INTERPRETATION OF SIAMESE MODERNITY THROUGH THREE COUNTRY PALACES IN PHETCHABURI

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This research investigates the different visions of modernity and of the tasks of modernisation held by three successive Siamese leaders through the medium of three static palaces in Phetchaburi: Phra Nakhon Kiri of King Mongkut, Phra Ram Ratchanivej of King Chulalongkorn, and Mrigadayavan of King Vajiravudh.

The built environments of the three palaces have 'heritage' values in establishing what is known about the respective personalities of the three monarchs, their political views of modernity and Westernisation.

At Phra Nakhon Kiri, King Mongkut used traditional architecture as a means of bolstering national pride and political legitimacy. The bell-shaped religious structure reflected the key concepts of his reformed Buddhist sect, Thammayut, which was characterised as rational, intellectual, and humanistic. Siam's position as a modern state was manifested through the European-Sino-Siamese hybrid architectural styles. The colonial observatory also reflected his interest in Western scientific knowledge.

King Chulalongkorn manifested his political views of civilisation and modernisation through the Jugendstil architectural style at Phra Ram Ratchanivej. This palace served as a 'footnote' in his multi-polar politics. However, it possibly reflected the cordial relationship between King Chulalongkorn and Kaiser Wilhem II of Germany while countering the powers of France and Britain at the end of his reign.

The remarkable design and layout of Mrigadayavan reflected King Vajiravudh's revival of traditional identity by linking it with his official nationalism. However, he had a strong inclination towards contradiction between traditional and Western lifestyles. And this yielded a context for an attempted synthesis of Siamese and Western cultural experience. This seaside palace also reflected his 'romantic' personality, 'English' lifestyle, and European tastes that he had adopted.

The research has yielded three major insights. There is firstly a methodological problem as it is impossible to ask questions of the three kings. Therefore, how is one to impute the intentions, values, and personalities from architectural expressions? Secondly, it is important to have a holistic knowledge of other disciplines in order to understand the complex interplay between the kings and their palaces. Thus, how is one to bridge the gaps between *Realpolitik,* personalities, and architectural expressions? Thirdly, there is an underlying epistemological problem: the way of seeing how the world changed radically over a period of 74 years. There were absolute shifts in the way that Thai knowledge and modernity were being constructed in accordance with and in reaction to Western influences.

Architectural Heritage Management and Tourism Graduate School, Silpakorn University Academic Year 2006

Student's signature .....

Thesis Advisor's signature.....

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Chapter 1

Introduction

'Architecture immortalises and glorifies something.
Hence there can be no architecture where there is nothing to glorify'
(Ludwig Wittgenstein 1980 cited in Koompong 2003)

Architecture has been one of the most inspired manifestations of Siamese heritage as it is a pillar of both traditional societies and the modern nation-state. In addition, a building can be considered as essentially valuable to societies because it bears witness to traditional cultures, and is an icon representing the spiritual achievement of the past (Pearson and Sullivan 1995). Architecture frequently evolves within a specific socio-cultural context, and apart from expressing the creators' capabilities in artistic achievements, it also express particular ideological positions of its creators and dwellers within a historical period.

In this sense, a house has long been recognised as a reflection of the essential character of the dwellers and the place to which it belongs. According to Piyalada (1999: 1), there is an old Thai saying "*Plook ruan taam jai phu yuu; Plook ou taam jai phu nawn*", which essentially means "building a house in accordance to the wishes of its inhabitants". This saying embodies the notion of a house as a representation of its dwellers as well as within its spatio-temporal context. Hence, the house has been an identifying ground for transmitting non-verbal messages and meanings of the dwellers' identities. In addition, the house visibly encompasses various socio-political aspects of a specific time frame for example, political power, dignity and legitimacy, status and hierarchy, system of belief and ideology, tradition, customs and rituals, and the dwellers' everyday way of life. In other words, the house offers a unique opportunity to identify the inhabitants' ideas and institutions of authority - both religious and secular - embedded in built forms.

Subject of inquiry

This research project presents an interpretive analysis of three countryside palaces of three successive Siamese leaders: King Mongkut; King Chulalongkorn; and King Vajiravudh. The three buildings now have no 'life' and cannot speak on themselves. However, it will be argued here that they represent the three kings' visions of the global politics of the 'West' which threatened Siam from 1851 to 1925, prior to the political revolution in 1932.

Besides being physically located in the same province of Phetchaburi, the three palaces share the similarity of three main issues (outlined below), which were investigated in the following manner:

1. The historical backgrounds of the three kings.
2. The ideas or concepts of modernity of the three kings which are interpreted

and represented in the architectural styles of the three palaces.

3. Comparison the ideas of modernity of the three kings manifested through their palaces.

Significance of the three palaces in Phetchaburi

Since the British defeated the Burmese in 1837, and followed this with the success of Western firearms in settling the Opium War in China in 1842, the Siamese elite led by the monarchy became aware of the increasing powers of European colonisation in Southeast Asia (Batson 1984: 4). In response to the global political circumstances, the Siamese elite introduced the concept of modernity and Westernisation to Siam by incorporating Western ideas of governance and administration, and changing the economy to a market-based cash economy (Keyes 1989: 45). Notably these Siamese elites, who had foreseen the potential benefits from the expansion of trade and production, welcomed the British demands and later signed commercial treaties with the European countries, beginning with Britain in 1855. Subsequently, such Western treaties, led by the Bowring Treaty, removed all trade barriers and established extraterritoriality for European subjects in Siam.

Map 1. Location map of Phetchaburi (Photography courtesy of the Tourism Authority of Thailand).

The mass arrivals of Europeans had major socio-cultural influences on people of Siam, especially in modern scientific knowledge, health, and travel. This began with the ruling elite who had acquired Western scientific knowledge such as mechanical engineering, medical science, navigation, and astronomy from their close contact with foreigners. According to a record in the Thiphakornwong chronicle in 1861 (cited in Koompong 2003: 146), the modern notion of physical retreat travel was initiated by Westerners, who had submitted a petition to King Mongkut (Rama IV) for an open air plot to ride carriages or horses for pleasure and to recuperate. Similarly, visiting new places was believed to be beneficial to health and longevity.

The idea of physical retreat travel significantly challenged the ancient system of divine kingship, where the kings and their royal families were required to reside only in the Grand Palace, which was regarded as a sacred place and the administrative center (Sarakadee 2003). However, this changed during the reign of King Mongkut who had made extensive pilgrimage trips to many provinces, while he was in the monkhood. He subsequently became well acquainted with the living conditions of his subjects. Thus, when King Mongkut ascended the throne in 1851, he realised that visiting the provinces was essential to good governance.

Amongst several holiday destinations, Phetchaburi, or literally 'the city of Diamonds', was selected by royal family members, then passing through senior ranking

officials to commoners because of its unique geographical location and a pleasant climate for good health. Being approximately 120 kilometers southwest of Bangkok, Phetchaburi Province (Map 1) is rich in both cultural and natural resources such as archaeological sites, ancient temples, elaborate handicrafts, white sandy beaches, national parks and mountains, as well as a great variety of local food and sweets. During the mid- 17th century, Phetchaburi was historically important as a post on the trade route from Ayutthaya (a former capital of Siam from 1350 to 1767) to neighboring countries, mainly in Southeast Asia, due to its strategic location next to the borderline with Burma, and the Gulf of Thailand (Smithies 1987). At war, Phetchaburi was a major fort town which played a significant role in stopping enemies from invading Ayutthaya. In addition, it was a home to several princes who were groomed for ascendance to the throne. Currently, it serves as a major transit on the route to the south of Thailand.

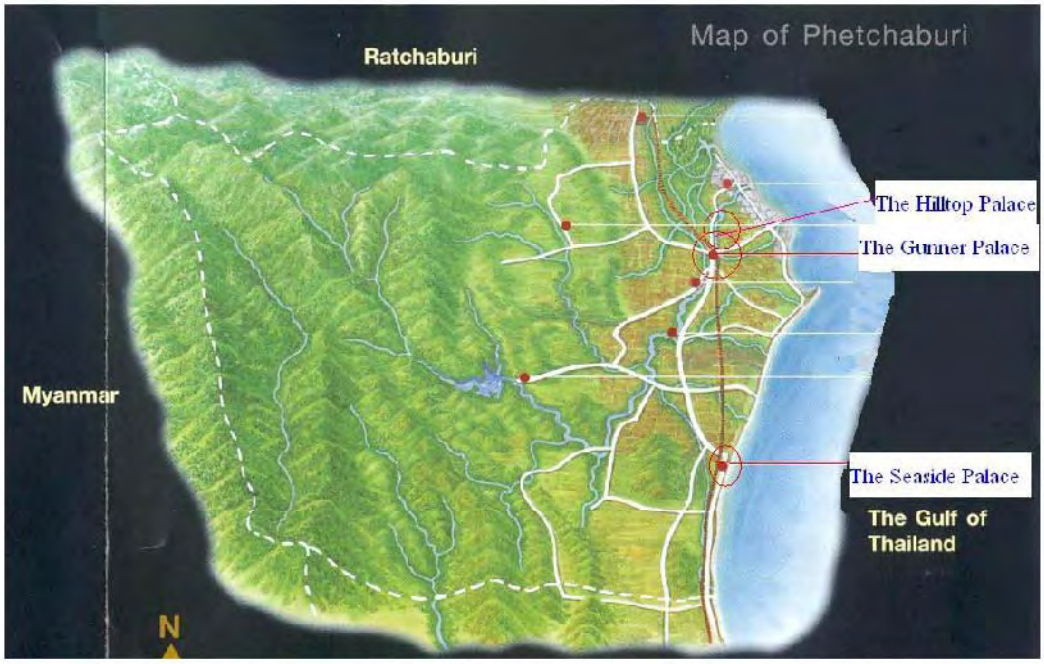
Being the location of this study, Phetchaburi is the home of three royal palaces (Map 2) built to accommodate three kings of the Chakri Dynasty. These palaces comprise:

1. Phra Nakhon Kiri (the Hilltop Palace) of King Mongkut, reigned 1851-1868;
2. Phra Ram Ratchanivej (the Gunner Palace) of King Chulalongkorn, reigned 1868-1910; and
3. Mrigadayavan (the Seaside Palace) of King Vajiravudh, reigned 1910-1925.

It will be argued here that the three successive kings used cultural materials, especially architectural designs embedded in the three country palaces, to represent their 'global views' - either to their own subjects or to the threatening influences of the European diplomats. The three royal palaces are among the most outstanding heritage attractions in Phetchaburi, primarily because of their distinctive geographical locations, the attractive architectural landscapes, and their proximity to Cha Am and Hua Hin - two of Thailand's leading coastal destinations.

It is noteworthy that the architectural designs as well as the construction materials embedded in the three heritage sites are evidence that reveal an evolution of Western influenced architecture in Thailand. Meanwhile, the stylistic architecture of the three palaces also reflects various socio-political European influences, via colonialism, which the Siamese elite welcomed, transformed and localised in a concept of modernisation, Westernisation, civilisation, and nationalism for the sake of their political interests. The three leaders might have used cultural materials, notably architecture as a political tool to strengthen their political governance when Siam was integrated into the new world order led by the 'West' during the nineteenth century.

Nevertheless, there was a desire by many to retain or re-establish their socio-political authority, and to resist European hegemony and the homogenisation of world culture (Powell 1993 cited in Piyalada 1999: 2). Such resistance was based on their centuries-old religious beliefs, which showed a manifestation of socio-political power and national and cultural identity through the traditional architecture of dwellings and religious structures.



Map 2. Location map of three country palaces: Phra Nakhon Kiri (The Hilltop Palace), Phra Ram Ratchanivej (The Gunner Palace) and Mrigadayavan (The Seaside Palace): Photography courtesy of the Tourism Authority of Thailand.

As Coaldrake (1996) has suggested, the rulers in non-colonial countries attempted to keep pace with the Europeans, therefore Western architectural buildings were used to restructure the way that they presented themselves to their subjects and the outside world. King Mongkut and King Chulalongkorn enthusiastically strove to retain their political legitimacy by adapting the policy of modernisation into the structure of Siamese society more in line with European practices. Their policies and agendas were in favour of the supposedly more 'civilised' standards set by the dominant political forces. In contrast, King Vajiravudh resisted Western culture and searched for the spirit of traditional cultures, parallel to his nationalistic policy.

It is also important to point out that the three palaces have value in apparently reflecting what is known about the three kings' personalities, their policies and agendas on foreign relations, and their architectural aspirations as expressed through the diverse styles of their palaces. Clearly, the three palaces reflect the evolution of architecture of the palaces in relation to the transitional periods of Siamese modernisation leading to the end of royal absolutism in 1932, inclusive of the dwellers' ideological intentions. The scale of buildings, appearances, location, settings, and architectural styles were governed not merely by physical factors, but also by a society's ideas, the changes of economics and social organisations – for example, the distribution of resources and authority, the activities and religious beliefs, including values that prevailed at that time.

One of the prominent characteristics of the three palaces is that they encompass particular aesthetic values, in terms of architectural design. Phra Nakhon Kiri, King Mongkut's Palace, is Thailand's first hilltop royal residence, and the symbolic landmark and outstanding identity of Phetchaburi Province. The location and setting of the 'Hilltop Palace' clearly reflected King Mongkut's social status, political intentions,

personalities and religious beliefs. King Chulalongkorn's Gunner Palace was of the German Jugendstil or Art Nouveau architectural style to be adjacent to the Phetchaburi River to serve as a rainy season retreat. King Vajiravudh's Seaside Palace, perhaps one of the world's most beautiful veranda bungalows, was based on a modular system and a response to the opening of the building for a tropical climate. Notably, the long walkway of the royal villa possesses horizontal elements and spaces exposed to the sea breeze for whiling away the time and relaxation.

The three palaces encompass three different individual histories of the three important reigns as a continuum. They are also the Western-influenced buildings which manifest architectural innovations of their creators and dwellers during the colonial period. The architecture at these palaces reflects an application of Western cultural concepts incorporated into the social spirit and the political agendas at that time. This resulted in a synthesis of Siamese and Western cultural experiences (Koompong 2003). In other words, the influences of colonialism led to the creation of a hybrid Siamese-European architecture. Understanding architectural values at these palaces may assist in educating the public and visitors on the evolution of architectural history in Siam, especially in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, it is interesting to note that the three palaces are currently managed by three different government agencies: Fine Arts Department (for the Phra Nakhon Kiri), the Royal Thai Army (for the Phra Ram Ratchanivej), and Bureau of Border Patrol Police (for the Mrigadayavan). As a result, the three agencies have different policies and agendas in preserving and managing their heritage sites. This also includes policies on promoting and interpreting heritage values to modern-day visitors.

Research problems

Although the concept of human thoughts in the past as inferred from the content and patterning of material remains has been recognised, yet no systematic study exists on how architectural designs at the three sites can be explained, and can represent the three kings' visions on global politics of the time. Most visitors mainly enjoy the attractive landscapes of the sites, but only slightly understand and appreciate the connected history of the kings' political thoughts on modernisation through architecture. Furthermore, the unique heritage values of the palaces have never been critically debated among the site managers or policy makers associated with the palaces including scholars in architectural history.

The three palaces, in particular Phra Ram Ratchanivej and Mrigadayavan, today appear to have lost the attention of architectural historians and researchers who have seldom scrutinised architectural expressions at the country palaces as an expression of the dwellers' political views. In just this way, such country palaces might seem unpromisingly small, obscure, and numerically insignificant in proportion to the total built environment. Unlike the palaces in Bangkok, the three country palaces are, by virtue of their functions, able to exhibit the hidden capabilities of the three kings in cultural and architectural achievements.

In the research project on the operational planning of tourism development for Phetchaburi and Prachuap Khiri Khan Provinces conducted by Naphawan Thanakarn (2002) of the Kasetsart University Faculty of Forestry, there was a proposal for an

insightful interpretative center at the three individual palaces in Phetchaburi. Such interpretative technique would be designed to provide historical backgrounds of the sites to visitors. It was clear, however, there was no study addressing a regional interpretative system aimed to enhance the understanding of the individual histories of the three important reigns as a continuum. In other words, the messages (contents) to be conveyed to visitors have rarely been profoundly or thoroughly debated. Similarly, in order to manage and develop the heritage sites, it is important to understand and appreciate their values first[*]. Otherwise, this might lead to their mismanagement.

A few research projects have gone as far as to interpret the socio-political and cultural meanings through architectural expressions during the three reigns. Outstanding examples included Aasen's *Architecture of Siam* (1998), Benjawan's *Karn Ook Bap Phra Nakhon Kiri Changwat Phetchaburi* [An Architectural Design Study of Phra Nakhon Kiri] (2000), Somchart's *The Works of Karl Siegfried Döhring, Architect* (1997), Somkid's *Roob Bab Phra Ubosoth Lae Phra Viharn Nai Samai Phra Bat Som Dej Phra Chom Kloa Choa Yu Hua* [The Pattern of Main Chapels and Viharnd in the Reign of King Mongkut] (2004), Chatri's *Jak Siam Kao To Siam Mai Khaom May Thang Sangkom Lae Karn Muang Nai Ngan Sa Tha Pat Ta Ya Kam* [From Old Siam to New Thai: Social and Political Meanings in Architecture During 1892-1957 AD] (2003) and Koomwong's *Power, Identity, and The Rise of Modern Architecture: from Siam to Thailand* (2003). It is clear that such studies explored the meanings of palaces, temples, dwellings, and government buildings in the context of historical development of forms, concepts, and styles in general. Nevertheless, they provided only a small amount of the information needed in understanding the abstract architectural meanings at the three palaces in Phetchaburi, including their justifications.

Research questions

It is vital, therefore, to analyse how the history of a relatively abstract concept (the three kings' visions of modernisation and their context/derivation) is represented and interpreted through the medium of static buildings that now are 'lifeless'. How is the understanding of a troubled time (that is, the realisation that Siam has a great and rich culture but has been bypassed in terms of technology and global influences) to be interpreted from the houses/palaces of the three successive leaders, and what stories about the three palaces should be conveyed to visitors on site? At present, the history of modernisation in Siam during the three important reigns is not interpreted by the three agencies as a continuum.

A number of questions (as listed below) are also posed as a basis for the necessary inquiries:

- What traces or indications of the three successive kings' political visions, ideologies, and values of modernity are embedded in the architecture, location, form, and layout of the three palaces in Phetchaburi?
- What were the socio-political, cultural, and economic factors in shaping the stylistic characteristics of the individual palaces? How does the architecture at the

[*] Interviewed Associate Professor Somkid Jirathutsanakul on 8 October 2004.

palaces relate to and respond to these factors, and why does it occur in a particular way?

- How did the kings cope with the global changes led by the Westerners and what degree of adaptations can be observed at the palaces?
- How did the kings transfer, localise, and hybridise the Western architecture into the Siamese setting?
- Did the kings 'borrow' the entire concept of modernisation for the sake of their political benefits? If not, what aspects of Westernisation did they resist, and why?

Purposes of study

1. to explore biographical background of the three kings and socio-political phenomena that formed their ideas, values, beliefs, and personalities.
2. to investigate the three kings' ideas of modernity and how they might have used the architectural designs of the three country palaces in Phetchaburi to represent their 'global views' of modernity and Westernisation.
3. to compare the three kings' views of modernity and Westernisation through the palaces in terms of their personalities, foreign policies, and architectural expressions.

Scope of inquiry

The built environments, in particular the architectural designs at the three palaces in Phetchaburi, have reflected the social, political and cultural changes during the reigns of the three successive kings. In order to understand the abstract meanings of their 'global' political views on modernity and Westernisation, it is important to call upon inter-disciplinary insights, from fields as disparate as socio-cultural history, politics, religion, and architectural history in Thailand. It is noted that the scope of the inquiry focuses on the transitional period of modernisation in Siam from the mid-nineteenth century until the end of King Vajiravudh's reign in 1925. Specifically, the research has concentrated on the three kings' biographical backgrounds and personalities, their global views on politics, and their capabilities in cultural and architectural achievements at the palaces. Significantly, these have to be put alongside the kings' other buildings elsewhere, especially Phra Ram Ratchanivej which reflects almost a footnote to King Chulalongkorn's personality, policies on foreign relations and architectural innovations. Nevertheless, it is important to mention his palace here as part of the method of this study. Meanwhile, wider contexts of the architectural history in Thailand, during the pre and post-colonial periods, will need to be acknowledged.

Method of investigation

Dwellings constitute the most remarkable physical evidence that gives a clear understanding of the social order and culture. Architecture, therefore, is a good tool for studying changes and transformation in societies, which are found to be related, mostly to changes in economic structure of the society, culture and political authority. For this research, ethnography has been used as a method of investigation in understanding phenomena such as socio-political change, culture and religion, ritual and ceremonies, and economic conditions including globalisation. The studies of such phenomena are so

highly interrelated that it is difficult to separate them from each other. In other words, it is impossible to study each of them separately.

In many types of research, it is almost impossible to select one single method and apply it to the inquiry at hand. Instead, for several types of research, especially those concerning human and cultural phenomena that are quite complex in nature, the interpretative approaches prove much more productive (Piyalada 1999). As this study aims to understand the potential meanings of the kings' political visions as expressed through the architectural design of their palaces, therefore a number of research techniques have been employed. These techniques demand an engagement with philosophical approaches of phenomenology and ethnography including interviews, participative observation, and the incorporation of historical accounts.

Phenomenology is defined by Seamon (1991: 25) as a way of knowing that seeks to describe the essential qualities of human experience on the world in which that experience happens. Ethnography means the study of people in a sensitive manner through an understanding of their everyday life. Such study employs myths, rituals, and the system of beliefs in an attempt to understand the worlds in which cultural materials, like architecture, are produced and their meanings are assigned (Malkawi and Al-Qudah 2003: 26). Ethnography's objects are individuals, neighborhoods, communities, societies and culture.

As human cognition is not as easily observed and measured as phenomena in the natural sciences, therefore this research is particularly concerned with understanding behaviour from the author's own subjective frame of reference. Research methods are chosen therefore, to try and describe, interpret and explain socio-political situations that possibly influence the ideologies of the three kings through their architectural expression. Accordingly, useful data can be obtained from both primary and secondary sources of information. In order to understand the historical background of the three palaces, data were collected from the primary source (between August 2004 and March 2007) through site visits, and participative observations, archival documentation, in-depth interviews with policy makers, site curators, and on-site tourist guides, including insightful data from numerous seminars. These seminars included:

1. Seminar on "King Mongkut's Contribution to Phetchaburi", organised by the Phetchaburi Provincial Administration Organisation, on 18 October 2004, at the Phetchaburi Auditorium Hall.
2. Seminar commemorating 150 birthday anniversary of King Chulalongkorn (1853-2003), themed "King Chulalongkorn: Siam-Southeast Asia-Jambudvipa", organised by Toyota Thailand Foundation and the Foundation for the Promotion of Social Science and Humanities Textbooks Project on 20 November 2003, at Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Anthropology Center.
3. Seminar commemorating the bicentennial anniversary of the birth of King Mongkut (1804-2004), themed "King Mongkut and Sir John Bowring", organised by Toyota Thailand Foundation and the Foundation for the Promotion of Social Science and Humanities Textbooks Project on 26 November 2004, at Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Anthropology Center.
4. Siam Society Lecture on "The Rise and Decline of Thai Absolutism" by Kullada Kesboonchoo-Mead, on 12 January 2005, at the Siam Society.

5. Seminar on "The Auspicious Occasion of Bicentennial Anniversary of King Mongkut to the Memory of His Majestic Wisdom", organised by Thai Khadi Research Institute, Thammasat University, on 21 September 2005, at Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Anthropology Center.
6. Seminar on "Impacts of the Bowring Treaty on the Present Thai Economy and Polity", organised by Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University, on 10 October 2005.

A participative observation was used in association with other research approaches as the primary way of gathering data. In order to receive cooperation from the three site agencies on disseminating the historical background of the palaces, the author took a group of undergraduate students to visit the sites and made an official request for a guide interpreting the site values. The individual guide at the three palaces included Khun Rattanaporn Koedkasaem (of Phra Nakhon Kiri), Khun Thanabun Phetchklaow (of Phra Ram Ratchanivej), and Khun Pradith Champa (of Mrigadayavan). Apart from sharing the same experiences as the visitors, this form of research is particularly effective in the quest for the heritage value of the palaces and the way that this value has been conveyed to visitors. Also, this research approach contributes to the development of a relationship with the site curators which is essential for further interviews.

As this research focuses on the transitional period of modernity in Siam, therefore it is important to have an understanding of a wider context of the architectural history, especially during the pre-colonial period. The author made a site visit to Bangkok National Museum where essential knowledge of traditional art and architecture has been disseminated to visitors by well-trained volunteer guides. In the context of modern architecture in Siam from the mid-nineteenth century until 1925, the author also accumulated comprehensive knowledge by attending a five-week postgraduate coursework in modern architecture at Silpakorn University.

Prominent scholars in architecture and historiography, notably Ajarn Chatri Prakitnonthakarn and an anonymous commentator from the Association of Siamese Architects (ASA), also participated in the field study through the site observation, and were asked to provide insightful comments and ideas on the subjects of enquiry. Their comments were used as objects of interpretation through a layering process of descriptions and interpretations.

It is noteworthy that this research project is a descriptive-interpretative study which is primarily based on documentary research. A number of secondary sources comprising historical documents relevant to the three kings and three palaces were reviewed from numerous libraries, both in Thailand and overseas, and included postgraduate dissertations, journals, academic and research papers, analysis of relevant reports, books, travel guides, newspaper, brochures, and management plans.

As it is impossible to ask questions to the three departed kings or to directly make the palaces speak themselves, therefore the author searched and documented the material evidence of past activities and then deduced behaviours from the material remains by comparing the three palaces to other prominent buildings associated and erected during the reigns of the three kings.

To learn about the past, the author sought to reconstruct and understand the three kings' global political views of modernity as expressed through architectural design of their palaces and also through their own utterances. To do this, the author obtained data about the past, and organised those data into a coherent system of hypotheses and models. Then ideas were continually tested with experts in architectural history and historians, and revised with the aid of their comments. Notably, the experts who participated in interviews were scholars in architectural history at Silpakorn University: Assistant Professor Somchart Chungsiri-arak, Associate Professor Somkid Jirathutsanakul and Ajarn Chatri Prakitnonthakarn. Khun Krailerk Nana, an expert on Thai history during the reign of King Mongkut and King Chulalongkorn, also gave his views on the Siamese-German relationship. The questions primarily focused on the three kings' possible socio-political meanings through architectural expressions at the palaces. These questions were used flexibly, however they were pursued in more depth when new or interesting ideas arose. The interviews were tape-recorded and on average lasted 45 minutes.

The layering process of analyses and synthesis was made by connecting physical evidence and historical records associated with the kings and the palaces, and inferring the possible meanings. Finally, interpretations of the king's visions on global politics, as well as the potential meanings of their palaces, were considered.

The significance of the research

Understanding ourselves is an important human goal. We associate with the past through our families, politics, religion and nation, and we could not function without some understanding of its values. The study of Siamese modernisation through architecture can be food for thought that assists in understanding what aspects of the internal and external threats the three kings experienced and how they were able to overcome these difficulties by using cultural materials, especially architecture as a political tool in representing their views and intentions. Also, the research provides insights into how the concept of modernity and Westernisation had been transferred, localised, and hybridised in the Siamese setting. In other words, this study helps towards a better understanding of the knowledge, ideas and practices that the kings had confronted and interacted with in the changing political and social environments of the time. It hopefully contributes to a number of contemporary political debates such as colonialism, free trade, globalisation, and nationalism. For example, understanding how the kings coped with political threats may shape and direct the future towards the unrest in the three southern provinces that the Thai government has been facing now.

Significantly, the research provides an important basis for heritage tourism, a major industry in Phetchaburi, in enhancing a heritage interpretation at the three palaces. The study contributes to the holistic understanding of the kings' global views on modernisation and Westernisation, including the socio-political and economic phenomena in shaping the architecture at the palaces. This critical analysis may provide insights for the key stakeholders in developing heritage tourism such as policy makers and site managers responsible for the three palaces, local communities, the Phetchaburi Provincial Administration Organisation (PPAO), Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), and tour operators. Likewise, understanding the abstract concept of socio-political meanings through architecture may contribute to fostering the contents (messages) and interpretive themes of the palaces. Such a concept can be inspiring and meaningful to visitors. The

research data may have significant applications to the site management and development, especially with respect to the interpretive plan.

Research organisation

In a sense as a detective, the study primarily attempts is to seek, interpret and comprehend the abstract concept of the kings' visions and ideologies on global politics which are reflected through architecture of their palaces in Phetchaburi. The study has been designed according to socio-political sequences during the three reigns by including the individual background, the analyses of political phenomena both internal and external, and the analyses of architectural expressions. On this basis, *Interpretation of Siamese Modernity through Three Palaces in Phetchaburi* has been divided into five chapters, namely:

Chapter One is the present introduction presenting an overview of this inquiry, its background and the questions to be investigated, including the methodology.

Chapter Two illustrates King Mongkut's background as a monk prior to his accession to the throne. It analyses the key characteristics of his reformed Buddhist sect, the Thammayut sect, which have had influence on the design of his residence and his religious structuring of Phra Nakhon Kiri.

Chapter Three examines King Chulalongkorn's global views in creating Siam as a modern nation-state along Western lines. This chapter analyses King Chulalongkorn's diplomatic policy on balancing powers**.** The king strove to bring the new powerful European countries into a position to balance the colonial powers at the end of his reign. The prosperous Siamese-German relationship may have contributed to the construction of his German style palace, Phra Ram Ratchanivej.

Chapter Four concentrates on King Vajiravudh's policies on official nationalism in that he attempted to revive the spirit of traditional art and the royalty's role as a patron of Siamese cultural heritage. The chapter discusses the remarkable design and layout of his seaside palace, Mrigadayavan, which reflected his political identity and personality that had been in part formed through his education in Britain.

Chapter 5 is the concluding discussion, which summarises and discusses, making a comparison of the three kings' personalities, their political policies, and the architectural expressions of the three palaces in Phetchaburi. The study also provides suggestions and recommendations on approaches to better conveying the stories of history itself, especially the history of a relatively abstract phenomenon such as modernisation, Westernisation, globalisation, and the post-colonial endeavour to modern-day visitors.

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Chapter 2

King Mongkut and Phra Nakhon Kiri

By the mid-nineteenth century, Siam was under the global influence of colonialism which was dominated by European countries. The ruling elite, led by King Mongkut, played an active role in introducing and hybridizing Western knowledge and practices of modernisation to local cultures. Their quest for the superiority of Siam as a modern and civilised kingdom in the region was expressed through architecture. Possibly, King Mongkut might have used numerous architectural styles, for the sake of political interests, to impress his subjects, especially the ruling elite and the European diplomats. This led to the creation of numerous hybrid Siamese-European structures in several of the palatial grounds both in Bangkok and upcountry. Seven country residences both close to and far from Bangkok were erected during his reign, notably the Bang Pa-In Palace and Chankasem Palace in Ayutthaya, Narai Ratchanivej Palace in Lop Buri, and Phra Nakhon Kiri, in Phetchaburi.

Figure 1. King Mongkut or King Rama IV, the scholar king who introduced modernisation to Siam (Photography courtesy of Poraminthra Krouethong).

Amongst the country palaces erected during the reign of King Mongkut that are still in existence, Phra Nakhon Kiri is the largest and most outstanding royal residence. This site complex has a unique geographical setting and attractive landscape and also contains a number of buildings in European-Sino-Siamese hybrid architectural styles. Such architecture designs manifest King Mongkut's personal identity, in terms of his visions of modernity, religious belief, and personality. The Hilltop Palace significantly reflects the influence of Western notions on science, health, and travel in the mid-nineteenth century. In addition, Phra Nakhon Kiri currently is the leading symbolic landmark in Phetchaburi and also the most visited national museum in Thailand that attracted 447,686 visitors[1] in 2006.

As architecture possibly reflects the identity of dwellers and creators, this chapter attempts to investigate and analyse aspects of King Mongkut's ideology of

[1] Interviewed Khun Pathom Rasitanont, Head and Curator of Phra Nakhon Kiri, on 25 November 2007.

As architecture possibly reflects the identity of dwellers and creators, this chapter attempts to investigate and analyse aspects of King Mongkut's ideology of modernisation, religious belief, and personality through the medium of static buildings at Phra Nakhon Kiri. The aim is to infer about the architectural history in Siam, and to determine to what extent political and religious meanings are embedded in the architectural forms of Phra Nakhon Kiri, and the reasons why. A thorough investigation was first required to understand the socio-political phenomena and the background of the king, particularly during his monkhood and while on the throne.

Freeman Tilden, one of the pioneering experts in interpretation for national parks in the United States, proposed fundamental principles of interpretation that have guided much interpretive planning for both natural and cultural heritage. Tilden (1977: 9) stated that information itself is not interpretation. Instead, interpretation is revelation based on information. Thus, in order to inspire visitors' curiosity about the great values of political and religious meanings through static buildings, it is important to have 'new' and 'holistic' information about King Mongkut, notably of his 27-year monastic life which led to his religious reforms associated with his close contact with Christian missionaries. Such phenomena, prior to his enthronement, had a great influence on his modern visions, which subsequently were applied to his modern polity.

Biographical background

King Mongkut, or King Rama IV, was the fourth monarch of the Chakri Dynasty who took a leading role in completely opening his kingdom to the West in the mid-nineteenth century. He was born on 18 October 1804 as the forty-third child of King Rama II (reigned 1809-1824), and the first son to be born to Queen Sir Suriyendra. As his mother was elevated to the lofty status of Principal Queen, the young prince received the title of Chao-Fa (Celestial Prince) and he was rightly heir to the throne after his father. He had a younger brother, Prince Jutamani (born on 1 September 1808), who was politically and militarily powerful. To avoid potential anarchy and confusion, King Mongkut elevated his brother to the status of the Second King known as King Pinklao, shortly after his accession to the throne in 1851.

The early days of Prince Mongkut were spent within the walls of the Grand Palace, out of sight and contact with the ordinary everyday life of the millions who later became his subjects. His education was that set down by savants of centuries ago as being necessary for those who were born to rule. He learned Siamese and elementary Pali, literature and poetry; Siamese history of mighty kings of the past; and the art of war including the use of unwieldy weapons and the riding and control of elephants and horses. For the sake of his soul and as a safeguard for his future conduct, he was taught the rudimentary precepts of Buddhism, Hindu mythical geography and cosmology, which taught that Mount Kailasa was the center of the universe, where the Gods dwelt on its summit, and that on its slopes were to be found miraculous animals in snowbound forests call the Himavanta (Moffat, 1961: 5). Additionally, he was required to have a thorough knowledge of extracts from a work entitled 'Code of Morality of Kings', together with the royal ceremonies and customs. On the other hand, there were serious gaps in his education; he probably learned little about the manners and customs of commoners including their problems and wants. Significantly, he hardly knew anything of the great

contemporary world beyond the confines of Southeast Asia or of the science developed in the West (Blofeld 1987: 10; Seri and Kukrit 1987: 2). Except India, China, Burma, and a few tributary states of Siam, Prince Mongkut's world revolved around the Grand Palace, as Seri and Kukrit (1987) remarked "Europe and England were to him then hearsay, and America was mere gossip".

Being regarded as the heir apparent, Mongkut was the only prince during his father's reign who was ceremonially lustrated with a great deal of pomp in his ninth year. What enhanced his celestial honour among the Siamese ruling class was that he underwent the first lavish tonsure ceremony in Bangkok at the age of thirteen. This ceremony was a symbol of regeneration and an initiation into a new order of life (Moffat 1961: 6). Also, undertaking the two royal ceremonies manifested that Prince Mongkut had accumulated merit (bun) and ability to bestow patronage (barami) on other princes of King Rama II.

Prince Mongkut was given an opportunity to take a more active part in public affairs. It was recorded that in his fifteenth year, he went out to the Three Pagoda Pass in Kanchanaburi to assist his uncle in giving a royal welcome to a large party of Mons who had fled to Siam to escape persecution in Burma (Blofeld 1987: 12). His first travel out of the palace improved his knowledge of Siam's topography and ordinary people whom he could never had met in Bangkok. Also, this travel cultivated the Siam-Mons relationship, which consequently led to him forming a new Buddhism sect, the Thammayut sect (Naruemol 1982: 17).

In accordance with the ancient tradition, Prince Mongkut spent seven months receiving elementary instruction in the Sublime Doctrine and in the art of mediation at Wat Mahathat as a novice in his fourteenth year. On returning to the life of a layperson, he was appointed as the Director-General of the Royal Pages' Department (Rong 1973: 118). During the next few years, he took to himself a wife named 'Noi' and already had two children by the time he reached eighteen (Sor 1979: 62).

