



# *The King is not a Fairy Tale*



*The Sovereignty of the Kingdom of Siam-King Chulalongkorn  
in Europe in 1897*

Author and Editor : Pomsan Watanangura  
Translated by : Michael Crabtree



---

# The King is not a Fairy Tale:

King Chulalongkorn in Europe in 1897  
and the Sovereignty of the Kingdom of Siam

---



Pornsan Watanangura

Translated by  
R. Michael Crabtree

Chulalongkorn University Ratchadapisek Sombot award-winning research (VERY GOOD)

Translation Project of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunication Commission on  
the Centenary of King Chulalongkorn's death in 2010

## National Library of Thailand Cataloging in Publication Data

Pornsan Watanangura.

The King is not a Fairy Tale - King Chulalongkorn in Europe in 1897 and the Sovereignty of the Kingdom of Siam.-- Bangkok : Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University, 2019.

224 p.

1. Chulalongkorn, King of Siam, 1853-1910. I. Michael Crabtree, tr. II. Title.

923.1593

ISBN 978-616-407-455-2

### **The King is not a Fairy Tale :**

*King Chulalongkorn in Europe in 1897 and the Sovereignty of the Kingdom of Siam*

**Author and Editor:** Pornsan Watanangura

**Translated by:** Michael Crabtree

Copyright © 2019

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored, transmitted, or disseminated, in any form, or by any electronic or mechanical means, without prior written permission by the publisher and the respective author

**Published by:** Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University

Tel. 02 218 4923

E-mail: jofletters@gmail.com

www.arts.chula.ac.th

**Printed by:** Chulalongkorn University Press

Tel. 02 218 3563 Fax 02 218 3547

E-mail: cuprint@hotmail.com

www.cupress.chula.ac.th

## Preface

The project to translate *The King is Not a Fairy Tale: King Chulalongkorn in Europe in 1897 and the Sovereignty of the Kingdom of Siam*, undertaken at the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University, and supported by the National Broadcasting and Telecommunication Commission (formerly the Office of the National Telecommunications Commission) is a continuation of the project on *Relations between the Kingdom of Siam and the Royal Houses of Europe in Documents Pertaining to King Chulalongkorn's First Visit to Europe in 1897*. The research was supported by the Chulalongkorn University Ratchadapisek Sombot Fund and was awarded “very good” in 2009. The translation aims to make the contribution of His Majesty King Chulalongkorn to the country better known and more widely accepted, both locally and abroad.

King Chulalongkorn made his first visit to Europe in 1897 for practical political reasons in the context of the high colonial era of the European powers. During this period, cordial relations between the great European powers and the Siamese court seemed particularly out of reach. The King's visit brought the Kingdom of Siam acknowledgement and recognition from Europe. The success of the visit alleviated political pressures on the Kingdom of Siam. The long-term outcome was that the royal courts and publics of Europe understood that the Kingdom of Siam was civilized and possessed a well-established culture. The European courts respected King Chulalongkorn as very well-educated, dignified, and equal to the royals of the West.

These positive effects helped the Kingdom of Siam to preserve its sovereignty and avoid colonization by any European power. In this regard, His Majesty's policy of the ‘balance of power’ played a most crucial role. King Chulalongkorn's first voyage to Europe in 1897 marked an important turning point in relations between Siam and the countries of Europe. His Majesty's presence in Europe succeeded in changing the way in which the West viewed Siam, its monarchy and its people. Siam was no longer just the name of an exotic, faraway land of fairy tales – it was a real place.

On behalf of the working team, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Faculty of Arts and the Office of National Telecommunications Commission for supporting this translation project and the publication. My special appreciation goes to Mr. Michael Crabtree, my friend and translator of this book.

Prof. Kittikun Dr. Pornsan Watanangura  
author and editor  
September 2019

# Content

<b>Chapter 1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	
<b>Chapter 2</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>The Background to King Chulalongkorn’s First Trip to Europe, 1897;</b>	
<b>Conditions in Europe, Siam and Neighboring Asian Countries at the End of the 19th Century</b>	
2.1 The Background to King Chulalongkorn’s First Trip to Europe, 1897	13
2.2 Conditions in Siam and Neighbor Countries Prior to King Chulalongkorn’s First Visit in 1897	22
2.3 Conditions in 19 <sup>th</sup> Century Europe Prior to King Chulalongkorn’s First Visit in 1897	35
2.3.1 The Forces Driving Change	36
2.3.2 Bismarck’s Foreign Policy – The Treaties to Achieve a Balance of Power between the Major Powers as a Tactic for Isolating France – Germany’s Decision Not to Pursue Colonies in Asia and the Lasting Friendship between Siam and Germany	42
2.3.3 French and British Foreign Policy and Japan’s Rise to Major Power Status in Asia – Events from the End of the 19 <sup>th</sup> Century to the Outbreak of World War I in 1914	48
Conclusion	62
<b>Chapter 3</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Preparations for the Royal Visit to Europe in 1897 (B.E. 2440)</b>	
3.1 Contacts with Europe	65
3.2 Preparations at Home Prior to the King’s European Trip in 1897	74
<b>Chapter 4</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>The Royal Visit to Europe – The Reception of the Public and the Courts of Europe, the Establishment of Cordial Relations and Western Acceptance</b>	
4.1 The European View of “Siam” and the “Siamese Head of State” Before and During King Chulalongkorn’s Visit to Europe in 1897	81

4.2 The Presence of the Siamese King in Europe – His Knowledge and Education: Qualities Which Won Him Acceptance and Respect	92
4.2.1 Determination and Insight	92
4.2.2 Knowledge and Education: Keys to Winning Respect	93
4.2.3 Siam’s “King of the White Elephants” in Europe	98
<b>Chapter 5</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>The Beloved King, the West, and the Royal Courts of Europe</b>	
5.1 The King of Siam’s Interests and His Knowledge of the World	108
5.2 Europe and the Royal Courts of Europe from the Point of View of His Majesty King Chulalongkorn	118
5.3 A Cordial Visit among “Equals” and the Political Perspective	141
5.4 Factors Contributing to and Impeding the Building of Cordial Relations between the Siamese Court and the Courts of Europe – Cultural Differences and the King’s Gift for “Reading People”	162
<b>Chapter 6</b>	<b>175</b>
<b>An Overview of Relations between the Kingdom of Siam and the Royal Houses of Europe and the Political, Social and Cultural Impact of His Majesty’s European Visit</b>	
6.1 Praise for a “Civilized Gentleman” and His Conformity with European Custom	180
6.2 A Western Character that Was Decidedly “Different,” but Not So Different that He Was Seen as “Bizarre”	182
6.3 A Sharp Intellect, a Quick Wit and a Gift for Repartee Both in Word and Action	183
6.4 The Successes and Intangible Benefits of King Chulalongkorn’s First Trip to Europe in 1897	184
6.4.1 Diplomatic Ties and Cordial Relations with the Nations of Europe	184
6.4.2 The Tradition of an Education in Europe for Siamese people	191
6.4.3 Impact on Religion and “Thai” Studies	194
6.5 Political Motivations that Generated Concrete Results and Contributed to Siam’s Long-term Survival	196

<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>201</b>
<b>Acknowledgment</b>	<b>218</b>

**201**

**218**



His Majesty King Chulalongkorn. Taken on 5 September 1897 at Villa Hügel. *The Krupp Archives*, Essen, Germany.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction



King Chulalongkorn's first trip to Europe in 1897, at the height of Europe's drive to colonize much of the rest of the world, including Southeast Asia, was inextricably linked to the monarch's concern for his nation's very survival. England and France were particularly interested in seizing control not just of Siam, but of all the other countries in the region. The 1893 Battle of Paknam between French and Siamese forces had resulted not only in the Siamese government's surrender of territory to the French, but in its pursuit of a political strategy referred to as "balancing power" – a strategy which saw the Kingdom "willing to yield in order to survive." To achieve its goals, Siam embarked on a diplomatic campaign to forge cordial relations with the European powers, a major component of which was the King's trip to Europe. This trip was intended to yield important psychological benefits, as the "farang" of Europe would have an opportunity to observe at first hand an Asian ruler of exceptional charm, wit and cultivation. The King's presence would compel Europeans to re-examine their

preconceived notions of Siam as "uncivilized," and of the Siamese King as a figure from a "fairy tale." As a result of King Chulalongkorn's trip across the continent, Westerners would have a much more accurate picture of Siam and its ruler.

A number of important earlier studies have demonstrated that the King's trip to Europe was a political tactic resulting from and closely linked to Siam's conflicts with the great European powers and the Kingdom's loss of territory to these Western nations. Although the trip did manage to alleviate, to a certain degree, some of the political tensions of the time, notably those between Siam and France, negotiations were not entirely successful in resolving all of the crises to which the Kingdom was vulnerable. Relations with the French in particular remained strained. And while the efforts of King Chulalongkorn's government to ally itself with Russia as a means of averting French aggression had some initial success,<sup>1</sup> the effectiveness of this policy was short-lived. After relaxing its position in the early rounds of negotiations, Paris ultimately

---

<sup>1</sup> See the royal telegram sent by King Chulalongkorn from Peterhof Palace on 5 July 1897, to Krom Phraya Thevavongsa Varopakarn, the Siamese Minister of Foreign Affairs. In *King Chulalongkorn's Visit to Europe in 1897 (1980), Volume 1*, National Archives, Fine Arts Department, page 360.

toughened its stance, eventually forcing Siam to cede more of its territory along the banks of the Mekhong River.

Other perhaps more significant benefits of the royal visit to Europe were diplomatic and psychological. As historians such as Chalong Suntharavanich have noted, the King's trip served "public relations" purposes; it created in the minds of his hosts and the European public an image of the Siamese as a "civilized" people (Chalong Suntharavanich, *Politics behind The Royal Visit to Europe of King Rama V*, 2002). It has also been shown that the King was eager to observe the scientific, cultural, political and technological advances of the West, hoping that his newly-acquired knowledge could be used to improve the lives of his people in Siam. However, these historians have yet to examine in any great detail the lasting impact of King Chulalongkorn's success in opening Western eyes to the "civilized" nature of the Thai people and the reality of a King seen before the trip through the prism of a fairy tale.

During his first trip across the continent, King Chulalongkorn was not only able to gain European recognition for his intelligence as the ruler of a civilized nation, but also won the hearts and affection of the European courts he visited. The 44-year-old head of the Siamese state charmed his hosts, even in countries which had systems of government very different from his own. In the Swiss Federation, for instance, the King was warmly received by the country's President and its people. Even in France, which Chulalongkorn described in a letter from Paris as "our greatest obstacle,"<sup>2</sup> he was received by President Felix Faure and the French public in a manner "befitting my station."<sup>3</sup> This is contradicted, however, by a German observer, who reported that while the government had complied with all official protocol in receiving the King, the French welcome was decidedly "cool."<sup>4</sup>

It is this aspect of the King's genius – that he was "beloved" not only by his own subjects but by the ruling classes of Europe – that deserves closer examination. Countries such as Russia, Poland and Hungary mark the royal visit as the *beginning of*

---

<sup>2</sup> In a letter from HM King Chulalongkorn to HM Queen Saovabha Pongsri, sent from the Hotel Royal de la Paix, Florence, 13 June 1897. Microfilm, National Archives, Fine Arts Department, Bangkok.

<sup>3</sup> In the *Letter of His Majesty King Chulalongkorn to Her Majesty Queen Saovabha during His Visit to Europe in 1897*. Prince Krom Phraya Damrong Rajanubhap and Princess Jongchitthanom Diskul Foundation. Printed in honor of HM Queen Sirikit's 5<sup>th</sup> Cycle Birthday Celebrations, 12 August 1992. Page 187.

<sup>4</sup> For details, see the report of the German ambassador from Paris to the Foreign Ministry in Berlin, dated 15 September 1897. Document From the Political Archives, Foreign Ministry, Berlin, Federal Republic of Germany, File R19239 Volume 20, 21 A 11848, page number 051-053.



*modern diplomatic relations with Thailand*, and the cordial ties that the King formed with a number of European royal families, including those of Denmark and Belgium, have remained intact to the present day.

In other words, one might say that the greatest achievements to come out of King Chulalongkorn's first visit to Europe in 1897 were, while rooted in very real political, social and cultural circumstances, chiefly abstract.

In my opinion, the crisis which erupted between France and Siam in 1893 was simply the *last* in a series of increasingly fraught confrontations with the European powers that necessitated King Chulalongkorn's departure for Europe four years later – a journey he had in fact envisioned since the first years of his reign. In 1894, the year after the Paknam Incident, the King expressed his intention to travel to Europe, although plans were ultimately put on hold. Then, between the end of 1896 and the beginning of the following year, rather hasty arrangements were made for him to set sail for Europe in April 1897. The journey eventually took place within a context of complex factors that are often difficult if not impossible to untangle.

The subject of relations between the Siamese dynasty and the royal courts of Europe is tied to a host of political, social and cultural factors, and can be divided into a number of smaller issues. This

book, which attempts to shed light on these issues, contains information from the national archives of several European countries. Other information was generously provided by these countries' embassies in Thailand, while still more information came from various Thai embassies in Europe.

In choosing to speak of the "royal courts" of Europe, reference is made not only to those countries with a monarchy, but to the Swiss Federation and the French Republic as well, because as research shows, these nations figured prominently in the King's European itinerary. France, in particular, held special significance for the King. Therefore, there is no reason to exclude Switzerland and France from the discussion at hand simply because they were neither an absolute nor a constitutional monarchy. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a transitional period between the "old Europe" and the modern Machine Age, many of the countries of Europe were ruled by monarchs. It was not until the end of World War I in 1918 that many of these traditional monarchies would fall.

It is the intention of this book to look in detail at the more "abstract" benefits derived from King Chulalongkorn's first trip to Europe. Because of his intelligence and political savvy, he was successful in winning the admiration and affection of virtually all the courts and rulers of countries in which he traveled. The West was compelled to recognize

this monarch of a small kingdom “beyond India”<sup>5</sup> as an equal worthy of their respect. This was no small feat. It is also hoped that readers will come to see that the King’s success was due to a large number of factors. These included the careful preparations that preceded his trip, and the formal and informal *relations of the Siamese court and of King Chulalongkorn personally with the courts of Europe* that existed prior to his departure. Also involved were the *social, cultural and political climate both in Thailand and in Europe* at the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as well as relations among the various European nations themselves.

All of these factors, however, can rightly be termed as backdrop or secondary players in this grand theatrical production. The true star was King Chulalongkorn, for it was his intelligence, charm, and special genius which were responsible above all for winning the respect of the West. While the retinue accompanying the King on his travels from Bangkok contributed to *some* degree to his success, his sons—the royal princes sent to be educated in some of the most elite institutions of Europe – played a larger role in convincing Europe that Siam was a “civilized” country, and their success in doing this reflected favorably on the upbringing they had been given by their father and mother in Bangkok.

This book draws on a wealth of primary and secondary sources from libraries in countries across Europe, for example Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Austria, Spain, Portugal, Poland, and the Czech Republic. It has also benefited from research conducted at national archives in Brussels, the Hague, Copenhagen, and Vienna. Significant use has also been made of materials found in the archives of the Foreign Ministry in Berlin and at archives in smaller cities around Germany, such as the Bismarck Archives in Friedrichruhe. Because of Germany’s history as a federation of independent states, records are not always centralized, but rather stored in the capital cities of the various states. Additional information was gathered at the Czech Foreign Ministry in Prague. In all these instances, the writer is grateful for the generous assistance given, both from the respective European embassies in Bangkok and from the Royal Thai Embassies in Europe. The cordial relations enjoyed today between Thailand and many of the European countries where this research was conducted are a legacy of the trip made by King Chulalongkorn over a century ago in 1897.

As I have tried to explain above, this book differs from previous works dealing with the same topic in two important ways: First, whereas most other works look at King Rama V’s European travels

---

<sup>5</sup> Before the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Europeans were generally unfamiliar with the name “Siam.” Germans referred to the Kingdom as “the land beyond India.” Asia, for most Europeans, consisted exclusively of India and China. On many of the old maps of Asia drawn by European cartographers, the names of smaller countries do not appear. Instead, these countries are subsumed within the borders of India and China.

from either a Thai or European perspective, this book attempts to integrate and synthesize information about *Europe*, *Siam* and *Asia* at the time of the King's first visit to the European continent. Second, it relies on a large number of primary sources from various countries which were previously unknown or not widely available. These materials can be broadly divided into the following subject areas:

- King Chulalongkorn in Europe in 1897 and the survival of the Siamese Kingdom;
- The image and manner of the King of Siam as a representative of the first king of an east or southeast Asian nation to visit Europe;
- The effect of the actual presence of the King of Siam as a representative of east and southeast Asian monarchs (prior to 1897, no East Asian king had traveled in Europe) in transforming his earlier fairy tale image into one more closely resembling reality;
- King Chulalongkorn's first trip to Europe in 1897 as an illustration of the Siamese "balancing power" policy in action. This political and diplomatic policy, which saw Siam "willing to yield in order to survive," involved forming alliances with the major powers of Europe and had long-lasting psychological benefits in proving to the West that the Siamese king and the nation of Siam were "civilized." This, and the recognition

of the King's intelligence and dignity as an equal to the royals of Europe, contributed greatly to Siam's survival as an independent state, allowing the country to escape the clutches of would - be European colonizers.

The book sheds light on the reasons behind the King's trip and the preparations that went into it. It examines conditions in Siam and neighboring countries, and the political policies of major European nations – namely England, France and Germany – and their impact on Siam. Other sections provide an overview of conditions in Russia and other European nations at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There is a detailed analysis of the reasons, relating chiefly to the political skills and personal charisma of the King, for the warm welcome accorded to this foreign visitor by the courts of Europe. The book will show that King Chulalongkorn was particularly successful in presenting an image of Siam as a cultured and civilized nation and of himself as an equal to the rulers of Europe, a man adept at fitting into European society and deserving of Europe's respect.

Another major reason for Europe's willingness to embrace the King as an equal, however, was Chulalongkorn's overt admiration for the ways of the West. The King of Siam recognized the superiority of European schooling, for example, and showed an eagerness to import the Western education model to Siam. Like his more enlightened European

counterparts, he promoted an atmosphere of religious tolerance, providing support for all forms of faith in the Kingdom. He proved himself capable of thinking like a Westerner, advocating Western customs, culture, and traditions over those of other parts of the globe.

It is also important to note that although the success of the King's trip in preserving Siamese sovereignty – the principal objective of his trip – was not evident at the time, Chulalongkorn's presence in Europe did yield less tangible, but no less valuable benefits that proved instrumental later on in helping the Kingdom escape the fate of its neighbors. By pursuing a policy that sought to achieve a "power balance" between England and France, the two European nations most eager to claim Siam as a colony, King Chulalongkorn and his government managed to maintain the country's independence. Excluding China and Japan, Siam

was one of only three Asian countries – Iran and Afghanistan were the others – not to become colonies of a European power, because they stand like Siam, as target of the colonial politics of two powers. For Iran and Afghanistan were Russia and Great Britain. (The influence of Russia from the West and the influence of Great Britain from the East through the colonized India). The case of Siam were Great Britain from the West and France from the East.

In writing this book, I hope to make a wider readership both here in Thailand and abroad aware of the tremendous achievements of King Chulalongkorn and the continuing legacy of his historic trip to Europe in 1897. This book, published with the support of the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University and the Communications Authority of Thailand, is also meant as a tribute to this great monarch on the occasion of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death in 1910.



## Translation of His Majesty's Speech.

 S you all know, who have assembled on this solemn occasion in obedience to Our summons, it has been long Our earnest desire to visit Europe and We have longed for an opportunity of accomplishing this purpose as much for the benefit of Our Realm as for the sake of Our own person.

The time having arrived We now, with the advice and consent of Our Councillors, shall within a short time leave Our country.

As we shall be far from Our country and as Our absence will be prolonged, it was necessary for Us to take measures not only to guard Our country against immediate danger, but also to see that the current government business may continue uninterruptedly, that the new measures We have sanctioned may be duly carried out, that Our subjects may enjoy the same protection as if We were Ourselves present in person.

We have therefore, with the advice of Our Councillors, thought fit to appoint by Royal Decree a Regent to represent Our Person to be assisted by a Council of Regency; and We, with the advice of Our trusted and well beloved Councillors, have appointed to this high office the Queen, Mother of the Crown Prince, the Heir of Our Throne, assisted by a Council of Regency selected from Our most trusted Councillors, whose duties We have clearly defined in Law.

Being aware of the love and high trust which you all repose in Us, We are convinced that you will obey and follow this Decree and will thus show the same love for and trust in Her Majesty the Regent as you have shown and evinced to Us and Our own person.

We have commanded Her Majesty to abide by those precepts of truth by which the Sovereigns of this country have always been guided, to be free from covetousness, animosity, cowardice and selfishness, which are the four evil states foreseen by the Law of Our Lord Buddha, to show mercy and clemency, to protect Our Royal House, Our nobles and officials, the Samanas and Brahmanas, the teachers and the people of this realm, to be hospitable and just towards all sojourners in this country, to observe all our treaty obligations as We have done Ourselves during the twenty-nine years of Our Reign.

The Queen's own character, the love which She bears towards Us convince Us that She will carry out Her high office in the way We have indicated.

And now in this solemn assembly let the Decree be read and may you in hearing it, conform to it:--

\* From the *Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes*, made available with the assistance of Herr Alexander Novak, Minister Counsellor for Political Affairs at the German Embassy in Bangkok, 1998-2002.



**TRANSLATION OF  
THE REGENCY ACT OF R. S. 115**

ROYAL DECREE FOR THE INSTITUTION OF A REGENCY DURING THE  
ABSENCE OF HIS MAJESTY.

[Enacted on the 21st March 1897.]



We CHULALONKORN, King of Siam, etc.

**W**HEREAS, in view of Our next journey to Europe and of the time during which We shall be absent from our Kingdom, it appears necessary to provide for the institution of a Regency, invested with the temporary power of decreeing in Our name such Regulations, enacting such measures and exercising in general such Sovereign Functions as may be required for the good government and administration of Our Kingdom,

Have decreed and do hereby decree:—

1. The present decree shall be cited as: The Regency Act of R. S. 115.
  2. During Our absence the Regency shall be entrusted to Her Majesty SOWABHAPION(SRI the Queen, mother of the Crown Prince, assisted by a council of Regency.
  3. The council of Regency shall be composed of the following five members: Chow Fa Chaturont Rasmi Krom Phra Chakrabatipongse, Chow Fa Bhanurangsi Swangwongse Krom Phra Bhanubandhawongse Varadej, Krom Luang Devawongse Varoprakar, Krom Mūn Damrong Rajanubhab and Chow Phya Abhai Raja.
  4. If, for any reason, Her Majesty the Queen Regent should be in the impossibility of exercising her functions, notice of the fact shall be sent to Us by the shortest possible mode of correspondence and until We shall decide otherwise the functions of the Regent shall be fulfilled by the highest in rank of the members of the council of Regency.
  5. In case of demise, grave illness or other cause of incapacity of one of the aforesaid members of the council of Regency, if there is no special cause of urgency, Her Majesty the Queen Regent shall send Us a report of the fact, and wait for Our instructions. In the meanwhile the council shall continue to act with its remaining number of members.
- In case of urgency, Her Majesty the Queen Regent, shall provisionally appoint a fit person to the vacant place, and at the same time submit the appointment to Our final decision.
6. Subject to the following restrictions and limitations, Her Majesty the Queen Regent,

\* From the *Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes*, made available with the assistance of Herr Alexander Novak, Minister Counsellor for Political Affairs at the German Embassy in Bangkok, 1998-2002.



assisted by the council of Regency, shall exercise in Our name and until Our return, or until, at any time, We should decide otherwise, the Sovereign Powers which belong to Ourselves.

Consequently, any Decrees, Ordinances or Acts of Law, Regulations, Dismissal from, or Appointment to public functions, Order for execution or suspension of judicial sentences or administrative decisions, Pardon of criminals, and in a general way any public acts whatever, signed and sealed in Our name by Her Majesty the Queen Regent, shall be as valid as if they were signed and sealed by Ourselves, provided:—

a. That such acts be not contrary to the maintenance of Our Royal Prerogatives and the Fundamental Law of Our country, or to the independence and integrity of Our Kingdom, or to the fulfilment of any obligations imposed upon Us by Treaties.

b. That no such acts be put in force without a previous and conformable advice of the council of Regency, and without being countersigned for and in the name of the council, by one number of the said council and by one of the Ministers.

7. Phra Ong Chow Pravitr Vaddhanodom shall act as Chief Secretary to Her Majesty the Queen Regent and to the council of Regency.

In case of his demise, grave illness or other cause of incapacity, Her Majesty the Queen may, in Our name and on Our behalf, constitute and appoint another person as Secretary to Herself and to the Council of Regency.

8. The Council of Regency shall meet at least once a week at a fixed day, hour and place, and moreover as often as it will appear necessary for the despatch of State affairs.

Before Our departure there shall be held a solemn meeting where the Queen Regent as well as every member of the Council shall take an oath, and in their first meeting following Our Departure the Council shall decide, subject to the approval of Her Majesty the Queen Regent at which day, hour and place, their ordinary meetings shall be held, as long as, under the same approval, it shall not be decreed otherwise.

Special convocations for any extraordinary meetings of the Council shall be sent by the Chief Secretary to each member of the Council either on command of Her Majesty the Queen Regent or at the request of any two members of the Council.

No convocations shall be sent for the ordinary weekly meetings.

9. Her Majesty the Queen Regent shall attend and preside in the Council of Regency, as often as She will deem fit and convenient. In her absence, any member appointed by

Her in writing shall preside, or, in default of such member, the member who is first in precedence of those present shall preside.

10. All questions proposed for debate in the council of Regency shall be decided by the majority of votes, and Her Majesty the Queen or the member presiding shall have a casting vote if upon any question the votes shall be equal.

11. The Council of Regency may, from time to time, make standing rules and orders for the regulation of their own proceedings, provided such rules and orders be not repugnant to the present Decree or to any other Decree or instructions from Us under Our seal and sign manual.

12. It shall be competent for any member of the Council of Regency to propose any questions for debate therein, provided that every question, the object or effect of which may be to dispose of or charge to any part of Our revenue shall be proposed by Her Majesty the Queen Regent, unless the proposal of the same shall have been expressly allowed or directed by Her.

13. Minutes shall be regularly kept of all the proceedings of the Council of Regency, and, at each meeting of the said Council, the minutes of the last proceeding meeting shall be read over and confirmed or amended, as the case may require, before proceeding to the despatch of any other business.

Every fortnight, a copy of the minute of the last meeting, confirmed or amended as above, shall be sent to Us, through the Chief Secretary, by the safest mode of conveyance, wherever We may happen to be.

14. Her Majesty the Queen Regent may, in Our name and on Our behalf and conformably to the provisions of Sect. 6, constitute and appoint Religious Dignitaries, Ministers, High Commissioners, Governors of the Provinces, Judges or other officials or officers whatever to fill up vacancies in the public service.

15. Her Majesty the Queen Regent may upon sufficient cause apparent to her and conformably to the provisions of Sect. 6, suspend from the exercise of his office any person holding any office within Our Kingdom. Every such suspension shall continue and have effect until Our pleasure thereon be known and, in the meanwhile, any person appointed by Her Majesty the Queen Regent to the same office, shall be considered as being appointed by Us.

16. Except as modified by the present Decree, nothing shall be changed during Our absence, in the relations of the Crown with the Legislative, Executive and Judicial Departments. Any communications, bill, draft regulations, reports, petitions and other documents which when We are present in our Kingdom should be directed to Us shall be directed during Our Absence to Her Majesty the Queen Regent.

Any questions, which could not be satisfactorily solved, between Ministers or Ministerial Departments, Courts of Justice or any public offices whatever shall be submitted to Her Majesty the Queen Regent, who shall decide them by order in Council, either in the Council of Ministers, or in the Council of Regency, or, in the two Council meeting together, as the nature of the affair may require.

17. In derogation from Sect. 7 of Our Decree of the year R.S. 113 on the constitution of the Legislative Council, no bill voted by the Legislative Council and not yet sanctioned by Us to shall take effect during Our intended absence, unless signed and sealed in Our name by Her Majesty the Queen Regent and countersigned by one of the members of the Council of Regency and by one of the Ministers as provided above in Sect. 6.

18. The Council of Ministers shall be presided by Her Majesty the Queen Regent in either of its special or ordinary meetings, when they shall have to decide upon questions of great interest to the state. In Her Majesty's absence when they shall have to decide upon affairs of secondary importance, the meeting shall be presided over by one of the Ministers voted to the chair for the time.

The Chief Secretary to Her Majesty the Queen Regent or his substitute shall also act as Chief Secretary of the Council of Ministers, and the provisions of the present Decree in regard to the convocations, meetings and minutes of the Council of Regency shall also be applied to the Council of Ministers.

19. Her Majesty the Queen Regent shall, on Our behalf, receive the petitions from the people as often as We do Ourselves, and in case of her being unable to do so herself, she may delegate either her Chief Secretary or the Minister of Justice to receive them for her, whereupon she may direct the matter in the petitions to be investigated upon or inquired into by any Court of Law or by any commission duly appointed by her as provided in Sect. 6.

20. We do direct and enjoin that this Our Decree shall be made known throughout Our Kingdom and We do require and command of all Our officers civil and military, and all Our other subjects, to be obedient, aiding and assisting unto Her Majesty the Queen Regent, acting in Our name, and to any person for the time being acting under the authority of Her Majesty the Queen Regent, from the moment when We shall be absent from Our Kingdom until We return to it or until We decide otherwise.

L. S. (Royal Sign Manual) Chulalongkorn R.

Translation of Her Majesty the Queen's Address\*  
Queen Regent Saovabha Pongsri, during the tour to Europe of King Chulalongkorn in 1897

087

**Translation of Her Majesty the Queen's Address.**

---

Sire,

Your Majesty has been graciously pleased to appoint me Regent of the Realm, during the time of Your Majesty's absence, in order that the government of the country and people may be prosperous.

Statecraft is the most complicated and onerous task, and great is the responsibility attached to it. I am but a woman, and although I, for love of my country will, in the office entrusted to me, endeavour to carry out my duties, I still have grave anxiety as the task which has been imposed upon me is an arduous and unwonted one.

But as Your Majesty Yourself by the advice and consent of Your Majesty's Ministers and trusted Councillors have deemed it right, to appoint me Regent and have been pleased to decree the Regency Act specifying my duties and have commanded, that I should rely on the members of Our Royal House and Our Councillors versed in the affairs of State, and as I am but one of Your Majesty's subjects, I cannot but obey Your Majesty's gracious orders, and I pledge therefore my faith to Your Majesty that I will fulfill the duties of Regent during Your Majesty's absence according to the best of my knowledge and of my strength.

My efforts will be that the state of the country shall be prosperous and I shall rely in this task on the cooperation of the members of Our Royal House, Our Nobles and Officials through the trust they repose in Your Majesty and through the love to our country.

I thus trust that during Your Majesty's absence the government of this country will continue to prosper and that it will be carried out in accordance with the wishes of Your Most Gracious Majesty.

\* From the *Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes*, made available with the assistance of Herr Alexander Novak, Minister Counsellor for Political Affairs at the German Embassy in Bangkok, 1998-2002.

## Chapter 2

# The Background to King Chulalongkorn's First Trip to Europe, 1897; Conditions in Europe, Siam and Neighboring Asian Countries at the End of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century



### 2.1 *The Background to King Chulalongkorn's First Trip to Europe, 1897*

Researchers have surmised from the study of documents, correspondence and royal archives a number of reasons for King Chulalongkorn's decision to travel twice to Europe, first in 1897 and then in 1907. Chief among these was the political crisis that erupted between Siam and the French government in 1893. It is also clear that His Majesty wished to apply the knowledge and experience he gained from his foreign travels to the social, political and cultural development of his own realm. While these motivations are generally acknowledged, others are less well-known. These include the matter of the King's delicate health, His Majesty's personal desire to broaden his understanding of the world beyond the borders of Siam, and political tensions among the nations of Europe.

In 1868, at the age of just 15, King Chulalongkorn ascended to the throne in the first of two official coronation ceremonies. Although he would not be entitled to assume full power until his 20<sup>th</sup> birthday, the young monarch was required to fulfill official

daily duties in the company of his ministers, assisted by the regent Chao Phraya Sri Suriyawongse (Chuang Bunnag).

In 1873, the King made the first of many trips beyond the confines of the palace walls in Bangkok. On a series of excursions to the provinces that combined work and pleasure, he learned how the vast majority of his subjects lived. In truth, however, the King's interest in carrying out his royal responsibilities away from the court in Bangkok was driven by more than just politics. Health was another important consideration. The young monarch had been in poor health since the death of his father, King Mongkut, who had fallen ill after returning from a trip to Wah Kor district. The Western doctor in service to the court had suggested that not only would travels upcountry be of benefit to the young monarch's health but that an extended trip abroad might alleviate the symptoms of chronic Phra Vakka<sup>1</sup> that afflicted the King.

---

<sup>1</sup> Kidney disease

In other words, another important motivation for the King's travels was medical. Of course, this reason alone would not have been sufficient. It would have to coincide with the monarch's own wish to establish a genuine connection with his subjects and a personal inclination to explore the world despite his knowledge that such travels risked taking a heavy physical toll on him.

King Chulalongkorn's second trip to Europe, made in 1907 and familiar to Thai readers through the collection of the King's letters published under the title *Far from Home*, was made chiefly for health reasons. His visits to the famous German spas of Baden-Baden and Bad Homburg were intended to strengthen the King's delicate constitution.

It is clear that despite his youth, King Chulalongkorn was a far-sighted ruler. He recognized the importance of gaining a broader understanding of the world, both through book learning and through direct experience, as vital preparation for assuming his full powers as King. He believed that a "study trip" abroad would help to make him a more capable head of state. His first "study trip" was a 47-day tour of Singapore, Sumarang, Malaya and the cities of Java, made in the year of the goat, 1870, three years after his first coronation ceremony. The King hoped that the knowledge he gained from the trip could be used to improve the administration of

his own Kingdom. He was well aware that Siam was at a turning point. The country was no longer "purely Thai," but was under pressure to open up to Western influences. Its very survival was threatened by the imperialist powers of Europe.

Although Siam's neighbors were already colonies of England and Holland, King Chulalongkorn saw only traces of the "modern" knowledge and ideas with which he hoped to become acquainted, and therefore, he expressed his intention to travel to Europe.<sup>2</sup> But the King's wishes met with opposition from his senior minister Phraya Bhanuwongse and the Regent, who feared that such a long trip outside Siam would expose the monarch to grave dangers. Another problem was the lack of a ship of adequate size and splendor to accommodate the King and his retinue. To travel aboard a merchant ship would not have befitted his stature as monarch.

Despite these objections to a proposed trip to Europe, the Minister and the Regent did approve of a three-month trip through India two years later, when the King was 20 years old. India was not so far from Siam, and because it was ruled by the British, it was felt that the trip would prove educational. The King set sail for the sub-continent aboard the *Bhiyamoranayuth* in December in the year of the monkey, 1872.

---

<sup>2</sup> Compare Keerati Kiattiyakorn (ed.) *The Siamese Court 1898-1910 Part 2: Westernization*, a compilation of chronicles and other historical documents for the new generation. Bangkok: Saengdao Press, 2001, pages 30-35.

What seems clear, then, is that the principal objection of the royal ministers to the King's proposed trip to Europe was simply that he was still a minor. He had not yet assumed his full powers as the country's absolute monarch. A lengthy absence from the Kingdom might expose him to circumstances that would threaten the stability of the monarchy. In other words, their objection was based on a careful consideration of internal politics.

Nevertheless, the first two foreign trips taken by the young King Chulalongkorn were excellent political training and valuable preparation for the time when he would assume the full reins of power. His travels allowed him to observe the political, social and cultural climate of the countries he toured. More importantly, he was given a glimpse of the progress and development introduced to these countries by the European powers that had colonized them.<sup>3</sup>

Another benefit of these trips was the chance they gave him to better grasp some of the more troubling political circumstances facing his own Kingdom. For example, he could better understand the political conflict between Siam and Britain that had simmered since the reign of King Rama II, when London first expressed its intention to bring the entire Malay peninsula under British control. His travels shed light on Burma's defeat at the hands of the British in 1886.<sup>4</sup> The signing of the *Bowring Treaty* in 1854, during his father's reign, had resulted in close commercial and political links between Siam and England. The agreement gave the *British greater influence over Siamese affairs than any other European nation*, most notably the French. In other words, England's commercial interests in Siam surpassed those of any of its European neighbors<sup>5</sup> – a fact which was reflected in London's stance and its policies toward Siam, especially its colonial politics and its rivalry with France. These conflicts

---

<sup>3</sup> See Sachchidanand Sahai (author). *Rama V in India: As seen by the Siamese* (Kanthika Sriudom, trans.). Published to mark the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of King Chulalongkorn's birth by the Toyota (Thailand) Foundation, Social Sciences and Humanities Textbook Foundation 2003, and Suntaree Asawai, with a foreword by Charnwit Kasetsiri. *1907 Siamese Report on Java*. Published to mark the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of King Chulalongkorn by the Toyota (Thailand) Foundation, Social Sciences and Humanities Textbook Foundation 2003.

<sup>4</sup> Tosaporn Kasikam. *Psychological Factors behind Foreign Policy with the Major Western Powers in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century: A Comparative Study of the Kingdoms of Siam and Burma*. Master's Thesis. Politics and Administration. Graduate School, Chiang Mai University, 1996, pages 108-109 (unpublished for distribution).

<sup>5</sup> Shortly before the crisis of 1893, trade with Britain accounted for approximately 75% of Siam's foreign trade. There were also a large number of British nationals and British colonial subjects conducting business and residing in Bangkok and the north and south of the Kingdom. For further information, see: Maj. Peerapol Songnui. "The Dispute between France and Thailand in 1894 from a French Perspective" in *Art and Culture* Special Edition. First printing January 2002, pages 15-17.

were clearly visible to the young monarch on his trips through the region. By traveling to these colonial possessions, King Chulalongkorn gained insight into his country's own political problems with the nations of the West and, as a result, was better able to make smart decisions that steered Siam through the political crises that erupted during his reign. Finally, these trips provided him with a basis of comparison for the future, when he did set sail for Europe.

On his trips through the region, King Chulalongkorn had the opportunity to see for himself the actual situation "on the ground" in Singapore, Malaya, Java, and India – all under European control. These experiences, combined with the Western-oriented education given him by his father, King Rama IV, and his fluency in English prepared the monarch, after his second coronation in the twelfth lunar month in the Year of the Rooster, 1873, to move "Siam forward in a direction that the West saw as 'civilizing.'"<sup>6</sup>

New information uncovered in Germany and not yet known in Thailand shows that Somdej Chao Phraya (Prince) Sri Suriwongse<sup>7</sup> advised the King to travel to Europe in April 1880, when he was 27 years

of age. The proposed itinerary, which appears in a document written by the Siamese Foreign Minister Prince Bhanuwongse to the German Consul H. Stannius on February 14, 1880, and forwarded to the German Foreign Ministry, was to be as follows:

Prague-Dresden-Berlin (14-16 June 1880) – The Hague-...- Schaffhausen (23 September 1880) – The Rhein – Hamburg-Denmark-Munich-Italy

Phraya (Prince) Bhasakarawongse, the Siamese Ambassador to London, was to receive the King on his arrival in Europe.<sup>8</sup>

But this itinerary begs a number of questions. First, why would Prince Sri Suriwongse advise the King to begin his trip in Prague, which was not a national capital at the time, but was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire? Second, while it is understandable that many of the stops on the King's itinerary were in Germany as relations between Siam and Germany were particularly close, the inclusion of Munich is somewhat puzzling as there had previously been no contacts between Bangkok and the southern German state of Bavaria, of which Munich was the capital. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Bavaria was an important agricultural center. Located in the foothills of the Alps, Bavaria is landlocked and its capital has

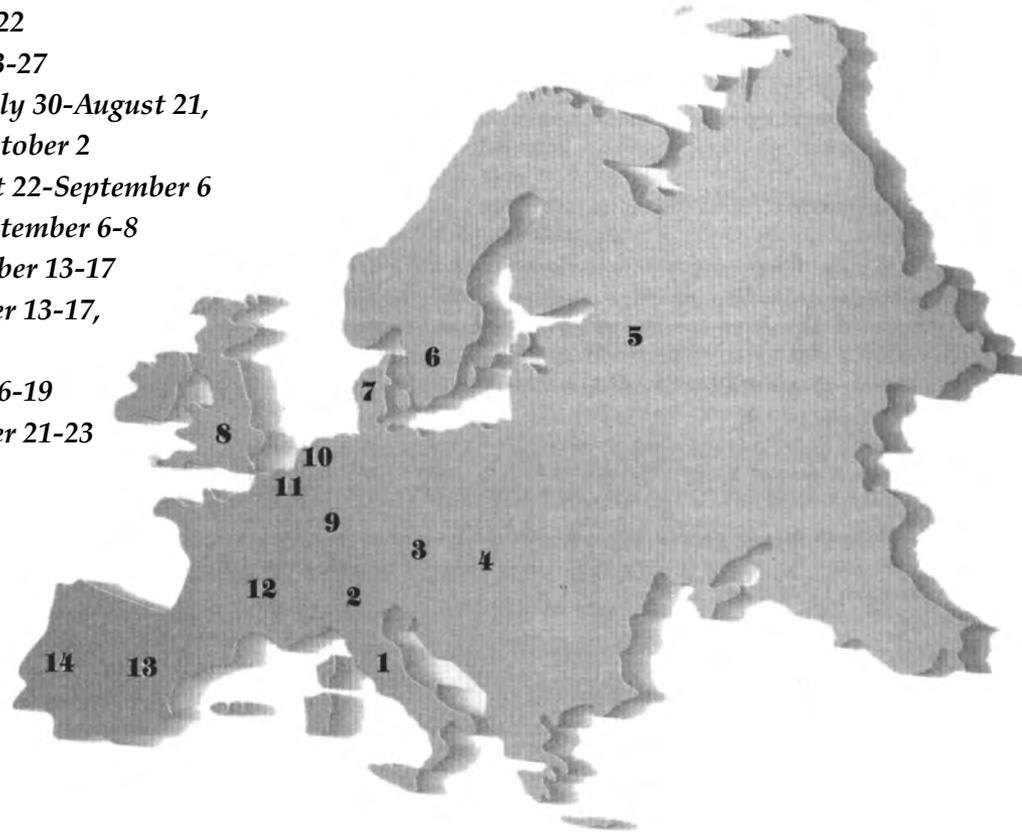
---

<sup>6</sup> From the notes of Krom Phraya Damrong Rajanubhap. In Keerati Kiatiyakorn (Ed.). *The Biography of Chao Khun Prayurawongse*, 2001, pages 36-37. See Note 2 above.

<sup>7</sup> The researcher is unsure if this is Prince Maha Sri Suriyawongse as Westerners may have recorded Thai names incorrectly, and in 1880, Prince Maha Sri Suriyawongse was still alive.

<sup>8</sup> Obtained from Prof. Dr. Rudolf Baierl (Technische Fachhochschule, Berlin).

1. *Italy, May 14-17*
2. *Switzerland, May 17-31*
3. *Austria, June 17-26*
4. *Hungary, June 26-30*
5. *Russia, July 1-11*
6. *Sweden, July 12-22*
7. *Denmark, July 23-27*
8. *Great Britain, July 30-August 21,  
September 17-October 2*
9. *Germany, August 22-September 6*
10. *Netherlands, September 6-8*
11. *Belgium, September 13-17*
12. *France, September 13-17,  
October 10-14*
13. *Spain, October 16-19*
14. *Portugal, October 21-23*



King Chulalongkorn's itinerary on his first trip to Europe, 1897

no port, unlike Hamburg and the cities of the Hanseatic League. One possible explanation is that Munich lay on the route between Italy and other destinations in Europe, although this route would have by passed Mecklenburg-Schwerin, which had much greater historical and political significance in the relations between Siam and Germany. In 1861, when Graf Eulenburg, the Prussian Ambassador, presented his credentials to His Majesty King Rama IV, marking the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries, German unification was still some years away. Instead, there was a loose confederation of German states led by Mecklenburg-Schwerin, a duchy on the Baltic Sea coast in northern Germany. Siam had also signed a trade and maritime shipping treaty with the German Confederation and the Duchies of Mecklenburg-Schwerin<sup>9</sup> and Mecklenburg-Strelitz.<sup>10</sup>

Later we learn that Siam under King Chulalongkorn enjoyed close relations with the

Duchy of Mecklenburg - Schwerin and the Kingdom of Saxony. This is confirmed in a telegram from the King to the Queen Regent<sup>11</sup> in Bangkok and by a visit to Siam made by Herzog Johann Albrecht von Mecklenburg-Schwerin in 1883, fourteen years before King Chulalongkorn would make his historic journey to Europe.

In his diary, Gustave Rolin-Jacquemyns (*Chao Phraya Abhairaja*), a Belgian advisor to the Siamese Royal Court, wrote that he had approached Siam's Foreign Minister, Krom Luang Thevawongse Voropakarn, about the possibility of the King's traveling to Europe even before the Paknam crisis of 1893.<sup>12</sup> But at the time of the proposed trip, the King had not yet reached the age of 20 and his second coronation had not yet taken place. Again, there was recognition of the need for the young King to prepare himself to deal with the tumult in Europe. From the time of King Rama II, relations between the major Western powers and the court in Bangkok had grown

---

<sup>9</sup> The German Customs Union consisted of the states of modern-day northern Germany and was formed as a trade association known as the *Hansestädte*, or *Hanseatic League*, for the purpose of conducting foreign trade, beginning in the Middle Ages. Later, prior to German unification, the Union evolved into the Northern German Union, and after unification in 1871, under Chancellor Bismarck, the country was named the *Second German Reich*.

<sup>10</sup> Wenk, Klaus. "Die Beziehung zwischen Deutschland und Thailand" (History of German-Thai Relations). In: *Das Archiv der Geschichte der Thai-Deutschen Beziehungen*, Hans Kappe (ed.). Orient Travel Press Ltd., 1996, pages 7-8 (in German) and pages 16-17 (in Thai).

<sup>11</sup> *King Chulalongkorn's First Trip to Europe, 1897*. Pornsan Watanangura, Narumit Sodsuk and Kanitha Boonpan (Eds.). Translation of correspondence and other documents pertaining to King Rama V's first trip to Europe in 1897. German edition. Centre for European Studies at Chulalongkorn University, 2003, pages 257-261.

<sup>12</sup> See Chalongsuntranwanich. "Political Background of King Chulalongkorn's European Trip." In *Arts and Culture*, October 2002, pages 87-103.



Gustave Rollins-Jacquesmyn in his office in Bangkok, with assistant legal advisor Robert Kirkpatrick. Courtesy of the Supreme Court of Thailand.

From *Chao Phraya Abhairajasiamanukulkij (Gustave Rollins-Jacquesmyns)*, General advisor to His Majesty King Chulalongkorn, courtesy of the Chao Phraya Abhairajasiamanukulkij Foundation

increasingly tense. But for reasons of domestic politics, Rolin-Jacquemyns' proposal was not given serious consideration by the senior ministers. With the young King out of the country for an extended period of time, the survival of the monarchy could have been at risk. It would not be until after the events of 1893 that conditions were deemed ripe for King Chulalongkorn to set sail for Europe. By this time, the French had embarked on a policy of gunboat diplomacy against Siam, while the British,

France's chief rival for dominance in the region, sat quietly on the sidelines, pretending to be unaware of the threat that the French posed to Siam's territorial integrity. Germany, meanwhile, a country with whom Siam enjoyed close commercial and political ties, showed no signs of colonial ambition in Asia.<sup>13</sup> Hoping to isolate France, Germany's traditional foe, Chancellor Bismarck took no direct part in the rivalry between France and Britain for colonial control of Indochina. German unification had only recently been achieved, and Bismarck's interest in Asia was primarily commercial. In these circumstances, French merchants and the French government felt that they were at a serious disadvantage in Siam because of the presence of a large number of German and British business concerns.<sup>14</sup> The Siamese government used Germany as an important tool in balancing British and French power.

As for other Western countries, Holland, for instance, which had exercised considerable influence in Java and had been among the first European countries to trade with Siam during the Ayuthaya period, had much less political influence in Bangkok than either the French or the British. Portugal, the very first European nation to establish links with the court in Ayuthaya, had even less sway. This is despite the Portuguese presence in Macau and the

<sup>13</sup> Pornsan Watanangura. *Two Periods of German Culture*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 2012 (2<sup>nd</sup> edition), pages 120-121.

<sup>14</sup> In a document from the German ambassador in Kolkata to the German Chancellor in Berlin, 20 January 1897. From the Political Archives, German Foreign Ministry, Berlin. File R 19238 Vol. 19, 20. SIAM No. 1, Number A 1333.



(left) Bhumisarnthira Park, site of the royal palace at Bang Pa-in  
(right) King Chulalongkorn, other Thai royals, and Thai and Russian attendants  
from *110 Years of Relations between Thailand and Russia, From Your Friend*, Royal Thai Embassy, Moscow 2007 Courtesy of former Thai Ambassador to Russia, H.E. Surayud Prompoj, 2007.

appointment of Consul Carlos da Silveira<sup>15</sup> to establish cordial relations and sell modern arms to the court in Bangkok during the reign of King Rama II. By the time King Chulalongkorn was planning his European journey, Portugal had fallen on hard times and was abandoning most of its former possessions in the Far East. Belgium, a relatively new country, having declared its independence from France in 1830, had appointed Baron Greindl the War Minister to Siam<sup>16</sup>. Russia had had close ties

with Siam since March 1891, when the future Czar Nicholas II stopped in Bangkok on his way to lay the foundation stone for the Trans-Siberian railroad. Russia was particularly eager to trade with Siam as the Kingdom had managed to maintain its sovereignty in a part of the world increasingly dominated by the British. As Britain seized control of parts of India and China close to Russia's borders, Russian displeasure with the British government intensified. England and Russia had already clashed

---

<sup>15</sup> Da Silveira was given a Thai noble rank as Luang Abhaipanich. In *History in the Ratanakosin Period*. MRW Sangsom Kasemsri and Wimon Pongpipat. Cited in Tosaporn Kasikam: *Psychological Factors behind the Foreign Policy with the Major European Powers in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century: A Comparative Study of the Kingdoms of Siam and Burma*. Master's Thesis in Political Science, Politics and Administration. Graduate School, Chiang Mai University, 1996, pages 108-109 (unpublished).

<sup>16</sup> In documents from the Political Archives at the German Foreign Ministry, cited in Note 14, File R 19238 Vol. 19, Number 1141 ½.

in the Crimea during the reign of King Rama IV. Furthermore, Russia had no interest in expanding its influence in Southeast Asia but was focused instead on parts of Central Asia near Afghanistan and the border regions of China. Compared to England and France, none of the other European countries constituted a credible threat to Siamese sovereignty in the waning years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The clash with French troops at the Battle of Paknam in 1893 was the final trigger that determined King Chulalongkorn to “regather the country’s forces,” in other words, “to take any steps necessary to prevent a similar event from occurring in the future.” One of these steps was “the need to travel to Europe and establish Siam’s presence there.”<sup>17</sup>

In a report sent to the Chancellor in Berlin in 1897, the German envoy to Bangkok, Baron von Hartmann, wrote that ten years earlier, such a trip would have been unthinkable as there was a very real risk of a palace revolt. That King Chulalongkorn felt able to travel abroad for a period of several months showed that he was in full control

of his Kingdom, that the political situation within the country was stable, and that the King had supreme confidence in Queen Saovabha’s ability to serve as Regent during his absence. The German envoy noted, too, that an attempt to overthrow the King would provide a perfect pretext for Britain or France to seize Siam as a colony. Therefore, it was von Hartmann’s opinion that the monarch’s trip to Europe would help to defuse tensions. The King himself had explained before his departure that he was not traveling for pleasure.<sup>18</sup>

From this assessment of the prevailing conditions and the influence of various Western countries in Siam around the time of his departure for Europe in 1897, it appears that it was truly time for the Siamese head of state to “make his appearance on the world stage.” By forging closer links with the countries on his itinerary, the King would advance the interests of his own Kingdom. As King Chulalongkorn himself declared,

“It is for the good of the Siamese Kingdom that I am making this trip to the countries of Europe.”

---

<sup>17</sup> A letter from King Chulalongkorn to Prince Sawasdi Sophon, dated 3 September 1894. Cited in Jiraporn Sathapanawantana. *1894: A Time of Crisis in Siam*. Bangkok: Teacher Training Department, 1976, page 194.

<sup>18</sup> From a report by the German envoy in Bangkok to the Chancellor in Berlin, dated 16 April 1897. In documents at the Political Archives, German Foreign Ministry. Previously cited. File R 19238 Vol. 19, 20 SIAM No. 1 A 6488 Page no. 090-097

## 2.2 *Conditions in Siam and Neighbor Countries Prior to King Chulalongkorn's First Visit in 1897*

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, events in Siam and throughout the region were changing rapidly. Even before King Chulalongkorn had come to the throne, in 1868, Siam was under threat from aggressive colonial politics of the European powers and there had been wars with neighboring countries. Clashes with those European powers intent on extending their influence in the region had led to the loss of the independence and sovereignty of a number of Siam's neighbours, convinced the king of Siam of the imminent danger and the necessity to be prepared for the coming situation.

Events as warning signs of the Western powers' imperialist intentions in South and Southeast Asia began during the reign of King Rama III and clearly visible in the negotiations between the Siamese court and the British envoy John Crawford (1821-1822). This is the evidence of the new type of the official relations between England and Siam after Ayuthaya Period including the first of a series of wars between Britain and Burma, which had erupted in 1825 during the reign of King Rama III and led to

the first treaty with Britain, the Burney's Treaty and the treaty with the United States of America. There were wars with Vietnam 4 times between 1833-1847.

In 1826, the rebel Prince Anuvong of Vientiane raised an army, intending to march on Bangkok under the pretense of helping the Siamese to fend off the British at the beginning of the reign of Rama III.<sup>19</sup> Between 1833 and 1847, Siam went to wars with Vietnam. China also came into conflict with the Western powers and was defeat during the Opium Wars, fought between 1839 and 1842.

During the reign of King Rama IV, Burma lost the second of its wars against the British (1851-1868) and during the reign of King Rama V, in 1885, after a third and final war, the country was forced to cede sovereignty to the Western colonizer.

In northeastern Asia, after a policy of isolation that had lasted for more than two hundred years, the Japanese opened their doors to the outside world. Persuaded by American gunboat diplomacy, Japan signed the Treaty of Kanagawa

---

<sup>19</sup> The invasion of Lao troops led by Prince Anuwong of Vientiane, ostensibly to aid Bangkok in repelling the British, met with little Siamese resistance, except in Nakorn Ratchasima. Capt. Henry Burney was engaged in negotiations with the Siamese court at the time. This incident precipitated the subsequent destruction of Vientiane by the Siamese army and gave rise to the legend of Suranaree, a woman warrior said to have saved the city of Nakorn Ratchasima.

in 1854, during the reign of King Rama IV. Also India became a British colony in 1858, during the time of King Rama IV.<sup>20</sup>

In Southeast Asia, the King of Cambodia requested the protectorate of Siam since the reign of King Rama III in the year 1845, Cambodia confronted many crisis, as Indochina was the direct target of the colonial politics of France. In the reign of King Rama IV, Vietnam began to extend their influence in Cambodia which increased the role of France in Cambodia after Vietnam had lost Saigon and some part of the south of Vietnam to France in 1859. The colonial European power began to make a claim for Cambodia for the reason that Cambodia used to be colony of Vietnam and had sent tribute to Vietnam as well as to Siam.<sup>21</sup> In 1867, Siam was forced to sign the contract in Paris with France accepting that the outer part of Cambodia belonged to France. Also in this year, Cambodia cede sovereignty to France and in after 1867, Siam lost the inner part of Cambodia to France as exchange for the left part of Trat province in 1906 during the reign of King Chulalongkorn (Rama V).

In 1858, in the reign of King Rama IV, India became colony of Great Britain.

Evidence of the new type of relations between England and Siam is clearly visible in the negotiations between the Siamese court and the British envoy John Crawford. In 1822, during the reign of King Rama II, Crawford arrived in Bangkok escorted by a contingent of sepoy, Indian soldiers who had received British military training. The sepoy so impressed Prince Krom Khun Issaretrangsarn that he subsequently arranged for the Royal Pages to receive similar training.<sup>22</sup> Discussions between Crawford and the Siamese broke down, however, as neither side had sufficient fluency in the other's language to make themselves understood. A Malay interpreter was employed to translate English into Thai and Thai into English. Four years later, after Britain's first victory over the Burmese, Siam entered into negotiations with Captain Henry Burney, but this time, King Rama III and many of his senior ministers understood the importance of English as the native language of an increasingly important presence in

---

<sup>20</sup> For further details, see: Pensri Duke Fellow, The Royal Society Thailand. *Foreign Policy and Thai Sovereignty and Independence* (from the reign of King Rama IV to the end of the P. Pibulsongkram regime). The Royal Institute Thailand, second printing, 2001, pages 5-6.

<sup>21</sup> For further details, see: Pensri Duke, *Foreign Policy and Thai Sovereignty and Independence*. Cited in Note 20 above. page 13.

<sup>22</sup> *History of Military Affairs in the Ratanakosin Period*. Printed for the funeral of Gen. Phraya Damkerng Ronabhoph. Wat Dhebsirin, 1967. Sor. 23-27. Cited in Pornsan Watanangura: "The Introduction of Western Thinking in Thai Society – Experiences from Learning Foreign Languages in Europe and Thailand". In *The Journal of European Studies*, Year 9, Vol. 2, July-December 2001. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, pages 90-91.

Asia.<sup>23</sup> The negotiations with the British diplomat ended with the signing of a trade agreement which was particularly “advantageous” to Britain. The treaty gave England control over Penang and recognized British claims to territory throughout the Malay peninsula.<sup>24</sup> The arrival of people representing various major European countries, most importantly England, for the purpose of trading in Siam, gave rise to numerous foreign communities within the Kingdom. Siam’s revenues soared as a consequence of the flourishing maritime trade with China and other countries. Yet, at the same time, the government found itself faced with rapidly rising expenses. There were costly wars fought with neighboring countries. Major repairs were needed throughout the Kingdom, following the establishment of the new capital at Bangkok during the reign of King Rama I. Furthermore, the agreements signed with England and other European countries ended the royal monopoly on

trade and forced the Siamese court to look for other sources of income to compensate. Some forty new taxes, including port duties, were introduced.<sup>25</sup>

Still, although Siam’s trade relations with England and many other countries in Europe, based on terms contained in the agreements written chiefly by and for the Europeans, required the Kingdom to adopt new commercial and tax practices, the court of King Rama III did not soften its stance toward the West. The same customs duties and government fees remained in place. King Rama IV compared the obstinacy of his predecessor to that of the Vietnamese before Vietnam fell to the French: “The Vietnamese are blind. They are deaf. They are no less obstinate than *the Thais of the previous reign*.”<sup>26</sup>

In 1850, the representative of the British Foreign Ministry, Sir James Brooke, submitted a list of proposals to the senior ministers of the Siamese royal court. These were rejected, causing Brooke to

---

<sup>23</sup> For further details, see: Pornsan Watanangura. “Language Learning in Europe and Thailand as a Paradigm of Cultural Transition.” In *MANUSYA, Journal of the Humanities*. Vol. 2, No. 2 (September), 1998. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, pages 86-98.

<sup>24</sup> A message sent by Capt. Burney to Robert Pullerton, a British government representative stationed in Penang, implying that Siam recognized British authority over the states of Perak and Selangor. Cited in MRW Saengsom Kasemsri and Wimon Pongpipat. *A History of Thailand in the Ratanakosin Period: From Rama I to Rama III (1782-1851)*. Pra Nakorn: Office of the Prime Minister, 1972, page 264.

<sup>25</sup> For further details, see: Chai Ruangsilpa. *An Economic History of Thailand from 1809 to 1910*. Bangkok: Social Sciences and Humanities Textbook Foundation, 1979. In Chapter 7, pages 136-172

<sup>26</sup> A letter from King Chulalongkorn to Phraya Surawongse Vaiyavatana, Siamese Ambassador sent to negotiate with the French government in Paris in 1867. Cited in Tossaporn Kasikam. *Psychological Factors behind Foreign Policy with the Major European Powers in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*. See Note 4, page 128.



Sir James Brook

feel considerable consternation.<sup>27</sup> A request by US Presidential envoy Joseph Ballistier to amend the treaty signed by the two countries earlier in the reign of King Rama III was similarly rebuffed. Ballistier advised his government that the only way to make the Thais change their minds was to threaten them with war.<sup>28</sup>

The British Foreign Ministry envoy was unable

to conclude negotiations with King Rama III, who was ill at the time of his arrival. Therefore, after the monarch's death, his successor, King Rama IV met with the Viceroy of the Straits Settlement to ask for time to get his house in order and implement a raft of new political and economic policies. The new monarch also asked for time to complete the funeral rites for his elder half-brother. As a result, the actions advised by the representatives of the British and American governments in Siam were never carried out.<sup>29</sup>

From his deathbed, King Rama III issued this warning: "There is no more war in Vietnam or in Burma. There are only Europeans. Be careful. Do not succumb to them, but learn from those things of theirs that are good, but do not admire them excessively."<sup>30</sup> As these words show, the King had a clear vision of things to come. Just as importantly, although he had been unwilling to adopt new legal, financial, commercial or diplomatic practices to

---

<sup>27</sup> In a private letter sent to the British Foreign Secretary consisting of 48 points, Brook wrote in point 12: "*If the Siamese refuse to accede to our demands, I urge that a detachment of troops be dispatched to seize the ramparts along the river and take control of the capital. In this way, we shall once again attain the position of power we once occupied and regain all the advantages we enjoyed in the past.... We shall achieve peace and enjoy the pleasures of trade in this country, which is thriving and becoming increasingly important each day.*" Taken from "Diplomatic correspondence of Sir James Brook" in "Historical Information from the Bangkok Period" by Kajorn Sukpanich. Cited in *Psychological Factors Influencing Foreign Policy with the Major Western Powers in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* by Tosaporn Kasikam. See Note 4, page 119.

<sup>28</sup> Cited in Hall, D.G.E. *History of Southeast Asia* (trans.) Bangkok: Social Sciences and Humanities Textbook Project Foundation, 1979, page 811.

<sup>29</sup> For more details, see Tossaporn Kasikam. Master's Thesis. Chiang Mai University, 1996 (Note 4) page 120. With reference to "When Sir John Bowring Came to Build Royal Bridges" by Kajorn Sukpanich, pages 156-157.

<sup>30</sup> Chao Phraya Tiphakornwongse. *Royal Chronicles of Krung Ratanakosin*, Volume 2, page 188.

reflect the growing European presence in Siam, the King did have a *grasp of the changing world in which he lived*, unlike his counterparts in Cambodia, Laos, or Burma. What's more, Siam began to upgrade its military and made other important moves in preparation for the influx of Western customs and ideas that accompanied the missionaries and merchants entering the Kingdom in increasing numbers.

