

THE BOWRING TREATY: IMPERIALISM AND THE INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVE

B.J. TERWIEL

THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

When assessing the Bowring Treaty it is best to make a distinction between the aspects of international relations on the one hand and matters concerning the Thai economy on the other. With regard to foreign relations historians agree that the Thais made spectacular concessions to the British. Indeed, soon after the treaty was drafted in 1855 there were several Thais who expressed concern at the thought that they might have granted the British more than the Japanese and the Vietnamese had done in similar circumstances.¹ As for the treaty's effect on the Thai economy the standard view in history books is that it revolutionised the Siamese taxation system and thus marked the beginning of a new era.

In this paper the evidence upon which historians have based their statements on the Treaty's economic results is examined. It will be shown that all take their cue from Bowring's own words. Secondly it will be shown that Bowring's remarks are not necessarily a reliable indicator. Having shown grounds to doubt the wisdom of relying primarily upon the chief British negotiator's personal prediction of the treaty's effects, the indigenous economic perspective is introduced. Finally, a revised appraisal of the treaty's effect upon the Thai economy is prepared.

Bowring's Own Words and Historians' Acceptance of Them

The revolutionary effects that the treaty would have were confidently predicted by Bowring himself. With more than a hint of self-gratulation he wrote:

...it was clear that my success involved a total revolution in all the financial machinery of the Government, —that it must bring about a total change in the whole system of taxation,—that it took a large proportion of the existing sources of revenue,—that it uprooted a great number of privileges and monopolies which had not

only been long established, but which were held by the most influential nobles and the highest functionaries in the State.²

In Bowring's account of the Thai revenue system he provides a concrete example of the type of practice the treaty was to eliminate:

There are special taxes on sugar-plantations—on pepper, tobacco, and all the principal articles of production; and they had so grown in amount, and their collection had become so vexatious, as to lead to the abandonment of many agricultural enterprises. The new treaty provides that produce shall only pay *one* tax; which will relieve the producer from the annoyances that have lately so sorely and severely pressed upon his industry.³

Bowring avows to some pride at the thought that it was an Englishman who overthrew this system and who had made the king and court abandon these monopolies in favour of free trade.

There can be little doubt but that Bowring felt passionately about the abolition of taxes; as a proponent of the School of Philosophical Radicals he had long been committed to the principle of free trade. He apparently thought that he had succeeded in persuading the leading Thais to apply that principle and to abandon the custom of taxing goods more than once during various stages of production. He assumed that the Thai leadership, by signing the treaty, would set in process the abandonment of much pernicious taxation and would thus liberate the producers, who in turn would feel inclined and encouraged to produce more.

It is a matter for judgement whether Bowring really thought that in the course of a few days of negotiations he had set into motion a process that would revolutionise the Thai economy, or whether his statements had better be read as a declaration of hope. In any case, the diplomat and envoy may be forgiven for a certain exaggeration in his claims as to the extent of the potential success of the treaty in changing the Thai system. What is remarkable, however, is the range of historians who have blithely accepted Bowring's exaggerated claims at face value.

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Siffin assumes that the treaty *eliminated* Thai control over taxes on all of its trade commodities⁴ (while in actual fact the treaty lists and specifies only a number of commodities and an agreed specific tax on each). The treaty is described as displacing the "monopolies" as Bowring himself called the tax farm system.⁵ Riggs also accepted Bowring's description of a total revolution of the financial machinery, and wrote that the system of royal monopolies and special privileges of many of the highest officials and nobles were undermined. This, he wrote, necessitated the creation of a new financial system, as well as a fundamental change in the system of taxation and financial administration.⁶

Other historians have not only taken Bowring's exaggerated words, but proceeded to further enlarge upon them. For example, Elliott has taken Bowring's "monopolies" to mean the royal monopolies, and from this (false) assumption he concluded that the treaty broke the king's export monopoly, henceforth enabling Thai farmers to sell to Chinese middlemen who functioned as imperialist agents.⁷ In this way, Elliott believes that the treaty's commercial effects were "revolutionary".⁸

