

## NOTE

### Prominent Mon Lineages from Late Ayutthaya to Early Bangkok

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Thai history from the late 16<sup>th</sup> to the early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries saw a series of Mon migrations from the kingdom of Hongsawadi in the Irrawaddi delta and its dependencies along the Andaman seaboard to the safe haven offered by the successive Siamese capitals of Ayutthaya, Thonburi, and Bangkok. Each of those flights from Burmese expansionist oppression was led by Mon chiefs who were rewarded with senior ranks, titles, and military functions in the Siamese nobility. They founded prominent lineages which retained their Mon ethnic identity over many generations of Siamese residence.<sup>1</sup> The dizzying swirl of intermarriages among those Mon noble lineages and between them and the Thai aristocracy offer unique insights into the social organization and political role of the Mon elite in Siam over the course of a particularly turbulent period of Thai history.

#### Some Mon Noble Lineages<sup>2</sup>

##### [1] Phraya Ram Chaturong (Chuan)

As a Mon chief (*saming*, a Mon term of rank roughly equivalent to the Thai *chao* or *phraya*), Chuan<sup>3</sup> apparently arrived at Ayutthaya with a large body

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<sup>1</sup> Ultimately, Mon ethnicity must be gauged in terms of self-identification; but as that essentially intangible indicator is not readily retrievable from the historical record other than through folk memory, such proxies as kindred, title, and personal name have here been relied on. For instance, one of the many means whereby the Mon sought to demonstrate their ethnicity in Siamese exile was the frequent use of personal names that included the syllable “*thong*” (“*tho*” in the Mon language), meaning “gold”—reminiscent, perhaps, of the ancient Mon homeland of Suvannabhumi, the Golden Land. That ethnic device is highlighted here with the hyphenation of all personal names that include either of those two syllables. However, care must be taken in using that ethnic identifier, as it was neither exclusively nor invariably a Mon usage.

<sup>2</sup> The following lineages have been grouped into five major clusters, each stemming from a single immigrant patriarch. In an attempt to deal with their complexity, the main entries under each lineage cluster are identified numerically in square brackets.

<sup>3</sup> Like several other personal names attributed to Mon nobles of the Ayutthaya and Thonburi periods, “Chuan” was not a Mon personal name. It may have been a Thai equivalent for a Mon name of different pronunciation, possibly “Choern.”

of followers fleeing Burmese oppression during the reign of King Boromakot (1733–1758) and was awarded the title of Phraya Thewarangsi. During the reign of King Ekatat (1758–1767) he was appointed Chakri Mon, chief of Siam’s Mon community, carrying the title of Phraya Ram Chaturong. He died in 1767 in the fighting that culminated in the fall of Ayutthaya.

He and Phraya Phetburi (Roeang) [3] were putative (possibly fictive) brothers. It appears that, through another close relative, possibly a younger sister and her Thai husband, they were both uncles of Nok-iang (Princess-Mother Thepamat), the mother of King Taksin.<sup>4</sup> Three of Chuan’s children established their own lines of descent: Thaw Songkandan (Thong-mon) [1a], Phraya Nakhon In (Ma Khon) [1b], and Khunying Paen [1c].

**[1a] Thaw Songkandan (Thong-mon)**—As a daughter of Phraya Ram Chaturong (Chuan), Thong-mon (or Moei-tho in Mon) was a putative niece of Phraya Phetburi (Roeang) [3] and thus apparently a cousin of King Taksin’s mother, Nok-iang. She married a minor prince (*mom chao*) of Ayutthaya, but there is uncertainty as to his identity.<sup>5</sup> Whatever the case, he died in the chaotic aftermath of the fall of Ayutthaya, leaving the widowed Thong-mon and her children to weather the storm and find their way to Thonburi. There she was provided with a place in the “Thonburi Grand Palace”, in the royal entourage of her kinswoman, Princess-Mother Thepamat (Nok-iang). After Nok-iang’s death in 1775, Thong-mon was assigned her former duties as guardian of the Inside, including the royal treasury, and with that important new function she received the eminent title of Thaw Songkandan.<sup>6</sup>

Thaw Songkandan and her children personified the historic watershed linking the Ayutthaya and Bangkok eras, being among the few survivors of the last generation of Ayutthaya’s aristocracy and contributing to both the Taksin and

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<sup>4</sup> As the daughter of a Thai man and as the younger sister of Phraya Phetburi (Roeang) and Phraya Ram Chaturong (Chuan), it is problematic whether Nok-iang would have retained her Mon ethnic identity through her parents’ (inter-ethnic) marriage and her own subsequent inter-ethnic marriage to a Chinese trader—and whether she would have passed any sense of that Mon ethnicity on to her son, the future King Taksin.

<sup>5</sup> Most sources claim that he was a son of Prince Thep Phiphit, who sought to establish a new kingdom at Phimai after the fall of Ayutthaya and who was overcome and executed by Taksin. Others suggest that he was a son of Prince Chit, who was elevated to the rule of Phisanulok in the aftermath of Ayutthaya’s fall and died soon thereafter in the fighting against the Burmese.

