

# University of Cincinnati

Date: 12/10/2019

I, **Namtip Yamali**, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Architecture.

It is entitled:

**Exotic Settlements through Compromise: The Interpretation of the Western Diplomatic Compounds in Siam, 1855 to WW II**

Student's name: **Namtip Yamali**

This work and its defense approved by:

Committee chair: Aarati Kanekar, Ph.D.

Committee member: Edson Roy Cabalfin, Ph.D.

Committee member: Rebecca Williamson, Ph.D.



36476





**Exotic Settlements through Compromise:  
The Interpretation of the Western Diplomatic Compounds in  
Siam, 1855 to WW II**

A dissertation submitted to the  
Graduate School  
of the University of Cincinnati  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the School of Architecture and Interior Design  
of the College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning

by

Namtip Yamali

B.Arch. Chulalongkorn University  
M.Sc. University College London

2020

Committee Chair: Aarati Kanekar, Ph.D.  
Committee: Edson Cabalfin, Ph.D.  
Rebecca Williamson, Ph.D.

ProQuest Number:28107978

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent on the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 28107978

Published by ProQuest LLC (2020). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All Rights Reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code  
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC  
789 East Eisenhower Parkway  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

## Abstract

The dissertation examines the socio-political relationships between Siam<sup>1</sup> and Western countries from 1855 to the end of the Second World War through the interpretation of the diplomatic compounds of Britain, France, and the United States in Bangkok in order to reveal the actual circumstances of the exceptional relationships between Siam and Western nations during the colonial era. These three nations were selected for the study as they were the first three to establish their consulates in Siam after the signing of the Anglo-Siamese treaty, called the Bowring Treaty, in 1855 which opened the country to the world system for the first time. In addition, they were also the most influential nations in Siam during the period of study. At the time, Siam encountered the increasing Western influences in the region. With this awareness, the Siamese king did much to encourage the growth of interaction with the outside world by giving Western countries the extraterritoriality and the right to erect their consulates in the kingdom. The increasing interaction, at the same time, led to Western encroachment on Siamese territory. However, Siam was the only country in Southeast Asia that retained its independent status.

This study does not study only the general terms of the history such as the political, administrative, economic, religious, educational or cultural institutions, but

---

<sup>1</sup> "Siam" was the former name of what today is called "Thailand". The country's name changed on June 24, 1939. "Siamese", which is used to refer to the natives or inhabitants of Siam, was then replaced by "Thai". Although this dissertation covers the period both before and after the change of the country's name (1855 - WWII), uses "Siam" as the name of the country and "Siamese" to refer to the people throughout the entire study due to the fact that the majority of the period discussed is before 1939.

also the coordination of these terms with the history of Western diplomatic properties in Siam. Instead of looking at the architectures of diplomacy in terms of iconicity by analyzing only their appearances, this dissertation also interprets them as the entire process of the development of the international relations. Apart from the architectural elements, this study examines them through the spatial arrangement of the compound, the connection to the surrounding contexts, the acquisition of the properties, and their maintenance and renovations. The correlation between the history of the diplomatic compounds and the history of international relations between Siam and Western countries is finally illustrated as a manifestation of the Western perception towards Siam, and vice versa.



## Acknowledgements

This dissertation could not have been completed without the kind support of many generous people. I am deeply indebted to my committee chair, Professor Aarati Kanekar, whose greatest support, guidance, and critical comments brought this work in shape. I also owe special gratitude to my committee, Professor Edson Cabalfin, for his advice and inspiration since the very beginning of PhD program; and Professor Rebecca Williamson for her thoughtful critiques.

I would like to thank University of Cincinnati for granting me the University Graduate Scholarship and the Graduate Assistantship which made my PhD study possible. I am grateful to the faculty of College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning, University of Cincinnati for deep knowledge and support that enriched this work. My heartfelt thanks go to my classmates from the PhD program whose multiplicity of backgrounds expanded my knowledge of the world. I would also like to thank my Thai friends in Cincinnati for their friendships and helps. I am particularly grateful to Nicha Tantivess who always shared ideas, resources, and PhD life experience with me. Special thank goes to Apipa Wanasathop for making my life in Cincinnati entertaining and enjoyable.

In Thailand, I am greatly indebted to my dear friends, Lha and Taew, who helped me in every way, apart from research matters, to get my work done. I would also like to thank my Professor, Rachaporn Choochuey, for her critical comments at the last minute of conducting dissertation.

Lastly, my deepest love and gratitude go to my mom and dad, who have been with me at every stage of my success, for their unconditional love and care. I sincerely thank my dear sister and her family who helped and supported me in every way, and made my stay in the United States a very happy one.

## Table of Contents

<b>Abstract</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>List of Figures</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>Chapter</b>	
<b>1. Introduction</b>	
<b>1.1. Purpose of the Study</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1.2. Conceptual Frameworks</b>	<b>8</b>
1.2.1. Architecture as Representation of Culture, Society, and Power	9
1.2.2. The Concepts of 'Orientalism' and 'Occidentalism'	15
1.2.3. Imagined Communities and Siam's Nationalism	18
<b>1.3. Research Methodology</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>1.4. Structure of the Dissertation</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>2. Historical Background of Siam</b>	
<b>2.1. Bangkok before the Bowring Treaty</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>2.2. The Processes of Modernization, 1855-1910</b>	<b>38</b>
2.2.1. Introducing the Western World to Siamese Masses	
• King Mongkut (1851-1868)	39
• Murals in Wat Bawon Niwet, Wat Barom Niwat	42



2.2.2. Exhibiting National Prestige	
• King Chulalongkorn (1868-1910)	60
• The King’s Voyage to Europe, 1897	64
2.2.3. The Growth of Bangkok during the Period Modernization, 1855-1910	73
<b>2.3. The Rise of Nationalism and Refashioning the National Culture,</b>	
<b>1910-WW II</b>	<b>91</b>
2.3.1. Responses to the Uncertainty of Western Influences	
• King Vajiravudh (1910-1925)	92
• Royal National Building: Wild Tigers	95
2.3.2. Remaking the Nation	
• The Political Revolution	102
• Siamese Cultural Mandates	106
2.3.3. The Growth of Bangkok during 1910 - WW II	113
<b>3. Siamese International Relations with the West</b>	
<b>3.1. Siamese International Relations before the Bowring Treaty</b>	<b>124</b>
<b>3.2 Siamese International Relations, 1855-1910</b>	<b>137</b>
3.2.1. Opening the Kingdom to the Outside World: The Signing of the Bowring Treaty in 1855	139
3.2.2. The Struggle for Independence	144
• Competing for Mightiness: Relations between Britain and France	147
• The Siamese Question in the North	151
• The Siamese Question in the South	154

• The Paknam Incident of 1893	157
<b>3.3. Entering the World Stage: Siam during 1910 - WW II</b>	<b>163</b>
3.3.1. The Second World War	164
<b>4. The Interpretations of Siamese International Relationships with the Three Powers</b>	
<b>4.1. Siamese Relationships with Britain</b>	
4.1.1. High-priced Friendships: Siamese Relationships with Britain, 1855-1910	170
4.1.2. The Siamese Relations with Britain during 1910 - WW II	177
4.1.3. The Products of Diplomacy and the Processes of Compromise: The Biggest Plot Acquirement	
• Land Allotment and Negotiation	179
• Spatial Arrangements, Adaptations and Construction of the Compounds	192
• The Architecture and Representation of Diplomacy	208
4.1.4. Summaries	220
<b>4.2. Siamese Relationships with the United States</b>	
4.2.1. The Loosely Peaceful Relations: Siamese Relationships with the United States, 1855-1910	225
4.2.2. The Siamese Relations with the United States during 1910-WW II	233
4.2.3. The Products of Diplomacy and the Processes of Compromise: A Much Finer Leap at the End	
• Land Allotment and Negotiation	238

• Spatial Arrangements, Adaptations and Construction of the Compounds	251
• The Architecture and Representation of Diplomacy	259
4.2.4. Summaries	275
<b>4.3. Siamese Relationships with France</b>	
4.3.1. The Ravenous-desire Friend: Siamese Relationships with France General Relations, 1855-1910	279
4.3.2. Siamese Relationships with France during 1910-WW II	281
4.3.3. The Products of Diplomacy and the Processes of Compromise: Remaining in the Same Place at Last	
• Land Allotment and Negotiation	285
• Spatial Arrangements, Adaptations and Construction of the Compounds	299
• The Architecture and Representation of Diplomacy	302
4.3.4. Summaries	311
<b>5. Conclusions</b>	<b>314</b>
5.1. Domestic Origins	315
5.2. International Factors	321
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>331</b>

## List of Figures

### Chapter 2

Figure 2-1: The original Bangkok mandala, 1782-85.	32
Figure 2-2: The Bangkok mandala, 1809.	32
Figure 2-3: Floating house on the river, Bangkok	35
Figure 2-4: The “British factory” of Mr. Hunter in Bangkok	35
Figure 2-5: Siamese roof decorative ornaments	36
Figure 2-6: View of the City of Bangkok in 1822	37
Figure 2-7: The mural in <i>bot</i> of Wat Borom Niwat	46
Figure 2-8: Scenic wallpaper “ <i>Vues d’Amerique du Nord</i> ” (Views of North America)	46
Figure 2-9: The scene of a large junk, sloops, and a steamboat plying the oceans of the mural in Wat Borom Niwat.	47
Figure 2-10: The scene of the “Boston Harbor” from the well-known wallpaper “ <i>Vues d’Amerique du Nord</i> ” (Views of North America)	47
Figure 2-11: The scene of jockeys training horses in the Wat Bowon Niwet mural, and the scene of flat-racing from scenic wallpaper “ <i>Courses des Chevaux</i> ”	48
Figure 2-12: The jockeys training horses scene in Wat Borom Niwat, and the scene from scenic wallpaper, “ <i>La Guerre de l’indépendance Américaine</i> ” (War of American Independence).	49
Figure 2-13: A floor plan with flattened walls of <i>bot</i> in Wat Bowon Niwet	51
Figure 2-14: A floor plan with flattened walls of <i>bot</i> in Wat Borom Niwat	52

Figure 2-15: The mural scene of a physician prescribing drugs for sick people in Wat Borom Niwat.	54
Figure 2-16: The mural scene of the forgiver in Wat Bowon Niwet with a highlight of the scene depicting a slave at the entrance kneeling down to thank a Christian priest.	56
Figure 2-17: The scene of a man pointing the way to a happy town in Wat Bowon.	57
Figure 2-18: The scene of a man pointing the way to a happy town in Wat Borom Niwat.	58
Figure 2-19: The scene of Jockeys training horses	59
Figure 2-20: The King of Siam in London, Reception of His Majesty by the Duke of Cambridge at Victoria Station.	66
Figure 2-21: The Siamese Embassy in London giving a banquet in honor of His Majesty King Chulalongkorn	66
Figure 2-22: The picture of King Chulalongkorn published on the cover of <i>Le Petit Journal</i>	71
Figure 2-23: The picture of King Chulalongkorn and Tsar Nicholas II	71
Figure 2-24: Bangkok map, 1902.	76
Figure 2-25: Charoen Krung Road, 1890s	78
Figure 2-26: Maps showing the expansion of Bangkok urban area, extracted from Bangkok Map 1820, and 1910	79
Figure 2-27: Bangkok map, 1910	86

Figure 2-28: Dusit Palace	87
Figure 2-29: Aerial view of Dusit Park	87
Figure 2-30: Wimanmek Mansion, the King's residence, Dusit Park, Bangkok, 1900	88
Figure 2-31: A View of the Inner Section of Ratchadamnoen Avenue	88
Figure 2-32: Members of the royal family displayed their new automobiles in a cavalcade along Ratchadamnoen Avenue, 1905	90
Figure 2-33: Tramways on Ratchadamnoen Road, 1911.	90
Figure 2-34: King Vajiravudh with the Wild Tigers corps	100
Figure 2-35: Poster showing "DO" and "DON'T" for appropriated Thai culture	111
Figure 2-36: Aerial view showing residential precinct of Sathorn road, 1946.	115
Figure 2-37: Aerial view of Lumpini Park	116
Figure 2-38: Bangkok map showing some new development projects, 1945	117
Figure 2-39: Maha Chulalongkorn Building, Chulalongkorn University.	118
Figure 2-40: Victory Monument, 1987	121
Figure 2-41: Rachadamnoen Avenue with Democracy Monument, 1949	121

### Chapter 3

Figure 3-1: Map of Siamese lost territories to Britain and France during 1855-1910.	150
---	-----

## Chapter 4

Figure 4-1: Reception of the Ambassadors from the King of Siam, 1857	174
Figure 4-2: Map showing locations and approximate size of the consulate compounds of Britain, the United States, and France in Bangkok	184
Figure 4-3: Figure 4-3: Partial map of Bangkok 1945 showing locations of the British compounds	188
Figure 4-4: Partial map of Bangkok 1981 showing the portions of the British compound that had been sold in two phases.	191
Figure 4-5: The layout of the British Compound in 1895	194
Figure 4-6: British Consulate complex viewed from the river, 1867	195
Figure 4-7: The minister's residence viewed from within the compound, late 1890s.	197
Figure 4-8: The Seated Queen Victoria statue in front of entrance gate	198
Figure 4-9: The War Memorial behind the main gate, 1920	201
Figure 4-10: Center of the compound with War Memorial and Queen Victoria statue at each end of the main street, and the minister's residence behind, 1930s.	201
Figure 4-11: Site plan of the British Legation as executed, 1924	202
Figure 4-12: Guard's Memorial	203
Figure 4-13: Map of St James's Park, London	203
Figure 4-14: The residence with the flagstaff and river behind, late 1890s.	212
Figure 4-15: The gate lodge located between jetty and the residence, 1907.	212
Figure 4-16: The harmonious design of buildings in the British compound, 1865	213

Figure 4-17: The British Consular office, 1907	213
Figure 4-18: Seated Queen Victoria statue in front of the road entrance of the compound.	214
Figure 4-19: Ground floor plan of the minister's residence, 1924.	216
Figure 4-20: The minister's residence with the repetitive pattern.	217
Figure 4-21: The front facade of the Consul General building	218
Figure 4-22: The front of the office building, late 1920s	219
Figure 4-23: The demolition of the British Embassy, 2019	220
Figure 4-24: Partial Bangkok Maps of 1888 showing the American consulate with one main building within the compound	252
Figure 4-25: Partial Bangkok Maps of 1910 showing no expansion of the American consulate	252
Figure 4-26: The building arrangement of the United States compound on Sathorn Road.	254
Figure 4-27: Legation Chancery and residence.	255
Figure 4-28: Consulate General. Office and residence of principal officer.	255
Figure 4-29: The Bailey Estate viewed from the front gate	257
Figure 4-30: The Bailey Estate viewed within the compound	257
Figure 4-31: Map showing locations of the American minister's residence, and the American Legation.	258
Figure 4-32: House of Rev. Mattoon in Bangkok, 1864	260
Figure 4-33: The United States Legation, Bangkok, 1895	261



Figure 4-34: Residence of the American Minister in Bangkok	262
Figure 4-35: Legation Chancery and residence. Acquired by United States Government in 1928.	265
Figure 4-36: Consulate General. Office and residence of principal officer. Acquired by United States Government in 1920.	265
Figure 4-37: New residential developments of Sathorn Road, 1946	266
Figure 4-38: Elevated veranda of the residence having a driveway passing below.	268
Figure 4-39: Living room with brown teak wainscoting and white wooden fretwork, 1915	268
Figure 4-40: Dining room with brown teak wainscoting and white wooden fretwork, 1915	269
Figure 4-41: Decorative front gable of the residence	272
Figure 4-42: Broken arch with gargoyle-like base	272
Figure 4-43: Similar pattern of the gallery's balustrade and the fretwork inside the house.	273
Figure 4-44: White exterior with green shutters of the CMR, and all-white interior of the dining room, 2017	275
Figure 4-45: Picture of the French gunboat anchored in front of the French legation, and picture of the French legation published in French newspaper	289
Figure 4-46: Picture of the French gunboat anchored in front of the French legation, Bangkok in French newspaper	290

Figure 4-47: Partial map of Bangkok 1945 showing locations of diplomatic properties of Britain, the United States, and France.	298
Figure 4-48: A rough master plan of the French diplomatic compound showing the location of the new chancery.	300
Figure 4-49: Back of the Chancery Building viewed from Soi Rongparsi	301
Figure 4-50: The French Consulate in Bangkok, 1866	306
Figure 4-51: The French Consulate in Bangkok, after renovation, 1893.	306
Figure 4-52: Architectural details: flowered-square balustrades, Romanesque arches and Doric pilasters	307
Figure 4-53: The new reception-dining room extended from the residence, constructed in 1901	309
Figure 4-54: The French Chancery viewed from within the compound, 1930.	309

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

My first interest in studying Siamese<sup>1</sup> international relations with Western countries through architectural representation was during my PhD study while brainstorming a research topic for my “Advanced Theory Seminar” class. I found pictures of murals in *Wat<sup>2</sup> Bawon Niwet* and *Wat Barom Niwat*, which have unusual representations in terms of figures and elements depicted in the scene and their arrangement. They are distinctly different from the traditional Siamese murals that I had ever seen before. Taking a closer look at the murals, one sees that the people and architecture in the scenes of the murals are Western. These raised a few questions why did these old murals (more than 150 years old) have such figures and architecture? What are ideas behind the paintings? What is the intention to create a new style of Siamese mural? What is the designer trying to communicate?

My research revealed that these murals were painted by an eminent monk-artist, Khrua In Khong, under the command of King Mongkut (1851-1910). One of the reasons these murals have Western people and Western architecture in the scene was that the king wanted to make ordinary Siamese acquaint with Western people and

---

<sup>1</sup> "Siam" was the former name of what today is called "Thailand". The country's name changed on June 24, 1939. "Siamese", which is used to refer to the natives or inhabitants of Siam, was then replaced by "Thai". Although this dissertation covers the period both before and after the change of the country's name (1855 - WWII), uses "Siam" as the name of the country and "Siamese" to refer to the people throughout the entire study due to the fact that the majority of the period discussed is before 1939.

<sup>2</sup> *Wat* is Buddhist temple in Thai language.

ideas. The selected elements in the mural presented the king's reformatory visions to modernize the country in response to the increase of Western influence in the region, as well as in Siam itself. They, in fact, have much deeper meanings which will be discussed in Chapter 2: *The Processes of Modernization*. My research concluded that there are many more aspects to be learned about. Besides the king's impression of the West, what was the Western impression of Siam? What were the actual circumstances of the relationships between Siam and the Western countries during the period that these murals were created that informed such impressions? Is there any other medium besides the murals that can be interpreted in this regard? These questions formed my next objectives of study.

I came to the realization that in order to have a better understanding, the bigger picture needed to be studied and interpreted. Rather than looking merely through the general terms of history such as the political, administrative, economic, religious, educational or cultural institutions, my analysis would be more nuanced. To me, what is important in understanding historical events, in addition to those mentioned terms, is to have some idea of the general ambiance of the events and the perception of the people on the scene while these events were taking place in tandem with the progress of the history. Thus, the methodology that best fits my research is to interpret the history through architecture because it is the lasting historical evidence suggesting a series of transpositions. It is also both process and product of planning, designing, constructing and living which involves users, designers and patrons that give meanings to architecture. Due to my interest in Siamese international relations with Western

countries, the diplomatic properties of the Westerners in Siam are certainly one of the best resources to be investigated.

Based on the history of Siamese international relations, the research begins with the signing of the Anglo-Siamese treaty, called the Bowring Treaty in 1855, which was signed during the reign of King Mongkut. At that time, Siam opened itself to the world system for the first time. The treaty became a model of later Siamese treaties with other countries, in which the United States and France were the second and the third ones respectively. As a result, the number of Westerners coming to Siam significantly increased compared to the previous reigns. The similar privileges that these nations received based on the treaties was King Mongkut's purposeful intention in order to balance the powers of these colonizers as a way to stabilize Siamese sovereignty.<sup>3</sup> With King Mongkut's awareness of the Western Powers and how their influences would increase in the future, the king started to modernize the country in order to survive Western aggressions in the region during that time. He adapted Western ideas and their advancements and reformed many aspects to develop the country. The king also did much to encourage the growth of interaction with the outside world by giving them extraterritoriality and the right to erect their consulates in the kingdom after the Consulate of Portugal, the first diplomatic compound in Siam was established in 1820.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Koompong Noobanjong, *"Power, Identity, and the Rise of Modern Architecture: From Siam to Thailand"* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Colorado, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> The Consulate of Portugal in Bangkok was established in 1820 due to the long history of relationships with Siam since 1511 when Ayutthaya was the capital of the country. The land was originally given to build the Portuguese factory. In Damrong Rajanubhab, "The Introduction of Western Culture in Siam," *Journal of the Siam Society* 20 (1927): 93-94.

The diplomatic properties of Britain, the United States, and France in Bangkok are selected as the subjects of my dissertation, since they are the first three to be established in the kingdom after the signing of the Bowring Treaty. In addition, these three nations are also the most influential ones in Siam during the selected period of study. However, their relations with Siam at that time are different depending on their intentions for coming to Siam, their perception of the country, and vice versa. These factors are represented through the architectures of diplomacy, as well as the history of their constructions. The relocation of these properties and their renovations further illustrate the actual circumstances and specific events that take place as the relationships progress. With this realization, the end of the Second World War is another turning point in the history of Siamese international relations and of the history of these diplomatic properties. The United States, for example, became dominant in the post-war period of Siam which was reflected through the last move of the American embassy to a much finer place of residence in Bangkok, and which has served the American diplomacy until the present time. The end of the war, therefore, becomes the ending period of my research. The entire period of study is between 1855 to the end of WW II, which serves as an important duration of time to demonstrate the insecure situations of the Siamese relations with the three Western Powers during the colonial period in the region, as well as of the diplomatic properties.

Instead of looking at the architectures of diplomacy in terms of iconicity by analyzing only their appearances, this dissertation also interprets them through the history of construction and renovation in parallel to the entire process of the

development of the international relations. In addition to the architectural elements, this study examines these diplomatic architectures through the spatial arrangement of the compound, the connection to the surrounding contexts, the acquisition of the properties, and their maintenance, expansion and renovations. Furthermore, the dissertation does not study only the general terms of the history such as the political, administrative, economic, religious, educational or cultural institutions, but also the coordination of these terms with the history of Western diplomatic properties in Siam. The diplomatic compounds are, I argue, a manifestation of the Western perception towards Siam, and vice versa. These properties were constructed through the compromise between the host nation and the Western country to establish its diplomacy. In this case, the actual circumstances of their relationships will be revealed and an attempt to answer the following specific questions:

1. What was the Western perception of Siam during the studied period and what was the Siamese perception of the West?
2. How did the interactions between Siamese and Westerners, and among the Westerners themselves affect these diplomatic properties and the built environment in Bangkok? Conversely, how did these built environments influence their relationships?
3. How were the physical forms and spatial arrangements of Western diplomatic compounds in Bangkok manipulated to establish political influence during the colonial period?
4. How did each country represent itself through these architectures?

5. How did these diplomatic compounds acquire their lands in Siam? How were they constructed and maintained?

### **1.1. Purpose of the Study**

The history of the relationships between Siam and Western countries from 1855 to the Second World War has been widely investigated since the latter half of the twentieth century. What interests the historians of Siamese studies is that it is a period of change and reform that brought Siam into the modern era. This event was a result of the Western colonial influence in Asia, and in the country, both directly and indirectly. Siam, however, was the only nation in Southeast Asia that retained its independent status. Even though the kingdom shared a similar experience with the neighboring colonies and lost some of its territory to the Western Powers, it did not suffer from internal collapse. This exceptional case demonstrates the distinctive relationship between Siam and Western nations and the interaction between them as exhibited through the architecture of diplomacy.

There is very little research on the architecture of Westerners who worked or resided in Siam, not to mention the architecture of diplomacy during the period of study. Most of the studies focus on the architecture of Siamese people that were adapted or transplanted from those of the West or had Western influence during the period of colonization. Contemporary research focuses more on the transformations of architecture and urban form in Siam, especially in Bangkok in this period, as the way Siamese aristocrats exhibited their self-image in order to legitimize their superiority and



political power over the commoners. The architectural transformations were analyzed in relation to the concept of civilization and progress which was indigenized as “*Siwilai*”.<sup>5</sup> The famous works: *The Quest for “Siwilai”: A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam* of Thongchai Winichakul (2000),<sup>6</sup> and the PhD dissertation *Building Siwilai: Transformation of Architecture and Architectural Practice in Siam during the Reign of Rama V, 1868-1910* by Pirasri Povatong (2011) are good examples of such studies.

Chomchon Fusinpaiboon’s (2014) in his PhD dissertation “*Modernisation of Building: The Transplantation of the Concept of Architecture from Europe to Thailand, 1930s–1950s*”<sup>7</sup> further investigates them through the concept of modernity in architecture. To him, the transplantation of Modern Architecture in Siam was a hybrid process created by the Siamese to modernize the traditional concept of building.<sup>8</sup> In his analysis, even though the initial motives of this transnational/transcultural modern architecture in Siam are clearly described, its architectural style overlapped with Siamese architecture that has been directly influenced by Western models. As a result, the terms used to define the style of architecture during this period are ambiguous and unclear. Due to this ambiguity, my dissertation tries to avoid defining the architectural

---

<sup>5</sup> Pirasri Povatong, “*Building Siwilai: Transformation of Architecture and Architectural Practice in Siam during the Reign of Rama V, 1868-1910*” (Doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, 2011), 1.

<sup>6</sup> Thongchai Winichakul, “The Quest for ‘Siwilai: A Geographical Discourse of Civilization Thinking in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Siam” *Journal of Asian Studies* 59, no.3 (2000): 528-549.

<sup>7</sup> Chomchon Fusinpaiboon, “*Modernisation of Building: The Transplantation of the Concept of Architecture from Europe to Thailand, 1930s–1950s*” (Doctoral dissertation, University of Sheffield, 2014)

<sup>8</sup> See Fusinpaiboon, “*Modernisation of Building*”.

style, and goes beyond its definition by elucidating the architecture through its representation and interpretation in relation to the socio-political contexts. More importantly, the existing research is typically written through the Siamese perception. The Western ideas imposed upon the physical form and spatial arrangement is rarely mentioned.

In response to these absences, the diplomatic architecture of Western countries in Bangkok will be examined as the interpretation of the international relations between Siam and Western countries. These subjects of study are not only the architecture of the West in Siam, but also illustrate the Western perception towards Siam, and vice versa.

## **1.2. Conceptual Frameworks**

To investigate the representation of architecture as a physical manifestation of a socio-political relationship between Siam and Western countries, a larger picture of the related accounts needs to be addressed for a thorough understanding of the topic. First, the architecture and the spatial arrangements as representations of culture, society and power will be examined. The interpretations of these physical forms have deeper meanings than what architects, patrons, or the state claim. Lefebvre's *Spatial Triad* suggests an approach to organizational analysis that facilitates the examination of social, physical and mental spaces that provide an integrated view of architecture. Furthermore, the concepts of Orientalism and Occidentalism are also discussed as the socio-political perceptions from both the Western and the Siamese points of view. These perceptions take into account the complex situation of Siam's independence

during the subject period and they particularly help in understanding the interaction and relationship between Siam and Western countries.

The independent status of Siam relates to the notion of Nationalism of both Siam and Western countries, which is one of the influences on their relationships. The diplomatic compound of the West in Siam performs as a representation of the Western country, as well as an 'Imagined Community' of the West in Siam. Even though it is not located in its own country, the diplomatic compound operates as though it is its own national territory. The last part of this research framework will therefore discuss these terms in relation to the Siamese nationalist ideology.

#### 1.2.1. Architecture as Representation of Culture, Society, and Power

The meaning of the architecture and space goes far beyond the interpretation within their own fields of study. The interconnections with other disciplines have been discussed and criticized by political, social, cultural, and geographical disciplines. As such, any singular point of view suggested to a total process of connections would be highly problematic. The search for its meaning involves many implicit ideas which make up a theoretical position. The dissertation argues that architecture is a social, cultural, and political arrangement through which bodies experience conceptual ideas in lived space. Therefore, this section proposes how the meaning of architecture and space connects to the other disciplines.

First, to search for the meaning of architecture within its own field, most analytical tools have their origins in art history, in which style development, articulation,

iconography and perception are examined. The meanings, however, have very little social or cultural context on their own. This traditional analysis, Markus (1993) suggests, was established in the Renaissance post-Vitruvian era, and was elaborated in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France. In the nineteenth century, it was transformed under the influence of German idealism and archeology which was extensively developed in the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>9</sup> For instance, according to Frankl (1914), form has three components: spatial composition; mass and surface; and the effects of light, color and other optical phenomena, in which the combination between them and functions imposed by them give meaning about the world. These three elements refer to the geometry of space, the concrete material, and the changing images with every viewpoint respectively that unite in the mind into a single sensation.<sup>10</sup> To him, designers are the ones who create the meanings which are evoked for everyone who experiences the building. The meanings will therefore, never change, and everyone's understanding about the building will be the same.<sup>11</sup> This ideology leads to the misunderstanding about architecture and space since they have been converted, modified, and used differently over time with regards to the changing society, culture, and political environment. Thus, their meanings have consequently changed. In this case, the socially constructed nature of space has been ignored. What is left is merely Euclidean space in which the philosophical thought treated as an 'absolute' and a 'space

---

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Markus, *Building and Power: Freedom and Control in the Origin of Modern Building Types* (London: Routledge, 1993), 11.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

of reference'.<sup>12</sup> The interaction between spaces and our lived experiences, which gives meaning to space, is neglected.

For a better understanding of the meanings of space and architecture, the interconnection between the physical form, culture, society, and politics needs to be addressed. This study employs Lefebvre's argument in *The Production of Space* (1991) as a framework. His analysis connects mental space (the space of the philosophers) to actual space (the physical and social spheres in which we live). It suggests space is fundamental to our lived experience of the world. We conceive and move it from the realm of the abstract to become the foundation of our engagement with the world. To him, every experience is comprised of three interrelated aspects of space: *Spatial practice* (the perceived space), *Representations of space* (the conceived space), and *Representational space* (the lived space). These are what Lefebvre called a "spatial triad". They are "the three moments of social space"<sup>13</sup> that are inseparable and overlap one another.

*Spatial practice* embraces "production and reproduction, and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation."<sup>14</sup> It occurs within the material space of experience and perception. It enables individuals to participate effectively in a spatial event. In this sense, buildings are not just material spaces or artifacts, but transformations of space through objects.<sup>15</sup> According to Hillier and

---

<sup>12</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 285.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p.40.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p.33.

<sup>15</sup> Bill Hillier, and Julienne Hanson, *The social Logic of Space* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 1.

Hanson (1984), “buildings create and order the empty volumes of space resulting from that object into pattern.”<sup>16</sup> The ordering of space is about the ordering of relations between people.<sup>17</sup> Architecture, in this sense, is what Markus (1987) calls “classifying devices” which reproduce such social classes through the framing of social relations, where form, space, and function demonstrate both power and bond relations. Society, consequently, enters into the very nature and form of buildings. We are then able to recognize society by a certain form.<sup>18</sup>

*Representations of space*, according to Lefebvre, are the dominant spaces in society and the conceptualized space constructed out of symbols, codifications and abstract representations.<sup>19</sup> In other words, they are spaces as they were conceived and represented. They are the manifestations of our mental constructs – the spaces of our rational and abstract understandings that provide a concrete guideline for how thought can become action. It is this aspect that codifies epistemological approaches to understanding, against which claims of knowledge and truth are evaluated. Architects, urban designers, and patrons play a crucial role in this regard. They have manipulated the design and the built environment to promote their ideas and legitimize their powers, whether intentionally or unintentionally. To Vale (1992), the design of architecture “is not some value-neutral aesthetic applied to efforts at urban

---

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>18</sup> Thomas Markus, “Buildings as Classifying Devices,” *Environment and Planning* 14 (1987): 30-31.

<sup>19</sup> Henri Lefèbvre, *The Production of Space*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 38-39.

development but is, instead, an integral part of the motives driving that development.”<sup>20</sup>

Lastly, *Representational space* is the space of lived experience, “as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of ‘inhabitants’ and ‘users’.”<sup>21</sup> In other words, it is the space that overlays physical space as it is lived in the course of everyday life. As such, there are “the lived spaces of sensations, the imagination, emotions, and meanings that were incorporated into daily life.”<sup>22</sup> This kind of space embraces the partiality of representation and knowledge systems. Its unique character is achieved in conjunction with, while not being completely constrained by, the structures of *Spatial practices* and *Representations of space* that have developed to provide the necessary cohesion for successful social interaction.

In the case of architectures in Siam, for instance, their meanings are often overlooked by conventional studies. One of the first research projects on this issue was the PhD dissertation by Noobanjong (2003). It examines the evolution of Western and Modern architecture in Siam and demonstrates “how various architectural ideas have contributed to the physical design and spatial configuration of places associated with negotiation and allocation of political power.”<sup>23</sup> The case studies are throne halls, parliaments, and government and civic buildings in Siam since the 1850s. By focusing on the political power in particular, the relationships between architecture, society, and

---

<sup>20</sup> Lawrence J. Vale, *Architecture, power, and national identity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), viii.

<sup>21</sup> Henri Lefèbvre, *The Production of Space*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 39.

<sup>22</sup> Henri Lefèbvre, *The Production of Space*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 33, 38-39.

<sup>23</sup> Koompong Noobanjong, “*Power, Identity, and the Rise of Modern Architecture: From Siam to Thailand*” (Doctoral dissertation, University of Colorado, Denver, 2003), iv.

culture, are hardly mentioned. The lived experience, in this sense, has been disregarded. Even though these cases were influenced by Western architecture, the cases in his research are strictly Siamese architectures, thus their interpretations are derived from an only Siamese point of view.

To fill this gap, this dissertation examines the cases that could demonstrate the interaction between the Siamese and Westerners. The aforementioned discourses have shed light on a wide range of possibilities in investigating architecture through society, culture, and power. At the same time, they affirm the way to study social, cultural, and political ideas through architecture. Architectures, according to King (1980), are consequences of social needs in which they accommodate a variety of functions – economic, social, political, religious and cultural.<sup>24</sup> Society's ideas, including social organization, its distribution of resources and authority, its activities, and the beliefs and values of any one period of time, dominate their appearance, size, location and form. These are not simply governed by climate, material, or topography.<sup>25</sup>

Thus, the interpretation of architecture goes far beyond what we visually perceive. It is a complex and complicated process. Although Lefèbvre's "spatial triad" seems abstract, its implications can be used as an analytical tool for my analysis to consider space as a resource to investigate the society and the spatial events. Accordingly, the key part of my analysis, in Chapter 4, will apply the concept of "spatial triad" to the interpretation the diplomatic compounds in regard to these three matters:

---

<sup>24</sup> Anthony King, *Buildings and Society: Essays on the Social Development of the Built Environment* (London: Routledge, 1980), 1.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.



Land Allotment and Negotiation; Spatial Arrangement, Adaptation and Construction of the Compounds; and Architecture and Representation of Diplomacy.

### 1.2.2. The Concepts of 'Orientalism' and 'Occidentalism'

As mentioned earlier, although the country was able to maintain its independence, Siam could not escape the nineteenth-century Western colonial influences imposed on its neighboring countries. It voluntarily accepted Western superiority of knowledge and technology, which is evident by the signing of the Bowring Treaty with Great Britain in the mid-nineteenth century, opening the nation to the West. According to Winichakul (1994), Siam had to redefine the country's geographical boundaries and geo-body<sup>26</sup> due to the approaching colonial powers of the West.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, the binary concept of East (Siam) and West has come to be defined as what has been considered 'Thai' [Siam] or 'Thainess' as the resistance to something 'Western' in order to retain what is believed to be Siamese/ Thai identity. In other words, it refers to the concept of 'we-self' vs. 'others'.<sup>28</sup> This concept of binary opposition originally demonstrates the Eurocentric construction of this term where it separates the Occident from the Orient. *Orientalism* (1979) by Edward Said is a pioneer work of this discourse. Rather than illustrating a real discourse about the Orient, this concept is a human production, to distinguish difference and created as a sign of

---

<sup>26</sup> The concept of geo-body refers to a territory and its related values and practices. It is 'discursively created.' See more in Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994).

<sup>27</sup> Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994).

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

European power over the Orient.<sup>29</sup> To him, this idea is an integral part of European material civilization and culture. Said calls the operation of this idea ‘imaginative geography’, which describes not only representations of other places – peoples, landscapes and cultures – but also the ways in which these representations project the desires, fantasies and preconceptions of their authors and the power between them and their subjects.<sup>30</sup> It was used as a strategy to claim the West’s power over its colonized cities. According to *Orientalism*, imperialism shaped the discourse of both academic studies and Western literature by creating stereotypes of the non-Western world.

This postcolonial discourse has only recently been proposed to apply to Siamese/Thai studies because the word ‘colonial’ explicitly contradicts the notion that Siam is the only nation in Southeast Asia that was never colonized. The country, however, did experience the colonial condition. Accordingly, this situation is defined as ‘semicolonial’, a popular term for Thai Maoists of the 1950s, as ‘crypto-colonial’, the word used by Michael Herzfeld in Siamese/Thai modernity discourses, or as ‘hybrid’, the concept favored by Thongchai Winichakul and Peter Jackson.<sup>31</sup>

The distinctive relationship between Siam and Western countries according to Siam’s independence during the period of colonialism in the region and the concept of ‘Occidentalism’ gives another perspective that could help explain the unique Siamese situation. Pattana Kitiarsa, a prominent Siamese scholar, suggests that this concept is

---

<sup>29</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 6.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Chakrabarty, Dipesh, “Forward: The Names and Repetitions of Postcolonial History,” in *The Ambiguous Allure of the West: Traces of the Colonial in Thailand*, ed. Rachel V. Harrison, Peter A. Jackson (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010), ix.

not simply a reversal of Western Orientalist logic and power/knowledge relations, but the historically and culturally rooted system of epistemological tactics employed by Siam's rulers and intellectual elites to turn Western 'Otherness' into ambiguous objects of those elites' desires to be modern and civilized.<sup>32</sup> He then refers to the works of Davisakd Puaksom, one of the first Siamese historians to deal with Occidentalism, that "The Thai elites have historically constructed images of their non-Siamese 'Others' in order to "self-consciously insist that 'We' - Siam are not uncivilized or barbaric."<sup>33</sup> This, as suggested by Rachel V. Harrison, was the way in which "an auto-, or crypto-colonizing elite voluntarily adopted and adapted strategies of power from the West" which was "a dominant political and cultural force in the region"<sup>34</sup> at that time. By doing so, they gained favor and advantage. This idea of adaptation has also been supported by other non-Siamese scholars such as Fred Riggs (1966) and Peleggi (2002), in the way it was a transformation in the total polity and displayed cultural civility in comparison to Western standards, and at the same time functioned as local legitimization, shoring up both the real and the symbolic powers of the Siamese elite.<sup>35</sup>

This concept of 'Orientalism' and 'Occidentalism' therefore helps shape the idea of my dissertation to analyze the actual circumstances of the relationships between the

---

<sup>32</sup> Pattana Kitiarsa, "An Ambiguous Intimacy: Farang as Siamese Occidentalism," in *The Ambiguous Allure of the West: Traces of the Colonial in Thailand*, ed. Rachel V. Harrison, Peter A. Jackson, 58-59.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>34</sup> Rachel V. Harrison, "The Allure of Ambiguity: The "West" and the Making of Thai Identities," in *The Ambiguous Allure of the West: Traces of the Colonial in Thailand*, ed. Rachel V. Harrison, Peter A. Jackson, 16.

<sup>35</sup> Fred W. Riggs, *Thailand: The Modernization of a Bureaucratic Polity* (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1966); Maurizio Peleggi, *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002).

Western nations and Siam during the period of colonization in the region through their interactions and the impressions towards each other.

### 1.2.3. Imagined Communities and Siam's Nationalism

In the case of Siam, according to Thongchai Winichakul, the notion of the Siamese nation came into being in the late nineteenth century, especially during the Paknam incident of 1893 when the Siamese ruling elite realized the importance of maps since the French underlined their claim to territory with the help of maps. Prior to this, Siam was a non-bounded kingdom. Overlapping or multiple sovereignties were common in Siam, by which small states paid tribute to two or more overlords and yet they remained sovereign.<sup>36</sup> There was then the difference of Siamese concepts of sovereignty and Western notions of nationhood.

Until the period of European imperialism in the region, mapping was required to define rigid borders of sovereignty and nationhood as a political geography. When the Siamese rulers encountered the West, they realized that mapping was a powerful means of dealing with the issue of boundaries. "They had come to believe that modern geography was the only language the West would hear."<sup>37</sup> The map gave birth to what Winichakul called the 'geo-body' of the Siamese nation, a new entity represented by the image of Siam on it. To Winichakul (1994), "the geo-body of a nation is a man-made

---

<sup>36</sup> Thongchai Winichakul, "Siam Mapped: Making of Thai Nationhood," *The Ecologist* 26, no. 5 (1996). [https://go-gale-com.proxy.libraries.uc.edu/ps/i.do?p=EAIM&u=ucinc\\_main&id=GALE%7CA19226240&v=2.1&it=r&sid=summon](https://go-gale-com.proxy.libraries.uc.edu/ps/i.do?p=EAIM&u=ucinc_main&id=GALE%7CA19226240&v=2.1&it=r&sid=summon)

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

territorial definition which creates effects - by classifying, communicating, and enforcement - on people, things, and relationships.... It is a source of pride, loyalty, love, passion, bias, hatred, reason, unreason. It also generates many other conceptions and practices about nationhood as it combines with other elements of nationhood.”<sup>38</sup>

Nation, in this sense, is imagined.

According to Benedict Anderson in his *Imagined Communities* (2006), the nation is “imagined as limited because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations.”<sup>39</sup> It is imagined because “the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.”<sup>40</sup> To Anderson, nationality, nation-ness, as well as nationalism are, therefore, cultural artifacts of a particular kind. According to Winichakul, the identity of a nation is then the effect of imagining about it, and nationhood is an imagined sphere with no given identity or essence; it is cultural construct.<sup>41</sup>

In this sense, the diplomatic compounds of the West in Siam that were constructed, renovated, and expanded as a representative of Western countries in Siam could be regarded as Imagined Communities, which this dissertation will discuss further.

---

<sup>38</sup> Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 17.

<sup>39</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London; New York: Verso, 2006), 7.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>41</sup> Winichakul, *Siam Mapped*, 14.

According to Siamese nation and nationalism, Anderson and Winichakul gave more importance to the contribution of the West to the development of the Siamese nation and nationalism, both institutionally and ideologically. The geo-body was therefore not a gradual evolution from the indigenous political space to a modern one but was a sudden replacement of the former. The effects of European imperialism in South East Asia were identified as key factors for the creation of the modern nation.<sup>42</sup> Siamese nationalism in this colonial period was then promoted as a 'modern enterprise'<sup>43</sup> project initiated by King Mongkut (1851-1868) and King Chulalongkorn (1868-1910). Therefore, nationalism in Siam is usually regarded as commencing during the reign of King Vajiravudh (1910-1925). Walter Vella (1978) considers King Vajiravudh as the founding father of Siamese nationalism.<sup>44</sup>

However, Andreas Sturm in his dissertation, *The King's Nation: A Study of the Emergence and Development of Nation and Nationalism in Thailand* regards the period under the reigns of King Mongkut and King Chulalongkorn as the period of 'Monarchical nationalism' in Siam in which "the nation is not only tied symbolically to the figure of the king but the king is also the dynamic (sometimes primary) political agent." To him,

---

<sup>42</sup> Andreas Sturm, "The King's Nation: A Study of the Emergence and Development of Nation and Nationalism in Thailand" (Doctoral dissertation, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2006), 15.

<sup>43</sup> Michael Kelly Connors, *Democracy and National Identity in Thailand*. vol. 2 (London; New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 5.

<sup>44</sup> Walter Vella, *Chaiyo- King Vajiravudh and the Development of Thai Nationalism* (Honolulu, 1978), xiii.

monarchical nationalism can also be regarded as a kind of 'cultural nationalism.'<sup>45</sup> King Vajiravudh is, on the other hand, regarded as a catalyst for the change from the dominance of 'monarchical nationalism' to 'political nationalism'.<sup>46</sup>

It is clearly seen that the Siamese nation, as well as its international relations with Western Powers were mainly shaped by the monarchy, even though it was not the sole agent in developing the country. This dissertation focuses on the activities and ideas of the Siamese monarchy in relation to the relationships with Western nations to help interpret the architecture of diplomacy of the Western countries in Siam.

### **1.3. Research Methodology**

The dissertation is chronologically conducted in coordination with a thematic analysis. It is organized by the reigns of the kings of Thailand, which is called by Scott Barme, the "Great Man" theory. To him, it is a one-sided analysis focusing only on the royal elite which would hinder other related aspects.<sup>47</sup> This study, however, keeps the same trajectory because, during the selected period from 1855 until the end of the Second World War, Siamese commoners did not yet have any role in the international relations between Siam and the Western countries, which is the focus of the dissertation. The Siamese leaders, on the other hand, were the harbinger of the

---

<sup>45</sup> Andreas Sturm, *"The King's Nation: A Study of the Emergence and Development of Nation and Nationalism in Thailand"* (Doctoral Dissertation, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2006), 32-33.

<sup>46</sup> Andreas Sturm, *"The King's Nation: A Study of the Emergence and Development of Nation and Nationalism in Thailand"* (Doctoral Dissertation, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2006), 160.

<sup>47</sup> Scott Barme', *Woman, Man, Bangkok: Love, Sex, and Popular Culture in Thailand* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers ,2002), 3.

international interactions, as well as how the nation progressed. Therefore, this research divides the period of study into two parts according to the main concept that the national leaders used to govern the nation, as well as to respond to the Western influences in the country. One is from 1855 when the Anglo-Siamese treaty, the Bowring Treaty, was signed until 1910, when the reign of King Chulalongkorn ended. During this time, Siam was considered to be in a period of modernization and reforms that corresponded to the Western colonial influences in the country. The other period begins when King Vajiravudh succeeded King Chulalongkorn in 1910 until the end of the Second World War, where there was a rise of nationalist ideology.

Besides the chronological order, this research is also thematically organized. This idea derived from the different degrees of interactions between Siam and Western countries during the progress of their international relationships. In this regard, the dissertation is carried out on a case study basis. The specific historical events and the examples of projects initiated by national leaders that best represent the theme of each section are selected and discussed in more detail. The discussion through the examples aims to provide the supportive information to better understand the whole process of these relationships.

The key analysis of the dissertation is the interpretation of the diplomatic compounds of Britain, the United States, and France in Bangkok. They are analyzed through the archival evidence, government records, photographs, newspapers, architectural drawings, memoirs, journals, autobiographies, travel diaries, legal documents, meeting minutes, and previous scholarly studies. For the study of the



French diplomatic compound, this research owes much to the study of the unpublished book *La Residence De France a Bangkok*, which was suggested by the staff at the Embassy of France in Bangkok, Thailand. It is an insightful and comprehensive historical document about the compound. It is a matter of my own linguistic limitations that prevented me from examining the French dimension of this subject from French records. Nonetheless, the French diplomatic compound is examined according to the thematic concerns of this research similar to the other studied compounds.

The other parts of the study, which are examined in correlation to the interpretation of the diplomatic compounds, are the fundamental aspects of the history of Bangkok and the history of Siamese international relations with Western countries. Like the interpretation of the diplomatic compound, these concerns are conducted through the similar methodology and sources, although they elicit different modes of interpretation. Additionally, the study of the settlements of these diplomatic architectures in relation to the surrounding contexts of the development of Bangkok and their spatial arrangements are primarily examined through maps and master plans of the diplomatic compound.

#### **1.4. Structure of the Dissertation**

This dissertation is comprised of five chapters, with the first one introducing and presenting the inspiration of the research leading to the research objectives, research questions, and methodologies for the study. Apart from the introduction and the conclusion, each chapter is chronologically divided into two key periods, where some

chapters also examine the additional period before or after the specific time period of the study in order to emphasize their transitions. Each chapter begins with the period of the signing of the Bowring Treaty in 1855 during the reign of King Mongkut (1855-1868) until the end of the next reign, the period of King Chulalongkorn (1868-1910). The second period of study starts when King Vajiravudh succeeded King Chulalongkorn in 1910 until the end of the Second World War.

**Chapter 2: Historical Background of Siam** consists of three parts according to the chronological order of the study. It starts with *Bangkok before the Bowring Treaty*, which provides the historical background of Bangkok before the specific period of study in order to pave the way for understanding the physical form of the city which serves as the venue of the following parts. It explains the city in the early age where the center was concentrated within the city wall. Outside the wall, people mainly lived along the waterways, the Siamese's main transportation route and source of daily habits. Westerners who came to the city during this period had to adjust their ways of living to resemble the local ones, as well as to conform to the existing conditions of the city.

The second part of this chapter: *The Processes of Modernization* covers the reigns of King Mongkut and King Chulalongkorn, and how the two kings tried to modernize the country. It is divided into three sub-sections. The first one is *Introducing the Western World to the Siamese Masses* where the murals in Wat Bawon Niwet, Wat Barom Niwat are emphasized to illustrate King Mongkut's reformative vision to modernize the country, as well as the responses of Siam to the Western Influences at the beginning of the colonial period. King Chulalongkorn, on the other hand, exhibited

national prestige through his voyage to Europe in 1897. The visions of these two kings led to *The Growth of Bangkok during the Period of Modernization (1855-1910)*. This sub-section illustrates the dramatic change of Bangkok from 1855 to 1910. During this period, Siam faced its most crucial situation due to the colonial intrusion of the West. With the uncertain threat of several colonial Powers, Bangkok was modernized as well as Westernized in every aspect according to the kings' strategies for the country to survive and to retain its independence.

The last part: *The Rise of Nationalism and Refashioning the National Culture* presents the theme of nationalism as the Siamese response to their anxiety about the uncertain threat of the West after territorial disputes with the West seemed to calm down. In this regard, King Vajiravudh initiated the Wild Tigers corps in relation to his ideology of *Royal National Building*. After the Siamese political revolution in 1932, the new political regime led by Phibunsongkram launched the *Siamese Cultural Mandates* project in order to remake the nation. At the end of this part, the growth of Bangkok is again illustrated as the supportive evidence of the city's development which is part of the internal factors that affected the relocation and renovation of the diplomatic compounds. Bangkok at that time is described as a city under development until it met the Western residents' satisfaction regarding facilities. However, Bangkok's urban development was halted during the political revolution in 1932 until the end of the Second World War when the dominant power of the revolutionary group declined.

**Chapter 3: Siamese International Relations** presents the Western perception, as well as that of the Siamese, through their interactions as their relationships progressed.

This chapter also provides the background of the Siamese international relations with the Western Powers before signing the Bowring Treaty in 1855 in order to emphasize the sharp shift in the international relations after the treaty was signed. Siam then opened the kingdom to the outside world which led to Western encroachment on Siamese territory. Due to this Western intrusion, some important evidences were presented to describe Siam's struggle for its independence during the period of colonialism in the region. These examples demonstrate Western perception towards Siam, and vice versa. The last part of this chapter studies the international relations of Siam when it aimed to enter to the world stage by participating in the First and the Second World Wars. Siam eventually became a member of the United Nations and Siamese independence was recognized and guaranteed by all, which was its ultimate goal.

***Chapter 4: The Interpretations of Siamese International Relationships with the Three Powers*** is divided into three sub-chapters according to the three studied nations – Britain, the United States, and France. Each one starts with their relationships with Siam during 1855-1910 followed by the relationships during 1910 - WW II. The next part is *The Products of Diplomacy and the Processes of Compromise* interpreting the diplomatic compounds of the three countries in Bangkok. They are analyzed through three concerns.

First, the *Land Allotment and Negotiation*, presents how each nation acquired Siamese land to establish their diplomatic compound. The different characteristics of Siamese relations with Western countries influenced the location of the diplomatic

compound, the sizes of the land plot they acquired, and the conditions of the property for the diplomatic purposes. The first period of study, from 1855 to 1910, was mainly about the establishment of Western diplomatic compounds in Bangkok and their maintenance, while the second period, from 1910 to the end of the Second World War, was predominantly focused on the idea of relocation.

Second, *Spatial Arrangements, Adaptations and Construction of the Compounds*, analyses how the three Western countries planned, adapted, converted, and used the properties in Bangkok they acquired from the Siamese to fit their diplomatic purposes. The different degrees of relationships between the Western nations and Siam are interpreted through the approach of the compound, the arrangement of the buildings and their connections, the construction and adaptation, the spatial hierarchy within the compound, and the relation to the surrounding context. These fundamental issues demonstrate the interactions between spaces and lived experiences, including the interactions between Westerners and the indigenous Siamese that give meaning to the spaces. The various existing conditions of the compound were another factor affecting the spatial arrangement of the compound. In this case, the matters of purpose-built vs. non-purpose-built compounds play a major role in the analysis.

Lastly, *Architecture and Representation of Diplomacy*, are analyzed through how each nation intentionally manipulated the design and the built environment of the compound to promote the image of the nation and to express its political power nationally and internationally; how these Western nations positioned themselves in the Siamese view, as well as the worldview; and how these diplomatic architectures were

adapted to fit the local context. The building's decorations, the architectural elements, the physical size of architecture, and the harmonious design of the buildings in the compounds are the main concerns to be examined in this analysis. They illustrate the connections between the representations and the relationships between these Western countries and Siam, and among themselves. It argues that the Western nations manipulated their powers and superiorities through these architectural elements. The interpretations are therefore, not only through the architectural fields of study, but also incorporate cultural developments, political statements, social structures, and national impressions. In other words, the architectural meanings are generated through representation. The correlations between these issues and the history of Siamese international relations as well as Bangkok's urban development, demonstrate the entire process of the development of the international relationships in which the Western perception towards the Siamese, and that of the Siamese towards the West, are also illustrated.

**Chapter 5: Conclusions** summarizes and gives critical comments on architecture as a representation of socio-political relationships between Siam, Britain, the United States, and France during the period of the signing of the Bowring Treaty in 1855 to the end of the Second World War. It compares the analysis of the diplomatic compounds of the three studied nations in Bangkok in relation to the coordination of the history of the international relations with the history of the diplomatic compounds. The interpretations of the architecture of Western diplomacy in Bangkok reveals the actual circumstances of the exceptional relationships between Siam, who was the only nation

in Southeast Asia to retain its independent status, and the Western countries, who threatened that exceptional status of Siam. As the diplomatic compounds were established through the compromise and negotiations between the country that post their representatives and the host country, the conclusions are divided into two major concerns. The first one is the internal factors of the host country which affected the representations of the architecture of diplomacy, as well as the international relationships. The other one is the influences from the other parties who exotically settled in the host country.

## Chapter 2

### Historical Background of Siam

#### 2.1. Bangkok before the Bowring Treaty

Bangkok was established as the new capital city of Siam in 1782 by King Phraphutthayotfa Chulalok (Rama I), the first king of the Chakri dynasty which has been the reigning dynasty up to the present king, King Rama X. Prior to moving the capital to Bangkok, the former capitals were Sukhothai (1238-1351), Ayutthaya (1351-1767) and Thonburi (1767-1782), respectively. During the periods of these other capitals, Bangkok was a fishing village and small trading port. The last move of the capital was the relocation from the opposite side of Chao Phraya River – Thonburi on the east bank, to Bangkok on the west bank of the river.

The city's name, Bangkok, appears to come from *bang*, meaning a riverbank village, and *kok* or *makok*, a wild olive or bitter plum.<sup>1</sup> In the early years of the Bangkok capital-period, the city was mainly concentrated within the area of the city walls with the palace in the center. The royal seat was replicated in the realm of the pivotal place of Mount Meru which was the abode of god in the Brahmanic cosmology. The physical form of the Bangkok was designed in the form of a mandala<sup>2</sup>, stimulating the layout of

---

<sup>1</sup> Ross King, *Reading Bangkok* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2011), 2.

<sup>2</sup> The mandala image, as depicted in tapestries, murals, and illustrated manuscripts “simplifies the three-dimensionality of Mount Meru onto a two-dimensional topography – in effect an aerial projection of Indra’s heaven atop Mount Meru, dividing the celestial city into an octagonal ring of precincts surrounding the pre-eminent ninth precinct, the citadel, at the pinnacle – each precinct identified with a Brahman deity possessing specific auspicious attributes, contributing



Indra's celestial city (Figure 2-1, 2-2). This implied the connection of the sovereign with the sacred source of power.<sup>3</sup> Outside the city wall, there was no definite boundary between the urban and the rural areas. They coexisted in the city in which the areas of different activities, such as agriculture, residential, and commercial were interwoven.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, different functions and purposes were also fused in the house. Aside from temples, hardly any other specific building types were found. Houses in Siam were then 'multi-purpose'. For example, government officials used their own houses as their offices.<sup>5</sup>

---

to the integrity of the whole. See more in Edward van Roy, *Siamese Melting Pot: Ethnic Minorities in the Making of Bangkok* (Singapore: ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, 2017), 3.

<sup>3</sup> Maurizio Peleggi, *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), 77.

<sup>4</sup> Roxana Waterson, *The Living House: An Anthropology of Architecture in South- East Asia* (New York; Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1990), xix.

<sup>5</sup> Chomchon Fusinpaiboon, "Modernisation of Building: The Transplantation of the Concept of Architecture from Europe to Thailand, 1930s–1950s" (Doctoral dissertation, University of Sheffield, 2014), 64.

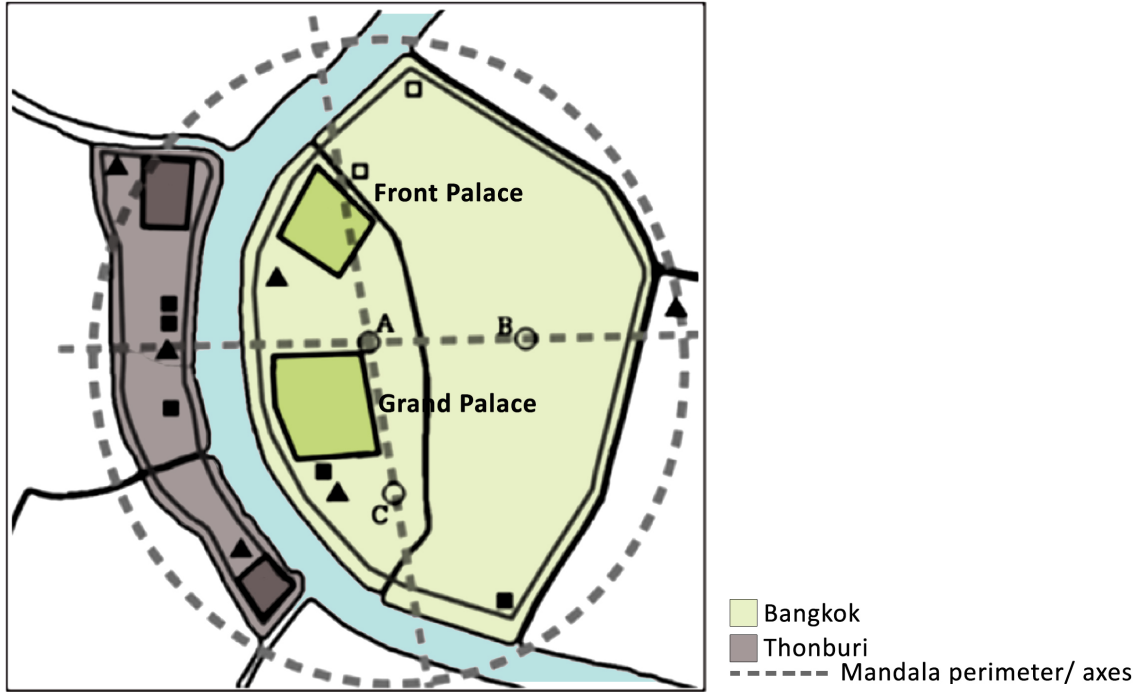


Figure 2-1: The original Bangkok mandala, 1782-85.  
 Source: compiled from Edward van Roy, *Siamese Melting Pot: Ethnic Minorities in the Making of Bangkok*

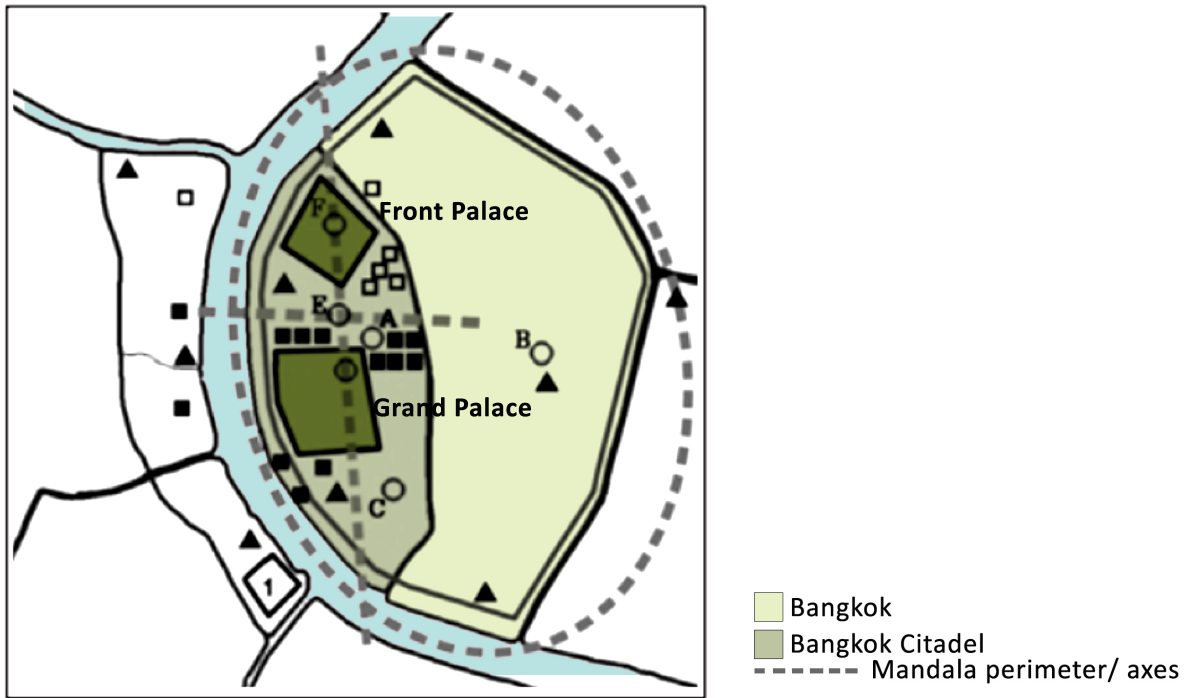


Figure 2-2: The Bangkok mandala, 1809.  
 Source: compiled from Edward van Roy, *Siamese Melting Pot: Ethnic Minorities in the Making of Bangkok*

Houses in the central plain, especially in Bangkok, were categorized into three main types: raft house, boat house, and detached house.<sup>6</sup> They were primarily located on or near waterways, which were the Siamese's main trade and transportation route, as well as the source of daily habits for washing, bathing, and gardening. Raft houses were dominant along the banks of Chao Phraya River and canals (Figure 2-3). Different classes including noblemen, merchants, and commoners inhabited these quarters. Similar to Siamese, some European traders also lived in raft houses before the King allowed them to build houses on land.<sup>7</sup> This kind of house sat on bamboo rafts, was linked with other raft houses and moored at the river bank. Its removable linkage allowed the inhabitants to move their houses conveniently if they wanted to change the location due to their work or business.<sup>8</sup> During the reign of King Rama III, there were very few large buildings in the citadel except those that comprised the two royal palaces and the temples. Palaces of princes and princesses who lived outside the walls were poor wooden houses.<sup>9</sup> Even in the early period of King Mongkut's reign (Rama IV), masonry work was still not a norm for the Siamese, especially in house building. The first known building constructed with brick in Bangkok was the three-story British factory called *Hang Huntra*, of Mr. Hunter, an influential Scottish merchant in Siam (Figure 2-4). There were only a few similar buildings at the time except some places such as the

---

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>7</sup> Frederick Arthur Neale, *Narrative of a Residence at the Capital of the Kingdom of Siam* (London: Office of the National Illustrated Library, 1852), 31–32.

<sup>8</sup> Fusinpaiboon, "Modernisation of Building", 65.

<sup>9</sup> Porphant Ouyyanont, "Physical and economic change in Bangkok, 1851-1925," *Southeast Asian Studies* 36, no.4 (1999): 443-4.

palace of the second king, Phra Pinklao, or the house of Mr. Chandler, the American missionary.<sup>10</sup>

Temples were also built in masonry which were deemed to last. They were also elaborately decorated with specific features, such as *Cho Fah*, *Bai Raka*, and *Hang Hong* on the roofs (Figure 2-5). These elements, however, would not be used to decorate the houses of commoners, no matter how rich they were, in order to resemble those of temples and palaces. According to Fusinpaiboon (2014), “well-to-do Siamese built masonry houses for both durability and expressing their high status.”<sup>11</sup> Similar to other Southeast Asian countries, this was a practice of social hierarchy, stratifying societies in the way that the aristocracy were able to differentiate themselves from commoners.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Malinee Khumsupha, “Changes in Urban Bangkok 1855-1909: The Impact of the Settlement of the British and their subjects” (Doctoral dissertation, Chulalongkorn University, 2011), 135.

<sup>11</sup> Fusinpaiboon, “*Modernisation of Building*”, 72.

<sup>12</sup> Waterson, ‘Houses and Hierarchies in Island Southeast Asia’, p. 58. Cited in Fusinpaiboon, “*Modernisation of Building*”, 69.



Figure 2-3: Floating house on the river, Bangkok

Source: John Bowring, *The Kingdom and People of Siam: With a Narrative of the Mission to that Country in 1855*.