Already in 1969 Wyatt wrote that the Bowring Treaty "had the effect of replacing an antiquated system of government export and import monopolies and exorbitantly high tariff duties with what was virtually a system of free trade; and these changes led ultimately to a revolutionary transformation of old Siam".⁹ In his recent book Wyatt appears to have also accepted without any questioning Bowring's claim that senior Thai officials sacrificed part of their personal income for the ideals of free trade. According to Wyatt those who stood to lose most by these changes were Suriyawong and Thiphakorawong¹⁰ and their faction, for most of the monopolies were under their control.¹¹ Wyatt went further and "reconstructed" the method that may have been employed by these self-sacrificing chief officials:

They must have been able to promise the government compensatory revenues from other sources to make up for those sacrificed in the interests of national security.¹²

However, both the idea that Chuang and Kham Bunnak promised "the government" compensation for future losses, and also the thought that, in view of a perceived external threat "the government" agreed to take this risk, rest upon false assumptions. Such a depiction of negotiation between government and treaty negotiators is reminiscent of twentieth-century negotiating procedures, but it does not reflect the Thai political realities of the 1850s. The treaty negotiators were themselves the state's most senior and experienced administrators, who in 1851 had moved decisively to put King Mongkut on the throne. Chuang and Kham Bunnak (Sisuriyawong and the future Thiphakorawong) were themselves among the government's chief executives, and not, as Wyatt suggests, a party that had to negotiate with the government. Unlike his predecessor, King Mongkut did not have much practical experience in government administration and particularly during the first years of his rule the king had to

rely upon advice from his senior administrators when making decisions regarding the maintenance of then state's revenue collection.¹³

Bowring's Bias: A Striking Example

Perusal of some of the private correspondence among the British members of the delegation casts some doubt as to the truthfulness and reliability of Bowring's account of the mission. In a letter from Parkes to Bowring, dated March 27, 1855, an awkward circumstance is mentioned concerning the presents accompanying the mission. Reporting on a conversation with "Phya Monkri Suriwong"¹⁴ Parkes wrote:

We have made no mention of presents as these would draw down a host of troublesome enquiries and as it is doubtful what state they may be in after having been so long packed up — it is well perhaps to say little about them until we are assured of their good condition. Above all I would never wish them to know that they are the *same presents* as those brought before by Sir James Brooke.¹⁵

There is indeed good reason for Parkes's wish to conceal the latter information, for in the correspondence between Bowring and Mongkut prior to the mission's arrival in Bangkok the matter of presents had been raised, and the Thai monarch had been happy to accept Bowring's offer of "astronomical instruments" and had also indicated his interest in receiving specific other gifts, "in the shape of arms such as guns and pistols of the newest inventions".¹⁶ From Parkes's remarks it may be assumed that Bowring had not only omitted to purchase the agreed-upon gifts, but that presents that had been intended for the previous king and had been stored for some four years were to be used again.¹⁷

Parkes's remark on his anxiety on the state they may have been in after having been packed for so long must certainly be read as an understatement. Almost four weeks earlier, on March 1, 1855, Parkes had witnessed how the small boat transporting the presents to the *Auckland*, had met with a gale, filled up with water and had sunk. With much effort thirty-six out of forty-five packages had been recovered, but with the exception of three packages, the contents were completely saturated and spoiled. About two thousand pounds' worth of property had been lost.¹⁸

In this emergency the British envoys decided to hand over the few items that were in good shape, as well as some of the ones that clearly showed the effects of water damage. King Mongkut was duly informed¹⁹ that by far the larger portion of philosophical apparatus, illustrative of astronomy, electricity and optics, were irretrievably damaged in the unfortunate accident.²⁰

King Mongkut, probably under the impression that Parkes would be held responsible for this loss, magnanimously went to some lengths exonerating the junior diplomat in his letter to Queen Victoria, acknowledging receipt of the remaining few presents:

We do not blame Mr. H. Parkes in any term for the portions of the presents designed for Us by Her Gracious Brittanic Majesty some being entirely lost some very injurious in being of no use and losing their fine appearance, for the stated unfortunate accident is believable and heard by Us from many others, and such the unfortunate accident is in difficulty of human power to promptly prevent; merely we are thankful to Mr. Parkes for his great endeavour to reobtain their portion for Us.²¹

