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**THE DYNAMICS OF CULTURAL
SYMBOLISM AS A COMPONENT OF THAI
STATE EXPANSION IN THREE
FRONTIERS OF SIAM, C.1873-1910**

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ABSTRACT

The interactions of the modern Thai state, its notions of national identity and unity, with its frontiers are often treated as peripheral subjects in historical studies of late 19th century Siam and its state development. This thesis, however, examines how the cultural symbolism of a changing Siam, influenced by the experience of global imperial expansion, was adapted in a dynamic process of integrating three frontier zones during 1873-1910. It examines the similarities and differences within the process of Thai cultural extension into the northern, north-eastern and southern frontiers, and explores the local reactions these cultural and symbolic political activities provoked. It looks at two important cultural symbols – Kingship and Buddhism – as they became signifiers of Thai national culture as the central state tried to become a unifying force in frontiers.

The thesis is divided into three main parts. The first part considers the broader framework of global transformation from the 1850s, and how Siam was influenced and participated in these changes, leading to its need to integrate frontiers into its territory. The second and third parts address the comparison in the methods and the dynamics of cultural symbolism as a component of Thai state expansion in the three predominantly non-Thai zones. The thesis considers the reactions evidenced in the attempted Malay rebellion, Holy Men rebellion and Shan rebellion, which all occurred in 1901-02. Thus, the thesis offers novel insights helping to support new understanding of how Thai national culture and its symbolism became an important but locally dynamic and differentiated component in integrating distinct frontier zones. Overall, the thesis demonstrates the dynamics of Thai national culture as a component of political change have been shaped and reshaped regarding internal and external pressures, enabling us to understand Thai state development beyond the narrow narrative of the central Thai state itself.

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NOTES ON TRANSCRIPTION

All Thai terms in this research have been transcribed using the Royal Thai General System of Transcription. These terms have been given in *Italic*, for example: Circle (*Monthon*), Uposatha Day (*wan phra*) or *mueang phi mueang nong* (Sister Cities). Sometimes, the Thai language has been used after the transcription of Thai terms. This is to mark out significant keywords and to help some readers who can read Thai to understand the particular context with greater precision, for example, Maitreya (*Phra Si Ariya Mettrai*-พระศรีอาริยเมตไตรย) or the ceremony of drinking the water of allegiance (*phithi thue nam phiphat satcha*-พิธีถือน้ำพิพัฒน์สัตยา). However, there have been exceptions for some Thai names and words that are widely used to keep the commonly preferred usage for each person or word. For instance, I used Rajanubhab instead of using Rachanuphap, Srisahadheb instead of using *Srisahathep* or Vajirananavarorasa instead of *Wachirayanawarorot*. The references at the bottom of the pages are given in English, with a transcribed version and Thai for the first-time citation while for materials that are already cited I have provided only the English version to keep the footnote text to a minimum.

NOTES ON CALENDAR

Calendar systems on many documents during the period of this study used three different systems. 'C.S.' (*chunla sakarat*-จุลศักราช) or the year that ran from B.E. 1181 was used from at least the Ayutthaya period to Rattanakosin until 1887. The 'R.S.' system was also in use during the period of this thesis, referred to as the Bangkok Era (*rattanakosin sok*-รัตนโกสินทร์ศก). This ran from the year of founding Bangkok in 1782 that was equivalent to R.S.1. It was not until 1911 that 'B.E.' or the Buddha Era (*phuttha sakarat*-พุทธศักราช) was introduced to replace the R.S. system. Furthermore, the first day of the Thai year traditionally was 1st April and the last day of the year was 31st March. It was not until 1940 that the first day of the year was changed to run from 1 January in accordance with the western calendar. The examples of calendar conversion are provided below:

- To convert C.S. to B.E., it needs to be **plus 1181**

Ex. C.S.1246+**1181** = B.E.2427

- To convert R.S. to B.E., it needs to be **plus 2324** (come from 2325-1, the B.E. year of founding Bangkok (2325) minus R.S.1).

Ex. R.S.120+**2324** = B.E.2444

* the year R.S.120 was 1 April to 31 March R.S.120 (that was equivalent to 1901/2 in western calendar).

- To convert B.E. to A.D., it needs to **minus 543**

Ex. B.E.2444-**543** = 1901

NOTES ON ABBREVIATION

Thai archival documents

B	Miscellaneous- <i>Bettalet</i> (เบ็ดเตล็ด)
KH	Ministry of Finance- <i>Krasuang phrakhlang mahasombat</i> (กระทรวงพระคลังมหาสมบัติ)
M	Ministry of Interior- <i>Krasuang mahatthai</i> (กระทรวงมหาดไทย)
NA	National Archives, Thailand- <i>Hochotmai het haeng chat</i> (หอจดหมายเหตุแห่งชาติ)
R5	the Fifth Reign- <i>Ratchakan thi ha</i> , (รัชกาลที่ 5, in Thai the Fifth Reign was referred to King Chulalongkorn)
RG	Royal Thai Government Gazette- <i>Ratchakitchanubeksa</i> (ราชกิจจานุเบกษา)
SS	Ministry of Education- <i>Krasuang sueksathikan</i> (กระทรวงศึกษาธิการหรือกระทรวงธรรมการ, Thammakan)
SB	Private Records of Prince Damrong Rachanuphap- <i>Banchi ekkasan suan pra-ong somdet krom phraya Damrong Rachanuphap</i> (บัญชีเอกสารส่วนพระองค์สมเด็จพระยาดำรงราชานุภาพ)
TP	Ministry of Foreign Affairs- <i>Krasuang kan tangprathet</i> (กระทรวงการต่างประเทศ)
TT	Thai Transcription
Y	Ministry of Justice- <i>Krasuang yuttitham</i> (กระทรวงยุติธรรม)

English archival documents

BL	The British Library
CO	Colonial Office: Straits Settlements Original Correspondence
FCRAS	Further Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Siam
FO	Foreign Office
IOR	Indian Office Records
TNA	The National Archives of the UK

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of problems and research questions

It is common for Thai people to consider Thai national culture or *watthanatham chat thai* (วัฒนธรรมชาติไทย) as something related to outstanding expressions that designate the collective awareness of the social group and which differentiates them from other societies and communities. The expression of collective self-perception can be conceptualised by shared customs, practices, beliefs and values amongst the Thai populations, including such behaviours as the way of greetings (*wai*-ไหว้), spoken and written languages (*phasa thai*-ภาษาไทย), the perceived personal characteristic of ‘deferential heart’ (*kreng chai*-เกรงใจ), or feeling of freedom (*it sa ra phap*-อิสรภาพ). Thai national culture can also be deemed to be intrinsic feelings that confirm the shared historical origin of individuals and the sense of national belonging, as well as creating pride in the rich heritage of the Thai social unit called the Thai nation.

There is, however, much debate about what Thai national culture and nationalism mean. A broader definition seems to support a view that the emergence of the collective feeling amongst the Thai social group was a natural entity emerging in the remote historical past of Siam before the nation-state came into existence.¹ The idea of national uniformity has been developed from the ancient ethnic communities by Thai ancestors who transferred that sense through blood lineage down to generations underpins this idea. The idea of the ancient-linear Thai community is still repeated in many official papers and Thai textbooks.² For example, a National Identity Office’s publication considered that ‘an identity of a nation emerged from several elements including blood relation; Thai identity existed in Thai people ...being Thai must have the particular feelings and the particular characteristics’.³ This view has been widely used to challenge the idea that the national consciousness and common culture are new constructions that are derived from the time when modernity and Western

¹ H. G. Quaritch Wales, *Siamese State Ceremonies: Their History and Function* (London: B. Quaritch, 1931), 13.

² Phutmi Amnuai et al., *Social, Religious and Cultural Studies Textbook for Grade 4 [Nangsuerien Raiwicha Puenthan Sangkomsueksa Satsana Lae Watthanatham Chanprathomsueksa Pithi Si-หนังสือเรียนรายวิชาพื้นฐานสังคมศึกษาศาสนาและวัฒนธรรมชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ 4]* (Bangkok: MAC, 2009), 28.

³ The National Identity Office, *The National Identity [Ekkalak Khong Chat-เอกลักษณ์ของชาติ]*, Transcripts of a Seminar on the National Identity (Bangkok: Graphic Art Publishing, 1983), 19 “เอกลักษณ์ของคนชาติใดชาตินึงนั้น เกิดขึ้นได้จากหลายอย่างคือมีติดตัวมาแต่กำเนิดโดยสายเลือด ความเป็นไทยส่วนใหญ่่นั้นเกิดมาพร้อมกับคนไทย เป็นไทยเสียอย่างต้องมีความรู้สึกอย่างนั้นๆ ต้องมีลักษณะอย่างนั้น นี้ไม่มีใครแก้ไขได้” (TT).

conceptions influenced Siam. Thainess, the national sentiment, is undoubtedly a later creation that emerged with the modern Siamese nation.⁴ In this model, however, the community cohesion is referred to as relating to superior layers of civilised Thai homogeneity that emerged among various populations that later became dominant. The proper ways of working, eating, sleeping and dressing were redefined as a significant part of the Twelfth Thai Customs Decree⁵ in 1939-1942, during the Phibunsongkhram period. For example, women had to wear hats and shoes whereas men should wear a Western-style suit because the dress code represented Thai civilised culture. However, national perception was even tied to Marxist ideology on other occasions, which was used to trace the origin of Thai slavery and to appeal for the social equality of the population, instead of social hierarchy.⁶ Although these descriptions of Thai characteristics shifted in various definitions, the production of a distinctive set of Thai national culture during Chulalongkorn's reign is assumed to be the scaffolding that secured the national attitude, practice and social value in a modern Thai historical context. This period was also the first time that Siam sought to shape and reshape the definition of Thai culture in frontiers that had previously been influenced only slightly by the central power of Siam until that time and were where Lao, Yuan, Shan, and Malay populations predominated.

Nevertheless, it is still necessary to define the meanings of terms that are connected with the idea of national culture - such as Tai, Siamese, Siam, Thai, national identity and national culture. Tai is the term referring to various groups of people who speak Tai languages and share the Tai label through connections in linguistics and culture. The main groups included the Shan of north-east Burma, Lue of Southern China, Lao of Laos and Thai of Thailand. However, modern influences helped to create distinctive identities and shared histories amongst these Tai people.⁷ For example, Thai people who are living in Thailand today were formerly called by foreigners as

⁴ Yoko Hayami, 'Redefining "Otherness" from Northern Thailand', *Southeast Asian Studies* 44, no. 3 (2006), 284.

⁵ Public Relations Department, *The Thai Customs Decree No.1* (Phranakhon: Phanichsuphaphon, 1939).

⁶ Chit Phumisak, *The Real Face of Thai Feudalism [Chomna Sakdina Thai-โฉมหน้าศักดินาไทย]*, 10th ed. (Bangkok: Sripanya, 2007), 40-48.

⁷ Andrew Walker, ed., *Tai Lands and Thailand: Community and State in Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009), 1.

‘Siamese’.⁸ The term Siamese later referred to all scientifically classified subjects of ‘Siam’ so that the term became the official name with a related geographical meaning ever since King Mongkut used this name in the Bowring Treaty (1855) and other foreign relations⁹ before it was changed to ‘Thailand’ in 1939. Regarding the term ‘Thai’, this was a preference of Siamese elites to refer to subjects of Siam from the late nineteenth century.

Today, Thai refers to Thai citizens, ‘lords’, ‘bosses’, and the people adopting Thai national identity, as well as being known as an adjective as referring to freedom-loving and pertaining to the Thai.¹⁰ From these definitions, ‘Thai’ reflects the cultural ideas that could represent how Thai people are distinctive from others at a national level. The feelings and ideologies of how Thai people regard themselves at a national level are known as ‘national identity’ (*Attalak khong chat thai-อัตลักษณ์ของชาติ*). Various terms are used interchangeably to refer to the contents of Thai national identity in Thai historical context; including a sense of Thai-ness (*khwam pen thai-ความเป็นไทย*),¹¹ Thai nationhood (*khwam pen chat thai-ความเป็นชาติไทย*),¹² or Thai national ideology (*udomkan khong chat thai-อุดมการณ์ของชาติไทย*).¹³

However, a national identity is considered subjectively as the way people feel they belong to one nation.¹⁴ The sense of Thai national identity therefore can be measured by identifying the features of people as a whole through their behaviours, the way they act and perform, what they wear and how they speak. This collective self-perception can be called ‘national culture’. In other words, ceremonies, attires, materials or symbols, which are the central theme in this study, are essential components of national culture. They describe the tangible manifestations of Thai

⁸ Simon de La Loubère, *The Kingdom of Siam* (Kuala Lumpur; Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1969), 6.

⁹ Damrong Rajanubhab, *Collection of Miscellaneous Royal Essays [Phrachumphraniphon Bettalet-prachumpraniphon Bettalet]* (Phranakhon: Sophonphiphatthanakon, 1926), 3–4.

¹⁰ So Sethaputra, *New Model English-Thai Dictionary [Photchananukrom Angkrit-Thai-พจนานุกรมอังกฤษ-ไทย]* (Bangkok: Thai Watthana Phanit, 2000).

¹¹ Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997).

¹² Walter F. Vella and Dorothy B. Vella, *Chaiyo!, King Vajiravudh and the Development of Thai Nationalism* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1978).

¹³ Michael Kelly Connors, *Democracy and National Identity in Thailand*, Studies in Contemporary Asian History 7 (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2008); Charles F Keyes, *Thailand: Buddhist Kingdom As Modern Nation State* (New York: Routledge, 2019).

¹⁴ Ivo Banac and Katherine Verdery, eds., *National Character and National Ideology in Interwar Eastern Europe* (New Haven: Yale Center For International and Area Studies, 1995), xviii.

national identity. In this way, the term ‘Thai national culture’ (*watthanatham khong chat thai-วัฒนธรรมของชาติไทย*) will be suitable for use as a shorthand in this thesis to encompass the inner ideologies and feelings of members at the national level through their political and cultural characteristics. The term also indicates a significance of cultural dimension and its elements regarding Thai national identity that was reified and expanded in the three frontier communities of Siam. For this reason, therefore, this thesis will deploy the phrase Thai national culture as its main organising reference to avoid the dangers of overlaying too many related but conceptually complex distinctions. Thai national culture was one of the key ideas that was extended along with the process of provincial administrative reform in the Chulalongkorn era (1873-1910). It is this period and this process that will be the main focus of this thesis.

The reign of King Chulalongkorn is a challenging but fascinating period for Thai and foreign scholars due to the modernisation and change that were underway at this time. Siam adopted Western models of administrative structure, military and educational systems, communication and transportation networks, as well as promoting progressive cultural traditions and ideologies regarding etiquette, well-being, civilised conduct, a sense of national distinctiveness, and so on. 1873 saw the onset of these changes when Chulalongkorn obtained actual power. Following from 1892, it was a sign of the official significance of political transition in Siam that power was centralised upon King Chulalongkorn as the head of state, which had never happened before.¹⁵ The 1892 provincial administrative reform became an important political tool for coordinating local, provincial, and central administrations upon Bangkok.¹⁶ Formerly, Siam divided the administration into three levels depending on the distance from Bangkok. The inner provinces were situated near central Bangkok, the outer provinces were between inner and tributary states, and tributary states were located in the peripheral areas under the former Siamese polity. The inner provinces were governed directly while outer provinces and tributary states were relatively independent. The tributary zone of the Siamese polity referred to spaces where the

¹⁵ Scot Barmé, *Luang Wichit Wathakan and the Creation of a Thai Identity* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1993), 7.

¹⁶ Thanet Aphornsuvan, ‘The Articulation between Periphery and Center: The History of the Creation of the Identity of Thai Nation-State [Kantosu Rawang Chaikhob Kap Sunklang: Prawattisat Kansang Attalak Ratchatthai-การต่อสู้ระหว่างชายขอบกับศูนย์กลาง: ประวัติศาสตร์การสร้างอัตลักษณ์รัฐชาติไทย]’, *Thai Khadi Journal* 4, no. 2 (2007): 7.

power of Bangkok had little influence due to the long distance from the centre.¹⁷ It partly included Laos on the left bank of the Mekong, Lan Na and Patani or present-day Thailand's northeast, north and south, respectively. The new administration of Siam influenced these tributary states known as *Monthon Thesaphiban* (มณฑลเทศาภิบาล).

Monthon (มณฑล) or circle is defined as the integration of two or more provinces, while *Thesaphiban* (เทศาภิบาล) refers to the administration consisting of the power of a high commissioner of a circle. *Monthon Thesaphiban* or the provincial administration is known as the system in which the king appointed the high commissioners and skilled civil servants, or *kha luang yai* (ข้าหลวงใหญ่) and *kha luang* (ข้าหลวง), from Bangkok to govern in each circle and to govern the areas situated far from Bangkok. The new system divided the circle into five levels: village, sub-district, district, province, and circle, respectively. All high commissioners were under the Ministry of Interior headed by Prince Damrong Rajanubhab (1892-1915, hereafter Damrong).¹⁸

Monthon Thesaphiban contributed to Siam becoming a modern state with settled boundaries. Also, it formally annexed former tributary states of the Siamese polity to be parts of a Siamese territorial state, or Thailand as it became. In actuality, Laos, Lan Na and Patani as tributary states had their sovereign authorities, languages, distinctive populations and traditional ways of life that were different from Siamese power at Bangkok. Siam used the provincial administrative reform as a tool to intervene in these traditional systems. The reform transferred local privileges of the three tributary states to the absolute monarchy and simultaneously sought to implant Thai national culture among new local Siamese subjects.¹⁹ Constructing Thai national culture in areas of Siam's annexation is one of the crucial objectives in the process of the provincial administrative reform. The aim of the administrative reform was to

¹⁷ Chulalongkorn, *The Royal Commentaries on the Royal Chronicle and the Royal Ceremony on the Selection of the Crown Prince* [Phraratchaniphon Songwichan Rueang Phraratchaphongsawadan Kap Rueang Ratchaprapheni Kantang Phramaha Uparat-พระราชพิธีทรงวิจารณ์เรื่องพระราชพงศาวดารกับเรื่องราชประเพณีการตั้งพระมหากษัตริย์] (Phranakhon: Phrachan, 1932), 3.

¹⁸ He was a younger brother of King Chulalongkorn who played an important role as the king's advisor.

¹⁹ Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), 165.

hand over remnants of sovereignty among tributary states to Siam.²⁰ Thai national culture then penetrated into former Laos, Lan Na and Patani.

The assumption that the national culture of the Siam state was one of the elements of the project of the provincial administrative reform is often taken for granted, especially the construction of Thai national culture in frontier regions, such as how Lan Na became *Monthon Payap* (มณฑลพายัพ)²¹, Laos turned into *Monthon Udon* (มณฑลอุดร) and *Isan* (มณฑลอิสาน)²² and Patani was part of *Monthon Nakhon Si Thammarat* (มณฑลนครศรีธรรมราช) and later became *Monthon Pattani* (มณฑลปัตตานี).²³ It is assumed that in these three frontier areas Siam, at that time, sought to create a specific Thai national culture by actively removing other forms of distinct ethnic community throughout its territory.²⁴ In other words, it is assumed in centre-focused accounts of Thai national history that in the new construction, the state apparatus attempted to transfer the ideas, feelings and beliefs into every area of the Thai state using the same process and methods to create Thai national culture. Ethnic Lao, Yuan, Shan and Malay populations were shaped to express and act in accord with the national culture, in the same way as the realisation of a homogeneous Thai identity within Siam was made concrete, and juxtaposed with non-Thai identities outside Siam.²⁵ It is assumed that these areas were not given any distinctive recognition that might have their own impact upon the methods used to implement incorporation. This process then led to reactions from the three frontier regions of the modern Siam state such as the northeast or *Phu Mi Bun Isan* (ผู้มีบุญอิสาน), the north or *Ngiaw Muang Phrae* (เงี้ยวเมืองแพร่), and *Khaek Jet Hua Muang Kob Kid Kabot* (แขกเจ็ดหัวเมืองคบคิดกบฏ)

²⁰ Chatchai Khumthawiphon, *Study of Works on Thailand's Modern History by Damrong Rachanuphap with Special Reference to Prince's Philosophy of History [Somdetkromphraya Damrong Rachanuphap Lae Prawattisat Niphon Thai Samai Mai-สมเด็จพระบรมโอรสาธิราชฯ ดมรงราชานุภาพและประวัติศาสตร์นิพนธ์ไทยสมัยใหม่]* (Bangkok: Thammasat, 1991), 225.

²¹ The Lan Na Kingdom was organised to be Monthon Lao Chiang and later Payap. It consisted of six provinces: Chiang Mai (Mae Hong Son and Chiang Rai provinces), Lampang, Lamphun, Nan, Phrae and Toen (which was annexed with Lampang in 1903).

²² Laos in the left bank of the Mekong River was organised to be Monthon Udon (Lao Phuan) and *Monthon Isan* (Lao Kao). It is situated in Nong Khai, Nakhon Phanom, Udon Thani, Sakon Nakhon, Khon Kaen, Kalasin, Mukdahan, Mahasarakham, Yasothon, Roi-et, Ubon Ratchathani, Buriram, Surin and Sisaket in the northeast of Thailand today.

²³ Patani Kingdom under Monthon Nakhon Si Thammarat was divided into seven principalities: Nong Chick, Patani(Tani), Yaring, Yala, Raman, Ra-ngae and Saiburi (Teluban). Later, it was organised to be Monthon Pattani in 1906 comprised of four provinces, Pattani, Yala, Saiburi, and Ra-ngae.

²⁴ Charles F Keyes, 'Who Are the Tai? Reflections on the Invention of Identities' in *Ethnic Identity: Creation, Conflict, and Accommodation* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1995), 145.

