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The Intellectual Aspects of Strong Kingship in the Late Nineteenth Century

The development of strong kingship in Thailand has received considerable attention from researchers. Some studies have examined it as a whole while others have examined just some of its aspects.¹ A number of scholars, for example, have examined the change in legal structure or the formation of the *Thesaphiban* provincial administration system. Surprisingly, though, little attention has been paid to the intellectual background to the formation of the absolute monarchy. Recently, a study examined the intellectual history of the 1932 Revolution² which examined the attitudes of different groups before and after 1932. The study, which also described the intellectual climate and how the royalty adjusted to the change in government, provided a better understanding of the attitudes of those holding power in the absolute monarchy. Nevertheless, the study of the origin of attitudes to kingship, how these related to cultural factors and to actions taken by the ruling class cannot be avoided in coming to an understanding of the intellectual roots of the absolute monarchy in Siam.

Past studies have described threats from the West as the main factor motivating the monarchy

to reform the government. This analysis rests on two bases. The first is the confidence in the institution of the monarchy which resulted in no one asking the simple question of whether it was the king alone who was clever enough to recognize the danger posed by the West that then led to the establishment of strong kingship when there are wise people born in all societies in every era. But despite the fact that some of those wise persons were kings, they may not have been able to single-handedly make decisions affecting everyone. Thus, this explanation is incomplete. What is needed is an understanding of the intellectual forces that led to the king making these decisions. The second basis exaggerates the external dangers to the Thai state, resulting in overlooking intellectual factors motivating the king to establish strong kingship. Such an analysis places too much stress on environmental conditions.

The present study examines the important intellectual forces that motivated the king of Siam's actions resulting in far reaching changes in Thai society. This includes understanding a new historical consciousness by the king which saw him as the protagonist in history shaping its course and leading the country in a progressive

way. The intellectual forces stressed in this study motivated the king. This does not mean, however, that other factors did not affect these changes. Although this study does not examine the relationship between these other factors, it does examine the intellectual forces within the context of the socio-economic and political changes occurring at this time. The new historical consciousness, thus, is not seen as emerging spontaneously but rather as evolving in a gradual interaction with the socio-cultural changes occurring at that time.

Origins of the New Historical Consciousness

The origins of the new historical consciousness that began to appear in the reign of King Rama IV and which became fully developed in the Fifth Reign of the Chakri Dynasty in Siam arose out of many overlapping intellectual forces. Understanding these forces requires that they must be dealt with individually even though this may in some ways distort reality.

Before discussing the new historical consciousness, it is necessary to explain that during the Fourth and Fifth Reigns, a new type of historical writing emerged that differed from the traditional religious chronicles (*tamnan*). Many historians have agreed that this new writing reflected influences from the West. However, such an explanation encounters difficulties when it cannot answer clearly how it was that this intellectual borrowing from the West made such an impact on society.³

The important intellectual changes were one basis for the new histories being written. They were written with a new historical consciousness that was based on changes in the conception of time.⁴ The conception of time is closely tied to human life and society. As a result, changes in human life and society must be examined so that an understanding of how the conception of time changed.

Thoughts about time are an important force in determining human and social behavior. They affect how humans decide what to do with their lives, such as whether to make merit for gaining a better future life or whether to try energetically to achieve a better present life or whether to observe Buddhist morality (*sila*), that is, practising concentration (*samadhi*), and using

intelligence (*pannya*) to achieve release from this life or whether they will dedicate their life to help the state progress. The conception of time is the same as other human conceptions in that it changes according to new conditions in life. Because human beings pass through endless cycles of birth and death in different worlds before achieving nirvana, there are two levels at which time is meaningful today (or when a human experiences a rebirth in the human world), human time and social time. Human time, not more than 100 years, is uncertain, characterized by impermanence, temporality and suffering. This is because of the condition of non-self characterizing all existence. Therefore, humans should engage in behavior consistent with the *dharma* until they can achieve nirvana in the future. Social time, although expressed in longer terms, is characterized by impermanence as well. Social life meaningful to human beings is seen through the four Buddhas, each with an era of 5,000 years. During each of these eras, society gradually deteriorates until the world ends with the falling apart of society.

Human life under these conditions was one of suffering. There was no hope of being able to change one's destiny to any great extent because time was an unchangeable natural factor. Another important factor was that during a life of fewer than 100 years, human beings were unable to change the course one's life took because of its being predestined by the *karma* earned in earlier existences. The meaning of life was to follow one's destiny until at a far distant point in the future, one would achieve release from worldly attachments with the attainment of *nirvana*.

That time flowed from the past and then carried on into the future was seen as the unavoidable immutable law of nature (*dharma*). Human beings can neither set nor change time. Stated differently, human beings do not determine time. Instead, time determines life and society. The *kaliyuga* (end of the world), thus, is when everyone (whose *karma* has predestined to have an earthly existence at that time) must die a horrible death. If someone earns good *karma* then that person will be born to a long life. If someone earns bad *karma*, then that person will be born in a bad era, such as the *kaliyuga*.

Persons living in traditional societies know time as expressed in the *Traiphum* wherein time as experienced on earth is given little importance. Time is not seen as it is in everyday social life. Instead time is seen as changing slowly according to the traditional Buddhist notions described above. Thus even though someone might not be alive when society is deteriorating, that person will believe society is indeed deteriorating such as at the *banchantarakhan*. Then that person will quickly perform good works to earn merit and *barami* in order to be born at an auspicious time such as when the next Buddha, Maitriya, will appear.

The new conception of the time, which began being accepted by the elite in the early Bangkok period, was a response to changing socio-economic conditions. One major change was the exchange of goods with other countries that became increasingly commercial as time passed. Investment, financial planning, and recruiting skilled workers for improving production⁵ gave many commoners and members of royalty an increased acceptance of the cause and effect principle. Such activities gave more attention to experience and confidence in human potential than before.⁶ All of these factors resulted in the lower royalty and nobility to have more contact with others. They saw for example that there was a greater chance to change one's future based only on one's own attributes. These attitudes appear clearly in the book *Nang Nophamat*⁷. The main character plays her role as a person who achieves considerable worldly success and demonstrates that the present life has more significance than before under the traditional cosmology where all was seen as non-self, suffering, and impermanent. People capable of and dependent on creating good which will be passed on the new generation. But the author, who lived in the reign of King Rama III, had Nang Nophamat create something new, namely the festively decorated hot air balloons used in a Buddhist merit-making ceremony at the Temple of the Buddha's Footprint at Saraburi. This resulted in her becoming one of "the famous of the kingdom" and it was told of her that these practices were handed down for many generations. The author used a slogan to identify Nang Nophamat, namely, "may your

reputation live on in the Kingdom for a long time"⁸

The giving of royal explanations in which creativity is praised and the existence of certain other practices that are handed down to later generations clearly show the change to a new kind of society. In traditional society there was no desire for novelty, creativity was meaningless and the desire to pass things on to later generations non-existent. This was because everything, both the persons and society were seen as impermanent. Furthermore, in a traditional society, there is no place for anything new.⁹ But the author of *Nang Nophamat* lived in a world that was beginning to change.

Creating new goods was then becoming to be important to society. The fact that Nang Nophamat used new strategies to create something new by which the Kingdom became famous should be a powerful inducement to people living in such a society to have the same ambition as Nang Nophamat. It can be seen clearly too that in *Nang Nophamat* time flowed almost endlessly with no sign of the world deteriorating. This represents quite a difference from traditional society when the world was indeed seen as deteriorating. The belief in a time that flows continuously represents a bridge between the traditional conception of time and the new conception of time which is seen as progressive in nature and which shall be described below:

Any monk who openly disrupts the *sangha* shall suffer until the end of this *kalpa* [world eon]. If the *kalpa* should end tomorrow, that person would only suffer in hell for one day.¹⁰

There was yet another question regarding time: "at what time will Ariya Maitriya achieve enlightenment in this world?"¹¹ Such doubts regarding the traditional conception of time as in the *Traiphum* arose because of the changing socio-economic conditions that caused the Siamese elite to doubt, on the basis of the new experience-grounded conception of time that they were accepting. By the traditional conceptions underpinning the *Traiphum*, human beings were unable to know or estimate time. As was thus understood traditionally, ordinary humans were unable to know at what point the

kalpa would end,¹² or when Ariya Maitriya would achieve enlightenment. Only those who had achieved supreme knowledge through enlightenment, such as the Buddha, would be able to know such things. Everybody else would have to rely on the teachings of the Buddha. Thus this time could not be estimated or known through the experience of ordinary people.

Under the traditional '*Traiphum*' conception of time, the roughly 100 years of individual human life were of little significance when compared to the endless cycle of births and rebirths to which all living beings were subject. Human life itself, in fact, had little significance in the *Traiphum*. A single day was of even less importance. This differed from the new conception under which a single day could have considerable significance during the time which the hands of a clock made a single revolution.

At this time, new expressions regarding the new conception of time arose in the palace of Prince Saktiphonsep, namely that it was possible to estimate time based on personal experience. Eventually, he posed the above question to the Sangha. The answer given indicates that the monkhood still accepted the traditional conception of time as given in the *Traiphum*:

Anyone who disrupts the Sangha in the middle of a *kalpa* will escape from the hell into which that person has fallen at the completion of the *kalpa*. The only limit given is that if a person's life is 100,000 years, it might be reduced to just ten years which will then be the end of that person's rebirth, the end of the *kalpa*. This would then be the penalty for disrupting the sangha.¹³

The difference in the conceptions of time held by the political elite and by the religious elite arose out of the two groups experiencing different socio-economic conditions. The political elite lived in a world in which goods were increasingly produced for export and overseas trade. These individuals were in a society that was becoming increasingly equal. Even though the religious elite lived in the same Siamese society, their way of life differed considerably because they were not involved in producing goods for export. It was also their duty to act according to the traditional precepts and to pass on such traditions to younger

generations. As a result, the monkhood's attitudes were highly conservative and changed more slowly than the political elite.

In any case, almost everyone at that time recognized that the teachings of Buddhism were noble truths. The political elite wanted to experience these truths directly for themselves.