Even though the origin, loss and pitiful state of the presents must have affected the mission, the embarrassing matter is not mentioned at all in Bowring's two volumes, even though they included a ninety-page chapter entitled "Personal Journal from March 24 to April 25, 1855". In the tradition of diplomats of all times he omitted facts that could reflect badly on the way the mission had been conducted, and at the same time, he emphasised points that put him in a good light. When presents are alluded to, the reader simply gets to know how some gifts were extremely well received, notably a magic lantern, a gold watch, and a travelling box for writing equipment.²² This example demonstrates that Bowring's statement of self-praise regarding the "total revolution in all the financial machinery" of Siam ought to be treated with caution.

The Treaty in the Context of the Thai Economy

Having established that leading historians have taken Bowring's own prediction on the treaty's economic impact as their cue, and also that Bowring's biased reporting makes *The Kingdom* a doubtful source, the way has been cleared to freshly examine what the role of the Bowring Treaty in the development of Thai economy may have been. A good approach is to describe the state of the Thai economy in the decades prior to the treaty, during the negotiations and in the decades immediately afterwards. An examination of economic indicators over the half-century between 1820 and 1870 ought to provide a better indication of the treaty's effects than the British diplomat's words.

A—Prior to treaty negotiations

It is difficult to assign first causes for the remarkable growth of central Thai power in the 1820s and 1830s. Various constituents combined to result in a remarkable climate of economic expansion.

One of the factors must have been the bold royal decree of 1803, in which the Bangkok administration abolished the right of provincial governors to appoint their own town councils, legal officers, heads of customs posts, officers representing the Department of Lands (Krom Na) or the Department of Registration (Krom Satsadi). This administrative move brought three of the four classes of provinces directly under the power of Bangkok's government departments.²³ This must have had its effect upon the Thai economy in that it made it

possible to more effectively regulate the supply of export goods for the trade with China.²⁴

Another factor was that during the first decades of the nineteenth century the danger of renewed Burmese attacks receded, freeing Thai military might, which turned east and southwards. The subsequent series of military engagements resulted in the capture of tens of thousands of prisoners-of-war, men, women and children, who were resettled in the central Thai region and forced to contribute to the flow of goods from countryside to Bangkok.

Probably the most important factor for the economic boom during the 1820s and 1830s is the spectacular immigration of Chinese labour. It will never be exactly known how many tens of thousands of Chinese flocked to Bangkok and from there to the Thai countryside, drawn there by the climate of prosperity and the fact that the Siamese government actively encouraged Chinese immigration. Directly associated with the influx of Chinese is the rapid increase in the number of sugar, pepper, tobacco, cotton, and indigo plantations, the growth of the iron industry, the boat-building industry, and especially the increased export trade. It is an established fact that between 1809 and 1840 trade with China was booming.²⁵

Siam's economic expansion between 1810 and 1840 affected the country in many ways. It stimulated the use of money throughout the countryside, it helped increase the size of the state's administration, it made it possible to invest in expensive military expeditions, which in turn boosted the size of the population. One of the most dramatic changes was, however, that in order to finance the increased administrative role of the central government the tax burden was expanded dramatically during the 1820s and 1830s. No less than 38 new types of taxes were introduced during the Third Reign alone, affecting people at all levels of society.

The economic "boom" between 1810 and 1840 needs to be understood in order to appreciate the effects of the recession of the 1840s. Again, various factors combined to cause a sudden and dramatic downturn in Siam's economy. In the first place, in 1842 China had lost on Opium War with Britain, and tribute trade declined. Between 1844 and 1851, King Rama III sent only a single mission to Peking.²⁶ Then there were two years in succession, 1843/44 and 1844/45, when the rice crop failed in many provinces because of bad weather. A factor that seriously aggravated the situation was that the administration proved unable to adjust to the economic downturn. During the 1840s the Siamese government was particularly inward-looking and unable to respond effectively to the changed conditions.²⁷ Instead of cutting its own expenditures and offering tax relief it mercilessly continued to impose its recently-introduced heavy tax burden upon a poverty-stricken farming population.²⁸

