilrat. *Life Beyond Sununta Palace*, in *Silapawattananatham* 7, (January 3, 1986), 52

“...Humans normally live with others as ‘family’, living in the same area and eating food together in one are, there could be one house or many depending on the number of household members but there had to be only one kitchen, this was a tradition since before history.”⁵¹

Atmosphere of a dining room of king Rama III was mentioned in the book ‘*A Story of Siam*’, written by pontiff Pallegou.

“...the eating time for the king was so quiet even though there were about 10-20 people at the same table, thus they just spent only 15 minutes to finish meal, noticeably nobody drank water before or during the meal except after the meal only.”⁵²

However, a quiet time for eating was not a fixed rule for every situation and events such as the royal banquets for foreigners’ Thai traditional music or a brass band played during the meal⁵³ to create a pleasant atmosphere and to entertain the royal guests as if they were part of a traditional western banquet. In other situations such as when the elite ate alone at home they needed to eat in quiet and privacy while the lower class enjoyed having food with other members. Due to limited information the descriptions above can only be analyzed as a general assumption and can not answer the question why the Siamese elite and a middle class needed more quiet time for eating than a lower class. In my opinion, the fact that the commoners households never had a formal dining room and their dining rooms could be any vacant spaces in their house, plus the necessity of the lower class to work hard and probably eat at their workplaces with irregular meal times, meant the lower class were not able to assign eating rules or create atmosphere for their dining places. Thus, the lower class were always considered uncivilized because they did not display etiquette and manners.

⁵¹ Kromphaya Dumrongrachanupab. *A Royal Letter of Kromphaya Dumrongrachanupab*, (January 16, 1935) In Sarnsomdej Vol.8, 1935 (Oct.-Mar), (Bangkok: Munlanithi Somdejchaofah Krompraya Narissaranuwattiwong, Munlanithi Kromphaya Dumrongrachanupab and Ongkarnkha Kurusapha, 1998), Printed for Celebrating 3rd Birthday Anniversary of Princess Somdej Prateprattanarajsuda Siamborommarajkumaree, 1991), 191.

⁵² Pontiff Pallegou. *A Story of Siam*, translated by Sun T. Komonbutre, 2nd edition, (Bangkok: Kaona Publishing, 1977), 198.

⁵³ Sir John Bowring. *The Kingdom and people of Siam Vol. 2*, 3rd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1977 [1857]), 328.

Unlike the lower class, the Siamese elite had the possibility of creating atmosphere and peacefulness for their dining places, however dining times for them was not the time to create ideas. Any ideas which occurred during eating were believed to be superficial and cursory. An example is found in a royal letter king Rama IV wrote to Somdej Kromphaya Dumrongrachanupab.

“A lyric ‘Kaowaman’ mentioned in this book was probably a verse in rhyme...but it was not fun anymore...in fact I think this probably was composed when the author was eating...”⁵⁴

Dining Out

A royal prophecy written by king Rama IV compared unfortunate people in the situation of eating food in a market with a dog. This comparison reflects the negative view that eating food in a market was considered inappropriate behavior, even though the market was an important and necessary place for every class from the elite to commoners. Negative meanings are also shown in many idiomatic expressions such as ‘pak-talad’ (sharp-tongued) or ‘mae-kha pak-talad’ (a lower class, who always scold, speak too loud, and too fast). The upper class used this as a standard difference dividing the elite and the vulgar. Thus, the image of a market was not only as an outside area where people buy and sell goods but also as a gathering place of lower class.

Additionally, in the early Rattanakosin era, there was an increase in the number of the westerners living in Siam, so king Rama IV released a government gazette about the issue.

⁵⁴ Chotamara, Lawan. *Retrace the Royal Family*, (Bangkok: Chocheaiteveth Publishing, 1989), 110.

"... Official foreign visitors will be censured that the streets in the palace were so dirty and nobody took care of it..."⁵⁵

Another example from the reign of king Rama V is Somdejchaophaya Borommaha Srisuriyawong who wrote in the '*Siam annual record*'.

"...the foreigners will be seen Siamese people buy and sell goods and food which were so dirty and smelly in everywhere especially on the street side, thus, the government released a regulation do not trade any goods on the street sides except in the markets..."⁵⁶

Therefore, the market which here meant the streets had been defined as a back stage of Siam prosperity. In the past, eating in public areas was a degrading practice for the aristocracy⁵⁷ thus buying food from a market was also insulting. The following record written by Somdej Kromphaya Dumrongrachanupab is about how king Rama V wanted to travel for pleasure to somewhere in Siam via train and come back by royal boat without bringing anything except money.

"...the king commanded me to travel with him but I think it's weird because if for a commoner will not be a problem to buy foods from the markets or asking for the foods from someone else, but He is a king who disgusts to eat foods selling from the street sides or the markets and He also dislikes the filthy places..."⁵⁸

However, the two royal journeys of king Rama V were not the only situations that the king had eaten in markets and public areas and also at commoners' houses. In His first royal journey, the

⁵⁵ "An Announcement to command Siamese who lived in the area of the palace cleaned their living areas," In *the Announcement of a government gazette of King Rama IV (1850-1868)*, (Bangkok: Ongkarnkha Kurusapha, 1961), 57.

⁵⁶ "Food Market," *Siam Annual Record* Vol. 3 page 28, 431-432.

⁵⁷ Chotamara, Lawan [Umporn Harnnapha]. *Roung Kong Kaokaeng (Food Story)*, In *Prakaipruk* (Pranakorn: Klangvittaya, 1963), 141

⁵⁸ Prabahtsomdej Prajunlachomkao Chaoyuuhou, and Somdej, Kromphaya Dumrongrachanupab. *Sadet Prapaat-ton (A Royal Journal of King Rama V)*, (Bangkok: Uksorncharoentut Publishing, 1991), 7

king stopped in many provinces such as Rajburi, Samutsongkram, Petchaburi, Samutsakorn, Nakornpatom, and Supunburi, and spent 25 days traveling (from July 14, 2448 B.E. to August 7, 2448 B.E.). A royal record stated that the king ate at commoners houses three times. First, was at the house an old lady called Yai-poung and the food provided for the king was fried cabbage with pork, salted fish, and nam prik or chili dip sauce. The second time was at the house of Chaokun Soonthorntesa and the king had chicken curry with rice for dinner. The last time was at the house of Nai-chang and Yai-plub but there is no record of the menu except a detail that Yai-plub cooked together with the king's chefs.⁵⁹

For the second royal journey of king Rama V about two years later, the king journeyed through many provincial cities including Kumpaengpeth and spent 34 days on the trip (July 27, 2450 B.E. to August 29, 2450 B.E.) having meals with commoners three times. First, the king had vermicelli and fried rice noodles at Bangpra-inn palace, second at yai-plub and her daughter's house and the menu was minced pork soup and chicken curry with rice, third was at a government official's house at Kumpaengpeth province where lots of dishes were prepared for the king.⁶⁰ However, the royal journeys of king Rama V were a special case for the upper class such as the king and the aristocracy; also it was the first time in Thai history that the king had closely associated with commoners.

Conversely, buying food from markets was a normal thing for the lower class since the reign of king Rama III as noted by a foreigner who lived in Siam in 1840-1841.

⁵⁹ Somdej Kromphaya Dumrongrathanupab. *Jodmai Naisong Anupab*, In *Prabahtsomdej Prajunlachomkao Chaoyuuhou and Somdej Kromphaya Dumrongrathanupab, A Royal Journey of King Rama V*, (Bangkok: Uksorncharoentut Publishing, 1991), 4, 16 and 19-20.

⁶⁰ Prabahtsomdej Prajunlachomkao Chaoyuuhou. *The Second Royal Journey*, In *Prabahtsomdej Prajunlachomkao Choyuuhou and Somdej Kromphaya Dumrongrathanupab, A Royal Journey of King Rama V*, (Bangkok: Uksorncharoentut Puvlishing, 1991), 27, 28 and 45-46.

“...there are Chinese merchants who sell cooked pork, and fried fish... women sell various kinds of dessert such as bread and a dessert which is made of flour and coconut milk, besides there are many raw goods such as sea fish and fresh-water fish, goat meat, chicken, duck, fruit and some miscellaneous goods needed for daily life..”⁶¹

Working and Dining Out

The evolution of the Thai government occurred in the reign of king Rama V who altered the government system to consist of twelve ministries. Official sites were separated from the homes or the palaces of government officials and working hours were adjusted from 10 am - 4 pm to 8 am - 2 pm. As a result, most official workers were not able to arrive at their workplaces on time to start work at 8 am. Traditionally, Thai people had always cooked and eaten in the morning before going to work and a lot of time was taken for cooking and eating in the morning.⁶² Also Thais usually ate every meal at home because eating outside cost a lot more than cooking and eating at home. However, it was now necessary for people to live far from their workplaces and it was inconvenient to return home for lunch. As a result, restaurants and food stalls were established on the street providing food and snacks for those who could afford to eat outside. According to an official register of the number of restaurants and food stalls serving customers in Bangkok, 57 food stalls sold rice with various kinds of Thai curry, 14 sold stir-fried rice noodle, 10 were noodle shops, 3 sold vermicelli with Thai curry, 2 sold rice congee and 29 places sold various kinds of dessert.⁶³

⁶¹ Neil, Frederic Arthur. *Narrative of a Residence in Siam in the Eyes of the Foreigner During 1840-1841*, translated and rearranged by Captain Linjong Suwanphokin, (London: National Picture Library Office, 1852), (Bangkok: Literature and History Division Silpakorn, 1986), 34.