²⁵ Aphornsuvan, 'The Articulation between Periphery and Center: The History of the Creation of the Identity of Thai Nation-State', 13.

in the south between 1901 and 1902, objected with violence to their incorporation into the Thai state. Therefore, the new sense of nationhood is inferred from the development of the modern Siamese state and the process of implementing Siam's centralisation policies from the nineteenth century onwards.

Yet, this seems to imply that Thai national culture was a new thing that was constructed regardless of different ethnic and cultural practices among particular ethnic groups before they were merged to be parts of Siam. In reality, we have only a vague understanding of the actual process of constructing Thai national culture in these frontier areas, especially regarding cultural and symbolic elements, and this is a gap that needs to be filled to understand how the Thai state made and remade itself during this period. How and what kinds of symbolic tools were used to convince and raise a notion of Thai culture at the national level among different Yuan, Lao, Shan and Malay populations? How did Siam deal with the rebellions in the three regions in 1901-1902, during the implementation of the provincial administrative reform? What were the similarities and differences regarding how an idea of Thai national culture was constructed in each frontier zone? We need to consider the impact that the 'peripheries' had upon central culture and mode of action rather than just focus on the hegemonic claims of nationhood. The reactions that followed attempts to construct a new national culture in the areas in which Thai identity was previously absent have not yet been clearly explained and compared. These questions are central to the thesis.

This study aims to consider the shaping of Thai national culture and the reactions it provoked, through a comparative study of three frontier regions via Laos, Lan Na and Patani that were not dominated by the Thai in a period when the Thai state was taking its modern shape. It will explore this complex interaction of the 'centre' and the 'periphery' and how they influenced each other through a study of symbolic elements, which acted as powerful tools to shape the model of unity through diversity in those three areas, during the reign of King Chulalongkorn, c.1873-1910. The Chulalongkorn era emerged as a critical period of transition in the Thai historical context. It was the turning point for the introduction of political structures and reproducing Thai national culture within the three frontier zones, as will be discussed,

yet these aspects of interaction between the centre and the periphery are not yet fully understood.

1.2 Literature review on Thai national culture and national ideology (a form of national identity and nationalism)

The definition of Thai national culture is still widely debated. Widely studied by both Thai and foreign scholars, it is nonetheless possible to group these ideas into five categories as follows. First, there is the idea that Thai national culture marked one nation as different and defines it as a natural unit that existed in an area approximately equating modern Thailand since the remote past. This argument considers that the natural antiquity of Thai culture is still alive in Thai society presently. The second group defines the intensity of Thai national ideology as tied closely to the absolute power of the Siam monarchy, which created the national culture on a territorial basis. In this argument, Thai national culture is a recent creation of the Thai modern state in the nineteenth century. The third category highlights the role of King Vajiravudh (1910-1925) who initiated the concrete idea of Thai national culture. The fourth category relates to definitions that focus upon Thai national culture as a powerful political tool. These studies explain how the political agendas of Thai political leaders influenced the development of Thai national culture over time. The fifth definition is founded upon Marxist ideology, which allies Thai national culture to class struggle and denies the idea that it was determined solely by the central Thai state. Although not all of these five categories are relevant to this thesis, they collectively illustrate how the issue of national ideologies such as national culture and nationalism have been dealt with. Most studies attempted to give a solution to the meaning of Thai national culture solely and to suggest how the sense of nationalism is entangled with political actors within the central administration. Nevertheless, there is not much understanding of the meaning of Thai national culture that was constructed and defined in relation to other areas outside the central Thai space, especially in relation to areas that the state attempted to incorporate other than through ideas of 'Otherness' rather than as a component of how these ideas and experiences interacted to shape and reshape ideas at the centre and at the periphery. A brief discussion of different group of thoughts will clarify how this thesis sits in relation to these ideas.

1.2.1 ‘Thai national culture’ defined as a natural unity from antiquity

Some authors such as H.G. Quaritch Wales²⁶, Eldon R. James²⁷ and Rattani Pakdi²⁸ agreed that the idea of Thai national culture was a natural one arising from antiquity. These authors believed in a long history of Thai identity by confirming the origins of Thai ancestors who settled down for generations in the area of the modern-day Thai state. Thus, Thai national culture and the Thai nation are assumed to be a natural entity since pre-modern times, even though the idea became concrete in the Chulalongkorn period due to changing technologies and the spread of education. The authors inferred that a Thai national culture as we know it today had existed for many centuries. The natural antiquity of Thai culture is reaffirmed by Quaritch Wales who studied Siamese cultural aspects, such as the Buddhist religion and royal ceremonies that were rooted in the past. His argument became a common way to argue for the legitimacy of the Bangkok administration, Thai ethnic community, the Thai state and the claim made over lands, subjects and Thai national culture.

Other writers, such as Eldon James and Rattanapakdi, confirmed that the Thai nation and national history could even be traced back further into Sukhothai (1238), Ayutthaya (1350), Thonburi (1767) and then Rattanakosin (1782-present period). Vitaly important to their argument is that this linear historical concept justified the limits of a Thai territorial sovereignty that assumed control over Lan Na, Laos and Patani for several centuries. Those spaces and their people have become parts of an ancient Thai community, it is argued, because they have lived in the Thai state from the historical past up to the present day. The intrinsic Thai culture and a long linear concept of the Thai state are reproduced in substantial literature in Thailand, including historical textbooks and academic writings to emphasise ancient Thai national values, which can be found in official materials that promote this understanding.

1.2.2 Definition of Thai national culture as being tied closely to the creation of an Absolute Monarchy

Thongchai Winichakul’s book, ‘Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a

²⁶ Wales, *Siamese State Ceremonies: Their History and Function*, 13.

²⁷ Eldon R. James, ‘Siam in the Modern World’, *Foreign Affairs* 9, no. 4 (1931): 657–64.

²⁸ Rattana Phakdi, *Thai Territory in Suvanabhumi (Malay Peninsula) [Dindaen Thai Nai Laemthong (Laem Malayu)-ดินแดนไทยในแหลมทอง (แหลมมลายู)]* (Phranakhon: Krom Sanphasamit, 1972).

Nation',²⁹ provides a persuasive theoretical framework for the development of Thai nationalism. His work concentrates on the close relationship between the invented Thai identity and the role of the monarch. The Thai cultural elaboration is defined in this case as a product of centralised power under the absolute monarchy in the Chulalongkorn period (1868-1910). Winichakul's concept challenges the previous Thai historical narratives by authors who believed that the Thai state has naturally existed since the remote past. He highlights institutional reformation, mapmaking technologies and the concept of internal colonialism of Siamese elites. In this way, we see how the geo-body of the Thai state and Thai national culture was founded upon a territorial basis created during the mid-nineteenth century. He reveals that Siamese elites represented themselves as victims who had lost their territories and urgently needed the central reforms by the centre to deal with the external imperial threats. Siamese elites attempted to become a survivor in the new world order, adopting a modern nation-state concept in this process. They created the artificial Thai state that claimed it could legitimately annex Lan Na, Laos and Patani Kingdoms to be parts of it. A definition of Thai self-perception has also been established in the discourse of the territorial concept of Siam. Therefore, the modern geography, mapping and the geo-body of Siam are powerful tools in the creation of a mono-ethnic Thai identity and shared Thai national culture.

A history of the geo-body of the Siamese nation was developed further in later articles by Winichakul. Such articles are involved in the conditions of being *Siwilai* (civilisation) in Siam,³⁰ the concept of nationalism of Siamese elites and royal nationalists,³¹ the ethnographic construction of Siamese rulers in 1885-1910³² and dealing with the West in the creation of a post-colonial society.³³ He coins the term

²⁹ Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation*.

³⁰ Thongchai Winichakul, 'The Quest for "Siwilai": A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam', *The Journal of Asian Studies* 59, no. 3 (2000): 528-49.

³¹ Thongchai Winichakul, 'Royalist-Nationalist History: From the Era of Crypto-Colonialism to the New Royalist-Nationalism or the Contemporary Thai Bourgeois Cult of Rama V [Prawattisat Thai Bap Rachachatniyom-ประวัติศาสตร์ไทยแบบราชาชาตินิยม]', *Silapawathanatham* 23, no. 1 (2001): 56-65.

³² Thongchai Winichakul, 'The Others Within: Travel and Ethno-Spatial Differentiation of Siamese Subjects 1885-1910' in Andrew Turton, ed., *Civility and Savagery: Social Identity in Tai States* (Richmond: Curzon, 2000), 38-62.

³³ Thongchai Winichakul, 'Coming to Terms with the West: Intellectual Strategies of Bifurcation and Post-Westernism in Siam' in Rachel V. Harrison and Peter A. Jackson, eds., *The Ambiguous Allure of the West: Traces of the Colonial in Thailand* (Aberdeen; Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010), 135-51.

‘Royalist-Nationalism’ to highlight the dominant nationalism of the Thai monarchs and their advisors because Royal-nationalists played a crucial role in the creation of a Thai territorial state and members of national entity. A Thai history of Siamese elites generates the legitimacy to determine who is Thai or not Thai, and what were the origins of the Thai people. The conditions of being civilised, in fields such as clothing, etiquette, weapons and modern life, helped Siamese rulers to categorise ethnic groups and to differentiate Thai national culture. It reaffirmed Thai national community as being superior to other ethnic groups within the Siam state. Winichakul’s works emphasise the role of Siamese elites in the mid-nineteenth century to understand Thai national culture based on the Western influences and a territorial basis (maps, boundary lines, bureaucratic revolution and concepts of modernisation) from the nineteenth century onwards. This means that the marker of Thai national culture is newly constructed during the modern period after the formulation of the Thai state and its territories. Winichakul developed a powerful concept to rethink the idea of the creation of national culture and identity that was tied to a Thai territorial state under strong monarchs as colonisers within Thai territory. He highlights the elements of the general idea of being Thai and of Otherness (un/non-Thai identity), but he does not focus on how Thai culture was stretched out to different ethnic regions and interacted with responses from those distinctive areas. Nonetheless, the model of royalist national history remains influential in the literature.

Winichakul’s idea of Thai-ness and nationalism has become a crucial model for both Thai and foreign scholars in their academic works concerning the monarchy and the new creation of being Thai, as well as other aspects of Thailand, such as Thai subjecthood, the Thai state, Thai policy, and so on. For example to illustrate this, Saichon Sattayanurak³⁴ adopts Winichakul’s idea to understand the role of Prince Damrong Rajanubhab and the creation of a Thai identity from Chulalongkorn’s reign onwards. The author shows how Damrong created new meanings around institutions such as monarchy, royal elites, administrative officials, as well as the status of subjects and people, women, monks and merchants in the new state. Since the

³⁴ Saichon Sattayanurak, *Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, the Building of Identities of ‘Thailand’ and ‘Class’ for the Siamese [Somdetkromphraya Damrong Rachanuphap Kansang Attalak ‘Mueangthai’ lae ‘Chan’ Khong Chaosayam-สมเด็จพระบรมโอรสาธิราชฯพินิจฯ การสร้างอัตลักษณ์ ‘เมืองไทย’ และ ‘ชั้น’ ของชาวสยาม]* (Bangkok: Matichon, 2003).

nineteenth century, Damrong and his king represented the new creative power of a Thai identity extending to people from various social strata, to justify social relations, statuses and duties that have become basic norms in Thai society. Following with Winichakul's idea of internal colonialism, Tamara Loos³⁵ tries to understand Siamese (Thai) sovereignty through jurisprudence and the modern family law in particular. Although her work is not related to an investigation of Thai national culture, her legal studies raise an important issue and require that we reinvestigate what actually happened in the Chulalongkorn period regarding the redefinition of Thai national culture and social values. She argues that Siamese rulers in the late-nineteenth century acted as an imperialist force competing with British imperialists, particularly in the domain of jurisprudence. She points out that Siam applied a plural legal system that was related to religion and family or customary laws, such as Islamic family court, marriage, divorce and inheritance law, in the areas of the seven Malay provinces or the former Patani kingdom, instead of fully applying secular laws. The exception that was allowed for Malay people did not exist for Lao, Khmer and other ethnic groups. Her argument provides the notion of different ethnic communities in the perception of Siamese rulers. Moreover, she illustrates the multiple strategies of the Siamese government in Bangkok to construct the national consciousness and how Siam convinced Malay people to become subjects of Siam. Although her work focuses on the Malays in the south, she has left a crucial question needing an answer about what Thai national culture means in frontier areas of Siam at that time.

1.2.3 The concrete definition of Thai national culture and role of King Vajiravudh (1910-1925)

There are several studies of Thai national culture that pay attention to the sixth ruler of the Chakri Dynasty, Vajiravudh, and his idea of monarchical nationalism. This overview can be first found in Acharaporn Kamutpisamai³⁶ and others such as Walter F. Vella.³⁷ They consider King Vajiravudh as the key figure in the initiation of Thai national culture and nationalism. Vajiravudh created the emergent national

³⁵ Tamara Loos, *Subject Siam: Family, Law, and Colonial Modernity in Thailand* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006).

³⁶ Acharaporn Kamutpisamai, *Thai Leaders Nationalist Ideology [Udomkan Chatniyom Khong Phunamthai-อุดมการณ์ชาตินิยมของผู้นำไทย]* (Bangkok: Thai Khadi Research Institute, Thammasat University, 1982).

³⁷ Walter F. Vella and Dorothy B. Vella, *Chaiyo!, King Vajiravudh and the Development of Thai Nationalism* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1978).

sentiments that contributed to ‘the masses’ realising the uniqueness, progress and civilisation of the unitary idea. The national culture, therefore, needed to be upon shared values among the mass of the population to realise ‘being Thai’. That is the reason King Vajiravudh borrowed British slogans---‘God, King and Country’, which he adapted to ‘Nation, Religion and King’ (*chat satsana phramahakasat*-ชาติ ศาสนา พระมหากษัตริย์) and promoted them to raise the notions of Thai national culture. The slogan was presented as a core concept to develop a Thai national culture. Those authors who studied the role of King Vajiravudh agree that he played the most important part in constructing the idea of a modern national unity. Thai national culture is a significant product of Vajiravudh’s reign, rather than Chulalongkorn and his era. Chulalongkorn produced little to the idea of national culture. The culture of the nation was still blurred. Chulalongkorn worked heavily on the demarcation of borderlines instead. Nevertheless, focusing on the Vajiravudh period as the beginning of the concept of Thai national culture presents some problems. The authors to a degree downplay Chulalongkorn who began out of curiosity to find answers to the question of who is Thai, what the meaning of Thai is, and how national attributes should be defined. In reality, there was an existing notion of Thai national culture since Chulalongkorn’s reign. Bringing the ethno-symbolic approach to the Chulalongkorn period will cause deeper reflection on the limitations and assumptions of this literature by illustrating how Thai national culture was constructed through many symbols and even expanded throughout Siam before the Vajiravudh period.

1.2.4 Defining the intensity of national culture as a powerful political tool

The constructivist approach to the Thai nation and national culture, particularly following Benedict Anderson’s approach, exercised an enormous influence on several Thai political scientists, historians, and independent scholars, such as

Revolution mainly served political agendas of Prime Minister Phibunsongkhram in 1938-1944. The national culture is outstretched with the aggressive sentiments of Thai identity and nationalism, which prominently downplays the role of the monarch in the definition of Thai culture. The monarch's slogan, 'Nation, Religion and King', was replaced with Nation and Religion and 'your leader'. The collective individual becomes a political tool to reoccupy a lost homeland of the modern Thai state and to strengthen Phibunsongkhram's political power. Wichit Wathakan himself produced several writings on Thai national culture and nationalism.⁴⁴ They provide rooted ideas and continue to be influential in this way as a response to the new political situation that followed the revolution in 1932. These studies emphasise how ordinary people, albeit concentrating on new leadership groups, played a role in constructing Thai national culture. Nevertheless, this group of writers and academics neglected the role that ordinary people played when they participated in the process of constructing Thai national culture at an earlier period in relation to the reactions of local people as a medium of nationalist creation in the three frontiers of Siam in 1901-2.

1.2.5 The meaning of Thai national culture founded upon Marxist ideology

Adopting historical materialism to explain the idea of nationalism is a crucial concept in this category of literature. Some literature was written after the Second World War (between 1947-1962) by people who called themselves as progressive intellectuals such as Chit Phumisak,⁴⁵ Kulap Saipradit,⁴⁶ Malai Choopiniji,⁴⁷ a historian, a novelist and newspaper editor and columnist, respectively. Phumisak was the most powerful writer, who provided several influential works and an alternative route to understanding Thai ethnicity and nation by paying less attention to the elite role. He adopts Marxism and Socialism that flourished after World War II as a framework to understand Thai national culture. For Phumisak, the term 'Siam' was meant in a

⁴⁴ Wichit Wathakan, 'Nationalism [Latthi Chu Chat-ลัทธิชูชาติ]', *Duang Prateep* 2, no. 36 (1932): 17–21; Wichit Wathakan, *The Politics and Governance of Siam [Kanmueang Kanpokkrong Khong Krungsayam-การเมืองการปกครองของกรุงสยาม]* (Phranakhon: Thai Mai, 1932).

⁴⁵ Chit Phumisak, *Summary: Comparative Study on Origins of Thai, Lao, and Khmer Words, Especially the Word Siam, and Social Aspects of their Personal Names [Khwapenma khong Kham Sayam, Thai, Lao, lae Khom lae Laksana Thangsangkhom Khong Chuechonchat-ความเป็นมาของคำสยามไทย ลาว และขอม และลักษณะทางสังคมของชื่อชนชาติ]* (Bangkok: Mae Kum Pang, 1992); Phumisak, *The Real Face of Thai Feudalism*.

⁴⁶ Kulap Saipradit, 'The Concept of Humanity [Manut Phap-มนุษยภาพ]', *Thammasat Journal* 19, no. 1 (April 1993): 7–17.

⁴⁷ Malai Choopiniji (Riam Eng), *The Dream City [Mueang Nimit-เมืองนิมิต]* (Bangkok: Thanon Nungsue, 1987).

geographical sense covering plural ethnic groups who lived by the Chao Phraya River, rather than referring to a particular ethnic identity. He denies the idea of ethnic classification because it leads to racism, conflict, and separatism. The Thai national concept included those people with multiple ethnic identities, rather than defining only a Thai identity that adhered to the monarch and state-centric idea. Therefore, the 1932 Revolution, which opened up the role of ordinary people, is considered the beginning of an emerging national identity rather than the period during absolute monarchy in the late nineteenth century. According to Phumisak, the Thai nation in 1932 comprised of a single political unit (of ordinary people), an economic unit, a mutual society, a territory, and a language, albeit having several ethnicities like Siamese, Lao, or Khmer under the Thai label. The progressive intellectual groups emphasise Thai national culture as an aggressive concept justified by a monarch. The markers of national unity led to ethnic classifications and oppressed other different ethnic groups. This literature provides a fascinating viewpoint that attempts to redefine the quality of national identity by focusing more on the ordinary people and the pluralism of ethnicity, which extended as far as the frontier communities. However, this literature did not state clearly the emergence of Thai culture and the issue of the collective reactions in frontiers that are relevant to the understanding of Thai national culture.

Therefore, the critiques of these pieces of literature exist in binary between a perennial and modern concept as a dominant theme in their works. One side of the literature seems to define Thai national culture by adopting a primordial model which is a static linkage between pre-modern and modern world. The other side denies the historical continuity. They confirm a newly emerging national sentiment, culture and values by using a modernist and constructivist model that begins in the mid-nineteenth century with the emergence of a Western influenced, nation-state building and territorial demarcation. Nonetheless, a primordial model was deemed to be too extreme to understand not only Thai national culture but also some histories of nations around the world.⁴⁸ In contrast, a modernist and constructivist model still influences numerous academic studies that debate on nationalism and national culture

⁴⁸ Jeff Kingston, *Nationalism in Asia: A History since 1945* (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2017), 6.

both in histories of other nations as well as in Thai history as shall be turned.

1.2.6 The previous debate on Thai nationalism, national identity and culture

This section will give an overview of how different thinkers have contributed to the debate on Thai nationalism and the formation of Thai unity. Theorists of nationalism, such as Benedict Anderson and Eric Hobsbawm, who discussed it as a modern concept⁴⁹ were two of the most influential theorists to influence the study of Thai nationalism. Anderson declares the nation as ‘an imagined political community’ of belonging to a shared community and sovereignty, whereas nationalism seems to depend on kinship or religion.⁵⁰ Both the concept of a nation and its attendant nationalism only just emerged in the eighteenth century when the wave of modernisation, such as printing technologies, newspaper, capitalism, radio and communication, influenced the development of ‘imagined communities’. These entailed the emergence of nations, national consciousness and communities that shared the same imagination. Taking a similar approach, Hobsbawm termed the modern crafting of historical national narratives, traditional practices and symbols as the ‘invention of tradition’ to claim that ethnic groups and nationalism were unprecedented. They were instead derived from the nineteenth century socially constructed typologies and political practices.⁵¹ National symbols and devices legitimised national movements and states, such as ceremonies, languages, rituals and costumes, in fact, they were recently invented to provide the sense of an identity for a community in the modern world. According to their arguments, modern political structures are predominant in their idea of how national identities came to be constructed.

The modernist and instrumentalist models influenced ideas of Thai national culture among Thai scholars and historians such as Kasetsiri⁵² and Aphornsuvan.⁵³ They paid much attention to how European concepts of progress such as an expansion of the

⁴⁹ Umut Özkırımlı, *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction*, 2nd ed (Basingstoke, Hampshire [England]; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 72.

⁵⁰ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Rev. ed (London; New York: Verso, 2006), 5–20.

⁵¹ Eric J. Hobsbawm and T. O. Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition*, Canto Classics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 13.

⁵² Kasetsiri, *Siamese/Thai Nationalism and Cambodia : A Case Study of the Preah Vihear Temple*.