Figure 2-4: The "British factory" of Mr. Hunter in Bangkok

Source: Frederick Arthur Neale, *Narrative of a Residence at the Capital of the Kingdom of Siam*



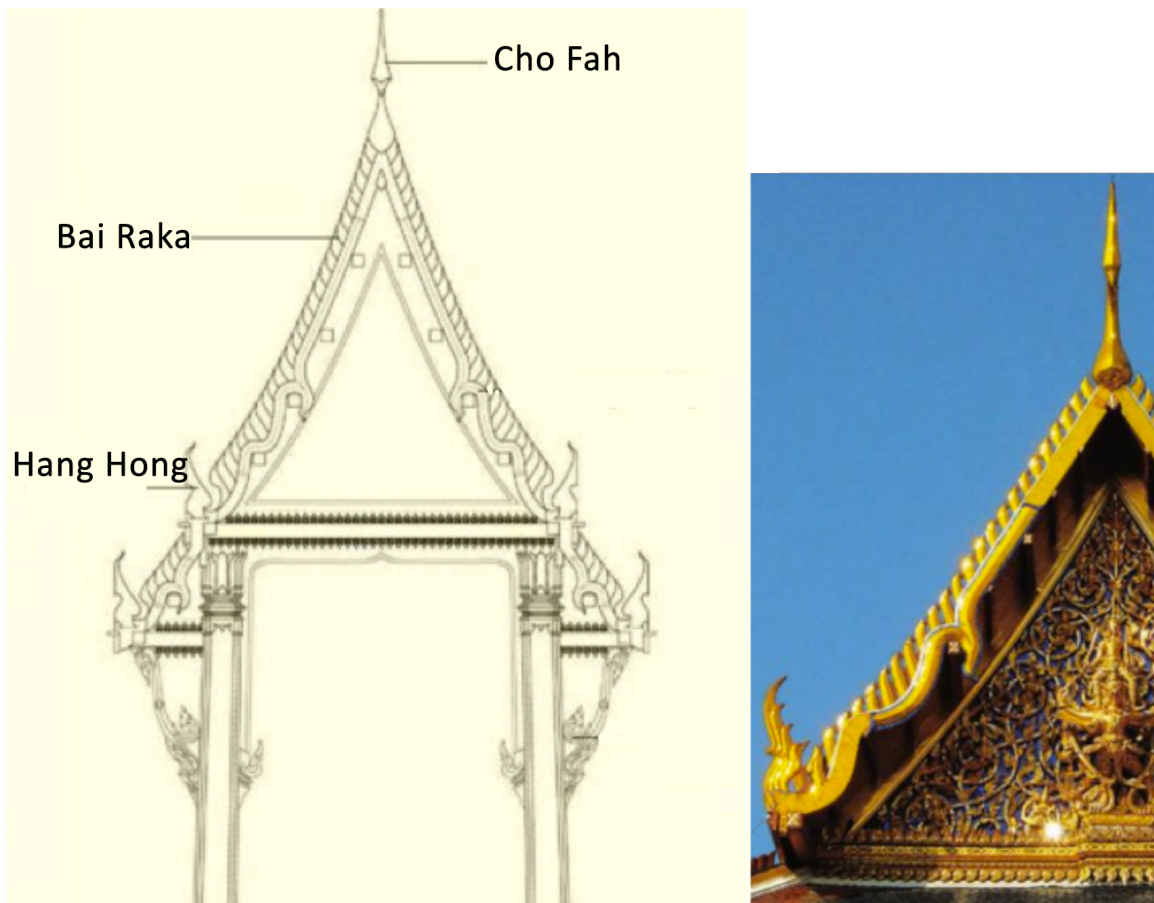


Figure 2-5: Siamese roof decorative ornaments

Source: Compiled from Sthapitanond and Mertens, *Architecture of Thailand: A Guide to Tradition and Contemporary Forms*.

The general picture of the city was clearly described by John Crawford, the British envoy who came to Siam in 1822 (Figure 2-6).

...a very novel spectacle – the capital of Siam, situated on both sides of the Menam. Numerous temples of Buddha, with tall spires attached to them, frequently glittering with gilding, were conspicuous among the mean huts and hovels of the natives, throughout which were interspersed a profusion of palms, ordinary fruit-trees, and the sacred fig (*ficus religiosa*). On each side of the river there was a row of floating habitations, resting on rafts of bamboos, moored to

the shore. These appeared the neatest and best description of dwellings; they were occupied by good Chinese shops. Close to these aquatic habitations were anchored the largest description of native vessels, among which were many junks of great size, just arrived from China. The face of the river presented a busy scene, from the number of boats and canoes of every size and description which were passing to and fro. The number of these struck us as very great at the time, for we were not aware that there are few or no roads at Bangkok, and that the river and canals form common highways, not only for goods, but for passengers of every description. Many of the boats were shops containing earthenware, *blachang*, dried fish, and fresh pork. Vendors of these several commodities were hawking and crying them as in an European town...<sup>13</sup>



Figure 2-6: View of the City of Bangkok in 1822

Source: John Crawfurd, *Journal of an Embassy from the Governor-General of India to the Courts of Siam and Cochin-Chin*.

<sup>13</sup> John Crawfurd, *Journal of an Embassy from the Governor-General of India to the Courts of Siam and Cochin-China: Exhibiting a View of the Actual State of Those Kingdoms* (London, Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830), 121-2.

In the mid-nineteenth century, during the reign of King Rama III (1824-51), when there was a trend of building masonry houses introduced by Chinese traders and immigrants in Siam, most of the wooden royal residences in the royal palace built during the reign of King Rama I were demolished and replaced by white-washed brick residences in the Sino-Siamese style and decorated with stucco and golden carved wood.<sup>14</sup> The flourishing trade with China in this period brought about this style of architecture, as well as the construction method. Later, there was some mixture of European elements to Siamese buildings for the sake of exoticness due to piecemeal contacts with Europeans and Americans at the end of this period.<sup>15</sup>

## **2.2. The Processes of Modernization, 1855-1910**

This section covers the reigns of King Mongkut and King Chulalongkorn, and focuses on the activities and ideas of the two kings in relation to the relationships with Western nations. It examines the Siamese responses to the Western influences which increased and intensified after the signing of the Bowring Treaty in 1855, discussed further. The political and cultural contact with the West was a serious concern for the Siamese ruling class. On the one hand, Siam needed Western knowledge and technology to modernize the country as a survival mechanism during the period of Western colonialism in the region.

---

<sup>14</sup> Naengnoi Suksri and Michael Freeman, *Palaces of Bangkok: Royal Residences of the Chakri Dynasty* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1996), 6.

<sup>15</sup> Fusinpaiboon, "Modernisation of Building", 93.



The first part introduces the Western world to the Siamese masses so that they would be familiar with it, and be ready to deal with it when the time came. The second one is the way the Siamese king tried to exhibit the nation's prestige on a par with other civilized countries of the West as the way to save Siam from Western aggression. Two specific projects have been selected and discussed in more detail in order to give a clearer view of their responses to the circumstances of the country at that moment. The visions of these two kings led to *The Growth of Bangkok during the Period of Modernization (1855-1910)*, which is discussed in the last part of this section.

#### 2.2.1. Introducing the Western World to Siamese

##### ***King Mongkut (1851-1868)***

Before ascending the throne in 1851, King Mongkut had been a Buddhist priest for 27 years. During his time in the monastery, he devoted himself to the study of English and Western science from American and French missionaries. Therefore, he had far more insight into the common Siamese people than any of his predecessors. He was the first Siamese king to be able to write and speak English.<sup>16</sup> In addition to English, he spoke six other eastern languages and Latin.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> M. L. Manich Jumsai, *History of Anglo-Thai Relations* (Bangkok: Chalermnit, 1970), 43.

<sup>17</sup> Ian Morson, *Four Hundred Years the British and the Thais* (Bangkok: Nai Suk's Editions, 1999), 194.

Whilst in the monkhood he reformed Buddhism in Siam and became the founder of the Thammayut sect,<sup>18</sup> where the goal of mankind was to be happy and to make others happy, not to reach heaven or to please God.<sup>19</sup> He tried to rationalize the Buddhist teaching based on a proper understanding of the laws of cause and effect. This principle, discussed further, was demonstrated through the murals in Wat Bawon Niwet, Wat Barom Niwat,

During his time in the monastery he also engaged in historical and linguistic studies for leisure. He was interested in astronomy and modern geography. This knowledge was acquired by personal interactions with the followers of other creeds and with missionaries. He therefore realized the needs of Siam for future development.

He was the one of the few Siamese who was aware of the Western Powers and the influences that would increase in the future. When he became the king of Siam, he did much to promote and advance contact with the outside world, while some other rulers chose to shut out Western influence. The signing of the Bowring Treaty with Great Britain in 1855 was the starting point in this regard. Siam was opened to modernization for the first time during King Mongkut's reign.

To raise Siam's status with the advanced Western countries, in order to survive Western imperialism in Southeast Asia during that time, the king adapted and adopted Western ideas and their advancements, and reformed Siamese socio-political aspects,

---

<sup>18</sup> Thammayut sect is a new sect of Buddhism, part of King Mongkut's reform, characterized as rational, intellectual, and humanistic. It was also integrated with scientific knowledge. See more in Somphong Amnuay-ngertra, "King Mongkut's Political and Religious Ideologies through Architecture at Phra Nakhon Kiri" *Manusya* 10, no. 1 (2007): 72.

<sup>19</sup> A. B. Griswold, "King Mongkut in Perspective," *Journal of the Siam Society* 45, no.1 (April 1957): 16.

religion, architecture, and art. King Mongkut abandoned a largely retrospective stance and looked to the West as the direction to develop Siam, as well as to accommodate the increasing pressures coming from outside the country. In this regard, one of the most significant missions was the establishment of diplomatic relations with Western Powers, and the opening of the kingdom to a life-giving flow of foreign commerce.

He also prepared the Siamese people for the incoming Western influence. The king began to send young men abroad to study, as well as encourage education at home. Moreover, it was the first time that Siamese women were admitted to the field of education. Turning its attention to women was an extraordinary move on the part of Siam. By approving female education, the king wiped out the old custom against teaching women. He asked three missionary wives: Mrs. Bradley, Mrs. Mattoon and Mrs. Jones, to teach English to the ladies of the palace.<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately, these classes continued for only a little over three years and were suspended without explanation. Some surmised that it was due to King Mongkut's displeasure of the missionaries religious influence and its infiltration into the classroom.<sup>21</sup> The king's intention was not completely disband as the Siamese consul in Singapore asked the Borneo Company's Singapore office to contact a governess, the widow of a Mr. Thomas Leon Owens, a clerk who had died in Penang in 1859, to teach the ladies of the palace and some of the royal children.<sup>22</sup> Mrs. Leon Owens arrived Bangkok in 1862 and stayed for four years. She was

---

<sup>20</sup> George Haws Feltus, *Samuel Reynolds House of Siam: Pioneer Medical Missionary, 1847-1876* (New York; Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1924), 111.

<sup>21</sup> Ian Morson, *Four Hundred Years the British and the Thais* (Bangkok: Nai Suk's Editions, 1999), 194-5.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

the one whose life in Siam was fictionalized in *Anna and the King of Siam*, and *The King and I*.

To modernize the country, King Mongkut reformed the administration, installed foreign advisers in a government department to improve the army and organize the police force. He set up printing presses, constructed roads, built canals, and issued the first modern currency to meet the requirements of his country's expanded trade.<sup>23</sup> Siam had now been modernized in many respects, and the modernization continued with his son, King Chulalongkorn.

### ***Murals in Wat Bawon Niwet, Wat Barom Niwat***

This section examines King Mongkut's efforts towards modernizing Siam in the nineteenth century through Thai<sup>24</sup> murals in *bot* (ordination hall) of Wat Bowon Niwet and Wat Borom Niwat in Bangkok created by an eminent monk-artist, Khrua In Khong, under the king's command. These murals marked a sharp shift in the history of Thai murals. Their changes deviated from the traditional one in both style and inspiration. Conventionally, besides the decorative aspect, the murals served a didactic purpose by which they were used as a visual medium for educating the illiterate masses about the tenets of Buddhism by depicting stories of Buddha's life and the Ramayana epic. The

---

<sup>23</sup> A.B. Griswold, "King Mongkut in Perspective," *Journal of the Siam Society* 45, no.1 (April 1957): 2.

<sup>24</sup> The study uses the word "Thai" in the case of the mural regarding the common use of this term. Apart from that, it uses the word "Siam", and "Siamese" as the name of a country, and its contexts before 1939. Siam was used as the name of the country prior to 24 June 1939 when the country's name was changed to Thailand. See Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand*. 2nd ed. (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 131.

murals in both temples, however, had deeper meanings than merely teaching Buddhism. The socio-political points of view were also inserted through the depictions of Allegoric Dharma, and the selection of particular scenes and architectures. Unlike the two-dimensional representation of the traditional Thai mural, these paintings incorporated atmospheric scenery and a more realistic perspective. The architectures, people, and historical events in the scenes were also from the exotic world of the West. This new representation of the Thai mural was, therefore, a great device to promote the king's reformative visions to the masses, as well as to introduce Western thought and advancements to the Siamese people. These murals are, therefore, a device to study Siamese concepts of modernization in the nineteenth century. However, the precise time period of the creation of these murals whether before or after King Mongkut ascended the throne has not yet been confirmed.<sup>25</sup>

- ***The French Scenic Wallpaper as Inspiration***

The specific sources for the inspiration in painting this new style of mural still need further studies. However, one of the most important clues found is from *San Somdet* (The Princes' Messages: A correspondence between Prince Narisara Nuvadtivongs and Prince Damrong Rachanuphap) where Prince Damrong states that "...still being amazed that Khrua In Khong had never traveled abroad but he could use the imported European wallpaper as a guide to draw Western-style painting in the early

---

<sup>25</sup> Wilairat Yangrod and Thawatchai Ongwutthiwet, *Thod Rahad Pap Panung Phra Jomklao – Khrua In Khong [Decoding Mural King Mongkut – Khrua In Khong]* (Nonthaburi: Museum Press, 2016), 38-39.

nineteenth century..."<sup>26</sup> In this way, the scenic wallpaper, which was dominant in the wallpaper market during the first half of nineteenth century, was a motif of these murals.

During this period, the French 'scenic', 'panoramic' or 'landscape' wallpapers were dominant in the wallpaper market. They were manufactured exclusively in France but were sold throughout Europe and the United States. This style of wallpaper was also used to promote the skills and standards of the French wallpaper industry.<sup>27</sup> Generally, the scenic wallpapers illustrated exotic landscapes, city scenes and parks, the pleasures of daily life, historical events, mythological subjects, and even scenes from contemporary literature. The souvenir imagery was also used as a printed material since the European tourism business was growing in popularity during the early nineteenth century. Viewing natural wonders became an important part of touring. Therefore, the typical themes used in designing wallpaper were nature and landscape.<sup>28</sup> Some of the subjects selected by the manufacturers contained a definite didactic component. A nationalistic pride typical of the time, which today would be viewed as cultural imperialism, was usually exhibited through the wallpapers.<sup>29</sup> A popular panoramic

---

<sup>26</sup> Prince Narisara Nuvadtivongs and Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, *San Somdet: Lai phra hat Somdet Chaofa Kromphraya Narisara Nuvadtivongs lae Somdet Kromphraya Damrong Rachanuphap* [The Princes' Messages: A correspondence between Prince Narisara Nuvadtivongs and Prince Damrong Rachanuphap], Vol. 22 (Bangkok: Khurusapha, 1962), 4.

<sup>27</sup> Gill Saunders, *Wallpaper in Interior Decoration* (New York: Watson-Guption Publications, 2002), 89.

<sup>28</sup> Joanne Kosuda-Warner and Elizabeth Johnson, *Landscape Wallcoverings* (London: Scala Publishers in association with Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution, 2001), 35-36.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

wallpaper produced by Joseph Dufour et Cie. In 1804 titled *Les Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique* (Savages of the Pacific Ocean) was a good example in this regard.

Besides the fact that the scenic wallpaper had widely been traded during that time, the similarities between this style of wallpaper and the murals in Wat Bowon Niwet and Wat Borom Niwat are also evident, in terms of colors, compositions, Western figures, Western architectures and landscapes. The somber color used by Khrua In Khong was a shift in the painting colors of Thai murals which were commonly painted by vivid colors. This shade of colors might come from the *Grisaille* (shades of gray meant to imitate carved stone) of the scenic wallpaper which was the most popular color shade at that time. Monochrome wallpaper was not only less expensive than the full-color one, but also had a unique style.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, the use of trees and bushes to divide the mural was the same as that of the scenic wallpaper, in which the panoramic view of wallpaper was divided into different landscapes and scenes. (Figure 2-7,2-8)

The coincidences between the scenes in the murals and the scenic wallpaper are also clearly found. By simply looking at some popular scenic wallpapers produced by a leading French manufacturer, Zuber et Cie, several numbers of similar scenes are demonstrated. One of the scenes of the murals in both temples, for instance, depicting a large junk, sloops, and a steamboat plying the oceans remind us of the scene of the "Boston Harbor" from the well-known wallpaper called "*Vues d'Amérique du Nord*" (Views of North America) printed in 1834 (Figure 2-9,2-10).<sup>31</sup> The jockeys training horses

---

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Robert P. Emlen, "Imagining America in 1834: Zuber's Scenic Wallpaper "*Vues d'Amérique du Nord*," *Winterthur Portfolio* 32, no. 2/3 (Summer – Autumn 1997): 200.

scene of the murals in both temples is another good example, in which the one in Wat Bowon Niwet resembles the flat-racing scene from “*Courses des Chevaux*” produced in 1837 (Figure 2-11), while the one in Wat Borom Niwat has similar postures of soldiers and horses to those in the scene “*La Guerre de l’indépendance Américaine*” (War of American Independence) painted in 1852 (Figure 2-12).



Figure 2-7: The mural in *bot* of Wat Borom Niwat using trees and bushes as mural division.



Figure 2-8: Scenic wallpaper “*Vues d’Amerique du Nord*” (Views of North America) showing different scenes divided by trees and bushes, with a highlight of the “Boston Harbor”.



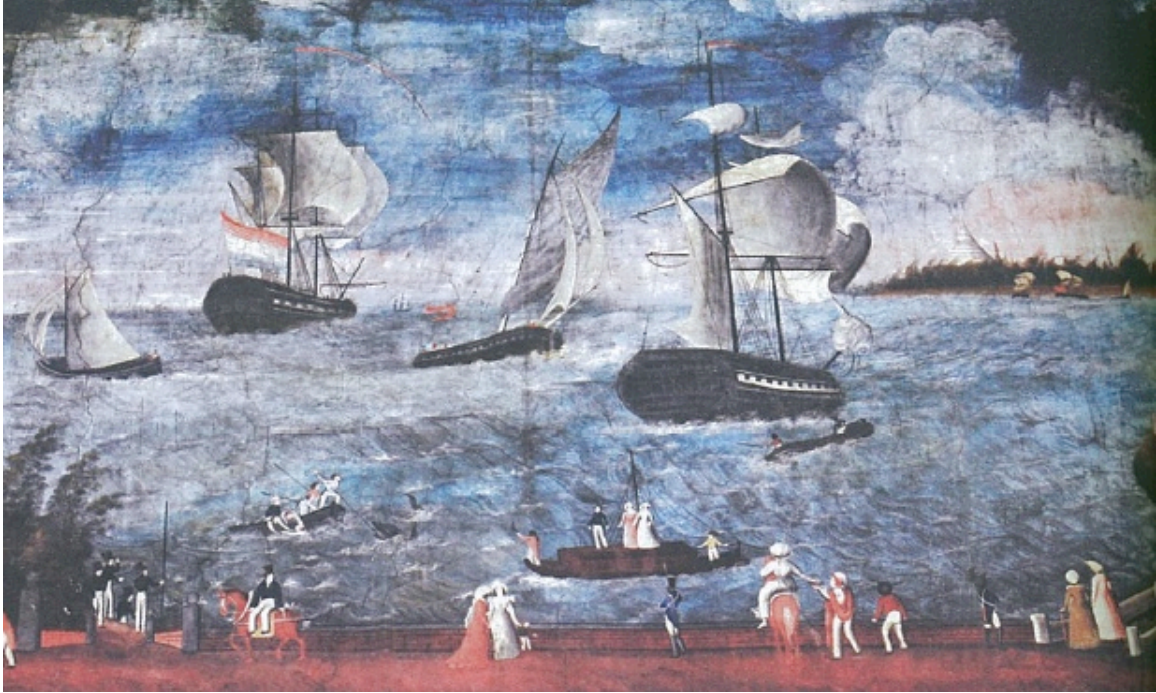


Figure 2-9: The scene of a large junk, sloops, and a steamboat plying the oceans of the mural in Wat Borom Niwat.



Figure 2-10: The scene of the “Boston Harbor” from the well-known wallpaper “Vues d’Amerique du Nord” (Views of North America)



Figure 2-11: The scene of jockeys training horses in the Wat Bowon Niwet mural (upper), and the scene of flat-racing from scenic wallpaper "*Courses des Chevaux*"(lower).





Figure 2-12: The jockeys training horses scene in Wat Borom Niwat (upper), and the scene from scenic wallpaper, “La Guerre de l'indépendance Américaine” (War of American Independence) (lower).

- ***The Murals in Wat Bowon Niwet and Wat Borom Niwat***

Wat Bowon Niwet and Wat Borom Niwat were both royal monasteries and built in the reign of King Rama III while King Mongkut (King Rama IV) was still in the monkhood. King Mongkut was the Abbot at the former temple for many years.<sup>32</sup> Wat Borom Niwat, on the other hand, was built for King Mongkut as an alternative place to stay during his monkhood. The murals in the *bot* of these two temples were very similar

<sup>32</sup> Rita Ringis, *Thai Temples and Temple Murals* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 108.

in terms of depiction and the positional arrangements, though there was a different number of murals in the *bot*. Wat Bowon Niwet had twenty-one murals, whereas Wat Borom Niwat had twelve murals (Figure 2-13, 2-14). In addition, the murals in Wat Borom Niwat had more complex and finer details than those in Wat Bowon Niwet. The ones in Wat Borom Niwat are, therefore, believed to be painted after the latter ones.<sup>33</sup> These murals were horizontally divided into two parts. The ones above the windows were Buddhist allegories with Western scenes as mentioned earlier. The ones between and below windows represented traditional ways of life. In the lower part, the differences between the murals of these two temples were apparent, even though the upper part of the murals were very much alike. Wat Bowon Niwet focused more on daily activities of monks and religious ceremonies, while Wat Borom Niwat concentrated on the lifestyle of Thai people, especially during the various religious festivals.<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> Wilairat Yangrod and Thawatchai Ongwutthiwet, *Thod Rahad Pap Panung Phra Jomklao – Khrua In Khong [Decoding Mural King Mongkut – Khrua In Khong]* (Nonthaburi: Museum Press, 2016), 38-39.

<sup>34</sup> Wiyada Thongmitr, *Khrua In Khong's Westernized School of Thai Painting* (Bangkok: Akson Samphan Press, 1979), 117-120.

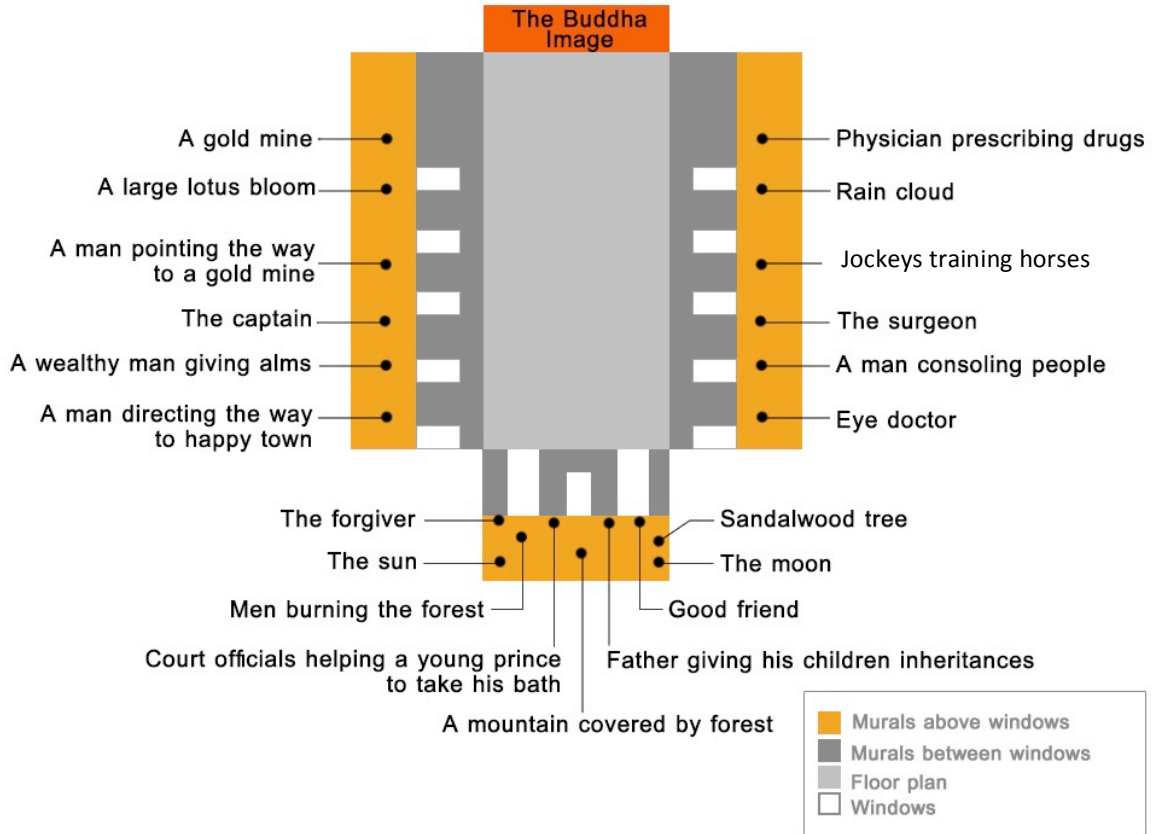


Figure 2-13: A floor plan with flattened walls of *bot* in Wat Bowon Niwet showing the position of murals on the walls

Source: Compiled from Wilairat Yangrod and Thawatchai Ongwutthiwet, 2016.

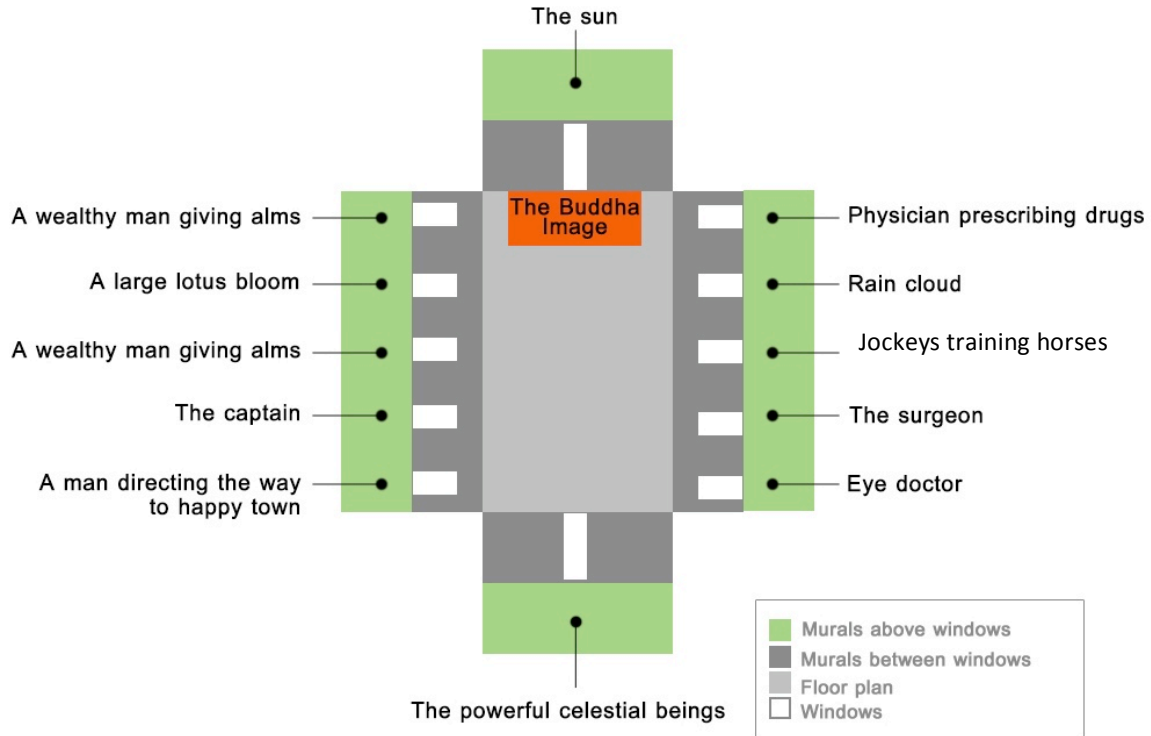


Figure 2-14: A floor plan with flattened walls of *bot* in Wat Borom Niwat showing the position of murals on the walls.

Source: Compiled from Wilairat Yangrod and Thawatchai Ongwutthiwet, 2016.

- ***The Interpretations of King Mongkut's Visions***

Even though the description of the murals written under each scene explains the meaning of the Buddhist allegories that connote the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, the way King Mongkut designed the scene and selected the painting elements for the artist to paint in the murals reflects his interest and vision towards Western advances and influence in the region, which were to be part of Siamese development. The secular (Western) settings literally suggest the king's perspectives of modernization, in which he would like to make Siam on equal footing with the advanced Western countries. Only some particular murals which clearly illustrate Western influence in relation to the king's reforms are selected to be discussed in this section.

The first one to be examined is the first mural on the right-hand side of the Buddha image of both temples. It is a scene of “a physician prescribing drugs for sick people” which, according to its description under the mural, concisely means that the Sangha or people who accept the Dhamma signified by the medicine will have no more sickness and find happiness.<sup>35</sup> The Dhamma is given by the Buddha who is connoted as a doctor. This mural encourages people to open their minds and believe in the Buddha’s teaching. On the other hand, looking specifically at the architecture and people in the scene, a new architectural type which was never seen in Siam was introduced to the Siamese. Together with the longer description in Wat Borom Niwat about a large building for curing sick people, the building in the mural reminds us of a Western hospital built during that period which sometimes had its own church constructed nearby. In this case, the latter was signified by a dome (Figure 2-15). According to Wilairat et al. (2016), the hospital in the mural is probably Saint Bartholomew’s Hospital in London which was located close to Saint Paul’s Cathedral or Greenwich Hospital in London whose the building had a lofty dome like the one in the mural.<sup>36</sup>

This scene in the mural of both temples demonstrates King Mongkut’s advanced vision, as the first hospital erected in Siam, Siriraj Hospital, was established in 1888 in the reign of King Chulalongkorn, who succeeded him.<sup>37</sup> During King Mongkut’s period, such a place for giving modern medical care was merely a house of missionaries, who

---

<sup>35</sup> Wilairat Yangrod and Thawatchai Ongwutthiwet, *Thod Rahad Pap Panung Phra Jomklao – Khrua In Khong [Decoding Mural, King Mongkut – Khrua In Khong]* (Nonthaburi: Museum Press, 2016), 57-61.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 62-65.

<sup>37</sup> “Our History”, *Faculty of Medicine, Siriraj Hospital, Mahidol University*. Accessed October 30, 2019, <https://www2.si.mahidol.ac.th/en/orthopedic-surgery/our-history/>



were also doctors. Their houses were then used for both preaching and medical services. In addition, the king desired to introduce the service of American missionaries, as well as the missionaries themselves, which began to influence Siamese development in many respects during his reign.



Figure 2-15: The mural scene of a physician prescribing drugs for sick people in Wat Borom Niwat.

Another act of generosity depicting the notion of Western advances, beside the medical service, was illustrated through the scene of “the forgiver” in Wat Bowon Niwet. The description of the mural states that “The Buddha is denoted as a forgiver, the Dhamma is signified as a forgiveness, and the Sangha who has been forgiven is



represented through people who is out of harm's way."<sup>38</sup> Accordingly, the scene depicts three different groups of people doing various activities. One is a group of wealthy people walking out of the luxurious mansion's gate and looking at people who are taking care of a tree. Another is a group of farmers harvesting the crops. The last group is of slaves, wearing a white slave uniform, similar to that found in the southern part of the United States,<sup>39</sup> leaving a building one after another. The one at the entrance kneels down to thank a Christian priest who opens his hands leading the slaves to the way out<sup>40</sup> (Figure 2-16). The Christian priest, in this case, according to Wilairat et al. (2016), was probably the Scottish missionary, John Phillip, who pushed the British government to legislate for the abolition of slavery in 1833.<sup>41</sup> The British case was again used as a precedent.

In Siam, King Mongkut was the first to take the step to abolish slavery leading to the complete emancipation in 1905 in the next reign. He broke down the old law regarding slavery that gave privileges to the nobles and princes to refuse the redemption money tendered to them by the slave. As a result, money tendered for redemption must at once be accepted, and the judges who assisted the money master in evading the law were made liable to severe punishment.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> Wilairat Yangrod and Thawatchai Ongwutthiwet, Thod Rahad Pap Panung Phra Jomklao – Khrua In Khong [Decoding Mural King Mongkut – Khrua In Khong] (Nonthaburi: Museum Press, 2016), 131.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 134.

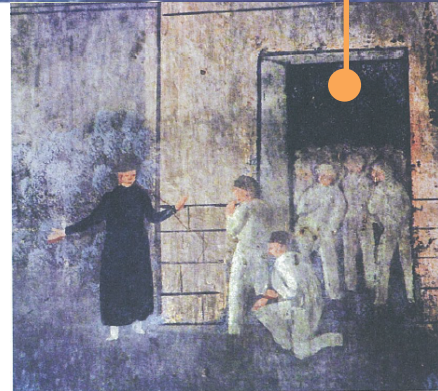
<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 131-134.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 135-136.

<sup>42</sup> O. Frankfurter, "King Mongkut," *Journal of the Siam Society* 1, no.1 (January 1904): 202.



Figure 2-16: The mural scene of the forger in Wat Bowon Niwet with a highlight of the scene depicting a slave at the entrance kneeling down to thank a Christian priest.



King Mongkut's democratic vision is illustrated through the murals in both temples. The scene of a man of virtue pointing in the direction of a happy place to a procession of people, according to its description, gives a connotation that people who follow the way of the man who points will reach a happy town, and be happy, while others who go on another path will meet sorrow.<sup>43</sup> In this case, the man refers to the Buddha who is loving and intelligent; the man suggests that the best route is the Dhamma; and people who follow the direction and reach the destination is the Sangha. There are literal depictions of familiar iconic buildings that the murals of the two temples display in the middle ground. The one in Wat Bowon Niwet illustrates Western architecture which is the representation of the former version of United States Capitol

<sup>43</sup> Wilairat Yangrod and Thawatchai Ongwutthiwet, *Thod Rahad Pap Panung Phra Jomklao – Khrua In Khong [Decoding Mural, King Mongkut – Khrua In Khong]* (Nonthaburi: Museum Press, 2016), 137.

with the dome designed by Charles Bulfinch in 1846, while the architecture in the mural at Wat Borom Niwat represents George Washington's Mount Vernon mansion<sup>44</sup> (Figure 2-17, 2-18). The idea to use these two architectures in this scene demonstrates King Mongkut's vision for democracy brought from the United States since the U.S. capitol is a symbol of democratic government, and George Washington was the first elected president of the United States. In addition, the man in the mural who points toward the direction could also reference George Washington based on the Western soldier uniform he wears and the architecture behind him.<sup>45</sup> Not surprisingly, King Mongkut is considered the first and foremost democrat of the country.<sup>46</sup>



Figure 2-17: The scene of a man pointing the way to a happy town in Wat Bowon Niwet showing a similar architecture to the former version of United States Capitol.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 143-148.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 146-148.

<sup>46</sup> See more details about King Mongkut's democratic vision in M.R. Seni Pramoj, "King Mongkut as a Legislator," *Journal of the Siam Society* 38, no.1 (January 1950): 33.



Figure 2-18: The scene of a man pointing the way to a happy town in Wat Borom Niwat showing a similar architecture to George Washington's Mount Vernon mansion.

The scene of “Jockeys training horses” is presented in both temples, but the one in Wat Borom Niwat is more interesting in relation to the Siamese international relations in the nineteenth century. Regardless of its description of Buddhist allegories, it depicts an important figure displayed in the lower left corner (Figure 2-19). According to the presumption of Wilairat (2016), he was the Prince of Orange of the Netherlands who was a commander of the British army fighting in the Battle of Waterloo.<sup>47</sup> With the support from European alliance, France was finally defeated in this battle in 1815 marking the end of Napoleon’s reign and of the expansion of his empire in Europe.<sup>48</sup> In this regard, whether it was King Mongkut’s intention or not, the outcome of this event, which halted French expansion, was the desire of the Siamese king, who was well aware of the aggressive French colonial power in the region.

<sup>47</sup> Wilairat Yangrod and Thawatchai Ongwutthiwet, *Thod Rahad Pap Panung Phra Jomklao – Khrua In Khong [Decoding Mural, King Mongkut – Khrua In Khong]* (Nonthaburi: Museum Press, 2016), 84.

<sup>48</sup> “Battle of Waterloo”, *History*, Accessed October 30, 2019, <https://www.history.com/topics/british-history/battle-of-waterloo>.





Figure 2-19: The scene of Jockeys training horses, which depicts the figure of the Prince of Orange in the lower left corner.

This new style of Thai murals in both temples is a visual device used not only to rationalize the Buddhist teachings, but also to acquaint the Siamese masses with Western people and their lifestyle since the influences of the West in the nineteenth century were about to increase in this region. Unlike the traditional mural painting, these reformed ones have multiple meanings than merely teaching Buddhism. Some significant international events in relation to Siamese circumstances and contexts at that time were inserted in the murals of both temples. Particular architectures and scenes were deliberately selected to provide philosophic interpretation. To modernize Siam to be on equal footing with the West, the country had to advance both physically and mentally. The exotic views of the West display the advancements of Europe and America which include images of steamboats, carriages, architectures, and Western

lifestyles. More importantly, the concepts of humanity such as democracy and the abolition of slavery are emphasized Western modernizations that King Mongkut admired. They do not only present Western thought, but also promote the king's reformative visions for the future of Siam. Allegorically, if people believe in him, and accept his ideas, they would find happiness and be free from sorrow. Consequently, King Mongkut's visions were presented as the course his successors were to follow.

### 2.2.2. Siam's Modernization/ Exhibiting National Prestige

#### ***King Chulalongkorn (1868-1910)***

King Chulalongkorn succeeded King Mongkut in 1868 and followed his father's policy to modernize the country. He was only fifteen years old when came to the throne and the first six years of his reign were under the supervision of the Regent who was the head of the most influential noble or ministerial family in the early Bangkok period. Therefore, it was a hard task for him to exercise his authority over various parties of the elite, especially senior Princes and noblemen, whose power was not easily undermined. To build up his actual power at the court, the king gradually utilized reformations. Apart from gaining domestic power, these reformations were also the king's responses to the Western imperial powers encroaching the region. Eventually, by the end of 1880s, the king held the center of power and his ministries were now mostly his siblings, half-siblings, and cousins, instead of noblemen from different families. The power of the nobility was then reduced.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> Chomchon Fusinpaiboon, *Modernisation of Building: The Transplantation of the Concept of*

King Chulalongkorn reigned until 1910 and had been regarded as one of the most important Siamese monarchs, and called 'Chulalongkorn the Great'. He was honored for reforming the army, administration and justice system, introducing Western-style education, abolishing slavery, building new infrastructure and generally undertaking projects of modernization.<sup>50</sup> In his reign, both the monarchy and bureaucracy had acquired power and authority they had never had in the previous centuries.<sup>51</sup>

One of the most significant reforms of the king was the gradual abolition of the corvée and slavery system, which altered the Siamese social hierarchy. It was also the aim of his father, King Mongkut, who took the first step in this regard, but who was unable to complete the emancipation of the slavery. This reform was motivated not only by the benevolence of the king, but also from the increasing need for paid labor in the rice-export business, which supplied the major income for the Siamese elite after the court was forced to cease its trade monopoly with the West.<sup>52</sup>

To modernize the nation, King Chulalongkorn left the country for the first time in Siamese history to learn the civilization practices mainly from European colonies in Asia. Early in his reign, he visited Singapore, Malaya, Burma, India, and Java, where he saw

---

*Architecture from Europe to Thailand, 1930s–1950s*” (Doctoral dissertation, University of Sheffield, 2014), 104.

<sup>50</sup> Robert Aldrich, “France and the King of Siam: An Asian King’s Visits to the Republican Capital”, in Julie Kalman (ed.), *French History and Culture: Papers from the George Rude Seminar*, vol.6 (2015): 228.

<https://h-france.net/rude/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/AldrichVol6.pdf>.

<sup>51</sup> David K. Wyatt, *Thailand: A Short History* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2003), 223.

<sup>52</sup> See Nartsupha and Prasartset, *Socio-Economic Institutions and Cultural Change in Siam, 1851–1910: A Documentary Survey*.

post offices, jails, hospitals, schools, telegraph offices, fire stations, lighthouses, botanical gardens, museums, theatres, shops and stores, orphanages, railways, and factories. Consequently these modern facilities made the king have a vision for his own kingdom to become modern without European occupation.<sup>53</sup> These visits to European colonies in Asia led to his grand tour of Europe in 1897, aiming to acquire firsthand experience from them. The king's European visit is discussed further in this chapter.

The latter half of his reign saw the implementation of a wide-ranging program of reforms. Education, administration, infrastructure, the bureaucracy, and the army were modernized under the direction of Western advisers. In offices of his royal government, there were European consultants and professionals. Belgian lawyers, German engineers, British comptrollers, American state secretaries, and Italian architects, among others, were employed by the Siamese elite according to the best reputation in their fields. Beside their positions as the heads of all governmental departments, mostly chaired by members of the royal family or noblemen, the Westerners also formed a large part of high and middle rank officials.<sup>54</sup> Westernization and Modernization were required for the reformation process in political, governmental and economic systems.

Moreover, King Chulalongkorn started to send his cousins and later his own and his siblings' children to study in Europe, particularly in England,<sup>55</sup> starting at the end of the 1860s, expecting that they would return to strengthen the reforms. At the same

---

<sup>53</sup> David K. Wyatt, *The Politics of Reform in Thailand: Education in the Reign of King Chulalongkorn* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), 40.

<sup>54</sup> Chomchon Fusinpaiboon, "Modernisation of Building: The Transplantation of the Concept of Architecture from Europe to Thailand, 1930s–1950s" (Doctoral dissertation, University of Sheffield, 2014), 106.

<sup>55</sup> M. L. Manich Jumsai, *History of Anglo-Thai Relations* (Bangkok: Chalermnit, 1970), 252-5.



time, many English teachers came to Siam and helped educate the future generation of Siam and laid a firm foundation for the learning of the English language as well as other Western subjects.<sup>56</sup>

Fred Riggs (1966) argued that the accomplishments of Siamese modernization during the reigns of King Mongkut and King Chulalongkorn, “although directed primarily toward transformations in the total polity, indirectly also changed the character and the public image of the monarchy itself.”<sup>57</sup> These reforms were not simply a reaction to the colonial threat, but rather an attempt originated by various groups of the Siamese elite to secure their superiority in Siam.<sup>58</sup> The latter process was what Thongchai Winichakul (2000) called “the quest for “*siwilai*” (*siwilai* was a transliterated form of English term “civilized.”).”<sup>59</sup> With this realization, this process played an important role in the modernization of Siam. Maurizio Peleggi (2002) argues that “far from being a by-product of the wider process of administrative and institutional reformation, the refashioning of the royal elite’s public image was a key element in the project of asserting their “civilized” status and, consequentially, their claim to “national” leadership.”<sup>60</sup>

King Chulalongkorn’s European tour, discussed further, is the best example in this regard. “The quest for *siwilai*” was demonstrated not only through the king’s visit to Europe where he intended to exhibit his status on a par with other European rulers, but

---

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 256.

<sup>57</sup> Fred W. Riggs, *Thailand* (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1966).

<sup>58</sup> Thongchai Winichakul, “The Quest for “*Siwilai*”: A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam.” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 59, no. 3 (2000): 529-30.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Maurizio Peleggi, *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), 3.

also through the projects inspired by these countries which were constructed after the king returned to Siam. Architecture and urban planning were transformed in order to symbolize the king's model of modern kingship.

### ***The King's Voyage to Europe, 1897***

The first European tour was something King Chulalongkorn had anticipated for some twenty years, following visits to Singapore, Java and India in 1871-72, which was the first time in history that a Siamese king left his country. From his visit to colonial territories, the king gained an insight into the benefits which he hoped he would be able to introduce into Siam.<sup>61</sup>

In 1897, King Chulalongkorn went on an official European tour visiting Italy, Switzerland, Austria-Hungary, Russia, Sweden, Denmark, Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Spain and Portugal in order to meet fellow sovereigns as part of what he called 'the advance of royal friendships.'<sup>62</sup> The tour started on 7 April until 16 December. The king's main purposes of this visit, as he described, was: "First, to see how life in Europe is; second, to study how wealth and goods originate; third, to fathom their [Europeans'] strength, were they to attack us; fourth, to enjoy myself as well."<sup>63</sup> In other words, according to Baker (2005), this tour was made for to some

---

<sup>61</sup> Ian Morson, *Four Hundred Years the British and the Thais* (Bangkok: Nai Suk's Editions, 1999), 310.

<sup>62</sup> Quoted in Robert Aldrich, "France and the King of Siam: An Asian King's Visits to the Republican Capital", in Julie Kalman (ed.), *French History and Culture: Papers from the George Rude Seminar*, vol.6 (2015): 231.

<sup>63</sup> Quoted in Maurizio Peleggi, *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), 31.

important reasons. One was part of the clever Siamese diplomacy following the Paknam Incident of 1893, the embittered situation between Siam and France where Siam had lost some territory to France. The king's mission for this European visit was to ensure that Siam could still retain her sovereignty.<sup>64</sup> According to the French colonial minister, this tour "will give the impression that the kingdom of Siam, whose sovereign has been received in the manner due to a European head of state, is a civilized country which should be treated like a European power."<sup>65</sup> Another reason was that the king would like to see *siwilai* for himself first hand. Furthermore, this tour portrayed the king to his subjects as a new kind of sovereign who was among the world's royal elite.<sup>66</sup>

King Chulalongkorn traveled on his own steam yacht, the *Maha Chakri*, accompanied by a large entourage of relatives, advisers and servants, including several of his brothers and sons, totaling two hundred and ninety-one people. When they arrived in England on 30 July 1897, it was just over a month after the celebrations of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. Therefore, the Queen was absent since she was at that time busy with the event. The king was only able to meet her for a day visit at Osborne on the Isle of Wight on 4 August.<sup>67</sup> However, the Siamese king did meet the

---

<sup>64</sup> Robert Aldrich, "France and the King of Siam: An Asian King's Visits to the Republican Capital", in Julie Kalman (ed.), *French History and Culture: Papers from the George Rude Seminar*, vol.6 (2015): 225-6.

<https://h-france.net/rude/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/AldrichVol6.pdf>.

<sup>65</sup> Patrick Tuck, *The French Wolf and the Siamese Lamb: The French Threat to Siamese Independence, 1858-1907* (Bangkok: White Lotus Co., Ltd, 1995), 191.

<sup>66</sup> Christopher John Baker, and Pasuk Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 69.

<sup>67</sup> Nigel J. Brailey, *Imperial Amnesia: Britain, France and "The Question of Siam"* (Dordrecht: Republic of Letters Publishing BV, 2009), 1.

future kings Edward VII and George V.<sup>68</sup> The reception made it to the front page of the *Illustrated London News*, Britain's leading weekly (Figure 2-20), which carried an imaginative sketch of the banquet held in the Osborne House's Indian Room (Figure 2-21).<sup>69</sup>

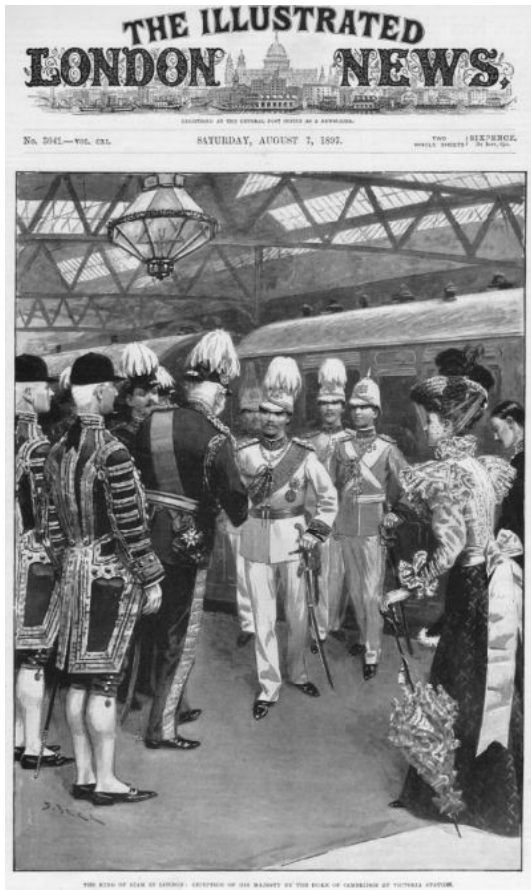


Figure 2-20: The King of Siam in London, Reception of His Majesty by the Duke of Cambridge at Victoria Station. (left)

Source: *The Illustrated London News*, August 7, 1897.

Figure 2-21: The Siamese Embassy in London giving a banquet in honor of His Majesty King Chulalongkorn (Right)

Source: *The Illustrated London News*, August 14, 1897.

<sup>68</sup> Ian Morson, *Four Hundred Years the British and the Thais* (Bangkok: Nai Suk's Editions, 1999), 310.

<sup>69</sup> Maurizio Peleggi, *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), 2.

In England, the king stayed at Buckingham Palace where he received an audience including the British premier and Foreign Secretary, the Marquess of Salisbury, amongst others.<sup>70</sup> Nonetheless, the king was not quite satisfied with the final outcome of his visit to England. According to a letter from Sir Frank Swettenham, the Colonial Secretary at Singapore, to the Colonial Office in London, King Chulalongkorn was not happy with his English reception as with others. Her Majesty did not give him or send his wife any presents whereas various rulers gave him beautiful gifts.<sup>71</sup> Despite the fact that England did not offer the king's reception at the expected level, King Chulalongkorn found England full of exciting and fascinating things to do. The royal group stayed there longer than anywhere else.<sup>72</sup> This trip to England, in fact, had been deterred by an earlier British government, concerned not to antagonize Paris, due to the Paknam Crisis in 1893. Moreover, the Anglo-Siamese relations at that time also caused unpromising circumstances for the king's European tour. The final approval of his visit to England was under the condition that the Siamese had to consent to the Anglo-Siamese peninsular treaty.<sup>73</sup>

The Siamese relations with France were another issue. As this European tour was partly the consequence of the Paknam Crisis between Siam and France, the latter was the crucial destination of this tour as it was considered most threatening to Siam. Siam

---

<sup>70</sup> Nigel J. Brailey, *Imperial Amnesia: Britain, France and "The Question of Siam"* (Dordrecht: Republic of Letters Publishing BV, 2009), 1.

<sup>71</sup> J.A. Swettenham to C.P. Lucas, 10 Jan. 1898. Salisbury Papers vol. 92, Colonial Office.

<sup>72</sup> Thongchai Winichakul, "The Quest for "Siwilai": A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 59, no. 3 (2000): 539.

<sup>73</sup> Nigel J. Brailey, *Imperial Amnesia: Britain, France and "The Question of Siam"* (Dordrecht: Republic of Letters Publishing BV, 2009), 143.

was eventually welcomed, however almost at the last minute. Even though the king had already left Bangkok, the French government had not yet agreed upon the king's visit to their country. The Siamese king, according to Blowitz, *The Times* senior foreign correspondent, was not welcomed there until a dispute between the two countries was settled over the imprisonment in Bangkok of two Cambodians that France claimed as its protégés.<sup>74</sup> It was not until the end of August 1897 that Paris definitely expected a visit from King Chulalongkorn, even though the king had authorized the release and deportation of the two imprisoned Cambodians to French Indochina as early as 27 July.<sup>75</sup> The king's trip to France, however, was a good sign that France no longer seemed to be the main threat to Siamese independence. The reason for this was that the Siamese king was received with a very welcome reception. The French rented the Hotel de Grammont, one of the finest mansions in the Champs Élysées quarter, for the king's accommodation. It was fully redecorated with silk damask and the best mahogany furniture.<sup>76</sup> The king arrived in France on 11 September 1897, where its glories and might were overwhelmingly shown to the king in the way that, on the one hand, any of the French demands could not be repudiated.<sup>77</sup> On the other hand, the King's French tour, according to *Le Petit Journal*, revealed French esteem to an Asian as the French "gave him the honors of our incomparable capital and the graciousness of the Parisian

---

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 9-10.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>77</sup> Robert Aldrich, "France and the King of Siam: An Asian King's Visits to the Republican Capital", in Julie Kalman (ed.), *French History and Culture: Papers from the George Rude Seminar*, vol.6 (2015): 233.

population.”<sup>78</sup> Moreover, the French press, especially the illustrated periodicals, provided extensive coverage of Chulalongkorn’s visit.<sup>79</sup> For example, a smart-looking picture of the king was published on the cover of 19 September 1897 *Le Petit Journal*, the mass-market French newspaper (Figure 2-22). The French impression of the king was also emphasized in the articles of other newspaper.<sup>80</sup>

During his European tour, King Chulalongkorn was received with a warm and respectful reception. The climax of his whole tour was when the king was welcomed by the recently crowned Tsar, Nicholas II of Russia (Figure 2-23), who was an old acquaintance of the king since March 1891 when he, as Tsarevich, visited Bangkok.<sup>81</sup> Once the king reached Russia, 18,000 troops were drawn up to receive him at the frontier, the same honor that was given to the Emperor of Austria, and would be presented to the Emperor of Germany.<sup>82</sup> And at Peterhof, the Tsar’s country seat, the railway station was illuminated and decorated with Russian and Siamese flags.<sup>83</sup> As a result of this visit, Alexander Olarovsky, the Russian Consul-General in New York, was

---

<sup>78</sup> *Le Petit Journal*, 26 September 1897. Cited in Robert Aldrich, “France and the King of Siam: An Asian King’s Visits to the Republican Capital”, in Julie Kalman (ed.), *French History and Culture: Papers from the George Rude Seminar*, vol.6 (2015): 233.

<sup>79</sup> Cited in Robert Aldrich, “France and the King of Siam: An Asian King’s Visits to the Republican Capital”, in Julie Kalman (ed.), *French History and Culture: Papers from the George Rude Seminar*, vol.6 (2015): 233.

<sup>80</sup> Robert Aldrich, “France and the King of Siam: An Asian King’s Visits to the Republican Capital”, in Julie Kalman (ed.), *French History and Culture: Papers from the George Rude Seminar*, vol.6 (2015): 233.

<sup>81</sup> Nigel J. Brailey, *Imperial Amnesia: Britain, France and “The Question of Siam”* (Dordrecht: Republic of Letters Publishing BV, 2009), 5-6.

<sup>82</sup> Vermeij to F.O., 3 August 1897. Salisbury Paper vol. 106. *The Times*, 5 July. Cited in Nigel J. Brailey, *Imperial Amnesia: Britain, France and “The Question of Siam”* (Dordrecht: Republic of Letters Publishing BV, 2009), 7.

<sup>83</sup> Nigel J. Brailey, *Imperial Amnesia: Britain, France and “The Question of Siam”* (Dordrecht: Republic of Letters Publishing BV, 2009), 7.



appointed as the Russian Minister in Bangkok in order to initiate regular diplomatic relations between the two countries.<sup>84</sup> The friendly relationship between King Chulalongkorn and Nicholas II also inspired the Siamese king to send his favorite son, Prince Chakrabongse, to Russia for education and military training, transferring him from England to Russia.<sup>85</sup>

The Russian favor of the Siamese king seemed to dissatisfy the French since the former had intervened too much in Franco-Siamese relationship. When the king went back to Paris again in October, the French response was different from his first trip. In this regard, the British Minister Greville back in Bangkok had the impression that Franco-Siamese relations had therefore “reverted to the position in which they were before the King’s first visit to Paris,” i.e. a “not very satisfactory state.”<sup>86</sup> According to Brailey (2009), it seemed that this discouraging outcome was a desire of the Russians to be Siam’s only friend.<sup>87</sup> *Le Temps*, the French Press, hinted that more Frenchmen needed to be recruited as expatriate advisers to the Siamese government in order to help improve Franco-Siamese relations.<sup>88</sup> Nonetheless, King Chulalongkorn promised

---

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 7-8.

<sup>85</sup> Sending his sons to study abroad was King Chulalongkorn’s favored strategy as it was the way to strengthen ties with European courts and gain insight into European politics and military life. Prince Chakrabongse spent ten years in Russia, and eventually contracted a morganatic marriage with a Ukrainian. Other sons studied in universities or military academies in Germany and Britain. Cited in Nigel J. Brailey, *Imperial Amnesia: Britain, France and “The Question of Siam”* (Dordrecht: Republic of Letters Publishing BV, 2009), 9-10, 17.

<sup>86</sup> Monson and Greville to Salisbury, 15 and 21 Oct. 1897. FO 422/47.

<sup>87</sup> Nigel J. Brailey, *Imperial Amnesia: Britain, France and “The Question of Siam”* (Dordrecht: Republic of Letters Publishing BV, 2009), 18.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 16.



Hanotaux, the French Foreign Minister, to send a plenipotentiary the next year “to arrange outstanding questions.”<sup>89</sup>



Figure 2-22: The picture of King Chulalongkorn published on the cover of *Le Petit Journal* (left)  
Source: *Le Petit Journal*, 19 September 19, 1897

Figure 2-23: The picture of King Chulalongkorn and Tsar Nicholas II  
Source: *L'ILLUSTRATION*; September 11, 1897. (right)

- **Consequences of the King's First European Tour**

Overall, the king's European tour had been a success at least domestically, if not internationally. According to Winichakul (2000), the king's trip to Europe was to serve Siamese anxiety and curiosity rather than to be a diplomatic measure to get recognition

<sup>89</sup> Greville to Salisbury, 29 Dec. 1897. FO 422/49. IN Nigel J. Brailey, *Imperial Amnesia: Britain, France and "The Question of Siam"* (Dordrecht: Republic of Letters Publishing BV, 2009), 17.

from the Europeans.<sup>90</sup> Though there were some improvements of the Siamese image in the worldview and the reduction of European ignorance of this small country, there were still some critiques on the king's grand tour. Unsympathetically, H.W. Smyth, the Director of the Department of Mines in Siam, wrote to his old friend Dr. Ernest Morrison of *The Times*, "I think it['s] a mistake the King['s] coming over to Europe don[']t you? Great expense, and nothing for it and the work in Siam will all stop dead."<sup>91</sup> And Morrison himself, later on in 1899, calculated the cost of the tour at around a quarter of a million pounds, nearly a fifth of total Siamese government expenditure for the financial year 1897-98.<sup>92</sup>

Even though, this trip improved the Siamese relationship with France, the territorial issues between the two countries remained active until ending with dramatic territorial concessions in which Siam was forced to alienate a considerable portion of Siamese territory.<sup>93</sup> Siam ceded the three eastern provinces of Battambang, Sisophon and Siem Reap to Cambodia, a French colonial territory. France, in return, renounced extra-territorial privileges over French citizens, protégés and subjects that it had exercised since 1893, together with giving two smaller areas that it had occupied along

---

<sup>90</sup> Thongchai Winichakul, "The Quest for "Siwilai": A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 59, no. 3 (2000): 542.

<sup>91</sup> Smyth to Morrison, April 26, 1897, Morrison Papers vol. 42, Mitchell Library Sydney. Cited in Nigel J. Brailey, *Imperial Amnesia: Britain, France and "The Question of Siam"* (Dordrecht: Republic of Letters Publishing BV, 2009), 19.

<sup>92</sup> "The Progress of Siam", *The Times*, April 4, 1899. Cited in Nigel J. Brailey, *Imperial Amnesia: Britain, France and "The Question of Siam"* (Dordrecht: Republic of Letters Publishing BV, 2009), 19.

<sup>93</sup> See Tuck, *The French Wolf and the Siamese Lamb*, and Brailey, *Imperial Amnesia*, for details of their relations over the ten-year period.

the Laotian border and in the Chantaburi region further south, back to Siam.<sup>94</sup> These agreements were signed on 22 March 1907, only a few days before King Chulalongkorn left Siam for his second European tour in pursuit of modernization.

Nonetheless, in the Siamese view, there was pride in their sovereign's reception as the head of state of one of the few remaining independent countries in Asia, which became the legacy for the king's compatriots in the way that his personal diplomacy conducted during his European tours played a significant role in the retaining of Siam's independence.<sup>95</sup> According to Peleggi (2002), this direct encounter with Europe's ruling dynasties and heads of state illustrates the endeavor of the king to refashion the public image of the Siamese monarchy as a modern, civilized, and civilizing institution.<sup>96</sup>

More significantly, King Chulalongkorn initiated a huge project, Dusit Park, discussed further, to remake Bangkok into a modern Siamese capital after his return. European ways and goods were now realized by the king and the Siamese aristocrats as a pattern of civilization. Siamese aristocrats now created another phase of self-civilization through material culture, architecture and urban design.

### **2.2.3. The Growth of Bangkok during the Period of Modernization (1855-1910)**

In this period, commercial expansion following the establishment of trade relations with Western countries was an influential cause for transforming Bangkok's

---

<sup>94</sup> Robert Aldrich, "France and the King of Siam: An Asian King's Visits to the Republican Capital", in Julie Kalman (ed.), *French History and Culture: Papers from the George Rude Seminar*, vol.6 (2015): 236.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 239.

<sup>96</sup> Maurizio Peleggi, *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002).

physical development. Since the 1850s, after the year of accession of King Mongkut (1851-68), the city landscape gradually changed. The Phadung Krung Kasem Canal was dug in 1851-54 by King Mongkut's command in order to encompass the expanding population outside the old city walls.<sup>97</sup> In other words, it served as a new outer moat for the Bangkok expansion, extending its boundaries to the north and the east. As a result, the area of Bangkok roughly doubled to 5,552 rai<sup>98</sup> (8.88 kilometers) indicating that the physical growth of Bangkok was considerably influenced by canals at this time (Figure 2-26).<sup>99</sup>

As trade and colonial expansion in the region rapidly grew, the Siamese kings were well aware of the importance of reform in order to counter Western colonial ambition. The reformation, which included an adequate infrastructure as well as the improvement of political, governmental and economic systems, was done through the process of Modernization.

After the signing of the Bowring Treaty with Great Britain in 1855, more Westerners came to live in Bangkok and set up trading firms and industries since they could now trade freely without state interference due to the abolition of the state monopoly on international trade and the permission to have private businesses. The area along the bank of the river, especially on the east side where Bangkok was located, became the focus for establishing the company headquarters, warehouses, and private

---

<sup>97</sup> Thiphakhorawong (Chao Phraya), *The Dynastic Chronicles, Bangkok Era, The Fourth Reign (AD 1851–1868)*, trans. C.K. Flood, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Center for East Asian Cultural Studies, 1966), 91-2.

<sup>98</sup> A unit of area equal to 1,600 square meters.

<sup>99</sup> Porphant Ouyyanont, "Physical and economic change in Bangkok, 1851-1925," *Southeast Asian Studies* 36, no.4 (1999): 440.

wharves of the western trading companies, the rice and saw mills and their wharves, custom houses, and the consulate of Western countries. Bangkok grew along Chao Phraya River indicating the great significance of the river. Similarly, canals in Bangkok were also important to the Siamese's life, as well as to foreign trade which was flourishing, particularly in this period. Between 1860-1910, more than fifteen canals were dug to link Bangkok and the central hinterland.<sup>100</sup> Trade necessitated the digging of canals, and the city grew accordingly. Bangkok gradually extended to the north when the Prem Prachakorn Canal was dug in 1869-70 to connect the city to Ayutthaya, the center of fertile rice agriculture.<sup>101</sup> People were then encouraged to settle in the northern part of Bangkok. Later, when the Pravit Burirom Canal was dug in 1878 to link Bangkok and Chachoengsao, another rice growing center, Bangkok consequently expanded eastwards (Figure 2-24).<sup>102</sup> The growth of business also generated the demand for land for construction and some residential areas.

---

<sup>100</sup> Porphant Ouyyanont, "Physical and economic change in Bangkok, 1851-1925," *Southeast Asian Studies* 36, no.4 (1999): 437-438.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 440-1.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*



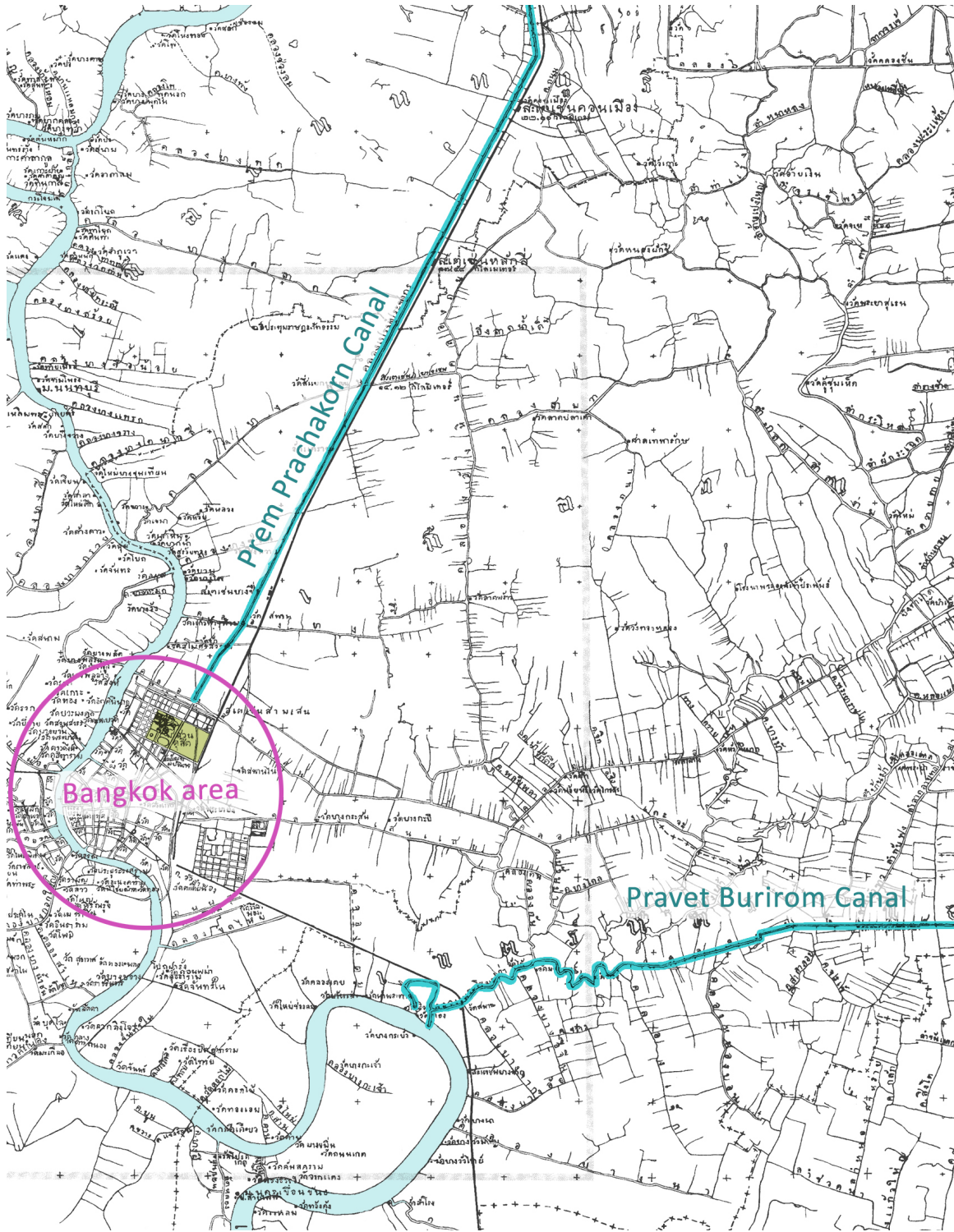


Figure 2-24: Bangkok map, 1902.  
Source: Compiled from Royal Thai Survey Department

In terms of urban settlement, Westerners preferred to settle within their own communities rather than to intermingle with Siamese natives. The concentration of Westerners along the river, mainly on the southern part of Bangkok, created the Euro-American quarter which later had a great influence on city development. One of the major changes was the construction of the first road outside the royal palace compound due to the petition European residents presented to King Mongkut. They complained about illnesses since there were no roads for exercise and to make excursions in their horse-drawn coaches.<sup>103</sup> Moreover, Somdet Chao Phraya's sightseeing travels to Singapore in 1861 also supported the idea of building the road because he saw the city plan of roads with shophouses built along them. The king therefore agreed to construct the road and shophouses along it like those in Singapore in order to serve the needs of the Westerners.<sup>104</sup> In 1862, King Mongkut ordered the first road to be cut parallel to the river. It was named *Charoen Krung* meaning prosperous city; however, it was commonly known among the Westerners as 'New Road' (Figure 2-25).<sup>105</sup> This road formed the main commercial artery of Bangkok until the twentieth century. The construction of other roads then followed. In the early phase before 1890, roads were usually built parallel to canal excavation, because the existing canals provided the concentration of

---

<sup>103</sup> Michael Smithies, *Old Bangkok* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 37.