The most important agreement between Siam and the Western powers, however, was the "Bowring Treaty" signed in 1855 (2398 B.E.), during the reign of King Rama IV. Not only did the Bowring Treaty set new terms for trade between Siam and England, but it also allowed the establishment of a British consulate in Bangkok and guaranteed its full extraterritorial powers. Admittedly, Siam did benefit economically from the treaty – within one year of its signing, domestic and international trade through the port at Bangkok was thriving, and the number of foreign commercial vessels docking at the port had soared<sup>31</sup>. Still, it was a dangerous sign of the increasingly aggressive policies of the West toward Siam and its neighbors. Nevertheless, the Bowring Treaty was officially an agreement between "friends," as the British envoy, Sir John Bowring,

had been appointed by Her Majesty Queen Victoria herself to carry out the negotiations with the Siamese court. He was not the representative of the British Viceroy in India or of the British Foreign Secretary. This perhaps contributed to the Siamese monarch's perception that he had no other choice but to sign the agreement. Although the terms of the treaty were tilted in favor of the British, the King understood that the likely alternative was the loss of Siamese sovereignty as had occurred in Singapore and Penang, or a military assault like the one in China during the Opium Wars. The Bowring Treaty became a model for other agreements signed with major powers in Europe, the United States and Japan in the years that followed.

Relations with the countries of the West, combined with the lessons learned from the failed negotiations with England during the reign of King Rama II, taught King Rama III and his senior ministers the growing importance of the English language in 19<sup>th</sup><sup>32</sup> century Siam. It is not surprising, then, that later monarchs undertook the study of Western customs and the English language. King Rama IV, who ruled from 1851-1868, studied Western civilization during the time he spent as a Buddhist monk. His education gave him a grasp of

---

<sup>31</sup> For details, see the analysis of effects of the Bowring Treaty and the translation of the Treaty in *Foreign Affairs and the Thai Sovereignty and Independence*. Pensri Duke. Previously cited in Note 20, pages 7-10 and pages 269-275.

<sup>32</sup> For details on the educational philosophies underpinning foreign language education in Thailand and in Europe, see Pornsan Watanangura. "Language Learning in Europe and Thailand as a Paradigm of Cultural Transition." In *Manusya Journal of the Humanities*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (September), 1998.

the situation in many parts of Asia. For instance, he was aware of Western aggression in China and the Chinese defeat during the Opium Wars of 1842, during the reign of King Rama III. He learned about America's "Gunboat Diplomacy," which had succeeded in 1854, in forcing Japan to abandon its isolationist policies in the early years of his own reign. India became a colony of England four years later. It was the King's grasp of the changing circumstances in the world around him that gave him the courage and strength to introduce changes in domestic and foreign policy that would enable his Kingdom to cope with the challenges of European colonial ambitions in the region. King Rama IV introduced sweeping administrative changes. Yet, amazingly, these changes were implemented in such a way that they did not destabilize the country or overturn the core beliefs and traditions of the Siamese people. This was his true genius. The monarch also appreciated the importance of knowing Western languages in maintaining good relations with the major powers of Europe. He passed this appreciation on to his son, King Chulalongkorn. (See Chapter 4)

Because of his facility with Western languages and his knowledge of Latin, "the language of scholars," King Rama IV was able to understand things from a Western point of view. He befriended

a large number of Westerners, including the American missionary Dr. Bradley in Siam and the Governor of Singapore, Sir Richard McCausland.<sup>33</sup> When he became certain that he would ascend to the throne, the future King Rama IV asked Dr. Bradley to interview him. He told the American the story of his life in English so that it could be published in a Singapore newspaper. The interview was to serve as "public relations," informing foreign readers both within and outside Siam of his ties to the Kingdom. The King feared that some of these readers might see him as an illegitimate interloper, as he was not the son of his predecessor, King Rama III. This is still further evidence of the monarch's far-sightedness and his grasp of the way in which foreigners communicated. Because of this cultural sensitivity, Westerners respected the King as a friend and an "equal," not an amusing but ultimately subservient child, who would eagerly bend to the wishes of the West.

It seems certain as well that King Rama IV instilled these outstanding traits in his son, the future King Chulalongkorn, both through formal training and by his example. The education he received from his father was vital to the success of his travels through Europe and to the perception of him as a truly "civilized gentleman," which is the subject of Chapters 4 and 5.

---

<sup>33</sup> Cited in Tossaporn Kasikam (1996). See Note 4, page 129.

Another close British friend to King Rama IV – a man who played an important role in Thailand’s history – was the diplomat and former governor of Hong Kong, Sir John Bowring. Appointed directly by Queen Victoria to represent her government in Siam, Bowring was advised by the Siamese monarch that the proper channel for contacting the court in Bangkok was through the Minister of Foreign Affairs in his capacity as Head of the Treasury, who would then pass on his request for a visit to the King. “The Cabinet of Ministers can then make the necessary preparations for welcoming you and can inform the public of your arrival as soon as possible so that potential disorder and rumors can be dispatched with, as our people are diverse and speak many languages and battleships are rarely seen.”<sup>34</sup>

When Bowring arrived in Siam in March 1855, negotiations lasted only 7 days, between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of April, with both sides signing what is generally known as the “Bowring Treaty.” It provided a model for the trade agreements that Siam would sign with US Presidential representative, Townsend Harris,

the following year, and with numerous European countries as well as Japan. It provided the basis for a foreign policy that sought to strike *a balance between rival powers*, whereby Siam agreed to give up its extraterritoriality rights with its treaty partners in order that no one country enjoyed an unfair advantage in its relations with the Kingdom. The Bowring treaty also ended the monarchy’s trade monopolies altogether and gave foreign merchants the right to trade and travel freely, while permitting the Siamese government to set duties on imported goods.

“These treaties were generally disadvantageous to Siam, and it was not until two decades after the end of World War I, during the reign of King Rama VIII, that the Kingdom successfully negotiated for the return of its extraterritoriality rights with 14 countries. This was achieved in 1938, with the assistance of an American adviser named Dr. Francis B. Sayre.”<sup>35</sup>

It could be said that King Rama IV’s personal invitation to Sir John Bowring was an important

---

<sup>34</sup> Cited in “When Sir John Bowring Came to Build Royal Bridges” in Kajorn Sukpanich. *Historical Information from the Bangkok Period*. Cited in Note 27, pages 164-165.

<sup>35</sup> Dr. Francis B. Sayer, an advisor to the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a professor at Harvard University, and son-in-law of U.S. President Woodrow Wilson, helped to negotiate with 10 European countries: France, the Netherlands, England, Spain, Portugal, Denmark, Sweden, Italy, Belgium, and Norway. Negotiations with another four countries, namely the U.S., Japan, Germany and Switzerland, were the work of the Thai government and other advisors to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For details see Variya Chinawanno. “Dr. Francis B. Sayer: An American Who Helped to Renegotiate Thailand’s Treaties with the Countries of Europe (1924-1926)” in: *The Journal of European Studies, Special Edition*. Year 8, Volume 1, January-June 2000. Bangkok: European Studies Center at Chulalongkorn University, pages 78-113.

gesture, marking the official opening of Siam to the West on the basis of “equals.” This distinguished the Kingdom from other countries of Asia which were forced into negotiations after having lost wars to superior European forces. His Majesty the King himself drew attention to this distinction.

“My dear friend, I am delighted to learn today that you will come here....Please allow us to express our respect for you in the Thai manner....We have been looking forward to welcoming you for such a long time.”<sup>36</sup>

The signing of the Bowring Treaty first with England in 1855 and then with the United States the following year in 1856 was noteworthy in that these agreements were made not with representatives of the East India Company or with Western Consuls based in Asia, as had been the case with earlier treaties, but with fully accredited representatives of the British Queen and the American President. These were agreements ratified by sovereign governments in accordance with official diplomatic protocol. The signing of these treaties marked a new era in Siamese foreign policy – one that sought to maintain a “balance of power” and that would define the Kingdom’s relations with other nations for decades to come. This was especially true in the “time of crisis” during the reign of King Chulalongkorn. His predecessor, King Mongkut (Rama IV), had



Sir John Bowring

introduced a policy of “liberalization” and “direct confrontation,” meeting foreign dignitaries both in person and through his own diplomats. In 1857, the King appointed Phraya Montri Suriyawongse (Chum Bunnag) his emissary to the court of Queen Victoria as an expression of gratitude for the Queen having named Sir John Bowring her personal representative in Siam. King Mongkut also corresponded regularly with US President Abraham Lincoln.

After the British took possession of southern Burma in 1840, King Rama IV attempted to restore ties with France, hoping to achieve a viable balance of power between the two European countries. On several occasions the King expressed a desire to sign a treaty of friendship with the government in Paris, but these efforts came to nothing.<sup>37</sup> But with the conclusion of the Bowring Treaty, the French Foreign

<sup>36</sup> In Hall, D.E.G. *Henry Burney: A Political Biography*. London: Oxford University Press, 1974, pages 808-809.

<sup>37</sup> Pensri Duke, Royal Institute. *Foreign Policy and Thai Sovereignty and Independence*, cited in Note 20, pages 9-10.

Minister worried that England's influence in Siam would surpass France's own and therefore dispatched envoy Charles de Montigny to conclude a friendship treaty with Bangkok – one that was decidedly advantageous to the French. This agreement was signed on 15 August 1856, one year after the Bowring Treaty. Interestingly, the treaty with the French specified the commercial, religious, and legal duties of France's Consul in Bangkok, as well as domestic shipping, customs duties, and the rights of French citizens to reside in the Kingdom. With the signing of this agreement, trade between France and Siam expanded to the point that the King felt it necessary to send "diplomats who were of royal blood to France." Phraya Sri Pipat (Pae Bunnag) was appointed the Siamese ambassador to the court of Emperor Napoleon III in 1861, in place of Siam's trusted British friend, Sir John Bowring<sup>38</sup>. The Siamese monarch recognized the need to act quickly, as France was perceived as a greater threat to the country's sovereignty than England. France had adopted an increasingly belligerent stance toward Siam, noting that the Thais were "less gullible than the Cambodians, who, like mice, had been enticed by the appetizing tidbits dropped by the Jesuits and the representatives of the French Emperor to lure them into" accepting the status of a protectorate. This, the French led the Cambodians to believe, would protect them from the British threat. De Montigny had used a similar strategy in his dealings

with Siam in 1856, but when this failed, Paris resorted to making threats. King Rama IV understood the situation perfectly:

"France is showing herself to be an enemy of Siam more clearly each day. Whom shall we turn to? Out of a fear of France, Siam may need to rely on England, in which case we may find ourselves under permanent British control, just as assorted states in India have had to do and as the Burmese are being forced to do at present."

The conflicts between France and Siam which occurred during the Bangkok Period can be traced back to another event that transpired after the failed negotiations between de Montigny and the Siamese court, and around the time of the arrival by ship of a group of Prussian diplomats, led by Graf Eulenburg, in Bangkok on the 15<sup>th</sup> of December 1861. Prior to setting sail from Europe, the Germans had heard that the French and English had clashed in Siam. In the view of the Prussian envoy Max von Brandt, the French representative, the Count of Castelnau, had provoked the conflict by sending gunships to take possession of Pulo Condore, an island that had belonged to England. What's more, the French warship *Formosa* had sailed into Bangkok without having obtained Siamese permission and not in accordance with any treaties between the two nations.

---

<sup>38</sup> Pensri Duke, Royal Institute. *Foreign Policy and Thai Sovereignty and Independence*, cited in Note 20, page 14.



Von Brandt also reported that de Castelnau had spoken disrespectfully to the King, demanding that France be given control of certain stretches of the Mekhong River and threatening to send warships back to Bangkok if the Siamese refused to accede to French demands. On the 10<sup>th</sup>

of December when the French naval vessels carrying the Siamese diplomats who had traveled to Paris for negotiations with the French emperor

returned to Bangkok, a message from Napoleon III was presented to “The First King of Siam”<sup>39</sup> (King Rama IV) together with royal regalia for both of the Siamese Kings, although in the opinion of the Germans, the “Second King” (King Phra Pinglau) had little official significance. The First King received the message from the Emperor with all due ceremony, but when the French naval captain came ashore with a contingent of French soldiers and a group of 50 military guards, he demanded that he be accorded the same deference. The First King (King Rama IV) refused, and although he did grant the French representatives and the French military officers a personal audience, his European visitors were furious. They left the country immediately afterwards in order to plan further demands.

This was what von Brandt<sup>40</sup> saw as the starting point for the series of conflicts which troubled Siam’s

---

<sup>39</sup> As the name appears in the records of the German Ambassador.

<sup>40</sup> Max von Brandt. *Dreiunddreissig Jahre in Ost-Asien, Erinnerung eines deutschen Diplomaten*, by M. von Brandt (in three volumes), Volume 1. Leipzig: Verlag von Georg Wigand (1901), pages 247-292.

Max von Brandt was one of the diplomats accompanying Graf Eulenberg of Prussia on the trip to Siam to establish cordial relations with the court in Bangkok. Their ship dropped anchor on 21 December 1861, and the party were granted their first audience with King Rama IV three days later. While waiting for the Siamese monarch to sign the agreement already endorsed by the team of Prussian diplomats, von Brandt traveled around the capital and into the countryside to observe the life of the Siamese people. He took part in the Great Swing Ceremony on January 4, 1862, and admired many temples and ancient structures in Ayuthaya and Saraburi. He went back to Ayuthaya before returning to Bangkok. Von Brandt wrote a book about his experiences in which he made many interesting observations about the people of Siam. As a diplomat, he had occasion to observe King Rama IV up close, remarking that the monarch was very knowledgeable and that he enjoyed using English vocabulary even though his lack of teeth made it difficult for him to pronounce the words correctly. Von Brandt also noted the place that gambling occupied in the hearts of the Thai people.

Once the Siamese court had signed the agreement with the visiting Prussians, von Brandt set sail from Bangkok on 12 February 1862, carrying with him a letter for the Prussian ruler from King Rama IV. Later he returned to Asia where he took up a new post in Japan

relations with France in the ensuing years and culminated in the Paknam crisis of 1893. It was this incident that ignited the antagonism between the two countries.

This “balancing of power” policy introduced by King Rama IV was carried on by his son, King Chulalongkorn. But over time, it became more complex, evolving from a “two pillar” policy to one that comprised numerous “pillars.” Initially, the purpose was to achieve a balance between England and France, the two major European imperialist powers. The United States at this time was not fully capable of extending its influence beyond its own borders, first because of the Civil War and then by an isolationist foreign policy that effectively shut the country off from the outside world until the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In Germany Bismarck, Chancellor under Emperors Wilhelm I and Friedrich III, did not pursue a colonialist policy in the tropics, focusing instead on strengthening and stabilizing the newly-formed Second German Empire. Bismarck was intent on isolating France, his country’s traditional enemy, by forming alliances with many other European countries. His hope was that England and France would clash over their colonial ambitions in Asia. Initially, Bismarck gave support to the French, but in 1890, during the reign of King Chulalongkorn, the newly-crowned emperor

Wilhelm II, whose abrasive personality alienated many European leaders, dismissed the Iron Chancellor from his post and set Germany on a more aggressive course. Under Wilhelm II, Germany not only condemned France’s imperialist policies but moved more assertively to protect its commercial and banking interests in Siam. That Germany continued to enjoy cordial relations with the Siamese court under both King Rama IV and King Rama V provoked the suspicions of the English and the French, both of whom worried that the Germans would threaten their own interests in the Kingdom. And at the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Wilhelm II’s drive to rebuild the German military, especially his navy, proved to be of benefit to the Siamese.

Ultimately, Kings Rama IV and V pursued a policy under which France and England, both equally intent on seizing control of all of Southeast Asia, were brought into competition over their perceived interests in Siam. When King Rama IV recognized the growing threat posed by the French to his country’s sovereignty, he attempted without success to draw closer to England. The British refused to come to Siam’s assistance despite having been granted numerous concessions as a result of agreements signed between the two countries. In these circumstances, the Siamese monarch and his Cabinet of Ministers,<sup>41</sup> both Thai and foreign,

---

<sup>41</sup> In addition to Krom Phraya Thevavongsa Varopakarn, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, during 1885-1923, Krom Phraya Damrong Rajanubhap, the Minister of the Interior under King Rama V, played a key role in the administration and foreign



specifically Krom Phraya Thevavongsa Varopakarn wisely agreed to do whatever was necessary to preserve the Kingdom's independence, even if it meant ceding land to the European powers.<sup>42</sup> The Siamese government also understood the importance of forging closer ties with Germany and Russia as means of keeping French and British power in check.

Germany, Europe's new "rising star," aroused fear in many of the European capitals at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. After all, German unification in 1871 had been helped by three wars, two of which were fought and won against Europe's major powerhouses, Austria-Hungary (1866) and France (1870). The Industrial Revolution that swept across parts of Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century had also spurred rapid development of the sciences, technology, arts and culture in the new German Empire. Under Chancellor Bismarck and Emperor Wilhelm II, Germany played a larger role in European political affairs, chiefly as an arbiter and a major power, unlike Austria-Hungary, whose influence was on the decline (See Section 2.3).

Because the Prussian ambassador had assured the Siamese government of King Rama IV that Germany entertained no colonial ambitions, Siam could draw closer to Berlin as a means of playing the French off against the British without undue concern for its own security.

Siam's relations with Russia were similar, as the Indochinese peninsula was outside the sphere in which the Czar wished to extend his country's power and influence. Russia had its eye instead on the Balkans and regions of central Asia near Afghanistan (See Section 2.3). The earliest Russian contacts with Siam occurred in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when, during the reigns of Kings Rama IV and Rama V, Russian warships docked in Bangkok three times. The Commander of the Russian Pacific fleet was also granted an audience with King Chulalongkorn. Because, like Germany, Russia's political and foreign policies posed no threat to Siam's sovereignty, the Kingdom sought closer relations with the Czar as a means of protecting itself from possible French and British aggression.

---

affairs of the Siamese state. Krom Luang Pichit Preechakorn was also instrumental in defending the kingdom's eastern frontier during the crisis of 1893. Among the foreigners who had a role in the political affairs of the Siamese court were a Belgian named Roland Jacquesmain (Chao Phraya Abhairaja), who served as an advisor to the king from 1892-1901, and Phraya Chonlayuthyothin (a Dane named Richelieu), who was second in command of the Siamese navy during the Crisis of 1893. See Pensri Duke, Royal Institute. *Foreign Policy and Thai Sovereignty and Independence*, cited in Note 20 above.

<sup>42</sup> Even his adversaries admired this quality, and recognized Krom Phraya Thevavongsa Varopakarn as the "Father of Siamese diplomacy." Even into the reign of King Rama VI, he was highly respected as one of the architects, along with King Rama IV, of Siamese neutrality. For his services to the Siamese crown, he was appointed special honorary commander of the Royal Siamese Army and given a similar title in the Royal British Army as well. In 1916, King Rama VI elevated him to the rank of prince.

The relationship had value for the Russians as well, as Siam could help Russia to maintain its influence in central Asia, which was under threat from England at the time. In the time of King Rama IV, Russia had already clashed with England, an ally of the Ottoman Turks, in the Crimean War. Under Czar Alexander III, when Russia began construction of the Trans-Siberian railroad, the Czarevitch was dispatched to lay the foundation stone. On his way, he stopped off in Bangkok, where he was given a grand welcome befitting his status. The warm personal feelings between the crown prince and the King of the two countries further facilitated the building of close ties between Russia and Siam. When King Chulalongkorn traveled to Russia in 1897, as part of his first European tour, he and the Czar signed a joint declaration of friendship on June 23, 1899, an act that allowed Siam to enlist Russian help in balancing French and British power.

Still, despite the repeated efforts of Czar Nicholas II and his Ministers to defend Siam against the French, a crisis could not be averted. Russia itself was in turmoil, and rumors of an impending war were spreading throughout Europe at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. King Chulalongkorn did not travel to Russia on his second trip to Europe in 1907 for these reasons. Similarly, he did not make a stop in Austria-Hungary, which was also experiencing internal politic unrest.

The long series of political disagreements with France and England throughout the reigns of King

Rama IV and King Rama V induced Siam to sign a number of treaties, both overt and covert, with the two European powers. Still, they did little to improve relations as both England and France continued to make increasingly onerous demands on Bangkok. The two countries had pressured Siam's neighbors to sign other agreements, while Siam entered into a secret arrangement with Cambodia in 1863 – an agreement that would lead to a “cold war” between Siam and France in subsequent years. Throughout this time, Siam was forced to cede land to England and France, and yet, the Kingdom was unable to avoid the Paknam crisis of 1893. All of these events point to the growing European threat that confronted Siam on its eastern, western, northern and southern borders in the years preceding King Chulalongkorn's first visit to Europe. Again, these events were: the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1867, during the reign of King Rama IV, which made “outer” Cambodia a French protectorate; Siam's ceding of the area of present-day Vietnam known as Sip Song Ju Thai (The Twelve Thai Tribes) to the French in 1888, during the reign of King Rama V; the loss of areas of southeastern Yunnan (“Ngiew”) and Karen state to the British in 1892; the 1893 clash between French and Siamese forces at the Battle of Paknam; and in 1896, London and Paris had issued a declaration proclaiming Siam a buffer state.

After King Chulalongkorn's return from Europe in 1897, and prior to his second trip to the continent, key events included: the forced ceding of land on the right bank of the Mekhong River to the

French, who in 1903, withdrew from Chantaburi but held on to the city of Kram, and the 1906 agreement under which Siam gave up “inner” Cambodia to the French in exchange for the city of Trat. Then, after his return to Siam from the second trip to Europe, the King was forced to cede four of the Malay states to Britain.

As the preceding paragraphs make clear, throughout their reigns, King Rama IV and his son King Chulalongkorn engaged in a high-stakes game of strategy with those major European powers – England and France – intent on laying claim to the entirety of Southeast Asia. Siam’s foreign policy

encouraged an atmosphere of rivalry and mistrust between the French and British that worked to the Kingdom’s advantage. Tensions grew as the two countries took bolder steps to protect their own commercial interests in Siam. Then, in 1896, to avert a possible war, France and England signed an agreement that made Siam a buffer state between the British colonies of Burma, India and Malaya to the west and south, and the French colonial possessions of Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam on Siam’s northern and eastern borders – a status that would ultimately be of tremendous benefit to the Kingdom of Siam.

### 2.3 *Conditions in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Europe Prior to King Chulalongkorn’s First Visit in 1897*

*Fin de siècle*, the name given to the atmosphere in Europe at the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, refers to more than just *the end of the century*. Europe at the time was beset by such turbulence and uncertainty that some felt that *the end of the world* was at hand.

It is important to understand how the *fin de siècle* atmosphere, which prevailed across the European continent in the waning years of the century, impacted on King Chulalongkorn’s first trip to Europe in 1897.

At this time, it was Europe – not Asia, North America, South America, Australia or Africa – where the major changes that would transform the entire world were taking place. Until the end of the Second World War, Europe was at the heart of a revolution

whose repercussions continue to be felt today. Chief among the changes that demand close examination are the following:

- The economic and political impact of the Industrial Revolution;
- Divergent trends in the art and literature of the period, a reflection of social, political and scientific forces, and of conflicting and mutually supportive currents in cultural and political philosophy;
- The birth of new nations in Europe; the devolution of patriotism into “nationalism” and “racism,” and the spirit of discovery that sent European explorers across Africa and Asia.

### 2.3.1 *The Forces Driving Change*

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Vienna was the cultural heart of Europe. Austrian satirist Karl Kraus (1874–1936) dubbed the city “the research laboratory for world destruction.”<sup>43</sup>

Within the span of a few short decades, the West had witnessed tremendous changes as the result of advances in knowledge, scientific and technological progress, and the Industrial Revolution, which completely transformed methods of production. Mechanized factories sprang up, launching a new age of mass production and creating an enormous demand for labor. People from the countryside began flooding into the cities to satisfy this demand, a process which radically altered traditional patterns of life and the family institution. It also gave rise to a new social class in Europe – the proletariat, made up of large numbers of former agricultural workers who left the land to work in factories in the big cities. The misery of the proletariat and the harsh living conditions of the urban poor, exploited and oppressed by the bourgeoisie, informed the political philosophy of Karl Marx (1818–1883). Influenced by the materialist philosophy of German thinker Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–1872), Marxism, which evolved into Communism, spread quickly across the continent, demanding a society

“free from class inequality,” in accordance with Marxist principles. The movement eventually led to violent political confrontation in a number of European countries. The birth of the proletariat and the capitalist class inspired artists, poets, and writers to choose as their subject matter the misery and suffering of the working classes – human beings imprisoned by their social environment and the natural laws of heredity. These naturalist artists, whose works were a rejection of many of the previous conventions of art and literature, adopted as their credo the formula “Art = Nature – X,” meaning that art should correspond to nature as closely as possible.

Naturalist art and literature were also influenced by positivism, a philosophy of science which held that the scientific method is the best approach to understanding the processes by which natural and human events occur. Positivism was particularly influential in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when it was reinforced by the ideas of the English naturalist Charles Darwin, whose *The Origin of the Species* appeared in 1859. His theory of evolution posited that animals and plants change gradually over time through a process of natural selection.<sup>44</sup> Positivism was also an outgrowth of the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Enlightenment era belief that “The visible is real.

---

<sup>43</sup> Helmut Nürnberger, *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur*, München: Bayerischer Schulbuch-Verlag, 24. Auflage (1998), page 243.

<sup>44</sup> *dtv Lexikon in 24 Bänden*, Volume 5, 6<sup>th</sup> edition (2006), page 114.

There is no other universe worth knowing apart from the material world that humans perceive with their senses.”<sup>45</sup> This materialist assertion was a rejection of the belief in the soul or the spirit which was common to most of the world’s major religions. This philosophy was embraced with particular enthusiasm in France.<sup>46</sup> It was also around this time that the French scientist and physician Paul Broca discovered the speech production centers in the frontal lobes of the human brain. Broca’s discovery was used to reinforce the prejudice that men were more intelligent than women because their brains were larger. This was extended to the claim that because whites generally had larger brains than members of the “lesser” races, they were necessarily superior to them. (Of course, we know today that these assertions have no basis in scientific fact.)

The discoveries made in the middle of the century had a tremendous impact on the scientific community, political philosophy, and the world economic order, which at the time was dominated by Europe. Darwin’s large body of work and particularly his rejection of the idea that living things have an essential nature that never changes introduced a new era not just in the field of biology but in the realm of political philosophy as well. The

Europeans, who considered themselves as “civilized Christians,” used Darwin’s theory to justify their own sense of superiority over other races. They saw themselves as “naturally” stronger. This was an idea articulated in *An Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races* (1853-1855) by the French aristocrat Arthur de Gobineau. In this work, Gobineau used the term “Aryan” to refer to the German people for the very first time. Germans constituted a pure, master race, superior to the “yellow” races and the “blacks” below them. Later, Adolf Hitler would seize on Gobineau’s racialist theories to justify his murder of more than six million Jews before and during World War II. These same theories underpinned Europe’s colonial policies in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, providing support for the belief that the white race was naturally superior and, therefore, had a legitimate right to rule over the people of Asia and Africa.<sup>47</sup>

It would be no exaggeration in fact to say that the scientific ideas of the time, especially the theories elaborated by Darwin, transformed all areas of human activity. Darwin’s theories on heredity influenced art, literature, political philosophy and economics in ways that would transform the entire world, first of all through the imperialist policies of Western Europe.

---

<sup>45</sup> “The visible is the real. What you see is what you get; there is no other universe worth knowing apart from the material world humans perceive with their senses.” In Charles Sowerwine, *France since 1870: Culture, Politics and Society*, 40.

<sup>46</sup> Charles Sowerwine, Notes 45, pages 41-43.

<sup>47</sup> Charles Sowerwine, Notes 45, page 46.

Imperialism defined the foreign policy of many European nations, intent on expanding their political and economic clout. These countries went in search of raw materials to supply the new factories that had been built in the wake of the Industrial Revolution. It was this that brought them into a long series of conflicts with one another and with the people in distant lands that they sought to colonize. From the closing decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the end of World War I in 1918, Siam was embroiled in the rivalry between the European powers for new colonial possessions throughout the world.

This was complicated further by the feelings of turmoil and uncertainty that characterized “*fin de siècle*” Europe and what came to be known as the dawn of the “Machine Age.” Interestingly, this period, from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was dubbed by German playwright Bertolt Brecht as the “Age of Knowledge.”

All of this had the effect of convincing the people of Europe that they were living in a time of declining morals. Artists, intellectuals, writers, and philosophers like Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) rose up in opposition to this new world, which they felt was destructive to the human spirit. Their

paintings, poetry, novels, and musical compositions were protests against the new age as well as a search for new forms of art, unlike any the world had previously known. Novelists and playwrights created works of social protest that rejected the values of the old world and the conventions of realism, which was still a dominant style in Europe at the time.

“*Fin de siècle*” Europe in the closing decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a turbulent place where borders were shifting as new countries came into being. The Benelux countries – Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg – had only recently achieved their independence after years of French, Austro-Hungarian and Spanish rule. War had been a constant in these countries throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century. They had come under French control during the time of Napoleon Bonaparte<sup>48</sup>, but in 1830, Belgium was the first of the Benelux nations to gain its independence, followed 60 years later by the newly-formed Kingdom of the Netherlands, which broke away from the Duchy of Luxembourg.

Germany, which for centuries had consisted of numerous independent states, also came under French control in the time of the Emperor

---

<sup>48</sup> At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, in 1795, much of the territory of what are now the Benelux countries was governed by France and named the Republic of Batavia. When Napoleon Bonaparte was crowned Emperor Napoleon I, it was renamed the Kingdom of Holland and formally annexed as part of France. After the Congress of Vienna in 1814-1815, European borders were redrawn to protect the interests of the traditional monarchies and aristocracies. Compare *Meyers Grosses Taschenlexikon in 24 Bänden* (1998), Volume 15, pages 247-248.

collapse of the Habsburg dynasty in Vienna and the ruling Hohenzollern family in Germany, Bohemia became part of the newly independent nation of Czechoslovakia.<sup>51</sup>

Finland had been under Swedish rule since 1581, before being annexed by Russia in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Finland began to aspire to political independence from Russia and cultural freedom from Sweden. These aspirations were finally realized with the downfall of the Romanovs in Russia in 1917.

For centuries, Norway had had close ties with Denmark. In fact, the Danish kings had ruled both countries since Renaissance times, and the Norwegian parliament elected the Danish King Christian I of the Oldenburg dynasty to be their monarch. But beginning in 1814, Norway came under Swedish rule, when King Charles XIII sent an army to force the Norwegians to accept him as their king and declared the creation of the Swedish-Norwegian Union (1814-1905). Norway attempted to claim its independence throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century but was only successful in forming its own government in 1898, just one year after the first visit to Europe by King Chulalongkorn of Siam.

Such was the “nationalist” atmosphere that pervaded Europe at the time of the Siamese King’s visit to the continent. In a letter he wrote to the Queen

Regent in Bangkok, King Chulalongkorn related a conversation he had with the King and Crown Prince of Sweden, both of whom remarked that Norway was likely to declare its independence within a matter of days. The actions taken by the various countries of Europe help those of us in the present to better understand the planning of the King’s itinerary. They also help to explain why he did not stop at Prague, one of Europe’s great cultural centers. The current capital of the Czech Republic was at the time still a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and not the capital of an independent state. Finland and Norway were excluded from the King’s itinerary because they, too, had yet to gain their independence – Finland from Russia, and Norway from the Kingdom of Sweden.

Political considerations also explain why on his second trip to Europe in 1910, King Chulalongkorn did not visit some of the “major allies” that had been the primary objectives of his first trip, primarily Russia and Austria-Hungary. Both of these countries were facing internal political crises. After the birth of the Czarevitch Alexis and the attempt on Rasputin’s life, Russia was rocked by political and economic turmoil that culminated in the Bolshevik Revolution and the execution of the entire imperial family. In Austria-Hungary, the Habsburgs’ grip on power was loosened after the death of Emperor Franz Joseph I prior to the end of World War I.

---

<sup>51</sup> For details see *Meyers Grosses Taschenlexikon in 24 Bänden*, Volume 3, 6<sup>th</sup> edition (1998), pages 106-107.

Almost two decades earlier, on his visit to Vienna in 1897, King Chulalongkorn remarked:

“In Austria the Emperor is supreme...he is revered...it appears likely that if the Emperor were to die, Hungary would soon revolt because there is no one with the Emperor’s stature to replace him...the royal family is disunited. In this country there is a clear distinction between commoners and the nobility. In Italy, in contrast, everyone dresses in military uniform. No one dresses differently.”

### ***2.3.2 Bismarck’s Foreign Policy – The Treaty to Achieve a Balance of Power between the Major Powers as a Tactic for Isolating France – Germany’s Decision Not to Pursue Colonies in Asia and the Lasting Friendship between Siam and Germany***

The establishment of the Second German Empire (Reich) in 1871<sup>52</sup> was a source of displeasure for a number of the new country’s European neighbors, especially France. Even in Russia, where Czar Nicholas II was a blood relative of the ruling Hohenzollern family, the emergence of a strong, unified Germany, led by Prussia, raised concerns.

Bismarck, however, who understood that the new empire was still relatively unstable, was particularly concerned that Germany’s enemies would band together to oppose her. It was out of this concern that Bismarck, as German Chancellor, pursued a foreign policy of peace, a policy which distinguished the German statesman from the governments of other major European powers, which were focused on expanding their power and influence.

At the time of Germany’s unification in 1871, Russia, France, and England were the world’s great superpowers. Because Bismarck had no interest in seeking revenge against his country’s old enemies, namely France, preferring to build bridges with neighboring countries, German foreign policy helped to reduce frictions between other imperial powers involved in the race to expand international trade and lay claim to colonial possessions all around the world. To ensure his country’s survival, Bismarck favored a policy of strengthening friendships with European nations like England and Russia, partly as a means of preventing them from forming alliances with France and putting pressure on Germany. In fact, however, Bismarck believed that

---

<sup>52</sup> i.e ten years after the first visit to Siam by the Prussian Ambassador Graf Eulenberg and the signing of a *Trade and Maritime Agreement* between the German Customs Union (Deutscher Zollverein), the Kingdom of Mecklenburg-Schwerin and Mecklenburg Strelitz and the Kingdom of Siam in 1862. The signing of this treaty led to the establishment of the first Prussian consulate in Bangkok, which four years later, with the creation of the Second Reich, became the Consulate of the Northern German Union. See Klaus Wenk. *Die Beziehung zwischen Deutschland und Thailand* (1998), page 17.



France under a republican form of government was less of a threat than a monarchical France.<sup>53</sup> By seeking to forge stronger ties with other major European powers, Bismarck effectively weakened France's political standing on the continent.

But just as Siam and Burma found it difficult to overcome the traditional mistrust and animosity that had defined their relationship for centuries, long-standing friendly colored the relationship between the new Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire (1815-1920) to the south, due to a common language and culture. Despite this long traditional friendship, the Prussian King Friedrich The Great had waged a successful war against Queen Maria Theresa of Austria and Bohemia in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, when the Austrians, under the Habsburgs, were at the peak of their political and economic power. The two neighbors fought again in 1866, prior to German unification. In 1849, Austria-Hungary had tried and failed to form a political union with Prussia and the German Confederation. The new entity would have stretched from the borders of Italy to the Baltic Sea. Instead, Austria-Hungary remained a major power on Germany's southern flank, and, following the outbreak of the Crimean War (1853-1856), was drawn into conflict with Russia. This war, fought chiefly on the Crimean

peninsula along the northern coast of the Black Sea (in present-day Ukraine), pitted the Russian forces of Czar Nicholas I against the Sultan of Ottoman Turkey. Turkey's allies – France and England – managed to take control of the peninsula in 1853, although the Czar's army continued to hold on to parts of Asian Turkey. As a condition of the Treaty of Paris, which ended the conflict, the Russians agreed to remove all troops from the Crimea, making the Black Sea a demilitarized zone.

Although Austria remained officially neutral, its threat to enter the war on the side of the Turks alienated the Russians. Relations between the two states worsened as Austria drew closer to France's Emperor Napoleon III in 1859, and when the Austrian Army lost the battles of Magenta and Solferino in Italy, Vienna was forced to cede Lombardy, effectively losing its influence in Italy and leaving it only its holdings on the Balkan peninsula.

Austria-Hungary's forced withdrawal from Italy and its military loss to Bismarck's Germany in 1866, a loss that facilitated Germany's subsequent unification, dealt a terrific blow to Austrian power in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Then, by focusing its attention on the Balkans, its last remaining possessions beyond its own traditional borders<sup>54</sup>, Austria-Hungary was brought into increasing conflict with

---

<sup>53</sup> Wilhelm Mommsen. *Otto von Bismarck*. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag (1966), pages 140-142.

<sup>54</sup> *Meyers Grosses Taschenlexikon in 24 Bänden* (1998), Volume 12, page 199, and Volume 16, pages 142-143, and Wilhelm Mommsen. *Otto von Bismarck*, pages 141-142.

the Russian Empire.

Bismarck was fully aware of the need to tread carefully in his dealings with both Austria-Hungary and Russia, two major powers with the greatest bearing on the survival and stability of the Second Reich.

Bismarck moved to forge cordial relations with Russia and to overcome the recent animosity with the Habsburgs in Austria. He recognized a common thread uniting these countries – the fact that all three were monarchies. They were not republics, and there was no parliamentary system, as in England, to impede the formation of permanent alliances.

Thanks to the German Chancellor's political savvy, Bismarck was able to persuade Russia and Austria-Hungary to enter into a treaty with Germany, forming what came to be known as the "League of the Three Emperors" in October 1873.<sup>55</sup> This treaty was renewed in 1884 and again in 1887. To improve relations with England, Bismarck chose not to pursue imperialist policies in Asia, allowing London and Paris, traditional antagonists, to vie for colonies there. Instead, Germany would lay claim to minor

parts of Africa, such as Cameroon and Togoland, and islands in the Pacific Ocean. This policy did, however, bring Germany into conflict with Spain over control of the Caroline Islands, a conflict mediated by the Pope. To pacify Russia, the Germans completely ignored the Balkans, claiming that the peninsula held no interest for them.

These foreign policies were designed to ensure the survival of the newly-formed Second Reich and to isolate France. Bismarck took no actions to incite a war with Germany's neighbors.<sup>56</sup> When the Prussian Ambassador, Graf Eulenburg, traveled to Bangkok in 1861 to forge ties with the royal court, King Mongkut (Rama IV) asked him if Germany had any intentions of establishing colonies in Asia. The Ambassador responded that if Prussia desired colonies, they would not be in the tropics, a reply which greatly pleased the Siamese monarch.<sup>57</sup> Bismarck remained true to this policy throughout his term as the German Chancellor, although he was not entirely able to resist internal pressure for Germany to enter the race for colonies with the other major European powers. In 1882, a Bureau of Colonial Affairs (*Kolonialverein*) was formed which

---

<sup>55</sup> In 1872, meetings took place between the leaders of three European kingdoms: Germany, Russia and Austria-Hungary. Referred to in German as "Die Drei-Kaiser-Zusammenkunft," these discussions led to the signing of the League of Three Emperors the following year, in: Wilhelm Mommsen. *Otto von Bismarck*, page 143.

<sup>56</sup> Compare Pornsan Watanangura (2012), *Two Periods of German Culture*, pages 144-147.

<sup>57</sup> Klaus Wenk (1996), page 16 and Max von Brandt. *Dreiunddreizig Jahre in Ost-Asien: Erinnerungen eines deutschen Diplomaten*. (In drei Bänden), Band I. Leipzig: Verlag von Georg Wigand (1901), page 259. All three books printed in Sütterlin script, housed in the German National Archives, Merseburg department, Gesch. VI d 347.

countries were merely temporary tools for pursuing foreign policy and were of value only so long as the parties to the pacts continued to share common interests and benefits.<sup>62</sup> After Bismarck's resignation, foreign policy was handled directly by the Kaiser, and despite the existence of an elected Parliament (*Reichstag*), power rested chiefly in the person of the Emperor. Recognizing the potential might of his new empire and of the German people, Wilhelm II embarked on a more aggressive policy to expand German influence. The Kaiser was particularly keen to build a new navy that would be as formidable as the British and Russian navies. Wilhelm II was so supremely self-confident, in fact, that he showed little concern for the reaction to his bellicose policies among other nations in Europe.

In brief, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, both before and after King Chulalongkorn's first visit to Europe, Germany was a major power with a central role in managing the political affairs of the entire continent. It was Germany that had pushed for the signing of the treaty with Austria-Hungary and Russia that created the League of the Three Emperors. Germany had also sought alliances with Romania, Spain, and Italy. It had positioned itself as an "arbiter" and not a "judge" in Europe's disputes, most notably in 1877-78, when England and Austria-Hungary threatened to attack Russia in retaliation

for the Czar's assault against the Ottoman Turks. This incident afforded Germany an opportunity to improve relations with the British through the England-Austria-Hungary-Italy Treaty. Germany was the peacemaker of Europe up until the time when Kaiser Wilhelm II adopted a more aggressive stance that alienated all of the country's former allies with the exception of Austria-Hungary. It was this belligerence on the part of the German leader that ultimately led to the outbreak of World War I.

In the 1880s, German policy under Chancellor Bismarck faltered when the Congress of Berlin failed to produce the desired results. Bismarck was aware of the internal weakness of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and tried to prevent Vienna from playing a major role in eastern European affairs for fear of antagonizing Russia. In the event of a war, he did not want Austria to gain ground in the Balkans. In 1887, Germany signed a treaty with the Russians, agreeing that both parties would remain neutral. Germany also recognized Russia's influence and Russian rights to the Balkan peninsula, especially in Bulgaria. At the time that the treaty was signed, Russia was well acquainted with the terms of the treaty between Germany and Austria-Hungary. For this reason, even Bismarck himself saw that the amiable relations between his country and Russia were unlikely to last. The Chancellor had confided

---

<sup>62</sup> Wilhelm Mommsen, 1996. Note 53, page 148.

as much to King Chulalongkorn during his visit to Friedrichruhe.<sup>63</sup>

Meanwhile, relations between Germany and France, hardly the closest of friends at the best of times, were growing increasingly strained. The “nationalist” policies pursued by French War Minister, General Boulanger,<sup>64</sup> brought the country into direct conflict with its neighbor to the east.

After 1885, there were anti-German rumblings in the Russian press, even though the Russian government and the Romanov court showed no signs of displeasure with Berlin. Then, in 1890, with the introduction of young Kaiser Wilhelm II’s more assertive foreign policy and Germany’s subsequent failure to renew the League of the Three Emperors, relations between Russia and France gradually improved. These were the principal factors behind the shift in direction in European foreign policy and the prevailing conditions in various countries in Europe at the conclusion of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>.

### ***2.3.3 French and British Foreign Policy and Japan’s Rise to Major Power Status in Asia – Events from the End of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century to the Outbreak of World War I***

Relations between European nations at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were often not as amicable as those between Germany and Siam. In the 1870s and 1880s, France and England clashed over perceived common interests in Egypt, Canada and India. Russia’s relations with England were also strained over policies pertaining to the Near East and stretches of Asia bordering China, where Russia was eager to expand its sphere of influence. When Russia attacked the Ottoman Turks in 1877-78, England and Austria-Hungary, both of whom were allied with Turkey, were almost drawn into a war with Russia. Germany under Chancellor Bismarck interceded, however, and mediated a settlement at the Congress of Berlin, although the peace achieved under this treaty was short-lived. Meanwhile, France and Italy were at odds over Tunis. These conflicts across the continent allowed Germany to pursue a foreign policy focused on preventing French aggression. The Germans initiated discussions to

---

<sup>63</sup> *Letter 53* (received the same date as *Letter 52*). In: Personal letters of Somdej Phra Ramathibodee Srisirithorn Maha Chulalongkorn Phra Chulachomklau Chaoyuhua to Queen Saovabha Pongsri, Regent, during the first visit to Europe of King Chulalongkorn in 1897. Somdej Prince Krom Phraya Damrong Rajanubhap and Princess Jong Chitrathanom Diskul Foundation. Printed to mark the 5<sup>th</sup> Cycle Birthday Celebrations of HM Queen Sirikit, 12 August 1992, page 183.

<sup>64</sup> The *Boulanger Affair* led to rumors that damaged the republican government. General Boulanger was a racist and anti-Semite who came to power through election in 1889, appealing to “populist” sentiments. He proved to be an ineffective leader. See Charles Sowerwine, *Notes* 45, pages 60-62.



improve relations with their traditional enemies although these efforts came to little. During his Chancellorship, Bismarck appeared to express support for French colonial policies, but ten years later, under the new emperor, Wilhelm II, this support was withdrawn. When Germany overtly opposed French colonial ambitions in Morocco, the cordial relations which prevailed for a decade quickly soured.

While German foreign policy had an impact on conditions in Europe and in Siam, the foreign policy of two other major powers – France and England – was equally, if not more, significant. The actions taken by these nations had a profound influence, both direct and indirect, on the policies adopted by Russia and Germany and on events in Asia as well.

The policies pursued by the two major European powers were shaped by a number of factors. These included the *fin de siècle* atmosphere that swept across Europe and the growing influence of science, which stressed materialism and denied the existence of the soul. Other influences were racist and nationalist ideologies that underpinned colonial ambitions in Asia and Africa.

What distinguished the French from the British was that French foreign policy was more strongly

shaped by the philosophical currents of the time, chiefly materialism, and nationalist pride in the country's Gallic past. This nationalism contributed to a rather virulent strain of racism that would not have surprised King Chulalongkorn, who, in a letter written in 1897,<sup>65</sup> described the French as a people ruled by their passions. French policy was also subject to the influence of the Catholic Church, both directly and through conservative politicians with ties to the old monarchy and the Catholic hierarchy.

English foreign policy, on the other hand, was less rigid, informed by such concepts as “laissez faire,” “divide and rule,” and “splendid isolation.” London also pursued a foreign policy in which commercial interests generally took precedent over political considerations. In other words, it was through the creation of a non-formal network of worldwide trade links that England hoped to achieve its political aims. This goal was complemented by a policy that sought to avoid confrontations with other major powers to the greatest extent possible. The country was also immune to conflicts between Protestantism and Catholicism since it had its own national church in the Church of England. Founded by King Henry VIII, the Church had asserted its independence from the Vatican in Rome in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and under Henry's daughter, Queen

---

<sup>65</sup> From *Letter 56*, written by King Chulalongkorn to Queen Saovabha Pongsri in Bangkok. See Note 63. page 187.

Elizabeth I, English subjects had been guaranteed freedom of religious expression. England's plan to build a global trading network was also helped by the dominance of the country's naval and commercial fleets. England had been the world's premier maritime power since the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588<sup>66</sup>. It was reinforced centuries later by Nelson's defeat of a combined Spanish-French naval force at the Battle of Trafalgar, off Spain's southern coast, on October 21, 1805. This victory cemented Britain's position as the leading maritime trading power and strengthened the country's political influence in the world.

In 1897, the year of King Chulalongkorn's first trip to Europe, Queen Victoria celebrated her Jubilee. Although the King was not invited to attend, he did send his son, the Crown Prince, to represent him at the celebrations. In a letter to the Queen Regent in Bangkok,<sup>67</sup> the King noted the power of the United Kingdom, which laid claim to colonies all around the globe. In Asia, the British controlled parts of China as well as India, Burma, and Malaya. Australia and New Zealand were British possessions as were Egypt, Nigeria, South Africa, and the Gold Coast

(present-day Ghana). England had colonies in the Caribbean and Latin America as well, and was interested in seizing control of still other parts of the globe. In Canada, England clashed with French-speaking settlers in Quebec, creating a dispute that has endured into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

At this time, the British pound sterling was the global currency. England had the world's largest navy and a standard of military might that allowed it to defend its trade routes and protect its commercial interests around the globe. While in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the population of England numbered only 42 million, the population of the British Empire exceeded 400 million, over half of whom were in India. At the same time, France's population stood at roughly 100 million, while that of Russia was approximately 130 million.<sup>68</sup> The fact that England was an island helped to distinguish it culturally and politically from the rest of Europe. It was an industrialized nation with a global trading network and a neutral policy that was considerably more responsive to changing circumstances than that of other major European countries.

---

<sup>66</sup> The Spanish word 'armada' translates as 'armed might.' It is the name given to the Spanish navy during the reign of King Philip II. The Spanish commander, Herzog von Medina Sidonia, led a fleet of 130 ships against a much smaller British navy, led by C. Howard and Sir Francis Drake. The battle, which raged between 31 July and 8 August 1588, ended with Spain's defeat.

<sup>67</sup> From a telegram sent by King Chulalongkorn to Queen Saovabha Pongsri. See Note 63. Version of Crown Prince Vajiravudh, pages 121-123.

<sup>68</sup> See: John W. Young. *Britain and the World in the Twentieth Century*. Arnold Publishers, 1917, pages 6-9.



At the height of its power, the British Empire was a land “on which the sun never set.” Queen Victoria, who reigned for more than 60 years, believed that her nation had an important role to play as a “civilizing” force in the world by bringing the Christian religion to the “dark” corners of the globe.<sup>69</sup> Even though the dominant forces in British society at the time were the military, the Church of England, and senior civil officials, most of whom were members of the landed aristocracy, the Queen’s vision of England’s civilizing mission contributed to the growth of a number of religious organizations. One of these, *the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, led by the German Sanskrit scholar Dr. Friedrich Max Müller, received a copy of the *Tripitaka* from King Chulalongkorn during one of his visits to England in 1897.

Despite Britain’s policy to avoid conflicts with other major powers, simply the vast extent and diversity of its empire created serious administrative problems. To address these, the British government adopted a policy of “divide and rule,” which gave some of its colonies the right to manage their own affairs. This was the case in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Even in India, a country whose size and population exceeded the capacity of British manpower to oversee administrative affairs, England

appointed representatives to supervise the work of local bureaucrats.

But beginning in 1870, England’s dominance in Europe was challenged by a united Germany. In the drive to achieve unification, Germany had fought and won wars against Denmark (1867), Austria-Hungary (1888), and France (1870). When Germany declared the creation of *the Second Reich* – the Second German Empire – at the Palace of Versailles on French territory, the French were enraged. Meanwhile, the Japanese were asserting their power in East Asia. Japan defeated the Chinese in 1894-95, and after 1890, it appeared that the United States was overtaking the British as the world’s leading industrial power.

In 1876, Russia embarked on an expansionist policy in central Asia, namely in Persia, Tibet, and Afghanistan, and in 1891, the Czar’s government began construction of the Trans-Siberian Railroad from St. Petersburg to the naval base at Vladivostock on Russia’s Pacific coast.<sup>70</sup> In 1879, the European continent was divided into two distinct camps, with Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy in one, and France and Russia, who formed the Franco-Russian Alliance in 1894, in the other. This situation was complicated further, however, by Germany’s control over the Chinese port city of Kiaochow in 1897 and

---

<sup>69</sup> John W. Young. See Note 68, page 9.

<sup>70</sup> i.e. Czar Nicholas II of Russia, while still the Czarevitch (Crown Prince) traveled to Siam in 1889, on his way to inspect the start of construction of the Trans-Siberian Railroad.

Russia's 25-year lease agreement with the Chinese for the city of Port Arthur. The U.S. was becoming increasingly concerned about the possibility of war with Spain because of Spain's presence in the Caribbean, and in March 1897, the American government agreed to lease the Chinese port of Weihaiwei.

A number of circumstances led Britain's Foreign Secretary Lord Salisbury to fear that his country could be drawn into a war with other major powers over interests in Turkey and China. In a speech delivered on the 4<sup>th</sup> of May 1898, Salisbury alluded to Darwin's theory of natural selection in explaining why some races thrive while others become extinct. Although there were as yet no immediate dangers threatening Britain's security at the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, changing conditions at the end of Victoria's reign forced England to re-examine its foreign policies around the globe.

It was at this juncture that the British government devised a policy known as "splendid isolation." The term was first used in the Canadian parliament in January 1896, when Richard Chamberlain was England's Prime Minister. Not long after, Chamberlain reasserted his country's intention to maintain its naval supremacy in the world, but England – unlike the United States,

Germany, Italy, Russia and Japan – had not expanded the size of its fleet. Chamberlain spoke of the "splendid isolation" that surrounded "our people." The Prime Minister felt that England should strengthen its power base by entering into alliances with other European nations – chief among them, Germany. Another minister, Naval Commander George Gorchen, felt that England's isolationist policy gave the country freedom to respond to changing circumstances in the world in a timely manner.<sup>71</sup>

But England had already entered into agreements with a large number of countries at the time. Some of these, such as England's treaty with Portugal, had been signed as far back as the 14<sup>th</sup> century (1373). Under a treaty signed in 1878, England was obligated to come to Ottoman Turkey's defense in the event of an attack by an Asian enemy, and under the terms of an 1839 agreement, England was sworn to defend the borders of Belgium, which had recently managed to secure its independence from France. These treaties indicated Britain's desire to protect some of Europe's smaller countries from invasion by larger powers. This is confirmed by the fact that England did not sign an agreement with a major power until 1902.<sup>72</sup> Many observers at the time felt that Britain's policy of "splendid isolation"

---

<sup>71</sup> John W. Young. See Note 68, page 12.

<sup>72</sup> Even so, England signed the Anglo-Kuwait Treaty in 1899. It was a sign of British concern over growing German influence in Persia and an attempt to protect English interests in India. In South Africa, the British put down a revolt by the Boers,

would cease with the signing of the friendship agreement between England and Germany in 1901, but this was not the case. The following year Japan proposed an alliance that was formalized with the signing of the Anglo-Japanese Treaty, an agreement meant to prevent France from coming to Russia's aid in the Far East. This was followed by the Anglo-French Entente, which was ratified in 1904.

Some people wrongly assume, however, that the British Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, Lord Salisbury, actively pursued this policy of "splendid isolation." While he did recognize the need for his country to ally itself with other major powers, Salisbury responded that under the British Constitution, England had no right to enter into any alliance that obligated it to come to the defense of another country. It was the British Parliament, together with the British public, that should decide whether England went to war. Salisbury was eager for Britain to cooperate with Germany and Japan despite criticism from several corners that he was pursuing the same conservative/nationalist policies of his predecessor Benjamin Disraeli. Still, Salisbury understood England's weakness: The British Army was not large enough to take on another country in war. The Prime Minister foresaw the growing rivalry across Europe and throughout the

world. In these circumstances, he stressed the need for England to maintain its maritime and financial clout as a safeguard against possible foreign aggression. Other European powers were entering into their own alliances.

France and Russia, for instance, had signed a treaty, which had the consequence of ratcheting up tensions between Russia and Austria in the Balkans. Meanwhile, the French were forced to cede Alsace and Lorraine to the Germans in 1871. Therefore, the focus of England's foreign policy at the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, just three short years after King Chulalongkorn's first trip to Europe, was to prevent war within its own colonial borders and to keep other threats as far from its own doorstep as possible. And even though England understood the importance of allying itself with Germany in order to limit Russian power, such an alliance, Prime Minister Chamberlain realized, was also seen as an act of aggression in other European capitals. In 1898, when Germany looked to England for support in Europe, England came under threat from Russia in the Far East, particularly in Manchuria. If the British openly supported the Germans, they faced the risk of war with Russia and France, who had their own alliance. Chamberlain had no choice but to block the involvement of any British financial institution in

---

descendants of Dutch settlers, who were intent on claiming independence from England. Another German-led revolt in the Transvaal, where rich gold deposits had recently been discovered, caused further difficulties for the British in South Africa. The German Paul Kruger's struggle for independence in the Transvaal received open support from the German Emperor.

the construction of the Berlin-Baghdad railroad. Begun in 1903, this project had the unforeseen benefit of increasing German influence in the Ottoman Empire, where there was a strong English presence. All of these circumstances prevented England from openly siding with any other nation, fearing that doing so would lead inevitably to war.

We find, therefore, that during the preparatory stages of His Majesty King Chulalongkorn's proposed first visit to Europe in 1897, then-British Foreign Minister Lord Salisbury ignored the Siamese request for a formal visit to England as early as 1896. Whereas other governments across the continent responded to the proposed royal visit with enthusiasm, the British government refused to extend an invitation to the Siamese monarch to take part in the celebrations for Queen Victoria's Jubilee, citing the Queen's advanced age and claiming that only those close to Her Majesty would be invited. Records also show that during his European tour, the King set foot on English soil three times although no formal agreements were reached between the two governments and King Chulalongkorn did not receive an official welcome befitting his station as he did in Germany and Russia. Still, despite England's apparent indifference to the Siamese King's visit, explained by a fear of provoking a conflict with the French, the British government did enter into negotiations with the Siamese to obtain a concession to build a railroad in the

Kingdom both before and after His Majesty the King's trip to Europe (for further details, see Chapter 3).

Another reason for the King's decision to visit Europe was the growing economic and political clout of the relatively young United States of America. Earlier in its history, the US had feared that England would seek to extend its sphere of influence in the New World. To protect the nation against British aggression, U.S. President Monroe pursued an isolationist policy, which came to be known as the Monroe Doctrine—a policy which the British government refused to recognize. As tensions between the two countries escalated, stock markets in both London and New York experienced a downturn that dissuaded subsequent British leaders from taking an antagonistic stance towards the U.S. In fact, as Britain's fears of the United States increased, the U.K. adopted a much friendlier attitude towards its former North American colonies. From Britain's point of view, war against the U.S. would be an exercise in waste and futility. Besides, Britain had massive investments in the United States, and as its major trading partner, the U.S. supplied the British with much-needed resources and raw materials. The U.K. and the U.S. also shared a common language, culture, and history that made them natural allies. British politicians such as Lords Chamberlain and Balfour, although not Lord Salisbury, insisted on the importance of the Anglo-Saxon link between the two countries. Consequently,



when the U.S. declared war on Spain, taking possession of the Philippines and islands in the Caribbean, the British, unlike other countries in Europe, turned a blind eye to the American aggression. The United States returned the favor by issuing a sympathetic statement concerning British policy in South Africa, a move which further strengthened ties between the two allies. After the conclusion of the Boer War, between British troops and Dutch settlers in South Africa led by Paul Boer, who had received support from the German government, England adopted a more relaxed stance toward the United States, signing an agreement granting the Americans the right to dig the Panama Canal. The British also withdrew their navy from the Caribbean Sea, signaling a new era of U.S. dominance, in which the Americans would protect British interests in the region. In 1902, in order to safeguard their commercial and financial interests, England and Germany imposed a joint embargo on Venezuela, but whenever American interests were at stake, the British stepped aside. Later, in negotiations to fix the border between the U.S., Canada and Alaska, the U.K. sided with their American allies.

Interestingly, as the friendship between the United States and the United Kingdom progressively warmed, relations between the U.S. and Germany cooled significantly.

With the United States squeezing the British out of the Caribbean, England adopted a more

cordial diplomatic policy towards the French. As mentioned earlier, the two nations signed an entente on April 8, 1904, which marked a turning point in their relations. No longer was France viewed as a strong ally of the Russian court and a rival for Britain's own imperial ambitions around the world, as had been the situation at the time of King Chulalongkorn's first visit to Europe in 1897. Instead, the British hoped to use France as a buffer against Russia. Still, the treaty between England and France was a far cry from that signed between the British government and the Japanese imperial court. There was also still no sign whatsoever of British readiness to take a more active role in European politics. The entente of April 8, 1904, settled fishing disputes off the coast of Newfoundland and divided up territory in equatorial Africa between the two European powers. In fact, relations between England and France warmed to such an extent that the French announced that they would no longer oppose British claims to Egypt while the U.K. reciprocated by supporting French ambitions in Morocco.

In general, France, like Spain, was eager to protect its colonial possessions and maintain its status as a world power. Although domestic politics was relatively tumultuous throughout much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with conflicts between conservatives, the aristocracy and the Church on the one hand and republican groups on the other erupting into bloodshed on a number of occasions, the newly-formed French republican government recognized

that Russia was in no position to assist it in protecting or expanding French territorial claims in Africa. In fact, the French were becoming increasingly nervous about angering London. A potent symbol of the move towards more cordial relations between the two European powers was the visit to Paris of the British monarch, King Edward VII, in May 1903. This was followed by a visit to London by the French President, exchanges which eventually led to the signing of the Anglo-Franco entente of 1904.

British scholar, John Young, believes that this entente served as a major catalyst of the Russo-Japanese war of 1904, although, according to Young, French anti-Germanism did not figure in Britain's decision to sign the entente with France.<sup>73</sup>

Still, political conditions at the time seemed to strengthen Britain's place in the world. When the Russian navy sank the British ship *Dogger Bank* in the North Sea, mistakenly believing it to be a Japanese torpedo boat, the Russians agreed to pay the British a hefty penalty. Meanwhile, it became increasingly apparent that the Anglo-Franco entente, unlike Britain's treaty with Japan, which was an attempt to resolve British problems outside Europe, did more to prevent hostilities than to foster cordial relations between the two signatories. English interests were especially well-served by Japan's defeat of the Russian navy. This was especially clear

after the battle of Tsushima Bay, in May 1905, when the Japanese destroyed Russia's Baltic fleet, which had traveled half way across the globe over a period of four months to engage the Japanese navy. Under the terms of the peace treaty that ended the Russo-Japanese War, the Japanese were allowed to keep Korea and Manchuria. In August of the same year, England and Japan renewed their treaty of friendship, this time agreeing to come to each other's defense in the event of an attack by a third country or an attack on India, the jewel in Britain's imperial crown. This had the effect of frightening the Russians, who understood that if they were to attack India, they would find themselves at war with both England and Japan. As a result, Russian influence in India and China as well as the country's aims on the Ottoman capital at Istanbul dissipated. Furthermore, the political situation within Russia itself in 1905 was particularly tense. Subsequent to the Russo-Japanese war, British foreign policy, which sought to control affairs from afar, became increasingly important, while Russia's defeat in the war weakened France's position on the European political stage. Meanwhile, the Anglo-Franco entente raised concerns in Berlin that England would ignore Germany's interest in Morocco in favor of the French.

In 1905, the German government decided to test the strength of the Anglo-Franco entente by

---

<sup>73</sup> John W. Young. See Note 68, pages 28-29.



provoking a confrontation in Morocco. Britain's response helped to clarify the country's policies in relation to France, Russia and Germany during the period between King Chulalongkorn's visit to Europe and the outbreak of World War I. These policies culminated in the strengthening of British power, the defeat of Czarist Russia, and the decline of French influence due to internal political strife, the subject of the following section.

While French domestic and international policies were shaped by political ideology and rigid cultural constructs, the British had a more stable system of government. In Edward VII, they had a monarch who worked willingly with Cabinet ministers<sup>74</sup> to formulate flexible policies that effectively protected the country's political and commercial interests without provoking undue internal conflicts. Germany and Russia at this time also had stable governments, although each was faced with its own internal political uncertainties. In Russia there was a growing and increasingly violent undercurrent of political dissent. The Czar, the nobility and the prosperous upper classes were engaged in a conflict with landless peasants from all over the Empire.

In Germany, after the dismissal of Chancellor Bismarck in 1890, power was increasingly

concentrated in the hands of the Emperor. The Reichstag was under his control and the Reichskanzler was chosen by the Emperor himself. Wilhelm II embarked on political, commercial, and diplomatic policies that were in marked contrast with those favored by former Chancellor Bismarck. He enlarged the military and built a powerful new navy. He showed little interest in maintaining friendly ties with any of Germany's European neighbors, intent only on isolating the French. Wilhelm II supported the use of German force in the Transvaal after the discovery of gold in 1886, and offered assistance to the Dutch settlers in South Africa in their war against the British. The Boer War, in which Dutch guerilla fighters were dealt with extremely harshly by the British authorities, threatened to further derail relations between London and Berlin. Later, in 1895, Germany entered into what was known as the "triple intervention" with France and Russia to protect their interests in China after the Japanese government announced its intention to annex large parts of the country. England's refusal to come to China's defense caused tremendous disappointment among the leadership in Beijing.

In brief, Germany took great strides towards becoming another major military, economic, commercial and industrial power in Europe. This

---

<sup>74</sup> King Edward VII, who came to the throne in 1901 after the death of Queen Victoria, was the last British monarch to take an active role in the country's foreign policy decisions. Under subsequent monarchs, foreign policy would be the purview of the British Cabinet.

development was spurred by many scientific and technological innovations introduced at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, both before and after King Chulalongkorn's visit to Europe in 1897.