King Rama II fell gravely ill in July 1824, and two royal white elephants coincidentally died within the same month, which signified that an inauspicious phenomenon would occur in Siam. His illness was so serious that he was not able to speak, until his death on 21 July 1824. Also, this was shortly after Prince Mongkut had entered the monkhood for fifteen days at Wat Mahathat, at the age of twenty, to fulfill his duty as a Theravada Buddhist male. As earlier Siamese history had shown, the status of Celestial Prince did not guarantee Mongkut an automatic right to the throne. King Rama II had made no formal provision for the succession. Thus, the Accession Council comprising the Princes, nobles, and chief rulers of the land would decide the selection of a monarch by taking into account the political circumstances of the time (Bradley 1969: 156). The Accession Council selected Prince Jesda Bodin, one of his elder half-brothers who was the son of a concubine, to succeed the throne as King Nangklao (Rama III, reigned 1824-1851). Prince Jesda Bodin's mother was a daughter of the governor of Nonthaburi, a commoner.

Although Prince Jesda Bodin was senior to Prince Mongkut, being born in 1787, he nevertheless had no precedence over Prince Mongkut to the throne by right of birth. However, he was more experienced in supervising the royal trade and monopolies,

and was an extremely powerful political figure (Kullada 2004: 21). Because of his influence resulting from his involvement in trade, production, and state administration, Prince Jesda Bodin was better known to the nobles and to the people at large. Also, he was known on account of his age, position, ability, the fact that he had been in many campaigns, having held a number of important posts during the reigns of his grandfather (King Rama I) and his father (King Rama II). Finlayson (1826: 128) commented on his political domination, observing that "All matters relating to peace or war, to foreign intercourse, or domestic regulations, to affairs of religion, of policy or justice, are equally at his disposal, and rarely referred to the King (Rama II)". Similarly, Crawfurd (1830: 193) cited that Europeans generally considered him capable, intelligent, and well-informed. More importantly, he paid close attention to the provincial governments, the royal and state treasuries, and relationship with immigrant communities and foreign states. Thus, he gained the respect and support of the members of the royal family and of the great nobles, especially the powerful Bunnag clan led by Chaophraya Phra Khlang (Dit Bunnag).

During the pre-modern state or prior to the first half of the nineteenth century, the territorial administration in Siam was loosely controlled due to geographical, infrastructure, and communication barriers. Siam was not a single political organisation under a unified authority; the central administration could exercise direct rule only over an area within a radius of two-day travel (Chaiyan 1994: 2). In fact, the central bureaucracy (the core area), and a number of other major and minor townships had varying degrees of autonomy. In time of peace, the individual townships ran their own affairs and paid tribute to the central administration after they had taken their cut. Minor townships at the periphery were responsible for paying tributes to major ones every three years (Manop 1993). This tribute took the traditional form of silver and gold trees.

It could be said that the power of the monarch was not always absolute because there was a balance of power among king, princes, and nobility (Prudhisan 1992: 8). Both princes and great nobles could amass manpower and enhance their bargaining power vis-à-vis the king, checking his absolutist pretensions. This observation was likewise made by Kullada Kedboonchoo, a distinguished scholar on the political history of Thailand. There was a need to strengthen the relationships between the king and his aspirant nobles to receive protection from their supporters and to access the powerbase of the warrior-leaders. Being a patron, the king was the source of a noble's livelihood, and he granted his clients (the noble) manpower and guaranteed it. In return, the noble was expected to contribute his resources for the king's use in time of both peace and war. It could be said that although theoretically absolute, in fact the king's power depended on the co-operation of the great families who controlled the manpower and strategic territories. Under King Rama II, Prince Jesda Bodin and the nobility led by Chaophraya Phra Khlang (Dit Bunnag), who at that time had influence over Siam's military, political, economic, and commercial domains, formed a close alliance to reap personal benefits from the royal junk trade with China, and exercised their prerogatives in buying from and selling to western traders. Thus, it could be said that Prince Jesda Bodin was supported by high-ranking princes and nobles because they considered him a strong ally to further enhance their political power (Kullada 2004: 24).

Given the political situation at the time, Prince Mongkut saw refuge in a Buddhist monastery where his saffron robes might shield him from the winds of political peril. He was concerned for his safety, and chaos could arise if he still had ambitions for the throne by using force. It could be asserted that Prince Mongkut refused to manage the conflict by the use of force (Naruemol 1982: 42). Meanwhile, his overall competency in those days was perceived as inferior to his half-brother who had gained more fame, political power, and support from princes and nobility at large. Additionally, he had asked for the advice from his respected uncle and senior relatives who suggested that it was not yet his time to ascend the throne. Thus, he decided to permanently remain in the monkhood to avoid the political conflict, whilst giving the impression to the new king that he had no ambitions for the throne. However, it was said that Prince Mongkut used Buddhism as a means to return to his political power, like the late monarchs in the Ayutthaya state, such as King Chakkraphat and King Songtham (Wyatt 1981: 91). Apparently, the monastic life in saffron robes greatly suited Prince Mongkut and ultimately contributed to his accession to the throne upon his brother's death in 1851.

Prince Mongkut's monastic life

Without an understanding of his 27-year monastic life prior to his kingship, it will be difficult to interpret his political and religious visions of modernity through the architecture of his Hilltop Palace. His monastic life played a significant role in cultivating his wisdom, innovation, and rationalism, which greatly influenced his kingship along with his modern state policies. Meanwhile, his religious reforms in accordance with Western modern science marked the beginning of a fundamental shift in doctrinal Thai Buddhism. Such a theoretical shift involved the rejection of the hierarchical notion of truth, which underlay traditional Buddhist teachings and was replaced with the notion of intellectualism, rationalism, and humanism. In order to understand his visions of modernity, it is essential to investigate these following questions. How was the nature of his 27-year monastic life? Why did he lay a foundation for a new Buddhism sect, the Thammayut? What were the key characteristics of Thammayut? What were the impacts of religious reforms on his state policy, and later as king? Was there any relationship between the new Buddhism sect and broader culture, notably architecture as manifested at his Hilltop Palace?

In his priesthood, Prince Mongkut was known as 'Makuto Bikkhu', meaning 'Mongkut the Beggar'. Makuto Bikkhu spent his first days wearing the saffron robe at Wat Samorai (now Wat Rachathivas), a forest monastery some distance from the capital, which was famous for teaching meditation and spiritual exercise. However, he was disenchanted with this training, which was very far from his concept of Buddhism, as his masters could not provide him with the doctrinal and canonical explanations behind such practices (Moffat 1961). The senior monks at Wat Samorai valued meditation as a means of acquiring supernatural powers which the Lord Buddha himself regarded as unimportant by– products of the practice of the mind. Makuto Bikkhu believed that the true teachings of the Lord Buddha were that of strict discipline, cultivating restraints, compassion and wisdom and regular practice of mind control. As reasons and texts were not the concerns of his masters, the princely monk returned to Wat Mahathat after one year. However, he still found many senior monks were not strictly observing monastic discipline; the rites were conducted mechanically and scholarship was of low value. Makuto Bikkhu spent

three years taking up Pali studies and was the first member of the royal family to sit the Pali examinations, which he passed to grade five in just three days, according Ishii (1986: 155). He later became one of the leading Pali scholars. Traditionally, supporting Buddhism has been an important concern of the Siamese monarchs because the religion supports a legitimation of the kingship (Ishii, 1986). Therefore, the king must ensure the survival of the Sangha through provision of material support as well as ecclesiastical ranks for successful monks. King Rama III was pleased with Makuto Bikkhu's outstanding scholarship, and rewarded him with a high ecclesiastical rank making his half-brother the chief examiner for the Pali Examinations. It is said that under Makuto Bikkhu's direction, religious teachings underwent a revival and attained high standards never seen before (Vella 1957: 39).

In-depth studies of the Pali Canon led Makuto Bikkhu to see serious discrepancies between the Buddhist doctrine and the actual practices of Siamese monks. He discovered that many senior monks could not make a clear distinction between the teachings of the Buddha and Brahmanist or animist accretions (Blofeld 1987: 17). Most of the monks at that time were relatively lax, easygoing, unwilling to reform, and ignored some important rules of conduct. Furthermore, they were more intent on winning magic powers and other superstitions rather than searching for liberation from the cycle of birth and death (Blofeld 1987: 16). Apparently, traditional Theravada Buddhism was often clouded by the mythological overlay mixed with magical beliefs, superstitions, and a mixture of Brahmanistic rites (Jackson 1989: 46). He even considered leaving the order, feeling it meaningless to remain unless he received some better sign of the monastic line of succession back to the original essence. As Thomas Kirsch notes:

> "He[Mongkut] was so anguished about the discrepancy he vowed that he would disrobe if he did not receive some sign that the monastic line of succession back to the Buddha had not been broken in Thailand". (Kirsch 1978: 58).

Subsequently, Makuto Bikkhu met a Mon monk whom he came to regard as upholding the tradition, which continued the original practices. To this point, it is interesting to investigate why the princely monk chose to pursue the Mon monastic practices. This was likely because he traced his maternal ancestry to the Mon ethnicity. Also, he had a good relationship with the Mon ethnic groups to whom he had given a royal welcome, in his fifteenth year, when they had fled to Siam to escape persecution in Burma. Furthermore, the Mons once had a great kingdom of their own which was later engulfed by the kings of Burma and Siam. Being devout Theravada Buddhists as a result of their close contact with Ceylon (Sri Lanka), the Mons retained more faithful practices in carrying out the ancient traditions of the Ceylonese order, which is an unbroken line of the Buddha's original teachings. They strictly followed the rules of conduct and were able to interpret the sacred texts in the light of wisdom, giving precise explanations for everything they contained. Makuto Bikkhu became convinced that the Mon monastic practice was a pure form. He learnt the proper way to meditate and became familiar with the scriptures and gained fluency in the Pali literature and language. Later, he laid the foundation of a new lineage of ordination, which organisationally and ideologically became a distinct sect, the Thammayut, meaning 'those adhering to the doctrine or Dhamma', in accordance with the Mon tradition (Jackson 2003: 38).

Being skeptical about his earlier ordination, which he felt was invalid, Makuto Bikkhu was determined to receive his new ordination according to strictly defined rituals, and wore his robes in the Mon style that required both shoulders to be covered (Kirsch 1978 and Blofeld 1987). Such a style of wearing the robes was different from the majority of Siamese monks who wore their robes baring one shoulder. This style was adapted apparently to conform to a Pali textual reference that monks should not remove the outer robe when entering a building. Although King Rama III had given Makuto Bikkhu considerable support in his various monastic endeavors, it was his half brother's religious reforms that troubled King Rama III the most. King Rama III was worried because Makuto Bikkhu might impose this robing style onto the entire Sangha, which was the root cause of Sangha disharmony as it defamed the dignity of Siam (Naruemol 1982: 129). Consequently, this was the main reason why King Rama III rejected the princely monk's candidacy as his successor to the throne at the end of his reign. Nevertheless, Makuto Bikkhu was willing to comply with the king's concern about his robing style, which implied that he was concerned for the sake of his political interest more than his religious purpose (Naruemol 1982: 130).

Characteristics of the Thammayut sect

The conceptual context of the Thammayut sect stemmed from the religious dilemma which Prince Mongkut had experienced while he was a Buddhist monk at Wat Samorai and Wat Mahathat. Makuto Bikkhu and his followers entered a new stage that was directed at upgrading monastic practices and purifying Buddism through the process of returning to the 'roots', making it true to the original teachings and practices of the Buddha, as Gridwold (1961, 18) has explained:

> "They (Mongkut and his followers) rejected all practices that had no authority other than custom. They accepted all canonical regulations, not merely following them mechanically, but endeavoring to keep their significance ever present in their consciousness. They were expected to understand the formulas they recited, the reasons for the rules they were subject to, and the meaning of the acts they performed".

This led to the encouragement of the Pali study and the import of numerous canonical texts from Ceylon between 1840 and 1844. Being the fountain-head of the purest doctrine, Ceylon had a great influence on Siamese cultural art, particularly the architectural forms, which to be discussed in a later section.

Since the new movement focused on the canonical studies, Makuto Bikkhu firmly rejected most of the Buddhist literature including traditional beliefs and practices related to magic, superstitions, and spirit-medium cults which were popular and practiced during that period of time on the grounds that those practices were orthodox. Significantly, he discarded the cosmology and cosmogony represented in Traiphum (the Three World Cosmology), a famous religious text which stood at the core of Siamese traditional belief for centuries (see political function of the Traiphum in Jackson 1993: 64-100). It can be said that the traditional Traiphum cosmology was challenged by Makuto Bikkhu's religious reforms and the presence of Western scientific knowledge. He argued that the notion of heaven and hell, which was described in Traiphum, was a superstitious belief, therefore incompatible with Buddhism. Meanwhile, his campaign against superstitions

was one of his remarkable public proclamations in the 1860s. King Mongkut along with Siamese elite and modernists saw the irrational belief in superstition as an obstruction to the path of modernisation. He insisted that persons committing crimes or frauds with respect to spirit-mediumship and black magic should be punished severely (King Mongkut cited in Pattana 1999: 8).

Rationalism is one the distinctive characteristics of the Thammayut sect which primarily aims to purify the religion by restoring it to the original context and essence. Furthermore, Buddhism is a rational religion and there is nothing in Buddhism that opposes the scientific views which he learned during his close contact with Christian missionaries both while as a monk and later as king (Kirsch 1978: 58). This rationalism was clearly explained by Lingat (cited in Tambiah 1976: 211) in his writing:

> "Even more perhaps than evasion, he [Mongkut] hated mechanical performances which transform devotion into nonsensical ritual. He expected the Bhikkhu [monk] to understand the prayer and Pali formulate that he was to recite, reason for the rules to which he was subjected, and the meaning of the acts that were demanded of him. Thorough knowledge of the canonical books, which had been the starting point of, and the justification for the reform, should be the first care of him who puts on the Yellow Robe".

The reform sect was created as a reaction to the lax religious practices of the Mahanikaya, the mainstream Buddhism. On the contrary, the Thammayut sect emphasised strict discipline and practices. One of Makuto Bikkhu's concerns was the proper monastic discipline including the way they dress. The Thammayut sect also stood for the correct observance of the Vinaya precepts. However, what made Thammayut distinct from the already established Mahanikaya sect was in the manner of wearing the three layers of robes, the holding of a larger alms bowl, and chanting in Pali. There were other less technical, but nevertheless important reforms, which the princely monk instituted amongst his followers. In general, Mahanikaya monks ordinarily consume two meals a day, although some were like the Thammayut monks, consuming only one meal a day, and were expected to consume only foods that were placed in their alms bowls. The Thammayut monks were also expected to attain some proficiency in both meditation and scholarship. Unlike the Mahanikayai monks, the Thammayut monks were encouraged to preach in the native language, rather than recite or memorise scripture filled with Pali words that were difficult for laymen to understand. It was during this time that the Siamese Sangha began witnessing the reawakening of scholarship after a lapse of many decades.

Although his religious reforms were consistent with the Western scientific knowledge, a number of scholars (see Tambiah 1976: 226, Jackson 1989: 45, Griswold 1961: 29, Riggs 1966: 105, Somboon 1984: 39, Blofeld 1987: 41) argued that Makuto Bikkhu's religious rationalism was incomplete. It is also interesting to note that although he criticised many forms of traditional beliefs as superstitious, yet in some respects he still worshipped the Brahmanical deities (Jackson 1989: 59). Even when he made a clear distinction between Buddhism and Brahmanism or animist accretions, he still revised the Brahmin rituals slightly by introducing Buddhist elements into it, and adding a human touch. According to Griswold (1961: 29), Makuto Bikkhu did not have any objection to Brahmanism as long as it did not threaten to contaminate Buddhism itself. Hindu gods

could be admitted as supporters of a Buddhist monarchy, as long as Buddhists did not mistake them for Buddhism. Today, all the most conspicuous features necessarily remain Brahmanistic. Interestingly enough, Wichayan Wichien Prasat, a Khmer style tower at the Hilltop Palace, also manifests his religious belief in both Buddhism and Brahmanism, which will be discussed later.

Humanism is one of the remarkable characteristics of the Thammayut sect. For Makuto Bikkhu, Buddha is a human being, a wise and gentle teacher who has developed his own mental powers to an unusual degree, without the slightest recourse to supernatural aid (Griswold 1961: 21). Similarly, Riggs (1966: 101) commented that his chief achievement was "in gradually changing the public image of the monarch from that of a divine king, apotheosised by the magical and supernatural rites of the Brahman priests, to that of the leading human defender and patron of the Buddhist Church". Again he commented: "Whereas in the Brahmanic tradition the king was a Devaraja or human vehicle of the gods, for Vishnu, or Siva, in the Buddhist view the king was a man…" (1966: 99). It is interesting to note that a number of royal ceremonies of divine kingship which were heavily Brahmanistic were replaced by a more Buddhist ceremony in order to address the role of the king as a Buddhist monarch. This had a great influence in changing the public image of the monarch as Dhammaraja (a king who rules in accordance with the Dhamma) to the righteous king who ruled with propriety, justice, and impartiality that persists until today.

Prince Mongkut's contact with missionaries

Makuto Bikkhu's religious reforms were also influenced by his increasing exposure to Western missionaries and intellectuals, who were becoming more common in Siam at that time. The French priest Pallegoix was the first foreigner who introduced him to Western knowledge. As his church happened to be adjacent to Makuto Bikkhu's residence, the two men frequently exchanged Latin and Pali instructions, and a knowledge of Western classical culture which, after his accession, the princely monk displayed by using the Latin style Rex Siamensium (Ishii 1986: 157-158). He even bought a printing press to print documents of his sect at Wat Bovonnivet, where he was the abbot from 1836 to his enthronement in 1851. Incidentally, he developed a lively home for intellectual discourse by inviting American Protestant missionaries, in particular Dr.Caswell, Dr.Bradley and Dr.House to teach Western languages, arts, and sciences. He took up the study of English with them when he was 40 years of age. Armed with English, Makuto Bikkhu avidly studied geography, physics, chemistry, mathematics, and astronomy, and absorbed information about current affairs in the world. His interest in the Western culture can be found in the accounts written by his son, Prince Damrong (cited in Fine Arts Department 1999: 10), as follows:

> " …The King [Mongkut] realised that there were many changes taking place in the world caused by the expansion of Western power, and that consequently Thailand would have gradually more relations with the West. He began learning Western languages to have a better understanding of them. They included mathematics, astrology, history, political science, etc. this was when he was from 40 to 47 years of age…"

Despite the close contact with missionaries, whose scientific knowledge implied the superiority of Christianity over Buddhism, the princely monk could not ignore this challenge. For him, Buddhism had to be defended from attacks by an alien religion. Failure to do so meant the defeat of Siamese values and the legitimacy of the ruling class as he was still a member of the royal family, a prince of the highest rank who was eligible to ascend the throne (Ishii 1986; 156-158). His pride in Buddhism was shown in the following excerpt from a letter he wrote to friends in New York in 1849.

> "The wise man like myself and other learned have had known that this religion of Christ was but ancient superstition of the Jew who were Barburious…We communicate with the English and American friends for knowledge of science & arts not for any least admiration or astonishment of vulgar religion…" (Mongkut 1932, cited in Ishii 1986: 160).

His determination towards Buddhism was remarkable as he thought many stories in the Bible were "contrary to the common sense". Also, he once said to his Christian friends: "What you teach people to do is admirable, but what you teach them to believe is foolish", according to Griswold (1961: 21). The long-term contact with Christian missionaries while in the monkhood and kingship provided him and other Siamese elite insight into global political circumstances, particularly the increasing power of European colonisation in Southeast Asia, notably after the British defeated the Burmese (traditionally Siam's most powerful adversary) in 1837, followed by the success of Western arms in the settlement of the Opium War in China in 1842 (Batson 1984: 4).

Prince Mongkut left the monastic life and was crowned on the death of King Rama III in 1851. It is interesting to note that King Rama III would have liked one of his sons, Prince Annop then 31 to succeed him. However, the Bunnag clan, the most influential noble clan in Siam during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, as Therdphong (2004) has pointed out, believed that they would not get along with Prince Annop that well. Other candidates, who were either sons of King Rama II or King Rama III, were dismissed, including Prince Juthamani, the militarily powerful younger brother of Prince Mongkut. Eventually, the Bunnags, who saw the potential benefits from the trade treaty, decided to support the princely monk who was likely to support their concept of free trade and to encourage relations with the West. Significantly, Prince Mongkut was probably sympathetic to opening the country to the West, appeared to pose the least threat to their power, and did not have much bargaining power vis a vis the Bunnags as he spent nearly three decades in a monastic life (see insightful analyses on King Mongkut's accession to the throne in Therdphong 2004 and Kullada 2004: 29).

It is noteworthy that prior to his accession to the throne, Prince Mongkut had accumulated merit (bun) and ability to bestow patronage (barami) through his religious reforms so that his social role would remain in the people's memories. Ultimately, his religious domination brought the princely monk to political hegemony, and he hardly encountered any major obstacles, as there were limited external threats. However, after his enthronement, King Mongkut encountered a number of threats challenging his political legitimacy, notably influences of noblemen led by the Bunnag clan; an existing political domination of his brother, King Pinklao; a colonial expansion; religious disharmony of the

two Buddhist sects as a result of his religious reform; and his limited political base as he had spent nearly three decades in a monastic life.

It can be argued that because of his political threats, King Mongkut needed to accord an urgent priority to the survival of his throne (internal polity) and of his nation-state (international polity), rather than protecting the Thammayut sect from the religious disharmony. Accordingly, it was important for King Rama IV to strengthen his kingship and political hegemony, in which he subsequently played various roles through his writings and cultural materials, notably architecture. Interestingly, most Buddhist temples enjoying his support or renovation were associated with his direct family such as his grandfather, grandmother, parents, spouse, siblings, and sons. Apart from his personal relationships shown as gratitude and family patronage, this also possibly manifested his political aspirations as he attempted to enhance the glory of his own genealogy through religious patronage. Similarly, he attempted to strengthen his kingship as well.

King Mongkut and the revival of King Narai's glories

King Mongkut was significantly influenced by King Narai the Great (reigned 1656 – 1688), who had excelled in foreign policy, international trade, and Western scientific knowledge, notably astronomy (Pongthida 1985 cited in Somkid 2004: 28). Apart from his personal faith towards King Narai's achievements, King Mongkut realised that the socio-political situation during his reign shared some similarities with those during that of King Narai: both kingdoms encountered threats from the 'West'. King Narai was able to save the Ayutthaya kingdom from external threats by using a diplomatically compromising approach and by bringing the Siamese more knowledge about 'global' affairs*. It could be said that the kingdom of Ayutthaya, during the reign of King Narai the Great, was one of the significant globalisation centers in Southeast Asia, where a large number of foreign vessels from many parts of the world came to trade.

King Narai supported a policy of opening Ayutthaya to the world. Also, he sent envoys to the courts of King Louis XIV of France, Sultan Sulaiman of Persia and the Kang-His, the Emperor of China; and in return many countries sent similar ambassadors to Ayutthaya. Also, the king was able to invite technocrats, engineers, physicians, architects and scientists from abroad to work on some of his projects, notably in building a city fortress, making reservoirs, and water pipes. Possibly, King Mongkut might have been influenced by King Narai's achievements which he later adapted to his own period.

It is noteworthy that King Mongkut gave significance to King Narai by emphasising his vision of modernity. For example, in his writing, King Mongkut spent one-and-a-half pages describing King Narai's socio-political modernisation, whereas in the same volume he wrote only 12 lines about King Naraesuan who liberated Ayutthaya from the Burmese occupation. In addition, King Mongkut followed King Narai's policies of having a second palace in the countryside - the Hilltop Palace in Phetchaburi, whereas King Narai's second palace was in Lopburi. King Mongkut also included foreign relations in his policies by sending a group of Siamese diplomats to cultivate relationships with

* Interviewed Associate Professor Somkid Jirathutsanakul on 8 October 2004.

Great Britain and France. In the meantime, King Mongkut also supported three temples associated with King Narai: Wat Kavisaram, Wat Choomphol Nikayaram, and Wat Senasanaram.

Interestingly, both kings were keen on the scientific Western knowledge of astronomy. This can be seen from their observatories erected in the countryside palaces of Lopburi and Phetchaburi. It can be asserted that King Mongkut attempted to revise King Narai's dignity as the Great Monarch who brought modernisation and prosperity into Ayutthaya. With respect to this approach, King Mongkut also attempted to strengthen his own kingship as the 'Great' in the eyes of his subjects and foreigners. Meanwhile, King Mongkut was recognised among foreigners as a compromising monarch who permitted his subjects to pursue any religious practice according to their individual belief and faith. This also raised his popularity in the eyes of foreigners. During the nineteenth century, as colonial powers extended their influences into Southeast Asia, King Mongkut perceived that if Siam was to survive as an independent nation, she had to undertake certain reforms in order to appear modern or civilised. The king introduced the concept of modernisation and Westernisation to Siam by incorporating Western ideas of governance and administration, and changing the economy to a market-based cash economy (Keyes 1989: 45).

It was noteworthy that the religious reform had actually started during the reign of King Rama III, while the reign of King Rama IV was a period of maintaining both the Mahanikaya and Thammayut Buddhism sects. This can be interpreted as King Mongkut being determined to reform Buddhism when he was still a monk. However, for maintaining peace in the society, he worked to reduce any religious discrimination between the two sects by maintaining their relationships. Simultaneously, he encouraged the introduction of Western knowledge and technology to his court, which helped develop the structure of Siamese society more in line with the Western practices. For instance, a retired British solder was hired to train the soldiers in the European manner, and other foreign experts were hired for jobs in which Siamese people at that time had no skill, notably in legal work, mechanical engineering, medical science, and navigation (Naengnoi and Freeman 1996). Incidentally, the king adopted some of the outward manifestations of Western values and beliefs, including in architecture, art, and clothing (Damrong Rajanuphab 1963). Likewise, Clarence Aasen has pointed out King Mongkut's socio-political reforms (1998: 189):

> "The king [Mongkut] discarded what he viewed as the obsolete practices of the former reign. At his coronation; he abolished the custom of requiring people to close their doors and windows whenever the king passed by. He even allowed people to approach him and to present their grievances. To facilitate relations with foreign powers, he also abolished for Westerners the practices of prostrating when he granted them an audience. He encouraged his people (particularly the nobility) to study English and Science".

It is interesting to note that King Mongkut and the Siamese elite modernised Siam in their own ways and for their own purposes. The king isolated science and technology from religion. He stated that he studied science in an attempt to demonstrate that he could match Westerners in this field. With respect to religion, he sought to purify Buddhism through popular acceptance, and to show not only that it could stand the critical

scrutiny of the Western scientific mind, but that it was a superior religion to Christianity, and one in line with modern ideas (Ishii 1989: 158).

Modernity discourse through cultural materials

King Mongkut and his successors used culture and the arts as a means to serve the nation in his determination to correspond to the Western image of a modern state and civilised nation. Naengnoi (1996) commented on this in her *Palaces of Bangkok*:

> "…it was important for King Rama IV and King Rama V, in particular, to show Western royalty that they too could inhabit grand palaces with elaborate furnishings and were not the rulers of a backward country who could be easily overthrown…if the Thai-style buildings personified the divinity of the king to his subjects, the European-style buildings symbolised the equality of Thailand among other nations of the world." (Naengnoi and Freeman 1996: 9).

Significantly, the utilitarian alignment of cultural artifacts still remained as the heritage of Siamese art, descended from Ayutthaya, which mainly served religious purposes. Only the elements, forms, scopes and executing artists underwent a change. With respect to buildings, the Chakri dynasty monarchs had certain individualistic styles identifiable with their respective reigns. By tradition, they gave instructions to project commissioners and creators, selected the site locations, determined the size of plots and the general style of the buildings, and were especially involved in their designs and constructions (Naengnoi and Freeman 1996: 8). It is logical to say that the style chosen by the individual monarchs was also influenced by the prevailing socio-political phenomena of the time. During the reign of King Mongkut, considered as a period of transition to modernity, the royal residences were influenced by European and Chinese arts from the previous reign. Notably, the notion of 'Beauty' according to the British was employed as a paradigm for what is desirable and superior to what is of Siam. In his correspondence with Queen Victoria in 1850, King Mongkut resorted to using a metaphor of a beautiful English garden for the British Empire writing that "Your Majesty's empire looks like a garden of paradise, while mine is so unkempt as if it were a jungle" (cited in Pensupa 2000: 12). This can be seen through the Hilltop Palace discussed below.

Prior to the mid-nineteenth century, traveling by boat was a major form of transportation within the city walls of Bangkok which was crisscrossed by many natural waterways. New canals increased the importance of transportation by water, and provide a network of water supply, which encouraged local residents to build their homes next to the waterways. With the Bowring Treaty in 1855, the arrival of Westerners led to major socio-cultural influences on all Siamese people, firstly to the ruling elite who had gained Western scientific knowledge from their close contact with foreigners. The modern notion of physical retreat travel was initially suggested by Europeans, who submitted a petition to the king for an open-air plot in order to ride carriages or horses for pleasure and to recuperate from illness. Similarly, visiting a new place was also believed to be beneficial to health and provided longevity, according to a record in the Thiphakornwong chronicle in 1861 (cited in Koompong 2003: 146):

> "In the third month the foreign consuls all signed their names to a petition which they presented to the king [Mongkut]. It stated that the Europeans were used to going out in

the open air, riding carriages or riding horseback for pleasure. These activities had been good for their health and they had thus suffered from illness".

Subsequently, the construction of the first three roads in Bangkok: Charoen Krung (New Road), Bamrung Muang, and Fuang Nakhon, followed by the use of horse-drawn carriages, occured during the reign of King Mongkut. This also coincided with the move from water-based transportation to land-based transportation.

According to the ancient system of divine kingship, Siamese monarchs and their royal families usually resided only in the Grand Palace, and this was regarded as a sacred place and the administrative center (Sarakadee 2003). Due to security concerns and undeveloped infrastructure, royal travels were usually day-trips to the provinces near Bangkok. Unless the kings were required to travel on important missions such as witnessing the search for white elephants, enshrining sacred Buddha images, and commanding troops during wartime, they would rarely make any long trip away from the residence (Benjawan 2000). According to Naengnoi and Freeman (1996), this however changed during the reign of King Mongkut for two reasons. Firstly, while leading a monastic life, the princely monk made pilgrimages to many provinces and became well-acquainted with the living conditions of his subjects. Thus, when King Mongkut ascended the throne, he realised that visiting the provinces was essential to good governance. Secondly, steamboats came into existence during his reign, therefore making travel much faster than before. Consequently, the king built seven countryside palaces both close to and far from Bangkok. Those to the north included Bang Pa-In Palace and Chankasem Palace in Ayutthaya, and Narai Ratchanivej Palace in Lopburi; and Phra Nakhon Kiri in Phetchaburi to the south.

As Phra Nakhon Kiri consists of a large number of residential and religious structures, the political and cultural values of the architecture at the royal palace, and that of the royal monastery, will be discussed separately in the following section.

Map 3. Layout of Phra Nakhon Kiri portraying distinctive architectural landscapes of the royal palace (the West Peak), Phra That Chomphet (the Middle Peak), and Wat Phra Kaew Noi (the East Peak). (Photograph courtesy of Phra Nakhon Kiri National Museum).

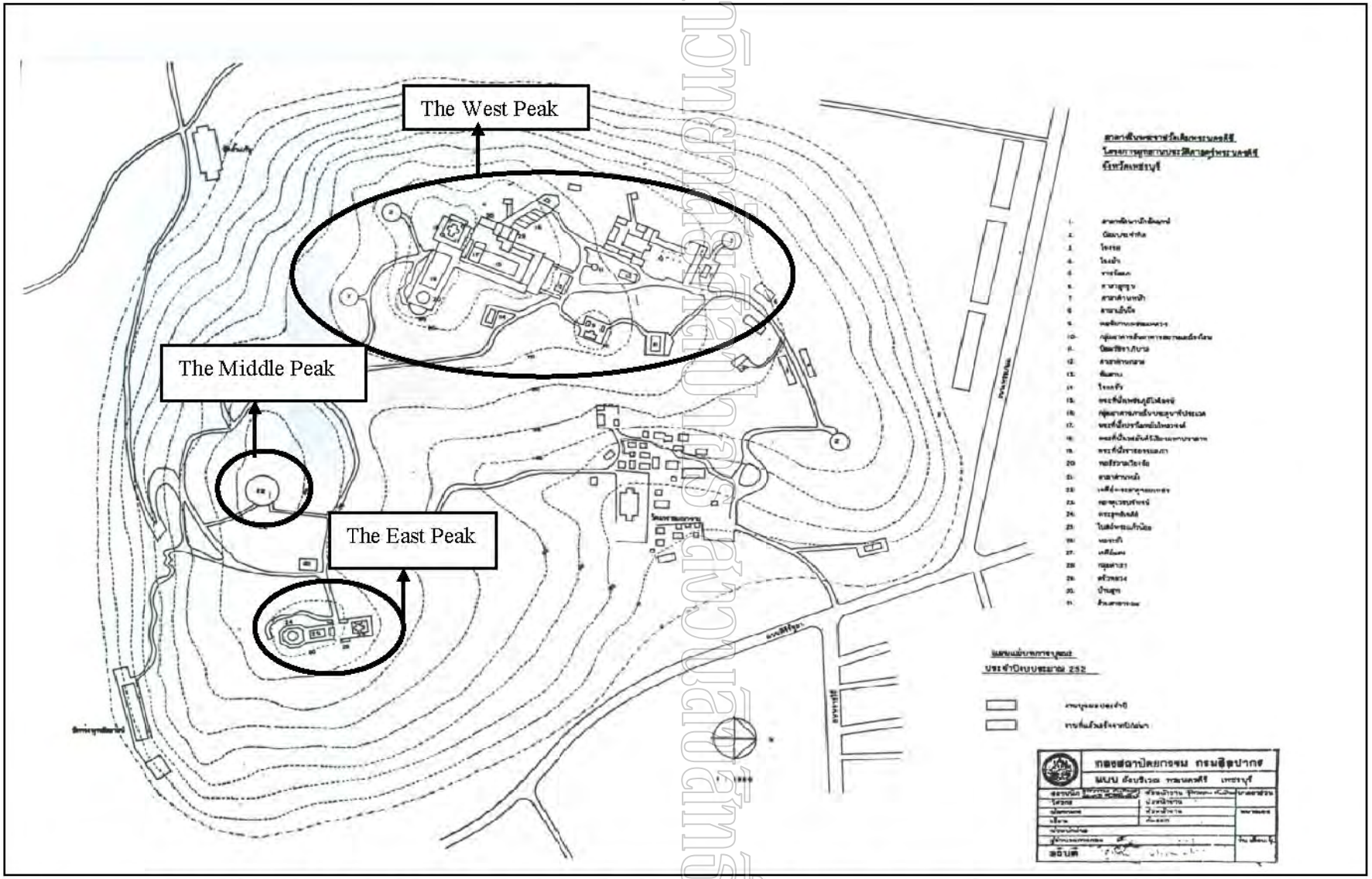
Architectural characteristics of Phra Nakhon Kiri

Phra Nakhon Kiri, commonly known among local residents as Khao Wang (the celestial city on the mountain), is a 95-meter high countryside palace erected in 1859 under the instructions of King Mongkut. The Hilltop Palace created a spectacular cultural landscape where the European-Sino-Siamese hybrid architectural styles of the edifices blended into its natural surroundings, comprising woods, rocks, and caverns. His vision on modernity was revealed through the architectural style embedded in the palace complex that included the throne halls, religious edifices notably the royal chapel and chedi (a domed or bell-shaped pagoda), and other buildings including the pavilion and citadels (see the complex layout in Map 3). King Mongkut and King Chulalongkorn frequently used the palace for their leisure and for important royal visitors. However, the roles that the palace played gradually lessened after the reign of King Chulalongkorn, resulting in the decayed condition of Phra Nakhon Kiri. In 1935, the palatial complex was registered as a national monument by the Department of Fine Arts and was restored to serve as a National Museum and Historical Park.

The whole complex creates a spectacular cultural landscape where the magnificent palace and religious structures blended well into the natural surroundings. Also, present were some Neo-Classical Western styles, as well as Chinese workmanship as seen in the roof structures, and in the roof layouts. The result is an interesting hybrid of architectural styles unique to this place. Furthermore, it was a palace that occupied three prominent peaks on the same mountain, known as the West, the Middle, and the East Peaks (seen Map 4).

Figure 2. (Left) The European-Sino-Siamese hybrid architectural styles of Ratchathammasapha Building, towards Wechayan Wichien Prasat in the background at the West Peak of Phra Nakhon Kiri (the Hilltop Palace), Phetchaburi. Figure 3. (Right) Wat Phra Kaew Noi, a Buddhist monastery was arranged in the Ayutthaya style, within the palatial complex. (Photograph: Korrachai Lekpetch).

The West Peak (shown in Figure 2) is the location of a complex of the royal palace known as the Phetphum Phairot Throne Hall, which currently serves as a museum featuring the royal belongings and utensils of both King Mongkut and his son, King Chulalongkorn (reigned 1868-1910). Cultural artifacts in this hall include furniture, bronze sculptures, porcelains and glasses in European, Chinese, and Japanese styles. The



Map 4. Site plan of Phra Nakhon Kiri portraying King Mongkut's royal palace and religious buildings. (Photograph courtesy of Phra Nakhon Kiri National Museum)

Phetphum Phairot was originally the hall for the king to give audience to his courtiers during his stay at Phra Nakhon Kiri. In 1910, the hall was converted to an accommodation for visiting dignitaries that included Duke Johan Albrekt and his consort Princess Elizabeth Stolberk from Brunswick in Germany. For the purpose, the building's interior was renovated accordingly.