⁶² Dumrongrathanupab, 145-146

⁶³ “Official Register Section 2: Population in Province, Road, and Street, A Little Era 1245 Vol. 2, For the Official of Post Department in Bangkok”, 2nd edition, (Bangkok: Tonchabub Publisher, 1998).

Beside this, restaurants in the reign of king Rama V selling rice with curry (*kao-raad-kaeng*) were open until late at night. Rice congee was popular for the Chinese coolies which was served all day and night, and were mostly located close to gambling places.⁶⁴ In the reign of king Rama VI, the popularity of going out for 'dinner' especially for western food increased, especially when Thai students finished their studies in Europe and returned home. The most famous and luxurious were the Oriental hotel and Tokadero hotel.⁶⁵

Recreation and Dining Out

In the reign of king Rama V, there were many centres for entertainment and relaxation for Thai people such as gambling houses, theatres, Japanese Cinema, lotto houses, theatrical performance houses known as 'Roung-Yeeke'. Food stalls and eateries emerged to accommodate customers, such as food stalls selling rice-with-curry or 'kao-kaeng' and rice congee. According to Mr. Chai Rounsilp, a Thai historian, in the reign of king Rama V 403 places were established for gambling, such as dice games, bean and cowrie games, and lotteries, but latter in 1887, 1889, and 1891 the Thai government abrogated all small gambling places decreasing the number to just 14 in Bangkok and 2 in Nontaburi.⁶⁶ Crowds of people roamed through these gambling places and many food stalls sold food for the gamblers such as rice with curry, vermicelli, rice congee etc. at about three satang per dish (100 satang = 1 baht).⁶⁷

Another place which was open in the daytime to service customers, particularly the Chinese coolies, was the opium house. Hot and sweet desserts like red beans with sugar syrup, or a Chinese sweetmeat made of ingredients such as peanut, sesame, enriched rice etc. were popular

⁶⁴ Buolek, Punnee. *Coolies Lark rod Kub Prawatsaad Raeng-ngan Thai (Coolies and A History of Thai Labor)*, (Bangkok: Sarakadee Publishing, 1999), 87

⁶⁵ Utsawaraj, Rak. *Mahasawektoh Prayakathatorabodee Sriharajchabalmoung* In a Memory of a Royal Cremation of Police Major General Prayakathatorabodee Sriharajchabalmoung (Tieb Utsawarak), at a Royal Funeral Pyre of Tepsirinrawas Temple, (June 1, 1969), (Pranakorn: Bumroungnukunkij Printing, 1969), 34-35.

⁶⁶ Rounsilp, Chai. *Thai History in 1810-1811*, first section: Social, (Bangkok: Banroungsilp Publishing, 1974), 320.

⁶⁷ Jamoun Amorn Darunarak [Jam Soonthornveth]. *The King Rama VI commanded to abrogate Thai Lottery*, In *A Royal duties of King Rama VI Vol. 6*, (Bangkok: Kurusapha, 1969), 108.

with the coolies after they smoked opium and became thirsty.⁶⁸ Chinese tea-houses were another popular place for Chinese to rest and relax after work in the afternoon⁶⁹. They normally drank tea with a Chinese dessert called 'Chan-up' (a dessert served at wedding rituals) along with various kinds of Thai desserts.⁷⁰ Additionally, in this period, hot tea was a popular drink at home for the Siamese elite, the middle class, and the Buddhist monks. A large amount of tea leaves and fragrant teas were imported from China every year.⁷¹ Also the tradition of serving afternoon tea for honored guests at the royal palace or the palace of the aristocracies, was normally accompanied with various kinds of snack such as cakes, and the Thai crispy cake called 'kanom farang kudee chine'.⁷² Besides this, tea with sugar and milk was also served with cakes for foreigners.

Another exotic drink in the reign of king Rama V was coffee ('kao-fae') for which various kinds of coffee beans were imported. Good quality coffee was served only in the foreign hotels located in Bangkok like the Oriental hotel and Tokadero. Coffee shops for the Siamese lower class emerged in the late reign of king Rama V at a price of 5 satang per cup. Interestingly, a luxurious coffee shop called 'norasigha', serving the elite and the wealthy Chinese merchants, was established in 1922 located close to the equestrian stables of king Rama V. The tables were set with white cloth on the lawn, and a small car park provided for 3-4 cars every evening.⁷³ Later, the first modern theatre in Thailand and Asia with air-conditioning called 'Chalerm-krung' was established in 1932. A Chinese from Canton called Taechew who lived in Bangkok at the time, opened a peculiar coffee shop serving coffee in Indian style by mixing coffee with boiled cow's milk.⁷⁴ There were a few coffee shops opening later surrounding the theatre and the number of Thais who drank coffee gradually increased along with watching movies at the theatre and other activities. From the late

⁶⁸ Buolek, 82

⁶⁹ Kanjanakpant, Sa-nga [Kanjanakpant]. *Krungtep Mear Wan Nee (Yesterday in Bangkok)*, 209-210.

⁷⁰ Suvicha [pseudonym]. *Wan Vaan Thee Pan Ma (In the Old Day)*, (Bangkok: Doungkamon Publishing, 1996), 65.

⁷¹ Chaojomsadub, Momrajwong, and Saengsoon, Momrajwong Ladawan. *Sarutanuson*, (Bangkok: Ummarin Printing, 1983), The Present King Rama IX granted to print for a Royal Cremation of Chaojom Momrajwong Sadub, a Concubine of King Rama V, at a Royal Funeral Pyre of Tepsirinrawas Temple, December 24, 1983), 147.

⁷² Suvicha, 13, 15

⁷³ Watcharasatien, Yod [Yutitsatien]. *Kred Jak Adeed (A Knowledge from the past)*, 328

⁷⁴ Tubthong, Tepchoo. *Lao Rong Thai Thai (Telling Thai Stories)*, Vol. 1, 24.

reign of king Rama VI onwards, watching movies at the theatre was rapidly becoming as the Thais favorite recreation together with having dinner or supper at Rajchawong Street after the movie had finished.⁷⁵ Therefore, restaurants such as *Hoitienlao* and *Pae-itt tienglao* which were situated near the theatres in Rajchawong and Yaowaraj Street were the central meeting places for people of all kinds such as journalists, writers, and Chinese merchants.⁷⁶

While dining out at restaurants was part of the recreation and entertainment of the Siamese elite and middle class, the elderly and senior government officials preferred to stay at home. The popularity of having three kitchens preparing Thai, western, and dessert dishes in aristocratic families increased the number of elite Thais consuming western dishes in their daily lives, especially government officers and royal families, who employed Chinese chefs to cook both western dishes and Chinese desserts at their palaces.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Suvicha, 45

⁷⁶ Watcharasatien, 361

⁷⁷ *Printed for a memory of Tanpuying Yeiium Charunsanitwong in her royal cremation*, (At a Royal Funeral Pyre of Tepsintrawas Temple), (November 14, 1998), 59.

CHAPTER 5

FOOD IDENTITY FORMATION THROUGH THE EATING UTENSILS

The study of eating utensils used by Thai people in the past shows that traditionally Thais ate food with their hands (known as เฝืงข้าว perb-kaao). The habit of eating food with a spoon and fork was adopted later by the Siamese elite during the period that Siam first associated with western culture. Later in the 19th century in the reign of king Rama III, the use of spoon and fork was the formal eating manner for every class. Although, in the old days, eating manners had adopted various tools, utensils such as spoons and forks, plates, bowls, etc, were rapidly incorporated for use in Thai society. In this chapter, information is divided into the following topics:

The development of eating utensils in western society.

The utensils and table manners of Siamese society.

The evolution of eating etiquette in Siamese society.

The habit of eating food with a knife, spoon and fork; the emblems of civilization.

The habit of eating food with the hands; 'Perb-Kaao' a Traditional Thai eating manner.

Instruction for eating food with knives, spoons and forks.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF EATING UTENSILS IN WESTERN SOCIETY

Generally, the evolution of eating utensils in western society had developed gradually since the middle Ages. The 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries were periods of rapid formulation of principles used to control the behavior of people in society, including eating which later developed into standardized table etiquette.

In the middle Ages of Western Europe, people ate food with their hands and fingers. The king and queen and farmers or laborers all used hands to pick up and eat food from the shared containers. This is illustrated in many paintings from the 15th century revealing gatherings of family members eating food together.⁷⁸ The paintings illustrate the manner in which people ate such as picking up a piece of food from a large plate and put into the mouth, picking up food and giving it to another person, sipping soup from a large bowl used by everyone at the table. The utensils were actually shared with other diners, also there were only a few pieces on the dining table, thus it is not necessary to classify the types of food containers. The food itself can be categorized into two types: dried foods using hands to pick up and eat, and swill or watery foods which were normally put into a big bowl and shared between the diners. The utensils in the middle Ages were similar to the utensils used in the last century such as platters, plates, dishes, *quadra* (a square wooden board used to cut meat known as *tranchoir* in French cuisine), *tailloirs* and knives. To eat soup or sauce, diners generally had to lift a bowl close to the lips then sip or use a shared ladle and pour the soup or sauce into the mouth. The use of the fork, which had been invented in 11th century⁷⁹, was not used as an eating utensil until the 17th century when it became incorporated as a table

⁷⁸ Elias, Norbert. *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, translated by Edmund Jephcott, with some notes and corrections by the author, revised edition, edited by Eric Dunning, Johan Goudsblom and Stephen Mennell, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers), 58.