In that the changing of the traditional conception of time based on Buddhism and on the belief in hierarchical worlds did not dare confront orthodox Buddhism, the result was a true change in how time was conceived. Religious organizations propagated (reinterpreted) Buddhist teachings based on this new conception of time starting with Prince Mongkut. When Mongkut, a member of the quasi-feudalistic social hierarchy himself, entered this conservative religious order, owing to the fact that he was grounded in the standards of truth and goodness, he found this traditional monkhood unacceptable. He observed, "the religious order has been lost since the old capital [Ayutthaya] fell to the Burmese".¹⁴ He thus denied the teachings of the Sangha itself as well asserting that these teachings were not the original word of the Buddha. Additionally, Prince Mongkut, and later, Prince Vajiranana, refuted the teaching of the Sangha at this time, both finding many errors in the traditional monkhood's teachings. Prince Mongkut believed as such because he was aiming to spread his new teaching and to inspire a new understanding of Buddhism as widely as possible in Thai society. He observed that "people in this time wanted very much to know what exactly was the teaching of the Buddha, what was erroneous or revisionist."¹⁵

As a part of his refutation of the traditional monkhood, Prince Mongkut established a new Buddhist sect, known as the Thammayut. This was to cause considerable change in Thai society, and since it gave the opportunity for new ways of thought to enter Thai society, these changes were most pronounced in terms of the way people thought. Even though the founder of the new order sought approval by stating that the new sect was based on the *Tripitika*, the Prince in fact introduced new teachings through his new order that essentially had never been found in prior Buddhist scripture.¹⁶

Evidence of the new way of thinking is personified by the Thammayut sect and involves

the potential of mankind related to the new conception of time. Vajiranana shows this clearly in the following passage:

“Human beings” because they are of a high rebirth. They are finely created and intelligent, able to conceptualize events far away in time. The intelligence of these beings . . . is enduring and they are capable of self-improvement in their different activities of which sagacity ranks high. They are able to desire the pleasurable, fear future suffering and death. For these reasons, these creatures are called thusly to distinguish them from those that are *derachan* [of lower rebirth].¹⁷

Because of this conviction that human beings are “intelligent” creatures, able to conceptualize, and of prominence, Vajiranana was able to return to stressing the *Tripitika*. He was confident that human beings had the ability to understand the *dharma* correctly and fully. This belief did not accept the pessimistic view that the world was deteriorating and that human beings were understanding the *dharma* progressively less and less, the conceptualization reflective of the cyclical understanding of time characteristic of the *Traiphum*. The reason that the Thammayut sect supported the Sangha adhering strictly to the Vinaya was also based on the belief in the new conception of time. Previously, the Sangha and the laity who lived together in the world had to adhere to the *sila* (moralities), practice concentration and exhibit wisdom, with the highest goal in life that of achieving nirvana. However, following the establishment of the Thammayut sect, the world began to separate into two different streams, the “way of the world” and the “way of *dharma*.” The Sangha, which was expected to limit itself to the way of *dharma*, did nonetheless enter the way of the world. Yet at this time, the way of the world and the way of *dharma* in fact set out in a new direction, namely in a non-cyclical way. Thus, when the Sangha followed the way of the *dharma* the monks were required to obey the *vinaya* strictly in order to be properly religious. “The teachings of the Prince [Vajirayana] will endure until the end of time.” Regarding adherence to the moralities for those following the way of the world, Vajiranana proposed that people unable to follow the

moralities strictly should “follow the lower five moralities”. Once they have become accustomed to doing so, they can start following the other five moralities strictly”.¹⁸ This suggestion is grounded on the idea that human beings are capable of developing themselves by first obeying the easier moralities and graduating to adhering to the more difficult ones. This reflects the new conception of time. This is the belief that people in this life can progress, that they can learn from their experiences in the world. People can thus improve themselves by acting independently in this life. Life is not controlled by the effects of past *karma* as was previously believed.

This change in how time is conceived can be seen clearly in the matter of “*karma*”, a basic teaching of Buddhism. Previously, *karma* was understood in the way of the *Traiphum* whereby the actions of previous lives determined events in the present life. When the conception of time changed, so did the conception of *karma* so that its understanding was based on the new conception of time. This new conception placed much emphasis on time in this life of experienced events, while the events of past lives are accorded much less importance. This is shown clearly in explanations of *karma* and the results of *karma* which avoid referring to “former times” or “former lives” while emphasizing instead only “this life” and not the “next life” either. Similarly, the results of *karma* discussed are those occurring in “this life” and not in the “next life”. For example, suppose if in a past life, someone has an experience yielding the meritorious result of a person “being the beloved of someone strongly desired”.¹⁹ If in a previous life that person had done something unmeritorious, “that person would be made to do something resulting in that person becoming angry.”²⁰ The Supreme Patriarch (Sa) wrote that “all human actions are aimed more at achieving results in this world than at results in the next life, which is a lesser objective”.²¹

Karma in a past life thus has less importance. The present life’s actions are more important. Birth and life are not illusions according to the *trailakkhana* (the three attributes). If they had importance to King Mongkut, it was only when he started the practice of making merit on his birthday. This was because he “had the opinion

after one survived to an advanced age, the marking of the anniversary of that person's birth was a great boon and most welcome".²² A good and well-practiced life was not one devoted to performing *sila* (moralities), *samadhi* (concentration), and *pannya* (wisdom) or to following the *dharma* in order to achieve *nivarna*. The purpose of a life which one should strive for is to meet with real success in this world, such as having good health, wealth, and honor.²³

In addition, King Mongkut stressed the importance of the present life. The King said that the progress people made in their present lives was linked with the advancement of the state.²⁴ Nonetheless, even though King Mongkut did discuss the possibility of the state developing over time despite the belief by many that Buddhism would disappear after 5,000 years, there is no proof that the King ever directly repudiated this belief. Perhaps this was because the King did not want to enter into a direct confrontation that do so would entail. His repudiation of this belief that Buddhism would end after 5,000 years, however, had to await King Chulalongkorn.

Regarding the prediction by the *Tathagatha* that Buddhism would decline step by step until there was nothing left, that mindful insight [*satipannya*] will become less, that insightful teaching will not be heard and that even if people heard it, they would not understand. Such thoughts have arisen because of having observed newly born children. When they have grown up and are as old as the observers, those observers will believe that those former children are less clever than they themselves. Then, when the observers die, they are not sure if the younger persons are as clever as they had been. But in fact, for as long as the life of the earth, knowledge has been increasing steadily so that after some time, more is known about a subject and the knowledge is acquired more quickly. This can be compared with people of later generations who learn from the work of their elders so that they are quicker to learn a subject from their teachers. As a result, those born afterwards are able to learn a subject faster than those born before them who had to discover information themselves. As a result, the belief that in the future conditions will deteriorate is in error. . . .

I would like to remove the belief and understanding that deterioration will occur in the future; any who believe this are culpably wrong because to do so will result in a lack of effort to improve any effort on grounds that it is futile because things are going to deteriorate anyway. Such beliefs lead to retrogression, leading only to decline. As a result, in any lifetime where this is believed, there will be a lack of initiative. The country will make less rapid progress than if the belief in future deterioration were not held. As a result, all of us should forget about this belief of the future deteriorating. We should face forward, seek knowledge, and provide support to the religion and to the country for which we can expect results to be as favorable as in the past, or more certainly, even better . . .²⁵

This direct refutation of the belief that Buddhism would come to an end in 5,000 years clearly indicates the desire to inspire people to work hard for their own personal improvement and that of the country as well. It also shows clearly that King Chulalongkorn wants the people to abandon the old conception of time while accepting the new conception. By doing so, the King wants the people to become more industrious and to work for the good of the *banmuang* (country) or state, not only for just one's self. To the elite, the idea of *banmuang*, or state, was incomparably more important than that of the self. One reason for this is that the state exists over a long "time". Persons should thus dedicate themselves to work for the benefit of the state so that the *banmuang* will have a long and prosperous existence". In this regard, King Chulalongkorn wrote:

But we can be sure about one thing. Countries in general are patriotic, safeguarding their nation and nationality. Because they believe in the long run of 30-40 years so they will gain by learning that safeguarding their country is profitable. They will see that this is more important than seeking only personal gain. As a result, in general this means that individuals will lose. Selfless persons are those who work for the good of the country. Dishonest individuals are those who penalize the country and who can be suppressed. At this time it is desired that the country progress enduringly, remain strong while enjoying domestic tranquility

for its citizens. With such ties binding the country together, it can be seen that for these people amicability is a reality.²⁶

From this confidence in human potential came the belief that people are capable of "... conceptualizing matters far into the distant future ..." and "that after starting to discuss subjects night and day, persons born afterwards can know these subjects better than those who started the discussions".²⁷ This led to changes in the conceptualization of time. These new thoughts regarding time and the possibility of progress caused the elite, particularly King Mongkut to perceive the difference between the conception of time previous to him and in his time.

This new conception of time became an important basis for understanding a new type of historical writing and a new historical consciousness. This was to be an important intellectual force in setting up the absolute monarchy. This new historical consciousness can be divided into two fields. The first is social time, referring to changes, that is the continual progress made through human activity. The second is human time, that is the temporal activities of an individual human being. Human time is of course much shorter than social time. As a result, significant or good individuals are those who cause society to progress.²⁸ Here I shall explain how the conception of time is the basis of society accepting this new historical consciousness.

The progressive historical consciousness of society explains how the state of society at a particular time has advanced over past times. It should be stated here that this consciousness stresses continuities and differences at various times. It was this new conception of time that caused the Thai elite, starting in the reign of King Rama V, to become dissatisfied with virtually everything that this generation had inherited from its predecessors. This dissatisfaction by the elite arose over the lack of importance accorded the conception of time by previous generations. In this regard, King Mongkut expressed his dissatisfaction about the Buddha images of preceding generations:

Those authors show their lack of ability by writing that such and such an image was made by whom,

in what place, at what time and for what reasons. This is because there are no oral accounts or old books giving this information definitely. Their accounts are all hypothetical.

The reasons the King felt this way was "that when people relate ancient accounts, and when they refer to cities and kingdoms . . . or to important Buddha image, they are content to say that they were miraculously built by Indra or Vesukarma".²⁹ The King believed that such accounts were "unreasonable and exaggerated"³⁰ well as "unnatural and abnormal".³¹

As a result, when the King related an account, he made sure to begin by asking "who built it, at what location, at what time, and for what reason".³² And with regards to time, the King wanted to know the following clearly:

The third problem regarding *Karma* that was asked when something was built, was whether it was built during the lifetime of the Buddha or after he achieved Nirvana; and in what year of the Buddha's religion, or in what year of the Lesser Cycle Era [Chulasakarat]; or in what year, month, day, or at the occurrence of which auspicious event, and how many years, months days did was taken until it was completed.³³

By the clearness with which the movement of time was stressed showed that King Mongkut wanted others to see the importance of this new conception of counting time.³⁴

One result of this new conception of time, in which progress in this life is emphasized, is that the writing of *prawat*, or historical accounts, became more common. These *prawat* were written to account for the origin of various manmade things. Because of the new conception of time, people were not so inclined as before to accept the old explanations while at the same time coming to accept that things change over time. Thus, accounts were written of certain things built by in a certain place by certain individuals at a certain time. Thus they believed that as time passed, certain changes were made so that the features of that thing changed:

Thus, as King Mongkut came to accept that the notion of time had changed and he came to place

new stress on changes of things in “time” that led to continual progress, he found it impossible to accept conventional Thai historical accounts. For this reason, because the King wanted to account for the actual background of certain places and objects, particularly those of a religious nature, he came to write many *prawat* (historical accounts). These included accounts of Buddhist images, especially those of particular importance, such as the Phraphutthamahratanapatimakon, the Phraphutthachinarat, the Phraphutthachinasi, the Phrasai, the Phraphutthabusayarat, and the Phrasisatsada.³⁵ He wrote accounts of such places as Wat Khemaphitaram and Wat Thong Ratana-ram³⁶, as well as writing a history of Lopburi and Nakhon Pathom, including the Phra Pathom Chedi.³⁷ He also described various royal traditions and rites.³⁸