<sup>104</sup> Malinee Khumsupha, "Changes in Urban Bangkok 1855-1909: The Impact of the Settlement of the British and their subjects" (Doctoral dissertation, Chulalongkorn University, 2011), 141.

<sup>105</sup> Porphant Ouyyanont, "Physical and economic change in Bangkok, 1851-1925," *Southeast Asian Studies* 36, no.4 (1999): 443.

settlements, the major routes of transportation, and the materials for construction (Figure 2-26).<sup>106</sup>



Figure 2-25: Charoen Krung Road, 1890s

Source: <http://teakdoor.com/Gallery/albums/userpics/58147/1894-charoen-krung-road-bangkok-xbx.jpg>

<sup>106</sup> Porphant Ouyyanont, "Physical and economic change in Bangkok, 1851-1925," *Southeast Asian Studies* 36, no.4 (1999): 443.



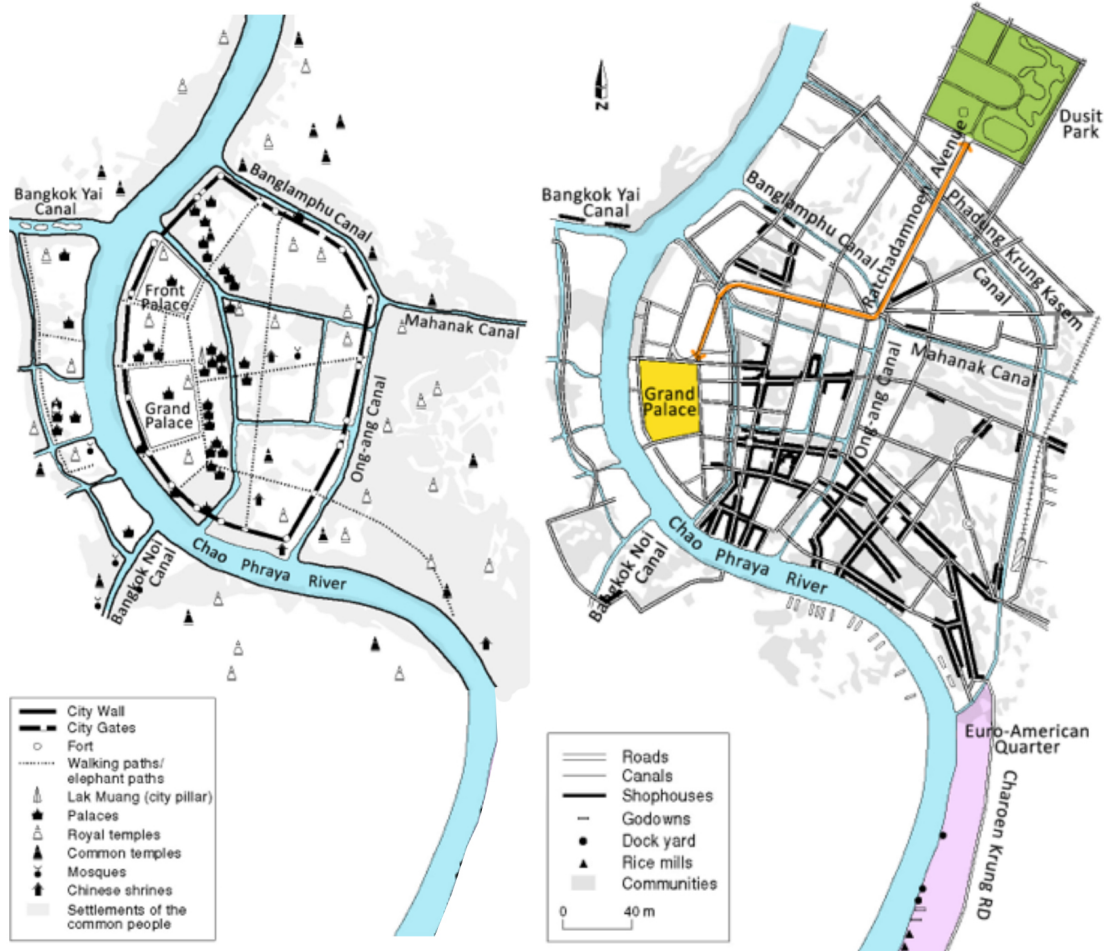


Figure 2-26: Maps showing the expansion of Bangkok urban area, extracted from Bangkok Map 1820 (Left), and 1910 (Right)

Source: compiled from Marc Askew, *Bangkok, Place, Practice, and Representation*.

Roads gradually became more important and induced the construction of shophouses along both sides which consequently formed a business district. The price of land then increased which encouraged the king and Siamese elites to build roads as business investments. The Privy Purse Bureau<sup>107</sup> was crucial to Bangkok's development and especially between 1890 and 1910, Bangkok's new streets were usually laid out as

<sup>107</sup> Privy Purse Bureau was the king's personal institution established as an independent department within the Ministry of Finance in 1890. The king was able to manage money to allocate to his own interests.

part of shophouse construction for royal investment.<sup>108</sup> Sathorn road was the first private road named after Luang Sathornrajyukti who built it. It was constructed in the 1890s, and the surrounding land was divided into small parcels for sale and rental. The entire area then became a residential zone where fine homes belonging to Siamese nobles and the foreign community were located. This was the early phase of the city's eastward extension.

Later, road construction was not only to enhance capital investments, but also to expand the city area into the suburbs,<sup>109</sup> as well as to impress western observers with the spectacle of civilization and progress.<sup>110</sup> Due to the accelerated growth of Bangkok, a variety of land uses were required. These demands stimulated an urban land market which turned the city into a new field of capital accumulation for the state.

The most important breakthrough in this regard was King Mongkut's acceptance of private ownership of land. In the past, it was traditionally understood that all land belonged to the king.<sup>111</sup> King Mongkut, however, argued in his proclamation that 'this law has become punitive and is not based on the principles of justice'. He eventually decided that the state had to pay for land at a fair market price.<sup>112</sup>

---

<sup>108</sup> Porphant Ouyyanont, "Physical and economic change in Bangkok, 1851-1925," *Southeast Asian Studies* 36, no.4 (1999): 466.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Marc Askew, *Bangkok: Place, Practice and Representation* (London; New York: Routledge), 30-1.

<sup>111</sup> Cited in Thai Khadi Institute, *Persistence Within Change*, Bangkok, 53.

<sup>112</sup> Printed in Chattip Nartsupha/Suthy Prasartset (eds), *Socio-Economic Institutions and Cultural Change in Siam, 1851-1910*, Bangkok 1981, pp.291-296. Cited in Andreas Sturm, "The King's Nation: A Study of the Emergence and Development of Nation and Nationalism in Thailand" (Doctoral Dissertation, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2006), 99-100.

During the reign of King Chulalongkorn (1868-1910), road construction in the capital advanced and over 120 new roads were built.<sup>113</sup> As a result, new areas opened up, and thus the process of city development began. From the early 1880s onwards, settlements gradually moved from the banks of the waterways to along the major roads. This was the beginning of the residential and commercial quarter in the inner area, and the urban area expanded.

A new important project which would have unlikely been erected amidst rice fields of the Bangkok countryside, for example, was the Royal Bangkok Sports Club (RBSC) (Figure 2-27). This project, which was a club with a horse racing track and a sports field, was proposed to the royal family by the Englishman, Franklin Hurst. King Chulalongkorn granted a charter to the club in 1901, stipulating the name that it still bears today. Meanwhile, the acres of fields within the same neighborhood was envisioned as a residential quarter by the Sino-Thai entrepreneur, Lert Sreshthaputra, also known as Nai Lert. To enhance the attractiveness of these tracts, Nai Lert imported and planted hundreds of albiza saman trees from Brazil, giving the neighborhood a look unlike any other in the city.<sup>114</sup> As a result, in addition to being a pleasant location as a fine residential quarter, this new development district also became a desirable place for erecting the diplomatic compound.

Not only did the commercial and leisure activities require roads to create new city development, but royal activities also led to road building elsewhere. After King

---

<sup>113</sup> Porphant Ouyyanont, *Bangkok and Thai Economic Development: Aspects of Change, 1820–1970* (Doctoral dissertation, University of New England, 1994), 84.

<sup>114</sup> "The Chief of Mission Residence: A Brief History," U.S. Embassy & Consulate in Thailand. Access February 17, 2019, <https://th.usembassy.gov/cmr-history/>

Chulalongkorn's visit to Europe in 1897, he constructed a suburban palace, Dusit Park, in the northern part of Bangkok. Rice fields and orchard lands were turned into a showcase of the new *siwilai* paradigm. The Park was designed to be Bangkok's modern suburb, complete with gridiron streets, fine avenues and cast-iron bridges, with Dusit Palace at its center (Figure 2-28). There were also traditional teak buildings and European suburban villas, which comprised the offices that housed the expanding bureaucracy, camps for the garrisons of the standing army, temples, schools, electricity, tram lines, and clean water supply (Figure 2-29, 2-30).<sup>115</sup> The total area of this project was about a quarter of the city's size.<sup>116</sup>

Siamese scholars often cited the residences of European royalty where the king would stay during his foreign sojourns as the inspiration for this new palace surrounded by the natural environment. It would also be a suitable style to accommodate foreign guests. Moreover, according to Peleggi (2002), the dominant medical theories, which predicated a casual connection between crowded environments and the spread of infections, were probably another reason for the dissatisfaction with the Grand Palace as a place of residence.<sup>117</sup> Furthermore, King Chulalongkorn proposed a project for road construction around the palace and surrounding areas. These roads were lined with the palaces of the expanding royal clan, the mansions of other great households, and the

---

<sup>115</sup> Christopher John Baker, and Pasuk Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 100-1; Pirasri Povatong, "*Building Siwilai: Transformation of Architecture and Architectural Practice in Siam during the Reign of Rama V, 1868-1910*" (Doctoral dissertations, University of Michigan, 2011), 173-4.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 190.

<sup>117</sup> Maurizio Peleggi, *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), 84.

new ministries and officials. A grand boulevard, *Thanon Ratchadamnoen* [the Royal Way], was constructed to link the new royal district to the Grand Palace. Its name was derived from Queen's Walk, a fine avenue in Green Park, London. To the king, it was comparable to London's Mall, the grand avenue leading to the front gate of Buckingham Palace.<sup>118</sup> The boulevard became the place to conduct state ceremonies, and later became a monumental urban tableau befitting the modernizing monarchy's ceremonial and representational needs (Figure 2-31, see also 2-27).<sup>119</sup>

Dusit Park, according to Peleggi (2002), symbolized the king's model of modern kingship. The western-style buildings in and around the royal palace was a continuation of the efforts of his father, King Mongkut, to express a western-inspired taste for a new residential lifestyle for the aristocracy. However, the scale of building and its impact on Bangkok's landscape in King Chulalongkorn's reign were much greater. The areas to the north and west were now the headquarters of the royal-focused nation-state.

This trend of the Western-style residence was in place since the reign of King Mongkut and during the mid-nineteenth century, the seemingly western style buildings became the residences of the members of the royal family and nobles. Like typical missionaries and foreigners' houses in the same period, most of the western style

---

<sup>118</sup> Pirasri Povatong, *Building Siwilai: Transformation of Architecture and Architectural Practice in Siam during the Reign of Rama V, 1868-1910* (Doctoral dissertations, University of Michigan, 2011), 191.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

houses of the Siamese elite were constructed with wood. Only a few were built with bricks.<sup>120</sup>

These types of palaces and houses were similar to what is called the 'bungalow'. Its main characteristic was a large overhang and balcony in the front or surrounding rooms with a steeply pitched roof and one or two frontal staircases. It was mainly made of wood with fine carving details.<sup>121</sup> The style was, in fact, the suburban and rural house of the staff of the British East India Company, which was adapted from the indigenous Bengal house in the end of the eighteenth century. It spread across the Indian sub-continent and then to the British Strait Settlements in the nineteenth century. In this respect, the Siamese elite seemed to join the trend adopted by Indian aristocrats and merchants in seeing the house form, as Anthony D. King has pointed out, as "the basis of "Western-style" developments, manifesting in style and scale, the ranking and status of its occupants."<sup>122</sup> However, in the case of Siam, according to Fusinpaiboon (2014), the space of the house still conformed to Siamese beliefs and dwelling practices. In other words, the Siamese elites preferred to build the traditional Siamese houses with some adaptations to make them appear to have western tastes.<sup>123</sup> As a result, the different

---

<sup>120</sup> Chomchon Fusinpaiboon, *Modernisation of Building: The Transplantation of the Concept of Architecture from Europe to Thailand, 1930s–1950s* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Sheffield, 2014), 161.

<sup>121</sup> Phusadee Tiptas, *Chang Farang Nai Krung Siam [Western Architect in Siam]* (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 2002), 2.

<sup>122</sup> Anthony D. King, *The Bungalow: The Production of a Global Culture* (London; Boston;: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), 59.

<sup>123</sup> Chomchon Fusinpaiboon, *Modernisation of Building: The Transplantation of the Concept of Architecture from Europe to Thailand, 1930s–1950s* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Sheffield, 2014), 161.

looks between the houses of Siamese aristocrats and commoners were even more obvious.

In addition, the modernization of Bangkok during this period was seemingly part of the global trend where an unprecedented scale of embellishment and monumentalization of urban spaces was found in Europe and in its colonies.<sup>124</sup> During the period of the half century before World War I, national pride and status in the worldview were very important. The capital cities of newly unified nations, such as Rome and Berlin, as well as London financed monumental architecture in order to signify these concerns.<sup>125</sup> In Siam, new buildings within the walled compound of the Grand Palace and in the new royal complex at Dusit Park constructed during King Chulalongkorn's reign, in particular, represented the court's Westernized tastes. In the 1870s and 1880s, large building projects were carried out by foreign contractors.<sup>126</sup> Not only did this Western-design architecture make the Siamese ruling elite appear to be on par with the Westerners in the worldview, but also in eyes of the indigenous Siamese, which, according to Noobanjong (2003), "offered a discourse of empowerment and legitimization for the Oppressor, while simultaneously muffling the voice of the Oppressed."<sup>127</sup>

---

<sup>124</sup> Maurizio Peleggi, *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), 76.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>127</sup> Koompong Noobanjong, "Power, Identity, and the Rise of Modern Architecture: From Siam to Thailand" (Doctoral dissertation, University of Colorado, 2003), 142-43.



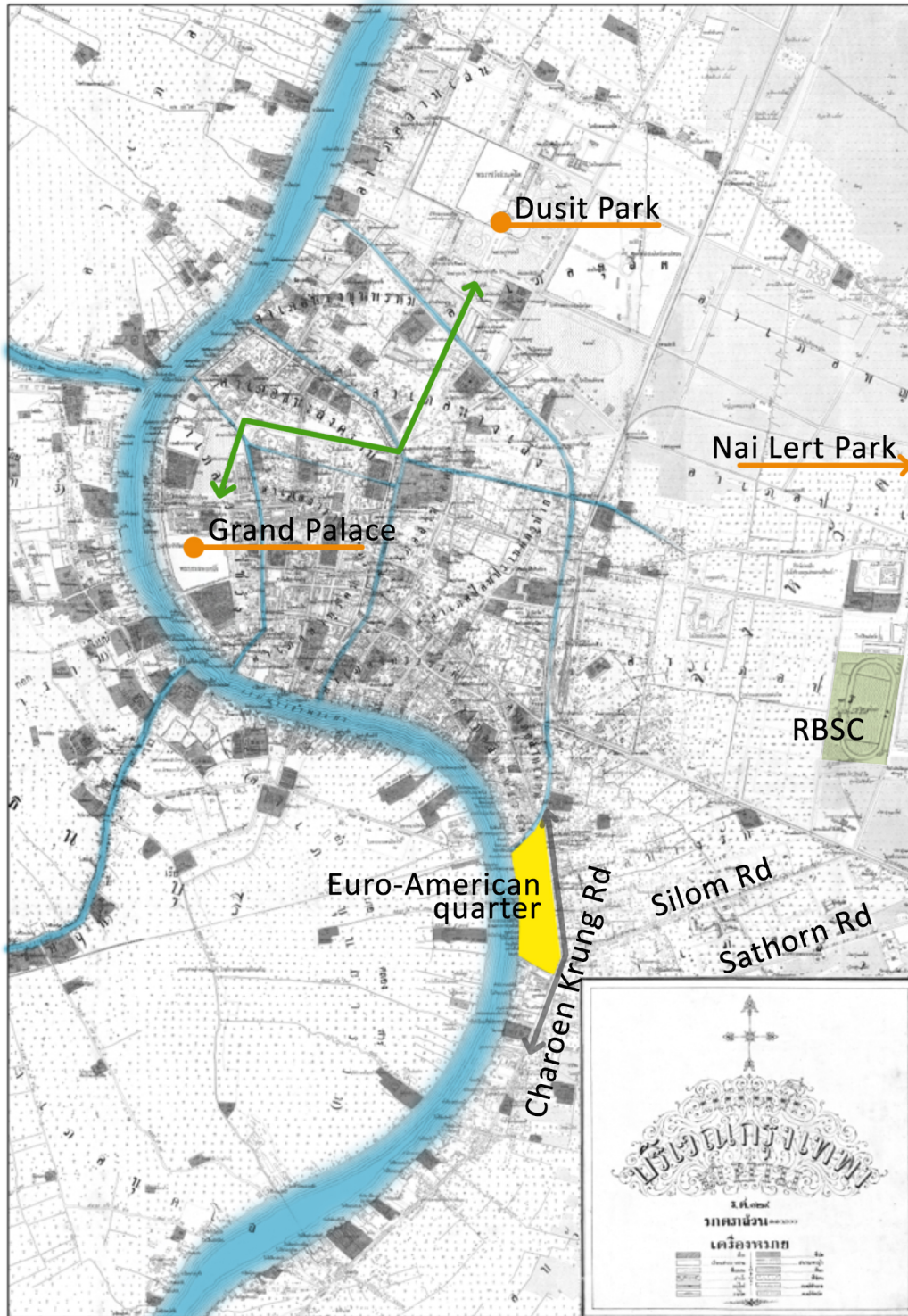


Figure 2-27: Bangkok map, 1910  
 Source: Royal Thai Survey Department





Figure 2-28: Dusit Palace

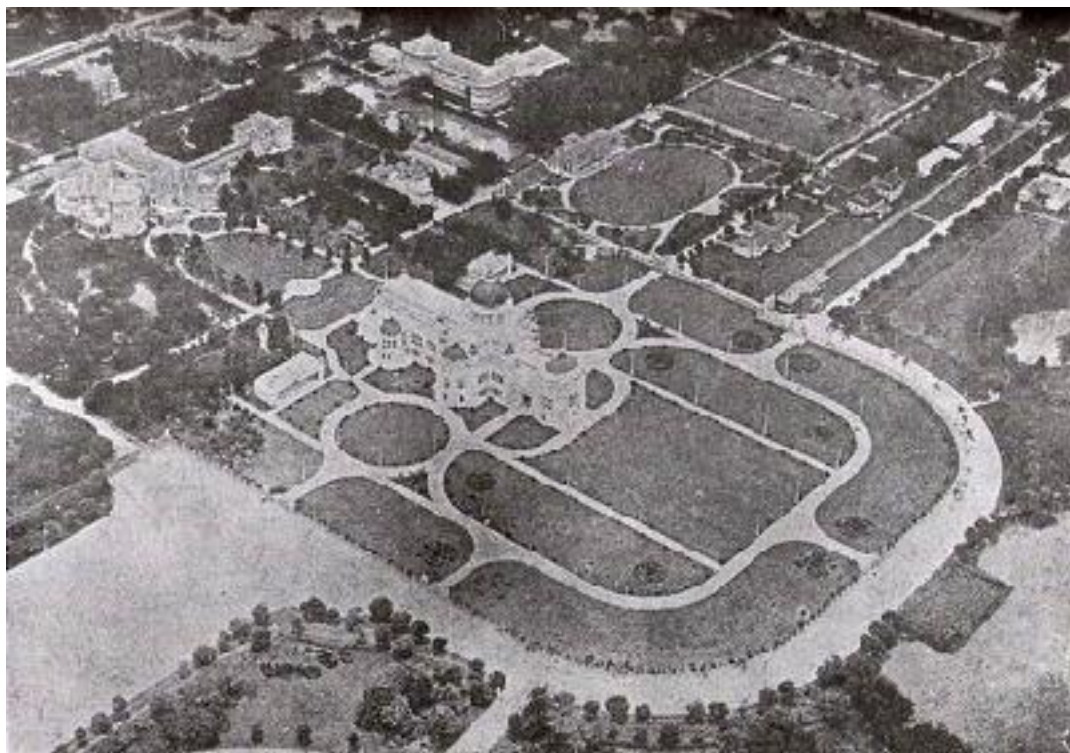


Figure 2-29: Aerial view of Dusit Park



Figure 2-30: Wimanmek Mansion, the King's residence, Dusit Park, Bangkok, 1900  
Source: National Archives of Thailand



Figure 2-31: A View of the Inner Section of Ratchadamnoen Avenue,  
Source: National Archives of Thailand

Besides these architectural and urban development influenced by the West, Bangkok had other developments brought by western technology which went hand in hand with city roads and streets including automobiles, largely owned by the Siamese aristocracy, tramways, electricity, the telegraph, and the telephone (Figure 2-32, 2-33).<sup>128</sup> A horse-tramway, for example, was introduced by the Danes in 1888. It was later electrified and extended in 1894. In the early 1890s, British and Danish merchants formed the first narrow gauge railway company running a line from Bangkok to Paknam. Later, the tramway company was amalgamated with an American electricity supply company which was later taken over by Danish capital. Eventually, in 1950, the Siamese government took over the whole operation,<sup>129</sup> however the Bangkok tramway system only ran until 1968. With the accelerated development and the new centralized government of Bangkok, the city grew from approximately 100,000 people in 1850 to around 360,000 in the 1910s, twelve times the size of the next largest city.<sup>130</sup>

---

<sup>128</sup> Porphant Ouyyanont, "Physical and economic change in Bangkok, 1851-1925," *Southeast Asian Studies* 36, no.4 (1999): 447.

<sup>129</sup> Malcolm Falkus, "Early British Business in Thailand," in *British Business in Asia Since 1860*, ed. R.P.T. Davenport-Hines and Geoffrey Jones (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 120-21.

<sup>130</sup> Cited in Christopher John Baker, and Pasuk Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 99.





Figure 2-32: Members of the royal family displayed their new automobiles in a cavalcade along Ratchadamnoen Avenue, 1905  
Source: National Archives of Thailand.



Figure 2-33: Tramways on Ratchadamnoen Road, 1911.  
Source: National Archives of Thailand.

### **2.3. The Rise of Siamese Nationalist Ideology**

#### **Nationalism and Refashioning the National Culture (1910-WW II)**

Except during the war years, the period between 1910 to World War II is considered the core period of Siamese nationalism. One of the reasons for nationalist ideology is that during these years, the Siamese ruling classes initiated several projects and campaigns in direct response to the Siamese circumstances both domestically and internationally. King Vajiravudh and Phibunsongkhram were the key figures of this period. The period of Nationalism in Siam is usually mentioned among academic scholars of Siamese history as beginning with the reign of King Vajiravudh, who succeeded King Chulalongkorn in 1910. The king himself is regarded as the one of the most important people in the analysis of Siamese nationalism. The rise of nationalist ideology came shortly after the previous Siamese territorial disputes with the Western Powers since the late nineteenth century seemed to be tranquil. However, there was no guarantee that the colonial dangers and encroachments upon Siam were over or not. With this realization, according to King Vajiravudh, only unity between the groups and the avoidance of conflict would create stability to keep the Siamese free.<sup>131</sup>

---

<sup>131</sup> Khanakammakan munnithiphraboromrachanuson phrabatsomdet phramongkutklao chaoyuhua (ed), *Phraratchadamrat khong phrabatsomdetphramongkutklaochaoyuhua ruam 100 khrang* [100 Royal Speeches of King Vajiravudh]. Cited in Andreas Sturm, *"The King's Nation: A Study of the Emergence and Development of Nation and Nationalism in Thailand"* (Doctoral dissertation, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2006), 139.

### 2.3.1. Responses to the Uncertainty of Western Influences

#### **King Vajiravudh**

King Vajiravudh, who lived in England from age 12 to 22, was educated at Oxford and trained at Sandhurst. He was an aesthete with interests in literature, history, and especially drama.<sup>132</sup> For example, he translated Shakespeare and Gilbert and Sullivan, built a playhouse, and wrote 180 plays and countless essays.<sup>133</sup> He was a proponent of cultural artifacts and he desired to use them to promote Siamese patriotism and military power.<sup>134</sup> In 1912, he founded the Department of Fine Arts to preserve and develop the art and craftsmanship of the country under one control.<sup>135</sup> In other words, the king, according to Noobanjong (2003), “nationalized the production of all cultural artifacts in Siam.”<sup>136</sup> The king then used all genres of media and writing that he could as the main method to instill a nationalistic mindset into the Siamese people, as well as to disseminate his ideas about the nation. The print-languages, according to Benedict Anderson, laid the bases for national consciousnesses. A language “enables a certain group of people to think of their community in an unprecedented, spatiotemporal definition.”<sup>137</sup>

---

<sup>132</sup> Christopher John Baker, and Pasuk Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 106.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Clarence T. Aasen, *Architecture of Siam: A Cultural History Interpretation* (Kuala Lumpur, New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 140.

<sup>135</sup> Walter Vella, *Chaiyo! King Vajiravudh the Development of Thai Nationalism* (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1978), 232.

<sup>136</sup> Koompong Noobanjong, “*Power, Identity, and the Rise of Modern Architecture: From Siam to Thailand*” (Doctoral dissertation, University of Colorado, Denver, 2003), 242.

<sup>137</sup> Andreas Sturm, “*The King’s Nation: A Study of the Emergence and Development of Nation and Nationalism in Thailand*” (Doctoral Dissertation, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2006), 44-45.

Moreover, the king, the first Siamese monarch to be educated abroad, saw that the jingoistic and nationalistic euphoria that he witnesses in Europe could be utilized in state-building.<sup>138</sup> Therefore, he tried to create the sense of belonging and identity for the whole population through nationalist ideology.<sup>139</sup> To King Vajiravudh, nationalism was exactly like royal nationalism, where the king was the representative of the nation, and the ordinary people only needed to be “unified, obedient, and grateful, to the point of self-sacrifice.”<sup>140</sup> As the representative, the king, unlike his predecessors, was separated from the nation by which everyone shared equal status regarding their importance.

This understanding could be seen through one of King Vajiravudh’s slogans: ‘Nation-Religion-King’. This motto was analogous to that of the British: ‘God, King, and Country’ demonstrating the Western import.<sup>141</sup> He visualized these three institutions through the tricolor of a new national flag introduced in 1917. The colors of the flag: red, white and blue, were the same as those of the allies in the First World War (France, the United Kingdom and the United States) – the side on which Siam participated during

---

<sup>138</sup> Walter Vella, *Chaiyo! King Vajiravudh the Development of Thai Nationalism* (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1978), xv; Andreas Sturm, “*The King’s Nation: A Study of the Emergence and Development of Nation and Nationalism in Thailand*” (Doctoral dissertation, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2006), 137-8.

<sup>139</sup> Koompong Noobanjong, “*Power, Identity, and the Rise of Modern Architecture: From Siam to Thailand*” (Doctoral dissertation, University of Colorado, Denver, 2003) 241.

<sup>140</sup> Christopher John Baker, and Pasuk Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 107.

<sup>141</sup> Walter Vella, *Chaiyo! King Vajiravudh the Development of Thai Nationalism* (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1978). xvi.



the war.<sup>142</sup> The reason for this was that the king desired to upgrade Siamese status in the worldview as equivalent to those of Western powers. The king, nonetheless, explained his idea of the tricolor in the way that it represented the elements of his nationalist trinity: red represented the blood of the Siamese who sacrificed themselves to protect the nation and religion; white stood for purity and therefore the Buddhist dharma; blue was King Vajiravudh's color and symbolized the monarchy.<sup>143</sup>

In the king's view, the concept of royal nationalism was based on necessity to maintain national sovereignty. In this regard, the monarch was not only the symbol of the nation, but also the natural leader. In addition, he declared "the people must be respectful and loyal to the king, who received the people's mandate to use his power on their behalf to protect the nation and to promote the common good."<sup>144</sup> Although the concepts of the monarch between his father's reign and his were different – the former considered the nation embedded in the monarch, whereas the latter emphasized the nation as an independent entity led by the king, there was a common ground in which the power of the monarch was absolute and unchallengeable. King Vajiravudh was aware of this issue and that it might dissatisfy those who were not part of the privileged circles; therefore, he gave lectures to bureaucrats and contributed articles to the press

---

<sup>142</sup> Andreas Sturm, *"The King's Nation: A Study of the Emergence and Development of Nation and Nationalism in Thailand"* (Doctoral dissertation, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2006), 143.

<sup>143</sup> Chanida Phrompayak Phueaksom, *Kanmueang nai prawattisat thongchat thai [Politics in the History of Thai National Flag]* (Bangkok: Matichon Press, 2003), 68-69, 78. Cited in Andreas Sturm, *"The King's Nation: A Study of the Emergence and Development of Nation and Nationalism in Thailand"* (Doctoral dissertation, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2006), 143.

<sup>144</sup> Koompong Noobanjong, *"Power, Identity, and the Rise of Modern Architecture: From Siam to Thailand"* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Colorado, Denver, 2003), 241-2.

in order to present his views of the nation and nationalism.<sup>145</sup> Nonetheless, his claim of royal position granted by the people was still subject to question. There were at least two attempts of a military coup, and perhaps one plan of palace revolution in his reign.<sup>146</sup>

### ***Royal National Building: Wild Tigers***

According to his nationalist ideology, King Vajiravudh inaugurated the Wild Tigers Corps on 1 May 1911 – six months and eight days after he became king. This project was quickly made possible because he had planned to create such an organization for many years before he became the king. The idea of the corps began in 1905, when the king introduced war games to his court pages at Saranrom Palace.<sup>147</sup> He viewed the corps project as a new instrument for bringing the nation together in the way in which it could break “the narrow interests, personal and departmental, of civil servants”; stimulate “martial values”; and above all; create “a new national spirit, the spirit of the Wild Tigers” among the Siamese people.<sup>148</sup> ‘Wild Tiger’, the name of the organization, was an old one that, according to King Vajiravudh, referred to men who “kept watch on the frontiers of the country, observing enemy movements, sending back reports to aid the Siamese army.” The Siamese nation owed its prosperity and survival

---

<sup>145</sup> Christopher John Baker, and Pasuk Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 106.

<sup>146</sup> Christopher John Baker, and Pasuk Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 106.

<sup>147</sup> Walter Vella, *Chaiyo! King Vajiravudh the Development of Thai Nationalism* (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1978), 28-29.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

to this corps.<sup>149</sup> The reference to this old corps was suitable for King Vajiravudh's idea to unite all Siamese people as in the past when there was no division between civilian and military groups. Every young man served their country in war – only after such service were men considered civilians.

To the king, Siam, a small country surrounded by enemies, expected all men “to become strong, to know how to defend the country, to gain expertise in arms, to begin to learn the arts of war ‘as soon as they were able to walk’.”<sup>150</sup> The members of the Tiger corps were, therefore, expected to support the military in time of need. They had to learn and put into practice proper discipline and learn how to march and drill. They had to participate in various ceremonies and fetes, and practice field exercises on maneuver.<sup>151</sup>

To bring citizen and soldier together was King Vajiravudh's aim to bring a new spirit of unity to the nation. All Siamese people, whether civilian or soldier, must see themselves as part of the nation. They must be “equally willing to do their jobs, equally willing to make sacrifices of personal comfort, personal advantage, even life itself, for the good of the nation.”<sup>152</sup> These new concepts for national unity were reflected in a new structure of the organization of the loyalties and ranks of the civil bureaucracy. Positions in regular departments were not valid in the Wild Tigers. A person with a high position in a ministry, for instance, might only be a common soldier in the Wild Tigers.

---

<sup>149</sup> Speech to Wild Tigers, May 26, 1911, in *Plukchai suapa*, p. 1-9. Cited in Vella, *Chaiyo! King Vajiravudh the Development of Thai Nationalism*, 29.

<sup>150</sup> Vella, *Chaiyo! King Vajiravudh the Development of Thai Nationalism*, 30.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

The reason for this was that the discipline and the stability of any group depended on everyone's obeying the orders of those whose responsibility it was to give them. In the Wild Tigers, every man must obey his Wild Tiger officer, no matter what position he might hold outside.<sup>153</sup>

This project might seem to be inspired by the Boy Scout movement that originated in England in 1908, and quickly spread to Germany, France, Russia, and the United States. The idea of inspiration, nonetheless, was not the case of Siam. Even though the king's appreciation of such an organization to strengthen the nationalism stimulated the Wild Tiger movement, the concepts of the two movements were drastically different. The Boy Scout movement was an entirely youth-directed and nonmilitary concept, while the Wild Tigers Corps was basically a paramilitary organization made up of volunteers who were recruited at first from among the members of the civilian bureaucracy.<sup>154</sup> Furthermore, the Boy Scout came too late to have been responsible for the Wild Tiger idea as King Vajiravudh already had the idea about the corps as early as 1905, when he introduced war games to his court pages.<sup>155</sup> The membership in the corps, though declared as voluntary, was in essence, practically compulsory for the higher civil service officials.<sup>156</sup> In addition, anyone who was not enrolled in the organization, according to a foreign commentator, "was regarded as a

---

<sup>153</sup> Speech to Wild Tigers, July 4, 1911, in Plukchai suapa, 58–71. Cited in Vella, *Chaiyo! King Vajiravudh the Development of Thai Nationalism*, 34.

<sup>154</sup> Vella, *Chaiyo! King Vajiravudh the Development of Thai Nationalism*, 27.

<sup>155</sup> Vella, *Chaiyo! King Vajiravudh the Development of Thai Nationalism*, 28-29.

<sup>156</sup> *Bangkok Times*, September 21, 1911

suspicious and untrustworthy person.”<sup>157</sup> As a result, some overzealous officials put pressure on their subordinates to join the corps in order to impress the king. By early 1912, the corps had about 4,000 members.<sup>158</sup>

The Wild Tiger Corps was usually regarded as the king’s own. The corps acted as a royal guard and as a vehicle to display loyalty to the throne.<sup>159</sup> It also, according to Vella (1978), functioned as a kind of club for King Vajiravudh himself, which was an extension of the club he tried to establish at Saranrom Palace when he was a prince.<sup>160</sup> He was involved in every step of the organization – he designed the Tigers’ uniforms and badges, wrote the Tigers’ songs, led the Tigers’ parades, organized the Tigers’ maneuvers, established the Tigers’ oath, and wrote the Tiger’s rules of discipline. He also composed the Tigers’ mottos, one of which read: “Give up life rather than honor,” and was emblazoned on its flags, badges, and signs.<sup>161</sup> The king’s contribution to every step of the Tigers was said to be because the Tigers provided him with the sense of total control, which he never received from the regular government.<sup>162</sup>

The king spent much time, attention, and money on the Tigers which consequently created the jealousy of many young army officers who felt that they were treated unfairly compared to the Wild Tigers. To them, they, not the Tigers, represented a real defense of the nation. They were dissatisfied with the privileges of the

---

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Cited in Vella, *Chaiyo! King Vajiravudh the Development of Thai Nationalism*, 37.

<sup>159</sup> Christopher John Baker, and Pasuk Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 106.

<sup>160</sup> Walter Vella, *Chaiyo! King Vajiravudh the Development of Thai Nationalism* (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1978), 33-34.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

paramilitary Wild Tiger Corps, and the waste of money by the royal household. The money spent by the king would be better invested in weapons in order to protect the nation in case of war.<sup>163</sup> Even though some of them wanted to join the Tiger Corps, military men were not allowed to do so. Only a few high officers were designated members in this “special” category. The reason for this exclusiveness was that the military did not need the training that the corps received.<sup>164</sup> Nonetheless, this group of young army officers were eventually arrested for complicity in a planned coup d’état in 1912. Their abortive coup in 1912 was, in part, a result of their jealousy, together with the earlier resentment of the military group to the monarchy which had accumulated since the late period of King Chulalongkorn’s reign.<sup>165</sup> Regardless of the aborted coup of 1912 and the criticisms of the Wild Tigers, King Vajiravudh kept the Wild Tigers active. His continued interest was clearly seen through his authorship of a play, *Huachai nakrop* (Soul of a Warrior) in 1913. It was used to propagate and extol the virtues of the Tiger corps and of the Boy Scouts, a youth version of the Wild Tigers.<sup>166</sup>

---

<sup>163</sup> Cited in Andreas Sturm, “The King’s Nation: A Study of the Emergence and Development of Nation and Nationalism in Thailand” (Doctoral Dissertation, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2006), 152-3.

<sup>164</sup> Rian Srichandr and Netra Poonwiwat, *Prawat pattiwat khrang raek khong thai r.s. 130 [The First Revolution of Thailand, 1912]* (Bangkok: Kim Li Nguan, 1960), 20-21.

<sup>165</sup> Vella, *Chaiyo! King Vajiravudh the Development of Thai Nationalism*, 45.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.



Figure 2-34: King Vajiravudh with the Wild Tigers corps  
Source: National Archives of Thailand

The Boy Scout, literally the “Tiger Cubs” in Siamese language, was established as a branch of The Wild Tiger by royal decree on 1 July 1911 and King Vajiravudh was scout chief. His aim was to instill the high patriotic qualities of the Wild Tigers into the minds of the younger generation.<sup>167</sup> Its members, in the capital alone, rapidly increased from more than 2,000 in 63 units by December 1911<sup>168</sup> to 21,500 in 177 units by 1922.<sup>169</sup> Similarly, the number of Wild Tigers also expanded, with the addition of almost 2,000

---

<sup>167</sup> *Bangkok Times*, December 5, 1911.

<sup>168</sup> *Chotmai het suapa* 2, no. 10 (February 1912): 666. Cited in Vella, *Chaiyo! King Vajiravudh the Development of Thai Nationalism*, 43.

<sup>169</sup> Henri Cucherousset, *Quelques informations sur le Siam* (Hanoi: l'Éveil Économique, 1925), 48. Cited in Vella, *Chaiyo! King Vajiravudh the Development of Thai Nationalism*, 43.



new full members in 1915.<sup>170</sup> The total membership by 1924 was reported to be over 10,000.<sup>171</sup>

The Wild Tigers had been variously evaluated – from high praise to complete condemnation. On the negative side, it was usually condemned as a useless, wasteful, gaudy show. On the other hand, it succeeded to the extent that it aroused a devotion to the nation of Siamese people, as well as a commitment to national unity. The corps impressed European observers in terms of discipline and national unity. For instance, in the neighboring colony of French Indochina, the French were aware that “The king and the Siamese aristocracy have created and are maintaining a Nationalist movement that it would be a mistake to ignore.”<sup>172</sup> Until 1925, when King Vajiravudh passed away, the Wild Tigers corps was sluggish, and quietly ended during the reign of King Prajadhipok. In 1939, its property was transferred to the National Scout Organization of Thailand who took care of the Boy Scout organization and which is still active until the present time.<sup>173</sup>

---

<sup>170</sup> *Chotmai het suapa* 9, no. 6 (October 1915): 595-608; 10, no. 1 (November 1915): 679-711; 10, no. 8 (December 1915): 807-811; 10, no. 9 (January 1916): 897-916. Cited in Vella, *Chaiyo! King Vajiravudh the Development of Thai Nationalism*, 48.

<sup>171</sup> W. A. Graham, *Siam* (London: Moring, 1924), vol. 1: 242.

<sup>172</sup> *Bangkok Times*, January 31, 1912. The article was based largely on an article by Lunet de Lajonquière in the *Bulletin de l'Asie française*. Cited in Vella, *Chaiyo! King Vajiravudh the Development of Thai Nationalism*, 52.

<sup>173</sup> *Prartchakitjanubeksa [The Royal Gazette], praratchabunyat haithrupsinkongsuapa tokpenkhong kanaluksuahangchat [The transfer of Wild Tigers' property to National Scout Organization Act]* 50 (1939), 1523.

### 2.3.2. Remaking the Nation

#### ***The Political Revolution***

Not until 1932, when the situation in Siam became crucial, that the absolute monarchy was finally overthrown in a political revolution by a coalition of educated military and civilian elites called the 'People's Party'. This occurred during the reign of King Prajadhipok, who succeeded King Vajiravudh, in 1925. In his reign, many of the reforms launched by his predecessors continued and further improvements were also made in transportation and communications.<sup>174</sup> The increase of the adoption of modern technology and administrative methods enhanced the effective authority of the absolute monarchy, but also provided opponents of the king the possibility to challenge the traditional power of the king.<sup>175</sup> The old relationships of patronage were replaced by the nation-state. The status of people as independent merchants, professionals, and intellectuals created the new urban middle class. This new community no longer depended on the government's support and could begin to come to grips with Siam's problems independently of those in power.<sup>176</sup> Moreover, they had more opportunities to compare Siam to the outside world, thus they demanded that progress was more widely shared, and redefined the purpose of the nation-state as the well-being of the nation's members.<sup>177</sup> On the other hand, the influential and conservative princes and nobles surrounding the king saw no reason to make any changes. They wanted to keep

---

<sup>174</sup> D.G.E. Hall, *A History of South-East Asia* (London: Macmillan, 1960), 676.

<sup>175</sup> Frank C. Darling, *Thailand and the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1965), 22.

<sup>176</sup> David K. Wyatt, *Thailand: A Short History* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2003), 239.

<sup>177</sup> Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand*. 2nd ed. (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 105.

the existing form of government. They hindered any moves of King Prajadhipok toward a more liberal form of government. The king once stated: “the power of the Monarchy depends more upon public approval than upon ancient prestige or more political theory.”<sup>178</sup> Even though, the king tried to liberalize the traditional political system, his poor health and retiring nature prevented him from making any serious attempts to do so.<sup>179</sup>

His failure to grant any democratic reforms stirred up widespread dissatisfaction among the small but growing middle class. This group of people included commoners who had studied abroad and had been influenced by the Western democratic ideas. After they returned to Siam, they were disappointed with their positions in the civil service which provided them with insufficient incomes. They expected a more influential and respectful role in the government. However, any changes in the government seemed to be too difficult to make possible. The reform became the best choice for them to overthrow the traditional system and establish a more modern form of government. In addition, their discontent was exacerbated by the Great Depression that hit Siam in the early 1930s and which this group of Siamese middle class suffered the worst impacts through salary cuts and taxes on salaries.<sup>180</sup>

---

<sup>178</sup> *The Government of Siam* (Bangkok: The Bangkok Times Press, 1926), 9. Cited in Walter F. Vella, *The Impact of the West on Government in Thailand* (Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1955), 357

<sup>179</sup> Frank C. Darling, *Thailand and the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1965), 25.

<sup>180</sup> David K. Wyatt, *Thailand: A Short History* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2003), 240.

On 24 June 1932, when King Prajadhipok was at his summer palace at Hua Hin, machine guns, tanks, and other military equipment raced through the streets to various palaces in Bangkok.<sup>181</sup> About forty important people were held prisoner in the Throne Hall and the revolutionary group, the People's Party, sent an ultimatum to the king.<sup>182</sup> The king, who had already drafted the first constitutions, (but was rejected by the supreme council) with no other choice, quickly replied that he was willing to remain on the Throne as a constitutional monarch and that he had always favored granting the people a constitution.<sup>183</sup> Consequently, the first permanent constitution was granted by the king on 10 December 1932. This day has thus since, been marked as Siam's Constitution Day, a national holiday to commemorate Siam's adoption of a constitutional monarchy in 1932. The country was then dominated by a handful of the Promoters of the 1932 coup until 1957.

The more progressive limitations of the king's power was clearly seen in September 1934 when King Prajadhipok's objection to three Assembly bills amending the Penal Code, regulating military establishments, and defining criminal procedure was withheld. His ancient prerogatives as "Lord of Life" were repudiated.<sup>184</sup> Only a majority in the Assembly was required to predominate over any vote. The king fell out with the military and then went abroad for medical treatment. On 2 March 1935, while living in England, he announced his abdication from the throne and his intention to reside there

---

<sup>181</sup> Kenneth Perry Landon, *Thailand in transition: a brief survey of cultural trends in the five years since the Revolution of 1932* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), 9 – 10.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> Virginia Thompson, *Thailand: The New Siam* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941), 86-7.

for the future.<sup>185</sup> Prince Ananda Mahidol, the ten-year-old king's nephew who was at school in Switzerland, was immediately proclaimed king after King Prajadhipok's abdication. During this time, the monarchy was basically absent from Siam because the new king had remained in Switzerland until 1946, except for a visit to Bangkok in 1938-39.

After the end of absolute monarchy, Siam experienced sporadic interventions. There were two major incidents before the premiership of Phibunsongkhram, who ushered a new era Siam's history regarding 'nation-building'. The first one was the Siamese coup d'état of June 1933 where the army and navy successfully seized the power of the government. Another one, that occurred in the same year, was the Boworadet Rebellion led by the royalist Prince Boworadet. This was a consequence of the conflicts between the previous royalist regime and the succeeding constitutional regime following the Revolution in 1932. Eventually, the government defeated the Boworadet revolt and Phibunsongkhram, who played a major role in suppressing this rebellion, then came to public prominence until he became a prime minister in 1938.<sup>186</sup>

Phibunsongkhram's first premiership ran from the end of 1938 to mid-1944 which nearly coincided with World War II. His policies, therefore, had a great deal to do with the way in which Siam had lived their wartime experience. Not much different from the earlier regimes, Siam during his time was shaped by his power and personality, more like a dictator even though his position had come through the process of a call for democracy. In the absence of the monarchy for the first time in Siamese history, which

---

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> Phibunsongkhram served as Prime Minister of Thailand from 1938 to 1944 and 1948 to 1957.

abdicated in 1935, the new ruling group had to build up legitimacy and credibility. To legitimize the power, Phibunsongkhram exploited the old concepts of nationhood which were Nation, Religion, and King as the basis of his strategy – the first two were to be reinterpreted, whereas the last one was to be abolished and replaced. Emphasizing the utmost importance of the nation became his ultimate goal. His government, therefore, initiated many projects and campaigns accordingly.

### ***Siamese Cultural Mandates***

According to the nationalistic ideas of Phibunsongkhram, as well as to legitimize his power, the nation was recognized as the state, which was interpreted as state-led.<sup>187</sup> In the context of a global war that Siam could not avoid, Phibunsongkhram's plan was to strengthen the country in order to remake the nation. In this regard, his most visible and straightforward project was to change the country's name from Siam to Thailand on 23 June 1939. The reason for this, Phibunsongkhram argued, was to clearly define the country by race, rather than by its geography like the old "Siam".<sup>188</sup> In other words, the country was signified that it belonged to the Thai as opposed to the economically dominant Chinese.<sup>189</sup> Moreover, 'Thailand' means 'Land of the Free', and, to

---

<sup>187</sup> Andreas Sturm, "The King's Nation: A Study of the Emergence and Development of Nation and Nationalism in Thailand" (Doctoral Dissertation, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2006), 171.

<sup>188</sup> Craig J. Reynolds, *Seditious Histories: Contesting Thai and Southeast Asian Pasts* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006), 245.

<sup>189</sup> David K. Wyatt, *Thailand: A Short History* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2003), 254.

Phibunsongkhram, it emphasized his idea that the country was free from foreign powers, as well as the royalist past.<sup>190</sup>

Not only was the nation reinterpreted, but Siamese culture was also redesigned. Like the previous regimes, the perception of the civilization of the country to the outside world was also Phibunsongkhram's aim. In his view, the nation's success mainly depended upon the culture. "A Thai with a good culture must be a real Thai at heart. He must really love Thai, do everything for Thai and have hope into the Thai nation. This will result in the development of the nation onto the same level as other civilized countries."<sup>191</sup> In this regard, his government initiated twelve cultural mandates as a policy, or what Baker (2009) defined as 'state edicts', which were called '*ratthaniyom*' in Thai. Six were introduced in 1939, three in 1940, two in 1941 and one in 1942.<sup>192</sup> Phibunsongkhram first introduced '*ratthaniyom*' to his national audience on the National Day in 1939 as follows:

*Ratthaniyom* is similar to the proper type of etiquette to be observed by all civilized people. In this term is included 'public power,' which is derived from public opinion. Public opinion brings public power, and this enables either the reformation, or the suppression of a minority of people who are stubborn and not desiring to become reformed.<sup>193</sup>

---

<sup>190</sup> Andreas Sturm, "The King's Nation: A Study of the Emergence and Development of Nation and Nationalism in Thailand" (Doctoral Dissertation, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2006), 171.

<sup>191</sup> Cited in Andreas Sturm, "The King's Nation: A Study of the Emergence and Development of Nation and Nationalism in Thailand" (Doctoral Dissertation, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2006), 170.

<sup>192</sup> Thamsook Numnonda, *Thailand and the Japanese Presence, 1941-45* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1977), 23.

<sup>193</sup> Scot Barmé, *Luang Wichit Wathakan and the Creation of a Thai Identity* (Singapore: ISEAS, 1993), 144.



The twelve mandates on these aspects are as follows<sup>194</sup>:

- (1) The names of the country, people, and nationality: The name of the country changed to “Thailand”, and its nationality was “Thai”.<sup>195</sup>
- (2) Protecting the nation's security: e.g. Thai people must not engage in any business without considering the benefit and safety of the nation.<sup>196</sup>
- (3) The name of the Thai people: Using the name 'Thai' to refer to all Thai people, without subdividing them – no more "northern Thais", "southern Thais", or "Muslim Thais".<sup>197</sup>
- (4) Saluting the national flag, the national anthem, and the royal anthem: e.g. When the national anthem is heard, whether played for official purposes or for any kind of ceremony, participants or attendees have to honor the anthem according to regulation or custom.<sup>198</sup>
- (5) The use of the Thai products: e.g. Thai people should make an effort to consume only food made from Thai produce.<sup>199</sup>
- (6) The melody and lyrics of the national anthem: e.g. The lyrics of the national anthem are ones submitted by the army.<sup>200</sup>
- (7) Calling the Thais to build their nation: Every Thais has to help build the nation. Every able person must work at stable career. The ones who do not

---

<sup>194</sup> Thamsook Numnonda, “Pibulsongkram's Thai Nation-Building Programme during the Japanese Military Presence, 1941–1945,” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 9, no. 2 (1978): 235.

<sup>195</sup> Office of the Prime Minister, *Prartchakitjanubeksa [The Royal Gazette]* vol. 56 (1939), 810.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid*, 1010.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid*, 1281.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid*, 2653.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid*, 2359.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid*, 2653.

will be regarded as unhelpful and do not deserve respects from the Thai people.<sup>201</sup>

(8) The royal anthem: Lyrics of the royal anthem were shortened, and the word “Siam” is replaced with “Thai”.<sup>202</sup>

(9) The Thai language and the duty of good citizens: e.g. Thai people must extol, honor and respect the Thai language, and must feel honored to speak it.<sup>203</sup>

(10) The dress of the Thais: e.g. Thai people should not appear at public gatherings, in public places, or in city limits without being appropriately dressed. Inappropriate dress includes wearing only underpants, wearing no shirt, or wearing a wraparound cloth.<sup>204</sup>

(11) The daily routine of the Thais: e.g. Thai people should divide their time into three parts: one for work, one for personal activities, and one for rest and sleeping. This should be done orderly and properly scheduled until it becomes a habit.<sup>205</sup>

(12) Protecting and assisting the children, the elderly, and the handicapped: e.g. In public places or roads, people should assist and protect the children, the elderly, or the handicapped to be safe from any danger during their journey.<sup>206</sup>

---

<sup>201</sup> Office of the Prime Minister, *Prartchakitjanubeksa [The Royal Gazette]* vol. 56 (1940), 3641.

<sup>202</sup> Office of the Prime Minister, *Prartchakitjanubeksa [The Royal Gazette]* vol. 57 (1940), 78.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid*, 151.

<sup>204</sup> Office of the Prime Minister, *Prartchakitjanubeksa [The Royal Gazette]* vol. 58 (1941), 113.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid*, 1132.

<sup>206</sup> Office of the Prime Minister, *Prartchakitjanubeksa [The Royal Gazette]* vol. 59 (1942), 331.

His desire was to uplift the national spirit and moral code of the nation, and to instill progressive tendencies and a 'newness' into Thai life.<sup>207</sup> These cultural policies were strengthened by other acts and policies. They prescribed Thai people how to live, to behave or to eat along modern lines. Thai people, for example, were required to dress in a modern fashion – the men in coats, trousers, shirts, and tie; women in skirts, blouses, hats, and gloves; and all in shoes. Contests were arranged to promote modern dress. Additionally, some western habits were suggested such as using forks and spoons, wearing hats, and even kissing their wife before leaving the house.<sup>208</sup> To Phibunsongkhram, Thailand needed all of this in the interest of progress and civilization in order to be accepted in the worldview as one of the modern nations.<sup>209</sup> Even though Phibunsongkhram encouraged Thai people to forswear imports and consume only Thai products, and some of his policies were regarded as antiforeign and even xenophobic, these mandates were in many respects along the Western lines.<sup>210</sup>

---

<sup>207</sup> Thamsook Numnonda, *Thailand and the Japanese Presence, 1941-45* (Singapore, 1977), 23.

<sup>208</sup> Chris Baker, and Pasuk Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand*. 2nd ed. (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 133.

<sup>209</sup> David K. Wyatt, *Thailand: A Short History* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2003), 255.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.



Figure 2-35: Poster showing “DO” and “DON’T” for appropriated Thai culture  
 Source: 100-year remembrance of Phibunsongkhram, July 14, 1997.

According to these cultural policies, Phibunsongkram’s focus was “to make Thai people truly Thai.”<sup>211</sup> The ‘new Thailand’ under his government was where a combination of true Thai would work together in friendship to unite the nation.<sup>212</sup> People were no longer to be described as ‘northern Thai’, ‘northeastern Thai’, and so on. To confirm the membership of the national community, Chinese and other non-Thai people needed to speak and act in certain ways. The reform of the Thai language was then created in the way that everyone was encouraged to learn and speak the Thai dialect of the central region. According to Benedict Anderson in his *Imagined*

<sup>211</sup> Chris Baker, and Pasuk Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand*. 2nd ed. (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 132-3.

<sup>212</sup> Saichon Sattayanurak, *Chat thai lae khwam pen thai doi luang wichit wathakan* [‘Thai nation and Thainess according to Luang Wichit Wathakan’] (Bangkok: Sinlapa Watthanatham, 2002), 135.

*Communities*, “Much the most important thing about language is its capacity for generating imagined communities, building in effect particular solidarities.”<sup>213</sup> The reform of the Thai language was also the reaction against the pressure of the Japanese to introduce Japanese in Thai schools during the war years. To promote Thai language, the government commission would like to make the language “easier to read and easier to write.” They, therefore, modified the language with “a simplified alphabet, regular phonic spelling, unique pronouns that ignored distinction of gender and status, and standard versions for greeting (*sawasdee*) and other common usages.” In 1942, a National Culture Commission was established to define and disseminate Thai culture.<sup>214</sup>

At the same time, this simplification included the abolition of the royal language and the use of official titles from the absolutist era. According to Sivaraksa (1991), the reform of language did not only diminish the importance of the monarchy by ‘equalizing’ the language, but also, one way or another, helped Phibunsongkhram legitimize his power by making him look like King Ramkhamhaeng who was regarded by Thais as the ‘inventor’ of Thai alphabets.<sup>215</sup> Similarly, this same strategy to legitimize his power after the end of absolute monarchy was also applied to architecture built during

---

<sup>213</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London; New York: Verso, 2006), 133.

<sup>214</sup> Chris Baker, and Pasuk Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand*. 2nd ed. (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 132-3.

<sup>215</sup> Sulak Sivaraksa, “The Crisis of Siamese Identity”, in *National Identity and Its Defenders: Thailand, 1939-1989*, ed. Craig Reynolds (Victoria: Aristoc, 1991), 41-58.

his period by which the royalist symbolism and the hierarchical spatial organization in Thai architecture were reduced and abolished.<sup>216</sup>

### 2.3.2. The Growth of Bangkok during 1910 - WW II

This period began with the reign of King Vajiravudh (1910-1925) who had a different focus than his predecessors. The investments in land and shophouses as in the previous reign were not the emphasis of his reign, as there is no record of large-scale shophouse construction during this period.<sup>217</sup> In addition, the development of the road network had also slowed down due to the government's financial difficulties. A large portion of the government's expenditure was on defense, royal affairs, and public investment such as railways and irrigation.<sup>218</sup> Nonetheless, the city wall and city gate were demolished in the 1910s for building roads, housing, and rowhouses.<sup>219</sup> As time progressed, land vehicles became more common, while waterway transportation declined.<sup>220</sup> The age of the canals in Bangkok was over, yet they continued to play a major role on the pattern of physical expansions thereafter. In the 1910s, less than 7-8 percent of Bangkok's population lived in floating houses.

---

<sup>216</sup> For further discussion on architecture built after the end of absolute monarchy see Chatri Prakitnonthakarn, *"From Old-Siam to New-Thai: Social and Political Meaning in Architecture During 1892-1957 A.D."* (Master Thesis, Chulalongkorn University 2003); Chatri Prakitnonthakarn, *Kanmuang lae sangkhom nai silapasatthapatayagam siam samai thai prayuk chat niyom [Political and Social Factors in Art and Architecture during the period of Siamese Nationalism]* (Bangkok: Matichon Publishing, 2004).

<sup>217</sup> Porphant Ouyyanont, "Physical and economic change in Bangkok, 1851-1925," *Southeast Asian Studies* 36, no.4 (1999): 451.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid., 456.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., 460.

In the 1920s, Westerners found Bangkok comfortable in a way similar to other European and colonial cities, considering the city to have good facilities, compared to the past, such as the western stores and medical dispensaries on Charoen Krung Road, hotels, the electric tramway system, an airport, and the railway station.<sup>221</sup> The evolving economic activities and the business investments on land sales also created the residential precinct of Silom, Suriwong, and Sathorn which stemmed from the impetus of the previous reign (Figure 2-36). The latter became one of the most desirable districts and foreign diplomats chose the Sathorn area as the location of their compounds, which will be discussed in Chapter 4. After the outbreak of World War I, foreign investors brought modern machinery to Bangkok. A number of plants were set up which included the British-American Tobacco Company, soap factories, coconut oil and bean oil plants, textile factories, waterworks, and power stations. The Siamese government also ran the Bangkok waterworks and the Samsen Power station.<sup>222</sup>

---

<sup>221</sup> Marc Askew, *Bangkok: Place, Practice and Representation* (London; New York: Routledge), 42.

<sup>222</sup> Cited in Porphant Ouyyanont, "Physical and economic change in Bangkok, 1851-1925," *Southeast Asian Studies* 36, no.4 (1999): 461.





Figure 2-36: Aerial view showing residential precinct of Sathorn road, 1946.  
Source: National Archives of Thailand.

From 1900 to 1936, the built-up area of the city expanded from 13 to 43 square kilometers. This expansion, however, was unevenly populated and ecologically diverse.<sup>223</sup> A number of functional zones associated with royalty and the state were consolidated. The royal precinct moved outward to Dusit Palace and Chitralada Villa was King Vajiravudh's residence. North of Dusit, the main barracks and associated offices of the army housed a military concentration.<sup>224</sup> The old city center where the Grand Palace was located, was now the major zone of government offices. Furthermore, more amenities and symbols of a modern city were continuously added such as hospitals,

---

<sup>223</sup> Marc Askew, *Bangkok: Place, Practice and Representation* (London; New York: Routledge), 41.

<sup>224</sup> Erik Seidenfaden, *Guide to Bangkok. With Notes on Siam* (Bangkok: The Royal State Railways of Siam, 1928), 81-6.

Chulalongkorn University and Lumpini Park (Figure 2-37, see also 2-38). The latter was originally intended as the site for a major international exhibition in the northeastern area of Silom. This park covered an area of 360 rais (57.6 hectares) on royal property, which was also a rare incidence of open space in Bangkok. At this place, there was a King Vajiravudh monument standing at the southwestern entrance to the park.<sup>225</sup>



Figure 2-37: Aerial view of Lumpini Park  
Source: [https://www.silpa-mag.com/history/article\\_25090](https://www.silpa-mag.com/history/article_25090)

<sup>225</sup> Ross King, *Reading Bangkok* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2011), 58.





Figure 2-38: Bangkok map showing some new development projects, 1945

According to King Vajiravudh's nationalist ideology, Siamese culture was a great civilization on par with other civilizations, the king supported the development of architecture which was orientated on traditional style in contrast to architecture in his father's reign, where western architectural design was favored. Maha Chulalongkorn Building (Figure 2-39) constructed in King Vajiravudh's reign was an excellent example for this neo-traditionalism. The construction of the building began in January 1913 and completed in 1915. It was designed by an English architect, Edward Healey, who was



assigned to study Siamese architecture at Sukhothai and Sawankhalok before carrying out the design work. The building was initially built as a Command Building for the Civil Servants School, which was founded in King Chulalongkorn's reign. Later, it was used as the university administrative building when King Vajiravudh had established Chulalongkorn University, the first university in Siam, in 1916.<sup>226</sup> At the foundation stone laying ceremony of the building, the king made clear that he saw architecture as an important means to promote Thainess: "It is necessary that we preserve Thai architectural art while we build this first university in Thailand. It should be heritage for our children for there is no better way than to have a model for the students to see and to know regularly."<sup>227</sup>



Figure 2-39: Maha Chulalongkorn Building, Chulalongkorn University.  
Source: <http://www.prm.chula.ac.th/cen067.html>

<sup>226</sup> "Maha Chulalongkorn Building," The Association of Siamese Architects under Royal Patronage. Access February 17, 2020. <https://asaconservationaward.com/index.php/2016-06-13-15-21-44/building-2530/32-maha-chulalongkorn-building-faculty-of-arts-building>

<sup>227</sup> Cited in Andreas Sturm, "The King's Nation: A Study of the Emergence and Development of Nation and Nationalism in Thailand" (Doctoral Dissertation, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2006), 150.

The symbolism of the monarchy was reduced after the bloodless coup d'état of 1932, which was the political revolution that changed the system of the Siamese government from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy. This meant that the political role of the Siamese monarchy was sidelined by the new nationalist regime. Its significance was superseded by warrior heroes and their role in the preservation of the nation. New urban monuments, such as the Victory Monument (Figure 2-40), were erected in the city in order to proclaim and encourage the ideals of the new elite. Another good example to demonstrate new political system was Ratchadamnoen Avenue. It was originally constructed as the royal way corresponding to its name, aimed to connect the Grand Palace to the new royal seat of Dusit. It was, therefore, the public expression of royal absolutism. However, under the government of Phibunsongkhram, one of the most prominent figures of the revolutionary group, it was redeveloped and the whole new project included constructing the Democracy Monument, stores, offices, apartments, a theatre, and hotels, to literally form the modern center of the capital.<sup>228</sup> In addition, King Chulalongkorn's mahogany trees on the avenue were removed, and the Art Deco buildings were built along the avenue (Figure 2-41). The Democracy Monument was a particularly good example in representing the intention of the revolution. It was erected to commemorate the change of the country's administrative system on June 24, 1939, and that date was then declared the National Day.<sup>229</sup> The later

---

<sup>228</sup> Chomchon Fusinpaiboon, *Modernisation of Building: The Transplantation of the Concept of Architecture from Europe to Thailand, 1930s–1950s* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Sheffield, 2014), 474.

<sup>229</sup> "Siam Monument to Democracy", *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, June 26, 1939, 3.

phase of the project was to build first-class hotels and a theatre, which, according to the revolutionary group, “would be another grand and luxurious theatre in the East, surpassing the ones in Tokyo, Manila, and Singapore.”<sup>230</sup> These changes effectively erased the absolute monarchy character of the city.<sup>231</sup>

Similarly, in terms of architecture, the royalist symbolism and hierarchical spatial organization were abolished by the change of architectural vocabulary. The simplicity and the lack of ornament created a new style of architecture called “the architecture of the People’s Party”.<sup>232</sup> This also happened at the time when the global currents of modernism were transplanted for the first time from Europe to Southeast Asia. In the case of Siam, however, this kind of architecture, according to Fusinpaiboon (2012), possessed a more complex history to suit the local context and time than a narrative of imitation or adaptation allows.<sup>233</sup>

---

<sup>230</sup> Rak, “Thai Sang Mueng [The Thais Build the City]”, *Chiwit Thai* 4 (1941), 21–24. Cited in Chomchon Fusinpaiboon, “*Modernisation of Building: The Transplantation of the Concept of Architecture from Europe to Thailand, 1930s–1950s*” (Doctoral dissertation, University of Sheffield, 2014), 474.

<sup>231</sup> See more in Chatri Prakitnonthakarn, “From Old-Siam to New-Thai: Social and Political Meaning in Architecture During 1892-1957 A.D.” (Master Thesis, Chulalongkorn University 2003).

<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

<sup>233</sup> See more in Chomchon Fusinpaiboon, “*Modernisation of Building: The Transplantation of the Concept of Architecture from Europe to Thailand, 1930s–1950s*” (Doctoral dissertation, University of Sheffield, 2014); Lawrence Chua, “*Building Siam: Leisure, Race, and Nationalism in Modern Thai Architecture, 1910-1973*” (Doctoral dissertation, Cornell University, 2012).





Figure 2-40: Victory Monument, 1987

Source: <https://teakdoor.com/famous-threads/39970-siam-thailand-bangkok-old-photo-thread-255.html>



Figure 2-41: Rachadamnoen Avenue with Democracy Monument, 1949



Apart from the specific projects mentioned and few others, only a small number of considerable physical changes took place in Bangkok during the period 1938-1944 under the first Phibunsongkhram government, even though Bangkok's population was rapidly increasing (at 6 percent annual growth over the national average of 3.5 percent).<sup>234</sup> The reason for this lack of urban development was that Phibunsongkhram only aimed to erase the absolutism of the monarchy in the city, rather than constructing new projects. Additionally, he had little interest in Bangkok's development as he proposed to move the capital city from Bangkok to Phetchabun. As a result, he eventually resigned his premiership in 1944 following a parliamentary vote against his proposal to shift the capital.

After the coup of 1932, the Siamese government promoted the idea of economic nationalism. Due to this, the predominance of Western and Chinese influence on the country's economy was diminished. According to Terwiel, "between 1933 and 1940 the number of European firms decreased from 122 to 104, while Thai [Siamese] business increased from 39 to 56."<sup>235</sup> Regardless of the changes within the top division of power, the socio-economic structure of the city had not changed. The landholdings of most of the old nobility in the city and its hinterland (and most of the crown's land) remained intact.<sup>236</sup>

---

<sup>234</sup> Larry Sternstein, *Portrait of Bangkok* (Bangkok: Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, 1982), 94.

<sup>235</sup> Barend J. Terwiel, *A Window on Thai History* (Bangkok: Editions Duang Kamol, 1991), 27.

<sup>236</sup> Benjamin A. Batson, *The End of the Absolute Monarchy in Siam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 238-9.