Meanwhile, however, France continued to be racked by domestic unrest. The republican faction had only recently managed to seize power from the old aristocracy who, under the influence of the Catholic Church, had pursued a policy of discrimination against the country's Jews and other minorities. After the February Revolution of 1848, the Second Republic pledged to realize the ideals of the Revolution of 1789. Influenced by the "bourgeois mode of perception,"<sup>75</sup> the new government was guided by the principles of reason and a materialist view of the universe in which only that which could be seen, touched and experienced through the senses was valid. With its roots in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, this view of reality was endorsed by various French guilds, the Jewish and Protestant minorities, lawyers, professors and university students. It is easy to see why this materialist philosophy appealed more to Republicans than to monarchists, who, allied with the Catholic Church, believed in the divine right of kings. The Republican faction that took power in France after the Revolution of 1848 instituted major educational reforms. With the enactment of the Guizot Law in 1833, France had established a

nationwide system of primary schools which provided basic education to all French boys, but in 1880, under President Ferry of the Third Republic, public education was made mandatory for both boys and girls through age 13. It was also an issue of great importance for Ferry's government that French children be taught by instructors who had obtained their *brevet* (teaching qualification) from the national teachers college, the *école normale*, rather than by members of the Catholic clergy. In 1886, a law went into effect which barred instructors affiliated with religious institutions from teaching girls and boys in French state schools after 1891.

The primary rationale for these moves was to raise a new generation of rational materialists – young French men and women with a modern outlook on the world. The Republican government provided special support for gifted children from poor families and equipped girls with the skills needed to become secretaries and clerical assistants. The government designed the compulsory curriculum for all schools, public and private, throughout the country, instilling in French children a love of country and an appreciation for French culture, traditions and the country's grandeur.

A similar phenomenon was set in motion in Germany in 1870, during the process of German unification, and again in the lead-up to the Second

---

<sup>75</sup> Donald M. Lowe. *History of Bourgeois Perception*. Chicago, 1982.

World War under Hitler's National Socialist Party. In France, General de Gaulle also pursued a nationalist agenda, although a far less aggressive one, after the close of World War II.

A particularly interesting component of the French Republic's work of nation-building was the way in which culture was used to underpin government policy and how this necessitated a revision of the country's history. A continuous historical narrative was created that linked present-day France with its past. Contemporary historians like Gabriel Monod, Charles Seignobos, and Ernest Lavisse posited a version of French history in which the "Republic" represented the epitome of national and political development. These scholars contributed to a "narrative history" that began with the storming of the Bastille and culminated with the toppling of the monarchy. These acts of "patriotic heroism" awoke France's military spirit which had been weakened under a corrupt monarchy, a long line of decadent, effeminate kings, and a dissolute aristocracy.<sup>76</sup> These eminent French historians adopted the methods of German philosopher Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886), one of the founders of modern source-based history. This approach, based on a critical reading of primary texts, spread

through secondary schools and universities. Lavisse (1842-1922), hailed by the French government as a "revolutionary history professor," applied it to the courses he taught at the Sorbonne, where he was paid a very handsome salary.<sup>77</sup>

Literature was another cultural product put into the service of bolstering the new French Republic. The end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the rise of naturalism, a literary movement that used realistic detail to suggest that the "environment" had inescapable force in defining human character. Naturalism's best-known practitioner was Emile Zola (1840-1902), whose novels about the lives of France's underclass were tremendous successes. Zola's novels did more, however, than demonstrate the crushing weight of environmental conditions on his characters' fate. They were realistic depictions of individuals who grew and developed, and who, through a series of harrowing circumstances, finally realized the need to change.

His first work to win popularity was *Thérèse Raquin*, the story of a poor woman who is motivated by lust and greed. The novel was followed by a 20-volume series entitled *The Rougon-Macquarts: Natural and Social History of a Family during the Second*

---

<sup>76</sup> British historian Ann Rigney observed in *The Rhetoric of Historical Representation: Three Narrative Histories of the French Revolution*. Cambridge (1990) that the French Revolution of 1848 was an attempt to make the country a 'republic' again after the rule of Napoleon Bonaparte and the restoration of power in the hands of the European nobility with the Congress of Vienna in 1815. Although the revolution did not prove successful, it did give France a restored sense of "narrative history".

<sup>77</sup> Charles Sowerwine (2001), See Note 45, pages 40-54.

*Empire (Les Rougon-Macquart: Histoire naturelle et sociale d'une famille sous le Second Empire)*. Published between 1871 and 1893, this cycle of novels is a naturalistic portrayal of French society in an era influenced by science. Zola's masterpiece, *Germinal*, appeared in 1885 and tells the story of a coalminers' strike in the northern French town of Anzin. The novel ends with the defeat of the miners, although capitalism claims its victims among the privileged classes as well.

Another celebrated author of Republican France was Victor Hugo, author of *Notre Dame de Paris* (1831) and *Les Misérables* (1862). These novels idealized France's poor, while Zola's portrayals were more "naturalistic." In the latter's works, the poor were shown as desperate and downtrodden, much as in the works of German playwright Gerhard Hauptmann. Hauptmann focused his attention on the miserable lives of workers employed in the booming textile mills of 19<sup>th</sup>-century Europe or similar individuals beaten down by the forces of heredity and environment set loose by the Industrial Revolution.

In Germany, however, Zola was not simply admired as the leading light of the naturalist movement. He was lauded as the "poet of the French Republic." The ideas and sentiments expressed in his works found voice in other artists and other art

forms as well – in, for example, the realist novels of Gustave Flaubert (1819-1877), friend of the poet Charles Baudelaire, and in the paintings of Impressionists Edouard Manet (1832-1873), Camille Pissarro, Claude Monet, and Edgar Degas, who displayed their works at the *Salon des Refusés* beginning in 1863. These paintings depict life in a naturalistic and impressionistic manner. Manet's portrait of Zola, exhibited in the Salon of 1868, is a declaration of the victory that these naturalist artists and their impressionist allies would ultimately score in the name of "republicanism." Standing in contrast were artists like Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824-1904), whose best-known works were "Orientalist" depictions of royalty and the aristocracy, as well as veiled apologies for racism and imperialism. Gérôme and other painters of his ilk were patronized by the royalist faction, which with the Republicans, took turns in power in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. One of the most famous paintings of the genre, Gérôme's *The Slave Market (Le Marché aux Esclaves)*, depicts a naked white woman surrounded by cloaked and turbaned Arab men who seem to invite the viewer to ogle her. The canvas functions as a denunciation of "barbarian societies," like that of the Arabs.<sup>78</sup>

It could even be said that the seesaw struggle for power between republican and conservative-

---

<sup>78</sup> Charles Sowerwine (2001), See Note 45, pages 48-49.

royalist factions that characterized French politics between 1871 and 1885 left France severely depleted. The situation was exacerbated by the numerous political “affaires” which followed the civil war that pitted the church and aristocracy against reform-minded republican politicians. The Boulanger Affair of 1885-1889, for instance, saw General Boulanger appointed Minister of War under President Ferry, who like the radical republican Georges Clemenceau who championed him, mistakenly believed that the general was on the republican side. In fact, Boulanger was a French general who merely “looked good on horseback.” A man of great personal ambition but little administrative skill, Boulanger received financial assistance from numerous royalists and reactionary leaders in the French Army.

An important reason for Boulanger’s success in attracting support from disparate elements among the French public, especially the women of the upper classes – support that won him a parliamentary seat in 1889 – was an incident involving German Chancellor Bismarck. Bismarck had warned the Reichstag that as French Minister of War, Boulanger represented a threat to German security. The perception that even the Iron Chancellor feared the French general won Boulanger respect and admiration among the French public. He was even hailed as the “new Napoleon.” But when a coup d’état seemed imminent, Boulanger failed to act, and when the French government issued a warrant for his arrest for treason, he fled to Brussels.

The Boulanger Affair proved to be a valuable lesson for French politicians on the dangers of unrestrained nationalist fervor. It also showed the country how anti-Semitism, even in a fanatical form, could be exploited for political gain.

France was also confronted with the Panama Affair (1889-93) in which French diplomat and engineer Ferdinand de Lesseps (1805-1894) played a leading role. De Lesseps had amazed the world when his plan to build a passage through the Isthmus of Suez proved successful. This new canal allowed ships from China, India, and Australia to reach the Mediterranean without having to sail around the southern tip of Africa. After the successful completion of this venture, de Lesseps formed a company to construct the Panama Canal and raised capital by means of a lottery (the 19<sup>th</sup> century equivalent of an IPO). But when the company went bankrupt, he falsely put the blame on Jews and corrupt politicians.

The scandal surrounding the so-called “Panama Affair” alarmed Catholic and royalist factions and weakened their political influence. In the parliamentary election of 1893, 190 new deputies were elected to replace those blamed for the failure of de Lesseps’ firm. Then, in the following year, France was shaken by the Dreyfus Affair, which started when a secret communication identifying French spies was discovered in the waste basket at the German embassy in Paris. Dreyfus, a high-ranking member of the French Army and a Jew, fought the charges in the court of appeals after it

became clear that, in fact, Major Esterhazy was the traitor and that the French military had forged evidence against him, hoping to exploit feelings of anti-Semitism among a large section of the French public. The government had played up the affair for what it claimed were “patriotic” reasons.

The Dreyfus Affair marked the final attempt by monarchist elements to reclaim political power in France. It was also the beginning of the end for the Catholic Church’s role in political affairs and pointed up the lack of discipline within the French military establishment.

### *Conclusion*

It seems clear that France, unlike England, was unable to sever its domestic, foreign and colonial policies from political ideology and certain artistic, historical and literary movements. When Gustave Eiffel completed construction of the 300-meter-high Eiffel Tower, it quickly came to be seen as the acme of French materialist achievement. As recently as 1998, then-French President Jacques Chirac publicly apologized to the descendants of Captain Dreyfus and Emile Zola (who had been convicted of libel for his defense of Dreyfus). French policies and actions in its colonial territories were dictated by a belief in the superiority of the white race, an attitude which we will see confirmed later in French newspaper headlines that criticized the “arrogance” of Siam

from the French point of view. In addition, the French government took a “hands-off” approach to the administration of its colonies, giving relative “free rein” to the colonial officers on the ground. This was not unlike the British administrators, who frequently conspired with the Prime Minister to formulate policies and plans without the knowledge or consent of the Parliament.<sup>79</sup>

Consequently, because of its ideological and geographical separation from continental Europe and the stability of its domestic politics, England was in a superior position to France, Germany, or Russia. More importantly, the British leadership was able to look at political and commercial conditions from a truly global perspective, allowing the country to “plan an effective strategy.” England had a gift for seeing “the big picture” that enabled it to remain aloof from or to warm to the other major powers in Europe and Asia, namely Japan, as prevailing circumstances warranted. Thus, Britain was ensured of long-term benefits. In contrast, France, Russia, and Germany were always slightly behind the curve, making decisions based on their short-term interests.

In the eyes of these European nations, Siam under King Chulalongkorn was a small country with relatively little political bargaining power and, unlike Japan, endowed with a weak military. Strategically and economically, it was much less important than

---

<sup>79</sup> Charles Sowerwine (2001), See Note 45, pages 48-49.



either China or India. Yet, it was key to the success of France's colonial ambitions to lay claim to the Indochina peninsula and to British control of Burma, India, and Malaya. In comparison, Siam would appear to have been more important to the French, as Paris was tremendously afraid of England. The friendship French President Félix Faure showed to the Siamese monarch was motivated in part by his fear of England and Russia, and the possibility of a conflict between the two.

The cordial relations that King Chulalongkorn enjoyed with both Kaiser Wilhelm II and the Russian Czar Nicholas II were relatively "free" of such political considerations. The German emperor could extend his hand in friendship without fear of provoking another country, and there were no conflicts of interest whatsoever to cloud the relationship between Bangkok and the Russian court. Therefore, it seems likely that the warm feelings that these two great European leaders had for the King of Siam were genuine. In contrast, the British remained distant, unwilling to accord respect to a small, relatively insignificant country like Siam, out of a wish to avoid a confrontation with France that could threaten its own interests.

In general, then, Europe in the 1870s and 1880s was a continent awash in conflicts. England and France clashed over interests in Egypt, Canada, and India. Russia and England were at odds over their respective policies in the Near East and large stretches of Central Asia, where the Russian

government was eager to extend its power. In British-controlled parts of China bordering India and Burma, both of which were British colonies, there were heightening tensions between England and Russia. In fact, the Czar ordered troops to attack the British in Turkey (1877-78), almost prompting London to join forces with its allies in Vienna to launch a counterattack against Russia. German Chancellor Bismarck convened the Congress of Berlin to defuse the situation, although his success in resolving the conflicts between these major European powers was limited and short-lived. Meanwhile, France and Italy were engaged in a dispute over Tunis. In light of the competition for power and influence among these various countries in Europe, Germany found it easier to implement its foreign policy, which sought to reduce the possibility of French aggression. Germany extended an olive branch to its neighbor to the West, but the cordial relations between the two countries proved only temporary. Whereas Germany had earlier given tacit support for France's colonial policies, under Kaiser Wilhelm II, Berlin took a different stance, openly opposing French colonial ambitions in Morocco. Consequently, as in the past, relations between the two countries turned noticeably frostier.

Clearly, it is essential that anyone researching the European travels of His Majesty King Chulalongkorn not overlook the conditions across the continent at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. An examination of the political



circumstances in Europe around the time of the Siamese monarch's arrival in 1897 helps to clarify the reasons behind the tactics the King adopted in choosing to forge relations with some of the major powers at the time. In befriending Russia and Germany, for instance, the King hoped to preserve the sovereignty of his Kingdom against the colonial designs of the French and British, while also playing off the various foreign influences in Siam against one another.

A thorough study of the available archives also sheds light on the role of the various European nations in Siam. For example, Portugal and the Netherlands, two of the earliest European countries to establish ties with the Siamese court, had a much reduced presence in the Kingdom. Portugal, for its part, was withdrawing from most of its holdings in East Asia, with the exception of Macau, probably out of a realization that it could not compete with larger players like France and Britain. Holland had only dispatched merchants to Bangkok during the reign of King Rama III, after having abandoned the Kingdom just two years prior to Ayuthaya's fall to the Burmese in 1767. This left just a small number of Western countries with a significant presence in Siam during the reigns of King Rama IV

and King Rama V. These were principally France, England, Russia, Germany and the United States (See Section 2.1). Analysis also reveals the shifting nature of the relations between many of the major European powers at the time, the general lack of trust, as well as the reasons for the cordial ties that linked countries such as France and Russia. It is particularly useful in explaining the strategy pursued by King Chulalongkorn to "lean on Russia" to "intimidate France."

Thai scholars who have studied King Chulalongkorn's travels through Europe know that in 1897, Russia and France were allies. From the King's letters to the Queen Regent in Bangkok, they are also aware of the tensions and rivalries between many of the European powers. For instance, the *Letter 35*, page 129 written from Budapest describes the disagreements within the Austrian court; another letter (*Letter 43*, page 151), discusses Norway's desire to declare its independence from Sweden, and in yet another letter (*Letter 45*, page 161), written from the mouth of the Kiel Canal during his stay in Denmark, the King relates the disputes between numerous European heads of state.<sup>80</sup>

---

<sup>80</sup> Personal Letters of King Chulalongkorn to Queen Saovabha Pongsri. See Note 63. Letter 45.

## Chapter 3

# Preparations for the Royal Visit to Europe



### 3.1 *Contacts with Europe*

As noted earlier, the Paknam incident of 1893 alerted His Majesty King Chulalongkorn to the importance of making a royal visit to Europe. Official preparations for the trip got under way on 22 February 1896, when the Foreign Minister, Prince Thevavongse Voropakarn, dispatched letters to Siamese embassies in 12 countries, informing them of the King's intention to set off for Europe in April the following year.<sup>1</sup> Prior to this, Prince Savasdi Sophon had sent a letter from London informing the King that the British Foreign Minister, Lord Salisbury, had been sounded out on the possibility of a royal visit sometime between November and December 1895<sup>2</sup>. It appears that along with the

Interior Minister, Krom Phraya Damrong, His Majesty had also placed great trust in his Foreign Minister<sup>3</sup>.

At the time, only 11 European countries had official diplomatic relations with the Siamese court. Some of these embassies and consuls were still without representation in Bangkok. For instance, the German embassy was responsible for overseeing Swiss interests in the Kingdom<sup>4</sup> as well, while the French embassy housed the Dutch consul in Siam. Formal diplomatic relations and foreign affairs in the modern sense were still in their infancy. Britain and France, however, both with sizable interests in the Kingdom, had their own envoys.

---

<sup>1</sup> i.e. letters to the British chargé d'affaires W.G. Archer, Esq., American ambassador John Barrett, German Envoy Herr von Hartmann, Portuguese Consul General F.A. Percira Esq., Spanish Consul F. Fiugger Esq., Austrian Consul E. Wiede Esq., Danish Consul General W. J. Archer, Consul for Sweden and Norway Charles Brockman Esq., French ambassador A. Defrance, Italian Consul C.E.W. Stringer Esq., and the Belgian and Dutch charges d'affaires. In: *King Chulalongkorn's Trip to Europe in 1897*, Volume 1. National Archives, Fine Arts Department. Printed and distributed in 1980, pages 8-9.

<sup>2</sup> For further details, see: *King Chulalongkorn's Trip to Europe in 1897*, Volume 1 (See Note 1), pages 43-46.

<sup>3</sup> i.e. Prince Krom Luang Damrong Rajanubhap. In *Letter 34*, from Budapest, in which King Chulalongkorn describes the strengths and weaknesses of some of the attendants traveling with him and expresses his intention to send this off in a separate letter: "I should not put my complaints in this letter as they are not for anyone's eyes but those of Krom Luang Damrong Rajanubhap..."

<sup>4</sup> In a report from Bangkok by German Envoy Baron von Hartmann to the German Foreign Ministry dated 22 February 1897. From the Political Archives, German Foreign Ministry, Berlin. File R 19238 A 2185, pages 033-034.

The Siamese government sent notice of the King's intention to visit Europe not only to the European diplomats posted in Bangkok. As evidence of the growing presence of the U.S. in Siam and throughout the region, a letter was also sent to the American ambassador Mr. John Barrett. The U.S. had begun to play a prominent role in Asia near the end of the reign of King Rama III, when Presidential envoy Mr. Ballastier urged the American government to take a warlike stance against the Siamese court and embark on the same kind of "gunboat diplomacy" that had successfully forced Japan to open its doors to the West in 1854, during the reign of King Rama IV (Cf. Section 2.3). It was not long after that the government in Bangkok engaged a number of Americans as advisors to the Siamese state.

In fact, however, prior to King Chulalongkorn's visit to Europe, relations between Siam and the U.S. could hardly be characterized as amiable. There had been a lengthy dispute with the American ambassador Dr. Cheek over the trade in teakwood from the forests of the North. A failure to agree on prices for this prized commodity led to an acrimonious court case.<sup>5</sup> Relations were further complicated when U.S. Deputy Consul Mr. E.V. Rellet charged that he had been assaulted by armed Siamese troops. To resolve



Mr. John Barrett U.S. Government Representative in Siam (1894-1898)

the dispute, a committee composed of Siamese and Western representatives was convened. Deliberations lasted a full year, ending in a victory for the American side, as reported in numerous issues of the *Siam Free Press* newspaper.<sup>6</sup> One headline read:

The United States and Siam – The Chiangmai Assault Case Proved and Punished – A Victory for Minister Barrett – Siam Will Apologize and Degrade Quality Officers. (*Siam Free Press*, November 15, 1897, Vol. 1135)

Another reason for informing the American embassy was to end suspicions on the part of the Ambassador and the Consul General, who had received unofficial word of the King's proposed visit to Europe on February 9, 1897.

---

<sup>5</sup> From the records of the U.S. Congress accusing Siam of wrongdoing in the case of American ambassador Dr. Cheek and the failure to agree on the price of teak. From the Political Archives, German Foreign Ministry, Berlin. File R 19238 A 3756.

<sup>6</sup> *Siam Free Press*, Monday, 1 February 1897; Thursday, 4 February 1897; 1 March 1897. From the Political Archives, German Foreign Ministry, Berlin. File A 19238 19, 20 A 4301, pages 049-053.

to campaign German and England against France, the King can do from his home as well, but his problems are his wives. He is not [a] young man anymore with the freshness of love and patience with hundreds of foolish little head[s]...He is looking for a few months without so many doves from his golden dove-house.’”

Vráz concludes with the following observation:

“As you can see, envy (sic) people can be found even in Siam...”<sup>11</sup>



Aboard the royal yacht the *Maha Chakri* in Venice, 16 May 1897

Vráz also clearly notes in his book that the royal vessel, the *Maha Chakri*, which had been built in England only a few short years before,<sup>12</sup> had a capacity of 2,100 tonnes and was bedecked with an enormous flag of Siam and, later, the King’s own royal banner. The entire crew was overseen by an English captain. The previous captain was a Dane named Andreas Du Plessy Richelieu, who had been awarded the rank of admiral in the Royal Siamese Navy. The remaining crew consisted of 290 Thais, not a single one of them female.

On 7 April 1897, two days before King Chulalongkorn boarded the *Maha Chakri*, bound first for Singapore and then for Europe, Vráz was given permission to board the royal vessel, an experience which he described as follows:

“I was lucky to get on the boat and indulge in true Asian luxury, royal chambers, a heavenly bedroom, a decorated salon, and a bathroom. One could not see the wooden walls for all the brocade, gold, silk, marble, ivory, and mother-of-pearl. Even the washbowl and the cuspidor (Chulalongkorn also chewed betel, though only a little) were of beautifully ornamented gold. I sneaked out of the rooms

---

<sup>11</sup> Translation by Magister Ludmila Čelisová, The Royal Thai Embassy in Prague, see footnote 10.

<sup>12</sup> The royal yacht the *Maha Chakri*, built by the Scottish firm Ramage & Ferguson in accordance with the specifications of Krom Phraya Damrong Rajanubhap, and presented to King Chulalongkorn for the purpose of transporting him to Europe in 1897. From Aerni Agathon. *Siam-Swiss Century: The Growth of a Friendship*. Bangkok: Amarin Printing & Publishing, 1997.

like a poor dog that was banished from a butcher's shop. How many beautiful artefacts for the museum!"<sup>13</sup>

Vráz provides an amusing account of His Majesty's departure. In the company of two Belgians, the Czech had intended to see the King off at the pier but arrived too late, as the monarch had boarded the ship two minutes earlier than scheduled. Likewise, various and sundry foreign diplomats, including the English, Italian and German ambassadors, arrived two minutes late and were unable to bid His Majesty farewell. Only the French ambassador, Monsieur Hardouin, and his Austrian counterpart Consul Wiede, accompanied by his beautiful wife, who had been born in Siam but was of European descent, reached the pier before the ship set sail. Monsieur Hardouin took His Majesty's hand, bidding him an

effusive farewell, as Consul Wiede and his wife reached the pier out of breath.<sup>14</sup>

Although preparations for the King's trip to Europe had begun more than a year before, a number of difficulties did arise. Chief among them was the difficulty encountered by the Siamese Foreign Ministry in communicating with those European countries which constituted the primary objectives of His Majesty's trip, namely France, England, Russia and Germany. To the Ministry's request for a fixed date on which these respective governments would be able to receive the King, the various governments of Europe sent differing replies. The Russian Foreign Minister, Count Mouravieff, for example, wrote that the Czar would be extremely pleased to receive His Majesty and would arrange for "the grandest welcome possible. I will inform the Czar of your

---

<sup>13</sup> Translated by the researcher into Thai from an English translation of the Czech original. Courtesy of the Czech Ambassador to Thailand H.E. Jiri Sitler and the Czech Consul Hana Flanderova. Received 13 April 2004.

<sup>14</sup> "He witnessed the departure in the company of two Belgian aristocrats. 'Both gentlemen returned at noon, delighted about the honour to introduce themselves to the King after he had dismissed the other dignitaries. In order to avoid being grilled in the hot boat, which was tied to the solid and scalding hot walls of the riverbank, I made the unfortunate suggestion to fetch quickly my Siamese-Chinese interpreter. Upon our return fifteen minutes later, only three minutes afar the palace, we heard the first, second, third," etc. salvo. Twenty-one altogether with the boat *Makut Radchadamri* and the royal flag hoisted on the boat *Mahachakri*.

"Goodness gracious, the King was on his way to the boat and we were late! Both Belgians fretted and fumed and I holed up in the corner aware of my guilt. However, not only we, but the whole diplomatic corps was two minutes late and missed the King and the minister for court ceremonies did not regard it appropriate to invite the gentlemen aboard."

"Only one envoy of a power, which the King was planning to visit, was in time at his place to await the Siamese Majesty – the French representative M. Hardouin, shaking his hand with the King imparted upon him several gracious words! Austria arrived out of breath, but still in time in the person of Consul Wiede and his lovely spouse, born in Siam, however of European descent. England, Italy, Germany were late. Belgium in spirit probably sent me to hell and I was ruefully ashamed." Translated from the Czech original. Courtesy of the Czech Embassy, Bangkok (See Note 13).



request for an audience immediately. All that remains is to arrange the date for such a meeting.”<sup>15</sup> The other embassies also informed the Siamese Foreign Ministry that they would be equally pleased to notify their own government of the Siamese monarch’s proposed visit. The French ambassador, Monsieur de France, even met with Krom Luang Thevavongse Voropakarn in person to discuss important aspects of the royal visit and other issues of concern to the French Republic.

The response from England, with whom Siam was especially eager to establish closer ties, was disappointing, however. The representative of the British ambassador and Consul General, Mr. W.J. Archer, wrote that he would notify his government and that he “would be pleased if His Majesty would inform him of the details of his voyage once they were finalized.”<sup>16</sup> The impression given was that the British government was less than enthusiastic about the prospect of welcoming the Siamese monarch. The English also delayed in agreeing to a date for the royal visit.

“At that time, I was speaking with Lord Salisbury about arrangements for your visit. I

explained that England is the most important destination on your trip. I first felt this way some four years earlier [1893]. I spoke repeatedly about this matter with Lord Salisbury but he would not engage in discussions. This has made it very difficult to send the necessary telegrams finalizing the arrangements for all the other stops on your itinerary...”<sup>17</sup>

In the end, after considerable equivocating, Britain’s Lord Salisbury declined to grant the King an audience with Queen Victoria on the occasion of her Diamond Jubilee. As Prince Savasdi Sophon explained to the King:

“...In response to your telegram of December 1, relating to your presence at the celebrations marking the Queen’s 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary on the throne, I was told that this would not be possible, that because of the Queen’s advanced age, only members of the royal family and representatives of the various courts of Europe would be permitted to attend...”<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Letter from Pra Suriyanuwat, Siamese chargé d’affaires at the Royal Siamese Embassy in Paris, 29 January 1896. In: *King Chulalongkorn’s First Trip to Europe, 1897*, Volume 1 (See Note 1), page 20.

<sup>16</sup> From a letter from W.J. Archer at the British Embassy in Bangkok, 23 February 1896, page 13.

<sup>17</sup> From a letter from Prince Sawasdi Sophon in London to King Chulalongkorn, 26 February 1896 (See Note 1), page 43.

<sup>18</sup> From *King Chulalongkorn’s First Trip to Europe, 1897*, Vol. 1. From a letter from Prince Sawasdi Sophon in London to King Chulalongkorn, 26 February 1896 (See Note 1), page 43.

Ultimately, Prince Sawasdi Sophon informed the British government that “the King of Siam [would] arrive in England sometime after the month of June.”<sup>19</sup>

This delay in arranging a date for the King’s arrival in England made it difficult to set the dates for his visits to the other countries on his itinerary. In the end, arrangements were made rather hastily, in early 1897.

Research shows that there were several reasons for England’s apparent indifference to the King’s proposed visit. (See 2.3.3, which deals with French and British foreign policy.) Primary among them was the fear that Siam would turn to England for support against France. At the time, Siam was attempting to cozy up to England, hoping to achieve a viable balance of power against the French, who were taking an increasingly aggressive stance against the government in Bangkok. Paris had recently forced Siam to hand over land on the eastern banks of the Mekhong River, along with the people living there. The French interpretation of Article 4 of the 1893 Convention signed with Siam led to the following:

“...Not only the Lao, Vietnamese, and Cambodians born on the left bank of the river

but all those living in these areas were to be considered subject to French law. All those ‘who in the past had been forced across the river into Thailand as prisoners of war and had lost their lives, left behind children and grandchildren whose right to demand their true nationality was denied them’...”<sup>20</sup>

England’s refusal to engage with Siam left King Chulalongkorn’s government little choice but to look to other European powers, namely Russia and Germany, to help protect the country from French aggression.

But then the Wednesday, 6 January 1897 edition of London’s *Morning Post* newspaper reported positively on King Chulalongkorn’s proposed visit to England. The paper remarked on the country’s extensive commercial interests in Siam, and expressed the hope that the King would assist British firms in securing the concession for a railroad construction project. Britain was also aware that trade with Hong Kong and China which passed through Siam was of such immense value that the country could ill afford to lose it. Later, in a secret agreement, Siam recognized English control over a newly-created “federation” consisting of the Malay states of Saiburi, Trengganu and Kelantan. It was

---

<sup>19</sup> From *King Chulalongkorn’s First Trip to Europe, 1897*, Vol. 1. From a letter from Prince Sawasdi Sophon in London to King Chulalongkorn, 26 February 1896 (See Note 1), page 43.

<sup>20</sup> Pensri Duke. *Relations between Thailand (Siam) and France in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century according to Documents in the Archives of the Foreign Ministry*. National Archives. The Royal Society Thailand, 1<sup>st</sup> Printing, 1996, page 175.

England's intention to extend its influence in Siam through these "protected native states" on the Kingdom's southern border, and in so doing, to further "civilize"<sup>21</sup> the Siamese people.

It was for this reason – one that accords with information from Thai sources – that the government in London showed little eagerness to receive King Chulalongkorn. It was also England's view that whether Siam was a "civilized" state depended almost entirely on its ruler – a view confirmed by an article which appeared in the *Times Friday* on 5 March 1897. The article noted that in visiting Europe and taking an interest in Western civilization, the King of Siam had "chosen the right path."

Interestingly, prior to King Chulalongkorn's arrival in Europe, the British government had welcomed two other Asian monarchs. The Turkish Sultan and the Prince of Persia had each been surrounded by every sort of "Oriental" pomp and ceremony. Their high-handed behavior had alienated the local population. As Prince Savasdi Sophon remarked in a letter from London, "when the son of the Persian king came to England last year, he overstayed his welcome, costing the British government large sums of money. No amount of hinting could persuade him to leave."<sup>22</sup>

In the same letter, addressed to King Chulalongkorn, the Prince advised that the monarch adopt an "independent attitude" during his travels through Europe:

"...The King of Siam *comes on his own hook*. He depends on nobody and no Country. *If any Courts* should welcome him, he will accept their civility. If, however, anyone shall not desire his Society, he will not thrust himself on him..."

It was this "independent attitude" which, in no small measure, contributed to the King's ability to maintain his dignity as an "equal" to his European hosts. His independence was key to the perception of him as a "civilized man" from a "civilized country."

Inevitably, however, King Chulalongkorn's itinerary had to be planned around the schedules of the European heads of state whose countries he intended to visit. As his travels would correspond with the summer months, when many Europeans went on holiday, his original travel arrangements had to be revised a number of times. Because the King of Denmark, for instance, was "taking the waters" at Wiesbaden in Germany at the end of July, King Chulalongkorn had to postpone the planned

---

<sup>21</sup> "...will advance more quickly with Siam in a more advanced state of civilization..."

<sup>22</sup> From *King Chulalongkorn's Trip to Europe, 1897*, Vol. 1. From a letter from Prince Savasdi Sophon in London to King Chulalongkorn, 26 February 1896 (See Note 1), page 45.

date of his arrival in Copenhagen. Other legs of his journey were also rescheduled for political and diplomatic reasons. Travel plans that took in both France and Russia were changed after the King's arrival in Europe. Queen Saovabha passed on the suggestion of her council of advisors in Bangkok that the King go to Russia first and seek an opportunity to meet with the Czar in private. The members of the council believed that the French government was spreading rumors intended to turn people against Siam. It was their perception that France was doing everything in its power to stop the King from making an official visit to the country.<sup>23</sup>

### 3.2 *Preparations at Home Prior to the King's European Trip*

In the months leading up to the King's departure for Europe, as plans for his trip were being finalized, the King himself was making careful arrangements to ensure that during his absence, no untoward event would befall the country. He appointed Queen Saovabha to rule as regent until his return. She was to be assisted by a council of advisors who would remain in touch with the King throughout his journey across Europe. The King also gave his approval to measures intended to improve the efficiency of government, such as the proposal made by Krom Luang Thevavongse Voropakarn for

When it became clear that the King would not be able to proceed with his trip as originally planned, whether because his intended hosts were not available to welcome him or because of other unexpected circumstances, King Chulalongkorn decided to visit a number of the former princely states of Germany. He also paid a call on the former Chancellor, Otto von Bismarck, at his home in Friedrichruhe, as he noted in his letters and telegrams. At times, the King and his party found lodgings in the cities they visited. At other times, they remained on board the *Maha Chakri*. In all cases, it was no easy matter for the King to change his itinerary as careful planning was imperative.

all government ministries to observe the same working hours. King Chulalongkorn also issued a statement urging the other members of the royal family, his ministers and all the government officials to work hard and fulfill their duties to the best of their abilities.

In the meantime, the royal yacht the *Maha Chakri* was fully provisioned and a crew engaged. To pilot the ship, the Consul General in Singapore recommended an Englishman, Mr. John Anderson, who was familiar with the customs of the court.

---

<sup>23</sup> From *King Chulalongkorn's First Trip to Europe, 1897*, Vol. 1. From a telegram from Queen Saovabha to King Chulalongkorn in Rome, dated 3 June 1897 (See Note 1), page 284.



## Chapter 4

### *The Royal Visit to Europe – The Reception of the Public and the Courts of Europe, the Establishment of Cordial Relations and Western Acceptance*



The information used in this section of the study comes from both Thai and European sources. Most of the Thai sources are primary, consisting of royal letters and telegrams, and documents from senior officials of the time. Two other primary sources bearing directly on the King's travels in Europe are a two-volume account of the royal visit entitled *Records of the Royal Visit to Europe, R.E. 116* (C.E. 1898) by Phraya Sri Sahathep (Seng). These are collections of correspondence assembled when Phraya Sri Sahathep still held the post of Royal Secretary.<sup>1</sup> In one of the letters, he explained:

“These are simply daily journal entries concerning the King's travels. They contain descriptions of interesting people, places and things. They recount legends and the deeds of historical figures....They were written in the occasional free moment...But because I have many official duties to perform, I have not had

the time to polish my prose or to write in a more elegant style.” (pages 2, 4)

But because Phraya Sri Sahathep did not accompany the royal party throughout the entire journey (for example, he did not go to Mecklenburg-Schwerin), his daily accounts were revised and substantially enlarged by His Majesty King Chulalongkorn as he traveled across the continent until his first arrival in England. Then, beginning on 21 August 1897, and continuing until the King's departure from Egypt on the return leg of his journey, the entries were further amended and expanded by HRH the Crown Prince. These two volumes were first published, according to the foreword, in Bangkok on 1 November 1907, ten years after the King's first European tour and in the same year as His Majesty's return to Siam after his second trip to the continent.

---

<sup>1</sup> Phraya Sarit, on whose work habits King Chulalongkorn commented in a letter from the Hotel Hungaria in Budapest, on 29 June 1897. Letters from King Chulalongkorn to the Queen Regent during His Trip to Europe in 1897, *Prince Damrong Rajanubhap and Princess Chomchitthanom Diskul Foundation, printed in honor of HRH Queen Sirikit on the occasion of her fifth cycle birthday celebrations on 12 August 1992*. Letter 43, page 127.

Another record of the royal visit to Europe is contained in *“Stories of the Royal Visit to Europe, R.E. 116 (C.E. 1897),”* written by Phraya Burus Ratanaratchaphallop (Ja Yuad), a page who accompanied the royal party on the first trip to Europe. Assigned to attend to King Chulalongkorn’s personal needs, Ja Yuad had a “unique opportunity” to hear, observe and experience things first-hand. His accounts contain brief descriptions of events that occurred along the way. The book was published in the reign of King Mahavachiravudh (Rama VI) at His Majesty’s behest.

The two sources referred to above are, therefore, very different from the other primary sources available during the research, in that they were both written by observers from a third person point of view. Both Phraya Sri Sahathep and “Ja Yuad,” or Phraya Burusratana-rajaphallop, as royal pages and later royal secretaries to His Majesty the King, were uniquely placed to observe events involving the King and his travels at close hand. Ja Yuad’s journal provides a detailed description of politics and people, as well as insights into the King’s own thoughts and feelings. It recounts the King’s physical discomfort on the ship during his visit to Sweden, his anger over words spoken by ladies in waiting to the royal court in Lisbon, and the King’s distress at the spectacle of a bullfight in Spain. These descriptions are often quite vivid as in the writer’s account of the savage gladiatorial battles with wild beasts that entertained the ancient Romans in the

Coliseum. In the wealth of information it provides, Ja Yuad’s journal makes a very valuable addition to the letters and telegrams written by King Chulalongkorn during his travels through Europe.

In fact, the accounts of this royal page give a fuller understanding of the events that transpired during the King’s landmark trip than did the diary kept by Phraya Sri Sahathep. The latter’s diary consists chiefly of rather objective accounts of the official programs attended by the King and his party. There are very few personal observations about places the King went and people he met. Place names are often written in European languages, and misspellings are not uncommon. For instance, the Austrian town of Bad Ischl appears in the diary as Pichl. Even so, the descriptions of stops on the royal itinerary and the historical background about these places contained in both of these primary sources proved to be valuable to the researcher.

Extensive use has also been made of the large quantity of secondary sources in Thailand to supplement materials housed in European national archives and libraries and in newspapers published in Europe during the time of the King’s visit. Many of these sources were of particular interest simply because they had not been previously seen in Thailand. In shedding light on European perceptions of the Siamese monarch and his tour of the continent, they frequently confirm information found in the more familiar Thai sources, and in many cases, they provide fresh insights into the circumstances in

Europe at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which are, surprisingly perhaps, not so dissimilar to conditions today. This is especially true with regard to the issue of European attitudes toward foreigners and their acceptance of them as equals, which was a matter of particular importance to King Chulalongkorn at the time of his first trip to Europe in 1897. Therefore, for the purposes of this research, these European materials have served as key secondary sources. What's more, these sources, consisting of both official communications and newspaper accounts, add a great deal of color and excitement to the story of King Chulalongkorn's first European voyage.

It is already well established that the Siamese monarch's decision to set sail for Europe in 1897 was rooted in his concern for the preservation of his Kingdom's sovereignty in the age of European colonialism. Even the Europeans themselves recognized that the trip was a matter of national honor as well as a demonstration of the monarch and his government's firm grip on power.<sup>2</sup> This was at a time when tensions between the court in Bangkok and the French government had reached a fever pitch. Even the German ambassador in Paris, speaking in June 1897, after King Chulalongkorn's

arrival in Europe but prior to his proposed visit to France, felt that the King would be forced to call off the visit, which the Siamese court and their counterparts in Paris had arranged several months earlier, at the very start of the year.<sup>3</sup>

The Queen Regent Saovabha assessed the French stance toward the Kingdom as follows:

"The colonial French are at present doing everything in their power to spread false rumors that cause alarm and turn everyone against Siam because they wish to prevent the royal visit to France. They most certainly believe that [if the trip goes as planned] you will succeed in winning over the French government and all the French people."<sup>4</sup>

It is clear then that in making an official visit to the major powers of Europe, like France, which was attempting to expand its political control in Southeast Asia, King Chulalongkorn hoped to defuse a potential crisis. Equally important, however, were the forging of cordial ties with other nations in Europe and the King's first-hand experience of new people, places and ideas. The King hoped to draw closer to many of the royal

---

<sup>2</sup> Compare the report of the German Envoy in Bangkok to the Minister in Berlin on 10 April 1897, in the Political Archives, Foreign Ministry, Berlin, German Federation, File R 19238, Volumes 19, 20 SIAM No. 1, Document A 6488, 090-097.

<sup>3</sup> In the Political Archives, Foreign Ministry, Berlin, cited above. File R 19238, Volumes 19, 20 SIAM No. 1, Document A 8231, dated 25 June 1897.

<sup>4</sup> Telegram sent by Queen Saovabha to King Chulalongkorn in Rome on 3 June 1897, from *King Chulalongkorn's First Visit to Europe, 1897*, Vol. 1, National Archives, Fine Arts Department, printed for distribution in 1980, pages 283-284.

courts of Europe in order to create a shield that would protect his own country from the advances of would-be European aggressors. He was also eager to take back new ideas and new ways of doing things to benefit the Siamese people and promote the development of the Kingdom.

The King's first trip to Europe, which lasted from 7 April to 16 December 1897, included both official and unofficial visits to numerous countries across the continent. In some cases, he entered a number of countries on more than one occasion in the course of his travels. These included England, Italy, and Germany. In all, his voyage took him to Italy, Switzerland, Austria-Hungary, Poland, Russia, Denmark, England, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Monaco, Spain, and Portugal.

This book is not intended as a chronological account of the places the King visited and the people he met over the course of his eight-month long journey. Instead, it is an attempt to dig deeper into the questions that originally motivated this research and to provide a more thorough analysis and synthesis of the materials concerning the Siamese monarch's first trip to Europe. Because of the vast quantity of such materials, it has been necessary to be selective,<sup>5</sup> but in general, most of the European sources originally written or published in English, German, French, Spanish, Swedish, Dutch, and

Portuguese of the period, were translated or rewritten into modern-day Thai, English, or German. Analysis of these sources has been an important component of this research.

In assessing the more abstract benefits of King Chulalongkorn's first trip to Europe, to Siam and especially the monarch himself, and his acceptance in the West as an "equal" from an equally "civilized" nation, research has not been restricted to information concerning diplomatic ties between King Chulalongkorn and governments in Europe. Instead, it seems no less important that readers of this book be given a broader picture of the interactions between the two sides, especially since the purpose of the King's trip was not limited to political aims. His objectives were much more complex, and in order to appreciate them, it is important to consider the following issues:

1. Siam's image in Europe as a "land beyond India" and Europeans' perception of Asia and the Siamese monarch;
2. the political, social and cultural factors which motivated the King's trip to Europe;
3. the appearance of the Siamese monarch in Europe and his reception among both the common people and the royal courts in the various European countries he visited;

---

<sup>5</sup> Additional information in both Danish and German and written in old-fashioned handwriting has not yet been translated into Thai because of the time restraints of this research.

4. the extent to which the King's travels across the continent changed the Europeans' view of Siam and its monarch;

5. and the factors which determined the nature of relations between the court in Bangkok and the courts of Europe, and any other external factors which facilitated the growth of cordial ties between Siam and the countries of Europe, ties which still exist today.

#### ***4.1 The European View of Siam and the Siamese Head of State Before and During King Chulalongkorn's Visit to Europe***

"It is true. We have seen leaders with absolute power, but each of them, from cultures different from our own, has had a unique spirit and character. Perhaps we could compare this monarch with a leader we once knew, Peter the Great of Russia. Anyone who still remembers the Russian Czar's visit to Paris, as recorded by the Markgräfin (Baroness) von Ansbach-Bayreuth, must acknowledge that "Chulalongkorn," in his appearance and manner, is much more charming and refined than Czar Peter."<sup>6</sup>

The same newspaper also concluded that the Siamese monarch struck all those who met him as a

Before examining the overall factors which allowed King Chulalongkorn to be received not just as an equal, but as a beloved ally among many of the crowned heads of Europe, it is important to consider the ways in which the Europeans viewed Asians and foreigners in general, as this will help to illuminate the image of the Siamese state and its monarch at the time of the King's first trip to the continent.

true "gentleman," surpassing in this regard the Shah of Persia, who had made an earlier appearance on the continent.

It was the Persian Shah, Nassr-ed-Din, to whom the Geneva newspaper *La Patrie Suisse* referred in the edition of 6 January 1897, several months prior to the arrival in Europe of King Chulalongkorn. Several years after the Shah's visit, a book in translation appeared which contained some of the Shah's "unusual" views on the country of Switzerland. To the Swiss, the Shah had shown more interest in trivial matters than in the grand ceremonies which the government had gone to great pains to organize in his honor. On the eve of King Chulalongkorn's

---

<sup>6</sup> From *Der Bund*, Bern, Saturday, 5 June 1897, Vol. 154, Column *Feuilleton*, "König Paramindr Maha Chulalongkorn in Berner Oberland" (conclusion), converted from German Sütterlin script.

visit, the Swiss were interested in knowing what the Siamese monarch would think of their country – not his official views, but his true opinions.”<sup>7</sup>

The news that appeared in the 5 June edition of “Feuilleton,” the culture column of the Bern newspaper *Der Bund*, at the start of King Chulalongkorn’s visit to Switzerland and prior to the publication of the item above, shows that the Europeans looked at things from a broad perspective. They took a relative view of affairs, comparing similar experiences or individuals and thus offering a clear picture of their viewpoint and prevailing conditions at the time.<sup>8</sup>

In comparing the visit of an Asian monarch from a distant land with that of the Russian Czar Peter the Great (1682-1725), the Swiss found King Chulalongkorn more “charming.” He was also seen as more of a “gentleman” than the Shah of Persia, considerable praise for an Asian King described as coming from “a land beyond India.” These were ready comparisons that the Europeans could understand because they placed King Chulalongkorn side by side with a major figure from European

history and with a well-known Asian visitor who had only recently toured Europe.

Another interesting comparison appeared in the Viennese newspaper *Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt* on 24 June 1897. It had not been since conjoined twins “Chan and In” shot to world fame that the people of the West, including Austria, had spoken of the country of Siam. It was almost as if they had forgotten that such a Kingdom even existed.

On 1 July 1897, the Polish newspaper *Z Slowo (The World)* reported that the Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph had received King Rama V as he would any other monarch of a great world power.

Only eight years later, in 1905, the same Franz Joseph would not hesitate to avoid receiving the Persian Shah Mozaffer-ed-Din on his tour of Europe. The reason given for this rebuff was the Emperor’s need to attend the funeral of an elderly relative, Graf Joseph, who had died in Budapest while the Persian ruler was in residence at Hoffburg Palace in Vienna. It was no easy matter, it was reported, for the elderly Emperor to attend to the needs of the “Oriental” monarch in a manner to which

---

<sup>7</sup> “Several years after the Shah of Persia’s visit to Switzerland, translation of a book recording the now deceased monarch’s impressions as a tourist in Europe [...] Nassr-ed-Din made some very strange judgments of our country. He was tremendously impressed by things that appear insignificant to us and hardly mentioned other celebrations that the government went to great pains to arrange for him... We are now very interested in knowing the opinion that the King of Siam, Chulalongkorn, takes away of our country, not his official opinion, but rather what he really thinks...”

<sup>8</sup> This is consistent with the scientific principle that everything changes; nothing is stable. In assessing anything, we must have a point of comparison. For instance, in physics, there is no such thing as cold, only less hot. We only know what is “hot” and what is “cold” in relation to one another.



the Shah was accustomed.<sup>9</sup>

At the time of King Chulalongkorn's first visit to Europe at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the primary sources of information about his travels were newspapers. An examination of these publications shows that the King was an object of tremendous interest in all of the countries he visited. In the 6 January 1897 edition of the British newspaper *The Morning Post* and the 5 March edition of *The Times Friday*, editorialists commented that the King was making "the right move" in coming to Europe although both columns linked the trip to British colonial policy which sought, through a kind of creeping spread of power, to extend English influence in Siam through its colonial government in Malaya. This was to be achieved under the guise of "civilizing" a relatively backward Asian nation. Even so, these newspapers did accord considerable importance to the Siamese head of state as an individual who was leading his Kingdom in what the English considered to be "the right direction" by opening his country to Western culture.

In each of the other countries on the King's itinerary, newspaper headlines trumpeted the visit

of the Siamese monarch one or two days before or on the actual day of his arrival. The press's preferred nickname for him was "King of the White Elephants." The name featured in newspapers published in the Swiss cities of Geneva and Bern, and in Poland, Vienna, Sweden, throughout Germany and Portugal, including Lisbon's *O Journal de Lisboa* and *Correio Nacional*, the northern *Semanario de Laricaturas* and the southern Portuguese publication *O Manuelino d'EVORA*. Other newspapers used variations of "white elephant" or "the Orient" or "the Land of the Rising Sun" (*Morgenland*), the last a common nickname given to Asia by the Europeans, who referred to their own part of the world as "the Land of the Setting Sun."

Furthermore, in all of these European countries, with the exception of England which referred to him simply as the King of Siam, the name of the Siamese monarch was shortened, as in the column "*Das Land der Freien*" (The Land of the Free), to *Tschulalongkorn*,<sup>10</sup> the preferred German spelling. His full name was too long and too complicated for Europeans to say without first "taking a very deep breath and perhaps even pausing in the middle for another big

---

<sup>9</sup> "...Dem alten Kaiser fiel es nicht leicht, diesen *echt asiatischen Potentaten mit jenen lebenswürdigen Aufmerksamkeiten zu bedenken*, die es ihm, wie ansonst jedem anderen Herrscher, sicherlich nicht vorenthalten hätte. Deshalb machte sich der Kaiser im Juni 1905 keine Sorgen, während der Anwesenheit Mozaffer-ed-Dins nach Budapest zu reisen, um dort den Leichenfeierlichkeiten für den gerade um diese Zeit verstorbenen alten Erzherzog Joseph anzuwohnen." Photocopy from a book (title and publishing information unspecified) from Dr. Orasa Thaiyanan. (Researcher's emphasis.)

<sup>10</sup> In German-speaking countries and countries in eastern Europe, King Rama V's name was spelled "Tschu..." rather than "Chu..." as in these languages there is no equivalent to the sound Thai sound.

breath..."<sup>11</sup> Again, in all of these countries except for England, there were short, accompanying articles explaining the significance of the white elephant as a symbol of royal power in the Kingdom of Siam. These pieces describe the appearance and color of the animal and feature sketches of the Royal Palace, usually the Maha Chakri Throne Hall, typical Thai houses, and the Chao Phraya River. There are also often descriptions of Thai life and a brief overview of the various achievements of the King, such as the abolition of slavery, the construction of the country's first railway, and the establishment of a postal service and "modern" schools – all of which improved the lives of the people of Siam.

A 1980 article in a Swedish newspaper referred to a story published in 1897, which, attempting to shed light on life inside the Siamese royal court, reported that the King had some 600 "wives" and more than 150 children. The writer even suspected that King Chulalongkorn had brought his "wives" with him on board the royal yacht *Maha Chakri*:

"...It [The *Maha Chakri*] also carried many of the King's wives although they never left the ship..."<sup>12</sup>

This was later refuted by the personal testimony of the Czech writer Vr̀az, who reported that the passengers and crew aboard the yacht numbered 290, *all of them men* (See Section 3.1).

As "head of an extended household," King Chulalongkorn was reported by the Viennese newspaper *Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt* of 25 June 1897, as having "a very comfortable life, surrounded by 600 wives and consorts and 150 sons and daughters. We have pictures of his smallest children ...happy in the love of their father."

Every day this Viennese newspaper featured enthusiastic accounts of the royal visitor's travels. There were front page reports, accompanied by illustrations, and stories in an inside column called "Was gibt's denn Neues?" (What's new?). Two days after the King's arrival in Vienna, there was even a special feature providing detailed information about King Chulalongkorn and "the Land of White Elephants" or "the Land of the Free" (24 June 1897). The newspaper was simply responding to the tremendous interest in the Asian visitor among its Austrian readers. The quality of many of these reports was so whimsical and fanciful that they read

---

<sup>11</sup> From the Viennese newspaper *Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt*, 24 June 1897, page 4: "...Werden Namen dieses asiatischen Herrschers in einem Zug aussprechen will, muß vorher tief Ahtem holen und da wird er vielleicht noch stecken bleiben und noch Luft schnappen müsen..." This full name is *Bhra Baramindr Maha Tschulalongkorn Badmohr Dhebana Maha Mongkut Bhra Tschulatschom Klau Tschau Yu Hue Bhandim Saham Lao Ben Vorama Radschah Thirafschi Haang Malova Bhradhet Maladschu Bradhet*.

<sup>12</sup> Translation provided by embassy staff at the Swedish Embassy in Bangkok.

almost like a “novel” or “tales from a distant land.” They took on the informality of an Austrian-style “chat” among friends as they passed on news of the “exotic” monarch from faraway.

All this is clear indication of the generally positive image that Europeans had of Siam and the country’s monarchy before even getting their first glimpse of King Chulalongkorn. The Austrian press presented stories portraying various aspects of life in the “Kingdom of White Elephants” and of the “exotic guest from faraway” in order to satisfy public curiosity and educate them about Siam and its monarch. But it was not only Austria where the media offered the public so much information.

The coverage given to His Majesty the King in the Portuguese press is particularly interesting. How would the Portuguese receive their royal visitor, when, according to royal correspondence and letters sent by the German and Spanish ambassadors in Lisbon to their governments in Berlin and Madrid, they had repeatedly angered the King? Similar reports of fractious relations between the two countries can be found in the London newspaper *The Times*, obtained from the German Foreign Ministry. Yet, what becomes apparent from almost every Portuguese newspaper provided by the

Portuguese embassy in Bangkok is that all of these publications, with the exception of *The Republic*, reported on the King’s travels in a very positive manner. Given the nature of the Portuguese people in general, it would be surprising if the coverage were otherwise. The Portuguese tend to be an extremely kind and warm-hearted people, who not unlike Thais, have a real fondness for conversational give-and-take, no matter how trivial the subject. It “whets the appetite.” And like the Thais, they are easily alarmed and tend to swarm around the scene of an accident. Therefore, despite “suspicions” that clouded relations between the two nations at a diplomatic level, it would be uncharacteristic of the Portuguese press to have reported on King Chulalongkorn and his country in any but a positive manner.<sup>13</sup>

Interestingly, the Portuguese showed themselves to be more knowledgeable about Siam than Europeans elsewhere. In a column entitled “The King of the Great White Elephants,”<sup>14</sup> His Majesty is referred to as the “Lord of Life,” a title little known to the rest of Europe. The column explained the history, culture and picturesque way of life of the Siamese since the Ayuthaya period. It characterized the people of the Kingdom as reserved but having a lively sense of fun. They were described as honest,

---

<sup>13</sup> It is possible that all of these positive remarks were selected from among others by the Portuguese Assistant Cultural Ambassador who asked to look through all the information before sending it to me.

<sup>14</sup> In *O Manuelino d’EVORA*, 24 October 1897, a newspaper from southern Portugal, and in *O Journal de Lisboa*, 20, 21 and 22 October 1897. From the Portuguese Foreign Ministry, with the assistance of the Portuguese Embassy in Bangkok.

trustworthy and warmly hospitable to guests, despite the general level of poverty. The Portuguese press reported that commerce was controlled by the Chinese, and that most of the country's imported goods came from England. However, Siam's exports, it was noted, exceeded imports by a factor of three. Newspapers also informed their readers that the Thai alphabet consisted of 36 consonants and 16 vowels and that the majority of the country's population was Buddhist. This wealth of detail seemed only fitting in that Portugal had been the first European country to make contact with Siam several centuries earlier.

It was perhaps for this reason that the Portuguese press saw the Siamese monarch, who with his intelligent, "onyx eyes" looked at everything with genuine interest, as "an old friend." Unlike most European newspapers, which focused solely on the number of King Chulalongkorn's "wives," the Portuguese papers noted that the sovereign, who had ascended to the throne at the age of 16, had 80 older and younger siblings. His favorite wife, whom he affectionately called "Nong," his little sister, had recently died.<sup>15</sup> Chulalongkorn had been chosen to rule because he was the "smartest" of all of his father's children. He had translated the Arabic classic "Thousand and One Nights" into Thai;

he had a library and even published his own newspaper in Siam.

Another observation is that many of the Portuguese newspapers were as interested in reporting on the King's travels through Spain and France as on his visit to Portugal. Readers were told of the Siamese monarch's agenda in Spain and that he intended to visit France in order to attend an international conference on ethnicity and racial prejudice, subjects to which the King, as a humanist philosopher, had already given considerable thought. Publications in Portugal also stressed the long history that linked the two countries and offered this as the primary reason for the Siamese sovereign's decision to include Portugal in his European itinerary. The press also claimed that the visit to Europe was chiefly intended to lessen the Kingdom's conflict with Paris over French claims to territory in the Mekhong River basin. In other words, Siam's internal politics were common knowledge in Europe at the time of the King's visit.<sup>16</sup>

"The King Was No Fairy Tale" is the title of an article published in a Swedish newspaper in 1980. It refers to a story published in 1897, although the specific edition of the newspaper in which it appeared is not mentioned. It reads:

---

<sup>15</sup> Possibly Queen Sunantha Kumareeratana: researcher

<sup>16</sup> In *A Crenca Liberal (Der liberale Glaube)*, 31 October 1897 and *O Ocidente*, a weekly illustrated newspaper, 20 October 1897.

In brief, not only did the European newspapers focus on the “exotic” qualities of this Siamese monarch from “a faraway land,” but almost without exception, they reported that King Rama V had as many as “600 wives” and 150 “sons and daughters” (It was important to specify the exact number.). In Vienna, the newspaper *Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt* (24 June 1897, page 5) even published a poem with 29 stanzas entitled “Letter from the King of Siam to His 600 Wives.” But because it appeared next to a story about a new play, without any context or explanation, it is not clear whether the poem is overtly racist or was merely meant to be humorous.

In the Sunday, 29 August 1897, edition of the Schwerin newspaper the *Mecklenbugishche Zeitung*, a German traveler published an essay in which he described Siam and its monarch as of the same type as “one finds in ‘India,’ an absolute monarch, but unlike India, Siam has managed to retain its sovereignty. It is the only kingdom in the entire region that has not become a colony of another country, whereas the rulers of all the other countries from the Himalayas to the southern tip of the Malay peninsula have been forced to cede power.”

European images of Asia, and specifically Siam, that had been formed in the past combined with the reality of the Siamese King as he traveled across the continent to produce a flood of stories, some more factual than others, about the country of Siam and

its people. While there were accurate reports of the King’s activities throughout his European tour, there were at the same time “fanciful” characterizations of Siam that were chiefly the product of the European imagination, especially when they concerned Siamese customs that differed from those in Europe and which the Europeans considered to be “uncivilized.” The most obvious example was the practice of polygamy. Not only did the European press dwell on the number of King Chulalongkorn’s wives, but there were many similar stories about Rama V’s father, King Mongkut, who was familiar to a large number of Europeans partly through the writings of Anna Leonowens, who had been tutor to Chulalongkorn. Other press reports focused on Siamese table manners, which were deemed inferior to those of the “more civilized” nations of the West.

More than two months into the King’s travels in Europe, however, the special Sunday edition of the *Mecklenbugishche Zeitung*, dated 29 August 1897, carried a story that lauded the Siamese King for the many ways in which he worked to benefit the people of his country. Of all the rulers of Asia, only the Japanese Emperor had done as much. But unlike the Emperor, King Chulalongkorn pursued a “middle policy” that ensured that what was “new” did not destroy the “old.” He was able to blend the cultures of the East and West in a harmonious manner.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> A rough translation from the *Mecklenburgische Zeitung* by a fellow researcher

This shows that as the King's journey progressed, the depiction of the monarch and his Kingdom in the European media became more positive and, overall, more accurate. It is also clear

that the King's travels made him a subject of great interest and a frequent topic of conversation among the people of Europe. But how did the King do this? What were the reasons for his "popularity?"

## 4.2 *The Presence of the Siamese King in Europe – His Knowledge and Education: Qualities Which Won Him Acceptance and Respect*

### 4.2.1 *Determination and Insight*

In analyzing the reasons for King Chulalongkorn's success in winning the respect of the European people and the courts of Europe as a "civilized" ruler from a "civilized" land, it is essential to begin with His Majesty's commitment to "conducting myself at all times in a manner befitting the ruler of all the people of Siam and to preserving the dignity of this independent Kingdom to the fullest extent of my powers...and as a reminder to myself that I am a source of comfort to all those who love me and wish me well." These words are taken from three vows made by the King before a gathering of monks at the Grand Palace's Paisal Thaksin Throne Hall on 21 March 1896, one year prior to his departure for Europe.<sup>20</sup>

This firm determination on the part of the King

was evident in the careful official planning for his trip and in his own personal preparations.

It is also apparent that these preparations consisted of much more than just arranging the various stops on the royal itinerary, but included his royal training, his Thai and Western education, and his study of Western languages and customs under the tutelage of the Englishwoman Anna Leonowens. Of special importance, however, was the example set by his father, King Rama IV, who had paid careful attention to Western customs, dress, and manners in order to "fit in" with the Europeans. King Chulalongkorn understood that this was necessary if he were to succeed in the performance of his official duties and achieve his aims as head of the Siamese state. He began to refrain from chewing betel nut in the months leading up to his departure for Europe in order to have whiter teeth. And throughout his

---

<sup>20</sup> From *King Chulalongkorn's First Trip to Europe in 1897*, Volume 1, Note 4, page 100. His Majesty's pledge consisted, in essence, of the following: 1) He would not profess faith in any religion other than Buddhism; 2. He would not enter into relations with any woman, regardless of how briefly, for the duration of his travels outside the Kingdom of Siam; 3. He would not indulge in alcoholic beverages to the point of intoxication.



trip, he indulged in the habit – which he, in fact, enjoyed immensely – only a handful of times, not wishing to offend the Europeans with whom he came in contact. Still, there were shocking reports in the Austrian press of the King’s “spitting red.”<sup>21</sup> Like the stories about Asian polygamy, it was another instance of the European media’s fascination with cultural differences between East and West.

In his appearance, his manner, and his carriage, the Siamese monarch was “Western” from “head to toe.” Yet there was something in his grace and elegance that remained decidedly Asian and that helped him to win the respect of the Europeans. In this, King Chulalongkorn proved much more adept than either the Turkish Sultan or the Shah of Persia, both of whom had made visits to Europe prior to 1897.

The King’s acute intelligence and perceptiveness, honed by the education he received, allowed him to adapt to circumstances around him and thereby gain almost universal respect from the people of Europe. Especially important to his success was the training he had been given by his father, and the admiration shown him on his tour of Europe reflected well on the intelligence and farsightedness of King Rama IV.

#### 4.2.2 *Knowledge and Education: Keys to Winning Respect*

Section 2.3 examined the political, social and commercial relations between Siam and its neighbors and the countries of Europe from the end of the reign of King Rama II to the early years of King Chulalongkorn’s reign. Despite the concessions imposed on Siam with the signing of the *Bowring Treaty* in 1855, trade with the West flourished. In contrast, political relations grew increasingly strained. This was the time when Siam “opened its doors” to a wide range of Western cultural, social and artistic influences. Siamese society, from the head of state and his cabinet of ministers to the public in general, found it necessary to adapt to these new influences from the West.