His pioneering efforts were followed up by his son and successor, King Chulalongkorn, who unified power under his increasingly absolutist monarchical rule. Many *prawat* written during the reign of King Chulalongkorn followed King Mongkut’s efforts in explaining aspects of *watanatham* (culture) that were changing or in danger of disappearing. Thus in the King’s description of the *phraratchaphithi* (royal rituals), he wrote “in looking for someone who could explain the rationale for all the royal rituals, I was unable to locate anybody who could give such an explanation.”³⁹ The King thereupon wrote the *Phraratchakaranayanuson*⁴⁰ and the *Phratchaphithi Sipsong Duan*⁴¹ (The Royal Rituals of the Twelve Months). Besides the King, other members of royalty wrote various *prawat*. One of the foremost of these was Prince Damrong who wrote about many aspects of culture, some still being practiced and some having already lapsed. His writings included the *Tamnan Ho Phrasamut Ho Phramonthiantham, Ho Wachirayan, Ho Phutthasatsana Sangha Lae Ho Samut Samrap Phra Nakhon* (An Account of Libraries: the Palace Library, the Vajiranana library, the Sangha’s library, and the library for Bangkok)⁴² and the *Tamnan Loek Huai Lae Thua Pai* (The Ending of the Old Lottery and Other Accounts).⁴³ The results of his interest in history can be found in the journal, *Vajiranana*, that was quite popular among the elite at that time.⁴⁴

Besides the historical accounts resulting from the changes in the conception of time by the elite, there was yet another important result. This was the effort by the elite to explain the origin of the state of which there is considerable evidence in correspondence sent from King Mongkut to Sir John Bowring. For example:

I and my brother, Krom Luang Wongsathirat . . . are trying to write an accurate historical account of Siam from the time of Ayutthaya which was founded in 1350. First of all, we shall select only events which are well-substantiated in fact.⁴⁵

The change in how time was understood which then proved to be the starting point for the above writings also caused King Mongkut to try to determine the origins of his ancestors, namely that of the Tai prior to the Kingdom of Ayutthaya. The writings of the King on this subject followed two lines of inquiry. In the first, the King examined the Tais under Khmer rule from whom they eventually broke free to establish Sukhothai.⁴⁶ In the second, the King sought out the ancestors of King U Thong, whom Mongkut believed had come from Chiang Rai to establish the city of Thepnakhon which was close to of Chaliang. Here there were five kings, the last being U Thong.⁴⁷ The historical writing showing most clearly the power of the new conception of time is the *Phraratchaphongsawadan Krung Si Ayutthaya Chabap Ratchahatlekha* (The Royal Autograph Recension of the Royal Ayutthayan Chronicles) edited by Krom Luang Wongsathirat Sanit together with King Mongkut. This provides a continuous historical account from the beginnings of Thai society in this region until the Ratanakosin era.

Despite all this, it was not only the changing conception of time that resulted in the acceptance of this new type of historical account. Other important changes included new attitudes about the state and the monarchy. Changes in the conception of time rested on the belief that people were capable of causing society to progress continuously. This does not mean, however, that each person is equally able to ‘change’ history. In this regard, the state and the monarchy came to play a particularly important role.

The elite's thinking about the state and monarchy began to change as early as the reign of King Rama III. They can be seen clearly, however, in the reign of King Rama IV, after which time attitudes changed continually and were intertwined with other changes occurring in society at that time. Still, changes in attitudes about the state and monarchy were one important intellectual force empowering the elite to create the absolute monarchy.

Formerly, Thai attitudes about the state and the monarchy had been linked with beliefs on empire found in the *Traiphum* in which the realm had no clear boundaries. The ruler of the Ratanakosin was a *Ratchathirat* (King of Kings), that is a *Chakraphat* (Wheel-Rolling or Universal Monarch) or a *Thammikaratchathirat* (Dharmic King of Kings). The ruler was also a *Ramathibodi* (a Rama-type ruler, namely a manifestation [Avatar] of Vishnu on earth). In this regard, the 'power' or 'Dharmic authority' of the king was not based on his being an ordinary mortal. Instead it came from his having been a Bodhisattva who had earned uncountable stores of merit in prior lives. Power also came from the royal rituals, such as the Abhisekha ceremony of coronation which deified the prince. It was believed that the royal authority of the king spread in every direction without limit (and in theory, above and, although nominally, beyond the power of other monarchs or states). As such, the succession placed less stress on bloodlines in determining the new king as became the case later (although in fact it was conventional for a high-ranking prince to succeed his father as king). This was because being a Bodhisattva or a Ramathibodi was a property that was not inherited from one's blood relatives.

The expansion of trade was another important factor causing changes in the conception of state and monarchy. Starting with the reign of King Rama III, when commercial trade began to expand rapidly, more emphasis was placed on basing assumptions on actual observations. This resulted in an increasingly frank reassessment of the Thai state and monarchy. Conceptualizing the state as the center of the religion under the rule of a King of Kings began thus to lose popularity. Additionally, the desire for the state's power to be greater than that of its dependent states also

began to lose popularity among the elite. This was because such a desire, based on traditional Wheel-Rolling Monarch beliefs would, if not actually requiring Bangkok to wage war on its neighbors, create a state of tension that would impede economic growth.⁴⁸ In particular, the holding of such power over dependent states was only nominal, bringing nothing more than honor or glory. No actual economic advantages were accorded the state with the result that investment was considered a poor risk. Instead it was peace that would encourage investment in production and in international trade.

These changing conceptualizations of the state and the monarchy among the elite during the reign of King Rama III reflect are clearly reflected in the book, *Nang Nophamat* (Lady Nophamat). The changing conceptualizations shown in this book are based on the observable fact that in the world there is no one premier state. And there is no single Mount Meru that is the center of any such state, or of the world. In fact, the world is comprised of many states, large and small which border one another. There is no one state controlling the rest.⁴⁹ There is no absolute royal power extending throughout the world. Royal power in fact is restricted to the boundaries of individual kingdoms. In *Nang Nophamat* is the passage: "The King is the most powerful, having autonomy with his awe-inspiring authority extending beyond and above all the people in the realm".⁵⁰ The statement that the King inspired awe among the people of his realm, showed the change in the conception of the King. The King, under this new conception, was considered more powerful than everyone else. This was different from the previous belief that there were other members of royalty, such as the rulers of dependent states, who were also 'rajas'. This can be considered the first sign of movement to an absolute monarchy in Thailand, in which the king actually was more powerful than everyone else.

During the reign of King Rama IV, signs of this new conceptualization of the monarchy and the state became more evident. The fact that the state came to be seen as having a clearly delineated boundary was the result of many factors. These include the King being one of the world's elite whose understanding of the monarchy and the state changed as discussed

above. Among the factors allowing for this change was the acceptance of the idea from the West that the world was round.⁵¹

The King revealed this in remarks to the American missionary, Jesse Caswell.⁵² With the acceptance of the belief in a round world, the King gave up his belief in the cosmology of the *Traiphum*, and thus, his belief in a state and monarchical system based on this cosmology. Through awareness gained by his understanding the English language, the king came to see that there were many countries in this vast world, "some of which are subordinate but not others".⁵³ This subordination, he learned, was one of empire and colonies, not one of dependent states. This made it necessary for clear boundaries to be delineated, Thailand included. On his trips as a monk and in his visits to different cities, he had first-hand experience of much of his Kingdom. The coming of capitalism to Thailand only made the King more certain that clear boundaries had to be drawn up. This was because the natural resources of the country, such as timber, minerals, and also the land itself, had come to have economic value. The King believed surveys were needed to determine the actual value of these important resources. In addition, the Bangkok government had come to control an increasing amount of territory for more than 80 years since the beginning of the reign of Rama I.⁵⁴ This was noted in the Royal Autograph recension of the Royal Chronicles, which stated that the "Kingdom had grown increasingly large and unified."⁵⁵

There is much evidence in the king's writings that he had decided that Thailand needed delineated boundaries even before the boundary mapping surveys had begun in conjunction with teams from the Western colonies surrounding his kingdom and using new surveying equipment.⁵⁶ One example is as follows:

The Kingdom of Siam comprises Siam Nua, Siam Tai, and other lands in the vicinity, which is the area in which peoples speaking different languages reside such as the Lao Chiang, Lao Kao, Cambodians, Malays, and Karens in almost all the different directions.⁵⁷

In 1854, the King discussed the drawing up of a boundary with British Burma. He told of the

problems of demarcating a borderline with Burma where there had never been an exact demarcation before. His explanation of Burma and Thailand, whom he described as former enemies, showed well his acceptance of the new conception of state and monarchy. Because of the continual warfare between the two states, subjects of both kingdoms did not dare to live close to the border resulting in a "no man's land, a neutral zone".⁵⁸ This border zone was marked by natural features that had served as markers to separate the two kingdoms. The king wrote that if these mountain ranges were to be the border, they should be marked "as clearly as is possible"⁵⁹ to estimate the distance and expanse of the Kingdom of Siam, which is located to the south of the *Ao Klang* and to the northeast of the *Machimprathet* (the central country, namely India).⁶⁰ He was also able to describe the exact location of Siam by using modern survey methods from the West, "13–16 degrees north Latitude and 101–103 degrees east Longitude."⁶¹

These thoughts on a state having a clear boundary are related to thoughts by King Mongkut that it was only his kingdom that was under his royal power. This was different from the belief that his power, even though stated in nominal terms, extended indefinitely. In stating that his power "extended only to Songkhla, Thalang, Phangnga, and Sirikhet"⁶² reflected this. The new attitude about the monarchy can be seen clearly in the book, *Nang Nophamat* which was written during the reign of King Rama III. In this book, although the king is still portrayed as possessing considerable merit and awe-inspiring respect, there is also a statement saying "do not fear the meritorious more than a prince"⁶³ which reflects changes in the perceived source of royal authority. This shows that merit, which had previously been seen as the source of supreme power was now described as being less powerful than being descended from royal blood. The importance of royal blood rather than being a Bodhisattva was stressed continually in *Nang Nophamat* through many references to "dynasty". This was not, however, restricted to just the royal dynasty, as shown, for example, in this passage: "people of all classes from all places and dependent states as well as in the capital consider themselves as belonging to a dynasty."⁶⁴ Of special interest

was envisioning dynasties as being patrilineal. This was important to King Rama III, whose mother was only the daughter of the ruler of Nonthaburi, as noted as follows:

As for the royal dynasty, it is the most powerful dynasty of all. The people will not disapprove when marriages are undertaken with any dynasty. They will revere all the nine royal dynasties. But royalty is passed on to children only through the male line.⁶⁵

The giving of importance to royal bloodlines reflects the new conception of time and to what is learned through experience because, unlike the obtaining of merit in previous lifetimes, bloodlines are a matter that can be observed. The elite at this time also observed that royal power had been passed from father to son for three generations and that the "royal dynasty" was descended from the ruling family at the end of the Ayutthayan period. The Kingdom's royalty thus had a ancient heritage. As Professor Nidhi Aeusrivongse observed:

Some members of royalty got there start in government because of their royal blood. They were also able to pass on their power to the next generation just had their ancestors in the Ban Phlu Luang Dynasty.⁶⁶

This passing on of power, when it reached the time when the concept of time changed, itself changed so that 'dynasty' and 'royal lineage' came to be stressed for the first time in Thai history.

The nature of the king as shown in *Nang Nophamat* was that he increasingly appeared as an ordinary person and less like a Bodhisattva. There was added emphasis on the "happiness and sadness of the people throughout the kingdom". Similarly, the king appointed high officials more and more based on their "ability and thoughts".