One of the more interesting buildings that reflected King Mongkut's personality is the Pramot Mahaisawan Hall, a royal residential hall consisting of three rooms: a living room, a bedroom and a dressing room. For security purposes, the small bedroom was hidden and connected by narrow stairways, which also revealed his simple and humble personality, very likely deriving from a rigorous and disciplined period of priesthood. The king's bedroom displayed a comprehensive understanding of the interaction between the king and the place through visible factors such as the height of tables, the directions of lighting, the shape of the room, the height of its ceiling, the colour of the walls, and the positioning of the room and the entrance.

On the contrary, the West Peak houses a large number of buildings such as the Wechayan Wichien Prasat (King Mongkut's statue hall); a ceremonial hall; an observatory (shown in Figure 4), called the Chatchawan Wiengchai, for the king to observe the stars and constellations; a large residential area for state guests; and a theatre for masked dance drama performances. The observatory reflected the king's great interest in the Western scientific knowledge of astronomy. The palatial complex reflected the scientific values of modern technology with the use of steel for constructing the high observatory and the four towers at the corners of the Wechaya Wichien Prasat. Naengnoi and Freeman (1996: 34) described the modern architectural style of these towers as:

> "The two-storey cylindrical tower has massive walls with semi–circular openings surrounded by a dome made of curved steel members and ring beams, the interstices covered with pieces of glass that are curved to the contour of the dome. The four, octagonal towers of the Phra Thinang Wechayan Wichien Prasat are built in the same style but are smaller and lower with openings of Gothic style".

Figure 4. (Left). The Chatchawan Wiengchai observatory on the West Peak of Phra Nakhon Kiri, reflecting King Mongkut's interest in Western scientific knowledge. Figure 5. (Right). The Western-influenced pavilion with Chinese roof tiles at Wat Phra Kaew Noi.

The great chedi enshrining a religious relic called Phra That Chomphet is located on the Middle Peak, while the Eastern Peak houses a royal temple called Wat Phra Kaew Noi built in the same style as the Grand Palace, in Bangkok. The monastery (Figure 3) contains numerous Buddhist edifices such as the ubosod (ordination hall), the bell–shaped stupa called the Phra Sutthasela Chedi (a bell–shaped stupa), Phra Prang Daeng (a Khmer-influenced tower in brick and stone), the belfry, and some small pavilions (shown in Figure 5). These buildings are situated on a multi-layered base. Notably, the characteristics of this monastery were arranged in the style of the Ayutthaya period (1350-1767), in which the ordination hall was made the most prominent, with the chedi to the rear, and the belfry placed lower to the front*.

In accordance with the ancient divine kingship system, royal palaces were traditionally built in relation to the Buddhist cosmology of Traiphum. The palace was usually divided into three main areas: the outer, the middle, and the inner courts. The outermost court consisted of official buildings. The middle court contained three main mahaprasat (the tall sacred symbolic buildings for the kings), each with the spiral roof, and they were used as royal residences and for royal ceremonies including the granting of audiences to foreign dignitaries. The inner court of the palace was the private quarters of the king and the ladies of the court.

In *An Architectural Design Study of Phra Nakhon Kiri*, Benjawan Thatsanaleelaporn (2000: 231) noted that the three courts were not placed in the traditional order, in particular the inner (ladies) court consisting of Santhakarn Sathan Hall and other structures within the Nari Prawet Gate were not located behind the royal residence and the Audience Hall, as is seen at the traditional Grand Palace in Bangkok. Instead, Santhakarn Sathan Hall is on the right hand side of the path to Phetphum Phairot, the Audience Hall. On the contrary, at least three studies (Naengnoi and Freeman 1996; Fine Arts Department 1999: 76-77; and Somchart interviewed on 7 September, 2006) claimed that the Hilltop Palace contains only two courts: the outer and the inner courts. This was very likely because the palatial complex was geographically constrained by its setting. These two courts are connected by paths and stairways leading up the slope. At the intersections, there are guard posts to maintain security. These are called the Front Sala, the Middle Sala, and the Rear Sala. There are outer and inner gates, and five strategically located forts. It can be said that the architecture of the Hilltop Palace is in the traditional Thai style where the inner part is at the highest spot, while the outer part is located below. In essence, there is no consensus with respect to the number of courts at Phra Nakhon Kiri. As the site has a limitation linked to its setting, the palace can be considered to have two or three courts depending on how the individual scholars view the architectural design of the complex.

Apinan Poshyananda (1992: 5) commented that these European-Sino-Siam hybrid buildings as an eclectic combination of "Doric columns, Ionic capitals, balustrades, and brickwork, in places mixed with glazed ceramics designed in the

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* Interviewed Associate Professor Somkid Jirathutsanakul on 8 October 2004.

Chinese style". Koompong Noobanjong (2003) has stated that buildings at the western peak shared several characteristics to make the entire compound looked 'Western' - heavy masonry and white-washed stucco walls, arches and arcades, as well as simplified classical ornaments such as the stylised Ionic order. Interestingly, Pensupa Sukanya (2000: 15) has suggested that the palatial complex was an early European architectural structure that was built in the countryside. Thus, officials and craftsmen probably relied on pictorial references like prints, photographs, postcards, calendars and posters from American and French missionaries as their architectural sources. It should be noted that the plan, design, scale, space and architectural characteristics have been distorted and adapted to meet the requirement of Siamese builders (Apinan 1992). However, the importance of the architectural hybridity reflected a transitional period in Siamese aesthetics from traditional eclecticism towards aspiring modernism.

Political legitimacy through architecture

Architecture can serve as a potent tool in manifesting authority, power and legitimacy for political and social status or for profoundly affecting religious belief (Coaldrake 1996: 3). The key linkage of the relationship between architecture and authority in Siam goes beyond signs and symbols which are institutionally embedded in the architectural form of the throne hall called Prasat, as rituals, ceremonies, and symbolic displays are also a means by which the royal authority is expressed in the guise of diplomacy (Dovey 1999: 12).

According to the ancient political system of divine kingship, the monarch was not only considered a ruler but also a supremely holy person, an incarnation of the Hindu god Vishnu or Indra, the god who protects Buddhism. As a result, palaces of the God–King had to reflect the ethos of heavenly architecture. The style of such buildings and the elements with which they were decorated are of a special type reserved only for use in palaces and temples. These elements included multi–storeyed roofs, gables depicting gods, for instance Vishnu mounted on a mythical bird, Garuda or Indra mounted on a three–headed elephant, Airavanta, gildings and other decorative details.

Figure 6. Wechayan Wichien Prasat, used as a throne hall or religious edifice, and reserved for the monarch only, according to traditional cosmology of Traiphum. (Photograph: Korrachai Lekpetch).

King Mongkut and the other ruling elites were aware of the Western influence and, simultaneously, they also attempted to safeguard their own national identity. The king had refined and strengthened the traditional Siamese values, notably the political legitimacy in which he grew up, employing them to counter the spread of Christianity.

King Mongkut's vision on the traditional values of hegemony was embodied in the architectural style of Wechayan Wichien Prasat (see Figure 6), a Khmer cruciform-shaped building used as a throne-hall or religious edifice, and reserved for the monarch only. Notably, the prasat was crowned by a tall spire (prang), a high sanctuary or monument on a square plan, with a corncob-shaped top. In Hindu mythology, the prang represents the thirty-three levels of heaven, with the summit occupied by the god Indra.

One of the most outstanding features of Wechayan Wichien Prasat is its five spires. The main spire signifying Mount Meru (a residence of the god Indra) is surrounded by four minor spires, symbolising the four continents (residences of human beings and other creatures) in relation to the traditional cosmology of Traiphum (Naengnoi and Freeman 1996). The superstructure is decorated with Thai–style ornaments. The towers on the four corners of the upper tier are in the Western style with domed glass roofs, which makes the small prasat more prominent, especially at night. Apparently, Wechayan Wichien Prasat, which was built to honour King Mongkut as was the custom, stood higher than any other architectural hybrid building in the West Peak and perhaps is the dominant structure erected by the king as a new means of presenting his political legitimacy to the outside world*.

Figure 2-7. Mural of the Traiphum or Three Worlds. The central pillar, partially obscured by the Buddha image, is Mount Meru. (Photograph: Sompong Amnuay-ngerntra).

* Interviewed Assistant Professor Somchart Chungsiri-arak on 29 October 2004.

It is interesting to note that although King Mongkut criticised the supernaturalism of indigenous Siamese religious forms, yet he did not fully accept the empiricism of Western science. The king was wise to support the traditional metaphysical view of Buddhism with its belief in heavens and hells populated by a diverse range of supernatural entities. In his writing, Somboon Suksamran (1993: 109) commented that "Buddhism not only provided the state with the ideological basis and political legitimacy but it could also be used to facilitate the government and to maximise the legitimacy of traditional government". This can be interpreted that the ruling elite in Siam strove to maintain their legitimacy since it permitted them to achieve their goal and maintain their power without resorting to coercive force. Such coercive power can then be reserved for possible major crises in the future. Also, Jackson (1989: 45-46) has argued that due to his religious reforms, King Mongkut did not radically reject Traiphum, a Buddhist cosmology of 'Three Worlds' comprising Heaven, Earth, and Hell, with punishments meted out in accordance with the sins committed. Instead, King Mongkut tried to supplant local religious traditions with his own semi-rational royal ideology. Hence, it can be asserted that the Brahmanical or Hindu deities were still worshipped by him. Additionally, Traiphum would constitute an invaluable means of maximising his legitimacy, which enabled him and the political regime to be accepted as rulers.

Significantly, the concept of political legitimacy through the Traiphum cosmology will greatly enhance an understanding of the geographical setting of the palatial complex. According to Ringis (1990: 7), the symbolism of Traiphum cosmology was expressed in the evolution of religious architecture, decoration, and mural painting (shown in Figure 7). Pensupa Sukata (2000: 14) has pointed out that the legendary Mount Meru in Traiphum, the 33-tiered mythical mountain at the center of the universe and home to the gods, notably Indra, remarkably influenced King Mongkut's decision on the geographical setting. The king attempted to dominate the landscape with his palace complex, especially Wechayan Wichien Prasat, which is a replica of the universe and represents an earthly model of the cosmos. The top tower rises from the center of the monument symbolising the mythical Mount Meru.

In short, understanding the political legitimacy and Mount Meru in the Traiphum cosmology will help answer two important questions regarding the geographical setting: why did King Mongkut have his complex erected on the hill? What is the symbolic meaning of Wechayan Wichien Prasat standing on the top of the west peak?

Humanism in cultural materials

Colonialism was not only a politico-economic project, but also a socio-cultural and intellectual one that led to dramatic changes in local cultures across the world (Thongchai 2000). In an attempt to understand the humanistic concept of Thammayut, the author argues that if the styles, designs, and characteristics of cultural materials at Phra Nakhon Kiri looked the same as in other buildings erected by King Mongkut then their meanings are likely to be the same.

It has been suggested in the preceding discussion that many of the Siamese ruling elite struggled to maintain independence from the colonial powers. However, they nevertheless appeared to be colonised intellectually and culturally (Thongchai 2000). This can be explained in the concept of humanism, one of the remarkable characteristics of the Thammayut sect, through the religious architecture and other cultural materials at Wat Phra Kaew Noi. Being an intellectual monarch, King Mongkut made a clear distinction between Buddhism and Brahmanism. He revised the Brahmin ceremony slightly, introduced Buddhist elements into it, and added a human touch to reinforce Buddhism. His modernity and Westernisation was also reflected through his cultural materials, notably photographs, sculpture, architecture, mural painting, art, and clothes. These subjects were significantly manifested in the effort to promote Siamese modernity.

The initial attempts to change traditional artistic representations and pictorial elements occurred during the reign of King Mongkut. Royal portraiture was one of the cultural imports from Europe that were localised in Siam. According to the ancient custom inherited from the Khmer courts, memories of departed kings were kept alive in the form of Buddha images that were dedicated posthumously, and it was a strict taboo to make royal portraits and visual representations of the sovereign's body for public display prior to the mid-nineteenth century (Apinan 1990 cited in Peleggi 2004: 136). King Mongkut's predecessors showed little interest in sculptures and photographs, purportedly due to a suspicion that a photograph caught in fire was to invite death (Cary 2000: 125). However, this did not concern the scholar monarch. From his Western scientific knowledge introduced by Bishop Palagoix, King Mongkut was aware of the use of royal portraits in the West as symbolic statements about a sovereign's power and vehicles of diplomatic exchanges. Instead, the king agreed to have his portraits illustrated by artists and photographers. Incidentally, people in Europe became aware of his appearance before his own subjects did.

Figure 8. A sculpture of King Mongkut, one of the diplomatic tools, was used in promoting Siamese modernity.

King Mongkut used his own sculptures and photographs (shown in Figure 8) for political purposes, introducing himself as the Siamese monarch to other heads of Western countries, and to promote Siamese modernity, in which he had rejected magical practices, spirit-medium cults, and other superstitious forms. The Siamese embassies dispatched to the courts of Queen Victoria in 1857, and Napoleon III and Pope Pius IX in 1861 presented them with daguerreotypes of his royal family (Sakda 1992 cited in Peleggi 2004: 136). In other words, his correspondence with these prominent Europeans was not only a courtesy or an exchange of information, but also

an intellectual battle in the campaign to maintain Siam's sovereignty in the face of European colonial imperatives (Cary 2000: 124).

Figure 9 (Left). The innovative architecture with the Victorious Crown insignia portrayed on the pediment of Wat Phra Kaew Noi, the author. Figure 10 (Right). The designed doorways incorporated multi-tiered crowns at the Royal Pantheon, the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, Bangkok (Photograph: Sompong Amnuay-ngerntra).

Given that there were no modern cameras during his reign, the procedure involved in photographing King Mongkut was elaborate and rigorous. This could be explained by the fact that technological advancement during his reign was still at the early stages resulting from the Bowring Treaty in 1855, which brought Siam into the world economic trade. Notably, the characteristics of humanism can be manifested through his sculpture which has been placed at Wechayan Wichien Prasat. Such sculpture also reflects the modern concept of humanism by which he made the differentiation between Buddhism and Brahmanism, displaying the sculpture of the human being, instead of deities.

In architecture, through his far-sighted diplomacy, King Mongkut was the first Siamese monarch who applied western knowledge of symbolism to promote his idea of modernity. The king introduced his royal insignia, *the Victorious Crown*, as an architectural innovation portrayed on pediments (shown in Figure 9), doors, and window panels (shown in Figure 10) of the palaces and religious structures associated with him (Somkid 2004: 28). The most important among these was the motif moulded in stucco on the pediment of Wat Phra Kaew Noi, one of the masterpieces found in Phetchaburi. Subsequently, other members of the Chakri Dynasty have also adapted King Mongkut's innovations of symbolism by portraying their royal insignia on buildings and other cultural materials.

Traditional characteristics of Siamese mural paintings were associated with the life and former lives of the Buddha and scenes from Traiphum, which were crowded with beings and divine attendants in traditional appearance and dress set in familiar landscapes (Ringis 1990: 90 and Chatri 2003). King Mongkut's religious reforms incorporated with Western scientific knowledge had a great influence on the characteristics of Siamese mural paintings, in terms of humanism, rationalism, and realism. The rationalistic ideal painting replaced the traditional theme of Buddhist cosmology. Krua In Khong, the most renowned court painter to King Mongkut, revealed the exotic world of the West in a three-dimensional 'realistic' style in a mural

painting of Wat Bovonnivet, where King Mongkut became an abbot prior to ascending the throne in 1851. Krua In Khong's visions of Western life were derived from the increasing numbers of missionaries in Bangkok. His Western figures with scenery, topography, and human activities were realistic and up to date in their authentic nineteenth century fashions. The introduction of these Western perspectives sparked a movement away from traditional Siamese painting and opened the door to new forms.

Figure 11. (Left) The bell-shaped architectural form of Ceylonese stupa, which was later the original model of chedi in Siam (Photograph courtesy of Matichon on 8 May, 2005.). Figure 12. (Right) Phra Prathom Chedi, in Nakhon Prathom, Thailand's largest bell-shaped stupa, which was reconstructed, in the nineteenth century, under King Mongkut's initiative in accordance with his religious reform (Photograph: Sompong Amnuay-ngerntra).

After analysing the humanistic concept of Thammayut as expressed through cultural materials, the following section examines why religious structures associated with King Mongkut, including Phra That Chomphet on the Middle Peak and Phra Sutthasela Chedi on the East Peak within Phra Nakhon Kiri, were erected in the form of bell-shaped architecture. What is the symbolic meaning of this bell-shaped architectural style? To what degree does this architectural pattern relate to the characteristics of the Thammayut sect?

The revival of the bell-shaped stupa in the Ayutthaya period

Being the world's oldest Buddhist edifice, the architectural form of bell-shaped stupa is regarded as part of the pure and original canon, and was used as a cultural medium in promoting the Thammayut sect and traditional identity. The close contact between King Mongkut and the Mon and Ceylonese Buddhist monks resulted in an exchange of Buddhist knowledge and artistic practice. While in his monkhood, King Mongkut cultivated a relationship with Ceylonese monks who came to visit Siamese temples and shrines in 1840. He also sent a group of his disciples to Ceylon twice in order to borrow 72 volumes of the oldest surviving Buddhist scriptures so that Siamese collections could be revised and expanded (Vella 1957: 40-41 and Griswold 1961: 19). During his reign, King Mongkut used the architectural forms to symbolise his religious ideology in accordance with the Thammayut sect, which focused on the pure and original canon.

As the Thammayut sect was initially directed at upgrading monastic practices and restoring the faith to a pure original canon, the king also used the architectural style of the bell-shaped stupa originally from Ceylon (Figure 11), to

manifest the characteristics of his Thammayut sect. To the king, Ceylon was considered the fountainhead of the purest doctrines in the 14th and 15th centuries, when there had been numerous cultural exchanges between Ceylon and Siam. Notably, the doctrines of Theravade Buddhism originated from the oldest surviving text that was written in the Pali language in Ceylon, in the first century BC, known as the Pali canon. Some Siamese monks in Sukhothai (Thailand's first kingdom) went there to study the Dharma and later returned home to preach and promote Ceylonese artistic practices, notably mural painting, sculpture and architecture. This can be seen through a bell–shaped stupa with a ring of elephant sculptures encircling the base at Wat Chang Lom in Sri Satchanalai, Sukhothai.

Figure 13. The design of three identical bell-shaped chedi piercing the sky with multi-tiered conical spires at Wat Phra Si San Phet, Ayutthaya (Photograph: the author)

It is noted that the bell-shaped stupa is symbolic of the Buddha's death or Parinirvana. This symbol was originally derived from the ancient mounds of India that enshrined the Buddha's remains after cremation. In Siam, the bell-shaped stupa (chedi) were favoured during the Sukhothai period (13th century) and subsequently adapted in various ways during the Ayutthaya period, according to their own aesthetic practices. The bell-shaped stupa was extensively used in Ayutthaya but it was given a new elegance, notably in the best known triple stupa with entrance porches at Wat Phra Si Sanphet (shown in Figure 13). The base of the bell was characterised as capped by a colonnaded hamika porch and crowned by a slim spire that imparted an airiness not previously seen (Van Beck and Tettoni 1991: 145). Ayutthayan architects played with this style, squaring its shoulders and elongating it to create one of Siamese architecture's most graceful expressions of soaring weightlessness. However, in the mid 19th century, the architectural style of the bell-shaped stupa was again seen. King Mongkut revived it as he found the architectural form particularly fascinating (Ringis 1990).

It is interesting to investigate why most Buddhist monasteries during the reign of King Mongkut were modelled as in the Ayutthaya period and not after the Sukhothai period. This can possibly be explained by the fact that the king used a particular expression of what Williams called as 'selective tradition'. According to Willaim (1977: 115), such a tradition is perceived as "an intentionally selective

version of a shaping past and a pre-shaped present, which is then powerfully operative in the process of social and cultural definition and identification". It was a model of the past, which the king had applied to a contemporary situation for the sake of promoting his kingship in relation to the idea of continuity with a glorious past. Apparently, he revived the physical, traditional identity, and cultural splendors of Ayutthaya, which was the kingdom's capital for the longest duration in Thai history. Also, Ayutthaya was the origin of ancient court ceremonies derived from Buddhist philosophy and the Brahman concept of divine kingship. The scholar monarch attempted to revise the role of kingship from the Ayutthaya period. Similarly, the Buddhist monk turned king applied the 'selective' tradition model promoting and supporting an image of his monarchy*. With respect to his global views on the 'selective' tradition, King Mongkut established Thailand's first museum with a collection of cultural artifacts for the sake of promoting his civilised kingdom in the eyes of foreigners, as in his personal correspondence with the heads of the colonial powers (Cary 2000: 131).

Figure 14. (Left). The Khmer-style sanctuary tower at Wat Ratchaburana, Ayutthaya, incorporated with stucco sculptures of guardians. Figure 15. (Right). A modern architectural style of Prang Daeng at Wat Phra Kaew Noi, Phra Nakhon Kiri, Phetchaburi. (Photograph: Sompong Amnuay-ngemtra)

Ayutthaya was related to King Mongkut's genealogy. Unlike King Rama III whose mother was a commoner, King Mongkut took pride in his royal family as possessing a 'civilised' pedigree. Likewise, he was keen on the historical background of his clan. In his royal writings, King Mongkut wrote that there were two original tracks of Siam. The former track was under the Khmer control that subsequently Siam was able to dispel, and establish a new empire called Sukhothai. King Mongkut believed that the other track came with the clan of King Uthong, the founder of Ayutthaya who descended from Chiang Rai and settled down in Ayutthaya, followed

* Interviewed Associate Professor Somkid Jirathutsanakul on 8 October 2004.

by the establishment of Bangkok by King Rama I. Hence, Ayutthaya was clearly associated with his clan, in terms of historical background.

Politically, most temples erected during the reign of king Rama III were influenced by Chinese art, primarily due to the increased sea trade with China. King Rama III, who noted the deterioration and the fire hazard presented by wooden structures, ordered the carved wooden structures to be replaced with decorations in brick and stucco. Unlike King Rama III who had opposed the unequal trading treaties with Western countries, King Mongkut was aware of an increasing 'Western' domination in the world economy and politics, notably during the Opium War in 1842. If Siam still had many Chinese-influenced architectural buildings, this would threaten his sovereignty because the Western powers might have perceived that Siam was a barbarian vassal state to China (Somkid 2004: 206). Therefore, King Mongkut did not give much significance to Chinese influenced architecture, but instead revived the traditional architectural form of the Ayutthaya period. It can be emphasised that most bell-shaped stupa monasteries today are associated with the king. These can be seen in Bangkok and upcountry, including such establishments as Phra Prathom Chedi in Nakhon Prathom (shown in Figure 12), the Golden Mount at Wat Sraket, Wat Phra Kaew at the Grand Palace, Wat Bovonivet, Wat Pratum Wanaram, Wat Makoot Kasat, Wat Sommanat, and Wat Phra Kaew Noi in Phetchaburi (see an analysis of religious architecture during the reign of King Mongkut in Somkid 2004).

Unlike during the Ayutthaya peiod, a number of religious buildings during the reign of King Mongkut were built in the chedi architectural form instead of prang. This is likely because the prang was regarded as a Khmer-influenced tower of Hinduism and thought to be incompatible with Buddhism. According to characteristics of the Thammayut sect, the king firmly attempted to purify Buddhist teachings and rejected traditional beliefs and practices concerning magic, superstitions and spirit-medium cults in Hinduism. Hence, the number of prang architectural buildings declined or had no significant values of religious meanings during his reign, in particular the Prang Daeng (seen in Figure 15) at Phra Nakhon Kiri*. This Khmer style tower, at Wat Phra Kaew Noi within the palatial complex, possesses distinctive characteristics in that there is only a single red tower with less detailed art decorations around the corners of the building.

Unlike the traditional Khmer prangs of the Lopburi, Sukhothai, and Ayutthaya periods (Figure 14), which are heavy and with an open entrance at the base. Prang Daeng is relatively thinner and lighter. It appears more like a prasat (a Khmer cruciform-shaped building used as a throne-hall) than a prang, and the interior is hollow from top to base (Naengnoi and Freeman, 1996). Furthermore, creating more space on the top of the prang for the lighting and the application of segmental pediments likewise reflected the Western architecture influence (Somchart 2001: 119).

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* Interviewed Ajarn Chatri Prakitnanthakarn on 23 September 2004.

In conclusion, a number of architectural styles at Phra Nakhon Kiri possibly manifest King Mongkut's complex personality as intellectual, traditional, and innovative.

King Mongkut refused to use force to cope with political conflicts. Instead, he used his knowledge and intelligence to overcome the difficulties he was confronting, prior to his monkhood and accession to the throne. This can be seen after his father had passed away, when he saw refuge in a Buddhist monastery as a means to avoid the political peril. Similarly, King Mongkut elevated Prince Jutamani, his brother who was militarily powerful and also seeking for the throne, to the status of the Second King in order to avoid potential anarchy and chaos. However, the elevation of the second king can be interpreted that King Mongkut incidentally sought to balance the increasing power of the nobility led by the Bunnag clan. Additionally, the 'Open Door' of his foreign policy, which led to the Bowring Treaty in 1855, reflected his welcoming and compromising personality to impress Sir John Bowring by promoting his intellectual and modern scientific knowledge.

King Mongkut understood the 'value' and the 'power' of the past, in particular during the reign of King Narai of Ayutthaya. He revived and invented court traditions for the sake of his governance and administration. Interestingly, he gave more attention to a 'selected' and partial version of traditional art and architecture in promoting the national identity and his political legitimacy. The king did not completely discard the concept of traditional cosmology. Instead, he strove to maintain his legitimacy embedded in the traditional architecture of 'Prasat' which manifested the royal power and authority without resorting to coercive force.

King Mongkut was an innovative, creative, and modern man. His interest in modern scientific knowledge was expressed through the colonial building type of an observatory. The king showed his innovation and creativity through European-Sino-Siamese hybrid architectural styles at Phra Nakhon Kiri. Not only did he observe the pace of change in the West, but the king also sought new ideas and knowledge from other places, including the traditional power of China. His quest for new knowledge aimed to enhance his governance.

The aforementioned information is not currently portrayed and interpreted to the visitors at Phra Nakhon Kiri. The existing on-site information is primarily based on the brief biographical background of King Mongkut, the historical background of the palace and monastery, and the site restoration. However, this trivial information is relatively descriptive and fails to inspire the visitors' understanding of the heritage value and its symbolic meanings. To draw visitors' attention and make the learning environment more interesting and enjoyable, the site should present the king's initiatives and socio-political visions of modernity. Although the Annual Muang Phet-Phra Nakhon Kiri Festival has been held in February to promote tourism, the site should not give more attention to tourist activities than the 'insights' of the heritage value which at present are not being conveyed to visitors. This comprehensive information can possibly add to the quality of visitor experience.

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Chapter 3

King Chulalongkorn and Phra Ram Ratchanivej

The transformations that occurred within the social, economic and political spheres at the turn of the twentieth century, during King Chulalongkorn's reign, have attracted the attentions of many scholars in Thailand. During the modernisation process, a dominant royalist historical narrative represented these reforms as signifying the king's position as a shrewd diplomatic leader who attempted to attain and confirm the relative superiority of Siam as the traditional power in the region.

Figure 16. King Chulalongkorn, or King Rama V of the Chakri Dynasty, reigned 1868-1910 (Photograph courtesy of Bureau of the Royal Household).

The Siamese elite had previously framed their public image and social identity with reference to Indian and Chinese influences. The emergence of Western 'civilisation', as the new world order, was the model for modernity, progressive development and desired changes among the ruling class in Siam. Accordingly, the Siamese monarch and his royal associates adapted their public image to conform to the Western order which involved the adoption of European patterns of consumption and display. These included new patterns of prestigious expenditure, collections of Western paintings, a change in physical appearance and dressing practices incorporating both Western and local styles to form a distinctive style, photography and architecture as a medium to reflect modernity while simultaneously displaying a modern image of the royal elite in its modern sartorial ways.

King Chulalongkorn (Figure 16) enthusiastically enhanced his national leadership along Western lines by presenting himself as a figurehead of an ancient empire and a chief executive of a modern nation-state. The social construction of modernity and the refashioning of the monarchy's public image were a result of a creative process of selection, adaptation and localisation of the ideas and the practices of Western civilisation within the Siamese settings so as to serve his interests.

This chapter addresses the concept of 'civilisation' during the reign of King Chulalongkorn by investigating these following questions. To what extent did King Chulalongkorn enter the 'civilised' international society? How and to what purpose did the Siamese elite employ, adapt and localise the Western cultural materials, notably architecture in relation to political meanings? What were the personal and diplomatic

policies of King Chulalongkorn on foreign relationships that influenced the construction of the Gunner Palace?

Biographical background

King Chulalongkorn, or King Rama V, was born on 20 September 1853 as the eldest son of King Mongkut and Queen Thepsirinthara. Being heir to the throne, Prince Chulalongkorn was groomed in the ways of the royal court protocols and responsibilities right from his early childhood. Being a high-ranking member of the royal family, Prince Chulalongkorn was educated in the basic subjects such as the use of fire-arms, wrestling, fencing, and riding elephants (Prachoom 1965). As King Mongkut was aware of the increasing European domination in the new world order, as well as the significance of international affairs during his reign, therefore the prince, at the age of seven or eight, was given instruction in such relevant subjects as public administration, national customs and archaeology. Additionally, he was also properly instructed in English by Mrs. Anna Leonowens, an English woman from whom he first obtained a Western outlook on life and developed a strong affiliation with modernity. Consequently, the young prince had inherited his father's inquiring mind and learned well from him. He was also well prepared for the throne through his meetings with many important visitors at the Grand Palace, who included ambassadors and envoys from overseas. However, the young prince had no idea how soon the mantle would fall on his shoulders. At the age of fifteen he had accompanied his father to witness the solar eclipse expedition at Wa Ko, in Prachuap Khiri Khan, where they both contracted malaria. The king subsequently passed away on 1 October 1868. Although Prince Chulalongkorn was physically vulnerable and too young to rule Siam alone at that time, he nevertheless assumed the throne and ruled under the guidance of the powerful Regency of Chao Phraya Sri Suriyawong (Chuang Bunnag) for five years.

King Chulalongkorn is credited with transforming traditional Siam into a modern nation-state, abolishing slavery, promoting economic and educational development, strengthening diplomatic relations with most European countries, and making Siam known worldwide during his forty-two year reign (1868-1910). By most accounts, the king had a pleasant personality that made him equally at ease with crowned heads and his own subjects. In addition, he was an accomplished scholar and writer, and a keen observer of foreign customs, as attested by the diaries of his overseas journeys (Peleggi 2004: 134).

Influenced by the foreign media, King Chulalongkorn became extremely keen on the great European powers, how they modernised themselves and administered their colonies. He asserted his will to travel and to see firsthand the influence of the controlling, colonial powers. The British and Dutch colonies in Asia were examples for the Siamese elite's desire in creating a modern nation-state and fostering a civilised policy. In 1871, King Chulalongkorn made a series of royal journeys to India, Burma, Malaya, Singapore, and Java in which he learnt of the numerous benefits of European technology, government systems, and commerce which would eventually assist in developing Siam.

Upon his return and within the same year, King Chulalongkorn changed the dress code and hair style of the royal court to conform to the European style. Furthermore,

the king aspired to modernise Siam in accordance with his father's dreams and values. He had expressed his sentiments for reforming Siam along European lines, hence reinvented the monarchy's public images and promoted Siam's profile abroad by instituting several changes and adopting some Western concepts to keep pace with the civilised world. The first step of his modernising practices was to abolish the practice of prostration, with his attendants crouching and crawling, as a form of respect shown to the monarch at his coronation ceremony in 1873. The king substituted the consciously Western practice of standing, bowing, and lifting the hat. Meanwhile, his ministers were permitted to be seated on chairs during royal ceremonies. The process of abolishing traditional servitude and slavery was implemented simultaneously. These two royal acts clearly revealed that he gained an in-depth understanding of the European attitudes towards exotic foreign cultures. He had understood that the Europeans judged others by measuring against their own cultural norms. Cultural acceptance in terms of diplomatic relations alone was inadequate, and Siam needed to assimilate with the Western cultures (Chakrarot 2000: 123). In this aspect, the reconfiguration of Siam's public image testified to the ruling elite's appreciation of visuality as the dominant cultural trait of modernity, as Peleggi (2002: 60-61) notes:

> "Western-style clothes were integrated into a hybrid ensemble signifying the Siamese elite's connection to a foreign civilisation that was instrumental to the definition of their own identity and yet distinct. As a result, different modes of self-presentation - one for the colonial stage, one for the domestic stage, one for the private realm - came into play, allowing for the negotiation of external expectations and personal tastes."

According to Gong (1984: 228), King Chulalongkorn requested princes and officials, and their spouses to begin dressing in a 'civilised' manner; that Siamese noblemen styled their hair in the Western styles instead of having it closely cropped; that they don white cotton coasts buttoned up to the neck; and that they wear socks and shoes. Meanwhile, Siamese women began wearing blouses and footwear at important functions. King Chulalongkorn regarded proficiency in European languages as an important component of 'civilised' behaviour, therefore, his children, in their preparation to serve the state, were required to study English along with French or German. Many of his sons were sent to attend military colleges or universities in England, Germany, Russia, Denmark, or other European countries.

Apparently, King Chulalongkorn and his royal associates attempted to strengthen relations with the colonial powers, in particular Britain, but not too closely in fear that Siam could be engulfed and become another colony. Following his late father's footsteps in modernising Siam, the king knew that he had to rule decisively, diplomatically, and skillfully. King Chulalongkorn revised the strategy of pitting Western nations against one another, to prevent them from uniting and conquering Siam by establishing diplomatic and trade relationships with new European countries, notably Russia and Germany, to counterbalance the old colonial powers: Britain, France, and Holland (Koompong 2003: 109).

King Chulalongkorn created a modern nation-state in accordance with the colonial bureaucracy, aiming at consolidating a national identity and centralising political and administrative power with the monarchy as its core (Cary 2000: 136). In other words,

there was a gradual process of consolidation of power with a gradual bureaucratisation and compartmentalisation of functions in ministries dominated by the king's siblings and other trusted aristocrats who gained positions by merit rather than by birth. The Siamese ruling class excercised legislative provisions and administrative measures over the outlying regions and provinces, similar to those used by the colonial powers. They appointed commissioners and districts officers and brought the fiscal policy of a centralised state revenue collection and all types of ministerial decrees under tight control. According to Ekavidya (1995: 258), these measures reflected the imitation of colonial bureaucracy, which is sometimes close to an internal colonisation.

The absolutism had become significantly forceful especially with the centralisation of the administration, tax collection and military draft. The centralisation of tax collection was crucial in generating revenue benefits to the royal court that made the increase in royal household expenditures possible. In addition, after the establishment of the Privy Purse in 1890, the royal household increasingly invested its private wealth in various profit-making activities, notably in real estate speculation, manufacturing industries, joint ventures and partnerships with foreign firms. The enormous amount of revenues that the court generated to its own advantage warranted the definition of absolute monarchy which contributed towards skepticism among the people. In reality, the emergence of civilisation and modernisation during the reign of King Chulalongkorn was closely associated with the theory of royal absolutism, power, and authority. There were several reasons for modernising Siam, and these will be discussed in the latter part of this chapter. The king himself was widely known as the 'Father of Modern Thailand', and we would like to see whether this epithet is justified or not.

King Chulalongkorn's quest for civilisation

The concept of civilisation

During the nineteenth century, as colonial powers extended their influences into Southeast Asia, they also brought into Siam notable and influential ideas of *progress* and *civilisation*. According to William (1983 cited in Barme 1993), the notion of 'progress' is 'a theory which …regards men as slowly advancing…in a definite and desirable direction, and infers that this…will continue indefinitely'. This view was rooted in a rational apprehension of the past, embodied in the universal histories of enlightenment. Progress was manifested in various ways: on one level it could be used to refer to the objects of material culture, while on another, it meant an increasing degree of political and social liberty.

The second key Western concept of 'civilisation', has two basic meanings. One, it refers to 'an achieved state of development', which implies 'historical process and progress'. At the same time, it also means 'an achieved state, which could be contrasted with 'barbarism'. Civilisation is thus a rather ambiguous concept, a point underlined by Williams (1983: 58): while the first meaning carries a sense of enlightenment and modernity, the latter meaning suggests 'an achieved and threatened state,…often…identified with the received glories of the past.' As opposed to 'barbarism', the term of civilisation became important in defining relations between Western and non-Western societies. In general, Europeans frequently viewed other peoples as being 'uncivilised' or 'inferior':

> "…and their [non-Westerners'] inferiority was proved because the 'superior race' was superior by the criteria of its own society: technologically more advanced, militarily more powerful, richer and more 'successful'." (Hobsbawn, 1984: 295 cited in Barme 1993).