Most authors have followed J.C. Ingram who estimated the economic effects of the Bowring Treaty by taking the year 1850 as base. Ingram depicts a rather "primitive" economy, with Siam's internal trade "probably carried on through barter entirely within the villages".²⁹ Ingram apparently did not realise that in 1850 the country was still in the middle of a

serious economic recession, and that if he had taken, say, 1830 as his base he would have obtained quite a different perspective. Many economic historians, however, have taken Ingram's statements on 1850 to refer to the whole of the early Bangkok period, and to make matters worse, they have elaborated upon the "barter economy" idea without taking note of the complex reality.³⁰

During the 1840s Siamese leadership decided to shut itself off from Western influences. The most dramatic results of this late-Third Reign isolationist policy came in 1850 when the Thais dealt rather contemptuously with American and British trade missions. At the same time a group of Thais, including Chuang Bunnak, Prince Chuthamani and Prince Mongkut, viewed these isolationist policies with grave misgivings. In 1851 this "reformist" group seized power and immediately after Prince Mongkut had accepted the throne the new rulers invited a British negotiator to establish a treaty of commerce and friendship.

B—During the negotiations

Historians relying primarily upon Bowring's self-praise tend to overlook the fact that the treaty negotiations were instigated by the Thais themselves. In 1851 they had taken the initiative by a series of measures, opening up the Thai market to the West. They abandoned a previously strongly-held principle by allowing opium be imported and sold, in principle only to Chinese, via a monopoly-holder.³¹ Also they abolished the heavy measurement fees on European ships and reduced some high import duties. In addition European residents were granted greater freedom of movement. Such far-reaching concessions were already made prior to the negotiations as a sign that the Thais were eager to attract European trade, but prior to 1855 very few European ships took advantage of the new situation.³²

By the time Bowring arrived in Siam the state of Thai economy was still causing much concern. 1853 had been a particularly bad year; revenue from tax farms had decreased.³³ The market with China had not revived to pre-Opium War levels; the Tribute Mission of 1852 had turned out to be a disaster because on its return journey it had been robbed of its valuable goods, and this was taken as a further sign that China's power had definitely eclipsed.

Siam's administration still depended for its finances almost wholly upon the elaborate internal taxation system of the Third Reign, and those who had hoped that the new king would give tax relief had been bitterly disappointed. Just before the negotiations with Bowring began, a whole set of new taxes (on fish, crabs, prawns, beeswax, silks, gunny sacks and cane baskets) was announced. The justification for these taxes was that government expenditures were extremely high and the income from the trade with China low. If the China trade would become more profitable the tax burden would be lowered, especially on items that were taxed more than once.³⁴ The latter statement is very much in the spirit of Bowring's philosophy and it may well have been inspired by pre-Treaty correspondence between Mongkut and Bowring.³⁵

It is clear that Chuang Bunnak was also aware of the fact that the Thai tax-farming system was too inflexible and that the people were overtaxed. Reports of his conversations with various members of the Bowring mission indicate how Chuang Bunnak stressed that the Thai state produced but little, and how he soon came to admit that the tax burden may well have been instrumental in limiting production. Already during his first meeting with Harry Parkes the Thai mentioned how Siam was not in a condition to obtain much trade, and how it lacked resources, which gave Parkes the chance to press the case for improving Siam's potential by allowing the forces of free trade.³⁶ A week later Chuang Bunnak appears to have been fully in agreement with the free trade principles. He is reported to have observed that under the existing tax farm system his country

...grows poorer daily, and is losing its commerce through having so little produce to export; what therefore is chiefly needed is, that the people should be relieved of their burdens, their industry encouraged, and a market provided for their produce...³⁷

King Mongkut apparently was persuaded to act in the spirit of free trade, for the very first announcement on tax after the Treaty was a dramatic lowering of the tax on tobacco in Phetchaburi Province. This change seems to have been extended over the whole country and was a real alleviation of the tax burden for tobacco-growers.³⁸ In the preamble to the declaration the king shows that he is acutely aware of the people's hopes for tax reduction, but that his advisers had not agreed to cut government expenditures. He assured the people that his intention was still to alleviate the commoners' burdens, and that it lay in his intention to amend taxes that overlapped, so that the people would have to pay only a single tax on one item.³⁹

While this first post-Treaty taxation law shows that the Thais intended to follow the spirit of the Bowring agreement, it ought to be recorded that here the matter seems to have come to an end. No further reductions or abolitions of tax ensued during the rest of the Fourth Reign.