⁷⁹ Visser, Margaret. *The Rituals of Dinner: the Origins, Evolution, Eccentricities and Meaning of Table Manners*, (New York: Penguin Books), 57.

utensil in western society.⁸⁰ Erasmus of Rotterdam depicted a dining table in the middle Ages that only had bread on the left, and a knife and a glass on the right.

The table manners that separated the elite from the lower-class were washing the hands with rose water before eating, using only one hand to pick up food, and to then pick up food using only three fingers.⁸¹ The 17th century was the first time westerners began to use an individual spoon for pouring food to eat but the spoon at the time was rather flat and round with the same size as ladle, so diners had to open their mouths wide when eating.⁸² However, the eating of soup or sauce from a big bowl shared by every diner ceased in the 17th century, including the additional rule of cleaning the spoon on an apron before pouring soup or other food. Eating etiquette gradually rose to a peak when individual diners were provided with a spoon, a fork, a knife, and a soup bowl as a standard. Diners were often confused over how to use such civilized utensils, such as which food could be used with a spoon or fork, or how to use the various knives for different purposes, thus in the middle of 17th century the rise of the study of table etiquette and manners began.

This modern period was a prosperous time for trade and commerce and the wealthy merchants were raised to the status of noblemen. Erasmus stated in his essay that these new wealthy men attempted to separate themselves from the lower class, disguised their past, called themselves 'civility' and looked down on people from other classes as 'antiquity' and boorish.⁸³ Moreover, the new elite learned by reading and copied the behavioral practices of the 'gentlemen' and regulated the behavior of their society such as eating etiquette and the principles of good conduct.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Elias, Norbert. *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, 91.

⁸¹ In the present, some of the experts Thai cuisine have informed the eating manner using three fingers in Siamese society was Thai traditional eating did not copy from Sri Lanka or Burma.

⁸² Elias, 59

⁸³ Elias, 66-67.

⁸⁴ Elias, 67-69.

The purpose of this behavioral regulation in the modern period affected westerners in two ways. Firstly, it helped to control the behavioral practices of people in society and secondly, it helped to distinguish the elite from the lower-class. These social practices become a social standard known as 'civilization'. In the modern period, western civilization indeed had just begun.⁸⁵ Throughout many centuries, the eating etiquette in western society had been defined by more than just eating or pouring food into the mouth,⁸⁶ The Siamese elite began to use knives, spoons and forks instead of hands in the reigns of king Rama IV and Rama V and just a century later these manners had spread to every class in Siamese society. Although 'civilization' found its way into modern Thai society easily, the traditional Thai manners have still remained.

THE UTENSILS AND TABLE MANNERS OF SIAMESE SOCIETY

In Thai society, the eating utensils and manners have been defined as symbolic of civilization and helped to classify the status of people in society as mentioned in the Thai ancient precept of 'tho-ra-nee-sarn'.⁸⁷ The book compiles prohibitive practices collected from the experiences of the elderly; some are still used now, some have disappeared such as the prohibition of eating food with *ta-luum* (a food container sealed with vermilion) and *chon-hoi-mook* (a spoon made from pearl's shell)⁸⁸

In the early Rattanakosin era, D. B. Bradley who was a physician at the time, defined *ta-luum* as a food container made of rattan; *toe* or *toke* was similar to *ta-luum* but made of brass, silver, and gold.⁸⁹ Current dictionaries define *ta-luum* as a container but not used to contain food anymore.⁹⁰

⁸⁵ Elias, 71

⁸⁶ Elias, 92

⁸⁷ "Tho-ra-nee-sarn". Appendix in *Prayoon Uluchadha [Plu-laung], Kati Kwam-chuew lae Prapenee Keaw Kub Karn-Saeng-roean, (Precept, Beliefs, and Festivals of Building House)*, (Bangkok: Mahanak Publishing, 1983)

⁸⁸ Tho-ra-nee-sarn, 111

⁸⁹ Bradley, D.B. *Noungsoe Arkrarapitansub 2416, (Thai Dictionary 1973)*, (Bangkok: Kurusapha, 1971), 239, 242

⁹⁰ "Rajabunditsatan", *Dictionary of Royal Institute 1982*, 335.

Additionally, Bradley defined various kinds of dishes and bowls used in the early period of the Rattanakosin era as follows:

“Plate is a flat container used for fish and vegetable, made of clay, painted color pictures. Big Plate is used for containing rice and desserts. Water Plate is to put water into the rice and eat like porridge, is used for liquid food”⁹¹

In the early Rattanakosin period, plates and bowls were usually made of clay imported from China, Europe, and some were produced in Thailand, whereas dishes and pottery used in Siam in late Ayutthaya era were imported from Italy and Holland; however they had a problem with humidity which caused the growth of fungus. Additionally, Siam traded with Chinese merchants by importing products such as bowls, jars, cusp but excluding dishes.⁹²

From the evidence, bowls of various types were used in Siam but it can be assumed that bowls without lids, made of clay, without color pictures such as *Cham-kala*, were the lowest quality and were normally used by the lower-class, whereas the elite used bowls with covers and painted with color pictures, such as *Cham-lai-norasigha*, *Cham-lai-tepanom*.⁹³ Another delicate pottery was *Cham-Benja-rong*, which was made of ceramic, painted with color pictures. Interestingly, ‘benja’ in Thai means ‘five’ but the evidence shows that *Cham-benja-rong* had 3, 5, and even 8 colors. The primary colors were red, yellow, white, black, green, and blue, other colors used were pink, purple, brown, and gold.

As mentioned above *Chon-hoi-mook* (a spoon made from pearl’s shell), later separated into two types, *Chon-hoi*, and *Chon-mook*. Different kinds of spoon were used in Siam:

⁹¹ Bradley, 148 (See also in *Krayaniyai* [S.Plainoi], (Bangkok: Matichon, 1998), 78)

⁹² Chompunit, Nukul. *The study of Ancient Tools and Utensils of the Central Plain*, (Bangkok: Odient Store, 1990), 130, 134.

⁹³ Chompunit, 130

“Chon-ngern was a spoon made of silver.

Chon-ta-kua was a spoon made of lead.

Chon-thong was a spoon made of gold.

Chon-touy was a spoon made of ceramic, similar to spoon from China.

Chon-mook was a spoon adorned with pearl, only used for monks.

Chon-hoi was a spoon made of shell”⁹⁴

From the details above, five materials were used to make spoons in the early Rattanakosin era; silver, lead, gold, ceramic, and shell. The first four materials were precious and scarce and used for the upper class, whereas shell was plentiful and cheap.⁹⁵ Pearl oyster was valuable so people used pearl's shell to make spoons for the monks while other common shells such as mussel and oyster were made into shell spoons for commoners.⁹⁶ It can be assumed that the classification of Siamese utensils in the early Rattanakosin period was used to signify social class; 'high' and 'low' separated the monks and the elite from the commoners, and reflected the process of identity formation in the Siamese elite. However, it was not only the utensils or the eating manner that reflected class in Siam society but also others factor such as dress, residence, tools, equipment, eating behavior, conversation, and speech.

In his book *Lao-roung-krung-Siam* written by pontiff Pallegua, who was a missionary in Siam for about 24 years, he mentions the use of *chon-hoi-mook* (a spoon made of pearl's shell) in Siamese society during the reign of king Rama III.

⁹⁴ Bradley, 183-184.

⁹⁵ Bradley, 510

⁹⁶ Chompunit, 136-137.