In Siam, the concept of 'civilisation' firstly appeared by the mid-nineteenth century. Being concerned with such a concept, King Mongkut sought explanations about it from Western missionaries even while he was still a Buddhist monk. He even admitted that Siam was 'half civilised and half barbarian', according to Charnvit (1996: 3-6). As a devout Buddhist, the king rejected any attempt to couple 'civilisation' with Christianity, remaining a firm believer in Buddhism. At the turn of the century, the notion of 'civilisation' clearly indicated the sense of transformation into the new age, or modernity, as opposed to the traditional, the ancient, or the bygone era. Incidentally, a Thai historian observed that civilisation was seen as Western things and ways of conduct (Charnvit 1996: 6). Interestingly, Thongchai (2000: 531) elaborated civilisation and the meaning of progressive development as a part of the emerging temporal consciousness in which history, progress and nostalgia were conceivable.

The Bowing Treaty

Siam's first modern treaty with a foreign power, the Bowring Treaty, was signed with Britain in 1855. The Siamese elite who saw the potential benefits from the commercial treaty welcomed the British demands. The expansion of trade and production provided the basis for the establishment of absolutism under King Chulalongkorn. The Bowring Treaty was instrumental in integrating the Siamese economy into the European world-economy. This process of integration led to Siam's transformation into a modern nation-state as well as an international division of labour, which consequently contributed to the increased massive demand for Chinese labourers.

Article II of the Bowing Treaty assured British authorities extraterritorial legal rights over British subjects including those from the colonial dependencies of Burma, Malaya, and India, whereas Article VIII removed all tariff restrictions from Siamese control and fixed very low export and import duties (Keyes 1989: 44 and Jackson 2004: 232). In other words, the Bowring Treaty limited imported duty to 3 percent of the market value of the goods. All export articles were subjected to a one-time levy, regardless of earlier inland taxes, transit duties, or export duties (Likhit 1975: 88). Between 1856 and 1870, Siam signed similar treaties with the United States, France, Denmark, the Hanseatic Republic, Prussia, the Grand Duchies of Mecklenburg-Scherin and Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Sweden and Norway, Belgium, Italy, Austria-Hungary, and Spain (Gong 1984: 211). The Western powers gained extraterritorial rights over their subjects, as Gong notes:

> "These treaties all contained extraterritorial provisions, fixed duty schedules, and restricted import tariffs; were without time limit; and were irrevocable. As they had done in China, Japan, and other Asian countries, the Europeans treaty powers soon used their extraterritorial and trade privileges to create a kind of *imperium in imperio* in Siam. While Siam preserved its nominal independence, it lost its judicial and fiscal autonomy outright, and had its political autonomy compromised." (Gong 1984: 212).

However, Kullada (2004: 31-32) observed that signing many treaties with the European countries directed attention to the comparative advantage that Siam's geography gave for producing rice, rather than sugar production, so as to meet the increased demand from the world market, and involving massive labour migration in Southeast Asia. On the same point, Jackson (2004: 235) agreed with Kullada's notion that Siam gained mutual benefits as the absolute monarchy acquired resources that permitted it to intensify its authority over the local population to a much greater degree compared to the pre-colonial period.

Since Siam was integrated into the new world order symbolised by the Bowring Treaty, the extraterritoriality forced Siam to transform her entire legal system to meet the Western standards. In addition, territorial administration, mapping, functional bureaucracy, taxation, military draft, Buddhist clergy and educational system were strongly influenced by ideas and models of the Westerners employed by the Siamese government (Peleggi, 2003: 91). In this case, Siam was a crypto-colony (semi-colony) because it was responsive to the colonial economy and performed a necessary function for the colonial system in the region without having to be colonised. However, the Siamese elite could not escape the ideological challenges posed by the West. They felt that they themselves were being measured against European norms of 'civilised' behaviour. In this sense, social organisations, culture and worldview in Siam were scrutinised, while polygamy and slavery became sources of particular embarrassment (Gong 1984: 227-230).

Constructing a civilised pedigree

As a result of the global influence of colonialism, Europe emerged as the new world order. The supreme powers in the world, especially Britain and France, were cause for concern among the international society as much as for excitement and inspiration. Similarly, 'Europe' was a cause for concern to the Siamese court as early as the 1830s. The Siamese elite understood that for a country to survive, Siam could no longer confirm or enhance its relative superiority by claiming lineage to the traditional cosmic origins as led by India and China. In fact, 'Europe' was the model of modernity, progressive development and desirable changes. Siam needed a confirmation according to the new ethos of civilisation measured against other international societies. King Chulalongkorn and the Siamese elite attempted to attain and confirm the relative superiority of Siam as the traditional power in the region. In doing so, he sought to catch up with the new world order of superiority as led by the Western nations in the mid-nineteenth century. Significantly, the king played active roles in appropriation and localisation of the ideas and practices of Western civilisation into the Siamese settings, therefore serving his interests.

The conventional historiography of Thailand always states that the self-civilising process of the Siamese elite since the mid-nineteenth century was a necessary measure to maintain Siam's independence from colonialism by earning recognition from the colonial powers. However, Thongchai (2000: 532) argued that Siam was not forced to act for survival, and that instead it was the Siamese elite's desire led by the king in changing, adjusting and adapting their cultural systems to the modern international society. Thus, the emergence of Siamese modernity was the royal elite's own desire and not a response to colonial force. King Chulalongkorn's quest for civilisation was only tactical to avoid the disgrace of inferiority for being uncivilised (Thongchai 2000). The

desire for progressive development was common amongst the aristocrats and urban intellectuals both within and outside the court. The king attempted to locate Siam's position in the new world order after he became aware of the global change through the foreign press in Singapore.

King Chulalongkorn personally appreciated and admired Western culture. He had enthusiastically embraced much of European thought and taste. From the 1880s, stories and information about Europe in terms of geography, histories, Western arts and miscellanies poured onto the pages of publications in Siam. According to Peleggi's study in *Lord of Things* (2002), consumption by Siamese elite was a means to imitate and keep pace with the Europeans, and the court invested heavily in the arts, colonial style buildings, royal portraits and public rituals. The king admired the high class, elegance, and Western goods, as can be seen from the interior decorations of his residences. This reflected his personal taste for the Western world, an interest beyond any influence of politics or survival. Thus, one can say that there was a personal dimension to his vision of modernity as well.

In *The Quest of 'Siwilai'* (2000), Thongchai observed that since the nineteenth century the Siamese elite were anxious, but not hostile to Westerners. They were fond of the Westerners and were receptive to the British and adopted a pro-British policy until they felt the Europeans becoming a real threat to Siam late in the century. Indignity to King Chulalongkorn and his royal associates seemed to be the worst and most serious damage to the absolute monarchy, which led the diplomatic king inevitably to seek a new source of superiority as he did not want to be left behind or beneath the leading nations. Siam was betrayed during the Franco-Siamese crisis in 1893, and the Siamese rulers were undeniably shocked by the defeat (Chandran 1970). This incident was so agonising because it was a danger to Siam as much as it was an affront to the royal dignity. The king and his royal associates were losing 'the supreme royal power'. In *Siam Mapped*, Thongchai (1994) argued that the Franco-Siamese crisis might not have been as jeopardising to Siam's independence as generally thought. This crisis was neither an anti-colonial act, as it pretended to be, nor was Siam an innocent victim. The territorial sacrifices were the aged-old imperial supremacy over Laos, Cambodia and parts in the peninsula whose people never considered themselves part of the Siamese Empire. Several uprisings such as the Anu Rebellion in Laos in 1827, the Kedah Uprising in 1831, and the Incursion to Cambodia during the 1840s occurred in those areas to get rid of Bangkok's control during the nineteenth century. However, these revolts were quelled by the Siamese military might. On the same point, Koompong (2003: 135) agreed that the case of the Franco-Siamese conflict was misleading because Siam never owned the territorial sacrifices and did not lose any of them. Incidentally, Siam was not the 'oppressed' victim of colonial powers, but it was the 'oppressor' who colonised its immediate neighbours. Therefore, one of the most urgent tasks among the Siamese elite was to attain civilisation to ensure that the country and the king remained relatively superior.

King Chulalongkorn's journey to Europe in 1897 has been interpreted among Thai historians as a major diplomatic success that guaranteed Siam's independence by showing to the European nations that Siam was not a barbaric, but a civilised state. However, Thongchai (2000: 538) has argued that there was no evidence that the royal journey was a diplomatic measure to get recognition from Europeans that resulted in

saving Siam's independence. In addition, if the royal trip to Europe was a diplomatic achievement, why did the imperial policies of the two colonial powers to Siam remain unchanged? Instead, the journey was a genuine quest to experience firsthand the source of civilisation. Significantly, Chandran (1970) asserted that one of the most important factors saving Siam from colonisation was the Franco-British Declaration of 1896 that effectively guaranteed Siam's sovereignty by making it a buffer zone between the two colonial powers. It was 'geo-politics' and the timing that Siam became an issue after her neighbours were already colonised (Thongchai 1994, Koompong 2003: 111).

Apart from the royal journey to Europe for the sake of responding to the anxiety and to experience civilisation firsthand, King Chulalongkorn and his associates desired to confirm Siam's position among civilised states by participating in the World's Fairs, museums and exhibitions.

World's Fairs

With the significant breakthrough of the Industrial Revolution in Europe in the late eighteenth century, a World's Fair was regarded as a cilivisation discourse among the industrial countries aiming at boasting of their advances in science and technology, industrial development, and other progress (Benedict 1983). Most of the major World's Fairs were a microcosm of the colonial world order that dominantly displayed the superiority of the imperial powers and their conquests (Rydell 1984). Incidentally, trade exhibitions presented opportunities for nation-building and the increasing number of commodity orders from the population at large (Cary 2000: 136).

Two prominent themes were repeatedly pronounced at most World's Fairs: the advance of Western civilisation and the exoticism of other countries from the rest of the world. Various levels of civilisation notably science, technology and industrialisation were on display to contrast with exotic cultures as seen in the eyes of the colonisers.

King Chulalongkorn and his associates enthusiastically kept pace with the latest global vogue. Significantly, they saw the benefits in participating in the major events, especially the World's Fairs, as these would enhance Siam's recognition and status in the eyes of the global community. Furthermore, Siam did not want to miss being part of the world's gala, even though it was a showcase of colonialism (Thongchai 2000: 540-542). It was true that participation was carefully selected and a number of invitations were turned down because of the limited budgets. However, Siam enthusiastically exhibited at World's Fairs in Paris (in 1889 and 1900), Chicago (in 1893), St.Louis (in 1904), and Turin (in 1911). To display Siam as a civilised nation-state, Siam encountered difficulties in balancing the modern, technologically developing nation with the ancient kingdom, rich with cultural heritage. Ultimately, various craft, arts, and natural products from all over the country were put on display. Nevertheless, Siam simultaneously took the opportunity to exhibit its technological progress in the areas of postal and telegraphic services, railways, and the first modern map in Siam (Peleggi 2002). Regardless of differing opinions, it finally was the Siamese elite's desire to elevate the country's position as a civilised nation that resulted in discourses through museums and exhibitions.

Museums and exhibitions

To King Mongkut, ancient civilisation was a claim for respect in the new presentation of international relations, in which Westerners were the powerful players. His diplomatic correspondence with heads of colonial powers reflected his avid awareness of the usefulness of an ancient civilisation for Siam, notably the Sukhothai archaeological artifacts which were utilised as tools in the practice of his own statecraft. In Siam, the origin of museums and exhibitions began in the Grand Palace in 1859 to house royal regalia and antiques (Cary 1994).

It is interesting to note that King Mongkut had used his antique collections in private diplomacy, and pursued a cautious exploration and experimentation, whereas King Chulalongkorn actively embraced and adapted Western artistic forms, and created the 'museum' as part of his drama of state (Cary 2000: 134). King Rama V's diplomatic and political skills have been shown through an exhibition held at the Concordia Hall in the Grand Palace in October 1874. In honor of the king's birthday, aristocrats, some private enterprises and foreign press in Siam were invited to witness the exhibition of choice and rare objects, and to listen to the musical concert. According to Cary (2000: 135), such exhibits included craft works, Buddhist icons, agricultural products, exotic and strange items and old books. Incidentally, lavish festivities were opened with an 'entertainment for the benefit of the public,' in the form of 'a Conversasione and Loan Exhibition of Work of Art'.

On the same point, King Chulalongkorn became the fashionable standard-bearer for newly defined categories of art and culture. A royal exhibition was held in 1882 to promote 'New Siam' in the mechanism of public display. While his father used photographs as objects, King Chulalongkorn learned to manipulate the image itself, in which his photographs suggested an awareness of Western art historical categories (Cary 1994: 67). In photography, the king seemed to be quite savvy, perhaps leading to or resulting from his becoming a practitioner himself. It can be asserted that the king interested himself in photography, grasping its rhetorical possibilities. His pose, dress, and setting are all coordinated to participate in the visual language of power current to European state portraiture.

As the royal collections and hobby became more serious, a museum among the Siamese elite became part of their effort to construct a new subject collection and mechanism for inventing a civilised nation-state (Cary 1994: 17). Notably, Thongchai (2000: 543) observed that Chamun Sirsorarak, the Director of the Museum Department, was sent to Europe to visit the leading museums in England, France, and Germany as part of the preparation for the establishment of Siam's first national museum for the purpose of promoting commerce and commodities from all over the country.

Being most fascinated by the Imperial Institute in Britain, but not with the British Museum, Sirsorarak subsequently recommended that the national museum in Siam should follow that model on his return to Bangkok, as he regarded the imperial character of the institute as the best model for the national museum of Siam. He suggested that the national museum should exhibit natural products, agricultural products, and manufactured commodities from the provinces in Siam, exactly as in the manner that the Imperial Institute did for the British colonies. Similarly, these provinces should cover the expenses of their own exhibits. Unfortunately, his recommendation was never realised because of

the financial constraints, and because there was no compelling need for a national museum at that time. Nevertheless, Thongchai (2000: 543) commented that such a proposal was neither a naive pretension nor an ambitious delusion. Instead, had all the project proposals been followed through, then Siam would have been an imperial country with economic potential having vast exploitable natural and human resources, and with the lesser-civilised people living along the borders of the Siamese civilisation.

In this sense, the Siamese elite in Bangkok would have been compared to the British court, a center of the global civilisation, and Bangkok might be likened to London, making Siam a parallel, through smaller, to the British Empire (Thongchai 2000: 543). This can be interpreted that the Siamese elite in the late nineteenth century tried to understand and keep pace with the new world order by locating themselves above or ahead of the rural hinterland in the region. Enhancing a modern form of power along with the 'civilised' public image was significant among the royal aristocrats who claimed their national leadership in relation to both to local population and the metropolitan powers.

Civilisation through art and architectural discourse

The quest for civilisation by the Siamese royal elite was a transcultural process in which ideas and practices from Europe, via colonialism, had been transferred, localised, and hybridised within the Siamese setting (Thongchai 2000: 529). The Siamese elite was fully aware of the colonial impacts, bringing with them both the benefits of modernisation and their inescapable problems. Initially faced with the colonial powers, the Bangkok monarchy accepted modern reforms, primarily for defensive reasons. Only in the latter part of the nineteenth century did they undertake modernisation with more fervour (Apinan 1992: xxii). Similarly, the reign of Chulalongkorn was the period when the most significant civilising and Westernising reforms were undertaken.

The major reforming and restyling of King Chulalongkorn's image and behaviour took place when he made a trip to India in 1872. The usage that most evidently evolved from prevailing Western norms did away with the cropped hairstyle and the exposure of the upper torso. In addition, the Siamese court similarly started adopting the Western style of dressing. The sartorial reform first began with men especially when the king and princes were exposed to the foreign gaze. The king and his royal associates had no desire to appear as barbarians to outsiders. Thus, the innovations of clothes, hair, and mustaches were brought to the royalty in line with contemporary Western fashion. Western style clothes and habits were integrated into a hybrid ensemble signifying the Siamese elite's connection to Western civilisation that was instrumental in the definition of their own identity. Incidentally, the king's visual representation in cultural materials, notably coins and stamps also reaffirmed his new modern image.

As part of his policies in building a modern nation-state along Western lines, King Chulalongkorn laid the basis for progressive development through his various reforms. As discussed earlier, the Siamese royalty achieved the re-validation of their symbolic capital by connecting to the sources of 'civilisation' which were now no longer perceived to be located in the Indianised world of South and Southeast Asia or China, but in Europe (Peleggi, 2002). Such reforms reflected the consumption practices induced by Western tastes, which encompassed luxury goods as well as architecture and public

spectacles. His patronage of Western art was only one part of this endeavour. The Siamese artisans in King Chulalongkorn's entourage were exposed to all kinds of Western art during his journey to Europe in 1897 and 1907. Western artisans and architects, mainly Italian, were hired from abroad to do commissioned works in Bangkok. Consequently, Western art became the desired royal style and highly visible at the royal residences, religious edifices, and official buildings. However, adaptations were made to suit the Siamese tastes.

King Chulalongkorn recognised the potential of portraiture, not only in photography but also in painting and sculpture. The king saw royal portraiture as a useful instrument for the purpose of political propaganda, especially as a way of presenting the rulers as civilised individuals (Apinan 1992: 12). His shrewdness and taste were displayed through royal selections of Western art works. Showing a collection of Western art treasure was another facet of his modernisation program. It also revealed that the Siamese fully appreciated Western-style portraitures. Frequently, portraits of Siamese monarchs and royal personages were placed next to images of Western rulers. This most likely indicated that Siamese rulers should be treated on equal terms along with their European counterparts. Indeed, they were probably designed to be viewed exclusively by prestigious visitors. Not surprisingly, King Chulalongkorn wished to show foreigners the Siamese ability to adapt to Western civilisation and manners (Apinan 1992: 13).

Civilisation through residential structures

In architecture, Western influenced architecture became an increasingly important concern. In a sense, numerous European architectural structures were symbolically used to portray the good and 'civilised' image of Siam, unlike that of other lesser developed countries in the region. Drawing upon various styles of architecture and international art movements demonstrated Siam's multiculturalism and strong position in foreign relations. King Chulalongkorn's visions of modernity for Siam depicted that of a country with diverse culture and knowledge, being international, and yet truly national and traditional at the same time. Through international relations, the king marked Siam's place in the global society, and not as one inferior to others. To the Siamese elite, attaining civilisation to ensure that the country and the Bangkok monarchy remained relatively superior, became one the most urgent tasks they needed to undertake. In terms of architecture, the king believed that Siam needed to gain knowledge of construction and new technology from Western countries. Therefore, Italian, British, and German architects were hired to work for the Department of Public Construction and other related departments; among them Carlo Allegri, Annibale Rigotti, Joachim Grassi, Mario Tamagno, John Clunish, and Karl Döhring (Aasen 1998; Poosadee 1998). Consequently, Western-style structures were significantly erected during his reign, as Peleggi (2002) observed that the court invested heavily in the arts, Italian and Victorian buildings, royal paraphernalia, and public rituals. Consumption was a means to imitate and keep pace with the latest European vogue. It was certain that the trope of Europe as the desirable model for civilisation was confirmed. The journeys to Europe plus the imitation and consumption of European cultural materials were the modern methods of obtaining and gaining access to the new cosmic power. The gigantic reception and extravaganza held upon the king's return marked the success not of any diplomatic negotiations but of making the trip to Europe itself (Thongchai 2000).

Throughout the modernisation programs, the Siamese elite attempted to earn themselves recognition among the civilised states and this recognition was to reaffirm their superiority among their subjects. To keep up with the rapid change in the world, King Chulalongkorn showed his preferred taste through a collection of Western consumer goods produced in the nineteenth century in such abundance and advertised through the local Western press. The king imported aspects of European culture, including objets d'art and later the artists themselves. His global view was expressed not only through the civilised manner but also through Western architectural residences, notably the Chakri Throne Hall, the Bang Pa-In Palace, and the Suan Disit Palace.

Figure 17. Chakri Throne Hall, in the Grand Palace, Bangkok, erected in 1876, one of the most outstanding buildings reflecting the cultural superiority of Siam to Western culture.

The Chakri Throne Hall (Figure 17), in the Grand Palace is one of the most spectacular buildings, in terms of a hybrid architectural style during the reign of King Chulalongkorn. The construction of this throne hall began in 1876, and was supposed to have three domes to give the building an entire European appearance. However, Chao Phraya Srisuriyawong, the former Regent, turned this building into a savvy political statement when he persuaded King Chulalongkorn to replace the domes with traditional Siamese spires and tiered roofs (prasat) over the European body so as to preserve the tradition of construction of a throne hall. The king decided to follow the former Regent's advice after he had realised the magnitude of the political implications for having such a controversial design. Reflecting the outstanding character of this edifice, Apinan noted:

> "The result is a meeting of two opposites (Oriental and Occidental) on a grand scale: arched windows, classical columns, and rustication are mixed with traditional carved gables, gilded decorations, and elongated spires. The interiors of the Chakri Throne Hall show further blending of East-West elements: marble pilasters support carvings of three-headed white elephants; chandeliers are placed adjacent to nine-tiered umbrellas (*chatra*); the Throne of Audience is positioned at the centre of arched columns." (Apinan 1992: 5)

With its impressive size and exterior, the Chakri Throne Hall signifies "vulgarity and kitsch, underscoring the mediocrity and banality of a hybrid architectural style created without the pressure of necessity and unguided by an organic tradition", according to Apinan (1992: 6). Although such a novelty may have been strange at first, it does become part of the standardisation of the cross-cultural influence nowadays.

The controversial design of the Chakri Throne Hall reflects the contradictory notions among the Siamese elite in the late nineteenth century, especially between the conservative attitude of the 'Old' Siam led by Chao Phraya Srisuriyawong and the civilised attitude of the 'New' Siam led by King Chulalongkorn. Positioning the Siamese architectural elements in more prominent locations than European counterparts without any effort to harmonise the composition signifies the clash of these two civilisations (Koompong 2003: 200). Furthermore, this also demonstrates the former Regent's political determination to resist Western encroachment while simultaneously proclaiming that Siamese will eventually win the struggle. In other words, the Chakri Throne Hall is the best representation of a building manifesting the high status of national and cultural identity of Siam while undermining the Western culture as inferior (Koompong 2003). Additionally, this disharmonious appearance reveals the position of Siam as a modern state that is neither an ancient kingdom, nor a copy of European, but a synthesis between the two civilisations.

Figure 55. Bang Pa-In Palace, Ayutthaya, one of the residences revealing King Chulalongkorn's global views on international relationships.

The Bang Pa-In Summer Palace (Figure 18) in Ayutthaya is another complex revealing King Chulalongkorn's global views on multi-polar politics in international relationships in relation to a 'civilised pedigree'. This palatial complex was erected in the 1880s in numerous architectural styles, notably European, Chinese, and Siamese. For instance the Thewarat Khanlai Gate was built in the Italian Neo-classical; Ho Withun Thasana in Moorish Style, Niwat Thamprawat Temple in French Gothic, Woropas Bbhiman Throne Hall in French Baroque, and Uthayan Phumisathian Mansion in Swiss chalet and Art Nouveau (Koompong 2003: 227). These European-style buildings are beautifully placed between the Siamese-style Aisawan Thiphta-art Pavilion and the Chinese Wehart Chamrun Mansion. Significantly, the site complex manifests his personality, political ideology and modernity embodied in the architectural structures. The palace most probably seeks to signify the high level of knowledge and power attained by Siam, equivalent to the European powers.

As Dovey (2001: 266) has asserted, urban form constructs a politics of representation. If his statement is justified, Suan Dusit (the Heavenly Garden), a new residential complex connected by the new Ratchadamnoen Avenue, possibly reflects King Chulalongkorn's progressive visions of reinforcing the royal authority along with the fashionable image of civilisation. Located 4 km to the northeast of the Grand Palace, Suan Dusit represented King Chulalongkorn's desire for a new sub-urban residential complex after he had made a journey to Europe in 1897. His stay in the country residences of the

European royalty made him appreciative of a lifestyle in which the court dwelling was paired with natural surroundings. Another motivation was to accommodate foreign guests in a suitable Western style residence. The king was also dissatisfied with the Grand Palace, as it was relatively crowded, resulting in an unsanitary facility at times of unpleasant weather (Peleggi 2002).

All of the new buildings at the Suan Dusit Complex were built in the European garden palace style, completely circumventing the rule of Siamese classical architecture. Among the built environments within the new residential complex, the most popular ones are Vimanmek Mansion, Ampornstan Mansion, and Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall, and the Royal Plaza including the equestrian statue of King Chulalongkorn himself. It is interesting to note that the building of the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall (Figure 21), originally planned to become the monarchy's first representative building in entirely Western style, is a hybrid of the cathedrals of St. Peter's in Rome and St. Paul's in London (Apinan 1992: 15). Instead of elephants, the horse, which was alien to the local iconography of royalist authority, also reaffirmed the Western view of King Chulalongkorn (Peleggi 2002).

Figure 19. (Left) Vimanmek Mansion, erected in 1901, within a new modern residential complex of the Suan Dusit, Bangkok. Figure 20. (Right) Ruen Ton, a traditional wooden house, in the Suan Dusit Complex, erected in 1904.

Figure 21. The Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall, Bangkok, the hybrid architecture of the cathedrals of St.Peter's in Rome and St.Pual's in London, commissioned by King Chulalongkorn in 1907.

In 1901, the king relocated a teakwood mansion from an island resort of Sichang and rebuilt it in the new palace called Vimanmek (Figure 19), which is currently the world's largest golden teak mansion. The royal residence, an airy and sprawling structure known as Ampornstan was completed in 1906. In addition, he built a wooden house in the traditional style called Ruen Ton (Figure 20), as a place where he could relax informally with friends and acquaintances.

According to King (1989 cited in Lawrence and Low 1990: 486), the influences of colonialism provide insights into the architectural development of the modern urban system. The contemporary urban system is 'contained in, symbolised by, and integrated with' a variety of buildings and urban forms. In this sense, Ratchadamnoen Avenue, literally meaning 'royal route', is an example of such a developmental process. It is noted that along the 'royal route', the new urban design leading to the Suan Dusit Palace is King Chulalongkorn's version of the Champs Elysee in Paris, the London Mall, and Berlin's *Unter den Linden* where he had been inspired during the visit to Europe in 1897 and fuelled by enlightenment notion of modernity, visibility and large scale geometric order of urban design with long vistas to symbols of power (Dovey 2001: 270).

The refashioning of his image, with the relocation of his residential quarters from the Grand Palace to the new Suan Dusit complex, not only opened up a more comfortable and pleasurable private space for the royal elite, but with its fenced villas and rectilinear street, also signaled the royalty's attachment to the Western civilisational sphere. In other words, the move to the new residential complex was at once a form of modernisation whereby the enclosing walls and canals of the traditional city were penetrated and bridged by the fast-flowing traffic. Significantly, the king was no longer hidden in the sacred palace, according to traditional cosmology of Traiphum, but was made visible in motorised parades (Dovey 2001: 272). The king's participation in a car procession also symbolised a monarch who was at the forefront of civilisation.

While constructions were built to reflect Western civilisation in that period, King Chulalongkorn also adopted the idea of making an equestrian statue of himself that was placed in the middle of the Phra Lan (or Royal Plaza), the wide open space in front of Suan Dusit (Peleggi, 2004: 139). This notion can be considered equally crucial for making his image as the prime symbol of the modern Siamese state both domestically and internationally. The foreign statue, portraying the king on a horse, also shows how the king used the horse to portray civilisation, as opposed to Siam's national animal, the elephant. According to Prince Damrong, the king conceived the idea of having an equestrian monument in the open space after seeing that of Louis XIV in front of Versailles in the summer of 1907. Having such urban design "would look majestic as much as those in the European countries" (Damrong 1961 cited in Peleggi 2004: 140). However, this mention of the French was not entirely accurate, as the king had already seen many equestrian monuments during his first European tour in 1897, before visiting Versailles. Meanwhile, there was no convincing evidence that the king favoured the Sun King monument. In contrast, in his famous writing *Klai Baan* or "Away from Home" (1955), King Chulalongkorn was impressed by the characteristics of an equestrian statue of King Victor Emmanuel in Milan, Italy, finding it "considerably graceful". Thus, the Louis XIV monument should not be the source of inspiration for the king. Additionally, his idea for the equestrian monument had emerged prior to his second visit to Europe.

During his stay in Paris, the king visited the factory called SUSSE Fres Foundeurs so as to pose for the sculptor of his equestrian statue which was cast and shipped to Bangkok in time for the celebrations of the fortieth anniversary of his reign in November 1908 (Peleggi 2003). King Chulalongkorn's equestrian statue reflects his visions of modernity, creativity, and involvement in design and construction.

Civilisation through religious structures

It was noted that the secular, non-religious art sector started to gain significantly during the reign of King Rama V, as a result of his modernisation policy. In contrast to the rise of Western art, there was a continual decline of activities in traditional art resulting not only from fulfilling those new requirements, but also from the king's shift of interest from being a traditional patron of the art to focusing on the demands of a modern state. A few projects, however, were conducted within the religious context.

Modern construction techniques and expressions increasingly succeeded in the sense that European construction materials and styles were used to blend with the traditional architectural forms. These innovations were applied at Wat Rajabopit and Wat Benjamabopit, both located in Bangkok, and Wat Niwet Thammaprawat in Bang Pa- In, Ayutthaya, or to mural paintings in Wat Rajathiwat in Bangkok.

Figure 22. (Left) The Buddhist belfry with Western stain glass decoration at Wat Rajabopit, one of the few religious monasteries in Bangkok erected in the reign of King Chulalongkorn.
Figure 23. (Right). The main chapel at Wat Niwet Thammaprawat, a Gothic-style Buddhist monastery at the Bang Pa-In Palace, Ayutthaya

One of the most intriguing architectural forms is Wat Rajabopit (Figure 22), the first religious edifice erected during the reign of King Chulalongkorn. This monastery was architecturally modelled on Wat Phra Prathom Chedi, in Nakhonpathom, in which major buildings are located around the central *chedi* with a covered walkway linking each. The main chapel is a Siamese-European hybrid influenced by Gothic and Renaissance architecture (Chatri 2003: 75; Koompong 2003: 215). The Gothic style interior is

decorated with pointed arches and vaulted ribs with chandeliers. The exterior adopts the Renaissance technique of imitation marble, in which lotus flowers were installed at the capitals of the columns.

In contrast to Wat Rajabopit, Wat Niwet Thammaprawat (Figure 23), constructed in the 1880s at Bang Pa-In, Ayutthaya, was designed by an Italian architect, Joachim Grassi. This temple is an example of Siamese-European hybrid innovation manifesting itself in several aspects. This tall religious edifice is made to resemble a European church. The exterior is in Gothic style with a high steeple and the interior is decorated with Italian marble and a coffered ceiling. Interestingly, the painted portraits of King Chulalongkorn in the stained glass installed in the lintel over the front entrance of the main chapel were used as the models for producing an image of the civilised king (Aasen 1998: 193). In describing the aesthetic value of this temple, Aasen (1998: 193) notes:

> "In its aesthetics, technical execution, bright colours, and material used, the stained glass is European; in content, however, it is a combination of European (for example, a Latin inscription which read 'Chulalongkorn Rex Siamenis'), Siamese (for example, a white elephant raising its trunk to symbolise Thailand, and the Maha Kathin head-piece), and stereotypic Eastern (for example, a red-winged dragon clinging to the top of a curtain)."

Figure 24. The main chapel at Wat Benjamabopit or the Marble Temple, Bangkok, creating a Western architectural concept on the traditional functions of Siamese monastery.

Wat Benjamabopit (Figure 24) is one of the most beautiful religious structures designed by Prince Narisara, who was King Chulalongkorn half-brother and the 'Great Teacher' of traditional Siamese architecture. This monastery is commonly known as 'the Marble Temple' because of its imported white Carrara marble, the same construction material that was used for the Anantha Samakhom Throne Hall. Innovatively, the main chapel at this monastery is not placed in the center of the temple, which is usually surrounded by galleries on four sides. Rather, it is integrated as a part of the enclosure, with two arms of the galleries originating from the main chapel. In addition, this temple offers a model for applying Western architectural concepts, materials, and technology incorporated into the traditional Siamese design. This creates a Siamese-European

synthesis revealing modern technology on the traditional functions of a Siamese monastery. In other words, this is a traditional-modern synthesis manifesting a Buddhism-based society in parallel with the modernity of the West. Instead of mindlessly copying the colonial architecture, the Siamese elite rearranged and recreated the modern architecture to fulfill the functional requirements of religious structures (Chatri 2003: 86).

Unlike Anantha Samakom Throne Hall and Chakri Throne Hall, traditional Siamese architectural forms at the Marble Temple dominated those of the Western traditions and such domination appears complementary instead of a clash of two opposing civilisations (Koompong 2003: 217). Furthermore, the new appearance of the main chapel at this temple reveals a fundamental move away from the governing magical cosmological as inherited from the Hindu and Buddhist traditions and a shift towards the secularisation and scientific rationalism of the West (Aasen 1998: 200). Interestingly, the architectural form of the Marble Temple, whose construction began in 1899 but was completed later during the reign of King Vajiravudh, reflected the socio-political situation at the turn of the new century. In his thoughtful interpretation of politico-cultural meanings through architecture of this monastery, Chatri (2003: 95-110) discovered significant political ideologies of King Chulalongkorn and the Siamese elite in the following contexts: 'the rise of Siamese absolutism' featured in the main chapel, 'Siam's map and boundaries' illustrated in the mural painting, 'national integration' through a collection of Buddha images standing at the temple galleries, and 'bureaucratic reforms' decorated on the temple pediments.

In *Palaces of Bangkok*, Naengnoi and Freeman (1996) observed that by the latter half the nineteenth century, ferro-concrete technology was introduced into Siam, and structures were built with steel-reinforced concrete pillars and beams. In addition, labour-saving devices such as steam pile drivers, winches, and water-pumps were used in construction work. Along with his modernisation policies, King Chulalongkorn brought Western culture into everyday life. Accordingly, the new culture affected house designs, and interiors were divided into living rooms, bedrooms, dining rooms, and bathrooms.

Through predominant by Western structures under the royal support, architecture at the turn of the twentieth century reflected the imposition of Western ideas, knowledge, cultural practices, ways of life, forms of consciousness, and technology upon Siamese culture. Such an application of Western architecture reinforces the hegemony of the West over Siam and incidentally signifies the process of Western colonisation in Siam culturally and intellectually (Koompong 2003: 183). Recognised as the 'Preferred Royal Style', Western architecture represented progress and refinement, standing for the dawn of a new era, the modernity and superiority of Western science and technology over Siam's traditional wisdom. Architecture of a pure Western style by European architects had become fully accepted at the beginning of the twentieth century. Foreign architects from different backgrounds applied their own ideas and styles to the works they were commissioned to do. The above statement is justified with the construction of Phra Ram Ratchanivej (the Gunner Palace), the pure Jugendstil, or Art Nouveau palace designed by a German architect, Karl Siegfried Döhring. Significantly, this palace takes further steps in a colonial discourse and manifests King Chulalongkorn's global views on civilisation, his personal taste in terms of the latest Western architectural styles and a cordial Siamese-German relationship. Such values are examined below in further detail.

Figure 25. The German Jugenstil or Art Nouveau architectural style at the Gunner Palace, Phetchaburi. (Photograph: Korrachai Lekpetch).

Phra Ram Ratchanivej and the Jugendstil architecture

Phra Ram Ratchanivej (Figure 25), commonly known as Wang Ban Puen (the Gunner Palace) in Phetchaburi, was built on the initiative of King Chulalongkorn as his rainy season retreat. The king suffered from hay fever during the rainy seasons of Bangkok especially in September, and sought to find a location offering a more suitable climate (Petchaburi Military District 2004). Having a seasonal retreat was a Western norm adopted by his father, King Mongkut, which King Chulalongkorn likewise followed. In his childhood, the king enjoyed visiting Phetchaburi where Phra Nakhon Kiri had been erected by his father. However, it was relatively difficult to obtain an adequate water supply because of its location on the hills, and so a new site near the Phetchaburi River and not far from the town was chosen as a priority.

Figure 26. Karl Döhring designed the Gunner Palace (Photograph courtesy of Somchart Chungsiriarak).