<sup>6</sup> Over the course of the Chakri dynasty the title of Thaw Songkandan was awarded to a succession of royal consorts. The function accompanying that title was, however, restricted to guardianship of the king’s personal treasury, with other administrative functions concerning the Inside (e.g., the kitchens, sanitary facilities, religious affairs, medical concerns, policing) being divided among other senior court ladies with the title *thaw* (e.g., Thaw Worachan, Thaw Inthara Suriya, Thaw Si Sacha, Thaw Rachakit Worapat, Thaw Sucharit Thamrong).

Chakri royal lineages. Of her six children, the following are of genealogical interest:<sup>7</sup>

- **Mom Thim**—She was accepted as a consort by King Taksin and bore Prince Amphawan, who in turn married his cross-cousin, Chaem, a daughter of his uncle Mom Thap (Phra Akson Sombat, another of Thong-mon's children). Of their six children, one daughter, Saeng, married Prince Phithak Thewet (Kunchon, a son of King Rama II), founder of the Kunchon royal lineage, and another, Phoeng, married Prince Rachasiha Wikrom (Chumsai, a son of King Rama III), founder of the Chumsai royal lineage.

- **Mom On (Phra Si Wirot)**—He married a daughter (name unknown) of Phraya Ratanachak.<sup>8</sup> Their great-grandson Phraya Chaiyanan Phiphitaphong (Choei), governor of Chainat province during the fifth reign, was founder of the Chaiyanan lineage, related to the maternal kindred of King Rama III.

- **Mom Thap (Phra Akson Sombat)**—He married Phong, a daughter of Phraya Phathalung (Khun, nicknamed Khang Lek) and Paen [1c]. (Phong was Thap's parallel cousin, as her mother, Paen, was a sister of Thong-mon.) Their daughter, Sap, was accepted as a consort by King Rama III and bore Prince Mataya Phithak (Siriwong, father of Princess Rampoei, who was raised to queen by King Rama IV and posthumously retitled Queen-Mother Thepsirin by King Rama V; and of Princess Lamom, who was raised by King Rama V to Princess Sudarat Rachaprayun).

- **Mom Chim**—She married Nai Nak, a son of Phraya Nonthaburi (Khanokchan, father of Riam, who was raised to Princess-Mother Si Sulalai by her son, King Rama III), a distant Mon kinsman. Their daughter Noi in turn married Phraya Si Saharat (Thong-pheng) [2c], a maternal grandson of Phraya Nakhon In (Ma Khon) [1b].

[1b] **Phraya Nakhon In (Ma Khon)**<sup>9</sup>—As the eldest son of Phraya Ram Chaturong, he stood in a preferential position to succeed his father as senior Mon military commander, or Chakri Mon. Why he was bypassed for that title

<sup>7</sup> As minor royalty, the children of a *mom chao* (prince), they bore the generic title of *mom*. (The lesser titles of *mom rachawong* and *mom luang* were not added until the fourth Chakri reign.)

<sup>8</sup> The Mon noble holding the title of Phraya Ratanachak traditionally served as commander of *Krom Athamat*, one of the principal Mon regiments in the Siamese army. The Phraya Ratanachak (personal name unknown) mentioned here preceded Phraya Ratanachak (Hong-thong), who arrived in Siam in 1815 as Saming Sodbao.

<sup>9</sup> *Ma* is a Mon honorific equivalent to the present-day Thai *khun* or *than*.

and function is unknown. Instead, as Phraya Nakhon In, he served as commander of *Krom Dap Song Moe*, one of Siam's several Mon military regiments. Nevertheless, his close association with the Chakri Mon continued through his marriage to a daughter (personal name unknown) of Phraya Ramanwong [2a], Chakri Mon during the Taksin reign. Phraya Nakhon In's daughter Thong-khon married Nai Chamnan (Thong-khwan, grandson of a senior Mon noble of the Ayutthaya era). Their eldest son, Phraya Si Sahathep (Thong-pheng) [2c], continued this eminent line of descent as forebear of the Siphon lineage. A second daughter, Hun, married Chaophraya Mahintharasak Thamrong (Phen Phenkhun). Their daughter Morakot was accepted as a consort by King Chulalongkorn and bore two children, Princess Chutharak Rachakumari and Prince Phichai (Phenphatanaphong), founder of the Phenphat royal lineage.

**[1c] Khunying Paen**—She married Phraya Phathalung (Khun, nicknamed Khang Lek). Their daughter Klin was accepted as a consort of King Rama I and bore Prince Kraison Wichit (Suthat), founder of the Suthat royal lineage. Through their senior son, Thong-khaw, Phraya Phathalung and Paen were the forebears of the na Phathalung lineage.

## **[2] Phraya Noradecha (Ma Pu)**

It appears that Ma Pu had served as the Burmese-appointed governor of Yangon until joining a Mon rebellion in the 1750s. With his family and some 400 followers, he fled to Tenasserim and from there to Siamese asylum. At Ayutthaya, he received the title of Phraya Noradecha and was posted as commander of a Mon regiment. After the fall of Ayutthaya, he joined King Taksin at Thonburi and, with the new title of Phraya Phetracha, was placed in charge of the Ministry of the Capital (*Krom Nakhonban*),<sup>10</sup> a position he held until his death in 1770.