⁵³ Aphornsuvan, ‘The Articulation between Periphery and Center: The History of the Creation of the Identity of Thai Nation-State’, 6.

capitalist market, territorial formation and the spread of dominant culture and education produced a drive towards the emergence of ethnic and national identities throughout the world. Particularly, the political and cultural ideas are two significant markers of the differences between the modern European expansion and other imperial expansions such as the Chinese and Indian in other times into the region of Siam and elsewhere on the south east Asian mainland. While Chinese might influenced trade, resources and communications, influence from the South Asian sub-continent impacted on political and religious ideas. The independence of these polities, people and their autochthony, however, had never been impacted by the ideas of territorial expansion and cultural conformation from China and India.⁵⁴ In contrast, the European myth on demarcating boundaries and political sovereignty became the logical necessity for every political organisation, and it constantly impacted on cultural and linguistic differences that changed the local system of the local people.⁵⁵ Thus, the new European world order and Western conceptions became the milestone to understanding how the power of modernity influenced the construction of national culture, ideologies and feelings. They agree that the Thai state emerged when the modern political revolution forced the Siamese government to construct the modern Siam nation and its territory during the Chulalongkorn reign. Thai nationalism and its national culture occurred later in some stages of modernity. Because of that, the modern Siamese nation is considered as a forerunner of Thai culture. They were a result of social engineering after Siam was constructed. Hence, the process of constructing Thai culture of the nation has been defined on the bases of its modern political evolution and territorial consolidation since the nineteenth century onwards.

Nonetheless, those scholars pay relatively less attention to attributes arising from the pre-modern world that were developed to redefine a specific Thai culture in the modern day. Because Thai national culture and social values were not purely invented in the nineteenth century, some cultural and symbolic elements can be traced back to the previous eras. For example, a traditional concept of cakravartin or a righteous

⁵⁴ Barbara Watson Andaya, *The Flaming Womb: Repositioning Women in Early Modern Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), 227.

⁵⁵ E. R. Leach, 'The Frontiers of "Burma"', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 3, no. 1 (1960): 49–50.

ruler was found as early as in the Asoka era⁵⁶ was remodelled into a new definition by King Mongkut and King Chulalongkorn since the nineteenth century to represent the Thai king's power as a part of the national culture. The Thai cultural or religious identity that was remodelled and used as a symbolism of the model personalities on the national level is deemed to illustrate historical dynamics before the emergence of the modern Siam nation. Therefore, Anderson's concept was used in a relatively limited way to explore the long-term historical explanation of non-Western traditions and cultures, while the invention of tradition, Hobsbawm's theory, seems to be sceptical about whether and how far the nationalists would not have invented these traditions.⁵⁷

Thai national culture consists of several symbolic elements that appeared in the remote past and were remodelled in the modern period with new definitions to serve new social circumstances, for instance, kingship and Buddhist religious belief. Therefore, it will be too extreme to conclude neither a national culture continually existed since pre-modern period, nor is it a new 'past-less' invention of the modern world. Pre-modern cultural traits that have a powerful meaning for constructing national culture in the modern world are less mentioned. Because Thai national culture is a unit that is defined by the explanation of its territorial basis, the understanding of it is singled out from state-centric viewpoints solely. The issue of national culture or quality mentions less about the interactions of both central and local perspectives. The construction of Thai national culture in three frontiers of Siam and the reactions it provoked thus needs clarification and evaluation.

1.3 Research objectives

This study has four objectives. First, it examines how Thai culture was developed from ancient symbolic elements to form Thai national culture in the modern nation. This will require analysing the pre-modern historical roots of each ethno-symbolic element, which is the key definition of Thai national culture, and singles out how

⁵⁶ Sunait Chutintaranond, 'Cakravatin: Ideology, Reason and Manifestation of Siamese and Burmese Kings in Traditional Warfare (1538-1854)', *Crossroads: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 4, no. 1 (1988): 53.

⁵⁷ Damiele Conversi, 'Mapping the Field: Theories of Nationalism and the Ethnosymbolic Approach' in Athena S. Leoussi and Steven Elliott Grosby, eds., *Nationalism and Ethnosymbolism: History, Culture and Ethnicity in the Formation of Nations* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 17.

those elements were remodelled to construct Thai culture. Second, it compares how the Royal Siamese rulers and its bureaucrats adapted Thai national culture in relation to the three regions of Siam's annexation such as northeastern, northern and southern regions where Thai identity and cultures did not predominate. Third, it analyses how local chiefs and communities in those three regions responded to the nature of Siam expansion and understood the results of constructing Thai national culture in these different regions. Lastly, this study illustrates how the symbolism of Thai national culture that disseminated in the three regions was related to administrative reform.

The three frontier areas thus are suitable for this study for political, geographical and social reasons, although the thesis recognises that the term 'frontier' imposes a central perspective. However, because this thesis is about the emergence of the Thai state, it will be used as a shorthand for the regions under discussion, while recognising their distinctive historical, cultural and political features as areas on their own terms. However, in the context of the emerging modernity of the Thai state, there are some common features when defined through their relationship with this entity. Geographically, although those three areas were incorporated into the territory of the Siamese state, they are situated a long distance from the centre of the Siamese power and closed to new borderlines, which became contested areas of the Siamese state authority. There is often an assumption that the southern states should be exceptionalised in this process because of their Islamic identity. This is, of course, a defining and critical characteristic, which is also explored in this thesis. However, it is also the argument of this thesis that there is a need to consider the expansion of the Thai state into its three main frontier zones as part of its process of political and territorial consolidation from a more holistic view. It is very rare for writers on Thai history to consider the frontier areas comparatively and this is a distinctive characteristic of Thai historical approaches and is not replicated in other countries, for example in historical writing on Burma where there is a more extensive literature on the relationship between the centre and its process of incorporation of multiple frontier regions, but considered as an integrated if not unified process. This thesis encourages a more integrated approach to this issue if we want to learn more about frontier incorporation in modern Thai history, rather than to exceptionalise the south because of its religious identity alone. This thesis recognises the important local differences between these regions, but it asserts that there is enough of a common

political process of integration emerging from the centre at a similar time period to warrant comparison of the three areas if the intention is to understand more about the nature of the Thai state and how it developed and used elements of an emerging idea of Thai national culture to integrate frontier zones. In this respect, the fact that the uprisings in these regions took place at a broadly similar time from a longer historical perspective provides a useful entry point to this discussion. It does not assume that there were linkages between the movements or that there was recognition among local actors that their experiences and resulting forms of resistance were shared or common.

When we consider the meta-level relationships of these frontiers with the Thai state or with Siam, we can see how Siam developed its policy in the frontiers with a sense of overarching purpose. Politically, the three regions were periodically all tributary states of a Siamese entity, although this varied depending on the political and economic advantages that this relationship offered at different times. Later, their independent existence was terminated, and they merged into parts of the modern Thai state in the Chulalongkorn period – or at least, the modern Thai state expressed that their independent existence was terminated; the different regions nonetheless retained a strong sense of their historical autonomy, as will be discussed. In terms of the wider geo-politics of the emerging Thai nation, however, their annexation by Siam diminished the power of old local leaders and the traditional sovereignty of the three areas, and the political transition led to conflicts between the central state and these regions. It resulted in the uprisings in all three regions in 1901-2. These reactions will be specifically examined in this thesis to shed light on these wider developments in Thai national culture and its role in territorial and political integration. In this context, it is important to include all three frontier zones into the analysis rather than to exclude the south *a priori*.

During the nineteenth century, the three regions were faced with the imperial expansion of British and French authorities, which were threatening Siam and which made use of the frontier zones as spaces of contest. The northern region of the new Thai state shared a border with British Burma, the north-eastern part adhered to Laos (on the right of the bank of the Mekong River), Cambodia was a French Protectorate, and the southern part was close to British Malaya, a cluster of states on the Malay

Peninsula and the island of Singapore.⁵⁸ The geographical situation of those three zones is also important in studying how Siam, with the ambition of enforcing a Thai national culture in those areas, dealt with the uncertain situations that arose in these frontier areas. Finally, the social differences between these regions and Thai national culture and society were some of the most challenging for integration by Siam. Typically, the three regions have consisted of communities identified as Yuan, Lao, Shan and other groups of peoples in the northeast and the north who later became classified as ‘minorities’ through state expansion, and ethnic Malay and autochthonous communities in the south. While Laotian, Yuan and Shan peoples had long adopted Buddhism, Malay people practised Islam. Therefore those people at that time had different ethnic identities, dialects, languages, religious practices, traditions and cultural attributes in relation to the Thai community, as well as amongst each other.⁵⁹ Again, however, it is argued from the perspective of this thesis that we can learn more about the nature of the emerging Thai state at this time and in relation to these distinctions in its frontiers by comparing all three at least at a meta-level.

Besides the strengths of a three-way comparison regarding political, geographical and social reasons, it is also recognised that there are some critical limitations in having three case examples. As noted, the case of southern Malay communities is most commonly excluded and exceptionalised *a priori* from comparative discussions with other frontier areas of Thailand. There are important reasons for this, including the obvious religious distinctions. While the northern and northeastern cases could provide us with persuasive examples when discussing the nature of the rebellions and the reinterpretation of Thai national culture in the performance of those rebellions, the southern case undeniably reveals significant differences. Indeed, the attempted Malay rebellion does not evidence clearly how local Malay people manifested the nature of rebellion and engaged with Thai national culture as cultural elements within their movement, which is the main argument in the study of the northern and the northeastern rebellions. It should be emphasised again, however, that while there are limitations in constructing a three-way comparative study, I feel strongly that

⁵⁸ *Boundaries of Siam/Thailand-Malaysia-Burma-Laos-Cambodia and the Disputes [Khetdaen Sayam/Prathetthai-Malesia-Phama-Lao-Kamphucha-เขตแดนสยามประเทศไทย-มาเลเซีย-พม่า-ลาว-กัมพูชา]*, 6 (Bangkok: The Foundation for the Promotion of Social Science and Humanities Textbooks Projects, 2011), (12)-(18).

⁵⁹ Tej Bunnag, *The Provincial Administration of Siam, 1892-1915: The Ministry of the Interior under Prince Damrong Rajanubhab* (Kuala Lumpur; New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 31.

retaining the southern case in this study can help us to reflect upon and more fully comprehend the problems and restrictions of the Siamese rulers in developing the modern Thai territory and the expansion of Thai national culture (will be discussed in Chapters 7-8). This thesis is not claiming to provide an internal history of these frontier rebellions, or even to make claims about presenting a ‘local perspective’. Rather, it is intended to illuminate primarily the process of expansion and integration across the state’s diverse frontiers by noting comparisons and the successes and limitations of this process and the uses and constraints upon using Thai national culture as a unifying symbolic tool as this policy of integration was enforced in the three frontier regions at almost the same time. While it is recognised that historical commensurability cannot be assumed simply because apparently similar events took place at the same or similar time, it would be an unfinished study if the southern area, which was one of the most significant regions that Siamese expansionists engaged with during the Chulalongkorn era, was ignored and excluded from the history of Thai state expansion at that time. It would also, as stated, reinforce the exceptionalism towards the south that has been a feature of Thai historical and political writing which has, in turn, limited historical understanding of frontier policy and integration in more nuanced and complex ways. For these reasons, shaping the shared national culture in these three regions constituted a considerable challenge that will help us to develop our understanding of the expansion of Siam’s perspectives and aspirations from the late-nineteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century.

Thus, a comparative history of the integration of three regions as they became the frontiers of the Thai nation will distinguish this thesis from previous studies of Thai national culture. The comparative study is a method which seeks to compare historical phenomena over places or periods of time to discover inadequacies or misunderstandings in previous explanations.⁶⁰ There was the acknowledged explanation assumed the imposition and proliferation of Thai national culture into the three frontier regions using the same process.⁶¹ However, the comparative framework will lead us to re-evaluate this existing or prevailing explanation that the national

⁶⁰ William H. Sewell, ‘Marc Bloch and the Logic of Comparative History’, *History and Theory* 6, no. 2 (1967): 210; James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds., *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 12–13.

⁶¹ Bunnag, *The Provincial Administration of Siam, 1892-1915*; Aphornsuwan, ‘The Articulation between Periphery and Center: The History of the Creation of the Identity of Thai Nation-State’.

hegemonic model may not have been disseminated using a single method, but using a variety of methods in each of the three frontier regions which themselves had distinct circumstances. In this sense, the aim of comparisons is to uncover the different methods utilised in these different frontier societies. In contrast, although the three local responses occurred independently in many places, they arose in parallel with each other and created enormous social stress. Comparisons can help to make more concrete the shared features as well as the distinct and local features among the three frontiers that are still only vaguely understood.

Exploring the state's rich symbolism as a key focus of the thesis could contribute to improve understanding of what the ideas and feelings of Siam pioneer nationalists were regarding the distinct cultural characteristics that were behind the provincial administrative policies. Additionally, the extent to which those expressions which were presented through symbolic elements such as myths, memories, symbols and values influenced and mobilised local people's opinions can be revealing throughout the development of the administrative process for revealing its other attributes. Functionally, symbolic elements suggest two linkages. Firstly, they illustrate how Thai national culture was embodied by linking to traditional legacies. Secondly, they suggest the cultural interaction between the national culture and local 'ethnic' communities. A study of symbolism provides information about how local communities absorbed a collection of national culture and reproduced them as local symbolic markers to mobilise their communities in response to the Thai expansion. Symbols are a key tool that helps to crystallise human thoughts regarding the construction of Thai national culture and the expressions of local communities responding to that national entity of integration. Because the symbolic domain is the central point of this thesis, an ethno-symbolic approach will be useful to crystallise the complexity of Thai national culture and to guide how the idea is constructed and developed through symbolic dimensions in the three frontiers of the emerging modern Thai state.

1.4 Theoretical significance

1.4.1 What is an ethno-symbolic approach?

Ethno-symbolism refers to “the nature of ethnic groups and nations, and the need to

consider their symbolic dimensions”.⁶² The approach deals with form, contents and senses of particular communities and their identity concerning subjective resources, such as myths, memories, symbols, and values, as mentioned.⁶³ Ethno-symbolists, such as Anthony Smith and John Hutchinson, have debated whether national identities and nationalism are located between models of perennialism and modernism. They reject that national identity was a natural entity that is similar to blood type and colour of skin, hair and eyes. They deny that national identity is a continuity of units of human association that have been static from the remote past until the modern day. However, in contrast, neither can national identity be defined as a new artefact resulting from modern influences, not going back further than two centuries.⁶⁴ By using an ethno-symbolist critique, national identity can be seen to have an uneven emergence with different and unpredictable formations concerning content and form depending on time, place and social circumstance.

Accordingly, this thesis will adopt this approach to understand Thai national culture and how it developed in its symbolic dimensions whilst in contact with new ‘frontier regions’. Religious practices, royal emblems, antiquity myths, legal codes, memories and other resources are powerful forces to form a national identity and its collective ideology,⁶⁵ in which nationalists can recognise inherited elements to develop their thoughts and mobilise their groups to attain their goals. These symbolic components also reflect the process of selection to shape an ‘ethnic core’ of a particular group, in this case a national group. Study of its ethno-symbolism can help us to understand how and at what level the national culture was constructed in social and political arenas. Critically for this thesis, ethno-symbolism is used to examine the development of national culture as a singular entity that unfolds in a singular way throughout the national territory. However, by considering the symbolic resources that are used to construct Thai national culture in each of the three different areas of Siam, we may learn more about the underlying nature of that identity and the ways in which it changes or adapts in particular contexts away from the national centre. Thus, ethno-

⁶² Anthony D. Smith, *Ethno-Symbolism and Nationalism: A Cultural Approach* (London; New York: Routledge, 2009), 1.

⁶³ John Hutchinson, *Nations as Zones of Conflict* (London; Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE, 2005), 12.

⁶⁴ Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991), 60–61.

⁶⁵ Richard Jenkins, ed. Anthony D. Smith, *The British Journal of Sociology* 39, no. 4 (1988): 630; David W. Dinwoodie, “‘He Expects We Would Be Off from His Lands’: Reported Speech-Events in Tsilhqut’in Contact History”, *Anthropological Linguistics* 49, no. 1 (2007): 6–7.

symbolism will provide us an alternative approach that differs from previous conceptual studies in relation to exploring the construction of Thai national culture. This approach can be the concept that develops the discourse of Thai identity beyond the existing explanation.

1.4.2 Long time-span approach and the changing national entity

The central argument of the ethno-symbolic approach emphasises symbolic attributes that seem to be perennial elements of the pre-modern state, but were later transformed to be in line with later historical events.⁶⁶ This approach helps us to understand the national elements in the *longue durée*. To understand the modern national identity and nationalist perspectives about these shared features (developed by Siamese rulers and elites in this case), Smith argues that ethno-symbolism allows us to investigate back to *ethnie*⁶⁷ or ethnic elements considered from the remote past, and that we should single out how these symbols have changed to produce a core character over a long time.⁶⁸ *Ethnie*, Smith's term, can be defined as being embedded in myths, symbols, memories, and cultures, inserted in folkways, customary laws, architecture, dance, poetry, clothing, religious practices, language and the conduct of inter-state warfare since the pre-modern era and even earlier. The changes that occurred over generations to these cultural symbols can be an effective mechanism to decode the complex ideas of national identity and nationalism.⁶⁹ It can be more understandable how these symbols have changed and become parts of national identity, feeling and characteristics in the modern world; the 'inner worlds' of nationalist creators, their perceptions and visions regarding one national attribute can become clearer.⁷⁰ Ethno-symbolic concepts seem to be useful for exploring the construction of a group of features. It may indicate how Thai ethnic claims originated from before the historical past have become an important mechanism for raising notions of Thai national culture and qualities during the reign of King Chulalongkorn. The approach also clarifies

⁶⁶ Hutchinson, *Nations as Zones of Conflict*, 2–3.

⁶⁷ *Ethnie* referred to "named human populations with shared ancestry myths, histories and cultures, having an association with a specific territory and a sense of solidarity", see Anthony D. Smith, *The Nation in History: Historiographical Debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism*, The Menahem Stern Jerusalem Lectures (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2000), 65.

⁶⁸ John Hutchinson, *Modern Nationalism, Fontana Movements and Ideas* (London: Fontana Press, 1994), 23–24.

⁶⁹ Smith, *The Nation in History*, 65.

⁷⁰ Smith, *Ethno-Symbolism and Nationalism*, 15–16.

what were the visions of Siamese Royal elites and elite bureaucrats, and how they expanded the national culture in the three different regions predominated by other ethnic people.

1.4.3 Ethno-symbolism and a top-down explanation of cultural formation

An ethno-symbolic approach defines an ethnic identity as a changeable unit that can be transformed to new circumstances.⁷¹ Similarly, modern nationalists also search for symbolic elements found in the past and remodel to locate them for the modern nation.⁷² An ethno-symbolic approach opens up opportunities for a variety of modern nationalists who may be people from above or below, to participate in the construction of a national form. Although an ethno-symbolic approach tries to avoid only highlighting elites who play a political game with issues of state and citizenships, ethno-symbolism does nonetheless seem to confirm the importance of elite roles.⁷³ Political elites initially searched for, shaped, and remodelled the national consciousness. They allied themselves with ancient symbols to mobilise moral sentiments acceptable to communities, in order to preserve their positions. Ethno-symbolism requires us to investigate how symbolic heritages influenced nationalist elites who embodied the social cohesion and how that national culture and sentiment affected the people 'below'.⁷⁴ Ethno-symbolism, therefore, helps us to examine the ideologies of nationalist elites in more depth. This approach seems applicable to understanding the important role of Siamese rulers in remodelling a modern Thai national culture in the late nineteenth century.⁷⁵ Applying an ethno-symbolic approach will help clarify what were the perspectives of Siam and its rulers in the process of constructing Thai national culture in northeastern, northern and southern frontiers of Siam.

However, as mentioned above, the ethno-symbolic approach does not focus on elites as a single level of analysis. It looks at the interplay between different social strata.⁷⁶

⁷¹ Anthony D. Smith, 'LSE Centennial Lecture: The Resurgence of Nationalism? Myth and Memory in the Renewal of Nations', *The British Journal of Sociology* 47, no. 4 (1996): 583–584.

⁷² Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 207.

⁷³ Umut Özkirimli, 'The Nation as an Artichoke? A Critique of Ethnosymbolist Interpretations of Nationalism*', *Nations and Nationalism* 9, no. 3 (1 July 2003): 347–48; Hutchinson, *Nations as Zones of Conflict*, 33.

⁷⁴ Smith, *Ethno-Symbolism and Nationalism*, 19.

⁷⁵ Christopher John Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand*, Third edition (Cambridge; Port Melbourne, Vic: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 45–46.

⁷⁶ Smith, *Ethno-Symbolism and Nationalism*, 19.

It is particularly helpful to study the movements involving collective action, which is a critical issue in this study. Applying an ethno-symbolic approach to understanding rebellion, for example, may explain how the roots of resistance movements developed from antagonistic tensions, both in a community and between communities, which consider themselves to be ancient ethnic entities and those of a modern national community. It is often argued in these settings that modern civilisation and society forced traditional societies to change their culture and social relations. In contrast, state nationalists or nationalist elites, in this case, are the group who first selected the cultural and symbolic resources that would embody the new sense of national distinctiveness. The rise of a national culture may exclude or abandon other regional cultures within the national proposition.⁷⁷ It raises a question about what the nation is and where groups resisting the centre belong in the world. Then, they attempt to enhance and restore their *ethnie*, such as ancient cultural practices, lifeway and traditional political power structures.

Although an ethno-symbolic approach sheds light on reactions to the development of a national form, especially in the conflicts between colonisers and colonised people,⁷⁸ it can be applied to the Thai case which was never wholly colonised by Western Imperialism. Combined with the notion of frontier, it helps us to provide a more concrete idea about the cultural perception of constructing a national standard in Siam which was itself acting as a civilising coloniser. The Frontier concept is best known from the discussion of the exceptionalism assumed in American society, discussing how the waves of European conquerors settled and claimed their rights over free areas of what was to become the United States from the Atlantic Coast, despite having indigenous people living in those areas. Consequently, European heritages turned autochthonous communities into the new Americans who similarly expanded westward into the American West, the outer edge of the frontier line that separated European coastal settlements from the western United States.⁷⁹ By this idea, the frontier became the significant line of a clash between ‘savage Indians’ (west) and ‘civilised’ expanding people (eastern coastal).⁸⁰ The notion of frontier can be

⁷⁷ Smith, 39–40.