Although in the writings of King Mongkut there are still traces of the old conception of the source of royal power, there is also evidence of the new way of thinking. King Mongkut wrote that "all the people select one individual of high intelligence and great industry . . . with a love of justice to come and serve . . .".⁶⁷ He denied

however that the King was a Bodhisattva imbued with much merit or a deity. As King Mongkut wrote, "the King is man". He believed that he came to royal power because of the actual events of this world. As he wrote:

But as for being the King at this time, to say that it was because of a heavenly being's intervention takes the merit away from that important person who came to be called king. Becoming King was because that important person could learn by using his ears to hear, his eyes to see for the most part, not because of a deity's power.⁶⁸

In any case, and despite the King writing that royal authority did not derive from any external source of power, but from his own human capabilities, this refers back to the importance of royal bloodlines. Thus, as the King says, a King is of "good birth based on good former lives from both of his ancestral lines".⁶⁹ This resulted in the title, *Chaofa* (Prince) Mongkut coming to mean "Prince With Merit as High as a Crown", or the "Crown Prince".⁷⁰ His knowledge was acquired from a broad-based education that enabled him to carry out very well his royal responsibilities.⁷¹ Even though he was said to have received royal power from "an important high-ranking person", he sought to explain this by saying that he had obtained the kingship from King Rama III. This merely stresses the fact that royal authority came from the King and can be used by the King only. Other persons can only acquire it by the King conferring it.

His Majesty the King determined that he would not live any longer. He then delivered a speech conferring royal power, with his own royal blessing as such, "I confer royal power on you all. When I pass on, the chief councilor determines who has merit and ability. Then give this royal authority to that individual and make him King."⁷²

Therefore mentioned stress on the actual changes in the economic structure were important factors in changing conceptions of the state and monarchy. Of particular importance during the reign of King Rama IV were changes related to taxation and the source of the king's income.

In the early Ratanakosin period, most of the royalty's income was derived from overseas

trade, over which the King exercised a monopoly. Research by Nidhi Aeusrivongse has shown that this overseas trade underwent a strong recovery in the early Ratanakosin period. His work also showed that the goods desired overseas increased in number and complexity. This resulted in many new economic opportunities in overseas trade.

Among these economic opportunities was the production of goods for the expanding Chinese market. The number of private traders increased as did the volume of goods produced for the export with other countries. This income came to be the backbone of the Thai economy in the early Ratanakosin period. During the reign of King Rama III, the increased number of tax farmers was witness to the growing amount of goods produced for sale. This allowed the government to derive a considerable income from taxing trade. From having taxed foreign trade, the government thereupon came to tax the production of domestic goods that were to be sold overseas.⁷³ Stated differently, during the reign of King Rama III, the government came to tax its citizens much more than before. In any case, King Rama III still sent out his royal trade junks from which he derived a far from insignificant income. By being able to earn income from domestic production as well as from foreign trade, the government of King Rama III was able to avoid problems of not having enough income when he signed the Burney Treaty that called for an increase in port fees for overseas trading vessels entering the Chao Phraya River.

The change in the source of government revenues was shown clearly when King Mongkut signed the Bowring and other foreign treaties. This treaty ended the government's monopoly on trade, stopped it competing in commercial affairs and allowed trade to be carried out freely. A treaty signed with the French allowed that country's merchants to import goods into the Kingdom and to buy goods directly from Thai producers and sell imported items freely and directly to anyone interested. One result of this was a rapid increase in the cost of rice. It was noted that during the reign of King Rama IV, "the price of rice became expensive because foreigners bringing foreign specie for purchases scattered it about in Thailand."⁷⁴ As a result,

investments by the King to earn money from overseas trade did not yield profits even though initially King Mongkut tried to earn profits in the way of his forebearers. As the King said, "I took 200 silver catties to invest by buying goods to be shipped for sale".⁷⁵ As a result of the ending of the royal monopoly and the increase of goods the king exported for sale, the royal junk trade eventually came to an end. Because of the loss of profits, the King decided to sell his junks, saying "We have decided to sell the junks due to a lack of profits resulting from foreigners bringing many junks here to engage in trade."⁷⁶ He added that it was inappropriate for the King to continue trading because it was the royalty only of small, not large countries, who did so. "As for," he said "Kings who engage in trading to maintain their kingdom, this is unnecessary as is the case in all the other big countries [who do not]; it is only rulers of the small Malay states who do so."⁷⁷ Thus, the King realized that his government had to raise money by taxing his subjects instead of from trade. This is clearly seen when the King wrote, in response to the desire of foreigners to set up a tax-free newspaper business, that if he granted their request he did not know from where the government's income would be derived. The King believed that the state should earn income from domestic taxation as well as on import and export duties as agreed in international treaties.⁷⁸ When the King realized that some of his subjects were dissatisfied, he announced:

Different taxes are to be announced at different rates of 10, 12, or 15 percent. Entrepreneurs have learned of what we intend. You are not pleased. But if we do not enact these taxes, you will not be able to receive the gifts of the kingdom at all. It is not like we have royal magical ability to summon seven kinds of jewels to rain from the sky and cover the country as happened in the Vessantra Jataka.⁷⁹

In any case, the process of finding new sources of government revenue continued. It was not separate from the collection of new revenues in the reign of King Rama III who had begun taxing 38 items, an increase over the previous total of 10. But the changes occurring under King Mongkut were motivated by the

need to give up the income from the royal junk trade and the ending of the royal monopoly. King Mongkut followed this method by adding new items to the list of items to be taxed.⁸⁰

Changes in the source of government revenues as discussed above led to new justifications for the new types of taxations. These explanations, such as the following by King Rama III, sometimes were justified in religious terms:

I heard a Buddhist sermon in which it was stated that taxes have been paid kings from the very beginnings of kingdoms. Every king has followed in this tradition of imposing taxes from the time of King Mahasammutiwong, the very first king.⁸¹

King Mongkut gave a different rationale:

Every king who has held royal power and governed kingdoms from the past until the present has imposed various taxes to raise money for the treasury. If there was no taxation, it might be impossible to maintain a tranquil kingdom. As a result, there has been this tradition of taxation from the past until the present.⁸²

Thus it can be seen that the economic changes following the signing of free trade treaties that led to changes in the source of government revenues then had a big impact on the conceptualization of the monarchy. These changes in the way of thinking discussed above, when seen together with the changes in the conception of time, show the intellectual power that inspired the monarchs to “act” in accord with those things seen as the royal duties.

On the basis of the new conception of time and the new way of viewing the king and the state, the Thai elite came to understand the “new history”. In order to envision this new history properly, it is necessary to examine trends in who it is that sets the course of history and the origin of the conception of *ratchawong* (royal lineage) among the elite.

Trends of Thought on those who Determine Historical Methodology

The method used for writing history based on the traditional cosmology of the *Traiphum* was

grounded in *dharma*, that is in natural law. Nobody was seen as having the ability to “determine the course of history”. After the Buddha achieved Nirvana, there were kings who sought to be “patrons of the *dharma*”. But even though they hoped that by supporting Buddhism, people would be able to achieve “emancipation” by bringing an end to the future decline of society, no king was actually able to do so. Even kings with large stores of merit and charisma were unable to slow this decline more than temporarily. Thus, as society continued to decline, people were increasingly less able to learn enough about the *dharma* to achieve emancipation.

Members of Thai society when the old conception of time was still accepted, that is up to the reign of King Rama III, accorded little importance to the concept of time as experience-based. They did see the changes in society that were occurring before them as significant. This is reflected in the account of John Bowring about Thai history:

The Siamese group their early ancestors around the first disciples of Buddha (Gaudama), and begin their annals about five centuries before the Christian era. . . . Buddhistical miracles and the intervention of super-human agency are constantly exhibited. . . .⁸³

When the changes in the conception of time caused the elite to view changing events in society as either progressing continually, or discontinually as was discussed above in terms of “culture,” some members of the elite tried to determine the source of the continuing progressive of the society or state. The elite had come to accept the potential for humans to progress and to accept the possibility that society was not deteriorating as was believed by the traditional Buddhist outlook. Instead they believed that it was human action that caused progress to occur. This was to bring about an increasing number of people who sought ways to initiate progressive change in society.

Those accepting the new conception of time were in the elite and wielded royal power. Since they were beginning to become conscious of the concept of *ratchawong*, as shall be explained below, they encountered no difficulty when they

judged society historically. As shall be seen, the writing of history during the reigns of Kings Rama IV and V was in agreement that it was the monarch who set the course of history. This is because the king was seen as the most important person in the state who could make the biggest impact on it. But the attitudes of the king, whose impact on the actions of the state was great, when he believed that history did not follow the law of *dharma* only served to give him more importance in setting the course of history.

The belief of the elite, especially King Mongkut, was shown in his comments that the king was the "heart of the kingdom".⁸⁴ They believed that he was of vital importance to the affairs of state. Thus it is not surprising that the elite were able to accept royal chronicles, the writing of which were based in a time frame different than in the period of the earlier conception of time. This was also because the elite held some beliefs that had not changed from the time of the previous conception of time, namely that other groups in society lacked the potential and the abilities of the elite. They also lacked the conviction that they would be able to change other groups in society despite their believing that they were becoming more accepting of the human potential of these people. But in the end, the most of the population was only one component of the state. As a result, when the elite decided to write a new and more correct history, it was as King Mongkut stated, "I and my younger brother . . . have consulted with you in the capital and are trying to prepare an accurate historical account of Siam."⁸⁵ The "accurate historical account of Siam" that Krom Luang Wongsathirat Sanit was writing with King Mongkut still followed the style of a royal chronicle, particularly in its stressing royal business even though there were some significant changes from chronicles in previous times, a topic which shall be discussed below.

Chronicles and other historical writings starting with the reign of King Rama IV were written without the constraints of the traditional religious world view. Even though older chronicles were used as sources for the new writing, the members of the elite who were writing the new histories had new conceptions regarding human beings and the emperor, the state and the monarchy, as well as time. This

meant that, rather than thinking of Ayutthaya as the center of the universe, they believed that the beginning of "Thai history" did not commence with the founding of Ayutthaya. They began trying to link the *prawatisat* (history) of neighboring kingdoms existing before Ayutthaya with the *prawatisat* of Ayutthaya and the Ratanakosin kingdoms. The writings of King Rama IV show his effort to transform such old capital cities as Nakhon Pathom and Sukhothai into being pre-Ayutthayan Thai capital cities.⁸⁶ King Mongkut, who founded an historical society wrote the following:

Later came the sense that we did not want to accept the chronicles of Krung Kao [the Old Kingdom, i.e. Ayutthaya] as the true account of Siam . . . they give the mistaken impression that our race and country started only with King Ramathibodi when he founded Ayutthaya.⁸⁷

He encouraged researchers to study more earnestly so they could learn the beginning of Thai history.