“The Chinese living in Siam and the natives ate food by sitting on their heels surrounding the set of food (around 7-8 dishes) which were placed on a brass tray, they would hold their bowl in the left hand and chopsticks in the right hand. By lifting up the bowl close to the lips and by using chopsticks they pushed the rice and food from the tray into the mouth. When they ate soup they used Chon-hoi-mook or a spoon made of pearl’s shell which were common for everyone in that time, then drank a big cup of tea followed by a little cup of arak and smoking.”⁹⁷

Apparently, in the reign of king Rama III, spoons made from pearl’s shell were not only used by the monks but were generally used by every social class in Siam. This did not indicate that the monks had diminished in significance or that Siamese had lost faith in religion, but that *Chon-hoi-mook* was not as valuable as in the past and were readily available. Siamese and Chinese living in Siam only used *Chon-hoi-mook* to eat soup like ‘dish spoon’ by pouring soup directly to mouth.⁹⁸

THE EVOLUTION OF EATING ETIQUETTE IN SIAMESE SOCIETY

From the Ayutthaya era onwards, Siam opened its doors to trade and associated with other countries with great economic or military power like France, England, Portugal, Holland, China, India, and Japan. There were conflicts of cultural practice and religion, such as conflicts between Buddhism and Christianity in the reign of king Rama IV. However, the admittance of the foreign cultures occurred alongside these conflicts.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Baptist, Pallegua. *Lao-Roung-Krung-Siam (Telling the Story of Siam)*, translated by Sun T.Komolbutre, 2nd edition, (Bangkok: Kaona Publishing, 1977), 197

⁹⁸ Pallegua, 200

⁹⁹ Terwiel, B.J. *A History of Modern Thailand 1767-1942*, (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1983), 168

In some cases, the assimilation and admittance of foreign culture to Siam society was somewhat inconvenient and unsuited to their life style.¹⁰⁰ An example was the custom of the Siamese elite wearing shoes with long white stockings during the reign of king Rama V, this custom symbolized Siamese 'civilization' even though wearing thick clothes in a hot climate like Siam would have been uncomfortable and sticky, it was also inconvenience when walking on asphalted roads.¹⁰¹

In 19th century, in the reign of king Rama III, the Siamese elite attempted to understand western manners and learn to be more civilized by, for example, changing from sitting on the floor to sitting on chairs, changing from placing food trays on a mat to placing food on the table, and changing from eating by the hands to using knives, spoons and forks instead. However, these new eating utensils and eating techniques had to be learned and practiced thus; royal banquets were held frequently for westerners who lived in Siam at that time.¹⁰² In the reign of king Rama IV, the annual Kings Birthday party was held in the palace in a western style banquet with invited foreign guests who lived in Bangkok. The king did not eat at the same table but walked around the guest's dining table talking to the guests individually.¹⁰³ The tables at banquets of the Siamese elite were customarily separated by social rank and did not allow government officers and merchants to sit at the same table as the royal families and the King. However, most government officers were from the royal families and so they could sit at the royal families' tables. The diary of Krom Phaya Tevawongvaropakarn, a high ranking royal government officer, mentions a informal festivity which he had been invited to by a Chinese merchant.

¹⁰⁰ Cheawchanpanith, Pornsuda. *Thai Cooking Utensils of the Lower Central Plain in Rattanakosin Era*, (The Ancient Histories Dissertation, Silpakorn University, 1988), 62-63

¹⁰¹ Peleggi, Maurizio. *Lords of Things: the Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), 44.

¹⁰² Feltus, Hall, George. *Dr. Renold House: Moh Farang Sam Rutchakarn*, 2nd edition (Bangkok: Suriyabun Publishing, 1982), 24-25.

¹⁰³ Mouhot, Onley. *Travels in Indo China: Siam* translated and arranged by Sakunrut Tharasuk *Alexander Henri Mouhot, Travels in Indo China: Siam, Cambodia, Laos & C. in the collection of translated books and historical documents volume 3*, (Bangkok: Kong Wannakadee Lae Prawatsaad Silpakorn, 1995), 214-215.

*"The Chinese U-nia invited me to celebrating his new house; I left home at 7 pm. and went to his house at Saam-Chine Temple. I saw Chaophaya Pontep, Chaophaya Sripipat, Phaya tepprachun, Phayapaiboon, Pranarinthon were eating at the same table as the French ambassador, the interpreter, the noblemen, and the foreigners. This banquet was informal we served each other and ate like the upper class."*¹⁰⁴

The above instance indicates that only the royal banquets with the King present would have been strictly set by social rank. However, in his diary he did not mention the way food was served thus two possibilities can be assumed. First, the food was served when the guests arrived, or second, the food had already been served on the table before the guests arrived. Apparently, the latter was the case at royal banquets in the reign of king Rama IV, where the king was at the central dining table and separate tables were organized by social rank.

He stated in his book about King Rama IV that, "...only invited royal members and the Siamese elite to have Thai dishes, Chinese foods, and western dishes both savory and desserts were serving on the table everyone had a set of knife, spoon and fork, and chopsticks..."¹⁰⁵

Thus it can be assumed that the dining table had been set with three national cuisines, Thai, Chinese and western food. Additionally, foreign dishes were not served in courses as is the western style, but were served as a set of dishes which were served and eaten at the same time in the Thai style. Desserts and tea were only served after the meal. A full set of eating utensils in the western style were used for the first time in the reign of king Rama V in 1888.¹⁰⁶ The royal

¹⁰⁴ Somdej Prachaoboromawongther Krom Phaya Tevewongvaropakarn. *Punyakatha Praprawaat Lae Jodmaihed Raiwan (The royal history and diary)*, printed for the royal cremation of Momchaoying Tiprattanaprapha Tevakun at the royal funeral pyre Tepsirintraaad, March 1, 1965), 75

¹⁰⁵ Prabahtsomdej Prajunlajomklao Chaoyouhue. *Prarajpithee Sibsongdeon (the Twelve Annual Ceremony)*, 221

¹⁰⁶ Watcharothai, Kwankaew. *Evolution and Arts of Setting Table, Beverages, and Menus*, 4th edition (Bangkok: Ammarin Printing & Publishing Public Co., Ltd, 1995), 40.

table provided utensils for savory dishes and desserts in the western style and the western dishes were served first, followed by rice and Thai dishes, Chinese foods or *Kao-lao*.¹⁰⁷

Another interesting aspect is that Thai women were welcome to eat at the same table with the men. In western culture it was customary that gentleman have a lady to join the dining table or tea table. In Siamese culture women were not allowed to eat at the same time as men. The wife must take care and serve the dishes when the husband was eating, only after would she be allowed to eat.¹⁰⁸ In the reign of king Rama V princes were sent to study in Europe and the princesses and other royal members learnt of the western practice of permitting women to eat at the same table with honored male guests and male foreigners.¹⁰⁹

THE HABIT OF EATING FOOD WITH A KNIFE, SPOON AND FORK: THE EMBLEMS OF CIVILIZATION

In the early Rattanakosin era, the use of a knife, spoon and fork were innovations for Siamese society as people used to eat with their hands (*perb-kae*) and sporadically used a shell spoon [*chon-hoi*] with soup. Thus, diners used their hands to touch and eat food directly. Perhaps in the beginning for the Siamese elite, a knife, spoon and fork seemed to be troublesome eating tools, but this may not have been such a problem for Chinese groups in Siam who had always used chopsticks when eating.¹¹⁰ Additionally, in the reign of king Rama III, the Chinese population in

¹⁰⁷ The word "Kao-Lao" in that time means the high Chinese cuisine. Look also in *Thanes Wongyannava, "Cooking Modernity: Cooking Thai, Cooking Chinese and 'Yum'-ing them all" (paper presented at International Symposium on 'Everyday Life Experience of Modernity in Thailand', at Suan Bua Thaini Resort, Chiangmai, Thailand, 13-14 January 2000), 26. (Photocopied)*

¹⁰⁸ Chaophaya Prasomdej Surenatipbodee. *The Metrical Composition for Women From Wachirayan Book and Etiquette*, (Pranakorn: Krompanteetaharnbok Printing, 1961) Printed for the memorial cremation of Mrs. Poon Seangpin at Prayoonrawongsawaat Funeral Pyre, January 25, 1961), 12.

¹⁰⁹ Chaojom Momsadub, Saengsoon Ladawan. *Sarutanusorn*, (Bangkok: Ammarin Publishing, 1983), The current king Rama IX, had granted to print for the royal cremation of Chaojom Momsadub, the king Rama IV's concubine at Tepsirintraawaat Royal Funeral Pyre, January 24, 1983), 12-13.

¹¹⁰ Baptist, Palegua. *Lao-Roung-Krung-Saim (The Story of Siam)*, 197

Siam was almost double the Siamese population thus undoubtedly chopsticks were a familiar utensil to the Siamese elite in the reign of king Rama IV.¹¹¹

Another problem of using the innovative utensils was misunderstanding their use and function. This is highlighted in a royal letter by *Krom PhayaDamrong Rachanupab*, a contemporary in the reign of king Rama V.

*"I remembered that we used spoon and fork eating foods on 'toke-ngern' (a silver raised tray on a pedestal) there were always a set of spoon and a two-prong fork placing on 'toke'. Only Chon-hoimook (spoon shell) was using for monks. Spoon might be used to pouring soup but I do not understand when we should used fork because those foods can be eaten by hands. For my opinion, fork might be used to divide food into small pieces by left hand holding fork stabbed food and used right hand pulled the food apart. Thus, fork was used for preventing dirt of left hand only..."*¹¹²

The function of the fork in the explanation above shows the way the Siamese elite used fork in the western style even though they did not eat on a table. In fact, a two-prong fork in the western style is normally used with a knife and was used to hold a piece of meat to be cut into smaller pieces, or used to stab a piece of meat and put it directly into the mouth. It was not used to gather food onto a spoon like the three- or four-pronged fork.¹¹³ Thus, the misunderstood use of a two-prong fork with a spoon indicates that the innovative utensils were used as symbols of civilization in Siam society (eliminating eating by the hands), rather than over concerns of sanitation and hygiene which occurred many centuries afterward.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Prabahtsomdej Prajunlajomkao Chaoyuhue. *Prarajpithee Sibsoengdoen (the Twelve annual ceremony)*, 221

¹¹² *Royal Signature of Somdejpraborommawongther Kromphayadamrong Rachanupab, June 7, 1943, in Sarn-Somdej (Royal Command)*, Vol.26, 70.

¹¹³ Watcharothai, 39

¹¹⁴ Elias, Norbert. *The Civilizing Process: Psychogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, 45.