At his father’s insistence, King Chulalongkorn had been educated in a Western manner, having studied such subjects as English and Latin. This enabled him to absorb the outside influences that were sweeping over Siamese society at the time. He was able to understand how Westerners thought, felt, and acted, and could, therefore, function competently in a European environment. His interest in Western science and his farsighted awareness of its value to the political and cultural development of his Kingdom convinced him of the

---

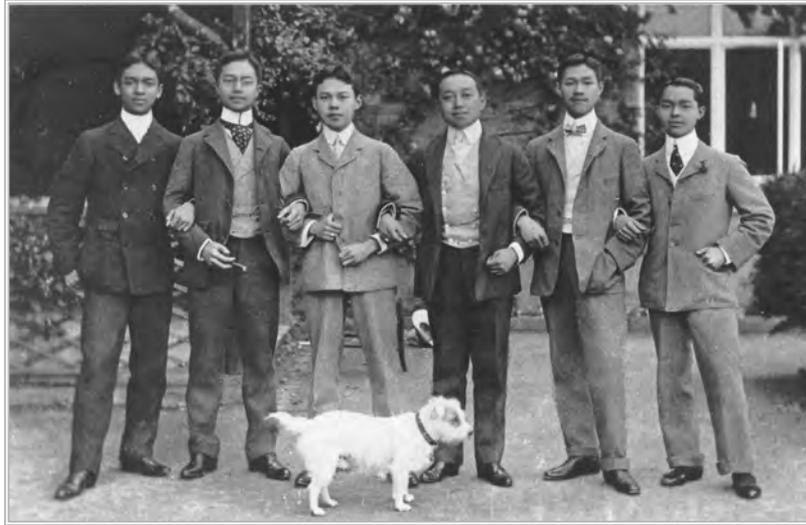
<sup>21</sup> From a conversation with Mr. Thorsten Eisengerich, Deputy Head of Mission, Austrian Embassy (2001 - 2004). At this time, the researcher is unable to trace the original source although others interested in Austrian affairs may have some familiarity with it.

wisdom of sending several of his sons to study in Europe. Crown Prince Vajiravudh, for instance, was sent to study in England, which the Siamese called the “Jewel of the Great Western Powers” and “the Land on which the Sun Never Set.” Another son, Prince Boriphatra Sukumbhant, was educated at the military academy in Potsdam in Germany, a country known for its military and scientific prowess. Prince Jiraprawat Voradech received military training in Denmark, where he was much loved by the Danish King and the members of his court. Later, he attended further training at the military academy in Potsdam. Still another son, Prince Chakrabongse Phuwanart, was sent for military training in Russia, partly as a means of cementing the cordial relations between the Russian Czar and the Siamese court after his father’s visit to Russia on his first trip to Europe.

The King’s high regard for education was passed to his children as well. While King Chulalongkorn was in Bern, he forbade his son, the Crown Prince, from accompanying him on an excursion to Grindelwald, a forested region in the Alps famed for its scenic beauty. He believed that his son’s teachers were right in thinking that by traveling with his father, the young prince would be distracted from his studies by the many receptions held in his father’s honor. Even the request of the President of the Swiss Federation for Prince Vajiravudh’s presence could not dissuade him. *Der Bund* in Bern reported the following in its



Prince Chiraprawat Voradech with Prince Jean of Orleans, younger brother of Princess Marie (1893)  
From *Relations between Two Lands*. Published by East Asiatic (Thailand) Plc.



Crown Prince Vajiravudh (the future King Rama VI) with his younger brothers, photographed in England (1903) while all the brothers were studying in Europe (from left to right)

- |                              |                          |                                 |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Prince Rangsit Prayurasak | 2. Prince Dilok Nopparat | 3. Prince Yukol Tikamporn       |
| 4. Crown Prince Vajiravudh   | 5. Prince Penpattanapong | 6. Prince Suriyong Prayuraphant |

From *The First Trip Abroad (1898), Prince Rangsit Prayurasak*. Courtesy of MR Preeyanantana Rangsit

edition of 1 June 1897:

This wise King's words would have shamed many European parents, that if one has entrusted one's children to a teacher, then as a parent, one has no right to countermand the teacher's authority...even though the King may have felt some regret later on that his son, the Crown Prince, would not be able to enjoy the beautiful Alpine scenery...<sup>22</sup>

This anecdote demonstrates not only that the King gave tremendous importance to the education of his children and to education generally but that he had respect for his children's teachers and tutors, and that he was determined not to spoil his sons by giving in to their wishes.

To Asians at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, nothing indicated the quality of the King's learning like his fluency in English. Many of the European newspapers

<sup>22</sup> "...Dieser wirklich erleuchtete König hat den für manche europäische Eltern beschämenden Ausspruch, wenn man einem Erzieher sein Kind anvertraut habe, dürfe sich der elterliche Wille nicht mehr den Befehlen des Erziehers entgegenstellen... gleichwohl mag der König es nachträglich *im Stillen* bedauert haben, daß der junge Kronprinz nun diesen wunderbaren Alpenübergang nicht zu sehen bekam..."

Prince Chiraprawat Voradech in the uniform of a second lieutenant in the Danish Artillery  
 From *Relations between Two Lands*. Printed by East Asiatic (Thailand) Plc.



Prince Chakrabhongse Phuvanart (seated) and Phum (standing)  
 From *Relations between Two Lands*. Printed by East Asiatic (Thailand) Plc.



Prince Boriphath Sukhumbhant (second left), Prince Rangsit Prayurasak (second right) and Thai students in Germany  
 From *The First Trip Abroad (1898)*. Courtesy of MR Preeyanantana Rangsit

commented on his ability to converse in English as well as any Westerner. The German press characterized his proficiency as “mächtig,” or expert. It was because of his English language skills that the King was able to communicate directly with his European hosts and build cordial relations with them. He had no need for translators or interpreters, although as reported in *Der Bund* on 3 June 1897, the city fathers of Bern arranged for a French language interpreter to be on hand when the King visited the Swiss capital. And in Italy, King Umberto, who spoke only Italian, had his own personal interpreter.

“In the evening the Italian King came into the throne room in full regalia. Then King Chulalongkorn entered, followed by the Italian Queen and the Princess....They moved into another room for dinner...At dessert the Italian King proposed a toast in Italian, which the *Queen translated into English. King Chulalongkorn responded with a toast in English, which the Queen then translated into Italian...*”<sup>23</sup>

Some of the most amusing moments of the King’s trip occurred when he and his royal host did not share a common language. For instance, during his stay in Vienna, Emperor Franz Joseph and his Asian visitor each spoke his own language.

“That evening I went to Schonbrunn for dinner, where the Emperor came down to receive me on the stairs...Later we went to the zoo. I was alone with the Emperor, but we somehow managed to communicate. I spoke English, and the Emperor spoke German. *We used enough sign language to make ourselves understood.*”

And although King Rama V spoke no German and the Austrian Emperor spoke no English, the two men were able to communicate. In fact, they even developed a friendship of sorts.

“...On the 25<sup>th</sup> I went to a crystal shop...I returned for dinner. The Emperor appeared without warning as I was on my way to the toilet. The Emperor waited for me....He lavished much praise on my frockcoat, which he found beautiful. We sat and talked for 20 minutes. It seems that he likes me more than before...”

(from *Telegram 35* sent from Budapest on 29 June 1897)

In its edition of 1 June 1897, the Bern newspaper *Der Bund*, page 2, praised Prince Savasdi Sophon’s manners during a reception hosted by the officials of Bern. The newspaper noted that “Prinz Svasti” was a highly intelligent man who had once studied

---

<sup>23</sup> In *Stories from The King’s European Travels, 1897*. Phraya Burus Ratananrajaphallop (Ja Yuad)



King Chulalongkorn (right) and Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph II (left) in a carriage at Schonbrunn Palace, 24 June 1897

Sanskrit with the German scholar Prof. Dr. Friedrich Max Müller in London. He had also made a number of earlier visits to various European countries. Because of the regard that the Europeans had for their own education system, King Chulalongkorn was also praised for the European-style education he had himself received and for his support for Western education in Siam.

Clearly, the King's Western education played a pivotal role in his ability to win the respect of royals and commoners alike in virtually all the countries he visited on his trip.

#### 4.2.3 *Siam's "King of the White Elephants" in Europe*

If we consider the state of Europe at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, we will see that most people, especially ordinary people, knew very little about

Siam or the Asian continent. This was marginally less true, however, for those countries like England and France which had colonies in Southeast Asia. There was general astonishment, therefore, not only that the King of Siam and his retinue spoke their languages fluently but that in his manners and appearance, he was very much a European. He dressed in the latest Western fashion. He ate European food. He was familiar with the customs of the European courts and could adapt to European life with relative ease. He had even given up his cherished habit of chewing betel. In a letter to Queen Saowabha (Number 34, 29 June 1897), King Chulalongkorn reported that he had been described in glowing terms as "proud" and "dignified.... unflappable, taking everything in his stride." For all these reasons, he was met by large crowds of people eager to see this Asian monarch wherever he went.

Because he did not insist on appearing "Oriental," unlike other Asian rulers who had toured Europe before him, he was readily accepted by his European hosts, who felt that he was really very little different from themselves. In his carriage and his manners, he was as "civilized" as any European.

The Swiss from the "Land of Snow" warmly welcomed their royal "Indian" visitor from a faraway tropical kingdom in the distant East. "King Chulalongkorn, although 44 years old, has the face of a younger man in his early thirties. What's more, in his face there is none of the indifference to his surroundings that one commonly finds in the faces

of other Asian royalty. This makes him unlike most other Asian rulers...<sup>24</sup> In *Der Bund* of 1 June 1897, a writer described the King of Siam's face as "naturally cheerful, and in his lively deportment, he appears not only open to everything around him, but also elegant and very much at ease. It is these characteristics that draw onlookers' gazes to him. In his movements he is like a 'leopard,' a more fitting comparison than a 'white elephant,' the symbol of the Kingdom of Siam..."<sup>25</sup>

In Switzerland, a country with which Siam had no political conflicts and which His Majesty found to be exceptionally beautiful, King Chulalongkorn wrote in a letter to Queen Saovabha from the city of Geneva, dated 22 May, a description of his trip across Lake Geneva to the town of Evian. "I had never believed the photographs I had seen of this place, but now that I am here and have seen it for myself, I realize how beautiful it truly is..."<sup>26</sup> In fact, the King was so taken with the beauty of the country that he wrote in a letter to his son, "Oh, what a beautiful country! What fine places!"<sup>27</sup> Articles in the Swiss press reported on the King's visit to the country for

five consecutive days, and on the last day – 5 June 1897, the newspaper carried a remark the King made to Dr. Gobat: "Anyone who comes to Europe and does not visit Switzerland, or who comes to Switzerland but does not visit Wengernalp should go hang himself!"

These words, uttered by the King of Siam, pleased the people of Bern immensely. Cable car operators, hotel owners, and drivers of all types of transport posted them all over the country, beneath which was a picture of a Siamese elephant bedecked with rhododendrons.

The King of Siam had a particularly powerful effect on the schoolchildren and teachers from the town of Wengernalp in Wengi who came out to welcome him at the railway station. The children here had never seen a king before. The press reported that the young people of the town had never in their lives seen "an Indian king and his retinue." And to their surprise, the King was not at all aloof. Instead, when the train stopped at the platform and the King emerged, he embraced the two young boys who came to present him with flowers and kissed them

---

<sup>24</sup> From the Berlin newspaper *Der Bund*, Tuesday 1 June 1897, Volume 150: "Im Reich des Schnees den tropischen Fremdling, die vom fernsten Osten gekommenen *indischen* Menschen..." This may be because the Swiss were unaware of the difference between "Siam" and "India."

<sup>25</sup> "...seinen resoluten Bewegungen, und bei allem temperamentvoll spontanen auch wieder durch eine vornehme Nonchalance auffallen, etwas vom Wesen des *schwarzen Panthers* wiedererkennen, der vielleicht mit größerem Rechte als der *weiße Elefant* das Wappentier Siams sein dürfte..."

<sup>26</sup> King Chulalongkorn's *First Visit to Europe, 1897* (R.E. 116), Volume 1, footnote 4, page 262.

<sup>27</sup> From the column "Feuilleton" on the visit of King Chulalongkorn to Bern in the *Der Bund*, 2 June 1897, Volume 151.

on the cheek. On seeing a lame, old man stumble, the royal visitor removed his hat in greeting and said, "The elderly deserve respect." This close contact with the "King from India" (as the Swiss newspaper columnist mistakenly called him) increased the European public's interest in every aspect of the King's person. What did he do? How did he feel? What did he think? There were detailed descriptions of the "gala uniform" he wore on special occasions as well as the "European-style traveling clothes" – a simple gray jacket and a black felt hat – that His Majesty wore on an excursion into the mountains.

The Swiss reporter added that on his descent in the cable car from Interlaken, King Chulalongkorn looked down at the beautiful mountain scenery and all the flowers in bloom and grew quiet for a moment. Finally he said, "*I thought on the Queen, whose absence I miss; how she would enjoy all this with me, if she were here. She would be simply in the fields picking flowers.*"

Remarking on this tender moment, in which the King spoke of missing his Queen, "Sakuntala" (another misunderstanding on the part of the Europeans), the reporter added that if the young women of Switzerland had heard these words, his Majesty would surely have won their hearts.<sup>28</sup>

From the first day of reporting, the columnist also expressed the conviction that King Chulalongkorn

acted not just out of his own "cultured" nature but that in embracing the child who presented him with flowers and in many of his other actions, the King demonstrated the "spiritual" refinement and "moral" superiority of a modern absolute monarch from the "land beyond India" which could not be ignored.

A great deal of additional evidence from Europe confirms the tremendous interest across the continent, and not just in Switzerland, in the Siamese monarch. There were abundant accounts of the King's attire and his daily activities. The press reported on his attendance at official functions and his moments of relaxation amidst Europeans from various countries. I have had access to documents from Switzerland, Poland and Germany that describe the King in such detail that it is easy to imagine the events taking place. At each of the stops he made, large crowds of onlookers were on hand to welcome this "exotic visitor" from a faraway land.

In the Polish capital, Warsaw, which in 1897 was still part of the Russian Empire, the public had an opportunity to see the King. The Polish newspaper *Z Slowo* (The World) of 3 July 1897, carried this report:

"...The King of Siam is 44 years old. He is of medium height and has fairly broad shoulders. His head and face are recognizably

---

<sup>28</sup> "...diese Worte würde ihm [dem König Chulalongkorn], wenn sie bekannt geworden, die Sympathie der Frauenherzen in der Schweiz gewinnen..." From *Der Bund*, Bern, 5 June 1897, Volume 154.



HM King Chulalongkorn in Poland

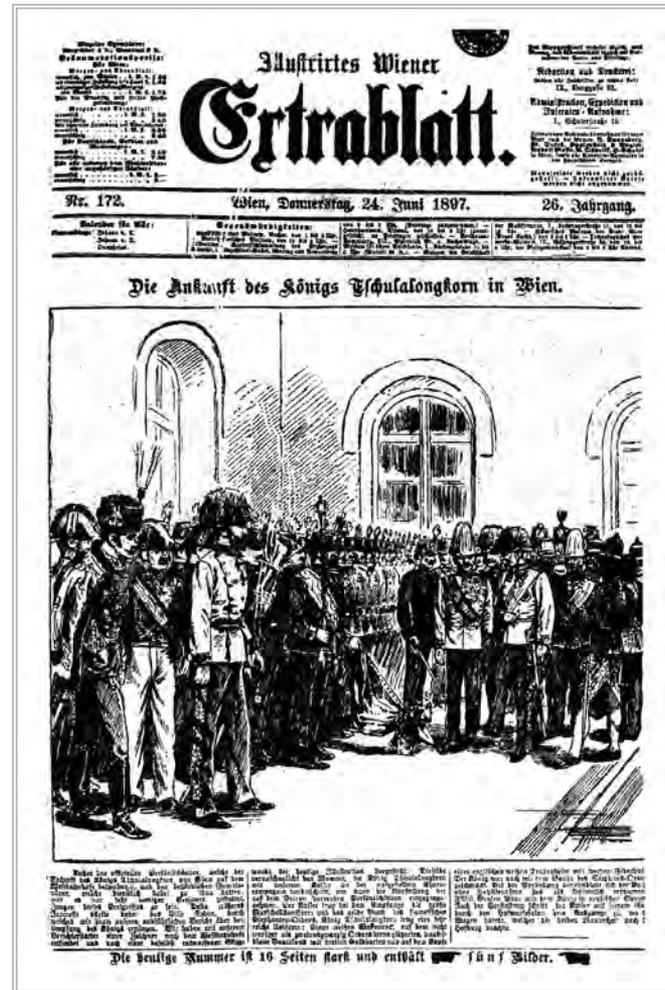
south Asian. He has wavy, sleek, black hair cut short and a small, curving moustache. He wore white gloves on his small hands, and on his feet he wore black patent leather shoes with small spurs on the heels. He wore a white uniform tailored at the waist, and the collar and cuffs of his shirt were made of black velvet decorated with gold braid and gold buttons... His Majesty wore long black trousers with gold piping on the sides and a white hat trimmed with a large bunch of feathers in the English style. The front and back brims were adorned with the royal signature embroidered in gold, and the front was lined with green material. His Majesty's black, slanted eyes gave his face a lively and cheerful appearance when

he smiled. Across his chest he wore a broad blue sash beneath his royal orders and decorations. The King and his party carried some 188 pieces of luggage weighing a total of 2,180 kilograms... and the King of Siam spoke only English."

News of King Chulalongkorn's travels in Europe, starting with his arrival in Italy on 14 May 1897, was spread by word of mouth and through the press all across the continent. Countries turned to other countries for information about the royal visitor. For instance, the Netherlands obtained detailed information from Belgium on how the King should be received (the National Archives in the Hague). In France, where a republican form of

government had been in place for a number of years, and knowledge of royal protocol was in short supply, the government, hoping to strengthen its ties with Russia, requested information from the Russian court on how to receive King Rama V. We also know that King Chulalongkorn traveled to Sweden aboard the steamer *Polstjernen*, which belonged to Czar Nicholas II of Russia.<sup>29</sup> The railway carriage in which the King traveled between Brussels and the Hague was decorated with objects which had once belonged to the French monarchy. Records also show that Spanish ambassadors in almost every country in Europe followed reports of the Siamese King's travels across the continent so that the reception given to him in Madrid would befit his station as the ruler of a sovereign state.<sup>30</sup> The Swedish press reported that when King Rama V arrived in the town of Logårdstrappa, the Swedish monarch was there in person to welcome him, the first European royal to do this. Also on hand were large crowds of onlookers, who waited "many, long hours in spite of the strong sun, like in Siam that day that people fainted and had to be carried away by the police."<sup>31</sup>

And although upon His Majesty's arrival in the Austrian-Hungarian Empire the crowds on hand at the railway station in Vienna to welcome him were fairly small, the Viennese newspapers reported on his visit in great detail. Journalists were particularly



Emperor Franz Joseph II (left) welcoming King Chulalongkorn (right, front)

<sup>29</sup> From the Swedish newspapers *Bladet* (13 July 1897) and *Dagens Nyheter* (14 July 1897). English translation provided by staff from the Swedish Embassy in Bangkok.

<sup>30</sup> From the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, courtesy of the Spanish Embassy in Bangkok.

<sup>31</sup> From the *Dagens Nyheter*, 14 July 1897, Note 29.



King Chulalongkorn on an excursion to Mount Kahlenberg overlooking Vienna

impressed that Emperor Franz Joseph was able to converse with the Siamese monarch without the assistance of his interpreter, Duke Baar.<sup>32</sup>

Interest among the Austrian public in the “King of the Land of the White Elephant” gradually increased as he extended his stay in Vienna. This is clear from the tone of the newspaper articles written about him. The greater the pleasure the King expressed at the various activities in which he took part during his stay, the greater the admiration of the Viennese people for this Asian king.

“Tschulalongkorn” and his retinue demonstrate that *civilization has come to Siam*. They are careful to observe the protocol of the court and the customs of the “Land of the Setting Sun” (i.e. Europe). The people of Vienna have taken special interest in this exotic visitor, and the King appears pleased to see that people have shown such interest in him. It appears that he is very happy in Vienna, and that he has great appreciation for the many kinds of entertainment on offer here. Therefore, we find that his schedule is filled with amusements intended for his pleasure. (*Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt*, 24 June 1897, page 2)

The same newspaper reported that thousands of people, most of them women,<sup>33</sup> followed His

<sup>32</sup> In fact, Emperor Franz Joseph spoke no English. Little more than basic greetings were likely exchanged.

<sup>33</sup> “...die Zuge verkehrten von zehn zu zehn und brachten Tausende und aber *Tausende*, die *Frauen* und entschiedene Majorität, nach dem Kahlenberggipfel...”

Majesty on his ascent of Mount Kahlenberg on 26 June 1897. The Siamese monarch went to the mountain, which was a popular recreation spot for the people of Vienna, for a “picnic” in the company of the Austrian Emperor’s younger brother. All of the buildings en route were festooned with flags, and the government officials, dressed in uniforms with full regalia, cheered as the royal party passed by. King Chulalongkorn was so gratified by the warmth of the welcome that he gave a military salute to those on Mount Kahlenberg. The Siamese monarch enjoyed the company of the Emperor’s brother and Archduke Ludwig Viktor, who also accompanied him on the excursion. The author of the newspaper column wrote that the King was so relaxed and spoke in such a loud voice that it almost seemed that he was issuing orders. This was in contrast with the members of his retinue, who spoke so softly that they were barely audible.<sup>34</sup>

King Chulalongkorn was so taken with the beauty of the “Land of the Danube” that the Viennese newspapers, representing the views of the Austrian people, opined that His Majesty had probably exclaimed in the local dialect, “So guat hab’ i mi’

scho’ lang net unterhalten!” (I haven’t been so happy in such a long time!) and that memories of Vienna would remain in his heart forever.<sup>35</sup>

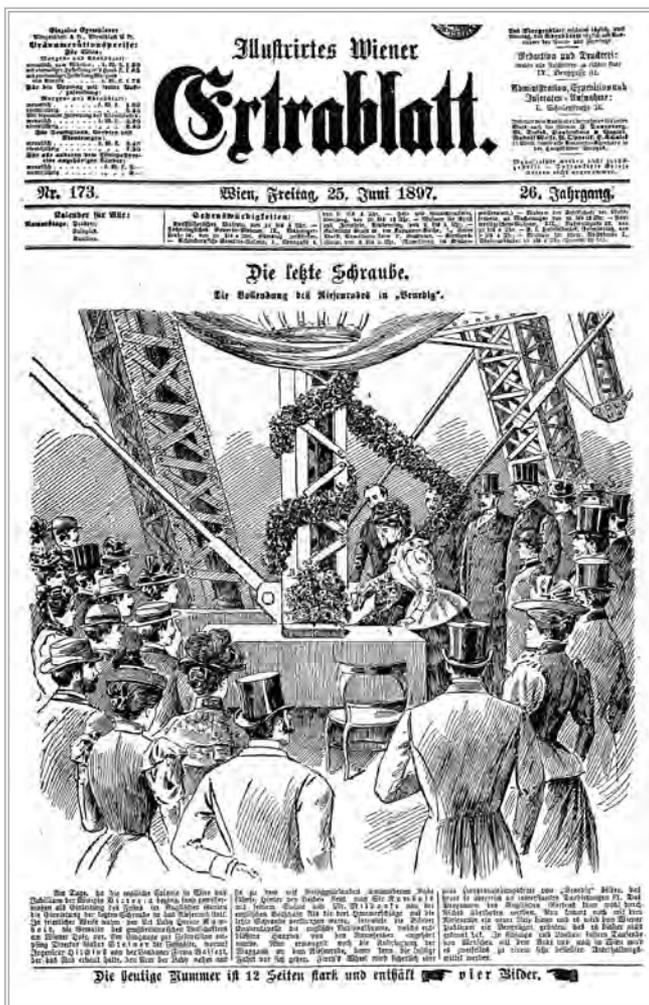
But Vienna was likely unaware of the worries that weighed on the King’s mind as he traveled across the continent. Hoping to ease the tensions between his country and the major powers of Europe, most notably France, he must have found momentary relief in traveling through a picturesque country free of any political conflicts with his Kingdom – a country whose people seemed so friendly and carefree (Austrians smile more readily than the Germans!), and where the cuisine, especially the desserts, was so varied and so delicious (Austria’s reputation for fine cooking outshone that of Germany!). Austria was also renowned for its art and music<sup>36</sup>. It was the cultural heart of Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, an empire and major European power that did not demand of King Chulalongkorn any political negotiations, but allowed him to forge, as he did in Russia and Germany, closer and more cordial ties. Although short, His Majesty’s sojourn in Austria-Hungary (18-27 June) provided him with a reprieve from the worries that weighed on him throughout most of his trip.

---

<sup>34</sup> “...Er war von großer Lebhaftigkeit und zum Unterschiede von seiner Umgebung, welche fast unhörbar leise spricht, sprach er sehr laut, fast im Commandoton...” From *Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt*, 26 June 1897, page 3.

<sup>35</sup> “...Nur schweren Herzen hat König Tschulalongkorn Wien verlassen...” From *Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt*, Sunday, 27 June 1897, Volume 175, page 15 (with illustration)

<sup>36</sup> To mark King Chulalongkorn’s visit to Bad Ischl in Austria-Hungary, the Emperor Franz Joseph arranged for a performance of the opera *Der Fledermaus* by Johann Strauss, the country’s premier composer, conducted by Strauss himself, who traveled with his family to Bad Ischl.



Celebrations marking Queen Victoria's Jubilee in Vienna attended by members of the Austrian and English royal families and government representatives from both countries

A later section of the book will examine the way in which King Chulalongkorn succeeded in winning over the Austrian-Hungarian Emperor and the imperial court. He was the object of comparable affection and admiration from the people of many of the other countries he visited on his tour. The (German) newspaper *Mecklenburgische Zeitung* published the following under the headline "A Bouquet for the Siamese King":

"Imagine someone waiting for the opportunity to experience His Majesty's grace and charm at close quarters...There is likely no one more tired than this 20-year-old woman who stood outside the back door of the Royal Theatre at a little after 9 p.m. and pleaded with the doormen to allow her to present a bouquet of flowers to the Siamese monarch as he alit from his royal carriage. Her request denied, she waited outside the entrance of the theatre until the performance concluded at roughly 11 p.m. When the doors opened, she rushed up to the King as he was stepping into his carriage and offered him her bouquet. The monarch accepted the flowers with a smile, after which the young woman simply vanished into the darkness of night...content that she had managed to give expression to the admiration she felt for the royal person." (*Mecklenburgische Zeitung*, Vol. 404, 31 August 1897)

Even in France, where relations with Siam were particularly troubled, the King noted that "the

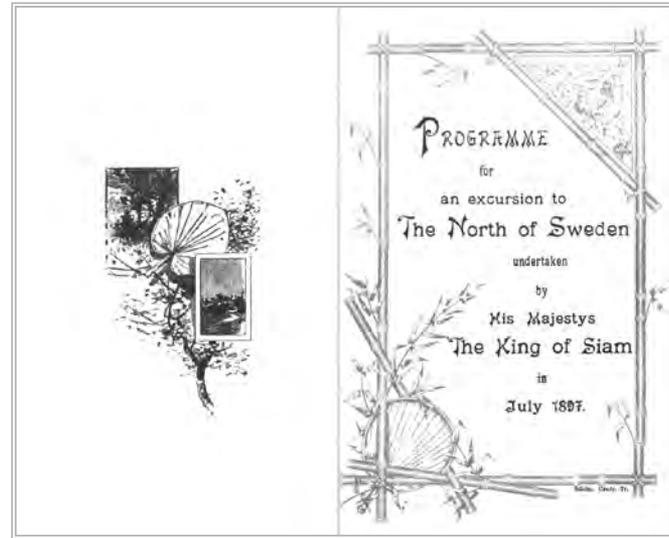
crowds thickened as we approached the station. A line of police officers stood with their arms outspread to hold them back, but today even more people turned out to see me."<sup>37</sup>

In addition, the King's "common touch" and his kindness to the ordinary people he encountered on his travels were remarked on in many of the places he visited. In Sweden, for example, it was widely noted that "His Majesty had not a single wrinkle on his face,"<sup>38</sup> and when he "passed out sweets wrapped in silk" to young children, he gave them a memory that would stay with them throughout their entire lives.

John Flodin from the town of Bispgården recalled the time when he was six and met King Chulalongkorn. He had peeked out from behind a tree as the King drove past in a horse-drawn carriage borrowed from Sundsvall:

"My mother came out to look...and because I was hiding behind a tree, the King did not see me and so I did not get any of the sweets that he tossed out to the children who lined the street to greet him. The sweets were delicious, wrapped in silk."<sup>39</sup>

At 17, Britta Nilsson rowed a small boat across



a river to welcome His Majesty the King. She noted that the crowds assembled for the King were so thick that she had to wait on the far side of the river. She also wrote: "I had a school friend in the same class named Kalle Bengtsson. He was very small and had black hair, so we called him "Chulalongkorn" because of his resemblance to the King."

Clearly, "the Beloved Great King of Siam," much loved by his own people, became, through his kindness and common humanity, as much loved by the European people he had traveled halfway across the globe to meet.

<sup>37</sup> From *Letter 56*, from King Chulalongkorn in Paris, 11 September 1897, to Queen Saovabha in Bangkok.

<sup>38</sup> "...not a wrinkle in his face..." From *Östensund Post*, 1897.

<sup>39</sup> English translation provided by the staff of the Swedish Embassy in Bangkok.

## Chapter 5

# The Beloved King, the West, and the Royal Courts of Europe



“It seems to me [...] that there were four reasons for my coming to Europe: *first*, to see how the people of Europe live; *second*, to understand the source of Europe’s wealth; *third*, to get a sense of the European countries’ military might, and *fourth*, to see the various forms of popular entertainment and recreation. [...] It is not possible for someone like myself, whose time here is short, to understand the political systems of these countries. .... Someone who has not read or studied would derive little benefit except for an understanding of these four areas. By understanding the lives of people in Europe, I mean to see how everyone, from royalty to commoners, lives their lives; how they behave, and how the members of the ruling class relate to the lower classes. In this regard, I realize that my experiences are mostly of the ruling class, and that I have seen very little of the middle and lower classes.

(2) As for the second reason, I have had only limited opportunity to understand

the source of Europe’s wealth. There has simply not been enough time to examine things more deeply.

(3) Likewise, my observation of Europe’s military might has also been superficial, yet one cannot say I have not seen it. It should in fact be the subject of a lengthy discourse rather than a brief account.

(4) Finally, of the fourth point, I can say that I have learned nothing. If I have seen anything at all, it is only official receptions, and not ordinary entertainments. [...] On this trip I have had no opportunity to look after myself but have been looked after by others throughout.”<sup>1</sup>

These frank and insightful remarks made by the King himself during the course of his European trip are evidence of the monarch’s sharp intellect and his ability to grasp situations and events as they occurred – an ability that is, sadly, far from common. This mental acuity, demonstrated throughout King Chulalongkorn’s travels, is a rare gift, indeed.

---

<sup>1</sup> From the Correspondence of King Chulalongkorn to the Queen Regent Saovabha during His Trip to Europe, 1897; *Letter 44*. The Prince Phraya Krom Damrong Ratchanubhap and Princess Jongchitrathanom Diskul Foundation, printed in honor of the 5<sup>th</sup> Cycle Birthday Celebrations of Her Royal Highness Queen Sirikit, 12 August 1992, page 153.

As the King noted, his contact with the lower and middle classes of Europe was generally limited to the large crowds across the continent who turned out to see him wherever he went. Whereas at home in Siam, he had been able to travel extensively and at length among the common people, in Europe, his schedule was filled with official functions and his stay in any one country was short.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the reception given the King by “the ordinary people of Europe” and the ways in which they viewed this “exotic” visitor. As for the other three objectives of his European tour – gaining an understanding of the reasons for Europe’s prosperity, its military might, and the popular leisure time activities of its people, these are things inextricably linked to the way of life of everyone from king to commoner. They also offer insights into the ties between the Kingdom of Siam and the courts of Europe from the perspective of the Siamese monarch.

The primary purpose of this book is to examine these ties through a wide variety of available sources dating from both before and during the King’s travels across the continent. These sources shed light on

### ***5.1 The King of Siam’s Interests and His Knowledge of the World***

In embarking on his trip to Europe, King Chulalongkorn had a number of official objectives he hoped to achieve. One of the most important was to mend relations with France, a major European

relations between Europe’s leaders and the royal court in Bangkok and on His Majesty’s daily activities, his wide-ranging interests and his knowledge of European customs and politics. They also make clear that King Chulalongkorn had a remarkable gift for “reading people” – a gift which allowed him to conduct himself in a manner appropriate to the circumstances, whether he was in the company of royalty or of common people, whether European or Thai. The King’s ability to analyze situations and grasp the possibilities and limitations of the moment served him extremely well throughout his European trip. In this chapter, the focus will be on four main topics:

1. The King’s interests and general knowledge;
2. his view of Europe and the European royal courts;
3. the King’s reception as an “equal” and ally of Europe’s ruling classes, and
4. the factors which both facilitated and hindered the establishment of cordial ties between Siam and Europe, as well as cultural differences and His Majesty’s gift for “reading people.”

power which had taken a threatening stance along Siam’s borders. Another was to pursue a strategy intended to “balance power” by entering into political negotiations with Czar Nicholas II of Russia,

another of Europe's giants, and strengthening relations with Germany. But less clear was how the King's visit to Austria-Hungary under Emperor Franz Joseph I would further the achievement of his political and diplomatic goals. Unlike in Russia and Germany<sup>2</sup>, where he met with the former Chancellor Bismarck in Friedrichsruh, he did not expect any tangible benefits from his discussions with the leadership in Vienna. Support for this claim appears in all the information relating to the King's trip to Austria, including His Majesty's own letters as well as reports in the Austrian press. Many of these are quite detailed, as I have shown in Section 4.1.

No less important than his political negotiations with the rulers of Europe, however, was his correspondence with the regent, Queen Saovabha, both on issues concerning the welfare of Siam and on more personal matters relating to the health and well-being of the Queen and the royal sons and daughters.

Unfortunately, his busy schedule left him little time to write to the Queen Regent in Bangkok. At Hofburg Palace in Vienna, after attending a performance of the ballet, the King "had to attend a formal supper and was not able to get undressed

until sometime after 11 o'clock. It is always like this, and consequently, I have had no time to write. When I finally go to bed, I am unable to sleep, and this has made matters even worse. Today has been so exhausting, and I could not go to sleep until after midnight. Even those times for me to rest, I find that I must speak."<sup>3</sup>

From Budapest's Hotel Hungaria, His Majesty wrote: "I could not help but protest to one of the counts, an advisor to the King. Lately I have had only a couple of free hours to write and relax." He was especially pleased that the Governor General of Warsaw, Prince Imatenski, "has scheduled two free hours from two to four in the afternoon for me to write to the Queen and my government...How can I not like such a well-bred gentleman? Our own "gentlemen are simply no match as they have almost nothing to do in the whole world..."<sup>4</sup>

The largest number of letters and telegrams written by the King were sent from Italy and Switzerland, where official duties did not occupy so much of his daily schedule. In contrast, from Denmark, the King wrote: "I have no time for letters because I am with the royal family until late in the evening."<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> For further details, see "State Secrets of King Rama V's Trip to Germany Were Not Secrets in Europe" by Krairoek Nana in "His Majesty King Chulalongkorn in the Western World: History Beyond the Royal Chronicles of King Rama V". *Arts and Culture, Special Edition*, pages 127 - 137.

<sup>3</sup> From *Letter 30*, written at Hofburg Palace, Vienna, 24 June 1897 (See Note 1), page 120.

<sup>4</sup> From *Letter 37*, written in Lazenki, Warsaw, 2 July 1897 (See Note 1), page 133.

<sup>5</sup> From *Letter 45*, written aboard the *Maha Chakri*, at the mouth of the Kiel Canal, 28 July, 1897 (See Note 1), page 159.

In Russia, King Chulalongkorn “intended to write but I have had no opportunity. I have done nothing but attend official functions. Although the reception here has been more personal, still protocol must be observed, and this is required of me on many occasions.”<sup>6</sup> While the King’s sense of duty obliged him to attend all official functions, other members of his party sneaked away to go shopping or amuse themselves in some other way. This caused occasional friction between the King and the roughly 300 people who accompanied him on his trip. For instance, there were only five members of the party – among them the King himself – who had not visited “the jeweled city – in other words, the great pilgrimage site of London.”

“Of all the people on the ship, only five have not entered Kapilavastu (the birthplace of the Buddha) – only five have not completed the hajj – namely, myself, Phraya Pichai, Nai Ja Yuad, Nai Kuad, and Nai Perm. The five of us are like dogs barking in unison. But Mae Lek’s “gentleman” has been to London even though he denies it. He went to have suits made. Now he has 15 suits, counting both the old and new. Last evening I had him give me a massage, but no matter how he pressed his thumbs into my legs, the blood would not flow and my legs ached terribly. Finally, I had to

have Chaiyan apply ointment, and Nai Yuad massaged my legs until the blood flowed. It took an hour for the pain to subside.”<sup>7</sup>



King Chulalongkorn in a gondola  
with the Duke of Genoa, Venice

And because he was unable to shirk his official duties, the Siamese monarch found it necessary to “play King” at all times.

“...I returned to the park in front of the palace. Those who sneaked away bought many very nice things. But as the King, I had to accompany the Duke of Genoa [Prince Tomasso of Savoy]. I was barely able to see the things in the shops. *I myself was on exhibit*. There were thousands of people...”<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> From *Letter 38*, written at Peterhof Palace, 5 July 1897 (See Note 1), page 138.

<sup>7</sup> From *Letter 43*, written in northern Sweden, 8 July 1897 (See Note 1), page 150.

<sup>8</sup> From *Letter 12*, written in Venice, 14 May 1897 (See Note 1), page 76.

Comments like these demonstrate another of the King's outstanding characteristics – his sense of humor.

Even so, the King did have occasional opportunities to relax and enjoy himself. In Switzerland, he listened to a local women's chorus. He shopped for crystal both in Switzerland and in Budapest. He rode a cable car up in to the Alps. He went to a dairy farm outside Bern. He tasted grapes for the very first time, an experience that made him think immediately of Queen Saovabha. He bought things in Bad Ischl, Austria. He climbed to the top of Mount Kalenberg, overlooking Vienna, and went salmon fishing in Norrland, Sweden. He also attended the theater, concerts, and the opera, and visited museums, the Spanish riding school in Vienna, assorted palaces, and bullfighting in Spain – all as part of his official duties as a visiting monarch.

One thing that the research for this book has made clear is that King Chulalongkorn was particularly fond of shopping. According to a story in the Polish newspaper *Z. Slowo* (The World), on 1 July 1897:

“King Chulalongkorn looked at everything new with great interest and attention, much as the English tourists do.

The King went to a shop selling crystal and other beautifully decorated shops. He purchased so many things that it was almost impossible to load them all onto the ship. And as soon as the King arrived in Budapest, he headed directly for Tingl-Tangl Oes-Budaner, which had been well-known since the exhibition of the previous year. There, he enjoyed himself much more than at the very best shops in Venice.”

Another of the beloved activities of the King and the members of the Siamese court was having their photographs taken. A Czech traveler acquainted with the German photographer Lenz, who had earlier worked in Singapore, and who, along with a Siamese photographer trained in Hamburg, was photographer to the Siamese court, wrote:

“Most of his income originates at the royal court. King Chulalongkorn likes to be photographed often, mostly alone, sometimes with his children, never with his wives.”<sup>9</sup>

When King Chulalongkorn was traveling in Italy, not only was he greatly interested in all forms of art, but he also found time to sit for two Italian portrait painters, Professor Eduardo Gelli and Dr. Cordiani. Of their work, the King wrote:

---

<sup>9</sup> From E.S. Vràz, *In the Land of White Elephant*, 1901. From an English translation of the Czech original, provided by the Czech Embassy in Bangkok.

“Professor Gelli has painted 15 royal portraits. His work is *heavenly*, but it has not yet reached *Brahma heaven*. As for Professor Cordiani, his work is outstanding. He has no need to make preliminary sketches.”<sup>10</sup>

The King was also visibly displeased if the photographer who came to take his picture was unskilled or if the pictures he took were unflattering.

“There were six photographs of mountains taken at Interlaken in Switzerland... In one of the photographs I am standing alone.

The fool photographer wanted to take my photograph with the snow-capped mountains behind me. I was looking directly into the sun and could barely open my eyes. I warned him but he paid no attention. So all you can see in the picture are the mountains.”

Eventually, the King’s fascination with the arts of Italy led to the construction of the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall, Wat Benjamabophit (the Marble Temple), and the Equestrian Statue of King Rama V, which has since become an object of veneration for many Thai people.

No. 20

Hotel de la Paix, Florence  
June 1st, 1897

My Dear Lek,

All the time, ever since my arrival in this city, I seem to have met only artists and craftsmen-sculptors, carvers, modellers and painters. In fact, arts and crafts have been my indulgence from the start. I let them organize only one reception for me yesterday afternoon. The officials of the Civic

Administration invited me to a meeting at Palazzo Pitti. It was an assembly of sixty members. This place was originally the site of the Parliament—that was when the King’s father<sup>1</sup> resided here and this city was the capital. Palazzo Pitti is a large, ancient building, decorated with antiques that consist of

---

<sup>1</sup> King Vittorio Emmanuel II, born in 1819, succeeded his father becoming King of Sardinia in 1849 and becoming King of Italy in 1860, died in 1877.

---

<sup>10</sup> From *Letter 20*, written in Florence, 1 June 1897 (See Note 1), page 97.

oil and water-colour paintings on the ceilings and walls, stone statuettes of renowned and high-ranking figures in history, and wall tapestries depicting designs of chronicles and legends, known as the Gobelian Tapestry. This superb craftsmanship has been widely recognized and art objects from this city have adorned palaces and noble mansions throughout Italy. Other countries may be able to produce art objects of a similar kind but they cannot be compared to Florentine artwork. Kings and noblemen from other nations have collected art items created in Italy and Italian craftsmanship dates back to olden days. They have produced art objects of superior quality for over a thousand years. Their products are on display and can be found everywhere. They have also created new items to add to their inventory. When considering what to buy, you can have a figure originally made at the time of the Roman Empire, two to three thousand years ago. Now, they have made replicas in different sizes to make a complete set. The sizes vary from that of the original to 2 to 3 inches high depending on the buyers' purchasing power. Buyers may obtain them as ornamental pieces so that they will be able to boast about their collections. At present, there are art professors whose superior workmanship enables them to make contemporary art items. These products are then copied from the largest to the smallest size. Therefore, it is almost impossible to find artwork that has never been duplicated. But the originals

and the replicas are so different in price. The originals attract much higher prices, ranging from 150 to 200 *jang* a piece. (One *jang* is equivalent to 80 *baht* - Translator). You can obtain a piece that costs five or six *baht* but when it is seen up close, it is evident that the replica is far inferior. When I saw how each item was first crafted, I realised how difficult it was for the artist to make. His skill and craftsmanship has also to be taken into consideration and then, I would not be reluctant to buy it. This is why they spend a fortune on artwork. If you had not seen any of these art items, you might think that they were out of their minds to spend so much on art. As for Palazzo Pitti that I have mentioned, this does not mean that this place has a collection of antiques of superior quality to those in Rome or in other parts of this city; I referred to it to make you understand the state of crafts and arts in Italy. The reception was nothing more than a crowded gathering of well-known and high-ranking people—men and women, moving around and talking to one another. Tea and champagne were served. I signed the guest-book which members of the Italian royal family and foreign sovereigns, such as Queen Victoria, had signed because they too had received the kind of reception I received today. After that, the ceremony came to an end.

As for the casting of my figure—a marble torso made in Rome—I sat for it for one day only. Tomorrow, they will examine the clay model.

This is not a really good studio but they are familiar with us. [...] The work on the torso began by making the first half—that is carving the pictorial projection from the surrounding surface known as bas-relief. Yesterday it seemed to fail but today, seeing the picture, makes me believe that it is going to be finished. I have sent you a picture. As for the photos that I had taken of myself, they turned out to be a failure. The photographer was nervous and hasty. Things were so confusing that I wasted almost three hours. Nothing could make me so cross as the way in which he painted a mole that I hated most on my cheekbone. I threw them all away. Tomorrow I shall have my picture taken again. As well as this, I sat for paintings at two studios. Our family picture of seven people<sup>2</sup> will take one year to complete. The painter is doing a good job. But there may be a problem since he has never seen us in person; neither has he seen our clothes so he has offered to go to Siam. This art professor is Gelli.<sup>3</sup> He has painted portraits of fifteen monarchs. His artistic skill is divine but not yet reaching the highest heaven of Brahma whereas that of Professor Cordiani<sup>4</sup> has. He can paint without sketching first but he is a bit fussy. If he does not have a chance to see the person he is going to paint, he will not do it, unless absolutely necessary. Thus in your case, he had to guess how

you look, but a model of you beautifully dressed in gorgeous attire has been made and he can do the work from your model sitting quietly on a chair. [...] While drawing, he has to find ways to tease us to make us smile so that he can see clearly our facial expressions. And we have to really smile at him because he has a stuffy nose that causes him to make grumbling sounds when he talks. His wife and daughters have to be busy, running around the house. I have to sit for him every day and food and drink are served. His dreams are also humorous. He does not dream of ordinary people like us but of ancient tales and angels. Once he dreamt of naked people pulling elaborate carriages and he painted them into several paintings. Last night, he dreamt that he saw me walking down the stairs so he got up late at night to draw my picture. As for my full self-portrait, he has finished the sketch which turns out to be splendid. But I still cannot imagine how your picture will come out. He asked me to send a telegram to request all of your clothes and accessories—it would be even better if he could have you sit for him. [...] As for the two painters in these two villages, foreign kings and queens and members of the royal family have to visit them. That helps develop their skills in welcoming and entertaining royal families. There are also other professors whom

---

<sup>2</sup> A large oil painting adorning the Blue Chamber in the Chakri Mahaprasat Throne Hall.

<sup>3</sup> Professor Eduardo Gelli.

<sup>4</sup> Professor Cordiani.

Protestantism. When the quote was translated for the King, he broke into laughter and exclaimed, "That European Confucius truly spoke words of wisdom."<sup>12</sup>

The King's knowledge of the world would have come as no surprise to the people of Siam, however. His letters to the court in Bangkok are filled with his astute insights. His interests were not restricted to politics or those things which he hoped to bring home for the development of his Kingdom. He showed an interest in Swiss farming techniques, in irrigation and energy in Venice, in the logging industry in Sweden, and in Germany's military might. He paid a visit to the offices of the German steel and armaments manufacturer Krupp and spent several days at the home of the Krupp family.<sup>13</sup> The King's lively intelligence extended to an uncanny ability to "read people," "win people over," and "read the political situation" in the European capitals he visited. Even the European leaders with whom he met recognized the King's familiarity with their customs and culture. This is the subject of a letter about his meeting with the Swedish king, who, after accompanying his Asian guest to the room in the palace arranged for him, made an unexpected return.

"Arriving in the accommodation arranged for me, I saw that there was a place where I could remove my clothes. As I was unbuttoning my shirt, the King suddenly reappeared. I quickly turned my head away and began looking at paintings which happened to be of the mistresses of French kings. As I recognized them, I told him (while rebuttoning my shirt) who they were. He said, 'You know them?' He had mistresses, too, he told me, and he loved them very much – all three of them. Then he asked me if I had mistresses as well, and I told him I did. He laughed and whispered, 'Not so loud,' although he himself was hardly speaking softly..."<sup>14</sup>

It is clear that His Majesty's knowledge of European customs served him well in his conversations with the rulers of Europe, enabling him to befriend many of them. As he wrote of the King and Crown Prince Oskar of Sweden, "We have become true friends. All formality fell away."

"Prince Oskar asked me for three pictures to give to his mother's serving girls. I agreed. I was eager to know who the women were, and when I saw an attractive woman, I asked

---

<sup>12</sup> "Als hierauf dem König die Worte Luthers übertragen wurden, lachte er fröhlich auf und meinte, da habe dieser europäische Confutse etwas sehr Gescheites gesagt..." in *Der Bund*, Berlin. (See Note 10).

<sup>13</sup> The Krupp Corporation or the Krupp family maintains its own archives with photographs and records of King Chulalongkorn's visit to Hühel Villa and his inspection of the Krupp industrial plant.

<sup>14</sup> From *Letter 44*, written on the Baltic Sea, 22 July 1897 (See Note 1), pages 150-151.

the Prince if she were one of those who had asked for my photograph. He took me by the arm and said, 'no.' That woman was German. I was terribly embarrassed. *He kept slapping me on the shoulders and back. Because we were joking, he slapped me on the back so hard that it hurt, but it was no reason to take offense. I was slapping him on the shoulders and back just as hard.*" (Letter 44, on the Baltic Sea, 22 July 1897, pp.150 - 151)

This is merely one example of the King's success in building friendships with the leaders of Europe. These were friendships formed on an equal footing and not just courtesy shown to a foreign guest or matters of formal protocol. King Chulalongkorn proved himself adept at understanding the character of many of the crowned heads of Europe and in winning the affection of royals all across the continent.

## 5.2 Europe and the Royal Courts of Europe from the Point of View of His Majesty King Chulalongkorn

King Chulalongkorn recorded his observations of the members of the royal families of Europe and his impressions of "life at court" and the people of Europe in many of his letters. In Letter 44, for instance, his political analyses of the Italian, Austro-Hungarian, Russian, and Swedish courts are particularly astute. His remarks on the German court were limited, however, to the German Emperor's role in achieving a balance of power between France and Russia. The reason for this may have been that, despite the unification of Germany and the establishment of a national capital in Berlin in 1871, the country was still very much a "federation of territories," each with its own royal court intent on retaining its own political influence and its own culture and customs. Siam had established cordial relations with Germany through representatives from Prussia in 1861, prior to the country's unification, and the King himself was on friendly

terms with a number of German royals, some of whom had visited Bangkok. Duke Johann Albrecht of Schwerin-Braunschweig, for instance, had been a guest of the Siamese court from 5 November 1882, to 25 November 1883, and for this reason, King Chulalongkorn included many German cities on his European itinerary. He visited Hamburg, the commercial capital of the Hansastädte (Hanseatic Towns). He paid a visit to former chancellor Bismarck in Friedrichruh, near Hamburg. His travels also took him to Essen in Ruhrgebiet, Germany's industrial heartland; to the Saxon capital of Dresden, ruled by the King's friend, Prince Albert; and to Potsdam, an important military center. His Majesty's trip through Italy – another recently unified country – had likewise consisted of numerous stops, for instance, in Rome; Turin, home of the Savoy royal family, Venice, and Florence.



King Chulalongkorn on a visit to the home of former German Chancellor Bismarck in Friedrichs Ruh, 1897

As for His Majesty's impressions of the Belgian King, the Danish royal family, and the two Queens of the Netherlands, inferences can be made from comments contained in the royal letters and telegrams sent from Europe. Interestingly, there are no letters especially devoted to an analysis of the Swedish court, but in Letter 42, written in Sweden on 14 July 1897, the King expresses a wish "to return home." He has had "enough, but in fact, returning now would be mad and a serious waste because important countries like England, Germany and France cannot be ignored. These are only idle complaints. But I don't wish to go to Belgium" because of his dislike for the Belgian monarch, whom King Chulalongkorn considered to be "insincere...

a man not to be trusted, who beat around the bush ... and only ever asked about matters of money."<sup>15</sup>

In brief, then, in the primary sources concerning the King's travels through Europe, namely his own letters and telegrams, there is little analysis of "people" or "politics" in either England or France, two of the most important destinations on his trip. Relevant documents seem to indicate that the British made it difficult for King Chulalongkorn to establish any close ties with the English court. Even during the preliminary stages of his trip, the British government had erected a kind of "fortress" that kept the Siamese monarch at a distance and delayed the planning of the royal itinerary. Even though King

---

<sup>15</sup> From *Letter 55*, written in Brussels, 9 September 1897 (See Note 1), page 185.

Chulalongkorn entered Britain “incognito” on a number of occasions and had been welcomed by the Crown Prince and other members of the British aristocracy, his reception had not been particularly warm or personal. And the fact that he was housed with the Duke of Cumberland, one of the country’s wealthiest men and not a senior member of the royal family, further added to the impression that the British royal family was less than enthusiastic about the Siamese King’s visit.

In France, another key destination, it was especially important for King Chulalongkorn to exercise caution. Things were complicated by the fact that few of the French officials with whom King Chulalongkorn’s party met spoke English, and the King himself spoke little French. Although the King felt a fondness for the President of the French Republic, Félix Faure, who could speak some English, Faure confided to his royal guest during political discussions that he wasn’t entirely his own man, but had to make decisions to “please the [French] people.” In this way, France was unlike other countries in Europe, and even Faure himself “survived only because he was a man that many people liked.”

These words would appear to have been contradicted by an earlier event that made front-page news in Austria, during the King’s visit to the city of Bad Ischl on 30 June 1897. The story, accompanied by a drawing, described how the French President had been the target of a failed assassination attempt.

The explosives intended to kill the French leader had been planted too far from the street in which he was passing. Then, when it was discovered that the first person arrested for the attempted murder – the victim of brutal police interrogation methods – was, in fact, a detective in pursuit of the actual suspected killer, the French police were made to look a laughing stock. German records also show that President Faure was believed to have had a secret wife and that there was no shortage of political opposition to his policies.

In Switzerland, the second stop on the King’s journey through Europe, the King made little effort to analyze the local political situation.

Upon his arrival in Europe, the King made a private visit to Venice, where he was met by the Duke of Genoa in a gondola belonging to the Venetian prince. The Duke was rowed out to the *Maha Chakri*, where he invited the King to join him on a tour of the city. Interestingly, in relating his impressions of Venice, King Chulalongkorn not only described what he saw in front of him but compared his impressions of Venice – and later other cities of Europe – with places and things back in Siam or in Asia, which constitutes much of the charm and pleasure of reading the King’s journals. They are both amusing and highly informative. For instance, he compared Venice’s Saint Mark’s Cathedral with the Buddhist temples in the grounds of the Royal Palace. He compared the clothes worn by people of different climates and geographical conditions.

“I am of the opinion that people dress in a manner that resembles the world around them. For example, in China, the trees – pines, for instance – have spindly branches that are wide and hang low to the ground and resemble the posture of characters from Chinese opera. The Chinese, therefore, wear large, loose-fitting clothes. In Europe, most of the trees are tall and thin, so people dress in a way that makes them look equally tall and slender. In Thailand, trees are more like shrubs, and so we wear clothes that make us look swollen around the middle just like the shrubs, and our houses have a similar shape....”<sup>16</sup>

In describing the statues he saw in Saint Mark’s, the King wrote: “All of them are of Jesus and the saints of their religion.” As for the citizens of the city, because they were free, it was difficult to distinguish the commoners from the aristocracy. Consequently, “going anywhere in the company of the royals was really little different from going alone...Being stabbed or shot would have posed no difficulty whatsoever. It could have happened at any time. They appear to have no royal bearing at all...”<sup>17</sup>

Throughout Italy, His Majesty observed that relations between the common people and members of the royal family were, while respectful, quite informal. “Wherever the King goes, crowds of people remove their hats and shout ‘Hurrah!’ or they may crowd around him...or stand close to his carriage and throw petitions in to him. They are free to pass papers to their King with their own hands.” To the Siamese monarch, this simple act seemed to pose a danger to royalty. Most of the people of Italy were poor and the country was not terribly clean, yet even so, the King praised the Empress for her intelligence and her love for Emperor Umberto. The Empress was particularly interested in how many wives the King of Siam had, how much “affection” he felt for the Queen (Mae Lek), and even “what the Queen calls me. She was particularly pleased to hear that the Queen and I love each other very much.”<sup>18</sup> The Empress sent her regards to the Queen and gave the King a bracelet decorated with onyx for her. “The stones are large and very beautiful. There are large gems all around that can be made into a brooch.” It was also evident to the King that “the Queen [Empress] is the true ruler of the palace. She comes and goes entirely as she pleases. It is the Queen who

---

<sup>16</sup> From *Letter 12*, written aboard the *Maha Chakri*, Tuesday, 14 May 1897 (See Note 1), page 74.

<sup>17</sup> From *Letter 12* (See Note 1), page 74.

<sup>18</sup> i.e. Queen Saovabha. From *Letter 21*:

*“At the table I was seated next to the Queen. The Queen is a very inquisitive person. Finally she asked me how many wives I had, what our life together was like, if I loved you. But she asked me these questions in an indirect fashion, unlike the Prince of Java. She also spoke of history, law and religion. She is a very knowledgeable individual. Her questions are intelligent and she is a gifted debater. She enjoys when I disagree with her and express my own opinions...”*

The Continental Hotel, Florence, Italy  
June 8th, 1897

My Dear Lek,

Upon my departure from Rome, after lunch, the King and Queen asked me to wait outside the inner chamber, saying that they were looking for a gift for me. They discussed what to give me for quite a while before they came out. The Queen handed the King a bracelet studded with a high quality, large onyx surrounded by diamonds—the one I had seen on her arm. She then said this was a gift for you from her husband<sup>1</sup>. I thanked them for myself and also on your behalf, telling them that I would telegram to you and you would thank them yourself. I then wrote the telegram right in front of them.

The Queen kept asking me how much I loved you. Eventually, she told me that I loved you in the same way that she loved the King. She asked me everyday whether I had heard from you, expressing her concern about my indisposition. She also informed me when she received your telegram

thanking her for the decorative badge. She said that she had told you that I was doing well. Probably she was afraid that you would be anxious about my well-being. She really wanted you to send your telegram in return. I had to explain that it took some time for our telegrams to get through. Eventually that pleased her, seeing such a caring couple just like us two.

I received another stone statue carved by a sculptor of superb craftsmanship. It is a little larger than the former, yet both look like me. I will send them directly to Bangkok. I think they will be sent at the same time so as to arrive together as expected. I initially had them insured. I hope that you receive them without delay. I shall write diligently to keep you informed on other matters. I am now relieved of my exhaustion and feeling fine. But I miss you more than words can express.

(His Majesty's Signature)  
Chulalongkorn Rex

---

<sup>1</sup> King Humbert of Italy.

*Letter 22, to Queen Saovabha from the Hotel Continental, Florence, 8 June 1897.*

*The letter concerns the King and Queen of Italy and gifts for Queen Saovabha.*

*From the book King Chulalongkorn's First Trip to Europe, 1897. Centre for European Studies at Chulalongkorn University, 2003, page 75.*



King Chulalongkorn in Rome, 3 June 1897

receives guests, while the King goes out occasionally, stands in the background and smokes cigarettes. I am always in the company of the Queen.”<sup>19</sup> The Italian Queen was an intelligent woman who offered frequent advice to her husband,<sup>20</sup> giving the appearance that it was she who ruled. But this was because the King allowed her to act in this manner. Indeed, as King Chulalongkorn observed, the Queen showed genuine respect for her husband.

In his descriptions of other Italian royals, the King noted not only their appearance and their character but whether they could be counted as close friends or whether, as in the case of the wife of the Duke of Auauster, the friendship they offered was unlikely to be sincere. King Chulalongkorn expressed

the same sentiment for the Italian Crown Prince, the Prince of Naples, who, despite being better educated than his father, “is reserved and socially awkward. He shows little interest in knowing anyone. He does not appear bold or brave. It is unlikely that he will be a close friend as he is so very withdrawn.”

The King had been struck by the Crown Prince’s diffidence ever since his arrival in Venice. Even the Siamese Crown Prince, the future King Vajiravudh, found it difficult simply to converse with the Prince of Naples, who shared the same rank with him. The two princes had met at the celebrations for Queen Victoria’s Jubilee, and in a letter to his father written in London on 21 June 1897, he related his encounter with the Italian Crown Prince.

---

<sup>19</sup> From *Letter 21*, written at the Quirinale Palace, Rome, 7 June 1897 (See Note 1), pages 99-101.

<sup>20</sup> From *Letter 44*, 22 July 1897 (See Note 1), page 154.

That Italy at the time seemed to be in the hands of the Queen and that the King and the Crown Prince appeared to lack political acumen portended the impending fall of the royal house of Savoy. This impression was reinforced by the great “freedom” with which the common people treated their rulers. Because Italy, like Germany, had only been unified in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Italians had no long-standing tradition of respect for a tightly centralized monarchy as in France, England, Spain and Portugal. Instead, like Germany, Italy had been divided up into small city-states, each with its own ruling family. In Florence, for example, the Medici family had held sway for three centuries. This and other ruling dynasties in city-states like Milan, Verona, Venice and Turin, competed for dominance over Italian culture, politics, and trade. The middle classes, consisting of merchants and high-ranking officials of the Catholic Church, were likewise in competition for power. This was clearly demonstrated in the acrimonious wrangling between the Pope and the Italian king over the status of the Vatican as an independent city-state in the heart of the Italian capital. In this case, neither man would back down from his position.

It was his awareness of the difficult relationship between the Vatican and the royal house of Savoy that caused the Siamese King to tread carefully as he prepared for his audience with

the Pope in Rome. King Chulalongkorn left his lodgings at the *Quirinale*, which the Italian King and Queen had arranged for him, and checked into a hotel, signaling to Church officials that he had taken *leave of the Kingdom of Italy* and would pay his respects to the Holy Father as an independent visitor from a distant land. Pope Leo XIII showed the King tremendous kindness, praising him for his tolerant treatment of Roman Catholics in Siam.

His audience with the Pope afforded King Chulalongkorn an opportunity to strengthen the bonds between his country and the Vatican. Relations had first been formed more than 200 years earlier but, in more recent times, had become somewhat strained. The King suggested that the Pope write to him directly should anything of particular urgency arise. A proposal to establish a Siamese embassy within the grounds of the Holy See was looked on favorably by the Vatican, but because of the expense involved, the Pope suggested that a Siamese delegation be housed with another embassy (provided that it was not the Italian embassy). Finally, Pope Leo XIII gave his blessings to the King and the other members of his party, heaping generous praise on them. “The Pope gave us each his blessing. He told Chira to be a good man like his father.”<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Letter from the Hotel Bauer, Bad Ischl, to Queen Saovabha, 18 June 1897. Microfilm from the National Archives, Fine Arts Department, Bangkok, cited in *King Chulalongkorn's First Trip to Europe, 1897: Collected Letters*. Pornsan Watanangura, Narumit Sodsuk, and Kanitha Boonpan (eds.), published by Centre for European Studies at Chulalongkorn University German-Thai edition, 2003, pages 89-108.

Not only did King Chulalongkorn receive a warm and gracious welcome from the ruler of one of Europe's largest empires, but he developed a genuine affection and respect for Emperor Franz Joseph. Both men were sincere and plain-spoken. Both had an appreciation for the importance of statecraft – shared characteristics that drew them together. Interestingly, their very first encounter did not bode so well. "I can barely speak German. I am constantly at a loss for words. We must always rely on interpreters. There is little hope that we will become close for whatever purpose."

Fortunately, King Chulalongkorn's personal charm enabled him to overcome this unpromising start. In the end, the two leaders formed a bond that proved to be of benefit to the country of Siam.

"On the 25<sup>th</sup> I went to a shop that sold crystal...Then I came back for dinner. Suddenly the Emperor came without any previous warning. I was in the bathroom. He waited, and when I came out, putting on my clothes and making my excuses at the same time, the Emperor took me in his arms and complimented me on my beautiful frock coat. We sat and talked for 20 minutes. It seems clear that his feelings for me have warmed."<sup>32</sup>

While King Chulalongkorn enjoyed his stay in the Austrian capital, his feelings for the Russian royal

family can only be described as "infatuation." The King admitted that he did not understand why he felt as strongly as he did, but he was not alone in feeling this way. "Even those who have not been as close feel as I do." In *Letter 42*, written from the Royal Castle in Stockholm, the King noted that this was the first letter he had written since arriving in Sweden, the reason being "not that I have been enjoying myself but that I have been thinking about Russia." In the same letter, he also compared the reception given him by the Russian Czar and Sweden's King Oskar II. In fact, the Swedish monarch was a much more overtly affectionate man, but to King Chulalongkorn, his frequent displays of affection lessened their value.