By the close of the Second World War, Bangkok remained a service-dominated commercial city tied to the world system and the changes of its markets.<sup>237</sup> In the post-war years Bangkok functioned as a significant link in international aviation routes.<sup>238</sup> There were also an increasing number of foreign advisers, journalists, diplomats and businessmen that expanded the expatriate foreign community in the city. Therefore, the residential rental market for foreigners boomed creating a major foreign expatriate zone in the Phloenchit- Sukhumvit district where the latest British embassy was located.

---

<sup>237</sup> Marc Askew, *Bangkok: Place, Practice and Representation* (London; New York: Routledge), 47.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

## Chapter 3

### Siamese International Relations with the West

#### 3.1 Siamese International Relations before the Bowring Treaty

This section provides an overview of Siamese relations with Western countries before the signing of the Bowring Treaty in 1855. The studied period began before Bangkok was founded as the capital city of Siam in 1782. The prosperity of Ayutthaya, the capital city from 1350 to 1767, attracted Westerners to come to Siam since the sixteenth century. At the time, Ayutthaya was possibly the largest city in Southeast Asia and one of the greatest port cities of Asia with trading links stretching from Persia to China.<sup>1</sup> It became an entrepôt between East and West. The city was surrounded by settlements of Chinese, Viet, Cham, Mon, Portuguese, Arab, Indian, Persian, Japanese, and various Malay communities from the archipelago.<sup>2</sup> The Siamese relations with Westerners derived from the commercial interests of the West in the Asian region. With its unique characters and good location, Siam became the destination. While other countries in Southeast Asia were colonized by the West, Siam was the only country in the Southeast Asia that remained independent.

Of all the Western nations to come to Siam, the Portuguese were the first. They came to establish friendly relations and obtained permission to trade since 1511, in

---

<sup>1</sup> Christopher John Baker, and Pasuk Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 13.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

which Ayutthaya<sup>3</sup> was the capital of Siam at the time. A large number of Portuguese followed and settled in the city. A hundred of the Portuguese even volunteered to serve in the Siamese army during a war period between Siam and Burma. After the war with the victory of Siam, the Portuguese were given land on the west bank of the river below Ayutthaya as a reward from the Siamese king in order to create their community – where they then built their homes and church. This was, therefore, the first European community who settled in Siam in the sixteenth century.<sup>4</sup> The Christian religion was another reason the Portuguese came to this region. At the time, their government desired to plant Christianity and Portuguese nationality permanently in all the Eastern countries that the Portuguese had conquered or where they had established trading stations. Marriage with the native women was encouraged to bring up their descendants as Portuguese and Christian.<sup>5</sup> However, the Siamese people did not seem to generally adopt Christianity.

In the seventeenth century, other European countries began to come to Siam. The Dutch came in 1604, followed by the English in 1612, and the Danes in 1621.<sup>6</sup> Siam became more important for trading, especially for the East India Company (EIC) which was incorporated in London under royal charter, and considered itself to have a monopoly on English trade in the Orient. During this time, Siam acted as an entrepôt for the exchange of goods between East and West since Japan, one of the main destinations

---

<sup>3</sup> Ayutthaya was the old capital of Siam (1350–1767), followed by Thonburi (1767–1782), and Bangkok (1782-present).

<sup>4</sup> Damrong Rajanubhab, "The Introduction of Western Culture in Siam," *Journal of the Siam Society* 20 (1927): 89.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 89-90.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

of the EIC besides China, had prohibited Christian merchants from its shores.<sup>7</sup> In 1612, the EIC established trading factories at Ayutthaya, the capital city of Siam, and in the South, at Pattani, then a vassal state of Thailand. By that time, the English were welcomed by the Siamese monarch, King Song Tham (1611-28), who was pleased to receive a letter from King James I of England which had been brought by the *Globe*, an East India Company ship. The Siamese king provided them with a brick house in the capital, even though this hospitality was hardly returned.<sup>8</sup> This, however, was the beginning of a long history of trade. Soon after, the EIC factory in Pattani became in debt to the state's ruler, and in 1623, the Ayutthaya factory was also closed. During this period, the Siamese king was in a very strong position and able to play the Portuguese, English, and Dutch against one another. There was friction between the Siamese and the Dutch which indirectly led to the treaty between Siam and Netherlands in 1664, in which the rule of extraterritoriality first appeared in Siam's foreign relations. This dispute also paved the way for the English factory, EIC, to reopen in Siam in 1662.<sup>9</sup> The king forgave the company's old debt, which had long embittered Siamese relations with the English, and generally made overtures to them in order to counterbalance the privileges that the Dutch had seized from Siam in their treaties of 1664 and 1668.<sup>10</sup> The situation of the factory, however, was not better than the previous one. The company's

---

<sup>7</sup> John Hoskin, *The British Club Centenary 1903-2003: A Celebration of Anglo-Thai Relations* (Bangkok: Mark Standen Publishing Co.Ltd, 2003), 14.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>9</sup> Virginia Thompson, *Thailand: The New Siam* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941), 142.

<sup>10</sup> W.A.R. Wood, *A History of Siam: from the earliest times to the year A.D. 1781* (Bangkok: Siam Barnakich Press, 1933), 97.

officers often traded on their own accounts and got into debt with the Royal Treasury.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, one of EIC officers, William Strangh, who was sent to negotiate a possible new treaty with Siam, alienated the favorite foreign senior minister of King Narai (1658-88), Constantine Phaulkon,<sup>12</sup> and as a result, Phaulkon blocked all Strangh's attempts to negotiate directly with the Siamese. The Englishman had to leave the country in 1684.<sup>13</sup>

The French, on the other hand, had a different purpose for coming to Siam. They first arrived in 1662 due to the mission of Louis XIV who sent Roman Catholic priests to find the best way to restore the glory of the church in the East to what it had been when the Portuguese powers were at its height.<sup>14</sup> It was concluded that Siam, a Buddhist country, was the most suitable place for religious propaganda as a variety of people from Eastern countries came to trade or to reside in Siam, and every religion was allowed in the country, unlike other nations in the region where the Moslem power was predominant.<sup>15</sup> The French strategy was to teach the different Eastern nationalities that they found in Siam, and hoped they would be converted. According to the plan, these people would then convey the Christian faith to their respective countries, and the missionaries would follow them afterwards. In 1664, a mission was established at

---

<sup>11</sup> John Hoskin, *The British Club Centenary 1903-2003: A Celebration of Anglo-Thai Relations* (Bangkok: Mark Standen Publishing Co.Ltd, 2003), 16.

<sup>12</sup> Constantine Phaulkon was a Greek by birth, and assumed all responsibility for Siam's affairs with foreigners. See John Hoskin, *The British Club Centenary 1903-2003: A Celebration of Anglo-Thai Relations* (Bangkok: Mark Standen Publishing Co.Ltd, 2003), 16.

<sup>13</sup> John Hoskin, *The British Club Centenary 1903-2003: A Celebration of Anglo-Thai Relations* (Bangkok: Mark Standen Publishing Co.Ltd, 2003), 17.

<sup>14</sup> Damrong Rajanubhab, "The Introduction of Western Culture in Siam," *Journal of the Siam Society* 20 (1927): 91-92.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

Ayutthaya by the Société des Missions Étrangères.<sup>16</sup> At first, the French came with kindness and charity and they helped the poor and sick people. They therefore gained appreciation from the Siamese, including King Narai of Siam whom eventually gave them land to build their church, Saint Joseph Catholic Church, which still remains in Ayutthaya until the present time, and assisted them in establishing schools. The French also helped the king build the palace and fortification of Lopburi as a second Capital to be used in case of war with the maritime powers. Moreover, the French engineers also built two forts in Bangkok.<sup>17</sup> King Narai took active steps by sending a diplomatic mission to France in 1684, which was lavishly received by Louis XIV. France, in return, sent an embassy back to Siam in 1685, and signed a treaty in 1685.

However, this good relationship did not last so long. The situation of the French mission changed. The French idea to make the Siamese king, and consequently, the whole Siamese nation, convert to Christianity created a strong anti-French and anti-Christian attitude among the Siamese nobles led by Phra Pejraja, who later became the king when King Phra Narai died in 1688. Besides the religion issue, Phaulkon, the Foreign Minister of Siam who was offered bribes of French titles, placed all French subjects and their protégés in Siam under French jurisdiction.<sup>18</sup> Due to these events, Siam eventually had the palace revolution in which Phaulkon was killed, and the current dynasty together with the French's allies were exterminated. The new king, Phra Pejraja,

---

<sup>16</sup> D.G.E. Hall, *A History of South-East Asia* (London: Macmillan, 1960), 340.

<sup>17</sup> Damrong Rajanubhab, "The Introduction of Western Culture in Siam," *Journal of the Siam Society* 20 (1927): 91-92.

<sup>18</sup> Richard Shaw Stetson, *Siam's Diplomacy of Independence, 1855-1909, in the Context of Anglo-French Interests* (Doctoral Dissertation, New York University, 1969), 64.



revoked all that had previously been done by French influence. In 1767, the European culture was lost with the destruction of Ayutthaya after the war with Burma.<sup>19</sup> Siam turned its back on the outside world since then.

Not until 1809 when King Rama II of the Chakri dynasty ascended the throne did the Siamese relations with the West began to revive after a 40-year suspension. At that time, Siam was threatened with wars by both the Burmese and the Annamites, so arms and ammunition were needed. In 1818, Siam granted the Portuguese permission to trade and to construct ships in Bangkok and they assisted Siam to obtain arms and ammunitions. The king also appointed a Portuguese agent, Carlos de Silvero, to the rank of Luang Abhaya Vanij and gave land, which was formerly occupied by an Annamite prince, for the Portuguese factory.<sup>20</sup> This site was situated on the east bank of the Chao Phraya River opposite the old communities of their ancestors in Ayutthaya known as Kudi Chin. It is now the present site of the Portuguese embassy, which was established as a consulate in 1820 during the reign of King Rama II. It was the first foreign diplomatic site in Siam.

In 1822, the relations between Siam and Britain resumed when the EIC wished to extend their trade to Siam. John Crawford was dispatched by the Governor General of India as an envoy to the Court of King Rama II of Siam in order to propose a treaty of friendship and commerce, as well as to negotiate the restoration of Kedah to Sultan

---

<sup>19</sup> Damrong Rajanubhab, "The Introduction of Western Culture in Siam," *Journal of the Siam Society* 20 (1927): 92.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

Ahmad.<sup>21</sup> Prior to this, the sultan had conspired with the Burmese to rebel against Siam, thus, Siam sent the army to invade Kedah. The sultan consequently fled to Penang, under British occupation since 1786, and attempted to invoke the treaties with the EIC to gain British assistance to restore him to his throne.<sup>22</sup> According to the negotiations between Crawford and the court of Siam, the Siamese insisted on their right over Kedah. Nonetheless, this issue was not the real complexity of the discussion. The actual one was that Siam was willing to give every facility to the British trade if it supplied them with arms and ammunition in return. This negotiation eventually broke down when Crawford asked the Siamese not to make such requests of the British against nations that were in friendly relations with the British – which Burma was one.<sup>23</sup> Little progress was made in the negotiation, in fact, the only concession that was made was the recognition of Penang as a British possession, which it already was for the past forty years.<sup>24</sup> The early 1820s was therefore a period of unease between Britain and Siam.

This situation was resolved by the delineation of the Siamese frontier and British spheres of influence in the Malay Peninsula through the Burney treaty, the first treaty between Siam and the British East India Company, in 1826.<sup>25</sup> The British Indian government sent Captain Henry Burney as an envoy for the mission to Bangkok. Besides

---

<sup>21</sup> John Crawford, *Journal of an Embassy from the Governor General of India to the Courts of Siam and Cochin China* (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830).

<sup>22</sup> David K. Wyatt, *Thailand: A Short History* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2003), 149.

<sup>23</sup> Damrong Rajanubhab, "The Introduction of Western Culture in Siam," *Journal of the Siam Society* 20 (January 1927): 94.

<sup>24</sup> John Hoskin, *The British Club Centenary 1903-2003: A Celebration of Anglo-Thai Relations* (Bangkok: Mark Standen Publishing Co.Ltd, 2003), 18.

<sup>25</sup> Crawford, *Journal of an Embassy*.

the border issue, the British also wished to end restrictions on Western trade in Siam.<sup>26</sup> Burney appeared to have been successful, where Crawford failed. According to Anthony Webster (1998), this success was mainly due to changing geo-political circumstances. The Siamese were greatly impressed by the formidable military power of the British since they just won the first Anglo-Burmese war prior to the arrival of Burney in Bangkok.<sup>27</sup> Nonetheless, Burney could not make the progress go very far. Aside from the agreement on the Malay States' frontier in which Kedah was still accepted as Siam's vassal, there were few trade advances made by the British, only some reduction in taxes and an easing of the royal monopoly on certain commodities.<sup>28</sup> Vessels were to pay tax determined by their size replacing the puzzling regulations in place before. However, Burney was not able to free British nationals from Siamese law, or to get permission for a British consul to reside at Bangkok.<sup>29</sup>

During the same period, in 1825, the American Consul in Batavia, John Shillaber, recommended that a mission be sent to open commercial relations with Siam. However, no action was made at this time. Compared to other Western countries as mentioned earlier, the American traders did not yet have an important role in Siam. American missionaries who came in 1828, on the other hand, was appreciated by the Siamese because they introduced many useful things including modern technological innovations

---

<sup>26</sup> John Hoskin, *The British Club Centenary 1903-2003: A Celebration of Anglo-Thai Relations* (Bangkok: Mark Standen Publishing Co.Ltd, 2003), 18.

<sup>27</sup> Anthony Webster, *Gentlemen Capitalists: British Imperialism in South East Asia, 1770-1890* (London; New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 1998), 159.

<sup>28</sup> John Hoskin, *The British Club Centenary 1903-2003*, 18.

<sup>29</sup> Robert Bruce, "King Mongkut of Siam and His Treaty with Britain," *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 9 (1969): 85-86.

to Siam. In 1835 Rev. Dan B. Bradley opened the first medical dispensary in the country and won the respect of the king as he introduced vaccination against smallpox and was able to restrain the spread of the disease. He also brought the first printing press, and in 1844 began to publish *The Bangkok Calendar*, Siam's first newspaper. Other missionaries taught the Siamese people better methods of hygiene and sanitation. In 1848, they established a small informal primary school in an attempt to inaugurate a program of modern education.<sup>30</sup> More importantly, an intimate personal relationship developed between the missionaries and Prince Mongkut, who eventually became king, which created one of the most important channels of American influence in Siam during the nineteenth century. The prince, while serving as a Buddhist monk, was taught English and science by Rev. Jesse Caswell, and other subjects such as mathematics and astronomy by other missionaries. This experience gave King Mongkut an intense interest in the advances of the Western world.<sup>31</sup>

Consequently, American missionaries set a different tone of Western impact in Siam as a peaceful and intellectual encounter. Without trying to coerce Siam into agreeing to a treaty, they brought books and tracts about Christianity as well as other subjects such as modern sciences, medicine and news, whereas American vessels and other Europeans brought arms.<sup>32</sup> They came to Siam with their own convictions, not sent by the government. Siam was viewed as their stopover on the way to China, the

---

<sup>30</sup> Frank C. Darling, *Thailand and the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1965), 13.

<sup>31</sup> Frank C. Darling, *Thailand and the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1965), 13.

<sup>32</sup> Thanet Aphornsuvan, "The West and Siam's Quest for Modernity: Siamese Responses to Nineteenth Century American Missionaries, *South East Asia Research* 17, no.3 (2009): 411.

ultimate destination of most missionaries of this period.<sup>33</sup> When they arrived, they saw a promising opportunity to establish mission work in Siam because they received friendly reception and enthusiastic support from the Siamese elite for advanced American knowledge until the late reign of King Rama III when a negative feeling towards the West formed.

Similar to American missionaries, the French Catholics, after being absent from the Siamese scene since the late Ayutthaya period, were able to pick-up from the basis of an existing foothold. Bishop Pallegoix, one of the most distinguished Apostolic Vicars of Siam who arrived in Bangkok in 1830, was able to revive and continue the work of the mission. Furthermore, he again introduced modern subjects to Prince Mongkut, who was at the time ordained as a monk. Bishop Pallegoix taught him geography, physics, chemistry, astronomy, French and Latin. The French bishop in return was taught Pali by the prince. When Prince Mongkut became king, he frequently invited Pallegoix to visit the palace and occasionally to meet for translating Pali into Siamese. This intellectual friendship between the two lasted throughout their lives.<sup>34</sup>

In terms of trading, American interest in Siam was increased after the success of the Anglo-Siamese treaty in 1826, though only small progress was made. The Batavia consul again proposed an American mission in 1830 and 1831, suggesting that he be appointed to head it.<sup>35</sup> This time his proposal was adopted but the envoy chosen was Edmund Roberts. Roberts established a treaty in Siam, which was very similar to the

---

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 409-10.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 408.

<sup>35</sup> United States Department of State, *Despatches from United States Consuls in Batavia (Djakarta), 1818-1906*, September 18, 1825; December 10 and 17, 1830; May 30, 1831.

British treaty of 1826. These treaties, whose major clause was a vague pledge to allow free trade, were made on the basis of equality and ceded none of the special privileges that the Western powers were to receive in later treaties.<sup>36</sup>

The treaties between Siam and Western countries did not stimulate trade between them as expected. The Siamese Government increasingly imposed regulations and monopolies that curtailed foreign trade. The Western traders encountered not only the arbitrary monopoly of purchase and sale exercised by the Siamese, but also fixed prices on articles for return cargoes by which no individual merchant dared offer any competition in buying or selling.<sup>37</sup> According to Thompson (1941), these bitter experiences faced by all Europeans stemmed from King Rama III's increasing xenophobia.<sup>38</sup> American trade, in particular, was consequently declined. The merchants could no longer sell to private individuals. It was reported that only two American vessels came to trade with Siam between 1828 and 1836, and none at all between 1838 and 1850.<sup>39</sup> Accordingly, both American and British Governments later sent new missions to Bangkok to secure more satisfactory treaty arrangements.

Another British attempt was made in 1840s. The Singapore Chamber of Commerce was lobbying the British government for a new diplomatic proposal in order

---

<sup>36</sup> Benjamin A. Batson, "American Diplomats in Southeast Asia in the Nineteenth Century: The Case of Siam", *Journal of the Siam Society* 64, no.2 (1976): 47-48.

<sup>37</sup> Virginia Thompson, *Thailand: The New Siam* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941) 199.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> James V. Martin, "A History of the Diplomatic Relations Between Siam and the United States of America, 1833- 1929" (Doctoral dissertation, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, 1947), 35, 41.

to secure a more favorable trade agreement in 1849.<sup>40</sup> Sir James Brooke was sent by the British Government as Envoy to Siam in 1850 to ask for a revision of the Burney treaty. He took a draft treaty after consulting with merchants in Singapore. The document included such proposals as complete freedom for British subjects to reside anywhere in Siam, the removal of all external duties on all items of commerce, except arms, teak and several other commodities, and the establishment of a permanent British consul.<sup>41</sup> Unsurprisingly, the mission was a complete failure. King Rama III who was, at that time, in a very poor health, and his advisers refused any revision as they considered those proposed amendments unnecessary and improper. Brooke eventually advised force. Luckily, London did not accept his gunboat plan and suggested to wait for the king's half-brother, Prince Mongkut, to succeed to the throne and to consider their pleas.<sup>42</sup> Similar to the British case, the American mission headed by Joseph Balestier, an American merchant from Singapore, also failed in negotiating with the uncompromising Siamese court. Moreover, his status of merchant, and especially of one whose unsuccessful business ventures in the Straits were already well known in Bangkok, made the Siamese very angry at this choice of envoy. Balestier was taken to the capital almost unattended.<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> D. R. SarDesai, *British Trade and Expansion in Southeast Asia, 1830-1914* (New Delhi: Allied, 1977), 84.

<sup>41</sup> Wong Lin Ken, "The Trade of Singapore, 1819-69," *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 33, no.4 (December 1960): 145.

<sup>42</sup> Robert Bruce, "King Mongkut of Siam and His Treaty with Britain," *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 9 (1969): 87-88.

<sup>43</sup> Virginia Thompson, *Thailand: The New Siam* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941), 200.



During this period in the late part of King Rama III's reign, the failure of missions did not only happen to the diplomatic ones, but also to those of the missionaries. The increased hostility to the American missionaries was evident. For instance, the applications to get the land permission for their mission were blocked by continued procrastination, in other words, were denied. Even in the case when official permission of the site was secured and the money was paid, Rev. Mattoon, an American missionary who later became the first consul of the United States, was required, without explanation or warning, to return to his old location. In addition, this took place at the juncture of the abortive negotiations of Brooke, by which the Siamese began to cut off communications with foreign residents.<sup>44</sup> The missionaries' situation in Siam was so critical that they eventually got permission from the mission office in New York to pull out of Siam. However, before they decided to leave, King Mongkut, King Rama III's successor, ascended to the throne. The attitude towards the American missionaries, as well as other Europeans, completely changed into decidedly positive tone. The new king even sent his thankfulness to the missionaries, whom were his teachers and friends during his monkhood, for all they had taught him. Furthermore, the Europeans were invited to King Mongkut's public ceremony of enthronement by his own invitation. This was beyond their expectation because no missionary was ever before on any occasion admitted within the palace walls.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> George Haws Feltus, *Samuel Reynolds House of Siam: Pioneer Medical Missionary, 1847-1876* (New York; Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1924), 102-3.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 106-7.

Regardless of the negative feeling towards the missionaries during the reign of King Rama III, the strong determination to open Siam due to its extensive trading potential remained. J.H. Chandler, a Bangkok missionary who later served as an American Consul, encouraged Secretary of State Webster and President Fillmore to press for treaty revisions in 1851,<sup>46</sup> the same year of the death of King Rama III, and the accession of King Rama IV, King Mongkut, in Bangkok. As expected by the missionaries, Siam, now seemed to offer improved perspectives for successful negotiations. But before the United States took action, the British successfully signed the Treaty of Friendship and Commerce between Britain and Siam, called the Bowring Treaty, in 1855. A year later, an American mission headed by Townsend Harris was sent to Siam, and the French one followed. These last three missions of Britain, the United States, and France are discussed further.

### **3.2 Siamese International Relations, 1855-1910**

This period of study began with the signing of the Bowring Treaty between Siam and Britain in 1855 which was one of the turning points in Siamese history. It integrated the kingdom of Siam into the world market system, and therefore, Siam started to have more solid international relations. The results of the treaty, on the other hand, accrued the gradual penetration of Siam by foreign influences, especially Britain and France. Nonetheless, Siam still maintained its dependent status.

---

<sup>46</sup> James V. Martin, *"A History of the Diplomatic Relations Between Siam and the United States of America, 1833- 1929"* (Doctoral dissertation, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, 1947), 54.

The period was also considered the cruelest Siam ever had in its history. Even though Siam is the only country in Southeast Asia to have never officially been colonized, the country shared the same experience with its neighboring colonies. The reasons Siam could maintain its independence depended on several factors. Regarding the internal factors, Siamese rulers always displayed tremendous flexibility in conducting the country's foreign relations to meet the demands of the circumstances. In the mid-nineteenth century when Britain was very powerful in the region, Siam developed good relations with her to deal with various problems. By the end of the century when France began to dominate the politics of the Indo-Chinese region, Siam signed some treaties with her, and maintained good relations in order to protect the kingdom from French aggressiveness.<sup>47</sup> The clever diplomacy of the Siamese, which was strategically planned since the beginning was another reason. An example of this is the equal status that Siam gave to all the countries since the start, which balanced the influence and power of the different nations in Siam. The external factors in keeping Siamese independence, was the mutual agreement by the British and the French to employ Siam as a buffer state between their colonies in Burma and Indochina. Even though this agreement secured Siamese status as independent, it did not stop the two powers from competing for the expansion of their empires.

Their contesting influences in the region, as well as in Siam, made King Mongkut feel forced to consider siding with either Britain or France and commented to an official:

---

<sup>47</sup> Ganganath Jha, *Foreign Policy of Thailand* (New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, 1979), vii.

“It is for us to decide what we are going to do; whether to swim up-river to make friends with the crocodile or to swim out to sea and hang on to the whale.”<sup>48</sup>

Unlike Great Britain and France, the United States at that time had no desire for territorial expansion in Southeast Asia. The Americans were interested rather, in missionary missions and trade. The United States also signed a similar treaty with Siam following the signing of the Bowring Treaty between Siam and Great Britain and was shortly followed by France.

Next chapter, therefore, selects three Western powers -- Britain, the United States, and France for the study. These nations were the first ones to sign similar treaties at the beginning of this period, and also the most influential ones in Siam after the signing of the Bowring Treaty in 1855. Though, at the beginning of this period, they had similar agreements with Siam, the different intentions and their situations in the region, if not in the world, constructed the different relationships between them and Siam, as well as between each other.

### 3.2.1. Opening the Kingdom to the Outside World: The Signing of the Bowring Treaty

#### in 1855

It was less than five years after the last British diplomatic mission led by Brooke left Siam. The new one arrived in 1855, and this time, the negotiation was headed by Sir John Bowring, Governor of Hong Kong. He came to negotiate the treaty with the full authority of the British Foreign Office behind him which, according to Thompson (1941),

---

<sup>48</sup> King Mongkut to Phraya Montri Suriyawong, 4 March 1867. Quoted in A.B. Moffat, *Mongkut, King of Siam* (Cornell, 1961), 124.

was one of the reasons the Bowring Treaty was successful, i.e. the fact that Bowring's credentials were signed by Queen Victoria, unlike the earlier unsuccessful ones in which Crawford's letters had been signed only by the East India Company and those of Brooke by the Foreign Secretary.<sup>49</sup>

It was King Mongkut's willingness to welcome Bowring's intent to negotiate with Siam. After China's defeat in the First Opium War in 1842 destroyed its trading capability, Siam sought to reinforce their trading partnership with the victorious British. Together with its awareness of the expansion of Western colonial power throughout various regions of Southeast Asia, Siam now looked to the West, not the East as previously, for its future.<sup>50</sup> The king wrote a letter to Sir John Bowring, and asked Bowring to send him the treaty terms in advance by private mail.<sup>51</sup> This was an incredible leap in Siamese international relations by which the king wrote directly to a foreigner after years of Siamese self-isolation since 1688.

Bowring arrived for negotiations accompanied by Mr. Harry Parkes, British Consul at Amoy, and J.C. Bowring, his own son, who acted as his secretary. They came from Singapore in two warships in order to pressure the Siamese into accepting their terms, based on the suggestion of Sir James Brooke. Furthermore, he also requested to be received no less lavishly than the French ambassador, Chevalier de Chaumont, during the reign of King Narai in the Ayutthaya period, about three hundred years ago, to

---

<sup>49</sup> Virginia Thompson, *Thailand: The New Siam* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941), 159.

<sup>50</sup> James Stourton, *British Embassies: Their Diplomatic and Architectural History* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2017), 148.

<sup>51</sup> Richard Shaw Stetson, *"Siam's Diplomacy of Independence, 1855-1909, in the Context of Anglo-French Interests"* (Doctoral Dissertation, New York University, 1969), 13-4.

enhance British dignity and prestige.<sup>52</sup> Even though no one could find any records of what that reception looked like, Bowring was received beyond his expectations by the Siamese king.<sup>53</sup>

The British had a great advantage in this negotiation as King Mongkut was already inclined and by training, pro-British, not to mention that Siam had also seen the precedent case of China, the strongest power in the East, which had lost territory by daring to defy British trade demands.<sup>54</sup> Siam, as a result, had to give away much of its economic potential to the British in order to have their alliance.

The Bowring Treaty granted extraterritorial privileges to the British and their subjects, reduced import–export duties, abolished customary shipping fees and removed many trading monopolies still in place on export products in the form of the private tax firms, and allowed private businesses to trade freely without state interference. British subjects were “permitted to trade freely in all the seaports of Siam, but may reside permanently only at Bangkok, or within the limits assigned by this Treaty. British subjects coming to reside at Bangkok may rent land, buy, or built houses, but cannot purchase lands within a circuit of 200 sens<sup>55</sup> (not more than four miles) from the city walls, until they shall have lived in Siam for 10 years, or shall obtain special

---

<sup>52</sup> M. L. Manich Jumsai, *History of Anglo-Thai Relations* (Bangkok: Chalermnit, 1970), 45.

<sup>53</sup> Sir John Bowring, report to Lord Clarendon, *Dispatch No. 144*, April 28, 1855. Cited in M. L. Manich Jumsai, *History of Anglo-Thai Relations* (Bangkok: Chalermnit, 1970), 47.

<sup>54</sup> Susan Morgan, *Bombay Anna: the Real Story and Remarkable Adventures of the King and I Governess* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008), 94.

<sup>55</sup> Sen is Thai measurement of length equivalent to 40 meters.

authority from the Siamese government.”<sup>56</sup> Britain was given the status of “most-favored-nation” meaning that whenever Siam signed any treaty with another nation, Britain would automatically receive at least the same concessions.<sup>57</sup> Finally, a British consul, who exercised the extraterritorial jurisdiction over all British subjects in Siam, was appointed in Bangkok, and the consulate was afterward established.<sup>58</sup> Regarding the appointments of the British consul, the king, at first, was concerned that he might not be able to control the consul and that he might be a violent and uneducated man in which he would have no confidence. At the end, the king’s fears were mitigated by Bowring’s assurance that only wise and worthy men would be appointed, and thus this agreement was successfully concluded.<sup>59</sup> The Bowring Treaty between Siam and England was signed on 18 April 1855.

Later, the draft was taken to England by Harry Parkes, Sir John’s assistant. The additional demands, which were called ‘the Parkes Amendment’, were requested upon his return from London in March 1856. Parkes came back with the gunboat anchoring with full view of Bangkok. Regardless of his improper manner, King Mongkut, who desired to finalize the treaty, accepted all of Parkes’ amendments which included a

---

<sup>56</sup> Treaty Series Vol.1, 1617-1869: Bilateral Treaties and Agreement between Thailand and Foreign Countries and International Organizations. Bangkok: Treaty and Legal Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1968: 38-39 cited in Malinee Khumsupha, “Changes in Urban Bangkok 1855-1909: The Impact of the Settlement of the British and their subjects” (Doctoral dissertation, Chulalongkorn University, 2011), 1.

<sup>57</sup> Susan Morgan, *Bombay Anna: The Real Story and Remarkable Adventures of the King and I Governess* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008), 94.

<sup>58</sup> Mark Bertram, *Room for Diplomacy: Britain's diplomatic buildings overseas 1800-2000* (Reading: Spire Books Ltd, 2011), 93.

<sup>59</sup> Virginia Thompson, *Thailand: The New Siam* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941), 159.



demand for a proper Siamese customs service, for the collection of a fixed minimal tax on British-owned property, for the abolition of the government's monopoly in coconut oil, and for the free export of gold and rice.<sup>60</sup>

The Bowring Treaty attracted other countries to make a similar one with Siam. It became the model of later Siam treaties with France and the United States in 1856, Denmark and the Hanseatic cities in 1858, Portugal in 1859, the Netherlands in 1860, Germany in 1862, Sweden and Norway in 1868, Belgium in 1868, Italy, Belgium, Norway and Sweden in 1868, Austria-Hungary in 1869, Spain in 1870, Japan in 1898, and Russia in 1899.<sup>61</sup> In this regard, at first glance, Siam seemed to have a disadvantaged position in the international affairs. However, according to Noobanjong (2003), signing similar treaties with different nations created a balanced power among the colonizers that could stabilize Siamese sovereignty.<sup>62</sup> This was also King Mongkut's intention as he wanted all of their alliances, not just one, so that if one should abuse his generosity, another would come to help.<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> Richard Shaw Stetson, *"Siam's Diplomacy of Independence, 1855-1909, in the Context of Anglo-French Interests"* (Doctoral Dissertation, New York University, 1969), 16.

<sup>61</sup> D.G.E. Hall, *A History of South-East Asia* (London: Macmillan, 1960), 581; Treaty Series Vol.1, 1617-1869: Bilateral Treaties and Agreement between Thailand and Foreign Countries and International Organizations. Bangkok: Treaty and Legal Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1968 cited in Malinee Khumsupha, *"Changes in Urban Bangkok 1855-1909: The Impact of the Settlement of the British and their subjects"* (Doctoral dissertation, Chulalongkorn University, 2011), 4.

<sup>62</sup> Koompong Noobanjong, *"Power, Identity, and the Rise of Modern Architecture: From Siam to Thailand"* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Colorado, 2003).

<sup>63</sup> M. L. Manich Jumsai, *History of Anglo-Thai Relations* (Bangkok: Chalermnit, 1970), 44.

### 3.2.2. The Struggle for Independence

The Siamese border question was the dominant issue in its relationship with the Western Powers, particularly with Britain and France, throughout this period of study (1855-1910). This commonly happened when the ones "whose borders were not precisely defined and which did not exercise a firm grip upon the confines of its jurisdiction, came into contact with the more highly-organized civilizations and the military systems of the West."<sup>64</sup> The understanding of border between Siam and Western countries were different. Overlapping or multiple sovereignties were common in Siam at that time. The characteristics of a boundary in Siam's conception were, for instance, determined or sanctioned by "any central authority but was the responsibility of local people to protect - the guards, hunters and inhabitants who earned their living by collecting honey or hunting elephants in the frontier zones."<sup>65</sup>

During the high imperialism of Britain and France in Asia, their empires expanded in the East and frontier disputes consequently arose, by which all made claims on doubtful territory. When they came to contest, the stronger power tended to advance at the expense of the weaker one.

According to Curzon (1893), this result was achieved through two methods. The first was "by diplomatic agreement or pressure, or through the intermediate form of

---

<sup>64</sup> George N. Curzon, Juliette Adam, "England and France in Siam." *The North American Review* 157, no. 442 (1893): 268-9.

<sup>65</sup> Thongchai Winichakul, "Siam Mapped: Making of Thai Nationhood," *The Ecologist* 26, no. 5 (1996). [https://go-gale-com.proxy.libraries.uc.edu/ps/i.do?p=EAIM&u=ucinc\\_main&id=GALE%7CA19226240&v=2.1&it=r&sid=summon](https://go-gale-com.proxy.libraries.uc.edu/ps/i.do?p=EAIM&u=ucinc_main&id=GALE%7CA19226240&v=2.1&it=r&sid=summon)

some sort of protectorate." The second was "by forcible seizure and aggression."<sup>66</sup> The different approaches of the British and the French were due to the situation and status of each in the region. The British would like to keep Siam independent, whereas, the French saw less profit to maintain Siam as an independent kingdom. The French had little to lose and much to gain from challenging Siamese sovereignty since their trade with Siam was minimal. To them, only a political takeover seemed to be sufficient for their expansion.<sup>67</sup>

The border issues of Siam and neighboring countries created disputes between Siam, Britain and France since the 1880s. Siam's territory was not originally the intention of the West. The dispute started when the French conquered Tonkin, and the British annexed northern Burma. As a result, they were face-to-face in their search for access to Southern China,<sup>68</sup> and became Siam's neighbors. Siam, accordingly, turned out to be the target of rivalry between Britain and France. The British worried about the French threat to this region as they wanted to secure the independence of Siam for reasons of British commerce and strategy.

Accordingly, in 1892, the British encouraged the Siamese to resist French protections in the Upper Mekong. Siam believed it could rely on British support when difficulties arose with the French. This stance, however, led to one of the most serious crises in Siamese history, as well as in the Anglo-French relation, the Paknam Incident of

---

<sup>66</sup> Curzon, George N. and Juliette Adam. "England and France in Siam." *The North American Review* 157, no. 442 (1893): 268-9.

<sup>67</sup> Patrick Tuck, *The French Wolf and the Siamese Lamb: The French Threat to Siamese Independence, 1858-1907* (Bangkok: White Lotus Co., Ltd, 1995), 242.

<sup>68</sup> Virginia Thompson, *Thailand: the New Siam* (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1941), 160.

1893, discussed further. This incident began when the French blockaded the port of Bangkok to force the Siamese government to accommodate their demands. Eventually, Siam signed the treaty with France on 3 October 1893, allocating maximum demands to the latter. This made French possessions contiguous with the British Protectorate on the Burmese frontier. The two Powers then came up with the Anglo-French Declaration of 1896 guaranteeing that neither of them should advance their armed forces, nor acquire any special privilege or advantage within the Menam valley. However, the portion of settlement to guarantee the independence was rather loose. With the anxiety of the French threat, the British concluded a secret treaty with Siam to protect their interests in the South in 1897. Now, almost all of Siam's borders in every direction, except those connected to ocean, became subject to disputes between Siam, Britain and France.

From the 1860s, the situations around the Siamese border were getting more complex, and in the last decade of the century, the two Western Powers became even more aggressive. The British nibbled away at the southern border, and grabbed another chunk of Burma in the north, while the French pressed inwards from the east. The border issues between Siam and the two Powers carried on until 1909 when Siam signed the treaty of 1909 with the British by which the former ceded the areas in the South to the latter as an exchange for the retrocession of British extraterritorial rights back to Siam and abrogation of the secret convention of 1897. Nonetheless, according

to Herbert Dering, Minister at Bangkok, the transfer of British extraterritorial jurisdiction back to Siam in 1909 was rather over-reaching the Siamese themselves.<sup>69</sup>

In all these processes until 1909, Siam lost control of seven border tributary states, the east bank of the Mekong and some marginal frontier tracts. In addition, Siam had to consent to the creation of British and French spheres of influence over its peripheral territories in the Mekong valley and in Siamese Malaya. During this half century, Siam had totally sacrificed the area about 233,100 square kilometers to the British,<sup>70</sup> and about 465,500 square kilometers to the French.<sup>71</sup> The latter one was almost the same size that remained of the country at the present time. In other words, the total area of Siamese territories lost to France was half of its old kingdom.

The compensation for this loss was that Siam was still a free sovereign nation and had finally freed itself from the burden of extraterritoriality. Optimistically, according to Stetson (1969), Siam “had rid herself of distracting satrapies and could concentrate on her internal development.”<sup>72</sup>

### ***Competing for Mightiness: Relations between Britain and France***

The British interests in Siam both in the North and in the South were uncontested by any other Power. France quickly spread its territory from the East in order to catch up with British influence in this region. Both of their influences

---

<sup>69</sup> D. C. M. Platt, *The Cinderella Service: British Consul since 1825* (London: Longman Group Limited, 1971), 215.

<sup>70</sup> Richard Shaw Stetson, *“Siam’s Diplomacy of Independence, 1855-1909, in the Context of Anglo-French Interests”* (Doctoral Dissertation, New York University, 1969), 142.

<sup>71</sup> Luang Vichitr Vadakarn, *Thailand’s Case* (Bangkok: the Thai Commercial Press, 1941), 2.

<sup>72</sup> Stetson, *“Siam’s Diplomacy of Independence, 1855-1909,”* 100.

progressively expanded towards the middle until touching in the North at Muang Singh, where they came to an understanding that it should be a buffer state between them, given over to Siam.<sup>73</sup> Accordingly, the British and the French governments signed a declaration on 15 January 1896 guaranteeing the integrity of the Chao Phraya basin and adjacent streams by which neither of them would, without the consent of the other, advance its armed forces into that area, except there was a need to do so to maintain Siam's independence.<sup>74</sup> On the one hand, this Anglo-French agreement was of benefit to Siam's sovereignty in some important respects. More importantly, Siam's true heartland, the rich and prosperous Menam basin, was guaranteed to remain part of Siam by the two European imperial Powers. The Siamese greatest fear for its independence throughout the nineteenth century was then resolved. On the other hand, Siam lost Muang Singh and all the rest of the territory that was ever loosely held east of the Mekong. In addition, this Declaration encouraged further separate agreements with France and Britain in 1904, 1907 and 1909.<sup>75</sup>

On 8 April 1904, a supplementary declaration between Britain and France was signed stipulating that Siamese territory lying to the west of the Chao Phraya basin should be recognized under the British sphere of influence, while that to the east was considered under the French one. This Entente, in other words, was the liquidation of the Franco-British controversy over Siam. These two nations renounced all ideas of annexing any Siamese territory or of committing any act which might contravene the

---

<sup>73</sup> M. L. Manich Jumsai, *History of Anglo-Thai Relations* (Bangkok: Chalermnit, 1970), 234-41.

<sup>74</sup> Josiah Crosby, *Siam* (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1920), 11-2.

<sup>75</sup> Patrick Tuck, *The French Wolf and the Siamese Lamb: The French Threat to Siamese Independence, 1858-1907* (Bangkok: White Lotus Co., Ltd, 1995), xii.

provisions of existing treaties. However, their governments should each respectively have liberty of action in its sphere of influence as defined.<sup>76</sup> In other words, this Anglo-French Entente of 1904 allowed the two Powers to come to terms separately with Bangkok. According to Thompson (1941), it freed the two Powers to expand in Siam in which each of them impelled the other to take greater plunder.<sup>77</sup> As a result, the British seized the areas on the northern and southern borders of Siam, while the French grabbed the area to the east (Figure 3-1). The three major losses of Siamese territory are discussed further.

---

<sup>76</sup> Josiah Crosby, *Siam* (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1920), 11-2.

<sup>77</sup> Virginia Thompson, *Thailand: The New Siam* (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1941), 165.



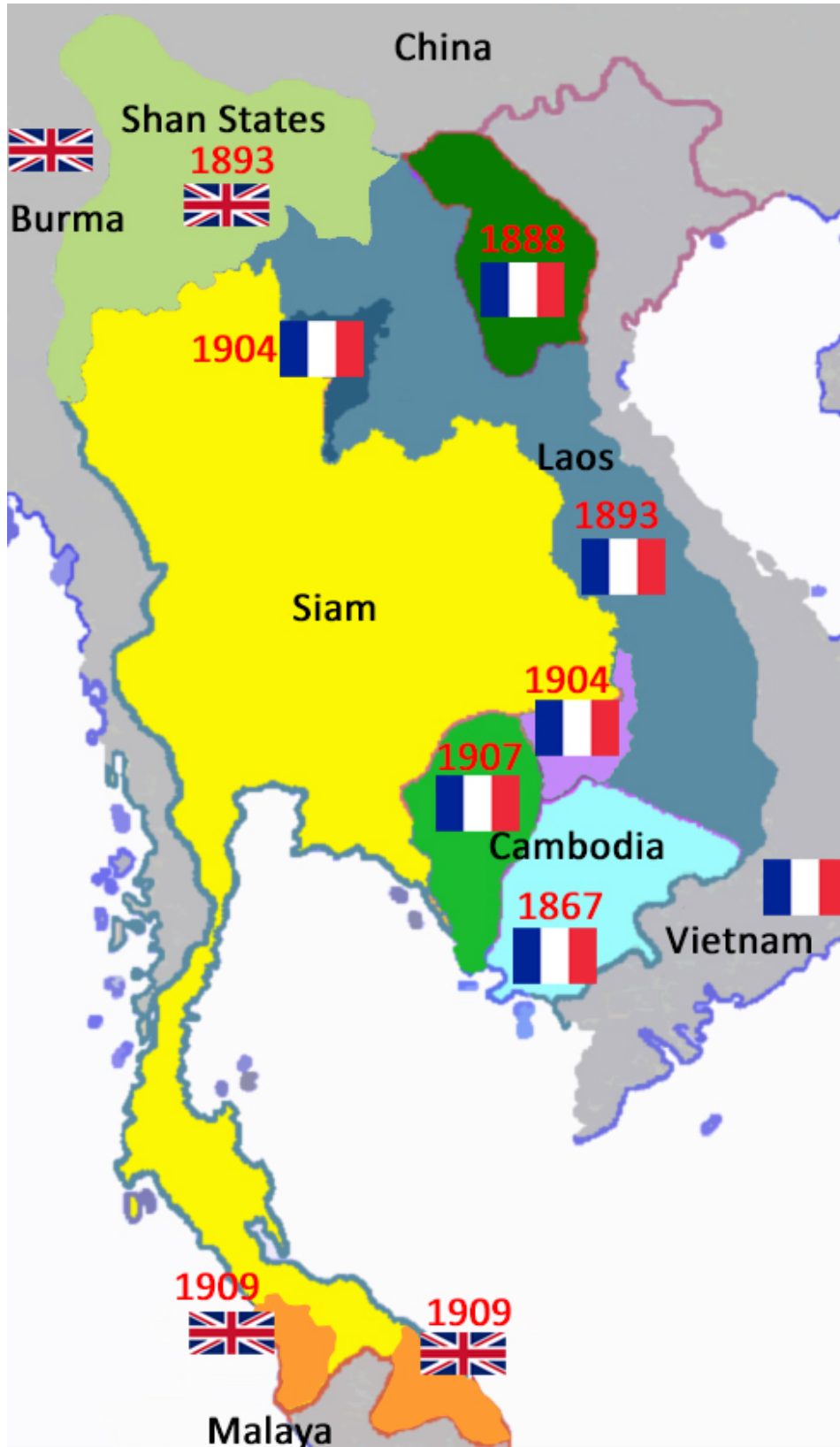


Figure 3-1: Map of Siamese lost territories to Britain and France during 1855-1910.

### ***The Siamese Question in the North***

In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, the Siamese and the British Governments presented rival claims to the land along the east bank of the Salween River, where Burma is located today. This narrow piece of land was commonly divided into two adjacent zones: the Shan states of Muang Sat (Mongthat), Muang Tuen (Mongton), Muang Hang (Monghan), Muang Chuat (Mongsut), Muang Tha (Mongta), Mesakorn, and Muang Mai (Miang Mau) in the north; and a portion of the Eastern Karenni State of Gantarawadi to the south.<sup>78</sup> Both areas were the questioned territories of disputes between Siam and Britain, in which the Shan states were the objects of quarrels from 1886-1889 and the Karenni from 1889 to 1890.

The relationship between Siam and Great Britain met difficulties when the latter annexed Upper Burma, after engaging in several wars with Burma. On 1 January 1886, Great Britain declared that all the Shan states had been Burmese, and therefore were to be incorporated as part of the British Indian Empire, of which Burma as a whole was to be a province. This complicated the Anglo-Siamese relationship as some of these states had declared outright that they preferred to be vassals of Siam, or, at least, had tried to declare themselves free of Burmese control.<sup>79</sup>

The Siamese laid claim to five Shan states: Muang Tuen, Muang Hang, Muang Chuat, Muang Tha and Muang Sat, as it was their understanding from the history for over a century. The British, on the other hand, said these states belonged to them since

---

<sup>78</sup> Charan Chakandang, *"Siam's Loss of Trans-Salween Territory to Great Britain in 1892,"* (Doctoral Dissertation, The Pennsylvania State University, 1987), 12.

<sup>79</sup> Richard Shaw Stetson, *"Siam's Diplomacy of Independence, 1855-1909, in the Context of Anglo-French Interests"* (Doctoral Dissertation, New York University, 1969), 39-40.

they owed allegiance to Burma, and Siam had no further proof to demonstrate its claim.<sup>80</sup> Moreover, the British consul at Chiangmai encouraged Britain to take these five states before the French seized them, otherwise the French territory would spread until reaching that of the British, and would get the area of very rich timber resources.<sup>81</sup> The prolonged negotiations between Siam and Great Britain then started.

In June 1888, the British Government in London made its own decision without consulting the Siamese Government to take control of the disputed area. The Siamese strongly protested and tried to manipulate Britain through diplomatic tactics by attempting to play France off against British. The British consequently reconsidered the case as they feared that the Siamese might seek protection from other Powers especially from France.

At some point, the negotiations were interrupted by another event which worsened the tension between the two governments. It was the attack on Mokmai, the British Shan dependency on the west bank of the Salween, by Gantarawadi or Eastern Karenni. Siam and Britain agreed on a plan that the former would send troops to cooperate with the latter in suppressing the Karenni State. The British request for the Siamese to join this expedition was, according to Chakandang (1987), to prevent the Karenni force from escaping into Siamese territory.<sup>82</sup> In January 1889, the new chief of Gantarawadi submitted to the British in Mandalay. The help from Siamese troops was

---

<sup>80</sup> F.O. 422/22, *Public Record Office, London*. Cited in M. L. Manich Jumsai, *History of Anglo-Thai Relations* (Bangkok: Chalermnit, 1970), 210.

<sup>81</sup> M. L. Manich Jumsai, *History of Anglo-Thai Relations* (Bangkok: Chalermnit, 1970), 210.

<sup>82</sup> Charan Chakandang, *"Siam's Loss of Trans-Salween Territory to Great Britain in 1892,"* (Doctoral Dissertation, The Pennsylvania State University, 1987), 110.

now useless, thus the British asked them to withdraw. In this case, the British would also have an opportunity to spread their influence on this area. The Siamese, nonetheless, refused the request by reason that they were only moving up to prevent disorder on their side of the border. Now, the newly disputed area was adjoined to the former one, so that the two governments agreed to set up a joint boundary commission to settle all these territorial questions by establishing a demarcated line. However, each side finally decided to have its commissioners work independently from one another.

According to their study, the British seemed to benefit since the British commissioners were more thorough in their work and determined to get what they wanted. The Siamese, on the other hand, merely tried to maintain what they considered theirs. The work of the Anglo-Siamese commissioners did not immediately settle the dispute between the two governments. It was almost two years of negotiations after the boundary commissions were appointed.

Eventually, the Siamese decided not to jeopardize their relationship with the British whom they regarded as their most reliable ally especially when the French were posing a threat on the Siamese frontier in the east. The Siamese Government therefore accepted what the British offered. In October 1892, in a royal proclamation it was publicly announced that Siam had given up the Trans-Salween Shan states including the five main focused states of Muang Tha, Muang Chuat, Muang Hang, Muang Tuen, and Muang Sat. They also renounced the small dependencies of Muang Yuan, Muang Tum, Muang Kwan, Muang Hai, Muang Ko, and Ban Hongluk, together with the Trans-Salween

Karenni Portion of Muang Che, Muang Mau, and Mesakon to the British.<sup>83</sup> The British, in return, gave Kyiang Chiang, a Shan State on the Mekong River, as compensation to Siam. This state was not only the compensation for Siamese loss, but, more importantly, also the British buffer zone to keep the British Burma frontier far from French Indo-China.<sup>84</sup> However, the transfer of Kyiang Chiang to Siam was never completed due to the Upper Mekong crisis between Siam and France in 1893. The French at that time demanded all the territory on the left bank of the Mekong River from Siam. Great Britain who was also involved in this crisis retook Kyiang Chiang from Siam and gave the portion on the left bank to the French in 1896 in association with the Anglo-French agreement to establish the Mekong River as the boundary between their Southeast Asian empires.<sup>85</sup>

### ***The Siamese Question in the South***

The location of the South attracted the British interest since they occupied Penang in 1786. Their interests were to extend their influence throughout the whole of the Malay Peninsula. The Foreign Office and Colonial Office both agreed that "Whoever holds the Peninsula must to a great extent command the route to the Far East."<sup>86</sup> In this regard, the British began to sap Siamese authority in the peninsular states comprising the States of Kelantan, Trengganu, and Kedah, according to Virginia Thompson (1941),

---

<sup>83</sup> R. 5. M.I. 40/5. Despatch, Ministry of Interior to the Governor of Chiangmai, 27 October 1892. cited in Charan Chakandang, *"Siam's Loss of Trans-Salween Territory to Great Britain in 1892,"* (Doctoral Dissertation, The Pennsylvania State University, 1987), 169-70.

<sup>84</sup> Charan Chakandang, *"Siam's Loss of Trans-Salween Territory to Great Britain in 1892,"* (Doctoral Dissertation, The Pennsylvania State University, 1987), 166.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 170.

<sup>86</sup> Thamsook Numnonda, "The Anglo-Siamese Secret Convention of 1897." *Journal of the Siam Society* 53, no. 1 (1965): 45-6.

known as 'empire-building by persuasion' and which was conducted along several lines.<sup>87</sup> In 1826, the Burney Treaty made Siam allow the British to come and trade in Trengganu, which was a tributary to Siam. The Siamese Government acted as an overlord allowing the British to trade. The British, on the other hand, took this action as an understanding that Trengganu was independent.<sup>88</sup> The tributes Siam received by Sultan of Trengganu were just a token of alliance and friendship.

Due to the Anglo-French Agreement of 1896 with the unclear guaranteed boundary of independence from the two Powers, the British persuaded the Siamese to sign the Anglo-Siamese Secret Convention in 1897 to secure the British interest in the South regarding Siamese territory outside the former agreement with France.<sup>89</sup> According to the Convention of 1897, Siam must not cede or alienate any other Power any of its rights over any portion of the territories or islands lying to the south of Muong Bang Tapan. Britain, in return, must support Siam in resisting any attempt by a third Power to acquire dominion or to establish its influence or Protectorate in the territories or islands mentioned above. In addition, Siam could "not grant, cede or let any special privilege or advantage whether as regards land or trade within the above specified limits either to the Government or to the subjects of a third Power without the written consent of the British Government."<sup>90</sup> The British fear of foreign influence in this area was then put to rest. However, problems fell onto the Siamese side because the terms

---

<sup>87</sup> Virginia Thompson, *Thailand: the New Siam* (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1941), 165.

<sup>88</sup> M. L. Manich Jumsai, *History of Anglo-Thai Relations* (Bangkok: Chalermnit, 1970), 166.

<sup>89</sup> F.O. 17/1293, Telegram, Salisbury-Bunsen, January 24, 1896.

<sup>90</sup> Thamsook Numnonda, "The Anglo-Siamese Secret Convention of 1897." *Journal of the Siam Society* 53, no. 1 (1965): 51-2.

of the Convention contradicted other powers rights that Siam had granted to them in the existing Treaties negotiated since the 1850's and 60's.

In 1902, the British were concerned that their competitors for empire, particularly Germany, and possibly Russia, or France might use the disordered Malay political situation to wring concessions from the Rajahs, and the Malay rulers would consider themselves independent and free to grant concessions to “whoever they please.”<sup>91</sup> In the British view, Siam had never effectively ruled states like Kelantan and Trengganu, and seemed unable to resist any penetration by foreigners under the pretext of commercial enterprise. In addition, the Sultans of these states refused to recognize Siamese authority but were too weak to do anything about it. This eventually led to an intervention in the Peninsula by a non-British Government,<sup>92</sup> and would become a “danger to Siam.”<sup>93</sup> To the British, therefore, these states needed British protection.<sup>94</sup> Eventually, Siam agreed to appoint British advisers in Kelantan and Trengganu in 1902, and in Kedah and Perlis in 1905.<sup>95</sup>

Accordingly, more problems sprang from the Anglo-Siamese Convention of 1897, and Edward Henry Strobel, Siam's new Foreign Adviser started to change the quality of

---

<sup>91</sup> FO 422, LVI, Lansdowne to Tower, 7 January 1902. Cited in Ira Klein, “Britain, Siam and the Malay Peninsula, 1906-1909.” *The Historical Journal* 12, no. 1 (1969): 123.

<sup>92</sup> Thamsook Numnonda, “The Anglo-Siamese Secret Convention of 1897.” *Journal of the Siam Society* 53, no. 1 (1965): 46; Ira Klein, “Britain, Siam and the Malay Peninsula, 1906-1909.” *The Historical Journal* 12, no. 1 (1969): 122.

<sup>93</sup> Consular and Embassy Archives, Bangkok (Public Record Office), FO 628, Swettenham's Promemoria of Conversations held with the King of Siam, 24 February 1902.

<sup>94</sup> Ira Klein, “Britain, Siam and the Malay Peninsula, 1906-1909.” *The Historical Journal* 12, no. 1 (1969): 122.

<sup>95</sup> Richard Shaw Stetson, “*Siam's Diplomacy of Independence, 1855-1909, in the Context of Anglo-French Interests*” (Doctoral Dissertation, New York University, 1969), 131.



the Anglo-Siamese relations in 1905 by negotiating and offering what he considered proper to secure what he thought would be most beneficial to Siam. He looked for a substitute agreement of a purely political nature. In April 1907, he proposed an agreement on a non-political and business basis with the Federated Malay States Government. This agreement became the substance of the Railway Agreement which was signed simultaneously with the final Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1909.<sup>96</sup>

Regarding the treaty of 1909, Siam obtained the retrocession of British extraterritorial rights and abrogation of the secret convention of 1897. In return, the terms for the Malay Railway were agreed upon, and transferred the states of Kelantan, Trengganu, Kedah and Perlis to the British.<sup>97</sup> This agreement not only ended the border question between Siam and Britain in the South, but also ceased the unfair British privilege which created Siam's consequent problems.

Additionally, the British agreed to give a loan of four million pounds to Siam in order to help the latter with railway construction.<sup>98</sup> Since then, the Anglo-Siamese relationship became healthier.

### ***The Paknam Incident of 1893***

As mentioned earlier, Siam was not a primary target for the colonial ambitions of the French. It was not until the French influence was established in Cochinchina<sup>99</sup> that

---

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 139.

<sup>97</sup> Ira Klein, "Britain, Siam and the Malay Peninsula, 1906-1909." *The Historical Journal* 12, no. 1 (1969): 134.

<sup>98</sup> M. L. Manich Jumsai, *History of Anglo-Thai Relations* (Bangkok: Chalermnit, 1970), 252.

they desired to further extend their political influence northward along the Mekong. The conflicts between the Siamese and the French started in the 1860s. In the French view, in order to secure their inland frontier and to gain control over the trade routes of the Mekong valley, they had to establish a protectorate over the Siamese vassal state of Cambodia, which they viewed as the 'heartland' of the Mekong basin.<sup>100</sup> Eventually, their plan became reality. The French victory created some damages to Siam, but the situation was not yet disastrous. According to Tuck in his book *The French Wolf and the Siamese Lamb*, the French action was based on their impression that "central Siam was already 'lost' to British influence, and that her vassal dependencies in the Mekong valley were, potentially, British forward positions."<sup>101</sup> This perception encouraged the French to create preemptive strategies to advance in the Mekong region before the British took over the rest of Siam.

After Cambodia was integrated into French Indochina in 1887 along with the French colonies and protectorates in Annam, Cochinchina, and Tonkin, the French then argued that the trans-Mekong possessions of Siam which historically belonged to Annam and Cambodia should be given back to them. Siam, however, did not accept the French claim. Thus, the disputes between the Siamese and the French began, and the troops of the two parties were sent to the disputed area. During this time, the Siamese kept resisting the French penetration of the Mekong valley per the British suggestion. A

---

<sup>99</sup> Cochinchina was the southern region of Vietnam during the French colonial period, known in precolonial times as Nam Ky ("Southern Administrative Division"), the name that the Vietnamese continued to use. See more in <https://www.britannica.com/place/Cochinchina>

<sup>100</sup> Patrick Tuck, *The French Wolf and the Siamese Lamb: The French Threat to Siamese Independence, 1858-1907* (Bangkok: White Lotus Co., Ltd, 1995), 246.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

series of incidents involving the Siamese with Frenchmen took place in various contested areas and led to the Paknam Crisis in 1893. The Siamese authorities allegedly perpetrated against the persons and property of French nationals, while the French fleet proceeded to occupy some of the islands in the Gulf of Siam.<sup>102</sup>

On 30 June 30 1893, Develle, the French Foreign Minister, threatened Prince Vadhana, the Siamese minister in Paris, that if these matters were not quickly fixed, France would break off diplomatic relations with Siam, and might even resort to arms.<sup>103</sup> During 1893, there was a large degree of alarm in Siamese government circles about possible movements of the French fleet. The French, however, promised the British that they would report to them any movements of their fleet.<sup>104</sup> The British government, in return, assured the French that they would persuade the Siamese to consent to the French demands.<sup>105</sup> On the Siamese side, Prince Devawongse, Siam's Foreign Minister, knew the French plan by 10 July, that some French warships were under sailing order because Pavie, the French minister at Bangkok, asked him for permission to proceed with the warships through the Paknam bar,<sup>106</sup> and anchor at Bangkok. As a result, the prince insisted that Siam would not grant the permission unless the French assured

---

<sup>102</sup> Josiah Crosby, *Siam* (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1920), 10-11.

<sup>103</sup> Siam Correspondence (Sess. Pap., 1894, XCVT), no. 19, p. 55, Phipps to Rosebery, 30 June 1893. Cited in Richard Shaw Stetson, *"Siam's Diplomacy of Independence, 1855-1909, in the Context of Anglo-French Interests"* (Doctoral Dissertation, New York University, 1969), 84.

<sup>104</sup> Richard Shaw Stetson, *"Siam's Diplomacy of Independence, 1855-1909, in the Context of Anglo-French Interests"* (Doctoral Dissertation, New York University, 1969), 87.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>106</sup> At Paknam, there was a natural tidal breakwater or bar of shoals and reefs in the Chao Phraya River, which was twenty miles downriver from Bangkok. The first customs formalities were disposed of and all ships must stop there to comply with rules of the Administration. See more in Lucien Fournereau, *Bangkok in 1892*, trans. Walter E.J. Tips (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 1894), 11-13.

them that they only came to afford necessary protection to the French lives and property in Bangkok, as the British had already done.<sup>107</sup>

Ignoring the Siamese refusal, the French gunboats, *Inconstant* and *Comète*, arrived at Paknam on 13 July 1893, and had a battle with two Siamese warships, the *Coronation* and the *Makut Rajakamar*. As a result, three French men were killed and twenty wounded; however, the gunboats were able to reach anchor in front of the French Legation in the evening.<sup>108</sup> By the next day, the British warships, the *Swift* and the *Linnet*, were sent and anchored between two French gunboats and King Chulalongkorn's Palace to protect British lives and property. This day was also French National Day, regardless whether it was the French intention or not, the French ultimatum was delivered to Prince Devawongse consisting three demands. Two of these demands were accepted by the Siamese, but the other one involving British loss requested a compromise, according to the British advice. Regarding the last demand, the French required that the entire territory on the left bank of the Mekong be ceded to them, which meant that British Burma's claim along the upper Mekong would automatically be lost to the French.<sup>109</sup>

Not only did Pavie refuse this deal of the Siamese, but he also threatened to leave Bangkok if all three demands were not met by 26 July. Before the due date, with no sign of Siam's acceptance of all the French demands, the blockade of the Chao Phraya River was established. In this case, the Siamese suffered very little compared to

---

<sup>107</sup> Richard Shaw Stetson, "Siam's Diplomacy of Independence, 1855-1909, in the Context of Anglo-French Interests" (Doctoral Dissertation, New York University, 1969), 88.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 92.

the British trade, so that the latter, rather than modifying the French demands, encouraged the Siamese to accept the French ultimatum.<sup>110</sup> Thus Siam, with no choice, accepted all three demands. Nonetheless, until Siam ceded Luang Prabang to France which was related to the first demand, the French would occupy the key commercial port of Chantaboon, at the mouth of the confluence of the river with the Gulf of Siam.<sup>111</sup> The consequent events and misunderstandings that took place almost created another war between Britain and France.<sup>112</sup> Finally, the treaty between France and Siam was signed on 3 October 1893, by which the Siamese agreed on all the French demands as follows:

- (1) The surrender of all Cambodian territory lying on the east bank of the lower Mekong including certain islands in the river as well as the eastern portion of Luang Prabang;
- (2) France to police the Mekong River and the Great Lake and Siam to renounce the right to keep armed vessels in these waters;
- (3) the withdrawal of all Siamese fortifications and other military establishments from a zone twenty-five kilometers wide along the west bank of the Mekong and from the provinces of Battambang and Siam reap, no customs to be established or taxes levied on imports and exports in these regions by the Siamese government, the right of France to construct facilities necessary for navigation of the Mekong and to establish agencies to care for those under French protection within the

---

<sup>110</sup> Virginia Thompson, *Thailand: the New Siam* (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1941), 162.

<sup>111</sup> *The Times* of London, August 2, letter of Henry Norman and a leading article, "France and Siam". Cited in Richard Shaw Stetson, *"Siam's Diplomacy of Independence, 1855-1909, in the Context of Anglo-French Interests"* (Doctoral Dissertation, New York University, 1969), 94.

<sup>112</sup> Richard Shaw Stetson, *"Siam's Diplomacy of Independence, 1855-1909, in the Context of Anglo-French Interests"* (Doctoral Dissertation, New York University, 1969), 96.

twenty-five kilometer zone; (4) the right of Cambodians living on the west bank of the Mekong to register as French subjects and enjoy French protection; (5) the military occupation by France of Battambang and the town of Chantaboon to ensure Siam's execution of the treaty.<sup>113</sup>

Regarding this incident, the triumph of France was not only over the Siamese, but also the British. The latter lost their prestige and the Siamese lost their faith in their friendship with the British because Siam expected better protection from Britain during the crisis.<sup>114</sup> According to Thompson (1941), this complicated situation has been regarded by many in both Britain and France as the most significant crisis in Anglo-French relations prior to the Fashoda Incident in 1898.<sup>115</sup> In 1896, the two Western Powers concluded the Anglo-French Agreement of 1896 guaranteeing the neutrality of the Chao Phraya basin.

---

<sup>113</sup> "Traite," enclosure in Dufferin to Rosebery, October 21, 1893, BFSP, vol. 87 (1894-1895). Cited in Minton F. Goldman, "Franco-British Rivalry Over Siam, 1896-1904." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 3, no. 2 (1972): 212.

<sup>114</sup> Richard Shaw Stetson, *"Siam's Diplomacy of Independence, 1855-1909, in the Context of Anglo-French Interests"* (Doctoral Dissertation, New York University, 1969), 102.

<sup>115</sup> Fashoda Incident was a series of territorial disputes in Africa between Great Britain and France in 1898. See more in Raymond E. Dumett, "A West African 'Fashoda': Expanding Trade, Colonial Rivalries and Insurrection in the Côte d'Ivoire/Gold Coast Borderlands: The Assikasso Crisis of 1897-98," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 41, no. 5 (2013): 710-743.

### 3.3. Entering the World Stage: Siam during 1910 - WW II

While Siamese relations with the Western Powers had previously gone through difficulties, the beginning of this period marked a sign of a growing reconciliation between them. Siam gained more respect from the Western nations after entering the First World War in July 1917 upon the side of the Allies, the same side as Great Britain, France, and the United States, though her assistance to the Allies was made in the last minutes of the war.<sup>116</sup> In spite of the objections of the Minister of War, the king's brother, and his army officers, which many of whom were German-trained, King Vajiravudh decided to declare the existence of a state of war with both Germany and Austria-Hungary, and send a Siamese expeditionary force to France in late July 1918. Siam thus emerged from the Great War as a nominal French ally, participating among the victors in the peace negotiations.<sup>117</sup> In Siam, "the internment of all male enemy subjects resident in Siam was effected; trading with the enemy was forbidden; arrangements were made for the liquidation of enemy businesses; enemy vessels lying in the river at Bangkok were seized; and a decree was promulgated denaturalizing such former enemy subjects as had come to acquire Siamese nationality by the process of naturalization."<sup>118</sup> At the end of the war, Siam was consequently accepted among the free nations in the League of Nations. The Siamese relations with Britain and France was then been further strengthened.

---

<sup>116</sup> Francis Bowes Sayre, "The Passing of Extraterritoriality in Siam," *The American Journal of International Law* 22, no. 1 (1928): 81.

<sup>117</sup> Robert Aldrich, "France and the King of Siam: An Asian King's Visits to the Republican Capital", in Julie Kalman (ed.), *French History and Culture: Papers from the George Rude Seminar*, vol.6 (2015): 238.

<sup>118</sup> Josiah Crosby, *Siam* (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1920) 7-8.