From the middle reign of king Rama III, Siam society had associated with westerners. The King granted western style festivities held in the palace on his birthday and other special occasions. Below is a narration of King Rama V in his book, *'The twelve annual ceremonies'*, which states the reason why the frequent western style festivities held in the palace had diminished in the late reign of king Rama IV.

"...seemed so boring and very formal when the king (Rama IV) had to light a candle and anointed with moistened fragrant flour as a sign of blessing the Buddhist statue, then the party had just begun and the king will be enjoyed the party until 11 pm or midnight. Since when the first year of current time [in 1868 or the first year reign of king Rama V - researcher] His royal corpse was in the grand palace so the party had to move to Anuntasamakom Palace, the royal families and the aristocracies in that time were so tired and boring to sleep late when joining the party then they asked to cancel those western style festivities since then..."¹¹⁵

However two years later, in 1870, was the first time in Thai history that a king of Siam had traveled to another country, Singapore. After the King returned from visiting Singapore, western style parties were held again at the *Paisarntuksin* palace, using knives, spoons and forks.¹¹⁶ It can be said that a new age of culinary tradition began in King Rama V's reign (1868 – 1910). The king went to Europe twice and sent many of his children and courtiers to European colleges. The court also employed many westerners. There was an influx of western customs into Siam amidst the maelstrom of western colonization.

At such a critical time, Siamese food culture evolved in accordance with political pressures. Food became a Siamese ploy to display their civilized culture as equal to that of the influential westerners. Western silverware was used on the dining table. The king also adopted western-

¹¹⁵ Prarajpatee Sibsoengdoen, 221.

¹¹⁶ Sarnsomdej, 70-71.

style breakfast. The royal dining table consisted of the king's chair and 20 chairs for others including the waiters, wearing a uniform in western style, and serving his honored guests.¹¹⁷ The habit rapidly spread among his courtiers who wished to follow the royal footsteps. The first Thai version of a cook book was translated from English and French by the king containing numerous recipes for western dishes. He tried to follow many recipes using his wives as kitchen hands. Undoubtedly, the royal wives could cook both superb Thai dishes, and western delicacies.¹¹⁸

PERB-KAO: THE TRADITIONAL THAI TABLE MANNER OF EATING FOOD WITH THE HANDS

Despite, the adoption of western style of eating among the Siamese elite, the life style of the Siamese women who lived 'inside' the palace still used their hands when eating.¹¹⁹ Changes came with the British-oriented King Rama VI (1910 – 1925). The king had western-style breakfasts and dinners, but for lunch he used his fingers with Thai dishes, washed down with mineral water or beer. To prepare western dishes for the royal menu, the king had Chinese, Indian and western cooks.¹²⁰

A narration by a concubine of King Rama V said that she had seen king Rama VI sitting on the floor and having lunch alone, and used his hands instead of a spoon and fork.¹²¹ This fact was also observed by *Prabumrourng Rajaboripaan* in his book, "...on a normal day when the king had private time he always eat food with his hands..."¹²² However, he was strict when eating in the

¹¹⁷ Somdej Kromphayadamrong Rachanupab. *Kwam-Shong-Jum (The Remembrance)*, (Bangkok: Silapabunnakarn, 1973), 258-259.

¹¹⁸ Saja, Poj. "Kae loy arayatham prik" in *the cultural world of food*, (2540), 28

¹¹⁹ Chaojom-Momsadub and Ladawan, 146

¹²⁰ Virasinchai, Sansani. "Krom Phra Sutthasininat" In *Art and Culture Magazine*, (April, 2001), 98

¹²¹ Momjao Punpitsamai, Ditsakun. *Roung-kang-keang*, in *collecting version of historic articles*, (Bangkok: Klangvittaya, 1957), 220-22

¹²² Prabumrourng Rajaboripaan. *His Behaviors in English Gentleman Style*, in Prayuth Sittiphant, *Pramahateeraraichao*, 339

manner of the English gentlemen as mentioned by the author of the book, '*First love of king Rama VI*'.

*"...He was strict in the use of utensils when eating in the western style and always ate like the English gentleman. He would not eat mustard with quail or add seasoning such as sauces, salt, or vinegar because it was not a traditional style of the English gentleman."*¹²³

Despite, *perb-kae* or eating food with hands being the traditional eating manner for every class in Siam society, the difference between the Siamese elite and the commoners, besides the quality and quantity of food and the variety of utensils, was the method of washing the hands after a meal. For example, a royal memorandum by King Rama VI's concubine, *Chaojom Momsadub*, noted the hand cleaning ritual of *Praongchao Saisawaleepirom Kromkhunsutthasineenath*, the chief wife of king Rama VI.

*"...after finished meal she was meticulous cleaning hands every time, firstly, begins with washing both hands by clean water then using soap and rinsed again, secondly, washed hands by aromatic sodium carbonate then rinsed by clean water again finally, used a slice of kaffir lime slightly scrubbed her hands then finished the procedure by rinsed hands with clean water again..."*¹²⁴

For the general commoners in Siam society cleaning the hands by the above procedure was impossible because soaps and sodium carbonate were so precious and expensive for the lower-class. These cleaning materials were 'exotic' and imported from abroad.¹²⁵ This did not mean that the commoners did not clean their hands after meals because eating Thai dishes like *nam-prik*

¹²³ Chotamara, Lawan. *First Love of King Rama VI*, (Bangkok: Doungkamon Publishing, 1981), 53

¹²⁴ Chaojom Momsadub, and Ladawan, 146-147.

¹²⁵ Chotamara, Lawan. *Cheevit Chaokrung Konsatawat Malaew Lae Cheevit Chaokrung Samaisongkram*, (Bangkok: Praepittaya Publishing, 1984), 91.

(chili dip sauce) by the hands would have made them smell. So, a general way of cleaning hands was by using herbal plants such as kaffir lime or Chinese citrus to exterminate smells.

King Rama VI cleaned his hands the way the Siamese elite did but he usually put lavender eau de cologne to eliminate fishy smells.¹²⁶ Lavender became popular in the reign of king Rama VII, known as *Nam-ooop Farang* or the exotic perfume, and came in different forms such as lotions, perfumes, and fragrant essences. The contemporary author, *Lawan Chotamara*, depicted in her book that “...*the price of perfume was several hundred baht some were several thousand baht. Eau de Cologne was known as washing water, Lavender was known as lemon grass water...*”¹²⁷

To conclude, the materials for washing the hands after meals by the upper class in Siamese society would also have changed with fashion. Individual preference could also make the difference between the elite and commoners through the fragrance of perfumes. Therefore the different ways of washing the hands after meals reflected the different eating practices of the Siamese elite and the commoners.

¹²⁶ Prabumrourng Rajboripan, 339-341.

¹²⁷ Chotamara, 93

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Thais were instructed in table manners and examples considered bad behavior were to eat too much, to take a big bite or mouthful, to eat messily, greedily, hurriedly, and to make noises. Another aspect based on the religious practices of Buddhist monks is not become infatuated with the taste and flavor food.¹²⁸ However, the intentions of table manners between Buddhist monks and Thai laymen are different. A moral belief in Buddhism views the human body as an obstacle for humans to be released from the existence and the cycle of birth and death. Buddhist monks live in a way intended to reach nirvana in the next life, while the laymen live for what we call 'social order' by living with all other humans in peace.

This dissertation attempts to study the Buddhist religious beliefs in the aspect of eating culture to discover how the religion views eating activities. It is clear that eating is important because it is a primary origin of birth also a numerous changes of all matters on earth. Moreover, for Buddhist beliefs, eating is a process of creating new life and destroying life at the same time and this cycle will happen again and again until people can strictly control the way to eat and behavior in the way of the Buddha. Then all lives will be released from the life cycle. On the other hand if people can not resist the taste and flavors of food then a life cycle of eating will happen again. Additionally, Buddhist beliefs have various meanings that have not been interpreted in the new meanings coming from society. So, the religious beliefs in Thai society in the early Rattanakosin era, which had long been influential since Sukhothai period, declined due to the social and economic changes at the time.

¹²⁸ Aewsriwong, Nithi. *Yooksamai Maichoey Yalobluu (If Not Believe Be Not Insulted)*, (Bangkok: Preaw Publishing, 1998), 106-107.

An increase in international trade in Siam from the reign of king Rama II onwards caused economic changes and Siam became a prosperous capital city. Besides the wealthy royal families and Siamese elite who traded with foreigners, Chinese living in Siam raised their social status equal to the Siamese elite. Therefore, the power of money and economic status of people in Siam society in the early Rattanakosin era can be used to classify the difference between the elite and the commoners, also wealth was thought to be as important as a fine lineage and social prestige.

The cultural and conceptual changes in Thai society occurred alongside the conflicts and compromises amidst a period of social and economic change in Rattanakosin era. This can be attributed to the understanding and perception in Siamese society that there were the other people who lived in other places of the world. The Siamese elite in the reign of king Rama III were the first group to associate with westerners and adopt western culture in their daily lives. Examples are, the grand palace being built and decorated in a western style, the costumes of Siamese noblemen, the eating etiquette using knives, spoons and forks, the table setting with silverware, and the western style banquets etc.