C—After the treaty

The real test to see if Bowring managed to "overthrow the system" is to look at revenue levels and sources of revenue. In order to gauge the effect of the treaty it is necessary to examine the income of the Thai state in the post-treaty years. There was no single state budget. Revenue was derived from many sources involving many separate treasuries and covered many distinct types of income. As Wilson remarked: "The cost of maintaining the Thai state is not recorded, and it is impossible to make an estimate of expenses or to reproduce a budget. We can only list the areas in which major expenses occurred and examine the different sources of revenue"⁴⁰ Wilson then proceeds to do just that, and has provided future scholarship with a most impressively documented overview of expense and income. In her dissertation is an account of the state's revenue-gathering from all tax

farms for which records have been kept for the Thai state between the years 1851 and 1868.⁴¹ The grand total for all tax farms between the years 1851 and 1868 is reproduced here in Table 1.

Table 1: Total revenue estimates from all tax farms, 1851-1868

Year	Total estimated revenue	Year	Total estimated revenue
1851	1,294,131	1860	1,905,786
1852	1,295,511	1861	2,229,556
1853	1,284,211	1862	2,344,795
1854	1,295,711	1863	2,551,216
1855	1,317,871	1864	2,733,716
1856	1,334,116	1865	2,873,316
1857	1,375,228	1866	2,696,236
1858	1,570,836	1867	2,754,316
1859	1,745,776	1868	2,874,236

From this table it is clear that revenue from tax farms did not "dip slightly" for one year immediately after the conclusion of the treaty, as Wyatt has assumed,⁴² but that on the contrary, it had dipped just before, in 1853. From 1854 onwards, there is a steady increase in state revenue from tax farms. This is contrary to the idea of massive post-treaty sacrifices by the state's chief beneficiaries of the system.

In order to understand why, contrary to Bowring's expectations, the Thai taxation system was not reformed, and why those who administered the tax farms did not sacrifice their incomes, it is necessary to examine the treaty provisions as well as the details of actual taxation levels during the Fourth Reign.

Attached to the treaty was a lengthy tariff and land-tax schedule in which specific rates of export tax on fifty-one commodities were mentioned and a further thirteen products were listed with a determined inland or transit duty. It was agreed that the items that attracted an export duty would not be further burdened by inland taxes and vice versa. Before ratification took place, a schedule of tax on garden ground, plantations and other lands was attached to the treaty. From the Thai negotiators' point of view this list meant little more than an enshrinement of no less than sixty-four types of tax, and at quite acceptable rates, reflecting existing pre-treaty practices. By agreeing to them the Thai negotiators did not deprive themselves of income. The clauses that by agreeing to the schedule, double taxation would be abolished, could hardly be taken seriously, for two reasons. In the first place the list of tariffs did not mention most Thai taxes on the means of production, proving that the treaty's idealistic sentences were not extended over the whole system of revenue. Taxes on fishing nets, boats of various sizes, buffalo carts, sugar pots, kilns, market produce, shops, gunny sacks, and cane baskets were not mentioned in the treaty, even though these went against the spirit of Bowring's liberalism, nor were they

abandoned as a result of the treaty. The level of tax on gambling, liquor manufacture and opium consumption were also left out of consideration. So were taxes on attap, bamboo, charcoal, anchors, rudders, clay, stones, tiles, cloth, firewood, iron, mats, molasses, planks, pork and many other products.

The Thais did not sign, either explicitly or implicitly, an agreement to rid the country of the so-called "tax farms" or "monopolies". Hong Lysa was probably the first to point out that the tax farming system was not superseded by the Bowring treaty. On the contrary, she found that it forced Chulalongkorn to depend even more on the tax farms for revenue.⁴³ Moreover, the treaty did not provide for a machinery of supervision, or other means to make the Thais keep strictly to their agreement not to impose double taxation.