⁷⁸ Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, 50.

⁷⁹ Ray Allen Billington and Martin Ridge, *Westward Expansion: A History of the American Frontier*, 6th ed. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001), 1.

⁸⁰ Walter Rundbell, ‘Concepts of the “Frontier” and the “West”’, *Arizona and the West* 1, no. 1 (1959): 15.

anywhere that civilisation forces others to be seen as ‘savages’ and where political, cultural or geographical conditions were undermined.⁸¹ Applying this to the Siamese case, it illuminates the intentions of Siamese rulers who experienced European expansionism. Then, they acted themselves as the colonisers to transfer their ‘civilised’ thoughts into Lan Na, Laos and Patani, which were not frontiers by nature but became the ‘frontiers’ in the perception of Siam’s central rulers.

When the ‘frontier’ peoples came into contact with outsiders, it led to communal and collective movements in the Thai historical context during the early twentieth century (1901-2). Violent reactions occurred in those three frontier regions against Siamese actions. The chaotic uprisings initially occurred in the southern region, followed by the northeast and the north. The collective reactions of the northeast and north, albeit in different levels and taking different forms, were mobilised by superstitious and magical cults. The situation signified a religious symbol to react against the Thai national influences. Similarly, European administrations in other places of the world at that time became targets of collective uprisings that carried local cultures to resist the colonial intruders.⁸² Then, to bring the idea of Millenarianism and the Cargo Cults in the global framing, where their movements incorporated various prophetic forms to liberate themselves from European dominant powers, also helps us to understand local reactions in those frontiers. Through these lenses, their cultural and religious expressions contained significant rather than just meaningless actions. Thus, considering the interactions and ideologies between elite nationalists who created a national culture and the local reactions in which people resisted that culture from the centre, helps us to clarify and reassess the process of shaping the national culture from the political core towards the three frontier regions.

1.4.4 Limitations of ethno-symbolism

There are some limitations in the ethno-symbolic approach in understanding how symbolic elements influence the construction of national forms and ideas. Ethno-symbolism is sometimes considered to downplay the dynamics of modern Western

⁸¹ William Francis Deverell, ed., *A Companion to the American West*, Blackwell Companions to American History (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2004), 6.

⁸² Holger Jebens, ed., *Cargo, Cult, and Culture Critique* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004), 3.

revolutions.⁸³ In this view, administrative reforms united or divided regions into a single/multiple territorial formations by employing a combination of ‘revolutions’ between culture and education, which attempted to create a homogeneity of citizens. Yet, the critique of ethno-symbolism rarely takes into account institutions and material resources, such as administration, fiscal institutions, the judiciary, and military, as the tools to isolate and interrogate Thai power and nationalistic sentiment. According to John Breuilly, without considering institutional roles, ethnic identity and nation become blurred, formless and have no framework.⁸⁴ In the same way, without mentioning the bureaucratic reform that was a vehicle for carrying Thai national culture to the frontiers, it will be difficult to understand the different ways in which Thai culture penetrated into those areas.

This thesis, therefore, attempts to connect these issues by considering the provincial administrative reforms (1892-1910) as the creation of an institutional framework that emerged from Western influences and nation-building concepts to crystallise the attempted cultural appropriation by Siam of ‘frontier’ regions. The provincial administrative reform of Siam was acknowledged as a crucial political mechanism to centralise a nation to concentrate on Bangkok and to include Laos, Lan Na and Patani.⁸⁵ The exploration of the development of symbolic dimensions through the expansion of political institutions will contribute to greater understanding of the path of Thai national culture. It also includes both objective factors such as proclamations, decrees, policies and political structure, as well as subjective factors of Thai national ideologies and the intentions behind those objective factors such as ethnic, cultural and religious perceptions. Although this is a study of symbolic elements that are used to construct a national perception, it examines those elements through the provincial administrative reform as an institutional framework of national culture in the national historical context by using Chulalongkorn’s reign to track a historical timeline of constructing the model of Thai culture.

⁸³ Smith, *National Identity*, 60–61.

⁸⁴ John Breuilly, ‘Reviewed Works: The Ethnic Origins of Nations by Anthony D. Smith; Nationalismus in Vorindustrieller Zeit by Otto Dann’, *The English Historical Review* 103, no. 407 (1988): 416–17.

⁸⁵ Winichakul, ‘Royalist-Nationalist History: From the Era of Crypto-Colonialism to the New Royalist-Nationalism or the Contemporary Thai Bourgeois Cult of Rama V’, 60–61.

1.5 Sources of primary and secondary materials

The research will explore a variety of primary sources and digitised materials based in archives and libraries in Thai and English. The National Archives of Thailand provide various collections such as bureaucratic documents, laws, orders, petitions, royal traditions, and religious practices. These sources reveal cultural and symbolic ideas in the process of creating a new administration for Siam based on social cohesion. Petitions, travelling reports and governmental records provide the historical events of all three local reactions against Siam. These reactions can be further illustrated through Thai archival sources and digitised documents such as diaries, personal letters, local myths and tales preserved at the Thammasat Library, Chulalongkorn Library, Silapakorn Library and National Library of Thailand. Furthermore, the achievement of the provincial administrative reform and Thai national culture owes to Prince Damrong. Thus, the Prince Damrong Library has also been useful for this research. Nonetheless, some of these materials collected by governmental regulations have limitations regarding state-centric perspectives. It is still necessary to cross-check and compare with other repositories, although this would extend the research to a period beyond the timeframe of the PhD. Then, some primary and secondary materials kept by Chiang Mai University in the north and Ubon Ratchathani University in the northeast of Thailand today provide a comparative vision as well as deep insight into how regional and local academics viewed Thai national culture of state expansion through their research. Short visits to the two places were useful to retrieve some books and journals that were distributed in local areas but were not circulated in Bangkok. Although I was not able to gain access to repository in the south because of the difficult political situation there at the time I was doing my field research, I am aware of this weakness that could create some limitations to the preliminary findings in the thesis. Thus, English language resources will be used and validated to mitigate some of this limitation, within the constraints of the study and its base in London, with the hope that further research can continue in years to come. The findings of this thesis are intended to be preliminary explorations of the possibilities opened up by this approach to thinking in new ways about Thai state expansion. A detailed study across more local languages and extensive local archives would be a multi-year project beyond the scope of a PhD. However, my findings offer important new lines of thinking on these issues,

especially in the context of how Thai national scholars, such as myself, may be prepared to approach them.

The thesis intends to deal with the three frontiers of Siam at the time of modern western imperialist expansion in the broader context of global history and does not take just an insular view of Thai history or a view based on methodological nationalism (privileging the nation as the only lens of analysis). Although Thailand had never been colonised by an external state, the British and French imperialists influenced the outlining of the boundaries of the northeastern, northern and southern Siam. Therefore, English archival sources found in the National Archives of the UK and the British Library in London are useful and valid in concrete terms to analyse this global framing and the process in the frontier regions in cases where local sources are difficult to access or are non-existent. English sources provide information about various activities of Siam concerning the three frontier areas. Seen in official correspondence, personal letters, diplomatic policies, treaties with Siam and the records of British and French travellers or American missionaries. Particularly, the British consular officers who were based in Bangkok, Chiang Mai and the Malay States left useful materials to help fill some of the gaps in our understanding of the research question. These materials provide an idea about the transition and of Siam's reform through their daily reports of rebellions, especially in the north and south of Siam close to British Burma and British Malaya. The relationships and activities between Siam and French imperialists, in competition with Britain, are also fruitfully contained. Therefore, the English materials are useful in cross-checking with Thai resources and help to reflect alternative viewpoints regarding the construction of Thai national culture.

1.6 Chapterisation

The thesis emphasises the comparison of shaping Thai national culture in the three frontier zones of Laos, Lan Na and Patani in 1873-1910 and the reactions that followed its attempt by investigating its symbolic elements. The thesis is therefore divided into three main parts.

In part I, chapters 2-3 clarify how the global situation influenced the transformation of Siam and attempts to place events within a wider context. It also considers the ways that Siam adopted and adapted modern Western concepts to develop the modern

Siamese nation. These two chapters suggest why national unity was relevant to Siam at that time. It also illustrates the emergence of provincial administrative reform and how it was defined as the crucial mechanism of Siam in creating the nation, as well as how the new administrative reform was related to Thai cultural definitions. Following, chapters 4 and 5 describe the appearance of revolts in a global and regional context so that we can understand these issues in a broader framework of global history that broaden our knowledge regarding the three rebellions in Siam in 1901-2. The two chapters also give a brief description of local circumstances and revolts that are significant to understand the cultural interaction between central Siam and its three frontier areas.

Part II moves away from this broader, contextual framework to focus more closely on Siam. In particular, it focuses on how symbolic elements from the pre-modern era were redefined and remodelled to shape the fundamental sense of Thai national culture in the modern period. It considers the two most important symbols that were used to refer to the notion of being Thai: kingship and Buddhism. Chapters 6 and 7 will focus on the conception of kingship, and chapters 8 will discuss the spread of central Thai Buddhism. Chapter 6 and the beginning part of Chapter 8 analysed the elements of kingship and Buddhism through the process of selection, recreation and adaptation in Siam to construct the core idea of national culture. It describes the Siamese government's perspectives regarding the Thai model of unity such as what the definition of Thai is, who is Thai, and what Thai culture should be.

Chapters 7 and 8 compare how Siam stretched Thai national culture through these two forms of symbolism: kingship and Buddhism respectively, and how this was done in the three frontier zones of Laos, Lan Na and Patani. It clarifies the methods of modern Siamese rulers and the Siam government in disseminating the idea of Thai-centred nationalism both political and cultural dimensions to the three frontiers. Both similar and different strategies of construction were used, through myth, memories, symbols or values, and how this was done in each frontier will be analysed. This helps us to understand how Siam adapted Thai national culture to those three distinctive circumstances. The Thai symbolic elements that were introduced and inserted in the proclamations, decrees, laws, and orders will be discussed in these two chapters. They also use the notion of the frontier to analyse the process by which Siam expanded into

frontier areas and how that influenced religious practices, languages and dialects and attire in the daily life of locals.

Part III, chapter 9 is a comparison of the collective reactions of local chiefs and ordinary people against the attempts of constructing Thai national culture in these frontier regions. The rebellions towards Siam that occurred in the three frontier areas of Siam in 1901-1902: northeastern Laos west of the Mekong, the seven Malay principalities in the south, and Lan Na in the north will be examined here. This chapter also analyses how rebellions in the north and the northeast absorbed the Siamese and other influences to produce their own reactions given their common incorporation into the Buddhist world. This is obviously a point of comparison where the convergence with the south is at odds and has obvious limitations. By taking the concepts of the 'Cargo Cult' and millenarianism to explore these revolts in Buddhist-oriented contexts, it helps us to understand the attempts of the local rulers and people more fully, the objectives of their grievances, the political and cultural movements that were presented through symbolic elements. Most importantly for this thesis, this part reflects the Siamese government's perspectives regarding the construction of Thai culture, including the ways of dealing with different ethnic groups and cultures in the three frontiers in more detail and the concentration in this chapter on the reactions in specifically Buddhist contexts, where such symbolism had deeper resonance, is particularly illuminating for how the Thai state was evolving its concept of Thai national culture as a unifying set of symbols.

**Part I – Siam and the Rebellions of 1902 within a Global and Regional
Context**

CHAPTER 2: SIAM AND GLOBAL HISTORICAL CHANGE, 1850s-1900s

Introduction

This chapter explains how the global situation impacted on Siam from the mid-nineteenth to the beginning of the twentieth centuries as a way of providing context for the expansion of the state and the attempt to consolidate its territorial and cultural power. It helps us to comprehend the local framing of rebellions in the frontier zones of Siam during that time (specifically in 1901-2). Instead of focusing solely on internal factors, this chapter will provide a different approach by placing Siam and these local responses within a global framework. By doing so, we therefore need to return to investigate the project of making modern Siam and a manifestation of local grievances within the context of the global setting to understand the critical transformation in trade between global markets in relation to western supremacies and other parts of the world, as well as Siam during the 1850s-1900s, if this part of the country's history is to be understood more fully.

The Bowring Treaty of 1855¹ marked the moment of the world economy that activated Siam to respond to change. When King Mongkut (c.1804-1868), who ascended the throne as the fourth monarch of the Chakri dynasty in 1851, signed this treaty, the modern outlook was reflected in the Thai court and areas surrounding the capital city of Bangkok. Mongkut seemed to be a wise navigator in modernising Siam (and an excellent example for his son, Chulalongkorn) with an eagerness to absorb modern trends: liberal economics, western scientific thought, territorial notions and the principles of being a civilised intellectual. Since Siam transformed the economy from state control to be opening for foreign trade, it changed the financial foundation of the Siamese government. According to Ian Brown, the treaty impacted on a major problem of a shortage of revenue in the central treasury of Siam, and this difficulty led to the transformation of tax collections from all regional provinces to enable the consolidation of the financial situation of the government.² Therefore, the

¹ This was a commercial agreement between Britain and Siam signed on 18 April 1855 to abolish the monopolies and open a gateway for foreign trade. Sir John Bowring, who was in charge of the British negotiator in the treaty, was a British diplomat and a Governor of Hong Kong.

² Ian Brown, *The Creation of the Modern Ministry of Finance in Siam, 1885-1910* (London: Macmillan, 1992), 3-4.

administrative reform under King Chulalongkorn in 1892 was a result of the world economic transition.

It is even more interesting that the global influences, which pressured Siamese rulers to follow the Western intellectuals and create a modernised nation, triggered local discontent. In 1901-2, the reactions in the frontiers were to mobilise against the new arrangement of Siam. The situation attempted to keep the state at bay and produced reactions that were partly associated with the millenarianism. It seemed to accord with Scott's model (will be discussed further in Chapter 4).³ Again, to understand the inner transitions and state expansion of Siam and the local reactions that were created in its frontier-borderlands, we have to place them within the context of a broader framework, understanding not just the local but also the global historical context. This chapter, therefore, will suggest how new global systems influenced Siam by illustrating how both the internal changes in Siam and its external relations were influenced and shaped by the global situation following from the Bowring Treaty of 1855 as a wider context for understanding the frontier rebellions.

2.1 Global circumstances affecting Siam in 1855

In 1855, new challenges faced the Siamese monarchy and elites and led to tremendous internal transformations regarding the economy and political system of Siam. The arrival of a British envoy with his coercive methods,⁴ Sir John Bowring brought about the rise of a new universal concept: free trade and a free-flowing financial system on global markets. Officially known as the Bowring Treaty of 1855, this was a British-Siamese commercial agreement that challenged the monopolistic and restrictive trade of the old system with liberal commercial relations and practices. Bowring remarked that his mission was to introduce 'a total revolution in all financial machinery of the [Siamese] Government'.⁵ However, it reified many points of inequality towards Siam.⁶ Specifically, the Siamese rulers could no longer determine

³ James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

⁴ David Todd, 'John Bowring and the Global Dissemination of Free Trade', *The Historical Journal* 51, no. 2 (2008): 393.

⁵ John Bowring, *The Kingdom and People of Siam: With a Narrative of the Mission to That Country in 1855*, vol. 2 (London: John W. Parker and Son, West Strand, 1857), 226.

⁶ Peter Sek Wannamethee, 'Anglo-Siamese Economic Relations: British Trade, Capital and Enterprise in Siam, 1856-1914' (MPhil thesis, London School of Economics and Political Science, 1990), 39.

the export or import prices, impose high duties as a barrier or restrict trade in rare local items, including tobacco, tin, ivory, pepper and so on, as they had done previously. Instead, western traders could more freely access the Siamese market and all Siamese seaports, as well as to establish extraterritorial businesses with capacity to interfere with internal economic affairs.⁷ The Siamese economy also changed from catering for a domestic market to producing for export to meet global demand.⁸ After the commercial treaty was signed, teak, rice, tin and rubber became the four main primary export products.⁹ Following this, Siam made similar treaties with other western powers, and with Japan. Led by Great Britain, the paramount objective of this critical change in Siam and south east Asia was primarily to secure a commercial route to China and to guarantee prosperity in European hands both the economy and politics.

Through force and persuasion, European powers sought to remove traditional economic systems, spread out among many areas globally as part of a colonising pattern during the mid-nineteenth century, not just in Siam. The Bowring mission enabled the liberal concept of free trade to be presented, promoted and ultimately to force open the gateways to trade throughout many national borders.¹⁰ As a representative of British free trade ideology, Bowring travelled to propagate free trade in the cities of Bern, Rome, Berlin and Brussels before coming to Siam,¹¹ while his task had also extended to the Ottoman Empire, Egypt and Syria in 1837-38.¹² Until the 1850s, when Bowring's mission was launched in the Far East, he was based in China (1854-60), to conclude the unfinished Nanking Treaty of 1842, in Siam (1855) as well as visiting the courts of Japan, Korea and Vietnam. Bowring's activities

⁷ B.J. Terwiel, 'The Bowring Treaty: Imperialism and the Indigenous Perspective', *The Journal of the Siam Society* 79, no. 2 (1991): 45; Antoinette Raquiza, *State Structure and Economic Development in Southeast Asia Structuring Development: The Political Economy of Thailand and the Philippines* (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2012), 87.

⁸ *Collected Royal Chronicles Part 50 (Myth of Ranong) [Prachum Phongsawadan Phakthi 50 (Tamnan Mueang Ranong)-ประชุมพงศาวดารภาคที่ 50 (ตำนานเมืองระนอง]* (Phranakhon: Sophonphiphatthanakon, 1928), 22.

⁹ Andrew Brown, *Labour, Politics, and the State in Industrializing Thailand* (London; New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 16.

¹⁰ Richard S. Horowitz, 'International Law and State Transformation in China, Siam, and the Ottoman Empire during the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of World History* 15, no. 4 (2004): 445–46.

¹¹ Todd, 'John Bowring and the Global Dissemination of Free Trade', 374.

¹² Bruce Masters, 'The Political Economy of Aleppo in an Age of Ottoman Reform', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 53, no. 1/2 (2010): 313; G. F. Bartle, 'Bowring and the Near Eastern Crisis of 1838-1840', *The English Historical Review* 79, no. 313 (1964): 764.

illustrated that the West in the 1850s was ready to universalise its advanced capabilities and its mindset economically to draw the world outside the North Atlantic into a uniform capitalist structure.¹³ A consequence of the modern economic model was that it formed new local political and social models throughout the world, which incorporated to new universal ideas on bureaucracy, international law and jurisdiction, mapping and territoriality, and forms of cultural identity. Thus, we need to understand history on a global scale from the 1850s to 1900s to understand the outcomes of Siam in 1902.

The Western global expansion continued steadily. Advanced technologies and development of industrial production provided the advantage to drive the multiple outputs and lift the quality of industrial products from the 1830s onwards. These technical and industrial developments formed the basis for the demand for free trade, which were booming and were interdependent upon each. Advances such as petroleum, alternative fuel to coal, and the steamship helped European governments and traders to access remote areas at affordable cost and reduced time.¹⁴ Troops could also be sent speedily and anywhere in the world. These technological advantages boosted the British and the West that possessed these new technologies, strengthening their capabilities. Thus, the lack of economic resources and industrial goods would result in the discontinuation of the wealth engine of great powers, which would handicap their military position and political strategy.

During the first phase of early globalised expansion in the 1830s, East Asia still retained its traditional economic models. Western powers with their logic of free trade, even British supremacy, did not have an impact until the 1850s. For one thing, the decrease of commercial benefits of the East India Company (EIC), the high costs of securing warehouses, fortresses and labour pensions, company privileges, and misrule by the EIC in India, were significant obstacles that slowed the new pattern of commerce.¹⁵ There was also a difficulty in accessing markets controlled by

¹³ Gary Bryan Magee and Andrew S. Thompson, *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World, c.1850-1914* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 137.

¹⁴ Prasannan Parthasarathi, *Why Europe Grew Rich and Asia Did Not: Global Economic Divergence, 1600-1850* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 2.

¹⁵ H. V. Bowen, *The Business of Empire: The East India Company and Imperial Britain, 1756-1833* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 296–98.

monopolised of local rulers, including the restriction posed by the Chinese emperor.¹⁶ Even in the case of Siam, there had been a previous attempt by the EIC to access Siam by signing the Burney Treaty of 1826,¹⁷ but this seemed to be a failure in commercial terms, unlike the successful mission of the Bowring Treaty later on. Europe itself still faced disruption from the Napoleonic Wars. However, after the British could control some main sea lanes and ports after the wars, it determined to abolish the EIC's privileges and its monopoly in India in 1813 and force open trade in China in 1833, and to embrace free trade instead.¹⁸ The mercantile policies were no longer considered economic benefits anymore.

When Siam was confronted with British naval power in 1855, we can see the rise of commercial interconnections globally.¹⁹ It linked the Atlantic triangular trades (America continent, West Africa and the sizeable European market) to the political arena of the Near East. It connected eastward to Persia and Tibet, northward to Russia, southward to East Africa, the Red Sea and Arabian sea (where the British took Zanzibar in Tanzania, Lagos in Nigeria, Alexandria in Egypt and Aden in Modern Yemen) and south-eastward to South Asia. Furthermore, the Indian Ocean was a strategic connection with the Far East, where large Chinese markets in East Asia and the resources of South East Asia were located (the entrance to China via Burma, the access to the South China Sea via Singapore and the link to China, Indochina and the Strait Settlements via Siam). It was also a way to access Australia, New Zealand and other the Pacific islands (including Fiji), which connected with the Americas across the Pacific. Simultaneously, the battles amongst the European powers after the 1850s had shifted their geopolitics to other locations globally to secure their national companies and trades. Their battles moved from the European arena to Afro-Asian world or what some might today call 'the global south'. The mid-

¹⁶ Jonathan Fenby, *Modern China: The Fall and Rise of a Great Power, 1850 to the Present* (New York: Ecco, 2008), 9.