The most important of his children were Phraya Ramanwong (Ma Dot) [2a], Phraya Sunrintharamat (Ma Tho-poen) [2b], Phraya Palanukhit Montri (Bunkhong),<sup>11</sup> Khunying Thong-in,<sup>12</sup> Phraya Krai Kosa (Son),<sup>13</sup> and Khunying

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<sup>10</sup> The main duty of the minister of the capital was maintenance of law and order. The assignment of police functions to the Mon nobility, as an extension of their military role, appears as a recurring theme in the history of Mon noble lineages.

<sup>11</sup> He served during the first Chakri reign as director of the Front Palace department of manpower registration. His wife, Khunying Sutchai, was a daughter of Phraya Racha Songkhram (Sawat) [4] and sister of Khunying Phawa (wife of Phraya Surintharamat [Ma Tho-poen] [2b]) and Khun Phrom (Sat).

<sup>12</sup> She married Phraya Chasaenyakon (Thurian), serving as director of the Front Palace department of the north during the first Chakri reign.

<sup>13</sup> He served during the second Chakri reign as director of the Front Palace department of trade.

Noi.<sup>14</sup> (There is a lingering suspicion, however, that some of these individuals may have been children rather than siblings of Phraya Ramanwong and Phraya Sunrintharamat, especially as several of them continued to be active well into the 19th century.)

**[2a] Phraya Ramanwong (Ma Dot)**—As Saming Samanchong, a Mon official serving in Burmese-controlled Yangon under his father, Saming Noradecha (Ma Pu) [2], Ma Dot joined the Mon rebellion of the 1750s and ended up fleeing to Ayutthaya. There, he received the title of Luang Bamroe Pakdi, eventually rising to Phraya Bamroe Pakdi. It has been suggested that in the tumultuous final days of Ayutthaya, with Phraya Ram Chaturong (Chuan) dead, he was elevated to Chuan's title in recognition of his leadership in battle.<sup>15</sup> Following the fall of Ayutthaya, he and his followers found their way to Thonburi, where King Taksin in due course—possibly in 1770, after the death of Ma Dot's father—conferred upon him the newly coined title of Phraya Ramanwong and appointed him Chakri Mon, head of Siam's Mon community. He commanded Mon military detachments in the Ratburi campaign of 1775 and at the battle of Phisanulok in 1776 but after that remained at Thonburi in command of the Royal Guard, the main military force left behind to protect the capital during the frequent absence of the army on campaign.

In the strife that led to the abdication of King Taksin in mid-March 1782, and in the ensuing turmoil that culminated in the enthronement of Chaophraya Maha Kasatsoek (Thong-duang) as the first Chakri king (today generally referred to as King Rama I) a few weeks later, Phraya Ramanwong and his troops remained loyal to Taksin. As a result, he was executed along with numerous other opponents of the Chakri faction in the days immediately following the first Chakri king's enthronement. However, his family was spared, and so his lineage survived.

Of his sons, the most prominent were Phraya Si Sorarat (Ngoen, Ma Dot's successor in continuing the Ramanwong lineage), Phraya Surasena (Khum, forebear of the Surakhup lineage),<sup>16</sup> and Phraya Ram (Bu). In addition, one of Phraya Ramanwong's daughters, Klin, married Phraya Chula Rachamontri (Nam), chief of Siam's Muslim community during the late third and fourth

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<sup>14</sup> She married Phraya Chula Rachamontri (Thoean), chief of Siam's Muslim community during the second and third Chakri reigns. She changed her religious affiliation to Islam to match that of her husband.

<sup>15</sup> However, that promotion is problematic in the presence of his father, Ma Pu, who would surely have been awarded the title first on grounds of familial seniority.

<sup>16</sup> Phraya Surasena (Khum) married Klip, a daughter of Phraya Ratanachak (Hong-thong). They had four children, one of whom was Phraya Rachasuphawadi (Pan), whose son, Phraya Mahanuphap (Pim), directed the construction of Wat Makut Kasatayaram during the fourth Chakri reign.

Chakri reigns. Their son, Sin, inherited his father's title of Phraya Chula Rachamontri, chief of Siam's Muslim community during the fifth Chakri reign.

**[2b] Phraya Surintharamat (Ma Tho-poem)**—He was a much younger brother of Phraya Ramanwong, born in Siam. During the Thonburi period he served as an aide to Chaophraya Surasi (Bunma, royal viceroy during the first Chakri reign), and his sons continued in that affiliation into the Bangkok era. His wife, Khunying Phawa, was a daughter of Phraya Racha Songkhram (Sawat) [4]. Their three sons, Phraya Rachasuphawadi (Khun-thong), Phraya Rachanukhun (Thong-kham), and Phraya Thepworachun (Thong-ho), are remembered for their collaboration during the third Chakri reign in rebuilding Wat Khun Phrom, dedicated to the memory of their uncle, Khun Phrom (Sat), their mother's brother. Wat Khun Phrom was renamed Wat Sam Phraya by King Rama III in their honor.

