

# Traditional Thai Dresses Part I

Ever since I was little, I have been fascinated by the amazingly gorgeous **traditional Thai dresses**. The Thai national or traditional dress is called 'Chut Thai phra ratcha niyom' (ชุดไทยพระราชนิยม) in Thai which means 'Thai dress of royal endorsement'. This kind of dress (chut Thai) is commonly worn on formal occasions as national costume.



*Traditional Thai dresses at the Queen Sirikit Museum of Textiles, Bangkok, Thailand\**

Today we can distinguish between eight different styles of Thai national dresses. They are said to have originated in the mid 20th century. In fact, when HM Queen Sirikit accompanied the King in state visits to Western countries in 1960, she realized the need for a modern national costume. Thus, Queen Sirikit had research conducted concerning historical records of royal dresses. Consequently, eight official designs were developed and also promoted by HM Queen Sirikit herself.

I will focus on traditional (national) Thai dresses for women but of course there are also national attire for men. I have divided this article into two parts, simply because there is so much material and information. Hence, I think it is better to have smaller 'bites' ☐



Traditional Thai dresses featured in this post (photo credit: bangkokpost.com)

## Traditional Thai Dresses

### 1. Chut Thai Chakkri

Chut Thai Chakkri is a very formal and elegant dress. This kind of garment is usually produced by using the Yok weaving technique. A special feature of the Yok weaving method is that it creates additional thickness within the fabrics without adding extra threads. In the Chakkri Style, the 'Pha-Sin', that is the 'Pha-Noong' or skirt, is a full length wrap skirt. This skirt has two pleated folds in front which are called 'Na- Nang'.



*Chakkri style dresses\**



Traditional Thai dress, Chakkri (photo credit: Amat Nimitpark)

## 2. Chut Thai Boromphiman

Like Thai Chakkri, Thai Boromphiman is also a formal evening attire. It can be worn in formal ceremonies and royal functions. The Boromphiman comprises a long sleeved round necked buttoned blouse which is tucked beneath the ankle length 'Pha-Noong' skirt with its front pleats ('Na-Nang'). The blouse and the skirt are sewn together so that they form a one piece traditional dress. The Boromphiman is made of brocaded fabrics in order to create a very luxurious appearance.



*Boromphiman dresses\**

### 3. Chut Thai Siwalai

The Thai Siwalai is a formal evening gown similar to the Boromphiman and the Chakkri. The only difference between these Thai traditional dresses is that the Siwalai has a shawl draped over the long-sleeved blouse. This shawl is also called 'sbai' in Thai. Chut Thai Siwalai is worn in royal ceremonies and other formal occasions. By the way, the term *siwalai* was derived from the English word 'civilized'.



Photo © 2005 Queen Sirikit Museum of Textiles



*Thai Siwalai dress & HM Queen Sirikit in Thai Siwalai dress around 1950\**

### 4. Chut Thai Chakkraphat

First of all, it is important to mention that 'Chakkraphat' means emperor in Thai language. Hence, Thai Chakkraphat is an official and conservative traditional dress with a shawl similar to Chakkri. Nevertheless, it appears even more put together than the Thai Chakkri dress because the shawl is thicker, richly embroidered and decorated with beautiful ornaments. It can be worn in royal or national ceremonies.



### *Thai Chakkraphat dresses\**

In the following part, I will feature the remaining four styles of traditional Thai dresses. Hence, stay tuned if you like these amazingly beautiful garments! Or click **here** to check it out immediately ☐ It is also interesting to note that today the Siamese Fashionista group tries to encourage young Thais to dress traditionally.

Yours, Sirinya

(\*All photos in this post are from the **Queen Sirikit Museum of Textiles** unless otherwise stated, a further source about traditional dresses in Thailand is **here**)