¹⁷ The treaty was signed between Henry Burney, an agent of British East India Company, and King Nangklao (c.1788-1851) to declare the ally between Britain and Siam.

¹⁸ Nick Robins, *The Corporation That Changed the World: How the East India Company Shaped the Modern Multinational* (London; Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press, 2006), 141–42.

¹⁹ C. A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World, 1780-1830* (London; New York: Longman, 1989), 102–6; Carl Cavanagh Hodge, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Age of Imperialism, 1800-1914* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2008), introduction (Xi).

nineteenth century, therefore, saw significant transformations that influenced the whole national history of Siam as a space reinterpreted through global framing.

2.2 Understanding the global context of change, the 1850s-1900s

The rise of global connections from the 1850s obviously influenced and shaped the world beyond the earlier commercial routes; Africa, Asia and the Pacific Islands, which previously had little contact with the Europeans and their innovations. Because of the need to seek more economic resources, Siam, as the case study of this analysis, was one of many polities in Asia that could not avoid engaging with the Europeans. In the meantime, western technologies significantly encouraged the onset of migrations and demographic changes in the new commercial routes pursued by the Europeans. A well-illustrated absorption of western intellectual models relating to technologies, migrations, territoriality and political and cultural changes could be seen at least in Siam as being part of the global trend.

2.2.1 Economics and the world-economy

It was not until the 1850s that Western powers agreed with Adam Smith's ideas and his work, *The Wealth of Nations* (1776),²⁰ which sought to bring about specialist industrial manufacturing to increase productivity and expand markets outside the Atlantic world. The new pattern of free trade became widespread general and embedded in the global south as never happened before.²¹ In the 1970s, Immanuel Wallerstein explored how the modern capitalist system became modern global system, radiated from the great western powers to cover the globe.

Wallerstein's concept attempts to broaden political and economic changes beyond the European continent. Covering all areas of the globe thus makes this model applicable for our case study of Siam in South East Asia. However, there are some constraints of the model due to the diversification of individual economic structures. It reveals an ignorance towards the pre-capitalist dynamics of local economic

²⁰ Hodge, *Encyclopedia of the Age of Imperialism, 1800-1914*, 154; John Lowe, *The Great Powers, Imperialism, and the German Problem, 1865-1925* (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), 75–76.

²¹ John Darwin, *After Tamerlane: The Rise and Fall of Global Empires, 1400 - 2000* (London: Penguin Books, 2008), 237.

structures whereby each area was developed at different times, forms and stages.²² As Victor Lieberman argued, the world-system seems unsuited to the Southeast Asian archipelago (i.e. Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines). These islands had been periodically engaged with European trading networks (including those of the Dutch and Spaniards) before the nineteenth century, the peak era of British expansionism. So, it was not the first time that Southeast Asian islands were in contact with the global powers, being in some of slowly developing peripheral situation.²³ In contrast, to understand the economic link between the Southeast Asian mainland and the global economy we have to consider the European impact after the nineteenth century that significantly influenced political and cultural transitions in the mainland societies.²⁴ Although the world-system discussed shows some limitations, the model is still useful in broadening the historical knowledge of Siam, particularly from the second half of the nineteenth century.

According to Wallerstein, the primary intention of the world-system among Europeans (including Americans) was to find new markets and products of those markets for the 'core' or central European economic producers. Foreign items began to flow to several commercial cities such as London, Bordeaux and New York under a complex system of global trade. The other side of the coin was that the new (Asian, except Japan, African, Latin American and the Pacific) markets involved in this system became the 'periphery' that fed raw materials or specialist items that responded to the needs of the cores. Further, the peripheries needed to buy western products and even processed goods made from local materials. In this model, it illustrates how advanced capital states created a single world-economy that relied on the exploitative relations with other less developed parts of the whole world.²⁵

²² Daniel Chirot and Thomas D. Hall, 'World-System Theory', *Annual Review of Sociology* 8 (1982): 99; Boris Stremelin, 'Bounding Historical Systems: The Wallerstein-Frank Debate and the Role of Knowledge in World History', *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 24, no. 4 (2001): 526–27.

²³ Victor Lieberman, 'Wallerstein's System and the International Context of Early Modern Southeast Asian History', *Journal of Asian History* 24, no. 1 (1990): 74.

²⁴ Victor Lieberman, 80–90.

²⁵ Terence K. Hopkins and Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein, *World-Systems Analysis: Theory and Methodology*, Explorations in the World-Economy, V.1 (Beverly Hills, Calif: Sage Publications, 1982), 11.

Accordingly, the advanced states stretched the rule of the free market and regarded the local monopolies as a serious hindrance to its operation.²⁶ The previous internal economic barriers to exchange, the regional networks of unfixed prices and available credit, were demolished to support the national advancement of international free trade. To increase rapid growth, the great powers steered the line of products and produced transnational relations which were based on the division of labour. They categorised the specialisation of local producers and raw materials in each peripheral zone.²⁷

Meanwhile, the global trend of consumption was also guided by the European metropole. Food and luxurious products such as tea, sugar, cigarette/tobacco, cacao, coffee, silk, timber and furniture that were increasingly sought products became symbols of the top in social class.²⁸ New crops of strategic raw materials also became essential for European industrialisation. Rice, rubber and tin from Siam became increasingly produced to respond to the global needs as Siam became a semi-colonial periphery. The Malay Peninsula with Singapore, Penang, and Malacca had been part of British India until 1867, and had been colonised to the metropole (in London) because of its abundant materials such as vegetable oils, tin and other mineral products.²⁹ The timber found in Burma, northern Siam and Laos also attracted British capitalist companies from 1867 onwards. From the late nineteenth, all local raw materials and primary industrial products in the global south contributed to making the peripheral zones linked to the demand of European capital masters at the centres.

2.2.2 Technologies, migration and demographic changes

It was not only the global economy that brought the changes to the local economic system of Siam: technologies, migration and demographics were also transformed in accord with the flow of liberalised economic practices. Some Siamese nobles became active advocates of modern technologies, particularly during the reign of King Mongkut (1851-1868). Likewise, Prince Chuthamani (1808-1866), the brother of

²⁶ C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2004), 136.

²⁷ Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein, *Mercantilism and the Consolidation of the European World-Economy, 1600 - 1750*, 2 (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2011), 129.

²⁸ Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2000), 114–15.

²⁹ Anne Booth, *Colonial Legacies: Economic and Social Development in East and Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007), 7 (introduction).

King Mongkut or the Second King of Siam in the Mongkut era, was one of the Siamese court members who engaged in modernisation through scientific knowledge. He created a model of a steamship in 1832.³⁰ However, it was not until the end of 1855 that his interest in shipbuilding became realised and used in the affairs of Siam. He generated his vision to build the first Siamese steamship named *Ruea Sayam Orasumpon* (เรือสยามอรสูมพล),³¹ of which all the materials were made in Siam except with the exception of the engine which was bought from Britain.³²

Photography and photographs became more general in Siam from 1865 after the arrival of John Thompson, a Scottish photographer and travel writer, who directly received a request from King Mongkut to take his images in the palace (see image no.2.1).³³ By doing this, photography helped to change the Siamese worldview by removing a previous belief that the camera would bring death to the persons whose photographs were taken.³⁴ Also, the telegraph, *ta-lap-gap* or *bok-fai-fa* (ตะแลบแก๊บ หรือ บอกไฟฟ้า), was brought into Siam after the Bowring treaty, albeit as a machine and not installed as a system.³⁵ Siam still telegraphed the news to others through Singapore's telegraph system. During the Chulalongkorn period, the first telegraph was installed at Bangkok in 1874, as mentioned in *Darunowat* (ดรุณาวาท), an early Thai newspaper.³⁶ Thereafter, the first telegraph line from Bangkok to Samut Prakan was built in 1875 to report on conditions at the mouth of the Chaopraya River. The telegraph was later extended to the northern, northeastern and southern frontiers of Siam. These technologies therefore helped Siam to link regional areas with the central

³⁰ William L Cowan, 'The Role of Prince Chuthamani in the Modernizing of Siam', *Journal of the Siam Society* 55.1 (1967): 45.

³¹ In Thai, 'o-ra-sum' refers to steam and 'pon' means power.

³² *Collected Royal Chronicles Part 62 (French Envoys in Rattanakosin Period)-[Prachumphongsawadan Phakthi 62 (Rueang Thutfarangset Samai Krungtratanakosin)-ประชุมพงศาวดารภาคที่ 62 (เรื่องทูตฝรั่งเศสสมัยกรุงรัตนโกสินทร์)]* (Bangkok: Sophonphiphatthanakon, 1936), 283; Damrong Rajanubhab, *A History of Thai Warships [Tamnan Ruearob Thai-ตำนานเรือรบไทย]* (Phranakhon: Phrachan, 1953), 34.

³³ John Thomson, *The Straits of Malacca, Indo-China and China or Ten Years Travels, Adventures and Residence Abroad* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Low and Searle, 1875), 89, 95.

³⁴ Anake Nawigamune, *First in Siam [Raekmi Nai Sayam-แรกมีในสยาม]* (Bangkok: Saengdaet, 1987), 74-75.

³⁵ Thiphakorawong, *Collected Royal Chronicles of Rattanakosin Period during King Mongkut Era [Phraratchaphongsawadan Krungtratanakosin Ratchakan Thi Si-ประชุมพงศาวดารรัตนโกสินทร์รัชกาลที่ 4]* (Bangkok: Kanphim Kueakun, 1964), 129.

³⁶ 'Darunowat [The Moral Instructions for Young Children-ดรุณาวาท]', 3 April 1874, 379.

capital at Bangkok, to secure the strategic and administrative benefits which supported general economic advancement.³⁷

The worldwide developments in relation to new technologies from the 1850s were something that the Siamese court experienced, and following European models. The far-reaching economic penetration became possible in Europeans' eyes because of the remarkable advance of technologies, which helped them to manage their commercial networks efficiently. Then, technologies accelerated European expansion to incorporate the weak Asian and African peripheries into the metropolitan economy.³⁸ From the 1840s the steamship and coal reduced travel times over long distances and reduced the expense of fuel costs; substantial part of internal trade and ground transport, however, were still inaccessible to European traders. It was only during the late 1840s when the railroads were developed, and from the 1850s when they became more general, effectively accelerated commodity delivery and increased regional products.³⁹ In India, railways became more significant than other projects after the end of the rebellion or the First War of Independence in 1857.⁴⁰ With the exploitation of tin and later rubber, railway construction was begun in the Malay Peninsula between 1885-1918.⁴¹ In Siam, the Paknam railway, the first railway of Siam, running from Bangkok to Paknam, Samut Prakan was opened in 1893.⁴² Later, the Ayutthaya railway opened in 1894 and extended to northeastern Korat in 1900 and a western line to Phetchaburi in 1903.⁴³ Not only through transportation, but telegraphy finally permitted people to send commercial information from Europe

³⁷ Ian Brown, 'British Financial Advisers in Siam in the Reign of King Chulalongkorn', *Modern Asian Studies* 12, no. 2 (1978): 211.

³⁸ William Hardy McNeill, *The Pursuit of Power: Technology, Armed Force, and Society since A.D. 1000* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 223–24.

³⁹ Peter Mathias and Michael M. Postan, eds., *The Industrial Economies: Capital, Labour, and Enterprise. Part II: The United States, Japan, and Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 86; Simon P. Ville, *Transport and the Development of the European Economy, 1750-1918* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 163.

⁴⁰ Bernard Porter, *The Lion's Share: A Short History of British Imperialism, 1850-2004*, 4th ed (Harlow, Essex, England; New York: Pearson/Longman, 2004), 52, 74.

⁴¹ C. J. Dixon, *South East Asia in the World-Economy* (Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 125.

⁴² Chulalongkorn, *Speeches by King Chulalongkorn, 1874-1910 [Phraratchadamrat Nai Phrabatsomdet Phrachunlachomklao Chaoyuhua Tangtae Po So 2417-2453-พระราชดำรัสในพระบาทสมเด็จพระจุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัวตั้งแต่ พ.ศ.2417-2453]* (Phranakhon: Sophonphiphatthanakon, 1914), 87.

⁴³ J. Antonio, *The 1904 Traveller's Guide to Bangkok and Siam*, Reprint (Bangkok: White Lotus, 1997), 56.

to its overseas at great speed.⁴⁴ Prices and quality of goods were standardised. Combined with developments in printing and photographic technologies, they helped to capture and evidence the real life in the form of images as well as all far-away situations that could be transmitted and reported speedily and accurately. The growing network of communications thereby linked daily instant news and cultural diversity crossing continents around the world together.

Further examples of these external global pressures can be seen in other areas. The policy of slave abolition in Siam in 1874, and opening for Chinese immigrants,⁴⁵ did not initiate by the Siam government, but due to the global trends and pressures at that time. The principle of a modern world-economy continuously replaced slavery with free labour to create efficient and skilled labourers, rather than depending on slave-based production. To stop all struggles over slavery (kidnapping, inhumane punishment and racial bias) that interrupted the flows of free trade,⁴⁶ the British government abolished slavery throughout its empire in 1833, triggering a process that had slavery illegal universally. However, the abolition of slavery resulted in a growth of global human translocation. Steamships carried more people across the Atlantic Ocean on shorter voyages with confirmed arrival dates.⁴⁷ Worldwide communication influenced the destination of migrants who often lived in poverty and searched for a new opportunity. In particular, Chinese and Indian migrant flows affected the demographic development in several places under British control, creating economic growth but also competition between migrants and local people, as well as the meaning of citizenship and the process of legal rights when crossing boundaries.⁴⁸ (see Map no.2.2, which shows the consequence when everywhere in the globe has now connected).

⁴⁴ S. N. Broadberry and Kevin H. O'Rourke, eds., *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 1.

⁴⁵ Brown, *Labour, Politics, and the State in Industrializing Thailand*, 16.

⁴⁶ Emma Christopher, 'The Slave Trade is Merciful Compared to [this]': Slave Traders, Convict Transportation, and the Abolitionists' in Emma Christopher, Cassandra Pybus, and Marcus Rediker, eds., *Many Middle Passages: Forced Migration and the Making of the Modern World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 112–14.

⁴⁷ McNeill, *The Pursuit of Power*, 225.

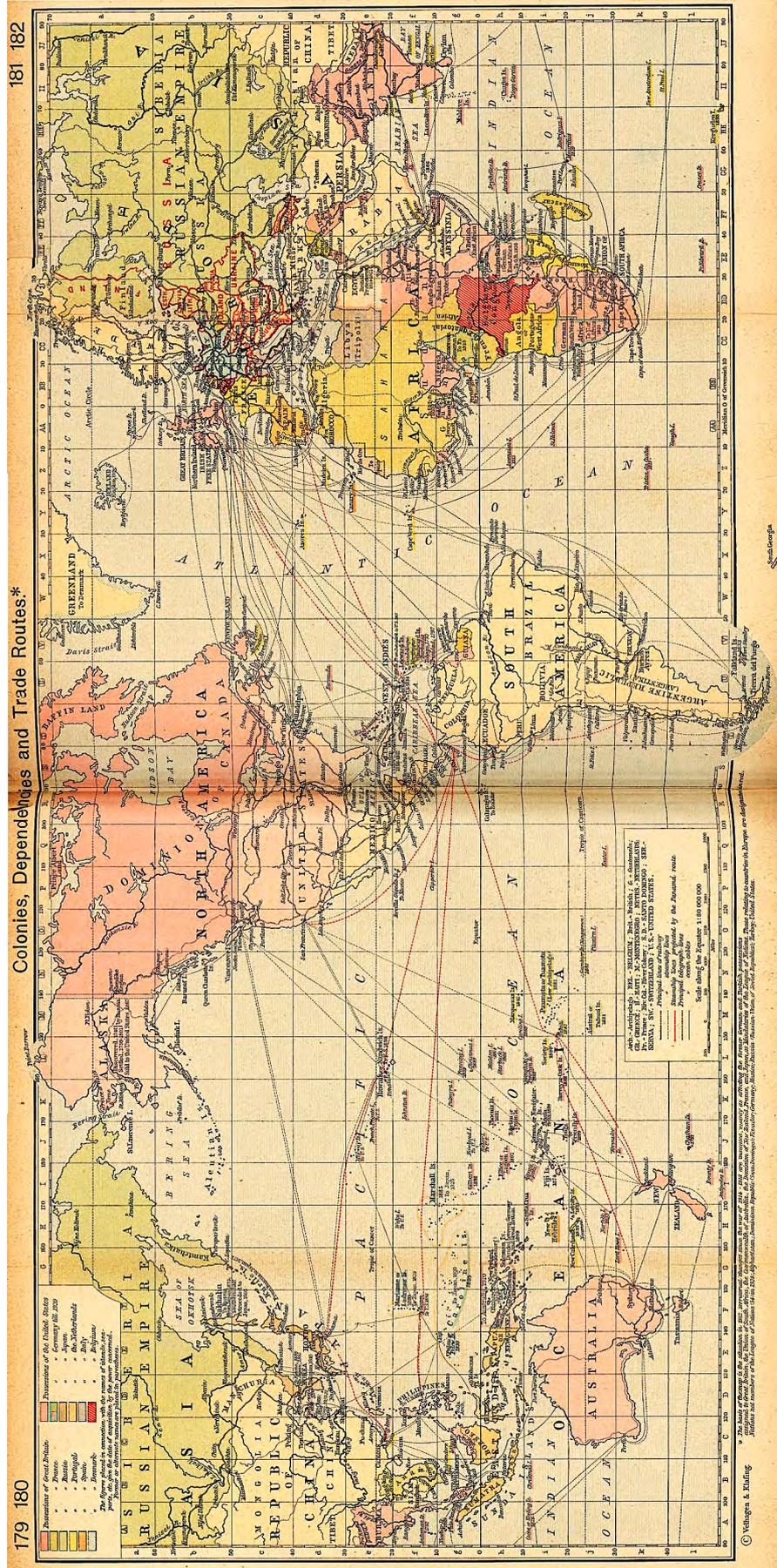
⁴⁸ Adam McKeown, 'Global Migration, 1846-1940', *Journal of World History* 15, no. 2 (2004): 173–74.

2.1: One of many photographs in John Thomson's collection, a photograph of Prince Chulalongkorn is seated on the Puttarn Thong palanquin after the tonsurate ceremony and the porch with King Mongkut



From: J. Thomson et al. (2015). *Siam through the Lens of John Thomson, 1865-66: Including Angkor and Coastal China*. Bangkok, Thailand: River Books Press, p.73.

2.2: Map showing trade routes around the globe, c.1912



William R. Shepherd (1926). Colonies, Dependencies and Trade Routes (Published in *Historical Atlas*). 1: 80000000. Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection.

2.2.3 Territorial consolidation

Nonetheless, the situation had been shifted again in the 1870s as other powerful cores were ready to compete with Britain to share the vast global economic benefits. Britain was no longer the main global power anymore.⁴⁹ Other western powers, including the US, Germany and France, had taken the leading role in the globe. In the definition of a single world-system there is thus not only one core, but many political units inside a world-economy.⁵⁰ A variety of cultures and groups with different religious and linguistic practices now composed in a world-economy. The core-periphery linkage was carved out in several relations around the globe during this period.

Since the 1776 revolution in America and up until the end of the Civil War in 1865, the extraordinary speed of industrialisation, the discovery of prosperous resources and development of internal markets in the project of westwards expansion, encouraged the US to claim a rank as one of the great powers of the world.⁵¹ German industrialisation also produced significant economic, political and social change. In the 1860s, Germany produced coal, steel and iron and ranked fifth after Britain, France, the US and Belgium.⁵² The ability to access raw silk from the Far East and the Middle East encouraged France to produce cheaper silk textiles, which changed France to a more modern form of industrial production.⁵³ Belgium with rich coal and iron resources and Italy with textile industry raised their level of national production as well. In contrast in Russia, industrialisation developed quite slowly. This followed from their loss in the Crimean War (1861-65) and their defeat again in the Russo-Japanese War (1905), which delayed the development of its empire. Similarly, although the Dutch, Portuguese and Spanish were still active, they became weakened states. The modernisation of the Japanese economy from the 1880s, in continuation of Meiji Restoration of 1868, should also be mentioned. After Japan opened up its ports, emulating experiences from foreign experts and developing a factory model, Japan shortly achieved the economic capacity and consolidated national unity that

⁴⁹ Porter, *The Lion's Share*, 81–82.

⁵⁰ Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein, *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 23.

⁵¹ Paul W. Schroeder, 'Europe's Progress and America's Success, 1760–1850' in Frederick C. Schneid, ed., *The Projection and Limitations of Imperial Powers, 1618-1850* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012), 187–88.

⁵² E. J. Feuchtwanger, *Imperial Germany, 1850-1918* (London; New York: Routledge, 2001), 5–6.

⁵³ Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914*, 176.

made it look for colonies, winning states, and won victory over China and controlled Korea in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895).⁵⁴

From the 1870s, the advanced nations in Europe (and Japan) turned to colonial engagement. This was because a working relationship between economic producers and political leaders became a necessity to make sure that other states would not interfere in their economic affairs.⁵⁵ This was not only the intention of the British but also other leading Western powers, which were more focused on the economic prospects seen in Africa and South East Asia, and increasingly associated this with territorial acquisitions.⁵⁶ Thus, boundary demarcation became the primary tool of Western imperialists from the 1870s. They believed that the intensification of political control combined with methods of dividing up and demarcating territories could preserve their economic dominance.⁵⁷

In the 1880s, the stability of European powers shifted. The British military intervention of Egypt in 1882 to secure interests over the Suez Canal (opened in 1869) was the onset of Anglo-French alienation and the start of a continuous partition of Africa by European imperialists a year later. Known colloquially as the ‘Scramble for Africa’, most of Africa was divided amongst European powers on the map, and a territorial basis was used to carve out domains of trading protection without regard to traditional African situation.⁵⁸ (How European powers partitioned the African continent during the 1880s is shown in Map no.2.4). This left a few spaces in Africa which were beyond European control after the British triumphed over the Boers or Dutch settlers that suffered severe hardship during the Boer War in 1899-1902.