The Thai tradition of sitting on the floor and eating with the hands (*perb-kaeo*) was a common practice for both the king and the commoners, only the food quality, quantity; the sets of dishes including food containers and utensils were obviously different. The evolution of eating style in Thai society using knives, spoons and forks, especially at the royal banquets to which the foreigners were invited, primarily occurred in the late reign of king Rama III. However, this was not a total change in Thai eating culture because the Siamese elite still practiced the table manners of the Buddhist monks such as not of eating too much, large mouthfuls, eating messily, or making noises etc. Additionally, a book of gentlemanly conduct known as 'Sombut-Phudee' was written by a member of the Siamese elite aimed at instructing and guiding those who wanted to act like gentlemen.

The coming of the spoon and fork into the table etiquette in Siam society began in the late reign of king Rama III. From then on the popularity of foreign culture gradually increased until the use of spoons and forks became a fixed part of Thai elite's social life in the reign of king Rama IV. Examples were the royal banquets provided for foreigners who lived in Siam at the time. Also after king Rama IV returned from visiting Singapore in 1870, the spoon and fork became more popular with the Siamese elite at many occasions such as on king Rama IV's birthday, and other royal ceremonies.

Traditionally, the eating practices of Siamese elite had a hierarchy. At every meal food was served to the husband first, after he had finished his meal the wife and other family members could eat, followed by the servants. Thus, priority was not only given by gender but also by social class and status. Apparently, after the arrival of western style banquets to Siam, women were allowed to participate especially at the royal festivities to which the foreigners were invited. Siamese women became more important at the dining table and wives and daughters had more opportunity to communicate and associate with foreigners. Moreover, the traditional Thai manner of women being attentive and serving the men changed to the western manner of women being welcome to sit with the men and being served by equally. Importantly, this allowed women to freely communicate and give opinions to the other dining members.¹²⁹ Despite the tradition of eating with hands being considered the eating practice of the commoners, the king and the Siamese elite would sometimes still eat with hands in private and when having a meal with family.

The Siamese elite, especially many elderly types of nobility who had never traveled to other countries, misunderstood of matching of the two-prong fork with the spoon, or were embarrassed when using knives, spoons and forks. On the other hand, the Thai lower class still eats with their hands but used *chon-hoi* (shell spoon) for soup. The Chinese coolies used chopsticks by sitting on the heels when eating, only the Chinese merchants ate at tables and chairs and some were be able to use spoons and fork as well.

¹²⁹ Chao Praya Prasadej Rurentratipbodee. *Sombut-Kong-Phudde*, 30th editions, (Bangkok: Ongkarnka Kurusapha, 2001), 3.

Siamese society rapidly developed identity through practice with table manners and the use of utensils during the reign of Rama IV to Rama V (1851-1910). Conversely, the adoption of tableware to western culture was a slower development. In the middle ages, people ate food with the hands from shared containers. Even though the fork had long been invented in Europe, the adoption of fork to western culture began in the 17th century along with the development of table manners to eliminate sharing table ware and utensils with other diners. The western elite had gained experiences and created etiquette standards and social manners. The Industrial Revolution in Britain occurred in the late 18th century and England became a country with great economic power. Beside this, through the development of science, engineering and medicine, the concepts of hygiene and sanitation also emerged.

The adoption of western culture and civilized manners and eating utensils into Siamese society occurred when Siam traded and associated with the other countries like Portuguese, England, France, and Holland etc. As a result, the Siamese elite began to define themselves as civilized as the westerners while their faith in Buddhism still remained strong. Therefore, the process of identity formation through the development of eating culture in Siamese society was influenced by both the etiquette standards of western society and the behavioral practices of Buddhism.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: *Thai Territory*

Thailand is fascinating and unique in culture, cuisine and architecture. Its physical landscape is webbed with waterways and glittering with splendid palaces and golden temples, it yields riches from rubies and sapphires to tin and rubber, and has beautiful islands and beaches on the mainland. Thailand is also one of the most highly developed nations in Southeast Asia. The country is shaped rather like the profile of an elephant head. Figure 3 shows a map of Thailand - the forehead abuts Myanmar, the outer edge of the wide ear borders Laos to the east, the trunk forms the long Malay Peninsula, and the mouth is Bangkok, Thailand's capital city. At one time the Thai flag depicted a red elephant on a white background. The king changed it to three wide stripes of red, white, and blue after Thailand joined the League of Nations. Thailand is the heart of mainland Southeast Asia, neighboring Myanmar to the northwest and shares the upper strip of the Malay Peninsula. The Central strip is Thai territory, and the lower is Malaysian. The eastern coastline of the 600-mile-long peninsula is lapped by waters of the Gulf of Thailand. Cambodia sits directly across the Gulf, and the southernmost tip of Vietnam's long coastline curves beneath Cambodia. Landlocked Laos stretches from the Myanmar border in the north to the Cambodia border in the south, along Thailand's northeastern region.

Thailand is divided into four distinct areas. the mountainous North, the fertile Central Plains, the semi-arid plateau of the Northeast, and the peninsula South, distinguished by its many beautiful tropical beaches and offshore islands. Covering some 514,000 square kilometers – roughly the size of France – it encompasses a wide range of topography. Mountains in the far north, where Thailand's borders meet those of Burma and Laos, rise to more than 2,500 meters (8,202 feet), with verdant valleys and the remains of the extensive teak forests. The northeast consists of rolling semi-arid plateau stretching all the way to the Mekong River, while the flat central plains, watered by the Chao Praya River, form one of the richest rice-growing regions on earth. The

narrow southern isthmus, extending down to Malaysia, is bordered on one side by the Gulf of Thailand and on the other by the Indian Ocean, with a spine of rugged limestone mountains down the middle.

A kindly climate allows year-round cultivation of crops, not only rice but also fruits and vegetables. Even today, despite the growth of urban areas, the great majority of the population can be found in the central part of Thailand who derives their living from agriculture. Other natural resources include a variety of minerals, precious stones such as rubies and sapphires, and an abundance of seafood along two long coastlines bordering the Indian Ocean to the west and the South China Sea to the east.