King Chulalongkorn showed considerable attention to the Gunner Palace. This can be interpreted that the king himself commissioned the project. For instance, he selected the site plan of Kaiser Wilhem II's summer palace as a model for his retreat palace. He assigned Karl Döhring and Dr.Bayer as the project architect and the project engineer. Additionally, Prince Boriphat, one of the king's beloved sons who spent many years studying military science in Germany, was responsible for the site plan and the installment of electricity and modern plumbing. Prince Damrong, the king's 'right hand' and devoted younger half-brother, was also responsible for the project construction in accordance with the site plan. Being the last palace erected during his reign, the foundation stone of the Gunner Palace was laid by the king in August 1910, just a few months before his death on 23 October 1910. King Chulalongkorn did not have a chance to stay there as intended because he passed away before its

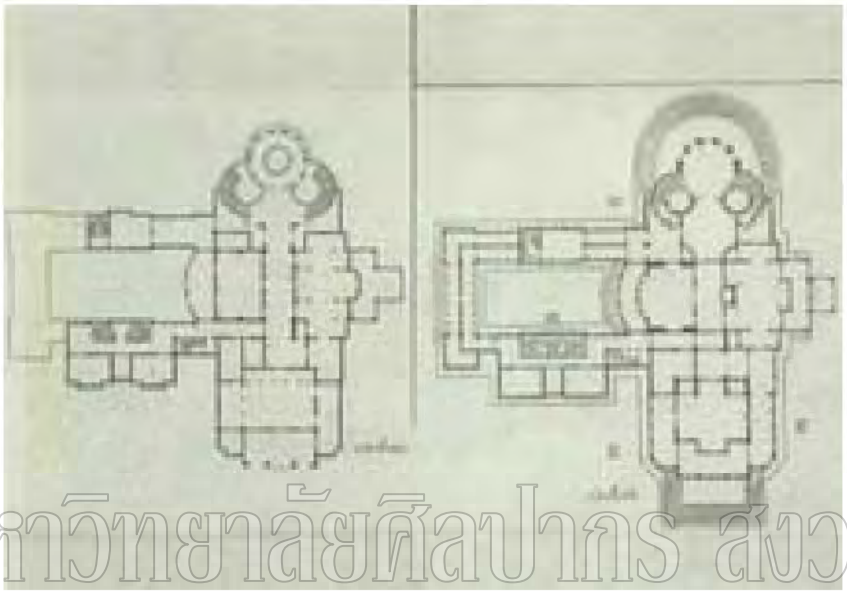
construction was completed in 1916, during the reign of his son and successor. King Vajiravudh had a short stay at the Gunner Palace when he was on route to his retreat villa at Hat Chao Samran. Sometimes, the palace was used for hosting dinner and parties. Nevertheless, he did not place as much importance on its socio-political values as his father did. He showed little interest in the palace, finding the German design too heavy and oppressive (Green 1999: 118). In fact, many of the mega-constructions including Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall, the Marble Temple, and Hua-Lumphong Railway Station in Bangkok initiated during King Chulalongkorn's reign, were subsequently completed during the reign of King Vajiravudh. The latter, however, showed little interest in the projects.

The Gunner Palace is an architectural masterpiece designed by the German architect, Karl Siegfried Döhring (Figure 26), a new graduate from the Faculty of Architecture at the Koniglichen Technische Hochschule in Berlin-Charottenburg, Germany. Döhring traveled to Siam in 1906 to take up the position of an assistant engineer to the Royal Railway Department of Siam, a function of the Public Works Department (PWD). This recruitment took place during a period in which Siam had undergone great development and modernisation (Somchart, 1997: 36). A large number of European professionals were employed by the king at that time, but it was Döhring to whom the king commissioned the design of his retreat palace, within only three years after his arrival in Siam. Although little is known about Döhring's first few years in Siam, a connection can be drawn between him and Prince Damrong. It was when Döhring was working for the PWD, and when Prince Damrong was the Minister of Interior that they developed a close association. That was perhaps why Döhring, a German, was specifically assigned for the architectural task on the Gunner Palace.

Figure 27. Jugendstil or Art Nouveau interior decorations at the Gunner Palace characterised by curvilinear lines influenced from natural beauty, notably trees and vegetations (Photography courtesy of *Muang Boran Journal*, vol. 25, no. 1, 1999).

Döhring adopted the progressive ideas of the early twentieth century architectural style known as Art Nouveau or 'Jugendstil' which was derived from the name of a progressive magazine called 'Jugend', published in Munchen in 1896 (Somchart 1997: 43). This new avant-garde art movement started in 1861 in England, where William Morris in collaboration with other artists, created the Arts and Crafts Movement as a reaction to the mid-19th-century artistic styles. Through ornaments and

asymmetries, artists *rebelled* against the ways of classic art (Leijenaar 1998). The creations of the artists involved in the movement explored nature, making its forms an integral part of the creative processes. Physically, Jugendstil architecture was characteristised by curvilinear lines influenced by trees and vegetation. Art thus combines with industrial materials and the minor arts revealing natural splendour, liveliness, and colourfulness. Again painting, architecture, and handicrafts were to be correlated both formally and conceptually in a close-knit relationship that was not determined by industrial mass production (Jugendstil n.a.).



Map 5. Site plan of Phra Ram Ratchanivej (Photograph courtesy of Somchart Chungsiriarak).

Influenced by the movement of steel-framed structures in Europe at that time, the Gunner Palace is entirely Western in its design and construction methods (Naengnoi and Freeman 1996). Architecturally, the site plan (Map 5) at this mansion is the Rhenish Romanesque trefoil plan with an enclosed cloister, which resulted from the treatment of mass and form following the massive appearance of Romanesque churches (Somchart 1997: 36). Being a two-storey structure built in the modern style with two spires, one large and the other small, measuring about 70 metres wide from east to west, and 60 metres from north to south, the countryside palace also comprises rectangular halls surrounding a courtyard.

Nearly all the construction and decorative materials were imported. The attractiveness of the Gunner Palace was characterised by large fractable entrances, and the Mansard roofs with a domed hall in the right wing. The front façade appeared stately and solid, whereas the other sides were dynamic with several forms of roofs and masses, which were notably different from classical styled buildings. In addition, the interior (Figure 27) was beautifully decorated with glazed tiles on the floors and walls, and the staircases were in a Baroque style that was brought to Siam. Facing the entrance of the dining room is a Poseidon statue, based on the Greek God of the sea. This too shows how Siam had established relations with Western countries. The Poseidon statue was meant to ensure a safe trip home from the royal journey to Europe in 1907. The furniture, the stained glass windows and the vase were decorated with roses, clematises, butterflies and dragonflies. Meanwhile, the ornament remains an important element of the outer

architectural surfaces. Marble, glass, majolica, tiles, colourful moulding, gilding, and other valuable materials were used for the decoration of architectural structures. Lamps, furniture, and individual ornaments at the Gunner Palace were aesthetically handled and chosen with great delicacy.

Unlike the work of contemporary colonial architects in Siam, Döhring's designs were not simply copies of European architectural styles aimed at pleasing the local clients, but reflected his creativity in blending Western aesthetics into the concept of vernacular architecture which placed an emphasis on functionalism (Somchart 1999: 31). Functional utility and the comfort of dwellers were firstly considered in designing the building, rather than being concerned with the traditional symmetrical plan. Unlike the traditional domestic life in which the Siamese elite used their own houses or palaces as their offices during the preceding reigns, the architecture at the Gunner Palace reflects the modern consumption practices through the design of new functional rooms such as living room, library, tea room, bathroom and garage (Piyalada 1999: 69). Furthermore, the designed landscapes of such holiday mansions also manifested new characteristics and elements, for example, a front porch with a semi-circular road leading to the mansion, or front lawns with German style gardens, fountain pond, and garden sculptures

Figure 28. The stucco elephant, the traditional symbol of royal authority decorated on the front porch of the Gunner Palace, Phetchaburi.

Having a good understanding of tropical humidity in Siam, Döhring designed buildings with higher ceilings and addressed the spatial usage. All rooms are connected without a narrow walkway, in order to facilitate the air circulation, which significantly kept the rooms cool. Döhring remarkably incorporated a modern spatial organisation with a Romanesque church plan. His design significantly revealed the Jugendstil ideas. Only three buildings of this kind have remained in Thailand: the Gunner Palace, the Somdej Mansion in the Bang Khun Phrom Palace, and Prince Damrong's Voradit Palace. Interestingly enough, these three buildings are unique, as if they reveal the personality of the owners. For example, the Gunner Palace is imposing and grand. It is noted that as the construction of this palace was completed in the reign of King Vajiravudh who promoted the official nationalism (to be examined in the next chapter), the stucco elephants signifying the traditional Siamese royal authority have been decorated on the front porch (Figure 28). Prince Damrong's Voradit Palace, on the other hand, looks simple but elegant, while the Somdej Mansion is graceful with soft interiors reflecting the feminine quality of the dweller (Somchart 1999: 31).

The European architectural style at the Gunner Palace provides a clue to what the king might have had in mind when building his modern-nation state along Western lines. Significantly, King Chulalongkorn's political policies on bureaucratic reforms commencing in the middle of the 1880s helped the Bangkok rulers maintain their hegemony over the native people by demonstrating that they were able to master the arts and technology of the Westerners. Indeed, the king attempted to show his regional subjects that the royal power, in terms of superior technology, knowledge, and refined Western culture was pervasive. Meanwhile, selecting the architectural style of Jugendstil or Art Nouveau at the turn of the century in Europe for the construction of his rainy season retreat significantly indicated his political position not as a figurehead of an ancient empire but a regional leader of a modern nation-state.

Apart from examining aesthetic and scientific values at the Gunner Palace, in terms of the composition of forms and the stylistic creation, it is also essential to take into account the socio-political circumstances that coincided with the Gunner Palace, especially why King Chulalongkorn selected the German architectural style. What was the Siamese-German relationship at that time? Was there any hidden agenda on foreign policy embedded in the architectural style at this countryside palace? If yes, what was it?

Diplomatic policy on balancing powers

In the nineteenth century, Britain and France aggressively competed with each other in expanding their colonisation into Southeast Asia, Africa and the Far East. They became a threat to Siam during the latter half of the nineteenth century. In 1885, Britain expanded into Burma and the Malay Peninsula. Even more than Britain, France posed a serious danger to Siamese independence. The Siamese elite realised that to forcibly resist colonial powers would only worsen the situation as the colonial powers had far superior armed forces. Thus, they turned to a more tactful weapon, diplomacy. The way to survive was to exploit the situation by using diplomatic skills and an astute foreign policy (Likhit 1975).

After the French had occupied Cochinchina (southern Vietnam around the Mekong Delta) in 1863, they extended their influence into Cambodia, over which Vietnam and Siam had long been struggling for control. France obliged the Cambodian leader, King Norodom, to accept a French protectorate. Siam formally relinquished its claim over Cambodia in 1867, in return for French recognition of Siamese sovereignty over the Cambodian provinces of Siem Reap and Battambang. The French tried to develop a trade route along the Mekong Valley so as to reach Yunnan which was believed to possess vast mineral resources and to have great possibilities for trade development (Lafuze 1935: 4). This seemed possible once France had assumed complete control over Vietnam in the 1880s. The French also eagerly showed their interest in Laos, which was under Siamese suzerainty, by arguing that the areas previously under Vietnamese control should now come under the French, the new ruler of Vietnam.

The French and the Siamese were engaged in a Laotian territorial dispute which culminated in a major clash in 1893, when two French warships made their way up the river to Bangkok after being fired upon by the Siamese from the Paknam Fort. The two ships anchored off the French legation in Bangkok. At this critical moment, Prince Devawong, the Minister of Foreign Affairs who had understood King Mongkut's policy of

gentle and dignified accommodation in the face of colonial threats, agreed to the cession of Laos. Thus, relations between France and Siam continued to be tense for the rest of the century.

Throughout Thai history since the Ayutthaya period, the Siamese monarchs proved themselves to be shrewd diplomats and the masters of manipulation, achieving a balance of foreign influences in their kingdom by pitting the foreigners against each other in tactful ways (Koompong 2003: 234). For example, King Narai had cultivated his relationship with the French in order to offset the influence of the British and the Dutch (Likhit 1995). King Mongkut's foreign policy was to lean towards the British and ward off the danger from the French. His successors, King Chulalongkorn and King Vajiravudh were Anglophiles. This was substantiated by the fact that most of Siam's foreign advisors were British and most students who went abroad on the King's scholarship were sent to England. This practice was also exhibited in the production of cultural artifacts, remarkably the architectural style at the Chakri Throne Hall erected in 1876. King Chulalongkorn provided his reasons for selecting the British Neo-renaissance for the throne hall as follows:

> "By contrast, the relationship between Siam and England since the reign of my father [King Mongkut] is based on friendship and mutual agreements. Therefore, it should not be any inappropriateness to design the throne hall in their tradition…Additionally, Queen Victoria ruled England for sixty three years with peace and prosperity, as opposed to the political disorder in France having one king, one emperor, and seven presidents rule the empire in less than fifty years. On these grounds, the English provides a suitable model for Chakri Dynasty for constructing the throne hall to celebrate Bangkok Centennial Anniversary." (Pensupa 2000 cited in Koompong 2003: 225)

Figure 29. The Borromma Bhiman Royal Residence, in the Grand Palace, Bangkok, erected in 1897 in French Neo-Renaissance style, aiming to reduce the influence of Britain in Siam after the British had ignored Siam's plea to intervene in the Siamese-French Conflict in 1893.

Similarly, the design of the Borromma Bhiman Royal Residence (Figure 29) in the French Neo-Renaissance tradition of Napoleon III in the Grand Palace signified the effort of the king to reduce the influence of the British over Siam's foreign affairs (Pensupa 2000: 86). Inspired by the Louvre in Paris, this royal residence was constructed

in 1897 and painted in cream, typical of the French tradition. This change of heart resulted from the bitter lesson learned when the British ignored Siam's plea to intervene on France's gunboat diplomacy in 1893. Instead, Britain suggested that Siam accept an agreement on French terms. Consequently, the design of the Borromma Bhiman rejected any reference to the British tradition in favour of the French Empire. Interestingly enough, after the Franco-Siamese conflict in 1893 through to the end of Chulalongkorn's reign in 1910, there were no more royal buildings erected in the British style (Pensupa 2000: 86).

Following to the 1893 incident, King Chulalongkorn sought to establish multi-polar relationships with the West, replacing the Siamese-British-Franco triplicate affairs, by bringing new powerful players to the game. In other words, King Chulalongkorn intended to form relations and allies with various countries, to counterbalance the power of France and Great Britain. The first country in which the king sought support was Russia, with whom King Chulalongkorn had fostered relationships when the Crown Prince Tzarevich Nicholas visited Siam in 1891. The relationship between the Romanov Dynasty and the Chakri Dynasty became stronger when King Chulalongkorn visited Russia in 1897. However, Russia failed to support Siam as King Chulalongkorn requested because of the 'French-Russian Dual Alliance'* made in 1894. This was perceived to result from Russia's dependenc on France for financial support and high-tech machinery in developing her country. Russia was not in the position to force or press France to compromise with Siam over their conflicts. Moreover, Russia's prestige dropped steadily after it had been defeated by the Japanese in 1905 (Pensri 1982: 184). Therefore, King Chulalongkorn made a swift change in strategy to approach Germany, formerly known as Prussia prior to the victory over the Franco-Prussia War in 1870 (Pensri 1982).

Siamese-German relationship

The relationship between Siam and the German Empire was a close one. From the start of the friendship and the commercial treaty of 1862, whenever there was an opportunity, Siam showed friendly gestures to Germany through various concessions in postal services, railway construction, commerce, and other civic fields. Significantly, King Chulalongkorn attempted to use Germany to counterbalance France and Britain. This was due to many reasons. Firstly, Germany was a great power dominating commerce, industry and military affairs in Europe after the German unification in 1871. Both Britain and France had to watch Germany closely and avoid creating a conflict. Secondly, unlike France and Great Britain, Germany did not have any colonising policy towards Siam and her neighboring countries. In general, Germany attempted to dominate commercial investment in Siam rather than in political power. Thirdly, Germany had never shown any violent conflict with Siam since the commercial treaty of 1862, but instead Germany was seen as a dangerous rival to Britain, France, and Russia (Pensri 1982: 192).

Figure 30. Emperor Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany (Photography courtesy of Krailerk Nana).

* Interviewed Khun Krailerk Nana on 3 October 2004.

In order to maintain a diplomatic balance, Siam usually showed friendly gestures to Germany. For instance, King Chulalongkorn granted the honours of anointing his son, Prince Vajirunahis, to the German Minister who was significantly impressed by the gesture, and subsequently reported back to his government. Such ceremony was made when the prince reached the age of adolescence. In return, Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany (Figure 30) took this opportunity to bestow the Royal Order of the Red Eagle on the Crown Prince, which also greatly pleased the King of Siam and his court (Ratree 1976:33). Although the two countries did not actually form a military alliance in the 1990s, their militaries grew close. Dozens of German advisors flocked to Siam, and the Siamese royalty and other officers received training in Germany, especially since King Chulalongkorn had realised the dangers arising from the Western powers and the importance of the military. This helped strengthen the friendship between the two countries, which was politically of great importance.

The political and commercial influences of Germany and Siam were promoted through the employment of Germans to important positions, especially in railway construction and postal services. According to King Chulalongkorn's policies on modernisation, the Siamese government employed a German, Herr Carl Bethge, as the first Director-General of Railways. In 1899, the king planned the construction of a railway line from Bangkok to Nakhon Ratchasima, one of the major provinces situated in the northeast, for politically strategic reasons. It was noted that the development of the public transportation and railway systems were built to facilitate territorial control and military intervention in the northeast region, where the border conflict with France was intense at that time. The railway line opened up the large interior for agriculture and transportation of goods, resulting in great economic development. Apart from the fact that Germany gained international recognition for engineering and infrastructure development, the employment of German workers was part of King Chulalongkorn's survival policy in that he did not want to see Britain and France having too great an influence in Siam. Any dependence on either Britain or France would cause a conflict of interest between the two powers which could have affected the stability and security of Siam (Pensri 1982). In addition, with the conclusion of the treaty of 1862, Germany had not posed any threat towards Siam. Therefore, Germany was seen as the best solution at that time.

The personal relationship between King Chulalongkorn and Kaiser Wilhelm II grew remarkably during his journeys to Germany. In 1897, the Emperor welcomed the king with full honours. King Chulalongkorn was accommodated at the Stade Schloss, and laid a wreath at the tomb of Frederick III, followed by a visit to Sans Souci Palace (Pensri 1982: 170). Being presented the Red Eagle Order by Kaiser Wilhelm II, King Chulalongkorn was also fascinated with a parade of the Royal Guards displayed at Templehof. It was noted that the royal visit to Germany significantly contributed to the development of a personal relationship between the king and the Emperor. After his return to Siam, the king honoured Von Seldeneck, the German Minister, by visiting him at his residence, which is something he had never done before.

On his second journey to Europe in 1907 for the purpose of physical recuperation after the king had suffered from the French conflict for decades, the Emperor and Empress of Germany extended their hospitality to the king and looked after him. During this time, the king was accommodated at Wilhelmshöhe Palace, and he also stayed

in Bad Homburg, for a month, where the Memorial Siamese Pavilion was erected to commemorate his time in Germany (Eulenburg 1982: 38). In his famous collections of letters *Klai Baan* (Away from Home) to his daughter, Princess Niphanophadol, the king (1970 cited in Pensri 1982: 171) wrote that:

> "The Emperor put me [King Chulalongkorn] in Emperor Frederick's room…took Boripat to his room and checked everywhere. …I informed him that I would send Daeng [Prince Mahidol of Songkhla who is the father of King Bhumiphol], my son to him. He accepted wholeheartedly and whispered to Boripat to remind me to send him as soon as possible, so that he could prepare instructors for him. He seemed to be very pleased and appeared to take it on himself personally."

Accordingly, the intimacy led to the full promotion of the ministers of the two countries. Such goodwill also led to the support in many aspects of modernisation that Germany contributed to Siam. For instance, Kaiser Wilhelm II presented a site plan of his summer palace to the Siamese king after his second visit to Europe. In addition, the goodwill also led to Germany's role in the guarantee of integrity to Siam, when the Emperor advised King Chulalongkorn to request cooperation from the colonising powers to guarantee the independence and integrity of Siam (Pensri 1982: 182). This idea did not please the British government very much because the British were afraid that if Germany agreed to guarantee Siam, the Siamese government, in return, might grant Germany an island to be used as a coaling station which inevitably would be extremely dangerous and detrimental to British Malaya (Pensri 1982). According to the Anglo-Siamese Convention secretly enacted in 1897, Britain had the full authority to reject this proposal and to make any commercial concessions subject to British approval. In return, Britain promised to protect Siam's independence of territory south of Bang Tapan from any aggression. Notably, this convention was enacted after Britain and France came to an agreement in 1896, which recognised Siam as independent buffer state between British Burma and French Cochinchina. However, such agreement did not apply to the southern part of Siam. This had amounted to an Anglo-Siamese Entente (Likhit 1975: 25).

King Chulalongkorn was also grateful for Kaiser Wilhelm II's advice on how to deal with the tense situation of being a buffer state. From all this support, he was able to conclude that only a stable state can serve as a buffer zone (Hooper-Greenhill 1994: 34). He then considered the strategies of Triple Alliances, as opposed to Dual Alliances, meaning that the more relationships he built with other countries, the greater neutrality Siam would hold and the better chance she would have to preserve her independence. It seemed that Kaiser Wilhelm was keen on the guarantee of the integrity of Siam when he declared that if necessary he might organise an international conference on the status of Siam like the one on Morocco in 1906. This declaration was one of the important factors which induced Britain to sign a treaty with Siam in 1909 whereby Britain received Kedah, Kelantan, Terengganu, and Perlis in exchange for the abolition of the Anglo-Siamese Convention of 1897 and the surrender of some of its extraterritorial rights in Siam (Pensri 1982: 193). Hence, contrary to some beliefs, it cannot be denied that King Chulalongkorn had considerable diplomatic skills and a broad global view to accept new changes. The king had a role to play, and it can be said that it was because of him that Siam was able to maintain her national independence when the world was getting engulfed by the colonialism and imperialistic policies of the Western powers.

King Chulalongkorn's diplomatic strategy was most likely backed by his intimate relationship with Kaiser Welhelm II to counterbalance the influences of France and Britain. This practice was also exhibited in the production of cultural artifacts, remarkably the architectural style at the Gunner Palace modeled after Kaiser Welhelm II's summer palace, which made King Chulalongkorn appreciate a life style in which courtly magnificence was paired with natural surroundings (Poosadee 1998; Petchaburi Military District 2004). Although small compared with palaces elsewhere, the Gunner Palace not only manifested King Chulalongkorn's admiration for Germany, for Kaiser Welhelm II and for his residence, but it also symbolised the meaningful political relationship between Germany and Siam at that time. Germany was a good friend to Siam and had helped the kingdom in innumerable ways, one of which contributed to the kingdom's sovereignty. Having a palace built entirely styled on German architecture, from the interior design to the exterior plan with the choice of trees, resulted in King Chulalongkorn and the kingdom of Siam making an eternal tribute to Kaiser Wilhelm II and Germany for the cordial relationship that they had shared.

Unlike neighbouring countries that chose to combat Western colonisation with military campaigns, King Chulalongkorn and his associates battled with the West through cultural and diplomatic means (Koompong 2003: 188). Apparently, Italians dominated the pool of Western artists and architects in Siam. Not only did this scenario result from the king's and the courts' preference for Italian art and architecture, but also for a significant political reason. It would have been a great strategic blunder if the Siamese monarchs had employed the art and architecture of the 'enemy' - the British and the French who had colonial ambitions toward Siam's territory. In contrast, both Italy and Germany provided a 'natural' choice, enabling the Siamese elite to avoid the image of being a colonial collaborator, since neither country had any intention of colonial oppression in Southeast Asia. Certainly, their art and architecture, like that of other Europeans, enabled the Siamese elite to acquire a 'civilised pedigree'. Consequently, it was not surprisingly that the Italians and Germans outnumbered French and British artists and architects in Siam (Koompong 2003: 149).

In conclusion, there was no speech from King Chulalongkorn that Phra Ram Ratchanivej was erected to balance the domination of France and Britain in Siam. However, it is undeniable that this retreat palace reflected to a slight extent his personality and policy on foreign relations. The king sought to foster relations and allies with Germany. The palace certainly represents the cordial relationship between the Siamese king and Kaiser Wilhelm II. If not, the German Emperor would have not presented a model of his summer palace to King Chulalongkorn after his second journey to Europe in 1907. This palace also manifested the king's considerable attention to the construction detail. He himself selected a site plan, a location, the project architect and engineer, and the project commissioner. Moreover, the king assigned Prince Boriphat, his son who was educated in Germany, to be responsible for the site plan and the installment of electricity and modern plumbing. It can be asserted that King Chulalongkorn was detail-oriented to the construction of this retreat mansion.

Although King Chulalongkorn was not able to successfully protect peripheral territories bordering Indo-China and Malaya at the end of his reign, it is undeniable that the king purposely presented himself to the outside world as a sovereign who was shrewd

in international politics, as a powerful broker, as a connoisseur of European art and culture, and as a highly educated gentleman of Western knowledge, and not as a figurehead of an ancient empire but a chief executive of a modern nation-state (Koompong 2003: 206).

Like the heritage interpretation at Phra Nakhon Kiri, the analysis of King Chulalongkorn's political views and personality is not currently portrayed and presented to visitors. In other word, there is no interpreted message of his policy on foreign relations through the Jugendstil architectural style at Phra Ram Ratchanivej. The insights into King Chulalongkorn's policy on foreign relations and personality should be incorporated into the thematic interpretation plan. These will possibly create fascinating and engaging ways to reveal new insights and better understanding of his values.

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Chapter 4

King Vajiravudh and Mrigadayavan

Nationalism in the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries, in the Southeast Asian context, is often seen as an anti-colonialist development, where indigenous subjects in the occupied territories formulated their nationalist sentiment for the sake of securing independence from foreign rule along with the establishment of their own states. This form of political development was consistent with what Anthony Smith (1971: 171), one of the more thoughtful theorists on nationalism, proposed as the general definition of nationalism:

> "an ideological movement, for the attainment and the maintenance of self-government and independence on behalf of a group, some of whose members conceive it to constitute an actual or potential nation like others".

In contrast to the popular form of nationalism cited above, a new type of development called 'official nationalism' emerged in the latter half of the nineteenth century. According to Anderson (1983: 95), such political development was an anticipatory strategy adopted by the royal elite who were "threatened with marginalisation or exclusion from an emerging nationally-imagined community". Similarly, Seton-Watson (1977: 148) explained that it was essential for leaders, notably czars and kings, to impose their nationality on all their subjects through religion, language or culture. By this means, such leaders were strengthening their state by creating a single homogeneous nation within it. It is also asserted that this type of official nationalism was relatively unique in many ways that further raised questions about definitions, instructive comparisons, and models of nationalism (Batson 1999: 287).

Anderson (1983: 93) has suggested that Thailand, being the sole country in Southeast Asia which could maintain her independence from direct colonial rule, invented a distinctive form of official nationalism, as a device with which a Siamese ruling elite sought to retain their political sovereignty by integrating their people in the name of the nation under their leadership. Additionally, Barme (1993: 9) commented that the Siamese ruling elite imposed a standardised, homogeneous, centrally sustained high culture on their subjects so as to create a modern nation. Such official nationalism was variously referred to as *elite nationalism* or *sakdina nationalism* (Batson 1999: 289). Interestingly, the official nationalism in Siam was initiated from the top down, or in other words, from the monarchy to the mass of the people. Clearly, the king, who was challenged by new circumstances and new ways of thinking, dominated the role of national hero up to the present. In contrast to Thailand, the national hero in the other Southeast Asian countries was normally a native leader who was profoundly influenced by the nationalism ideology through his modern knowledge from the West. Eventually, such ideology of nationalism in this region developed into a movement of resistance, hostile to colonialism and frequently to indigenous elite and determined to destroy it (Charnvit 2003: 24).

The Siamese official nationalism was initiated by King Chulalongkorn during the 18 and 1890 through a series of his modernisation policies developed along Western lines (Murashima 198 Thus, th e king was able to centralise the royal power as never seen before. According to Wyatt (1994 27), major political reforms were conducted through an establishment of functional bureaucracy, which reduced the power of city lords, an introduction of military conscription, and the abolition of slavery. Also, the king sought to improve the tax collection system, whereby both the freed slaves and the general peasantry were required to pay a monetary head-tax to the state. Due to these reforms, local loyalties and relationships were undermined and transferred towards the absolute monarchy, which sought to create a new, wider affiliation for its subjects by promoting the idea of nation. Such a process became greatly intensified, formalised, and institutionalised by his successor King Vajiravudh (Figure 31), who "began moving all the policy levers of official nationalism: compulsory state-controlled primary education, state-organised propaganda, official rewriting of history, militarism and endless affirmations of the identity of dynasty and nation" (Anderson 198: 95).

It can be said that the absolute monarchy in Siam became shaky at the beginning of twentieth century because of structural problem within the absolutist system that failed to satisfy a young group of western-educated officials who called for political participation (Kullada 2 The king was the target of criticism because he held the top position in running the state affairs. Thus, it was impossible for the king to avoid criticism from the public, especially if he was not accepted and lacked barami (charisma) in political legitimacy. This may be true with King Vajiravudh who encountered difficulties in running his state affairs, and later aggressively promoted nationalistic policies designed to instill in his subjects a new degree of commitment to three fundamental institutions: Chat (nation), Religion, and Monarchy.

Figure 31. King Vajiravudh, reigned 1910 1925the bicultural monarch who strongly propagandised the official nationalism in Siam (Photograph courtesy of Silpakorn University).

In order to understand King Vajiravudh's political visions of nationalism as embedded in the architectural form of his 'Seaside Palace' in Cha Am (Phetchaburi), it is necessary to trace back to his biography, education and personality. Furthermore, there is a need to consider these following questions: what are the factors influencing his nationalistic policies? What is the content of his official nationalism? Where, in the context of his nationalism, do we place the anti-Chinese propaganda? How did he promote his

nationalism through cultural artifacts, in particular architectural expressions?These questions will be investigated in this chapter.

Factors influencing King Vajiravudh's official nationalism

Critical factors influencing King Vajiravudh's official nationalism arose from (1) his childhood and educational background, (2) his character and personality, (3) the emergence of the new middle-class who increasingly called for a parliament and constitution, (4) the 1912 abortive incident by a group of young military officers, who aimed to overthrow his throne, and (5) his anti-Chinese sentiment in response to the Chinese community in Siam who were becoming restive and separate from the broader society. Such factors strongly influenced his desire to foster a heightened sense of pride, unity, and patriotism among his subjects in accordance with Siam's recognition and acceptance by the international community.

Biographical background

King Vajiravudh, also known as King Rama VI, was the eldest son of King Chulalongkorn and Queen Sripatcharinthara (Saowapa Phongsri). The sixth monarch of the Chakri dynasty was born on 1 January 1881, and had four brothers: Prince Chakrabongse of Phitsanulok, Prince Asdang of Nakhonrachasima, Prince Chudaduj of Petchaburi and Prince Prachathipok of Sukhothai.

In his early childhood, Prince Vajiravudh received his early education at the Royal Palace at Ratchakuman School, a special school established by King Chulalongkorn for his children and other royal family members. The young prince began to learn English at the age of eight under the direction of Sir Robert Morant who had been brought up in a strict Christian environment, and likewise passed it on to his student. Although King Chulalongkorn gave great significance to building the nation-state along Western lines, he never wanted his sons to be entirely absorbed by this Western tradition. Rather, he wanted to ensure that his sons would not forget their heritage roots; thus, they were required to learn rudimentary precepts of Buddhism, traditional liberal arts and martial arts.

As King Chulalongkorn considered modern education indispensable for every royal family and for the progress of the nation, Prince Vajiravudh was escorted by Siamese caretakers to Great Britain to pursue his education after having completed the royal tonsure ceremony in 1893. The young prince arrived in Brighton in January 1894 and moved to Ascot, outside London and near Windsor Castle. His life changed dramatically after one year in Great Britain, when Prince Vajiravudh was unexpectedly appointed as the new crown prince of Siam after the sudden death of Prince Vajirunahis, the eldest son of Queen Sawang Wattana, as Siam's first Crown Prince, who had a reputation of great intelligence. Rather than continue the line of succession, King Chulalongkorn decided to give the position to the eldest son of Queen Sripatcharinthara, one of the other three Queens of the realm. This was Prince Vajiravudh, whose special ceremony was held at the Thai Legation in London. It can be said that the real absolute monarchical system in Siam began in the mid 1890 after the demise of King Chulalongkorn's political rivals, Sri Suriyawong (Chuang

Bunnag), Vichaichan (son of King Pinklao who had held the position of *upparat* of the Front Palace). The latter challenged King Chulalongkorn's power and subsequently led to the Front Palace crisis at the end of December, 18As absolute monarch, the king abolished the traditionally powerful position of upparat and created a new position of Crown Prince along Western lines.

It can be argued that King Chulalongkorn might not have realised the political threats that could arise from changing the means of ascension, and which subsequently led to the political revolution in 1932. Unlike the tr aditional ascension, which required the participative consensus of several members of the ascension council comprising princes, ruling elite, nobles, and other senior ranking officials, the new Crown Prince selection was made by the king alone. Certainly, such a decision carried more risks if the successor had never been popular, or was rather shy and retiring, and particularly deficient in social graces, as Prince Vajiravudh was. Undoubtedly such a phenomenon increasingly ch allenged the power of absolutism, to the point where the successor eventually lost his trustworthy status and the barami (charisma) of political legitimacy. Several scholars of Thai history have been curious and questioned why King Chulalongkorn did not have the new Crown Prince back to Siam to learn from his own ideas and receive a more systematic training as future king. Rather, he agreed that the Crown Prince should stay a few years longer in Great Britain to obtain a better 'modern' education, and simultaneously strengthen foreign relationships between Siam and the leading colonial powers. A possible assumption might be that he was still in a state of grief from the death of his beloved son, Prince Vajirunahis, who was the previous Crown Prince.

Academically, the young Crown Prince was educated by a private tutor for three years and later enrolled for military training at Sandhurst Academy and the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich before joining the Burdurham Regiment. From 18-190, he entered Christchurch College at xO ford, where he studied history, law, and administration. Naturally, he was introverted and averse to sport, and private tuition had poorly prepared him to mix socially. At xford, it was reported that he did not demonstrate the same enthusiasm for academic studies as he had shown for the military profession. His request to extend his stay in Britain to study his favorite military science was turned down by his father on the grounds that, as a future king, he needed training in civilian affairs. Prior to his return to Siam in 190 via the Uited States, Japan, and Hong Kong, the young Crown Prince presented hi s final dissertation entitled 'The War of the Polish Succession'; however, he did not stay on to fulfill the degree requirement (Kullada 20-128. It was asserted that Prince Vajiravudh was strongly inspired by the might of Great Britain and Japan, which subsequently influenced his nationalistic development. The former is a nation that he knew best dominated the world at that time as the greatest colonial power, whereas the emergence of Japan, which defeated Russia in 195also made a strong impression on him. Significantly, it was the first Asian triumph over a European nation.

In Bangkok, the Crown Prince was given the insignificant position of inspector general of the army as all of the important positions were held by either his uncles or his elder half-brothers. Due to the differences in age, educational background, character and personality, Prince Vajiravudh had a distant relationship

with his relatives. However, he served as Regent when King Chulalongkorn was on his second trip to Europe in 1907. After the death of his father on 23 October 1910, Prince Vajiravudh was crowded as the sixth monarch of the Chakri dynasty and ruled Siam for 15 years (1910-1925). Throughout his reign, Siam was the subject of much controversy and debate as the king sought to secure his royal absolutism through his nationalistic promotion (Hamilton 1991).

King Vajiravudh's character and personality

It is important to understand his background, character and personality, which greatly influenced his nationalistic ideology manifested through his cultural artifacts, notably architecture, as much as in his policies.

Prince Vajiravudh was a shy, gentle, and unassuming person in his young age. He disliked playing with his friends or his brothers; in addition, he refused to go out when he was asked by his caretaker to do so. When he became the Crown Prince of Siam, Prince Vajiravudh faced the problem of suddenly occupying an exalted position, and being compared to the late Crown Prince. He wanted to dominate his brothers and became insolent in attempts to dictate to his siblings who were studying in Europe at the time (Kanphirom 1978: 30-31). It can be said that his behaviour changed drastically. He became more egotistic and boastful as cited by Phraya Visuddhi (1996: 66), one of his Siamese caretakers in Great Britain:

> He feels more sensitive and attached to his new title and rank than a little boy at his age should be. If he thinks that he may lose in a game or any kind of competition among friends, he usually refuses to join them because he is afraid that it will affect his prestigious title. Or in any game in which a leader is required, he definitely chooses to be the leader of the game. He considers his title and rank more important than anything else."

It was noted that no competition could be allowed to place a Crown Prince like Vajiravudh second in anything. He always stayed away from any physical or sportive games as he was concerned that he would lose in the competition. If he ever had to be part of any game, he would choose to be the referee. Meanwhile, the young Crown Prince tried to find something else at which he excelled, and it seemed that literature and drama were his world. Being a prolific, gifted, and accomplished writer, Prince Vajiravudh composed a number of works of great merit both in prose and poetry. He translated three of Shakespeare's works into Thai, and they were beautifully composed in a poetic style, so that their original charm was retained. According to Vella (1978), the plays were 'The Merchant of Venice', 'As You Like It', and 'Romeo and Juliet'. Because there were numerous theaters in Great Britain, Prince Vajiravudh was greatly influenced by the plays and he gradually became very much attached to drama. He began to critically review plays at the age of thirteen, wrote plays when he was fourteen, directed plays when he was fifteen, and acted in plays himself at sixteen (Pin, 1981: 6).