Unlike China, which was too large to be dominated entirely, the states and kingdoms of a politically fragmented south east Asia became a crucial point of European competition for economic dominance as it linked China, India and the Middle East.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ A Swale, *Meiji Restoration* (UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 53; Mathias and Postan, *The Industrial Economies*, 142–44.

⁵⁵ Wallerstein, *World-Systems Analysis*, 24.

⁵⁶ Eric J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire: 1875-1914* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987), 128; Nicholas Tarling, *Imperialism in Southeast Asia: 'A Fleeting, Passing Phase'* (London; New York: Routledge, 2003), 33.

⁵⁷ Nicholas Tarling, ed., *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, UK; New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 71.

⁵⁸ John M. MacKenzie, *The Partition of Africa, 1880-1900 and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (London; New York: Methuen, 1983), 14–16.

⁵⁹ Dixon, *South East Asia in the World-Economy*, 1.

It therefore shared Africa's destiny (in Map no.2.6 shows the before and after imperialist expansions throughout south east Asia). Britain took Penang (1786), Singapore (1819), Malacca (1824) to form the Straits Settlements and then came to control the rest of Malaya in 1895. It controlled Northern Borneo in 1882 (part of present-day Malaysia) and Brunei in 1888. Burma was completely in the hands of the British in 1886 (after three wars in 1824, 1852 and 1885) since it occupied an important strategic position in relation to China, and with rich resources. France brought Indochina under a French Protectorate, starting with Cambodia in 1863, Tongkin, Annam and Cochinchina (Vietnam) in 1883 and Laos in 1893. In the case of Java, the British preferred to give the territory back to the Dutch to restrain the interference of other European powers. The Philippines became part of the US in 1898 as a result of the Spanish-American War. Siam alone was in a better position than Burma and all other states in South East Asia. Siam thus was free from colonisation as an independent buffer state.⁶⁰ However, and perhaps more accurately, the term semi-colony seems to be an appropriate description of the Siamese situation in 1900. Siam was unavoidably confronted with a series of humiliations from imperialist powers which was no different from other directly ruled colonial states.⁶¹

By the 1900s, almost all lands were fitted into a world map defined by imperialism and appeared in the territorial records of Western powers (as seen in Maps no.2.3-2.6). At this time, the effect of the European state system could be seen clearly, such as in the demarcation of territory and frontiers that marked the difference between pre- and modern state systems. The former focused on people and governance, which was based on personal relations.⁶² However, the latter emphasised lands, taxes and the relationship between the state and citizens under the doctrine of Western ideas. Therefore, the political structures, governance and sovereignty regarding centrally organised bureaucracies were the main features that preserved European powers and their framework of rule.⁶³

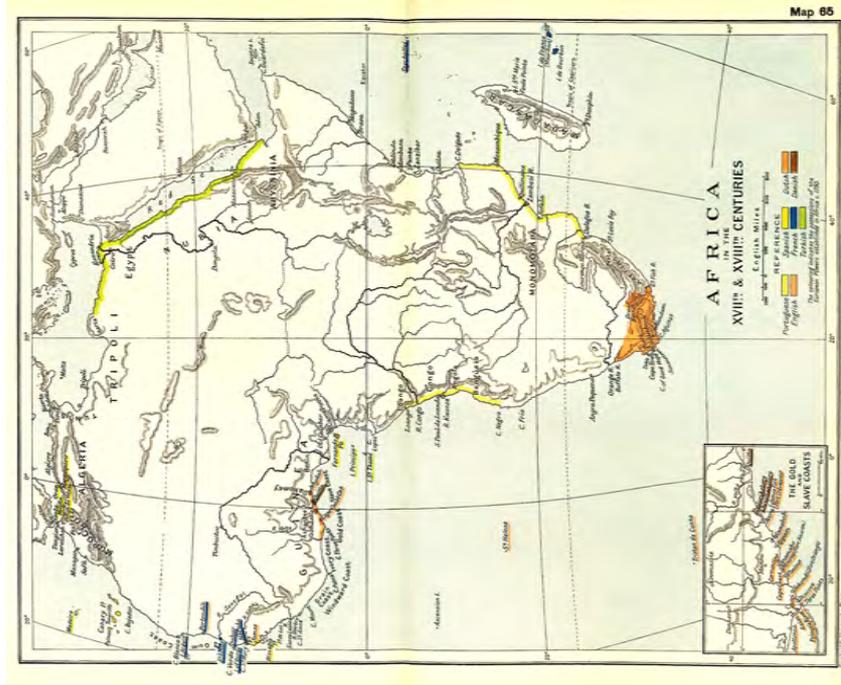
⁶⁰ 'Inclosure No.132 from Mr.Chamberlain to Governor Sir C. Mitchell', 2 December 1896, IOR/L/PS/20/FO79/1, FCRAS Part VIII 1896, BL.

⁶¹ Loos, *Subject Siam*, 2.

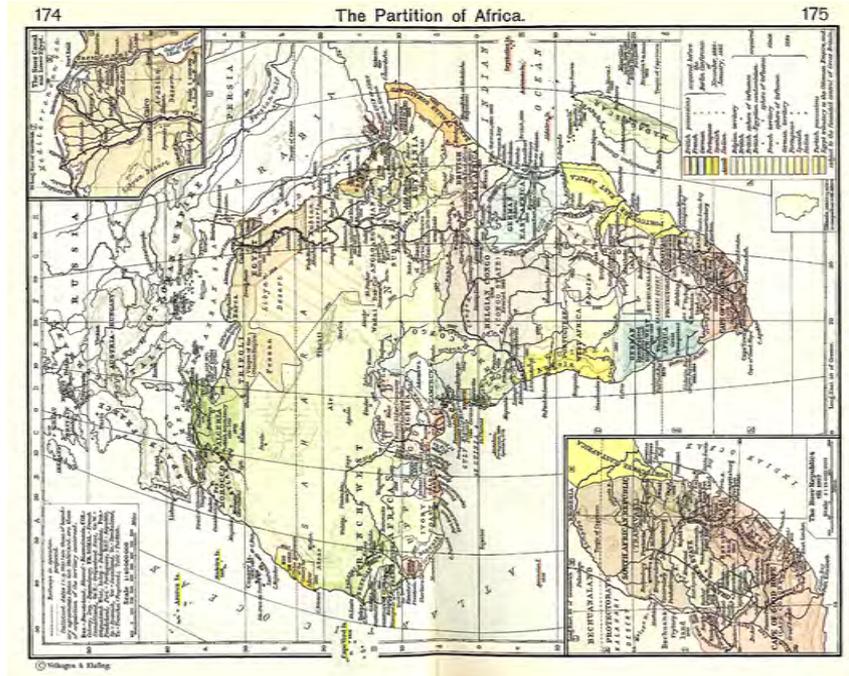
⁶² James C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 26–27.

⁶³ Antony Anghie, *Imperialism, Sovereignty and the Making of International Law* (Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 38.

2.4: Maps showing before and after the partition of Africa in the 1880s

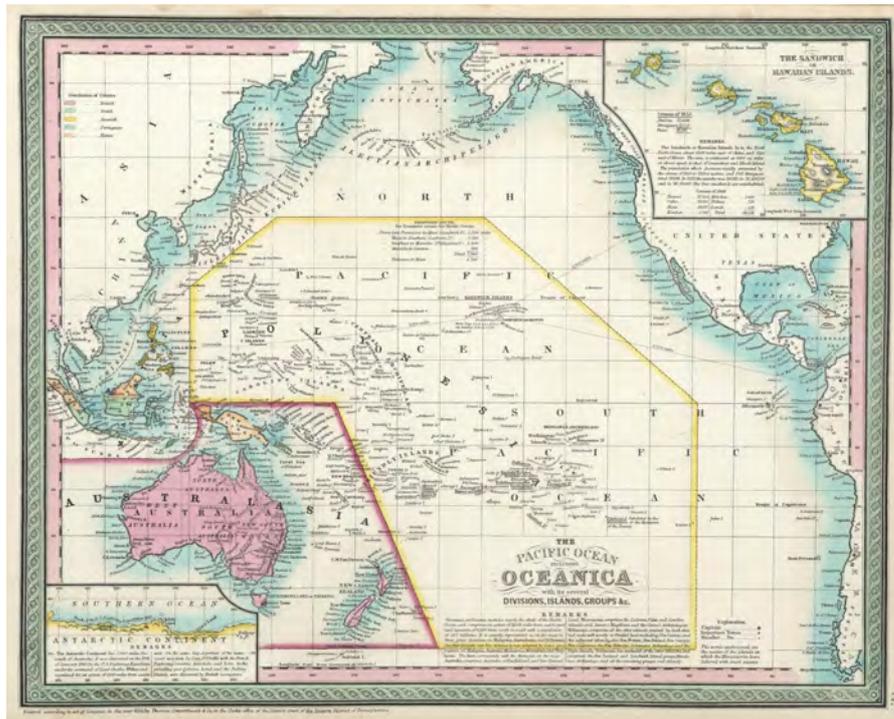


From: Sir Adolphus William Ward, G.W. Prothero and et al. (1912). *Africa in the 17-18 Centuries* (Published by Cambridge University Press). Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection.

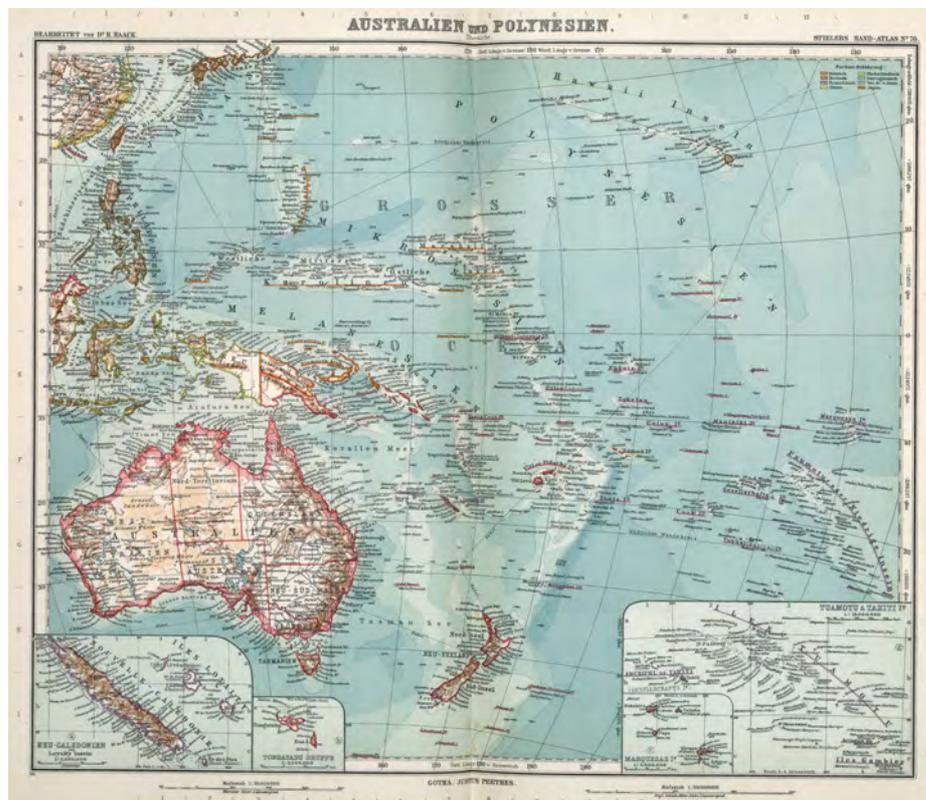


From: William Shepherd (1911). *The Partition of Africa*. (Published by William Shepherd in *Historical Atlas*). 1:4000000. Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection.

2.5: Maps showing colonial possessions in Pacific Islands from 1850s-1910s

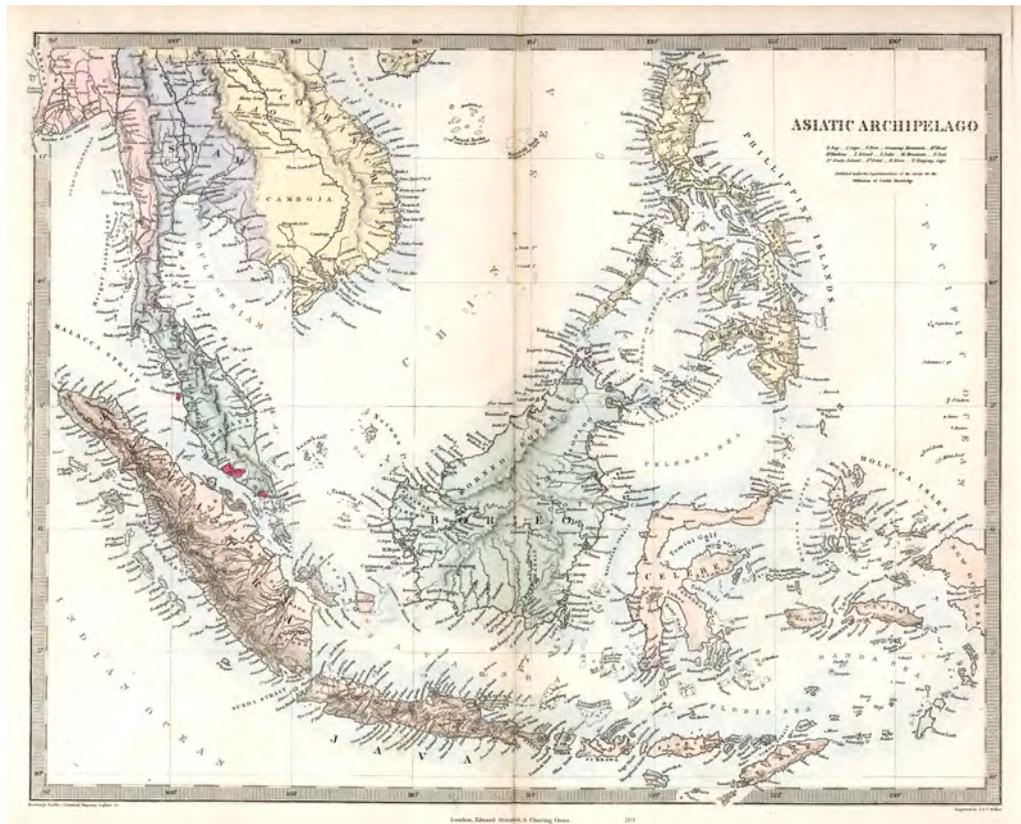


From: Samuel Augustus Mitchell (1855). Pacific Ocean Including Oceanica (Published by Cowperthwait Desilver & Butler & Co). 1:47000000. David Rumsey Historical Map Collection.

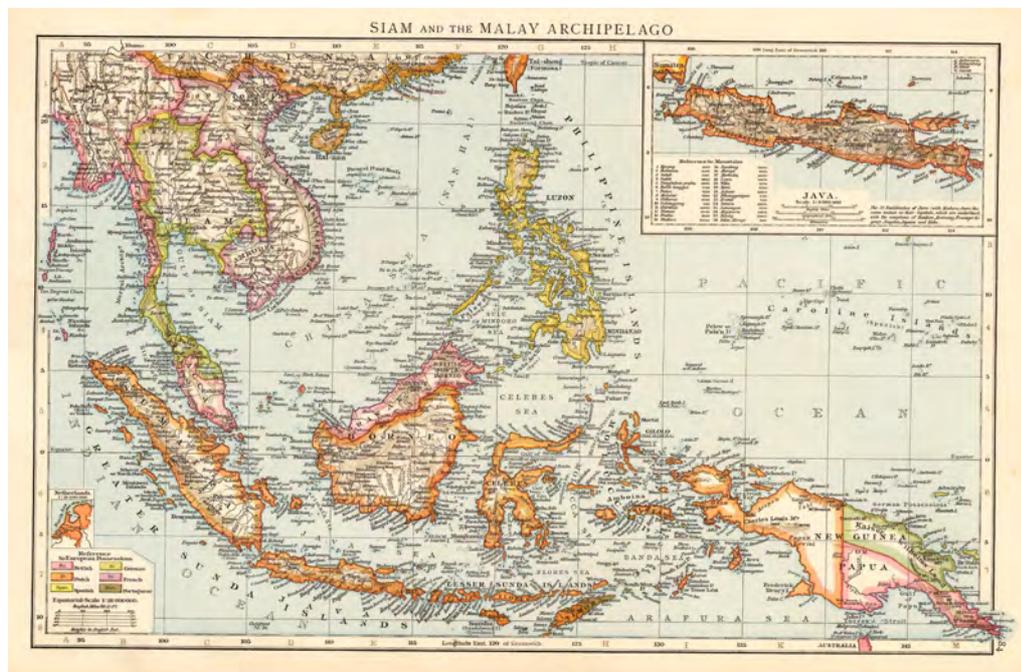


From: Adolf Stieler. H. Haack (1911). Nr. 76. Australien u. Polynesien (Published Stieler's Hand-Atlas). 1:30000000. David Rumsey Historical Map Collection.

2.6: Maps showing colonial expansions in south east Asia, from the 1850s-1890s



From: John Walker (1856). Asiatic Archipelago (Published under the Supervision of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge). 1: 11000000. In David Rumsey Historical Map Collection.



From: Richard Andree. Times (London, England) (1895). Siam, Malay Archipelago (with Java). (Published at the office of "The Times," London, 1895). 1:18000000. In David Rumsey Historical Map Collection.

2.2.4 Political and cultural shifts

The framework of colonialism which delineated the state system in Asia, Africa and other peripheries impacted on their political and cultural systems and created critical shifts. European rulers made their colonies, in Africa, Pacific Islands and Asia, subject to national requirements and as a result, they experienced political transformation, with direct and indirect controls, more aggressively than in earlier times. A European expansion of a centralised system increasingly reached into the countryside when printing technology, transportation and communication were expanded. There was governmental interference by a series of steps; economic exploitation by collecting taxes and reforming lands, then securing order and authority by introducing law and the judiciary. By doing this, the administrative uniformity elevated the potential of imperial rulers to strengthen their policies.

The fact is that not only political uniformity help to secure the unequal relationship between the cores and its peripheral zones in the capitalist world-system but also its process put racial, national and ethnic categorisations in place to make those systems work.⁶⁴ Due to increasing population and geographical complexity, European imperialists (including Siam, where rules were instructed by Europeans) designed ‘unambiguous’ subjects within boundaries. The categorisation was also a method to make sure that wider ranges of autochthonous communities would provide dominating powers with legitimation and loyalty. Defining citizenship through censuses and legal systems then became a necessity. In their scientific view, human behaviour and the human condition could be reshaped along rational lines.⁶⁵ The line directed to white racial superiority, which believed that humankind needed moral instruction to become civilised and to progress. Then, the new hierarchy of an ideological set of civilised improvements and being a member of the international world were introduced to local people.⁶⁶

The political and cultural uniformity as part of European knowledge, also known as a form of colonial discourse as identified by Edward Said and his theory of

⁶⁴ Immanuel Wallerstein, ‘The Construction of Peoplehood: Racism, Nationalism, Ethnicity’ in Étienne Balibar and Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (London; New York: Verso, 1991), 79.

⁶⁵ Darwin, *After Tamerlane*, 210.

⁶⁶ Anthony Reid, *Imperial Alchemy: Nationalism and Political Identity in Southeast Asia* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 210.

Orientalism, was the European (and Siamese) elite attempts to embody the unequal power relations between dominating and dominated forces to maintain the interests of dominating groups.⁶⁷ Later, post-colonial scholars agreed that colonial experiences and knowledge were still reflected in various present-day literature and visions in relation to the domain of national identity and culture.⁶⁸ By this approach, the rulers justified that their political and cultural orders were superior, and these orders necessitated the dominated peoples to follow them in order to be more ‘civilised’. The savages or wilderness were then labelled as attributes of autochthonous peoples. This process is an expression of Nationalism, an ideological tool of European imperialists, that propagated the advantages of state-level uniformity. Together with cultural nationalism such as court dresses, uniforms, ceremonies, sanitation and medicine, scientific thinking, western education and central language dominance effectively shaped a set of common notions about who was incorporated as a member of the national entity and who was excluded or remained outside it.

Conclusion

These standards as described above, on the one hand, allowed the European rulers to enjoy economic gains and secure the principle of the division of labour within the unbalanced structure that existed between the cores and its peripheries.⁶⁹ On the other hand, the political and cultural encounters also created the forms of resistance expressed by the dominated people. Thus, a next step was how “a series of local crises erupted” in various world scenario, as discussed by Christopher Bayly.⁷⁰ The local eruptions resulted not only from the domination by the central authorities of European states but also as a result of political innovation and new forms of cultural consciousness among local people. They attempted to challenge the power of imperialists.⁷¹ The cultural interaction between centre and peripheries was ‘mimicry’, according to Homi Bhabha⁷², and this analysis will be discussed in more detail in the

⁶⁷ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 12.

⁶⁸ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, 2nd ed (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), 1–2.

⁶⁹ Charles Hirschman, ‘The Making of Race in Colonial Malaya: Political Economy and Racial Ideology’, *Sociological Forum* 1, no. 2 (1986): 356–57; ‘The Construction of Peoplehood: Racism, Nationalism, Ethnicity’ in Balibar and Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class*, 80.

⁷⁰ Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914*, 454.

⁷¹ Gregory Claeys, ed., *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Thought* (London; New York: Routledge, 2005), 23–24.