We want to invite you all . . . to study the amounts of the kingdom of Siam . . . starting from 1,000 years ago . . . which was the beginning of the old Thai race.⁸⁸

In the investigation of *prawatisat thai* before the time of Ayutthaya and trying to link it with later *prawatisat thai*, the elite did identify those persons who changed the course of history. This was shown in the king's writings about how the old Thai kings maintained the ancient capitals, Buddhist *chedi*, and Buddha images. In any case, since the elite from the time of King Rama IV gave much importance to experience as the basis for the truth of *prawatisat*, they believed that the events they described had to be well documented. As a result, they were unable to describe the role of the king in the pre-Sukhothai kingdoms very substantially. They were only able to substantiate the role of the king from the time of Sukhothai on, and in doing so had to rely on the evidence of stone inscriptions, chronicles, and foreign accounts. The results are shown in the King's *Prawatisat Thai*, a historical account starting with King Ramkhamhaeng of Sukho-

thai. King Mongkut then traced the history of the Thai through King U Thong, (Ramathibodi) the founder of Ayutthaya. From here King Mongkut told the story of the Thai by describing the events of the different kings down to King Taksin of Thonburi and the kings of the Chakri Dynasty. The continuity of Thai history is also shown in King Mongkut's *Prawatisat Thai Doi Sangkhep* (History of the Thai, by Phases) which he wrote for Sir John Bowring. The continuity is also shown in the Royal Autograph Version of the Ayutthaya Chronicles. These writings show *prawatisat thai* as a *prawatisat* with continuity. Emphasis is placed on the actions of the kings starting with those in the time of Sukhothai whose statements and actions gave the Thai state its basis and accounted for its changes and the progress it underwent until the time of the Chakri Dynasty.

It should be noted here that there have been accounts describing the *ratchawong* (royal lineage) during the Ayutthayan period such as in a work written in 1789 by Phra Phimontham entitled *Sangkhitayawong*. However in such works, the monarchy is described according to the traditional Buddhist notion of time. The purpose for its being written was for the reader or listener to know how far the "way of history" had come, as well as how much the kings had supported Buddhism and how much time was left before the end of the 5,000 years Buddhism was supposed to endure. The way of history was also meant to show how, in the time remaining, which things should be done so that they could achieve the purpose of life, which was to attain nirvana.⁸⁹ Thus, when the kings of the Mangrai and other dynasties in the Ayutthayan period were described, including the "Two Kings of Kings", that is King Rama I and Kromphra-ratchawang Bowon Mahasurasingharat, the purpose was to determine to what degree each had been a good king according to the traditional Buddhist worldview. These early writings did not want to show continuity in *prawatisat thai* as did King Mongkut and later authors.

It can be stated that King Mongkut wrote *prawatisat thai* under the new conceptions of history. His purpose was to describe the kings as "doers" who gave rise to the state, who maintained "peace and tranquility", and brought

about the "spread of progress". This is shown in the following writing:

A kingdom must have an absolute monarch . . . a large population living in peace. If there is no keeper of the peace, meaning a person with the authority to govern the kingdom . . . there will be quarrels until all are dead. Anyone who establishes divisions of the Fields, Treasury, Palace, and State as well as other departments . . . must do this at the very beginning. Once this has been done, when there has been much progress in different directions, the constraints will not come undone. It is just like counting 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and on to 100 or 1,000.⁹⁰

In the other historical writings of King Mongkut, kings are described as doers in ways different from the previous historical style. That is, the previous way was to describe Kings as avatars of Vishnu, Rama as the god-king, "Ramathibodi" or as a Bodhisattva. The actions of the King thus came from the power of the deities or from the Bodhisattva. It was not necessary for the king to be given any credit for having thought or deliberated prior to taking any actions. The historical accounts written during this time included royal orders and other activities of the kings but without any of the statements or thought process undertaken by them. But the history that was written when the king was seen as a human being who shaped Thai history stressed the "royal statements" that led to "actions" taken by the king. The above differences can be shown when comparing the chronicles written in the Ayutthayan period or during the reign of King Rama I, such as the Phan Chanthanumat recension, with those written in the reign of King Rama IV, such as the two volume Phra Sisunthonwohan (Phak) recension published by Dr. Bradley in 1863⁹¹ or with the Royal Autograph recension. An example is when Phan Chanthanumat describes the digging of the Khok Kham Canal during the reign of King Thai Sra:

In the year of the ox in the third cycle, in the second month of year 1083 of the Sakaraja era, His Majesty the King ordered that since the Khok Kham Canal had many curves, a straight-line canal along the same route be dug instead.⁹²

In the Phra Phonarat recension of the chronicle, to which the account of Phan Thai Norasing was added, the account is as follows:

Then His Majesty the King made the statement that the Khok Kham Canal had many curves making it difficult for ships to enter and exit . . . so the canal should be straightened out.⁹³

The Royal Autograph Chronicle told the story as follows:

In the year of the ox, Sakaraja Era year 1083, His Majesty the King travelled to the mouth of the Thai Chin River. When he reached the Mahachai Canal he observed that the canal had not been completely dredged. Then when he reached the capital again, he made the statement that Phraratcha Songkhram be given the position “*Nai Kong*”⁹⁴

In this account of King Narai, the King sent an embassy to France. This account does not appear in the Phan Chanthanumat Recension. This recension does provide an explanation in a way that corresponds to that of the Royal Autograph recension. The reason given for the embassy was as follows:

His Majesty the King listened to Phraya Wichaiyen who said that in France there were many unbelievable wonders. The King then made the statement that to learn the truth, he was ordering Chaophraya Kosathibodi to have a Thai ship travel to France.⁹⁵

The Royal Autograph version gives importance to the decision-making that lead to the King’s order which would then benefit the people. In other words, the King was described as having the desire or feeling the duty to act on behalf of his subjects. This is shown in the description of King Taksin’s determined state of mind before he came to power. The chronicle gave emphasis to the fact that the king “made a statement that he would bring peace to this era of chaos and that he would make Krung Thep to be the royal capital”.⁹⁶ Another clear example is in the attempt to stress that soldiers and *phrai* accepted the intentions of King Taksin:

It is true that Krung Thep was lost to the Burmese. We think that to have all the people in the eastern provinces return and restore the old capital as the capital of yore, and then to rebuild the monkhood would not bring peace and happiness. We will found our capital at a place of which the people are in awe. From here we shall restore the kingdom easily. All of you, both soldiers and *phrai* will see these things and see them in a favorable light.⁹⁷

As these excerpts show, it was during the reign of King Rama IV that historical reasoning begins to occur. At this time, the writings show the thought-process of the kings. These are important characteristics of historical writings in the reigns of Kings Rama V and VI such as those written by Prince Damrong Rachanubhap. Since the king was seen as a human being, and since the “royal statements” could be mistaken, King Mongkut felt it necessary to explain that in the past, Thai kings could do both good and evil. If there was more good than evil, “the man who was king would rule the kingdom with power and kindness and even though occasional serious errors might be made, they could not do away with the good altogether.”⁹⁸

Thus, the statements made by King Mongkut show that he thought it necessary for the historical kings to be shown as having received accolades by their subjects for “their power and kindness”. This differs from the descriptions of King Taksin made at the beginning of the Ratanakosin era:

King Taksin brought together people from all over the kingdom to fight the Burmese in order to regain Thai independence. But it must be the fault of those people who did not come and set their hearts against it. But it was because his actions saved many people that he was acclaimed as the leader, with his finally becoming the ruler of Siam and his being seen as the same as the previous kings.⁹⁹

That King Mongkut was willing to recognize Taksin as one of the historical Thai kings was because King Taksin brought peace after a chaotic episode in Thai life. “Had he not done so,”¹⁰⁰ there would be a gap in Thai history.

Thus it was not difficult to give King Taksin a place as a king in Thai history. The fact that

he “wrested Thai independence back from the Burmese” was proof that the king had been of help to the people, which was unlike King Ekathat under whose rule, the kingdom was lost to Burma. However, King Mongkut wrote the history of this era without discrediting King Ekathat, seeing that when kings aimed to serve the people, they could make mistakes too. Mongkut wrote that “if we think that it was the badness of King Ekathat, it was not really that bad because it was his indifference to the government and his promoting bad people that resulted in the kingdom falling into disorder for 8–9 years.”¹⁰¹ The badness of King Ekathat thus became indifference to the government and the promoting of bad people. Similarly, in the Royal Autograph Chronicle, a passage telling that King Ekathat’s military tactics were stupid and lacking in intelligence was removed. His bad qualities were lessened so that he was seen as not being a “protagonist”. Had he only not been indifferent, thus, social order would not have collapsed.

King Mongkut added that in the kingdom of Ekathat, “nobody rebelled or committed treason. As subjects, they endured until the kingdom fell to Burma. This was because all the people were loyal to the king who was descended from a long line of royalty that still maintained royal power and goodness.”¹⁰² The basis of this argument shall be discussed below. Nonetheless, all of these passages show that a king was seen as setting the course of history in his era. And all the kings were seen as receiving the loyalty of the people.

This new historical style which became popular in the reign of King Rama IV and which described the king as society’s protagonist also described King Taksin in this way. Prince Damrong wrote:

As for the nobleman Taksin, Chaophraya Thiphakorn once made joking references to him as having lost it, while Somdet Phraphutthachauluang wrote that he was . . . fierce nobleman Taksin. No one should try to detract from his store of merit.¹⁰³

By placing emphasis on the kings as “protagonists” or as “shaping the course of history”, the writing of history came to be changed so that individual reigns came to be the

measure of historical units or eras. This had far-reaching influence as can be seen in the Royal Autograph Chronicle where the term “kingdom of his majesty” is used frequently.¹⁰⁴ Other places where the impact can be seen is in inscriptions, stating “Siamese Reign No. No. 37”¹⁰⁵ written on Buddha images given by King Mongkut to the previous Thai kings. This shows that King Mongkut envisioned the previous kings as having shaped history during their dynasty. During that period, King Mongkut saw them as having been the “shapers” of history.

These historiographical changes, which led to the king being seen as the “shaper of history” by which progress took place and because of the conception that the king was a human being, indicate that King Mongkut saw the level of ability and power of the Thai kings as not being equal. This led to certain kings being given extra accolades for the extraordinary amount of progress that occurred in their reigns. Or they might be recognized for their special ability in performing the royal duties well. Thus some kings became known as “*maharat*” (great king, or “the great”). Although the term *maharat* was not used during the reign of King Rama IV, the history recorded by Sir John Bowring reflected the new concept of “great” kings. Here, three Ayutthayan kings were singled out as being excellent, namely Kings U Thong, Naresuan, and Narai:

U T’one Rama-Thi-Bodi was a mightier Prince than any of His predecessors. . . . On the demise of Maha-Thamma raja, prince Naret succeeded to the throne, and became one of the mightiest and most renowned rulers Siam ever had. . . . King Narai, the most distinguished of all Siamese rulers. . . .¹⁰⁶

The singling out of these three kings gives importance to three events. First was the founding of Ayutthaya by U Thong. Second was the restoration of the kingdom by King Naresuan. Third was the promotion of the kingdom by the overseas contacts made by King Narai.

In addition to contradicting the religious-based belief, King Mongkut had become aware of a new type of historical consciousness. By this, as has been shown, the king was seen as

the “protagonist” of history, a king who “acts” to build a new society.