However, these smooth relations carried on only until the outset of the Second World War since Siam declared war against the Allies due to the Japanese invasion. Different responses were developed depending on the different backgrounds in which each nation had experienced their relations with the Siamese. The most obviously dissimilar reactions were between the British and the Americans at the end of the war. The former demanded full compensation for their property losses from the Siamese government as they had been involved with Siam for almost a century, predominantly in the fields of trade and diplomacy. The Americans, on the other hand, had a sympathetic attitude toward the situation of Siam, and did much to assist the post-war recovery of the country since they were interested in the country mainly as a field of missionary activity.<sup>119</sup>

### 3.3.1. The Second World War

At the beginning of the war, Siam declared strict neutrality and would resist strongly if this neutrality was violated. In 1939 a non-aggression pact was signed with England, France and Japan, determined to stay out of the war. There was also an understanding with the British in Malaya and Singapore that they would come to help if Siam was attacked. However, when Siam was invaded, the British refused to send help from its Singapore base when they were called by cable from Siam. In addition, the United States also refused to deliver the planes Siam had ordered. In other words, Siam was forsaken by both countries.

---

<sup>119</sup> Frank C. Darling, *Thailand and the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1965), 45.

On 7 December 1941, the Japanese ambassador to Siam requested passage for Japanese armies through Siam after they declared war on the United States and Britain. At that time, Phibunsongkram, the prime minister, was away from Bangkok, so the foreign minister, Direk Jayanama, refused the request for the time being, while urgently summoning Phibunsongkram back to Bangkok. Disregarding any permission, the Japanese invasion began a few hours after their request. When Phibunsongkram returned, the Japanese presented three propositions: "1) Allow the Japanese army the right of transit, 2) Friendship with Japan for which Japan will give protection, and 3) Alliance and fighting side by side with Japan, and Japan would try to get back all the territory lost by Thailand [Siam] to England and France."<sup>120</sup> Most of the ministers, on the one hand, did not want to ally with Japan; on the other hand, they did not wish to resist Japan. Eventually, with no choice, Siam agreed to allow the Japanese to pass through the kingdom, and was in return assured by the Japanese to maintain her independence.<sup>121</sup> Nonetheless, the Japanese met some resistance at almost every point on the Siamese coast where they landed,<sup>122</sup> and were thus suspicious of Siamese sincerity at the beginning. Siam was under strict surveillance by the Japanese, and, as a result, all kinds of cruel stories were reported every day in the newspapers.

Finally, Phibunsongkram decided to enter into an alliance with Japan on 21 December 1941 in order to assure the Japanese and prevent any seizure or mishandling of the people. Furthermore, he declared war against England and America on 25 July

---

<sup>120</sup> Andrew Gilchrist, *Bangkok Top Secret* (London : Hutchinson, 1970), 83.

<sup>121</sup> David K. Wyatt, *Thailand: A Short History* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2003), 256-7.

<sup>122</sup> Andrew Gilchrist, *Bangkok Top Secret* (London : Hutchinson, 1970), 13.

1942.<sup>123</sup> These events were considered as the actions of one man alone, rather than the actual will of the Siamese people, because parliament was not consulted, and Pridi, who became a regent, went into hiding in order to escape the countersigning of the declaration.<sup>124</sup> He was also the strongest opponent to Phibunsongkram's policy, and became the chief of the underground organization, the Free Thai Movement, which sought to get into contact with the Allies and to liberate Siam from Japanese domination. He organized the Free Thai Movement from his residence at Thachang, Siam, while the Siamese ambassador in Washington, Seni Pramoj, led this organization in the United States, and Prince Subha Sawasdi Swasdiwattana, a brother of the ex-Queen Rampai Bharni, who lived in exile in London, led the one in England.

The Free Thai units were organized everywhere in Siam and were trained secretly by the English and American officers in the jungle. Their aims, according to Jumsai (1970), were "to get into contact with the Allies, cooperate with them, pass on information behind the line, organize sabotage work, and to help the Allies in landing and then fight against the Japanese when the time comes."<sup>125</sup> One of their plans, for example, was to permit the Allies to send men into Siam where they would be arrested and brought to Police Headquarters. They would then be guarded by the Japanese and hidden from the public in the sense that they were prisoners. At night, they would work secretly in their organized cells on the radio, contacting the Allies headquarters of the

---

<sup>123</sup> M. L. Manich Jumsai, *History of Anglo-Thai Relations* (Bangkok: Chalermit, 1970), 261.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 265-7.

Southeast Asia command at Kandy in Ceylon, giving information about Japanese military movements and news about their underground colleagues in Siam.<sup>126</sup>

Therefore, Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, refused to consider Siam as an enemy, and chose not to consider the United States at war with Siam. The American Government even helped Seni Pramoj to train the Free Thais and sent them to cooperate with the units in India.<sup>127</sup>

Although there was the Free Thai Movement in England, the Siamese ambassador in London did not do anything along the line of Seni in the case of the United States. The Siamese students were also instructed to return home. Those who refused to go back were regarded by the British Government as aliens. However, a Free Thai group in England was eventually formed with the help of the Siamese Ambassador in Washington. Their great work, for instance, was to pass the information to the Allies which could not be obtained otherwise. They could even tell them precisely the location of the Japanese ammunition dumps, so that dumps could easily be spotted and bombed right out.<sup>128</sup>

Finally, the war came to an end since Japan unconditionally capitulated on 14 August 1945 after attacked by an atom bomb in Hiroshima on 5 August and another one in Nagasaki on 9 August. In Siam, peace was declared on 16 August 1945. As soon as Japan announced its surrender, the Siamese government took prompt action to publicly declare that the territory in Burma and Malaya which Siam had acquired from the

---

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 270-1.

Japanese would immediately be returned to Great Britain in order to regain Western favor. The Siamese government was also taken over by the “Free Thai” Movement. Seni Pramoj, the Siamese Ambassador in Washington, was chosen as Prime Minister and served the country from 17 September 1945 to 31 January 1946. However, the bitter story of Siam had not yet come to the end when an even worse crisis took place after the end of the war. It was the “Formal Agreement” that Siam had to accept and sign under British pressure to “gave way to the British of a total take-over and the disruption of the whole administrative system of the country: finance, economic, military, naval, communication, publicity work, radio broadcasts, press, trade, exports, industries, production, etc. – all to come to the British.”<sup>129</sup> Basically, the British demanded that the Siamese had to pay for all the investments in the country so that they could reestablish everything without having to pay for anything. Moreover, they made the Siamese government pay for British lives and damages to her possessions and nationals due to the cooperation with the Japanese.<sup>130</sup>

At first the British demanded full compensation for their property losses from the Siamese government. The United States then promptly intervened in the negotiations and forced the British to reduce most of these demands otherwise they would hold up a proposed multi-billion dollar loan to Great Britain. American intervention finally caused the British to accept a peace treaty in which they “settled for the compensation for their property losses, moderate Allied control of Thai [Siamese] exports until September, 1947, the grant of 1 ½ million tons of free rice (which was

---

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 272-3.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

never obtained), and other minor privileges. The British withdrew their demand to recognize the armed forces and the Thai [Siamese] were given the authority to prosecute their own war criminals.”<sup>131</sup> Moreover, in January 1947, Siam agreed to reinstate the provinces to French-Indochina, which were regained during the Japanese presence in the country, in return for a French promise not to veto Siamese admission to the United Nations, which was vital to Siam’s international respectability.<sup>132</sup>

---

<sup>131</sup> Frank C. Darling, *Thailand and the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1965), 43.

<sup>132</sup> David K. Wyatt, *Thailand: A Short History* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2003), 262.

## Chapter 4

### The Interpretations of Siamese International Relationships with the Three Powers

#### 4.1. Siamese Relationships with Britain

##### 4.1.1. High-priced Friendships: Siamese Relationships with Britain, 1855-1910

The Bowring Treaty came into force on 6 April 1856, a year after it was signed. The first British consul, Mr. Hillier, was instantly assigned to this post in Bangkok by Sir John Bowring, who was then the ambassador to Siam. Prior to this, two men of Bowring, Mr. Bell and Mr. Forrest, remained in Siam to study Siamese language and customs. They then worked at the consulate when it was set up. These preparations demonstrated the comprehensive preparedness of the British for their diplomatic mission, unlike other countries, especially the United States, which will be discussed further.

Later, Bell took charge of the consulate when Hillier fell seriously ill and died on 18 October 1856. Bowring, the ambassador to Siam at the same time, sent Mr. Gingell to Bangkok as acting Consul. Bell consequently gave way and asked to resign.<sup>1</sup> During that time, the British were looking for a permanent site to build a British Consulate instead of renting as they were doing. Finally, the British were granted a piece of land adjacent to the Portuguese consulate on the east bank of the Chao Phraya River by King

---

<sup>1</sup> M. L. Manich Jumsai, *History of Anglo-Thai Relations* (Bangkok: Chalermit, 1970), 89.



Mongkut. Sir Robert Schomburgk, who arrived in Bangkok in December 1857, planned the British consulate on this site. He was then the first British consul to inhabit the compound, and the first one directly appointed by the British Government in London without it being reported to Sir John Bowring in Hong Kong. From that point on, the British Consul in Bangkok would be appointed in this manner.<sup>2</sup> Schomburgk did not speak much Siamese, and, as an amateur geologist and surveyor, spent most of his time in Siam on long excursions around the country outside Bangkok.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the British consuls were tasked in looking for resources of the country where they resided,<sup>4</sup> as commercial development was one of Britain's major concerns in the second half of the nineteenth century, and when they were found, they encouraged the British subjects to take full advantage of these resources.<sup>5</sup> They, especially in the Far Eastern Service (covering China, Japan, and Siam), were appointed "to provide the focus around which trade might develop, to 'open' trade rather than to supply services at well-developed, westernized commercial centers."<sup>6</sup>

An example of harnessing resources can be seen with British subjects who engaged in their own endeavor without proper British surveillance to work in the forests, and they were arrested in Chiangmai, a tributary state of Siam which, in those days, was not yet incorporated into the direct administration of Bangkok. Schomburgk

---

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>3</sup> Susan Morgan, *Bombay Anna: the Real Story and Remarkable Adventures of the King and I Governess* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008), 114.

<sup>4</sup> M. L. Manich Jumsai, *History of Anglo-Thai Relations* (Bangkok: Chalermnit, 1970), 92.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>6</sup> D. C. M. Platt, *The Cinderella Service: British Consul since 1825* (London: Longman Group Limited, 1971), 180.

protested to the king for their release and was consequently paid damages by the Prince of Chiangmai. This case inspired Schomburgk's idea of for the British to have a vice-consulate there since he thought that there were many cases of iniquity towards British subjects, and he did not have time to look into them all. It took almost nine years of negotiations and his idea was revived again and again by later Consuls. Finally, the vice-consulate in Chiangmai, which would take care of the whole area of the North, was established in 1884.<sup>7</sup> E. B. Gould of the British Consulate General at Bangkok was selected by the British Foreign Office to be the first vice-consul there. According to this agreement, the bonds of extraterritoriality were tightened and the British vice-consul at Chiangmai acquired complete civil and criminal jurisdiction over all cases in which British subjects were accused.<sup>8</sup>

The exploitation of natural resources was one of the consequences of signing the Bowring Treaty. According to the treaty, the British now enjoyed the advantages of free trade and facilities and they could now do anything without Siam's interference. They soon controlled "the teak industry of the North, the ruby mines of Chantaburi and Pailin, the export of rice, the control of prices, the sugar industry where her men came to establish a sugar factory at Nakorn Chaisri, the cattle and hides of the Northeast, etc. Every kind of enterprise was taken over by the British."<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the Siamese king had to acquaint himself with the protests from the foreign consuls and found ways to deal with them since they were not under his command like his own subjects and would

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>8</sup> Richard Shaw Stetson, *"Siam's Diplomacy of Independence, 1855-1909, in the Context of Anglo-French Interests"* (Doctoral Dissertation, New York University, 1969), 38.

<sup>9</sup> M. L. Manich Jumsai, *History of Anglo-Thai Relations* (Bangkok: Chalermnit, 1970), 55.

not listen to him unless they got what they wanted. So, it was common to see these consuls asking British warships to come to Bangkok to display force and disseminate fear.<sup>10</sup>

In addition to these privileges, the extraterritorial rights under the British consular jurisdiction was another benefit the British subjects obtained. More and more people received this advantage through the expansion of British Empire in Southeast Asia. These British subjects now included Mon, Burmese, Shans, Karens, Malays, different mountain tribes, Chinese from Singapore and Hong Kong – in an extended sense almost any Chinese person from anywhere, and Indians who had come and settled in Siam. Moreover, Siamese wives and the children of these people also became British subjects. Consequently, British subjects under British law could be found everywhere in Siam and no one could make a complaint against them without the consent of the consul or without his judgment as chief of the local British tribunal. The situation became even worse when they were not arrested or punished for any crime by Siamese authorities. Furthermore, they did not have to pay any taxes according to Siamese laws.<sup>11</sup>

The friendship from the British came at a very high price for the Siamese people. Regardless of these special prerogatives, the Anglo-Siamese relations were going well at the beginning of this second half of the century. In 1857, the Siamese embassy was sent to the Court of Queen Victoria in London to return the courtesy of the queen for sending Sir John Bowring to Siam in 1855. Upon their journey, the British Government

---

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 55-6.

sent a warship, the *Encounter*, to take the Siamese Embassy to England and to bring them back home. When they arrived, the embassy was received by a meticulous reception put on by the British, all at public expense of the British Government. At the same time, they impressed the Queen and the Court in the way they paid respect to the queen in the same way they did to their own king (Figure 4-1).<sup>12</sup>



Figure 4-1: Reception of the Ambassadors from the King of Siam, 19 November 1857  
Source: <https://www.rct.uk/collection/919795/reception-of-the-ambassadors-from-the-king-of-siam-19-november-1857>

Siam's domestic situations as well as international affairs during this period of reforms relied much on the British. An internal crisis was well illustrated by The Front Palace Crisis in 1874-5. The incident took place during the early development of the

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 67-9.

Siamese reforms during the reign of King Chulalongkorn where the Siamese Second King, Prince Wichaichan, felt his position threatened by the reforms of 1873-4. The resistance and defiance of the prince, as well as the group called "Old Siam," occurred only months into the reforms. The growing strength of the king's power made Prince Wichaichan feel anxious that he was going to be removed from his position as the Second King.<sup>13</sup> He began to call in his troops and have them run drills in the Front Palace grounds in the dead of night. When informed, King Chulalongkorn strengthened his own palace guards. Finally, a fire was set near the gunpowder storehouse and gasworks in Chulalongkorn's palace on the night of 28-29 December 1874. Prince Wichaichan's fully armed troops arrived at the gates and awaited permission to put out the fire. The fire was eventually quenched and both parties stood tensely waiting for the next move.<sup>14</sup> On 2 January, Prince Wichaichan fled his palace and took refuge in the British Consulate, when it seemed that the king's party was going to use this incident to reduce his entitlement. He propounded that King Chulalongkorn make an agreement guaranteed by the British and French consuls, so that he might go back to his palace. However, the proposal was refused, and the king asked London and Paris for their neutrality.<sup>15</sup> Mr. Newman, who was in charge of the British consulate in Bangkok, tried to reconcile them and asked Sir Andrew Clarke, the Governor of Singapore who was much respected by

---

<sup>13</sup> Neil A. Englehart, *Culture and Power in Traditional Siamese Government* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2001), 95.

<sup>14</sup> J. G. D. Campbell, *Siam in the Twentieth Century: Being the Experiences and Impressions of a British Official* (London: Edward Arnold Publisher, 1902), 193.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

both kings, to act as a mediator.<sup>16</sup> As a result, after staying at the British consulate for almost two months, Prince Wichaichan, with no other choices, returned to his palace, and accepted the limitations of his status. The king, in return, abandoned many of the reforms of the preceding eighteen months.<sup>17</sup>

Throughout the nineteenth century, British advisors<sup>18</sup> were also specially favored by the Siamese Royal Court. By the 1890s, there was a significant difference between the number of British advisors and those from other foreign countries: there were fifty-eight British, twenty-two Germans, twenty-two Danes, nine Belgians and eight Italians.<sup>19</sup> As King Chulalongkorn mainly took Englishmen as his advisers, the British economic interests in Siam accordingly grew. In 1884 British shipping in Bangkok constituted 61 percent of the whole enterprise; and by 1898 it had risen to 78 percent.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, the British had the largest capital investment in Siam. Most of the foreign business firms in Bangkok were also British. The stakes seemed large in the view of the Siamese, but for the British, it was not large enough to be its critical concern. However, the British still wanted to keep the relationship with Siam not only for its market, but also in opposition to French annexation.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> M. L. Manich Jumsai, *History of Anglo-Thai Relations* (Bangkok: Chalermnit, 1970), 104.

<sup>17</sup> J. G. D. Campbell, *Siam in the Twentieth Century: Being the Experiences and Impressions of a British Official* (London: Edward Arnold Publisher, 1902), 193-4.

<sup>18</sup> Employing foreign advisors to assist in the Siamese administration was begun in the reign of King Mongkut.

<sup>19</sup> James Stourton, *British Embassies: Their Diplomatic and Architectural History* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2017), 149.

<sup>20</sup> Virginia Thompson, *Thailand: The New Siam* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941), 160.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

#### 4.1.2. The Siamese Relations with Britain during 1910 - WW II

Regarding the treaty of 1909, the Anglo-Siamese relations came into a new and prolonged period of smooth sailing. In the First World War, Siam joined the side of the Allies, the same side as Great Britain. In the post-war period, Britain regained her dominant position in the Siamese economy and her influence in the administration, which the Germans had threatened. However, her position had been disturbed when Siam changed her government system from absolute monarchy to a constitutional regime in 1932.

After the political revolution of 1932, the British, who had long exercised dominant economic and political influence in Bangkok and had enjoyed good relations with the royalist regime, naturally disapproved of such policies. In this regard, the strong British position in Siam was threatened both by internal and external situations of Siam at the time. Internally, it was threatened by the aggressive Siamese nationalism of the Assembly and the press, and externally, by Japanese economic penetration.<sup>22</sup> In 1935, for example, the British was warned by the *Times* that Siam's "credit and stability may not be strengthened by the artificial creation of industries, for which its people have as yet shown little inclination or capacity, or by an intensely nationalist and isolationist policy which is not suited to the needs of a country that must live by its agriculture, its mines, and its forests."<sup>23</sup> However, the British did not tend to intervene in Siamese circumstances, although they disliked much about this new order. Rather, the British

---

<sup>22</sup> Virginia Thompson, *Thailand: the New Siam* (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1941), 166-7.

<sup>23</sup> *The Times* (London), 4 March 1935.



minister from 1934, Sir Josiah Crosby, sought to influence the course of events through friendly persuasion.<sup>24</sup>

Until the Second World War, the British continued to hold first place controlling 37 percent of Siam's total foreign trade, in comparison to Japan's 11.6 percent. In terms of shipping, Britain held second place – behind Norway. By far, British capital represented the largest foreign investment in Siam, dominating the teak industry and controlling a large share in the tin and rubber trades.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, Siam adhered to the sterling bloc with only transient inconstancy, and a large part of her currency reserve was in sterling securities and notes. Three out of the six foreign banks were British, and so was the Financial Adviser.<sup>26</sup>

Nonetheless, the smooth relations between Britain and Siam were eventually agitated in the Second World War. During that time, Siam was threatened by the Japanese forces to declare war on Great Britain and the United States as already discussed. Great Britain recognized the declaration of war and throughout the duration considered itself in a state of war with Siam. At the same time, the British army also trained a small group of "Free Thai", an underground organization against Imperial Japan during World War II which spied on Japanese military movements and attempted to sabotage their activities to liberate Thailand from Japanese rule. However, compared to the Americans, the British help was only minor.

On 1 January 1946, under English pressure, the Anglo-Siamese Peace Treaty was signed in order to terminate the state of war between Britain and Siam. Its major points were that "[Siam] would return the Malay and Burmese territories acquired during the

---

<sup>24</sup> Richard J. Aldrich, *The Key to the South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 153-6.

<sup>25</sup> Virginia Thompson, *Thailand: the New Siam* (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1941), 167.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

war, would turn over free one and a half million tons of rice to United Kingdom, would not build a canal across the Kra Isthmus without British approval, and would sell rubber, tin, rice and tea in accordance with prices fixed by International Committee. In return, Britain and India agreed to support Siam's membership in the United Nations."<sup>27</sup> As a result, the diplomatic relations between Britain and Siam once again resumed after the temporarily interruption of the Japanese invasion. This agreement was later revised and updated in May 1946 since Siam completely fulfilled the obligations required by the terms of the agreement. Finally, this agreement was cancelled in January 1954 bringing the Anglo-Siamese relations completely back to their normal state of affairs.<sup>28</sup>

#### 4.1.3. The Products of Diplomacy and the Processes of Compromise: The Biggest Plot Acquirement

##### ***Land Allotment and Negotiation***

- ***The British Compound by the River***

After signing the Bowring Treaty in 1855, Britain sent Charles Hillier to be the first British consul in Siam. He arrived with his wife in June 1856 and rented a property in the Bang Khloaem district in the southern part of Bangkok, as a consulate.<sup>29</sup> Soon after, the British wanted to have a permanent property for their consular purposes. They were interested in the land that at the time, belonged to Phraya Bhrabal Sombatta,

---

<sup>27</sup> Nik Anuar Nik Mahmud, "Anglo-Thai Relations, 1945-1954" (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Hull, 1988), 38-40.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Mark Bertram, "Room for Diplomacy: Catalogue of British embassy and consulate buildings, 1800 – 2010", Accessed February 28, 2018, <https://roomfordiplomacy.com/thailand/>

a noble Minister of His Majesty the Second King. This land was described as in a good location in the letter written by King Mongkut to Hillier:

..... it was below the fortification above which it is stipulated in the Treaty that the vessel of men of war conveying a functionary Mission from Her Majesty's Governments shall not cross without permission of the Siamese Governments; and near of the place in which the Custom House will be built or constructed and the residence of the officers who will have right to consult with British Consul &c.<sup>30</sup>

Nevertheless, King Mongkut had difficulty selling that land to the British since he had no right to the site. He suggested that Hillier write the request to the Second King by himself and recommended another piece of land instead. It was the site near the Portuguese Consulate which belonged to Malayan and Burmese people who were forcefully moved to live there. The king made an offer as indicated in the same letter to Hillier:

The greater part of the piece of land in neighbouring place of the Portuguese Consulate is belonged to many Malayan and Burman people who are very common native inhabitants here. I will compel them all the owners of that part of land to sell their land to you in customary price of every one Tical<sup>31</sup> for every one square fathom<sup>32</sup>, according to the modern Siamese law and Royal custom, or

---

<sup>30</sup> Mark Bertram, "Room for Diplomacy: Catalogue of British embassy and consulate buildings, 1800 – 2010", Accessed February 28, 2018, <https://roomfordiplomacy.com/thailand/>

<sup>31</sup> Tical is an archaic unit of mass and currency which may refer to: The Thai baht, formerly known to foreigners as the tical.

<sup>32</sup> 1 square fathom equal to 3.34 square meters.

little lessening for the part thereof, which were or are useless to the possessors before...<sup>33</sup>

Before the British decided on the site for their consulate, King Mongkut actually purchased the land he suggested with his own personal funds and gave it to the British consulate as an expiation of his insult to them. Prior to this resolution, a few months after the king suggested this land to Hillier, a Siamese secretary of the British consul, Seng, was arrested and punished in King Mongkut's presence. He was given ninety-nine lashes for placing his name as a witness on an agreement to lease a plot of land to a European.<sup>34</sup> The British were very angry about this incident since Seng had acted upon the consul's orders and because the transaction was also legal under the new treaty. Thus, the punishment became an international incident. Furthermore, Seng was later moved to Prince Wongsathirat's palace where an overdosed opium plaster was applied to his back. He fell into a stertorous sleep from which he never again awoke. As a result, the British consul conducted a protest demanding Seng's body and the release of the other persons unlawfully imprisoned.<sup>35</sup> A few days later, King Mongkut pledged his outrage and was willing to make expiation by purchasing the land in the city for the British Consulate. According to Bradley (1856), the king also wanted to place a monument declaring his offense and that he had given the plot of ground for the

---

<sup>33</sup> Letter written by King Mongkut to Hillier, the British consul, in July 17, 1856. In G. Coedes, "English Correspondence of King Mongkut", *Journal of the Siam Society* 21.2, (1927): 127-128.

<sup>34</sup> B. J. Terwiel, *A History of Modern Thailand, 1767-1942* (New York: University of Queensland Press, 1983), 178-179.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

consulate as a lasting memorial of his crime.<sup>36</sup> According to Terwiel (1983), the reason for this was that the king feared the displeasure of Queen Victoria.<sup>37</sup> However, no further information about the monument was found if it had really been erected or not.

Moreover, King Mongkut made a loan of 16,000 ticals (\$9,600) to enable Mr. Gingell, a consul who succeeded Mr. Hiller, to construct the British compound while waiting for the transfer of funds from the Foreign Office in London.<sup>38</sup> The tension between the Siamese and the British was then relieved.

Soon afterwards, the land was slightly enlarged to about seven acres which was evidently the biggest consulate in Bangkok of that period (see Figure 4-2). The plot of ground was roughly shaped as a rectangle formed by the river at its west end and by a muddy track to the east. It was situated between the Portuguese consulate on the north side and the temple grounds to the south with canals on both sides as boundaries.

The British privileges on the land and the loan granted by the Siamese king in order to construct their consulate, illustrated the Anglo-Siamese relationship during the last half of the nineteenth century. The Siamese had to please the British in many respects in order to satisfy their international affairs with Siam. How the British were pleased corresponded to the advantages they gained from signing the Bowring Treaty with Siam. It showed that Siam desired to establish a good friendship with Britain in the

---

<sup>36</sup> Cited in B. J. Terwiel, *A History of Modern Thailand, 1767-1942* (New York: University of Queensland Press, 1983), 178-179; Padej Kumlertsakul and Clare Patchimanon, "The British Embassy Bangkok: a look back before moving on", GOV.UK, The National Archives, last modified April 15, 2019, <https://history.blog.gov.uk/2019/04/15/the-british-embassy-bangkok-a-look-back-before-moving-on/>

<sup>37</sup> Terwiel, *A History of Modern Thailand, 1767-1942*, 179.

<sup>38</sup> [https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/tna\\_la\\_nhs/20101115150513/http://ukinthailand.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/our-embassy/location-access/embassy-history](https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/tna_la_nhs/20101115150513/http://ukinthailand.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/our-embassy/location-access/embassy-history)

first place. King Mongkut even sent the letter to Sir John Bowring himself and was very well prepared to sign the treaty. Moreover, the Siamese king who traditionally had absolute power above any laws had to atone for his offense to the British.

Furthermore, the fact that the British consulate had the biggest site among the other nations in Bangkok, demonstrated the British position in the region as the most powerful and most favorable country of that period, whether this size of land plot was requested by the British or was willingly given by the Siamese king without request. The consulate was well maintained throughout the nineteenth century and was elevated to the Legation in 1895.



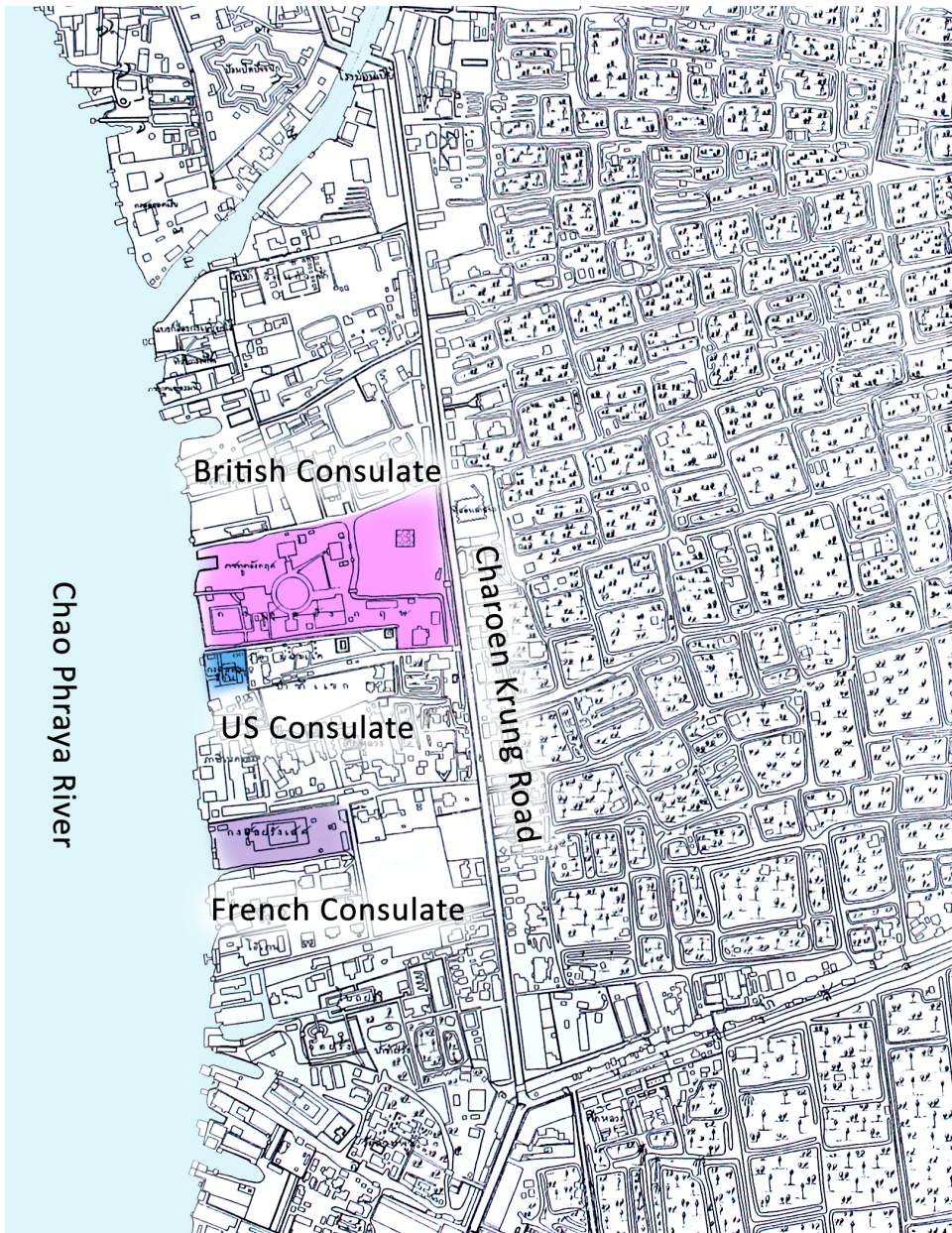


Figure 4-2: Map showing locations and approximate size of the consulate compounds of Britain, the United States, and France in Bangkok, extracted from Bangkok map 1888.

- ***The British Compound at Sapatoom***

According to the growth of Bangkok at the turn of the century, the surrounding area of the legation was in the unpleasant conditions. Relocating the British legation was a primary British concern. Although there were Siamese modern facilities, the



legation's foreign neighbors living in the same Euro-American quarter also cause problems. On the road opposite the legation, for example, there was a popular bar run by an Italian woman who played the piano and other musical instruments and which attracted lots of people to the bar.<sup>39</sup> The British Legation was no longer peaceful. Consequently, in the early 1900s, Sir Ralph Paget, who was a minister at that time, proposed to the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Works in London that it was time to change the site. His suggestion was to move closer to the Royal Bangkok Sports Club. The Foreign Office and Ministry of Work was neither enthusiastic nor helpful. Their major concern was that the legation be moved only if done at no expense to the British government.<sup>40</sup> Eventually, nothing came out of these ideas before the war broke out because the minister was too busy with other important matters, particularly the negotiations on the abolition of extra-territorial jurisdiction and border problems, and had little time to worry about the unpleasant conditions of the compound.<sup>41</sup>

After the First World War broke out in 1914, the site became even more unsuitable. Its surrounding area was now much too overcrowded and polluted. In addition, many other missions in Bangkok had already moved away. Eventually, Cecil Simpson, an Office of Works architect who visited the site in early 1921, concluded that it was time to move out of the compound. Phra Pakdi Noraseth, a successful

---

<sup>39</sup>"Embassy History", *British Embassy Bangkok*, Accessed February 17, 2018, [https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/tna\\_la\\_nhs/20101115150513/http://ukinthailand.fc.o.gov.uk/en/about-us/our-embassy/location-access/embassy-history](https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/tna_la_nhs/20101115150513/http://ukinthailand.fc.o.gov.uk/en/about-us/our-embassy/location-access/embassy-history).

<sup>40</sup> Mark Bertram, "Room for Diplomacy: Catalogue of British embassy and consulate buildings, 1800 – 2010", Accessed February 28, 2018, <https://roomfordiplomacy.com/thailand/>

<sup>41</sup>"Embassy History", *British Embassy Bangkok*, Accessed February 17, 2018.

businessman who was Siam's first real estate developer<sup>42</sup> popularly known as Nai Lert, showed Simpson and Mr. Richard Sturgis Seymour, a minister at that time, his large land plot of paddy fields that he had drained in the Sapatoom area on the edge of town that he would exchange for half of the current legation compound. Even so, no agreement was made since the offer still did not meet the British Treasury's conditions that the site move be fully self-financed.<sup>43</sup>

After several discussions, a few months later, Nai Lert offered a new proposal in which the British government would be given about eleven acres of his site at Sapatoom free of charge, and in return he could purchase the riverside compound of the legation (except for a small piece of land that the British government wanted to retain for the Consular Shipping Office) for 1.1 million ticals (£117,000). Furthermore, the statue of Queen Victoria, the iron gates, the railings, and the flagstaff on the present site would be moved to the new legation.<sup>44</sup>

Nai Lert's land at Sapatoom was about twenty-four acres in total which was later developed into a park in 1911, called Park Nai Lert. This land originally belonged to the local farmers.<sup>45</sup> It was located between Phloenchit road and the SanSaeb canal. The half of it located next to Sukhumvit road was purposed for exchange with the British government (Figure 4-3). At that time, the Phloenchit area was quiet and considered as the outskirts of Bangkok. The road ended a little further down from the site and no

---

<sup>42</sup> Teddy Spha Palasthira, *The Last Siamese: Journeys in War and Peace* (Bangkok: The Post Publishing, 2013), 50.

<sup>43</sup> Mark Bertram, *Room for Diplomacy: Britain's diplomatic buildings overseas 1800-2000* (Reading: Spire Books Ltd, 2011), 175-176.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Palasthira, *The Last Siamese*, 50.

cable car or bus passed through. Not surprisingly, there were many complaints about moving the legation to the new site. The captains of British ships, for example, were dissatisfied with how far the new site would cause them to waste time going to and from the new premises in order to enter and clear their vessels at the British Consulate-General in the Legation. Similarly, many British subjects particularly Indians, Burmese and Malays, were unhappy with the transportation to get there as buses and trams at that time did not pass near the new area. This dissatisfied attitude was also exhibited by Sir Robert (Hyde) Greg, the Minister at the end of 1921, successor to Seymour, and his wife. They were not excited with the idea of moving because they loved living in the old compound next to the river with the archaic buildings, as they both had an artistic taste. In addition, they were “horrified at the thought of being obliged to live in a house designed by an architect from the Ministry of Works whose achievements elsewhere widely regarded as architectural monstrosities.”<sup>46</sup>

Nonetheless, the agreement on Nai Lert’s proposal was eventually signed in March 1922, as his offer satisfied the British government as a sufficient guarantee of being self-financing.<sup>47</sup> The British Government acquired about half of Nai Lert’s park, or some 28 *rais* (12 acres) from him. In the same year that Nai Lert got the riverfront site from the British, the Siamese government bought back the plot of land as a site for a

---

<sup>46</sup> Ping Amranand, and William Warren, *Heritage Homes of Thailand* (Bangkok: The Siam Society Under Royal Patronage, 2001) 61.

<sup>47</sup> Mark Bertram, “Room for Diplomacy: Catalogue of British embassy and consulate buildings, 1800 – 2010” Accessed February 28, 2018. <https://roomfordiplomacy.com/thailand/>



new Central Post Office.<sup>48</sup> The existing consulate building was then converted into the office of the Post Office.

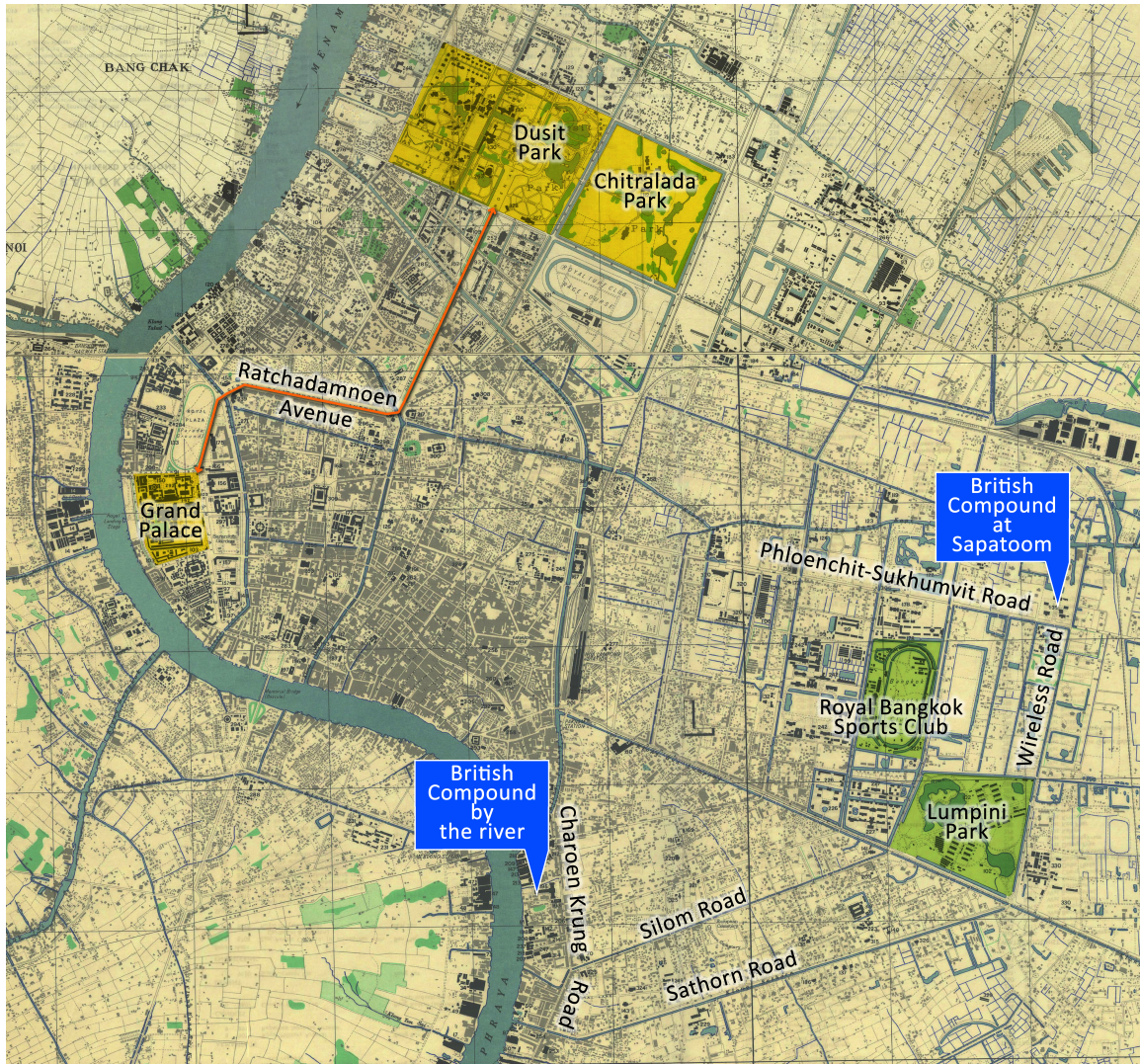


Figure 4-3: Partial map of Bangkok 1945 showing locations of the British compounds  
Source: extracted from Bangkok map 1945, National Archives of Thailand

In the late-1920s, the British compound was enlarged along its northern boundary, when they bought a 70-meter-wide strip of land including the pond. According to the strictly self-financing principle of the British government, this purchase

<sup>48</sup> Mark Bertram, "Room for Diplomacy: Catalogue of British embassy and consulate buildings, 1800 – 2010" Accessed February 28, 2018. <https://roomfordiplomacy.com/thailand/>

was made possible through the money the British got from selling their remaining part of the former property used as the Shipping Office to an Indian merchant. The sale of 50,000 ticals was enough to purchase the additional strip of land on the north part from Nai Lert which cost 40,000-tical.

During the Second World War, some buildings of the British legation were taken over by Japanese and Siamese authorities. In addition, local civilians occasionally attempted to pillage the compound. The furniture, however, remained safe from them since it was moved to the Swiss consulate, and was brought back after the end of the war. Fortunately, the presence of some Swiss on the compound deterred worse intrusion, as the Swiss served as a protecting power.<sup>49</sup>

At the compound, the residence was hit by a bomb during an air-raid on 5 June 1944. After the cessation of the War in October 1945, Edward Healey, the local representative for the Office of Works, inspected the bomb damage and found a ten-meter crater on the area near the building which was only eight meters away from the northeast corner of a building. The bomb also completely destroyed a septic tank and threw various drains around the building out of alignment. As a result, the basement

---

<sup>49</sup> The protecting power was a third state that protected another's 'citizens and properties in the territory of the state with which it no longer has diplomatic relations. Such property included its diplomatic buildings. The arrangement leaved both sides with a residual diplomatic channel of communication to the other. The protecting power could exercise its responsibility to the protected power in respect of diplomatic buildings by occupying vacated buildings or paying the wages of caretakers'. See Mark Bertram, *Room for Diplomacy: Britain's diplomatic buildings overseas 1800-2000* (Reading: Spire Books Ltd, 2011) 159.

was full of water and the whole of the building showed signs of having been severely shaken, with walls cracked in many places.<sup>50</sup>

In addition to these damages, another concern was the insufficient space, which was increased during the 1950s. To solve the problem, the first floor of a modern 3-story block on Silom Road was leased for the Information Office, and the building of students' quarters in the compound was converted into the addition of the office building.<sup>51</sup> Apart from these modifications, other changes also took place including the walling of the compound in the late-1950s, causing the canal along Phloenchit Road to be infilled and some fine trees were cut down.<sup>52</sup>

Eventually, the large plot of land owned by the British was reduced to two-thirds when one-third of the site, the front part of the compound, was sold to Central Group, who owned the large neighboring shopping mall, for £84 million (£22 million per acre) in April 2006 (See Figure 4-4). This was what the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) termed 'rationalization'. The retained part of the compound served the British diplomatic purposes until 2018 when it was eventually sold to a joint-venture consortium of Hongkong Land, a member of the Jardine Matheson Group, and again Central Group for £420 million (£46.5 million per acre). This sale was the largest land deal in Siamese history and the Foreign Office's biggest sale ever. Consequently, the

---

<sup>50</sup> Mark Bertram, "Room for Diplomacy: Catalogue of British embassy and consulate buildings, 1800 – 2010" Accessed February 28, 2018. <https://roomfordiplomacy.com/thailand/>

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.



new British embassy moved to the AIA Sathorn Tower, a modern tower block, in the central business district of Bangkok in 2019 on lease for the next 15 years.<sup>53</sup>

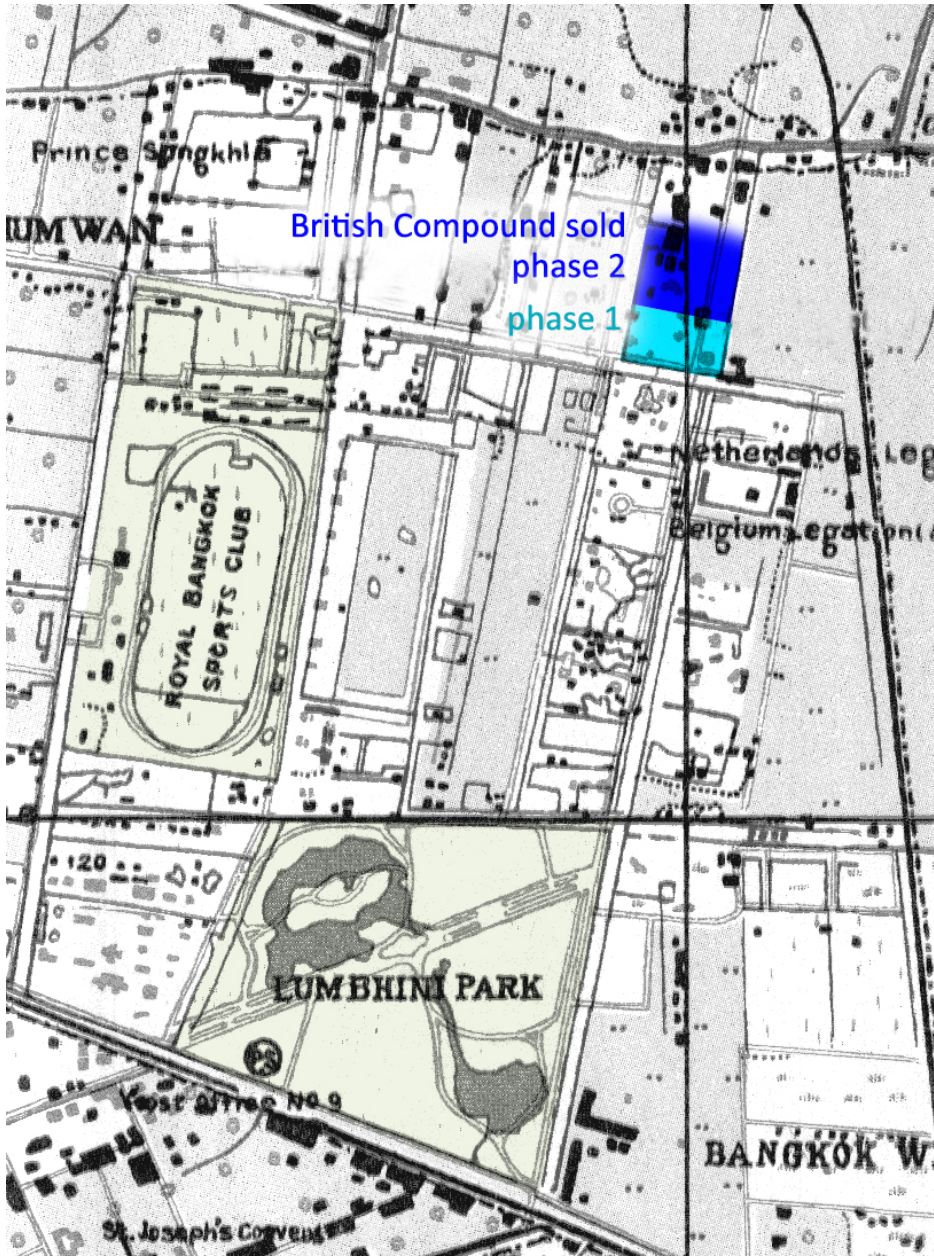


Figure 4-4: Partial map of Bangkok 1981 showing the portions of the British compound that had been sold in two phases.

Source: extracted from Bangkok map 1981, National Archives of Thailand

<sup>53</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/jan/31/cash-strapped-foreign-office-puts-bangkok-embassy-up-for-sale>; "UK's Bangkok embassy sold by Foreign Office for £420m" last modified January 31, 2018. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-42886466>



## ***Spatial Arrangements, Adaptations and Construction of the Compounds***

- ***The British Compound by the River***

In the beginning of the Siamese international relations after signing the Bowring Treaty in the mid-nineteenth century, Britain was the only nation among the three – Britain, the United States, and France – that had the absolute right on the land granted by the Siamese king for constructing the consulate in Bangkok. It was then the only country that had a purpose-built compound, where its master plan was newly laid out, and the buildings were particularly designed for diplomatic purposes.

Regarding the site of the British consulate given by King Mongkut, the plot of ground had a roughly rectangular shape bordered by the Chao Phraya River on the west side, and by a muddy track on the east side. The site was situated between the Portuguese consulate to the north and the temple grounds to the south, in which there were canals as boundaries of these two sides. The total area was about seven acres. The new consular site was laid out by Sir Robert Schomburgk, the second British consul to be appointed to Siam, who arrived in Bangkok in December 1857. He was an experienced surveyor best known for having surveyed and marked out the boundaries of British Guiana.<sup>54</sup> His plan was straightforward in the way in which a group of consulate offices, the vice-consul's house and the assistants' house formed the center of the site (see Figure 4-5).<sup>55</sup> The residence of the consul was placed on the same axis as the office but

---

<sup>54</sup> Mark Bertram, *Room for Diplomacy: Britain's diplomatic buildings overseas 1800-2000* (Reading: Spire Books Ltd, 2011), 93.

<sup>55</sup> The master plan of the British consulate designed by Sir Robert Schomburgk accessed via the river could not be found; however, a new road-access one suggests the former spatial arrangement of the compound.

was closer to the river; the best location of the compound. Similar to that of the Portugal consulates in Bangkok, the front of the British residence faced the river which, at the time, was the main access of the compound. Accordingly, a landing stage and a boat shed were built by the river to serve the means of entry. To access the residence, visitors had to pass through the gate lodge located between a jetty and the residence. This path, however, was laid out off the center of the residence allowing the latter to be clearly seen from the river. The unobstructed view of the residence seemed to be the reason of this arrangement. Therefore, the magnificence of the consulate was revealed (see Figure 4-6). At the back of the site, there was a group of courthouses and native quarters on one side, while stables and jail were on the other side.

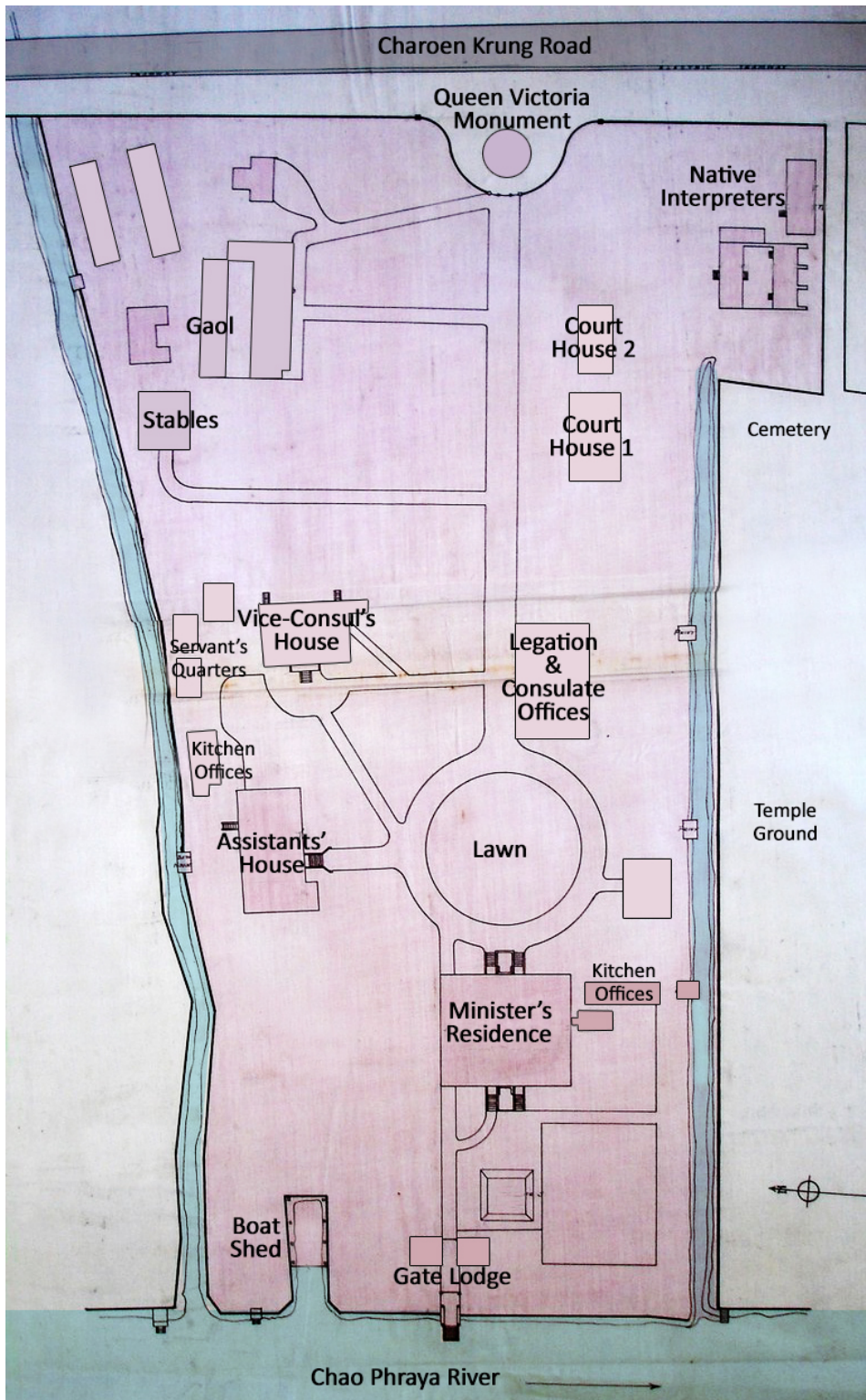


Figure 4-5: The layout of the British Compound in 1895 after reversing the compound's access from river to road suggesting the former spatial arrangement of the compound designed by Sir Robert Schomburgk accessed via the river.

Source: <https://roomfordiplomacy.com/bangkok-before-1926/>



Figure 4-6: British Consulate complex, which had a flagstaff and a gate lodge in front of the residence, viewed from the river, 1867

Source: <http://teakdoor.com/Gallery/albums/userpics/58147/1867-british-embassy-complex-bangkok-bb.jpg>

The three-story consulate residence was the biggest building in the compound. The main function occupied the two upper floors which were surrounded by shuttered verandas (Figure 4-7). The construction of this building was finished in 1876. Other buildings were later added to the compound which included a row of servants' quarters, two jails in 1880 and 1890, a house for the Consular Assistant, an office building in 1890, and two courthouses were finished in 1902 and 1907.<sup>56</sup>

Later, the spatial arrangement of the compound reversed since the significance of the river as the main access of the consulate was lessened in the 1880s. The reason for this was that the way to travel within Bangkok had gradually changed from by the

---

<sup>56</sup> "Embassy History", *British Embassy Bangkok*, Accessed February 17, 2018, [https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/tna\\_la\\_nhs/20101115150513/http://ukinthailand.fc.o.gov.uk/en/about-us/our-embassy/location-access/embassy-history](https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/tna_la_nhs/20101115150513/http://ukinthailand.fc.o.gov.uk/en/about-us/our-embassy/location-access/embassy-history).

river to by road. This change in city transportation began when the first road outside the royal compound, 'Charoen Krung', was constructed and used in 1864. It was followed by other roads constructed in the following years, and an electric tramway was in service in the 1890s. The main entrance to the consulate had consequently shifted from facing the river to facing the public road, which was Charoen Krung Road.<sup>57</sup> A wide straight drive was accordingly laid out illustrating the main axis of the compound. It became a backbone of the site which had small streets spreading out from it and connecting to other parts of the compound. In this regard, no pattern specified the overall layout of the compound since these small streets were not concurrently planned with the buildings.

According to the new approach, the inner main street started from the entrance gates, which was now located on Charoen Krung Road and passed the consulate office to a large circle drive in front of the residence. The circular driveway in front of the consul's residence emphasized the grandness of the British consulate, as well as the residence itself. However, as the approach to the consulate shifted to the opposite side, the back of the house was now in front of the others. The guests needed to first pass the most inferior points of the compound such as jail, the native staffs' quarter, and the stables in order to come to the residence, though they were located quite far from the main street (Figure 4-5). And to accentuate the new entrance on Charoen Krung Road, in 1905, a Queen Victoria statue was erected in front of the compound<sup>58</sup> (Figure 4-8). It

---

<sup>57</sup> Mark Bertram, "Room for Diplomacy: Catalogue of British embassy and consulate buildings, 1800 – 2010" Accessed February 28, 2018. <https://roomfordiplomacy.com/thailand/>

<sup>58</sup> More details about Queen Victoria statue will be discussed in the next section.



was designed by Sir Alfred Gilbert, the sculptor of the Shaftesbury Memorial Fountain in Piccadilly Circus.<sup>59</sup> This monument was a reproduction of the one in Winchester Castle. The mold was used to cast three statues in which another one was in Newcastle.<sup>60</sup> Interestingly, instead of placing the statue inside the gate, it was erected on the outside. The intention was to draw people's attention to see the grandness of the British consulate was therefore evident.

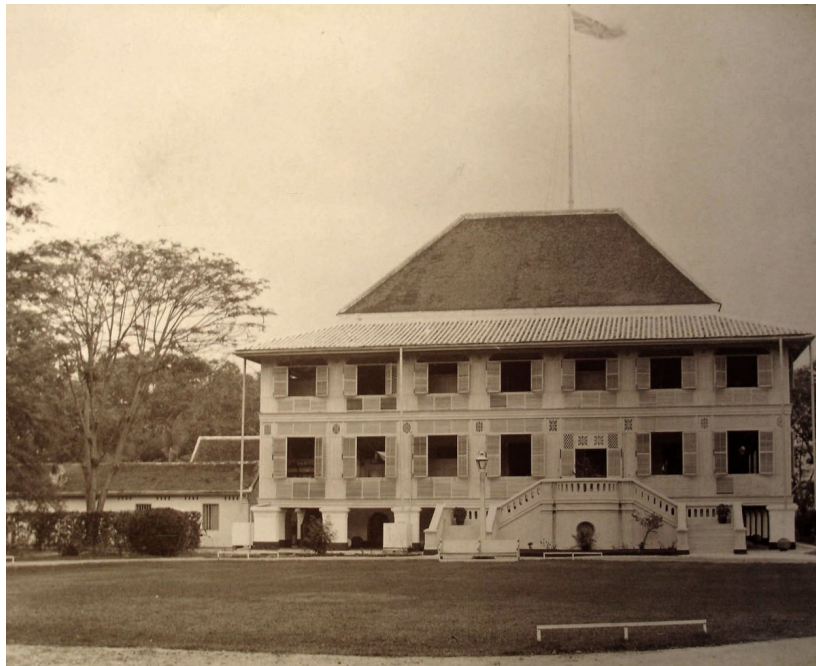


Figure 4-7: The minister's residence viewed from within the compound, with a circular driveway at the front, flagstaff and river behind, late 1890s.

<sup>59</sup> "The British Embassy Bangkok: a look back before moving on", *GOV.UK*, Accessed January 16, 2018, <https://history.blog.gov.uk/2019/04/15/the-british-embassy-bangkok-a-look-back-before-moving-on/>

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

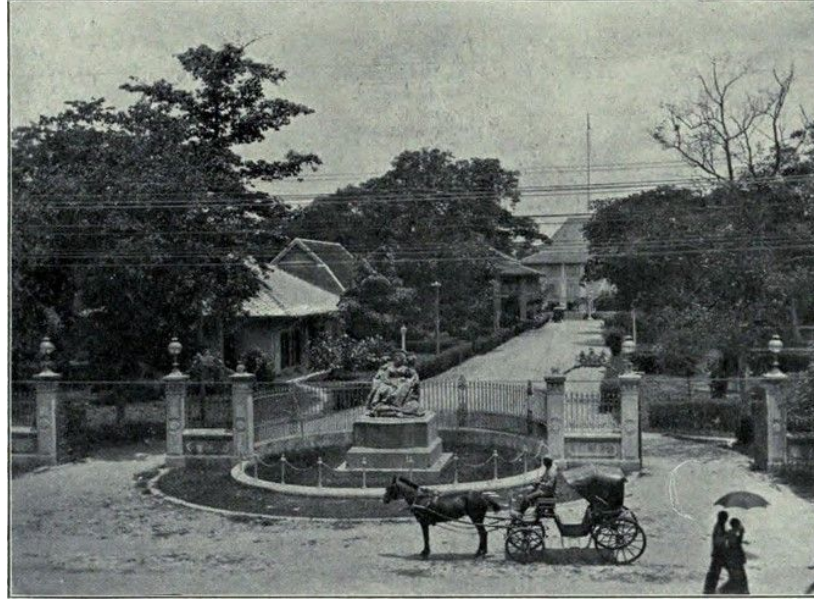


Figure 4-8: The Seated Queen Victoria statue in front of entrance gate on Charoen Krung Road.

- ***The British Compound at Sapatoom***

In 1920s, the British legation was relocated to Nai Lert's site at Sapatoom. There are several hands that can be credited with the final design of the new compound. Julius Bradley, the Office of Works architect in Shanghai, made the original plan, but Sir Robert Greg, the minister in Bangkok at that time, was dissatisfied with it. W.A.R. Wood, the consul General at Chiang Mai, who was responsible for the original draft plans of the new consulates at Songkhla and Chiang Mai<sup>61</sup>, offered him to discuss the matter with the Office of Works while on leave in London in 1922. This resulted in the appointment of Archibald Scott from the London office to be posted to Bangkok as resident architect

---

<sup>61</sup> Ping Amranand, and William Warren, *Heritage Homes of Thailand* (Bangkok: The Siam Society Under Royal Patronage, 2001), 61.



to complete the project.<sup>62</sup> He was responsible for customizing the design to local conditions, incorporating Greg's preferences, and overseeing construction contracts.<sup>63</sup>

The new site was almost square in plan with each side about 200 meters long. The total area was about twelve acres. Three sides of it were canals, and another side to the north was a large rectangular drainage pond that Nai Lert had dug as a cistern to cope with the heavy rains. The main entrance was on Phloenchit Road which was located at the south side of the compound. The War Memorial was directly behind the entrance gate, which was the first structure placed on the site. It was erected at the beginning of 1923, and was paid for by the British community in honor of the British subjects who resided in Siam who fought and fell in the First World War to defend their country.<sup>64</sup> The memorial was designed by a British architect, Mr. Edward Healey, who headed to Siam to chair as the first headmaster of the newly established Po Chang School (The Craftsmen's Training School) in Bangkok, and had his own private construction office in Siam — Siam Architect.<sup>65</sup> This work was described by *Siam Observer*<sup>66</sup> as 'simple and dignified', and was made out of Aberdeen granite and bronze. The names of the fallen were inscribed on a bronze plate on the lower portion, whereas

---

<sup>62</sup> James Stourton, *British Embassies: Their Diplomatic and Architectural History* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2017), 153.

<sup>63</sup> Stourton, *British Embassies*, 153; Bertram, *Room for Diplomacy*, 176.

<sup>64</sup> "British War Memorial," *The Straits Times*, January 19, 1923.

<sup>65</sup> Chomchon Fusinpaiboon, "Modernisation of Building: The Transplantation of the Concept of Architecture from Europe to Thailand, 1930s-1950s" (Doctoral dissertation, University of Sheffield, 2014).

<sup>66</sup> *Siam Observer* was Daily newspaper, which was printed in two languages -- English and Thai, was founded by Mr. W.A.G. Tilleke, the Acting Attorney-General of Siam, and Mr. G.W. Ward, who had formerly been a member of the staff of the *Bangkok Times*. *Siam Observer* was first published in 1893.

at the top there were bronze laurel wreaths.<sup>67</sup> The position of the memorial was the starting point of the ceremonial street which was laid out as the main axis of the compound. It was then the first structure people had to pass by when visiting the legation (Figure 4-9).

At the end of this grand street, in front of the big circular drive of the residence, there was the statue of Queen Victoria brought from the old compound. Instead of erecting it at the front gate like the old compound, it was placed behind the War Memorial (Figure 4-10, 4-11). This arrangement illustrated the shift of national representation from presenting the loyalty to the monarchy to honoring the patriotism which was an outcome of the nationalism movement in Europe at that time. Moreover, the sequence of erecting these two structures was similar to the one at Buckingham Palace in London. The Guard's Memorial installed in memory of Guardsmen who died in World War I<sup>68</sup> was erected at the front end of *The Mall* which led direction to the Queen Victoria Memorial at the far end, in front of the Palace (Figure 4-12, 4-13). This similarity demonstrated that the British diplomatic compound in Siam directly reproduced the symbols of the nation from its own motherland.

---

<sup>67</sup> "British War Memorial," *The Straits Times*, January 19, 1923.

<sup>68</sup> "Guard's Memorial", *The Royal Parks*, Accessed January 16, 2020.

<https://www.royalparcs.org.uk/parks/st-jamess-park/things-to-see-and-do/monuments-fountains-and-statues/guards-memorial>



Figure 4-9: The War Memorial behind the main gate viewed from Sukhumvit Road, 1920.

Source: <https://readthecloud.co/embassy-4-2/>

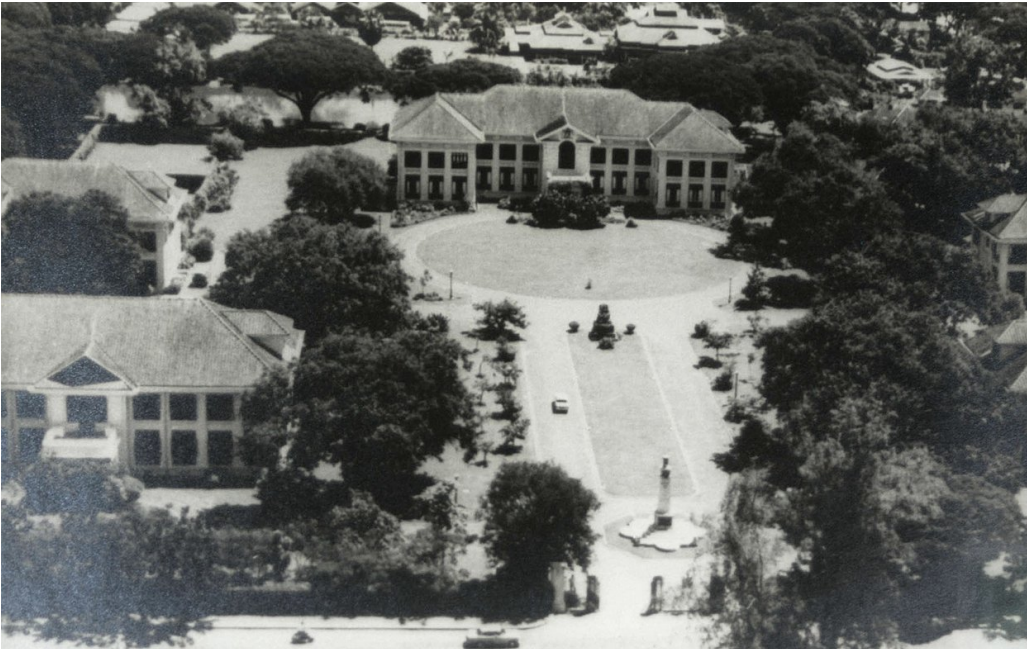


Figure 4-10: Center of the compound with War Memorial and Queen Victoria statue at each end of the main street, and the minister's residence behind, 1930s.