⁷² Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London; New York: Routledge, 1994).

next chapter. Thus, rapid changes seen in economy, politics and culture triggered the emergence of a collective awareness in the global context, which was apparently also the case in Siam during the late nineteenth to the beginning of the twentieth centuries. It is the outcome of this at a national and local level that will now be considered.

CHAPTER 3: THE SITUATION IN SIAM

Introduction

As we have seen in the previous chapter, a transition occurred globally transforming the economic world order and together with the arrival of new technologies created widespread political change. This chapter will consider in more detail how these dramatic shifts were experienced and adopted in Siam. This will help us to understand the pressures that fed through into the revolts of 1902. The world economic system, political and cultural expansions pressured Siamese elites to readjust their knowledge repeatedly from the 1850s, and most intensely from the 1870s onwards. This chapter, therefore, will provide a political and economic insight as well as some ideological background to the cultural perspectives that were adopted as Siam abruptly readjusted to stand firm during the period of imperial conquest along all of its borders.

This chapter will use the work of Homi Bhabha to provide additional analytical insight into this context of cross-cultural encounter. The situation of Siam in the 1870s-1900s, especially the administrative reform of 1892 with the *Thesaphiban*, the ‘civilising’ projects and the reactions along the Siamese frontiers in 1901-2, can be understood in greater depth by exploring Homi Bhabha’s idea of the ambivalence of mimicry as part of the discussion.¹ Nonetheless, Bhabha’s explanation provides a postcolonial study of mimicry that does not engage deeply with the nature or history of colonialism or anti-colonialism.² In other words, he largely ignored the world-historical moment; likewise, the role of anti-colonial resistance under the coloniser-colonised relationship which would never be similar to other patterns of resistance.³ As Benita Parry points out, “‘difference’ has been diverted by a postmodernist criticism as a theoretical ruse to establish a neutral, ideology-free zone from which the social dissension and political contest inscribed in the antagonist pairing of coloniser/colonised, have been expelled”.⁴ Subsequently, Bhabha’s explanation of mimicry that lacked awareness of variants of

¹ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*.

² David Huddart, *Homi K. Bhabha*, Routledge Critical Thinkers (London; New York: Routledge, 2006), 106.

³ Benita Parry, ‘Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse’, *Oxford Literary Review* 9, no. 1/2 (1987): 34; Benita Parry, *Postcolonial Studies: A Materialist Critique*, Postcolonial Literatures (London; New York: Routledge, 2004), 37–54.

⁴ Benita Parry, ‘Signs of Our Times: Discussion of Homi Bhabha’s *The Location of Culture*’, *Third Text* 8, no. 28–29 (September 1994): 15.

broader and local historical contexts became simplified and undifferentiated.⁵ Thus, in applying Bhabha's idea to the Thai historical context during the tide of colonialism and global force takes into account how this study recognises the limits of mimicry, especially regarding the simplification of the binary model of coloniser-colonised relations by seeking to extend this important additional line of analysis further in the thesis. As critical cultural studies starting point for considering how encounters could be transformative and revolutionary, Bhabha's model of mimicry can be helpful to move our view beyond the action and symbols of the centre to the response of the frontiers.

Mimicry, according to Bhabha's concept, was a strategy of colonial knowledge that encouraged colonies to follow colonialist intellectuals and adopt an advanced 'civilisation'.⁶ By this idea, the cultural transformation in relation to core and peripheries in Siam appeared in two systems. First, they appeared in the form of how a semi-colonised Siam took a hybrid shape between the great European powers and its traditional structure to form a modernised Siamese political and cultural authority or to form "the discourse of mimicry", as termed by Bhabha.⁷ How the frontiers were expected to emulate or imitate what seemed to be modern outlooks of central Thai culture will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 6 and 8 including examples of the new Thai cultural hybridity such as kingship and Buddhism. This analysis suggests that the method and form through which Siam mimicked European models, however, created a new complex hybridity of culture, which became incorporated into the central idea of Thai national culture in modern Siam from that time.

Second is the way that central Siam acted as colonial master and projected the discourse of mimicry to its peripheral zones with an expectation that these zones would follow the modern Siamese modality. Later, people in the three frontiers of Siamese annexation used some parts of these new forms (the discourse of mimicry) to react to Siamese expansion. This process, which can be called 'the effect of mimicry', did not produce copying, but the hybridity that emerged in new local forms of cultures. This analysis will provide us with clearer indicators as to why frontier communities, upon which Siam projected the *Thesaphiban* system and 'civilising' projects, felt compelled

⁵ Rasheed Araeen, 'A New Beginning: Beyond Postcolonial Cultural Theory and Identity Politics', *Third Text* 14, no. 50 (March 2000): 16–17; Huddart, *Homi K. Bhabha*, 108.

⁶ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 85.

⁷ Bhabha, 86.

to rebel in response to these challenges. We should start, therefore, by considering the historical dynamics of economic and political structures in Siam before and then after the reform programme as a way of understanding the changes that were introduced through administrative reform in the frontiers at this time in response to global pressures upon the modernising state, and national reformulations of identity, culture and values.

3.1 The traditional structure of Siam

Before the reform, the statecraft in Bangkok was shared between two ministries, the Civil (*Samuhanayok* or *Mahatthai*-สมุหนายก หรือ มหาตไทย) and the Military (*Kalahom*-กลาโหม). The Civil ministry consisted of four departments; Capital (*Nakonban*-นครบาล, changed from *Wieng*-เวียง), Palace (*Wang*-วัง), Treasury (*Phra Khlang*-พระคลัง) and Land (*Na*-นา), see in diagram no.3.1.⁸ Later, the Civil ministry was changed to control every aspect (revenue, conscription, jurisdiction and warfare) over the northern part of the country, while the Military was responsible for the southern part: the north end of Bangkok's power was Pathumthani and Nonthaburi, and the southern end was Samut Prakan until 1891 at least.⁹ Most revenues were obtained in corvée labour and goods (*suai*-ส่วย) rather than in terms of money. Financial affairs such as collecting income and expenditures were the responsibility of the two ministries instead of the Treasury solely. The old structure, therefore, determined responsibilities based on the area instead of administrative speciality.¹⁰ After Siam increasingly dealt with Chinese tax farms during the reign of King Nangklao (1824-1851), an expanding number of foreign trades came into the King's hands, the Treasury then became more engaged with revenues. Nonetheless, all tax revenues were still divided between the three ministries; Civil, Military and Treasury.

The actual amount of revenue collected in each area benefited to the head of the three ministries (*chao krasuang*-เจ้ากระทรวง) and concessionaires (*chao phasi*-เจ้าภาษี), rather

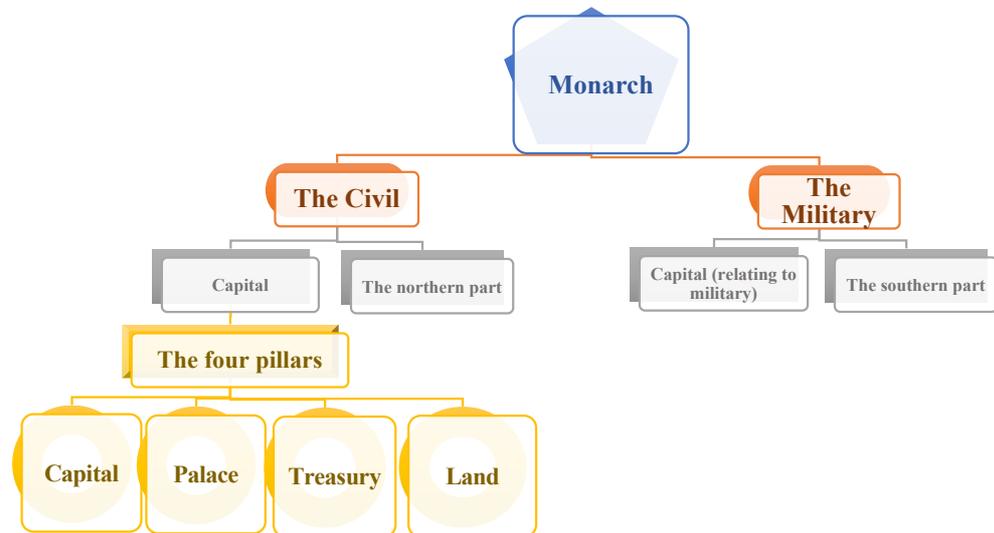
⁸ Damrong Rajanubhab, *The Siamese Government in Ancient Times* [*Laksana Kanpokkhong Prathetsayam Taeboran*-ลักษณะการปกครองประเทศสยามแต่โบราณ] (Phranakhon: Thampithayakhan, 1939), 47.

⁹ Bunnag, *The Provincial Administration of Siam, 1892-1915*, 18–19.

¹⁰ Chulalongkorn, *Speech of King Chulalongkorn Explaining the Governmental Reform* [*Phraratchadamrat Songthalaeng Phraboromrachobai Kaekhai Kanpokkhong Phaendin*-พระราชดำรัสทรงแถลงพระบรมราโชบายแก้ไขการปกครองแผ่นดิน] (Phranakhon: Sophonphiphatthanakon, 1927), 3–5.

than going directly to the government.¹¹ It is true that the government at Bangkok never knew the exact amount of all revenues collected.¹² Moreover, the commercial benefits of sustaining the central administration were further reduced after the Bowring Treaty,¹³ as the government inevitably gave up the substantial income obtained from monopolised items. The traditional commercial groups, who had the privilege over concessions due to the close relationship with the royal family, could not monopolise their benefits any longer according to the new regulations. All merchants could access local markets and concessions in Siam. Therefore, it was seen as an emergency to centralise all revenues and expenditures from the Civil ministry, the Military and the Treasury to help the Siamese king control all state revenues and recover from the loss of benefits after signing the commercial treaties.¹⁴

3.1: The diagram shows the pre-reform structure of Siam



Yet, we can learn from the global situation of the 1850s onwards, outlined in the previous chapter, that it was not only economic but also political and cultural pressure that led to new structures of Siam, modelled on the European examples. This was particularly the case from the 1870s onwards, when territorial conquests and assertive European protectionists competed for their benefits along all the boundary lines of Siam. At that time, King Chulalongkorn had just obtained full power in his second

¹¹ Damrong Rajanubhab, *The History of Some Taxes [Tamnan Phasi Akon Bangyang-ตำนานภาษีอากร บางอย่าง]* (Bangkok: Daily Mail, 1925), 31; *Collected Royal Chronicles Part 50 (Myth of Ranong)*, 25.

¹² Chulalongkorn, *Speech of King Chulalongkorn Explaining the Governmental Reform*, 7.

¹³ Rajanubhab, *The History of Some Taxes*, 22.

¹⁴ Hong Lysa, *Thailand in the Nineteenth Century: Evolution of the Economy and Society* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1984), 8.

coronation of 1873 and was no longer influenced by the regent of Chaophraya Sri Suriyawong (Chuang Bunnag). From 1868 to 1873 had been the period when the influential Bunnag family members who administrated the military, treasury, land and foreign affairs flourished. For about a half-decade during which Chulalongkorn was politically weak, free labour, military services during wartime, and taxes in kind or cash were still out of the King's hands. The courts were run by heads of ministries, and bribery was a significant problem. Making a leap in development in infrastructure and creating a modern army in Siam were impossible due to the shortage of finance and labour. The internal instability of the King's power and increasing external pressures activated Siam to remake its political administration and adopt new cultural perspectives that were to prove critical for changes in Siam in the years to come.

3.2 Internal and external factors that hastened the reform programme

There were substantial internal changes in 1873-4: the launch of financial reforms that centralised all state revenues in the King's hands under the Finance Office (*ho ratdakonphiphat*-หอรัษฎากรพิพัฒน์), the appeal process, the establishment of the Council of State (*ti prueksa ratchakan paendin*-ที่ปรึกษาราชการแผ่นดิน) and Privy Council (*ti prueksa nai phra-ong*-ที่ปรึกษาในพระองค์), and onset of abolition of slavery. However, the sudden reform initiated by Chulalongkorn and his progressive advisors or Young Siam (*sayam num*-สยามหนุ่ม)¹⁵ led to grievances among the conservative groups, or the ex-regent camps, who lost benefits and were against the reform, which became known as the Front Palace Crisis (*wikrittakan wangna*-วิกฤตการณ์วังหน้า)¹⁶ in the following year. The transition, thus, needed time until the old network passed away, the death of the ex-regent in 1883 and the Front Palace Wichaichan in 1885.¹⁷ In the late 1880s, the financial reforms were strengthened and received income from the lucrative opium, spirit trades and gambling, which increased the revenue for the government.¹⁸ Other

¹⁵ Young Siam refers to people who had already accustomed to western knowledge since they were young.

¹⁶ The Front Palace was the position of *Uparat* or viceroy. Prince Wichaichan was a representation of conservative Siamese elites and his followers (or the Front Palace camp), who disagreed with the reform. The change would demolish all benefits in their previous life. To launch the reform, King Chulalongkorn as a leader of progressive elites (the Royal Palace camp) intended to limit the power and benefits of the conservative group. This situation led to a serious confrontation between the Front Palace and the Royal Palace, known as the Front Palace Crisis (1875). Finally, Prince Wichaichan was the last *Uparat* in Siam, and this position was abolished after his death.

¹⁷ Neil Englehart, 'Culture, Choice and Change in Thailand in the Reign of King Chulalongkorn, 1868-1910' (PhD Thesis in Political Science, University of California, 1996), 198.

¹⁸ Brown, *The Creation of the Modern Ministry of Finance in Siam, 1885-1910*, 24.

operations and regulations from the government also expanded following the tracking of state revenues. Siam officially established the Ministry of Finance in 1890, which divided revenues between the King's personal pocket and the state's pocket and shaped the financial pattern throughout Siam. Following this, the government launched the full official reform of 1892: the Twelve Departments created according to the specialist responsibilities of the central administration (*patirup krasuang*-ปฎิรูปกระทรวง).¹⁹ Then, the *Thesaphiban* or provincial administration was officially launched under the Local Administrative Act 1897/r.s.116. The *Thesaphiban* system helped Chulalongkorn to enlarge the power of the centre and annex areas outside the capital city, particularly the tributary states (*hua mueang prathetsarat*-หัวเมืองประเทศราช) in the frontier zones of Siam. It indeed boosted the Bangkok monarchy to be the centre of a modern state, rather than just nominal overlord as in earlier times.

The tension of drawing boundaries between Anglo-Siamese interests required negotiations about the frontier lines and became much more serious under harsh external pressure from the 1870s as well. It began with an increase of British attention to protecting their property from piracy (partly sanctioned by local chiefs) which engendered the desire to inspect all affairs of the Malay States in 1871,²⁰ the same year that Chulalongkorn visited Singapore. Then, British influence successfully established the residential system under the Pangkor Treaty 1874 in Pahang, Perak, Selangor and Negri Sembilan, the Federated Malay States.²¹ Influenced by British show of power along the border and the signing of the Anglo-Siamese agreement in Chiang Mai Treaty in 1873, the Siamese king turned his attention to interfere in the north in the same year, because Chiang Mai, Lampang and Lamphun were situated close to Moulmein, a centre under British control in western Burma.²² The Siamese king experienced the reality of strong British engagements in Burma by himself during his journey to Burma in the 1870s.²³ To avoid British interference, Siam started to inspect local affairs closely to solve the mismanagement of local jurisdiction, to interfere between local chiefs and foreign diplomats and to transfer the timber business and its concessions to central

¹⁹ Chulalongkorn, *Speech of King Chulalongkorn Explaining the Governmental Reform*, 57–59.

²⁰ Arnold Wright and Thomas H. Reid, *The Malay Peninsula: A Record of British Progress in the Middle East* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912), 124–27.

²¹ Frank Swettenham, *About Perak* (Singapore: Strait Times Press, 1893), 8–13.

²² R5 M.58/191, The Contract Signed Between Siam and the Chiang Mai Chief in 1873 [Nangsuesanya Waduai Kanthi Chaonakhon Chiangmai Cha Raksa Banmueang Hai Riabroi r.s.92-ม.58/191 หนังสือสัญญาว่าด้วยการที่เจ้านครเชียงใหม่จะรักษากันเมืองให้เรียบร้อย ร.ศ.92], NA.

²³ Sachchidanand Sahai, *India in 1872: As Seen by the Siamese [Ro Ha Sadet India-ร.5 เสด็จอินเดียน]* (Bangkok: Toyota Thailand Foundation, 2003), 313.

Siamese control. There were many difficulties in Siamese enforcement in these areas; likewise, the conflict between British Burmese subjects, and the Chiang Mai Prince and the Chiang Mai court, which was in debt to British merchants of the British Borneo Company.²⁴ The Chinese labourers in Ranong and Phuket provinces, close to the Malay Peninsula, simultaneously opened a conflict that pressured Siam to be increasingly involved with both British and French influences in 1876.²⁵ Consequently, the international court system regarding British Asian subjects laid out according to the Bowring Treaty was also continued in 1883. Siam, therefore, was enthusiastic about generating its authority and keeping the northern and southern frontiers from British influence.

Alongside the British expansion, Germany and France also increased the speed in the administrative process and ‘civilising’ projects of Siam in its three frontiers. Germany disclosed its latent interest in the Malay Peninsula, and it drove the British to become more seriously involved and influential in the Malay Peninsula close to the southern border of Siam.²⁶ In the east, Siam was also confronted with the French enlargement of power along the Mekong River in 1891 (see in Maps no.3.2-3.4). At that time, the French flags were set up in several areas in outlying Siam but were pulled down by Siam several times.²⁷ King Chulalongkorn increasingly perceived European intimidations as seen from the sudden change of Damrong’s position (see Damrong’s image no.3.5). He was the king’s brother and the closest advisor, and his position was changed from educational and religious affairs to head of the Ministry of Interior in 1892. “If we are careless and deny changing the administration...it perhaps would lead Siam to the loss of freedom”, said Damrong.²⁸ Siam, however, experienced actual pressure from the French empire during the Franco-Siamese conflict the following

²⁴ R5 M.58/206, Revenues Administration and Other Departments in Monthon Lao Chiang (22 February 1893 - 2 September 1898) [Chatkankhlang Lae Phanaek Uen-Uen Monthon Lao Chiang-ม. 58/206 เรื่องจัดการคลังและแผนกอื่น ๆ ณ หนองหลวงเชียง [22 ก.พ. 112 - 2 ก.ย. 117]], NA.

²⁵ Chulalongkorn, *A Chronicle of King Chulalongkorn's Daily Activities Part 1* [Chotmaihet Phraratchakit Raiwan Phraratchaniphon Phrabat Somdet Phra Chunlachomkiao Chaoyuhua Phak 1-จดหมายเหตุพระราชกิจรายวันพระราชนิพนธ์ของพระบาทสมเด็จพระจุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว ภาค 1] (Phranakhon: Sayamphanitchayakan, 1933), 1–3, 23–25.

²⁶ W. David McIntyre, *Imperial Frontier in the Tropics, 1865-75* (UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 1967), 202–4.

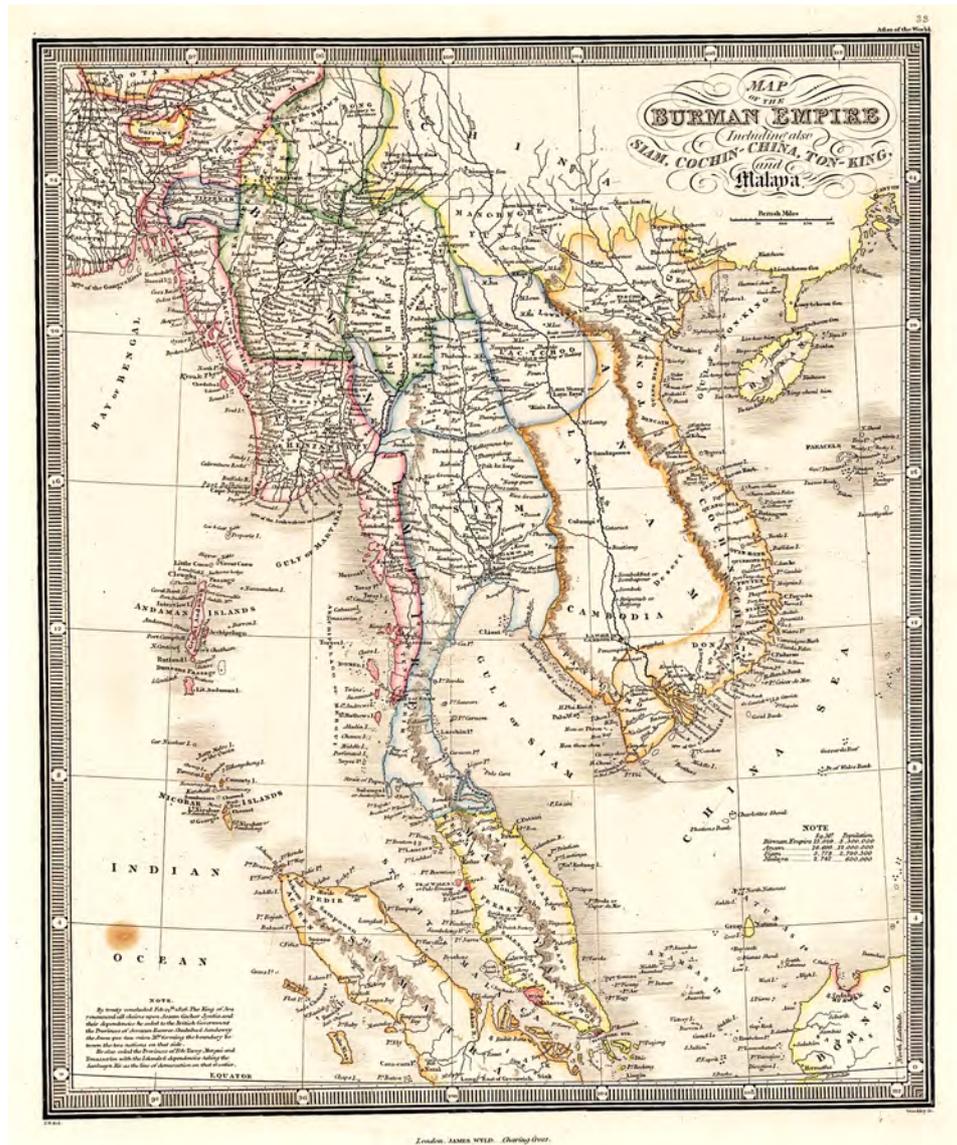
²⁷ ‘Incloser 1 No.12 Memorandum’, 7 July 1891, IOR/L/PS/20/FO61/2, Further Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Asia (In continuation of Confidential Paper No.6129) July to December 1891, BL.