**[2c] Phraya Si Sahathep (Thong-pheng)**—He was the son of Nai Chamnan (Thong-khwan), who was, in turn, said to be a son of Luang Raksena (Chamrat) and grandson of Phraya Chasaenyakon (Charun) of the late Ayutthaya era.<sup>17</sup> Thong-pheng's maternal grandparents were Phraya Nakhon In (Ma Khon) [1b] and a daughter (personal name unknown) of Phraya Ramanwong (Ma Dot) [2a]. So on his mother's side Thong-pheng was descended from three leading Mon nobles of Ayutthaya, Phraya Ram Chaturong (Chuan) [1], Phraya Noradecha (Ma Pu, father of Ma Dot) [2], and Phraya Chasaenyakon (Charun).<sup>18</sup>

Thong-pheng married Noi, a daughter of Nai Nak (himself a son of Phraya Nonthaburi<sup>19</sup>) and Mom Chim (a daughter of Thaw Songkandan). Nai Nak's sister Riam (eventually retitled Queen-Mother Si Sulalai) was accepted as a consort of King Rama II and bore Prince Chesada Bodin (Thap), who became the third Chakri king (Rama III). Thong-pheng thus entered the entourage of Prince Chesada Bodin. With such impeccable connections, he enjoyed many advantages. From initial service as a clerk in the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the North (*Krom Mahadthai*) he rose swiftly to Moen Phiphit Akson, then Luang Si Sena, and finally Phraya Si Sahathep, in charge of teak timber tax collections.

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<sup>17</sup> Thong-khwan and Thong-pheng are solidly Mon personal names. Charun and Chamrat, however, are said to be modern Thai personal names. That anomalous nomenclature sequence remains unexplained.

<sup>18</sup> Thong-pheng's father, Nai Chamnan (Thong-khwan), followed common practice under the Mon/Thai bilateral kinship system in taking up residence in his wife's home and ultimately sharing in her inheritance, which is how Thong-pheng ended up gaining possession of the property of his maternal ancestors.

<sup>19</sup> Phraya Nonthaburi (Khanokchan) is said to have been a distant relation of Phraya Nakhon In (Ma Khon).

Phraya Si Sahathep (Thong-pheng) was the forebear of the Siphon lineage. Among his sons were Phraya Si Sahathep (Phoeng), who established the Siphon surname, Phraya Si Singhathep (Run), and Phraya Nikon Kitikan (Kak, or Ong-naewchan in Mon), who served as governor of Phrae during the sixth reign.

### [3] Phraya Phetburi (Roeang)

As putative brother of Phraya Ram Chaturong (Chuan) [1], Roeang presumably arrived in Siam with him during the reign of Ayutthaya's King Boromakot. Around 1757, not long after his arrival, he was appointed governor of the Mon population center and naval base of Phetburi. As a close relative of Thaw Songkandan (Thong-mon), he was in turn related to Princess-Mother Thepamat (Nok-iang). However, he had no opportunity to benefit from those illustrious kinship ties at the Thonburi court, as he survived the fall of Ayutthaya only to fall in battle soon thereafter, during the course of King Taksin's southern campaign of 1769. The most important of his sons were Chaophraya Phichai Racha (personal name unknown) [3a] and Chaophraya Surabodin Surinroechai (Bunmi) [3b].

**[3a] Chaophraya Phichai Racha (personal name unknown)**—As governor of Sawankhalok, he was also commonly known as Chaophraya Sawankhalok. He was executed for the crime of unwittingly insulting King Taksin by seeking his consent to marry one of his ladies-in-waiting whom the king had already bedded and made pregnant.<sup>20</sup> Prior to that ill-fated petition for an addition to his personal harem, Chaophraya Phichai Racha had already had two wives. His senior wife was Mom Sopha, a survivor of the Ayutthaya royal family. Their daughter, Im, married Phraya Phochana Phimon (Thong-yu), a Mon noble of unknown lineage.

During the Thonburi period Thong-yu served as a monk at Wat Rakhang carrying the senior ecclesiastical title of Phra Wanarat. In that capacity, he served as mentor to Chim (later King Rama II), the eldest son of Chaophraya Maha Kasatsoek. At the start of the first Chakri reign, he was disrobed for his transgressions under King Taksin, but in view of his scholarly qualifications he was in due course appointed to a post in the Royal Pages Corps (*Krom Mahadlek*), eventually rising to Phraya Phochana Phimon. Having returned to the laity and married a daughter of Chaophraya Phichai Racha, he presented his daughter, Em, as a consort to King Rama II. The king could not, however, accept a daughter of his former spiritual mentor, so passed her to his eldest son, Prince

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<sup>20</sup> A softened version of that tale has it that his offense consisted of his claim to being a brother-in-law of King Taksin.