Source: <https://roomfordiplomacy.com/bangkok-before-1926/>



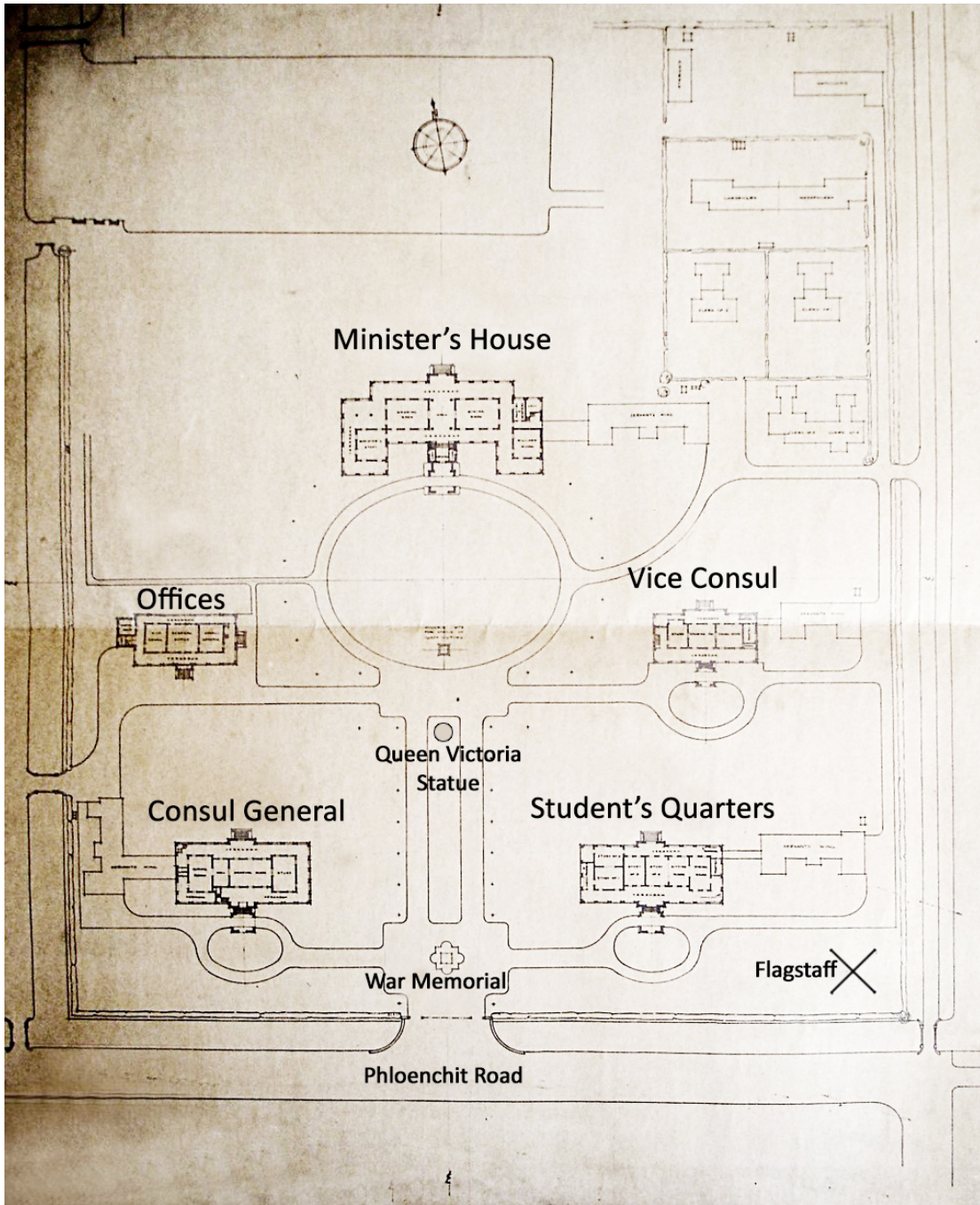


Figure 4-11: Site plan of the British Legation as executed, 1924

Source: <https://roomfordiplomacy.com/bangkok-before-1926/>



Figure 4-12: Guard's Memorial

Source:

<https://www.royalparksofuk.org.uk/parks/st-james-park/>

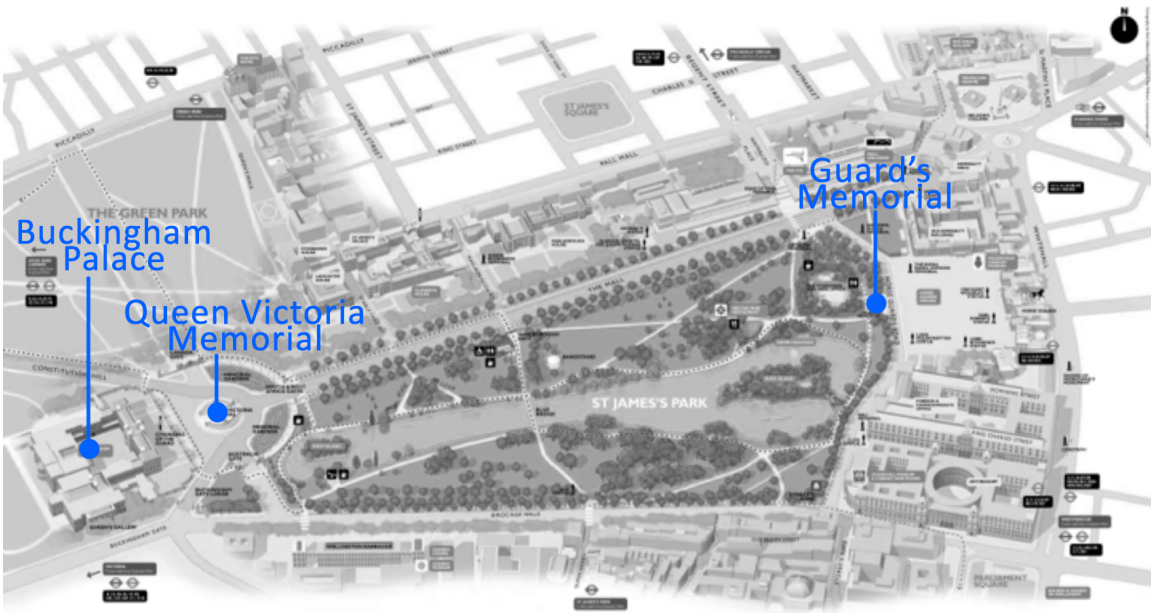


Figure 4-13: Map of St James's Park, London showing locations of Guard's Memorial and Queen Victoria Memorial

Source: <https://www.royalparksofuk.org.uk/parks/st-james-park/map-of-st-james-park/>

The grand street was the backbone of the compound running northwards from the main gate in the center of the south frontage to a large circular drive in front of the minister's residence. It divided the site symmetrically into two parts, where perpendicular streets were spread out from it in order to access other buildings on the site. Unlike the old compound, the building arrangements and the street network in the compound were coordinately designed. According to the master plan of the legation, there were five main buildings planned in a similar sequence as that of the former compound when its approach was already reversed to the road. The minister's residence was located on the main axis of the compound in the deepest position compared to the other four buildings. The consul-general's house and office building were located on the west side of the main street, while the student's quarters and the vice-consul's house were on the east side. Each one had its own access street with a circular drive in front of the building, as well as an ancillary quarter attached to its side, except for the office that had only a straight street passing in front and had no additional quarter attached to it. In this regard, the access to each building demonstrated the spatial hierarchy of the compound which was purposely planned. Obviously, the most important one was the minister's residence which had the biggest circular driveway in front of the building. The reason for this was that the residence was the place for welcoming significant guests both from Britain and foreign countries. The other three buildings, which were the vice-consul's house, the consul-general's house, and the student's quarters, had identical circular drives (Figure 4-11).

Regarding the customized design of Scott, the plans of these five buildings were easily agreed between him and Greg and were finished in August 1924. A few months later, in November 1924, the main tenders for the superstructures of the buildings were received, and the contract was given to the Bangkok Dock Company Ltd. which was established in 1865 by an Englishman named Captain Bush.<sup>69</sup>

The residence was the biggest one among the five main buildings. It had an E-shape plan with a porch in the middle. The main hall at the center of the building opened to the garden and Queen Victoria statue (Figure 4-11). Functions within the residence were clearly planned in the way in which the first floor was the place for reception, whereas the upper floor which had more privacy functioned as the living quarter of the minister, his family, and guests. Nonetheless, the residence seemed to be too small for Greg.

Apart from the British living quarters, there were also indigenous people residing in the compound. It seemed that the British were not acquainted with Siamese lifestyle. The layout showed that they lived separately. The ancillary quarters of each building were placed at the far end of the building away from the main axis (Figure 4-11). This placement was made due to Greg's request. He was concerned, as Scott explained to London, that "Mr. Greg is naturally not keen on having so many native families close to his own residence ... The official servants and their families, who number about seventy

---

<sup>69</sup> "History," Bangkok Dock Company (1957) Limited., Accessed February 21, 2020, <http://bangkokdock.co.th:8080/2556/history.php?lang=en>



altogether, are very well behaved on the whole, but the small babies which arrive at abnormally frequent intervals are apt to be rather noisy".<sup>70</sup>

Even though Greg's first anxiety was resolved, another thing still annoyed him. There was noise and overcrowdedness at the pond, Nai Lert's cistern, located next to the minister's private garden on the north side of the land. Particularly, during the period from the middle of October to the beginning of December, when people on holiday from all over Bangkok would visit the pond in motor cars and boats. They spent all day bathing and canoe-racing and picnicking on the banks.<sup>71</sup> To get rid of these noises, Scott proposed to buy the pond to become a property of the British legation. This part of land was offered for 40,000 ticals, which was far exceeded its market value. However, Scott suggested that the total property when including the pond would be increased by an even greater amount.<sup>72</sup> The decision had not yet been made since the self-financing principle was their major concern. Incidentally, the part of the former compound down by the river which had been retained for a Shipping Office was sold to an Indian merchant for 50,000 ticals as the office was less needed. This was enough to buy this additional 70-meter-wide strip of land including the pond, which was laid along the northern boundary of the new compound.<sup>73</sup> Finally, the minister's residence was permanently saved from noisy crowds on the pond. Moreover, this additional land could

---

<sup>70</sup> Cited in Mark Bertram, "Room for Diplomacy: Catalogue of British embassy and consulate buildings, 1800 – 2010" Accessed February 28, 2018.

<sup>71</sup> Mark Bertram, Room for Diplomacy: Britain's diplomatic buildings overseas 1800-2000 (Reading : Spire Books Ltd, 2011), 178.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Mark Bertram, "Room for Diplomacy: Catalogue of British embassy and consulate buildings, 1800 – 2010" Accessed February 28, 2018.

also provide sites for quarters for clerks, gardeners and messengers. At last, the total project fell only fractionally short of its self-financing target.<sup>74</sup> Greg's major concerns had now been resolved. Later on, the existing low-quality buildings on the additional site were demolished in order to construct a single, and secure new office building on this ground in the 1960s.

Sir Robert Greg, the Head of Mission, Minister and Envoy Plenipotentiary, entered into the residence on 22 September 1926, a little later than he had hoped. However, he remarked in a letter to the Foreign Office, "What is a few weeks' delay when you have built almost for eternity?"<sup>75</sup> This spatial arrangement served the British diplomatic purposes until the end of the Second World War.

After the war, the British continued to keep their compound in good condition, though some parts of it were damaged due to the war. The embassy made some improvements and adjustments to the spatial arrangement. Some buildings were converted, some were demolished, and some were newly constructed. Nonetheless, one-third of the compound was sold in 2006, and the retained one was sold in 2018. The embassy consequently moved to a modern tower block, the AIA Sathorn Tower, located in the central business district of Bangkok. The horizontally spatial relationship of the compound was then shifted to the vertical one.

---

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> "Embassy History", *British Embassy Bangkok*, Accessed February 17, 2018, [https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/tna\\_la\\_nhs/20101115150513/http://ukinthailand.fc.o.gov.uk/en/about-us/our-embassy/location-access/embassy-history](https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/tna_la_nhs/20101115150513/http://ukinthailand.fc.o.gov.uk/en/about-us/our-embassy/location-access/embassy-history).

## ***The Architecture and Representation of Diplomacy***

- ***The British Compound by the River***

In the first British compound, the residence of the consul was located on the best location of the compound, closest to the river, separated by a landing stage and a boat shed. The building itself was simple with no lavish decorations and covered by a bonnet roof. It was rectangular in plan, about ninety feet wide and seventy-five feet deep, and three stories high.<sup>76</sup> Each floor was surrounded by a veranda, but only two of which on the upper floors had shutters enveloping the exterior. These two floors were occupied by main diplomatic functions<sup>77</sup>. The ground floor, on the other hand, was opened like that of other bungalow houses in tropical climates. In other words, the building sat on sturdy pilotis of the ground floor to raise the main function areas above flood level (Figure 4-14). The ceiling height of the ground floor, therefore, was lower than that of the upper ones. Due to the raised floor design, the building could be described as in response to the local conditions. Architecturally, the main feature of the building was the repetition of the colonnade columns and the shutters on the exterior façade. Unfortunately, apart from knowing that the consular site was laid out by Sir Robert Schomburgk, the British consul at the time, the record of the architect who designed the building can not be found.

---

<sup>76</sup> Mark Bertram, *Room for Diplomacy: Britain's diplomatic buildings overseas 1800-2000* (Reading: Spire Books Ltd, 2011), 93-94.

<sup>77</sup> "Embassy History", *British Embassy Bangkok*, Accessed February 17, 2018, [https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/tna\\_la\\_nhs/20101115150513/http://ukinthailand.fc.o.gov.uk/en/about-us/our-embassy/location-access/embassy-history](https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/tna_la_nhs/20101115150513/http://ukinthailand.fc.o.gov.uk/en/about-us/our-embassy/location-access/embassy-history).

The construction budget of the consulate at the beginning seemed to be rather tight as the British had to borrow a loan from the Siamese king of 16,000 ticals (\$9,600) while waiting for the transfer of funds from the Foreign Office in London.<sup>78</sup> This might be the reason of the simple look of the residence which was the first structure to be constructed on the site. However, it was the biggest building in the compound which was emphasized by a tall flagstaff erected in front of the riverside entrance of the residence. Originally, the flagstaff was a wooden one given by King Mongkut at the beginning of the establishment of the compound. It had been used until 1892 when it broke in a storm. The British consulate, therefore, ordered a steel one from Hong Kong, which was the highest in Bangkok at the time.<sup>79</sup> Even though this was quite expensive, causing dissatisfaction from the Foreign Office and Ministry of Work, the national pride of the British as the most influential nation in Siam, deemed it more important that they own the unbeatable size of the nation's symbol. Furthermore, the United Kingdom Royal coat of arms embellished the top of the gate lodge located between the residence and the landing stage by the river. In this case, visitors would clearly see it before passing through the gate to get to the residence (Figure 4-15). Although, at the beginning, the architecture of the residence did not seem to represent any national identity of Britain, the later constructions helped identify the great status of the compound, as well as the nation.

---

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Songklod Bangyeekhan, "The Memory of The Embassy", The Cloud, last modified March 6, 2018. <https://readthecloud.co/embassy-4-2/>

Other buildings which were constructed later were harmoniously designed (see Figure 4-16). They had a similar pattern of repetition, the same as the consul's residence. The consular office completed in 1890, for example, had a balcony surrounding the building which exposed the repetition of the colonnade columns. However, the magnificence of the office was lessened by the lower building height with two stories, instead of three like those of the residence. Its roof was also different; it had a combination roof where the upper part was gabled, and the lower part was a hipped one (Figure 4-17).

In the last decade of the nineteenth century, the access to the consulate by river was replaced by the road on the opposite side of the compound. The spatial arrangement was consequently reversed. In this regard, the new approach from the road was highlighted by the Queen Victoria statue which was erected outside the entrance gate in 1905 (Figure 4-18). This bronze statue was fourteen feet high, thirty feet at its widest point, and weighing around two tons. The statue was paid for by public subscription in which the British subjects in Siam raised a sum of 21,838 ticals (approximately £1,275) to erect a memorial to Her Late Majesty Queen Victoria.<sup>80</sup> There was the inscription engraved on the statue's base: "Erected in loving memory by her Subjects in Siam 1903". This statue then, was not only the emblem of the nation, but also symbolized the love to the British monarchy, as well as to the kingdom.

The unveiling of the monument ceremony took place on 23 March 1903. *The Times* reprinted a report from the *Bangkok Times*, about this ceremony: "The Crown

---

<sup>80</sup> WORK 10/275 - Public Buildings (Overseas) 'Bangkok Legation', The National Archives.

Prince [Vajiravudh] then drew the cord, everyone rose, the officers present in uniform saluted, the civilians uncovered, and the flag slipped aside, revealing the bronze statue of the Queen, represented as seated upon a throne, crowned, bearing scepter and orb, and arrayed in the robes of State.”<sup>81</sup> This event showed the significance of the British in Siam, as well as a good relationship between the two kingdoms and the monarchies. Throughout the nineteenth century, the British advisors won special favor at the Siamese Royal Court. At the same time, this event was held during the period of what Peleggi (2002) called “Refashioning the Theater of Power” of Siam developed after King Chulalongkorn’s return from his first European Tour in 1897.<sup>82</sup> This mourning of the Siamese for the death of Queen Victoria presented the close relation between the monarchs of the two countries aiming at impressing the populace, and foreign observers, which were mainly the British subjects in Siam in this case, by ritual spectacles.

Later, the statue, together with the flagpole, were moved to the new British legation when this compound was sold in the part-exchange agreement with Nai Lert.

---

<sup>81</sup> “The British Embassy Bangkok: a look back before moving on”, *GOV.UK*, Accessed January 16, 2018, <https://history.blog.gov.uk/2019/04/15/the-british-embassy-bangkok-a-look-back-before-moving-on/>

<sup>82</sup> See more about “Refashioning the Theater of Power” in Maurizio Peleggi, *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), 113-142.

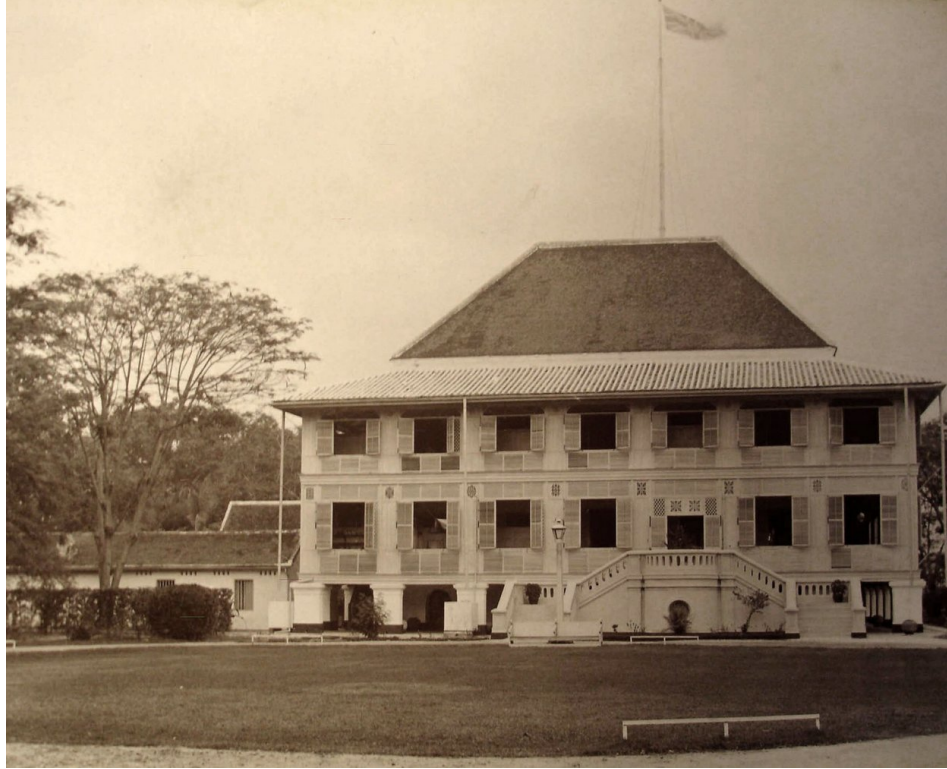


Figure 4-14: The residence with the flagstaff and river behind viewed from within the compound, late 1890s.

Source: <https://roomfordiplomacy.com>



Figure 4-15: The gate lodge located between jetty and the residence, 1907.

Source: <https://roomfordiplomacy.com>





Figure 4-16: The harmonious design of buildings in the British compound, 1865  
Source: <https://teakdoor.com/famous-threads/39970-siam-thailand-bangkok-old-photo-thread-213.html>



Figure 4-17: The British Consular office, 1907  
Source: <https://roomfordiplomacy.com/bangkok-before-1926/>



Figure 4-18: Seated Queen Victoria statue in front of the road entrance of the compound.

- ***The British Compound at Sapatoom***

Within the new British compound at Sapatoom, there were five main buildings, each of which was two stories high and had verandas around each floor. Similar to other buildings built by the British in tropical countries at the time, all the building in the compound had a harmonious design with Colonial style – huge, lofty rooms and deep verandas, where the long eaves displayed the oriental appearance.<sup>83</sup> Originally, the eaves of the consul-general’s house, the vice-consul’s house and the student’s quarters would have been longer than this, but they were lowered by a meter to trim some

---

<sup>83</sup> Ping Amranand, William Warren, *Heritage Homes of Thailand* (Bangkok: The Siam Society Under Royal Patronage, 2001), 61.

construction costs. In addition, due to the reduction of the construction cost, the frieze was also omitted.<sup>84</sup>

The minister's residence was the biggest one among the five buildings. It had an E-shape plan, with a porte cochère. The building was covered by a hipped roof, except the part of the projecting middle porch, which had a gabled roof emphasizing the entrance of the building. Moreover, there was the Royal coat of arms of the United Kingdom embellished on the pediment of the gabled roof indicating the position of the legation as the representative of the country. The overall appearance looked stately with thirteen-bay width, though its depth was quite shallow. Rooms were arranged in a linear manner. All were connected via the veranda surrounding it (Figure 4-17). Each bay was filled with shutters on both two floors. On top of the shutters were wooden fretworks that each had two roof brackets attached on its two sides. The repetitive pattern of these elaborate elements became the main character of the building (Figure 4-20). Regarding these architectural details, the building was well ventilated by which the wind could effectively flow throughout the residence. This was what Sir Robert Greg, the British minister, called "the relation of space to health"<sup>85</sup> which was designed in response to the climate of Bangkok. In terms of function, the ground floor was used as

---

<sup>84</sup> Mark Bertram, *Room for Diplomacy: Britain's diplomatic buildings overseas 1800-2000* (Reading: Spire Books Ltd, 2011).

<sup>85</sup> "Embassy History", *British Embassy Bangkok*, Accessed February 17, 2018, [https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/tna\\_la\\_nhs/20101115150513/http://ukinthailand.fc.o.gov.uk/en/about-us/our-embassy/location-access/embassy-history](https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/tna_la_nhs/20101115150513/http://ukinthailand.fc.o.gov.uk/en/about-us/our-embassy/location-access/embassy-history).

the legation office, where there was also hidden access to the servants' quarter at the end of right wing (Figure 4-19). The upper floor was the living quarter of the minister.<sup>86</sup>

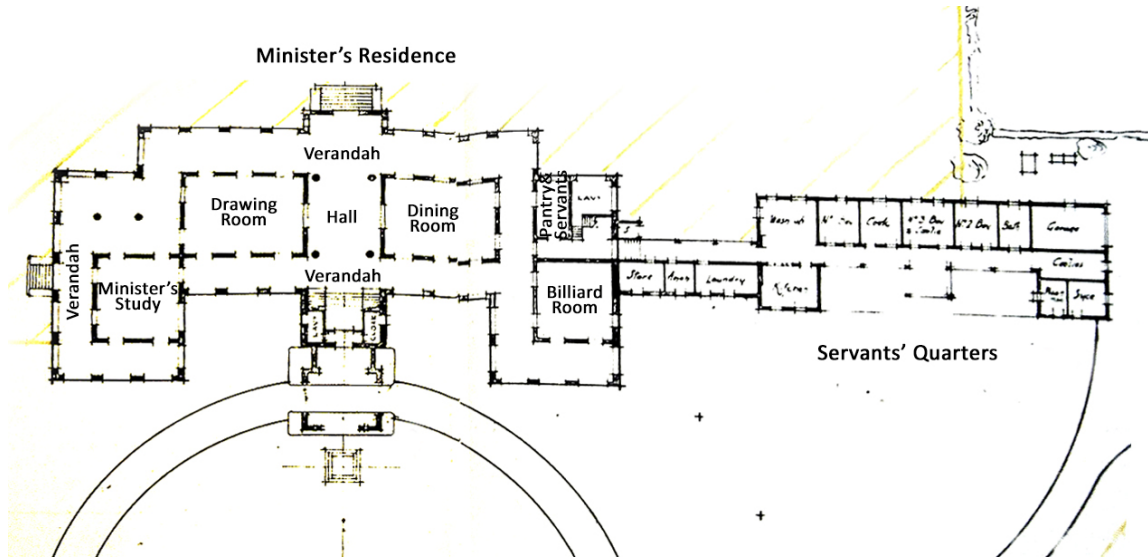


Figure 4-19: Ground floor plan of the minister's residence, 1924.  
Source: <https://roomfordiplomacy.com/bangkok-before-1926/>

<sup>86</sup> Saowalux Poshyanandana, Vasu Poshyanandana, *175 Architectural Heritage in Thailand: Twenty years of Architectural Conservation Award 1982-2002* (Bangkok: Amarin Printing and Publishing Public Company Limited, 2004), 57.





Figure 4-20: The minister's residence with the repetitive pattern.

The other four buildings in the compound had a similar character to that of the residence, but with simpler architectural details. They were two stories in height and had a deep veranda surrounding it. The repetition patterns of pilasters and shutters at every bay window were dominant. Three of the buildings had a circle driveway in the front, as well as a porte cochère in the middle of the building (Figure 4-21). Unlike the residence that had an E-shaped plan, the plans of these buildings were simply rectangular and the rooms were linearly arranged. All had two entrances both at the front and back of the building. They also had direct access to their own ancillary quarter attached on the side. The office building which had no circular driveway, only had a

small porch projecting from the middle of the front facade. It was also the smallest building among the five main ones (Figure 4-22).



Figure 4-21: The front facade of the Consul General building  
Source: <https://readthecloud.co/embassy-4-2/>



Figure 4-22: The front of the office building, late 1920s

Source: <https://roomfordiplomacy.com/bangkok-before-1926/>

The construction of the compound was finished in 1926. Some furniture was sent from London and some were brought over from the old legation such as a punkah and a safe. The punkah was installed in the dining room, in which the end of its rope was in the kitchen for the staff to control it from there. The safe was problematic because the doorway of the new legation strongroom was too narrow to install it. Nonetheless, London was impressed with the photographs of the finished buildings.<sup>87</sup>

In 1984, the British Embassy was awarded for Outstanding Conservation of Architectural Arts by the Association of Siamese Architects. However, in 2019, the British government was asked to return the conservation award for demolishing the embassy building without taking any regard to the historical and architectural value of

---

<sup>87</sup> Mark Bertram, *Room for Diplomacy: Britain's diplomatic buildings overseas 1800-2000* (Reading: Spire Books Ltd, 2011), 179.



the building<sup>88</sup> after the British compound was sold to a joint venture consortium of the Central Group and Hong Kong Land in 2018 (See Figure 4-23).



Figure 4-23: The demolition of the British Embassy, 2019

Source: <https://thailand-construction.com/association-of-siamese-architects-wants-its-award-back-after-demolition-of-former-british-embassy-building/>

#### 4.1.4. Summaries

Among the three studied nations, Britain was the first to establish its consulate in 1856, a year after signing the Bowring Treaty. Not only was Britain the single nation among the three that had absolute right to the land in the first place but the Siamese

---

<sup>88</sup> “UK government asked to return conservation award for demolition of former embassy building”, *Thai PBS WORLD*, last modified August 24, 2019, <https://www.thaipbsworld.com/uk-government-asked-to-return-conservation-award-for-demolition-of-former-embassy-building/>

king also granted it the biggest plot specifically for the consular purpose. In addition, when the British moved their compound to the second site at Sapatoom, they acquired the largest property for diplomatic purposes in Bangkok even though, this time, it was offered by a Siamese developer, not by the king as in the former case. In both cases, these far larger sites than that of the other countries reflected the scale of the British power and influence in Siam, as well as the Siamese favor of the British at that time.

The British compound benefitted from full possession of the sites in which the buildings and the layout were specifically designed for diplomatic purposes. The spatial hierarchy of the buildings within both compounds clearly revealed that the residence held the most important status among the other functions due to its best location on the site, the grand symmetrical approach from the entrance, and the sequence of entering the building that required passing through other components of the compound. This kind of spatial arrangement reflects Lefèbvre's *Spatial Practice* in the way it was designed as a framework for people to use and perceive spaces. In this sense, such a space would embody 'properties' (dualities, symmetries, etc.) which associate with the actual 'occupation' of space.<sup>89</sup>

Besides the buildings, the compound had other structures erected to emphasize the grandness of the compound conceived by the British. The Queen Victoria statue on the first British compound, for example, was uncommonly placed outside the gate, instead of on the inside. The position of the statue successfully drew attention to the legation by passersby. More importantly, the way the fence of the compound recessed,

---

<sup>89</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford; Cambridge: Blackwell, 1991), 171.

which left the statue outside the gate, was perceived as if the Queen Victoria statue, an emblem of the British nation, sat on the Siamese territory. This was probably the British intention to exhibit its power over Siam, the host country, as well as France, her competitor, whose legation was the neighbor of the British one. In this sense, the entrance space of the legation was constructed by a national symbol which Lefèbvre suggests as *Representation of Space*.<sup>90</sup> The statue was erected during the period when territorial disputes between these three countries – Britain, Siam, and France – were ongoing. The situation was intensified after the Paknam incident of 1893 when Siam had to accommodate all the French demands, and Britain also lost her prestige to France. In addition to the above mentioned elements of the compound, there were other components illustrating a significant role of Lefebvre's *Representation of Space* in designing the British compound. In the second British compound at Sapatoom, the national representation of Britain was presented through the War Memorial, erected directly behind the front entrance of the property inside the gate. The memorial was paid for by the British community in honor of the British subjects residing in Siam who fought and fell in WWI to defend their country. The erection of the War Memorial at the front gate, instead of the Queen Victoria statue which was also brought from the old compound, illustrated the shift of national representation from presenting the loyalty to the monarchy to honoring the patriotism which was an outcome of the nationalism movement in Europe at that time.

---

<sup>90</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford; Cambridge: Blackwell, 1991), 33.

In addition, the British also owned the tallest flagstaff to raise their national flag higher than any other diplomatic compound in Bangkok. Even though this flagstaff was very expensive, the national pride of the British as the most influential nation in Siam was more important.

Due to the purpose-built aspect of the British compounds, the similarity of the spatial arrangements between the two properties – the first one on the riverside and the second in the Sapatoom area – was clearly demonstrated. They both had a wide internal street laid at the center of the site acting as the main axis of the compound. In both cases, this street led directly to the residence which was located in the deepest position of the compound. Other buildings were then placed on the side. Architecturally, the buildings in both compounds were harmoniously designed with the formal expression represented through the repeated patterns of the shutters and the colonnade. In addition to these unique characteristics, the buildings were all designed in response to the local climate and geographical conditions of Bangkok. The ones on the riverfront compound sat on high pillars in order to raise the main floor above flood levels, while the ones on the inland site at Sapatoom sat on ground level. Instead of stairs, only a few steps were needed to access the buildings. The whole area of the ground floor could now be used as the main function activities of the buildings.

Despite the adjustment to meet the local conditions, the British did not acclimate to the local Siamese people. The British minister requested that the quarters of the servants, who were mostly Siamese, be separated from the main functions of the compound and they were in turn planned to be located at the far end of the buildings.

Furthermore, the British bought an additional site on the northern part of their second compound in order to rid themselves of the annoyance of Siamese people who frequently visited the pond on that part of the property. The British compound was then fully isolated from the local people and the surrounding context.

Disregarding their relationship with the Siamese, the British put their concerns first, including selling their embassy which had been awarded a prestigious historical designation by the Association of Siamese Architects, and moved to a modern tower block.

## **4.2. Siamese Relationships with the United States**

### **4.2.1. The Loosely Peaceful Relations: Siamese Relationships with the United States, 1855-1910**

It was during the time when Parkes, the British envoy, was negotiating with the Siamese government about further concessions for a post-Bowring Treaty, that the American envoy, Townsend Harris arrived Bangkok on 13 April 1856 carrying a letter from President Franklin Pierce and a good number of valuable presents. The American mission had to wait until the Siamese completely concluded the agreement with the British and many details and questions asked by Parkes delayed Harris's mission which caused the latter's impatience. When Parkes left Bangkok, the Siamese speedily proceeded to negotiate with the Americans, and the treaty was signed with an unusual speed within the same month of the departure of the British envoy.<sup>1</sup>

During the negotiation between the United States and Siam, Harris encountered some reluctance by King Mongkut in dealing with the representative of a republic, rather than an agent coming on behalf of the royal heads of state, as in the British case.<sup>2</sup> The king was not favorably disposed towards Harris personally, nor was he willing to treat him like Bowring of Britain. In the end, Harris, nonetheless, successfully upheld his position of equal status as that of Britain and received the same privileges. The Americans were not only granted a similar treaty to that of the British, but also obtained the freedom of religion for Americans who resided in Siam, and Siamese subjects who

---

<sup>1</sup> "English Correspondence of King Mongkut." *Journal of the Siam Society* 21, no. 1 (1927): 31.

<sup>2</sup> Frank C. Darling, *Thailand and the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1965), 15.

were employed by Americans.<sup>3</sup> Among the three studied nations, the United States-Siamese treaty came into force as the second one, after the Bowring-Parkes Treaty of Britain in 1856, but before the Montigny Treaty of France in 1857. The first apparent difference between the United States and the other two Powers, Britain and France, was that the former had no foothold in Southeast Asia, and it had never threatened Siam's sovereign independence as did Britain or France.<sup>4</sup>

After the treaty was settled, Harris, empowered by the President, soon appointed Rev. Stephen Mattoon who was his interpreter of the mission as the first American consul in Siam. Rev. Mattoon was a long-term resident missionary in Bangkok since 1847. Unlike other cases of consul selection in which the post was exclusively decided by the authorized government or persons, the case of the United States was different because the Siamese got involved in this choice. Somdet Oong Noy, the Siamese noble, recommended Rev. Mattoon as the best person to this post as the latter knew the Siamese language, customs, etc. Harris agreed upon this idea and gave additional reasons including that Rev. Mattoon was also popular with both Kings and Siamese nobles.<sup>5</sup> To Rev. Mattoon, being a resident consul was "an honor entirely unexpected and unsought," although he almost said "undesired."<sup>6</sup> His main goal to come to Siam was for religious purposes, not for diplomacy or politics. The only

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Richard Shaw Stetson, *"Siam's Diplomacy of Independence, 1855-1909, in the Context of Anglo-French Interests"* (Doctoral Dissertation, New York University, 1969), 182.

<sup>5</sup> Townsend Harris, *The Complete Journal of Townsend Harris* (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc, 1930), 121.

<sup>6</sup> Mary L. Mattoon, *Sketch of the Life of Rev. Stephen Mattoon, D.D.* (Charlotte: History of Johnson C. Smith University, 2010), 32-33.



desirable reason to accept this position was that it might enable him to be more useful.<sup>7</sup> He eventually consented to act for the time being as he felt that his country should have a core representative. He served this post for three years by which no important problems arose between the two governments. His major problem was that the government never paid his salary for the post.<sup>8</sup>

Rev. Mattoon's successors to this post were failures of the United States government to send consuls to Bangkok. The first presidential appointment of the Bangkok Consul, H. Rives Pollard, failed to arrive in Bangkok because of his troublesome personal life.<sup>9</sup> The next one, John Hassett Chandler, who had come to Siam since 1843 as a Baptist missionary,<sup>10</sup> was involved in business affairs which finally placed him in the consular jail.<sup>11</sup> Chandler's successor, in addition, Aaron J. Westervelt, was accused by Chandler as the most abusive man to the natives he ever met. Westervelt shortly left Bangkok with an abundance of criticism.<sup>12</sup>

These problems seemed to stem from the fact that this post was unpaid. Only unqualified people would accept this condition, and, in return, exploited the appointment for their own purposes. This exploitation was common at that time since the consuls, mostly businessmen, were allowed by the government to promote their own commercial interests, and collect fees that they were permitted to keep in lieu of

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Bangkok Dispatches, May 7, 1858.

<sup>9</sup> Benjamin A. Batson, "American Diplomats in Southeast Asia in the nineteenth century: The Case of Siam", *Journal of the Siam Society* 64, no.2 (1976): 53-5.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>11</sup> *Bangkok Dispatches*, January 7, 1876.

<sup>12</sup> Benjamin A. Batson, "American Diplomats in Southeast Asia in the nineteenth century: The Case of Siam", *Journal of the Siam Society* 64, no.2 (1976): 58.

salary. The principle was that “where fees were ample, men of limited means were able to live abroad in relative comfort.”<sup>13</sup> A qualified man, on the other hand, could find a better job and a higher income than the American consul position. This presumption was not, however, entirely true. James M. Hood, the first American consul to receive a salary, and the first who did not work as a merchant or a missionary as the former ones did,<sup>14</sup> was soon as controversial as any of his predecessors by having trouble with many entities in Siam including the Siamese government. This was followed by a series of abuses, such as falsifying expenses, selling protection papers to Chinese and liquor agents, and even stealing consular property, created by succeeding consuls.<sup>15</sup> These were only some examples of the American consuls in Siam in the late nineteenth century which were very different from those of the British who seemed to have better qualifications, experience, and purposeful duty of their post. Accordingly, the United States was regarded as a subordinate Power by King Mongkut. He once reported, “the character of the Representatives of that Nation at his Court had not been such as to lead him to believe it a great nation.”<sup>16</sup>

The reputation of the United States consulate was eventually restored by David B. Sickels, who was appointed as a new American consul in 1876. Within a few months

---

<sup>13</sup> Jane C. Loeffler, *The Architecture of Diplomacy: Building America's Embassies* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2011), 14

<sup>14</sup> *Bangkok Despatches*, December 24, 1865.

<sup>15</sup> Susan Morgan, *Bombay Anna: the Real Story and Remarkable Adventures of the King and I Governess* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008), 114; Benjamin A. Batson, “American Diplomats in Southeast Asia in the nineteenth century: The Case of Siam”, *Journal of the Siam Society* 64, no.2 (1976): 69.

<sup>16</sup> *Bangkok Despatches*, August 20, 1866. Quoted in Benjamin A. Batson, “American Diplomats in Southeast Asia in the nineteenth century: The Case of Siam”, *Journal of the Siam Society* 64, no.2 (1976): 60.

he was able to correct numerous abuses of his predecessors.<sup>17</sup> He then initiated the idea to raise the rank of America's representative from "Consul" to "Consul-General" or even "Minister Resident and Consul-General."<sup>18</sup> Additionally, the restoration of American prestige was followed by King Chulalongkorn's plan for a tour of Europe and the United States.<sup>19</sup> However, because of reasons of doubt, the royal visit to the United States never happened, whereas the king visited Europe in 1897 and 1907. The diplomatic relationship between Siam and the United States was even better when General John A. Halderman, Sickels' successor, who was pleased with the Siamese king, and he was eventually named Minister Resident and Consul-General in 1882. At the time, he was the first diplomat accredited to this high rank in Siam.<sup>20</sup> Afterwards, there were no serious issues between the United States and Siam, and the situation between the two countries was getting better. The improvement of American trade in Siam seemed to be the main concern of the consuls. In 1894, John Barrett, one of the most successful American representatives in Siam, strongly encouraged the United States to compete with the influences of the British, the French, and the Germans in Siam. In 1903, the rank of American consul, Hamilton King, was raised from Minister Resident and Consul-General to Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> *Siam Weekly Advertiser*, January 9, 1879, enclosed in Bangkok Despatches, January 20, 1879.

<sup>18</sup> Benjamin A. Batson, "American Diplomats in Southeast Asia in the nineteenth century: The Case of Siam", *Journal of the Siam Society* 64, no.2 (1976): 70.

<sup>19</sup> *Bangkok Despatches*, February 23, 1880.

<sup>20</sup> Benjamin A. Batson, "American Diplomats in Southeast Asia in the nineteenth century: The Case of Siam", *Journal of the Siam Society* 64, no.2 (1976): 76.

<sup>21</sup> Benjamin A. Batson, "American Diplomats in Southeast Asia in the nineteenth century: The Case of Siam", *Journal of the Siam Society* 64, no.2 (1976): 100.

Apart from the diplomatic relationship between the United States and Siam, the Americans also had influence on Siamese education and public health through the missionary services. The missionaries induced the Siamese understanding of the need to improve their living conditions. King Mongkut sanctioned the statement of admiration of the American missionaries that

Many years ago the American missionaries came here. They came before any Europeans, and they taught the Siamese to speak and read the English language. The American missionaries have always been just and upright men. They have never meddled in the affairs of government, nor created any difficulties with the Siamese. They have lived with the Siamese just as if they belonged to the nation. The government of Siam has great love and respect for them and has no fear whatever concerning them. When there has been a difficulty of any kind, the missionaries have many times rendered valuable assistance. For this reason the Siamese have loved and respected them for a long time. The Americans have also taught the Siamese many things.<sup>22</sup>

Moreover, American missionaries impressed King Chulalongkorn with their educational work until, in 1878, Rev. and Mrs. S.G. McFarland were requested by the king to become the superintendents of a new government school. Their son, Rev. George B. McFarland, organized the Royal Medical College and served as a dean and lecturer from 1892 until 1926. The missionaries also published newspapers in Bangkok which consequently encouraged the development of the Siamese local press.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> Cited in George Haws Feltus, *Samuel Reynolds House of Siam: Pioneer Medical Missionary, 1847-1876* (New York; Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1924), 137.

<sup>23</sup> Frank C. Darling, *Thailand and the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1965), 14.

Similarly, the American advisor, Edward H. Strobel, a former Bemis Professor of international Law at Harvard University, was impressed by King Chulalongkorn in how he assisted in the revisions of the legal codes and played an active role in the negotiations with the British and the French to restore considerable judicial authority to Siam. Previously, the Siamese government used to ask Western countries including the United States to abolish their special treaty privileges but were rejected. Even though Siam had improved its judicial system along Western lines by employing a team of European jurists to rewrite the legal codes of the country, and two American advisers to assist in improving the court system; and sending students to study law abroad, the result did not seem to meet Western satisfaction. Eventually, with the help of Strobel, the British extraterritorial privileges were retroceded to Siam in 1909, though at a high price to the Siamese.<sup>24</sup> Prior to this, the transfer of French extra-territorial jurisdiction back to Siam in 1907 was also done through his help, although Siam had lost some of her territories as compensation.<sup>25</sup> These successful tasks became a precedent for filling the post of advisor with a professor from the Harvard Law School which lasted until 1940.<sup>26</sup> The selection of an American for this high advisory position illustrated the Siamese desire to obtain the support from a friendly and powerful non-European nation in its endeavor to gain freedom from unequal treaty restrictions and to oppose the territorial encroachments of the British and the French. This notion was stated in a government

---

<sup>24</sup> Details on this issue are discussed in the following section of this Chapter.

<sup>25</sup> Ira Klein, "Britain, Siam and the Malay Peninsula, 1906-1909." *The Historical Journal* 12, no. 1 (1969): 129-30.

<sup>26</sup> Frank C. Darling, *Thailand and the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1965), 17-8.

publication that it would help Siam “to avoid being involved in European controversies.”<sup>27</sup>

In terms of trade, American trade was at its peak in 1858 when their commerce was greater than that of any other countries except Great Britain which was about the same.<sup>28</sup> The United States exported large numbers of steam engines to Siam to be used in rice mills and a new fleet of merchant vessels. The glory of American trade in Siam, however, lasted only a very short period. In 1859 American shipping suffered “a great falling off” and an American trading company in Bangkok was sold.<sup>29</sup> The American trade could not survive during the American Civil War and particularly the activities of Confederate cruisers. Many American traders had to switch to the safety of foreign flags.<sup>30</sup> Its trade rapidly declined after the Civil War due to the increase of competition from Great Britain and Germany.<sup>31</sup>

The relationship between Siam and the United States was improved by a visit of ex-President Ulysses S. Grant in April 1879 where he emphasized the need for more intimate relations between the two countries. He also specifically encouraged King Chulalongkorn to send Siamese students to the United States for higher education, in which, at the time, most were sent to Europe, especially England and Germany.<sup>32</sup> Three

---

<sup>27</sup> *Siam General and Medical Features* (Bangkok: The Bangkok Times Press, 1930), 11.

<sup>28</sup> Frank C. Darling, *Thailand and the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1965), 12-3.

<sup>29</sup> *Bangkok Despatches*, June 30, 1859.

<sup>30</sup> Abbot Low Moffat, *Mongkut, the King of Siam* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1961) 91-95.

<sup>31</sup> Frank C. Darling, *Thailand and the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1965), 12-3.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

years later, the United States elevated its diplomatic mission in Bangkok from a Consulate to a Legation in October 1882 to ensure a good relation between the two countries. In 1884, a Siamese diplomatic mission was sent to the United States to obtain a treaty revision in order to give the Siamese government greater control over liquor and opium trafficking in the country. This was the first time Siamese officials set foot in the United States.<sup>33</sup> However, compared to the other two Powers, the role of the Americans after the Civil War became rather out of Siamese sight until after the Second World War.

#### 4.2.2. The Siamese Relations with the United States during 1910-WW II

The relations between Siam and United States improved after Siam entered the First World War in July 1917 on the side of the Allies. Although the Siamese did little to assist the Allies war effort in Europe, they did gain additional respect from Western nations. This allowed the Siamese delegation a chance to attend the Versailles peace conference as one of the victorious members. They used this opportunity to ask for the restoration of complete judicial and fiscal economy from the Western statesmen. This plea did not seem to get attention from most of these men except President Wilson of the United States. He promised that his country would relinquish these unequal privileges and prepared to give Siam a new treaty.<sup>34</sup> Accordingly, negotiations between American and Siamese officials began immediately in Paris and were later transferred to

---

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>34</sup> Francis Bowes Sayre, "The Passing of Extraterritoriality in Siam," *The American Journal of International Law* 22, no. 1 (1928): 81.



Washington. A new treaty of Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation between the two countries was signed on 16 December 1920.<sup>35</sup> The American Government surrendered all rights of extraterritoriality and granted fiscal autonomy to Siam. Complete equality of treatment was given to the citizens of both countries. This treaty made the United States the first Western country to advance the Siamese position toward international equality. A moral obligation was consequently placed on other Western nations to follow the United States' move.<sup>36</sup>

This closer friendship between the two countries was made particularly through the service of American advisers. During this studied period, the most renowned among the Americans to fill this post was Francis B. Sayre, son-in-law of President Woodrow Wilson, who headed a Siamese diplomatic mission to Europe and successfully helped Siam be granted complete judicial and fiscal autonomy by all Western nations by March 1927.<sup>37</sup> As a result, he was granted the title of "Phraya Kalyan Maitri" (True Friendship) by the government.<sup>38</sup>

Furthermore, from 1916 to 1929, the Rockefeller Foundation launched a public health program which brought additional medical knowledge and services to Siam.<sup>39</sup> This Foundation also provided both financial and advisory assistance to the Royal Medical College in 1917, when it was combined with the Civil Service College and

---

<sup>35</sup> Frank C. Darling, *Thailand and the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1965), 17.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Francis Bowes Sayre, "The Passing of Extraterritoriality in Siam." *The American Journal of International Law* 22, no. 1 (1928): 10-12.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>39</sup> Victor Heiser, *An American Doctor's Odyssey* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company Inc., 1936), 482.

established as Chulalongkorn University. Consequently, the standard of the university was raised through the teaching of American doctors sponsored by this Foundation, and in 1923, it began awarding medical degrees.<sup>40</sup> In addition, there were increasing numbers of Siamese officials and students coming to the United States for observation and study. In 1927 Prince Mahidol, the father of King Rama VIII and King Rama IX, began his medical training at Harvard Medical School where he received an M.D. degree. King Prajadhipok (King Rama VII) came to the United States in May 1931 for medical treatment but he also made numerous observations of the American political system.<sup>41</sup>

Apart from these specific examples, generally, the influence of the United States in Siam was minor since the beginning up to the Second World War, compared to the other two Powers. Even though the outbreak of war in Europe caused Siam to increasingly turn to the United States as a supplier of manufactured goods, American trade continued at a low level. These imports included machinery and airplanes which contributed to the technological progress and military power of Siam.<sup>42</sup>

The government's program of economic nationalism after the overthrow of the absolute monarchy in 1932 caused troubles for the Americans. One American corporation, the Standard-Vacuum Company, for instance, had been forced to end most of its operations by 1941,<sup>43</sup> and the relations between Siam and the United States became even worse. In the late 1940s, the American government halted the sale of

---

<sup>40</sup> Frank C. Darling, *Thailand and the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1965), 19.

<sup>41</sup> Andrew A. Freeman, "His Majesty King Prajadhipok of Siam," *Asia* (May, 1931), 277.

<sup>42</sup> Darling, *Thailand and the United States*, 32-3.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

sixteen aircrafts to Siam as an attempt to regain territory in French Indochina. Moreover, by March and April 1941, the United States was holding up petroleum supplies, relenting only in May after being assured of continued access to Siamese tin and rubber. American advisors, who were previously favored by the Siamese government, were also affected from the nationalist ideology of the new political regime. Their significance was rapidly reduced until came to the end in July 1940.<sup>44</sup>

Similarly, the influence of the missionaries declined after 1932. The mission school became less attractive and their enrollment decreased in many areas due to the rise of nationalism together with the increase in educational facilities provided by the government. On the other hand, the economic depression in the United States also reduced the number of missionaries sent to Siam making Siamese Christians increasingly turn to indigenous leadership. In this case, medical and educational work continued until the missionaries were interned or fled the country at the beginning of World War II. Some of their welfare work, however, was carried on by Thai Christians.<sup>45</sup>

The advent of World War II dramatically changed the character of Siamese-American relations. At the beginning of the war, Siam was occupied by massive Japanese forces which eventually made her declare war against Great Britain and the United States, and collaborated with Japan. However, the Siamese ambassador in Washington, Seni Pramoj, did not deliver the declaration of war to the Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, but led the resistant unit of the Free Thai Movement in the United States. The American government, moreover, offered to assist this organization.

---

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

Throughout the subsequent years of the war, the United States worked closely with the Free Thai group which made their tasks successful. This pattern of cooperation that developed during the war was carried forward into the post-war years. Eventually peace was declared on 16 August 1945, with the triumph of the United States and Great Britain. The former, nonetheless, considered Siam not as an enemy but as a country to be liberated from the enemy.<sup>46</sup>

That attitude restored the good relations between the two countries. In the post-war period, the Americans did much to assist the recovery of Siam. They helped the country negotiate with Great Britain to reduce her demand of extreme recompense for their property losses from Siamese government. They also supported Siam's application for membership in the United Nations, and provided a loan of \$10,000,000 to Siam for the purchase of railroad equipment and the rehabilitation of the transportation system.<sup>47</sup> Apart from these aids, the Americans provided good offices which enabled Siam to reconcile its disputes with France. They also played a mediating role in the negotiation of the first treaty ever signed between Siam and China.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, Siam's economy was bolstered by financial and economic aid from the United States. Private American trade expanded rapidly for the first time in almost a century.<sup>49</sup> These conditions helped improve the economy to some degree. The early

---

<sup>46</sup> James V. Martin Jr., "Thai-American Relations in World War II." *Journal of Asian Studies* 22, no.4 (1963): 467.

<sup>47</sup> Virginia Thompson, "Governmental Instability in Siam," *Far Eastern Survey* (August 25, 1948), 186-7.

<sup>48</sup> Frank C. Darling, *Thailand and the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1965), 46.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

post-war period became the starting point of a strong relation between Siam and United States until the present time.

#### 4.2.3. The Products of Diplomacy and the Processes of Compromise:

##### A Much Finer Leap at the End

##### ***Land Allotment and Negotiation***

- ***The Compound of the United States by the River***

In the same year when the first British consul arrived which was delayed a year after the Anglo-Siamese treaty was signed, the United States appointed its first consul in Bangkok in 1856, immediately after its treaty with Siam was signed. This position was filled by one of the on-site missionaries, Stephen Mattoon, who had been in Bangkok with his family since 1847. His house on stilts was then used as the United States consulate.<sup>50</sup> Seeing as there was no specific place designated for the diplomatic purpose, it can be assumed that there was only a little American interest in their relationship with Siam in the early period.

Rev. Mattoon and his family used to live on the floating house, like most of the Siamese people, and once they almost had a chance to live in a better place since a friendly Siamese person was willing to lease a desirable piece of land. Even though the official permission was secured, the money was paid over, and the building was about to be erected, the permit was unexplainably revoked by a Siamese higher official. Therefore they had to stay in their old location. The reason for this event was unknown,

---

<sup>50</sup> Susan Morgan, *Bombay Anna: the Real Story and Remarkable Adventures of the King and I Governess* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008), 93.

but it happened at the juncture of unsuccessful negotiations attempting to revise the American treaties with Siam in the previous reign.<sup>51</sup> The missionaries suffered from the disfavor of the old Siamese regime until King Mongkut acceded to the throne and the new era of missionaries was ushered in. According to the Dr. Samuel Reynolds House records, the new king said he gave his permission to the missionaries to live closer to the palace. They could even have the whole vacant space to the canal bank, if needed, and build their houses for themselves as many as they wished.<sup>52</sup>

After the permanent site was secured, although by a lease, the missionaries consequently decided to construct houses of brick to be as durable and comfortable as possible. Rev. Mattoon and his family moved into the first finished building from their floating house which had been their temporary home lent by a friendly prince while the new building was constructed.<sup>53</sup> The other dwellings were soon completed and occupied and the missionaries now had a place for their religious mission. The preaching services began at the new compound in February 1852. This site continued to be the location of the mission until 1857, when the expansion of their work necessitated a change and needed more space.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, it became the first United States consulate in Siam in 1856 and Rev. Mattoon became the first American consul.

Before Rev. Mattoon's house became a consulate, this missionary compound, including other dwellings on the site, was already a place for welcoming the Western

---

<sup>51</sup> George Haws Feltus, *Samuel Reynolds House of Siam, Pioneer Medical Missionary, 1847-1876* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1924), 102-103.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 108-109.

<sup>53</sup> Mary Backus, *Siam and Laos, as seen by our American Missionaries* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1884), 372-73.

<sup>54</sup> Feltus, *Samuel Reynolds House of Siam, Pioneer Medical Missionary, 1847-1876*, 109.

guests who came to Siam. At one point, his house, for example, was used to receive the guests from two important Western missions to the Siamese court at the same time. One was the wife of the English Agent of Mr. Parke's mission, from England; another one was the American consul who came to negotiate the treaty between the United States of America and Siam which soon became signed as the successful Harris treaty.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, a British consul and his family, who were to reside in Bangkok, also stayed at Rev. Mattoon's house while waiting to get their own residence. Even though these hospitalities consumed Rev. Mattoon's small missionary salary, he and his family were willing to offer warm receptions on such occasions since there was really no other place for these people to go.<sup>56</sup>

In this case, it seems that the first site for the United States consulate originated from King Mongkut's personal relationship with the American missionaries during his 27-year monkhood before becoming the king, rather than from the international one after signing the treaty. The missionaries were his teachers and friends who taught him English language and literature, and sciences of the advance Western world during that time. However, he did not intentionally give them the site for diplomatic purposes, but rather for their religious mission.

In terms of consul, Rev. Mattoon was followed by a series of more or less disreputable American businessmen and traders; Chandler, Westervelt, and Virgin, who were more interested in their own business rather than consular missions. According to

---

<sup>55</sup> Mary L. Mattoon, *Sketch of the Life of Rev. Stephen Mattoon, D.D.* (Charlotte: History of Johnson C. Smith University, 2010) 31-32.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.



the book *James Madison Hood: Lincoln's Consul to the Court of Siam*, they had no diplomatic powers and could only forward requests from the Siamese government to the Department of State for action.<sup>57</sup> Similar to its representative, the American consulate was also discreditable since it was presented by these consuls' residences, the same as the case of Rev. Mattoon. One example could be found in the memoir of Captain Hood who was the first full-time salaried United States consul to be sent to Siam. When he arrived in Bangkok, the consulate of the United States was the back room of George Virgin's general store and rum shop, which had no proper furniture and the records and papers were disorderly stored in an insecure fashion.<sup>58</sup>

It was evident that, since the Harris Treaty between the United States and Siam was signed in 1856, the Americans had had little interest in the country, though Siam gave them the most favored nation status in 1856. Little trade had developed between the two countries. It came to a halt with the beginning of the Civil War in 1861, when the Confederate raiders roamed the seas, seizing and burning Union merchant ships.<sup>59</sup> The image and representation of the nation in Siam was not yet a concern of the United States.

As far as it had been recorded, the first full possession of land for the diplomatic purpose of the United States in Siam started in 1884, after the site had been leased to

---

<sup>57</sup> George C. Kingston, *James Madison Hood: Lincoln's Consul to the Court of Siam* (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2013), 11.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-7.

them for the same purpose sixteen years ago.<sup>60</sup> This was a few years after the reputation of the United States diplomacy was restored by David B. Sickels, who was appointed as the American consul in 1876, and General John A. Halderman, his successor, who was named Minister Resident and Consul-General in 1882. Their virtues were probably the reason King Chulalongkorn could envision the further relationship with the United State, and decided to make it more solid. Moreover, the king bought the American's current site on the bank of the Chao Phraya River for their legation purposes and officially gave it to them as indicated in the letter of Prince Devawongsa to Mr. Halderman, the American Minister Resident, on 2 September 1884:

In consideration of the strong sentiments of friendship which you and your Government have held toward His Majesty's Government, and in consideration of your faithful observance of treaty relations, I have the honor to inform you that my gracious sovereign has been pleased to buy the house now occupied by your excellency as the United States Legation, and to present it to the United States Government as a token of His Majesty's strong attachment of friendship for the United States of America. His Majesty trusts that it will be acceptable to your Government. I am commended, therefore, to request that your excellency, as the representative of your Government, take, hold, and possess in perpetuity the said house, grounds, and all the buildings and fences in the compound in front of Wat Muang Khei.<sup>61</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1884, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1884), 461.

<sup>61</sup> *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1884, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1884), 461. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1884/d333> [accessed 30 March 2019]

Even though now the Americans did not need to pay the rent of the property as they previously did, they were required to pay a yearly contribution of one hundred and forty ticals (\$84) to the mentioned *Wat* (temple) according to Siamese custom, as all former owners of the property had to contribute this charity to that monastery.<sup>62</sup> Comparing this case to the British one, we see how different the Siamese king treated the representatives of these two nations. The American got a much smaller site and had to pay the yearly contribution, whereas the British had possessed the biggest plot, and did not need to pay anything. Nonetheless, this was a great sign of the better relationship between Siam and the United States.

The property of the United States consulate had a 166-foot river front that extended back 149 feet,<sup>63</sup> by which the total area was about a half-acre. It was situated between the British consulate and the Siamese customs house, in close proximity to the French consulate as well. This site was occupied by the American government for the next 30 years, until 1913. Throughout this period, the property always received complaints and required repairs and outlays of money of one kind or another.<sup>64</sup> According to the statement of Mr. Wilbur J. Carr, Director of the Consular Service, Department of State, unlike the British and the French who spent more money to keep their embassies in Bangkok in good condition, the United States was not able to keep

---

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> United States. Congress. House. Committee on Foreign Affairs, and Charles Sumner Lobingier. *Exchange of Legation Property at Bangkok, Siam, Authorizing the Purchase of Buildings And Grounds for the Embassy of the United States At Santiago, Chile: Hearings Before the Committee On Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Sixty-sixth Congress, First Session On S. 2250 And H.R. 10007. Statement of C.S. Lobingier, Judge of the United States Court for China* (Washington: G.P.O., 1919).

their compound intact. Their waterfront had become greatly damaged and the building made of woodwork rotted and washed away.<sup>65</sup> It was reported in the 1889 Senate Document by Jacob S. Child, the American minister as a “wreck dangerous for occupation, shaking in strong wind.”<sup>66</sup>

In 1890, Congress appropriated \$3,000 to the embassy for repairs and received an additional \$2,000 in 1900 by the United States government for repairs.<sup>67</sup> However, these funds did not seem to improve the legation’s condition to reach satisfaction of the minister. He still had anxiety about the dangers of living in the building. According to certificates from civil engineers and builders, they all spoke about the disgraceful condition of this property. The Siamese king even suggested that the Americans erect a new permanent building on the site.<sup>68</sup> Nonetheless, the United States government paid little attention to these matters and even six months after the minister sent the urgent letter, he still had not received any reply.<sup>69</sup> With no concern about the condition of this American compound from the government, it was kept as the useless property of the United States until 1919. Nonetheless, regarding the unendurable state of the compound, the minister’s residence and the legation moved out to a new leased site in another part of the city.

---

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Senate Document 29, 51<sup>st</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session quoted in American Embassy Association, *American Embassies, Legations and Consulates Mean Better Foreign Business* (New York, 1910), 8.

<sup>67</sup> American Embassy Association, *American Embassies, Legations and Consulates Mean Better Foreign Business* (New York, 1910), 29.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

- ***The Compound of the United States on Sathorn Road***

In the early twentieth century, even though unpleasant conditions and pollution increased in the neighborhood in the Euro-American quarter, the United States government did not feel the necessity to move their legation to a nicer part of the city. In 1910, Bangkok, along with Tokyo, was one of the two capitals which was considered unsuitable for the United States legation out of the four cities where the United States owned diplomatic properties. These four capitals were Constantinople, Peking, Tokyo, and Bangkok.<sup>70</sup> The idea of relocation was not yet an American anxiety, even though several other foreign missions had already moved out from this area. The British and the French legations, which were the neighbors of the United States legation, seriously contemplated the idea of relocating their legations, even though they were maintained far better than the American one.

However, the minister of the United States legation who lived in this compound insisted to leave his residence because he felt it was unsafe to use the building for residential purposes. In May 1913, he was eventually, out of necessity, granted the authority to vacate the building and to rent desirable quarters in another part of the city.<sup>71</sup> The United States compound was uninhabitable since then. Thus, the best way to deal with the property was to sell it, but it was unsellable since it had been given for

---

<sup>70</sup> Graham H. Stuart, *American Diplomatic and Consular Practice*, 2d ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1952), 46.

<sup>71</sup> Statement of Mr. Wilbur J. Carr in United States. Congress. House. Committee on Foreign Affairs, and Charles Sumner Lobingier. *Exchange of Legation Property At Bangkok, Siam, Authorizing the Purchase of Buildings And Grounds for the Embassy of the United States At Santiago, Chile: Hearings Before the Committee On Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Sixty-sixth Congress, First Session On S. 2250 And H.R. 10007. Statement of C.S. Lobingier, Judge of the United States Court for China* (Washington: G.P.O., 1919).

American legation purposes by the Siamese government.<sup>72</sup> Not only were the Americans unable to sell it, they also had to pay the expenses of its retention by hiring a caretaker to protect the property.

In 1919, this property was eventually proposed for exchange. This was shortly after Siam entered to the First World War on the side of the Allies, the same side as the United States, in order to upgrade its status in the worldview as equivalent to the Western powers. According to a statement of Mr. Wilbur J. Carr, Director of the Consular Service, the discussion between the American minister in Bangkok and the officials of the Siamese Government about the undesirable condition of the compound, inspired the idea on exchanging the riverfront property with the inland one on Sathorn Road currently leased to the American legation. The Siamese government took action by giving the title of the property, which the United States was now renting for legation purposes, plus additional contiguous land, in return for taking back the riverside property remodeled and used as the Siamese customhouse.<sup>73</sup> This enthusiasm of Siamese kindness seemed predicated on the small nation's desire to have a closer relationship with the more powerful Americans.

Mr. Carr affirmed that all the elements of the exchange appeared to be in favor of the United States. The new site was described in the letter of the Hon. George Pratt Ingersoll, who resigned the position of American minister to Siam in 1918 as follows:

The premises now rented by the United States Government for a legation are located on the Klong Poh Yome, ... the best location for this purpose in the city of

---

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

Bangkok. The neighborhood is a desirable one in every respect. The avenue on which the premises are located is well paved, reasonably near the center of the city, and accessible from all directions, and the premises themselves are bounded on two sides by compounds with good residential buildings. It is a good neighborhood—about the best in the city.<sup>74</sup>

To Ingersoll, the minister at that time, the new compound was located on the best residential street for foreigners, and near the Italian, Dutch, Austrian, Japanese, German, and Russian legations. On one side of it was a well-kept residential compound owned and occupied by an English Army officer, who had acted as the head of the Bangkok police service for many years. On the other side, there was an attractive residence of great value rented to a foreign resident. The new site was also accessible to the foreign office. It was close to the two principal hotels in Bangkok that would provide residential quarters for the minister and offices for the legation.<sup>75</sup>

Apart from the better location and the neighborhood, the area and the value of the property itself was another beneficial aspect to the United States. Compared to the old property with 22,197 square feet (0.51 acre), the new one which included the additional contiguous land, contained the area of 97,963 square feet (2.25 acres). Moreover, in 1916, the new inland property was valued at approximately \$20,399, whereas in 1918 the Siamese Government made an offer of \$15,525 to the United

---

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.



States for the old riverfront compound. In this case, the value was another American benefit.<sup>76</sup>

Besides all the advantages both nations gained as mentioned above, another major reason that influenced this exchange was the relationship between them. One of the committee members on Foreign Affairs, Mr. Mason, said “In any event we would be in an indelicate position if we refused it, inasmuch as they propose to exchange it for something which they had already given to us.”<sup>77</sup> Finally, the agreement upon the exchange of the property was made, and the United States legation moved to the new site on Sathorn Road. Later, there were regular complaint about this new compound for its undesirable impression created by the ‘ramshackle’ premises of the United States Legation. Additionally, in the 1930s, this compound was even considered something of a punishment to the posted American Ministers and their staff.<sup>78</sup> Nonetheless, the American minister and diplomats in Bangkok continued to work in this compound until the post-war period.

During the Second World War, when the Japanese occupied Bangkok early in December 1941, all Americans were locked up in the legation compound until their repatriation was arranged on the *S.S. Gripsholm*,<sup>79</sup> eight months later.<sup>80</sup> At the end of the war, the United States Legation did not seem to be as affected by the war as the

---

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Richard J. Aldrich, *The Key to the South: Britain, the United States, and Thailand during the Approach of the Pacific War, 1929-1942* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 3.

<sup>79</sup> S.S. Gripsholm was the Swedish liner which was used as repatriation ship between the war faring nations. See Atushi Archi Miyamoto, “Inventory of the Gripsholm Exchanges”. Accessed September 29, 2019. <https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt1k4031p7/>

<sup>80</sup> Edwin F. Stanton, *Brief Authority: Excursions of a Common Man in an Uncommon World* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1956) 187.

British since Edwin F. Stanton's, who was appointed Minister to Siam after the war, concerns were very much about lack of privacy and comfort of their residence, rather than the damage caused by the war. In April 1946, Stanton and his wife, Josephine, arrived in Bangkok, and moved into the legation on Sathorn Road. The problem they found was that, for example, there was no door to shut between the living quarters and the office below. After several months, there was a staff bursting into their living quarter which made Mrs. Stanton no longer bear to live in this property. Stanton, in addition, noted in his memoir that he did not know "what Josie had expected, but the partitioned rooms, the depressing bits of furniture and the antiquated bathroom with large earthenware pots to hold water quite stunned her."<sup>81</sup> Their living quarter was later turned into badly needed office space.<sup>82</sup> Finally, Mrs. Stanton asked him to get the State Department's permission to find a better quarter.<sup>83</sup>

- ***The Residence Compound of the United States on Wireless Road***

As soon as Stanton got State's authorization to rent a "suitable residence," the search for a new property in Bangkok started. The choices for livable residences, however, were limited due to the consequences of the war. Moreover, two properties that Mrs. Stanton loved were snatched away because there were other people who offered to pay higher rent. The frustration was relieved after they saw the old Bailey

---

<sup>81</sup> *Residential Heritage: A Visual Exploration of the U.S. Ambassador's Residence Historic and Architectural Legacy*, 21. [https://th.usembassy.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/90/2017/06/CMR\\_70thAnniversary\\_2017.pdf](https://th.usembassy.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/90/2017/06/CMR_70thAnniversary_2017.pdf)

<sup>82</sup> Stanton, *Brief Authority: Excursions of a Common Man in an Uncommon World*, 193.