"On the very first day he must have kissed me at least six or seven times. First he kissed me on board the ship and then again as he greeted me on the dock. A very capable foreign photographer took a picture of us embracing there. When we arrived at the palace and he showed me to my room, he kissed me again and then once more at dinner. Later we kissed while drinking and then as he bade me good night. At first I found it confusing but now it does not strike me as strange at all."<sup>33</sup>

But the Swedish king, who was said to have "German" manners, enjoyed making vulgar jokes.

---

<sup>32</sup> *Letter 35*, written in Budapest, 29 June 1897 (See Note 1), pages 129.

<sup>33</sup> *Letter 44* (See Note 1), page 155.

Little of what he said was particularly sincere or carefully considered. He was in the habit of rushing through the palace as he issued orders that were routinely ignored. No one removed their hat or hailed him as he passed by. As a result, he did not impress King Chulalongkorn as having a regal bearing. He stood in marked contrast, in fact, with the Russian Czar, who was generally quiet but thoughtful, a man whose personality endeared him to children and adults alike.

“The Emperor does not put on airs. Nor is he a stickler for protocol. Yet he does not treat anyone in a trifling or capricious manner. He is a man of tremendous dignity, and although he is feared and respected by people of all classes, he appears to take great pleasure in the company of others, engaging in jokes and friendly banter. His subjects fear him much more than our own people fear the aristocracy. They see him as a god rather than a man...There are no words to describe the people’s reverence for their ruler.”<sup>34</sup>

To King Chulalongkorn, the Swedish Monarch and the Russian Czar were as different as night and day. This was not only because the Czar had previously met the King on a trip to Bangkok in 1889, before ascending to the throne and before the

Paknam crisis, but because in contrast to the Austrian court, the Russian royal family enjoyed very close relations, due in no small measure to the personal qualities of the Czar. There was little of the formality that defined relations between the members of the Austrian court. In Russia, King Chulalongkorn also won the heart of the Czar’s mother,<sup>35</sup> whom he praised “as the true mother of all, a beautiful and gracious woman.”

The King appreciated her keen intelligence and regal manner. As they were about to part, the Empress gave him orders as if he were her own son and the King reciprocated by thinking of her as his mother. “Every day she kisses me and offers her cheek for me to kiss.”<sup>36</sup>

Of the four European monarchs that he met within a short period of time – Emperor Franz Joseph I of Austria-Hungary, King Oskar II of Sweden-Norway, Czar Nicholas II of Russia, and Belgium’s King Leopold II, the Siamese monarch believed that the first three of these men had a knowledge of statecraft and a genuine love of country. Even though King Oskar, a heavy drinker, was much less competent than his son, the Crown Prince (who would later come to the throne as King Gustav V), he was kind and sincere, in stark contrast with the Belgian monarch. Of Leopold II, King Chulalongkorn

---

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, page 155.

<sup>35</sup> i.e. Empress Marie Feodorovna, wife of Czar Alexander III.

<sup>36</sup> *Letter 41* written at Peterhof, 11 July 1897 (See Note 1), page 146.

wrote: "His eyes look like those of a dead fish floating on the water. There is nothing in what he says that shows a love of country. He does not have the manner of a king."<sup>37</sup> The Siamese monarch added: "He is a strange man. He appears to wish to be good but his greed prevents this."<sup>38</sup>

As the King traveled across Europe, it seems clear that praise for the Asian sovereign was passed from one royal court to the next. One of Europe's oldest monarchs, Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria-Hungary, placed tremendous trust in King Chulalongkorn. The Emperor "entered my room and closed the door. Pra Ratanakosa was our interpreter. We spoke of many things. The Emperor told me that he had recently been in St. Petersburg, where the Czar had spoken very highly of me. I replied that as a guest of the Czar, I had been given a very fine welcome."<sup>39</sup> Sweden's King Oskar also received an eight-page letter from Prince Hans of Denmark, who was staying at the Imperial Palace in St. Petersburg at the time of the King's visit. In the letter, Prince Hans praised King Chulalongkorn, referring to him as his dear friend. From this, we can assume that Czar Nicholas II sought to ensure that the King's reception in Denmark and England would be as warm as in Russia. The King and Queen of Denmark also sent King Chulalongkorn their love and best

wishes through relatives in the city of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, offering to do all they could for him, as they had done with "Nicky," who was worried about the situation in Siam. For his part, Czar Nicholas, whom King Chulalongkorn already counted as a personal friend, sent off a letter to his daughter in England, asking her to do her best to meet the Siamese monarch. In the frequent letters and telegrams between the Czar and his daughter, there is constant praise for the King.

From this, we can assume that Russia commanded considerable power and influence at the time of King Chulalongkorn's first visit to Europe. A number of the King's letters also refer to the network of familial relations that connected the royal courts of Europe. The blood ties linking the Danish and Greek royal families to "Nicky" (Czar Nicholas II) were particularly close. The German ambassador once overheard Queen Louise of Denmark<sup>40</sup> gossiping about the German Emperor: "That is certainly the German ambassador. I despise the German Emperor. He is a man not to be trusted. In fact, I hate both the Germans and the French. When the King saw the picture of the German Emperor that was given to him, he remarked on how haughty and grand he appeared. It is because he became Emperor at too young an age, but Nicky became

---

<sup>37</sup> Letter 42, 14 July 1897 (See Note 1), page 147.

<sup>38</sup> Letter 55, 2 September 1897 (See Note 1), page 185.

<sup>39</sup> Letter 30, written at Hofburg Palace, Vienna, 24 June 1897 (See Note 1), pages 118-119.

<sup>40</sup> Queen Louise of Denmark

Czar at an equally young age. But in his case, it did not matter because the Czar was of a very different nature.”<sup>41</sup> As these remarks show, the Danish court had little liking for the German Emperor Wilhelm II, and relations between the two countries were severely strained. In fact, relations among many of the countries of Europe were becoming increasingly hostile, eventually culminating in the outbreak of World War I a few short years later. A document from the German Foreign Ministry advised that Prince Chira be treated with caution since he had completed his military training in Denmark and had entered military service in Prussia. The Prince had many friends in the Danish military and at court. Even though Prince Chira was later to serve in the German army, he was not to be entrusted with any military secrets.<sup>42</sup>

During the course of my research, I was repeatedly struck by the strong feelings of dislike expressed by many of the courts of Europe for the German leadership. Anything viewed in a negative light was described as “German.” Italy’s Crown Prince, the Prince of Naples, who avoided making eye contact, and the King of Sweden, who had a fondness for vulgar jokes, were both described as “German.”

Few foreign visitors were allowed a glimpse

of Europe’s “internal” and “external” politics. Only after a degree of trust was established did these guests become privy to the “gossip” circulating among the continent’s ruling classes. That King Chulalongkorn was taken into the confidence of so many of the leaders he visited during his trip is proof of the trust he inspired. And because of what he heard, he was able to conduct himself appropriately. For instance, through his connections with the Greek royal family within the Russian and Danish courts, he obtained a letter of introduction to Prince George of Greece, with whom he met discreetly.<sup>43</sup> He did not, however, travel to Turkey because the two countries were embroiled in a dispute that led to war during King Chulalongkorn’s stay on the continent.

Even before setting sail for Europe, King Chulalongkorn was well aware of Russia’s power and the personal authority of the Czar, Nicholas II. The Siamese court had asked the Czar and Count Mouravieff to help with the arrangements for the King’s trip to France. The Russians, who had cordial relations with the French government, explained that France’s belligerent stance toward Siam was only benefiting the British, and because of the King’s personal friendship with the Czar, the two monarchs met in private on more than

---

<sup>41</sup> Letter 45, written aboard the *Maha Chakri* at the mouth of the Kiel Canal, 27 July 1897 (See Note 1), page 161.

<sup>42</sup> From the archives of the German Foreign Ministry, Berlin, File R 19238, Document A 3756

<sup>43</sup> i.e. Prince George of Greece, who accompanied the Czarevitch on his 1889 trip to Siam

continued to pose a threat to Siamese sovereignty. Even the Czar's personal intercession proved largely ineffectual. Domestically, Russia was in increasing turmoil, with revolutionary elements threatening the country's stability. In addition, external politics eventually led to its involvement in the First World War. But at the time of King Chulalongkorn's visit, the Czar "could always be counted on to act discreetly, for instance, by speaking with the German Emperor," who gave special instructions to the newly-appointed German envoy to the court of Siam, von Seldenek. The King had learned that the two rulers had spoken, and although when he met with Emperor Wilhelm II for private talks, nothing was said directly, King Chulalongkorn sensed that the Czar had alerted the German Emperor to Siam's difficulties with France prior to his visit to the Russian capital as a service to the Siamese crown.

The King was appreciative of this gesture, writing in *Letter 53* of the Royal Correspondence: "I have tremendous respect for and confidence in the Russian Emperor's wisdom." His numerous

meetings with the Czar only reinforced his impression that the Russian monarch had deep affection for him and was determined to welcome his Asian visitor "in the same manner as he had received the Austrian Emperor..."<sup>47</sup> And as the German envoy to the court at Saint Petersburg noted in his report, Nicholas's eyes filled with tears as he recalled his visit to Bangkok when he was still the Czarevitch. These fond memories help to explain, perhaps, the Czar's wish to receive King Chulalongkorn and his party in a truly magnificent manner.<sup>48</sup>

Unfortunately, the Czar's influence with the French government proved to be of only limited benefit to Siam. One reason for this was the political alliance negotiated between Russia and France as a hedge against the growing power of Germany's Emperor Wilhelm II, who was the common enemy of many of the major European countries of the time. The German Emperor, who was seen as haughty and arrogant, took an increasingly belligerent stance toward his European neighbors.<sup>49</sup> To offset the Second Reich's growing influence<sup>50</sup>, France adopted policies aimed at

---

<sup>47</sup> *Letter 53*, written together with *Letter 52*, in Essen (Germany) on 5 September 1897 (See Note 1), pages 182-183.

<sup>48</sup> From the political archives of the German Foreign Ministry, Berlin. File R 19238, Vol. 19,20 SIAM No.1 A5022, Number 063. From the German envoy to Saint Petersburg, 14 April 1897.

<sup>49</sup> German Emperor Wilhelm II firmly believed that he was the world's only true emperor. In 1909, he wrote: "Europe and the world are waiting to hear what the German Emperor says and thinks." In: Rudolf Buchner, *Deutsche Geschichte in europäischen Rahmen: Darstellung und Betrachtung*. Göttingen: Musterschmidt-Verlag, 1975, page 375.

<sup>50</sup> An article appeared in the Viennese newspaper *Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt* (Vol.175) of 27 June 1897, claiming that Germany was facing a financial crisis. The headline read: "Germany in Crisis." The situation was blamed on Wilhelm II's ambition to make the German navy the most powerful fleet in Europe, much like his predecessor Emperor Friedrich I, who had strengthened Germany's army and was known as the "soldier king." Although a majority of the German people

strengthening its own international position, while Russia sought to intimidate Berlin. And although the Romanovs and the Hohenzollerns were close blood relations, Germany ultimately declared war on Russia in the First World War.

King Chulalongkorn was right in his analysis of the German Emperor. Although Wilhelm II extended a warm and gracious welcome to the Siamese monarch, his only true motivation for doing so was to please the Czar. "I have taken the chance of observing [the German ambassador's] manners and behavior as well as his attitude toward our administration and I have found that we cannot really rely on him. The fact that I have tried to develop ties with the German leadership during this trip is because of my only wish...to please the Russian Emperor..."

Still, Emperor Wilhelm II showed the King tremendous hospitality throughout his stay in Germany, even if, as the King noted, "the focus was a bit too much on the military." The King accompanied the German Emperor and Empress to the parade grounds in Berlin to review the troops. He had done very much the same in Warsaw, where the Cossacks and Hussars "showed him great respect." And in France, he reviewed a military parade of some 60,000

troops, which was meant to be not only a show of respect for the Asian monarch but a display of French might as well. Finally, because of Germany's reputation for military prowess, the King sent several of his sons for training to such prestigious German institutions as the Lichterfelde Academy in Berlin and the military academy at Potsdam.

In Germany, King Chulalongkorn turned his critical gaze on not only the Emperor but several of the German diplomats posted in Bangkok. Noting that several of his predecessors were "weak-willed and gullible," the King commented that the new ambassador, von Seldenek, was a man, who "although not very keen on talking with members of the royal family...displayed good behavior. He was not as extravagant as other German ambassadors I have met in the past. He does not appear to be a stupid man."<sup>51</sup>

One royal observation of particular interest is that "the foreigners abroad and the foreigners in Thailand act very differently."<sup>52</sup> The King had met the former German envoy, a man named Kempermann, who as the Resident Minister in Siam had acted very much the "big man." But at home in Germany, he was virtually powerless. He even lacked the authority to enter the Emperor's palace,

---

disagreed with his plans, the Emperor increased the military budget from 400 million marks to 700 million marks, sending the country's debt spiraling out of control. Even so, his plans to expand the German navy were never completed.

<sup>51</sup> Letter 53 (See Note 1), page 183.

<sup>52</sup> Letter 53 (See Note 1), page 183.

derailed in the middle of a rainstorm.<sup>55</sup> But as the King noted, “I am grateful that everybody on board

did not have their neck broken as everything in Portugal invariably goes wrong.”<sup>56</sup>

### 5.3 *A Cordial Visit among “Equals” and the Political Perspective*

As mentioned previously, it was extremely important for King Chulalongkorn to travel across Europe “independently.” Yet, because he did not need to rely on anyone’s hospitality or generosity, he risked being received by the leaders of Europe merely as a matter of routine courtesy. That he was seen as “civilized” and that he was recognized as an equal by the ruling classes of Europe, however, was no simple matter. Even today, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century this would be seen as a daunting achievement. It is and was a question of character, manner, and intelligence. For King Chulalongkorn, it required a quick wit and an amazingly keen intellect. His facility in English was another terrific advantage. He was also possessed of certain special qualities that allowed him to do more than simply engage in polite conversation with the Europeans he met from many different countries. Of course, his preparations for the trip were meticulous. He also had the grace and dignity expected of a monarch (See Chapter 4). He

radiated a charisma that was felt by the people around him and that he himself was aware of. In *Letter 45*, he wrote: “I am neither Western nor Thai. I am a king and a monk.”

It is only by looking more closely into the qualities that enabled King Chulalongkorn to win the respect of 19<sup>th</sup>-century Europe as a fellow leader of a “civilized” nation, and not some tribal chieftain from a savage backwater, that many readers will fully appreciate the King’s special genius. While the primary objective of his first trip to Europe in 1897 was to negotiate a treaty of friendship with France in hopes of securing Siam’s sovereignty, the King also intended to strengthen his kingdom’s ties with England, Russia and Germany. He embarked on a strategy of playing off the major powers of Europe, one against the other, as a means of containing any one country’s undue influence in Siam. In addition to this policy, which was dubbed the “*cauchemar des coalitions*”<sup>57</sup>, King Chulalongkorn also included in

---

<sup>55</sup> As reported by the Lisbon correspondent for the London newspaper *The Times*, 25 October 1897.

<sup>56</sup> *Letter 58* (See Note 1), page 193.

<sup>57</sup> The term “*cauchemar des coalitions*” was originally used to refer to a policy employed by the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Prussian monarch, Frederick the Great, which contributed to his defeat of Empress Maria Theresa at the peak of the Austro-Hungarian Empire’s power and the successful annexation of Silesia. It also made Prussia the preeminent political, military and cultural force of the region, and the Prussian king had the right to be “Lord Elector” (Emperor) of the Holy Roman Empire.

this itinerary other European nations with whom Siam had had relations for many years – in some cases, since the time of the Ayuthaya kingdom. But prior to his trip, no previous King of Siam had made a reciprocal visit to Portugal or the Netherlands, the first two Western countries to send envoys to the court at Ayuthaya. No Siamese monarch had traveled to Italy, Switzerland, Sweden, Austria-Hungary, Belgium, or Spain. King Rama V's trip to Europe at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which had very real political objectives, ended up having even more important abstract benefits – namely, the King was recognized as being just as “civilized” as the European heads of state he visited. This feat – this success in winning the respect of his European hosts – would not have been possible if the King had not been blessed with very special personal traits. Of course, other factors, which I discussed in the first chapter of this book, contributed to the King's success. Chapter 4, as well, presented an overview of some of the other non-political considerations relating to his visits to England, France, Germany, and Russia. This chapter will examine in closer detail the political aspects of these visits and compare them with his travels through “neutral” countries such as Switzerland, Austria-Hungary, the Netherlands,

Denmark, Spain and Portugal. On a stopover in Monaco, the King was unable to meet with the Prince, who was away at the time. It appears that no previous word had been sent to inform the Prince of King Chulalongkorn's intended arrival.

In fact, Siam's intention to forge political alliances with the governments of Russia and Germany was no secret in Europe.<sup>58</sup> It was widely reported in the British and German press and in diplomatic reports sent from Bangkok to Berlin. The German envoy to the court in Bangkok at the time was Baron von Hartmann. He was of the opinion that the King's trip to Europe would succeed in convincing the French to soften their stance vis-à-vis the Siamese and help to alleviate the tensions that had troubled relations between the two countries for some time.<sup>59</sup> But once the King was in Europe, the German Ambassador in Paris felt that the conflict between Siam and France had reached the point where the King would have to cancel his planned visit. Even the German newspapers carried detailed reports of a case involving a number of Laotians and Cambodians considered by Paris to be French subjects but who, in the absence of King Chulalongkorn, were pressed into the Siamese army by officials in Bangkok.<sup>60</sup> The French

---

<sup>58</sup> Compare Krairoek Nana, “History Beyond the Chronicles of King Rama V: King Chulalongkorn in the Western World.” *Arts and Culture* (Special Edition). Bangkok: Arts and Culture Press, 2003. Pages 128-150.

<sup>59</sup> From the Political Archives of the German Foreign Ministry, Berlin. File R 19238, Vol. 19,20 SIAM No.1, Number 6488, pages 090-097, recorded 10 April 1897.

<sup>60</sup> In the *Mecklenburgische Zeitung* (Schwerin), Vol. 374, 13 August 1897, evening edition.

government had also made a regular practice of “leaking news” to the French press and to such overseas publications as *Le Courrier d’Haiphong* over the period from September to November 1896.<sup>61</sup> One commentary uncovered in the course of this research makes clear the French logic behind the government’s drive to colonize the countries of Asia. Couched in “scientific principles,” the statement reads:

“There are causes for conflict every day. Like the English, we must maintain a presence. Like *all races condemned to vanish*, the Siamese have a *blindness* and a *stubbornness* that are equaled only by their insolent vanity. These traits are indicative of an *incurable decadence*.”<sup>62</sup>

An article appeared in a newspaper printed in the German city of Schwerin, commenting on relations between Siam, France and England, and Siam’s chances of retaining its independence. The writer noted that it was in Germany’s interest for the Siamese to remain independent for as long as possible, since economic development in Siam would generate financial and commercial benefits for Germany. But in 1896, with the signing of an agreement between France and England that declared Siam to be a buffer state between their colonial empires in Asia, it appeared that both

European powers were poised to lay claim to the Kingdom at the least sign of weakness. In addition, if the King moved to further liberalize the economy, it would only make the country more attractive to France and England, putting Siamese sovereignty at even greater risk. In other words, as Siam became more prosperous, the major colonial powers of Europe were increasingly tempted to take control.

The same columnist remarked on the stance taken by smaller, less powerful nations in their dealings with major powers, comparing it to a form of worship. “In Asia, we can see that England and France are free to do as they please, but they both have to be wary of Russia, which is one of the most powerful countries in Asia. Germany must keep in mind an incident which took place in China one year earlier when German efforts to open markets in one part of China ended up providing economic benefits to England, France and Russia. This is not so difficult to understand if we recall that it is in our nature to worship both good and evil deities. The question, however, is why we should choose to make larger offerings to the evil gods. This is the situation in which China found itself. Of course, it had to yield to those countries with the power to destroy it.”

“King Chulalongkorn is an intelligent ruler. He realizes that the warm reception

---

<sup>61</sup> From the Geneva city archives. *Le Courrier d’Haiphong* (Vol. 1105), 5 September 1896; (Vol. 1125), 22 October 1896; and (Vol. 1130), 6 November 1896.

<sup>62</sup> *Le Courrier d’Haiphong* (Vol. 1125), 22 October 1896. “Franco - Vietnamese Expansion on the Right Bank of the Mekhong.”

shown him during his visit to Germany is a clear sign that Berlin is in no position to threaten Siam even if it were interested in doing so. And although the King feels animosity toward England and France, he has little choice but to do as they demand, just as we propitiate those gods with the power to destroy us.”<sup>63</sup>

Even the German leadership understood the reasons for Siam’s willingness to yield to French and British demands. Chancellor Bülow, who succeeded Bismarck, sent a written report to the Emperor about Germany’s political and economic relations with Siam, noting that King Chulalongkorn’s efforts to draw closer to England as a means of protecting the Kingdom against French aggression were likely to fail,<sup>64</sup> which turned out not to be true.

But the assumption that growing Siamese wealth would make the country more attractive as a colony to both England and France did not conform to German expectations. In fact, because England had such extensive commercial interests in Siam, the Kingdom’s bargaining power with the French was

that much greater. England was clearly unwilling to let Siam and all of its economic investments fall into the hands of their colonial rivals in Paris. Consequently, when King Chulalongkorn embarked on his tour of Europe, the British appeared indifferent. This became even more evident when the King and his retinue arrived in London, which they called the “jeweled city,” a holy site for the Siamese.<sup>65</sup> The King compared his trip to England to a pilgrimage to the city of “Kapilavastu,” the capital city of the Lord Buddha’s father. Buckingham Palace, where they stayed, was King Suddhodana’s royal retreat. King Chulalongkorn jokingly referred to himself as a “senior monk” and to the other members of his party as his “disciples.” From London, he wrote:

“The reception here has been quite good by English standards. It seems much different from that in other countries, but the English swarmed everywhere. All the newspapers have been complimentary.”<sup>66</sup>

In fact, the King entered England on a number of occasions, most often “incognito,” and when he

---

<sup>63</sup> From the *Mecklenburgische Zeitung* (Schwerin), Vol. 396, 26 August 1897, afternoon edition. An editorial on “Siam.”

<sup>64</sup> From the Political Archives of the German Foreign Ministry, Berlin. File R 19238, Vol. 20,21, document number A 10228, pages 016 - 129. From the *Reichkanzler* (Chancellor) to the German Emperor, 23 August 1897.

<sup>65</sup> i.e. the King’s trip to London. Thais who had traveled to London were exceptionally proud of having visited the “heavenly city,” which they referred to as the “jeweled city.”

<sup>66</sup> *Letter 50*, from Wellbeg Abbey, England, 8 August 1897 (See Note 1), page 174.

divided his trip into three parts, it was decided that England would serve as his base.<sup>67</sup> This was a clear sign of the country's importance. On his arrival, he was met by a number of high-ranking British officials and members of the aristocracy, including the Queen's representative, the Duke of York; Lord Harris, the royal page to the Prince and Princess of Wales; Lord Salisbury; Sir Nowell Salmon, General Davis, and Lord Armstrong. The Earl of Jersey was also slated to attend but in the end, he did not appear.<sup>68</sup>

The King felt uncomfortable in London. "It is very hot. I feel as though I have a fever, but I do not. I cannot sleep, and my stomach is upset."<sup>69</sup> The British government had arranged for their royal visitor to stay with the Duke of Portland,<sup>70</sup> one of the country's wealthiest individuals. In fact, he was richer than many kings and queens. King Chulalongkorn did not feel particularly close, however, to any of the English nobles, telling the

German ambassador to London that, unlike his reception in Saint Petersburg and Vienna, he had not been received as an equal in the British capital.<sup>71</sup>

This "English" reception was likely an indirect way of telling the King that British support for his cause would be limited. It was also in keeping with the typically guarded nature of the "empire on which the sun never sets." England had also sent a secret communication through Lord Salisbury even before the King's trip to Europe that London hoped to obtain the concession to build a railroad in Siam, a project that other European countries, notably Germany, were also interested in. The British had asked the King to delay his decision until after he had visited England. Despite the numerous trips he made to the island nation, most of them private, the King was unsuccessful in achieving the political goals he had hoped for. In discussions with the Russian Czar, Count Mouravieff, Lord Salisbury, and the Viceroy of

---

<sup>67</sup> "...divided into three parts: Part One (from 9 April - 19 August) covers the trip from Bangkok to our first arrival in England; Part Two (19 August - 30 September) includes our departure from England for Belgium, Germany, Holland, and France, and then back to England for the second time; the Final Part (1 October-16 December) includes our second departure from England for France, Spain, Portugal, Gibraltar, Naples, Palermo, and then to Egypt and finally returning to Bangkok..." from *Letter 46*, written aboard the *Maha Chakri* in the North Sea, 28 July 1897 (See Note 1), page 167.

<sup>68</sup> Taken from *The Times*, 28, 29 and 30 July, and 7,14, 16 and 19 August 1897.

<sup>69</sup> *Letter 50* (See Note 1), page 174.

<sup>70</sup> The Sixth Duke of Portland was, at the time of King Chulalongkorn's visit to England, the Master of the Hall. His ancestor, the First Duke of Portland, received his title in 1716.

<sup>71</sup> "...Der König von Siam spricht sich in *wenig anerkennender Weise* über seinen Empfang in London, verglichen mit Petersburg und Wien, aus..." From the Political Archives of the German Foreign Ministry, Berlin. (See Note 64). Document number A 10226, pages 006 - 007. From London, 18 August 1897.

India, Mr. Curzon,<sup>72</sup> the King had expressed his expectations that Siam would receive support from other countries in Europe. The Czar himself had confirmed to the King that *if Siam were attacked and its sovereignty threatened, the various important persons of Europe whom he had named would likely intercede on the Kingdom's behalf.*

Still, the King realized that the extent to which he could rely on any of these foreign powers to plead his country's case was *limited*. "...do not ever imagine that in time of trouble, we can ask others to voice our problems or to think for us. *Do not imagine that anyone will take the trouble of doing anything for us. We are an independent country so it is appropriate for us to say what we want.* If they do not want us to be under their protection, they will not bother to deal with us."<sup>73</sup>

Clearly, the King was extremely protective of his country's dignity as an independent nation, but this, he felt, *was often overlooked*.<sup>74</sup> "Until only two or three days ago some of [our own officials]

wondered why the Russian Emperor had not kept his promise to me. They expected him to play the role of mediator. If so, we would have had to appoint a mediator first..."<sup>75</sup> In fact, however, Siam had not requested Russia's active assistance. "We simply looked to Russia as a friend who could help two friends reconcile their differences."<sup>76</sup>

That King Chulalongkorn saw himself as an equal partner in his negotiations with the leaders of Europe is consistently clear in all of the documents from his first trip across the continent. Never does he present himself as an inferior, toadying for the help of the great European powers in protecting Siam's interests against the advances of other European nations.

In presenting himself as an "equal" to the rulers of Europe, the Siamese monarch represented a stark contrast with the Burmese crown in the years before the country became an English colony. Whenever quarrels erupted between rival factions of the Burmese monarchy or between the central

---

<sup>72</sup> Mr. George Erskine, Viceroy of India, and British Foreign Secretary

<sup>73</sup> *Letter 52*, from Essen, Germany, 5 September 1897 (See Note 1), page 181.

<sup>74</sup> From the context, King Chulalongkorn was probably referring to Thai government officials in general as he declared himself "deeply concerned" about the caliber of the Siamese officials working abroad and noted that if the European bureaucracy were equally inept, the countries of Europe would not enjoy the advantages they had over Asia and other less developed parts of the world.

<sup>75</sup> See Note 73, page 181.

<sup>76</sup> A telegram to Thevavongse from Peterhof Palace, 5 July 1897. In *King Chulalongkorn's First Trip to Europe*, Volume 1 (Thai - German edition) (See Note 21), page 201.

administration and any of the country's ethnic minorities, the Burmese King would request British help in suppressing the conflict. As a result, the British, who were politically and militarily stronger, found themselves in the strange position of serving a weaker authority. This was an untenable situation which led eventually to the loss of Burmese sovereignty.

Interestingly, however, it was not simply that King Chulalongkorn chose to present himself as an "equal" among the rulers of Europe. Many of the European leaders were themselves respectful of Siamese independence and saw the Siamese monarch as their equal. (The only real exception was England, the world's great power at the time, which affected an air of indifference to King Chulalongkorn's visit.) As has been made clear throughout this book, many of the royal families across the continent were sympathetic to the King's cause and were sincere in their desire to assist him. This was true of the Russian imperial family, the German Emperor, and the Danish court. Even in Sweden, a neutral country, the Siamese King was shown all the respect due to a visiting foreign monarch. An article called "King Chulalongkorn" that appeared in the Stockholm

newspaper *Dagblad*, dated 11 July 1897, contains nothing but praise for the King.

"The King's sense of honour is very strong. His Majesty is also a good patriot and has suffered a lot by the humiliations the French inflicted on Siam in 1893. The King has now recovered and the visit to Europe shows that His Majesty is willing to learn and forgive."<sup>77</sup>

It is clear that the Swedes were very aware of King Chulalongkorn's sense of honor and his patriotism. They praised his moral sense, his eagerness to learn new things, and his willingness to forgive. On 13 July 1897, the same Swedish newspaper, the *Bladet*, published an article on various countries – Siam included – which were targets of European colonialism. Entitled "People's Rights and Colonial Politics Regarding the Visit of the King of Siam," the column remarked that the colonial policies of the major European powers "will increase the differences between them and the small states. It will also make the small states even more inferior. The 'exotic' states should *try to create international legal relations with the West in order to achieve an equal position*. One of the most

---

<sup>77</sup> From the archives of the Royal Thai Consulate in Sweden (courtesy of the Ax:son Johnson Foundation). Mr. Axel Ax:son Johnson was appointed by King Chulalongkorn honorary Siamese consul to Sweden. Today, his descendant, Viveca Ax:son Johnson currently holds the post. She accompanied the Swedish King Gustav XVI on a state visit to Thailand in February 2003. With her assistance, I was able to obtain a great deal of useful information for my research. All of the documents were in Swedish, with English translations provided by the personnel of the Royal Swedish Embassy in Bangkok.

prominent representatives doing this is the King of the 'White Elephant' who is visiting our King and our people today. During almost 30 years His Majesty has tried to *get closer to European culture* and also *built up a safe international position*."<sup>78</sup>

The Siamese monarch was Europe's "favorite" (See Section 5.1). Even the French leadership feared that if the King were to appear in France, he would manage to convince the French people and their government to change its policies in such a way as to benefit Siam. It was for this reason, perhaps, that the French press pursued such a vigorous campaign to vilify Siam. Some of the reports were more or less factual; others were unsubstantiated rumors. Accounts of heated battles between French and Siamese troops on the right bank of the Mekhong River were believed by the *press in Paris to have originated in England*, where the British government was eager to sabotage King Chulalongkorn's impending visit to the French capital.<sup>79</sup>

Such inflammatory rumors involving Siam were common among these two competing powers, both of whom were eager to increase their political advantage. Once, when the French government signaled its readiness to relax certain demands on Siam concerning authority over the areas along the banks of the Mekhong, the French press responded by lambasting their own authorities. By taking a more conciliatory stance and thereby reducing French influence in Siam, the French government was guilty of treason. In turn, the German press lambasted the Parisian newspapers for "fanning the flames of aggression" (Hetzblätter)<sup>80</sup>. In fact, the Germans regularly took a snide attitude in reporting on French affairs. Even in a story on the attempted assassination of French President Faure<sup>81</sup> on 20 June 1897, a prominent Berlin newspaper wrote: "Because the French must always have a scapegoat for their own stupidity..."<sup>82</sup> Another report in the popular press (9 July 1897)<sup>83</sup> sought to worsen relations between the two neighbors by evoking bitter

---

<sup>78</sup> "The great power world-wide colonial and occupational politic will increase the differences between them and the small states. It will also make the small states even more inferior. The "exotic" states should try to create international legal relations with the West in order to achieve an equal position. One of the most prominent representatives doing this is the King of the "white elephant" who visits our King and people today. During almost thirty years the Majesty has tried to get closer to *the European culture and also built up a safe international position*." In: *Bladet*, 13 July 1897.

<sup>79</sup> In the Berlin newspaper, *Königlich privilegierte Berlinische Zeitung*, Vol. 377, 13 August 1897.

<sup>80</sup> From the Political Archives of the German Foreign Ministry, Berlin. File R 19239, Vol. 20, 21, document number A11361, pages 055 - 057.

<sup>81</sup> In the Berlin newspaper (See Note 79), Vol. 401, 27 August 1897 (evening edition).

<sup>82</sup> In the Braunschweig newspaper, *Braunschweiger Stadtangzeiger*, Vol. 142, 20 June 1897.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.* Vol. 158, 9 July 1897.

memories of the peace agreement signed between Prussia and France during the time of Napoleon Bonaparte, almost a century before. Under the agreement, Prussia had been forced to cede more than half of its territory and more than 4.5 million of its inhabitants. The size of the Prussian army had been reduced to just 40,000 men, and the government in Berlin had been made to pay reparations to the French in excess of 140 million francs. Then, on 27 August, the same newspaper printed an editorial that spoke of supposed widespread French fears of an imminent German invasion. According to the writer, the French themselves were responsible for these fears, hoping to urge their own countrymen into a war to retake the eastern provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, which the Germans had seized in the Franco-Prussian War. It was also reported that France was looking to Russia as a key ally in any upcoming war with Germany.

At that time, French President Felix Faure had only recently completed his state visit to Russia, an event which received daily coverage in the Berlin newspapers (25-28 August 1897). The Germans were doubtful that cordial relations between the two great powers would last, given the very different systems of government under which they were ruled. Even so, the two leaders “kissed and embraced like loving

brothers.” Russia and France concluded military negotiations, and an abundance of fine words poured forth from both sides. President Faure spoke of “brotherly cooperation on matters of armaments,” “close ties and mutual trust,” and “shared views,” while the Russian Czar referred to France as “our friend,” and to the French army as “courageous” and the French navy as “powerful.” Yet the word that the French longed to hear above all others was “alliance.” But it was not until the formal dinner on the last day of Faure’s visit that Nicholas II said the magic word, and then only after the French had used it in a toast to celebrate the bond between the two countries – a bond that was born out of shared cultural ideals of justice. To this toast, the Czar responded by saying that he took great pleasure in the President’s visit, which created a bond between the two *allied*, friendly nations.<sup>84</sup>

The German newspapers concluded their reports by noting that Germany had no reason whatsoever to be worried about this new alliance, a statement which likely indicated the depth of Germany’s actual concern. The press also quoted an anonymous diplomat, who claimed that England was attempting to join the new Franco-Russian alliance,<sup>85</sup> which, if it were true, would have been particularly troubling as Germany had tried to align

---

<sup>84</sup> “schätze ich mich glücklich zu sehen, dass Ihr Aufenthalt unter uns ein neues Band zwischen unseren beiden befreundeten und alliierten Nationen schafft...”

<sup>85</sup> Berlin newspaper (See Note 79), Vol. 409, 2 September 1897.

itself with the British,<sup>86</sup> citing their common ideals, ambitions and national outlooks.<sup>87</sup> If England and Germany were to join together, the dream of a “European Union” could become a reality. After all, *Europe without Germany was like an unarmed Europe without a brain, and Europe without England was a Europe without teeth. England, after all, had succeeded in subjugating and colonizing many of the countries of Asia and Africa, while its people had also settled the continents of North America and Australia.*

The writer of the article entitled “The Lord Chief Justice of Europe,” which appeared in the British publication *The Review of Reviews*, concluded by speculating that if England, Germany and Russia were to form a close alliance, then war in Europe would be impossible. He also expressed the view that of these three nations, Germany should take the leading role, but because the picture at the time was still unclear, Germany was probably “too embarrassed” to play this part.

Earlier sections of the book have described

relations between England, Germany, and Russia in some detail in order to give readers a clearer understanding of the conflicts that troubled European politics at the time of King Chulalongkorn’s first visit. In the years leading up to the monarch’s second visit ten years later, tensions between the three great powers would only escalate. England, Germany, and Russia were engaged in a kind of “political theater,” each with its own perspective on Siamese sovereignty. It was also on the ties among these countries that the success of the King’s second trip to Europe in 1907 hinged. Furthermore, in the midst of these political machinations, each of the major players tried to ensure Siam’s involvement in the network of relations. This was only possible because the royal courts of almost all the countries of Europe regarded Siam and the Siam monarch as equal partners.

Therefore, King Chulalongkorn’s official visit to France, which constituted the centerpiece of the entire European voyage, required him to be absent

---

<sup>86</sup> Berlin newspaper (See Note 79), Vol. 365, 21 July 1897 (evening edition). “The Lord Chief Justice of Europe,” cited in the British *The Review of Reviews*.

<sup>87</sup> In fact, the German people had felt this way since the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was believed that Germany and England shared the same soul, the same temperament, and were different from the French. After all, the English were a Germanic people, and English and German were related languages, unlike French, which was one of the Romance languages descended from Latin. The great German thinkers and writers, Lessing, Goethe, and Schiller all praised Shakespeare and expressed the view that his plays evinced the German soul. Their assertion was part of an effort to *free Germany from the cultural shadow that France had cast over the country since the Baroque period in the 17<sup>th</sup> century*, and which had been particularly strong during the reign of King Louis XIV. This admiration for the works of Shakespeare was an attempt to awaken a sense of German pride in a country that had not yet managed to achieve political unity. Compare Pornsan Watanangura, *Two Periods of Weimar Culture*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 2000. (1<sup>st</sup> edition), *Two Periods of German Culture* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) (2012).

from his beloved “wife” and homeland for a period of nine long months. And throughout this trip, he commanded the interest and attention of the three great European powers. In *Letter 46*, written from Paris on 17 September 1897, King Chulalongkorn remarked:

“Since my departure, I have not encountered such difficulties as here. While I appreciate how worried you [Mae Lek] are over my upcoming visit to France, please understand that *I am ten times more worried for it is I making this trip...*”

And although King Chulalongkorn noted that:

“My reception here in Paris has gone well. The President accompanied me in the carriage to my lodgings. This is a courtesy he has shown no other visitor but the Russian Emperor. Any sane man would understand that he did not do this, however, *out of any fear he might have for us but rather out of fear for the power of the Emperor*, whose customs he observed in Russia. Therefore, all that he does is in the Russian manner...”

Upon his arrival in the French capital on 11 September 1897, King Chulalongkorn considered the official reception by the representatives of the French government as “excellent.” The railway station and parts of the city were gaily festooned to welcome the visiting monarch, while large crowds lined the streets along the King’s path. Near the station, the police

had to restrain the onlookers, who cheered the King and the French President in unison. “Vive Félix Faure! Vive le Président! Vive le Roi de Siam!” Amazingly, King Chulalongkorn was also able to perceive the true nature of the French people despite having never set foot in the country before.

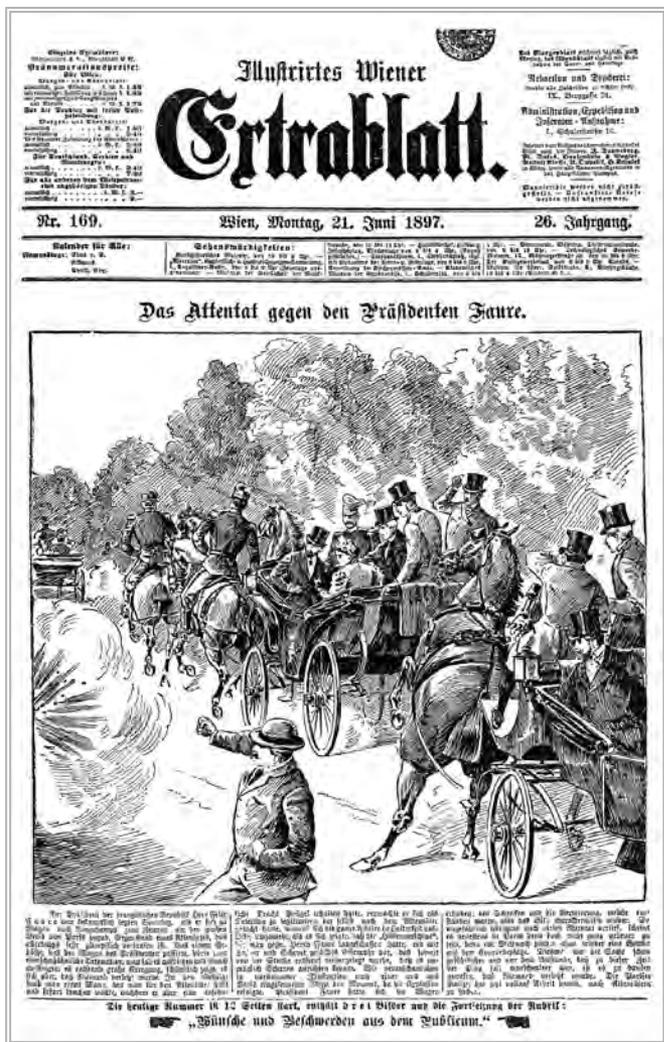
“No people of any country are like them [the French] in terms of passion. They are unable to restrain their feelings, whether of pleasure or displeasure. They not only waved and cried out but also beckoned and posed in revealing dresses, and did all sorts of things to show off...Some women even asked to kiss us...”

And on the following day, the King recorded:

“The newspapers now are not so harsh on us, but they are not really friendly either. From my observations, more people came out to see me today [12 September]. The people here are not angry with us...”

He also noticed that:

“In fact, the French people have no idea of the truth. Having great passion, they are easily influenced by their leaders. If they are incited to anger, the whole country shakes with fury. Even when they are persuaded to become agreeable, they cannot simply remain quiet, but have to express their pleasure by waving their hands or banners...”



Viennese newspaper account of the attempted assassination of French President Faure (21 June 1897)

Despite the political tensions between Siam and France, the King was moved to admit that the country was “incomparably beautiful, worthy of being called paradise.” And if he were in France as an ordinary traveler, he “would surely have great fun.”

Interestingly, amidst an atmosphere which proved to be much *less hostile* than initially feared, the German press reported that King Chulalongkorn’s reception in Paris had been noticeably chilly, despite the French government’s respect for official protocol. When the King first arrived, the French president was away on a hunting trip and so was not present to meet him. Lodgings had been arranged for the Siamese monarch at Versailles, and after breakfast, the King was given a tour of the palace. Then he met with officials of the French government and other European diplomats. Again, the German press remarked that *despite the King’s best efforts to appear gracious and friendly*, his French hosts were decidedly *cool and reserved*.

Given the fact that France had tried every way possible to take possession of Siam, it seems likely that the German ambassador’s remarks, which appeared in the press release, were accurate with regard to the French government officials on hand to welcome the King. Besides, the press had been full of stories highly critical of the behavior of the Siamese court. As the *head of state*, the *French president*, however, had a *specific role to play*. He was the face of the French republic – a representative

of democracy – and therefore, would have *had little choice but to treat state visitors like the King of Siam with a high degree of civility.*

In his discussions with King Chulalongkorn, President Felix Faure showed himself more than willing to engage in direct consultation with the visiting monarch. He asked about the King's trip to Russia and made it clear that the French in Paris, who included the President himself, were not to be confused *with the French in the East.* It was these Frenchmen, President Faure assured the King, who claimed that Siam had no wish to pursue friendly relations with France. Faure even offered to talk with them on the King's behalf.

What's more, the French President also told the King that *his views were separate from those of the French government and the population at large.* King Chulalongkorn needed to understand that France was "unlike other countries." The President had "to please the people, which made governing difficult." He had managed to survive simply because so many people liked him.

The Siamese monarch's political acumen was evident in his response to President Faure. He had, he said, *discussed these political problems with the Russian Czar.* He also responded to a French request that "Jira visit France since he had been to Russia."

In other words, the King promised to send another of his young son to study in France, while also noting that President Faure had had "kind words to say about Luuk Tho" (Crown Prince Vajiravudh). This was perhaps a signal of France's desire for the Crown Prince to be educated in France.

It was only after all these issues were discussed between the two men in private that President Faure presented his government's ministers and other high-ranking officials. Unfortunately, the *French president's assurances did not carry much weight.* First of all, he was essentially a figurehead with little real authority.<sup>88</sup> Second, *his personal views were directly opposed to the official policies of the French government.* Consequently, the chances that King Chulalongkorn, who had no experience with the workings of a republican form of government, would achieve much real progress in Paris were quite slim. What he did succeed in doing, however, was to *reduce immediate tensions and establish an atmosphere of cooperation* between the leaders of the two countries. He also fulfilled his duties as representative of the Siamese people by entering into political negotiations with a foreign power on equal terms and maintaining his dignity throughout. Thanks to the alliance he had forged with the Russian imperial court, he had a "big stick" with which to force the French to treat his country with respect. After all,

---

<sup>88</sup> King Chulalongkorn's second trip to Europe ten years later was a private one. The King did not meet with Faure, because he was no longer in office.

France recognized that the cordial ties between Russia and Siam were much stronger than any temporary alliance that Paris might forge with the Czar as a means of isolating the Germans. Even the British understood that *this new friendship was intended to put a lid on potential German aggression*.<sup>89</sup> Clearly, then, England did not reciprocate the feelings of admiration that Germany had for the English. Moreover, when the German Kaiser traveled to Saint Petersburg to meet the Czar in early August, not long before the French president's trip to Russia, he was given a warm welcome. He was praised in the Russian press and by the Russian people. The Russian government even appointed him an admiral in the Imperial Navy, signaling the budding friendship between these two major powers. This should not have been such a surprise, perhaps, as the German and Russian royal families shared blood ties. In toasting his host, the Kaiser praised the Czar and pledged that he and the German people were committed to maintaining the peace between their two great nations. Germany would also do all it could to support the Czar in his efforts to suppress all those who wished to disrupt this peace.

Interestingly, the German newspapers reported that the British press had shown virtually no interest in the German leader's visit to Saint Petersburg.<sup>90</sup>

King Chulalongkorn's quick thinking in the matter of his newly-established friendship with Czar Nicholas II was immediately evident. The Siamese monarch announced his intention to send his son, Prince Chakrabhongse Phuvanart, to meet the Russian Emperor in the German city of Darmstadt, at the same time he himself met Grand Duke Friedrich I of Baden. The King had hoped to inform the Czar of his intentions by letter but this was not possible. It is this that illustrates the political significance of the King's travels to the courts of Europe from the point of view of the Europeans. It also points up King Chulalongkorn's own political wisdom in recognizing the value of his personal visits to the royal courts of Europe, which were made possible because of requests made through official channels, a point that was lost on the "ordinary people."

"Later by chance I heard that the Emperor would be in Darmstadt at a time convenient to us... Visiting the Emperor is like a little star approaching the moon. As I have said, many times meetings of European royalty are like an eclipse of the moon. They attract everyone's attention and dominate every conversation. They *have no idea that we, in fact, initiated this meeting, believing instead that it was at the Emperor's initiative*. Nevertheless,

---

<sup>89</sup> In *Königlich privilegierte Berlinische Zeitung*, Vol. 401, 27 August 1897 (evening edition).

<sup>90</sup> In *Königlich privilegierte Berlinische Zeitung*, Vol. 367, 7 August 1897, and Vol. 369, 9 August 1897.

Because his own royal yacht was undergoing repairs in Holland, King Chulalongkorn traveled to Sweden aboard the steamer *Polstjernen*, which had been arranged for him by the Russian Czar Nicholas II. Swedish King Oskar II met him personally aboard the ship, informing him that lodgings had been prepared for him at the royal castle in Stockholm. The Siamese King was to stay in a room very near the Swedish monarch, and King Chulalongkorn's son the Crown Prince was to stay near his Swedish counterpart, whom King Chulalongkorn praised for his knowledge. King Chulalongkorn was also highly critical of the Swedish King, as has been noted earlier in the book. As for the Crown Princess, he wrote:

“What a fool! How could she ask me if it ever rained in Thailand? I asked her in return if by that, she meant that Thailand was in Aden. Then she asked me where Aden was...”<sup>97</sup>

In response, the King asked her if she had ever heard of Asia. What better response could he have given to her than this question?

One of the more amusing anecdotes from the letters written from Europe is the one in which the King “pretended to be drunk” during his stay in Stockholm, a ruse that allowed him to demonstrate his gift for clever retorts. His remarks were so clever

in fact that rather than take offense, his Swedish hosts – the King and his counselors – were forced to express their admiration for his wit.

“I should refer back to the time I pretended to be inebriated while in Stockholm. Among all those who were closest to me Phraya Pichai kept smiling at me knowingly. The King is a drunk but is considered a good monarch.... The party we had on the ship on the day of our return was full of fun and merriment. After he left, I walked around with my head cast down pretending to be intoxicated. A genuine drunkard could not match me because my senses were functioning more fully. The only person who was aware of what I was doing was the Crown Prince. Phraya Pichai also detected something.”<sup>98</sup>

When the Swedish King asked Prince Sawasdi about politics in Siam, the Prince gave a very different response from that of his older brother, the King (from the same letter):

“The King (of Sweden) asked Sawasdi why it was that, if the French were unjust and cruel, we gave in to their intimidation. Sawasdi explained that he had not been there since it happened when he was in Europe. What happened was that one of the ministers was terrified or one could say that he was so

---

<sup>97</sup> Letter 42 (See Note 1), page 148.

<sup>98</sup> Letter 43, from Slevjo, northern Sweden, 18 July 1897 (See Note 1), page 151.

apprehensive and then he went off on a long tirade. The King kept nodding in agreement and proceeded with the conversation without once looking at me. That infuriated me. In the end the King proposed a toast to Sawasdi, maintaining that their ideas were the same.”

Then King Chulalongkorn offered a particularly apt reply.

“So I begged his indulgence to remind him of something. I was well aware that he had been on the throne for over 25 years and was well versed in the matters of government and profoundly intelligent. Those who can talk without having the burden of responsibility and those who are responsible and talk are two entirely different things. He should sometimes feel or may sometimes have felt the same way I mentioned.”

This response caused the entire audience to burst into laughter. “The entire table broke into peals of laughter since that was a matter that quite hit the point. This made [the King] agree with me and then he proceeded to kiss me commending me for what I had said.”

The following day King Chulalongkorn found himself seated next to the Swedish Crown Prince, and asked him about the situation in Norway. The Crown Prince answered him at length. After all, it was well known to the King and his party that the Norwegians were hoping to separate from Sweden

and form their own republic. Initially, however, the Swedish King had refused to recognize Norwegian independence, and as a result, there was talk of rebellion. The Siamese monarch also wondered why the Swedes and Norwegians could not follow the example of Austria-Hungary with regard to the military and treasury, but the Crown Prince explained that the situation had been allowed to go on too long and could not now be resolved. When the discussion was reported to the Swedish monarch, he exclaimed:

“It’s over. They can now see through us! I was told that he was quite bewildered as to *why a Thai person could be so knowledgeable about European matters* like this. Listening to my words led him to utter the opinion that in time the Thais would be able to be on a par with them.”

Hearing this, King Chulalongkorn responded in what can only be described as a diplomatic manner.

“I begged him not to say that since we are still very far from where they are. The matter was brought up repeatedly. At the dinner party held aboard the ship it was brought up again. It was said that the fact that *I had scattered my children in so many cities was a matter of contention for his country*. He even insinuated that in the long run we would be victorious since their weakness was in their excessive drinking while the Thais drank moderately.

If we were this much better, how would they not be defeated?”

The Swedish monarch’s comments indicated his fear that the Thais would one day be superior to the Europeans, citing as one of his reasons Westerners’ excessive fondness for alcohol. Although in response to these flattering remarks, King Chulalongkorn demurred.

“I said that those words were too flattering. There is no way that we could surpass [the Europeans] since we *were not only learning the positive sides of the West but their negative traits, like drinking, too. The situation would be even worse in a hot climate.* Again, that became a laughing matter among us.”<sup>99</sup>

Throughout King Chulalongkorn’s entire stay in Sweden, he was not only treated by the Swedish court with the respect and deference deserving of a visiting monarch, but the *preparations for each stage of his visit were made with great care and attention to detail.* There were regular communications with the Swedish General Consul in Stockholm, Mr. Axel Johnson, and with Captain Adolf Nordberg, who

commanded the steamship Carl XV and was a member of the tourist association that traveled to Sundsvall each week aboard this ship. In a letter dated 6 July 1897, Captain Nordberg had asked the General Consul if the King’s visit was to be “official, half official or incognito?” He had also contacted the Siamese Consul in Stockholm, confirming that, as the founder of the tourism association, he would ensure that the King was treated as an “honored guest,” with all the respect and courtesy that he had shown Swedish King Oskar II (25 July 1897).<sup>100</sup>

Abundant evidence shows that the royal courts and citizens of Europe admired the Siamese King for his dignity and royal bearing. In their eyes, he was an equal to the crowned heads of Europe, and was, therefore, entitled to equal treatment.

The “independence” and superior “sovereign” nature of His Majesty the King were even more evident in the donations he made *to help the poor of Europe.* Records from many of the stops on his itinerary across the continent show that he frequently *gave money to those in need.* This subject will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

---

<sup>99</sup> Letter 43 (See Note 1), pages 151 - 152.

<sup>100</sup> Another representative of the tourism association, Mr. Edo Ericson, also helped to make arrangements for King Chulalongkorn’s visit to Herösand. There, traveling by boat and by horse-drawn carriage, the King observed the movement of Swedish timber between the provinces of Jämtland Södra, Medelpad Ostra and Bispgården. He also took a 5-minute excursion to see the beautiful landscape around Elfdalen after having breakfast in Bispgården. He went to Bergsforsen to see logs being transported by river but arrived on Sunday, which was a holiday. Even so, Captain Nordberg made special arrangements for King Chulalongkorn to see all facets of the operations. At Sollefteå, the King boarded a train for Stockholm. (From the archives of the Royal Swedish Consulate in Thailand, courtesy of the Ax:son Johnson Foundation of Sweden.)

#### 5.4 *Factors Contributing to and Impeding the Building of Cordial Relations between the Siamese Court and the Courts of Europe – Cultural Differences and the King’s Gift for “Reading People”*

During his stay in Portugal, King Chulalongkorn received over 300 letters from people asking for his charity.<sup>101</sup> Although once one of the wealthiest countries in Europe and the continent’s premier maritime power in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Portugal’s fortunes had fallen drastically by the time of the King’s visit at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Portuguese King did not extend an invitation to his “friend” from Siam (as he was called in the liberal newspaper *A Crenca Liberal* on 31 October 1897) to stay in the royal palace but arranged rooms for him at the *Braganza Hotel*, which had been converted into a royal residence. The carriage sent to transport him to his lodgings was very old. In fact, King Chulalongkorn wrote that “the carriage was gold but dated from the days of King Rama I. The seat was falling apart, and I was terrified that it would break into pieces.”<sup>102</sup> (See 5.2).

A devout Buddhist and a righteous ruler, King Chulalongkorn donated a considerable sum to helping the poor in Portugal, as reported by the

Lisbon correspondent for the English newspaper *The Times* (25 October 1897).

By helping the poor in many of the countries he visited, the King of Siam demonstrated to the people of Europe not only Buddhist compassion but his own generosity as well as that of the people of his Kingdom to those in need. In Switzerland, the King gave 1,500 francs to assist the poor. In Sweden, he made donations totaling 1,200 francs to a local hospital, an orphanage, and a home for the destitute (31 May 1897). He made a gift of 2,000 kronen to the Russian Czar, and at a dinner on board the *Maha Chakri*, he handed out small sums of money totaling 337 francs to all of the English sailors and to their commander Captain Cummings, while reminding his Thai crewmen of the importance of observing European customs and manners for the future benefit of Siam. Even in France, which had adopted a belligerent policy toward the country, King Chulalongkorn demonstrated his “moral superiority” by giving French President Félix Faure some 10,000

---

<sup>101</sup> In the Lisbon newspaper, *O Journal de Lisboa*, 24 October 1897, page 2. The same article also reported that King Chulalongkorn had sent more than a thousand telegrams abroad. This was to be expected as telegrams were the fastest means of communication at the time.

<sup>102</sup> *Correio Nacional*, 21 October 1897, page 2. This article, which reported on the King’s trip to Portugal, noted that once the Siamese monarch had been installed at his lodgings, a carriage was sent to transport him to the Royal Palace, where large crowds were on hand to see him. But along the way, one of the mounted guards fell off his horse and broke his leg. The royal procession was accompanied by some 300 guards.

King Chulalongkorn's decision to wear European-style clothing, his familiarity with Western customs, and his fluency in English, combined with the common knowledge in Europe that he had abolished slavery in Siam and that he was an advocate of Western - style education, convinced his European hosts that he was an Asian friend and ally. That he welcomed Western influences into his Kingdom was tantamount to admitting to the people of Europe that *he recognized the value of their cultures and traditions*. This was a signal to the West that he was not some threatening "other," but was *one of them*, a friend worthy of acceptance and respect.

While his physical features were nonetheless still seen as *exotic and elegant, his dark, slanted eyes and warm smile* were praised as *marks of intelligence* and a lively interest in everything around him.

The physical "differences" that distinguished the King from his European hosts were viewed as individual traits that were highly valued by the people of the West. These differences were not so "different" that they prevented the Europeans from recognizing the King's common humanity. Instead,

they were seen as *central to the charm and attraction* he held for all those who came in contact with him. As a document from Poland noted: "The different look of the guests, their elegant and exotic appearance, attracted widespread attention. Siamese customs were extensively discussed in the papers."<sup>107</sup>

Still, some elements of this "exoticism" were unacceptable to the Europeans. The clearest example perhaps was the King's numerous wives and consorts, which accounted for the fact that he also had far more sons and daughters than the crowned heads of Europe. Admittedly, newspapers in countries like Sweden, for example, tried to explain that polygamy was a part of Siamese tradition and that even commoners had more than one wife. "It is a normal custom also for commoners to have many wives, so why does not a King or a nobleman want to have concubines?"<sup>108</sup> Other newspapers noted that the practice of having several wives was common throughout Asia, and compared Siam with countries such as Japan and China.

Even so, it seems that explanations like these are, in fact, disingenuous. For centuries, European nobility did not marry for love. Marriage was a political alliance, a strategy for extending the scope

---

<sup>107</sup> In: *Centenary of the Visit of King of Siam Chulalongkorn (Rama V) to Poland*. The publication commissioned by the Royal Thai Embassy in Poland in cooperation with the Thai Foreign Ministry. Content prepared by the University of Warsaw, Grazyna Szeszniak, ed. Interpress Publish PAI S.A., 1997. Courtesy of the Polish Embassy, Bangkok, page 15.

<sup>108</sup> In: the Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter*, 9 June 1897. The column "The King of Siam and His Harem Life": "It is a normal custom also for commoners to have many wives, so why does not a King or a nobleman want to have concubines?"

of one's power, a means of solidifying a kingdom's stability or increasing its wealth. Marriages among the ruling classes were based on political and economic considerations, and not on love. Catherine de Medici, for instance, was forced to wed the Crown Prince of France in order to cement the power of the Catholic Church in Europe. Queen Elizabeth I of England was pressured by her senior ministers to marry the King of Spain or the King of France as a means of ensuring the strength and stability of Britain. Even the 16<sup>th</sup>-century French writer Rabelais wrote that marriage was simply a means of perpetuating noble bloodlines and that love played no part in the institution. Love is something precious that should be given only to that special "sweetheart."<sup>109</sup>

It is not surprising, therefore, that European history, especially that of France, is filled with stories of kings and their mistresses, many of whom wielded greater power than the queen. And in some cases, the royal mistresses played a greater political role

than the kings who loved them. Even at the time of King Chulalongkorn's first visit to the continent in 1897, a number of Europe's crowned heads were involved in relationships with women who were not their wives. The King of Sweden, for instance, had a number of "wives" whom he loved to distraction.<sup>110</sup> And just prior to King Chulalongkorn's visit to Italy, the Italian monarch had a "dalliance" with a serving girl, who was later forced out of service.<sup>111</sup> Even in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, it has not been uncommon for European royalty to have extramarital affairs, which, in some cases, they have denied.

Tales of King Chulalongkorn's 600 wives and concubines that appeared in the Viennese press are evidence of European sarcastic attitudes. One newspaper printed a supposedly humorous poem entitled "A Poem for the 600 Women." But one issue which many of the European countries the King visited refused to take lightly was punctuality or the last-minute cancellation of a planned event on the royal itinerary.<sup>112</sup> Once on an excursion to

---

<sup>109</sup> The idea of perpetuating one's family line through marriage is derived in part from Christianity. The Catholic Church taught that sexual relations between a man and woman were sinful outside of marriage. A woman should be modest, and her duty as a good wife was to bear children. These beliefs were more widespread among Roman Catholics than among Protestants, who under the influence of the founder of Protestantism, Martin Luther, a rebel against the teachings of Rome, rejected the idea that priests should be celibate. Instead, Protestant preachers may marry and have children.

<sup>110</sup> *Letter 42* (See Note 1), page 150.

<sup>111</sup> *Letter 21* (See Note 1), page 101.

<sup>112</sup> In contrast to the majority of European newspapers, the Portuguese daily *O Seculo* reported on 23 October 1897, that King Chulalongkorn had taken pains to keep to the schedule set by Queen Amalia for his arrival at the Palace. While the Queen had requested his presence at 9.30 p.m., the King himself grumbled that "The Portuguese King had scheduled dinner for 8 o'clock but he himself did not arrive until half past eight, and the food was not ready until 9 o'clock. By the time we were ready to eat it was nearly half past nine!" In *Letter 58*, from Monte Carlo, 26 October 1897 (See Note 1), page 193.

Mount Kahlenberg, on the outskirts of Vienna, the King was in the company of Archduke Ludwig Victor when he spotted a couple of men playing chess and expressed the wish to join them. The Archduke dissuaded the King from stopping, however, because chess was not included in the planned slate of activities. On another occasion, the King was scheduled to visit the Vienna City Hall at two in the afternoon. On hand to welcome the King was a local dignitary named Dr. Lüger, who hoped to receive a royal decoration from the Siamese monarch. Instead, King Chulalongkorn chose to take a nap after lunch and cancel his visit to City Hall, leaving the man feeling deeply disappointed.

In Poland, the *Kurier Poranny* (*The Morning Courier*) of 3 July 1897, reported that the King had mounted a royal horse-drawn carriage to visit a nearby army camp *but had cancelled the trip at the very last minute*, choosing instead to head directly to the palace to meet with Prince Imertinski. And in the afternoon, between two and half past four, he cancelled all his planned events – visits to Ujazdow Hospital, the university, Galgotha Panorama, the Orthodox church, Saint John University, and Belvedere Public Park – deciding to rest instead. Eventually, he did visit Galgotha Panorama, which he admired, at 4.30 that afternoon, once the weather had cooled.

The King's disregard for time was the subject of a critical column in the newspaper *Slowo* (*The World*) on 1 July 1897. The Poles took particular

offense because it was widely known that the Austrian Emperor was a stickler for punctuality and that during his visit to Austria, King Chulalongkorn had cancelled none of the events that his hosts had arranged for him. In Poland, however, the Siamese monarch's last-minute cancellations angered many people who had made preparations for his visit.

In all likelihood, however, there were always good reasons for these cancellations. In most cases, the King's European hosts had simply arranged for him to see and do too much. Consider, for instance, all the places the King was expected to go on his visit to Warsaw in the span of just two and a half hours. The schedule would have allowed him no more than ten or fifteen minutes at each stop, especially given the fact that he was traveling by horse-drawn carriage, which would have been very slow. What's more, the King's schedule began early each morning and generally did not conclude until after dinner, sometime late in the evening. It was not unreasonable to expect him to need some time to rest in the middle of the afternoon, especially as he was required to keep up royal appearances at all times throughout the day.