Chesada Bodin (later King Rama III). Em was accepted as a consort by Prince Chesada Bodin and bore Prince Chumsai (eventually raised to Prince Rachasiha Wikrom), founder of the Chumsai royal lineage.

Chaophraya Phichai Racha's other wife was Than Phuying Bunmi. Her son, Chaophraya Surabodin Surinroechai (Bunchi, not to be confused with his identically titled uncle, Bunmi [3b]), in turn had many children, the most memorable among them being Long, who rose to Chaophraya Pholathep, head of the Ministry of Lands (*Krom Na*), during the third Chakri reign and was forebear of the Bunlong lineage.

**[3b] Chaophraya Surabodin Surinroechai (Bunmi)**—He appears not to have survived the fall of Ayutthaya and is remembered solely through his son Hon, whose full Mon name is said to have been Hon-thong. As Luang Sorawichit, Hon was posted during the Thonburi period to Uthaithani, a key upriver Mon refugee way station and settlement area. During the civil strife at Thonburi in 1782 he kept Chaophraya Maha Kasatsoek, who was absent with the army on campaign in Cambodia, informed of developments. He was duly rewarded by King Rama I with the post of director of the Merchandise Warehouse Department (*Krom Khlang Sinkha*) carrying the title of Phraya Phiphat Kosa, and he was later raised to the exalted position of Chaophraya Phra Khlang, head of the Ministry of Trade and Foreign Affairs (*Krom Phra Khlang*). His children included Phum, a childless consort of King Rama II, and Nim, another consort of King Rama II and mother of Prince Dechadison (Mang), forebear of the Dechatiwong royal lineage.

**[4] Phraya Racha Songkhram (Sawat)**

Phraya Naranukhit Montri (Nu) was another of the many Mon chiefs who entered the service of King Boromakot. His eldest son, Sawat, served in Ayutthaya's Front Palace Pages Corps (*Mahadlek Wang Na*) under Prince Sena Phithak (Kung) and then Prince Uthumphon (Dok-madua), with the junior title of Nai Narin Thibet. When Ayutthaya fell in 1767 Sawat was captured by the Burmese. Discovering his Thai-Mon bilingual skills, his captors appointed him to a captaincy of the war prisoners being conveyed to Pegu. They then conscripted him to serve as an officer in their campaign to take Chiangmai. Heading the levy of Siamese captives forced to serve the Burmese on the Chiangmai campaign with Sawat was Chaophraya Aphai Montri, one of the most senior of the nobles carried off from Ayutthaya. When Chaophraya Aphai Montri died on the march, Nai Saeng, his son, along with Sawat and their company of conscripts, defected to the Thai forces commanded by Chaophraya Chakri (Thong-duang).

Upon arrival at Thonburi, Sawat was appointed to the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the North (*Krom Mahadthai*, headed by Chaophraya Chakri) with the title of Luang Chat Surenthon. He subsequently fought in the battle of Bang Kaew, Ratburi (1775) and for his valor was promoted to Phra Racha Songkhram. Later he participated in the siege of Phisanulok (1776) and was promoted to Phraya Racha Songkhram. His continuing subaltern's role in the military campaigns led by Chaophraya Maha Kasatsoek ensured his affiliation with the Chakri faction in the events leading to the dynastic transition of 1782. But his bright prospects ended with his death shortly before the end of the Thonburi era.

Sawat married Lamun, a daughter of Phraya Wichitmali, a provincial governor under King Taksin. They had four children. One of their daughters, Phawa, moved out when she married Phraya Surintharamat (Ma Tho-poen) [2b], and the other, Sutchai, left upon marrying Phraya Palanukhit Montri (Bunkhong). Their son Trut, too, moved out to live with his wife downriver at Ban Tawai, where his government service eventually earned him the title of Luang Wisut Yothamat. That left only their son, Sat, who attained the minor title of Khun Phrom. Sat continued to administer the family's lucrative business interests and inherited the family residence, and when he died without progeny the lineage was left dispersed.

#### [5] **Chaophraya Mahayotha (Cheng)**

His father, the Mon governor of Myawadi, a Burmese principality across the frontier from Mae Sot, was reputedly a younger brother of Banya Dala, the last independent Mon ruler of Hongsawadi prior to its final fall to the Burmese in 1757. Under the Burmese, Cheng (Choeng in Mon) served as a military officer in the incursions into the Lao states, attaining the senior title of Saming Kiat. At Chiangsaen he was appointed military commissioner and took a daughter of the former ruler as his consort; their son was the ancestor of the na Lampang lineage. Cheng was subsequently promoted by his Burmese overlords to the governorship of Troen (Ataran), a subsidiary of Martaban fronting the Three Pagodas Pass.