<sup>83</sup> *Residential Heritage: A Visual Exploration of the U.S. Ambassador's Residence Historic and Architectural Legacy*, 21.

house, at 108 Wireless Road, while they were setting out to the Prince Regent's house.<sup>84</sup>

They described:

One day we were driven to the residence of the Prince Regent, along a bumpy dirt side street. The road was called Witayu, or Wireless Road, because of the location of a naval wireless station at one end of it. During the rainy season the road became a muddy mess and was almost impassable. But there, set far back, with an avenue of magnificent dark spreading Rain Trees leading to it, we saw a sprawling sagging house, painted chocolate brown, shutters hanging precariously; indeed, the whole house listed to one side. The extensive garden surrounding the house was crammed with rusted war junk, remnants of jeeps, trucks, gun carriages and tanks left there by Japanese troops.<sup>85</sup>

Mrs. Stanton, however, saw the promise of the property. Mr. Stanton, on the other hand, tried to tone down his wife's desire for this place by explaining that the State Department would not pay for renovations. Mrs. Stanton, therefore, called the Siamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs straight away stating that the Stanton's were willing to rent the property if the Ministry paid for the repairs. The ministry agreed to her idea.<sup>86</sup> This quick agreement on behalf of the Siamese government was due to what the United States had done for Siam after the war. The Americans recognized Siam as an enemy-occupied territory, although Siam had initially cooperated with the Japanese which reversed Siam's position from ally to subject state. The American's help prevented the British from making punitive reparations to Siam. A two-year renewable

---

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>85</sup> Ping Amranand, and William Warren, *Heritage Homes of Thailand* (Bangkok: The Siam Society Under Royal Patronage, 2001) 30.

<sup>86</sup> *Residential Heritage: A Visual Exploration of the U.S. Ambassador's Residence Historic and Architectural Legacy*, 22.

lease with favorable payment terms was drawn by the Crown Property Bureau (CPB) on 1 January 1947 for the “residence located at 108 Wireless Road, of ten rooms with a garden of about three acres, to be used for a diplomatic residence in Bangkok.” This CPB lease, although modified somewhat through the years, remains in effect today.<sup>87</sup> At this time, the United States acquired the biggest site they ever had for the diplomatic purpose, at almost ten acres.

### ***Spatial Arrangements, Adaptations and Construction of the Compounds***

- ***The Compound of the United States by the River***

As mentioned in the previous section, the American consulates in the early period were only the residences of the consul in Bangkok. No specific place was permanently established for diplomatic purposes.

The first American full possession of property for this specific purpose began in 1884. It was located in a very pleasant area of the city where other Western legations were its neighbors and it was in close proximity to the British and the French ones. A 166-meter side by the river performed as the front of the property, similar to other buildings located along the riverbank since the transportation, at that time, was water-based. The site extended back 149 feet in which the total area was about a half-acre, far smaller than other two compounds of Britain and France. Moreover, as far as the available information reveals, there was only one main building erected on the site (Figure 4-24, 4-25), unlike the compounds of Britain and France which had other

---

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

buildings to help support the operation of the consulate. The only main building of the Americans was situated right in the middle of the site. No information indicated any new construction taking place while the Americans possessed this riverfront site.

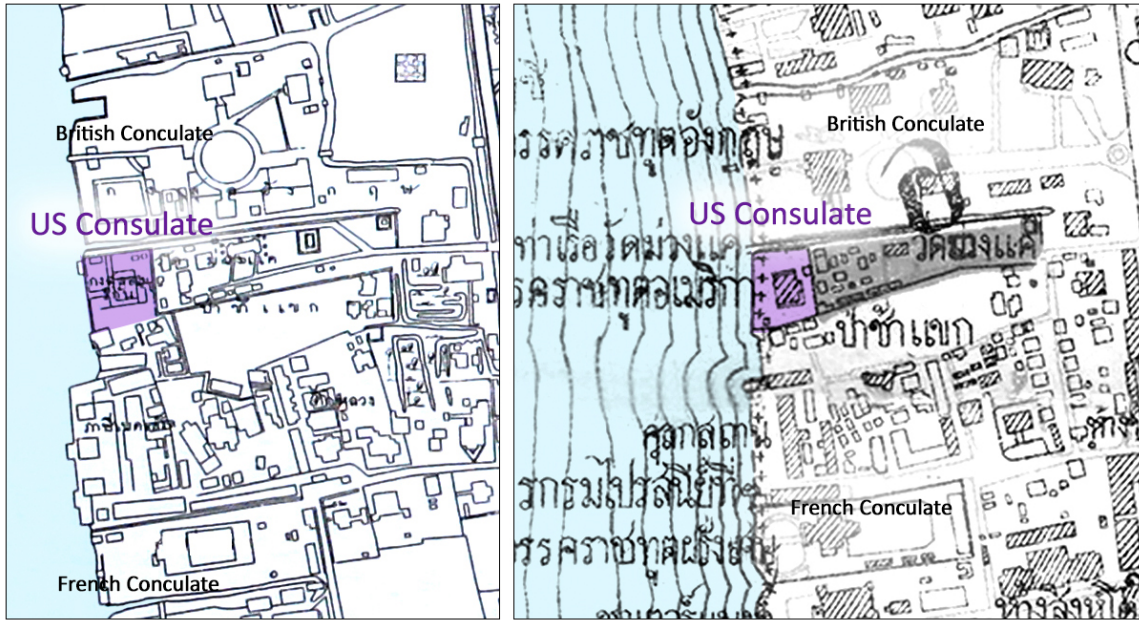


Figure 4-24: Partial Bangkok Maps of 1888 showing the American consulate with only one main building within the compound

Figure 4-25: Partial Bangkok Maps of 1910 showing no expansion of the American consulate, compared to Map of 1888

- ***The Compound of the United States on Sathorn Road***

According to the American compound on Sathorn Road, the total area of this new site was a little more than two acres, which was about five times bigger than the old one. It had a 125-foot façade and was 225 feet deep. At this time, the front of the legation faced a well-paved avenue which was the new means of transportation. The urban development of Bangkok now depended on road networks rather than the river

and canal system. At the back of the compound, there was still a paddy field where cattle were sometimes quartered.

The legation building was located about 75 feet from the rear fence, which was about one-third from the back border. This meant that the building was set back quite a distance from the main road in front of the legation, and left the frontal area of the compound opened up (Figure 4-26). On the new site, there were three wooden houses, which, as far as the information was available, one was used for the legation chancery, one as the residence, and the other for the consulate general, office and residence of principal officer (Figure 4-27, 4-28). All the three buildings were erected abreast of the main road in front of the compound. In this regard, no hierarchy of spatial arrangement was provided to signify the importance of the buildings, unlike the case of the British. However, the middle position of the biggest one, where the chancery and residence were located, helped indicate where the main functions of the legation were.

Unlike their former shabby compound, according to Ingersoll, the existing building on the new site could practically be adapted for the legation purposes. It would provide residential quarters for the minister and offices for the legation. The buildings were built in tropical style with deep verandahs in a garden. The legation building was said to compare very favorably with the Japanese and Russian ones.<sup>88</sup>

---

<sup>88</sup> United States. Congress. House. Committee on Foreign Affairs, and Charles Sumner Lobingier. Exchange of Legation Property At Bangkok, Siam, Authorizing the Purchase of Buildings And Grounds for the Embassy of the United States At Santiago, Chile: Hearings Before the Committee On Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Sixty-sixth Congress, First Session On S. 2250 And H.R. 10007. Statement of C.S. Lobingier, Judge of the United States Court for China (Washington: G.P.O., 1919).

As time progressed, the buildings in the compound were repaired and remodeled many times, but funds from the United States government for these improvements seemed to be too little to help the property recover from the uncomfortable condition. Nonetheless, the compound served the United States diplomacy until the post-war period, while the minister's residence had moved off of the property since the end of the Second World War.



Figure 4-26: The building arrangement of the United States compound on Sathorn Road extracted from Bangkok map 1945.





Figure 4-27: Legation Chancery and residence. (Left),

Figure 4-28: Consulate General. Office and residence of principal officer. (Right)

Source: *The American Foreign Service* (Washington D.C.: American Foreign Service Association) *American Foreign Service Journal* XIII, no. 11 (November 1936).

- ***The Residence Compound of the United States on Wireless Road***

After WW II, the condition of the compound was even more unacceptable. Edwin F. Stanton, the first American minister who was appointed to Bangkok in the post-war period, and his wife, began to search for a new property for their residence. The old Bailey house of Horatio Victor Baily<sup>89</sup> was deemed a suitable residence (Figure 4-29, 4-30). It was close to the Royal Bangkok Sports Club (RBSC), a desirable area where the British also wished to move their legation since the early 1900s. Bailey, as an RBSC trustee and avid horseman, was then one of the first pioneers who moved to this area as it could provide him an ample space to raise horses.<sup>90</sup>

Finally, the agreement between the Stantons and the Siamese government was made such that the Americans would pay the rent of the property, while the Siamese

<sup>89</sup> Baily was a British engineer worked for Bangkok Dock Company and later an Engineer-In-Chief to the Royal Mint Department. He was conferred on the Thai name and rank of Phra Padibat Rajaprasong by the Siamese king. See in Ping Amranand, and William Warren, *Heritage Homes of Thailand* (Bangkok: The Siam Society Under Royal Patronage, 2001), 30.

<sup>90</sup> "The Chief of Mission Residence: A Brief History," U.S. Embassy & Consulate in Thailand. Access February 17, 2019, <https://th.usembassy.gov/cmr-history/>

Ministry of Foreign Affairs paid for the repairs. In regard to the layout of the site, the house was located at the back third of the property, in view of but at a discrete distance from the road that definitely would be developed someday. In order to access the residence, visitors would pass Bailey's prominent bathing sala which was adjacent to a large square bathing pond. This pond was, in fact, canals on the western and southern borders that Bailey had widened and deepened to form the pond.<sup>91</sup>

Prior to being the residence of the American minister, the house belonged to a few different owners and was adapted differently in response to the residents' lifestyle. After Bailey died in 1920, the house was leased to the Belgian minister to Siam, Baron de Villenfagne, on a year-to-year basis. In 1927, it became an official residence of the American advisor of the Siam Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Raymond B. Stevens. He had supervised the extensive renovations of the Bailey estate for two months before moving from the American Legation on Sathorn Road. At the estate, the stables, the external Siamese kitchen, and the windmill were removed. The servants' quarters were upgraded. The bathing sala and pathways were also repaired.<sup>92</sup> In the main house, the bathroom was upgraded with new septic tanks and flowing water. The British kitchen was improved and modernized. A new porch and several new doors were also added.

In 1938, the house was renovated again when the new American advisor, Frederick R. Dolbeare, succeeded Stevens. The upper level patio was enclosed in order to make a more useful and formal living room. However, the residence was left

---

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> *Residential Heritage: A Visual Exploration of the U.S. Ambassador's Residence Historic and Architectural Legacy*, 19.

unoccupied in 1940 since Dolbeare resigned from the position due to the increasing tensions in Southeast Asia and a war raging in Europe. This was also the end of the role of independent American advisors in Siam.<sup>93</sup> Until the outbreak of World War II, in December 1941, the Bailey house was taken over by Japanese troops who entered Bangkok and rounded up foreign residents. At the end of the war, the property appeared beyond repair like many other buildings in Bangkok.



Figure 4-29: The Bailey Estate viewed from the front gate (left)

Figure 4-30: The Bailey Estate viewed within the compound (right)

Source: *Residential Heritage: A Visual Exploration of the U.S. Ambassador's Residence Historic and Architectural Legacy*

Even though the Bailey estate and the American compound on Sathorn Road were in similarly very poor conditions after the war, the new American minister and his wife chose to move their residence out from the old compound to the Bailey house, instead of repairing the old one. In this regard, the residence of the American minister was now separately located on the new site, unlike the other two compounds of Britain

---

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

and France in Bangkok, where the residence and the legation were on the same site. In this case, each day the driver would pick Stanton up at the porte cochère in front of the residence at exactly the same time to go to work at the legation on Sathorn Road, on the other side of Lumpini Park (see Figure 4-31).<sup>94</sup>

The reason for moving the residence did not seem to be the deteriorated state of the property, but rather, the unpractical spatial arrangement of the old compound. At the same time, the Stantons acquired not only the more functional residence, but also the bigger and finer property.

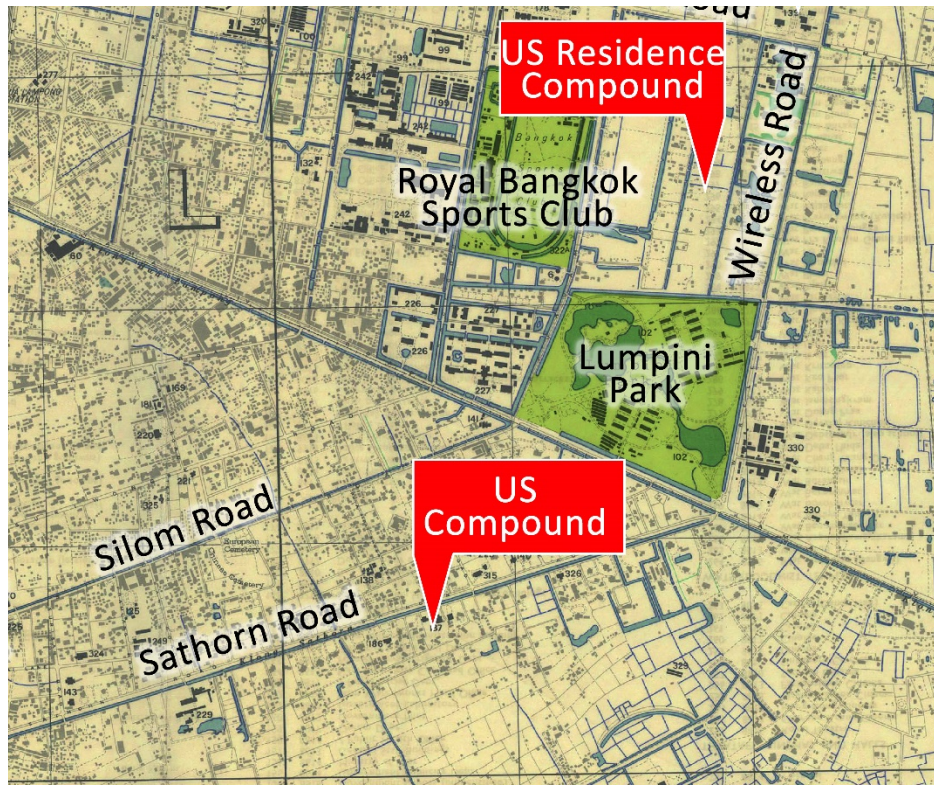


Figure 4-31: Map showing locations of the American minister's residence, and the American Legation.

<sup>94</sup> Residential Heritage: A Visual Exploration of the U.S. Ambassador's Residence Historic and Architectural Legacy, 24.

## ***The Architecture and Representation of Diplomacy***

- ***The Compound of the United States by the River***

The first diplomatic compound of the United States was merely a house of an American missionary, Rev. Mattoon, who later became the first American consul in Bangkok. It was built before the treaty between the United States and Siam was signed in 1856. Its functions were originally only for living and religious purposes, this first consulate was therefore, not different from other missionaries' houses constructed at that time. The character of these houses were even named "Missionary style"<sup>95</sup> architecture, which was a dominant characteristic of Western-style structures built in Siam before the 1850s. They were designed to be well adapted to the tropical climate. This first American consulate was raised on high pillars and had a balcony around the building capped by a steeply pitched roof (Figure 4-32). The consulate took on several different forms and places depending upon who the consul was at the time and what his occupation was, since the United States used the consul's house as its diplomatic site. In this way, no special characteristic, nor any architectural element could represent the character of the consulate of the United States in this period.

---

<sup>95</sup> "Missionary style" architecture was a Western-style structure which American missionaries raised their Southern Colonial houses on high pillars with a balcony around the building. It was an architecture built by the amateur missionaries-architects before 1850s. See more in Koompong Noobanjong, *"Power, Identity, and the Rise of Modern Architecture: From Siam to Thailand"* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Colorado, Denver, 2003), 144; Phusadee Tiptas, *Chang Farang Nai Krung Siam [Western Architect in Siam]* (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 2002).





Figure 4-32: House of Rev. Mattoon in Bangkok, 1864

Source: Susan Morgan, *Bombay Anna: the Real Story and Remarkable Adventures of the King and I Governess*, 2008.

Indeed, the first property that the United States possessed, and was intentionally used for diplomatic purposes since the beginning, was the one on the riverfront granted by King Chulalongkorn in 1884. Compared to the other two consulates owned by the British and the French, the Americans not only got the smallest site among the three nations, but also seemed to have the most disgraceful property conditions. The main existing building on the site was 84 by 58 feet, two stories high, and had fifteen rooms.<sup>96</sup>

---

<sup>96</sup> *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1884, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1884), 461, Accessed March 30, 2019.

<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1884/d333>

Like any other bungalows in that period, the building was mainly built of wood with some fine carving details such as a running trim and repetitive brackets which supported a large overhang (Figure 4-33). In addition, it had deep verandas surrounding the building with a steeply pitched roof. However, its frail structure failed to keep out rain, snakes, lizards, rats, or ants.<sup>97</sup> Some parts of the veranda, for instance, were entirely open (Figure 4-34). As a result, American representatives' major problem was the struggle to keep the building from collapsing and to keep both the building and the grounds from washing into the river.<sup>98</sup> At last, this legation was left unoccupied when the minister found it was unbearable to live in the compound. The Americans, therefore, had to rent a property in another part of the city for diplomatic purposes.



Figure 4-33: The United States Legation, Bangkok, 1895  
Source: Greenlee, Grace E. *As we were journeying; the Hawaiian Islands, Japan, China, Siam, Java and India, as seen from a girl's point of view*, 1900.

<sup>97</sup> *Siam Despatches*, September 29, 1884

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*





Figure 4-34: Residence of the American Minister in Bangkok

Source: Jacob T. Child, *The Pearl of Asia: Reminiscences of the Court of a Supreme Monarch, or, Five Years in Siam* (Chicago: Donohue, Henneberry & Co., 1892), 160.

- ***The Compound of the United States on Sathorn Road***

Eventually, the property that the Americans were now renting for legation purposes on Sathorn Road, together with some additional contiguous land, was granted to the United States by King Vajiravudh in 1919. This new compound consisted of three main buildings in which the middle one was used as the minister's residence and chancery. Compared to its former legation on the riverfront, this new inland property seemed to be more durable and grandiose. The building was built of brick and stone

materials covered with stucco up to the second story which was made of wood.<sup>99</sup> It was covered by a big-hipped roof with a steeply pitched slope with some added detail through hexagon porches on the front and sides. There was also external stairs running directly to the second floor (Figure 4-35). Inside the building there was a huge barnlike space, separated into two bedroom units. The building, according to Ingersoll, the minister at the time, could also be reasonably adapted to the legation purposes.<sup>100</sup>

Even though, the existing building provided sufficient space for their use, the ways these spaces were arranged and divided were, in fact, not suitable to be adapted as the legation. There was little privacy within the building since the spaces of different functions were divided only by swinging half doors and latticework above the partitions. There were lots of complaints, especially about the privacy, from Edwin F. Stanton, who was the last minister residing in this building, and his wife. According to Stanton:

Not a single door shut off our own rooms from the offices below, with the result that people were constantly bursting in upon us without warning. Nor could we enjoy the evening's coolness in the garden, where we had all the seclusion of an aquarium. Even at night there was no guarantee of privacy as diplomatic couriers locked their precious diplomatic pouches in the office safe downstairs and then got me out of bed long before dawn to unlock the safe for them before they flew

---

<sup>99</sup> United States. Congress. House. Committee on Foreign Affairs, and Charles Sumner Lobingier. Exchange of Legation Property At Bangkok, Siam, Authorizing the Purchase of Buildings And Grounds for the Embassy of the United States At Santiago, Chile: Hearings Before the Committee On Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Sixty-sixth Congress, First Session On S. 2250 And H.R. 10007. Statement of C.S. Lobingier, Judge of the United States Court for China (Washington: G.P.O., 1919).

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

out of town. Only a well-worn, thoroughly indoctrinated, persistently patient career diplomat could have tolerated such conditions.<sup>101</sup>

In addition to the inappropriate spatial arrangement, the materials and design of the external structure were also unfitting, though the appearance was quite pleasing. For instance, the building had no windows – the sides of it were entirely open. It was protected from sun and rain only by the bamboo blinds.<sup>102</sup> Similarly, the building for the consul general and the principal officer was also open. It, however, had a simpler appearance than the minister's residence because less architectural details were applied to it. The building was capped by a big simple gable roof with a decorative bargeboard (Figure 4-36). Regardless of the spatial hierarchy of the location of the buildings on the site, the architectural appearance could illustrate their importance and priority within the compound. Nonetheless, there was no special character indicating its nationality and function. In other words, the American legation was not different from other fine buildings constructed in the same neighborhood on Sathorn Road, the new residential development area of Bangkok (Figure 4-37).

The American minister's residence was used until the end of the Second World War, while other functions of the legation continued serving the United States diplomacy after the war.

---

<sup>101</sup> Edwin F. Stanton, *Brief Authority: Excursions of a Common Man in an Uncommon World* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1956), 193.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 169-70.



Figure 4-35: Legation Chancery and residence. Acquired by United States Government in 1928.  
Source: *Photographic Register: The American Foreign Service*, American Foreign Service Journal.  
November 1936. Volume XIII, No. 11.



Figure 4-36: Consulate General. Office and residence of principal officer. Acquired by United States Government in 1920.  
Source: *Photographic Register: The American Foreign Service*, American Foreign Service Journal.  
November 1936. Volume XIII, No. 11.





Figure 4-37: New residential developments of Sathorn Road, 1946 by Peter Williams Hunt  
Source: National Archives of Thailand

- ***The Residence Compound of the United States on Wireless Road***

The minister's residence was moved out from the legation compound on Sathorn Road to the new property on Wireless Road after the Second World War. It was the old Bailey estate, which was built in 1914 by Horatio Victor Bailey, a British engineer who designed the property. The main house was designed to meet the tropical climate of Bangkok like other bungalows built in that period. The new residence, which had ten rooms, was built on strong wooden stilts where the living quarters were placed above the ground in response to the annual rainy season flooding. The building was capped

with a hipped roof which had far-extended eaves from the exterior walls to protect the house from the ample sun and rain of Bangkok. The roof was covered with slate-look concrete tiles. The structural frame supporting the roof and floors was very durable so that the house did not need load-bearing walls. The interior layout was consequently more flexible.<sup>103</sup>

In front of the residence there was an elevated veranda extended in a welcoming manner. It performed as a porte cochère where there was a driveway passing below (Figure 4-38). This space was designed to intersect with the gallery around the house. In other words, the house was encircled by a teak floored exterior gallery which was below the eaves. Visitors could therefore, sit or walk around the outside of the interior rooms. The partitions between these spaces of interior and exterior were casement windows which could be widely opened to allow more airflow into the interior.<sup>104</sup> Crossing over the gallery, was the library and the adjacent dining room which had a high volume of space. The interior of these rooms was very masculine illustrating Bailey's character. It was finished by heavy brown teak wainscoting, topped by six feet of white ornamented fretwork and coffered ceilings. On the contrary, the top of each room was encircled by the wooden fretwork painted in white and carved in an unadorned, vertical and faintly art nouveau style, allowing light and air from the external gallery into each room (Figure 4-39, 4-40).<sup>105</sup>

---

<sup>103</sup> *Residential Heritage: A Visual Exploration of the U.S. Ambassador's Residence Historic and Architectural Legacy*, 9.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 13.



Figure 4-38: Elevated veranda of the residence having a driveway passing below.  
Source: Residential Heritage: A Visual Exploration of the U.S. Ambassador's Residence Historic and Architectural Legacy.



Figure 4-39: Living room with brown teak wainscoting and white wooden fretwork, 1915  
Source: Residential Heritage: A Visual Exploration of the U.S. Ambassador's Residence Historic and Architectural Legacy.





Figure 4-40: Dining room with brown teak wainscoting and white wooden fretwork, 1915  
Source: Residential Heritage: A Visual Exploration of the U.S. Ambassador's Residence Historic and Architectural Legacy.

After the Stantons signed a two-year renewable lease contract with the Crown Property Bureau (CPB), the renovation of the property began. Mrs. Stanton supervised an army of workers to rid the house and grounds of junk after the war, and to make the property was a suitable diplomatic residence. Over the next six months, the house's wiring, plumbing, and structural integrity were restored. At the new residence, some interior spaces were enhanced. The gallery was enclosed to enlarge the living space, and the elevated front veranda was enclosed by installing windows that turned the space into a massive room for entertaining. These windows were full-length storm shutters that could be held open or adjusted into several positions for the appropriate airflow and protection from sun, storms, and insects.

Moreover, some functions had been converted to fit the lifestyle of the new residents, as well as the current circumstances. The billiards room on the ground floor,

for example, was converted into a dining room. At the time when Bailey was the resident, the former seemed to be more important than the latter since Bailey usually had dinner with his friends in the bathing hall rather than the dining room. Afterwards, they would gather in the billiard room and had cigars and drinks around the massive snooker table. This was the desired evening of the Bangkok high society at that time.<sup>106</sup> Unlike the old days of Bailey, the dining room and the living room now became more important. Their residence was not only a place for living, but also a place for receptions as Stanton remarked, "In periods of stress and strain, our house always became a busy center as politicians, their wives and friends tried to talk to us privately rather than appear at the Embassy."<sup>107</sup>

Architecturally, the residence was also said to be "a playful combination of European colonial, restrained gingerbread and tropical Malaysian designs, harmonized with Siamese architecture's elegance, intricacy and neatness."<sup>108</sup> The British preference of Bailey's heritage, for example, was integrated with Siamese wood craftsmanship presented through the front gable decoration of the projected living room on the elevated veranda. It was decorated by brown timbers on white stucco, and bordered by an ornamental bargeboard in order to attract visitors who came up the front drive from the street (Figure 4-41).<sup>109</sup> The most playful part could be found through the series of

---

<sup>106</sup> *Residential Heritage: A Visual Exploration of the U.S. Ambassador's Residence Historic and Architectural Legacy*, 11.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>108</sup> "The Chief of Mission Residence: A Brief History," U.S. Embassy & Consulate in Thailand. Access February 17, 2019, <https://th.usembassy.gov/cmr-history/>

<sup>109</sup> *Residential Heritage: A Visual Exploration of the U.S. Ambassador's Residence Historic and Architectural Legacy*, 9.

“broken” arches at the top of the shutter openings of this living area. On the wooden base, or the false corbel of these arches were gargoyle-like carved human faces, facing inward, with both European and Asian features (Figure 4-42).<sup>110</sup> None of which, moreover, was identical. This element illustrated Bailey’s whimsical side and created the uniqueness of the property specifically designed for him.

In addition, the Baron de Villenfagne, the Belgian minister to Siam who resided in this building after Bailey died in 1920, remarked that the residence was “one of the most beautiful in all of Bangkok” since it was “carefully planned down to the last detail, together with the garden make a truly elegant legation.”<sup>111</sup> Not only were the buildings in the compound harmoniously designed but also some of them had similar design details. The ornamented braces, for example, were punctuated around the main body of the house throughout the length of the eaves. This design element was also carried through to the bathing hall.<sup>112</sup> This design manner was also applied to the interior decoration in which the railings and balustrade enclosing the gallery had a similar pattern, though less detail, to the fretwork inside the house, and was adorned with plants and chairs (Figure 4-43).<sup>113</sup>

---

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.



Figure 4-41: Decorative front gable of the residence  
Source: <https://th.usembassy.gov/cmr-history/>



Figure 4-42: Broken arch with gargoyle-like base.<sup>114</sup>

<sup>114</sup> Photos were taken in 2017; however, the residence was kept the same way as it was in the past. No historical picture of these elements was available.





Figure 4-43: Similar pattern of the gallery’s balustrade and the fretwork inside the house.

Apart from these elaborated details of the property, most of which were kept intact, the original elements of the house design were enhanced through resurfacing the floor and painting the walls. Mrs. Stanton worked very closely on this renovation. One day she even said to her husband that the house would be complete once she got the “Williamsburg blue just right”<sup>115</sup>, when he asked the date they would move in as the renovation neared completion. To her, the right color seemed to be an important issue of the renovation. The selection of color was probably to present the history of the residence as something connecting to the British (Bailey’s residence) to the Americans (the legation). At the beginning of the post-war period, the United States government established a Ministry of Works and Buildings with the objective of making extensive

<sup>115</sup> Residential Heritage: A Visual Exploration of the U.S. Ambassador’s Residence Historic and Architectural Legacy, 22.

preliminary plans for post-war reconstruction. In this case, Williamsburg was selected as an example of restoration. It was the epitome of a particular period of American history, since the city was once the political, cultural, religious, social and economic center of the largest and most densely populated English-American Colony.<sup>116</sup> Finally, Mrs. Stanton did get the color right and used it throughout the house.<sup>117</sup> The dark brown house illustrating Bailey's masculine character was eventually transformed into a historic colonial residence representing the European heritage of Colonial Americans.

The American Legation was upgraded to a full Embassy and Minister Stanton became Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Stanton in April 1947. This property accordingly became the Chief of Mission's Residence or the CMR. It has been a residence of United States' ambassadors until present time and has been continuously maintained by the Ambassador, by the Ambassador's family and by dedicated Embassy staff. The original appearance of Bailey's residence is still found with some additional modern touches of white paint (Figure 4-44). The Embassy was awarded the 1984 Architectural Conservation Award by the Association of Siamese Architects for the continuing efforts and success to preserve the CMR.<sup>118</sup>

---

<sup>116</sup> See more in Alfred C. Bossom, "Colonial Williamsburg: How Americans Handle a Restoration," *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 90, no. 4621 (1942): 634-5.

<sup>117</sup> Residential Heritage: A Visual Exploration of the U.S. Ambassador's Residence Historic and Architectural Legacy, 22.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 25, 45.



Figure 4-44: White exterior with green shutters of the CMR, and all-white interior of the dining room, 2017

#### 4.2.4. Summaries

The United States was the second nation to establish its consulate after signing the Bowring Treaty. Regardless of the purpose of land permission given by the king of Siam, the United States was the first country to acquire a site in Bangkok, later used as their consulate, though the original intention of giving the land was for the living and religious purposes of American missionaries. Because Rev. Mattoon, the American missionary in Siam, became the first consul of the United States in the kingdom, his house in the missionaries' compound turned into the consulate by chance. The missionaries were granted the land which correlated with the reason the missionary in Siam was selected to be an American consul. These two events occurred due to the favor of the Siamese, especially the king, toward the American missionaries. They were very important and played a major role in modernizing Siam, as they introduced modern technological and social innovations to Siam. Moreover, some of them had personal relationships with King Mongkut before he ascended the throne.



However, the United States was the last one among the three studied countries to be granted the on-purpose land as a diplomatic ground in 1884. In this respect, the United States did not seem too concerned and paid little attention to the image of the nation in the Siamese view. Prior to the allocation of their riverside premises by King Chulalongkorn, inappropriate residences of different American consuls were used as consulates, including the inappropriate qualifications of the consuls. Later, when qualified consuls were posted, and the consulate ground was secured, the United States was unable to keep its compound in good condition. These aspects illustrate the trivial relationship between the United States and Siam in the early years after signing the treaty in 1856. As time progressed, there were some periodic events that encouraged a good relation between the two countries. Nonetheless, the most important turning point in their relationship was during World War II, when Siam overcame its difficulties in the post-war period with the help of the United States.

According to the unpleasant conditions of the Euro-American quarter at the turn of the century due to the rapid growth of Bangkok, the United States was the only country among the three who did not yet have any thought of moving its legation. Until the American minister himself could not stand to live in the current compound, he asked for permission from the government to leave the compound and to rent a better place for living. Eventually, in 1919 shortly after Siam entered the First World War on the same side of the United States, the American minister proposed to the Siamese government to exchange the property he rented. Acquiring this second American

compound on Sathorn Road was the second time the Americans were granted the site they were renting by the Siamese.

Moreover, after the end of the Second World War, there was a sharp shift in both relationships between the United States and Siam, as well as in the maintenance of the American diplomatic compound. The Americans now not only owned one of the most beautiful properties in Bangkok, but also one of the largest sites of diplomatic compounds. They searched for the most appropriate minister's residence to demonstrate their outstanding status in Siam after the war and it became theirs with the willingness of the Siamese government. The design of the property had a unique charm not found in any other government buildings, as it was formerly a residence of an influential foreigner in Siam who designed it himself. The gargoyle-like broken arches were the best example in this regard. Originally, they represented the whimsical side of the former owner, they were now recognized as the unique character of the design of the American residence in Bangkok, which later became the Chief of Mission's Residence serving the United States diplomacy until the present time. Even though the architectural design of the residence compound lacked in specific visual references, it gave the idea of American identity as a product of independence.

Although *The Representation of Space* in the case of the American compounds seemed to provide evidence of consolidation in the realm of architecture rather than in the arena of politics or diplomacy, the compound cannot be understood separately from the history of the American-Siamese relationships, as well as the history of acquiring the properties. The United States, who at the beginning had the least interest in changing or

improving the compound, was eventually the one who relocated their compound the most often. Their diplomatic compound moved three times since the Siamese king granted them the riverside land in 1884 until the present time. The frequency of relocation, on the one hand, seemed to be due to their ignorance of the relationship with Siam in the early years, as well as of their position in the Siamese view before World War II. Basically, they only acted in response to whatever they were offered at that moment. They did not seem to have any problem to stay or move their legation, except for their last move after World War II. On the other hand, among the three nations, the United States acquired the most inferior property, so that whenever there was a chance to move to a better place, they did not hesitate to take it. This opportunity, in fact, derived from the growing friendly relationships with Siam.

### **4.3. Siamese Relationships with France**

#### **4.3.1. The Ravenous-desire Friend: Siamese Relationships with France, 1855-1910**

With the French interest in Cambodia as a safeguard to its hold in Cochinchina, signing a treaty with Siam became a main concern of France, as it would serve as a mediator between France and Cambodia because the Siamese had greater influence in Cambodia. After signing a favorable treaty with Britain in 1855, in August 1856, Siam negotiated a similar treaty with France which came into force a year after. This French mission was led by Louis Charles de Montigny, a French consul in Shanghai who was long familiar with the Far East. However, Montigny added some demands to Bowring's agreement, which concerned two particular respects: "French armed vessels were permitted to proceed beyond the Paknam breakwater up the Chao Phraya River to Bangkok"; and "French subjects gained freedom to practice Catholicism freely throughout Siam, with permission to build churches upon consultation with various Siamese local authorities."<sup>1</sup>

Although the French agreement with the Siamese improved on the Anglo-Siamese treaty, what Montigny had done during his mission to Siam – before and after the signing the treaty – degraded, rather than enhanced, the Siamese impression of France.<sup>2</sup> He left France on 30 December 1855 and did not arrive in Bangkok until 10 July 1856. He seemed to be too busy with the religious proselytizing aspects of his mission, and apparently focused more on the French relationships with the kings of Cambodia

---

<sup>1</sup> Richard Shaw Stetson, *"Siam's Diplomacy of Independence, 1855-1909, in the Context of Anglo-French Interests"* (Doctoral Dissertation, New York University, 1969), 19.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 20-2.

and Annam than on Siam which was the main purpose of his mission.<sup>3</sup> He spent only ten days out of his seventy-three days in Bangkok negotiating the treaty. Furthermore, the only a copy of the ratified document returned slowly from Paris to Bangkok by a merchant ship rather than a fast warship. It was presented to the Siamese Court by Mr. Moor, a Portuguese resident of Bangkok, who could be considered as a French consul appointed by Montigny, with no customary gifts.<sup>4</sup> Siam regarded these manners as an insult and rejected the treaty until a new copy was made and signed by both King Mongkut and the Second King of Siam on 24 August 1857, and with no accompanying ceremony.<sup>5</sup> What Montigny had done created Siam's suspicion of his concealed intentions of his mission.

From this point on, the Siamese suspicions of the French motives became tangible and the Franco-Siamese contention of the Mekong valley north of Cochinchina was the main theme of the relationship between the two countries in the second half of the nineteenth century. The 1893 Paknam incident was the most serious crisis of all in the Franco-Siamese relations, thus this study will discuss this incident in the following part.

After the embittered Paknam incident between Siam and France in 1893, the Siamese continued to distrust the French, and was irritated by the continued occupation of Chantaboon, the area that the French occupied during the crisis. French trade with Siam was almost a negligible quantity, and French influence in the capital and the

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

country was also generally small. The situation between them slowly improved, and in 1904 they signed a convention in which the French agreed to evacuate Chantaboon and to place their subjects in Northern Siam under the jurisdiction of the International Court. Siam, in return, abandoned territory in the southeast, and renounced its claim to Luang Prabang. Moreover, regarding the Siamese portion of the basin of the Mekong, Siam needed to come to an understanding with the French Government before proceeding with the construction of ports, canals, or railways, in the event that such enterprises would not be carried out exclusively with Siamese personnel and with Siamese capital.<sup>6</sup>

France, nonetheless, did not stop her desire. In 1907, Siam had to cede the territories of Battambang, Siemrap, and Sisophon, the adjoining frontier of Cambodia, to France. In return, Siam reclaimed the areas of Dan-Sai and Kratt, which were previously given up under the Franco-Siamese treaty of 1904. This final readjustment of territorial claims officially inaugurated a new era of friendly Franco-Siamese Relations.

#### 4.3.2. Siamese Relationships with France during 1910-WW II

At the beginning of this period, the relations between France and Siam seemed to be slowly recovering from their bitter past of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, Siam, with a new nationalist regime after the political revolution of 1932 did not seem to forgive the French for the Crisis of 1893 and the subsequent loss

---

<sup>6</sup> Josiah Crosby, *Siam* (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1920), 11.

of her suzerainty and control of Laos and Cambodia. The defeat of France in Europe seemed to provide a chance of revenge.

When the French government proposed to Phibunsongkram, the new Siamese leader, that France and Siam should arrange a mutual non-aggression pact, he suggested that the two countries revise their border issue by reconsidering the position of various islands in the Mekong River.<sup>7</sup> The French Minister at Bangkok and his superiors in Paris were sympathetic to the Siamese requests, so when the pact was signed in June 1940 the Siamese expected a high-level committee to look into the border question. Thus, the Siamese hoped that the French enclaves on the west bank of the Mekong opposite Luang Prabang and Pakse, which were ceded to France in 1904, would be returned. But before the French took any action, Paris was seized by German forces. As a result, the burden of the negotiations on the border issue fell upon the French rulers of Indo-China, who had a different idea and wanted to maintain the French pressure and resist the Siamese encroachment.<sup>8</sup>

In August 1940 Phibunsongkram sounded out a call to the Germans, Italians, British, Americans, and Japanese if Siam recovered territories formerly lost to French Indo-China. The Germans and Italians agreed upon the idea, whereas the British and American governments did not. The Japanese who were aiming to create a much closer relationship with Siam encouraged the idea. Without discussing the matter in the cabinet, Phibunsongkram secretly told the Japanese naval attaché that Japanese troops

---

<sup>7</sup> Barend. J. Terwiel, *A History of Modern Thailand, 1767-1942* (St. Lucia; New York: University of Queensland Press, 1983), 344.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.



would be permitted to cross Siamese territory if necessary and that he would consider supplying troops.<sup>9</sup>

While these secret negotiations were taking place, the French were publicly accused of their border violations. There were reports of French airplanes entering Siamese airspace and of reputedly unprovoked acts of aggression against Siamese citizens during October and November. Two bombs were dropped on the northeastern town of Nakhon Phanom on 28 November, and the Siamese consequently struck back by bombing Thakhek and Savannakhet, towns on the French side of the Mekong River. From that point on, acts of military aggression became usual.<sup>10</sup>

Moreover, the anti-French rhetoric of Phibunsongkram was such a success that donations for an anti-French campaign poured in and nearly 70,000 men volunteered for military service. In addition, there was a newly formed group, called *khana luad thai* (Siamese Blood group), organized to boycott French products, as well as the Roman Catholic Church, whose bishop was French. This was adopted into an anti-Catholic policy by banning all non-Buddhists, which included Siamese Muslims, from working in the government or serving in the military service.<sup>11</sup>

In November 1940, Japan started to intervene in the dispute as an arbitrator, was beginning to move into French Indochina, and finally secured a military base and

---

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 345.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Bruce Reynolds, "Phibun Songkhram and Thai Nationalism in the Fascist Era." *European Journal of East Asian Studies* 3, no. 1 (2004): 126.

transit rights in northern Vietnam.<sup>12</sup> In January 1941, Phibunsongkram launched a large-scale invasion of French territory of Indo-China through an excuse that there was an attack on Aranyaprathet, near the Cambodian border. After three weeks, not only did the Siamese armies take the disputed enclaves on the western side of the Mekong River but also a large stretch of Cambodian territory. Thus, the French were pressured to accept Japan's intervention. Protracted negotiations took place on a Japanese cruiser off Saigon and in Tokyo. Finally, an agreement was reached in March 1941, in which Siam was permitted to keep almost all of the occupied land.<sup>13</sup> Phibunsongkram's decision to press for border readjustments gained popular support, which made him proud as a truly national leader. He then promoted himself to field marshal, skipping the ranks of lieutenant-general and general.<sup>14</sup>

Nonetheless, after the Second World War, Siam had to return the territories gained through the help of the Japanese during the war back to French-Indochina in order to save the nation from the French rejection of the country's admission to the United Nations.

---

<sup>12</sup> David K. Wyatt, *Thailand: A Short History* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2003), 255-6.

<sup>13</sup> Barend J. Terwiel, *A History of Modern Thailand, 1767-1942* (St. Lucia; New York: University of Queensland Press, 1983), 345; David K. Wyatt, *Thailand: A Short History* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2003), 255-6.

<sup>14</sup> Barend J. Terwiel, *A History of Modern Thailand, 1767-1942* (St. Lucia; New York: University of Queensland Press, 1983), 346.

### 4.3.3. The Products of Diplomacy and the Processes of Compromise:

#### Remaining in the Same Place at Last

#### ***Land Allotment and Negotiation***

- ***The French Compound***

France was the fourth nation that received the right to build a consulate in Siam in 1856, after Portugal, Great Britain and the United States, respectively. By then M. Moor, the Portuguese consul, was appointed as the temporary French enterprise representative in Siam while the French consul was to be assigned officially. In October 1858, M. de Castelnau was selected to be the first official French consul in Siam.<sup>15</sup>

In 1857, France got the property by the Chao Phraya River which formerly belonged to the Siamese Customs. The building was assumed to be a warehouse originally and later converted to a reception house for Western Customs experts.<sup>16</sup> However, the understanding regarding the French rights on that land was uncertain. On the one hand, according to the book *La Residence De France A Bangkok*, the French seemed to have an absolute right on the site since King Mongkut announced in front of the audience at the reception of Comte de Castelnau in 1858 that France now had their own land in Siam so that they could build their own building on the site.<sup>17</sup> The Siamese government, on the other hand, denied any claim of the French right on the land when the French consul asked for their legal ownership. The Siamese said they had never intended to give the land to France. Thus, the French representative concluded that

---

<sup>15</sup> Klein Jean-Francois, Alexis Thuaux, and Sophie Trelcat, *La Residence De France a Bangkok* (Paris: Editions Internationales du Patrimoine, 2015), 49.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

Siam would give France two options. First, Siam would lease this land which belonged to the Siamese Customs to the French for ten years and would afterwards sell it to them for a reasonable price. Another option was that Siam sold it to the current French consul as soon as he resided in Bangkok.<sup>18</sup>

According to this uncertainty, the French consul sent a letter directly to King Mongkut and the king's response verified that his understanding was correct. The king did not have the intention to give Siamese lands to any Powers. He further explained that the land given to the Portuguese consulate was due to a strong relationship since ages. In terms of the history of Siamese international relations, we see that Portugal was the only nation which had never left the Siamese scene since the Ayutthaya period. And in the case of the British consulate, the king said that the land was a present he gave to them.<sup>19</sup> The British, in fact, got the land as atonement for the king's insult in the case of the civil servant of the British Consul as mentioned earlier.

The Siamese king's response to the French was not a surprise since the first impression the Siamese had of their envoy, Louis Charles de Montigny, who came to Siam to negotiate the treaty, was not pleasant. Montigny acted as though his mission to Siam was trivial and even though Siam was the main destination of his trip, he only spent few days there. Thus, the Siamese were suspicious about Montigny's intentions.

Therefore, the French had to rent this poor property for almost twenty years in which the total rent they paid was about six thousand francs, according to the memoir

---

<sup>18</sup> Simona Bunarunraksa, Monseigneur Jean-Baptiste Pallegoix, Ami du roi du Siam, imprimeur et écrivain (1805-1862) (Paris, l'Harmattan, 2013), 214.

<sup>19</sup> Jean-Francois, *La Residence De France a Bangkok*, 59.

of Jean-Baptiste Pallegoix.<sup>20</sup> Until 10 June 1875, King Chulalongkorn gave the land and the on-site buildings to the French, which they had rented since they first established their consulate in Bangkok, due to a long Franco-Siamese relationship. The French thought that this was probably the Siamese plan to appease them, since they had been encroaching on the eastern border of Siam in order to counterbalance the British colonial expansion in the Far East which, at that time, was influencing the northern border of Siam.<sup>21</sup>

The land, according to the royal decree, was surrounded by Chao Phraya Polathep's residence to the north, and reached the property of M. Remy de Montigny at its south.<sup>22</sup> After France fully owned the property, the French consul's residence was renovated many times during 1875-1894. The simple house was eventually transformed into a small-scale colonial residence.<sup>23</sup> The renovations showed the growing interest of France in Siam. In 1887, the consulate had been elevated to the rank of legation, after the case of the United States in 1882, but before the British in 1895. This period of renovation, including the time when the consulate's status was raised to legation, was a crucial period in Franco-Siamese relations, as it was a conflict period between the two countries which began in the 1860s. At this time, French influence was already established in Cochinchina. The next step of the French was to extend their political

---

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>22</sup> Dispatch of the French consulate in Bangkok to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 25, 1875, containing a copy of the documents relating to the donation to the French Government by the King of Siam of the land and the house, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, La Courneuve.

<sup>23</sup> Jean-Francois, *La Residence De France A Bangkok*, 69.

influence northward along the Mekong valley. In this regard, they had to establish a protectorate over the Siamese vassal state of Cambodia, and this was the starting point of their dispute with Siam.

Taking more interest in Siam did not always signify a good relation. During the period of colonial expansion, France sought to catch up with British influence in the region. Siam which was located in the middle of these two Powers' influences accordingly became their focus. In this regard, the renovation of the French consulate was seemingly an attempt to establish a more firm representation in Siam, and to present a competitive prestige with the British who was now the most influential European country in Siam. In 1893, this well-maintained site acted as a sign of their dispute with Siam when the French gunboats, *Inconstant* and *Comète* anchored in front of the French legation due to Paknam crisis in which Siam finally accepted the French ultimatum, and signed the Franco-Siamese Treaty on 3 October 1893.

Surprisingly, the news about this incident (Figure 4-45, 4-46) attracted a pioneer group of tourists to come to Bangkok, as well as to the French legation. This interest, for example, was described in the memoir of Isabelle Massieu, an explorer, photographer, and writer: "the legation was located by Chaophraya River. The garden stretched along the river bank. The chancery of the legation was on the ground floor under arch columns. Each day, a crowd of different people such as Annamese, Laotians and



Cambodians came to the legation and sought for French protections under the 1893 agreements.”<sup>24</sup>

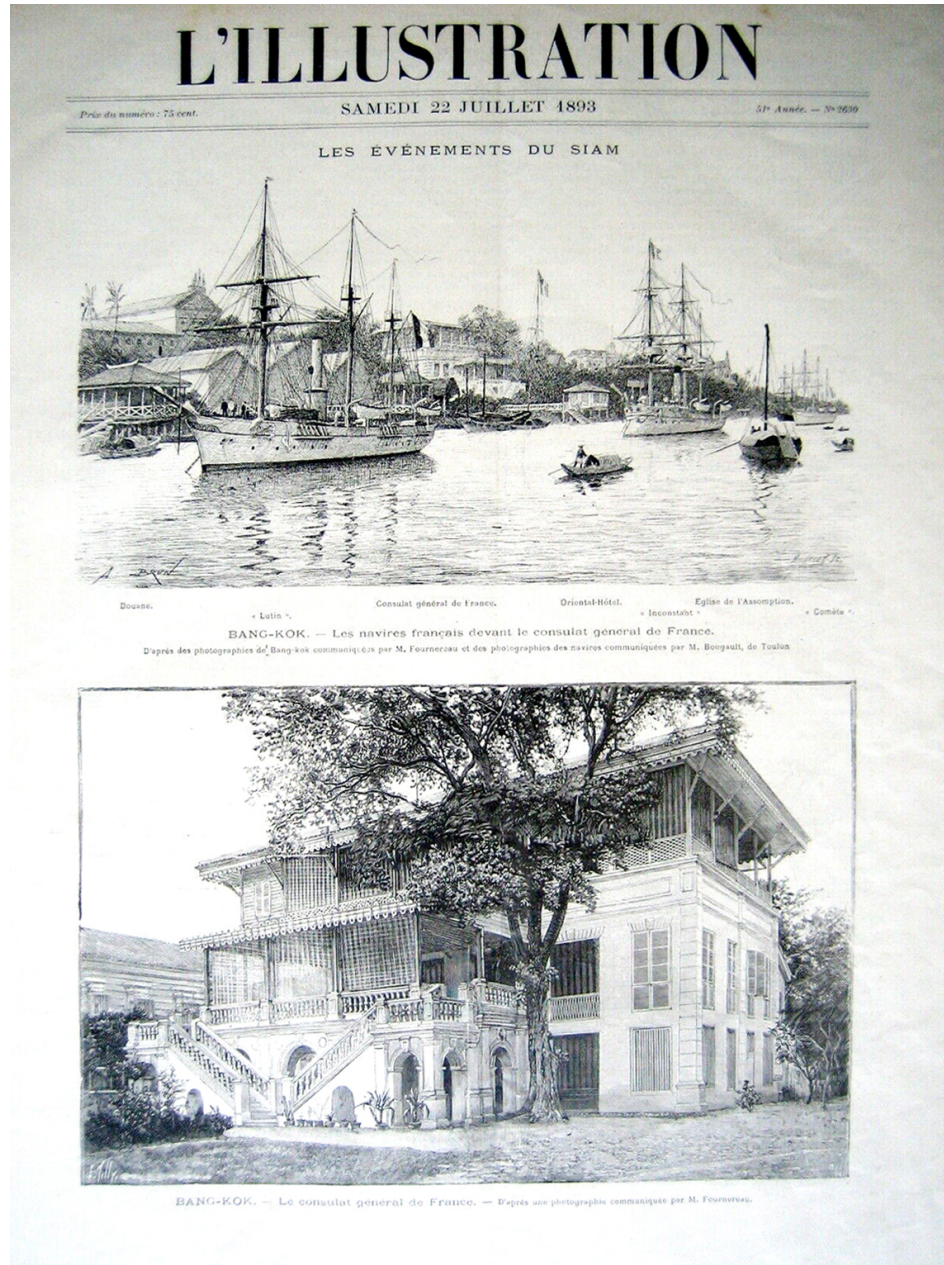


Figure 4-45: Picture of the French gunboat anchored in front of the French legation, and picture of the French legation published in French newspaper  
Source: *L'ILLUSTRATION*; July 22, 1893.

<sup>24</sup> Massieu Isabelle, “Une visite a Bangkok,” *La Revue des Deux-Mondes*, 1901, reissued in *Thaïlande* (Paris: Magellan et Cie, 2014). Quoted in Jean-Francois, *La Residence De France A Bangkok*, 75.



# LE MONDE ILLUSTRÉ

JOURNAL HEBDOMADAIRE

ABONNEMENT POUR PARIS ET LES DÉPARTEMENTS  
Un an, 24 fr.; — Six mois, 13 fr.; — Trois mois, 7 fr.; — Un trimestre, 3 fr. 50 c.  
Le volume mensuel, 25 fr.; hebdom., — 27 fr.; relié et doré aux tranches,  
ÉTRANGER (hors poste) : Un an, 27 fr.; — Six mois, 14 fr.; — Trois mois, 7 fr. 50.

37<sup>e</sup> Année — N° 1895 — 22 Juillet 1893

Directeur : M. ÉDOUARD DESFOSSÉS

DIRECTION ET ADMINISTRATION, 13, QUAI VOLTAIRE  
Toute demande d'abonnement sera accompagnée d'un bon sur Paris ou sur la poste, toute demande de numéro à laquelle on n'a pas joint le montant en timbres-poste, sera considérée comme non adressée. — On ne répond pas des manuscrits et des dessins envoyés.



ÉVÉNEMENTS DU SIAM. — L'AVISO LE *Lutin* DEVANT LE CONSULAT DE FRANCE, A BANGKOK.

(D'après une photographie de M. L..., notre correspondant.)

Figure 4-46: Picture of the French gunboat anchored in front of the French legation, Bangkok in French newspaper

Source: *Le Monde Illustré* Journal, July 22, 1893 (Bibliothèque Nationale de France)

As time progressed, the French legation deteriorated and had insufficient space for the approximately twenty local officers to live in. Some diplomats who had families needed to rent places in the city which were very expensive. At the legation, only the area for the minister was well arranged with three rooms reserved for him. Additionally, according to the book *La Residence De France A Bangkok*, the current French legation's location by the river might be a risk in the way that the French subjects could too easily flee into the compound when there was a tense situation in the area.<sup>25</sup> Thus, the French had the idea to move their legation out of the current site.

While no action to relocate the legation was taken, a renovation and expansion of the legation was approved and financially supported by the director of the Government-General of the French Indochina, Mr. Paul Doumer in 1901. This renovation included fixing the pavement and the construction of a new teak building that functioned as a chancery, a staff's residence, a dining room at the back of the main building, a riverfront pier, a steel pontoon for the use of Navy, and a garden drainage system. These improvements cost about 282,000 francs, which were made possible by indemnity Siam paid to the Government-General of Indochina in 1893 due to the Paknam Incident.<sup>26</sup>

Shortly after the renovation, in 1902, the Indochinese Union directed by Mr. Doumer, purchased a 41,000-square meter land plot (10.13 acres) in Bangkok from Dr. Reyttter, a Belgian land developer and the personal doctor of Queen Saovabha-pongsri of Siam, in order to build a new French legation. This land was a new real estate

---

<sup>25</sup> Jean-Francois, *La Residence De France a Bangkok*, 82.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

development on Sathorn road in the Bangrak district where many other foreign legations had just been established, any several commercial activities were also developing. Mr. Doumer gave this new property to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs without any expense. However, the land was not a gift from Mr. Doumer's kindness, but his ostentation in order to show off his power during the dispute between him and Mr. Delcasse, the minister of Foreign Affairs, and their imperialism quarrel over the South China Sea. However, in the end, Mr. Doumer was dismissed from his position, and the proceedings for the new French legation on the mentioned site was consequently lost.<sup>27</sup>

The idea of moving the legation was brought back again in the same year due to the financial problems of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In this regard, they would like to sell the current legation, the gift from King Mongkut in 1871, back to the Siamese government. Aside from the financial difficulty, this idea also seemed due to the fact that the generosity of the Siamese king was less important to the French after the two countries' long disputes about the territory since the 1860s and their relations became less active. However, in 1907 there was a final readjustment of territorial claims which was a good sign for a more friendly relationship. In order to proceed with this sell, the title deed and other documents had to be found. Unexpectedly, fraud conducted by Frantz Hamon, the French accountant, was found. He defrauded 200,000 francs from the French government and was consequently imprisoned for five years and fined

---

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 83.

20,000 francs as penalty. As a result, the relocation project of the legation was again terminated.<sup>28</sup>

In 1909, the land given by Mr. Doumer again returned to the scene. Pierre de Margerie, the French minister in Bangkok, sent a report to the French government summarizing the reasons for which he recommended moving the legation to the more spacious grounds on Sathorn road that the General Government of Indochina, directed by Paul Doumer, had acquired in 1902. One of the reasons was that the existing buildings in the current compound seemed to be worthless even though Antony Klobukowski, the French minister who succeeded Margerie, had renovated it many times. This report of Margerie was a starting point of a forty-year discussion about moving the legation. The discussion was between those who supported the idea of building a new legation on the current site and those who wanted to sell that site and move the legation to the new property on Sathorn road. Nevertheless, none of them wanted to keep the current building. The discussion continued until the mid-twentieth century.

In 1911, the proposed idea became more solid when Henri Marchal, the Director of Public Works of Indochina, had completed the study for the construction of the new legation. The study included plans, cross-sections, program requirement and project specifications. However, some titles of ownership were missing, which delayed the project. In addition, due to a suspicious statement in 1913, the House of Representatives refused to give credit to the project as requested. Finally, it was

---

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

concluded that the current site by the river was already located on a strategic location, and therefore needed to be preserved. Furthermore, the First World War suspended the plan to move the legation.

It was not until 1926 when Mr. Fernand Pila, the new French minister in Bangkok, was enthusiastic to move the legation to a new place. He wrote a letter to the French Government in Paris that Mr. Nana's company, Messieurs Nana & Cie, wanted to exchange a land which would benefit the French in the way that they could hold the absolute title of land on Paknam road and the new legation could be constructed there. This new property, according to Mr. Nana's proposal, was about 84,964 square-meters (21 acres), far bigger than the 7,544 square-meters (1.86 acres) of the current one. In addition, there were other two offers made by Nai Lert, the businessman who had exchanged his land with the British legation, and Siamese customs.<sup>29</sup> The project of selling this land seemed to go very well as none of these three offered less than the asking price. The progress satisfied Mr. Pila since he had a bad impression of the current compound. He once said:

[Author's translation] Now we were living in very poor condition. In other words, the building was not appropriate for living. We had to stay here because we had no other choice. I dreamed of renting my own private house after working here for several days. The renting price, however, stopped my dream. The current residence has been built and had many additions added at different time, until any taste and comfort could not be found. The second floor, which was a residence quarter, was made of wood making every bedroom hot during

---

<sup>29</sup> Klein Jean-Francois, Alexis Thuaux, and Sophie Trelcat, *La Residence De France A Bangkok* (Paris: Editions Internationales du Patrimoine, 2015), 92-93.

daytime, and keeping that heat all day. The roof and lintel, moreover, are the gathering places of birds, bats, lizards, and snakes, as well as annoying small bugs. As a result, all the appliances, books, and clothes needed to be wrapped. The scenery of the river was still beautiful, but the all-day noise from all description of water transports, and their sirens truly irritate us, not to mention the smell from the rice mill and crematorium of the next-door temple. And we have to gave in.<sup>30</sup>

While the relocation project of the legation was in progress, Mr. Pila was succeeded by Mr. Charles Arsene Henry, who had a different opinion about the legation. The new minister suggested that a new residence be built in the French style on the current riverfront location. He commented to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the current residence was too small, but its appearance was still acceptable, so, a new building should be constructed. The proposed land on Phloenchit road, where the British legation was located, was too far and expensive. The current site, therefore, should be kept. This plot of land was located in his favorite neighborhood, which also had the Portuguese legation, the custom house, the Oriental hotel, and shops that sold imported products. To him, these neighbors illustrated the convenience of the location.<sup>31</sup> His impression of this place was also due to the vivid lives along the river, and the beautiful scenery, which were many of the reasons to remain at the same site.<sup>32</sup> His letter changed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' opinion about the current property.

---

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 93, 96.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 96.

In 1930, the French subjects voted on the different ideas for the future of the legation. There were two choices: to demolish the old building in order to build a new one on the same site and, to sell the current site and move to Phloenchit road. The vote resolved the disagreement on moving to the new distant site.<sup>33</sup> This project had been discussed until the World War II, but no conclusion was made because of the disagreements between the minister of Foreign Affairs and the Government of Indochina. Moreover, the minister posted to Bangkok kept switching, so the project idea was constantly changed. More importantly, the property laws stopped the plan of selling the riverfront land, so this idea eventually came to an end.<sup>34</sup> Not until the new legation project was determined, there was a big renovation of the French legation again in 1938, after the first serious improvement was done in 1901 by Anthony Klobukowski, the French minister in Siam at that time.<sup>35</sup>

During the Second World War, like the two previous legations mentioned, the French were also affected by the Japanese. Some part of the French compound was occupied by them and the neighbors, the Oriental Hotel, was used as the office of the high rank soldiers. The Japanese grew a vegetable garden on the riverfront of the French compound. The chancery, however, was still operating, although not as convenient as before. On 5 January 1944, there was an announcement from the Bangkok Governor ordering all people who lived along the river move out of the area. The French chancery was, therefore, moved to one of the Catholic missionary buildings in the Klong Toey

---

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 84.



area. On 1 December 1945, the French government in Paris called all diplomats in Bangkok to return to Paris.<sup>36</sup>

When the war ended, the French legation reopened in 1946 after had been abandoned for several years. Even though it was in a very poor condition, the compound had never changed its site. The riverfront property was preserved, improved, and continues to serve the French diplomacy in Siam until the present time. In addition, another French occupied land in Bangkok on Phloenchit road, which was mentioned earlier, was eventually sold after the royal decree authorized that the land to be sold at a public auction in June 1949. The price reached the unexpected amount of 2.8 million ticals (2.8 million francs) at the auction in October 1949.

---

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 99-100.

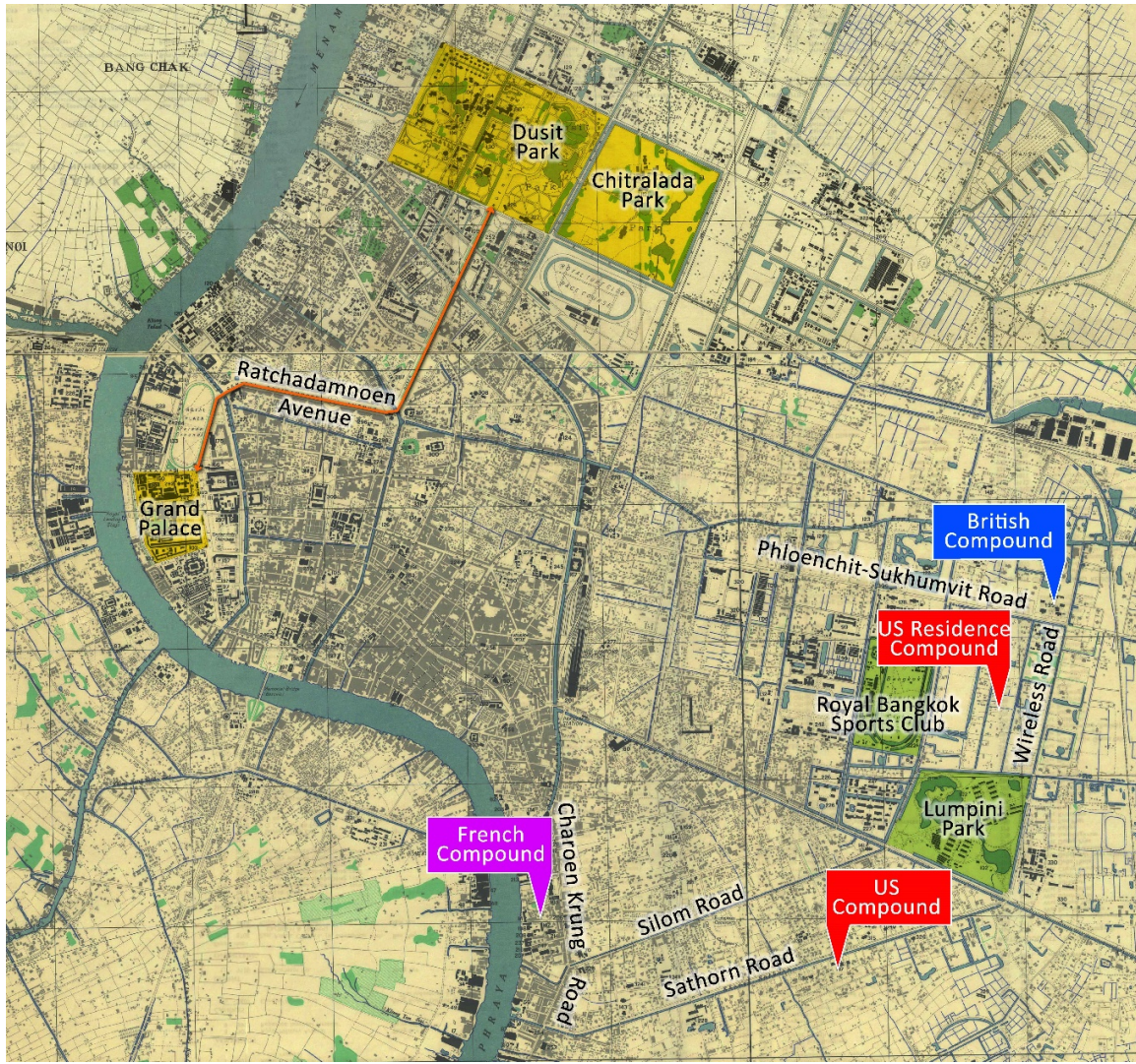


Figure 4-47: Partial map of Bangkok 1945 showing locations of diplomatic properties of Britain, the United States, and France.

Source: extracted from Bangkok map 1945, National Archives of Thailand

### ***Spatial Arrangements, Adaptations and Construction of the Compounds: The French Riverside Compound***

The existing condition of the site the French acquired for diplomatic purposes consisted of a rectangular-shaped building that had five rooms and a gallery, attached to a long building which had ten rooms. These buildings, however, were worn out and cramped and the marshy garden flooded every year.<sup>37</sup> The lower floor of the main building was used as the consulate office, while the upper floor was used as the residence and the work space of the consul. The wing of the building was used as a prison and staff's residence.<sup>38</sup>

In 1901, there was a big renovation and extension of the legation compound. A teak building functioned as a chancery and a staff's residence was constructed on the eastern border of the site along a small alley. The back of the chancery faced an alley and performed as a fence of the compound (Figure 4-48, 4-49). It separated the French compound from the bustling local context which consisted of Western stores, Western companies, medical dispensaries, and hotels. The Euro-American quarter, at this time, was considered unpleasant for living because the modern developments created all kinds of pollution. Even though many foreign legations had already moved out to a more desirable and peaceful portion of Bangkok, the French compound still remained on the same site. These local conditions, therefore, seemed to be the reason for which the new building was arranged.

---

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 59.



In addition, a new dining room was added to the back of the main building to be able to accommodate more guests. Though many things in the compound had changed, the main building still faced the river, as the compound could not be directly accessed from the main street, unlike the British legation where the main entrance was reversed from the river to Charoen Krung Road. In this regard, the access from the river to the French compound was still important, though a little less. A riverfront pier and a steel pontoon for the use of the Navy were also built at the time of this big renovation.<sup>39</sup>



Figure 4-48: A rough master plan of the French diplomatic compound showing the location of the new chancery, extracted from Bangkok Map in 1888 (Left), and in 1910 (Right).