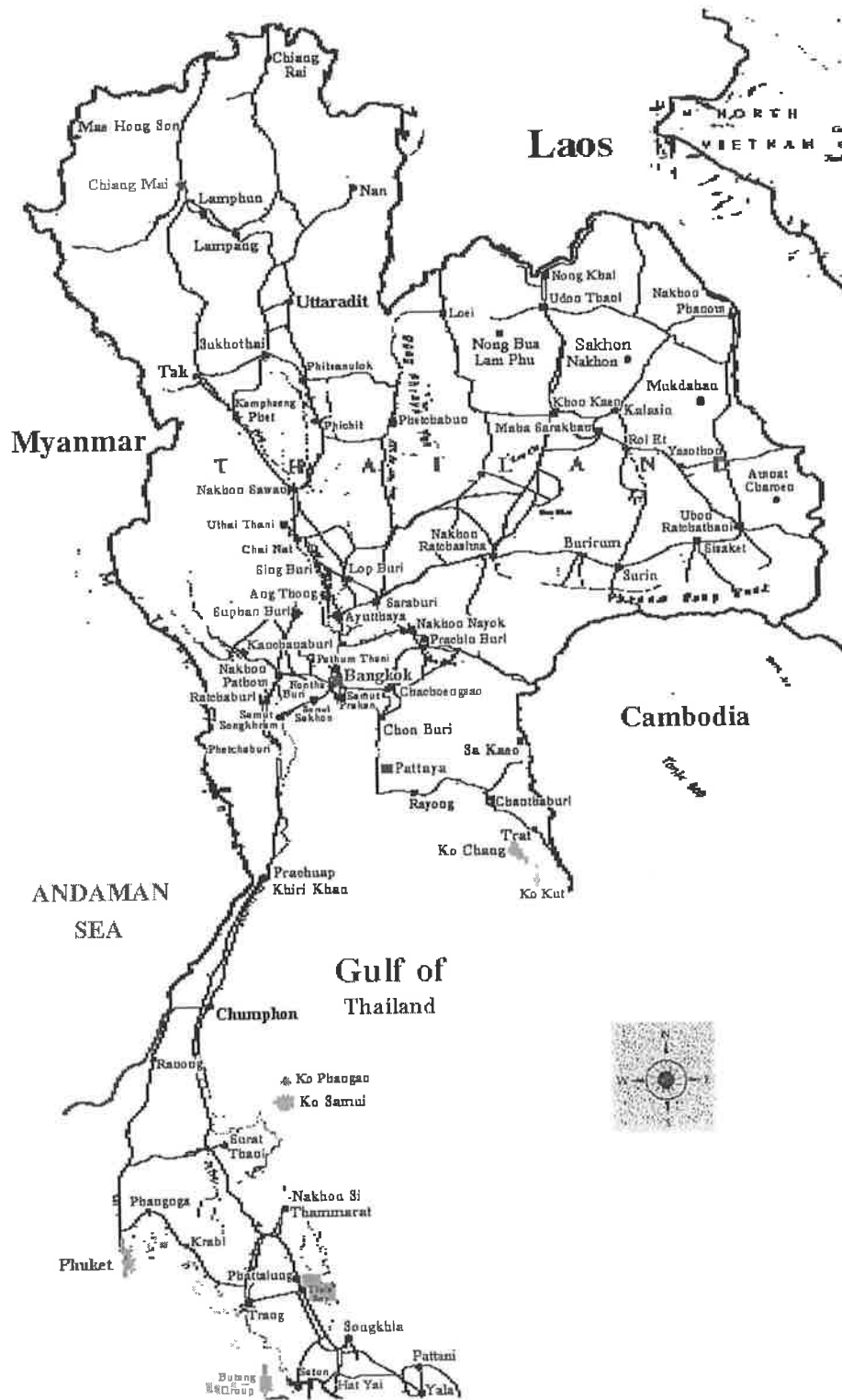


Figure 3 Map of Thailand

Appendix B: *the history: Siam to Thailand*

The peoples who finally became the nation of Thailand, known as the 'Ai Lo' by the Chinese and as Nanchaoans by others, first migrated out of northern India almost 4,000 years ago. They traveled up towards southern China, skirting round the mountainous regions of Tibet, and entered the Hunan province of China. They battled the imperial Chinese army for over 50 years before the Imperial court allowed the Nanchaoans to stay, as long as they agreed to pay tribute. Tibet moved against China in a series of political wars, based on the rejection of China to allow a royal member of the Chinese imperial court to become a wife to one of the kings of Tibet. The Nanchaoans like the Tibeto-Burman were the unfortunate buffer between both countries. In the early tenth century, an invading Mongol army from China's southwestern borders swept into the region and the Nanchaoans not being able to compete against the invading Mongol armies and defending their backs against the Tibetans, moved out after 400 years.

The Tai peoples are a term generally used to denote various related peoples, among them the Shans, the Laos and the Siamese Thais. As early as the 7th century Tai peoples had gradually migrated southwards down the great river valleys of mainland Southeast Asia settling among the Khmer, Mon and Burmese populations whom they encountered on the way. By the 12th century they had established several small states in Upper Burma (Shans), the Mekong valley (Laos) and the Chao Phaya valley (Thais) which now forms the majority of the population of the kingdom of Thailand.¹³⁰

Thais first major city Sukhothai, or "Dawn of Happiness" was built in the middle of the Central plain. Thai written language, culture, architecture, and their Buddhist religion were well established when repeated attacks from marauders forced the Thais to flee farther south. In 1351, King Uthong established a new city at Ayutthaya, a splendid metropolis of lavish palaces

¹³⁰ David Thompson. *Thai Food*, (Penguin Books Australia Ltd, 2002), 113

and soaring temples with gold statues of the Buddha. A new dynasty was founded and Sukhothai became a tribunal state.

Ayutthaya served as a capital of Siam (as the country was called until 1932) and ruled over all the terrain that is now Thailand, and also parts of Burma, China, Laos, Cambodia, and Malaysia for 417 years. During the Ayutthaya period, Siam fell to Burmese power twice. After the first time, Ayutthaya was restored as the capital of the country. In the early 1500s, European emissaries from Portugal, Holland, and Britain came to Siam and on their return to Europe they told wondrous tales of the fabulous city of the east. Inevitably calamity fell. However, in 1767, after the Burmese's second successful invasion, Burmese hordes, burning and looting, overran Ayutthaya, reduced the population of 1 million to 10,000, and left the city in ruin.¹³¹ Ayutthaya was destroyed beyond recovery. A new capital city was established in Thon Buri by King Taksin.

Gathering together scholars and storytellers to restore the Siamese heritage, the first Chakri king in the present ruling Chakri Dynasty moved the capital city across Chao Praya River, near present-day Bangkok. He also extended the borders to include the northern mountains and the long southern neck of land between the Gulf and the Andaman Sea. Succeeding monarchs, particularly King Mongkut (1851 – 1868) of Anna and the King and “The King and I” fame, and his son King Chulalongkorn (1868 – 1910), steered the state toward modernization, and established the country’s infrastructure. King Chulalongkorn launched the vast canal-building project that today crisscrosses the fertile Central Plain, providing water for a sea of gently waving, emerald green rice shoots. By skillful diplomacy, and by relinquishing parts of the kingdom, Thailand evaded colonization by the French. Thailand is the only independent country on the mainland: Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam were French colonies and Malaysia, Burma, and the Indian continent were British. The area covered by the modern state of Thailand, known until 1932 as “Siam”, is one of considerable diversity. In 1939 the country’s name was changed to “Thailand”, meaning “the Land of the Free”. The term Thai or Siamese is therefore primarily not ethnic, but

¹³¹ Danai Chaiyotha. *Prawatsat Thai Yuk Anachak Ayutthaya (Thai History in Ayutthaya Period)*, (O.S Printing House, 2003), 178-180.

political, denoting a subject of the king of Thailand, secondarily linguistic, meaning a speaker of the Thai language, and thirdly cultural, signifying a product of the culture to which the various ethnic groups that have formerly lived or live today in the region have all contributed.¹³² At the same time, and without bloodshed, the absolute rule of the king was changed to a constitutional monarchy. The present king of Thailand is King Bhumibol, Rama the ninth.

¹³² Chaiyotha, 208

Appendix C: *Traditional Thai Cuisine*

Spicy, colorful Thai food, scented with an extraordinary range of herbs, roots, and seasonings, is a gastronomic delight. Traditionally Thai people have always made best possible use of what is available naturally from the land, rivers and the oceans. This is reflected in the makeup of original Thai cooking with the chief ingredients being rice, fowl, fish, vegetables, herbs and of course seasoning. Thai food is normally sophisticated and it is a time consuming practice. As acknowledged by David Thompson in the introduction of his book 'Thai Food', "Thai is not an instant cuisine..., it expects time and effort to be spent and it requires honed skills, but it rewards with sensational tastes."¹³³ This nature was originally determined by the abundance of the ingredients in one dish, the materials of the cooking wares, the fuel for cooking, and the ingenious cuisine. The basic ingredients for Thai dishes are simply rice and fish. The staple and main crop of Thailand is rice. Thai farmers have been respected as the 'spine of the nation', for they keep the whole country alive with their provision. Around ninety-five percent of the cultivated land is dominated by the rice paddies.¹³⁴ Thai rice comes in white color, long-grained size and has two consistencies are sticky and steamed rice. Most rice eaten in Bangkok is steamed, while sticky rice in north eastern (*phak isan*) of Thailand. Jasmine rice is known as Thai fragrant rice, usually served hot with Thai food.

The Thai catchphrase "eating rice and fish", apparently applies to every region which means Thai cuisine has always favored fish. Not only do most of the areas border long stretches of coastline, the heart of the country sits on a fertile drainage basin traversed by a vast network of rivers and waterways that have blessed the land with an abundance of freshwater fish, as well as freshwater crustaceans and mollusks. For the reason that fish will not taste good if not fresh, fish was dried and mixed with salt for a preserved food called *pla-ra*, *pla-daek* which can be kept longer although the year, it is also made into fish sauce or *nam pla* for seasoning. Simon De La Loubere, writing in 1688 about Siam in the time of king Narai, said in chapter IV of the second part of A

¹³³ Thompson, 186

New Historical Relation of the Kingdom of Siam (translated into English by "A.P.Gen.R.S.S." and published in London 1693):

"The table of the Siamese is not sumptuous; as we eat less in the summer than in winter, they eat less than we, by reason of the continual summer in which they live; their common food is rice and fish. The sea affords them very delicate small oysters, very excellent small turtles, lobsters of all sizes, and admirable fish, the sorts of which are unknown to us. Their river is also very plentiful of fish, and principally very good and curious eels: but they make little esteem of fresh fish."¹³⁵

Unlike meat, eating fish is not regarded as taking life as it is a food freely given by nature spirits and nurturing deities; fish comes miraculously with life-giving water and are seen as willingly swimming into fish traps and nets to give sustenance to the people. In rural farming communities Thais believe in the rice goddess, who is the great provider of nourishment and often depicted surrounded by lotus blossoms and fish. Even in landlocked areas of mainland North and Northeastern part of Thailand, fish has constituted a major source of food for centuries and is regarded as second only to rice in importance. It is said that both come with the water; therefore, for Thai people, they belong together as an indivisible pair. To many country folk, to eat rice is to eat fish, and vice versa. Indeed, Southeast Asia is known to be one of the richest in the world for freshwater fish. Early western explorers who pioneered into the area, including Marco Polo, described the fish at Sumatra's island as "among the best in the world" in the journals they kept and letters they sent home to their families and associates.¹³⁶

Little is known about the cooking of Sukhothai, where so much of what is regarded as distinctively Thai, first emerged. From information in King Ramkhamhaeng's famous inscription, however, it is clear that rice and fish were the major ingredients. Fruits were undoubtedly plentiful as well, along

¹³⁵ Simon de la loubere. *A New Historical Relation of the Kingdom of Siam: Envoy Extraordinary from the French King, to the King of Siam, in the years 1687 and 1688.* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 35

¹³⁶ Marco Polo, *Marco Polo section 3* In *National Geographic (Thai Version)*. (October 2001), 135

with mushrooms that grew wild in the forests and a variety of vegetables. A clearer picture is available of Ayutthaya, thanks largely to 17th Century French visitors who characteristically devoted a considerable amount of space to the subject of food in their accounts of the kingdom. Simon De La Loubere, for instance, who came with a diplomatic mission in 1687, was struck by the fact that the people ate sparingly. Good salt, he found, was a rare commodity, and fresh fish was seldom eaten, despite its abundance.