A good example of how the Thais went directly against the letter of the treaty is to note the taxes on rice. Not only was rice-growing land taxed, and an export tax of four baht per *kwien* (agreed to in the Bowring treaty) levied on the export of that commodity, but this did not prevent the Thais from imposing an extra levy on milled and unmilled rice, called *phasi khaw*. In 1853 this was two baht per cartload of rice. In the Treaty of 1856 it was specified that rice would be "entirely free from inland or other taxes", so that the *phasi khaw* should have been abolished. However, we read that instead it was increased, and by 1864 it had increased no less than thirteen-fold to twenty-six baht per cart.⁴⁴

As for the detailed taxation records that have been studied by Wilson, they confirm that there was no Bowring-style "revolution". Apart from the case of tobacco, discussed above, no other tax farm shows a sudden decline after 1855-1856. On the contrary, during the first seven years after the treaty ratification many (such as meat and fish, opium, granulated sugar, teak, silk, birds' nests, gambling, cotton, fisheries, and iron) show a marked increase.

The facts thus indicate that Mongkut's and Sisuriyawong's enthusiasm for a complete revision of the taxation system were short-lived indeed. Internal taxation, instead of being liberalised, was allowed to intensify. Contrary to Bowring's claims the multiple taxation upon many goods during the production stage and prior to consumption, continued unabatedly.

A more realistic appraisal of the effects of the Bowring Treaty would be that internal taxation was allowed to continue, while at the same time Siam's former protective import barriers were removed. These two factors combined to gradually undermine many local industries. The effect was not immediately visible; it lasted just over a decade before local industries began rapidly to decline. Again, it is in the taxation records that this decline is visible. The first to show a diminishing tax record is the coconut and coconut oil industry in 1864, followed by iron, and market tax a year later. In 1866 the orchard and salt taxes began to drop, sapan wood and fisheries in 1867, and cotton in 1868.

All these industries and others that had thrived in the beginning of the Third Reign went into decline in the 1860s through overtaxing and through cheap foreign imports. The Thai economy shifted from a diverse labour-intensive planta-

tion and industrial base to the production of a few commodities, mainly rice, teak and tin, for which there was a fairly regular market. Gradually the Chao Phraya Delta became a mono-cropping area. The resulting landscape was very similar to the Burma Delta, but while in Burma its crop potential was largely realised for the first time in the late-nineteenth century, in the Thai case it meant the abandonment of a much more diverse economy.

Conclusions

In the first place this essay has shown that many historians have failed to critically appraise Bowring's remarks on the treaty he himself negotiated. The envoy's excessive claims seem to have been slavishly accepted; British imperialist bias seems to have blinded historians and to have prevented a judicious and balanced assessment of the economic effects of the treaty. A second reason why the treaty's economic effects have been misjudged is the fact that most his-

torians take 1850 as the base from which to judge the performance of the Thai economy. It is argued here that between 1845 and 1855 the Siamese economy had been in recession and that this has generally not been taken into account. For these two reasons a false picture of the economic effects of Bowring's Treaty has come to be accepted.

As a result of the introduction of an indigenous fifty-year perspective we may now safely abandon the idea of an instant total revolution of the Siamese financial base. Also the idea that those most prominent in the negotiations sacrificed their incomes may be laid to rest. The Bowring Treaty simply made the Thai market more accessible to European traders; it did not immediately revolutionise the Thai system of revenue collection, it did not lift tax burdens, did not destroy the system of tax farms and "monopolies". The demise of the traditional taxation system would come much later. The long-term effects were indeed revolutionary, but that was partly because of the inflexibility of the internal tax farm system, not its early abolition.