It is noted that no Siamese or British caretakers were serious in correcting Prince Vajiravudh's personality. Traditionally, Phraya Visuddhi considered himself only a 'kha' (servant) while Prince Vajiravudh was a 'chao' (royalty). Thus he failed to

inform the young prince, as required, about his petty mistakes. This was because he refused to disturb Prince Vajiravudh's happiness. Such treatment made it difficult for him to correct the prince, who subsequently became weak, confused, and disoriented. Also, Phraya Visuddhi was pro-monarchy and considered Prince Vajiravudh's power to be important, as the future king's 'goodness' could be instrumental in keeping the country at peace (Phraya Visuddhi 1987: 114). It is asserted that Prince Vajiravudh was influenced by the importance of his power, and brought up in an environment that led him to be egotistic and to exaggerate that importance.

It is interesting to note that Prince Vajiravudh was more an idealist than a practical person: he loved dramas, reading and living his life with imagination. The fact that he loved to be a leader in whatever he did, as well as his great attachment to his title, rank, and monarchy, inspired him to apply nationalist ideology to secure his rule. Furthermore, he was in Europe in the late nineteenth century when nationalism was regarded as a very important issue. He was an idealist who had picked up ideas and later applied them to suit his needs. As King Chulalongkorn is now regarded as one of the greatest monarchs in Thai history, it was not an easy task for his successor to follow in his footsteps, especially for a king who lacked self-confidence as King Vajiravudh did. This lack of self-confidence also made him feel the need to secure his throne and lead to official nationalism as mentioned in his speech at the reception celebrating his becoming the Crown Prince to the effect that "I would return to Siam more Siamese than when I left the country" (Pin 1981: 13).

The emergence of the "middle" class

The early twentieth century in Siam was a period when rapid social transformations were taking place at many levels. New ideas and images were circulating in ever- broader circles and the problems stemming from the outside world were now supplemented by difficulties emerging from the economic and political changes within.

The provincial political reforms along Western lines initiated in 1892 had a great impact on the daily life of the indigenous people. One of the main objectives of King Chulalongkorn's bureaucratic reforms was to centralise all powers originally vested in conservative ministers and city lords and to improve the tax collection system that the government sought to replace the revenues lost, as a result of the Bowring Treaty that brought Siam into the world economy since 1855 (Kullada 2004). The provincial reforms eliminated the traditional hierarchy and replaced it with strict and central control from Bangkok for the sake of enhancing a relationship between the king and his subjects (Kavidya 1995: 25). Likewise, social reform was remarkable; slavery was gradually abolished, together with an increasing number of state officials from approximately 2,500 in 1900 to about 8,000 in 1918 (Barme, 1993: 22).

Following the socio-political reforms along Western lines, the expansion of secular education gave people of all classes equal opportunities to be educated, and individuals began to realise human freedom and aspirations for political rights, especially among the educated class who had acquired modern knowledge from the West. These young intellectuals essentially formed a new social grouping, a 'middle'

class, located between royalty, the nobility, and the peasantry. The new middle class had been exposed to modern education and training, which developed an idea of 'nation', 'civilisation', and 'progress' through English newspapers brought from Singapore and Penang during the late nineteenth century (Baker and Pasuk 2005). Also, the increasing freedom of the domestic press, together with a new form of narrative based on foreign models with Western themes, developed a set of values that were relatively distinct from those that formed the basis of the existing royalist order.

Political change in foreign countries

By the time Vajiravudh became the Crown Prince and throughout his reign, a number of foreign countries, notably Japan (in 1868), Turkey (in 1908), Portugal (in 1910), China (in 1911), and Russia (in 1917) encountered the decline of monarchical absolutism, which simultaneously raised and aroused public awareness in constitutionalism. Such political change also signified the progress of the nation-state, in which incidentally the middle class called for a political participation. Undoubtedly the political change in these countries influenced Prince Vajiravudh's notion of official nationalism - to secure the legitimisation of absolutism.

Japan, as an Asian country, became a model for the young intellectuals in Siam who regarded the Meiji development, prosperity, and power as being the result of her adaptation to a new Western democratic form of government. The Japanese government paved the way for the promulgation of a Constitution on 11 February 1889, and the first election was held in the following year (Nuttanee 1990: 33).

Political change took place in Turkey and Portugal in 1908 and 1910 respectively, after the young groups who were disillusioned with the monarchy's incompetence and weakness established constitutional governments. Mexico also encountered a democratic revolution in 1910, while a nationalist movement was also growing in India (Murashiwa 1989: 10).

One of the most important incidents occurred in China when the Manchu dynasty was overthrown and a republic was formed in 1911, only one year after Prince Vajiravudh was crowned. In Russia, the absolute monarchy had begun to break down in 1905 until the Russian Revolution took place in 1917, resulting in the Tsar being overthrown and a provisional government was set up. The collapse of the Tsarist regime, with which the Siamese royal family, especially King Chulalongkorn, had cultivated a close relationship, was a real shock and signified the loss of popularity in absolute monarchical regimes.

Undoubtedly, the political change in these foreign countries gave a warning signal to the Siamese monarchy that the end of absolutism in Siam might occur soon. Also, these phenomena encouraged the hope of young intellectuals in Siam that political change was possible. They wanted to see this form of political change in their country and called for a participatory form of politics - a parliament and constitution. Clearly, the young intellectuals rejected the traditional notion of deference, gratitude and inherited superior-inferior status roles. Instead, they believed that merit and

achievement should be the primary criteria for determining an individual's position in society (Kullada 1981: 8).

Three Western-educated Siamese princes of King Chulalongkorn petitioned him in 1885 for the creation of a constitutional monarchy. This was a totally new attitude in Thai political history provoked by Western citizenship ideas (Chai-anan 1982: 7). The proposal noted that in order to preserve Siam's political independence, an adoption of Western political principles had become the standard for measuring civilised nations. Chai-anan Samudavanija (1982: 7), a prominent scholar on Thai politics, pointed out that the king took their criticism well and agreed with the need to change but expressed his doubt on the applicability of Western political models and practices as there was only a small number of educated people available to assume a broad range of executive and legislative responsibilities. In contrast to Chai-anan, Murashiwa (1988: 8) argued that King Chulalongkorn strongly objected to the introduction of Western political ideas that would limit his power and harm his governmental reforms.

> "Now he (King Chulalongkorn) had finally gained the power to begin making governmental reforms. Any limitation or distribution of his power would not contribute to these reforms. Hence a parliament was no use in Siam because not only were there no suitable and able people to participate in it, but a parliament itself would hamper and corrupt the reforms." (Murashiwa 1988: 8)

In another speech on unity given in 1903 to his officials, the king commanded that they unite with him under his royal leadership (cited in Murashiwa 1988: 8).

> "Siam and Europe have taken different historical courses. Therefore, it is totally mistaken to try to introduce Western ideas as they are. Western political institutions such as parliaments or political parties are not suitable for Siam where the king traditionally leads a backward population. Hence the unity of all Thai officials under the monarchical leadership is the best way for the prosperity of Siam."

However, the calls for the implementation of a more progressive political form continued to intensify prior to his death in 1910. Ultimately, the king revered his political position when he told his assembled ministers that his successor, Prince Vajiravudh, would give a constitution to the public on the occasion of his coronation ceremony. In spite of King Chulalongkorn's professed hopes that a parliament would be established and a constitution promulgated during the following reign, the position of the absolute monarchy in Siam had become deeply problematic by the time Prince Vajiravudh ascended the throne. The sixth Chakri monarch was strongly opposed to such ideas. Furthermore, he quietly ignored his father's wishes and produced a series of articles and essays rejecting the idea of constitutionalism and parliament for Siam by noting that "things of benefit to Europeans might be evils to us," cited in Vella (1978: 66). Importantly, he was unresponsive to the criticism that career and social advancement should be based on individual merit and achievement. Instead, he defended the notion of the traditional form of paternal relationships and propagandised his official nationalism so as to secure his royal absolutism throughout his 15-year reign (Barme 1993: 23).

The next section will investigate the 1912 coup incident raised by a group of young military officers, who attempted to challenge King Vajiravudh's monarchical absolutism. This incident, regarded as a critical factor, significantly influenced his creation of official nationalism and his anti-Chinese sentiment, which is one of the best known contexts of his nationalistic discourse.

The 1912 abortive incident

Growing middle-class hostility towards King Vajiravudh, based on a combination of both ideological and personal factors, translated into a conspiracy uncovered at the beginning of April 1912, only one year after Prince Vajiravudh became the monarch. According to the British Foreign Office (cited in Barme 1993: 24), the plotters were originally divided in to three parties. The first group of junior military officers was headed by a Siamese medical officer of Chinese descent. An officer in the Judge Advocate's Department led the second group, whereas an officer on the General Staff led the third group. Due to the widespread disenchantment with the new king, these military officers attempted to overthrow King Vajiravudh and establish a representative government, either a republic or a constitutional monarchy. According to the confessions of those who were involved, the plan was poorly organised with no clear objectives. The members failed to agree among themselves whether Siam should become a republic or a limited monarchy. The first group advocated changing Siam into a republic, with Prince Ratburi as Siam's first President. The second group wanted a constitutional monarchy under Prince Boriphat of Nakhonsawan, while the third also aimed at a constitutional monarchy, but under Prince Chakrapong, Siam's Crown Prince at that time (Nuttanee 1990: 6).

It is interesting to investigate why this group of young military officers attempted to challenge the king's power and overthrow his throne. Critical factors influencing the 1912 coup d'etat arose from the whipping punishment, the establishment of the Wild Tiger Corps, and the king's personal behaviour and activities.

The whipping punishment

The military officers' resentment towards King Vajiravudh arose from the fight between his royal pages and some military officers over a woman in 1909, when he was the Crown Prince. After being informed about the fight, he had all of the military officers imprisoned. According to Prince Vajiravudh, all military officers who were involved in the fight with his pages deserved to be beaten on their backs by a rattan whip, as they aggressively chased his pages up to the palace gate. Thus, he insisted on his will and asked King Chulalongkorn's permission to flog the military officers in public; otherwise he threatened to resign from the position of the Crown Prince. The traditional form of whipping punishment had already been abandoned and considered a serious humiliation. Finally, King Chulalongkorn had to yield to him for he was afraid that everything would go out of control (Nuttanee 1990: 5; Green 1999: 9). Although the whipping incident was over, it never faded from the minds of the military officers because their anger, disaffection, and negative attitude toward the Crown Prince had already built up.

The establishment of Sua Pa (The Wild Tiger Corps)

Having spent most of his childhood in Europe, Prince Vajiravudh had a distant relationship with his relatives who held ministerial positions in government. When he returned to Siam in the early twentieth century, he was given trivial state affairs as his uncles and brothers had undertaken the key responsibilities and missions of government. However, it was argued that the main factors creating a gap between him and his relatives were his strongly criticised dramatic acting and his personal lifestyle surrounded by young male courtiers (Vella 1978). Prince Vajiravudh had plenty of time for himself and created an association called *Thaveepanya* in his Saranrom Palace for the sake of his artistic pursuits. The court became focussed on the composition of literary works and classical and modern drama. He was always surrounded by his trusted young pages, who joined him in all kinds of activities, especially *Sua Pa* (the Wild Tiger Corps).

The notion of forming the Wild Tiger Corps, a paramilitary organisation whose members consisted of volunteers from the civil bureaucracy, was initiated as one of his ploys while he was still the Crown Prince. The objectives of the Wild Tiger Corps were to assist the armed forces during time of war and the civil authorities in the event of internal disorder. The Wild Tiger Corps was founded on 1 May 1911, only six months after he was crowned as the king of Siam. King Vajiravudh saw such an organisation as an opportunity to create a bond between himself as *a citizen monarch* (a popular kingship) and his loyal subjects - a volunteer corps willing to make sacrifices for the king and the nation. Likewise, he intended to use the corps as a means of promoting himself as the head of a modern, militaristic organisation preaching a nationalistic ideology (Kullada 2015). Although he presented himself as a citizen monarch, King Vajiravudh was not thus perceived by some people who were close to the court at the time. This might be true as long as he still held absolute power (Keyes 1987: 60).

The disaffection of the Wild Tiger Corps stemmed from the conviction that the organisation duplicated rather than complemented the regular armed forces. Furthermore, it seemed that the king's personal military administration competed with the regular armed forces rather than supported them. This was likely, as Likhit Dhiravegin (1983), a prominent scholar on Thai political science, has argued that the Wild Tiger Corps was established as a force to counter balance the regular military organisation under certain powerful princes. The loss of King Vajiravudh's popularity among the regular armed forces was exacerbated by the fact that they were unable to join the Wild Tiger Corps in any other capacity other than as honorary members. Due to his serious problem with interacting with the military officers and his distant relationship with royal family members, King Vajiravudh felt insecure, as if nobody was on his side. Therefore, he was always surrounded by his trusted young courtiers, who received the king's full personal attention and rewards in titles, property, money, and promotions. Apparently, this caused considerable resentment among the royal elite and military officers, whose military budget was cut down by the king.

King Vajiravudh's personal behaviour and activities

Apart from King Vajiravudh's ideological commitment to conserving the royal absolutism, the young military officers strongly criticised his undignified

personal behaviour and activities. According to the confessions of those who took part in the coup incident (cited in Nuttanee 1990 6), King Vajiravudh's behaviour was perceived as

> "nonsense. He has no interest in state affairs but rather enjoyed himself with plays money spent in those plays should be used to subsidise military affairs or anything else which will help the country's progress."

Another confession of the military officers, who were involved with the abortive coup in 1912, criticised the king's activities (cited in Nuttanee 1990 6):

> "The present political system is not good because the king can do whatever he wants with no objection because he is above the laws. For instance, he can play khon (masked drama), lakhon (play) and anything which is useless for the country's well-being."

Instead of settling down to a traditional royal family life, King Vajiravudh remained a bachelor and was surrounded by young male courtiers, engaged in artistic pursuits, including appearing on the stage in a wide variety of roles (Terwiel 198: 298). Strangely, he was also an avid performer and even appeared on stage dressed as a woman in the French play *Paul and Jarlet* during his education in Great Britain (Lawan 198: 3; Barme 1993: 23). His acting on stage shamed the royal dignity and honor as it was not what the Crown Prince ought to practise. However, he was not discouraged and persisted in taking part in dramas, even after he became the monarch. Being a prolific author, King Vajiravudh spent a lot of time in his own world of writing and directing a series of plays, as mentioned earlier (Great Britain, Foreign Office 1925).

King Vajiravudh's extravagant waste of money was another criticism, which was interpreted from his second coronation that comprised a European-style ceremony in an attempt to impress foreign visitors with the new monarch's grandeur. The four-week elaborate ceremony was extremely costly. The budget for that event used nearly eight per cent of Siam's annual national budget for the year 1911 of just over 60 million baht (Vella 198 25). In response to this criticism, he reasoned that the coronation expenses were a worthwhile investment as Thai were shortsighted in state affairs and his purpose was to lead Thai thought into broader and larger paths, and this ceremony was part of that policy (Vella 198 25). King Vajiravudh's lavish spending was severely criticised when he overspent on a number of controversial, non-productive ventures such as the establishment and administration of mega-construction projects both in Bangkok and upcountry, a sophisticated miniature model city known as Dusit Thani, the Wild Tiger Corps activities, and Western technology infrastructure investment, whereas the government received little revenue from exporting agricultural products. Inevitably, Siam encountered financial problems in 1919;and consequently, the government needed to increase its external debt by borrowing two million pounds sterling at a high interest rate of seven per cent in 1922 (Terwiel 198: 311). The impacts of financial crises also resulted in the poor economy prior to the 1932 Revolution in the reign of King Prachatipok or King Rama VII.

Interestingly, the issue of lavish royal spending has drawn considerable attention among scholars of Thai history such as in Peleggi's *Lords of Things* (2002: 25-28) and Thongchai's *To what Extent of Civilisation?* (1997: 37-38). It was argued that not only King Vajiravudh deserved criticism for his overspending, but also King Chulalongkorn who spent a large sum of money on purchasing lavish souvenirs for the sake of his Westernised taste, during his European journeys in 1897 and 1907. Peleggi (2002: 26-27) commented that King Chulalongkorn was 'a big spender' during his overseas trips - that money was spent on travel, accommodation, and luxury goods such as 'paintings and sculptures in Florence, porcelain sets in Sevres, Tiffany vases in London, Faberge *objets* in St.Petersburg, and jewelry in Berlin'. However, King Chulalongkorn's lavish spending was hardly criticised as much as was his successor's. This was because his government was able to increase revenues from the taxation system reform along with the period of nation-state building in the 1890. In addition, King Chulalongkorn's consumption was based on mega-infrastructure projects, palatial constructions and government buildings, according to his modernisation policies. Also, such objects were utilised by King Chulalongkorn as diplomatic instruments promoting Siam's modernity and civilisation to the outside world. Unlike his father who had massive palatial constructions built for his children (King Chulalongkorn fathered seventy-six children with thirty-six wives), King Vajiravudh was strongly criticised for his lavish spending on the construction of luxurious mansions for his trusted courtiers. Nevertheless, it might be an exaggeration to state that the Siamese government encountered financial problems because of King Vajiravudh's overspending alone. In fact, his government had spent on mega-infrastructure projects initiated during the final period of the previous reign. Meanwhile, the external environment, especially World War One also worsened the Siamese economy.

After the revelation of the 1912 incident, King Vajiravudh became more concerned for his throne. Instead of taking the abortive plot as a serious warning and moving on to prevent a further and more serious incident from happening, he tried hard to suppress the political aspirations of his subjects and propagandise them to appreciate his nationalistic ideology through the strength of his writings. Incidentally, the relationship between the king and his brothers and relatives, notably Prince Chakrapong and Prince Boriphat, became more distant because they were socially acceptable and regarded as his political foes. It could be said that, despite their failure, the 1912 abortive plotters were the forerunners of others who succeeded in bringing the end of absolute monarchy twenty years later, in the 1932 Revolution.

Significantly, political change in foreign countries, especially the Chinese Revolution in 1911, also indirectly influenced the coup incident in Siam. According to the investigations, several members of the republican group involved in the 1912 coup were Siamese subjects of Chinese descent who wished to overthrow King Vajiravudh and emulate the Chinese Kuomintang model (Barme 1993: 24). Similarly, the king believed that the 1912 coup d'etat was influenced by the recent political unrest in China. The revelation undoubtedly made him become more concerned about the Chinese community in Siam, the largest ethnic group, who also threatened his royal absolutism (Skinner 1957). It was asserted that the 1912 abortive coup also aroused his official nationalism.

Unlike his predecessors who were threatened by Westerners (British and French colonialism), King Vajiravudh's attention was directed against the Chinese ethnic groups, although he incidentally had Chinese ancestry (Anderson 1991: 100). Likewise, Skinner (1957: 24) has discussed that throughout the history of Thailand, Siamese kings had engaged in the profitable trade and fostered social intercourse with Chinese merchants since the thirteenth century. For the sake of the commercial economy, the absolute Siamese monarchs had pursued a policy designed to attract the Chinese to the Thai nobility thereby ensuring their loyalty to the court. During the first five reigns of the Chakri dynasty, prominent Chinese were ennobled by the court and drawn to the elite in roles such as treasury and customs officials, tax-collection officers, and court scholars. Incidentally, the most affluent and influential Chinese merchants were holding revenue monopolies. As the court was ennobling the prominent Chinese, their attractive daughters were actively and successfully sought as wives and concubines by the Siamese elite. Each of the early Chakri monarchs themselves had Chinese consorts or queens, and Chinese descendants. Thus it is interesting to note that King Vajiravudh himself had more Chinese blood than Thai (Anderson 1991).

The Chinese peril

The Bowring Treaty in 1855 resulted in the radical transformation of Siam. Sir John Bowring stated in his renowned travel book on Siam *The Kingdom and People of Siam* (1977: 227) that the treaty significantly brought 'a total revolution in all the financial machinery of the government'. Prior to the Bowring Treaty, a major portion of government revenues was derived from royal trading monopolies; but these were now abolished. The government was obliged to look to other sources to replace the lost revenues, and turned to both direct and indirect taxes levied on opium, spirits, gambling, and lotteries, which were consumed almost exclusively by the increasing Chinese migrants. Likewise, Skinner (1957: 129) stated in his study *Chinese Society in Thailand* that "the country (Siam) depended on Chinese virtues for the expansion of commerce and trade, the government relied on Chinese vices for the expansion of public revenue."

Following the Bowring Treaty, Siam was drawn into the global economy with a large number of European merchants and an introduction of foreign products, which could be purchased only with money. Incidentally, the expansion of international trade in Bangkok attracted not only a large Chinese labour force to construct many new facilities, but also Siamese peasants into the commercial economy (Keyes 1987: 71). Banknotes were introduced and steadily used instead of the traditional barter system. The government also demanded increasing taxes to be paid in cash. In addition, Siamese peasants were encouraged to generate cash income through the production of rice, rubber, tin and teak, which generated significant amounts of foreign exchange through export.

When Bangkok became the major trading center of the kingdom, a rapid expansion of port and warehouse facilities, rice mills, commercial offices, and financial institutions took place. The proliferation of trade-related firms spurred the government to improve the city's infrastructure. Rice milling, sawmilling, rubber

plantations, and tin mining were the country's important industries, in which both public works and privately owned firms urgently required a large labour force from China (Skinner 1957). It is interesting to investigate why the Siamese government imported Chinese labour rather than indigenous people. Benedict Anderson answered this question in his *Imagined Communities* (1991), to the effect that King Chulalongkorn had been determined to build up an industrial proletariat following a European model and policy on the models of the Straits Settlements (British) and the East Indies (Dutch), which he had visited and studied in 1871. King Chulalongkorn was fearful of disturbing traditional Siamese social structures and values and so adopted the simple expedient, which he had learned from Singapore and Batavia, of importing a significant labour force from China. In addition, Keyes (1987: 74) explained that few Siamese peasants were motivated to move from the countryside to Bangkok because they were able to generate significant cash income by remaining on their farms and cultivating rice for the export market. The massive migrations of young, single, male Chinese, mostly from southeastern China's Kwangtung and Fukien provinces, were mobilised to construct port facilities, build railway lines, dig canals, and expand commerce agriculture. Due to the lack of crops caused by civil war and natural disasters, poor farmers and peasants decided to leave their home country of China for the sake of acquiring money abroad and raising their family status, according to Boonyong (2001).

Because of the urgent demand for labour, the policy of King Chulalongkorn in favouring the Chinese was interpreted through his statement cited in Skinner (1957: 162) that "I regarded them (Chinese) not as foreigners but as one of the component parts of the kingdom and sharing in its prosperity and advancement." The Chinese would agree that they had the same opportunities for labour and profit as were possessed by the indigenous people. They were also permitted to monopolise the retail and the rice traders, and could travel and reside freely outside the capital. Importantly, they were exempted from corvee labour, and all other government regulations, except a poll-tax. However, the tax that they were paying was on average about 1.6 baht per year, while for twenty years the indigenous people and other Asian residents in Siam had been paying seven baht per year (Landon 1941: 151).

Anderson (1991) observed that King Chulalongkorn was unconcerned about the long-term consequences of a large Chinese element in the population, which developed into a powerful ethnic group in Siam. According to Vandenbosch (1978), they organised chambers of commerce, opened branches of Chinese banks, published Chinese newspapers, established schools with imported Chinese as teachers, and formed secret societies and social clubs. As part of the nationalism struggles in China after her defeat by Japan in 1895, both Chinese royalist and republican groups increased their political activities in Siam so as to tie the overseas communities with the homeland and raise a new awareness of the Chinese character and nationalistic sentiment through their establishment of Chinese newspapers, community schools, and political associations. In order to protect China from falling under foreign domination, the Manchus promulgated the first Chinese Nationality Act in 1909, which decreed all persons born of Chinese parents as Chinese nationals regardless of where they were born (Skinner 1957).

Due to the remarkable influence of Chinese domination in the Siamese economy, which undoubtedly caused an anti-Chinese bias among the European in Siam who perceived the Chinese either as trade competitors or low-status employees. Such anti-Chinese sentiment was conveyed by quoting two of the prominent advisors to the Siamese government. Warington Smyth, Director of the Royal Department of Mines, considered the Chinese who aggressively dominated economic and political interests in Siam disparagingly as the 'lawless of Siam' and claimed that 'they hold the Siamese in the palm of their hand;' and 'The toleration accorded to them by the Government is put down to fear;they bow and scrape before the authorities, but laugh behind their backs;and they could sack half Bangkok in a day.' (1898 cited in Skinner 1957: 160). J.G.D. Campbell, educational advisor to the Siamese government, was another European who compared the Chinese to the Jews. On his attitude, he wrote (cited in Skinner, 1957: 160): 'the quiet-loving [Siamese] nativeshave virtually sold to them [the Chinese]their birthright for a mess of pottage.' By the turn of the twentieth century, the 'Yellow Peril was a real concern among the 'Anglo-Saxon' countries and the Chinese had been excluded from most European states. Influenced by the 'Yellow Peril, the Western advisors in Siam also advised the Siamese to tax the Chinese more heavily and to suppress their economic-political domination, notably the Chinese secret societies as the British had attempted in Malaya (Skinner 1957). According to Landon (1941: 33), the new law in March 1909 called for the collection of a capitation tax of all persons resident in Siam irrespective of race, and the only exceptions were Buddhist monks and ordained ministers. Clearly, this new law ended the triennial tax by which the Chinese had taken a privileged fiscal status for many years. Instead of meekly accepting the same capitation tax as did the native people, the Chinese staged strikes and serious riots in Bangkok in June 1910as a means of expressing dissatisfaction with the government's new tax laws.

The city was thrown into turmoil as every Chinese enterprise and service was warned to close shop;otherwise, they would encounter pillage and arson (Skinner 1957: 162). Only domestic employees of Western business firms did not take part in the strike. Landon (1941: 15) stated that the Siamese economy was completely paralysed for three days, during which time rice and other food became scarce and expensive. However, the riots were soon subdued and businesses resumed, but the damage was done. From this incident, the Siamese realised for the first time to what extent they had become dependent upon the Chinese in business and trade (Landon 1941: 33). Meanwhile, this strike suggested that the Chinese residents in Siam were determined to get all that they could and to give nothing in return - that they valued money above loyalty, obedience, and justice (Landon 1941; Skinner 1957). Furthermore, the incident proved the strengths of a newly organised police and army, such that the Chinese could not bring their power to bear on the Siamese government. The aftermath was that the Chinese accepted the justice of equal taxation. However, this strike was to leave an indelible impression on King Vajiravudh, who ascended the throne at the end of the year 1910and ultimately expressed his anti-Chinese sentiment four years later. In Siam, the Chinese had never experienced racial-antagonism prior to this time.

It was clear that King Vajiravudh had been left with the consequences of the promotion of Chinese nationalism in Siam, in terms of the growing sense of identity

and community, which would present a threat to his throne. A problem that worried him was the spread of political movements from China to the people, especially the intellectual middle-class in Siam. Through the newspapers, the Chinese were asking their offspring in Siam to remit money to subsidise the revolutionary cause in China. The 1911 Chinese Revolution led by Sun-Yat Sen also worried King Vajiravudh as the young Siamese could adopt the popular republican idea and this would profoundly threaten the dynastic principle (Nuttanee 1990: 119). In addressing this Chinese problem, the king implemented a Thai nationality law in 1913, which provided that any child born to a Thai parent, either in Siam or abroad, was a Thai citizen subject to Thai law. In order to counter the provisions in the Chinese laws, the document also stated that everyone born in Siam, regardless of parentage, was a Thai.

In addition, King Vajiravudh propagandised patriotism through his literary works by denouncing the Chinese in Siam as being non-Thai, and as people who were still loyal and affiliated with China. His anti-Chinese sentiment was conveyed to the rising middle class, who were among the most enthusiastic readers in the kingdom and, perhaps, the most receptive to new ideas because of their Western-focused education and training. It was clear that the king dedicated much time to writing and the circulation of literary and dramatic works aimed at fostering and preserving national identity. According to Murashima (1989: 91), King Vajiravudh criticised the political activities of the Chinese in his earliest political essays in 1909, prior to the Chinese strike incident that occurred in Bangkok in 1910. However, his antipathy to the Chinese became more aggravated, especially in 1914, when he authored a classic article entitled *The Jew of the East* under a pen-name of Asavabahu (Pegasus). The sixth Chakri monarch reminded his people to realise the threats posed by the waves of Chinese immigrants who came to Siam to enrich themselves before returning to China. Also, he turned the concept of "The Yellow Peril" into the Chinese peril to fit it in with the Siamese society's context at that time (Likhit 1978). In the conclusion of his article, King Vajiravudh claimed (1914: cited in Landon 1941: 115):

> "In my opinion one were given a choice between the Jews and the Chinese, it would be hard to choose between them. And I have to doubt at all that some day we shall see terrifying and blood-curdling events in the countries in which the Jews of the East" preside. As for Siam I am very hopeful that we shall not have to face the problem yet awhile. But we are only ordinary human beings, and there is a limit to our self control. If there should be another occurrence similar to the Chinese strike, I would not care to guarantee the results."

According to King Vajiravudh (cited in Purcell 1980: 120-121), both the Chinese and the Jews had three characteristics in common. The first characteristic was a sense of racial loyalty and pride - they both lacked sacrifice and loyalty to the country in which they lived. No matter where they lived, or what nationality they assumed, Chinese always remained psychologically Chinese. It was argued that Chinese married Siamese women for the sake of the Chinese advantage - they forced their wives to become Chinese and reared their children as Chinese. They expected all privileges provided to the native inhabitants, but refused the obligations of citizenship. Their attitude towards the state was treacherous, secretive, and rebellious (Skinner 1957: 164). King Vajiravudh condemned the Chinese suspension of work in 1910

when their purpose had been to protest against paying *the same poll-rate tax that all pay!* (Landon 1941: 36).

The second characteristic by which King Vajiravudh compared the Chinese with the Jews was how they viewed other races. The Jews divided people into two kinds: the Jews themselves and the Gentiles. The first one took pride in their race as that chosen by God. They looked down upon other groups as inferior to them. Similarly, the Chinese thought that they were the most civilised race on earth. They looked down upon other races and regarded the latter as savages or 'Huan' whom they tended to treat as inferior to themselves (Nuttanee 1990: 116). In their contact with the barbarians, the Chinese recognised no right or wrong;nor did the Jews in dealing with the Gentiles.

Money-making instinct was the third common characteristic of the Chinese and the Jews. Chinese were willing to undergo any sort of privation for the sake of money - an affluent Chinese could hire a poor man to be executed in his stead. Also, they were able to endure hardships and live in a poor, small room that people of other races on earth could not manage to breathe in it. It was not surprising that the Chinese drained host countries of their resources, in much the same way that certain insects live by sucking the blood of human beings. Although the Jews and the Chinese might have had a few characteristics in common, there was also an essential difference between them which King Vajiravudh pointed out in his article: namely, the Jews had no national home, whereas the Chinese did. The Jews acquired economic and political power in the country in which they resided, and they could spend their wealth in that same country because they had no homeland to which to remit it. Then, on this point, the Jews were more desirable than the Chinese who drained off the wealth of the Siamese who had offered them hospitality (Landon, 1941;Nuttanee 1910).

However, Sir Frank Swettenham, governor of the Straits Colony and high commissioner for the Federated Malay States, argued that the arrival of Chinese immigrants contributed to Thailand's economic progress, national resources development, and the consolidation of national wealth (1907 cited in Landon 1941). This is likely to be true. Without the Chinese, there would have been no wealth to draw off. For the prosperity of all, Siamese products had to be gathered, distributed, and sold, and the Chinese had the principal role in all these activities. Economists also believe that the large share of the Chinese wealth still remained in Siam, and that the amount remitted was small in comparison - less than 10% of their net profits. In addition, the second and the third generation might remit nothing. Such comment was consistent with Ta Chen's study, cited in Landon (1941: 34), to the effect that remittance tended to decrease.

To this point, this chapter has discussed a number of major factors influencing King Vajiravudh's official nationalism: his background, personality and character, the emergence of the middle class, the 1912 abortive incident, and the Chinese peril. The next section will investigate the key concepts of his official nationalism and methods of his nationalistic propaganda manifested through culture and arts, especially architectural design and dramatic works at the beachfront palace in Cha Am, Phetchaburi.

Concept of King Vajiravudh's official nationalism

Anderson (1983: 82) has commented that official nationalism was an attractive model for the traditional royal rulers who turned into the modern ones. Such rulers ruled over their dynastic realms, which were inhabited by heterogeneous and largely illiterate populations. It was a self-protective policy, intimately linked to the preservation of imperial or dynastic interests, which the ruling elite attempted by bringing the ruled subjects to serve the interests of the state first. Apparently, these interests were determined by the royal elite.

In the case of Siam, the ideology of 'official nationalism' was fully developed as a weapon to defend absolutism under King Vajiravudh who was threatened by the modern bureaucrats (Kullada 2004: 135). Despite his long-term education in Europe, King Vajirvudh was not convinced by the Western political idea of liberal democracy and parliament. His earliest official nationalism notions were expressed in a monthly journal article of his Thawipanya (Enhancement of Knowledge) Club formed in 1904, just over one year after his return from Europe. Under the pseudonym of *Noila*, Prince Vajirvudh replied to a number of newspaper critics who were asking when Siamese would be able to have a parliament like other civilised countries. To Prince Vajiravudh, the parliament was perceived as an utterly useless body of absurdity and confusion because the members spent long hours in tedious debate and meaningless speech-making. He claimed that most Siamese were uneducated and lacked a profound knowledge of democracy; thus, it would be a high risk to have a single political group exercise power in the nation. Prince Vajiravudh believed that there were no ethical politicians to work for the sake of public interests; instead, they worked for themselves. Furthermore, changing a political leader every term would damage the country. Socialism was not suitable for Siam as there was no equality on earth. Rather, he addressed the significance of absolute monarchy based on the ancient Buddhist theory of kingship whereby social harmony could only be attained when the social members chose the most intelligent and capable among themselves as the leader or king to act on their behalf.

With regard to a royal speech to his Wild Tiger Corps in 1911, King Vajiravudh sought to instill a new degree of commitment, loyalty, and sacrifice for the three fundamental institutions: Nation, Religion, and Monarchy. As a result of his education in Europe, the king was influenced by the British nationalistic trinity of 'God, King, and Country', according to Green (1999). This slogan became the ideological foundation of the Thai government for many years to come. King Vajiravudh addressed his ideal loyalty to the nationalistic trinity in this way (cited in Saichol 2002: 114):

> "*Loyalty* means that 'a person sacrifices his own benefits to help others'. That is, he is willing to be king in any kind of trouble or even lose his own life because he is entirely devoted to the nation, the religion, and the king. He (Vajiravudh) understands that he is just like a speck of dust, which is part of a mountain which we call 'nation'. If our nation collapsed, we tiny specks of dust would be blown by the wind. In fact, everybody has some value – no matter how small – because we

> belong to an independent nation, one that has never been colonialised by any nation"...

One of the distinctive characteristics of his nationalistic ideology was the symbolic importance of the kingship and his sovereignty. According to King Vajiravudh (cited in Murashima 1992), all members of the national community should be regarded as relatives and the monarch is the member who dignifies such national community. The king, who is regarded as elected, is entrusted by the people with the sovereign power of the national community. Therefore, his kingship status is regarded as ultimately dependent on the will of the people, but once the people have entrusted the community role to him, they must then follow him absolutely. Regarding the relationship between the nation and the monarchy, he urged the Siamese people to be loyal to the king and protect the nation and the religion (cited in Barme 1993: 28).

> "Because the king is the one who possesses the power of the group and he uses this power for the benefit and happiness of everyone. Therefore, respecting or admiring the king is respecting and admiring the power of the group...Being loyal to the king is the same as loving oneself because the king has the duty of protecting the nation."

In King Vajiravudh's view, those who lack such loyalty should be considered as a person without a country (Vajiravudh 1958). Incidentally, those who harm the king must be regarded as those who harm the nation, destroy the dignity of the country, and break the peace and happiness of the community. He offered this following example:

> "We are all in one boat. The duty of all is to help paddle. If we don't paddle and only sit back all the time, the dead weight in the boat will slow us down. Each person must decide whether to paddle and not argue with the helmsman, or jump out of the boat and swim. He just shouldn't sit there and weigh down the bout. If ballast for the boat is needed a chunk of stone is better than such a man because it won't argue with the helmsman" (Vajiravudh 1959: 97–99).

In this case, the helmsman was certainly the king. He believed that the monarch was the primary strength of the Thai nation because he not only steered the ship of state through troubled waters, but also drew up the charts showing where the dangerous waters were.

On the relationship between nation and religion, King Vajiravudh asserted that Theravada Buddhism, the country's primary religion, was superior, from an intellectual point of view, to those practiced elsewhere. However, Keyes (1989: 162) argued that there is no evidence that the king was a particularly zealous student of Buddhist doctrine. His writings on Buddhism contained popular expositions of fundamentals rather than detailed studies of finer points of doctrine. Meanwhile, his lectures to the Wild Tiger Corps were an apologia for the 'Englishman' within and a self-presentation of Thai identity. Certainly, the king was an ardent defender of Buddhhism; but there is ground for doubt whether he was truly able to internalise Buddhist values. Given the contradictions inherent in King Vajiravudh's positions, Keyes (1989: 163) put an interesting conclusion on his nationalism and religion that "it might even be said that the higher he raised the voice of Buddhist propaganda, the

clearer the image emerged of an 'Engl ishman' who could not fully become a Buddhist." It was certain that the nation and religion relationship was born of the struggle between his European influences and the traditional Siamese values by which he was destined to become king. The highly contrasting characteristics of his official nationalism were also manifested through his associated culture and art, especially architecture, to be discussed in the next section.