The acceptance of the king as society’s protagonist led to a change in the traditional understanding of *ratchawong*, to seeing it in a light that gave more importance to the successor’s ancestry. This new interpretation saw being the son of a previous king as a sign of “dharmic” favor bestowed on the crown prince. The new understanding of *ratchawong* implied the “right” to succeed to the throne. This is seen in the explanation King Mongkut gave regarding kings in Thai history. Concerning King U Thong, King Mongkut said the following:

This king, it is said, was son-in-law of his predecessor, who was named Sirichai Chiang Sen, who was without male issue, and therefore the throne descended to the son-in-law by right of the royal daughter.¹⁰⁷

Based on what was explained before, this passage tells clearly enough that had the child of Sirichai Chiang Sen been male, this child would have been the successor. Since this was not so, royal descent passed through the princess to the son-in-law, and then continued for another 15 reigns.¹⁰⁸

Because these interpretations of *ratchawong* implied the “right” to succeed, King Mongkut sought to show how new kings were descended from royal ancestors. Thus, as he explained regarding Maha Thammaracha, “The ruler of Northern Siam was Mahathamma rajarelated to the fourteenth king as son-in-law, and to the last as brother-in-law.”¹⁰⁹

When King Mongkut inscribed the names of 37 kings from the Ayutthayan and Thonburi periods on the bases of Buddha images, he described them as occurring due to two different reasons in the inscriptions. The first was peaceful succession to the throne:

The tenth king of Siam, reigning from 1470 to 1509; the Buddha image is shown in a seated pose, raising his right hand to suppress Mara . . . it is dedicated respectfully to Somdet Phra Ramathibodi II, who ascended to royal power in the great capital, Krung Thep Thawarawadi Si Ayutthaya in the year 832 of the Lesser Cycle.¹¹⁰

The second reason was the taking the throne after an armed struggle.

The fifteenth king of Siam, reigning from 1529 until 1555; the Buddha image is shown in a seated pose, raising his left hand. It is dedicated respectfully to Phra Mahachakrapadiraichathirat, who seized power in the great capital, Krung Thep thawarawadi Si Ayutthaya.¹¹¹

Following armed seizures of the throne, those who later succeeded to the throne were seen as justified heirs. This was the case with the sixteenth king of Siam”. The writings regarding these inscriptions showed well the thinking of King Mongkut. They show clearly his thoughts regarding the “succession” which then became the guiding principle in future successions.

Changes in the conception of succession which reached their culmination in the Fourth Reign were related to the historical understanding by the elite of that time. King Rama IV was also affected by this process. Beside the elite’s accepting the king as the “protagonist” of history and the creator of historical continuity, another result was the differentiating between different *ratchawong*.

By his clearly distinguishing between *ratchawong*, the King, through acceptance of the new historical understanding, took a step with important political implications. The idea of *ratchawong*, by conferring the “right” to the throne also brought with it other implications in this new historical consciousness regarding kings who did not act properly. That is if, as King Mongkut explained, “no one rose up in rebellion or committed treason against the king but continued living as if they were happy”.¹¹² It was because the ancestors of the king had ruled kindly over the grandmothers and grandfathers of the present-day citizens.¹¹³

This new historical consciousness spread to many people by means of King Mongkut’s announcements. Many of his announcements showed his new historical consciousness.¹¹⁴ At the same time, he transmitted this new way of understanding history to many close to him. Some of these were members of the next generation who played an important role in implementing the absolute monarchy. Among these was Prince Damrong Racnabhubhap, who

described how King Mongkut taught his son, Prince Chulalongkorn about the subject of being a king.¹¹⁵ King Chulalongkorn himself described how his Royal father taught him much about history.¹¹⁶

This change in historical consciousness and the acceptance of a new way of understanding history was transmitted to others. The way in which the Thai elite acted from the Fourth until the Seventh reigns shows well how these individuals facilitated the spread of this new historical consciousness.

The New Historical Consciousness as the Basis of the Absolute Monarchy

The intellectual force that inspired the elite, in particular the king, to see the monarch as the “protagonist” of history by which social change (progress) takes place led to the coming to be of a new kind of state. The intellectual force of the new conception of history that led to changes in how history was perceived was the basis for a new understanding of politics. Therefore, understanding this new conception of history will result in a better understanding of the politics at that time.

As stated above, the king was the only person who was seen as capable of changing history and satisfying the needs of society. The king did this, thus creating continuity from the past until the present reign. When taken together with the new belief in the possibility of progress, attitudes were changed so that kings were seen as obliged to “act” in order to satisfy the needs of society. This conception then led to the belief in the “duties” of the king.

King Mongkut explained the origin of the belief in a Royal mission by saying “the Siamese have been good and half bad for many generations. There are many who are really stupid.”¹¹⁷ As a result, there had to be a king to serve as the leader so that progress would occur. The King explained that “when one became an adult in the Kingdom, that person would see good things; would read and learn about everything according to the new traditions that were occurring in neighboring countries.”¹¹⁸

King Mongkut noted often that the king was the protagonist of history leading it on a

progressive course. He often stated that the king “*nam pai soeng phaendin*” (leading for the kingdom) as seen in the following passage:

The king, as ruler of all, is busy with many activities, living for bringing happiness, being a safeguard for the people, leading the kingdom, as is the way of the *dharma*.¹¹⁹

The stating of these intentions occurred in many of the King’s writings, such as in the Royal Gazette. An example of this is “the King spoke about how he was going to improve the kingdom and to make life better than before.”¹²⁰

Because of the thinking that the king was the protagonist of history, historical writings often used the phrase, “*phaendin phramahakasa*” (the kingdom’s king) to refer to the current ruler. This phrase was used to emphasize that the present king who was shaping the kingdom’s history at that time. This led to King Mongkut using the phrase “working for the kingdom”. He believed that it was the king’s duty to shape history.

Based on the belief that the king shaped history, it is possible to state that everything occurred because of the king’s shaping history. In this regard, King Mongkut stated:

The king, as the supreme ruler in Siam . . . acts for his relatives, for his royal relations in the *ratchawong*; for the government officials working at a depressed condition and for those in an elevated condition. The king acts appropriately for the different levels of government officials in various conditions; for those at the lower conditions up to the highest including councilors and ministers. He speaks to bring happiness and to support all people of every class in the Kingdom”¹²¹

In short it is clear that the king sees he is the source of everything in the kingdom. This was so regardless of wealth, land holdings, or social status that came as a result of economic factors. Thus the understanding that the king was the protagonist of history led to the strengthening of the belief that the king had to do everything for the Kingdom. Besides this, the understanding of history was the image of different reigns. The succession of kings according to bloodlines led to kings believing that the bloodlines that

ensured the continuation of the dynasty were the bloodlines of the Chakri dynasty.

It is necessary to point out here that at the early stages of this change in historical consciousness, phrases such as *Ratchawong Chakri* (Chakri dynasty) or *Borommaha Chakri Wong* (The Great Chakri dynasty) were not used. These terms only came to be used in the reign of King Rama V after the institution of decorations like the "Order of the Chakri Dynasty" or the building of the Chakri Palace. In any case, although these words did not change people's conception, they did indicate those changes. In this paper, the term *Ratchawong Chakri* shall be used rather than terminology previously employed because of its convenience and clarity.

The recognition of a Chakri Dynasty includes the belief of an origin with King Rama I. King Rama IV spoke of himself as a member of this *ratchawong* as follows: "King Mongkut, of the Kingdom of Siam is the Fourth Monarch of the Dynasty which founded Krung Ratanakosin-mahintharayuthaya".¹²² The king also used this terminology in his Chronicle of Krung Ratanakosin.¹²³

The belief in the dynasty's descent from King Rama I had a great impact on both King Mongkut and the elite of his time. This was because descent from King Rama I was a descent from a great king who had built many wondrous things. King Mongkut referred to this descent as follows:

My royal grandfather and father, both Kings [Rama I and Rama II], were illustrious founders of this *ratchawong* just as was Phrachao U Thong was the founder of the great city, Ayutthaya, the old royal capital . . . Thinking of their majesties and goodnesses [is because] they founded the great capital and the "*ratchawong*".¹²⁴

King Mongkut was not the only king to trace the origin of the dynasty to King Rama I. King Chulalongkorn also stressed the continuity in the dynasty in his announcements and writings. For example, in his 1873 Announcement on the Founding of a Council and Royal Establishments, he wrote that "King Chulalongkorn is the fifth king in the royal dynasty that has been ruling in Krung Thep Mahanakhon [Bangkok]."¹²⁵

There are two important announcements related to the founding of the dynasty and the capital. Besides being the king who has the duty to "act" for the benefit of the kingdom, as a member of a dynasty, the king must also "act" to enhance the dynasty's prestige and honor. As King Mongkut told Phra Boromawongsanuwong:

Work for the honor and prestige of King Rama II and King Rama III who carried on the dynasty and the line of King Rama I, the founder of the dynasty. Do not relax or stop working earnestly . . . go . . . help and conceive of new ways which will serve to ornament all of the royal kings of the dynasty.¹²⁶

When writing to Kromluang Wongsathiratsanit, King Mongkut indicated his clear awareness of this point. He wrote, "we are the kingdom. If we remain inert, thinking of nothing, we will lose our honor."¹²⁷

This continued stress on the dynastic links from the founding king and the builder of the capital city down to the present had another important impact on the elite, and King Mongkut in particular. This was that all things in the kingdom were royal possessions.

There were two aspects to this belief. The first appeared clearly in a writing by the king regarding accession to the throne. In discussing the coming to power of King Rama II, Mongkut observed:

The supreme ruler on becoming aged turned over his power to the Crown Prince, his Royal son. The Crown Prince received Royal power from his Royal father at the coronation.¹²⁸

The King explained that, as for King Rama III, "the second ruler [Rama II] . . . had fallen ill . . . not giving him the time to hand over the royal possessions to any particular individual . . ."¹²⁹ This clearly shows that the royal power is seen as belonging to the king which then makes it an "inheritance" for whomever the king designates.

The second aspect is related to the belief that royal power is a possession of the king just as all things in the kingdom also belong to him. As such the king is able to give such a possession to whomever he wants.