<sup>39</sup> Klein Jean-Francois, Alexis Thuaux, and Sophie Trelcat, *La Residence De France A Bangkok* (Paris: Editions Internationales du Patrimoine, 2015), 78.



Figure 4-49: Back of the Chancery Building viewed from Soi Rongparasi  
Source: *La Residence De France A Bangkok*, 2015, 97

As time progressed, there were many plans and discussions that constantly caused insecurity to the current French compound. One plan proposed that the French move their legation to a new site in another part of the city. Another one required that the buildings on the current site be demolished in order to be replaced with new ones. Nonetheless, no action was taken until the Second World War.

After the end of the war, the French legation opened again in 1946 after being abandoned for several years. Not surprisingly, it was in very poor condition. Moreover, on 13 October in the same year, some part of the chancery was destroyed by fire, but the main building remained intact. A simple single-story wooden building was then constructed for temporary use at the end of backyard.<sup>40</sup> In 1947, Pierre-Eugene Gilbert,

---

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 100.

the French Minister Plenipotentiary, inspected the condition of the legation and proposed the cost estimation and architectural drawings for the renovation of the whole compound.<sup>41</sup> One of his aims was to build a new permanent building that gathered different departments of the chancery in one place. However, this plan had to wait for ten years until the funds were approved in 1956. The construction of the new chancery on the old tennis court in the compound was eventually completed in the following year. It was the first time that the living quarter was separated from the working space. The old building was now used only for the residence of the French ambassador. These buildings have been part of the French embassy until the present time.

### ***The Architecture and Representation of Diplomacy***

- ***The French Riverside Compound***

France was the only one among the three studied nations that has never changed its site of the diplomatic compound in Bangkok since it was first established in 1857. Regarding the style, materials, and the big openings of the existing building on the site, it was assumed that the building was originally a warehouse of Siamese customs. Later on, in the reign of King Mongkut, when there were more Western consultants coming to Siam to advise on the management system, as well as the customs system, the building was converted to a reception house for these Western customs

---

<sup>41</sup> The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Letter of Jean Darridan*, 24 July 1947.

specialists.<sup>42</sup> The date of construction was unknown; however, the architectural style, and the construction method illustrated the architecture popularly built during the end of the reign of King Rama III and the beginning of the reign of King Rama IV (King Mongkut).<sup>43</sup>

The building originally had two stories, where the principal function was elevated on the upper floor, similar to other bungalows built during that period. The upper floor was a residence and the working space of the consul. It was reached by two exterior stairs in front of the building facing the river. The lower floor was made of brick masonry coated with white stucco and functioned as the office of the consulate. The wing of the building was used as a prison and the staff's residence.<sup>44</sup> This simple-looking building was capped with a roof made of Nipa palm (Palm Thatch Roofing) (Figure 4-50).<sup>45</sup> The roof was in hipped-gable style commonly found on Siamese houses in the South. It was also known as the Manila Blanor roof, which was an Indonesian word referring to the Dutch. This expressed the colonial origins of the style. It combined a hipped form with gables midway up the slope on two sides. This style of roof benefited from good ventilation of the gable pediments, and good drainage from the four sides of the hipped roof.<sup>46</sup>

The main building was renovated many times during 1875-1894, and eventually transformed from a simple building to a small-scale colonial residence. In this regard,

---

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 59-60.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Nithi Sthapitanond, Brian Mertens, *Architecture of Thailand: A Guide to Tradition and Contemporary Forms* (Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, 2012), 50.



the space of the building was augmented through the construction of the third floor on top of the existing building, and the addition of the front roof covering the terrace and turning it into a porch. As a result, it could be said that this building was a combination of Colonial style, Neo-Palladian, and some Victorian details (Figure 4-51).<sup>47</sup> All of these changed the whole appearance of the residence. Unfortunately, the information about the architect who designed the building could not be found.

The third floor was built of wood was lightweight as appropriate for the additional structure. This floor was decorated all the way through the gallery by railings and woven wood panels, except the left side of the building. The new gallery on the third floor was enclosed by striped canvas blinds, the same as those in some parts of the second and the first floors. The whole area was covered by a hipped roof made of teak shingles. This roof had a long eave which was decorated by round wooden trim. Moreover, there was Victorian fretwork decorations on the third floor. These details together with its light structure made this upper part of the residence contrast with the existing solid grandeur of the Neo-Palladian style of the lower floors.<sup>48</sup>

At the lower part of the building, there was another major addition, which was the terrace roof of the second floor. It was added by a light structure in order to enlarge the reception area of this floor. Therefore, the front terrace was transformed into a porch, which was necessary for architecture in tropical climates because the open space could be used even in the rainy season. Accordingly, the old stairs needed to be

---

<sup>47</sup> Klein Jean-Francois, Alexis Thuaux, and Sophie Trelcat, *La Residence De France a Bangkok* (Paris: Editions Internationales du Patrimoine, 2015), 132.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 72, 132.

replaced with new ones, and in this replacement, the direction they passed was also changed. The new stairs, instead of projecting to the river, started their flights from the central ground of the front façade and proceeded separately — one to the left and one to the right of the porch on the second floor. The two simple frontal stairs, which were the main character of bungalow,<sup>49</sup> were now changed to the formal ones corresponding to the solid grandeur of the Neo-Palladian style of the lower floors. According to the new design of the stairs, their balustrades were made of cement and decorated with flowered squares in the middle. The bottom of the stairs was enclosed by Romanesque arches and Doric pilasters (Figure 4-52).<sup>50</sup>

The addition of the lower part of the residence illustrated how the Western architectural style adjusted to fit the local environment since the Palladian terrace would not have traditionally been covered.<sup>51</sup> Nonetheless, the new porch was placed and designed harmoniously with the existing structure. Apart from the architectural appearance, this change indicates that the direct approach from the river, in the late nineteenth century, was not as important as before since the new modes of transportation were introduced to Bangkok – new roads were constructed, and trams were more widely used.

---

<sup>49</sup> See more in Koompong Noobanjong, *“Power, Identity, and the Rise of Modern Architecture: From Siam to Thailand”* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Colorado, 2003), 144.

<sup>50</sup> Klein Jean-Francois, Alexis Thuaux, and Sophie Trelcat, *La Residence De France A Bangkok* (Paris: Editions Internationales du Patrimoine, 2015), 132.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.



Figure 4-50: The French Consulate in Bangkok, 1866.  
Source: La Residence De France A Bangkok, 62-3



Figure 4-51: The French Consulate in Bangkok, after renovation, 1893.





Figure 4-52: Architectural details: flowered-square balustrades, Romanesque arches and Doric pilasters, in a photograph of Pierre de Margerie, the French minister, and French diplomats in front of the French minister's residence, 1908.

Source: *La Residence De France A Bangkok*, 79.

The French consulate was upgraded to the legation in 1887, the second one among the three nations. They kept renovating and preserving their diplomatic compound to always maintain a good condition, unlike the case of the United States. There was a big renovation and the extension of the compound in 1901. The major changes were the construction of a reception-dining room and a building for the chancery and the staff's residence. The former was built on stilts added to the back of the residence. The room had a hexagon plan surrounded by a balcony. It was capped by a double-hexagonal hipped roof that had a similar round wooden trim, as well as the same pattern of fretwork as those of the residence (Figure 4-53). This double roof consequently added a statelier look to the back end of the building. The new chancery, on the other hand, had a simpler appearance than the new dining room. It was a long rectangular building aligning with the eastern border of the compound. The similar design of fretwork of the residence was used throughout the new building. The different details between the two buildings was that the simple gabled roof of the chancery was decorated with wooden trim, which was simplified from fretwork, rather than the round wooden trim of the residence (Figure 4-54). The more elaborate design of the residence indicated its higher status. There was then a visual hierarchy of the buildings within the compound.





Figure 4-53: The new reception-dining room extended from the residence, constructed in 1901, photograph taken in 1930.

Source: *La Residence De France A Bangkok*, 94-5



Figure 4-54: The French Chancery viewed from within the compound, 1930.

Source: *La Residence De France A Bangkok*, 97.

The improvement of the compound, however, never stopped the idea to have a new legation. The long discussion concerning this was between building a new one on the current site or to move to a new site in another part of the city. None of them wanted to keep the old building. This did not, nonetheless, mean that no one appreciated living in the current compound. In 1925, Mr. Paul Morand, a diplomat and a writer and the French minister in Bangkok at that time, wrote about his impression to live in the residence of the legation:

[Author's translation] The building was decorated in an old-fashioned colonial style, and looked humble. It was situated in the French enclave, amid the nature of the garden, while the thirty-five-meter French flag was waving. In the rainy season, the fresh air was blown by the wind, together with lots amount of rain. The building itself opened to receive wind from every direction. Nothing obstructed the wind as the building had a huge lattice frieze, where birds were its visitors. The reflections of the sun from the water covered the woven rattan ceiling of the residence glittering as if it was gilded. This was a unique charm of the wooden tropical house. There was no glass window. Walls were reduced to the necessity, and no defense ever. In the rest time, the servants just closed the large blue and green blinds, and lay themselves down blocking the door for safety.<sup>52</sup>

Nonetheless, the person who loved this compound stayed there for only two months. He eventually had to leave Bangkok, as he was sick with dysentery. The idea to relocate the legation was brought back again by his successor.

---

<sup>52</sup> Jean-Francois, *La Residence De France a Bangkok*, 91.



Regardless of all the attempts to move the diplomatic compound to other places, this riverfront compound has served French diplomacy since the Franco-Siamese treaty was signed in 1856 to today. Like the embassies of Britain and the United States, the French embassy was awarded the 1984 Architectural Conservation Award by the Association of Siamese Architects.

#### 4.3.4. Summaries

France was the only nation among the three who did not relocate their legation. Even though many plans to move their legation were on the cusp of happening, none of them succeeded. Progress and halts of the plans depended mostly on French internal matters, rather than those of Siam – Bangkok development, for example – and eventually, the site of the French diplomatic compound never changed since they first established their consulate in Siam and it remains their embassy at present time.

At the beginning, France, who competitively expanded its influence in the region with Great Britain, was quickly suggested the riverside property for its diplomatic purpose by the Siamese, who was aware of the French colonial aggression, after signing the Franco-Siamese treaty in 1856. However, because of the suspicious intention of the French coming to Siam, the French had to rent the property for almost twenty years until King Chulalongkorn granted them the plot of land in 1875.

Unlike the purpose-built compound of the British, the French had to adjust themselves to fit the existing conditions of what they received from the king. However, their compound was well maintained and had been renovated many times. The new

buildings were constructed, and additions were added to make the compound suitable for the growth of their diplomacy, as well as for the increase of their influence in Siam. The big renovation in 1901, for example, was made by indemnity Siam paid to the Government-General of Indochina in 1893 due to the Paknam Incident. The French, when unable to beat the grand size of the British compound, focused more on the detailed design of the buildings. The *Representation of Space*, therefore, played a major role in this regard. The French continuously renovated the compound to always maintain it in condition. More elaborate designs of the wooden fretwork and balustrades and a more complicated form of the roof were added to the existing buildings in the compound compared to the British ones. A two-story simple building originally a warehouse of Siamese customs was transformed into a three-story colonial residence. The French residence in the compound was now on par with the three-story residence building of the British, which was custom-built. According to these architectural details, a visual hierarchy of the buildings within the compound was consequently illustrated. The architectural decorations of the residence signified its superior status over other buildings.

The French were not only concerned about the representation of its status as mentioned above, but also about the Siamese local context. When the access from the road replaced the waterway mode of transportation, the exterior stairs of the French consulate were renovated and the direction changed from facing the river to starting at the central ground of the residence's front façade and proceeding separately to the two

sides of the porch on the second floor for easy access, as well as to give a grandiose appearance of the compound.

Even though the local condition was part of the design, the connection to the neighborhood did not seem to be one of the French concerns. When a new chancery building was constructed, it was placed on the edge of the site by which the back of the building faced the outside world acting as the fence of the compound. The interaction between the French in the compound and the outsiders was consequently cut off. This particular location of the new building illustrated Lefèbvre's *Spatial Practice* that was required for the everyday functions of society, the spatial events of life. The French, in this sense, seemed to prefer staying in their own precinct, not blending with the local ones.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusions

This dissertation examined Siamese international relations with Western countries from 1855 to the end of the Second World War through the representation of the diplomatic compounds of Britain, France, and the United States in Bangkok. In response to the increasing Western pressures in the region, King Mongkut encouraged Siamese interactions with Western nations by signing the Bowring Treaty with Britain in 1855, which was soon followed by signing similar treaties with other countries. Due to the treaties, the Western nations were given extraterritoriality and the right to erect their consulates in the kingdom after the Consulate of Portugal, the first diplomatic compound in Siam, was established in 1820.<sup>1</sup> In other words, the firm international relations between Siam and Western countries started at the same time that the history of the diplomatic compounds in Siam began. With this realization, the dissertation analyzes the correlations between these two events.

The discussions in Chapter 2, 3, and 4, *The Historical backgrounds of Siam, Siamese International Relations with the West, and The Interpretations of Siamese International Relationships with the Three Powers*, demonstrate the connections between the countries that help reveal the actual circumstances of the exceptional

---

<sup>1</sup> The Consulate of Portugal in Bangkok was established in 1820 due to the long history of relationships with Siam since 1511 when Ayutthaya was the capital of the country. The land was originally given to build the Portuguese factory, and was later converted to the diplomatic compound. In Damrong Rajanubhab, "The Introduction of Western Culture in Siam," *Journal of the Siam Society* 20 (1927): 93-94.

relationships between Siam, the only nation in Southeast Asia that retained its independent status, and the Western countries, who threatened that exceptional status of Siam.

As the diplomatic compounds were established through the compromise and negotiations between the host country (Siam), and the nations who posted their representatives, the conclusions are divided into two major concerns. The first one: “Domestic Origins” are the internal factors of the host country that affected the representations of the architecture of diplomacy, as well as the international relationships. The other one: “International Factors” are the influences created by the Western countries who established their diplomatic compounds in the host nation.

This dissertation offers an alternative way to investigate the history through the architectural representation that does not only study the general terms of the history such as the political, administrative, economic, religious, educational or cultural institutions, but looks for the interrelationship between these fundamental terms and the history of the Western diplomatic properties in Siam. It was, I argue, a manifestation of the Western perception towards Siam, and vice versa.

### **Domestic Origins**

The beginning of the more rigid Siamese international relations with Western countries was initiated by King Mongkut who recognized that the only way to survive European imperialism was to absorb their influences and modernize the country, as he

had seen the fatal result of China's attempt to shut out the West.<sup>2</sup> The king was enthusiastic to sign the treaties with different nations to advance contact with the outside world, as well as to balance their influences and powers in Siam. Accordingly, he granted Siamese lands to these nations in order to establish their consulates. In this regard, the establishment and the changes of the diplomatic compounds, during the first studied period, from 1855 to 1910, depended merely on the kings' initiations and consents.

Even though the privileges given to Britain, the United States, and France due to the treaties had only minor differences, the location and the size of the properties they were granted were distinctly different. The British acquired the largest plot which was bigger than that of the Portuguese who had the longest historical relationships with Siam and the first to establish the consulate. With the absolute ownership and the ample space of the property, the British could create their imaginative compound specifically designed to fit their diplomatic purposes, while the United States and France who in the early years after signing the treaties with Siam had to rent the premises. They, therefore, had to adjust themselves to fit the conditions of the properties.

The different physical sizes and conditions of the diplomatic properties have direct variation to the different degrees of Siamese favors, as well as its fears of the Western powers. The first British compound occupied a space of 7 acres, whereas the French got less than one third of that area, and the Americans got the smallest, which was only 0.51 acre.

---

<sup>2</sup> A. B. Griswold, "King Mongkut in Perspective," *Journal of the Siam Society* 45, no.1 (April 1957): 1.



To King Mongkut, on the one hand, Britain at the time was the most formidable Western Power in the region due to its recent victory in the First Opium War with China in 1842. On the other hand, Britain was the most favorable Western nation in Siam as demonstrated by a great number of British advisors in the Siamese court compared to those from other foreign countries. Additionally, King Mongkut had a pro-British leaning which was demonstrated through the murals in Wat Bowon Niwet and Wat Borom Niwat, in the way that he admired the British advancements such as the hospital in London, as well as the good humanity of the British due to the abolition of slavery. Britain, consequently, possessed the largest property among other foreign diplomatic compounds in Bangkok.

France acquired the second largest property among the three as its aggression was contesting the British. The United States was the least favorable, as well as the least formidable nation among the three since it did not yet have an aggressive influence on the region except its trade and missionary missions. It therefore acquired the smallest riverfront compound. Prior to this site, the state of its consulate was even worse. At the beginning, the Americans had not even been granted Siamese property. They had to use their consuls' residence as a consulate until 1884, almost thirty years after signing the treaty in 1856, when King Chulalongkorn granted the riverfront property that they rented to the United States due to the better impression of the king towards the United States consul at that time.

The architectures of the three compounds were all designed in response to the local climate and geographical conditions of Bangkok. As expected, the architectures of

the United States and the French compound had characters of tropical architecture since their consulates were adapted from what the existing Siamese properties provided. Regardless of a new design of the British consulate, the architecture within its compound was also constructed based on the tropical-design criteria. The architectures of diplomacy of the three nations by the river all sat on high pillars to elevate the main floor above flood levels. The buildings were surrounded by a veranda which was enclosed by shutters or blinds. Above the shutters, the wooden fretworks were installed to let wind pass through the buildings. The buildings were capped by a steeply pitched roof, though they had different styles, and had long eaves to protect them from the sun.

Even though, at the beginning, the basic features of the buildings in the compounds of the three nations were quite similar regarding their responses to the local context, they had different specific characteristics that gave meaning to the spaces by which they later adapted, adjusted and renovated the properties. The differences between the case of the United States and the French compounds are particularly worth mentioning as they both had acquired the properties which were not originally designed for the diplomatic purposes. While the Americans paid little attention to keep their property in a good condition, not to mention any extension or renovation of the compound, the French kept their compound very well, and further added a new design with regard to the local condition. The front terrace of the residence, for instance, had a new roof added to cover its open space that was turned into a porch, and could be used even in the rainy season of Siam's tropical climate.

Furthermore, when the physical conditions of Bangkok changed due to its modern development, the three compounds were also changed, renovated, and relocated accordingly. When the first road outside the city wall, Charoen Krung Road, constructed by King Mongkut, passed the British consulate, the British compound reversed their spatial arrangement from the river approach to the road access based on the shift of Bangkok's transportation from river-based to road-based. By the turn of the century, Bangkok expanded in every direction. The new development areas were more pleasant than the Euro-American quarter where the three consulates were located. This old area became dense and polluted making the British and the French want to move their legations to the new residential districts like many other foreign missions in Bangkok that had already moved out. However, these were merely desire, no action had yet been taken.

Until the growth of the new Siamese urban middleclass such as merchants, professionals, and intellectuals who no longer depended directly on the royal patronage, the private land ownership became business investment. Prior to this, before the reign of King Mongkut, it was traditionally understood that all land belonged to the king.<sup>3</sup> According to this new business, the desire for relocating the diplomatic compounds became more tangible because land acquisition no longer depended only on the king. In the 1920s, Siamese developers who were part of this new group of people presented sites to the British and the French for exchange and proposed the

---

<sup>3</sup> Andreas Sturm, *"The King's Nation: A Study of the Emergence and Development of Nation and Nationalism in Thailand"* (Doctoral Dissertation, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2006), 99-100.

offer to purchase their properties. When the site-exchange proposal was adjusted to meet British satisfaction, their diplomatic compound consequently moved to the second site at Sapatoom. The former riverside property of the British granted by the king was now possessed by a Siamese businessman. It was later bought back by the Siamese government to be used as the site for the Central Post Office. The French compound, however, remained in the same place due to its internal political issues. The relocation of the British compound illustrates that, in the second period of study (1910 to WW II), the king's objective was no longer the only motive for the change of the diplomatic compound.

Architecturally, as the second British compound was located on an inland site, the design of the buildings changed accordingly. Unlike the old design of the elevated architecture in the first compound, the buildings on the new site now sat on ground level, where the whole area of the ground floor could be used as the main function of the buildings. Although some of the design of the buildings changed due to the different local context, the spatial arrangement and the spatial hierarchy of the buildings in the compound of both properties were similar. The residence was put in the deepest position, the best location of the compound, accessed by the grand symmetrical entrance with a big circular drive in front of the building. Visitors had to pass through other buildings on the side to get to the residence.

In the case of the French compound, even though it remained on the same site, the buildings were renovated corresponding to the change of Bangkok's means of transportation. The main stairs at the front façade pointing to the river, for example,

were replaced by new ones whose direction was changed to fit the surrounding context giving a new easy access to the main functions of the compound on the second floor of the building.

Siam's internal factors influenced the design of the diplomatic compounds of the three nations, which were basically made through the land acquisition of each nation to establish the consulate and the city development. They provided specific conditions such as the size of the properties, the location, the existing layout of the buildings in the compound, the surrounding context, and the means of transportation to be developed for the diplomatic purposes of the compound which directly reflected Lefèbvre's spatial practice in shaping how people used and perceived space. These respects, moreover, were fundamental conditions or limitations which were adjusted in tandem with the development of the international relationship between Siam and the three respective Western countries as the representations of space. They are then discussed further in relation to *International Factors*.

### **International Factors**

As the relationships between Siam and the three nations progressed, the histories of the compounds also developed. The interrelation between them was clearly seen through King Chulalongkorn's grant of the riverfront property to the United States for diplomatic purposes in 1884, the site they had previously been renting. This improved condition of the legation compound correlated with the advancement of the Siamese relationship with the United States by which its consulate was the first one in

Siam who received the elevated status to legation in 1882. Nonetheless, the condition of the property was not yet comparable with the British and the French ones.

The same manner of granting the Siamese properties to the United States was made throughout the history of the American diplomatic compound. The United States legation moved to the second compound according to a more friendly relationship. When the Siamese government knew about the American anxiety regarding the unacceptable conditions of the current compound, proposed to exchange the riverfront property of the United States with a new site that the United States now began to rent for diplomatic purposes. When the agreement was made, the old American compound was then remodeled and used as the Siamese customhouse. This exchange, however, was of benefit to the United States and was made shortly after Siam entered into the First World War on the side of the Allies, the same side as the United States. The correlation between the history of Siamese international relationships and the history of the compound was then illustrated. The reason Siam joined the war was to upgrade its status in the worldview as equivalent to the Western powers, which was demonstrated through the new national flag designed by King Vajiravudh, that had the same tricolors as those of the Allies. As a result, Siam, not surprisingly, was willing to give the benefit to the United States regarding the exchange of the new property.

Furthermore, the last move of the residence compound of the United States took place due to the outstanding status of the United States in the Siamese international relationships during and after the Second World War, in which the latter helped prevent the British from making punitive reparations to Siam. With this



understanding, the American minister was assured that his desire to move the residence to a much finer property would be agreed by the Siamese government. Eventually, the United States possessed one of the most beautiful properties in Bangkok.

Apart from the two World Wars, the Paknam incident in 1893 was also one of the most significant events in the history of the relationship between Siam and Western countries, and the history of the diplomatic compounds, that the British and the French witnessed. This crisis took place due to a territorial dispute on the trans-Mekong area between Siam and France. French gunboats anchored in front of the French Legation and threatened the Siamese to accept their ultimatum, while the British warships anchored between the French gunboats and King Chulalongkorn's Palace to protect British lives and property. In this case, the diplomatic compounds of Britain and France in Siam being regarded as the representation of the countries was highly evident. There was no actual territory of the two countries on Siamese land, but the imagined one. Eventually, Siam had to accommodate all the French requests. This serious incident affected not only territorial loss of Siam, but also the subsequent representation of the French diplomatic compound.

In 1901, the French used the indemnity of the Siamese regarding to the Paknam Incident for a massive renovation of their diplomatic property. A teak building functioned as a chancery and a staff's residence was constructed. It was intentionally placed on the eastern border of the site acting as a fence cutting off the French precinct from the Siamese surrounding context. Other extensions with the elaborate design were also added to the existing buildings to enlarge the functional spaces, as well as to

enhance the prestige of the nation. Regarding the Paknam crisis, the triumph of France was not only over the Siamese, but also the British, who temporarily lost its prestige due to the whole situation that took place during the incident which led to the conclusion of the Anglo-French Agreement of 1896 which guaranteed the neutrality of the Chao Phraya basin of Siam as a buffer state.

Prior to this event, France and Britain had already been contesting for supremacy in the region. The diplomatic compound was one of the mediums that represented the prestige of the nation. Since the French were given the land they currently rented for consular purposes by King Chulalongkorn in 1875, the property had been renovated many times until 1894 when the Paknam crisis recently ended. A two-story simple building originally a warehouse of Siamese customs was transformed into a three-story colonial residence. The French residence in the compound was now on par with the three-story residence building of the British, which was built on purpose.

Furthermore, the Paknam incident in 1893 had additional subsequent effects than first revealed. It was also one of the reasons King Chulalongkorn visited Europe in 1897 for the first time as he wanted to ensure that Siam's sovereignty would not be threatened again. On this tour, the king witnessed the ritual spectacles of the West, which, according to Peleggi, inspired him to refashion the royal elite's public image as a modern and civilized national leader of Siam.<sup>4</sup> The ceremonial unveiling of the Queen Victoria statue erected in front of the first compound of the British legation in 1903 was a good example of this refashioning. On the one hand, it shows the Siamese mourning

---

<sup>4</sup> Maurizio Peleggi, *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), 113-142.

the death of Queen Victoria; on the other hand, it presented the public image of a Siamese monarch that had a close relation with the British one. This ritual spectacle aimed also to impress the populace, and foreign observers, which were mainly the British subjects in Siam.

Besides the Siamese point of view, the Queen Victoria statue did not only symbolize the love of its subjects to the British monarchy but was also the emblem of the nation. It was erected in an unusual location outside the front gate of the legation, instead of the inside. The interaction between the British legation and the surrounding context is clearly seen. Unlike the solid fence with the back of the building of the French legation facing the outside, the British had a see-through gate where outsiders could see into the compound. Prior to the addition of this monument, when the main access of the compound was from the river, the highest national flagstaff in front of the riverside entrance of the residence, and the Royal coat of arms of the United Kingdom embellished on top of the gate lodge performed as the national symbols before entering to the compound. The representation of spaces in the case of the British compound was obviously one of its criteria to design the diplomatic compound.

This manner of representation was carried on with the design of its second compound at Sapatoom completed in 1926. However, the national representation of Britain in this case was presented through the War Memorial. The memorial was paid for by the British community in honor of the British subjects residing in Siam who fought and fell in WWI to defend their country. The erection of the War Memorial at the front gate, instead of the Queen Victoria statue illustrated the shift of national representation

from presenting the loyalty to the monarchy to honoring the patriotism which was an outcome of the nationalism movement in Europe. Furthermore, this sequence of placing the two memorials was similar to the placement of the ones at Buckingham Palace in London. This could be assumed that the British diplomatic compound directly reproduced the symbols of the nation from its own motherland. It is obvious that the national representation of the British was explicitly represented through the symbols that directly linked to the British nation.

Furthermore, as both the British diplomatic premises were purpose-built, they both had similar architectural characteristics, as well as the spatial hierarchy of the buildings within the compound. The dominant feature was the repetitive pattern of shutters and colonnade found on the exterior façade of the buildings. This pattern together with the symmetrical plan demonstrate the formal character of the British. The ceremonial main street of the compound helped support this representation.

The French, on the other hand, presented its national character through the elaborate architectural decoration. The residence was said to be a combination of Colonial style, Neo-Palladian, and some Victorian details.<sup>5</sup> These ornamented elements, such as the wooden fretwork, balustrades, and the complicated roof form, did not only illustrate the national character, but also displayed the visual hierarchy of the buildings in the compound that created the representation of space. Accordingly, the residence, which held the most significant function, had the most detailed architectural ornament.

---

<sup>5</sup> Klein Jean-Francois, Alexis Thuaux, and Sophie Trelcat, *La Residence De France a Bangkok* (Paris: Editions Internationales du Patrimoine, 2015), 132.

In the case of the United States, the representation of the last residence compound is worth mentioning. Unlike the British and the French cases, it was recognized by the residence's playful character which could not be found in any other buildings of government services. The gargoyle-like broken arches at the top of the shutter, for example, which previously illustrated the particular character of the former owner of the property was now the unique representation of the United States residence. Even though the design of the residence compound lacked in specific visual references, it gave the idea of American identity as a product of independence.

Due to the international factors which are part of the relationships between Siam and the Western countries, and the influences created by the other foreign parties who settled in Siam, the spatial practice and the representations of space, according to Lefèbvre's spatial triad, play a major role in the interpretation of the diplomatic compounds. The international relationships between Siam and Western countries, as well as among the Westerners themselves are the key factor of the representations of space. The correlations between the history of the compounds of the three nations and the history of international affairs are evidently illustrated. During the period of increasing Western power in the region, when each power was ascendant, its architectural representation was accordingly dominant; when the powers were competing, their representations of the diplomatic compound were contested; and when the power was insignificant, the architecture of diplomacy was correspondingly ignored.

In terms of the spatial practice, the internal issues of each nation seemed to be the main factors in this regard. The British compound is a good example since it was purpose-built. The spatial arrangement of the second British compound was planned according to the preference of the minister at that time. The ancillary quarter of each building in the compound where indigenous people resided, for instance, was located at the far end of the building away from the main axis of the compound. This arrangement was due to the minister's annoyance at the natives' way of living. Moreover, the British even purchased the additional site on the northern border of the compound in order to get rid of the overcrowding of locals who regularly gathered there.

This latter example illustrated not only the spatial practice of the compound, but also the interaction between the Westerners who resided in Siam and the indigenous people. Even though the interaction of the British compound to the Siamese context could be found through the visual openness of the gate of the compound, the actual bodily interaction was intentionally obstructed by the physical property. Similarly, this interaction aspect was even more evident in the case of the French compound where the new construction of the chancery preformed as the fence cutting off the French precinct from the local context.

The way in which Siamese local staffs were placed on the very far end of the compound, and how Siamese locals were completely cut off from the Western precincts in their own land, as seen in the British and the French compounds, explicitly illustrated the Orientalist discourse by Edward Said in the way that non-European, in this case Siamese, were a part of the European's power relations that constitute the presence of



“the Other” to confirm Western superiority over “the Oriental”.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, these spatial arrangements suggest the entities of “Otherness” in the process of Western identification.

The “Otherness”, on the other hand, was employed by Siamese elites to turn Western ‘Otherness’ into ambiguous objects of those elites' desires to be modern and civilized as seen through projects initiated by the kings and Siamese ruling class.<sup>7</sup> Any changes of the Western compound such as the granting of lands for diplomatic purposes initiated by Siamese kings occurred only from the good relations between Siam and Western nations, not the other way around. This realization illustrates Siam’s expectation to improve its relationship with the Western countries. On the contrary, any modifications of the compound created by the Western countries seemed to derive from their own distinct intentions such as competing with other Western countries and exhibiting their national prestige. In addition, isolating themselves from the Siamese was also a part of Western desires. In this regard, the good relations with Siam was not entirely relevant.

By looking at the history of the Western diplomatic compounds in dialogue with the history of Siam and its relations with the Western countries, the true circumstances of Siam during the colonial period are revealed. Rather than defining the Siamese status as crypto- or semi-colonial, this dissertation argues that the term 'nominally independent', suggested by Herzfeld (2002), best describes the actual situation. It can

---

<sup>6</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

<sup>7</sup> Pattana Kitiarsa, “An Ambiguous Intimacy: Farang as Siamese Occidentalism,” in *The Ambiguous Allure of the West: Traces of the Colonial in Thailand*, ed. Rachel V. Harrison, Peter A. Jackson, 58-59.

thus be said that, during that period, Siam was in a subordinate position in the Western-defined 'global hierarchy of value'<sup>8</sup>, as seen through the architecture of diplomacy of the Western countries in Siam.

---

<sup>8</sup> Herzfeld, Michael. "The Absent Presence: Discourses of Crypto-colonialism', *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101, no.4 (Fall, 2002): 900.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

*Bangkok Despatches*, May 7, 1858.

*Bangkok Despatches*, June 30, 1859.

*Bangkok Despatches*, December 24, 1865.

*Bangkok Despatches*, August 20, 1866.

*Bangkok Despatches*, January 7, 1876.

*Bangkok Despatches*, January 20, 1879.

*Bangkok Despatches*, February 23, 1880.

Despatch of the French consulate in Bangkok to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 25, 1875, containing a copy of the documents relating to the donation to the French Government by the King of Siam of the land and the house, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, La Courneuve.

F.O. 422/22, Public Record Office, London.

F.O. 17/1293, Telegram, Salisbury-Bunsen, January 24, 1896.

F.O. 422, LVI, Lansdowne to Tower, 7 January 1902.

F.O. 422/47. Monson and Greville to Salisbury, October 15, 1897.

F.O. 422/47. Monson and Greville to Salisbury, October 21, 1897.

F.O. 422/49. Greville to Salisbury, December 29, 1897.

F.O. 628, Consular and Embassy Archives, Bangkok (Public Record Office), Swettenham's Promemoria of Conversations held with the King of Siam, 24 February 1902.

J.A. Swettenham to C.P. Lucas, 10 Jan, 1898. Salisbury Papers vol. 92, Colonial Office.

R. 5. M.I. 40/5. Despatch, Ministry of Interior to the Governor of Chiangmai, October 27, 1892.

Phipps to Rosebery, June 30, 1893. Siam Correspondence (Sess. Pap., 1894, XCVT), no. 19.

*Siam Despatches*, September 29, 1884

Sir John Bowring. Report to Lord Clarendon. *Dispatch No. 144*. April 28, 1855.

Smyth to Morrison, April 26, 1897. Morrison Papers vol. 42, Mitchell Library Sydney.

Statement of Mr. Wilbur J. Carr, Director of the Consular Service, Department of State

(with the committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives) (1919) from

United States. Congress. House. Committee on Foreign Affairs, and Charles

Sumner Lobingier. *Exchange of Legation Property at Bangkok, Siam, Authorizing*

*the Purchase of Buildings and Grounds for the Embassy of the United States at*

*Santiago, Chile : Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of*

*Representatives, Sixty-sixth Congress, First Session on S. 2250 and H.R. 10007.*

*Statement of C.S. Lobingier, Judge of the United States Court for China, 1919.*

The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Letter of Jean Darridan*, 24 July 1947.

"Traite," enclosure in Dufferin to Rosebery, October 21, 1893, BFSP, vol. 87 (1894-1895).

United States. Congress. House. Committee on Foreign Affairs, and Charles Sumner

Lobingier. Exchange of Legation Property At Bangkok, Siam, Authorizing the

Purchase of Buildings And Grounds for the Embassy of the United States At

Santiago, Chile: Hearings Before the Committee On Foreign Affairs, House of

Representatives, Sixty-sixth Congress, First Session On S. 2250 And H.R. 10007.

Statement of C.S. Lobingier, Judge of the United States Court for China

(Washington: G.P.O., 1919).

United States Department of State. *Despatches from United States Consuls in Batavia (Djakarta), 1818-1906*. September 18, 1825.

United States Department of State. *Despatches from United States Consuls in Batavia (Djakarta), 1818-1906*. December 10, 1830.

United States Department of State. *Despatches from United States Consuls in Batavia (Djakarta), 1818-1906*. December 17, 1830.

United States Department of State. *Despatches from United States Consuls in Batavia (Djakarta), 1818-1906*. May 30, 1831.

WORK 10/275. Public Buildings (Overseas) "Bangkok Legation." The National Archives.

### **Newspapers and Periodicals**

*Bangkok Times*, December 5, 1911.

*Bangkok Times*, January 31, 1912.

"British War Memorial." *The Straits Times*. January 19, 1923.

*Le Monde Illustré* Journal, July 22, 1893.

*Le Petit Journal*, September 19, 1897

*Le Petit Journal*, September 26, 1897.

*L'Illustration*, September 11, 1897.

*L'Illustration*, July 22, 1893.

“Siam General and Medical Features.” *The Bangkok Times Press*, 1930.

“Siam Monument to Democracy”, *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*,  
June 26, 1939.

“The Government of Siam.” *The Bangkok Times Press*, 1926.

*The Illustrated London News*, August 7, 1897.

*The Illustrated London News*, August 14, 1897.

“The Progress of Siam.” *The Times*, April 4, 1899.

*The Times London*. 4 March 4, 1935.

#### **Ratchakitchanubeksa [The Royal Gazette]**

Office of the Prime Minister, *Praratchakitjanubeksa [The Royal Gazette]* vol. 56 (1939)

Office of the Prime Minister, *Praratchakitjanubeksa [The Royal Gazette]* vol. 56 (1940)

Office of the Prime Minister, *Praratchakitjanubeksa [The Royal Gazette]* vol. 57 (1940)

Office of the Prime Minister, *Praratchakitjanubeksa [The Royal Gazette]* vol. 58 (1941)

Office of the Prime Minister, *Praratchakitjanubeksa [The Royal Gazette]* vol. 59 (1942)

#### **Books and Journals**

Aasen, Clarence T. *Architecture of Siam: A Cultural History Interpretation*. Kuala Lumpur,  
New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Aldrich, Richard J. *The Key to the South: Britain, the United States, and Thailand during  
the Approach of the Pacific War, 1929-1942*. New York: Oxford University Press,  
1993.

Aldrich, Robert. "France and the King of Siam: An Asian King's Visits to the Republican Capital." in Julie Kalman (ed.). *French History and Culture: Papers from the George Rude Seminar*, vol.6 (2015): 225-239.

American Embassy Association. *American Embassies, Legations and Consulates Mean Better Foreign Business*. New York, 1910.

Amranand, Ping, and William Warren. *Heritage Homes of Thailand*. Bangkok: The Siam Society Under Royal Patronage, 2001.

Amnuay-ngertra, Somphong. "King Mongkut's Political and Religious Ideologies through Architecture at Phra Nakhon Kiri." *Manusya* 10, no. 1 (2007): 72-88.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London; New York: Verso. 2006.

Aphornsuvan, Thanet. "The West and Siam's Quest for Modernity: Siamese Responses to Nineteenth Century American Missionaries." *South East Asia Research* 17, no.3 (2009): 401-431.

Askew, Marc. *Bangkok: Place, practice and representation*. New York: Routledge, 2002.

Backus, Mary. *Siam and Laos, as seen by our American Missionaries*. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1884.

Baker, Chris, and Pasuk Phongpaichit. *A History of Thailand*. 2nd ed. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

\_\_\_\_\_. *A History of Thailand*. 2nd ed. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2009.



Barmé, Scot. *Luang Wichit Wathakan and the Creation of a Thai Identity*. Singapore: ISEAS, 1993.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Woman, Man, Bangkok: Love, Sex, and Popular Culture in Thailand*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002.

Batson, Benjamin A. "American Diplomats in Southeast Asia in the Nineteenth Century: The Case of Siam." *Journal of the Siam Society* 64, no.2 (1976): 39-111.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The End of the Absolute Monarchy in Siam*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984.

Battye, Noel Alfred. *"The Military, Government and Society in Siam, 1868-1910: Politics and Military Reform During the Reign of King Chulalongkorn."* PhD Dissertation, Cornell University, 1974.

Bertram, Mark. *Room for Diplomacy : Britain's diplomatic buildings overseas 1800-2000*. Reading : Spire Books Ltd, 2011.

Bishop, Ryan, John Phillips, and Wei-Wei Yeo. *Postcolonial Urbanism: Southeast Asian Cities and Global Processes*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Bossom, Alfred C. "Colonial Williamsburg: How Americans Handle a Restoration." *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 90, no. 4621 (1942): 634-644.

Bowring, John, Sir. *The Kingdom and People of Siam: With a Narrative of the Mission to that Country in 1855*. London: J.W. Parker, 1857.

Bradley, William L. *Siam Then: The Foreign Colony in Bangkok Before and After Anna*. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1981.

Brailey, Nigel J. *Imperial Amnesia: Britain, France and "The Question of Siam."*

Dordrecht: Republic of Letters Publishing BV, 2009.

Bruce, Robert. "King Mongkut of Siam and His Treaty with Britain," *Journal of the Hong*

*Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 9 (1969).

Bunarunraksa, Simona. *Monseigneur Jean-Baptiste Pallegoix, Ami du roi du Siam,*

*imprimeur et écrivain 1805-1862.* Paris, l'Harmattan, 2013.

Campbell, J. G. D. *Siam in the Twentieth Century: Being the Experiences and Impressions*

*of a British Official.* London: Edward Arnold Publisher, 1902.

Chakandang, Charan. "*Siam's Loss of Trans-Salween Territory to Great Britain in 1892.*"

Doctoral Dissertation, The Pennsylvania State University, 1987.

Chatterjee, Partha. "Whose Imagined Community?." *Millennium - Journal of*

*International Studies* 20, no. 3 (1991): 521-525.

Child, Jacob T. *The Pearl of Asia: Reminiscences of the Court of a Supreme Monarch, or,*

*Five Years in Siam.* Chicago: Donohue, Henneberry & Co., 1892.

Chua, Lawrence. "*Building Siam: Leisure, Race, and Nationalism in Modern Thai*

*Architecture, 1910-1973.*" Doctoral dissertation, Cornell University, 2012.

Coedes, G. "English Correspondence of King Mongkut." *Journal of the Siam Society* 21.2,

(1927): 127-77.

Connors, Michael Kelly. *Democracy and National Identity in Thailand.* vol. 2. London;

New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003.

Copeland, Matthew. "*Contested Nationalism and the 1932 Overthrow of the Absolute*

*Monarchy in Siam.*" Doctoral dissertation, Australian National University, 1993.

- Crawford, John. *Journal of an Embassy from the Governor General of India to the Courts of Siam and Cochin China*. London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830.
- Crosby, Josiah. *Siam*. London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1920.
- Curzon, George N. and Juliette Adam. "England and France in Siam." *The North American Review* 157, no. 442 (1893): 268-286.
- Damrong Rajanubhab, Prince. "The Introduction of Western Culture in Siam," *Journal of the Siam Society* 20 (1927): 89-100.
- Darling, Frank C. "British and American Influence in Post-War Thailand." *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 4, no. 1 (1963): 97-111.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Thailand and the United States*. Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1965.
- Dick, H. W., and P. J. Rimmer. "Beyond the Third World City: The New Urban Geography of South-east Asia," *Urban Studies* 35, no.12 (1998): 2303-2321.
- Dipesh, Chakrabarty. "Forward: The Names and Repetitions of Postcolonial History." in *The Ambiguous Allure of the West : Traces of the Colonial in Thailand*, ed. Rachel V. Harrison, Peter A. Jackson. Hong Kong : Hong Kong University Press, 2010.
- Dovey, Kim. *Becoming Places: Urbanism/ Architecture/ Identity/ Power*. London: Routledge, 2010.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Framing Places: Mediating Power in Built Form*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. London: Routledge, 2008.
- Dumett, Raymond E. "A West African 'Fashoda': Expanding Trade, Colonial Rivalries and Insurrection in the Côte d'Ivoire/Gold Coast Borderlands: The Assikasso Crisis of

1897-98." *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 41, no. 5 (2013): 710-743.

Emlen, Robert P. "Imagining America in 1834: Zuber's Scenic Wallpaper "Vues d'Amérique du Nord"." *Winterthur Portfolio* 32, no. 2/3 (Summer – Autumn 1997): 189-210.

Englehart, Neil A. *Culture and Power in Traditional Siamese Government*. New York: Cornell University Press, 2001.

"English Correspondence of King Mongkut." *Journal of the Siam Society* 21, no. 1 (1927): 1-35.

Falkus, Malcolm. "Early British Business in Thailand," in *British Business in Asia Since 1860*, ed. R.P.T. Davenport-Hines and Geoffrey Jones. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Feltus, George Haws. *Samuel Reynolds House of Siam: Pioneer Medical Missionary, 1847-1876*. New York; Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1924.

Feroci, C. "Traditional Thai Painting." *Journal of the Siam Society* 40, no. 2 (December 1952): 147-168.

Foucault, Michel. "Panopticism and Space, Knowledge, Power." In *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*, edited by Neil Leach, p.356-379. London: Routledge, 1997.

Fournereau, Lucien. *Bangkok in 1892*. trans. Walter E.J. Tips. Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 1894.

Frankfurter, O. "King Mongkut," *Journal of the Siam Society* 1, no.1 (January 1904): 191-207.

Freeman, Andrew A. "His Majesty King Prajadhipok of Siam." *Asia* (May, 1931), 277-337.

Fusinpaiboon, Chomchon. "*Modernisation of Building: The Transplantation of the Concept of Architecture from Europe to Thailand, 1930s–1950s.*" Doctoral dissertation, University of Sheffield, 2014.

Gilchrist, Andrew. *Bangkok Top Secret*. London : Hutchinson, 1970.

Goldman, Minton F. "Franco-British Rivalry Over Siam, 1896–1904." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 3, no. 2 (1972): 210-228.

Graham, Walter Armstrong. *Siam: A Handbook of Practical, Commercial, and Political Information*. London, A. Moring, limited, 1912.

Greenlee, Grace E. *As we were Journeying: The Hawaiian Islands, Japan, China, Siam, Java and India, as seen from a Girl's Point of View*. Chicago: Blakely Printing Co, 1900.

Greysmith, Brenda. *Wallpaper*. New York: Macmillan, 1976.

Griswold, A. B. "King Mongkut in Perspective." *Journal of the Siam Society* 45, no.1 (April 1957): 1-38.

Hall, D.G.E. *A History of South-East Asia*. London: Macmillan, 1960.

Harris, Townsend. *The Complete Journal of Townsend Harris*. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc, 1930.

Harris, Townsend, and Mario Emilio Cosenza. *The Complete Journal of Townsend Harris: First American Consul General and Minister to Japan*. New York: The Country Life Press, 1930.

Harrison, Rachel V., Peter A. Jackson, ed. *The Ambiguous Allure of the West : Traces of the Colonial in Thailand*. Hong Kong : Hong Kong University Press, 2010.

Harvey, D. Between space and time: reflections on the geographical imagination. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 80, 418–434, 1990.

Heiser, Victor. *An American Doctor's Odyssey*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company Inc., 1936.

Herzfeld, Michael. "Thailand in a Larger Universe: The Lingering Consequences of Crypto-Colonialism." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 76, no. 4 (November, 2017): 887–906.

\_\_\_\_\_ "The Absent Presence: Discourses of Crypto-colonialism", *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101, no.4 (Fall, 2002): 899–926.

Hillier, Bill, and Julienne Hanson. *The social Logic of Space*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

Hoskin, John. *The British Club Centenary 1903-2003: A Celebration of Anglo-Thai Relations*. Bangkok: Mark Standen Publishing Co.Ltd, 2003.

Isabelle, Massieu. "Une visite a Bangkok," *La Revue des Deux-Mondes*, 1901. Paris: Magellan et Cie, 2014.

Jameson, Fredric. "Post Modernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism." *New Left Review* 146 (1984): 53-92.

- Jackson, Peter A. "Autonomy and Subordination in Thai History: The Case for Semicolonial Analysis." *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 8, no. 3 (2007): 329-348.
- Jean-Francois, Klein, Alexis Thuaux, and Sophie Trelcat. *La Residence De France a Bangkok*. Paris: Editions Internationales du Patrimoine, 2015.
- Jeyes, Samuel Henry. *The Earl of Rosebery*. London: J.M. Dent & Co., 1906.
- Jha, Ganganath. *Foreign Policy of Thailand*. New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, 1979.
- Jumsai, Manich, M. L. *History of Anglo-Thai Relations*. Bangkok: Chalermnit, 1970.
- Ken, Wong Lin. "The Trade of Singapore, 1819-69." *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 33, no.4 (December 1960): 4-315.
- Khoman, Athada. *Siam: Days of Glory: 19<sup>th</sup> Century Photographs of Thailand*. Bangkok: Siam Renaissance, 2010.
- Khumsupha, Malinee. "Changes in Urban Bangkok 1855-1909: The Impact of the Settlement of the British and their subjects." Doctoral dissertation, Chulalongkorn University, 2011.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Siam Avoids Colonization, Bangkok is the Exchange," *Journal of Integrated Sciences* 11, no. 1 (2015): 153-177.
- King, Anthony D. *Buildings and Society: Essays on the Social Development of the Built Environment*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Colonial Urban Development: Culture, Social Power, and Environment*. Boston; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Bungalow: The Production of a Global Culture*. London; Boston;: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984.



King, Ross. Bangkok Space, and Conditions of Possibility. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 26, no. 2 (2008): 315-337.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Reading Bangkok*. Singapore: NUS Press, 2011.

Kingston, George C. *James Madison Hood: Lincoln's Consul to the Court of Siam*. North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2013.

Kitiarsa, Pattana. "An Ambiguous Intimacy: Farang as Siamese Occidentalism." in *The Ambiguous Allure of the West : Traces of the Colonial in Thailand*, ed. Rachel V. Harrison, Peter A. Jackson. Hong Kong : Hong Kong University Press, 2010.

Klein, Ira. "Britain, Siam and the Malay Peninsula, 1906-1909." *The Historical Journal* 12, no. 1 (1969): 119-136.

Kosuda-Warner, Joanne and Elizabeth Johnson. *Landscape Wallcoverings*. London: Scala Publishers in association with Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution, 2001.

Landon, Kenneth Perry. *Thailand in transition: a brief survey of cultural trends in the five years since the Revolution of 1932*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939.

Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1991.

Leonowens, Anna Harriette. *The English Governess at the Siamese Court: Being Recollections of Six Years in the Royal Palace at Bangkok*. Boston: Fields, Osgood, 1870.

Loeffler, Jane C. *The Architecture of Diplomacy: Building America's Embassies*. New York: Princeton Architectural, 2011.

Lynn, Catherine. *Wallpaper in America: From the Seventeenth Century to World War I*.  
New York: W.W. Norton, 1980.

Markus, Thomas. *Building and Power: Freedom and Control in the Origin of Modern  
Building Types*. London: Routledge, 1993.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Buildings as Classifying Devices," *Environment and Planning* 14 (1987): 467-  
484.

Martin, James V. "A History of the Diplomatic Relations Between Siam and the United  
States of America, 1833- 1929." Doctoral dissertation, Fletcher School of Law and  
Diplomacy, 1947.

Martin, James V. Jr. "Thai-American Relations in World War II." *Journal of Asian Studies*  
22, (1963): 451-467.

Mattoon, Mary L. *Sketch of the Life of Rev. Stephen Mattoon, D.D.* Charlotte: History of  
Johnson C. Smith University, 2010.

Mc Clelland, Nancy. *Historic Wall-Papers*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1924.

Moffat, Abbot Low. *Mongkut, the King of Siam*. Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press,  
1961.

Mommsen, Wolfgang J. *Theories of Imperialism*. 1st American ed. New York: Random  
House, 1980.

Moore, R. Adey. "An Early British Merchant in Bangkok." *Journal of the Siam Society*  
11.2, no. 1 (1914-15): 21-39.

Morgan, Susan. *Bombay Anna: the Real Story and Remarkable Adventures of the King  
and I Governess*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008.

Morson, Ian. *Four Hundred Years the British and the Thais*. Bangkok: Nai Suk's Editions, 1999.

Murphey, Rhoads, "Traditionalism and Colonialism: Changing Urban Roles in Asia," *Journal of Asian Studies* 29, no.1 (November 1969): 67-84.

Neale, Frederick Arthur. *Narrative of a Residence at the Capital of the Kingdom of Siam*. London: Office of the National Illustrated Library, 1852.

Ngonrot, Chulla. "Kamnoet lae khwampenma khong latthi chatniyom nai prathet thai [The Origin and Development of Nationalism in Thailand]." Master's thesis, Chulalongkorn University, 1970.

Nik Mahmud, Nik Anuar. "*Anglo-Thai Relations, 1945-1954*." Doctoral dissertation, The University of Hull, 1988.

Noobanjong, Koompong. *Power, Identity, and the Rise of Modern Architecture: From Siam to Thailand*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Colorado, 2003.

Numnonda, Thamsook. "The Anglo-Siamese Secret Convention of 1897." *Journal of the Siam Society* 53, no. 1 (1965): 45-60.

Numnonda, Thamsook. "Pibulsongkram's Thai Nation-Building Programme during the Japanese Military Presence, 1941-1945." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 9, no. 2 (1978): 234-247.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Thailand and the Japanese Presence, 1941-45*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1977.

Nuvadtivongs, Prince Narisara, and Prince Damrong Rachanuphap. *San Somdet: Lai phra hat Somdet Chaofa Kromphraya Narisara Nuvadtivongs lae Somdet Kromphraya*

*Damrong Rachanuphap* [The Princes' Messages: A correspondence between Prince Narisara Nuvadtivongs and Prince Damrong Rachanuphap], Vol. 22, Bangkok: Khurusapha, 1962.

Ouyyanont, Porphant. "Physical and economic change in Bangkok, 1851-1925," *Southeast Asian Studies* 36, no.4 (1999): 437-474.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Foundation of the Siam Commercial Bank and the Siam Cement Company: Historical Context and Alternative Historiographies," *SOJOURN: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 30, no. 2 (2015): 455-496.

O'Connor, Richard. *A Theory of Indigenous Southeast Asian Urbanism*. Singapore: ISEAS, 1983.

O'Neil, M. S. *Bangkok: A Cultural History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Palasthira, Teddy Spha. *The Last Siamese: Journeys in War and Peace*. Bangkok: The Post Publishing, 2013.

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

*Phinit phranakorn 2475-2545 [The Capital Observation 1932-2002]*. Bangkok: Department of Military Map; Chulalongkorn University, 2006.

Phrompayak Phueaksom, Chanida. *Kanmueang nai prawattisat thongchat thai [Politics in the History of Thai National Flag]*. Bangkok: Matichon Press, 2003.

Platt, D. C. M. *The Cinderella Service: British Consul since 1825*. London: Longman Group Limited, 1971.

Poshyanandana, Saowalux, and Vasu Poshyanandana. *175 Architectural Heritage in Thailand: Twenty years of Architectural Conservation Award 1982-2002*. Bangkok: Amarin Printing and Publishing Public Company Limited, 2004.

Povatong, Pirasri. *"Building Siwilai: Transformation of Architecture and Architectural Practice in Siam during the Reign of Rama V, 1868-1910."* Doctoral dissertations, the University of Michigan, 2011.

Prakitnonthakarn, Chatri. *"From Old-Siam to New-Thai: Social and Political Meaning in Architecture During 1892-1957 A.D."* Master Thesis, Chulalongkorn University, 2003.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Kanmuang lae sangkhom nai silapasatthapatayagam siam samai thai prayuk chat niyom [Political and Social Factors in Art and Architecture during the period of Siamese Nationalism]*. Bangkok: Matichon Publishing, 2004.

Pramoj, M. R. Seni. "King Mongkut as a Legislator." *Journal of the Siam Society* 38, no.1 (January 1950): 32-66.

Rajanubhab, Prince Damrong. "The Introduction of Western Culture in Siam." *Journal of the Siam Society* 20 (January 1927): 89-100.

Reynolds, Bruce. "Phibun Songkhram and Thai Nationalism in the Fascist Era." *European Journal of East Asian Studies* 3, no. 1 (2004): 99-134.

Reynolds, Craig J. *Seditious Histories: Contesting Thai and Southeast Asian Pasts*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006.

Riggs, Fred W. *Thailand: the Modernization of a Bureaucratic Polity*. Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1966.

Ringis, Rita. *Thai Temples and Temple Murals*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Roy, Edward Van. *Siamese Melting Pot: Ethnic Minorities in the Making of Bangkok*.

Singapore: ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, 2017.

Said, Edward W. *Culture and imperialism*. New York: Knopf, 1994.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.

SarDesai, D. R. *British Trade and Expansion in Southeast Asia, 1830-1914*. New Delhi:

Allied, 1977.

Satow, Ernest. *A Diplomat in Siam: H.B.M. Minister-resident, Bangkok, 1885-88*.

Bangkok: Orchid Press, 2000.

Sattayanurak, Saichon. *Chat thai lae khwam pen thai doi luang wichit wathakan* [*Thai*

*nation and Thainess according to Luang Wichit Wathakan*']. Bangkok: Sinlapa

Watthanatham, 2002.

Saunders, Gill. *Wallpaper in Interior Decoration*. New York: Watson-Guption Publications,

2002.

Sayre, Francis Bowes. "The Passing of Extraterritoriality in Siam." *The American Journal*

*of International Law* 22, no. 1 (1928): 70-88.

Seidenfaden, Erik. *Guide to Bangkok: With Notes on Siam*. Bangkok: The Royal State

Railway Department of Siam, 1928.

Shunyu, Xie. *Siam and the British, 1874-75: Sir Andrew Clarke and the Front Palace Crisis*.

Bangkok: Thammasat University Press, 1988.

Sivaraksa, Sulak. "The Crisis of Siamese Identity", in *National Identity and Its Defenders:*

*Thailand, 1939-1989*, ed. Craig Reynolds. Victoria: Aristoc, 1991.

Smithies, Michael. *Old Bangkok*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Srichandr, Rian, and Netra Poonwiwat. *Prawat pattiwat khrang raek khong thai r.s. 130 [The First Revolution of Thailand, 1912]*. Bangkok: Kim Li Nguan, 1960.

Stanton, Edwin F. *Brief Authority: Excursions of a Common Man in an Uncommon World*. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1956.

Sternstein, Larry. *Portrait of Bangkok*. Bangkok: Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, 1982.

Stetson, Richard Shaw. "Siam's Diplomacy of Independence, 1855-1909, in the Context of Anglo-French Interests." Doctoral Dissertation, New York University, 1969.

Sthapitanond, Nithi, and Brian Mertens. *Architecture of Thailand: A Guide to Tradition and Contemporary Forms*. Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, 2012.

Stourton, James. *British Embassies: Their Diplomatic and Architectural History*. London: Frances Lincoln Publishers Ltd., 2017.

Stuart, Graham H. *American Diplomatic and Consular Practice*. 2d ed. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1952.

Sturm, Andreas. "The King's Nation: A Study of the Emergence and Development of Nation and Nationalism in Thailand." Doctoral dissertation, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2006.

Suksri, Naengnoi, and Michael Freeman. *Palaces of Bangkok: Royal Residences of the Chakri Dynasty*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1996.

Tarling, Nicholas. *Imperialism in Southeast Asia: 'A Fleeting, Passing Phase'*. New York: Routledge, 2001.



- Terwiel, Barend J. *A History of Modern Thailand, 1767-1942*. St. Lucia; New York: University of Queensland Press, 1983.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *A Window on Thai History*. Bangkok: Editions Duang Kamol, 1991.
- The American Foreign Service (Washington D.C.: American Foreign Service Association)  
American Foreign Service Journal XIII, no. 11 (November 1936).
- Thiphakhorawong, Chao Phraya. *The Dynastic Chronicles, Bangkok Era, The Fourth Reign (AD 1851–1868)*, trans. C.K. Flood, vol. 1. Tokyo: Center for East Asian Cultural Studies, 1966.
- Thompson, Virginia. *Thailand: The New Siam*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941.
- Thomson, R. Stanley. "The Establishment of the French Protectorate Over Cambodia."  
*The Far Eastern Quarterly* 4, no. 4 (1945): 313-340.
- Thongmitr, Wiyada. *Khrua In Khong's Westernized School of Thai Painting*. Bangkok: Akson Samphan Press, 1979.
- Tiptas, Phusadee. *Chang Farang Nai Krung Siam [Western Architect in Siam]*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 2002.
- Tuck, Patrick. *The French Wolf and the Siamese Lamb: The French Threat to Siamese Independence, 1858-1907*. Bangkok: White Lotus Co., Ltd, 1995.
- Vadakarn, Vichitr, Luang. *Thailand's Case*. Bangkok: the Thai Commercial Press, 1941.
- Vale, Lawrence J. *Architecture, power, and national identity*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.
- Vella, Walter. *Chaiyo! King Vajiravudh the Development of Thai Nationalism*. Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1978.

Wales, H. G. Quaritch. *Siamese State Ceremonies: Their History and Function: with Supplementary Notes*. Surrey: Curzon Press Ltd., 1992.

Wannamethee, P. S. *Anglo-Siamese Economic Relations: British trade, Capital and Enterprise in Siam, 1856-1914*. Doctoral dissertation, University of London, 1990.

Waterson, Roxana. *The Living House: An Anthropology of Architecture in South- East Asia*. New York; Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Webster, Anthony. *Gentlemen Capitalists: British Imperialism in South East Asia, 1770-1890*. London; New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 1998.

Wilson, C. M. (1989). Bangkok in 1883: An Economic and Social Profile. *Journal of the Siam Society* 77, no.2 (1989): 49-58.

Winichakul, Thongchai. "Prawatisat thai baep rachachatniyom: Jak yuk ananikhom amphrang su rachachatniyom mai roe lathi sadet pho khong kradumphai thai nai pajjuban" [Royalist-style Thai history: From the era of crypto-colonialism to neo-royalism or the paternal cult among the Thai commercial class in the present], *Silapawattthanatham* 23, no. 1 (2001): 56–65.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Siam Mapped: Making of Thai Nationhood." *The Ecologist* 26, no. 5 (1996).

<https://go-gale->

[com.proxy.libraries.uc.edu/ps/i.do?p=EAIM&u=ucinc\\_main&id=GALE%7CA1922624](https://go-gale-com.proxy.libraries.uc.edu/ps/i.do?p=EAIM&u=ucinc_main&id=GALE%7CA1922624)

[0&v=2.1&it=r&sid=summon](https://go-gale-com.proxy.libraries.uc.edu/ps/i.do?p=EAIM&u=ucinc_main&id=GALE%7CA19226240&v=2.1&it=r&sid=summon)

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Quest for 'Siwilai: A Geographical Discourse of Civilization Thinking in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Siam." *Journal of Asian Studies* 59, no.3 (2000): 528-549.

Wood, W.A.R. *A History of Siam: from the earliest times to the year A.D. 1781*. Bangkok: Siam Barnakich Press, 1933.

\_\_\_\_\_. *An English Consul in Siam: A Memoir, 1896-1932*. London: Kegan Paul, 2003.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Consul in Paradise: Sixty-nine Years in Siam*. London: Souvenir Press, 1965.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Land of Smiles*. Bangkok: Krungdebnagar, 1935.

Wright, A., & Breakspear, O. T. *Twentieth Century Impressions of Siam: Its History, People, Commerce, Industries, and Resources, with which is incorporated an abridged edition of Twentieth century impressions of British Malaya*. London: Lloyds Greater Britain Publishing Company, Ltd., 1908.

Wyatt, David K. *Thailand: A Short History*. New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2003.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Politics of Reform in Thailand: Education in the Reign of King Chulalongkorn*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969.

Yangrod, Wilairat, and Thawatchai Ongwutthiwet. *Thod Rahad Pap Panung Phra Jomklao – Khrua In Khong [Decoding Mural King Mongkut – Khrua In Khong]*. Nonthaburi: Museum Press, 2016.

## Website

Bangyeekhan, Songklod. "The Memory of The Embassy." The Cloud. Last modified

March 6, 2018. <https://readthecloud.co/embassy-4-2/>

"Battle of Waterloo", *History*, Accessed October 30, 2019,

<https://www.history.com/topics/british-history/battle-of-waterloo>.

Bertram, Mark. "Room for Diplomacy: Catalogue of British embassy and consulate

buildings, 1800 – 2010" Accessed February 28, 2018.

<https://roomfordiplomacy.com/thailand/>

"Embassy history." *British Embassy Bangkok*. Accessed February 28, 2018.

[https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/tna\\_la\\_nhs/20101115150513/http://](https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/tna_la_nhs/20101115150513/http://)

[ukinthailand.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/our-embassy/location-access/embassy-](http://ukinthailand.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/our-embassy/location-access/embassy-)

[history](http://ukinthailand.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/our-embassy/location-access/embassy-history)

"Guard's Memorial", *The Royal Parks*, Accessed January 16, 2020.

<https://www.royalparks.org.uk/parks/st-jamess-park/things-to-see-and->

[do/monuments-fountains-and-statues/guards-memorial](https://www.royalparks.org.uk/parks/st-jamess-park/things-to-see-and-do/monuments-fountains-and-statues/guards-memorial)

"History," *Bangkok Dock Company (1957) Limited.*, Accessed February 21, 2020,

<http://bangkokdock.co.th:8080/2556/history.php?lang=en>

Kumlertsakul, Padej, and Clare Patchimanon, "The British Embassy Bangkok: a look back

before moving on", *GOV.UK, The National Archives*, last modified April 15, 2019,

<https://history.blog.gov.uk/2019/04/15/the-british-embassy-bangkok-a-look->

[back-before-moving-on/](https://history.blog.gov.uk/2019/04/15/the-british-embassy-bangkok-a-look-back-before-moving-on/)

Landells, Robert Thomas. "Reception of the Ambassadors from the King of Siam, 19 November 1857." Royal Collection Trust. Accessed October 1, 2018.

<https://www.rct.uk/collection/919795/reception-of-the-ambassadors-from-the-king-of-siam-19-november-1857>

"Maha Chulalongkorn Building," *The Association of Siamese Architects under Royal Patronage*. Access February 17, 2020.

<https://asaconservationaward.com/index.php/2016-06-13-15-21-44/building-2530/32-maha-chulalongkorn-building-faculty-of-arts-building>

Miyamoto, Atushi Archi. "Inventory of the Gripsholm Exchanges". Accessed September 29, 2019. <https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt1k4031p7/>

"Our History", *Faculty of Medicine, Siriraj Hospital, Mahidol University*. Accessed October 30, 2019, <https://www2.si.mahidol.ac.th/en/orthopedic-surgery/our-history/>

"Pandintong tee maichai kong Thai: teedin satharnthut Unggrit" [Precious Land which does not belong to Thai: British Embassy property]. *Silpa wattanatham [Art and Culture]*. Accessed October 1, 2018. [https://www.silpa-mag.com/club/art-and-culture/article\\_9479](https://www.silpa-mag.com/club/art-and-culture/article_9479)

*Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1884. Washington:

Government Printing Office, 1884. Accessed March 30, 2019.

<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1884/d333>

*Residential Heritage: A Visual Exploration of the U.S. Ambassador's Residence Historic and Architectural Legacy*, 21. [https://th.usembassy.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/90/2017/06/CMR\\_70thAnniversary\\_2017.pdf](https://th.usembassy.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/90/2017/06/CMR_70thAnniversary_2017.pdf)

“The British Embassy Bangkok: a look back before moving on”, *GOV.UK*, Accessed January 16, 2018, <https://history.blog.gov.uk/2019/04/15/the-british-embassy-bangkok-a-look-back-before-moving-on/>

The Chief of Mission Residence: A Brief History.” *U.S. Embassy & Consulate in Thailand*. Access February 17, 2019, <https://th.usembassy.gov/cmr-history/>

“UK's Bangkok embassy sold by Foreign Office for £420m.” *BBC News*. Last modified January 31, 2018. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-42886466>

“UK government asked to return conservation award for demolition of former embassy building.” *Thai PBS WORLD*. Last modified August 24, 2019, <https://www.thaipbsworld.com/uk-government-asked-to-return-conservation-award-for-demolition-of-former-embassy-building/>

Wintour, Patrick. “Cash-strapped Foreign Office sells Bangkok embassy for £420m. *The Guardian*. Last modified January 31, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/jan/31/cash-strapped-foreign-office-puts-bangkok-embassy-up-for-sale>

“Zuber Manufacture de Papiers peints, Tissus, Cuirs et Peintures,” Accessed April 10, 2017, <https://www.zuber.fr/en>.