ENDNOTES

1. N. Tarling, "Harry Parkes' Negotiations in Bangkok in 1856", *Journal of the Siam Society*, Vol. 53, Pt. 2, 1965, p. 168.
 2. Bowring, *The Kingdom and People of Siam*, Oxford in Asia Historical Reprints, Oxford: Oxford University Press, Vol. 2, p. 226. This vainglorious statement was cited in full, and apparently accepted at face value by both Thompson and Ingram. See V. Thompson, *Thailand: The New Siam*, New York: Macmillan, 1941, pp. 158-159; and J.C. Ingram, *Economic Change in Thailand 1850-1970*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1971, p. 35.
 3. Bowring, *The Kingdom*, Vol. 1, p. 264.
 4. W.J. Siffin, *The Thai Bureaucracy, Institutional Change and Development*, Honolulu: East-West Center Press, p. 48.
 5. Bowring, *The Kingdom*, Vol. 1, pp. 264-65.
 6. F.W. Riggs, *Thailand, The Modernization of a Bureaucratic Polity*, Honolulu: East-West Center Press, p. 19.
 7. D. Elliott, *Thailand: Origins of Military Rule*, London, Zed Press, 1978, pp. 80-81.
 8. N. Tarling, "The Mission of Sir John Bowring to Siam", *Journal of the Siam Society*, Vol. 50, Pt. 2, 1962, p. 92.
 9. D.K. Wyatt, in his introduction to Bowring's *The Kingdom*, Vol. 1, p. ix.
 10. The use here of the name Thiphakorawong is, strictly speaking, historically not right. The name Thiphakorawong was not granted until 1865; at the time of the Treaty negotiations this individual (Kham Bunnak) had the administrative rank of *Chaophraya* and carried the name Rawiwong.
 11. D.K. Wyatt, *Thailand; A Short History*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1984, p. 184.
 12. *Ibid.*
 13. Hence the frequent mention of the term *pru'ksa*, "to consult with," "to ask the advice of," "to discuss matters" in records describing Mongkut's reign, noted by C.M. Wilson in "State and Society in the Reign of Mongkut, 1851-1868: Thailand on the Eve of Modernization," Cornell University Ph.D. Dissertation, 1970, p. 710.
 14. Phraya Montrisuriyawong (Chum Bunnak) was a son of Dit Bunnak, the "Elder Somdet," who earlier in his career once had held this title.
 15. M.L. Manich Jumsai, *King Mongkut and Sir John Bowring (From Sir John Bowring's personal files, kept at the Royal Thai Embassy in London)*, Bangkok: Chalermnit, 1970, p. 54.
- The emphasis on the words "same presents" occurs in Manich.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 41. It is noteworthy that the paragraph regarding presents is not included in the version of the same letter published in 1927. See G. Coedès (ed.), "English Correspondence of King Mongkut", *Journal of the Siam Society*, Vol. 21, Pt. 1, pp. 13-15. It would seem that the letter as published in 1927 is an earlier draft, and that the one published by Manich is the one which Bowring actually received.
 17. Manich, p. 54.
 18. Letter by Parkes to Lockhart, 3 March 1855, as cited in S. Lane-Poole, *The Life of Sir Harry Parkes*, Vol. 1, *Consul in China*, London: Macmillan & Co, 1894, p. 199. Lane-Poole assumes (p. 200) that Parkes had himself brought the presents "all the way to Singapore", but the knowledge that these had been the same that Brooke had used makes it likely that they had been stored in Singapore, or transported there earlier.
 19. The quotation from Mrs. Parkes's Journal in Lane-Poole, *The Life*, p. 205, is demonstrably wrong when it says that Parkes told the king on 27 March about the loss of the presents. At that time Parkes was still in Paknam.
 20. "English Correspondence", p. 26.
 21. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
 22. Bowring, *The Kingdom*, Vol. 2, pp. 317-318, and p. 322. See also Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, *The Dynastic Chronicles, Bangkok Era; The Fourth Reign* (transl. by Chadin Flood), Vol. 1, Tokyo, The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies, 1965, p. 128. King Mongkut wore the watch on April 16. See N. Tarling, "The Bowring Mission: The Mellersh Narrative", *Journal of the Siam Society*, Vol. 63, Pt. 1, 1975, p. 119. Chula Chakrabongse also mentions this watch, in *Lords of Life, A History of the Kings of Thailand*, London: Alvin Redman, 1960, p. 198. 23. "Phrarachakamnot Mai, No. 44" in *Kotmai Tra Sam Duang*, Vol 5, Bangkok: Khurusapha, B.E. 2506 (1963), pp. 366-367.