After years of service to the Burmese, he became involved in a Mon uprising and in 1775 fled to Thonburi as leader of a contingent of some 3,000 troops, part of a larger Mon migration totaling some 10,000. King Taksin awarded him a military commission along with the title of Phraya Cheng, under the administrative authority of Phraya Ramanwong (Ma Dot) [2a], chief of Siam's Mon military. Friction soon arose between the two Mon leaders, however, as Phraya Cheng, though younger and a newer arrival, considered himself to hold senior status (of royal descent) within the Mon social hierarchy. That conflict came to a head in the factional strife following the abdication of King Taksin, with Phraya Ramanwong remaining loyal to the Thonburi regime (temporarily co-opted by Phraya San) while Phraya Cheng sided with the Chakri faction. Upon

the victory of the Chakri faction and the installation of its leader as the first Chakri king, Phraya Ramanwong was executed, while Phraya Cheng was rewarded with promotion to Phraya Mahayotha as the new Mon military chief.<sup>21</sup>

In 1785 the Burmese mounted yet another massive invasion of Siam. The Thai responded with an attack on the invaders at Tambon Lat Ya, Kanchanaburi. Phraya Mahayotha participated in that battle as leader of a 3,000-man Mon regiment. He and his troops also participated in the retaliatory Siamese attack on Tavoy in 1787. In recognition of that support he was promoted to the rank of *chaophraya*.

Around 1815, during the second Chakri reign, Chaophraya Mahayotha (Cheng) was placed in charge of mobilizing and directing manpower for the construction of a fort at the site of the old Mon settlement of Prapadaeng near the mouth of the Chaophraya River. That fortified military outpost was named Nakhon Khoeankhan (Mighty Barrier City). It was garrisoned with Mon conscripts supplied by Cheng, and Cheng's third son, Tho-ma, was installed as the first governor with the title of Phraya Nakhon Khoeankhan. The governorship of Nakhon Khoeankhan was retained by Cheng's lineal descendants through eight consecutive appointees, until Siam's provincial administrative system was revised in the sixth Chakri reign.

**[5a] Chaophraya Mahayotha (Tho-ria)**—The second son of Chaophraya Mahayotha (Cheng) [5], but considered the foremost in ability, Tho-ria was born in the Mon country and accompanied his father to Siam in 1775 at age 13. He entered the Royal Pages Corps (*Mahadlek*) at Thonburi and continued that apprenticeship into the first Chakri reign. In due course he was appointed to serve under his father as an officer in Siam's Mon military. Upon his father's death around 1820, he was promoted to Phraya Mahayotha, replacing him as Siam's Mon military chief. At the start of the third Chakri reign (1824) his title was raised to Chaophraya Mahayotha.

Like his father, Tho-ria played an important military role. In 1820 he commanded a Mon infantry regiment in a general Siamese mobilization against a threatened Burmese invasion that never materialized. During the course of the British invasion of lower Burma in 1824, he skirmished across the Tenasserim divide and swept up Mon villagers for forced resettlement in the Siamese

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<sup>21</sup> In sharp contrast to the abundant evidence of frequent intermarriage among Siam's prominent Mon noble lineages, there is no indication of any intermarriage between descendants of Phraya Ramanwong and those of Phraya Cheng. Evidently, the memory of former antipathies long persisted, despite efforts to erase them from the record. Even in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, several descendants of Thonburi's Old Mon nobility have voiced to the author a trace of lingering resentment against the ascendant New Mon lineages of the Bangkok era.

lowlands.<sup>22</sup> And in 1826–1827 he participated in a massive Thai campaign against Vientiane to defeat the so-called “Chao Anu rebellion.” That is the last occasion on which Tho-ria is known to have served as a military leader.

Tho-ria fathered 10 children, among them Phraya Mahayotha (Chui) [5b], Phraya Kiat (Wan), and Mom Chamot, wife of Prince Bua (son of Prince Surasinghanat, viceroy during the first Chakri reign). Though the date of his death is not recorded, he lived long enough to rejoice in the birth of his great-grandson Prince Krisada Phinihan (later titled Naret Worarit) in 1855, an event that cemented his family’s ties to the Chakri dynasty.

**[5b] Phraya Mahayotha (Chui)**—He was the fourth son of Chaophraya Mahayotha (Tho-ria) [5a] but attained seniority through the early deaths of his elder siblings. As Phraya Damrong Rachapholakhan, before being promoted to Phraya Mahayotha, he served as the second governor of Nakhon Khoeankhan. He is recorded as having sired as many as 35 children. The best-known among them were Sonklin and Nok-kaew, though a number of others are remembered as having married into other important noble lineages of the fourth and fifth Chakri reigns, particularly the Bunnag lineage.

Sonklin was accepted as a consort of King Rama IV and in due course bore Prince Naret Worarit (Krisada Phinihan), founder of the Kridakan royal lineage. She was an exceptional woman, particularly in her fervent championship of Mon culture within courtly society, her patronage of many Mon villages and sponsorship of many Raman temples, and her efforts to exert a Mon influence on the upbringing of her son, Prince Naret, including her personal selection of his Mon senior wife and several Mon minor wives.

Her younger brother, Nok-kaew, served as the third governor of Nakhon Khoeankhan with the title of Phraya Damrong Rachapholakhan. In 1883 he was co-opted by his nephew, Prince Naret, then serving as Siam’s ambassador at London, to serve as the embassy’s secretary. With his promotion to Phraya Mahayotha after his father’s death, he served as ambassador at Berlin from 1887 to 1891 and subsequently as ambassador to Great Britain, the Netherlands, Belgium, and the United States of America. He is said to have been one of the most popular and successful Siamese ministers at the Court of St. James. The Khochaseni lineage proceeded through his descendants.