In addition, it is widely known that in Thailand, especially in the past, people had "lots of time on their hands." Unlike in Europe, where people had to preserve food and make heavy clothes to tide them over the cold winter months, the Siamese were blessed with a tropical climate and abundant food and water. Europe at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was

also rapidly industrializing. *Traditional values and patterns of life were changing quickly, widening the gap between Europe and Asia.* This, then, helps to explain why the Siamese placed little value on punctuality, preferring instead to do things at their leisure. Their approach to life has traditionally been unhurried. Because time is not seen as a valuable commodity, the Thais have always found happiness in a more relaxed way of life.

These sudden changes to the King's itinerary, made either because he was tired or because he saw something unexpected that he believed could be used to develop his own country, perplexed and sometimes even angered his European hosts. For instance, the Hamburg aristocracy found it difficult to understand why the Siamese monarch would choose to stay in their city for three days (31 August – 3 September) when, to their way of thinking, Hamburg had little more to offer than its port and its stock exchange. How could it compare with such places as Berlin and Saint Petersburg? Even more confusing was the fact that the King had signed no trade agreements with the city. Hamburg purchased large quantities of Siamese goods while Siam bought very little from Hamburg.<sup>113</sup>

Such misunderstandings are commonplace even today. Cultural differences between Europe and Thailand continue to trouble relations at the

political, commercial and personal levels.

Other cultural differences came to light during King Chulalongkorn's travels through Europe at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. One was the Siamese custom of chewing betel nut. Others concerned matters of dining etiquette and dress. An interesting item appeared in the Polish newspaper *Kurier Poranny* (*The Morning Courier*) on 3 July 1897, in which the reporter noted that "none of the Siamese visitors, the King included, wore gloves to the theatre and throughout the entire performance appeared to be eating or chewing something like cud which the monarch held in his hands. One observer claimed that it was a brown nut which was very popular in the countries of the East."

Although there is no irrefutable proof that the King and his party chewed betel nut, it seems all too likely, given the King's fondness for the habit. In *Letter 47*, sent to the Queen before his arrival in France, King Chulalongkorn wrote, "The pros and cons of not chewing betel are obvious. My toothache has disappeared. My teeth no longer feel loose but are instead stronger than before, and the gaps between my teeth have narrowed. But it has become more difficult to cure my other dental problems." The "red expectorate" which was remarked on during his visit to Austria (see Chapter 4) puzzled Europeans wherever the Siamese travelers went.

---

<sup>113</sup> A report from Hamburg in a document from the Political Archives of the German Foreign Ministry, Berlin. File R 19239, Vol. 20, 21 SIAM No. 1, document number A 10648, dated 3 September 1897, pages 036 - 037.

Overall, however, the cultural differences that set the Siamese and their European hosts apart were not so great as to make it impossible for the King to forge friendly relations with many of the governments and people of Europe. They were minor compared with the perceived “goodness” of the King.

What troubled the King more was the “nature” of some of the people who accompanied him on his trip. While the King eagerly pursued a hectic schedule of activities and events that he hoped would contribute to the development of his country, other members of his retinue – including some of his brothers – lacked his energy and enthusiasm. They grew bored and unsatisfied. They just found it pleasant to drink and flirt with pretty women.

“I am unhappy because there is no time left for myself...as my program takes up all my time. Sawasdi does not read nor write to anyone in the entire world. All he wants to do is to enjoy himself. He comes and goes as he pleases....I have scolded him for being frivolous, but he insists on going out to drink and flirt with women, activities that hold no appeal for me....How can I tolerate such behavior? He is of no use to me. As for me, I want to know and remember too much. I love my country and my friends and family in

Bangkok too much.” (from *Letter 52*, Essen 5 Sept. 1897)

The King’s love of country finds eloquent expression in the following correspondence:

“I always feel that I see my country as a loving wife with whom I have lived for thirty years – long before you with whom I have lived for some twenty years. As much as I have missed you, thinking about “the wife” who has taken care of me and has sheltered me, how can I help missing her even more? I have missed her days and nights and in all my disposition...”<sup>114</sup>

Still, despite the King’s criticism of his young brother’s behavior, he was not blind to his sibling’s innate intelligence. “Sawasdi may engage in frivolous behavior, but he is an intelligent man...If he decides to buckle down and work, then he works hard and does everything to the best of his ability.”<sup>115</sup> For this reason, when unexpected emergencies arose in Rome and England, His Majesty turned to his brother to assist him. “Chira [the King’s son] is able to manage things, but he is still young, and what he says carries no weight.”<sup>116</sup>

But even more distressing than the behavior of certain individuals close to the throne was the

---

<sup>114</sup> From *Letter 52*, from Essen, Germany, 5 September 1897 (See Note 1), pages 181-182.

<sup>115</sup> *Letter 33*, from Budapest, 29 June 1897 (See Note 1), page 125.

<sup>116</sup> *Letter 26*, from Florence, 13 June 1897 (See Note 1), page 110.

general state of the Kingdom's foreign affairs in Europe, about which the King wrote:

"Come to think about it, this trip is just like traveling with my eyes closed. We who live in Bangkok may be ignorant, but *those living abroad are sometimes worse than us*. It is a pity that the knowledge we have gained turns out to be a wasted offering to a number of ignorant people. Considering the advantages we have gained from this visit, I can see only dreams of silver and gold mines. Yet I cannot see any way that we can really mine them. ...Still, when I think about lots of things, I continue to hope for them to become a reality *but after thinking about people, I become disheartened*. As long as our diplomacy remains in this kind of condition, our affairs in Europe will come to nothing. Anything that we sent from home here was *left unread*. Let it be known that any message sent to the Ambassador will be kept in cabinets or delivered to the Brahma realm. Do not expect that any action is going to be taken. This is because *no one takes responsibility*. This is not only due to the *Ambassador's being inconsiderate* but also because of the *ignorance and fear of those who do not give a hand but instead obstruct other people*. Since *foreign governments have found it unimportant to communicate with us*, it is

better to sit still and do nothing.

A way to solve our problem overseas is to look for a diplomat who is knowledgeable of the country's interior administration and at the same time creative enough to think about doing things and determined to work. In brief, if we had Krom Luang and Krom Damrong as diplomats, we would be able to solve the two problems mentioned above. The point is that we want people who can contribute to the improvement of our administration.

As for our interior administration, since there are *not many qualified people*, who is going to take care of it if these people are appointed to be diplomats working abroad?"<sup>117</sup>

And while King Chulalongkorn despaired at the fecklessness of many of those serving the Siamese court abroad, he was full of praise for their European counterparts:

"Their officials are all so very good. Ours, on the other hand, *do not know how to serve their masters*, and this is shameful. They must be instructed every day.... Phraya Pichai has now developed himself and is much better, but Phra Indradech still hopeless.... *Their officials are much capable than ours* and that is *shameful*.... Still *I must not display my anger*. *I must bear it all*. Yet this is a matter of grave

---

<sup>117</sup> Letter 52, from Essen, Germany, 5 September 1897 (See Note 1), pages 180 - 181.

concern, as there may be serious consequences in the future.”<sup>118</sup> (from *Letter 34*, Hotel Hungary, Budapest, 9 June 1897)

The King was all too aware of the shortcomings of some of the men serving him from the beginning of his trip to Europe. And his concern for the future state of the Kingdom’s diplomatic service proved to be wholly justified.

It was clear that Pra Intradech was “hopeless” from the beginning of the royal party’s arrival in Europe, and near the end of the trip, an incident involving him caused a rift between the King and the Portuguese royal court. “Pra Intradech suffered from diarrhea and refused to allow his Portuguese servant to enter his room, not wanting the servant to see him at his business. The Portuguese claimed that he had done something so seriously wrong that I was going to have him killed. That first day he had diarrhea at least 40 times and continued to experience stomach upset every day thereafter.”<sup>119</sup>

This story of Pra Intradech was all the talk both within and outside the Portuguese court on the evening that King Chulalongkorn went to Queen

Amalia’s palace. “An entire group of women asked me about having Pra Intradech killed, and no matter how many times I denied it, they refused to believe me. I was furious.” This rumor also appeared in a report from the Spanish ambassador to the Spanish government, dated 23 October 1897.<sup>120</sup> The report, which describes a state dinner at the royal palace, claims that it was the Duquesa de Palmella, the Queen’s secretary, who asked the King about Pra Intradech’s fate. A similar story appeared in the Portuguese newspaper *Republicana*. The story noted that Siam was not a democracy and that although Pra Intradech had committed only a minor error, King Chulalongkorn had ordered his execution. The King was understandably outraged. He knew that if *Republicana* printed such a claim, many readers would believe it. What he found difficult to understand, however, was why the Queen’s lady-in-waiting would believe such an outrageous story. That was why he reacted so angrily to the Duquesa de Palmella’s question.

In a letter to Berlin, Germany’s ambassador to Portugal corroborated the story. The Herzogin (Duchess) von Palmella asked the Siamese monarch

---

<sup>118</sup> *Letter 21*, from Rome, 7 June 1897 (See Note 1), page 103.

<sup>119</sup> Prior to King Chulalongkorn’s visit to Portugal, the Spanish Queen had warned him at a dinner in his honor that if he attended a dinner in Portugal, he should eat something before the meal and he should avoid drinking the water because it was not safe to drink. Even so, we have no way of knowing for sure what brought on Pra Intradech’s severe bout of diarrhea.

<sup>120</sup> In a letter from the Spanish Ambassador in Lisbon. *Ligaeien de S/M Catolica Lisboa*, No. 272 Politica, 24 October 1897.

if he were going to have the matter published in the press once he returned to Bangkok. The King was extremely angry and turned his back to her.<sup>121</sup> The Spanish ambassador added that throughout the King's stay in Lisbon, he had been lodged in a hotel and had hardly ventured out on to the streets. According to the ambassador, King Chulalongkorn was displeased with the reception given to him by the Portuguese court, which was so different from the welcome shown him in other countries in Europe. The monarch had made his feelings known to other foreign diplomats and had even told the Spanish ambassador to inform his government in Madrid. As a result, Lisbon's diplomatic community was curious as to the reason for the Portuguese court's shabby treatment of their foreign guest. The Portuguese newspapers had also printed unfavorable reports of the King's visit despite the fact that everyone who met him left with the impression that he was a highly educated and cultured gentleman.<sup>122</sup> Portugal's King Carlos refused to speak to King Chulalongkorn's sons at a state dinner, where foreign custom dictated that those in attendance make toasts to one another. Instead, Carlos acted as if the princes

were invisible. Although members of the Portuguese royal court reminded the Siamese monarch of the long history of relations between their two countries, King Carlos refused to allow his guest to speak before they ate or to toast to the relationship between Siam and Portugal.<sup>123</sup>

At the end of his report, the Spanish ambassador in Lisbon wrote: "King Chulalongkorn has a distinguished education as do his sons."

This incident involving Pra Intradech points up some of the more striking differences between the customs and attitudes of Europe and Siam. It also makes clear the differences between the countries of southern Europe and those of the other parts of the continent. Portugal and Spain clung to memories of past glory as the "rulers of the seas." They had once been the world's pre-eminent maritime powers. They had sailed around the globe in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and because of the historic rivalry between the two nations, there were hard feelings between them. The Portuguese considered the Spanish to be haughty and vain, not realizing that they themselves were equally so. Although their

---

<sup>121</sup> From the Political Archives of the German Foreign Ministry, Berlin. File no. R 19239, Vol. 20, 21 SIAM No. 1, document number A 12774, dated 26 October 1897, pages 088 - 089.

<sup>122</sup> "Los periódicos portugueses no le han sido por lo general muy benévolos, por mas que todas cuantas personas se han acercado a la familia real siamesa han tenido que reconocer la cultura y distincion del Rey, la de sus hijos y la de todas cuantas personas formaban su comitiva."

<sup>123</sup> "y al hablar con el gentilhombre portugués que tenía a su inmediato servicio y aludir este a las antiguas relaciones que unían a Siam con Portugal por haber sido la primera nación europea que entró en relaciones con aquel pueblo, contestó el Rey de Siam que ya lo sabía y aun tenía la intención de referirse a este hecho en su brindis de contestación si el Rey Don Carlos le hubiera dado ocasion para ello."

wealth and influence in the world had waned in more recent times, their pride had not. In addition, like many of the people of southern Europe, the Spanish and the Portuguese were equally garrulous. They were loud and highly excitable. When they learned that Siam was ruled by an absolute monarch with the power over life and death, they may have jumped to the conclusion that King Chulalongkorn routinely ordered the execution of courtiers who displeased him, in conformity with the image of Siam they already had in mind. While many of the countries in Europe were likewise ruled by a king or queen, the Siamese monarch's visit coincided with a rising tide of republican sentiment. That a king could arbitrarily condemn a man to death may have struck the Duquesa and the Portuguese court as an inconceivably cruel form of "exoticism." This would have chimed with the portrayal of Siam in the *Republic* newspaper as a country where notions of democracy were decidedly alien.

Another matter that caused the Siamese monarch some consternation was King Carlos's refusal to allow his Asian guest the opportunity to make a toast at any of the state dinners the two men

attended. The European custom of making toasts and giving short speeches before sitting down to a formal meal permitted leaders to speak of issues central to relations between their respective countries in a diplomatic manner. In Germany, for instance, King Chulalongkorn and the German Emperor toasted to improved trade relations between their two countries.<sup>124</sup> But in Portugal, King Carlos did not observe this custom. The reason for this remains unclear. But as a result, the King's anger over the misunderstandings surrounding Pra Intradech remained bottled up inside. Yet, at the same time, both monarchs as well as the local press played up the long history of relations between Siam and Portugal, which dated back to the time of Ayuthaya. The Portuguese newspapers also showed a better knowledge of Siam than the press in any of the other European countries that the King visited (See Section 4.1). The information provided by the Portuguese embassy in Bangkok ensured that coverage of the King's travels in Portugal was entirely favorable. But in the course of research, it came to light that some of the information from these diplomatic sources had been censored,

---

<sup>124</sup> At a state dinner held in honor of King Chulalongkorn, the German Emperor Wilhelm II made a toast in English emphasizing the importance of friendship and cordial trade relations between the two countries. He gave his blessings to the many large projects being undertaken in Siam and wished the King success on his trip across Europe. He also expressed the wish that trade relations between Germany and Siam would grow. In response, King Chulalongkorn thanked the German Emperor for his friendship and expressed his appreciation for the help the Emperor to his sons, Boribhat and all the brothers, also his assistance in establishing the country's first postal and telegraph services and laying the country's railroad. Finally, the King hoped that Germany would continue to provide assistance in the future.

probably by the Cultural Attaché, as conjectured in Chapter 4. In contrast, a report from the Spanish ambassador in Lisbon and a story written by an English correspondent in Portugal for the English newspaper *The Times*, 24 October 1897, noted that:

“Immediately upon the King’s return from Cascães Palace at one a.m. this morning, he sent off a telegram to the Portuguese monarch informing him that he was extremely tired and would be unable to undertake the excursion to Cintra which had been specially arranged for him on the following day. King Chulalongkorn remained in his room the entire day before setting off by train for Naples at 11 o’clock that evening. King Carlos went to the railway station to bid farewell to his royal guest.

I can report that there were many reasons for King Chulalongkorn to feel angry with his hosts, foremost among them was the circulation of unfounded and absurd reports about him...”

Finally, the Portuguese court, which angered the King, had been on the receiving end of his considerable generosity on a number of occasions. He had also exchanged the highest royal decorations with Portugal’s monarch.

“Decorations of the highest class have been conferred by the Monarchs, and the King of Siam has left a handsome sum for the poor.”

We could say that the misunderstanding caused by the cultural differences between two notions had been corrected and honoured through exchange of decorations. So the donation for the poor made the friendship standing out.

## Chapter 6

# An Overview of Relations between the Kingdom of Siam and the Royal Houses of Europe and the Political, Social and Cultural Impact of His Majesty's European Visit



As the beginning of the book states, although King Chulalongkorn's first trip to Europe in 1897 was motivated by *political necessity*, namely to *protect Siamese sovereignty* which at the time was under threat from the major imperial powers of Europe, chiefly England and France, the success of the trip should be judged by the less tangible benefits it yielded. For instance, the journey was a *public relations* coup, acquainting the people of Europe with the country of Siam and creating an image of the Kingdom and the Siamese people as "civilized." And more importantly, the country's monarch, His Majesty King Chulalongkorn, was not only recognized as an intelligent and "civilized" individual, wherever he went, but he also won the hearts of European royalty and the European people, virtually all of whom expressed as much respect, admiration and affection for him as the people of Thailand, who regard him as their "great, beloved" monarch. It is indeed these benefits that have been the subject of much of this book.

The research for this book uncovered abundant evidence confirming claims about the success of King

Chulalongkorn's European tour. Admittedly, however, the degree of respect accorded to the monarch did vary from one royal court to the next, depending on individual circumstances and specific political and cultural factors. In other words, the warmth of the reception given to the King depended on the national "character" of each of the European nations he visited.

In countries that took a neutral stance toward Siam, namely Switzerland, Italy, Austria-Hungary, Sweden (at the time, Norway was still a part of Sweden), Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, and Portugal – in other words, countries in no position to inflict political harm on the Kingdom – King Chulalongkorn was shown an extremely gracious welcome (with the exception of Belgium and Portugal), both by the members of the court and by the common people. This was especially true of "ordinary people" in Switzerland, Austria-Hungary, and Sweden. In his travels through Italy, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Spain, the King's contacts were limited almost exclusively to members of the ruling class. His only contact with the ordinary

citizens of these countries was with the large crowds of people who surrounded his party everywhere he went. It was only in England, France, Russia and Germany where the reception was less cordial.

King Chulalongkorn was especially struck by the graciousness of the Austro-Hungarian and Danish courts. The Siamese monarch considered Emperor Franz Joseph I “an elder friend with a special kindness to the younger,” and several royals representing a number of the courts in Europe had made earlier trips to Bangkok. These included Archduke Karl Ludwig, the younger brother of Emperor Franz Joseph I, who had traveled to Siam in the company of his wife, the Infanta Adelgundes, the sister of Archduchess Maria Teresa of Portugal, in 1893. In Denmark, King Chulalongkorn went on a series of excursions with various members of the royal family, ranging from King Christian IX, nicknamed the “Grandfather of Europe,” to the youngest daughter – two - year - old Princess Margarethe – of Princess Marie (with whom King Chulalongkorn enjoyed a particularly close friendship) and Prince Waldemar. In this way, the Siamese monarch had ties with three generations of the Danish royal family, as King Christian IX’s queen, Marie Louise, remarked. This relationship continues today, with members of the Danish and Thai royal families exchanging visits on numerous occasions. The same holds true for the royal households of Sweden and the Netherlands, the king and queen of these two countries having been the official guests

of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej during official visits to Thailand in 2003 and 2004, respectively.

The friendship between King Chulalongkorn and the Swedish monarch, King Oskar II, was decidedly more “stormy.” Oskar was notoriously sharp-tongued, and in order to defend his country’s honor in political discussions with his Swedish counterpart, King Chulalongkorn had to be especially quick-witted. The King was also forced to come to the defense of his Foreign Minister, Krom Luang Thevavongse Voropakarn, who had been accused by the Swedish monarch and by “Savasdi” (Prince Savasdisophon) of failing to protect Siam against French bullying, as related in one of the King’s letters (See Section 5.3). There was also an incident in which the King pretended to be drunk during a reception aboard the royal yacht the day before he and his party were due to leave Sweden. But because of his wit and eloquence, his behavior did not anger the Swedish king, who, on the contrary, felt greater respect for King Chulalongkorn as a royal equal. He even came to feel more admiration for the Siamese than for other Europeans, going so far as to speculate that one day Siam would even conquer Europe.

King Chulalongkorn felt only dislike for the Belgian monarch, Leopold II, however, who he believed was “insincere and only concerned for his own immediate interests.”

What this shows is that in his dealings with the members of the courts of Europe, King Chulalongkorn was an unfailingly elegant, refined gentleman with a lively sense of humor. Yet, while projecting a gentle exterior, he possessed an inner strength and determination. Like an experienced diplomat, his Majesty was able to “give as good as he got” while not appearing aggressive and managing to maintain his dignity.

At the courts of England, Germany, and Russia and in the French Republic, the countries in whose hands the fate of Siam’s sovereignty rested, the warmth of the reception shown to King Chulalongkorn depended on a complex web of political factors both in Europe and in Asia.

King Chulalongkorn received a decidedly cool reception from the English court. The British were wary of the French, who were their chief competitors for new colonies in different parts of the world. This was especially true for the Indochina peninsula (See 2.3.3). In their dealings with the Siamese, the British were, therefore, “reserved,” usually sending a small delegation of high-ranking officials, led by the Queen’s representative, the Duke of York, and some of the country’s wealthiest men to meet with the King. Otherwise, prevailing circumstances dictated whether the Siamese monarch was able to meet with the Crown Prince, the Prince of Wales, and the Crown Princess. King Chulalongkorn did have an official audience with Queen Victoria at Osborne House, her royal retreat on the Isle of Wight,

and was allowed to stay at Buckingham Palace in London. However, there is no indication, not even in any of the King’s letters, of any closeness between the English royal family or top government officials and King Chulalongkorn. And although he made a number of visits to England during his tour of Europe, the King was most often housed with wealthy members of the aristocracy not related to Queen Victoria.

The coolness of this welcome, which contrasted so strikingly with the warmth shown him in most other countries in Europe, was a clear sign of British reluctance to risk upsetting Europe’s other major power, France, and of England’s tendency to hold itself aloof, proud of its power and standing in the world. Interestingly, at the same time, the British were vying for a railway concession in Siam and had asked that the government in Bangkok not grant the concession to any other country before the King could make a visit to England. Even so, the English court treated the Siamese monarch with greater indifference than subsequent economic and political representatives, and in stark contrast with the Germans.

Not surprisingly, then, after returning from his trip to Europe, the King granted the railway concession to his friends in Germany, a country with whom Siam had enjoyed good relations even when Germany was still Prussia. In choosing Germany, Siam also recognized the Germans’ role in effecting a balance of power between the other major countries

in Europe. It was for this same reason – to limit England’s influence – that Siam had chosen to join the German postal service in 1885. The importance of the commercial and economic ties between Siam and Germany was made evident in a toast in honor of King Chulalongkorn given by Emperor Wilhelm II at an official reception for the Asian monarch held in Berlin on 28 August 1897. Because the King’s trip across Europe was not meant to be secret, newspapers in all the countries he visited reported in great detail on the royal traveler’s activities. There were frequent analyses of his trip in the European press. The chilly reception given to the King by the British government was likewise no secret. It inspired the governments in Berlin, Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Dresden and Hamburg to receive King Chulalongkorn with great fanfare in order to highlight the contrast with the very different reception he had received in England.<sup>1</sup> Even when visiting former Chancellor Bismarck and the wealthy industrialist Krupp, he was shown tremendous deference befitting his station. King Chulalongkorn and the German Emperor discussed such issues as Siamese sovereignty, relations with Russia and France, and

political matters involving German diplomats in Bangkok. The King became especially close to Duke Johann Albrecht of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, who had traveled to Bangkok in 1883 and would make a second trip in 1919, during the reign of King Rama VI. In a letter to Queen Saovabha, King Chulalongkorn wrote of the good time he had in the company of Grand Duke Friedrich I of Baden. A story in the German press remarked: “No other visiting monarch had been shown such respect.”<sup>2</sup>

In Russia, another major European power at the time of the King’s visit, not only did Czar Nicholas II receive the King of Siam with great pomp and ceremony, but he welcomed him into the royal family. The Czar’s mother<sup>3</sup> was particularly fond of King Chulalongkorn, asking him to consider her his mother and kissing him warmly as he departed Saint Petersburg. Although he succeeded in winning the affection of leaders all across Europe, it was only in Russia that he felt truly sorry to leave. He wrote to the Queen in Bangkok that he was genuinely infatuated with the Russian Czar and missed him and his family terribly. He even decided to send one of his sons, Prince Chakrabongse Phuvanart, to be educated in Russia not just for political reasons but

---

<sup>1</sup> Compare Tosaporn Kasikam. *Psychological Factors Behind Foreign Policy with the Major Western Powers in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*. Master’s Thesis. Chiang Mai University, 1996, page 6.

<sup>2</sup> Tosaporn Kasikam, page 6.

<sup>3</sup> i.e. Princess Dagmar of Denmark, wife of Grand Duke Alexander Alexandrovitch who was given the title Grand Duchess Marie Fyodorovna in 1866, upon her husband’s accession to the Imperial Throne of Russia as Alexander III. She was the mother of Czar Nicholas II, and it was for this reason that the Danish royal court was full of praise for “Nicky.”

because he trusted the Czar, whom he considered a close friend, to take good care of him. The special bond that united the King of Siam and the Russian imperial family paid dividends in other countries as well. The Czar wrote to the German and Danish governments, asking them to assist Siam in its dealings with the French. He also praised the King to leaders in Austria-Hungary, Sweden, and England. In England, however, the Czar's words had little impact other than to give London greater pause before taking aggressive action against the Kingdom.

The Siamese-Russian alliance also concerned the French. Despite a lack of enthusiasm among certain members of his government, President Félix Faure, like the Russian court, gave King Chulalongkorn a welcome that accorded with proper protocol. At the time of his visit, France was pursuing an aggressive colonial policy in Asia, and although many of the colonial administrators in Southeast Asia acted independently of the central government in Europe, by including Paris on his itinerary, King Chulalongkorn was stepping boldly into the tiger's den. He met personally with the architects of the policies that threatened his Kingdom's survival. In fact, though, the French President was not such an imposing figure. His actions were restricted by the will of the French people, and in hosting a foreign

visitor, he was obliged to show courtesy and respect. And since this visitor was obviously elegant, charming and cultivated, President Faure would have found it even more difficult to turn a cold shoulder to him.

Indeed, evidence shows that the King and his retinue enjoyed very cordial relations with their French hosts throughout their visit. When it was time for the Siamese to leave, there were feelings of sadness among the officials on both sides, as, after all, the King and his party had "spent several days in France."<sup>4</sup> The Mayor of Le Havre, where King Chulalongkorn had donated money to help the poor, was also on hand to see off the Asian visitors. He presented the King with a special medal made as a souvenir of his visit to the city. Once his party had left France, President Faure sent a telegram telling the King that he was glad that he had arrived safely in England.<sup>5</sup> Clearly, at the very least, King Rama V had been shown friendship by the leader of a country considered to be one of Siam's most dangerous foes.

Although the Spanish and Portuguese governments played virtually no role in the politics of the rest of Europe, they did keep a close watch on the activities of the King as he traveled across the continent. In both Paris and London, the Spanish

---

<sup>4</sup> In Srisahathep (Seng). Phraya. *Chronicles of the King's Trip to Europe in 1897*, Volume 2. Thanathai Securities (Public) Co., Ltd. Published in honor of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of King Bhumibol's Accession to the Throne, 1996, page 158.

<sup>5</sup> Srisahathep (Seng). Phraya, page 158.

ambassadors were eager to arrange with the King a suitable date for his arrival in Madrid. In Portugal, the first European country to establish ties with Siam and the country most familiar with the Kingdom, the arrangements made for the King's visit were a fiasco from start to finish. The Portuguese planned too many events at various locations that took hours to reach and exhausted the King. The carriage that transported the Asian monarch was also old and falling apart. The mounted police fell off their horses. Carriages overturned, and a train derailed. To top it all off, there was an "incident" involving a false report in the local press that a certain Phra Intradech was to be executed. Other newspaper accounts of the King's visit to the country were fairly negative in tone, taking a toll on the King's patience and stamina. He found it difficult to hold his tongue in front of the Portuguese officials and the members of the royal court. Furthermore, King Carlos declined to have conversation with his sons and refused to allow

his guest to toast to their relationship before they ate, despite the very long history that linked the two kingdoms.

In general, King Chulalongkorn's first trip to Europe in 1897 was a success in building cordial ties with the governments of Europe. It acquainted the people of the continent with the distant Kingdom of Siam and gave them an image of the country as "civilized." Most of all, the trip showed the Europeans that the King was himself a highly intelligent and highly cultured ruler, an equal of the European heads of state, and a civilizing force in Asia.

The questions that remain, however, are: What precisely did the Europeans consider as "civilized?" In what way was the King equal to his European counterparts? What were the ramifications of the European perception of Siam as a "civilized" society?

The research for this book uncovered the following answers to these questions.

### **6.1 Praise for a "Civilized Gentleman" and His Conformity with European Customs**

It seems clear by now that much of the praise for Siam and especially for its ruler, King Chulalongkorn, derived from the *King's conformity with European customs*. The European newspapers and leaders who heaped praise on the King throughout his trip said as much. To be "civilized" was to be "one of us." The key to his ability to connect with his European hosts was *education* and the fact

that the King had adopted European customs and practices to develop his Kingdom.

King Chulalongkorn had been the recipient of a Western-oriented education from the time he was very small. His father, King Mongkut, was well-known to the West as an enlightened ruler who valued learning and provided support for Western

education in Siam. The West was also aware that his son, King Rama V, was an equally enthusiastic advocate for Western-style education and had sent a number of his sons and other members of the court to Europe for schooling. He had implemented reforms in the Siamese education system. He had abolished slavery and introduced a modern postal system, telegraph service, and railroad network. King Chulalongkorn was an intelligent man who had brought many changes to his country. In the eyes of the West, he was on the “right” track, which, of course, meant the “*Western*” track. Even the British commended the King for being “on the right path.” An article in a Swedish newspaper remarked that the King’s travels across Europe were part of an effort to establish cordial international relations among equals, and that for almost 30 years, the Siamese monarch had worked to understand European culture as a means of securing his country’s place in the community of nations.

In addition, the King was seen as a polished and elegant gentleman, and a stickler for Western etiquette. It was these qualities that won him the affection and admiration of the European nobility and the common people. The King was known to be a good and fair man with an interest in and knowledge of Western literature and history. Best of all, he had shown himself to be *a friend of the Westerners who resided in the Kingdom* and had turned his personal attention to issues that concerned them. For instance, he had instructed

that all houses in Bangkok be assigned Roman numerals in addition to Thai numbers. According to the Polish press, he had solved many of the problems that troubled the Europeans living in Siam. He gave his *support to Christianity and other religions*. At the Vatican, His Holiness Pope Leo XIII recognized the King’s tolerance for other faiths by presenting him with a medallion inscribed with these words: “We saw a bright star rising in the East.” On numerous occasions, King Chulalongkorn also showed his European hosts the generosity of the Siamese people by giving alms to the poor and making sizable donations to hospitals and orphanages in almost every country he visited. Not only did these gestures demonstrate his superior moral code but they were also evidence of the compassion that is an essential part of the Buddhist teachings.

In short, the West lauded King Chulalongkorn and was willing to treat him as an equal precisely because he had set Siam on a course of Westernization, which to the people of Europe was good and “civilizing.” He was seen as an advocate of European culture and could therefore be counted as a great friend of Europe.

But the King’s Western qualities won him acceptance, in fact, only to the extent that he was not perceived as a “savage.” To be accepted as an equal among the royals and rulers of the courts of Europe required other special qualities that are the subjects of the following sections.

## 6.2 *A Western Character that Was Decidedly “Different,” but Not So Different that He Was Seen as “Bizarre”*

Other Asian royalty that had visited Europe and England in the years prior to the arrival of King Chulalongkorn in 1897, had made a bad impression on the Western press and the people who came in contact with them.<sup>6</sup> This was especially true of the King of Persia, Nasser al-Din Shah Qajar, who made three visits to Europe beginning in 1873. His fondness for oriental pomp and frippery gave him a reputation for pomposity. He had also made derogatory remarks about Switzerland, and as a result, when it was known that the King of Siam would visit the country, the Swiss press was very eager to know what this Asian monarch would have to say about their country. None of the Asian rulers who had traveled through Europe before King Rama V had succeeded in gaining the respect of their hosts or of ordinary Europeans. They were seen as so different that the gap that separated them from the people of Europe could not be bridged. They were “strange.” It was almost as if they belonged to an entirely different species from the white men and women of Europe. The Asian royalty who visited Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century had clung to their “oriental” ways and made little effort to adapt to Western customs and manners. Perhaps they were motivated by a

wish to show the Europeans that they were “free” from any pressure to conform to Western expectations.

The cultural differences that separated the Asian rulers from their European hosts were so great that the visitors were perceived as “alien.” They lacked charm. They were seen as “uncivilized” and treated with disdain. King Chulalongkorn, however, was entirely different from his Asian predecessors. He dressed in smart, English-style suits. He understood Western ways of thinking and had a deportment that conformed to European notions of “civilized” behavior. This won him praise from the Western press and the European public.

The King had an obvious grace and a “dignified” manner befitting a monarch. Unlike many of the members of his retinue, King Chulalongkorn was rarely taken aback by the things he saw on his trip. He was also blessed with certain qualities that not everyone has – sincerity and a personal warmth that endeared him to many of the people who met him on his travels through Europe. He had a gift for putting other people at ease. He could converse with strangers in a way that made them feel special. These were key parts of the King’s charisma.

---

<sup>6</sup> The first time in 1873; the second time in 1888, and the third time in 1889, eight years prior to King Chulalongkorn’s first visit to Europe. On this last occasion, there were comparisons made with King Chulalongkorn’s trip to Europe in the Swiss press.

These qualities were responsible for the affection and admiration felt for the King by the leaders and common people of almost every country he visited on his European tour. But even this is not

enough to explain the respect and reverence accorded King Chulalongkorn. This required yet another remarkable trait.

### 6.3 *A Sharp Intellect, a Quick Wit and a Gift for Repartee Both in Word and Action*

Throughout this book there has been ample evidence given to show that King Chulalongkorn had much more than just “piercing black eyes that shone with intelligence.” He had a sharp intellect and unflinching tact that proved valuable resources in his encounters with the leaders of Europe. Words rarely failed him. These qualities served him exceptionally well, for example, during his visit to Sweden, where he found that the Swedish King and other members of the court knew virtually nothing about Siam or about Asia for that matter. He was also able to hold his own in negotiations with the Belgian diplomats representing King Leopold, successfully preventing the Belgian King from “tying Siam’s hands” and taking unfair advantage of the Asian kingdom.<sup>7</sup>

Another key element of the King’s success in winning the respect of his European hosts was his “sovereign” manner. On repeated occasions, he donated money to people in need. He conferred royal

decorations on European leaders without discrimination, instead, treating everyone equally. This was a deliberate tactic that turned out to have diplomatic benefits that lasted long after the King returned to Siam.

That King Chulalongkorn managed to win the respect and admiration of so many of the European leaders he met, and that he was actually recognized as their equal, are clear indications of what can only be described as the *King’s genius*. That so many of the *King’s children* were studying in Europe at the time of his visit also *contributed in part to the success of their father’s trip*. Crown Prince Mahavajiravudh, Prince Jirapivat Voradech, and Prince Boriphath Sukumbhant were among the sons enrolled in school in Europe at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. All of them were recognized as “cultured” men of the world. Prince Savasdi Sophon, who was not a foreign student but accompanied his father on his trip across the continent, received equal praise for his manners

---

<sup>7</sup> From conversations with officials at the National Archives in Brussels and other Belgians, it became clear that King Leopold II, who was on the throne at the time of King Chulalongkorn’s state visit to Belgium, was not particularly admired by his subjects. There was little surprise at the Belgian monarch’s behavior as described by King Chulalongkorn. King Bhumibol was particularly close to King Baudoin (now deceased), who welcomed him on an official visit to Belgium in 1960.

and intelligence. Of course, this is not to discount the contributions of the other members of the royal retinue, many of them handpicked by a monarch

with a gift for putting the right man in the right place at the right time (See Section 5.4).

#### ***6.4 The Successes and Intangible Benefits of King Chulalongkorn's First Trip to Europe in 1897***

King Chulalongkorn's first trip to Europe in 1897 yielded a host of other intangible benefits. These included the following:

##### ***6.4.1 Diplomatic Ties and Cordial Relations with the Nations of Europe***

Europe was the center of the universe at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and in the opening decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Most of the developments that changed the course of human history at this time arose not in Asia or North America but in Europe. These changes continue to affect the way we live our lives today. For instance, the Industrial Revolution and its economic, cultural, social, and artistic ramifications transformed European thought. A continent that had once seen life in this world as mere preparation for life after death came to value only those things which could be grasped through the senses. Science became the new religion, and material values replaced spiritual ones. The end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century also saw the birth of new countries across Europe and the rise of nationalist and racist ideologies. It was the era of European colonialism, which

had tremendous impact, both positive and negative, on peoples all around the world.

The fact that King Chulalongkorn felt secure in traveling to Europe for extended periods both in 1897 and ten years later in 1907 showed, first, that the political situation in Siam was stable under an absolute monarchy. As the German ambassador to Bangkok, Baron von Hartmann, observed, the King had complete control over the governance of his Kingdom and was confidently able to appoint his Queen, Saovabha, regent during his absence.<sup>8</sup>

Events in Asia, including Siam, beginning in the reign of King Rama II and becoming increasingly obvious under his successors, Rama III and Rama IV, pointed to the "grave danger" posed by Europe. Europe was responsible for the dramatic changes sweeping the region. Historical accounts of the two trips to the continent made by King Chulalongkorn at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries make evident not only the political and diplomatic intelligence possessed by the King but also his enthusiasm for the languages, arts and

---

<sup>8</sup> From a report by the German ambassador in Bangkok to the Chancellor in Berlin, 16 June 1897: from the Archives of the German Foreign Ministry in Berlin, File R 19239 Vol. 19, 20. SIAM No. 1 A 6488.

culture, and politics of the West. The latter is particularly interesting given the tenor of the times. That the king of a small Asian country could expect to be welcomed as an equal by the governments of Europe at the peak of the imperial age was virtually unthinkable, especially since the major powers – England and France – were less than honest in their dealings with Siam.<sup>9</sup>

In a speech delivered at an international symposium sponsored by Chulalongkorn University's European Studies Centre on 4 February 2004, former EU ambassador to Thailand, H.E. Klauspeter Schmallenbach remarked that on his first trip to Europe, King Chulalongkorn's mission to establish friendly relations with the nations of Europe would have been as difficult as that of Robert Schuman, the French foreign minister, who in the early 1950s was charged with negotiating a treaty to establish the "European Coal and Steel Community" with the first Prime Minister of the new German Federation Konrad Adenauer.<sup>10</sup> This was in the years not long after the conclusion of the Second World War,<sup>11</sup> when relations between the perennial enemies were still seriously strained.

Yet in the end the discussions between the two sides led to the Friendship Treaty between France and Germany, signed by Adenauer and French President Charles de Gaulle.

It is fair to say, then, that the starting point of a new era in relations between Siam and the countries of Europe was the two trips to the continent made by King Chulalongkorn more than a century ago. Especially important was the King's success in winning respect as an "equal" of the European heads of state with whom he met. These trips also played an instrumental part in the "Westernization" of Siam. On the first of his journeys, the King initiated diplomatic relations with European nations like Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Norway that had not yet achieved their independence. He visited Budapest and Warsaw, and although Oslo was not included on his itinerary, he did travel to Russia and Sweden, thereby visiting Norway and the Czech Republic indirectly. His first trip through Europe strengthened ties with countries with which Siam already had diplomatic relations and with nations with which the Kingdom had no previous connections. In many

---

<sup>9</sup> Prof. Dr. Eberhard Lämmert, Professor of Literature and Comparative Literature, Free University Berlin, in "King Chulalongkorn's Experiences with European Culture," expressed the view that: "King Chulalongkorn embarked on a journey to a foreign continent at a time when any real partnership between the European powers and his country was inconceivable..." In *The Journal of European Studies*, Special Edition, Year 12, Volume 1, January - June 2004, page 38.

<sup>10</sup> H.E. Klauspeter Schmallenbach, "King Chulalongkorn – A First True Honorary European," in *The Journal of European Studies*, Special Edition, pages 11 - 19.

<sup>11</sup> For further details, see Pornsan Watanangura, "136 Years after German Unification: From the Legend of 'Siegfried' to 'WM 2006'". In *The Journal of European Studies*, Year 15, Volume 2, July - December 2007, pages 12 - 15.

cases, these relations have remained intact in today's age of the European Union.

Interestingly, many of the countries of Eastern Europe, which managed to reclaim their independence from larger European powers at the end of the Second World War, mark the King's visit as the beginning of a relationship that eventually led to full diplomatic recognition. Poland, for example, still part of the Russian Empire at the time, was extremely pleased that the King recognized the importance of the Polish people and chose to include the country on his itinerary. As Chulalongkorn wrote to Queen Saovabha in Bangkok, "I have arrived in the country of Poland, not Russia." The relations established by the King on his trip have endured to the present day. This is acknowledged in a special document to celebrate the establishment of cordial relations between Thailand and Poland prepared jointly by the Polish and Thai Foreign Ministries:

"...The two-day visit of King Chulalongkorn to the Polish Kingdom had the character of an official stay in that part of the Russian Empire. Rama V was greeted and accompanied solely by representatives of the Russian authorities and administration, since there was no other in the Kingdom at that time. Even the Poles

who met the monarch at Vilna Station such as Wielopolski and others, appeared as Russian officials. Nobody, including themselves, informed the ruler of their nationality. Chulalongkorn arrived at *Petersburg* with a *concrete aim in mind*, and although he knew that the Polish Kingdom had been incorporated into the Russian Empire, it was of no interest to him. What was essential was how he was going to be received by the Russians. At the same time, it is evident that the *King was aware of the fate of the land he visited. He wrote to his wife that he had visited Poland (and not Russia)...*

When in 1934, the youngest son of Chulalongkorn, *Prajatipok – Rama VII*, visited Warsaw, he was welcomed by a *different city*, the capital of an *independent Poland*.

The visit to Poland of the Crown Princess, *Her Royal Highness Maha Chakri Sirinthorn* in 1996 opened a completely *new chapter in the mutual relations and emphasized their historic continuity.*"<sup>12</sup> (Researcher's emphasis)

As for Russia, although Czar Nicholas II, while still the Czarevitch, had traveled to Bangkok

---

<sup>12</sup> In *The 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Visit of the King of Siam Chulalongkorn (Rama V) to the Kingdom of Poland*, published by the Royal Thai Embassy in Warsaw with the cooperation of the Thai Foreign Ministry. Content prepared by the University of Warsaw, Grazyna Szeszaniak (ed.) Interpress Publish PAI S.A., 1997. From the Polish Embassy in Bangkok, pages 19, 26 - 27.



Prince Viggo, youngest son of Prince Valdemar, receives Their Majesties King Bhumibol and Queen Sirikit at Copenhagen Airport, 6 September 1960  
From *Ties between Two Lands*, published by East Asiatic (Thailand) (Public) Co., Ltd. to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of His Majesty's Accession to the Throne, 1996

#### 6.4.2 *The Tradition of a European Education*

Beginning in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Europe, emboldened by a belief in its cultural and scientific superiority, embarked on a colonial project that changed the course of world history. (See Section 2.3) Smaller countries in other parts of the globe, militarily inferior to the West, began to send their young people to Europe for a Western education. Siam under King Chulalongkorn and Japan under the Meiji Emperor were just two of a number of Asian nations eager to learn about

Western culture, science, and technology as a means of modernizing their own countries.

Japan differed from Siam, in that it was the United States that, in 1854, forced the island nation to abandon its isolationist policies and open its doors to the West. Japan's subsequent modernization was rapid and dramatic. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Mori Ogai<sup>15</sup> traveled to Germany to study medicine and learn about German literature, and by the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Japanese students were studying the poetry of the great German writer Goethe in

---

<sup>15</sup> Mori Ogai (real name Mori Rentaro, 1862 - 1922), Japanese poet, essayist, translator and military physician. From a family of doctors, Mori Ogai studied medicine in Germany from 1884 - 1888. He is the author of several works of fiction, including *The Dancing Lady* (1890) and *The Wild Goose* (1913). He also translated Goethe's masterpiece *Faust* into Japanese, a work which was praised for its literary and artistic merit, in *Meyers Neues Lexikon*, VEB Bibliographisches Institut, Leipzig, Volume 9, 2<sup>nd</sup> Printing, 1974, page 541.

Japanese. Other Japanese students undertook military training and architectural studies in Germany. The number of Japanese students in Germany was such that German had become the language of science in Japan by the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was this exposure to German science and technology that contributed to the rapid development of the Japanese army and the country's military successes against Russia and China.

One of the reasons for the interest in European knowledge and education among the elite of Siam and Japan was simply political necessity. It also explains why Thais for several generations now have preferred to pursue their studies in Europe and North America rather than in other parts of Asia and why they more commonly learn Western languages instead of Japanese, Chinese, or some other Asian language. These preferences have remained very much in evidence throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup>.

It was when Europe became a destination for Thais wishing to continue their studies abroad that the country began to look at Europe in a new way. Thais were eager to see and be seen. They found themselves ready to adopt Western ways of thinking and looked to the West for the means of modernizing their country. But as time would show, although Western culture made its influence felt in Japan and Siam at roughly the same time, how this influence impacted the two countries was very different. This

should not be surprising, given the very different natures and histories of the people of these two Asian nations. Many of the Thai students who traveled to Europe for an education in the years after the end of the absolute monarchy in 1932 failed to gain a true understanding of European customs and culture. Even on the occasion of King Chulalongkorn's first visit to the continent in 1897, many of the members of his retinue showed little interest in understanding the cultural or historical context of the things they saw and experienced. It was enough for them *merely to imitate external, Western forms*.

This focus on the immediate benefits of a Western education while *failing to grasp the values* that underpinned it led to *cultural misunderstandings* and in some cases, a fascination with the less attractive aspects of Western behavior. As is clear in a number of his letters, King Chulalongkorn was well aware of these pitfalls of contact between Siam and the West. They have continued to trouble political, diplomatic and economic relations to the present day. Since the time of King Rama V, it has been difficult to find Thais with the cultural understanding needed to actually communicate with Westerners on an equal footing. The chief reason for this is simply *a lack of cultural knowledge*. Even today, this remains an issue that deserves serious thought and an effective remedy.

The Thai preference for European knowledge has not been restricted to the fields of science and technology, economics, literature, history and



political science. It extends to military science as well. This is really not surprising given that it was the superiority of European arms in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that allowed countries like England and France to establish colonies all around the globe. It became a tradition for Asians planning on a military career to receive training in Europe, most especially Germany. During his visits to Berlin and Dresden, King Chulalongkorn was particularly impressed by the military parades organized in his honor. Even the Germans remarked on the grand spectacle to which the King was treated in Berlin. "A grander sight can hardly be found, even in Prussia."<sup>16</sup> In response to the military parade in Dresden, the King enthused, "I like the soldiers very much. They move with such mechanical precision."<sup>17</sup>

The tradition of sending young Thai cadets for military training in Germany, which was initiated by King Rama V, continues today. A large number of Thai princes and high-ranking nobles

have benefited from military training in Germany, where they acquired a taste for things "German." During the First and Second World Wars, Thailand's initial inclination was to side with Germany against the Allies. This was due in part, of course, to the cordial relations between the two countries, established during the reign of King Rama IV, when the German envoy to the court in Bangkok made it clear that his country had no intention of claiming Siam as a German colony.

Many of the military coups that have occurred in Thailand over the last 70 years have been led by officers trained in Germany. Most notably, the revolution that overthrew the absolute monarchy and established a parliament with the King as head of state was engineered by graduates of a German military academy.<sup>18</sup> More recently, the coup that took place in 1985 was likewise the work of Thai soldiers educated in Germany.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> In the *Königlich privilegierte Berlinische Zeitung*, Volume 400, 27 August 1897 (morning edition).

<sup>17</sup> Microfilm from the National Archives, Fine Arts Department, Bangkok. In *Die erste Europareise des Königs Chulalongkorn 1897*, Pornsan Watanangura, Narumit Sodsuk and Kanitha Boonpan (eds.), Bangkok: Centre for European Studies at Chulalongkorn University, 2003, page 257.

<sup>18</sup> The "People's Party" (Khana Ratsadorn), which brought an end to Thailand's absolute monarchy, consisted of three top military officers trained and educated in Germany. These so-called "tigers" were: Col. Phraya Song Suradech, head of operations and planning; Col. Phraya Paholphayahasena, and Lt. Col. Phraprasart Pittayayuth. A radio transmission received in Berlin on 24 - 26 June 1932, praised the men who led the revolution for avoiding bloodshed and mentioned that three of the leaders were graduates of German military training. (From: Sathun Supasophon. *The Life and Struggle of Phraya Song Suradech*. Published to mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of democracy in Thailand. Bangkok: Creative Publishing, 1992. Cited in Pornsan Watanangura. *Two Periods of Weimar Culture*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 2000, page 117.

<sup>19</sup> i.e. two young air force officers who studied at the Universität der Bundeswehr (military academy) in Neubiberg near Munich responsible for seizing the group of air force commanders at the time.

For King Chulalongkorn, it was important to maintain close relations with both Germany and Russia as a means of protecting the country against English and French aggression. Part of his policy consisted of sending a number of sons to Germany for military training. After spending some years at the royal court in Denmark, Prince Jiraprawat Voradech, for instance, traveled on to Germany for advanced military training. Even the French expressed a desire for the King to send his sons to France so that they could learn an appreciation for French customs and culture. So King Chulalongkorn sent his youngest son, Prince Prajatipok to have an elementary education in France before going to “Eton” school in England.

During his first trip across Europe, King Chulalongkorn also decided to send a son, Prince Chakrabongse Phuvanart, to Russia for military training as a means of strengthening ties between the two kingdoms. The King felt certain that the Prince would be looked after very well by the Emperor and the other members of the Imperial court. Little did he realize, however, what would happen to the Romanov dynasty just twenty years hence.

Whereas the royal families of Europe had built political alliances through marriage since ancient times, King Chulalongkorn instituted a *different tradition* – sending his children to study abroad as a tool for forging ties between Siam and the countries of Europe.

### 6.4.3 Impact on Religion and “Thai” Studies

Unlike Christianity, Buddhism does not stress the importance of proselytizing. Throughout history, there have been few Buddhist missionaries engaged in spreading the faith and making new converts in other corners of the globe. In contrast, Christian believers have felt an obligation to bring the Gospel to followers of other faiths ever since Christ was crucified and resurrected. The spread of Buddhism through much of east Asia was, in general, a much more gradual and organic process. One exception was during the third century of the Buddhist Era, when the Indian emperor Ashoka the Great dedicated his life to the propagation of Buddhism through much of the continent. Buddhist missionaries from Siam played an important role in the religion’s history during the reign of King Boromakos of Ayuthaya, when after the Portuguese had succeeded in eliminating the Buddhist religion from the island of Sri Lanka, the newly - established Lankan king sought help from his Siamese counterpart. A contingent of monks was dispatched to the island to ordain local Sri Lankans as Buddhist monks. Even today, Sri Lankan monks ordained within the tradition begun by these Siamese missionaries are said to belong to the Siamese sect of Buddhism.

For centuries Buddhism was propagated through much of Asia by means of the Buddhist scriptures, the *Tripitaka*. There is a well - known legend of a Chinese monk named Xuan Zang who traveled to India in search of these sacred texts. But



Their Majesties King Bhumibol Adulyadej (Rama IX) and Queen Sirikit received by Pope John XXIII at the Vatican, 1 October 1960

entirely clear at the time. As history would show, it was clear that the King's trip had not removed the threat of French aggression against Siam.

This is evident, ultimately, the success of the King's trip can be measured in terms of its very real psychological benefits. By pursuing a policy of balancing power called the "*cauchemar des coalitions*," the King managed to forge a number of allegiances

that acted as counterbalances to French and English influence in Siam. It was this policy that played a major role in winning him such high esteem all around the globe. Later, this esteem served as effective armor against the threat of European colonial ambitions.

The King's political success was due in large measure to two key factors.

(1) *First*, political relations within both Europe and Asia were highly contentious at the time of his first trip. There was a mad and complicated scramble among the major powers of Europe for colonies not just in Asia but in Africa as well. In 1897, France was making overtures toward Russia, hoping to strengthen ties between the two countries. When it became clear that King Chulalongkorn had succeeded in building a close friendship with the Russian Imperial Court, other European nations showed signs of "fearing the Siamese." A photo of the Czar and the King of Siam that appeared in the French newspapers was solid proof of the closeness between the ruling dynasties of the two countries. Although this was a great psychological coup, subsequent negotiations with the French were ultimately disappointing despite the intervention of Czar Nicholas on Siam's behalf.

Clearly, this aspect of the King's success can be attributed to the climate of suspicion among the countries of Europe at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. France, afraid of the alliance between Germany and

Russia, tried to draw closer to England. Germany was suspicious of France and attempted to ally itself with the English. As for England, London had found an important new ally in Asia, namely Japan, which had recently scored military victories over Russia, China, and Korea. This alliance further worried the other major European powers, inducing Germany to strengthen ties with Austria-Hungary and compelling the Italians to seek their own colonies in Africa. Less powerful countries in Europe, such as the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden-Norway, Greece, Spain, and Portugal, feared for their own safety. To make matters worse, a number of countries, both big and small, were faced with internal crises. Turmoil that would ultimately lead to the Bolshevik Revolution was already brewing in Russia. There was dissension within the Austro - Hungarian royal family, who had already been forced to cede parts of its vast empire. Norway was clamoring for the dissolution of its union with Sweden, a goal achieved in a year after King's Chulalongkorn's first visit to Europe. Such was the state of the continent that only France and England (and the United States) appeared poised to enjoy the fruits of the age of colonialism. The hostility and suspicion that characterized European politics at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century led France, which had yet to find an acceptable reason for severing friendly relations with Siam, to send gunboats against the government

in Bangkok. France asserted its Extraterritoriality Rights to take possession of land on both sides of the Mekhong River,<sup>21</sup> temporarily exercising its authority over the Siamese provinces of Chantaburi and Trat.

In Asia, the French needed to be cautious of the Japanese, a rising military power in the region. Under the Meiji Emperor, Japan had opened up to Western knowledge and overhauled its education system. The country's military success against China and Russia sent shivers down the spines of France and the other powers of Europe, who feared that Japan would seek to expand its influence across other parts of Asia. Furthermore, Tokyo had signed a formal friendship treaty with Britain, each agreeing to come to the other's defense in the event of an assault by a third country. Proof of the grudging respect shown the Japanese by the countries of Europe is the way in which King Chulalongkorn was frequently compared to the Emperor of Japan or the fact that Siam and Japan were described as equals.

(2) A *second* important observation is that if we look at world history, we will find that only five Asian countries managed to avoid becoming colonies of Europe at the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. These were: *Iran, Afghanistan, Thailand, Japan* and *China*. Three – Iran, Afghanistan and Thailand – were all able to escape

---

<sup>21</sup> Pensri Duke. *Relations between Thailand (Siam) and France in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century through Documents from the Foreign Ministry*. Bangkok: The Royal Academy Thailand, 1996. Chapters 3 and 4, pages 174 - 102.

this fate for the same reason: in each case, two major European powers vied to claim it as a colony. In Iran and Afghanistan, it was Russia and England (Russian influence came from the west, while English pressure was felt from the east, in India, which was already a British colony.) In Thailand, the two rivals were France and England.

In conclusion, then, rather than representing a “nightmare” as German political analysts feared (See Section 5.3), being squeezed between two rival nations, both intent on expanding their colonial holdings, turned out to be a blessing in disguise. This situation created a stalemate, in which neither player had the courage to make a move, fearing the loss of its own political and economic interests. In the case of Siam, England refused to let the French take control of the Kingdom because of the enormous scale of British interests there. Why should the French reap these benefits when they had made no investments of their own? England’s feigned indifference to Siam’s fate can be explained, therefore, by its wish to avoid provoking the French. Still, London had signed a confidential agreement with Bangkok that protected its interests on the Malay peninsula. It signed another – non-confidential – agreement with France that declared Siam a “buffer zone.” Meanwhile, it also pursued a cautious

political and diplomatic policy with France, Russia, and Germany, which it knew to be allied with Siam.

Research has also uncovered a very interesting book on Siam’s survival called *The View of Siam on the Eve of Chakri Reformation* by Nigel Brailey (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 1989). In his book, Brailey reveals that Prince Parisadang, the former Siamese ambassador to England, France, Sweden, Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands, had submitted a petition to King Chulalongkorn seeking to reform the country’s system of government. The King was so infuriated that the Prince fled to Japan and France, where he revealed most of the inner workings of King Chulalongkorn’s court to the British envoy, Sir Swetztenham.<sup>22</sup>

In other words, England had an insider’s view of the Siamese government, which makes it even more amazing that the Kingdom managed to evade the clutches of the European colonizers.

Much light has been shed on the history of Siam’s survival in the age of European colonialism and the achievements of the Chakri kings. This is especially true of King Chulalongkorn, the “Great Beloved King” of the Thai people. His story deserves to be even more widely known.

---

<sup>22</sup> From a conversation with Dr. Supoj Manalapanacharoen, former professor in the Department of Music, Silpakorn University, currently an independent researcher living in Germany.

As for the people of Europe, King Chulalongkorn was warmly praised throughout this first trip across the continent in 1897 as “The Civilizer of the East” and “the most educated of the Asian rulers.”<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> *The Illustrated Weekly*, 3 July 1897. In: *The 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Visit of the King of Siam Chulalongkorn (Rama V) to the Kingdom of Poland*, footnote 12, page 17.

## บรรณานุกรม Bibliography

### เอกสารปฐมภูมิ Primary Source

#### เอกสารจากฝ่ายไทย (Thailand)

กองจดหมายเหตุแห่งชาติ. *การเสด็จประพาสยุโรปของพระบาทสมเด็จพระจุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว* ร.ศ. 116 เล่ม 1. กรุงเทพฯ: กองจดหมายเหตุแห่งชาติ กรมศิลปากร, 2543.

จุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว, พระบาทสมเด็จพระ. *พระราชนิพนธ์ “ไกลบ้าน (Klai Baan)”* (เล่ม 1 และ 2). กรุงเทพฯ: แพร่พิทยา, 2508.

จุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว, พระบาทสมเด็จพระ. *พระราชหัตถเลขาสมเด็จพระพุทธเจ้าหลวง ถึงสมเด็จพระพันปี*. พระนคร: เขษมบรรณกิจ, ม.ป.ป.

จุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว, พระบาทสมเด็จพระ. *พระราชหัตถเลขาส่วนพระองค์ สมเด็จพระรามาธิบดี ศรีสินทร-มหาจุฬาลงกรณ์ พระจุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว พระราชทานสมเด็จพระนางเจ้าเสาวภาผ่องศรี พระบรมราชินีนาถ ขณะทรงเป็นผู้สำเร็จราชการแผ่นดินแทนพระองค์เมื่อเสด็จพระราชดำเนินประพาสยุโรป พ.ศ. 2440 (ร.ศ. 116) มูลนิธิสมเด็จพระเจ้ายา จอมพระยาตำราจราชานุภาพและหม่อมเจ้าจงจิตรถนอม ดิศกุล พระธิดา พิมพ์กุลเกล้าฯ ถวาย สมเด็จพระนางเจ้าสิริกิติ์พระบรมราชินีนาถในวโรกาสฉลองพระชนมายุครบ 5 รอบ 12 สิงหาคม 2535.*

ตำราจราชานุภาพ, สมเด็จพระเจ้ายา. *พระราชพงศาวดารกรุงรัตนโกสินทร์ รัชกาลที่ 5*. พระนคร: บรรณาคาร, 2514.

บุรุษรัตนราชภักดิ์, พระยา (นพ ไกรฤกษ์). *เล่าเรื่องเสด็จประพาสยุโรป* ร.ศ. 116. กรุงเทพฯ: ตีรณสาร, 2534.

พรสวรรค์ วัฒนางกูร, นฤมิตร สอดสุข และชนิษฐา บุนปาน (บรรณาธิการ). *การเสด็จประพาสยุโรปครั้งที่ 1 ของพระบาทสมเด็จพระจุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว* พ.ศ. 2440. หนังสือแปลรวมพระราชหัตถเลขาและเอกสารการเสด็จประพาสยุโรปครั้งที่ 1 ของพระบาทสมเด็จพระจุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว พ.ศ. 2440. ฉบับภาษาเยอรมัน. กรุงเทพฯ: ศูนย์ยุโรปศึกษาแห่งจุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย, 2546.

พระสุริยา. จดหมายจากพระสุริยา เอกอัครราชทูตไทยประจำปารีส ถึงรัฐมนตรีประเทศสเปน. วันที่ 4 ตุลาคม ค.ศ. 1897 เขียนที่ Légation de Siam – Paris – 14 rue Pierre Charron. (ต้นฉบับภาษาฝรั่งเศส แปลเป็นภาษาอังกฤษโดยอาจารย์ขนิษฐา บุนปานตรวจทานและแปลภาษาโดย ศาสตราจารย์ ดร. พรสวรรค์ วัฒนางกูร)

### เอกสารจากฝ่ายยุโรป (Europe)

#### เอกสารจากประเทศสวิตเซอร์แลนด์ (Switzerland)

หนังสือพิมพ์ (Newspaper)

*Der Bund* (Bern)

Tuesday 1 June 1897, volume 150

Wednesday 2 June 1897, Volume 151

Thursday 3 June 1897, Volume 152

Friday 4 June 1897, Volume 153

Saturday 5 June 1897, Volume 154

*Journal de Geneva*, 18 May 1897.

*La Patrie Suisse* (Geneva), 6 January 1897.

*Le Courrier d' Haiphong*

5 September 1896, Volume 1105

22 October 1896, Volume 1125

6 November 1896, Volume 1130

*Montreux*

15 May 1897

20 May 1897

#### เอกสารจากประเทศออสเตรีย (Austria)

สถานเอกอัครราชทูตไทยประจำประเทศออสเตรีย และ เมืองบาดอิเชิล (The Royal Thai Embassy Vienna and the town Bad Ischl). *Zum Gedanken an den Besuch seiner Majestät König Chulalongkorns in Bad Ischl vor 100 Jahren* (ฉบับภาษาเยอรมัน) และ *Commemoration Book on the Centennial Anniversary of*

*King Chulalongkorn's Visit to Bad Ischl* (English edition). Book for the exhibition in Kaiservilla, Bad Ischl, 19-30 June 1997

เอกสารจากหอจดหมายเหตุสำนักพระราชวังและหอจดหมายเหตุแห่งชาติออสเตรีย กรุงเวียนนา (Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Wien)

เอกสารจากแฟ้ม Ceremoniel Protokoll 1897 II ZA Prot. 121

Newspaper *Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt* (หอจดหมายเหตุแห่งชาติ กรุงเวียนนา, Staatsarchiv, Vienna)

Monday 21 June 1897, Volume 169, first page (head line)

Tuesday 22 June 1897, Volume 170, first page, (head line)

Tuesday 22 June 1897, Volume 170, evening edition, first page, (head line)

Wednesday 23 June 1897, Volume 171, Evening edition, first page, (head line), and page 3

Thursday 24 June 1897, Volume 172, first page, section 1

Thursday 24 June 1897, Volume 172, Evening edition, page 4

Friday 25 June 1897, Volume 173, Evening edition, first page (head line) and page 2

Saturday 26 June 1897, Volume 174, page 2-3

Sunday 27 June 1897, Volume 175, first page (head line) and page 15 with picture

Newspaper *Ischler Wochenblatt* (National Archiv, Vienna)

Sunday 20 June 1897, Volume 25, page 3

Monday 21 June 1897, Volume 26, page 2-3

### เอกสารจากประเทศเยอรมนี (Germany)

เอกสารจากหอจดหมายเหตุการเมืองกระทรวงการต่างประเทศ กรุงแบร์ลิน ประเทศเยอรมนี (Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, Berlin) ในแฟ้ม Akt SIAM หมายเลข 1 between the end of the year 1896 to the middle of the year 1897.