 24. The fact that in the first half of the nineteenth century Bangkok intervened directly in provincial affairs in order to stimulate exports is witnessed by documents in the National Archives. Thus there is a letter, dated January 1844, in which Chaophraya Sithammarat tells the governors of four provincial towns that the export of *Mai Daeng*-wood needed to be boosted, and that more people had to be assigned to the task of cutting those types of wood. (National Archives, Chulasakarat 1206/213-3).
 25. For details see Sarasin Viraphol, *Tribute and Profit: Sino-Siamese Trade 1652-1853*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977, Chapter 9.
 26. Sarasin, *Tribute and Profit*, p. 231.
 27. This was partly due to a lack of new personnel being accepted in the top executive positions. Rama III had apparently once hoped to appoint his son Lakkhanukhun to the office of Uparat, but after this favourite son died in 1836 he left the post open.
 28. For a first-hand account see Nai Mi's "Nirat Suphan", in Khrong Kanpathanakan Su'ksa, Krasuang Su'ksathukan, *Wannakhadi samai Ayutthaya lae Rattanakosin: Khlong Nirat Hariphunchai; Thawathotsamat; Nirat Suphan kho'ng Nai Mi (Mu'n Phromsomphatso'n)*, Bangkok B.E. 2504 (1961).
 29. Ingram, *Economic Change*, p. 19.
 30. Thus D.B. Johnston, "Opening a Frontier; The Expansion of Rice Cultivation in Central Thailand in the 1890s", *Contributions to Asian Studies*, Vol. 9, 1976, p. 27; Chatthip Nartsupha and Suthy Prasartset, *The Political Economy of Siam, 1851-1910*, Bangkok: The Social Science Association of Thailand, 1978, p. 1, and Suthy Prasartset, "The Capitalist Class in Thailand: Genesis and Consolidation", in E.E. Boesch (ed.) *Thai Culture; Report on the Second Thai-European Research Seminar, 1982*, Saarbruecken: University of the Saar, 1983, pp. 69-71.
 31. Thais who had become opium addicts often grew a queue and chose to be registered as Chinese.
 32. Sarasin, *Tribute and Profit*, p. 233.
 33. See Table 1, below.
 34. Hong, Lysa, *Thailand in the Nineteenth Century, Evolution of the Economy and Society*, Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1984, pp. 79-80. She states that these taxes were introduced in 1857 just after the Bowring Treaty. However, all three documents quoted date from Chulasakarat 1216, the year beginning March 29, 1854 and ending on March 18, 1855, prior to the negotiations for the treaty. Hong Lysa is of the opinion that the reference to the declining junk trade is not convincing, and probably amounts to nothing more than a convenient excuse. This interpretation is probably inspired by the misreading of the date of the law. In 1853-54 there certainly was reason for a feeling of inquietude when considering the effects of the Taiping Re-

bellion on the trade with China.

35. Bowring seems to have written on his general free-trade philosophy and aversion of excessive taxation on October 4, 1854. See Mongkut's letter to Bowring, 27 December 1854, in "Correspondence", p. 16.

36. Parkes to Bowring, March 28, 1855, as cited in Manich, *King Mongkut and Sir John Bowring*, p. 59.

37. The "Parkes" journal, as cited in N. Tarling, "The Mission", pp. 98-99.

38. This is borne out by Wilson's Table Q2, where the tobacco tax farm reached a peak in 1856-57, and then rapidly drops in a few years to about one-eighth its niveau. See Wilson, "State and Society", pp. 999-1000.

39. Hong, *Thailand in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 78. As is clear from the references on page 79, Dr. Hong has unfortunately

made a mistake in the conversion of dates and consequently has failed to see the full implications of the king's preamble.

40. Wilson, "State and Society", p. 571.

41. *Ibid.*, pp. 995-1000.

42. *Thailand, A Short History*, p. 184.

43. Hong, *Thailand in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 69.

44. Wilson, "State and Society", p. 658.