Notes

- ¹ Chaiyan Rajchagool, 1984 *The Social and State Formation in Siam, 1855–1932*. (Manchester: University of Manchester Ph.D. Dissertation).
- ² Nakharin Mektrarat, 1992 *Kan Patiwat Sayam Ph.S. 2475* [The Siamese Revolution of 1932] (Bangkok: Social Science and Humanities Foundation & The 60 Years of Democracy Project).
- ³ See details of Thai historiography in Charnvit Kasetsiri & Suchat Sawatsri, 1972 *Prawatisat Lae Nak Prawatisat Thai* [Thai History and Historians]. (Bangkok: Praphansan).
- ⁴ Nidhi Aeusrivongse, 1986 “*Watanatham Kra-thumphu Kap Wannakam Ton Ratanakosin*” [Feudal Society And Literature in the Early Ratanakosin Era], In *Pak Kai Lae Bai Rua* [Quill and Sail]. (Bangkok: Amarin) pp. 96–106.
- ⁵ Nidhi Aeusrivongse, 1986 “*Watanatham Kra-tumphu Kap Wanakam Ton Ratanakosin*” [Feudal Culture and Literature in the Early Bangkok Period], in *Pak Kai Lae Bai Rua* [Quill and Sail]. (Bangkok: Amarin) pp. 90–106.
- ⁶ *Ibid*, chapter 4.
- ⁷ *Ibid*, chapter 4.
- ⁸ *Ibid*, p. 324.
- ⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 281–282.
- ¹⁰ In the rules for monks, “good” actions include only those aimed at attaining nirvana. Traditionally, these were acts of merit making. At present, such acts include creative endeavors such as anonymously writing non-religious literature.
- ¹¹ *Phrarachpuccha Nai Khan Krung Ratanakosin Tangtae Ratchakan Thi 1-Ratchakan Thi 5*, 1970 [Royal Questions in the Ratanakosin Kingdom from the 1st until the 5th Reign] Vol. 2. (Bangkok: Khurusapha) p. 56.
- ¹² *Ibid*, p. 63.
- ¹³ *Ibid*, p. 63.
- ¹⁴ Prince Poworetsawariyalongkon, “*Ruang Racha-prawat Nai Rachakan Thi 4*” [Regarding the Biography of King Rama IV], in *Prachum Phra-rachaniphon Phasa Bali Nai Ratchakan Thi 4* [Collected Pali Writings in the Reign of King Rama IV], Part 1. (Bangkok: Mahamakut Rachawithayalai) p. 2.
- ¹⁵ King Mongkut, “*Khatha Sansoen Phrathama-winai* [Verse Celebrating the Vinaya], in *Prachum Phrarachaniphon Phasa Bali Nai Ratchakan Thi 4, Part 1*, pp. 66–70.
- ¹⁶ Sisuphon Chuangsakun, “*Khwamplianplaeng Khong Khanasong: Suksakorani Tammayut Nikai (Ph.S. 2368–Ph.S.2464)*” [Changes in the Sangha: the Case of the Thammayut Sect (1825–1921)]. (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University M.A. thesis in history) pp. 154–157.
- ¹⁷ King Mongkut, “*Khatha Thammabanyai*” [Verse Explaining the Dharma], in *Prachum Phrarachaniphon Phasa Bali Nai Ratchakan Thi 4, Part 1*, p. 105.
- ¹⁸ King Mongkut, “*Phraboromarachowat Sadaeng-baep Sin Yang Tam* (Royal Command Describing Lower Moralities, in *Prachum Phrarachaniphon Thai Nai Ratchakan Thi 4 Phak 1* (Collected Writings of the Fourth Reign, Part 1).
- ¹⁹ Somdet Phra Sangkharat (Sa), *Sarathanpariyai* (Printed for the cremation of Phrakhru Palatsamathiphat Silachan, 1925). (Bangkok: Sophon-phipphanthanakon) p. 11.
- ²⁰ Vajiranana Library, Thammakhadi Section, No. 6, Drawer 121, Title *Phromachariya Thetsana*.
- ²¹ Phra Sangkharat (Sa), 1920 *Sappaasam-annyanusatsani Akkat Patipathanusatsani*. (Printed for the cremation of Rongsawektho Khun Kanchanarangsan [Chan Semakanit]. (Bangkok: Sophon-phipphanthanakon Press) p. 19.
- ²² King Chulalongkorn, 1968 *Phratchaphithi Sipsong Duan* (Royal Ceremonies of the 12 Months). (Bangkok: Sinlapakon) p. 666.
- ²³ For examples see Prince Damrong Rachanaphab, *Khon Di Thi Khapachao Ruchak*, Vol III (Good People I Know), pp. 80, 126.
- ²⁴ Sisuphon Kuangsakun, “*Khwamplianplaeng Khong Khana Song . . .*” (Changes in the Sangha), pp. 45–51.
- ²⁵ King Mongkut, *Phratchaphithi Sipsong Duan*, pp. 430–433.
- ²⁶ King Chulalongkorn, 1975 “*Phraboramora-chathibai Waduai Khwamsamakki Kae Khwam Nai Khatha Thi Mi Nai Sayam Phaendin* (A Royal Explanation of Congeniality in the Kingdom of Siam) in *Prawatisat Lae Kanmuang* (History and Politics). (Bangkok: Thammasat University) pp. 174–175.
- ²⁷ King Mongkut, “*Khatha Thammabanyai* (A Discourse Explaining the Dharma) in *Prachum Phrarachaniphon Phasa Bali Nai Ratchakan Thi 4 Phak 1* (Collected Writings in Pali During the Fourth Reign, Part 1), p. 105.
- ²⁸ King Mongkut, 1962 “*Phrathutthabutsayrat*” In *Chumnum Phraboramratchathibai Nai Phrabat Somdet Phrachomklao Chaoyuhua Muat Boranasathan Lae Boranawattu* (Collected Royal Explanations by King Mongkut, Section on Ancient Monuments and Objects). Printed on the occasion of making terra cotta amulets and for the cremation of Achan Phanna Khanodop. (Bangkok: Wiratham) p. 37.
- ²⁹ *Ibid*.
- ³⁰ *Ibid*., p. 36.
- ³¹ *Ibid*.
- ³² *Ibid*., p. 34.
- ³³ *Ibid*., p. 35.

- ³⁴ King Mongkut, 1968 *Prachum Prakat Ratchakan Thi 4, P.S. 2408–2411* (Collected Royal Announcements of the Fourth Reign, 1865–1868). “*Phraratchakamnot Kuang Nalika* (Royal Setting of Clocks), pp. 142–145.
- ³⁵ King Mongkut, 1966 *Phraratchaniphon Nai Phrabat Somdet Phrachomklao Chaoyuhua Waduai Phongsawadan Phraphutthachinarat Chinasi Lae Phrasisatsada* (Royal Writings by King Mongkut on the Chronicle of the Chinarat, Chinasi, and Phrasisatsada Buddha Images). Printed for the funeral of Nang Punphuan Chomwithaya; King Mongkut, 1933 *Tamnan Phrasai Wat Pathum* (Account of Wat Pathum). Printed on the occasion of the Royal Kathin Ceremony sponsored by Prince Voradej (Bangkok: Sophonphiphathanakon); and King Mongkut, *Chumnum Phraboramoratchathibai Nai Phrabat Somdet Phrachomklao Chaoyuhua Muat Boranasathan Lae Boranawat*.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*
- ³⁷ King Mongkut, 1962 *Chumnum Phraboramora-chathibai Na Phrabat Somdet Phrachomklao Chaoyuhua Ruam 2 Muat* (Collected Royal Explanations by King Mongkut, including 2 Sections). Printed for the Cremation of Prince Thiptepsut Devakul, (Bangkok: Wat Thepsirin).
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*
- ³⁹ King Chulalongkorn, *Phrachaphithi Sipsong Duan*, p. ii.
- ⁴⁰ King Chulalongkorn, 1964 *Phrachakaran-yanuson*. Bangkok: Khlangwithaya.
- ⁴¹ King Chulalongkorn, *Rarachaphithi Sipsong Duan*.
- ⁴² Prince Damrong Rachanuphab, 1969 *Tamnan Ho Phrasamut: Ho Monthiantham Ho Wachirayan Ho Phutthasatsanasankha Lae Ho Samut Samrap Phranakhon*. (Bangkok: Akson Charoenthat).
- ⁴³ Prince Damrong Rachanuphab, 1964 “*Tamnan Loek Huai Lae Thua Pai*” In *Prachum Phongsawadan* (Collected Chronicles). Pt. 17, Vol. 12. (Bangkok: Khurusapha) pp. 157–292.
- ⁴⁴ When the same changes occurred in Western society, explanations arose for all things, so much so that one authority noted “Everything has a history”, Peter Burke, *The Renaissance Sense of the Past*, pp. 39–50.
- ⁴⁵ King Mongkut, *Phrarachahatlekha* (Royal Autograph Chronicle), p. 37.
- ⁴⁶ King Mongkut, 1984 *Phrachaniphon Nai Phrabat Somdet Phrachomklao Chaoyuhua* (Royal Writings of King Mongkut). (Bangkok: Sanmuanchon) pp. 22–23.
- ⁴⁷ Phrabath Somdej Pra Chomklaochaonhua, 1969 “The Brief Notices of the History of Siam”, In Sir John Bowring, *The Kingdom and People of Siam, Vol III*. (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford) p. 342.
- ⁴⁸ Nidhi Auesrivongse, “*Lok Khong Nang Nophamat* (The World of Nang Nophamat), in *Pak Kai Lae Bai Rua*, pp. 361–362.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 359.
- ⁵⁰ *Nang Nophamat*, p. 46.
- ⁵¹ George Hall Feltus, 1928 *Samuel Reynolds House Burut Chai Di* (S.R. House: A Man with a Good Heart). (Bangkok: Bunruang) p. 28.
- ⁵² William L. Bradley, 1976 *Siam Then*. (Pasadena: William Carey Library) p. 49.
- ⁵³ King Mongkut, “*Nana Thamawicharin*” (Collected Dharma Writings) in *Prachum Phrachaniphon Phasa Thai Nai Rachakan Thi 4 Phak 2* (Collected Thai Writings in the Fourth Reign, Part 2) p. 123.
- ⁵⁴ Nidhi Aeusrivongse, *Kanmuang Samai Phrachao Krung Thonburi* (Politics in the Time of King Taksin), p. 267.
- ⁵⁵ *Phraratchaphongsawadan Chabap Rachahatlekha* (Royal Autograph Chronicle). Printed for the cremation of Tailong Phonprapha, Thonburi, 1968.
- ⁵⁶ See discussion of the shaping of Thai borders in Thongchai Winichai, “*Prawatisat Kansang Tuaton*” (History of a Self-Creation) *Yu Muang Thai*, pp. 129–180.
- ⁵⁷ King Mongkut, 1978 *Phrarachhatlekha Khong Phrabat Somdet Phrachomklao Chaoyuhua* (Writings of King Mongkut) in work celebrating the 84th anniversary of Makutrachawithayalai. (Bangkok: Makutrachawithayalai) pp. 601–603.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 353.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 354.
- ⁶⁰ King Mongkut, *Prachum Phrachaniphon Phasa Bali Nai Ratchakan Thi 4 Phak 2* (Collected Pali Language Writings in the Fourth Reign, Part 2). (Bangkok-Thonburi: Mahamakutrachawithayalai) p. 553.
- ⁶¹ King Mongkut, *Phrarachahatlekha Khong Phrabat Somdet Phrachomklao Chaoyuhua* (Writings of King Mongkut) p. 31.
- ⁶² National Library, R4 C.S. 1219 *Chotmai Thung Thutanuthut Ruang Thoenam Phiphattaya Lae Ruang Suriyuprakha*, No. 134. *Phrarachhatlekha Thung Thutanuthut Mi Phramahamontri Pen Ton*.
- ⁶³ National Archives, R4, Lem 25, C.S. 1225 (1853) *Santra Waduai Yok Leksom Chaomuang Kromakan Sak Mai Hai Pen Rua Samrap Lattrawen*, cited in Niramon Thirawat, 1982 *Phrachadamri Thangkanmuang Khong Phrabat Somdet Phrachomklao Chaoyuhua* (Political Writings of King Mongkut) (M.A. thesis, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University) p. 326.
- ⁶⁴ *Nang Nophamat*, p. 46.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 12.
- ⁶⁶ Nidhi Aeusrivongse, “*Watanatham Kratomphi Kap Wanakam Ton Ratanakosin*” (Feudal Culture and Literature in the Ratanakosin Era), in *Pak Kai*

Lae Bairua, p. 90.