The message King Rama VI repeatedly stressed was that adherence to Buddhist morality was the way to build a strong and prosperous nation. The king reaffirmed comments of his uncle turned supreme patriarch, Prince Wachirayan, that a nation that was complete with morality would prosper. On the contrary, the lack of morality would erode a nation until it was finally destroyed (cited in Murashima 1989: 93):

> "A nation filled with morality will prosper; on the other hand, a nation insufficient in morality will become badly disordered and divided. When each member has no morality, does not care for justice, there must be conflicts and there can be no happiness among them. In such a situation, it becomes impossible to live together as a community which can only lead to the destruction of the national community."

To King Vajiravudh, those members of Thai society who abandoned the Buddhist faith were not really Thai (Barme 1993: 30). The king further argued that individuals who rejected Buddhism, or those who did not give the doctrine unqualified support, were selfish and thought only of themselves. As a result, they brought about disunity which would inevitably undermine the nation's independence.

Official nationalism through art discourse

In contrast to the Western art and architecture in Siam which had prospered since the reign of King Mongkut, the state of Siamese art and traditions was in decline at their lowest ebb in the late 19th century as Siamese elites were most influenced by European exposure and anxious to make a good impression on Westerners (Vella 1978). King Chulalongkorn also stated that sk illed artisans in classical traditional art and crafts became scarce in his reign. Social idealism in the royal court at that time was based on civilised Westernisation which substantially influenced traditional art and architecture. The Siamese elite were likely to reject the symbolism of the traditional cosmology embedded in traditional architecture. Similarly, traditional mural paintings on the three worlds of Triphum cosmology including detailed mystical animals were less seen in art and architecture.

As discussed in the previous section, King Vajiravudh criticised the blind importation of European political ideas as a cult of imitation summarised in the following (cited in Murashima 1989: 95):

> "There are many believers in the cult of imitation in Siam. But no matter how well they imitate Europeans, they cannot be respected by the Europeans. Imitating Europeans blindly means becoming slaves to them. Imitating Europeans in order to be civilised is definitely wrong, because civilisation means having one's own creativeness and independence of culture. If we still like to imitate others, we should

> imitate our glorious ancestors who were able to integrate and preserve our nation for the last two hundred years."

King Vajiravudh pointed out under the pseudonym 'Asvabahu', in his most penetrating article *Siamese Art* (1914), that the art of country was like 'a poor invalid' because of a cult of Western imitation. Consequently, art, literature and morality suffered from the efforts of those who wished to appear civilised. The king asserted that "all sorts of vandalism have been committed against art, literature and morality in the name of civilisation." 'Asvabahu' definitely discouraged Siamese people from imitating the art of other nations because their definition of beauty might not be suitable for the Siamese. He also believed that traditional art could not flourish through the efforts of a few genuine art lovers only. Instead, it was the duty of all Siamese people to keep alive the national treasures, especially decorative painting, sculpture, metal work, lacquerware, architecture, and art.

Feeling that Siam was under the threat of losing a traditional pedigree, King Vajiravudh attempted to instill pride in traditional art associated with nationalism and conservation (Apinan 1992: 26). To support his views on the revival of traditional artistic endeavours, the king took on the role of a strong defender and patron of Siamese art for both aesthetic and nationalistic reasons. Consequently, the Department of Fine Arts and the Arts and Crafts School were established in 1912 and 1923 respectively under the immediate supervision of the king, who attempted to develop the national art and craftsmanship under one control. King Rama VI also encouraged studies in archaeology, literature, drama, and performing arts. Furthermore, he sponsored a number of art fairs and supported international exhibitions of Siamese art and crafts, notably in Turin in 1911, in Berlin and Dresden in 1912, in Leipzig in 1914, and in San Francisco in 1915(Apinan 1992). Notably, policy on protection and preservation of archaeological resources including the reproduction of ancient objects began under King Mongkut who had brought a number of important stone inscriptions to Bangkok. These included Phra Than Manangkhasila-at, the stone bench of King Ramkhamhaeng, to collected while he was making a pilgrimage journey in Sukhothai during his monastic life. King Chulalongkorn, particularly after an order of 1874 directing officials to search for old inscriptions, received many stones and relocated them to the royal museum.

King Vajiravudh used Siamese history as a means of stimulating nationalism including addressing the need to preserve old sites, encouraging the production of historical artifacts, publicising the stories of the glorious past, and applying particular episodes or aspects of the past for his present purposes – strengthening his official nationalism (Vella 1978: 208). The king believed that there was a need for general appreciation and public support in order to ensure the survival of Siamese arts and crafts. This was not only for the sake of the real merits of the art itself but also for the sake of the nation as art was considered part and parcel of national life. He fully applied his nationalistic notions in his own writings on history sprinkled with historical references and justifications. Such writings were freely applied to old institutions that he wished to preserve such as the monarchy, the nation, and the Wild Tiger Corps.

Revival of performing art

One of his artistic fields that received extraordinary royal attention was traditional performing art. Because of his devotion to drama as an art form which can be seen from his output of approximately 180 plays (143 in Thai and 37 in English), there is no doubt that the golden era of traditional and modern performing art was during his reign; the king also saw the revival of Siamese drama, dance, and music as a part of the essence of preserving Siamese national culture (Matinee 1996: 15).

King Vajiravudh himself performed two musical plays - *Phra Ruang* and *Wiwah Phra Samut* - at the seaside palace, and it is interesting to examine what the message the plays themselves reveal. King Vajiravudh purposely centralised all royal entertainment and dramatic activities so as to use them, not only for his own pleasure and entertainment, but also for his political ideas on official nationalism. The main theme of his performing art was to strengthen and glorify the institution of absolute monarchy and to propagate the concept of national unity and patriotism with a great pride in Siamese cultural heritage (Mattani 1982: 134). The king attempted to instruct and enlighten Siamese people in the need to stir up duty, responsibility, and loyalty to the nation and to the king (Vella 1974; Montri, 1982; and Mattani 1996). Each play ends with a moral lesson or a speech by a main character emphasising moral virtues, national obligations, and sacrifice for the country and the monarchy. King Vajiravudh utilised Siamese history to demonstrate the theme of the national identity. He essentially focused on the supremacy of the monarchy's status and roles by referring to only three successful predecessors: Phra Ruang, King Naraesuan, and King Taksin. In King Vajiravudh's eyes, these three monarchs were courageous, intelligent and, above all, natural leaders capable of inspiring confidence, commanding respect, and uniting the country. It seems that he aspired to exemplify the domination of unity and loyalty to the monarchy and to enhance the king's vital role in national security and independence.

Phra Ruang represented an attempt to create a national myth from the legendary figure of Phra Ruang who fought against the Khmer rulers and finally became king of Sukhothai during the 13th century. Phra Ruang called upon the Thai people (Phraratchaniphon Phra Ruang cited in Vella 1974: 188):

> I ask only that we Thai not destroy our nation.
> Let us unite our state, unite our hearts, into a great whole.
> Thai - do not do harm or destroy Thai,
> But combine your spirit and your strength to preserve the state
> So that all foreign people
> Will give us increasing respect

King Vajiravudh wrote three different versions of a play about this monarch as well as an account of his field trip to the remains of the ancient kingdom. These three versions are a traditional dance drama written in 1912, entitled *Khom Dum Din* (The Underground Khmer); the second version, a modern drama Phra Ruang, the best known and frequently performed, written in 1917; and the third version, a musical Phra Ruang, first presented in 1924 (Vella 1978 and Montri 1982: 6). All versions

were performed on stage for larger audiences. The king himself played the role of Nai Man. All three versions have been published and performed many times.

It can be said that the main themes of the play *Phra Ruang* included patriotism, unity, political power and the struggle to be free from foreign subjugation. King Vajiravudh purposely brought a legendary figure out of the shadows and gave him historical life as a glorious exemplar of Siamese virtues. The king learned how to combine goodwill with invention, and mercy with persuasion. Apparently, he had *Phra Ruang* for his imagined mentor in political ideas and administration, especially unity and solidarity among the Siamese people.

M.R. Kukrit Pramoj (1981: 11-13) stated that King Vajiravudh, a bicultural monarch, encountered difficulties in creating a nationalistic sentiment and in the revival of traditional art. Due to his long-term education in England, the king had an inclination of confusing traditional and Western lifestyles, which was seen from what he was wearing while having meals. His passion of military grandeur in the English manner, including personal daily activities, clearly contrasted with his revival of Siamese royal traditions and ceremonies. He insisted on wearing *pha nung* (wrapped-around pantaloons) for Thai luncheons in the traditional style (Mattani 1996). At night, he preferred a luxurious full-course dinner prepared by a Paris-imported chef. It is noted that a tuxedo and black tie are currently exhibited in his dressing room at the seaside palace. When the king dined with his courtiers, he had his new plays read aloud by royal pages at the royal dinner table. After dinner, there would be impromptu plays, games, rehearsals, play reading, music and other entertainment to keep the court alive until the early hours of next morning. It was this contradiction in his character and behaviour, being on the one hand traditionally Thai, and on the other hand forwardly Western, which often confused his associates. This also caused them to doubt his sincerity. However, King Vajiravudh should be given a great deal of credit for having initiated the performing arts. During his reign, the performing arts were no longer a ritual or merely an entertainment as in their traditional role. Rather, they became an artistic instrument to manifest his socio-political ideas on a nationalistic ideology.

Revival of traditional architecture

Figure 32. The traditional architectural style of Tap Khawn Mansion, at Sanam Chandra Palace, Nakhonpathom, was erected in response to King Rama VI's revival of national identity.

In architecture, King Vajiravudh believed that there was a need to revise traditional styles after the excessive adoption of Western motifs. However, a question has arisen as to what extent his socio- political vision was associated with his practices in the revival of traditional architecture. It was certain that he hardly believed in the traditional cosmology of Traiphum. Instead, he valued the concept of civilised pedigree and used history to stimulate nationalistic notions. This practice was consistent with the social norm of that time, which was based on

ideas of civilisation led by Westerners. Chatri (2๑) has observed that King Vajiravudh's enthusiasm for the revival of cultural heritage created new aesthetic values focusing on the traditional architecture, which signified a civilised history and national identity of Siam when compared to other civilised nations (Figure 32). Such traditional architecture, which mainly possessed intricate and splendid craftsmanship, also represented Siamese identity (Chartri 2๑).

Figure 33. (Left) The Western architectural style of Charli Mongkhon-at residence, Sanam Chandra Palace, Nakhonpathom, featuring King Vajiravudh's beloved dog monument, Ai-Leh, in front of the round towers in German Gothic style and the unusual Siamese-style pediment above the window. Figure 34(Right). The traditional Siamese style Watchari Romya Hall incorporated with the three-headed elephant Erawan carrying a bolt of lighting, at pediment of the building. (Photograph: Sompong Amnuay-ngerntra).

The revival of traditional art and architecture resulted from the Siamese elite who were unable to clearly identify their own genealogy and exposure to the outside world. The more they strived for ideas of modernity in order to make an impression on Westerners, the further they realised that they were losing their traditional identity (Chatri 2๑).

King Vajiravudh's contradictory ideas of modernity (Westernisation) and tradition were also expressed in architecture as evidenced by the fact that the king disfavoured the heavy intrusion of Western styles, especially the Italian marble Ananta Samakom Throne Hall and the German-designed Gunner Palace (Phra Ram Ratchanivej) whose construction began in the previous reign, but which he felt obliged to complete (Apinan 1992; Green 1999; and Chatri 2๑). Although the hall was grand, elegant, and unique in Siam, King Vajiravudh commented that it did not express any indigenous character. However, constructions of European design continued to be built during his reign, some undoubtedly with his approval. Notable among such architectural works were Thai Khu Fah Building (Norasingh Mansion which is currently Government House) and Banthomsin Building (Phitsanulok Mansion) in a Venetian Gothic style erected by the king for his favorite courtiers. In addition, several buildings within Sanam Chandra Palace in Nakhonpathom clearly reflected the contradiction in his artistic preferences for both Western and traditional styles, especially Charli Mongkhon-at (see Figure 33) and Mari Ratratabanlang buildings, which were erected in pure Western styles;whereas Watchari Romya (shown in Figure 34) and Samakki Mukhamat Halls were built in the traditional style.

Despite King Vajiravudh's enthusiasm for the revival of traditional styles, it is interesting to note that he did not completely reject Western architecture. Several buildings erected during his reign looked traditional in their physical appearance, but they were built with modern materials and relied heavily on Western engineering and technology in their construction (Naengnoi and Freeman 1996). However, his attempts at revival of traditional architecture were mostly not successful. Ornamental materials were continually ordered from Western countries to decorate the grand residences of which construction began in the previous reign and were subsequently completed during his reign. Construction techniques and material, in the meanwhile, had developed further. Steel permitted greater interior spans and glass admitted more light. The use of the vault considerably changed the architecture of buildings.

Figure 35(Left). Vajiravudh College, Bangkok (Photograph courtesy of Vajiravudh College)
Figure 36. (Right). Chulalongkorn University's Faculty of Arts, a modified Khmer-Thai style building, Bangkok. (Photograph: Sompong Amnuay-ngerntra).

According to Apinan (1992), the king preferred traditional designs by Luang Wisan Silpakam, who applied Western knowledge and modern construction techniques to continue the progress of modernisation seen today in the main building at Vajiravudh College (shown in Figure 35), and at the Faculty of Arts at Chulalongkorn University (Figure 36). These buildings adopted a modified Khmer–Thai style that had started to emerge at the end of King Chulalongkorn's reign.

Figure 37. One of the royal courtiers' places within the complex of Sanam Chandra Palace, Nakhonpathom, featuring King Vajiravudh's influence of the English Arts and Craft movement. (Photography: Sompong Amnuay-ngerntra).

King Vajiravudh's contradicting inclinations between Westernisation and tradition created a new context in traditional art in response to the social norm of civilisation, in which classical Siamese art expresses cultural glory and national

identity. However, it is interesting to investigate how the traditional art is used to signify the Siamese glory to stand alongside that of other civilised countries.

It is certain that King Vajiravudh's enthusiasm for the return of traditional crafts was influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement led by the old aristocracies in Great Britain, the Western country he knew best through his educational exposure. Significantly, the Industrial Revolution had begun in Britain in the 18th and spread during the 19th century to Europe and America. The industrial development contributed to the mass production of new materials and new ways of making things. It demanded new types of buildings for transport and industry and created the techniques that made these possible. Therefore, the most progressive buildings of the time were the work of engineers rather than architects, using iron, the principal new material, boldly and adventurously (Norwich 2012). In art, industrialism depreciated aesthetic values in the eyes of the old aristocracies, who valued superb hand-crafted details. Fearing that the industrial development would cause the craftsmanship to become extinct, the aristocracies revised classical traditional art in response to industrialism and its ways.

The English Art and Crafts movement was led by William Morris (1834–1896), who was born into a wealthy family in London and championed the cause of the craftsman and encouraged a return to the skills of weaving, hand–printing, and fresco painting. Also, he took part in a great popular demonstration demanding social and political reform and finally became a Marxist. The legacy of Morris had a great impact on the thinking and works of Arts and Crafts architects, designers, and craft workers across Europe in the 20th century (Glancey 2015).

King Vajiravudh was substantially influenced by the English Arts and Craft movement and applied this nostalgia for traditional values into his artistic pursuit (as shown in Figure 37). Although Siam was not opposed to industrialism, Vajiravudh asserted that Siam still needed to strive for traditional art and crafts, which was the national identity expressing a civilised tradition. The king realised that the superb handicraft details expressed the civilisation of Siam, like other European countries. Also, the revival of intricate craftsmanship was consistent with his official nationalism, which dominated the role of monarchy and royalty in taking a strong position of defense and patronage of Siamese cultural heritage. Only the royal elite were able to possess the high value classical Siamese art. Notably, ordinary art of indigenous peasants was not taken into consideration, due to the hierarchy of Siamese society at that era.

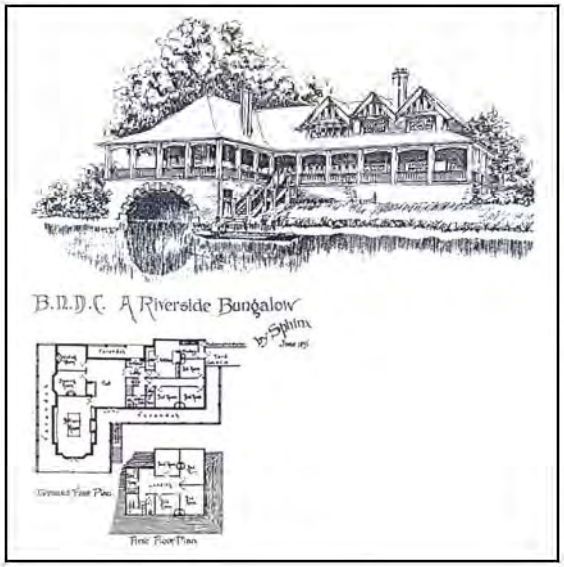
Throughout his reign, it was apparent that King Vajiravudh purposely selected an only partially traditional approach to art and architecture. He paid less attention to the religious symbolism of the Traiphum cosmology embodied in architecture. Accordingly, this did not mean that King Vajiravudh lacked an understanding of the symbolic significance. Instead, he selected the traditional value in an international context only. The king enhanced the traditional values and created a new role of the civilised history to suit his socio-political interests in relation to the quest for 'Siamese modernity' (Chartri 2009) . The conceptual synthesis of Siamese and Western cultural experience, which retains the spirit of Siamese national and cultural identity coupled with Western knowledge and modern technology, can be

demonstrated through a critical study of Mrigadayavan, the seaside palace in Cha Am District, Phetchaburi Province.

Mrigadayavan Palace

In *Buildings and Society* (1980), Anthony King investigated what could be understood about the vacation house in Great Britain as a societal production during the 19th century. His research can shed some light on King Vajiravudh's ideas in having his royal seaside bungalow for recreational purposes in Phetchaburi. In general, the architectural characteristics of such a romantic villa were significantly influenced by the early bungalows in Britain including those of the English Arts and Crafts Movement, especially its forms, locations, sites, designs and layouts.

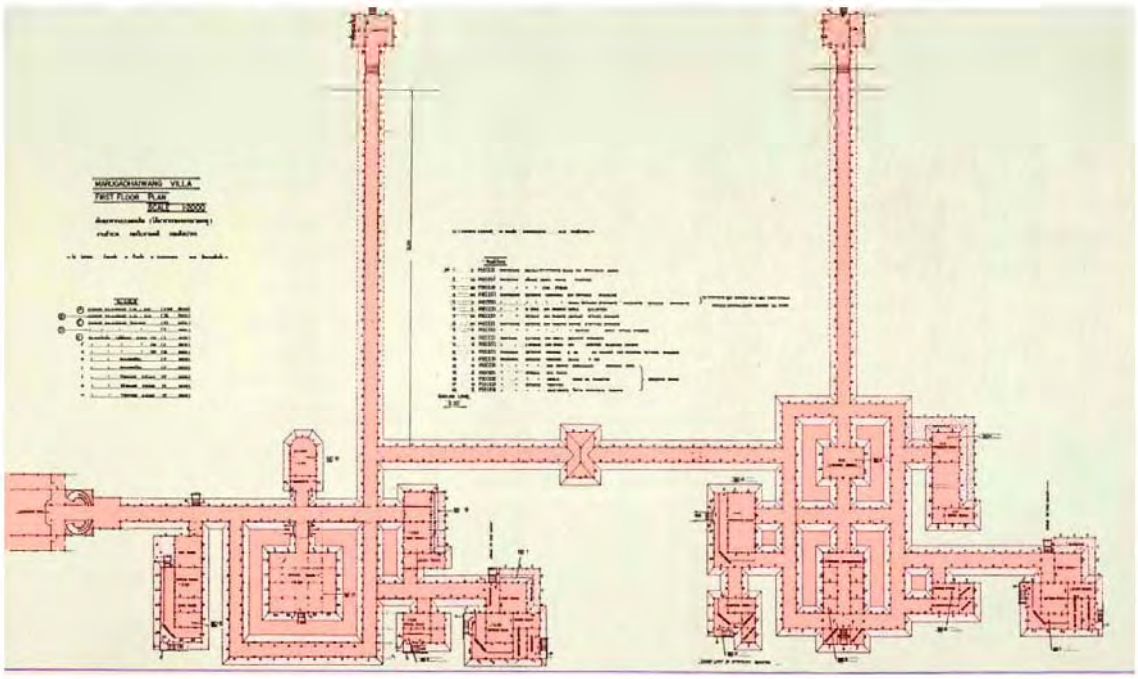
According to King (1980), the idea of the aristocratic and wealthy class having two or more dwellings, one in the city used as the principal locus of social and political activities, the other in the country for recreational use and as a symbol of power and status, had been established in England since the 15th century or possibly earlier. With the emergence of advanced capitalism and the development of rail, bicycle, and automobile networks in the second half of the 19th century, seaside resorts and others in the country were increasingly seen by the urban middle class as a recreational resource providing respite from what were perceived as the growing strains of urban life. Meanwhile, the bungalow emerged as a special house type specifically developed for popular use as a vacation house from the late 18th. Initially, it was an additional dwelling for a wealthy urban middle and upper middle class and subsequently it was used by a far wiser spectrum of clients. However, Thompson (cited in King 1980: 26) argued that at the form, location, and site of the bungalow also indicated the greater economic surplus and the vast inequalities in the distribution of wealth in modern industrial capitalism. To support this argument, King Vajiravudh's seaside palace in Phetchaburi was designed not only for recreational purposes, but also for monarchical status manifestation.



Map 5Design and layout of a riverside bungalow in England, possibly influencing King Vajiravudh's notions in creating the summer seaside palace in Phetchaburi. (Photograph courtesy of *Building News*, 12 July, 1895)

The particular locations designed for the early bungalows in England were seaside, countryside, riverside, and hillside areas. The overall design and layout of such recreational resources were determined in response to leisure, relaxation and idleness. The bungalow possessed its essentially horizontal elements: early models were large, generally single-storey and often with a veranda all round. According to King (1984: 26), space was used for time-consuming, low-energy, generally horizontal activities: billiards, boating, sleeping, sitting in the lounge and writing. Such a building for the consumption of free time provided the veranda accommodating the deck-chair for gazing at distant views, and balconies for 'the matitudinal cigarette' (*Building News* 1906 cited in King 1984: 29).

If King's statement has validity, it can be suggested that King Vajiravudh may have been influenced by English culture, lifestyle, and favouritism. Through his formative education in the West, he became 'more English than a king of England', according to Phra Sarasas (1942: 132). Significantly, the king's sketches of the seaside palace may have been essentially influenced by the riverside bungalow in England (as shown in Map 5). Furthermore, he had adopted the aforementioned lifestyle of English aristocrats in changing his residence for different seasons and having many personal activities at his countryside residences, such as the military maneuvers of the Wild Tiger Corps conducted at the Sanam Chandra Palace in Nakhonpathom. There was evidence that the king disliked the depressing atmosphere of the royal palace in Bangkok. He came to the Grand Palace and slept there only twice: once during his coronation and the other time nearing his death, when he insisted on lying in the royal chamber following the tradition of his ancestors (Mattani 1996: 164).



Map 6. Site plan of Mrigadayavan Palace, Phetchaburi, divided into three groups of buildings: the audience hall and royal theater on the left;the king's residence at the middle coupled with the long walkway to the sea;the queen's residence on the far right. (Photograph courtesy of Mrigadayavan Foundation).

The early bungalows in England represented a search for solitude, and a quest for tranquility and isolation from the city crowd. The ideology behind the development of such bungalows was 'a desire for periodic escape from the pressures of an urban environment' and the search for 'places to which people like to retreat in privacy and isolation', 'the desire for self-expression and individualitythe urge to escape from the limitations of daily lifethe n eed for changethe desire to rediscover and strengthen one's roots. Man needs to feel a tie not just to his fellowmen but to history and to naturehe seek s direct contact with nature, with the elements, the historical and the primitive', according to Downing and Dower (cited in King 1980: 20).

Figure 38King Vajiravudh's first retreat villa at Hat Chao Samran, Phetchaburi (Photograph: Sarakadee 2000)

Similarly, King Vajiravudh's ideology behind the construction of his seaside palace was a desire to retreat from his rheumatism in privacy, isolation, and tranquility. He followed his doctor's advice to seek a warmer and airy seaside climate which would relieve his symptoms. Therefore, the king had his seashore villa built near a small isolated fishing village of Bang Thalu, approximately 15kilometers from Phetchaburi. The king was attracted to this remote area rather than the fashionable seaside resort of Hua Hin where a growing number of elites had built their homes. This was because the site was isolated, had a broad sandy beach and fell within the jurisdictional boundary of his old friend, Phraya Phathathorn, who was the governor of Phetchaburi at that time. The construction of his villa was completed in 1918and subsequently the king renamed his retreat 'Hat Chao Samran' or the beach of 'the Lord of Happiness'.

Figure 38illustrates the characteristics of his retreat villa at the Lord of Happiness. Built entirely of rubber plants, the first villa was erected on tall stilts which were quickly dismantled and assembled in another location. It is a cluster villa consisting of many units connected with long walkways. The villa contained high gables sloping downward into long projecting eaves, a large raised verandah connecting the separate rooms. The king's bedroom faced to the sea allowing breezes to pass underneath the villa and through the spaces in the floor levels. Such villa also contained a theater where the king had dinner with his associates and watched the dramatic performances. The king visited his villa five times during his reign and enjoyed his first stay there for two months. However, he became dissatisfied with this remote villa because of its poor road access, scarcity of fresh water, and intolerable insects (Green 1999: 119). Consequently, he abandoned his Lord of Happiness and started to look for another location in 1922.

The king decided to build a new retreat villa upon receiving a report that a new location further south at Hat Sai Nua was an ideal site because of abundance of fresh water and convenient access, as it was not far from the railway station. In addition, the new site was drier and cooler, endowed with lush natural forest and fresh water. It is a mountainous forest landscape leading to a clean beach with white soft sands. The king decided to build his new seaside palace in 1923 by using construction materials from the dismantled buildings of the former villa. He named his new beach-front palace 'Mrigadayavan', literally meaning 'park of hog deer', so as to maintain the original meaning of the site while adopting the auspicious name of the park where the Lord Buddha gave his first sermon. When the palace was built, the king declared the area within a radius of 8 kilometers of the palace as a wildlife sanctuary (Naengnoi and Freeman 1996).

Figure 39. (Left). Phra Thinang Phisansakhhon, the Beachfront Palace of King Vajiravudh. Figure 40 (Right). The open elegance of dome stic architecture coupled with Western modern technology at Phra Thainang Samosornsewakamat, the royal audience hall and theater. (Photograph: Korrachai Lekpetch)

This royal bungalow is 399 meters long and consists of three groups of buildings: 1) Phra Thinang Samutphiman, the residence of royal consort Indrasakdi Sachi, located in the south;2) Phra Thinang Phisansakhhon (Figure 39), the residence of King Vajiravudh, at the middle facing the sea; and 3) Phra Thinang Samosornsewakamat, a throne hall and theater, located in the north. From the royal consort's quarters and the king's quarters separate long walkways for male and female members of the courts lead out to pavilions right on the sea.

Figure 41. (Left). The design of the Beachfront Palace based on a modular system in response to the opening for tropical climate. Figure 42. (Right) A long walkway of the Beachfront Palace possessing horizontal elements. Space exposing to the sea breeze for whiling away the time and relaxation. (Photograph: Korrachai Lekpetch).

It is noteworthy that the king ensured good ventilation with high ceilings and fretwork on all walls. Building the entire structure on stilts ensured to keep the ground clean. Bringing all his ideas together, a group of eleven Italian architects, engineers, and artists, under the supervision of the Italian chief architect Ecole Manfredi and chief engineer Emilio Gollo, were hired by the Minister of Interior, Chao Phraya Yommaraj (Pun Sukum), to design the palace (see Map 6) in accordance with the king's sketches. Chinese laborers were hired for most of the buildings.

It is alleged that King Vajiravudh enjoyed the open elegance of Siam's classic domestic architecture (Figure 4). However, he also wanted to live in a Western style; for example, he incorporated steam baths, and an assortment of decidedly non-traditional amenities. This can be seen through the seaside palace as the synthesising outcome of the design of the traditional Thai house, in terms of atmosphere and spatial relationships, with modern technology. Like other traditional Thai houses, the seaside palace embodies the key characteristic of transportability. The entire structure can be taken apart and easily reassembled. Meanwhile, the complex is fitted together using wooden joints held in place by wooden pegs - no nails were used. The open space beneath the buildings serves a number of practical functions, such as providing structural resistance to inclement weather, as respite from the monsoon season.

The seaside palace is supported by 1,8concreted columns. The modular system is calculated in determining the equal spacing and size of the columns. From the concreted walkways beneath the buildings to the elevated wooden quarters, there is no construction material holding the two components together. This indigenous technique puts the columns in the right position to carry the weight of the buildings. Naengnoi Suksri (1996: 323) describes distinctive architectural characteristics of the palace, as follows:

> The design of the palace is based on a modular system [Figure 4], applied to both elevation and plan with columns at three-meter intervals for every building. The width of each room was also three meters, with an elevation of three meters, giving a cube-shaped room. For important rooms, the elevation was twice this, or six meters. From the exterior, the appearance is that of a two-story building. Each module has an opening for ventilation covered with framework in Art Deco Style. The use of such a modular system gives coherence to the architecture and imparts unity to the whole."

Furthermore, other dominant features of the palace include the use of rhombus-shaped roof tiles; gables with slatted openings for the tropical climate; wooden window awnings; the Art Deco fretwork details and reinforced concrete columns with small wells with water for preventing ant and termite attacks (as shown in Figure 4) on the wooden structures (Naengnoi and Freeman 1996: 324). The architects created a careful and thoughtful design covering every detail, from the foundation to the roof of the palace. They wisely applied Western knowledge and modern techniques to suit the living conditions in Siam. The sloped roofs were designed in triangle which could better protect the buildings from sunlight and rain than the normal flat ones. The layout of the site complex reminds the dwellers of a large traditional Ruen Thai (Thai house) with walkways, balconies, terraces and high-

pitched roofs for ventilation and humidity protection (Koompong 2003: 220). Meanwhile, golden teak was used in the construction of the seaside palace, creating an affinity with the site. Similar to Sanam Chandra Palace, the beachfront palace reflected King Vajiravudh's strong influence of Romanticism, which emerged in Europe during the 19th century (Sunon 2002: 5).

Due to its strategic location on the beach, the architectural design of this seaside palace has great openness and lightness, exposed to the sea breezes by minimising the ventilation resistance (Figure 3). However, this lightly wooden palace, which has reinforced concrete columns, is inevitably vulnerable during the monsoon season. Therefore, a composition of several functional units has been wisely designed to connect the entire structure for the sake of aesthetic values and vandalism protection (Weeravut 1991: 29). The designed concrete ceiling certainly placed more weights on beams and top of columns, and also contributed great elegance to the teak seaside palace.

Figure 3. (Left) The influence of the English Arts and Crafts Movement in the interior of the audience hall and royal theater. Figure 4(Right) Modern technology in the reinforced concrete columns with small water wells used for preventing ant and termite attacks. (Photograph: Korrachai Lekpetch).

King Vajiravudh chose to use the form of a classic Thai house for his summer palace to express his prestige in connection to traditional cultural heritage. However, he adopted modern facilities into the traditional Thai house. It is asserted that the control of the design was still under the influence of the architects who fulfilled the king's desires (Vimalin 1999: 2). Although these artisans were Europeans, they had been working for the Siamese government long enough to have a good understanding of vernacular architecture through their travels to the northern historical cities of Sukhothai and Sri Satchanalai. They were aware that a design based on heavy masonry and reinforced concrete and steel framing systems was not suitable in Siam, due to the local environment with tropical climate.

In *Architecture and Past* (2003), Pensupa termed the characteristics of the seaside palace as a 'geometric teak structure' and explained that the design focused on the 'elegance' of the golden teak texture. Perhaps it is one of the most outstanding teak mansions, possessing the aesthetic values of timber as carving rarely seen in timber structures (2003: 14). The artisans attempted to dominate the simplicity of the teak surface by giving more attention to line and direction than pattern, colour, style, and interior arts (shown in Figure 3).

Because of King Vajiravudh's nationalistic concern, it was not surprising that the architects at that time created geometric wooden pavilions in response to the king's desire - nostalgia for a classical Thai house. Incidentally, Ross King (pers. Comm.2006) observed that the lightness and elevation of the seaside palace are in stark contrast with stone masonry traditions and solidity of Chinese traditions including the work of Chinese property development in Siam of that time. If his remark is valid, to support King Vajiravudh's anti-Chinese sentiment, it is noted that the characteristics of the seaside palace are totally contrasting to the outstanding feature of Chinese architecture– the curved roof with overhanging eaves supported by a timber skeleton based on a raised platform (Ch'eng 1984 : 11). Unlike the Chinese architecture at Wehart Chamrun Mansion in Bang Pa In Palace, the seaside palace does not contain any Chinese decoration of pure floral design or plants and flowers on the gable or pediment.

After the construction of the retreat villa was completed in 1924, King Vajiravudh visited and stayed here twice. While staying at the royal theater, he performed two dramatic plays - *Phra Ruang* and *Wiwah Phra Samut* - that he wrote, especially on the occasion of his beloved royal consort Indrasak Sachi's birthday on 10 June 1924. The consort was pregnant and King Vajiravudh was filled with much happiness with the hope that he might get a son to be the next crown prince. However, his hope disintegrated when it was discovered that the royal consort was not able to give birth due to a miscarriage. At that time, he nursed his wife with considerable concern and sadness at the palace.

The nationalistic monarch came back to the beachfront palace with another royal consort Suwatthana and stayed here from 12 April to 20 June 1925. It was as if he returned to say farewell to his romantic seaside residence as he passed away shortly after arriving back in Bangkok. During his second visitation, he again hoped that he could be able to have a son as his consort Suwatthana was pregnant. During that time, the king himself became seriously ill. On the delivery date, the Siamese musical instruments were played which signified that she gave birth to a princess (if a prince, then the signal would be firearms*). Emotionally, the king could not cope with his diminishing health, and after seeing his little daughter only twice, he passed away because of cancer of the intestines. Afterwards, the summer palace was not used and deteriorated;however, today it is under the supervision of the Bureau of Border Patrol Police and has been renovated to good condition.

In conclusion, there was no speech from King Vajiravudh wherein he tried to fight back against the erosion from Western art and architecture by emphasising the individualism and independence of Thai culture. The king was possibly influenced by the English Art and Crafts movement through his formative education in the West. As England was successful from the industrial revolution, however some British elites discarded this advanced technology by nostalgically searching for the glorious past. They paid more attention to the significance of intricate craftsmanship. Mrigadayavan Palace reflects particularly King Vajiravudh's artistic and romantic characteristics combined with a profound understanding of vernacular architecture. Despite its

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* Interviewed Khun Pradith Champa, a site curator at Mrigadayavan, on 10 August 2006

aesthetic value, the seaside palace has a long walkway which is relatively unproductive in terms of functional utility*.

During the fifteen years of his reign, it is known that King Vajiravudh, a man of culture and art, purposefully used his literature and drama as a device in promoting the political concept of official nationalism with a great pride in traditional culture. The king encountered political challenges from a new middle class as a result of the political revolution at the turn of the twentieth century. These young intellectuals called for a participatory form of politics - a parliament and constitution. However, King Vajiravudh was able to successfully retain the royal absolutism during his reign and made his nationalistic trinity of 'Nation, Religion, and Monarchy' popular to the present day.

At Mrigadayavan Palace, there is no sufficient historical analysis conveyed to the visitors, and the concept of the king's official nationalism is sometimes overlooked. Visitors mainly enjoy the aesthetic value of the site, but they may not realise the reasons for having the architectural style of buildings. It would be important to deliver the message to the visitors that the buildings were not erected purely for their architectural beauty, but in fact there is a more socio-political reason for those specific styles to be chosen. If visitors have more of this background knowledge then they will possibly appreciate the seaside palace and enrich their travel experience.

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Chapter 5

Summary and Conclusion

This thesis investigates the different contrasting visions of modernity of three successive Siamese leaders, that are reflected in the search for a context in which to 'interpret' the values, roles and styles of three static palaces in Phetchaburi: Phra Nakhon Kiri (the Hilltop Palace) of King Mongkut, Phra Ram Ratchanivej (the Gunner Palace) of King Chulalongkorn, and Mrigadayavan (the Seaside Palace) of King Vajiravudh. The three palaces currently are some of the most outstanding heritage attractions primarily because of their unique geographical locations, attractive architectural landscapes, and proximity to Cha Am and Hua Hin, two of Thailand's leading seaside destinations. However, there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that the unique heritage values of the three palaces under the supervision of three government agencies – the Department of Fine Arts (for the Hilltop Palace), the Royal Thai Army (for the Gunner Palace), and the Border Patrol Police (for the Seaside Palace) – have never been meaningfully interpreted to modern-day visitors. Furthermore, most visitors primarily enjoy the aesthetic values of the physical topography of the sites, but only slightly understand and appreciate the heritage significance of the palaces they visit.