1. file R 19238 Vol. 19, 20 มีเอกสารหมายเลขดังต่อไปนี้

A 1333

A 6488 Nr. 090-097

A 6488, 090-097

A 8231, date 25 June 1897

1141 1/2

- file R 19239 Vol. 20, 21 มีเอกสารหมายเลขดังต่อไปนี้  
A 10228 หมายเลขหน้า 016-020  
A 11848 หมายเลขหน้า 05-053
- เอกสารหมายเลข I 17289 Pr 30 September 1897

เอกสารจากหอจดหมายเหตุแห่งชาติ กรุงแบร์ลิน ประเทศเยอรมนี (Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, Berlin, Germany)  
แฟ้ม R 901-61051

เอกสารจากหอจดหมายเหตุประวัติศาสตร์ครูปป์ (Historisches Archiv Krupp)

- document No.  
WA 4/2009  
WA 162212
- pictures No.  
FAH 3 H 47: 10  
FAH 3 H 47: 11  
FAH33 H 47: 32  
FAH33 H 47: 33  
FAH 3 H 51: 1-20  
SH 52/13  
SH 52/14

เอกสารจากหอจดหมายเหตุมูลนิธิออตโต ฟอน บิสมาร์ก ณ เมืองฟรีดริชรูห์ (Archiv Otto von Bismarck Foundation, Friedrichsruh)

- document  
Funke, A. *Das Bismarck – Buch des deutschen Volkes*. page 457. ม.ป.ป.  
Poschinger, H. *Bismarck nach seiner Entlassung*. Leipzig. 1898.
- Foto of King Chulalongkorn during His Majesty's visit to Otto von Bismarck Foundation, Friedrichsruh, 2 September 1987.

เอกสารจากหอจดหมายเหตุแห่งรัฐนือเดอรัชชังเซิน ณ เมืองวอลเฟินบิตเทิล (Niedersächsisches Staatsarchiv in Wolfenbüttel)

file 4Z (1897) page 179m, 182, 183, 207, 211, 234

*Sonntagsbote für Sachsen*. Year 49, volume 40 (date 3 October 1897), p. 316-317 (received from Prof. Dr. Baierl)

Newspaper *Berliner Tageblatt und Handelszeitung*

- ฉบับที่ 365, 21 July 1897, Evening edition
- ฉบับที่ 370, 24 July 1897, Morning edition
- ฉบับที่ 376, 27 August 1897, Evening edition
- ฉบับที่ 425, 23 August 1897 1897 Morning edition (page 2)
- ฉบับที่ 433, 27 August 1897 (page 5)
- ฉบับที่ 434, 27 August 1897 (page 4)
- ฉบับที่ 435, 28 August 1897 (page 5)
- ฉบับที่ 422, 1 September 1897

Newspaper *Braunschweiger Stadtanzeiger*

- ฉบับที่ 133, 10 June 1897
- ฉบับที่ 135, 12 June 1897
- ฉบับที่ 138, 16 June 1897
- ฉบับที่ 141, 19 June 1897
- ฉบับที่ 142, 20 June 1897
- ฉบับที่ 145, 24 June 1897
- ฉบับที่ 146, 25 June 1897
- ฉบับที่ 149, 29 June 1897
- ฉบับที่ 158, 9 July 1897
- ฉบับที่ 200, 27 August 1897
- ฉบับที่ 201, 28 August 1897
- ฉบับที่ 202, 29 August 1897
- ฉบับที่ 205, 2 September 1897

Hesse-Wartegg, Ernst von. *Siam: Das Reich des weißen Elefanten*. Leipzig: Verlagsbuchhandlung von J. J. Weber, 1899. (Reprint 1986)

Newspaper *Königlich privilegierte Berlinische Zeitung*

- ฉบับที่ 367, 7 August 1897

ฉบับที่ 369, 9 August 1897  
ฉบับที่ 377, 13 August 1897  
ฉบับที่ 386, 19 August 1897  
ฉบับที่ 396, 25 August 1897  
ฉบับที่ 399, 26 August 1897  
ฉบับที่ 400 , 27 August 1897 (Morning edition)

Beilage zur Vossischen Zeitung Volume 400

ฉบับที่ 401, 27 August 1897 (Evening edition)  
ฉบับที่ 404, 29 August 1897

Max von Brandt. *Dreiunddreizig Jahre in Ost-Asien: Erinnerungen eines deutschen Diplomaten*. In drei Bänden, Band I. Leipzig: Verlag von Georg Wigand, 1901, page 259. (all books printed in Sütterlin Schrift), National Archiv, Germany, Abteilung Merseburg Gesch. VI d 347.)

หนังสือพิมพ์ของเมืองชเวริน *Mecklenburgische Zeitung, Schwerin*

Special Edition Sonntag, Volume 35, date 29 August 1897

ฉบับที่ 374, 13 August 1897 (Evening edition)  
ฉบับที่ 383, 19 August 1897  
ฉบับที่ (not clear), 25 August 1897  
ฉบับที่ 396, 26 August 1897  
ฉบับที่ 397, 27 August 1897  
ฉบับที่ 399, 28 August 1897  
ฉบับที่ 402, 30 August 1897 (Evening edition)  
ฉบับที่ 403, 31 August 1897 (Morning edition)  
ฉบับที่ 404, 31 August 1897 (Evening edition)  
ฉบับที่ 407 ประจำวันที่ 2 กันยายน 1897 ฉบับกลางวัน  
ฉบับที่ 409, 3 September 1897  
Sunday Special Issue, No.35, 29 August 1897

Newspaper *Neue Preußische Zeitung*

ฉบับที่ 399, 27 August 1897



ฉบับที่ 409, 2 September 1897

หนังสือพิมพ์ *Sonntagsbote für Sachsen*. Year 49, Volume 40, 3 October 1897, Page 316-317 (received from Prof. Dr. Baierl)

### เอกสารจากประเทศสเปน (Spain)

เอกสารจากหอจดหมายเหตุการเมือง กระทรวงการต่างประเทศ ประเทศสเปน (Political Archive, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Spain) ประกอบด้วยเอกสารดังต่อไปนี้

1. รายงานจากทูตสเปนประจำประเทศต่าง ๆ ได้แก่ ฝรั่งเศส นครวาติกัน สวีเดน และอังกฤษ (reports of Konsuls and Ambassadors of Spain in France, Vatican, Sweden and England)
2. โทลเลขระหว่างเตรียมการรับเสด็จที่ประเทศสเปน (Telegrams during preparation to receive King Chulalongkorn in Spain)
3. จดหมายติดต่อกันระหว่างพระสุริยา อัครราชทูตไทยประจำฝรั่งเศส ถึงรัฐมนตรีสเปน (Correspondence between Siam Minister in France and Ministerio'de Estado, Spain)

### เอกสารจากประเทศสวีเดน (Sweden)

#### Letters

Letter from Adolf Nordberg from Sundsvall, date 28 July 1897 to General Consul Mr. Axel Johnson, Stockholm.

Letter from Adolf Nordberg from Sundsvall, date 28 June 1897 to General Consul Mr. Axel Johnson, Stockholm.

Letter with program of the journey of King Rama V in Sweden, written by Louis Amein, date 19 June 1897

#### Telegrams

Telegram from Adolf Nordberg from Sundsvall to General Consul Mr. Axel Johnson, Stockholm, 5 July 1897.

Telegram from Adolf Nordberg from Sundsvall to General Consul Mr. Axel Johnson, Stockholm, 6 July 1897.

Telegram from Adolf Nordberg from Sundsvall to General Consul Mr. Axel Johnson, Stockholm,  
11 July 1897.

Telegram from Hedberg from Sundsvall to General Consul Mr. Axel Johnson, Stockholm, 8 June 1897.

Telegram to General Consul Axel Johnson from Sundsvall, 11 June 1897.

Personal letter of King Chulalongkorn from the Royal Court, 3 June 1897.

### **Newspapers**

หนังสือพิมพ์ *Aftonbladet*, 14 July 1897

หนังสือพิมพ์ *Bladet*, 13 July 1897

หนังสือพิมพ์ *Dagens Nyheter*

14 July 1897

19 July 1897

24 July 1897

26 July 1897

หนังสือพิมพ์ *Nya Dagligt Allehanda*, 16 July 1897

หนังสือพิมพ์ *Östersund Post* 1897

หนังสือพิมพ์ *Stockholms Dagblad*

14 July 1897

20 July 1897

หนังสือพิมพ์ *Svenska Dagbladet*

16 July 1897

24 July 1897

หนังสือพิมพ์ *The Stockholms Tidningen*, 19 July 1897

### **เอกสารจากสาธารณรัฐเชค (The Cze Republic)**

Kořenský, Josef. *Nové cesty po světě, v.10: V Siamu a Čině*. Praha: Otto, 1907-1909.

*Siam through the Eyes of the Czech Travellers E. S. Vráz and J. Kořenský during the Rama V Reign.* Courtesy of the Embassy of the Czech Republic, Thailand

Vráz, E. S. *In the Land of White Elephant*, 1901. Documents translated from the Czech language into English, courtesy of the Embassy of the Czech Republic, Thailand

### **เอกสารจากประเทศอังกฤษ (England)**

*Foreign Office Confidential Prints* (Further Correspondence respecting the affairs of Siam), IX “King Chulalongkorn-the Siamese Government,” Tel., Buda-Pest: June 30, 1897 (Inclosure I in “Greville (British Minister in Bangkok) Lord Salisbury”, No. 5 9. Confidential, (Bangkok: July 6 1897).

*Foreign Office Confidential Prints.* “Greville-Lord Salisbury”, No. 4 3, Tel., Confidential, Political, (Bangkok: October 11, 1897).

*Foreign Office Papers* 69. (Siam)., p. 189: “Greville-Lord Salisbury”, No. 4 4, Tel., (Bangkok: October 21, 1897).

*Foreign Office Papers* 69/187; “Greville-Lord Salisbury”, No. 9 7, Tel., Confidential, (Bangkok: October 22, 1897).

*Foreign Office Papers* 69/189; “King Chulalongkorn-Queen Regent (Queen Saowabha),” Tel., San Sebastian, October 15, 1897. (Inclosure in “Greville-Lord Salisbury,” No. 97, Tel., Confidential, (Bangkok: October 22, 1897).

Report of Archer to Lord Salisbury, 3 April 1897 จากหอจดหมายเหตุแห่งชาติสหราชอาณาจักรอังกฤษ (National Archive, Britain) แฟ้ม FO 175, page 132 (courtesy of Dr. Dhiravat Na Pombejra)

### **เอกสารจากประเทศโปแลนด์ (Poland)**

#### **Newspapers**

ข่าวจากหนังสือพิมพ์โปแลนด์ระหว่างการเสด็จ ประพาสยุโรป พ.ศ. 2440 ได้รับต้นฉบับคำแปลภาษาอังกฤษจากสถานเอกอัครราชทูตโปแลนด์ประจำประเทศไทย (Press-cuttings – translation from Polish into English from The Embassy of Poland, Thailand)

หนังสือพิมพ์ *Gazeta Swiateczna* (The Holiday Gazette), 4 July 1897.



หนังสือพิมพ์ *Kurier Poranny* (Morning Courier)

1 July 1897, page 2

2 July 1897, page 2, 3, 6, 7

3 July 1897, page 2, 3

หนังสือพิมพ์ *Kurier Warszawski* (*The Warsaw Courier*)

2 July 1897

Supplement Morning edition, 2 July 1897

Supplement Morning edition, 3 July 1897

หนังสือพิมพ์ *Slowo* (*The World*)

1 July 1897

3 July 1897

## เอกสารจากประเทศโปรตุเกส (Portugal)

### Newspapers

หนังสือพิมพ์ *A Crenca Liberal*, 31 October 1897

หนังสือพิมพ์ *A Nação*

20 October 1897

21 October 1897

22 October 1897

23 October 1897

หนังสือพิมพ์ *Correio Nacional*

21 October 1897, page 1-2

22 October 1897, page 1-2

หนังสือพิมพ์ *Diário Illustrado*, 21 October 1897

หนังสือพิมพ์ *O Journal de Lisboa*

20 October 1897

21 October 1897

22 October 1897, page 1-2

24 October 1897, page 1-2

หนังสือพิมพ์ *O Occidente*, 20 October 1897, page 1 (picture)-2

หนังสือพิมพ์ *O Mannelino d' EVORA* 1243 m

หนังสือพิมพ์ *O Século*

22 October 1897

23 October 1897

24 October 1897

หนังสือพิมพ์ *Semanario de aricaturess* from Porto, 31 October 1897

### เอกสารทุติยภูมิ Secondary Source

*100 Years Siam-Russian Relations: Translation of historical document.* จัดพิมพ์เนื่องในโอกาสฉลองความสัมพันธ์สยาม-รัสเซีย 100 ปี เพื่อถวายสมเด็จพระรัตนราชสุตาฯ สยามบรมราชกุมารี โดยมหาวิทยาลัยธรรมศาสตร์. กรุงเทพฯ: โรงพิมพ์มหาวิทยาลัยธรรมศาสตร์, 2540.

*A Tale of Two Kingdoms.* หนังสือถ่ายสำเนาได้รับจากสถานทูตเดนมาร์กประจำประเทศไทย. (รายละเอียดชื่อหนังสือยังไม่สมบูรณ์)

Aerni, Agathon. *Siam-Swiss Centenary: The Growth of a Friendship.* To commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Royal State Visit to the Swiss Confederation of His Majesty King Chulalongkorn of Siam 1897. Bangkok, Berne: Royal Thai Embassy, Berne and the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, 1997.

Benna, Anna-Hedwig. Quellen zur Geschichte der Beziehungen Österreich-Ungarns zu Siam im Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv. In Generaldirektion (Hg.), *Mitteilungen des österreichischen Staatsarchivs*, 28/1975, p. 115-140.

Buchner, Rudolf. *Deutsche Geschichte in europäischen Rahmen: Darstellung und Betrachtung.* Göttingen: Musterschmidt-Verlag, 1975.

Forbes, Jill and Kelley, Michael (editors), *French Cultural Studies.* London: Oxford University Press, 1975.

- Hall, D. G. E. *Henry Burney: A Political Biography*. London: Oxford University Press, 1974.
- Hall, D. G. E. *Henry Burney: A Political Biography*. London: Oxford University Press, 1974.
- Helmut Nürnberger. *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur*. 24. Auflage. München: Bayerischer Schulbuch-Verlag, 1998.
- Jeshurun, Chandran. The Anglo-French Declaration of January 1896 and the Independence of Siam. In *Journal of Siam Society LVIII*, July 1970, 105-126.
- Lämmert, Eberhard. *König Chulalongkorns Erfahrungen mit europäischer Kultur*. Paper presented in the International Seminar and book launch of the book: *The First Voyage to Europe of King Chulalongkorn in 1897*. Pornsan Watanangura, Naruemit Sodsuk, Kanittha Boonpan (editors), 5<sup>th</sup> February 2004, Room 105, Maha Chulalongkorn Building, Chulalongkorn University. บทความจากงานสัมมนานานาชาติ เพื่อเปิดตัวหนังสือแปล “การเสด็จ ประพาสยุโรปครั้งที่ 1 ของพระบาทสมเด็จพระจุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว พ.ศ. 2440” (บรรณาธิการ: พรสวรรค์ วัฒนางกูร, นฤมิตร สอดสุข และชนิษฐา บุญปาน) วันที่ 5 กุมภาพันธ์ พ.ศ. 2547 ณ ห้อง 105 อาคารอักษรศาสตร์ 1 จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย.
- Meyers Grosses Taschenlexikon in 24 Bänden*. 6. bearb. Auflage. No. 4. 1998.
- Numnonda, Thomsook. The Anglo-Siamese Secret Convention of 1897. In *Journal of the Siam Society LIII*, January 1965, 45-46.
- Petersson, Niels P. King Chulalongkorn's Voyage to Europe in 1897. In *Journal of European Studies* 2/1995, 1-27.
- Pierre A. Boussard, Gérald Walewijk. *Centennial of the Belgian Embassy in Bangkok 1904-2004*. The Belgian Embassy in Bangkok, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Brussels and The Thai Belgium Historical Institute. 2003.
- Pornsan Watanangura. Language Learning in Europe and Thailand as a Paradigm of Cultural Transition. In *MANUSYA Journal of Humanities*, Vol. 2 No. 2 (September), 1998. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 86-98.
- Soontravanich, Chalong. *Siam and the Hague Peace Conference of 1899: A Preliminary Note*. Paper presented at the International Conference to Commemorate the Centenary of King Chulalongkorn of Siam's First Visit to Europe in 1897, 6-7 November 1997, Bangkok.

- Sowerwine, Charles, *France since 1870: Culture, Politics and Society*. PALGRAVE Publisher, 2001.
- Szczesniak, Grazyna (editor). *Centenary of the Visit of King of Siam CHULALONGKORN (Rama V) to Poland*. Warsaw: Interpress Publish PAI S.A. (Document from the Embassy of Poland, Thailand.
- Szczesniak, Grazyna (editor). *Centenary of the Visit of King of Siam CHULALONGKORN (Rama V) to Poland*. The publication commissioned by the Roral Thai Embassy in Poland with the assistance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland. The Text prepared by the History Institute of the Warsaw University. Courtesy of the Embassy of Poland, Thailand (เอกสารจากสถานทูตโปแลนด์ ประเทศไทย เป็นฉบับเดียวกับที่ทางสถานทูตไทย ณ กรุงวอร์ซอร์ส่งมาให้เมื่อต้นเดือน พฤษภาคม พ.ศ. 2545)
- Thai-Danish Relations: 30 Cycles of Friendship. Copy of book, courtesy of the Royal Danish Embassy, Thailand.* (หนังสือถ่ายสำเนาได้รับจากสถานทูตเดนมาร์กประจำประเทศไทย) (รายละเอียดชื่อหนังสือยังไม่สมบูรณ์)
- Tingsabadh, Charit (editor). *King Chulalongkorn's Visit to Europe: Reflections on Significance and Impacts*. Centre for European Studies, Chulalongkorn University. Bangkok: Craftsman Press, 2000.
- Tips, Walter E. J. *Notes on the Origins, Background and Significance of HM King Chulalongkorn's 1897 Journey to Europe Based on Private Belgian Archives*. Unpublished paper.
- Tips, Walter E. J. *Siam's Struggle for Survival: The 1893 Gunboat Incident at Paknam and the Franco-Siamese Treaty of October 1893*. Bangkok: White Lotus, 1996.
- Tuck, Patrick. *The French Wolf and the Siamese Lamb: The French Threat to Siamese Independence, 1858-1907*. Bangkok: White Lotus, 1995.
- Wenk, Klaus. Die Beziehung zwischen Deutschland und Thailand (ประวัติศาสตร์ความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างเยอรมนีกับประเทศไทย). In Hans Kappe (Hg.), *Das Archiv der Geschichte der Thai – Deutschen Beziehungen*. สมาคมไทย-เยอรมัน, Orient Travel Press Ltd., 1996.
- Wilhelm Mommsen. *Otto von Bismarck*. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1966.
- Wyatt, David K. *The Politics of Reform in Thailand: Education in the Reign of King Chulalongkorn*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969.
- Young, John W., *Britain and the World in the Twentieth Century*. Arnold, 1917.

สมเด็จพระนางเจ้าพระบรมราชินีนาถ. ความทรงจำในการตามเสด็จต่างประเทศทางราชการ พระราชนิพนธ์. จัดพิมพ์ครั้งแรกเนื่องในโอกาสทรงพระเจริญพระชนมพรรษา 3 รอบ 12 สิงหาคม 2511, ทรงพระกรุณาโปรดเกล้าฯ พระราชทานพระราชานุญาตให้จัดพิมพ์ครั้งที่ 2 เนื่องในโอกาสพระราชพิธีมหามงคลเฉลิมพระชนมพรรษา 6 รอบ 12 สิงหาคม 2547.

กীরติ เกียรติยากร (บรรณารักษ์). ราชสำนักสยาม พ.ศ. 2441-2453 ภาค 2 สู่อารยธรรมตะวันตก, เรียบเรียงจากพงศาวดารและเอกสารสำคัญทางประวัติศาสตร์เพื่อการค้นคว้าของคนรุ่นใหม่. กรุงเทพฯ: สำนักพิมพ์แสงดาว, 2544.

ไกรฤกษ์ นานา. ราชการลับ เมื่อ ร. 5 เสด็จ ประพาสเยอรมนี ไม่ใช่เรื่องลับในยุโรป. ใน ไกรฤกษ์ นานา, ประวัติศาสตร์นอกพงศาวดารรัชกาลที่ 5 พระพุทธเจ้าหลวงในโลกตะวันตก: ศิลปวัฒนธรรมฉบับพิเศษ. กรุงเทพฯ: สำนักพิมพ์ศิลปวัฒนธรรม, 2546, หน้า 127-137.

จริยาวรรณ อภรณ์รัตน์. ปัญหาของรัฐบาลไทยในรัชสมัยพระบาทสมเด็จพระจุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัวที่เกี่ยวกับคนเอเชียในบังคับอังกฤษและฝรั่งเศส. วิทยานิพนธ์ปริญญามหาบัณฑิต ภาควิชาประวัติศาสตร์ คณะอักษรศาสตร์ จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย, 2525.

จิราภรณ์ สถาปนาวรรณนะ. วิกฤตการณ์สยาม ร.ศ. 112. กรุงเทพฯ: หน่วยศึกษานิเทศก์กรมการฝึกหัดครู, 2519.

จิราภรณ์ สถาปนาวรรณนะ. วิกฤตการณ์สยาม ร.ศ. 112: การเสียดินแดนฝั่งซ้ายแม่น้ำโขง. กรุงเทพฯ: ภาควิชาประวัติศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ ประสานมิตร, 2523.

จิราภรณ์ สถาปนาวรรณนะ. วิกฤตกาลสยาม ร.ศ. 112. กรุงเทพฯ: กรมฝึกหัดครู 2519. (เอกสารนิเทศการศึกษาระดับที่ 75).

ทิพากรวงศ์, เจ้าพระยา. พระราชพงศาวดารกรุงรัตนโกสินทร์. เล่มสอง. [ม.ป.ท., ม.ป.ป.].

ฉลอง สุนทรวาณิชย์. การเมืองเบื้องหลังการเสด็จประพาสยุโรป. ใน ศิลปวัฒนธรรม, เดือนตุลาคม 2545, 87-103.

ฉลอง สุนทรวาณิชย์. การเมืองเบื้องหลังการเสด็จประพาสยุโรป ลืมโคตรเหง้าก็เผาแผ่นดิน. กรุงเทพฯ: สำนักพิมพ์มติชน, 2544.

ฉลอง สุนทรวาณิชย์. รัสเซีย-ไทย สมัยรัชกาลที่ 5-6. กรุงเทพฯ: สร้างสรรค์, 2517.

ชัย เรื่องศิลป์. ประวัติศาสตร์ไทยสมัย พ.ศ. 2352-2453 ด้านเศรษฐกิจ. กรุงเทพฯ: มูลนิธิโครงการตำราสังคมศาสตร์และมนุษยศาสตร์, 2522.

ชาติ เอี่ยมกระสุนธุ์. สยามแห่งความหลัง. พิมพ์ครั้งที่ 2. กรุงเทพฯ: ต้นอ้อ แกรมมี่, 2540.

แซน บัจจุสานนท์. *กรณีพิพาทระหว่างไทยกับฝรั่งเศสและการรบที่ปากน้ำเจ้าพระยา สมัย ร.ศ. 112 ตอน 4 บรรยาย การรบที่ปากน้ำเจ้าพระยา*. พระนคร: โรงพิมพ์การศาสนา, 2508.

ณัฐภัทร จันทวิช. *100 ปี พระบาทสมเด็จพระจุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว เสด็จประพาสยุโรป พ.ศ. 2440-2540*. พิมพ์ครั้งที่ 1 (อัดสำเนา). กรุงเทพฯ: 2541.

ทศพร กลสิกรรม. *ปัจจัยทางจิตวิทยาในการดำเนินนโยบายต่างประเทศกับมหาอำนาจตะวันตก ในคริสต์ศตวรรษที่ 19: ศึกษาเปรียบเทียบกรณีราชอาณาจักรสยามและพม่า*. วิทยานิพนธ์รัฐศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต สาขาวิชาการเมืองและการปกครอง บัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่, 2539. (ไม่ได้ตีพิมพ์เผยแพร่)

ทัก แพทริค. *หมาป่าฝรั่งเศสกับลูกแกะสยาม: ภัยคุกคามของฝรั่งเศสต่อความเป็นเอกราชของสยาม ปี ค.ศ. 1858-1907*. กรุงเทพฯ: โรงพิมพ์กรมแผนที่ทหาร, 2542.

ปีแอร์ เอ. บูชาร์ด และคณะ. *การเสด็จประพาสประเทศเบลเยียมของพระบาทสมเด็จพระจุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว (King Chulalongkorn's Journeys to Belgium)*. สถาบันเอเชียศึกษา จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย. กรุงเทพฯ: อัมรินทร์พรินต์ติ้งแอนด์พับลิชชิ่ง, 2545.

พรสวรรค์ วัฒนางกูร. *การรับแนวคิดตะวันตกในสังคมไทย – ประสบการณ์จากการเรียนภาษาต่างประเทศในยุโรปและประเทศไทย*. ใน *วารสารยุโรปศึกษา*, ปีที่ 9 ฉบับที่ 2 กรกฎาคม-ธันวาคม 2544. กรุงเทพฯ: โรงพิมพ์แห่งจุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย, 90-91.

พรสวรรค์ วัฒนางกูร. *สองยุคแห่งวัฒนธรรมไวมาร์*. กรุงเทพฯ: สำนักพิมพ์แห่งจุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย, 2543.

พรสวรรค์ วัฒนางกูร. *สองยุคแห่งวัฒนธรรมเยอรมัน*. กรุงเทพฯ: สำนักพิมพ์แห่งจุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย, 2012 (second edition)

พรสวรรค์ วัฒนางกูร. *การเสด็จประพาสฝรั่งเศส ร.ศ. 112 ของ ร. 5 กับการเมืองอาณานิคมของฝรั่งเศส บทความวิจักษณ์ในการประชุมวิชาการเรื่อง “สยาม ฝรั่งเศส อินโดจีนในรัชสมัยพระบาทสมเด็จพระจุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว”*, 20 กันยายน 2548, อาคารมหาจุฬาลงกรณ์ ห้อง 105 จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย. ใน *ด้วยทุนพิเศษ*, นิตยสารรายเดือน. กรุงเทพฯ: พี วาทิน พับลิเคชั่น. เดือนมกราคม, หน้า 91-98.

พรสวรรค์ วัฒนางกูร. *จุดเริ่มความสัมพันธ์ไทย-ยุโรปในยุคสมัยใหม่: พระบาทสมเด็จพระจุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัวในฐานะ “ชาวยุโรปกิตติมศักดิ์” พระองค์แรก, บทความวิจักษณ์ในการประชุมอบรมความรู้เรื่องยุโรป จัดโดยศูนย์ยุโรปศึกษาแห่งจุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัยร่วมกับสำนักงานกรรมาธิการแห่งสหภาพยุโรป กรุงเทพฯ และคณะรัฐศาสตรมหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่, 24-26 มีนาคม 2551*.

พีรพล สงนุ้ย. *กรณีพิพาทไทย-ฝรั่งเศส ร.ศ. 112 ตามหลักฐานฝรั่งเศส*. ใน *ศิลปวัฒนธรรมฉบับพิเศษ*. พิมพ์ครั้งแรก, มกราคม 2545, 15-17.

พิษณุ จันทร์วิทัน. *รูปเก่าเล่าเรื่อง*. พิมพ์ครั้งที่สอง. กรุงเทพฯ: โรงพิมพ์กรุงเทพ, 2545.

พีรพล สงนุ้ย, พันตรี. *กรณีพิพาทไทย-ฝรั่งเศส ร.ศ. 112 ตามหลักฐานฝรั่งเศส*. พิมพ์ครั้งแรก. กรุงเทพฯ: พิมพ์แฉศพรินทร์ตั้ง เซ็นเตอร์, 2545.

เพ็ญศรี ดูก. *การต่างประเทศกับเอกราชและอธิปไตยของไทย (ตั้งแต่สมัยรัชกาลที่ 4 ถึงสิ้นสมัยจอมพล ป.พิบูลสงคราม)*. พิมพ์ครั้งที่ 2. กรุงเทพฯ: ราชบัณฑิตยสถาน, 2544.

เพ็ญศรี ดูก. *ความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างประเทศไทย (สยาม) กับประเทศฝรั่งเศสในคริสต์วรรษที่ 19 ตามเอกสารของกระทรวงต่างประเทศ*. ราชบัณฑิตยสถาน, 2539.

มานิต ชุมสาย, ม.ล. *เอกสารประวัติศาสตร์ไทยว่าด้วย ร.ศ. 112*. กรุงเทพฯ: เฉลิมนิจ, 2519.

*ยุโรปกับรัชสมัยพระบาทสมเด็จพระจุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว: โอกาส ความขัดแย้งและการเปลี่ยนแปลง*. การประชุมทางวิชาการ ชุดโครงการวิจัย วันที่ 18-20 ธันวาคม พ.ศ. 2540 ณ โรงแรมเจดับบลิวแมริออท กรุงเทพมหานคร จัดโดย สยามสมาคมในพระบรมราชูปถัมภ์ และ คณะรัฐศาสตร์ จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย. กรุงเทพฯ: สยามสมาคม จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย, 2540.

วริยา ชินวรรณโน. ดร. ฟรานซิส บี. แซร์: ชาวอเมริกันผู้แก้ไขสนธิสัญญาไทย-ยุโรปให้แก่ประเทศไทย (พ.ศ. 2487- 2469) ใน *วารสารยุโรปศึกษา ฉบับพิเศษ*, ปีที่ 8 ฉบับที่ 1 มกราคม-มิถุนายน 2543. กรุงเทพฯ: โรงพิมพ์แห่งจุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย, 78-113.

วิจิตรวาทการ, พลตรี หลวง. *ปาฐกถาเรื่องการเสียดินแดนไทยให้แก่ฝรั่งเศส*. พระนคร: โรงพิมพ์มหามกุฏราชวิทยาลัย, 2482.

วิชุด สุรพงษ์ชัย. *ย้อนรอยประวัติศาสตร์ 100 ปี ร. 5 เสด็จประพาสยุโรป: จากมุมมองของ ดร. วิชุด สุรพงษ์ชัย*. 2541.

วุฒิชัย มูลศิลป์. *การปฏิรูปการศึกษาในสมัยพระจุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว*. พิมพ์ครั้งแรก. กรุงเทพฯ: ไทยวัฒนาพานิช, 2529.

วุฒิชัย มูลศิลป์. *เมื่อเริ่มปฏิรูปการศึกษา สมัยรัชกาลที่ 5-รัชกาลที่ 7*. พิมพ์ครั้งแรก. กรุงเทพฯ: เวิลด์มีเดีย, 2541.

ส. ศิวรักษ์. *ศตวรรษแห่งวิกฤตการณ์ทั้งทางโลกและทางธรรม*. พิมพ์ครั้งแรก. กรุงเทพฯ: มูลนิธิโกมลคีมทอง, 2536.

สวรรณค์ สุวรรณโชติ. *ประเทศไทยกับปัญหาเมืองจันทบุรีและตราดที่ฝรั่งเศสยึดครองระหว่างปี พ.ศ. 2436-2449*. เอกสารการนิเทศการศึกษา ฉบับที่ 192. กรุงเทพฯ: กรมการฝึกหัดครู, 2520.

สัมพันธ์ไมตรีไทย-เดนมาร์กในรอบสี่ศตวรรษ – *Thai-Danish Relations Through Four Centuries*, Published for the opening of an exhibition at the National Museum Bangkok, 8<sup>th</sup> February 2001 during the State Visit by the Danish Royal Family. Bangkok: Graphic Production Scan-Media, 2001.

สายชล สัตยานุรักษ์. *ความเปลี่ยนแปลงในการสร้างชาติไทยและความเป็นไทย โดยหลวงวิจิตรวาทการ*. พิมพ์ครั้งแรก. กรุงเทพฯ: พิมพ์ศ พรินท์ติ้ง เซ็นเตอร์, 2545.

สำนักงานกองทุนสนับสนุนการวิจัย. *ยุโรปกับรัชสมัยพระบาทสมเด็จพระจุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว โอกาสความขัดแย้งและการเปลี่ยนแปลง: โครงการวิจัย*. กรุงเทพฯ: สำนักงานกองทุนสนับสนุนการวิจัย, 2540.

สุมิตรา จันทร์เงา. *สยามยามวิภฤติ*. พิมพ์ครั้งแรก. กรุงเทพฯ: มติชน, 2541.

สุวิทย์ พักขาว. *ความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างไทยกับฝรั่งเศส ร.ศ. 112-126*. เอกสารการนิเทศการศึกษา ฉบับที่ 180. กรุงเทพฯ: หน่วยศึกษานิเทศก์ กรมการฝึกหัดครู, 2519.

แสงโสม เกษมศรี, หม่อมราชวงศ์ และ วิมล พงศ์พิพัฒน์. *ประวัติศาสตร์ไทยสมัยกรุงรัตนโกสินทร์ รัชกาลที่ 1 ถึงรัชกาลที่ 3 (พ.ศ. 2325-2394)*. พระนคร: สำนักทำเนียบนายกรัฐมนตรี, 2515.

อภิญา เพ็ญพูนกุล. *กรณีวิกฤตการณ์ปากน้ำ ร.ศ. 112: วิเคราะห์หลักไก การกำหนดนโยบายต่างประเทศของไทย*. เอกสารวิชาการ ลำดับที่ 11. กรุงเทพฯ: สถาบันเอเชีย จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย, 2524.

อรรถจักร์ สัตยานุรักษ์. *การเปลี่ยนแปลงโลกทัศน์ของชนผู้นำไทย ตั้งแต่รัชกาลที่ 4 ถึงพุทธศักราช 2475*. พิมพ์ครั้งที่ 2. กรุงเทพฯ: สำนักแห่งจุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย, 2541.

อัจฉราพร กมฺพิสมัย. *กบฏ ร.ศ. 130: ศึกษากรณีการปฏิรูปทางการปกครอง และกลุ่ม “ทหารใหม่”* วิทยานิพนธ์อักษรศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต ภาควิชาประวัติศาสตร์ คณะอักษรศาสตร์ จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย, 2524.

อัมพร จิรัฐติกรและสุธิดา อ่าวสุคนธ์. *ยุโรปในสายพระเนตร สมเด็จพระพุทธเจ้าหลวง*. พิมพ์ครั้งแรก. กรุงเทพฯ: ประพันธ์สาริน, 2542.

อัมพร ตั้งเสวี. *วิเทศบายของพระบาทสมเด็จพระจุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว ที่มีต่อมหาอำนาจยุโรป*. วิทยานิพนธ์อักษรศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต ภาควิชาประวัติศาสตร์ คณะอักษรศาสตร์ จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย, 2522.

ฮอลล์, ดี. จี. อี. *ประวัติศาสตร์เอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้*. (ฉบับแปล) กรุงเทพฯ: มูลนิธิโครงการตำราสังคมศาสตร์และมนุษยศาสตร์, 2522.

## กิตติกรรมประกาศ Acknowledgment

On behalf of Chulalongkorn University, the researcher, the research team and the editorial staff hereby would like to express their appreciation for the assistance and support of all parties involved in making the research and this translation project successful. The research and translation project, also the publication of this book with the support of the Chulalongkorn University Faculty of Arts and the office of National Telecommunications Commission, is also meant as a tribute to this great

monarch on the occasion of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death in 1910.

Our Special thanks are due to European Embassies in Thailand, EC Delegation in Bangkok and the Royal Thai Embassies in Europe. The appreciation also goes to the academics, the working group, especially all the translators and foreign language experts who have played the vital role in seeing this difficult but invaluable task to its conclusion.

### ประเทศไทย Thailand

Associate Prof. Dr. Usnee Yotyinyuat	Former Vice-President for Research Affairs, Chulalongkorn University
Mr. Tosporn Kasikam	co-researcher Former Instructor, Faculty of Social- and Political Science, Chiangmai University
Dr. Dhiravat Na Pombejra	Former instructor, Department of History, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University
Assistant Prof. Dr. Bhawan Ruangsilp	Department of History, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University
Dr. Orasa Chaiyanan	(Emer.) German Section, Faculty of Humanities, Kasetsat University

Associate Prof. Dr. Nuengruedee Lohapon	Head, Department of Western Languages, Italian Section, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University
Mr. Athikhom Saengchai	research assistant, now research assistant and freelance translator
Mr. Michael Crabtree	translator of this research work from Thai into English, Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University
Mr. Chris Baker	Language editor, Freelance writer
H.E. Georg Schmidt	Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Thailand

### Institutions in Thailand and Europe

#### Switzerland

The Embassy of the Swiss Federation, Thailand

contact person: Mr. Christian Fotsch (Minister Counsellor), Deputy Head of Mission

Archives de l'Etat de Genève

1211 Genève 3, Rue de l'Hôtel de Ville 1, Switzerland

contact persons: Dr. Catherine Santschi (Director)  
Ms. Nathalie Fanac (Archive Assistant)

#### Denmark

The Royal Danish Embassy, Thailand

contact persons: Mr. Poul Pedersen (Cultural Attaché)  
Ms. Lisbeth Berming

The Royal Thai Embassy in Denmark

H.E. Adisak Bhanupong (ฯพณฯ เอกอัครราชทูต อติศักดิ์ ภาณุพงศ์)  
Ms. Diana Andresen (Data Analyst)

The Danish National Archives

Rigsdagsgården 9, DK – 1218, Copenhagen K  
contact person: Mrs. Inge Bundsgaard (Director)

## Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland

The Embassy of the Federal Republic Germany, Thailand

contact person: Mr. Peter Finger, First Secretary, Press and Cultural Attaché (2001-2005)

The Royal Thai Embassy, Berlin, Germany

H.E. Chontineepan Cheeranon: ๗พณ๗ เอกอัครราชทูต ชลชินีพันธ์ ชีรานนท์

Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes Kurstr. 33, 10099, Berlin

contact person: Dr. Gerhard Keiper

Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde

Finckensteinallee 63, 12205, Berlin

Landeshauptarchiv Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in Schwerin

Landesbibliothek Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in Schwerin

Stadtarchiv Braunschweig

Niedersächsisches Staatsarchiv in Wolfenbüttel

Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Zeitungsabteilung

Geheimarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Dahlem, Berlin

Historisches Archiv Krupp

Villa Hügel, Hügel 1, 45133 Essen

contact persons: Dr. Ralf Stremmel (Director)

Herr Herwig Müther

Bismarck-Stiftung

Mr. Alexander Nowak

Counselor, Political Affairs

The Embassy of the Federal Republic Germany, Bangkok, Thailand

Prof. Dr. Eberhart Lämmert

Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. (Ältere und Neuere deutsche Philologie)

Professor of Literature and Comparative

Literature, Freie Universität Berlin, Germany

Prof. Dr. Rudolf Baier

Technische Fachhochschule, Berlin, Germany



## **Austria**

The Embassy of Austria, Thailand

H.E. Dr. Herbert Traxl (Ambassador), 2002-2006

Mr. Thorsten Eisingerich (Deputy Head of Mission and first Secretary), 2001-2005

Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv

Schenkenstr. 4, A-1010 Wien

contact persons: Prof. Dr. Leopold Auer (Director)

Dr. Gerhard Gonsa

Magister Gerda Heckermann

## **Belgium**

The Royal Thai Embassy, Brussels, Belgium

H.E. Surapong Posayanond (ฯพณฯ เอกอัครราชทูต สุรพงษ์ โปษยานนท์)

contact person: Ms. Somjai Tapaupong, First Secretary

The National Archive

The Royal Palace, Rue Ducale/ Hertogsstraat 2, B-1000 Brussels

contact person: Dr. Gustaaf Janssens (Director)

Chao Phya Abhai Raja Gustave Rolin-Jaequemyns Foundation, Baan Insi 88,

Baan Nong Van, Muang District, Chiangrai province,

Contact persons: Count Gerald van der Straten Ponthoz

Mr. Thanit Vajarodaya

## **The Netherlands**

The Royal Netherlands Embassy, Bangkok, Thailand

contact person: Mr. Ernesto Braam

Counsellor for Press, Cultural and Political Affairs

The Royal Thai Embassy, The Hague, The Netherlands

H.E. Vasin Theeravejyan (ฯพณฯ เอกอัครราชทูต วศิน วีระเวชญาณ)

The Siam Society, The Netherlands

contact person: Khun Viganda (secretary)

The Royal House Archive

Noordeinde Palace, P.O. Box 30412, 2500 GK, The Hague

contact person: Ms. Charlotte J. M. Eymael (Archivist in Chief)

Nationaal Archief of the Netherlands

Prins Willem Alexanderhof 20, 2595 BE, The Hague

contact persons: Dr. Jan Kompagnie (Director)

Mr. Frans van Dijk (Coordinator for International Affairs)

Ms. Karijn Delen

Ms. Irene Stengs

M.A. student at the Hague

field of research, research on King Chulalongkorn

Meertens Institute

Research and Documentation of Language and Culture of the Netherlands, Royal Netherlands

Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW)

P.O. Box 94264

NL-1090 GG Amsterdam

### **The Federation of Russia**

The Embassy of the Russian Federation, Bangkok, Thailand

H.E. Zevegny D. Ostrovenko

Contact persons: Dr. Vladimir A. Lukoyanov, First Secretary

Mr. Vadim V. Velikanov, Third Secretary

The Royal Thai Embassy, Moscow, The Federation of Russia

H.E. Sorayut Prompoj, Former Thai Ambassador to Russia

### **Spain**

The Embassy of Spain, Thailand

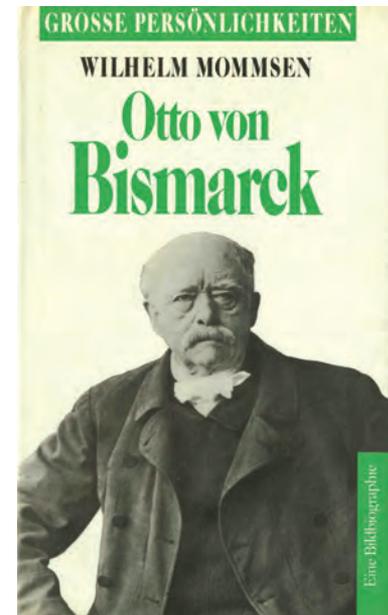
contact person: Mr. José Matres Manso (Deputy Head of Mission)



Napoleon. Napoleon had used political, military, and diplomatic means to prevent these disparate German entities from uniting. Thus, Germany, as Europe knew it, was a fragmented state from the Middle Ages through the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when it became the battlefield for the 30 Years War, a conflict which pitted Catholics against the Protestants of Martin Luther. Throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> century, efforts were made to form a united Germany on the basis of a shared language and culture. These efforts intensified in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when writers like Goethe, Schiller and Herder, all based in the court of Weimar, took up the cause.<sup>49</sup> To the major powers of Europe, Germany was a patchwork of over 300 separate states, which under Napoleon I were subject to French political and cultural dominance. Even after the French Emperor's defeat at the Battle of Waterloo to the combined forces of Britain, Prussia, and Austria-Hungary, Germany continued to struggle to form a unified state. In 1848, German farmers rose up in revolt but were crushed by royalist troops. A group of politically liberal German intellectuals met at St. Paul's Church in Frankfurt seeking similar aims, and the German Confederation tried but failed to pressure two kings of Prussia – Friedrich Wilhelm IV and Wilhelm I-into accepting the crown of a united German Empire. However, it was not until the Prussian Chancellor Otto von



Wilhelm, Prince of Prussia



Otto von Bismarck

---

<sup>49</sup> For details see Pornsan Watanangura. *Two Periods of German Culture* (2012), 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, pages 1-94.

Bismarck (1815-1898) assumed power that German unification was finally achieved in 1871.

The following section will examine the importance of the man dubbed by his fellow Germans as the “Iron Chancellor” on European politics both before and during the arrival of King Chulalongkorn in Europe. Suffice it to say here that Bismarck’s policies had a direct and indirect influence on Siam’s policy of “balancing power,” formulated in the reign of King Rama IV. Successfully implemented, this policy allowed Siam to retain its sovereignty throughout the colonial period.

One further look at the political and nationalist movements that swept through Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century reveals that a combination of political, social and cultural factors enabled Belgium to gain its independence from France, the Netherlands to secede from Luxembourg, and Germany to finally achieve unification.<sup>50</sup> Belgium and Germany went to war to acquire their independence. In fact, Germany fought three wars, first against Denmark to the north in 1864, then against Austria-Hungary to the south in 1866, and finally against France four years later before the Second German Empire could be proclaimed at the Palace of Versailles in 1871. By making this declaration at the former French royal palace, the Germans seemed to be mocking France

and the French people. It was a move intended to evoke feelings of patriotism throughout the newly-united German state. Unfortunately, patriotism was to devolve into a virulent form of racialist nationalism, which would have dire consequence for the rest of Europe and the wider world starting at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and culminating with the genocidal policies of Hitler and his Nazi party during the Second World War.

But these nationalist feelings were not unique to Germany and the other newly-formed nations of Europe. They were a powerful force in northern European countries like Norway and Finland, and in the Balkan peninsula, where demands for independence from the Austro-Hungarian Empire were becoming increasingly vocal. In Bohemia, today part of the Czech Republic and formerly part of the Holy Roman Empire, a German king had ruled since the 11<sup>th</sup> century. German settlers had migrated into the area starting in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. But in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Bohemia and Hungary came under the control of the Habsburgs, the ruling house of Austria, and feelings of Bohemian nationalism date from this time. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Habsburg rulers were significantly weakened, and this, together with changing political circumstances in Europe, intensified Bohemia’s ambitions for independence. At the end of World War I, with the

---

<sup>50</sup> For details see Pornsan Watanangura. *Two Periods of German Culture* (2012), 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Chapter 2 “The Path to the Weimar Republic,” pages 122-137.



forced Bismarck to agree to the establishment of a small number of German overseas possessions. This imperialist policy was in effect, however, only from 1884-1885, when King Chulalongkorn was 31-32 years old. As a result of the policy, Germany was brought into conflict with England, prompting the Iron Chancellor to castigate British policymakers on numerous occasions. In the end, though, Bismarck abandoned Germany's imperialist policies altogether by the end of 1888, declaring himself to be "no supporter of colonialism."<sup>58</sup> Meanwhile, in 1882, Germany had entered into a "Tripartite Alliance" with Austria-Hungary and Italy, at a time when relations between Vienna and the Russian court had badly deteriorated. The agreement was especially important to Italy as the British navy hovered off the coast in the Mediterranean Sea. In 1883, the treaty was extended to include Romania and Spain, as well.

This, then, helps to explain the reasons for the cordial relations between Germany and Siam, initiated under Bismarck and strengthened during the reign of King Chulalongkorn after Bismarck's departure as Chancellor. Still, the fact that Germany did not entertain imperialist ambitions in Asia – much to Siam's relief – did not mean that Germany, like the other major powers in Europe, was not

desirous of building an empire in other parts of the world. Still, we must not forget that for Bismarck what mattered above all else was the stability of a Germany which for the first time in its history was a unified whole. And perhaps because he was a member of a strict Protestant sect – *Pietismus* – similar to the Puritans in England and the Huguenots in France,<sup>59</sup> the Iron Gentleman of Germany never pursued a policy of war against another country throughout his entire tenure as Chancellor, from 1862-1890. But in 1890, Bismarck was summarily dismissed from his post by the young Kaiser Wilhelm II.



Emperor Wilhelm II  
of Germany

<sup>58</sup> Compare Wilhelm Mommsen, *Otto von Bismarck* (1996), page 150.

<sup>59</sup> The great classical German poet Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805) was a devout Christian Pietist and the originator of an esthetic theory of the theatre based on the belief that theatre should be "the moral training ground" (*Theater als moralische Anstalt*) of the German people. Schiller's ideas about the theatre were later attacked by more contemporary German-language playwrights such as Bertolt Brecht and Peter Hanke.

Germany and Siam enjoyed cordial relations in an atmosphere of mutual respect from the very beginning. Because both sides were eager to establish diplomatic ties and promote trade, a large number of German merchants found conditions for doing business in Siam under King Chulalongkorn very favorable. Some of these merchants, however, aware of French and British colonial policies in the region, encouraged Berlin to adopt similar policies. Records from the German Foreign Ministry show that German merchants attempted to pressure the government into laying claim to Siam, but Berlin resisted as Bismarck preferred to remain neutral. To the Chancellor, Germany's interests should be strictly commercial. Among other major projects, Germany hoped to be given the concession to build the first railroad in Siam. Equally interested were the British, whose Foreign Ministry requested that King Chulalongkorn make no decision about the railroad concession until he had visited England.<sup>60</sup> And in a letter to the British Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, dated 9 April 1897, just a few days prior to the Siamese monarch's arrival in Europe, England's chargé d'affaires wrote that King Chulalongkorn had agreed to the British government's request.<sup>61</sup>

In history books studied in Thailand, it is recorded that at the peak of Europe's drive to establish colonies, Germany was the only major power that showed no intention to claim Siam as its own. That King Rama V sent a number of sons to Germany for military and other training reinforced the feelings of friendship that the Thais have had toward Germany and the German people. This was particularly evident in the years leading up to the outbreak of World War I and in Thai consumers' confidence in the quality of goods manufactured in Germany even today.

Still, the history of Thailand's relationship with Germany has not always been amiable. Contact between the two countries changed dramatically after Kaiser Wilhelm's abrupt dismissal of Chancellor Bismarck in 1890. Under Bismarck, Germany had signed and reaffirmed its commitment to a number of strategic alliances, such as the "League of the Three Emperors," but this was no longer so easy in the years after Bismarck's departure. The new German Kaiser sent a clear signal that cordial relations of the type fostered earlier in the century could no longer be taken for granted. Even the German Chancellor had expressed the view that "treaties between these

---

<sup>60</sup> A five-page letter from Chancellor Bülow, successor to Bismarck under Emperor Wilhelm II, dated 23 August 1897, during King Chulalongkorn's travels across Europe. File R 19239 Vol. 21, 22. Document A 10228 No. 016-020. Political Archives, the German Foreign Ministry, Berlin.

<sup>61</sup> A letter from Archer to Lord Salisbury, dated 7 April 1897. From the British National Archives. File FO 175, page 132 (information courtesy of Dr. Theerawat Na Pompetch)

“If this news is true, I would like to take this opportunity to ask if there is any way that His Majesty the King could, during the course of his trip, arrange to make a visit to the United States as well...If His Majesty were to accept this invitation, he would, of course, receive a welcome befitting of the leader of a powerful and friendly nation.”<sup>7</sup>

This letter from the American ambassador confirms that as early as a year prior to his actual departure, rumors of the King’s intention to visit Europe circulated among not just the local population but also those foreigners residing in the Siamese capital. The rumor was reported, in fact, in a book written by Czech-American Enrique Stanko Vráz, who happened to be in Siam at the time that His Majesty set sail from Bangkok for Singapore aboard the royal vessel the *Maha Chakri*. In *In the Land of*

*White Elephant* (sic)<sup>8</sup>, there is an account of the King’s departure together with a photo of the royal vessel<sup>9</sup> even though, according to Vráz, His Majesty the King had sent the following message to the European envoys in Bangkok only one day prior to his departure:

“May the purpose of my voyage is not amusement, I go to Europe to get known all advantages of the West and choose the ones suitable to my country...(sic)”<sup>10</sup>

Interestingly, Vráz, a Czech traveler, also reports in detail on rumors circulating within the Siamese court itself:

“But there were some rumours among the palace staff confirmed by an acquaintance of mine, who was very close to the King, and he spent some time with him almost daily: ‘You know, he said, that piece of politics how

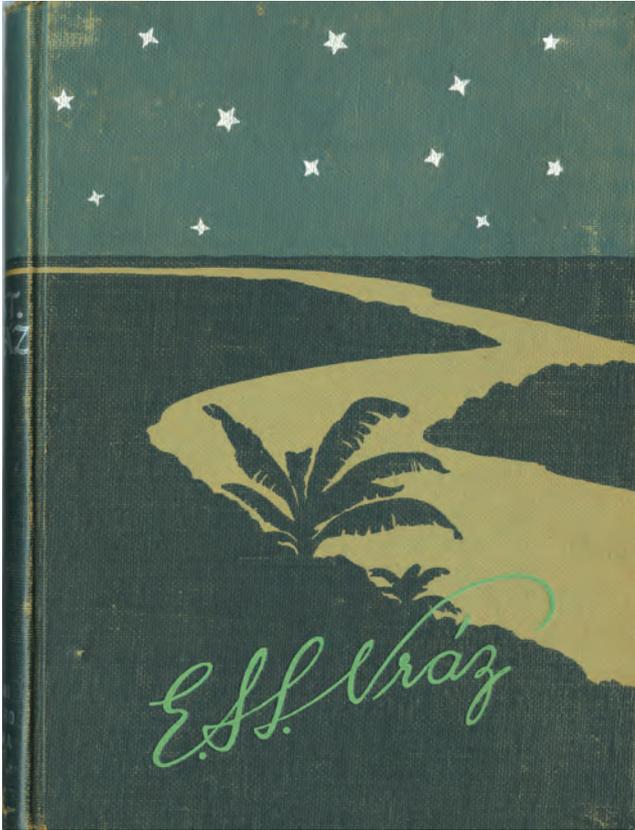
---

<sup>7</sup> Rumors at the time had it that King Chulalongkorn’s trip to Europe was “for pleasure.” Czech traveler Enrique Stanko Vráz noted the rumor in his book *Z cest E. St. Vráz* (1898), in which he also wrote that despite the 21-gun salute as the King set off aboard the *Maha Chakri*, there were very few members of the public on hand to bid the King farewell. From the Czech National Archives, Prague.

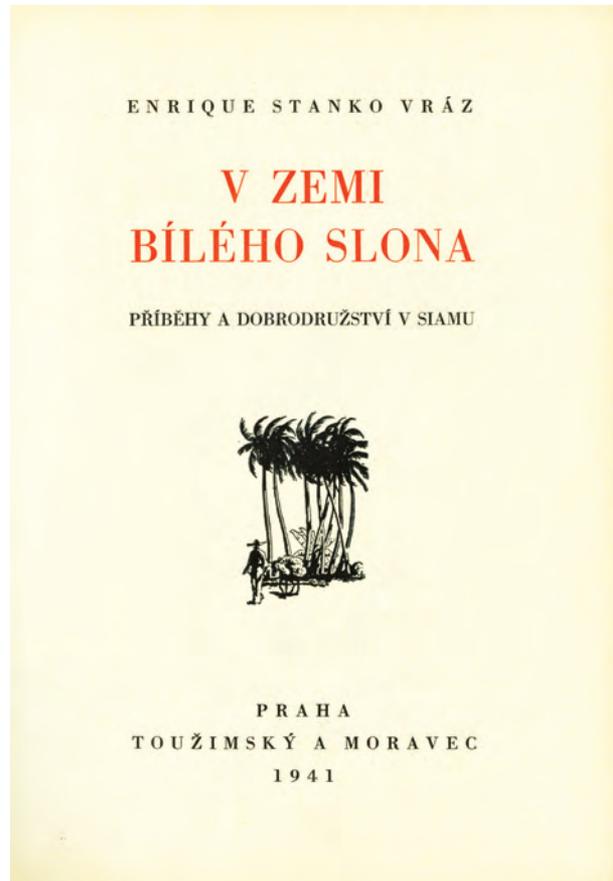
<sup>8</sup> Enrique Stanko Vráz, a renowned Czech-American traveler and adventurer, who sailed around the world between 1883 and 1898. (information taken from *Z cest E. St. Vráz* (1898) (*Travels of E. St. Vráz*) which recount his travels). Vráz reached Africa in 1885 and spent four years there, after which he traveled on to the Canary Islands, Venezuela and other parts of South America (1894), Prague, North America, Japan, China, Borneo, Malaya, New Guinea and Singapore before reaching Siam in 1897. In Bangkok, Vráz stayed at the famed Oriental Hotel, and in March and April of that year, he visited Bang Pa-in and Ayuthaya.

<sup>9</sup> Vráz is considered one of the earliest photographers. He took photographs at a time when newspapers in Europe were illustrated with hand-drawn sketches.

<sup>10</sup> Translated from Czech into English by Magister Ludmila Čelisová at the Royal Thai Embassy in Prague. Received 17 October 2003. Retrieved by the researcher at the Czech National Archives in May 2003. Courtesy of the former Thai Ambassador to Prague, H.E. Thamnu Tangkhanasingha.



Cover of Enrique Stanko Vráz's account  
of his world travels (1883-1886)  
For details on Vráz's visit to Siam,  
See Note 8 (Chapter 3)



Anderson would join the trip at Suez and remain with the ship as it traveled around Europe. The *Maha Chakri* was pulled by another ship, which added considerably to the cost of the voyage. All these preparations were made with the utmost care and circumspection. The ship was also loaded with chests of silver from the Royal Treasury and from the King's own resources, as well as the personal items of the monarch and his suite comprised of almost 300 men. As a Polish document recorded, most of the clothing packed for the trip – whether previously worn or newly-tailored – was in the “English fashion.”<sup>24</sup> Interestingly, little Thai food and few Thai kitchen hands found their way aboard the ship. In a telegram sent from Aden on 1 May 1897,<sup>25</sup> less than a month after the *Maha Chakri* set sail from Bangkok, the King wrote, “I am starving. There is no more chili paste (*nam prik*) except for *nam prik pao*....In all my life I have never been so hungry....Don't bother sending anything again as no one on board knows how to make anything.” And because this was a lengthy, official journey, there was little dried food from Thailand, and of the two later shipments of food sent

by the Queen in Bangkok, only one managed to reach the King and his party.<sup>26</sup>

Another important component of the preparations for the official state visit to Europe were the tokens of friendship which King Chulalongkorn intended to bestow on the kings, queens, and heads of state of the countries he visited. Packing the royal regalia to be worn by members of the King's entourage at the various state functions they attended was another complicated matter. The proper regalia would have to be worn at all times in order to avoid a breach of protocol and a possible loss of face.

It is worth noting as well that the King was particularly sensitive to the financial burdens that the trip placed on some of the lower-ranking officials who accompanied him. In a letter sent to Krom Meun Mahisara Rachaharutai (number 170/1766) dated 20 March 1896, the King wrote:

“...Those accompanying me this time who receive only a small salary must buy blankets, trunks, socks and shoes. These are expensive items, and to buy them, they are

---

<sup>24</sup> According to a supplement in the Warsaw morning newspaper *Kurier Warszawski* (*The Warsaw Courier*), 3 July 1897: “During his trip to Europe, King Chulalongkorn, his sons and the other members of his party wore identical loose-fitting, dark brown uniforms in the English fashion.” In fact, many of the European newspapers that reported on his travels remarked in detail on the King's attire, but it was only this Polish newspaper that said his clothes were “in the English fashion.”

<sup>25</sup> From *King Chulalongkorn's Trip to Europe, 1897*, Vol. 1. (See Note 1), page 248.

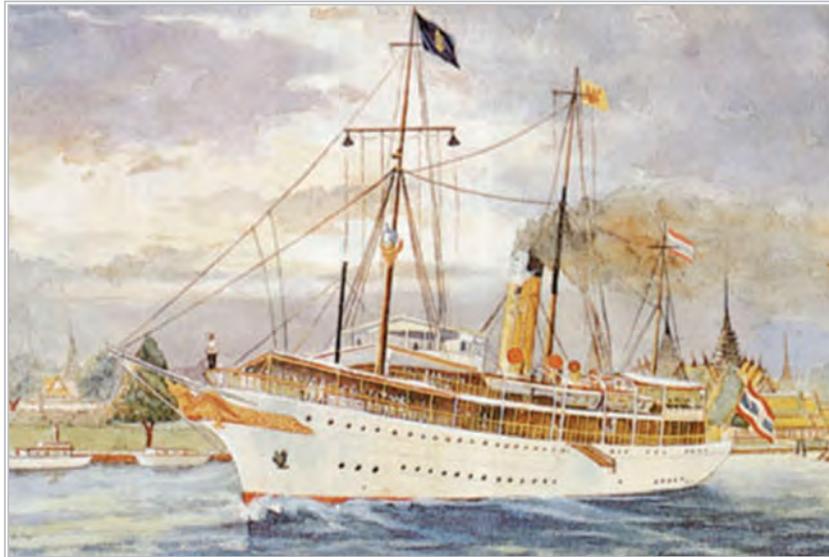
<sup>26</sup> From a telegram from King Chulalongkorn to Queen Saovabha. In: *The Royal Correspondence of King Chulalongkorn to the Queen Regent Saovabha during His Trip to Europe in 1897*. Prince Krom Phraya Damrong Rajanubhap and Princess Jong Chitrathanom Diskul Foundation. Printed to mark the 5<sup>th</sup> Cycle Birthday Celebrations of HM Queen Sirikit, 12 August 1992. Page 152.

taking out loans. Those who travel on their own have large sums to spend, but the members of my retinue are hard-pressed for money....I feel sorry for them....Those of higher rank receive higher pay and already have some of the things they will need. Therefore, pay all those whose names appear below the sum of 400 baht equally..."<sup>27</sup>

This kindness and concern for those less fortunate was evident to many of the Europeans who had the chance to observe the King during his travels. He gave money to the English sailors aboard the *Maha Chakri*. He made donations to the poor in many

of the European countries he visited. This generosity was the subject of numerous newspaper stories published during the trip.

It might even be said that the "independent attitude" that characterized the King throughout his journey across Europe was not limited to his refusal to rely on any particular individual but extended to all those who came in contact with him. The innate generosity he showed to everyone around him marked him as a sovereign superior to the Westerners among whom he traveled. It helps to explain the reverence that the entire Thai nation felt and continues to feel for this great, "Beloved Monarch."



Mahachakri Royal Yacht

---

<sup>27</sup> From *King Chulalongkorn's First Trip to Europe, 1897*, Vol. 1. (See Note 1), page 83.



Picture of King Chulalongkorn in the Portuguese newspaper *Semanario de Caricaturas*



ANNO XVII. Assignatura.—Anno 1868 (1867) semestral, 200 rs. 1.ª e 2.ª de Evora a preço do correio. Anillo, 20 rs. Edição supplementar, 10 rs. Administração, rua d'Aviz, n.º 33. Polia politica, litteraria, noticiosa e independente. Alameda S. CARLOS, ANEXO PLATO, S.º DE SAO ANTONIO VIEIRA. N.º 838

### 6.ª edição supplementar ao N.º 838

Evora 24 de outubro de 1867

#### O "senhor do grande elephante branco"

Uma novidade sensacional da semana finda, em Lisboa, foi a visita do rei de Siam, Chulalongkorn I.

Em algumas notas interessantes acerca da majestade oriental e do seu reino.

Os siameses, professando a religião budhista, adoram os animas de pelle branco, tendo uma grande veneração pelo elephante.

Um destes, o mais corpulento e ferocissimo pachyderme, que figura no exercito do rei, achou-se instalado num riquissimo pagode, onde é tratado com o maior respeito e attenção.

É alimentado a custa de assucar e servem-lhe tambem os mais preciosos frutos do paiz. Banhamo diariamente em agua perfumada, e empregam-se no seu serviço muitos escravos, directos subordinados a um funcionario especial. Quando sae a passeio toda a gente se prostra, oferecendo-lhe frutas e rebodões, que elle recolhe na tromba e saborea com voluptuosidade. E quando morre, fazem-se em sua honra exequias solennes, sendo o seu cadaver incinerado. O successor é eleito entre os que se encontram nos estabulos reais.