⁶⁷ King Mongkut, "Nanathamawicharini" in *Prachum Phrarachaniphon Phak Phasa Thai Na Ratchakan Thi 4 Phak 2* (Collected Writings in Thai During the Fourth Reign, Part 2) p. 134.

⁶⁸ King Mongkut, *Phrarachahatlekha*, p. 203.

⁶⁹ King Mongkut, *Phraratchahatlekha*, p. 203.

⁷⁰ King Mongkut, 1912 *Phrakhatha Ruang Phratchaphongsawadan Yo Krung Ratanakosin Phitsadan Nai Ratchakan Thi 4 Lae Phra Khatha Tamnan Phrakaeo Morakot Lae Phrakhatha Sansoen Phrathamawinai* (Accounts on the Ratanakosin Abbreviated Chronicle in the Fourth Reign and on the Emerald Buddha and on the worship paid the Vinaya. Printed for the cremation of Chao Chom-manda. (Bangkok: Bamrungnukulakit) pp. 15–16.

⁷¹ King Mongkut, *Phraratchahatlekha*, p. 29.

⁷² King Mongkut, *Phrakhatha Ruang Phrarachaphongsawadan Yo Krung Ratanakosin Phitsadan Nai Ratchakan Thi 4*, pp. 22–23.

⁷³ Nidhi Aeusrivongse, "Watanatham Kratumphi Kap Wanakam Ton Ratanakosin", in *Pak Kai Lae Bai Rua*, article no. 3.

⁷⁴ King Mongkut, *Prachum Prakat Ratchakan Thi 4 P.S. 2408–2411*, "Prakat Tuan Sati Hai Sanguan Khao Wai Yai Pho Kin Talot Pi (Announcement Warning to Store Rice for Use the Entire Year) p. 195.

⁷⁵ King Mongkut, *Prachum Prakat Ratchakan Thi 4 P.S. 2408–2511*, "Prakat Ruang Cha Phrarachathan Piawat Phra Orasot Phrathida Na Phra Bowon-rachawang" (Announcement on What Will be Given to the Princes and Princesses in the Palace), p. 7.

⁷⁶ Vajiranana Library, R4 CS 1215, No. 82. *Khvam Laolu 3 Prakan Thamnam Phrarachawang Phra-chaophaendin*.

⁷⁷ Vajiranana Library, R4 CS 1218, No. 107.

⁷⁸ Vajiranana Library R4, CS 1215, No. 82. *Sam Prakan Lae Kongsun Tangprathet Dai Ngoen Duan*.

⁷⁹ Sathian Lailak, *Prachum Kotmai Pracham Sok* (Collected Laws, By Year) Vol 6.

⁸⁰ See details in Ramphai Udomphachitrakun, 1984 "Kansawaeng ha Raidai Khong Phaendin Phainai Rachaanchak Thai Ph.S. 2398–2458" (The Search for Government Revenues in the Thai Kingdom, 1855–1915). (M.A. Thesis, Silapakorn University).

⁸¹ National Archives, CS 1209 No. 57, *Phrarachakamnot Phasiakon Tang Tang* (Announcement on Tax Rates).

⁸² King Mongkut, *Prachum Prakat Rachakan Thi 4 Ph.S. 2384–2400* (Collected Announcements of the Fourth Reign, 1841–1857); "Prakat Phim Khosana Phasi Ya", (Announcement of the Tax on Medicine), pp. 133–134.

⁸³ Sir John Bowring, 1969 *The Kingdom and People of Siam, Vol I*. (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford) p. 35.

⁸⁴ King Mongkut, *Phrarachahatlekha*, p. 51.

⁸⁵ King Mongkut, *Phrarachahatlekha*, p. 307.

⁸⁶ King Mongkut, *Chumnum Phraboromorachathibai Nai Phrabat Somdet Phrachomklao Chaoyuhua Muat Boranakhadi Boranasathan*.

⁸⁷ King Chulalongkorn, "Samakhom Supsuan Khong Boran Na Prathet Sayam" (Committee to Investigate Antiquities in Siam) *Silapakorn* 12 (July 1968), p. 43.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Saichon Wannarat, "Patikiriya Ik Miti Nung Samrap Sangkhitiyawong Kap Kanmuang Nai Raya Raek Tang Krung Ratanakosin" (Another Dimension Regarding the Sangkhitiyawong and Politics at the Founding of the Ratanakosin Capital City); *Ruambothkwam Prawatisat* 6, pp. 82–90.

⁹⁰ King Mongkut, "Nanathamawicharini", in *Prachumphrachaniphon PhasaThai Nai Ratchakan Thi 4 Phak 2*, pp. 126–127.

⁹¹ Dan Beach Bradley, ed., 1853 *Phraracha Phongsawadan Chabap Phim Song Lem*. (Bradley Printing of the Ayutthayan Chronicles). (Bangkok: Khlong Bang Luang).

⁹² *Phraracha Phongsawadan Krung Si Ayutthaya Chabap Phan Chanthanumat (Choem)* (Royal Ayutthayan Chronicles, the Phan Chanthanumat (Choem) Recension). (Bangkok: Khurusapha) 1969, p. 241.

⁹³ *Phraracha Phongsawadan Krung Si Ayutthaya Somdet Phra Phonarat* (The Royal Ayutthayan Chronicles, the Somdet Phra Phonarat Recension). (Bangkok: Khlung Withaya) 1972, pp. 579–580. It was formerly and erroneously believed that Somdet Phra Phonarat was the author. In fact it is the same recension as that printed by Bradley in 1853. See Ubonsi Atthaphan, 1981 "Kanchamra Phraracha Phongsawadan Nai Ratchasamai Phrabat Somdet Phraphuttha Yotfachulalok" (Writing Royal Chronicles during the Reign of King Rama I), (M.A. thesis, Sinlapakorn University) pp. 37–41.

⁹⁴ *Phraratcha Phongsawadan Chabap Phrarachahatlekha*, p. 545.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 462.

⁹⁶ *Phraracha Phongsawadan Chabap Phrarachahatlekha*, p. 616.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 603–604.

⁹⁸ King Mongkut, "Ruang Ratsadon Raluk Thung Phradet Phrakhun Phrachaophaendin" (On the People Paying Respects to the Power and Goodness of the King), in *Boranakhadisamoson Chumnum Phraboromarachathibai Nai Phrabat Somdet Phrachomklao Chaoyuhua* (Antiquities Society: Royal Explanations by King Mongkut), p. 8.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹⁰⁰ *Phraracha Phongsawadan Chabap Phrarachahatlekha*, p. 616.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 6–7.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

- ¹⁰³ Prince Damrong Rachanuphab, "Khunluang Tak Pen Ba Ru" (Was King Taksin Crazy?), in *Ruang Bua Benchaphan Lae Banthuk Rap Song Somdet Kromphraya Damrong Rachanuphab Prathan Mom Rachawong Sumonchat Sawatikun* (On the Benchaphan Lotus, Recorded to Receive Prince Damrong Rachanuphab by Mom Rachawong Sumonchat Sawatikun). Printed for the cremation of M.R. Bua Sanitwong and M.R. Thanyawat Sawatikun, Bangkok, 1959, p. 45.
- ¹⁰⁴ *Phraracha Phongsawadan Chabap Phrahatlekha*, pp. 65–66.
- ¹⁰⁵ King Mongku, *Phrarachakaranuson*. Bangkok: Khlang Withaya, 1964, pp. 22–41.
- ¹⁰⁶ Prabath Somdej Pra Chomklachaouhua, "The Brief Notices of the History of Siam," Sir John Bowring, *The Kingdom and People of Siam Vol. 2*, pp. 343–345.
- ¹⁰⁷ Prabath Somdej Pra Chomkloahua, "The Brief Notice of the History of Siam," Bowring, Vol II, p. 342.
- ¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 343.
- ¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 342.
- ¹¹⁰ King Mongkut, "Phrarachakaranuson", p. 27.
- ¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 29.
- ¹¹² King Mongkut, 1912 "Ruang Ratsaton Raluk Thung Phradet Phrakhun Chaophaendin," (On Citizens Remembering the Power and Good Qualities of the King), in *Chumnum Phraboramorachathibai Nai Phrabat Somdet Phrachomklao Chaoyuhua* (Collected Royal Explanations by King Rama IV). (Bangkok: printed for cremation of Prince Sinakhasawatsadi) pp. 6–7.
- ¹¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 6–8.
- ¹¹⁴ See *Prachum Prakat Ratchakan Thi 4*, for example "Ton Prakat Phrarachathan Laekplian Thi Wisung Kham Li Ma Muang Thonburi, 1862".
- ¹¹⁵ Prince Damrong Rachanuphab, *Khwamsongcham* (Reminiscences), p. 115.
- ¹¹⁶ King Chulalongkorn, *Phrarachaphiti Sipsong Duan*, pp. 63, 126, 163, 211, 666, 668.
- ¹¹⁷ King Mongkut, *Phrarachhatlekha*, p. 677.
- ¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 605.
- ¹¹⁹ King Mongkut, *Phrarachaphongsawadan Chabap Yo Krung Ratanakosin*, p. 83.
- ¹²⁰ King Mongkut, *Prachum Prakat Ratchakan Thi 4 Ph.S. 2400–2405* "Prakat Ruang Ok Nangsu Rachakitchanubeksa," [Announcement Regarding the Publishing of the Royal Gazette] p. 116.
- ¹²¹ King Mongkut, *Phrarachaphongsawadan Chabap Yo Krung Ratanakosin*, pp. 36–37.
- ¹²² King Mongkut, *Prachum Prakat Ratchakan Thi 4 Ph.S. 2405–2408* "Ton Prakat Phrarachathan Laekplian Thi Wisungkhamsima Muang Lopburi" [Announcement on the Exchange at Lopburi], p. 50.
- ¹²³ See in King Mongkut, *Phrarachaphongsawadan Yo Krung Ratanakosin Phitsadan Na Ratchakan Thi 4*.
- ¹²⁴ King Mongkut, *Prachum Prakat Ratchakan Thi 4 Ph.S. 2394–2400* "Prakat Khanan Nam Phra-phutthapotimakon Pracham Ratchakan," pp. 24–25.
- ¹²⁵ King Mongkut, "Prakat Waduai Tang Khaonsil Lae Phrarachabannyat", [Announcement on Establishing a Consulate and Royal Orders], in Chai-anan Samuddavanija and Khattiya Karnasutra, *Ekasan Kanmuang Kanpokkhong Thai Ph.S. 2411–2477*. [Thai Political and Administrative Documents, 1868–1934], p. 17.
- ¹²⁶ King Mongkut, *Prachum Prakat Ratchakan Thi 4 Ph.S. 2394–2400* "Phraboramorachawat Phrarachathan Rangwan Phoem Piawat Phramoromawongsanuwong" [Royal Order Regarding the Awarding of Prizes and the Increasing of the Subsistence allowance, p. 266.
- ¹²⁷ King Mongkut, *Phrarachahatlekha*, p. 59.
- ¹²⁸ King Mongkut, "Phrarachaphongsawadan Yo Krung Ratanakosin Phitsadan Nai Ratchakan Thi 4," pp. 10–11.
- ¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 14.