<sup>22</sup> In connection with that British intervention into Burmese affairs, Captain Henry Burney was sent to Bangkok for treaty negotiations. The British contemplated the possibility of reconstituting the Mon kingdom as a means of containing the Burmese, so Burney proposed that Tho-ria—on the grounds of his purported Mon royal ancestry—be offered the rule of an independent Mon state. That proposal proved unworkable primarily because the Mon leadership was unwilling to contemplate the exchange their privileged position in Siam for an uncertain future in Burma and also, it appears, because King Rama III feared that a resurrection of Hongsawadi might result in a wholesale Mon exodus from Siam.

## Some Mon Contributions to Siamese Royal Lineages

### Mon elements in King Taksin's lineage

Though commonly considered to have been of Chinese race and ethnicity through his father, Tae Cheng-yung (or Tae Hai-hong), King Taksin can equally well be deemed to have been Mon through his mother, Nok-iang, a relative (possibly a niece) of Phraya Ram Chaturong (Chuan) [1] and Phraya Phetburi (Roeang) [3].<sup>23</sup> At Thonburi Nok-iang was provided with royal quarters in the Inside (the women's precinct) of the Grand Palace with the title of Princess-Mother Thepamat, and there she took up the role of *mae wang*, female guardian of the palace, until her death in 1775. Taksin relied on his mother's judgment in entrusting her kinswoman, Thaw Songkandan (Thong-mon) [1a], with senior responsibilities within the Grand Palace. She, like a number of other ladies of the former Ayutthaya court who had found their way to Thonburi following the devastation of Ayutthaya, played an important contributory role at Thonburi in the revival of Ayutthaya court administration, ritual, and etiquette.

Mon pedigrees were transmitted by King Taksin and his progeny to the Chakri dynasty through two princes of the Thonburi period. First, Taksin accepted Tim, a daughter of Thaw Songkandan, as a consort. Her son, Prince Amphawan, in turn married a Mon noblewoman, Chaem. One of their daughters, Saeng, married Prince Phithak Thewet (Kunchon, a son of King Rama II), founder of the Kunchon royal lineage. Another daughter, Phoeng, married Prince Rachasiha Wikrom (Chumsai, a son of King Rama III), founder of the Chumsai royal lineage. The other Mon infusion was through the marriage of Taksin's son, Prince Naren Rachakuman, to Thaw Si Satayanurak (Noi), a daughter of the Mon noble, Phraya Ratanachak (Hong-thong).<sup>24</sup> Three of their granddaughters, Malai, Iam, and Phan, were accepted as consorts by Phra Pinklao (Chutamani), viceroy

<sup>23</sup> On ethnic (i.e., socio-cultural) rather than racial (i.e., biological) grounds, Taksin was evidently far more Chinese than Mon. His firmly Chinese upbringing is evident in apocryphal tales of his preference for wearing a queue rather than the short hairstyle of his Mon and Thai peers as a youth in the Front Palace Pages Corps (*Mahadlek Wang Na*) at Ayutthaya. His later promotion of Chinese immigration and support of the Chinese merchant community at Thonburi is well documented. But the favors he bestowed upon his Mon kin during the course of his reign, under the influence of his widowed mother, cannot be discounted.

<sup>24</sup> It is recorded that Pom, a daughter of Phraya Ratanachak, became a consort of King Rama I and bore Princess Rerai. Em, another daughter of that same Mon nobleman, became a consort of King Rama II and bore Prince Worasak Phisan (Arunwong), founder of the Arunwong royal lineage. However, Prince Worasak and Princess Rerai were both born before Phraya Ratanachak (Hong-thong) arrived in Siam. Their mothers must therefore have been the offspring of an earlier Phraya Ratanachak (personal name unknown), about whom no other information is available.

during the fourth Chakri reign. Malai bore Princesses Duang Prapa and Suda Sawan; Iam bore Prince Panumat, founder of the Panumat lineage; and Phan bore Princess Thanom.

### **Forebears of the Chakri dynasty**

Among the Mon military officers accompanying Prince Naresuan to Ayutthaya from Hongsawadi in 1584 was Phraya Kiat (personal name unknown), the earliest-recorded ancestor of the Chakri dynasty. He is said to have married Princess Amphai (later popularly known as Chao Mae Wat Dusit), a daughter of Naresuan's younger brother, Prince (later King) Ekathotsarot. One of the sons of Princess Amphai and Phraya Kiat was Chaophraya Kosa Thibodi (Pan). His male line of descendants, in sequence, is reported to have been Chaophraya Worawong Thirat (Thong, or Khun-thong), Chamoen Mahasanit (Thong-kham), and Phra Akson Sunthonsat (Thong-di), culminating in King Rama I (Thong-duang). Through that male line the Chakri dynasty claims firm ties to Ayutthaya's Old Mon nobility.