Em Siam não existe nenhum cadastro da população, nem coisa parecida com isso, de maneira que, ao certo, não se sabe qual seja o numero de siameses espalhados pelo reino. Ha quem diga que são 14 milhões e outros que não passam de nove. A opinião geral, assente em calculos mais exactos, é a que fixa em 10 milhões o numero de vassallos do rei Chulalongkorn.

O exercito siames, apesar de estar armado com as espingardas de repetição mais modernas e commandado por officiaes lidos de Londres e Berlin, conserva dos seus antigos costumes um poderoso esquadro de elephantes de guerra, cujo numero passa de oitocentos.

Uns conduzem sobre o dorso uma torre em que va collocada uma peça de artilheria, outros um reducto, d'onde a infantaria hostilisa o inimigo finalmente outros são portadores de vivendas e munições de campanha.

Estes elephantes entram em combate com o maior ardor. As vezes de commando, o estrondo

das armas e o soar dos clarins irritam-os e exaltam os mais temerosos e bom instinto de só causar dano aos inimigos.

Exceto-se, porém, quando são feridos, porque então esquivam-se da sua subjugação e tratam por igual amigos e adversarios, sendo necessario abandoná-los, ou que os proprios soldados, que os conduzem, os matem.

Em Siam ha muita coisa que denota o atraso do paiz. A mulhier, por exemplo, é um ser subalterno. Não conta a mais com o marido. Serve-lhe as refeições, e só depois é que lhe é permitido conversar. Não gosa de nobreza regalia. O seu papel social é ser a escrava do homem. Nada mais.

O harem real é sumptuosissimo. Povosm o cérca de 4000 mulheres, escolhidas entre as mais formosas do paiz. A rainha faz parte d'essa legião, tendo, porém, a parte de esposa e grande tratada com honras e considerações distinctas. Chulalongkorn tem 174 filhas, dos quaes 4 legitimas.

O respeito pela pessoa real é illimitado. Servem de joelhos e toda a gente se prostra quando elle passa.

O potentado asiatico chama-se Sorndech Pa Paramindr Maha Chulalongkorn.

A assignatura official é mais complicada ainda: Para Paramindr Maha Chulalongkorn, Dindind Dindind Maha Mongkut Para Eschava Yachorn Kiat Tachon Lu Hae Shandin Sayan Lao Pen Istancia Rudschah Thiradochi Hsang Maha Pradit Malobcho Pradit.

Esta assignatura é imposta ao rei de Siam segundo a lei.

O rei nasceu em 20 de setembro de 1853, tendo quarenta e quatro annos de idade, de estatura baixa, tez cobreada, bigode preto. O conjunto do seu rosto, fulto de expressão, denota a raça oriental. Commo vulgarmente, tem um olhar investigador.

Foi educado por professores inglezes sob a direcção de seu gae o rei Mongkut, que abriu o Siam ao commercio estrangeiro e creou uma marinha mercante para exportar as immensas riquezas do seu paiz.

Quando Mongkut falleceu, o actual monarcha tinha quinze annos.

Não era o primogenito entre os seus oitenta irmãos e irmãs, mas era o mais intelligente de todos e a isso deveu a honra de subir ao throno.

A coroação não se fez esperar, mas sómente á sua maior idade, em 1873, é que lhe foram entregues as regalias do monarcha.

Durante a sua menoridade, conformando-se com os usos do paiz, entrou para um convento de budistas onde se educou a todos

os exercicios dos monjes, sendo, ao mesmo tempo, educado nos seus deveres de futuro soberano.

O primeiro acto do seu reinado consistiu, segundo os ritos, em lançar fogo á madeira que devia incinerar o corpo de seu pai.

Desde essa epocha devotou-se como pag de familia a dar uma educação solida aos seus cunhados e queridos filhas, entre os quaes o principe herdeiro, que curava uma das primeiras universidades inglesas.

A polygamia existe em Siam. O rei tem o direito de escolher uma ou duas rainhas de sangue real. A primeira esposa de Chulalongkorn, ha pouco fallecida, era sua sobrinha.

Além d'isso, por occasião de certas festas, os principes e a nobreza do reino tem como habito oferecer ao rei para companheiras as mais bonitas de suas filhas e assim se explica o grande numero de filhas que o actual monarcha possui.

Chulalongkorn tem alguns titulos por que é designado no seu reino. Por exemplo: «Soberano da Vida».—«Filho do Ceu».—«Senhor do grande Elephante Branco».—«Supremo Senhor».—«Monarcha Litteravel».—«Excelente».—«Darmo» etc.

«O monarcha siames é o» dos 84 filhos do rei Maha Mongkut seu predecessor.

Foi sagrado rei em 11 de novembro de 1868.

As filhas do rei estão condemnadas a um celibato absoluto. A lei não permite que o rei possa ter gerros.

As leis contra os delinquentes são terribes. Correm nos vivos dentro d'um sacco e os cadaveres são lançados ao mar.

Os supplices são empalados. Chulalongkorn é muito illustrado. Tem publicado algumas obras, entre ellas uma traducção das *Ills* e uma noiva.

A sua bibliotheca é das mais ricas que se conhecem. Tem um journal correctamente redigido, impresso nas officinas reais.

#### Regresso do expedicionario

Está para breve o regresso de Moçambique da companhia de guerra d'infanteria 4, que tão brilhantes serviços prestou na ultima campanha dos siameses. Em Elvas preparam-se alegres festejos para comemorarem a vinda d'esse punhado de bravos, que mais uma vez affirmou o valor e a dedicação do exercito portuguez. Noticia o *Correio Evorae* que os officiaes aquelle regimento offerecerão um banquete aos suas camaradas da expedicao, havendo tambem um jantar dado pelos siameses aos sargentos da companhia que regressa.

#### Pela politica

Tornaram-se transparentes as parades dos gabinetes ministeriaes, e quando menos se pensa apparece em toda a luz o que as conveniencias, partidarias ou partidarias, mandavam no mais tenebroso arcano.

Ora vejamos: Estrabou muita gente que o *Diario de Noticias* annunciasse a escolha do sr. conde de Macedo para ministro das negociaes estrangeiras, visto como tal escolha não se realisava.

Pois sabia-se que a noticia do mesmo collega teve todo o fundamento.

Segundo excellentes informações que temos, o sr. Barros Gomes conseguiu que o sr. conde de Macedo annuise a entrar no ministerio e, com essa annuncia, chegou ha poucos dias a Lisboa.

Sucedde porém que o sr. conde de Macedo contereos como o se travessero, mediá as consequencias de uma disponibilidade ligada, e ainda o sr. Barros Gomes não tinha tomado o seu banho ao regressar aos lares, e foi o sr. conde de Macedo o tornava sciente de que dava o dito por não dito; mas para, do seu lado, facilitar a soluçáo da crise, aconselhasse e recommendava que, visto ter de sair o sr. Mathias de Carvalho, chamassem o sr. Antonio Ennes, pois este, como ministro dos estrangeiros, era decerto o candidato mais competente para levar por diante as negociaes commerciaes que deve ter estabelecido no Rio de Janeiro.

O alvitre souo bem aos ovidos ministeriaes, e não se podendo conjurar a recusa do sr. conde de Macedo, diçamos a nossa Cassandra que o sr. Antonio Ennes brevemente será investido nas funcções de ministro das negociaes estrangeiras, diz o *Reporter*.

Reunio o conselho superior de obras publicas e minas, tratando dos seguintes assumptos: Fornecimento de oleo mineral para os caminhos de ferro do sul e sueste e de carvão de aço para o caminho de ferro do Douro, obra de reparaçoes no edificio da Casa Pa. de Evora e projecto de conclusáo da ponte da Formosa sobre o rio Tuela, no distrito de Beira.

Para edificio de adubos e cereales, estão se construindo com toda a urgencia uns barracões na estacção do caminho de ferro do Barreiro.

A critica justa e vigorosa da imprensa alguma coisa conseguiu.

#### Destacamentos

Reitrou no dia 21 para Beja a força d'infanteria 17 que aqui se achava fazendo serviço durante a estada do destacamento d'infanteria 15 no Alentejo. Este regresso foi no dia 21 a esta cidade, acompanhado da respectiva banda de musica.

Por portaria de este homem foram concedidas ordens sacras para sub-diacono e diacono ao ordinando da diocese d'Evora, sr. João Marques Serrão.

Acho-se n'esta cidade, onde se demora alguns dias, o sr. Sertório do Monte Pereira, lente do Instituto de Agronomia e Veterinaria.

Abriu no dia 20 do corrente mez a escola districtal d'Evora.

Foram já distribuidas aos corpos os medalhas «Rainha D. Amélia», com que foram galardoadas as praças que fizeram parte das expedições a Moçambique e á India.

Falleceu repentinamente no dia 20 de outubro o sr. padre Antonio Carlos Peres.

Foi superiormente determinado que os manicobos pertencentes aos contingentes anteriores a 1865 autoadados como refractarios, mas ainda não julgados, podem remir-se por Sobocco réis, até 31 de dezembro do corrente anno, se assim o solicitarem.

Entrou no vigesimo anno de existencia o *Diario de Noticias* do Funchal.

Encontram-se enfermos, guardando o leito ha dias, o nosso amigo sr. Joaquim Francisco da Silva, e sua ex.ª esposa.

Desceam com bem breve se restabeleçam.

#### Descaço semanal

Os christaos descaçam so domingo; os gregos á segunda-feira; os persas á terça; os assyrios á quarta; os egypcios á quinta; os turcos á sexta e os judeus ao sabado.

As propriedades que possuia na Inglaterra a fallecida duquesa de Montpensier foram avaliadas em 65043 libras esterlinas.

An account of King Chulalongkorn's visit to Portugal in the Portuguese newspaper *O Manuelino d'EVORA*

“Some people may be surprised to learn that “Chulalongkorn Street,” which connects Utanede with Hölleforsen, is named after a real king and not a fairy tale one... After 83 years, the monarch appears to have become a figure from a fairy tale...But King Chulalongkorn made a visit to Sweden in 1897 aboard the royal yacht the *Maha Chakri*... Records show that the ship carried 320 crewmen, a 15-man orchestra, a large number of servants, and several “royal concubines” who never left the vessel...His Majesty returned to Sundsvall by ship where he dined at a tourist hotel. The hotel owner recalled that he had scrambled to borrow silverware from all over the area in order to serve the King, but in the end, none of the silverware was used because *King Chulalongkorn ate with his hands*.... The young boys who waited on the King struck those who saw them as especially beautiful. Some of these small boys served the monarch tea in tiny cups at least twenty times a day. The local people believed that these boys were actually girls dressed in boys’ clothing and were perhaps even his favorite consorts. It was also rumored that the King had his own food on board ship as people had gathered up many empty tin cans along the King’s route to Indalselvven...” (Researcher’s emphasis)

Another Swedish newspaper, *Dagens Nyheter*, dated 9 June 1897, published a story called “The King



of Siam and His Harem Life,” which referred to the country as the “Land of Many Wives” where marriage customs were like those in China and Japan. The story reported that King Chulalongkorn’s father, the celebrated King Mongkut, had had some 800 concubines and that at his death, he had between 80 and 90 children. However, Siamese custom permitted the King to have only two queens. According to the newspaper, when the King wished to enlarge his harem, he would ask the girl’s parents for her, and

there were thousands of young women eager to enter the palace as the King's concubines. These women spent their days making pleasure trips outside the court, stringing flower garlands, and caring for birds. The concubines and ladies-in-waiting indulged in various diversions and chewed betel...."

Clearly, the Swedish newspapers were particularly interested in some of the more trivial aspects of the King's life and had scant regard for whether these "tidbits" were really true. Much of what was printed about Siam and its beloved monarch was in fact the stuff of hearsay and fairy tales. It would have been more appropriate, perhaps, to have called the story "The King *Was* a Fairy Tale."

With His Majesty's arrival in Poland (which at the time was part of Russia), the people of Eastern Europe were treated in Warsaw newspapers like the *Kurier Poranny* (July 1, 1897), *Kurier Warszawski* (2 July 1897), and *Z. Slowo* (3 July 1897), to intricately detailed descriptions of the King's attire at various functions. There were accounts of the King's accession to the throne, and in the *Kurier Poranny*, enthusiastic praise for the royal guest and his retinue:

"What is most praiseworthy about him

is the friendship he shows for the Europeans residing in his country and his full support for European-style education despite a number of events which have disheartened and angered the King..."<sup>17</sup>

Another interesting depiction of the Siamese ruler appeared in the German press and makes use of decidedly Christian imagery:

"A wealthy ruler like the King of Siam, who is an instrument of God, has given guidance to his people much as a shepherd guides his flock...like the supreme leader of his family."<sup>18</sup>

The same article also provided readers with a summary of the basic tenets of Buddhism as practiced in Siam and the efforts of Western missionaries to spread Christianity among the Siamese people through such work as a Thai translation of the Bible. This particular portrayal of a man and a country that fascinated Europe reflects the character of the German people, who tended to be more religious and more interested in philosophy than people in other European countries.

---

<sup>17</sup> Press cuttings from Poland during the King's travels around Europe, 1897. Original English translation provided by the Polish Embassy in Bangkok.

<sup>18</sup> From the Sunday newspaper *Sonntagsbote für Sachsen*, Year 49, Volume 40, 3 October 1897, pages 316-317. In both the Old and New Testaments of the Christian Bible, mankind is compared to a flock of sheep and God and His Son Jesus Christ are shepherds. In the book of Revelations, it is foretold that on Judgment Day God will separate mankind into two groups, as if separating His flock. Those who believe in God will enjoy eternal life in Heaven, while those who have turned their backs on Him will be condemned to the fires of Hell.

I should visit. They are almost related by blood. I enjoy myself everywhere I go and I believe that you would feel the same way. [...] Only two of our portraits are to be finished. I shall send my portrait home but as for yours, I really love it and I want to keep it for myself. I shall carry it with me at all times. Other pictures will be sent later. I sent you six photos taken in Interlaken during my visit to Switzerland. One photo was supposed to be a picture of me alone. The photographer was ambitious for he wanted to take my picture with a snow-capped mountain in the background. I was standing in the

bright sun so that I could hardly open my eyes. I warned him about this but he would not listen. The result was a photo of the mountain only. [...]

It is not comfortable here; it is unnaturally hot and oppressive, making it easy to get a fever. Some already have one. The water is not so clean and some have already suffered from diarrhoea. This is probably because the ground is a platform of huge rocks. I have to remain here because I have to contact those professors. Almost all other visitors have left. It is as hot as Bangkok. The sunlight is so strong like our towns in the north.

(His Majesty's Signature)  
Chulalongkorn Rex

*Letter 20, written at the Hotel La Paix, Florence, to Queen Saovabha, 1 June 1897.  
From the book King Chulalongkorn's First Trip to Europe, 1897. Centre for European Studies  
at Chulalongkorn University, 2003, pages 53-54.*

The interest that the Siamese King took in everything around him astounded the people of Switzerland. They were surprised, for instance, by the appreciation that this monarch from a distant land showed for the beauty of the Swiss Alps, a landscape for which the Swiss felt tremendous pride. Such majestic peaks were unfamiliar to him as he

came from a country where the tallest mountains were only 2,400 meters high and were certainly not topped with snow. Interestingly, the people of Europe themselves had only learned to see the Alps as beautiful a little over a century before.

Of even greater interest is the comparison the same Swiss newspaper made between King

Chulalongkorn and the fashionable upper-class ladies of Paris, who were “elegantly attired and beautifully made-up but showed no interest at all in the peace and tranquility of the spectacular Alpine landscape. Their interests were limited to whether they should drink “Röderer,” “Heidsick,” or “Veuve Cliquot.” In his royal bearing and interests, King Chulalongkorn was their polar opposite.”<sup>11</sup>

It seems that Westerners were of the view that an Asian who was not white like them could not possibly appreciate their culture or their civilization. It is this attitude that explains the surprise of the

Swiss at how much King Chulalongkorn enjoyed the performance of a local women’s chorus despite his inability to understand the language they sang in. His Majesty was especially fond of a song called “Breneli ab em Guggisberg,” and when the Strauss waltz “Wine, Women, and Song” was played, Dr. Kobatt remarked to Prince Savasdi Sophon, “Anyone who does not like wine, women, and song would remain a fool his entire life. These are the words of a German monk from the 16<sup>th</sup> century.” As soon as he heard this, the Prince knew at once that they were the words of Martin Luther, the father of



A photo of King Chulalongkorn’s arrival on land in Stockholm, 13 July 1897. On the middle right is the King of Sweden.

---

<sup>11</sup> From *Der Bund*, Berlin, Thursday, 3 June 1897: “*Pariser besonders und auch geschminkte Pariserinnen mitten durch die herrlichste Alpenwelt fahren gesehen, ohne daß sie auch nur einen Blick für deren Stille und majestätische Schönheit übrig gehabt hätten! ... Hierzu bildete nun das Verhalten König Chulalongkorn den größten Gegensatz...*”

In short, then, the King's dealings with the Italian royal family "went as well as had been hoped."<sup>22</sup> In a telegram he sent to Queen Saovabha in Bangkok, King Chulalongkorn attached the following message given to him by King Umberto of Italy:

"The sentiments which Your Majesty was kind enough to express to the Queen and myself before leaving Italy have deeply touched us. Our hearts will always entertain the most pleasant remembrance of Your Majesty's visit which leaves in Italy some sincere and affectionate friends and universal sympathies."

M.K. Humbert <sup>23</sup>

The fondness between the two monarchs found expression in hugs and kisses of a decidedly forceful nature. On daily walks together, King Chulalongkorn noted, "The King refuses to walk in front of me. I told him that according to Thai custom, the elder man should not walk behind his junior. He answered that when he visited Siam, he would be sure to walk in front."<sup>24</sup> This friendly banter points to the affectionate feelings that developed between the two

men. King Chulalongkorn also remarked that "the Crown Prince and Princess feel a great tenderness for me. We find pleasure in one another's company.... The gracious reception I have been given has been sincere and open-hearted, as it has been throughout my travels in Italy. I am extremely happy, and all those others accompanying me are equally content."<sup>25</sup>

The happiness that King Chulalongkorn experienced in Italy was also felt in Austria, where the Emperor was an old man with a penchant for punctuality and a fierce regard for tradition. "He is very set in his ways. He is not particularly intelligent nor especially eloquent, but he is sincere. He always speaks from the heart." And because he was an able ruler, he was deserving of respect. Precisely because he understood the workings of government, he was not on particularly good terms with the other members of the imperial family. "The Emperor and the nobles are not especially fond of one another because the nobles are 'too noble.' Each does as he likes without regard for anyone else." King Chulalongkorn observed that if the Austro-Hungarian aristocracy were Siamese, "they would be kidnapping daughters, drinking liquor, whoring, and killing. There is not a good man among them.

---

<sup>22</sup> Telegram from the Italian King Umberto I to King Chulalongkorn, 17 June 1897. Microfilm from the National Archives, Fine Arts Department, Bangkok, cited in *King Chulalongkorn's First Trip to Europe, 1897: Collected Letters*. Pornsan Watanangura, Narumit Sodsuk, and Kanitha Boonpan (eds).

<sup>23</sup> See Note 21, page 87.

<sup>24</sup> *Letter 21*, 7 June 1897 (See Note 1), pages 102-103.

<sup>25</sup> Telegram from Rome to Queen Saovabha, 3 June 1897, in *King Chulalongkorn's First Trip to Europe, 1897*, Volume 1. Chronicles, Fine Arts Department, 1980, page 61.

They are neither good soldiers nor good civilian officers. They are poor models for the country."<sup>26</sup>



Crown Prince Rudolf and his mistress Maria Vetsera  
From Rommelspacher, Andreas. *Grosse Komponisten und ihre Musik. Mahler Symphonische Werke mit Musik aus Viscontis Film der Tod in Venedig*. Stuttgart Belsler Offset Druck GmbH, 1984.

The Emperor's younger brother, the Archduke Ludwig Victor, "is not bright. He has no administrative skills. Nor is he skilled as a soldier. While Archduke Otto cuts a handsome figure, he is a drunkard. It is said that he will become the Emperor since his older brother Ferdinand is ill. The doctor has forbidden him from taking a wife, but people have little respect

for him..."<sup>27</sup>

But history would prove that Ferdinand would, of necessity, become Crown Prince since his father's favorite, Prince Rudolf, died of an apparent suicide in 1889.<sup>28</sup> The Emperor's younger brother, Maximilian, had been executed in Mexico two decades earlier. But in the end, Ferdinand never came to the throne. His assassination in Sarajevo would prove to be the trigger for the First World War. King Chulalongkorn's presentiment that Hungary would seek independence from Austria if Emperor Franz Joseph were to die, turned out to be true upon the downfall of the Habsburg dynasty at the conclusion of World War I.

Although the Siamese monarch's visit to Austria lasted only a few days – the Emperor himself complained that King Chulalongkorn's stay was too brief – he showed a real gift for understanding the politics of the Austrian court. Like Chancellor Bismarck of Germany (See Section 2.3), he perceived the fundamental weakness of the Habsburg's grip on power. Not only did he realize, however, that those in line to the throne "did not amount to much" – unlike the Emperor himself, whom King Chulalongkorn respected – but

---

<sup>26</sup> Letter 36 from the Hotel Hungary, Budapest, 29 June 1897 (See Note 1), page 129.

<sup>27</sup> Letter 44 (See Note 1), page 155.

<sup>28</sup> The suicides of Crown Prince Rudolph and his mistress Maria Vetsera had a tremendous impact on the Austro-Hungarian Empire and on the Emperor personally. This, and the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo, precipitated the fall of the Habsburg dynasty at the end of World War I.

he understood that a large gap separated the aristocracy and the common classes. This was very different from Italy. In Austria, too, military officers were required to dress in uniform, and if King Chulalongkorn had been a European or a member of a European royal family, he would have seen that Austria in the 19<sup>th</sup> century had a profound respect for military rank, even more so than Germany.<sup>29</sup> Still, despite his political and psychological acuity, this royal visitor from Asia could not have understood all the complex machinations within the Austrian royal family. For instance, he would have had little understanding of the true nature of the relationship between Emperor Franz Joseph and his wife, Queen Elizabeth. King Chulalongkorn had been told that the Emperor had treated “Sissi” cruelly, but he refused to believe it, preferring to think that it was all “made up.” In fact, Elizabeth was at odds with her mother-in-law, not her husband. The Emperor refused to resolve the conflict, fearing that any intervention on his part would only worsen tensions between the two women.

In the closing years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Austrian royal family and the Austro-Hungarian Empire were in decline and would eventually collapse at the end of the First World War, just two

years after Franz Joseph’s death in 1916. As the famed Austrian writer Karl Kraus (1874-1936) observed, after centuries as the cultural and intellectual capital of Europe, especially during the reign of Empress Maria Theresa, Vienna under the Habsburgs had become “the research laboratory for world destruction” (See Section 2.3). The Austrian dynasty would meet the same fate as the Hohenzollerns of Germany, whose reign would also end with the conclusion of World War I. A sign of the Habsburgs’ impending collapse was the dwindling size of their empire. And unlike England, France, and Russia, Austria lacked the strength to pursue a colonialist policy in Asia.

For this reason, Austria-Hungary did not figure prominently on King Chulalongkorn’s tour of Europe. The King understood that relations with Vienna would do little to help him achieve his goal of finding a counterweight to the threat posed to Siam’s sovereignty by Europe’s major powers, England and France. Instead, he set his sights on Russia and on Germany, the continent’s new rising powerhouse.

Nevertheless, King Chulalongkorn enjoyed his brief stay in the Austrian capital no less than he had his travels through Italy. The Viennese newspaper *Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt* reported that the

---

<sup>29</sup> From a conversation with a German Professor at Heidelberg University on German literature at the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. At the time, many of the officers in the Austrian army were well-educated, high-ranking members of the aristocracy. Duels, often fatal, were frequent occurrences. This military culture is reflected in many literary works dating from the period.



Emperor Franz Joseph I of Austria (1830-1916) in full military regalia and Empress Elizabeth (Cece) (1837-1908) pictures from: Rommelspacher, Andreas. *Grosse Komponisten und ihre Musik Johann Strauß (Sohn) Wiener Walzer*. Stuttgart: Belser Offset Druck GmbH, 1984.

Siamese monarch was fond of entertainment and had, therefore, packed his itinerary with excursions to places like the ballet. He went horseback riding with the Emperor and visited public parks and gardens. He toured a tannery and a shop selling fine crystal. He went to see the Spanish Riding School, and on 25 June, 1897, shortly before his departure from Vienna, he enjoyed a picnic on Mount Kahlenberg on the outskirts of the Austrian capital. And of course, he developed a genuine fondness for the Emperor Franz Joseph I. On their first meeting, King Chulalongkorn remarked, “We sat for a full ten minutes without the Emperor asking

me to leave. He talked the entire time. It is his custom that no one should be late for an audience with him.”<sup>30</sup> The Siamese monarch and his Austrian counterpart developed such a friendly rapport that all the usual formalities were dropped, especially at mealtime. “I attended a formal dinner. There was none of the normal ceremony. There were none of the usual speeches.” Later, as the royal party prepared for an evening at the theater, the Emperor sent everyone else on ahead. Then at 7:20, “he entered the room alone and invited me to the theater. As we took our seats in the carriage, the attendant covered our legs with a common blanket.”<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> From *Letter 30*, written at Hofburg Palace, Vienna, 24 June 1897 (See Note 1), page 119.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, page 119.

one occasions to discuss important matters at length. As he wrote to Queen Saovabha and his council of ministers in Bangkok, “The Emperor and I have been alone. We go places together; no one accompanies us.”<sup>44</sup> That the subject of their discussions was protecting Siam against French aggression is well known to Thai historians.

Although Russia appeared to be one of Europe’s most powerful countries, the seeds of revolution among the Russian peasants and urban poor, nurtured by Marxist philosophy, had been germinating since at least the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. King Chulalongkorn, however, would not have been aware of these troubling currents, as he

had little contact with the lower and middle classes.

In a letter to Queen Saovabha, the King did relate one incident which occurred during his stay at Peterhof Palace in Saint Petersburg.

“One unusual incident occurred which I did not mention in my telegram. [The Czar and I] were in our carriage ...but a woman knelt directly in front of the carriage with a piece of paper on her head. I could not see it because I had turned to speak to the Emperor. It was only when the soldiers came to drag her away that I turned to look. I was shaken. The Emperor assured me that the woman had only



Peterhof Palace  
In: Wernowa, N. *Peterhof*. Finland: Verlag Abris, 2001.



King Chulalongkorn seated next to Czar Nicholas II  
at a state dinner at Peterhof Palace  
In: *110 Years of Relations between Thailand and Russia*. Royal Thai Embassy in Moscow, 2007. Courtesy of former Thai Ambassador to Russia, H.E. Sorayuth Prompoj

<sup>44</sup> From telegrams from Queen Saovabha and *Letters* 38 and 39, (See Note 1).

wanted to submit a petition. It was a disturbing and frightening scene..."

Despite the Czar's reassurances, however, the King was not convinced. He understood that the woman's behavior was strange, noting in his letter to the Queen that the incident was "unusual," although he did not know what motivated it.

Only a few short years later, feelings of hatred for the Russian royal family would spread among a large section of the Russian population. The Emperor was increasingly feared by his own people. There was concern over the health of the Czarevitch Alexis, who was born after King Chulalongkorn's first visit to Europe, and over the influence that Rasputin exercised over Empress Alexandra. Upon their first meeting, the Siamese monarch recognized that the Czarina was a shy and retiring woman, who felt uncomfortable in crowds. As he was about to set off from Russia, the King received a request from the Russian Empress that he take his leave from her "in a very quiet room."<sup>45</sup>

Because the King spent his time in the company of the Russian royals, he would not have been aware of the growing discontent among the Russian people. In Sweden, however, he was told by the King and the Crown Prince that it was

likely that Norway would soon secede from Sweden and establish a separate republic. As King Chulalongkorn noted, "The people of Stockholm are quite appalling. Those who are good are the country folk like those from Sundsvall. But even though they are good, they still tend to be republican in their politics."<sup>46</sup>

Only one year after King Chulalongkorn's first trip to Europe, the Norwegians did indeed declare their independence from the Swedish crown.

Nevertheless, the Siamese monarch's political negotiations with the Russian Imperial Court did bear fruit. Russia was prepared to "intercede with France on our behalf. I understand that the results should be highly positive." One of the outcomes of the negotiations was a photograph of the King with the Czar that the Russian government had placed in the French newspaper *L'Illustration*. The photograph, which proved to be a psychological coup, offered proof of the close ties that bound the Siamese court and the mighty Russian Empire.

But history has taught us that the benefits of this friendship would be short-lived for it became perfectly clear that the French remained intent on pursuing their colonial agenda in Southeast Asia – that despite Russian support for Siam, France

---

<sup>45</sup> The delicacy of Empress Alexandra made it necessary for her to rely on persons much stronger than herself. The same was true of her son, the Czarevitch. This helps to explain the influence at court of Rasputin, whose excesses precipitated the fall of the Romanov dynasty. In the turmoil of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, the Czar and all the members of his immediate family were shot to death.

<sup>46</sup> *Letter 44* (See Note 1), page 158.

and in order to meet with King Chulalongkorn, had to turn to Duke Johann Albrecht of Mecklenburg-Schwerin for help. The King clearly understood the tendency of many Westerners abroad to exaggerate their own importance. Part of the reason for this was the Western emphasis on the value of the individual. Still, most Thai people trusted and looked up to Westerners. But because their country had retained its sovereignty, Thai people lacked the sense of inferiority common to their colonized neighbors and could treat people from other cultures with warmth and friendship.

Even more impressive, however, is that although the King had a clear perception of the boastful “nature” of Westerners, he knew that not all people conformed to this observation and so continued to treat people with respect and kindness. In addition, he forbade the members of his party to treat the “pompous” Westerners they met with disdain. “Foreigners living in their own country and those living in Siam are so different. But we can not be serious about it, nor can we look down on them because they represent their superiors and to look down upon them would mean looking down on their superiors. You should always keep this in mind.... Please give this message to Krom Luang Devawongse, Krom Muen Damrong, and Chao Phraya Abhairaja so that they can properly welcome the envoy.”<sup>53</sup>

---

<sup>53</sup> *Letter 53* (See Note 1), page 183.

Interestingly, though, while the King made fairly detailed descriptions of the governments, leaders, and citizens of Switzerland, Italy, Austria-Hungary, Russia, Denmark, Sweden, and Germany, there was very little in the way of the King’s impressions of the leaders of France and England in the primary sources available to me. This is especially true of Britain. Virtually all of the information concerning the King’s observations of the British court comes from secondary sources, chiefly the English press, and most of these are factual accounts of the King’s travels both within England and across the continent. Clearly, England was interested in knowing where the Siamese monarch went, who he met with, which countries he planned to visit, and the precise routes he intended to take. None of this information allows readers a glimpse, however, of the King’s thoughts and feelings during his sojourn in England, despite the fact that he entered the country several times in the course of his travels around Europe.

As for the royal courts of the Netherlands, Belgium, and Spain, information from the archives in Brussels and from records housed at the Spanish and Portuguese embassies in Bangkok show that the King’s comments are restricted almost entirely to physical descriptions and matters of protocol. An exception is the anger and irritation that King Chulalongkorn felt for the King, Queen, and other



To Mae Lek

I have been away from the Palace in the Hague since half past one...The two queens met me on the stairs and took me for tea...The Queen Regent is twice as fat as you...The younger queen has a slender figure. She is still as a giggly as a child....



The official seal of V.O.C.

court officials in Lisbon. However, the general lack of analysis on the part of the King can probably be ascribed to the fact that, unlike England, France, and other larger European countries, neither the Netherlands nor Belgium posed any threat to Siamese sovereignty. In addition, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, and Belgium were among the last countries on the King's itinerary. His stay in each country was quite short, and, therefore, he did not have adequate time to describe his experiences in much detail.

But in the Netherlands, Spain, and Portugal, where there were no pressing political issues to discuss, the King was able to concentrate on

establishing cordial relations with all three host governments. In Madrid, where he was welcomed warmly by the Queen Regent and King Alfonso XIII, he had a very pleasurable time. And in the Netherlands, where there were two queens – Emma and Wilhelmina, he described the Queen Regent, Emma, as twice as fat as Queen Saovabha, not very tall, and talkative but not about frivolous matters. She appeared to be an intelligent and dignified woman who was much loved by her royal husband. The other Queen, Wilhelmina, he compared to his daughter Walai (Princess Walai-alongkorn). She had a graceful figure, slender but already showing signs of future plumpness. She was cheerful and innocent,

but clumsy as if she was frequently breaking things.

In Spain, Queen Marie Christina, daughter of the Austrian Archduke Karl Ferdinand and wife of King Alfonso XII, was “an exceedingly cautious and thoughtful woman. Without her, Spain would likely collapse.” King Chulalongkorn compared her with the Italian Queen, who also played a crucial role in the country’s political affairs. Her son, the future King Alfonso XIII, loved her very much. While in Spain, the Siamese monarch traveled to Irun and Escorial before reaching Madrid, where he was very comfortably lodged at the Royal Palace. He also made an excursion to the former capital at Toledo. King Chulalongkorn attended a bullfight, a chilling sight for the Thai spectators, and made visits to Seville and Barcelona after leaving Portugal.

Relations between Spain and Siam had not been particularly close before King Chulalongkorn’s visit. In contrast, Spain’s neighbor Portugal had been the first European country to make contact with the Siamese at Ayuthaya. The Dutch, too, had traded with the Siamese court before the second fall of Ayuthaya and reestablished commercial links during the reign of King Rama III. King Chulalongkorn’s visit to the Netherlands strengthened the cordial ties between the two countries, and in 2004, Thailand and the Netherlands celebrated the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of relations. The Dutch were principally interested in trade and lacked the military might to go in search of new colonies in Indochina. After all, the country,



King Chulalongkorn on his first trip to Europe (1897), during a visit to Spain (15-20 October 1897)

which had only recently been established in 1893, had already taken possession of Indonesia, an archipelago with an abundance of natural resources. Over all, the Netherlands was a small European nation with less influence and power than either France or England.

Research for this book also uncovered frequent reports from Spain’s ambassadors to Italy, France, Sweden, and especially England to the Foreign Ministry in Madrid about the Siamese monarch’s planned visit to Spain. These missives contain

proposed itineraries and likely dates for the King's visit. The frequent changes to these programs and dates are evidence of the Spanish court's eagerness to host King Chulalongkorn and his party. It is also clear from some of this correspondence from the royal palace and between officials of the Foreign Ministry that the Spanish government was determined to receive the Siamese monarch in a grand manner befitting his station.

To explain the constant changes to the proposed dates and itinerary for the King's visit to Spain, it would appear that the monarch probably felt that it was important for him to complete his business in other countries before traveling on to a neutral nation like Spain. His programs in these other countries which were more vital to the survival of Siamese sovereignty did not allow him the same degree of flexibility. It was this, after all - protecting his Kingdom from the imperial powers of Europe - that had motivated his decision to come to Europe in the first place.

King Chulalongkorn described his experiences in Portugal as "not at all boring." Still, a number of distressing incidents occurred, and the Portuguese monarch himself struck his Asian visitor as having a less than dignified bearing.

The King compared the Portuguese ruler unfavorably to the Sultan of Java. The officials in

service to the Portuguese crown made almost no preparations for King Chulalongkorn's visit. When the King and his royal host were to make an excursion, they had to wait almost an hour because no carriage had been arranged to transport them. A state dinner was late in starting because the food had not been prepared in time. And as for the Portuguese Queen, Amalia, King Chulalongkorn described her as "the most beautiful woman ever seen, but probably had not been at any court."<sup>54</sup>

Although the Portuguese royal court did not receive King Chulalongkorn in the grand manner of the Russians or the Germans, failing to provide him with accommodation in the Royal Palace, and providing him with a "golden" carriage on the verge of falling apart, it was likely for no other reason than that the Portuguese royal family had fallen on hard times. The Royal Palace was simply not lavish enough to accommodate a foreign monarch, and a rickety old carriage was the best that the Palace could offer. After all, during the King's stay in Portugal, he received thousands of letters from ordinary citizens asking him for money.

Given the long history that connected Portugal and the Kingdom of Siam, there was something appropriate perhaps in the King's riding in an "antique" carriage; appropriate, too, in his leaving the capital in a shabby, old railway carriage that

---

<sup>54</sup> Letter 58, from the *Hotel de Paris*, Monte Carlo, 26 October 1897 (See Note 1), page 193.

this perception makes us appear all the more important.”<sup>91</sup>

But it was not just the games of protocol, politics and diplomacy at which King Chulalongkorn was impressively adept. The monarch also had a gift for making the people he met love and respect him. He had a special quality that endeared him to royals and commoners alike, and made them feel immediately at ease in his presence. This was just as responsible for the acceptance he won in the inner circles of the royal courts of Europe as his mastery of European customs and official protocol. Even today, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the King’s achievements in winning over the hearts of Europe’s ruling classes would be seen as no small feat. In a telegram sent from Bangkok on 29 June 1897, the Queen Regent Saovabha wrote:

“I am overjoyed to learn that the Emperor [of Austria-Hungary] has shown you such warmth and friendship. I am certain that it is because of *your own open-hearted nature and your gift for making others love you* that the Emperor has shown you such affection. These are qualities that are *rare indeed...*”

These special qualities were largely responsible for King Chulalongkorn’s success in befriending virtually all of the crowned heads of Europe. These gifts were clearly in evidence during the King’s stay



King Christian IX of Denmark (1818- 1906)  
In: Jeua Pawasant (ed) *Relations between Two Lands*.  
Bangkok: Amarin Printing and Publishing, 1996.

in Copenhagen, where as a guest of the Danish royal family, he had almost no time to himself to write. After spending long hours with the Danish monarch, King Chulalongkorn was invited to call his counterpart – affectionately known by the moniker “the Grandfather of Europe” – by his first name,

---

<sup>91</sup> *Letter 57*, from Baden Baden, 9 October 1897 (See Note 1), page 190.

Christian. The Danish Queen, Louise, felt such fondness for the Asian visitor that she reprimanded him for staying up late to compose a telegram, much as a mother concerned for her child's health would do. King Chulalongkorn felt particularly close to Princess Marie, the consort of Prince Valdemar, who would later travel to Bangkok. In a letter, he wrote:

“Meeting the Queen was like visiting Grandma – there was nothing ceremonious. She looked hard at this and that and walked around as she pleased. Then I met the Crown Princess, who greeted me at the entrance. I had met her and her two daughters before.... I became quite well acquainted with Marie. She was lively and talkative and I guess I played the role of gallant to her...”

The King was particularly struck by the exceptionally friendly and informal way in which Princess Marie conversed with him. On an excursion on the Danish royal yacht, the Princess was seated next to him and began to complain. “The Crown Princess was really petulant, saying she thought I must hate her. She kept complaining about her advanced age. As for Marie she was quite peevish, accusing me of getting tired of her while she was sitting beside me the other day...” The King assured her that this was not the case and had to propose a toast to her three times to please her. Later that night she returned to sit near the King again. The friendship between the two royals deepened further when the King told Princess Marie that



Princess Marie (1865-1909), wife of Prince Valdemar  
In: Jeua Pawasant (ed) *Relations between Two Lands*.  
Bangkok: Amarin Printing and Publishing, 1996

he “wanted to have some fruit but I did not want to peel it...because I did not want to stain my hands. So, she took the fruit from me and offered to peel it for me. I stopped her for fear that her hands would get dirty. She found this offensive, arguing that she had cleaned her hands before the meal.... *I had to coax her into peeling the fruit and kept flattering her that I had never tasted anything as delicious as this before....she started to laugh and bumped me with her shoulder.* Her behavior made me realize that I had pleased her.” In fact, during his stay at the palace in Copenhagen, the female

members of the Danish royal family all competed to be the King's "favorite." And even though he considered himself "an old monk," they all wanted to attend a gala dinner held in honor so that they could see him and spend time with their royal visitor.<sup>92</sup>

King Chulalongkorn's kindness was not reserved exclusively for Europe's aristocracy, however. He also realized that his travels through Europe represented a tremendous financial burden for the low-ranking members of his retinue. Because they did not have the means to buy the clothes they would need to wear on the trip, the King ordered that clothing be provided for them (See Section 3.2). He was equally generous to the foreigners who served him. For example, he acted as witness at the wedding of Captain Cumming, the Englishman who piloted the royal yacht, in Edinburgh and hosted a reception for the bride and groom. He gave money to the Europeans responsible for attending him and his party throughout their trip across the continent.<sup>93</sup> General Consul Mr. Axel Johnson was presented with a gold and silver cup to commemorate the King's visit to Sweden. Captain Adolf Nordberg was

given a signed photograph. In addition, King Chulalongkorn bestowed royal decorations and valuable gifts on many of the leaders he met on his travels. Always sensitive to matters of "face," he took pains to ensure that the decorations were appropriate to the status of those who received them. In return, the Siamese monarch was likewise presented with various decorations and gifts from the governments of the countries he visited. Although they were not always of particular value, they were emblematic of the affection that the King inspired. At the court in Vienna, for instance, the King received a framed portrait of the Emperor. He exchanged portraits with the King of Denmark. And as had been the case in Russia, the Danish monarch told King Chulalongkorn to call him by his Christian name. But above all, the King took most pride in the compliments he received from the Austrian Emperor, who was a man little given to praise. In fact, "everyone [at the Austrian court] praised me."<sup>94</sup> Therefore, during his stay in Vienna, the King told the Emperor that on the occasion of his Jubilee the following year (1898), he would send his son, the Crown Prince, to help with the festivities,<sup>95</sup> just as he had done for Queen

---

<sup>92</sup> *Letter 45*, concerning the King's stay in Denmark (See Note 1), pages 159-169.

<sup>93</sup> In Burus Ratanarajaphanlop, Phraya (Nop Krairoek). *Stories about King Chulalongkorn's Trip to Europe in 1897*. Bangkok: Teeranasarn, 1991, page 511.

<sup>94</sup> *Letter 47* (See Note 1), page 169.

<sup>95</sup> *Letter 31*, from Budapest, 26 June 1897 (See page 121).



King Leopold II and Queen Marie-Henriette, painting by France Gaillard (1902) in a private collection  
In: *Chao Phraya Abhai Raja Siamanukulkij* (courtesy of the Chao Phraya Abhai Raja Siamanukulkij Foundation)

Victoria's Jubilee in 1897, during his trip through Europe.<sup>96</sup> There was no clearer symbol of the fondness and mutual respect that these two monarchs felt for one another.

Yet, the equality between King Chulalongkorn and his royal hosts in Europe was not limited to the

friendship and affection that developed between them during his travels across the continent. He was also their equal as a dignified ruler of a proud, independent nation. In his bearing and in his dealings with Europe's kings and queens, the Siamese monarch was always forceful, assertive, and mindful of his mission to serve the interest of the Kingdom. At no times could he be accused of lowering himself in an attempt to curry favor. There are two instances in which this is especially clear: at the royal court in Belgium and during his visit to the court in Stockholm.

On his visit to Belgium, King Chulalongkorn felt genuine animosity for King Leopold II. The Belgian monarch struck him as insincere and only concerned for his own personal interests. On one occasion, the Siamese monarch wrote:

"Everything here is good, but I have little affection for the king....He does not inspire trust. He is not forthright and speaks only of money...He claims to be poor, but I find this difficult to believe..." (*Letter 55*, 9 September 1897, from Brussels)

---

<sup>96</sup> From the beginning, the Siamese government had hoped that King Chulalongkorn's visit to England could be timed to coincide with the Jubilee celebrations of Queen Victoria, but the British government replied that this would not be possible because of the Queen's advanced age and because the celebrations were to be closed to all but close relatives. Ultimately, however, the Siamese Crown Prince was invited to attend. For further details, see the letter of Crown Prince Vajiravudh to King Chulalongkorn, dated 21 June, 1897 (See Note 1), pages 121-123.

francs to help the poor in the cities of Le Havre and Versailles.<sup>103</sup>

On his tour of Europe, the Siamese King conducted himself as an exemplary ruler of a Buddhist country, and despite having made the trip in hopes of negotiating assistance from the major European powers, the King showed himself to be a “giver” rather than a “petitioner” (Unlike Thailand and other countries in the developing world once?). He received frequent praise from the people of Europe for his tolerance of and generous support for other faiths besides his own. Even Pope Leo III, the head of the Roman Catholic Church, gave King Chulalongkorn a portrait of himself, inscribed with the words “We saw a star rise in the East,”<sup>104</sup> as a memento of his visit to the Vatican. Neither did the King neglect his duties as a Buddhist emissary. Documents in both England and Spain contain reports of the Siamese monarch’s trip to Taplow Court in Scotland, where he granted an audience to the directors and a group of scholars from the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland (16 August 1897).<sup>105</sup> The members had come to express their gratitude to His Majesty for graciously presenting them with a copy of the *Tripitaka*. The

King also pledged to continue to support educational efforts both within and outside Siam, while the Society confirmed its intention to continue publishing scholarly works on Buddhist texts in the Pali language.

In Germany, too, the press reported that King Chulalongkorn presented a 39-volume edition of the *Tripitaka* to the library at the University of Mecklenburg in Rostock, a city in the northeast of the present-day country. The first volume bears an inscription in Thai. Printed to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the King’s ascension to the throne, each volume has a yellow cover embossed with the emblem of Siam in gold and the name of King Chulalongkorn.<sup>106</sup> A newspaper in Mecklenburg-Schwerin reprinted the news when the monarch arrived in the city at the end of August 1897.

The *religious differences* that separated Siam and Europe proved in the end to be a *means of building cordial relations between East and West*. They paved the way for *peaceful contacts* free from aggression on either side.

Siam’s cultural and artistic practices, as evidenced in the King’s attire, differed tremendously

---

<sup>103</sup> In: Burus Ratanarajaphanlop, Phraya. *Stories about King Chulalongkorn’s Trip to Europe in 1897*, pages 487, 492 and 524.

<sup>104</sup> In: *A Nagão*, 21 October 1897.

<sup>105</sup> In: *The Times*, 17 August 1897. From the Political Archives of the German Foreign Ministry, Berlin. On hand to welcome the King were: Sir Raymond West, Mr. I.R. Ashburn, Prof. Bendall, Rev. Dr. Gasko, Mr. Robert Chalmers, Mr. J.G. Legge, Mr. T. Wallers, Mr. T.H. Thornton and society secretary Prof. T.W. Rhys Davids.

<sup>106</sup> In the *Mecklenburgische Zeitung* (Schwerin), Vol. 402, 30 August 1897 (evening edition).



*Tripitaka*, Chulalongkorn edition (1897)  
Found by the researcher at the Institute of Indian Studies  
of the University of Göttingen on 15 April 2009

from those of the European countries in which the King traveled and “amazed” European audiences with their beauty and splendor. These customs, associated with Siamese royalty, won praise and admiration for their exquisite delicacy and grace in Poland.

“The beautiful gold stitching that adorns the uniforms of the high-ranking members of the King’s party attracts everyone’s eye. This hand embroidery is done with *such exquisite skill that little in Europe can compare.*”

People in Warsaw went even further in their praise: “The Siamese are exceptionally skilled at

goldsmithing, and their ceramics are renowned for their beauty.” (In: *Centenary of the Visit of King of Siam Chulalongkorn to Poland*)

At the same time, we must not forget that King Chulalongkorn’s arrival in Europe in 1897 attracted tremendous attention from the courts of Europe as well as from the common people. Everyone spoke with amazement of this “exotic” King from the East. It was rare for Asian monarchs to appear in Europe, and this marked the *very first time for a king from Siam to travel on the continent*. All of the available records from the time show that King Chulalongkorn was the sole Asian monarch to win almost universal praise and admiration from the people of Europe at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Unlike the Turkish sultan or the Persian shah, who had visited Europe in preceding years, the King of Siam was not seen as a strange or bizarrely exotic figure. He dressed in the European style and demonstrated a mastery of European customs. He adopted a strategy that differed greatly from the leaders of other Asian countries that, like Siam, were targets of Western colonialism. The rulers of Turkey and Persia had set out to dazzle the West with their own brilliant customs and traditions. Whether because of their own personalities or a wish to show themselves as in no way inferior to their European hosts, they remained aloof from the people around them, and as a result, the people assumed that arrogance characterized all the kings of Asia. The King of Siam proved them wrong.

in 1889, at the time of King Chulalongkorn's visit to Russia, the Russian court still had no official representative in Siam. But as the reporter for Reuters noted in the English newspaper cited below, the Czar was considering sending an envoy to Bangkok.

"The newspapers report a rumor that the present Russian Consul-General for New York, who has recently been here [in England] on a visit, is to be appointed Russian Minister to the Court of Siam. The visit of the King of Siam *undoubtedly gave rise in diplomatic circles to the question of establishing permanent official relations* with that country, where Russia has never yet had any representative, and M. Alosofsky, Consul at New York, was very desirous of obtaining the proposed appointment."<sup>13</sup> (Researcher's emphasis)

In 2007, Her Majesty Queen Sirikit traveled to Russia at the invitation of Russian President Vladimir Putin to celebrate the 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two nations.

Other European countries, such as Italy and the Netherlands, which had only recently appeared on the map as sovereign states in the 19<sup>th</sup> century at the time of King Chulalongkorn's first visit to the continent were, like Russia, without diplomatic representation in Siam. Denmark, as well, was represented by the British diplomatic envoy, Mr. Archer.

King Chulalongkorn's first trip to Europe marked a new beginning in the diplomatic relations between Siam and a number of European countries, and in almost all cases, these relations have been maintained to the present day. In other countries where contacts had already been established prior to the King's trip, friendly ties were strengthened and renewed.

In forging these ties, the King helped to *give Europeans a more genuine picture of Siam and the Siamese people. No longer was he or his country some distant "fairy tale" ruler from a faraway "fairy tale" kingdom. His first trip marked an important turning point in the history of Thai-European diplomacy, trade, and cultural exchange. It set a precedent for the round-the-globe trip taken by Their Majesties King Bhumibol Adulyadej and Queen Sirikit in 1960, as Thailand opened up to the world in the decades after the Second World War.* Although they differed in the details, the trips made by King Chulalongkorn and his grandson, King Bhumibol, both drew widespread attention. As the Queen wrote in her account of her travels with the King, entitled *Memories of Official Trips Abroad* (p. 79), "The King was determined not to travel abroad without adequate reason. As head of the Thai state, he should remain in the Kingdom to be as close as possible to his people." But the trips made by the two Chakri monarchs did share certain similarities. In both instances, Thailand was

---

<sup>13</sup> In *The Times*, 3 August 1897 (courtesy of the Swedish Embassy in Thailand).



Welcoming ceremony for HM Queen Sirikit on her state visit to Russia, 2 July 2007.

From *110 Years of Relations between Thailand and Russia*, Royal Thai Embassy, Moscow, 2007. (Courtesy of the Former Thai Ambassador to Russia, H.E. Surayuth Prompoj, 2007)



HM Queen Sirikit received by President Vladimir Putin at St. George Hall, Kremlin Palace, Moscow, 5 July 2007.  
From *110 Years of Relations between Thailand and Russia*, Royal Thai Embassy, Moscow, 2007.



Royal decoration, The Order of the White Elephant, Class 1, bestowed on Gustave Rolin Jacquemyns by King Chulalongkorn, in the collection of the Military Museum of Brussels.  
 From Chao Phraya Abhai Raja Siamanukulakij (Gustave Rolin Jacquemyns), General Advisor to King Chulalongkorn  
 Photo courtesy of Chao Phraya Abhai Raja Siamanukulakij Foundation, Ban Insee 88, Ban Nong Waen, Muang District, Chiang Rai

presenting a new face to the world through its head of state, and by looking westward, the country was exposed to new influences that had a transformative effect on the Kingdom.<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, the world tour undertaken by the previous King and Queen marked the first time that the Thai monarch traveled outside the country in the company of the Queen, as is the custom of the

West. This is a subject deserving of greater study in itself.

Siam's relations with the countries of Europe were not restricted to the field of diplomacy, but extended to trade, culture, and economics. King Chulalongkorn's trip initiated links between the populations of Siam and Europe that have only expanded over time.

<sup>14</sup> In fact, in 1934, King Prajatipok (Rama VII) and Queen Rambhai Barni traveled extensively in a number of European countries during his reign, but this trip is much less well-known than the European trips made by King Chulalongkorn and the round-the-world travels of King Bhumibol (Rama IX) and Queen Sirikit. New research has been done in 2017 by Prof. Dr. Pornsan Watanangura, *King Prajatipok's Visit to Europe in 1934*, research supported by Prapokglau – Museum, Prapokglau – Institute, Thailand



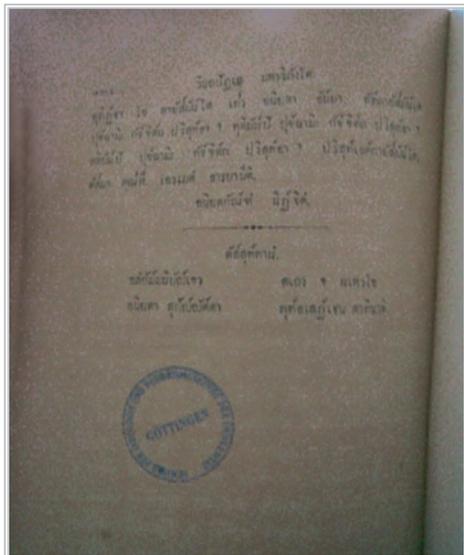
HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej and HM Queen Sirikit laying a wreath at Dam Square during a visit to Amsterdam, 24 October 1960 (at left: Dutch Prime Minister J.H. de Quay, at right: Amsterdam mayor G. Van Hall)  
From *400 Years of Thai-Dutch Relations* (courtesy of the Royal Dutch Embassy, Bangkok, 2004)



HM Queen Beatrix and the Crown Prince of the Netherlands on a state visit to Thailand, January 2004 (Photographer: Frans Poptie, courtesy of the Royal Dutch Embassy, Bangkok)



Prince Henrik of Denmark in conversation with HM Queen Sirikit during a state visit to Thailand by the Danish Queen Margrethe II, 1981  
From *Four Centuries of Thai-Danish Relations*, courtesy of the National Museum, Bangkok



King Chulalongkorn edition (1894) of the *Tripitaka*, at the Faculty of Indian Studies, University of Göttingen, published in 39 volumes in a gold cover

it is unlikely that the *Tripitaka* reached Europe before the founding of the Chakri dynasty at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. During his trip through Switzerland, King Chulalongkorn sent a telegram to Prince Pravit asking him to have a copy of the Bible in the Thai language sent as a gift to the museum of Geneva, which “housed copies of the Bible in many languages.”<sup>20</sup> This gesture, again, is indicative of the thoughtfulness of the King. There is also documentary evidence showing that prior to the King’s first trip to Europe in 1897, he had sent a 39-volume set of the *Tripitaka* to the university library in Rostock,

Germany, to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his accession to the throne. The first volume bears an inscription in Thai, English, German and French. In England, King Chulalongkorn also presented the *Tripitaka* to the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland. This tradition of giving the Buddhist scriptures to organizations throughout the world carries on to the present day under King Rama IX. In fact, a new translation of the *Tripitaka* in a number of languages was recently completed and offered as a gift to various foreign countries.

---

<sup>20</sup> Telegram sent from Geneva, 25 May 1897, in *King Chulalongkorn’s First Trip to Europe, 1897*, Volume 1. Coordinating Committee to Celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of King Chulalongkorn’s First Trip to Europe, 1997. Second printing, 1999, page 266.

It can be said that the history of Buddhist studies, the study of the Pali language, and even Thai studies can be traced back to the *Tripitaka* and other original texts uncovered and scrupulously researched by Western scholars. It was this research that was responsible for the spread of these academic fields beyond the limited scope of the Thai Buddhist clergy and across much of Europe. A number of European universities opened programs in Buddhist and Thai studies, conferring doctoral degrees on graduates not only from the countries of Europe but from Thailand as well. For many years, Thai students wishing to pursue an advanced degree in Thai studies had no choice but to enroll at a European institution such as the University of London. It was not until 1991 that the Thai Department in the Faculty of Arts at Chulalongkorn University opened its own Ph.D. program in Thai studies for both local and international students.

King Chulalongkorn's active support for Buddhism, Christianity and other faiths won him

considerable praise among the people of Europe, who saw it as a sign of an enlightened ruler. Ironically, however, the Europeans themselves showed little sympathy or tolerance for religions other than their own. That people in Asia were not Christians became a pretext for laying siege to or taking possession of these countries. The Europeans used as their justification the Biblical commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." Many Christians were convinced that theirs was the one true faith, and that this made them superior to adherents of other religious traditions. It was their duty as Christians to convert the unbelievers, and when these efforts failed, they felt little compunction in using violence against the "infidels."

This phenomenon has existed since the founding of the early Christian church and continues to the present day, although in a generally less virulent form.

### ***6.5 Political Motivations that Generated Concrete Results and Contributed to Siam's Long-term Survival***

In the course of my research abundant evidence was found suggesting that the real success of King Chulalongkorn's first trip to Europe in 1897 was largely psychological. The Europeans who came in direct and indirect contact with the King were convinced that he, and by extension, his Kingdom were as "civilized" as the people of Europe

themselves. Not only was King Chulalongkorn able to forge cordial relations with many of the countries he visited but through his personal charm, he frequently inspired genuine affection among the ruling classes of Europe. And although the primary justification for his trip was the preservation of Siamese sovereignty, the political rewards were not

Mr. Eduardo Dominguez      Former instructor for Spanish language, Faculty of Arts,  
Chulalongkorn University and former instructor for Spanish,  
Ramkamhaeng University

### **Portugal**

The Embassy of Portugal, Thailand

contact person: Mr. João Azeredo, former Counsellor

The Embassy of Portugal

Mrs. Lisette Queiros Werner      Portuguese instructor for German language,  
Volkshochschule, Frankfurt am Main, Germany

Mr. Bernhard Werner      Judge (retired), Court of Law, Darmstadt, Land Hessen, Germany

Ms. Mathuros Supaphon      Guest lecturer for Portuguese language,  
Department of Western Languages, Faculty of Arts,  
Chulalongkorn University

### **Sweden**

The Swedish Embassy, Bangkok, Thailand

contact persons: Mr. Bengt G. Carlsson (Counsellor and Deputy Head of Mission)

Mr. Lukas Ekdahl, consular officer

Translator for Swedish

Mr. Leif Almstedt, consular officer

Translator for Swedish

Ax:son Johnson Foundation

Sturenplan 3, S-10375, Stockholm

contact persons: Mrs. Viveca Ax:son Johnson

Honorary Thai Consul of Sweden

Ms. Katarina von Axelson, Assistant of Mrs. Viveca Ax:son Johnson

The Archive of Thai Consul, Sweden

Nordstjernan AB, S-10375, Stockholm

contact persons: Mr. Mats Hallerby (Chiefarchivist)

Mr. Siv Höök



**Prof. Kittikun Dr. Pornsan Watanangura**

(ศาสตราจารย์ ดร. พรสวรรค์ วัฒนางกูร)

Dr. phil, Ruprecht-Karls Universität Heidelberg,  
Germany (Applied Linguistics, New German  
Literature, Music)

Em. Professor of German Language and Literature,  
German Section, Department of Western  
Languages, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn  
University, Bangkok, Thailand

Fellow, The Royal Society Thailand, Academy of  
Arts, Comparative Literature

President, *The Thai-German Society Thailand*

**POSITIONS (selected)**

since 2014 Member of the academic Board of the  
*Society of Intercultural Germanistik*  
(GiG)

June-August 2012 Visiting Professor, Institut für  
Deutsch als Fremdsprachenphilologie,  
University Heidelberg

since 2008 Member of the Editorial Board,  
English Journal of the Royal Society  
of Thailand

2005-2011 Member of the Committee to define  
terms for western music, The Royal  
Society Thailand

2008-2010 Member of the board to revise the  
transliteration of German into Thai,  
The Royal Society Thailand

**HONOURS and AWARDS (selected)**

- Decoration “*Maha Paramaporn Chang Puek*”  
(The Royal White Elephant Highest Rank)
- *Bundesverdienstkreuz am Band* from Bundes-  
president Joachim Gauck), The Federal Republic  
of Germany for academic and cultural contribution  
in the fields of German Language and Literature,  
Intercultural Germanistik and Thai-German  
relations
- Research Award „Very good“, *Ratchadapisek*  
*Sombot Fund*, 2009, for research „Relations  
between the Kingdom of Siam and the Royal  
Houses of Europe in Documents Pertaining to  
King Chulalongkorn’s First Visit to Europe in  
1897“
- Outstanding Student of Wattana Wittaya  
Academy for the Year 2016 and 2018
- Professor “Kittikun” from Chulalongkorn  
University 2019

### **MAIN EMPHASIS OF RESEARCH**

Intercultural Studies, Comparative Literature, Culture, History, Psycholinguistics,

### **RESEARCH and PUBLICATION**

Professor Dr. Pornsan had great interest since childhood in history, music, art, culture and theatre. Through her duty at the Centre for European Studies at Chulalongkorn University and as member of the editorial board of the Journal MANUSYA and the International Journal of the Royal Society Thailand, also chair of the committees to celebrate on occasions of diplomatic relations between Thailand and The Netherlands, Germany and Portugal, she has been main editor of many publication projects and also does researches on King Chulalongkorn, King Prajadhipok and on the reception of Buddhism in world literature.

Her publications in Thai, German and English on linguistics, comparative literature and intercultural studies consist of approximately 164 articles, editors of 18 books and journals, over 30 books, translations Thai-German/German-Thai, also reviews on cultural matters, especially on theatre performances.

Her interests are music, theatre arts and history. She plays piano and guitar in her spare time and sing occasionally in chorus.

### **COUNTRIES VISITED TO DO RESEARCH OR PRESENTING PAPERS**

Germany, Japan, Canada, France, The Netherlands, Taiwan, Austria, The People Republic of China, Belgium, The Czech Republic, Portugal, South Korea, India, Finland, Israel, Turkey, Poland, Hungary, Ireland, Iran, Switzerland, Italy



**Michael Crabtree,**

Lecturer, Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok Thailand. A teacher by profession, he is also a well sought-after translator. His proficiency in the Thai language enables him to contribute to a wide range of Thai to English translation works of high quality, especially in the fields of history and art. His interests are art, music and travel. He plays the piano in his spare time and spends every vacation traveling. Some of his translation works are:

- ชะลุุด นิ่มเสมอ. 2553. *Stream of Life (สายธารชีวิต)* The Special Exhibition Project to Honor Thai Artist.
- นที อุตุฤทธิ์. 2550. *The Amusement of Dreams, Hope and Perfection,*
- อลงกรณ์ หล่อวัฒนา. 2552. *In Praise of the “Cultured Man”,*
- ญาณวิทย์ กุลแจทอง. 2548. *Paa Sa-Nguan (ป่าสงวน)*
- เดชา วราชุน. 2545. *นิทรรศกาลศิลปกรรมย้อนหลัง*

**translation work on special occasions:**

- 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Department of Fine Arts: *Art in Tandem with Technology.* (ภาควิชาวิจิตรศิลป์ คณะสถาปัตยกรรม สถาบันเทคโนโลยี เจ้าคุณทหารลาดกระบัง)
2548. *Collaborative Print Exhibition between Silpakorn University, Tama Art University and the University of Alberta*
2547. *Designer of the Year 2004* by Silpakorn University
2546. หนังสือที่เผยแพร่การแสดงผลงานภาพพิมพ์และวาดเส้นนานาชาติ เนื่องในวาระฉลองครบรอบ 60 ปี มหาวิทยาลัยศิลปากร.