In order to develop the interpretive understanding of the sites for tourism purposes, the researcher attempts to 'discover' abstract meanings that might be linked to three kings' visions of modernity, and which might be embedded in the built forms of their palaces. Significantly, the built environments, notably the architectural styles, the forms, and the designs of the palaces have value in suggesting what can be known about the three kings' intentions, values, and personalities, as influenced by the 'West' during the transitional period of Siamese modernisation that concluded with the end of royal absolutism in 1932.

In none of King Mongkut's speeches was there ever mention that he had built Phra Nakhon Kiri to demonstrate the way he saw the universe. Likewise, King Chulalongkorn never once mentioned that he had built the Gunner Palace in the German style because he wanted to counterbalance the influences of France and Britain by 'playing' with architectural expression. However, it is certain that King Chulalongkorn's global vision on diplomacy was against colonisation. Similarly, King Vajiravudh never mentioned that he tried to 'fight back' against the erosion of traditional heritage by emphasising the individualism and independence of Siamese culture. We are assuming such links which can only be partly tested against the historical evidence. As the three kings had reinvented their roles, images, and Siam's position in the world, it is argued here that they used architectural expression, in the effort to promote Siamese modernity for political purposes.

Significantly, the three kings played active roles in the appropriation and localisation of Western ideas and practices of 'civilisation'. Thus, it has been interesting

to investigate to the degree in which their ideologies on modernity might have been reflected through the architectural expressions of their palaces.

King Mongkut and Phra Nakhon Kiri

In the face of European colonial domination led by Britain and France, King Mongkut (reigned 1851-1868) was responding to a changed political dynamic by seeking new modes of presentation and legitimacy. The king had foreseen the importance of modernisation along Western lines if Siam wanted to preserve her sovereignty and did not want to suffer the same fate under European control as other 'primitive' Asian societies (Sinee 1969: 108).

Initiating a path of reform in the 1850s, King Mongkut was engaged in modernisation by a careful adoption of Western concepts, practices, institutions, knowledge and culture. He encouraged the introduction of Western scientific knowledge to be absorbed as much into Thai culture as would assist in developing the structure of the Siamese society to be more in line with European practices. For instance, unlike his predecessor who showed little interest in photography due to a suspicion that to be captured in a photograph was to invite death, the innovative king not only permitted himself to be gazed upon directly by all observers but used photography as a means of personalising his contact with heads of state and establishing himself as a peer monarch (Cary 2000: 125 and Peleggi 2004: 136).

At the Hilltop Palace, the political position of Siam as a modern state was manifested through a number of European-Sino-Siamese hybrid buildings, along with his enthusiasm for Western scientific knowledge, notably astronomy and geography, which he had learned in his contact with Christian missionaries while in his 27-year monkhood and later as king (Kirsch 1978: 58). In his correspondence with prominent European leaders, the king would exchange information in something of an intellectual battle in the campaign to demonstrate his political equality and technological sophistication. His passion for ancient civilisation would also be used as a diplomatic tool to strengthen relations, in which he discussed the discovery of the throne and stone inscription of King Ram Kham Khaeng with foreign diplomats. Also, he expressed an awareness of how the idea of a museum as a repository can be promoted by and associated with the power of the state. The museum was a showcase to be used in the manifestation of Siam's cultural achievement (Cary 2000).

For religious purposes, the scholar monarch supported Buddhhism both textually and visually. It is interesting to note that all pagodas associated with him possess the bell-shaped architectural charateristics that originated in Sri Lanka, an ancient source for Southeast Asian Buddhist authenticity (see Vella 1957: 40-41). Such architectural expression reflects the significant concept of his religious reforms for the sake of upgrading monastic practices and purifying the canon (Kirsch 1978: 61 and Phra Phaisan Visalo n.d: 3). His reformed Buddhist sect, Thammayut, is

charaterised as rational, intellectual, and humanistic (see Tambiah 1976: 211 and Griswold 1961: 21). The scholar king asserted that there was nothing in Buddhism opposing the scientific views that he had learnt in his contact with the Christian missionaries. Significantly, he denied magical beliefs and superstitions, particularly, Traiphumikatha (the Three World Cosmology), a famous religious text which had stood at the core of Siamese traditional beliefs for centuries. However, in some respects, he still worshipped the Brahmanical deities manifested through Wechaya Wichien Prasat, a Khmer style tower, at Phra Nakhon Kiri (Jackson 1989: 59). He followed the approach of divine kingship as a means of bolstering national pride and Siamese sovereignty.

King Chulalongkorn and Phra Ram Ratchanivej

In answer to the questions of why King Chulalongkorn (reigned 1868-1910) devoted the entire Gunner Palace to German arts, and why it had to be German, the author points out that the Gunner Palace served as a 'footnote' in his multi-polar foreign policies, for the sake of strengthening the Siamese and German relationship while countering the powers of France and Britain, at the end of his reign.

Following in his late father's footsteps in modernising Siam, King Chulalongkorn knew that he had to rule decisively, diplomatically, and skillfully. Influenced by foreign media, the king made a series of travels to his colonised neighbors particular Malaya, Singapore and Java so as to foster the 'civilised' policy, and through these he learnt numerous benefits of European technology, government systems, and commerce.

With the British and Dutch colonies in Asia as examples for Siam's desired development, the king strove to create a modern nation-state in accordance with government reform aimed at consolidating the royal absolutism. Notably, the Siamese elite pursued legislative provisions and administrative measures, similar to those used by the colonial powers, over the outlying regions and provinces. They appointed commissioners and districts officers and introduced the fiscal policy of a centralised state revenue collection and ministerial degrees under tight control. These measures reflect the imitation of colonial bureaucracy and sometimes come close to internal colonisation, according to Ekavidya (1995: 258). The social construction of modernity and the refashioning of the monarchy's public image was a result of a creative process of selection, adaptation, localisation, and not just a one-way process deriving from the West. This practice was also meant to elevate his hegemonic position and prestigious image either to the eyes of his own subjects, or to the ever-threatening European diplomats.

Due to the Franco–Siamese conflict in 1893 as well as the increasing tension between the two colonial powers surrounding her, especially at the turn of the century, Siam became a buffer state that was prone to the colonial threat and political

pressure at that time. In response to such phenomena, King Chulalongkorn sought to establish multi-polar relationships with other European countries, replacing the Siamese-British-Franco triplicate affairs, by bringing new powerful players to the game, notably Russia and Germany. In other words, he pursued 'Open Door' and modernisation policies in order to come to terms with the external political forces (Pensri 1982: 166). One of his diplomatic strategies was to send his children to study in various parts of Europe, notably Britain, Germany, and Russia. Subsequently, the diplomatic king made visits to Europe twice, in 1897 and 1907, for the sake of strengthening relations and allies with various European countries.

Significantly, King Chulalongkorn intended to counter-balance the power of France and Britain, rather than just to broaden horizons. Due to the close relationship with Siam, Russia was the first country in which the king had sought support; however, Russia failed to give Siam the support that Siam requested. This was perceived to result from Russia's dependence on France for financial support and high-tech machinery in developing her country (Pensri 1982). Therefore, the king made a swift change to Germany, one of the powerful nations in Europe at that time. He was especially impressed with German Kaiser Wilhelm II's sincerity, accepting unconditional agreements to Siam's request and negotiations. Furthermore, Germany had no colonisation policy in Asia. It was also Keiser Wilhelm II who advised the king to request cooperation among the colonial powers to guarantee the independence and integrity of Siam.

Despite the persistent trouble with Europe, King Chulalongkorn seems to have enthusiastically embraced much of European thought and taste. He was an avid collector of the consumer goods that nineteenth century Europe produced in such abundance and advertised in the pages of the local Western press. The king pursued the 'civilised' strategy in establishing the Chakri Reformation, which entailed the centralisation of government, taxation and military draft and the establishment of a Western-style ministerial cabinet, bureaucracy, Buddhist clergy and educational system (Peleggi 2002). To the king, Western structures were symbolically used to portray the good and modernised 'image' of Siam, as unlike that of other, primitive countries in the region. Possessing various styles of architecture and international art movements demonstrated Siam's multiculturalism and strong position in foreign affairs. With his 'global views' on modernity, the king marked Siam's position in the international society as not inferior to others (see Thongchai 2000).

One of the key players in this modernisation process was undoubtedly Germany, which significantly contributed to developing infrastructure especially railroads, telegraph and other civic improvement in Siam. From numerous visits to Bad Homburg in Germany, King Chulalongkorn developed a strong relationship with Kaiser Wilheml II. Being fascinated by the Kaiser's palace in Germany, the king manifested his 'global views' of civilisation and modernisation through the Jugendstil or Art Nouveau architectural style at the Gunner Palace. This representation not only

clarifies King Chulalongkorn's admiration for Germany, the Kaiser himself and his residence, but it might also symbolise the meaningful diplomatic relationship between Germany and Siam while countering the power of France and Britain at the end of his reign.

King Vajiravudh and Mrigadayavan

In the late nineteenth century, Siamese art and traditions were in decline and at their lowest ebb as Siamese elite were more influenced by European exposure and anxious to make a good impression on Westerners (Vella 1978). Feeling that Siam was under threat of losing national identity, King Vajiravudh (reigned 1910-1925) attempted to revise traditional art, linked with his official nationalism and conservation (Apinan 1992: 26).

In architecture, the question arises concerning the extent to which King Vajiravudh valued the concept of a civilised society and used the concept of history to stimulate nationalistic sentiment. This practice was consistent with the social norm of that time, which was based on civilisation determined by Westerners. To the king, traditional architecture signified a civilised history and national identity of Siam comparing with other civilised nations (Chatri 2003). Through his formative education in Britain, King Vajiravudh was substantially influenced by the English Arts and Crafts movement led by the old aristocrats. He valued superb hand-crafted details showing Siam's civilisation, like those other European countries. Also, the revival of intricate craftsmanship was consistent with his official nationalism, which dominated the role of monarchy and royalty in taking a strong position as defender and patron of Siamese cultural heritage. However, at a personal level, King Vajiravudh exhibited some contradiction between traditional and Western lifestyle, and this subsequently yielded a context for an attempted synthesis of Siamese and Western cultural experience (see Koompong 2003). For the sake of retaining the spirit of Siamese national identity coupled with modern Western technology, this new context was refracted through architectural expressions at his seaside palace Mrigadayavan.

The remarkable design and layout of the riverside bungalow in England, in the nineteenth century, possibly influenced King Vajiravudh's primary notion of creating the architectural form, site location, and layout of his summer 'veranda bungalow' reflecting his 'romantic' personality, 'English' lifestyle, and European taste. Through a critical investigation, the king chose to use the form of a classical Thai house, because of domestic geography and tropical weather, to express his revival of cultural heritage, parallel to the modern technology and Western facilities that he adopted (Naengnoi and Freeman 1996: 324; Koompong 2003).

His official nationalism was clearly demonstrated through his dramatic performances at the seaside palace. The king himself performed two musical plays - *Phra Ruang* and *Wiwah Phra Samut* - and it is interesting to examine the sort of

message the plays themselves reveal. The Chakri monarch purposely centralised all royal entertainment and dramatic activities so as to use them, not only for his own pleasure and entertainment, but also for his political ideas on official nationalism. It would seem that the main theme of his performing art was to strengthen and glorify the institution of absolute monarchy and to propagate a concept of national unity and patriotism with a great pride in Siamese cultural heritage (Mattani 1996). The king attempted to instruct and enlighten Siamese people to the necessity for stirring up a sense of duty, responsibility, and loyalty to the nation and to the king (Vella 1974; and Mattani 1996).

Discussion and conclusion

The research summarised here has yielded three major insights, related first to methodology, second to theory, and third to the nature of knowledge itself – that is, to epistemology.

The question of methodology

There is a first methodological problem as it is impossible to directly ask questions of the three kings but one must rather find and document the material evidence of past socio-political situations and then deduce their visions. However, the idea of political vision is relatively abstract and difficult to interpret validly and reliably because of incomplete and imprecise information, a strong reliance on inference, and difficulty in method. Therefore, how is one to impute intentions, values, and personality from architectural buildings that now have no 'life'? How is one to validate the result of this enquiry?

There has been increasing interest among archaeologists, anthropologists, philosophers, and architects in constructing a theoretical concept of how people thought in the past, what their motivations and expectations were, and how their thinking was reflected in the content and patterning of their material remains (Sutton and Yohe 2003). While visiting heritage places, modern visitors also increasingly strive for insightful knowledge and understanding of ideological and symbolic meanings immanent in static heritage buildings and material remains, notably the designs, forms, styles, characteristics, and technology which reflect the priorities and values of the makers and users (Stark 1998 cited in Sutton and Yohe 2003: 285). Such study of past societies, in which explicit attention is paid to processes of human thought and symbolic behaviour as inferred from material remains, is called 'cognitive archaeology' by Renfrew (1994a: 339).

One of the fundamental challenges among contemporary cognitive scientists is to develop theories, tools and methodology to read and understand human cognitions in the past (see Hodder 1986, Bell 1994, Hill 1994, Renfrew 1994b, Segal 1994, and Sutton and Yohe 2003). To complicate any research methodology, the

evidence of past human cognitions is relatively abstract and difficult to interpret properly. This is because history and heritage are subjects that tend to be more descriptive, with too strong a reliance on inference, less quantitative, less suited to experimentation and, significantly, the results tend to be less precise (Dincauze 2000 cited in Sutton and Yohe 2003). Additionally, some critics point out that all history is written by people, and all history contains some biases, sometimes unconsciously recorded. Some history is 'rewritten' to serve interests of hegemonic groups when they come into power. Therefore, historical records and interpretations are suspect as incomplete, biased, and sometimes even false (Sutton and Yohe 2003).

Due to this problem of methodology, we do not obtain complete information and confirmation. As the past is not directly observable in the present and past facts are no longer accessible to direct inspection, it is impossible to interview or ask the long dead people about their motivations or make the mute buildings speak on their behalf. Furthermore, the minds of long dead people are gone and their cognitive contents are not recoverable, and so we can understand very little about their intentions, values, and behaviour. But are the aforementioned statements really to be accepted?

My argument is that although we cannot let the static buildings speak for themselves, abstract meanings can be interpreted through architectural contexts, notably styles, characteristics, and techniques in construction. We cannot precisely validate such meaning in the present, however, heritage buildings - as historical evidence - can be interpreted for their cultural meanings, symbolic meanings, and religious meanings. Furthermore, an architectural expression also reflects beliefs, behaviours, and personalities of makers and dwellers. In other words, it is not absolutely mute. It may be correct that we cannot actually know what people thought in the past as there is no 'direct' access to the past. Nevertheless, the present author would reiterate Hill's argument (1994) that it is sometimes possible to make plausible inferences about what people must almost certainly have thought, given very strong circumstantial and analogical evidence. Moreover, the author believes that some such inferences are testable through the application of scientific method in the formulation of hypotheses to be tested against historical data.

In order to interpret abstract socio-political meanings through stylistic aspects of architecture, the author has employed two analytical methods. The first is formal analysis whereby architecture can be interpreted and understood through the idea of forms, a pattern of polarities distinguishing and describing a formal composition through geometrical relationships, according to Wolfflin and Hottinger (1950). Such an approach helps distinguish key architectural compositions from different ages, leading to a comprehension of their spatial configurations and architectural meanings. The second method is stylistic analysis which serves as a classification tool for a particular kind of architecture with identifiable relationships among the features of forms, materials, ornaments, and construction methods. Also,

stylistic analysis uses a matrix of characteristics, theories, shared beliefs, technological improvement and values of makers and dwellers (Koompong 2003: 43).

This research focuses on forming structures of inference in an explicit manner which helps towards a better understanding of the knowledge, values, ideology, and personalities of the three kings who had built the palaces, and how they might have used architectural expressions of their palace in their efforts to promote their ideas of Siamese modernity. To complicate any research methodology, as the author cannot participate in any past, 'I-was-there' experience, the evidence of the three kings' political visions is relatively untested and difficult to interpret properly. Indeed, the study generally attempts to 'seek' rather to 'test or ascertain' the meanings of intelligent thoughts. In the conduct of any such enquiry, it is not the source of the insight which validates the claim, instead it is the explicit nature of the philosophical reasons which sustain it and the means by which the available data can be brought into relationship with it (Renfrew 1994b).

In a sense as a detective, the researcher attempts to translate a 'feeling' that there is a rational continuum between these three stories into a coherent question, by linking political activities of the three kings to the consequences of those activities associated with the three palaces. It is important to understand what it is about the socio-political phenomena and the individual backgrounds of the three kings, that might enable one to infer something about architectural history in Siam, and to sort out to what extent political visions are embedded in the architectural forms of the country palaces, and why? One of the problems in this research study is to define 'the question'. The answer to this dilemma is to realise that history and heritage are subjects of discourse rather than of science – it is simply not possible to determine causal effects. The visions or the personalities of the kings do not 'cause' the architecture.

One of the primary concerns in this research is to yield the database and theoretical insights appropriate to cognitive science. Although there is no 'direct' possibility of reading the past, it is sometimes possible to gain an 'indirect' understanding of the 'meanings' that the three kings' visions on modernity and their personalities might have left embedded in the architectural styles of the three palaces, through the formulation of a refined methodology to be tested against the historic record. In relation to the research studies conducted by Schiffer and Tschauner (1995 in Sutton and Yohe 2003), it is essential to link the material historic record to past human behaviour such as the ritual performance conducted at the beach-front palace in the case of King Vajiravudh. This thinking is accomplished through the application of logical analogy, an argument that if two things are similar in some aspects, they will be possibly similar in others. 'Conclusions' reached through the use of analogy, however, continue to be hypotheses and may be incorrect. Therefore, the cognitive scientists continually need to test and refine hypotheses and models generated by analogy. It is true that the study of past or present cognition cannot be divorced from

the study of society in general. Thus there is a need to have an understanding of the past society, economy, politics, and environment. Significantly, this work involves learning how the historical record was formed and trying to understand how past human behaviour created and was associated with buildings.

The author uses a similar method to the sort of cognitive archaeology which Hill (1994) termed the 'Tight Local Analogy method' or (TLA method). This method requires that the unknown (archaeological data) and the known (ethnographic analogy) phenomena be 'tight' and 'local'. 'Tight' means that there should be as many specific similarities as possible, and 'local' implies the likelihood that they should be close in time and space. In other words, if the architectural styles, designs, and characteristics of the three palaces look the same as other buildings erected by the same king as revealed in the historical literature, we conclude that their ideas are the same. However, this approach has limitations, for as Binford (1976 in Hill 1994: 89) has pointed out, we cannot logically study the past by studying the present; we must use historical data if we want to understand what went on in history. Likewise, it is not possible to assign unknown meaning to the association without comparing it to structures/buildings erected during the same time and space. To seek the cognitive meanings intended by the three kings, it is necessary to tie the historic record of the three heritage sites to the analysed historical literature. Without the historical record of the three palaces, such a method will usually not validate the hypotheses. Therefore, in relation to the well-established aspect of analogy, the result can be plausible and persuasive because all of the inferences about the past are based on analogy and the inferences are rarely more than plausible and persuasive, even when tested rigorously against the historical record (Hill 1994).

It is certain that we cannot precisely know about the three kings' thoughts; however, there are certainly situations in which the historical record is structured in such a way that we can plausibly infer what they must have been thinking. We can also test some of our inferences in this regard. Incidentally, we can infer the political ideologies of the three kings from what they actually did (their behaviour), because it is evidence of behaviour that is available for examination. Significantly, whenever we find historic phenomena that we suspect might be amenable to cognitive interpretations, it will be useful to examine the historical literature in search of good analogies. This will carry with it the methodological limitations as outlined above. The study of cognitive science through architectural expression is an important domain, with unique data and methods which can contribute to the general understanding of intelligence. Also, this research study can profit from data and methods developed in other cognitive sciences.

The question of theory

One of the major difficulties for this study is how to write three different individual histories as a continuum. The analysis and interpretation of the three kings'

ideologies through the architectural expressions of the three palaces cannot be divorced from an understanding of the social and political system in the past. The research has had to encompass a wide range of specialised knowledge, disciplines and sub-disciplines that might foster an understanding of the transition of Siamese modernity during a span of 74 years (1851-1925). To understand the complex interplay between the three kings and three palaces (see Table 1), it is important to call upon insights from a diversity of studies, from fields as disparate as socio-cultural history, politics, religion, and art history in Thailand. As the concern is also with the personalities of the three kings, ideas must also be sought from psychology. Therefore, how is one to bridge the gaps between biographical backgrounds, personalities, political policies, and architectural expressions?

The links between the three kings and three palaces are discursive. However, the study addresses the relationship between personalities and political policies which, it is suggested, consequently contribute to architectural characteristics of the buildings. In other words, the individual architectural expressions are the reflection of the relationship between personalities and political policies made by the three kings.

(Personalities + Political Policies) ⇒ Architectural Expressions

As architecture is a manifestation of civilisation, a pillar of both traditional society and the modern state, the buildings and built environment offer a unique opportunity to identify the ideas and institutions of authority, both religious and secular, embodied in architectural form (Coaldrake 1996). Likewise, architecture does not passively reflect personalities, but also manifests aspects of political perceptions of the individual top leaders. Describing architectural characteristics is a simple procedure; however, understanding what political ideologies are embodied in buildings and why they are in that way is a much greater challenge. Data and critiques on biographical backgrounds, personalities, behaviour and political policies have been used in analysing the architectural expressions of the palaces.

For the 'scholar king', it is important to acknowledge his compromising personality, scientific sophistication, and the 'Open Door' of foreign policy, including the major concept and characteristics of his Buddhist reform, in the Thammayut sect. So, to what extent might his personality and ideas be associated with the architectural design of his palace? To King Chulalongkorn, having clear policies on foreign relations, he wanted to link himself to Europe, not as the vassal state, but as the regional leader of a small empire. With regards to the German designed palace of the diplomatic king, it is interesting to investigate to what extent the Siamese-German relationship might be manifested through the Jugendstil architectural expression. In addition, was there any relationship between King Vajiravudh's dramatic pursuits,

Table 1. Comparisons of the interplays between the three kings and the three palaces

	Personalities	Foreign Policies	Architectural Expressions
King Mongkut	• Religious scholar • Intellectual and innovative king/ universalist/ 'renaissance' man • Western scientific sophistication • Compromising • Approachable, humane, friendly, and sympathetic • Modest and humble • Hidden • Reformer	• Welcoming • Collaborating (bending with the wind) • The Open Door Policy (the Bowring Treaty of 1855) • Promoting Siamese modernity and civilisation through cultural achievements in private diplomacy	• Power, national identity, legitimacy (traditional Siamese architecture with Indian and Khmer influences) • Modernisation and Westernisation (European, Sino, and Siamese hybrid architectural style) • Thammayut characteristics (original, rational, and humane) • Modern scientific interest
King Chulalongkorn	• Diplomatic leadership • Intelligent with political skills • Far-sighted visions • Outgoing • Modern monarch with good 'taste' • An avid collectors of Western goods • Open reformer	• The counter-balancing policy (make friends with Germany to counter France and balance Britain) • Creating a modern nation-state along with royal absolutist consolidation • Policy by travel • Security of the border • Internationally diplomatic policy (He created the museum as a part of his drama of state through invited foreign press)	• Global views (modernisation and civilisation) • Colonial imposition on Lanna and Pattani • Scientific values (modern architectural structure and Western technology) • German and Siamese cordial relationship countering France and Britain (Jugendstil or Art Nouveau architecture and interior decorations designed by German architect)
King Vajiravudh	• Romantic, artistic, fanciful and dreamy nature • Shy and sensitive • Dramatic pursuit • Gifted author • Undiplomatic • Bicultural king (English-Siamese) • Contradicting personality between traditional and Western lifestyle	• Official nationalism • Anti-Chinese propaganda • Opposing a cult of Western imitation • Cooperation with the Allies in the First World War • Renegotiating the mid-nineteenth century treaties	• Revival of traditional art and architecture • Colonial opposition • Arts and Crafts Movement (English influences) • Conceptual synthesis of Siamese architecture with Western amenities and modern technology • No Chinese characteristics

personality, and royal nationalistic activities and the seaside palace? Does the architectural design imply any English cultural characteristics, and if so, how? The Seaside Palace would appear to reflect his rejections of Europeanism. It also reflects his idea of modernity. According to King Vajiravudh's personality on cultural pursuits, the Seaside Palace reflected his cultural rejection of the 'West' and the search for the traditional identity.

It can be said that all three monarchs were complex individuals, revealed in their contrasting personalities and the different political agendas that each had. They tried to achieve a number of political agendas which were also playing one battle against another. For example, unlike King Mongkut who carefully adopted the Western concepts, King Chulalongkorn fully exposed and developed his nation-state more in line with European practices. In contrast, King Vajiravudh revived the glory of national identity by giving more attention to nationalistic policy. Hence, we possibly expect see the complex political policy of the three kings reflected through their architectural expression.

The epistemological question

Underlying all these is an epistemological problem: the way of seeing the world changing radically over these 74 years from 1851 to 1925. There were absolute shifts in the way that Thai knowledge and modernity were being variously constructed in accordance with and in reaction to Western influences. Ultimately, the study has sought to contribute to the development of a comprehensive understanding of the three top rulers' political visions on modernity. It has provided insight into how the three kings were influenced by their surroundings, i.e. how they interacted with the environments in the past. This information may have significant applications today, especially with respect the long-term planning and to understanding long-term change in Siamese modernity. At a step along the way, the information and understanding derived from the research work can be applied to the management and conservation of the past and to the education of the public about the past (Sutton and Yohe 2003).

Since there are a number of heritage buildings, associated with the three successive kings of the Chakri Dynasty in Thailand, therefore, the study of the abstract meanings of their political visions on modernity and personalities through architectural discourse may significantly contribute to the development of heritage planning, in terms of conservation of the cultural landscape, education of the public about the heritage values, and interpretation for tourism purposes. It is expected that when the public better understands and appreciates the values of the three palaces, they will tend to provide more proactive cooperation in conserving, supporting, and developing the heritage places. Meanwhile, the enquiries of the abstract socio-political meanings through architecture can be used and applied to other heritage sites. For instance, it may be interesting to investigate to what extent has King Bhumibol's social policies on development, in particular the philosophical principles of 'self-

sufficiency economy', been reflected through the 'simple' architectural expressions of his dwellings or the religious structures he has supported.

The research study has helped to rediscover the past and is thereby mutually beneficial to both outsiders and the Thai people themselves by promoting and enhancing a better understanding of Siamese rulers' capabilities via architectural and cultural accomplishments. Ultimately, the study of Siamese modernity helps us with a better understanding of the heritage as a storehouse of past experiences that have rationally contributed to modern society and to confronting the intellectual challenges of the present and the future.

The result of this enquiry also contributes to a number of contemporary political debates such as the 'Open Door' policy of the Bowring Treaty in 1855 associated with the present Free Trade Agreement (FTA), the 'nationalism' concept in accordance with the political unrest in Thailand's three southernmost provinces by illuminating the present with a perspective on the past. By understanding the visions of modernity in past societies, we can engage in a more enlightened and informed discourse about these same things in today's world.

Further research and policy implications

It was noted in Chapter 1 that the intrinsic values of the three palaces have neither been interpreted to modern visitors nor linked to the personalities and political policies of the three reigns, as outlined above. The three different individual histories should be viewed in a continuum so as to help towards a better understanding of their 'holistic' heritage values. However, the main issue is that the three sites are managed by three governmental agencies that have complexity, in terms of policies and agendas. Hence, it may be of interest and value to investigate how to present the political visions of the three kings and their personalities to observers. Meanwhile, several questions that flow from the scope of this enquiry, especially with respect to management and interpretation of the three palaces for modern visitors still remain unanswered and require further investigation. For instance, how can do we get the shared interpretative theme across from the three palaces to the modern visitors? To what degree can we learn from the three management agencies, in terms of heritage interpretation and visitor management? In addition, what factors should be considered in developing communicative techniques at the three palaces?

In order to enhance visitors' understanding of the heritage values of the three palaces, there should be careful consideration of the entire interpretative system by seeking a common theme or story of the three sites, to be incorporated into tourism planning. The transitional period of Siamese modernity and socio-political phenomena of the three reigns and the way that the kings used their palaces to reflect their political positions should be the shared theme or story to be illustrated in the entire interpretative system. Furthermore, the three management agencies should share

stories, opportunities, and visitors – complementing each other, instead of competing for parts of the tourism market. Hence, the interpretation at any one palace would avoid duplication of stories told on site. Instead they can link to the socio-political story so as to enhance visitors' understanding of the related histories, themes, and stories of the three kings. This will ultimately enrich travel and educational experiences. Furthermore, the three agencies can enjoy a more cost–effective planning effort by planning to work and interpret together. They can possibly develop and promote a Three-Palace Tourism Program to tourists. It must be asserted that the interpretative system should be incorporated into a tourism masterplan for the Phetchaburi Province as well.

Promoting the interpretative system requires not only an integrated collaboration but also a proactive communication between the three management agencies. It may be more appropriate to have the three agencies promote their strengths within a provincial interpretive system once their goals are well defined - in such a manner that all the interests of each agency are met. In this way, the three agencies will need to interact more 'effectively' as far as the potential synergies involved are concerned. Simultaneously, the Phetchaburi Provincial Administration Organisation (PPAO) should play a key role in incorporating a provincial cultural heritage and tourism management plan to include the interpretative system. It is necessary for the PPAO to build a consensus among parties associated with local heritage, such as the three agencies responsible for the three palaces, temples, and Phetchaburi Cultural Promotion Office. However, problems will still arise if there is a difference, in terms of the quality of services provided to visitors at the three sites. Hence, how can these three palaces be promoted as a provincial interpretative system once visitors start comparing the difference in the quality of services provided by the three different agencies? Hence, it will be difficult to make the three palaces interact in a provincial interpretative system, unless policy makers from PPAO understand and appreciate the kings' vision on modernity expressed through architectural expressions.

Although many local inhabitants are aware that three palaces are located in Phethaburi, they still lack an understanding of the site values of the three. Also, there is little effort to link the histories of the three reigns into some form of continuum. Local inhabitants may have a little understanding and appreciation of the abstract meaning of the kings through architectural expression. Thus, collaboration among the three agencies is required if they attempt to generate income for the local community while simultaneously supporting the preservation of its cultural heritage.

In order to make local inhabitants and visitors more aware of the values of the three palaces including local culture and arts in Phetchaburi, it is recommended to build a Phetchaburi Museum and Archive (PMA)[*], which can serve as a live museum,

[*] Interviewed Khun Pathom Rasitanont on 28 March 2007.

an interpretative center of Phetchaburi cultural heritage, and a learning center of local cultural artifacts. The PMA has the potential to inspire visitors' understanding of heritage values of the sites if it provides audio-visual aids such as raised letters, special signage, sign-language interpreting and cassette tapes to facilitate communication. The interpretative media will help visitors to know the heritage sites more intimately and to enrich their experience.

The history of Siamese modernity should be elaborated and presented through new technology conveying a sense of place and traditional culture of Phetchaburi that still exist in the province. Also, the stories of the three kings should be made more holistic rather than be made up of simple parts. Economically, the PMA has the potential to contribute to the average length of tourist stay and their expenditure. This will generate economic benefits to the host inhabitants and parties concerned as a result of the increase of visitors to their area. However, selecting the strategic location of the PMA must be made carefully if we aim to attract more local residents and visitors. The PMA should be easily accessible by public transportation, and situated along the highway to Cha Am and Hua Hin. In a province like Phetchaburi, where cultural heritage and tourism face planning and management challenges, there is no evidence of marketing and interpretation collaboration among the three agencies. However, the result of this research may lead to a wider collaboration and synergy in the future. This is essential if the working partnership among the three agencies and other heritage sites aims to develop in a way that is beneficial for all parties concerned.

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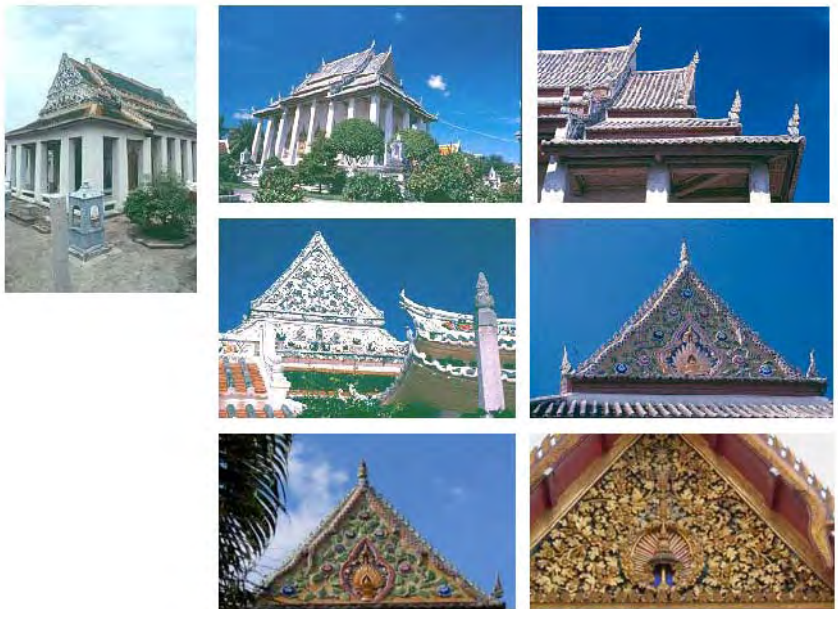
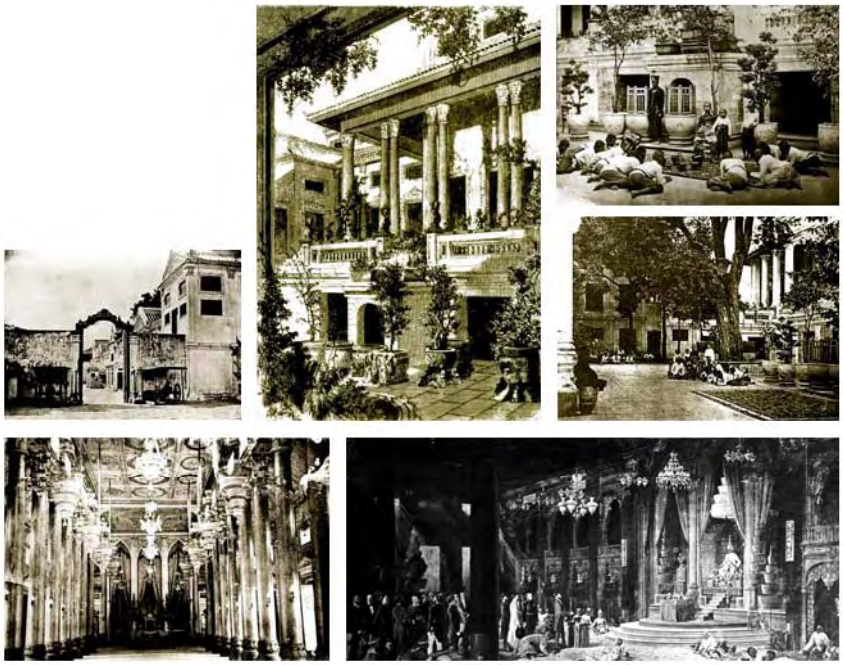
Appendix

Numerous architectural styles during the reign of King Mongkut

Traditional architectural style of Abhombhimok Pavilion, in the Grand Palace, erected during the reign of King Mongkut (Photography courtesy of Naengnoi Suksi).



The Victorious Crown insignia portrayed on the pediment of Chinese influenced monasteries in Bangkok built during the reign of King Mongkut (Photography courtesy of Naengnoi Suksi).



Being the early Western influenced architecture erected in the Grand Palace during the reign of King Mongkut, Aphinaonivej Complex consisted of various structures including Phra Thinang Anantasamakhom, the royal audience hall which the king granted audience to foreign diplomats. The complex was torn down in the reign of King Chulalongkorn because of its deterioration (Photography courtesy of Naengnoi Suksi).

King Mongkut's complex personality as an intellectual, traditional and innovative man was expressed through numerous attires. The king sought for new ideas and knowledge from Western countries including China, the traditional power in Asia (Photography courtesy of Naengnoi Suksi).

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Academic and Administrative Experiences

- Vice Chairman of Travel Industry Management Division at Mahidol University International College, Mahidol University.
- Head of Tourism and Hospitality Management Program (International Program), Rangsit University's School of Hospitality Industry, Bangkok (January 1999 - Sep 2000).
- Guest speaker at United Nations ESCAP, Ramkhamhang University, Walailak University, and Chankasem Rajabhat University.

Selective Consultancy Services

- Member of the Approval Committee for a Bachelor's degree in Tourism and Hospitality Management, Rangsit University, since 2001.
- Working Member, the Curriculum Development Committee for Ecotourism, Baan Somdej Rajabhat University, 2005.
- Working Member, the Curriculum Development Committee for International Hospitality Program, Payub University, 2002.
- Working Member, the Scholarship Selection Committee for Tourism and Hospitality Management, Office of the Civil Service Commission, 2002.

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