The Mon ethnic affiliation of the early Chakri kings was further strengthened through the female line. Queen-Mother Amarin (Nak), wife of King Rama I, was one of 10 children of a wealthy Mon family residing at Bang Chan, Amphawa District, located in the lowlands near the mouth of the Maeklong River. Her siblings were installed as adjunct members of the Chakri dynasty, and three of them produced lines of descent, collectively termed the Bang Chan branch of the Chakri dynasty: her elder brother Chuto founded the Chuto royal lineage (divided over time into the Chuto, Sawat Chuto, and Saeng Chuto lines); her younger sister Nuan married Nai Bunnak (raised to Chaophraya Akha Mahasena by King Rama I), founder of the Bunnag lineage; and her younger sister Kaew married Phraya Samut Songkhram (Son). Of Nak's own nine children, her eldest son Chim became the second Chakri king (Rama II) and her second son Chui rose to viceroy in the second reign. All her children were reared with a strong exposure to Mon culture, spending part of their childhood in their Mon ancestral household at Amphawa. Over the course of her long life—she lived to 1826—Nak exerted a lasting influence on her grandchildren, including her eldest grandson, Prince Chesada Bodin, the future King Rama III, and Prince Mongkut, the future King Rama IV.

### **Further Mon infusions into the Chakri dynasty**

The ancient Southeast Asian aphorism that women strive upward while men reach down describes succinctly the kinship relations between Siam's Mon nobility and Thai royalty. Royal preferment was actively pursued by the Mon

nobility through the presentation of their daughters at court, in hopeful anticipation of their selection as royal consorts and ultimately their conjugal fulfillment as royal mothers. There were two routes whereby women of the Mon nobility could contribute to the lineages of the Chakri dynasty—through their marriage to princes, and through marriage to kings or viceroys (including the special case of princes who went on to become kings or viceroys). The first route contributed children of *mom chao* rank, whereas the second route produced offspring of *phra ong chao* rank. Of those children, the daughters were prohibited from marrying anyone of lesser rank than their fathers and thus, in effect, were prevented from producing further generations of their lineages.

Some 50 Mon women, or women of Mon descent, are reported to have become royal mothers in the Grand Palace over the course of the Bangkok era: seven in the first Chakri reign, seven in the second reign, four in the third reign, six in the fourth reign, and 26 in the fifth reign. An additional, unknown number of Mon women achieved motherhood as wives of Chakri dynasty princes. Of those who bore children, nearly half had only daughters, who for the reason given above remained childless. Furthermore, a number of their sons, due to illness, infertility, premature death, monastic vocation, or sexual preference, failed to sire any children. So the actual number of Chakri dynasty lineages produced by these Mon mothers was limited to the instances summarized in the following table.

## Some Mon contributions to the royal lineages of King Taksin and the Chakri dynasty

### 1. Royal lineages arising from the marriage of Mon women (or women of Mon descent) to kings

<b>Mother <sup>a</sup> (queen/consort)</b>	<b>Father (king)</b>	<b>Son (king/prince)</b>	<b>Royal lineage(s)</b>
Thim [ <b>1a</b> ]	Taksin	Amphawan	various
Chim Yai	Taksin	Kasat Anuchit	various
Amarin (Nak)	Rama I	Rama II Rama II's viceroy	all of Rama II's sons' lineages all of Rama II's viceroy's sons' lineages
Si Sulalai (Riam)	Rama II	Rama III	all of Rama III's sons' lineages
Em	Rama II	Worasak Phisan	Arunwong
Sap [ <b>1a</b> ]	Rama III	Mataya Phithak	Siriwong
Em Yai [ <b>3a</b> ]	Rama III	Rachasiha Wikrom	Chumsai
Thepsirin (Rampoei) [ <b>1a</b> ]	Rama IV	Rama V Chakrapadiphong Phanuphan	all of Rama V's sons' lineages Chakraphan Phanuphan
Iam	Rama IV's viceroy	Panumat	Panumat
Sonklin [ <b>5b</b> ]	Rama V	Naret Worarit	Kridakan
Morakot [ <b>1b</b> ]	Rama V	Phichai	Phenphat

### 2. Royal lineages arising from the marriage of Mon women (or women of Mon descent) to princes

<b>Mother <sup>a</sup> (wife/consort)</b>	<b>Father (prince)</b>	<b>Royal grandfather</b>	<b>Royal lineage</b>
Klin [ <b>1c</b> ]	Kraison Wichit	Rama I	Suthat
Chamot [ <b>5a</b> ]	Bua	Rama I's viceroy	Pathomsing
Saeng [ <b>1a</b> ]	Phithak Thewet	Rama II	Kunchon
Prang Yai	Wongsa Thirat Sanit	Rama II	Sanitwong
Nim [ <b>1b</b> ]	Dechadison	Rama II	Dechatiwong
Phoeng [ <b>1a, 1c</b> ]	Rachasiha Wikrom	Rama III	Chumsai

\***Note:** *a* Numbers in bold brackets refer to Mon lineages listed in the text.

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