*"A Siamese makes a very good meal with a pound of rice a day, which amounts not to more than a farthing; and with a little dry or salt fish, which costs no more....Their sauces are plain, a little water with some spices, garlic, chibols, or some sweet herb, as Baulm. They do very much esteem a liquid sauce, like mustard, which is only crayfish corrupted, because they are ill salted; they call it kepi. They gave Mr.Ceberet some pots thereof which had no bad smell."*¹³⁷

Nicolas Gervaise, a Jesuit missionary, noted that *kapi*, the popular fermented shrimp paste, "has such a pungent smell that it nauseates anyone not accustomed to it" and gave perhaps the first general recipe for a typical Thai condiment based on it: "salt, pepper, ginger, cinnamon, cloves, garlic, white onions, nutmeg and several strongly flavored herbs...mixed in considerable quantities with this shrimp paste."¹³⁸ From these accounts it is clear that for all its seeming simplicity, the presence of exotic spices, herbs, and vegetables were evidence of trade with the outside world, and the fact that numerous Chinese, Japanese, Malays, and the Indians lived in Ayutthaya suggests other likely influences. Thai cooking was already becoming more sophisticated.

Thai food is always fresh because of the abundant of ingredients which are available everywhere. Cooked extremely quickly—the ingredients retain both their freshness and their nutrients. Food is an important part of religious observance and spiritual ritual for many different faiths in Thailand,

¹³⁷ La Loubere, 35

¹³⁸ S. Plainoi. *Samai Ayutthaya Pla-ra Thai Pai Farangsed (In Ayutthaya Period, Pla-ra consumed in France)* In *Thai Cultural Magazine* (June/July 2001), 17-18.

including Buddhism, and Islam. The role of food in Thai cultural practices and religious beliefs is complex and varies among individuals and communities. Due to the dietary rules of Buddhism, which is more of a life philosophy than a religious doctrine, Thais' believe that in his lives on Earth, Buddha cycled through various animal forms before he took on the form of a human being – this is why most Buddhists are vegetarian. Some Buddhists avoid meat and dairy products, while others only shun beef.

Generally, Thais would not kill big animals for food but fish is an exception because cooking fish does not involve blood like other animals; cow and buffalo. Safinai Suleiman, a secretary of the entourage of Persian king (Iran) who came to Siam in the reign of King Narai, mentions Siamese food in his diary and stated that, "Siamese eat rice with head fish soup, they will not hesitate to cook and eat big animals which have already died because they believe it will be a sin to kill animals for food".¹³⁹ Meat in today's Thai cuisine, with its Buddhist background, plays a minor role in Thai meals because cows and buffalos were the mainstays of farm and village life, and were eaten only when they were too old to work. Subsequent culinary culture influenced by other countries like Portuguese and French introduced the use of sizeable chunks of meat to Thai cooking. Thais shunned the use of large animals in big chunks. Big cuts of meat were shredded and laced with herbs and spices. Fish and shellfish, fresh from local waters, is less expensive than meat. Chicken is versatile and much loved whether roasted, deep-fried, curried, stir-fried, or grilled over charcoal. Meat, poultry, and seafood generally are highly seasoned with fragrant leaves, fiercely hot chillies, pungent fish sauce, and aromatic roots, such as ginger and turmeric.

Rice is usually eaten at every meal with soups, curries, fried vegetables and *nam phrik*, a hot sauce, which is prepared in a variety of ways and differs from region to region: *nam phrik pla pon* is a ground dried fish and chilli sauce, *nam phrik pla raa* is a fermented fish and chilli sauce, *nam phrik kapi* is a shrimp paste and chilli sauce, *nam phrik oong* is a minced pork, tomato and chilli sauce. In general, the basic ingredients of *nam phrik* include shrimp paste, garlic, chilli, fermented

¹³⁹ Chaiyotha, 319

fish sauce and lemon juice. *Tom Yum Kung*, a uniquely piquant prawn soup that is renowned for its simplicity, creativity, and delicious taste and is the best example of Thai cuisine, represents the five basic flavours of Thai food which are hot, sweet, sour, salty and sometimes bitter.

Other common seasoning in Thai food include galanga (*khaa*), black pepper, ground peanut, tamarind juice, ginger and coconut milk. As a result, it takes hours to prepare a proper Thai meal in the traditional way as it involves so much peeling and chopping and pounding so it needs time to prepare in advance. Influenced over the centuries by China, India, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Portugal, Thais have integrated into their cuisine with care the foreign ideas that appealed to their tastes, and the result is a seamless cuisine, uniquely their own.

Appendix D: *Palace Cuisine*

Apparently, Thai cooking has four major regional variations plus the highly refined "Royal" cuisine. The latter is sometimes translated into English as *Palace Cuisine*, this being a heritage from the days of absolute monarchy when only the best was served at the Royal table. Every dish must be pleasing both to the eye and the palate. Not only must the ingredients be carefully selected and the cooking techniques as perfect as possible but the presentation must also be creative. Royal culinary art has successfully retained its immortal value through the delicate elaboration and innovative ingenuity of the court ladies, who created and bequeathed sophisticated court recipes for later generations. The dishes they created pleased not only the consumers' taste buds, but also the eyes of any beholders. Such qualities were achieved through their superb presentations. The culinary art of the royal court was considered the highest standard that all chefs wanted to achieve. The art has been nurtured through generations of royal *cordons bleu* chefs, who systematized it into a culinary science unparalleled elsewhere. Though some ethnic dishes were adopted into the palatial main menu, the royal chefs managed to blend them in with traditional dishes and created results, which were unarguably Thai. The royal recipes, in accordance with social changes over time, still reflect harmonious relationship and affectionate interaction between royalty and commoners. On ceremonial occasions, they signify people's solemnity and reverence for the Thai monarchical system.

Appendix E: *The culinary art of the Royal Palace: A Lady's requirement*

The “Inside” was misunderstood by many outsiders, particularly foreign missionaries, who viewed it as the most obvious manifestation of polygamy, an institution of which they strongly disapproved. Even a few outsiders who were granted entry, like Anna Leonowens, insisted on referring to it as “the harem”, and its inhabitants as quasi-prisoners.¹⁴⁰ This view actually had a lot more to do with Western fantasies than with fact. In fact, the inner palace was more likely an ultra-exclusive finishing school, where all the ladies from royal and aristocratic family had to participate. The daughter of a nobleman who had spent all or part of her youth in this rarefied atmosphere was regarded as highly desirable by any future husband, for she would surely be adept at supervising an elegant household of her own in the outside world.

When people expressed their admiration for the artistic qualities of the royal kitchen, it was not only for the beautiful presentation before their eyes, but also for the taste and aroma of the elaborate dishes. Traditional Siamese society highly valued those arts and considered them “a true lady’s decoration”. Many mansions in the Grand Palace were regarded classic finishing schools for well-born ladies who desired to attend in order to learn traditional skills, which ranged from Thai *cordon bleu* cooking, carving of fruits and vegetables, arranging flowers and banana leaves, classical dancing, dress-making, perfume brewing, to good manners.

Masterpieces of sophisticated palatial art included carving *ma-prang*, making *kha-nom beuang*, preparing betel chews and wrapping wantons, all of which needed practice and attentiveness to excel. But the highlight of palatial art and crafts remained the carving of fruits and vegetables where ordinary natural produce like guava, cucumbers, crab apples or pumpkins, were transformed into life-size flowers and miniatures of all sorts. The ingenuity of palace crafts and cooking lies in the artists attempt to create natural and realistic masterpieces. *Kha-nom chor-muang*, for example, is made to resemble the flower that bears its name. A rose could be de-

¹⁴⁰ Viboon Vichitwatakan. *Satree Siam (Siam's women)*, (Yaima Publishing, 1986), 19

petaled, and its petals glazed one by one before being re-constructed into the same rose.¹⁴¹ A notable mansion in the Grand Palace much acclaimed for its recipes, was that of Krom Phra Suddhasininatha, a royal consort of King Rama V, better known as “Chao Sai”. She remained the royal head chef through the 43 years of his reign. The first recipe book using standard measurements was written by Chao Praya Bhasakaravansa’s wife, Lady Plian. She mentioned that, “Siamese cooking is an art in itself, but it should be standardized so that the art can evolve into a science with a proper syllabus for posterity”.¹⁴²

Royal polygamy ended under King Rama VI. A few resisted to relocation – at least one was still in residence as late as the 1960s – but gradually, the ladies of the “Inside” and their numerous attendants left their protected existence and entered another, very different one outside the high walls.¹⁴³ Fortunately, though, palace cooking did not vanish along with the hidden world where it originated. It survived through the descendants of the royal women and, especially in recent years, has been discovered by a wider public through several restaurants that take pride in their re-creations of this unique cuisine.

¹⁴¹ Kannikar, Promsao & Nunta, Benjasilaruk. *Kaeroy Samrub Thai (Exploring Thai Foods)*, (Wannarak Publishing, 1999), 31

¹⁴² Virasinchai, 99

¹⁴³ Lawan Chotamara. *Kroung Saveow PraMongkutklao (The Foods of King Rama VI)* In *Manawasan*. (Vol.1, Jan, 1986), 25

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