²⁸ Damrong Rajanubhab, *The Thesaphiban System of Provincial Administration* [Thesaphiban-เทศาภิบาล] (Rungkrueangtham, 1955), 7.

“ถ้าเราประมาท ไม่จัดการปกครองบ้านเมืองเสียให้เรียบร้อย... บางทีอาจจะถึงเสียอิสรภาพของเมืองไทยก็เป็นได้” (TT)

year. The Siamese influence in the east had been limited to the right bank of the Mekong river, and Siam ceded the left bank and islands to France.²⁹ The pressure for official territorial demarcation reached its peak from the 1890s onwards and hastened the redefinition of the ‘modern Siamese metropole’ as well as the programme of centralised administration in Siam into frontiers as had never happened before.

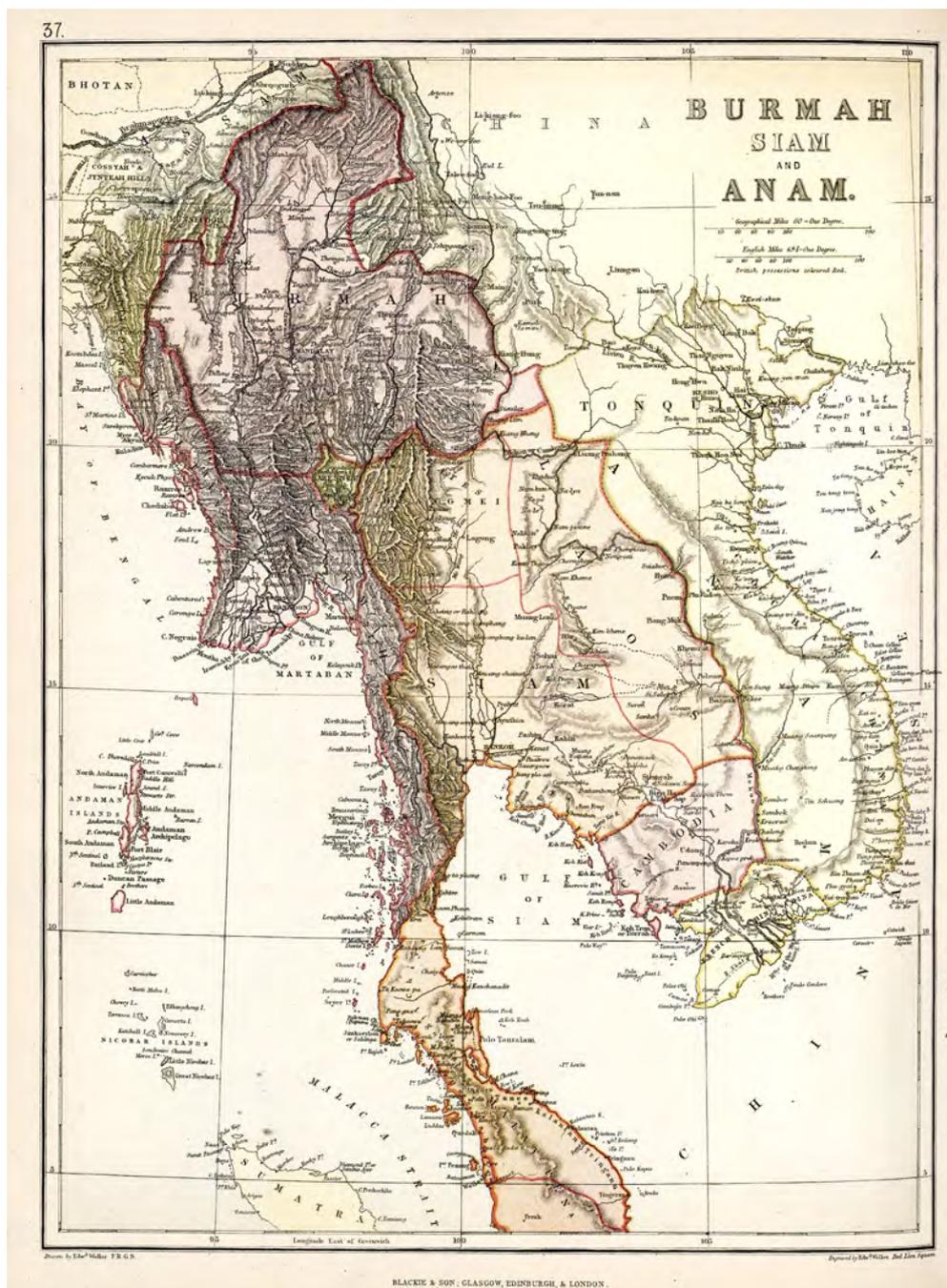
3.2: Map of Siam and its neighbours in 1864



From: James Wyld (1864). *Map of Burma, Siam, Cochin-China and Malaya*. 1: 12500000. David Rumsey Historical Map Collection.

²⁹ ‘Inclosure No.174 Captain Jones to the Earl of Rosebery’, IOR/L/PS/20/FO77/2, FCRAS Part II January to June 1893, BL.

3.3: Map of Siam and its neighbours in 1882



From: W.G. Blackie (1882). *Burmah, Siam, and Anam*. 1: 7,950,000. David Rumsey Historical Map Collection

3.4: Map of Siam and its neighbours in 1901



British French Siam

From: Edward Stanford (1901), *Siam, Burma and Anam*, 1:6969600. David Rumsey Historical Map Collection

3.5: Photograph of Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, head of the Ministry of Interior (c.1892-1915)



From: Damrong Rajanubhab, *Provincial Inspection of Prince Damrong Rajanubhab [Kan Sadet Truat Huamueang Khong Somdet Kromphraya Damrong Rachanuphab-การเสด็จตรวจราชการหัวเมืองของสมเด็จพระเจ้าบรมวงศ์เธอกรมพระยาดำรงราชานุภาพ]* (Bangkok: Prince Damrong Rajanuphap Institute, 2012), 498.

3.3 Forming the discourse of mimicry: *Thesaphiban* system and ‘civilising’ project, and the role of Siam as a semi-colonial power

The administrative reform of Siam in 1892 during the Chulalongkorn era was a well-known event in Thai history. In particular, the analysis by Tej Bunnag³⁰ helped to frame the historical debate on the policy of the administration. However, revisiting the general background is still necessary to conceptualise the cultural dimension of these changes and to understand the reactions to these changes in Siam that emerged during the reform programme in 1901-2. The bureaucratic administration in Siam was in some respects an imitation of the colonial policies that European rulers intentionally transferred to

³⁰ Bunnag, *The Provincial Administration of Siam, 1892-1915*.

their colonies. Due to the internal weakness of the country and the external threats, Siam enthusiastically sought to adopt the European models. When Chulalongkorn returned from trips to Singapore and Java and another trip to India, Singapore, Penang and Burma during 1871-2 – see the picture of him (no.3.6) was taken at Bombay – the King and his court spoke highly of the British (and Dutch) colonial model which would mould the Siamese reform of its administration.³¹

The adoption, adaptation and imitation of the West then became an essential foundation of Siam and its policies at both state and interstate levels led by the King and his advisers. This can be seen from Chulalongkorn's preamble that informed people about his objectives in visiting Europe in 1897:

Since the coronation, the king had visited either small or large states such as India, Burma, Java and Malaya. The king selected various traditions and norms from those places to improve our state and population that could be seen in various progress...Although they were colonial states, it still brought many progressive benefits to our kingdom. Then, if [the king] visits Europe, it would even bring multiple benefits.³²

ตั้งแต่เสด็จเถลิงถวัลยราชสมบัติมา ได้ทรงพระราชอุสาหะ เสด็จไปทอดพระเนตรการต่างประเทศ ถึงเมืองใหญ่น้อยนอกพระราชอาณาเขตร์ คือ ประเทศอินเดีย พม่า รามัญ ขวาทวีปและแหลมมลายูนับได้หลายครั้ง ได้ทรงตรวจตราเลือกสรรแบบแผนขนมธรรมเนียมราชการในบ้านเมืองเหล่านั้น ซึ่งเป็นการดีมีทางเจริญแก่บ้านเมืองและอาณาประชาราษฎร์นำมาจัดขึ้นในพระราชอาณาจักรให้แลเห็นความเจริญได้แลก็หลายอย่าง ...แม้เมืองเหล่านั้นเป็นแต่เมืองขึ้นของมหาประเทศซึ่งอยู่ในประเทศยุโรปก็ยังเป็นเหตุให้เกิดการเจริญรุ่งเรืองแก่พระราชอาณาจักรได้เป็นอันมาก ถ้าเสด็จได้ถึงมหาประเทศเหล่านั้นเอง ประโยชน์ย่อมจะมีทวีขึ้นอีกหลายเท่า

This explanation not only emphasises that Siam from the mid-nineteenth century was deeply engaged with the Western culture and knowledge as discussed in a collection of essays titled 'The Ambiguous Allure of the West: Traces of the Colonial in Thailand', which was developed by several scholars including Rachel Harrison, Peter Jackson and

³¹ *A Chronicle of King Chulalongkorn's Journey to Singapore, Batavia and India [Chotmai het Sadetpraphat Tangprathet Nai Ratchakan Thi Ha: Sadet Mueang Singapore Lae Mueang Batavia Krungraek Lae Sadetpraphat India-จดหมายเหตุเสด็จประพาสต่างประเทศในรัชกาลที่ 5: เสด็จเมืองสิงคโปร์ ปัตตาเวียครั้งแรก และเสด็จประพาสอินเดีย]* (Phranakhon: Sophonphiphatthanakon, 1917), 6.

³² Sri Sahadheb (Seng), *A Chronicle of King Chulalongkorn's Journey to Europe in 1897 [Chotmai het Sadetpraphat Yurop, r.s. 116 Lem 1-จดหมายเหตุเสด็จประพาสยุโรป ร.ศ.116 เล่ม 1]*, vol. 1 (Bangkok: Sophonphiphatthanakon, 1907), 1–2.

Thongchai Winichakul.³³ King Chulalongkorn's preamble above also revealed his intention that deriving modernisation from Greater Europeans significantly provided access to power in the frontiers of Siam as part of its outlining of the Siamese kingdom.

Following this, colonial governance, particularly British rule over conquered people, was a role model for shaping 'the discourse of mimicry' of Siamese elites: Siamese political, economic and cultural reproduction. This is seen by the fact that most foreign advisers at the Siamese court in 1891 were British.³⁴ It illustrates two sides of this relationship. On the one hand, Siam adopted mainly the British style as a role model. The pseudo-colonial status of Siam, on the other hand, was seen from numbers of British monopolies in terms of their administrative and commercial interests in Siam. In the meantime, although Britain and France considered Siam as a buffer state, maintaining its independence rather than making it a colony, Siam was, in fact, confronted with a series of humiliations by both British and French imperialists. The agreement of 1896 on retaining Siamese independence was made to give the advantage to secure the British dominance in Siam and secured the Upper Mekong and the entrance to China via Vietnam under French rule.³⁵ Siam, therefore, was a "semi-colony", "internal colonialism" or "crypto-colonialism" that did not differ much from other state under direct colonial rule.³⁶ Bringing the concept of Bhabha regarding cultural hybridity in relation to the case of Siam illustrates that the political programme and definition of Thai national culture was shaped and redefined under the dominating and dominated relationships between the Westerners and the Siamese. Either Siamese elites were forced to copy due to the tide of European imperialism, or they imitated the West with the intention of forming its own political strength, its response towards the flourishing of European expansion crucially led to this repetition. As Bhabha explained, "something different, a mutation or a hybrid" of modern political and cultural policies in relation to Thai national culture of central Siam from the mid-nineteenth century (examples of new Thai cultural hybridity will be discussed further details in Chapters 6 and 8).³⁷

³³ Harrison and Jackson, eds., *The Ambiguous Allure of the West: Traces of the Colonial in Thailand*.

³⁴ Sahai, *India in 1872: As Seen by the Siamese*, 315.

³⁵ Tarling, *Imperialism in Southeast Asia*, 126–30.

³⁶ Peter Jackson, 'The Ambiguities of Semicolonial Power in Thailand' in Harrison and Jackson, eds., *The Ambiguous Allure of the West: Traces of the Colonial in Thailand*, 37–56.

³⁷ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 111.

At that time, British models in India launched after the Indian Rebellion in 1857 provided the British demand, responsibility and model to improve aspects of lives to make them ‘better’, and bring about a proper administration and political consciousness, such as encouraging modern education with scientific thought, law, history and the English language.³⁸ The Siamese government adopted these British notions to be a role model to form its reform programme. Sometimes, the divide-and-rule policy was a strategic way of sustaining British rule (and other imperial systems), at least in British India, the Malay states and Burma. The Federated Malay States (FMS) are an excellent example for the working of rule. Although the sultans were still ranked as heads of the four states, they had to accept British protection and all advice on administrative matters (economics, foreign affairs and military) from its Residents; who were the real power-holders.³⁹ Nonetheless, any Islamic issues and Malay traditions, including Islamic law of inheritance, marriage and divorce, were considered exceptions.⁴⁰ Later, this type of rule became a model for Siam to rule over the seven Malay principalities.⁴¹ In the same way, Siam copied the indirect rule policies in the areas of the mountainous zones and the Shan States in British Burma. This model required the local chiefs to accept British sovereignty and to appoint British commissioners and assistants to control tax collections and approve other concessions.⁴² These colonial experiences as being ‘the project of modernisation and civilisation’ then were imitated by the bureaucratic governance of Siam in the programme of the *Thesaphiban* for its peripheral zones. Because Siamese rulers attempted to develop their dominant strategic functions, they also desired to guide and force their subordinate people to imitate the meaning of development, discipline and proper styles to reach a civilised standard as it did to Europeans.

³⁸ *British Policy in India 1858-1905*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), ix.

³⁹ A. C. Milner, ‘Colonial Records History: British Malaya’, *Modern Asian Studies* 21, no. 4 (1987): 773.

⁴⁰ Muhamad Ali, *Islam and Colonialism: Becoming Modern in Indonesia and Malaya* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 210.

⁴¹ Loos, *Subject Siam*, 88.

⁴² R5 M.58/64, Problems and Prevention Bandits in Monthon Lao Chiang (24 September 1894-3 July 1900) [Rueang Phurai Plon Lae Rueang Kitchatkan Pongkan Jonphurai Thang Monthon Lao Chiang-เรื่องผู้ร้ายปล้นและเรื่องคดีจัดการป้องกันโจรผู้ร้ายทางมณฑลลาวเฉียง (24 ก.ย. 113-3 ก.ค. 119)], NA; Nua'on Khruathongkhiao, *History on Political Conditions of Northern Thailand [Poetphaen Yuet Lanna-เปิดแผนยึดล้านนา]* (Bangkok: Matichon, 2016), 26–27.

3.6: Portrait of King Chulalongkorn while visiting Mumbai, 1872



From: Bourn and Shepherd (1872). SIAM (THAILAND): Chulalongkorn, King of Siam (1853-1910). Asia, Pacific and Africa Collections. British Library.

3.4 The effect of mimicry: the interaction between Siam as a colonial master and its three peripheral annexed areas

The interaction between central Siam and its frontiers could be seen in the 1870s-1900s through the implementation of the provincial administration, both de facto and de jure. Siam acted as a colonial power with its modality of superiority displayed through political and cultural advancements, in similar ways to how powerful European states expanded their influence politically and culturally. The imitation of the West enabled the Siamese court to form the hybridity of Thai national culture that was recreated from various sources of culture, particularly the West and including autochthonous culture. Interestingly, this hybridised Thai culture became the medium of mimicry of the

Siamese authority to boost its role as a colonial master and to enforce frontier communities to imitate its civilisation. Under the relationship between the Siamese and its colonial subjects, it provides the effect of mimicry. This contributes to a further understanding of the connection between ‘reaction’ and ‘hybridity’: the response of local resistance (1901-2) towards Thai national culture and its policies.

After copying the West, the political structure under Chulalongkorn became centralised at Bangkok to protect Siam from their neighbouring colonial powers, as well as to sustain Siamese domination over its new subject peoples, resources and expanded territory.⁴³ The economic shifts in central Siam required proper management of the bureaucracy in areas outside the capital city to increase the state’s income. All traditional chiefs had to submit to the rule of Siam by approving a Thai commissioner and appointed officials, who had the power of deciding on their responsibilities in each *Monthon*. Known for its as a circle, it divided into five levels from the large to small scale areas: circle, province, district, subdistrict and village. The political hierarchy in a circle comprised of a High Commissioner (*khaluang yai*-ข้าหลวงใหญ่), Commissioner (*khaluang*-ข้าหลวง), Acting Commissioner (*phu rang mueang*-ผู้รั้งเมือง), deputy (*palat*-ปลัด), assistant deputy (*rong palat*-รองปลัด), judge (*yokkrabat*-ยกกระบัตร) and general assistant (*phuchuai*-ผู้ช่วย). The High Commissioner who controlled several provinces in a circle had the authority to decide on all affairs. The other official functions that were carried out not only included the governing pattern but jurisdiction and the system of annual revenues and recruiting troops to outer and tributary zones.

Although Siam disclosed its intention to solve the problems of local rights and power, corruption and bribery within the *kin mueang* system (eat all town-กินเมือง),⁴⁴ the modern, efficient bureaucracy was also better able to sustain the political strengths of the centre as it expanded to frontiers where Bangkok had slight influence.⁴⁵ The standardised jurisdiction introduced following the Constitution Act of Court of 1895/r.s.114 helped Siam to recover the loss of extraterritorial rights, which had allowed foreign courts to sue the cases in Siam due to the Bowring Treaty. The loss of

⁴³ Winichakul, ‘The Others Within: Travel and Ethno-Spatial Differentiation of Siamese Subjects 1885-1910’ in Turton, ed., *Civility and Savagery: Social Identity in Tai States*, 41.

⁴⁴ Rajanubhab, *The Thesaphiban System of Provincial Administration*, 28.

⁴⁵ Chulalongkorn, *The Royal Commentaries on the Royal Chronicle and the Royal Ceremony on the Selection of the Crown Prince*, 3.

juridical rights was related to the unstable sovereign authority of Siam.⁴⁶ The new governance also encouraged Siam to secure sketched boundary maps as well as to raise incomes and taxable resources to nourish salaried officials and which replaced the annual payment (*biawat*-เบี้ยหวัด) and compensated for the loss of monthly pensions for traditional political rulers and their relatives.

However, the arrangements in the modernisation of Siam also had a negative effect upon local regimes who previously executed their power and sovereignty within their polities. The chiefs of Chiang Mai, Nongkhai or Sultanate of Patani, for instance, had to transfer their political power to the Siamese ruler and became salaried bureaucrats under the function of reform. (The details about the reforms and what they were in practice will be discussed further in Chapter 7 and 8.) Since then, all revenues that were collected from local people (in cash and labour) became part of national income collected by the Ministry of Finance at Bangkok.⁴⁷

Concurrently, both the ‘civilising’ project and social control became a Siamese concern during the 1890s to 1900s similar to what has been called the ‘white-man’s burden’ of Europeans projecting the perceived positive consequences of its colonised peoples. “Education and contact with Western people must produce the inevitable result. Isolated native races...must disappear or conform to the views of a stronger will and a higher intelligence...they will change, and the process of awakening has in place already began”, wrote Frank Swettenham, a British colonial official in the Malay States, who engaged with the northern Malay states including Kedah, Kelantan, Terengganu, Perlis and Patani when they were under the Siamese influence during 1901-4.⁴⁸ Similarly, by establishing hospitals, a well-trained military to protect from outside enemies, schools for primary education, expanding the use of the Thai language, developing technological infrastructure that reduced communication time and distance through the post and telegraphy, as well as the clear boundary

⁴⁶ David M. Engel, *Law and Kingship in Thailand during the Reign of King Chulalongkorn* (Ann Arbor: Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of Michigan, 1975), 59.

⁴⁷ R5 M.1.4/5, Levying Manpower in the Territory of Siam (31 August 1893-8 January 1899) [Chatlek Thua Phraratcha Anakhet-ม.1.4/5 เรื่อง จัดเลขทั้วพระราชอาณาเขตต์ (31 ส.ค. 112-8 ม.ค. 118)], NA.

⁴⁸ Frank Swettenham, *Malay Sketches* (London and New York: John Lane, 1900), x–xi.

Frank Swettenham was in charge of several positions during 1870s-1910s:

1875-1876 Deputy Commissioner in Perak

1882 British Resident Minister of Selangor

1889-1895 British Resident Minister of Perak

1896-1901 Resident-general of the Federated Malay States (or exercised in administrative authority)

1901–1904 Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Straits Settlements

demarcation, the Siamese rulers attempted to advance the Siamese state.⁴⁹ Also, appropriate categorisations of identity and subjectivity, the diffusion of Buddhist doctrine, standards of morality, etiquette and norms, gradually reached the remote areas of Siam. It was, therefore, a period of transition for Siam, as its government enthusiastically sought to transfer what it considered evidence of a modern world into every inch that had been drawn within its boundary.

The reform of Siam indeed was a project that guided frontier communities to imitate Siamese advancement and its intellectuals as Siam mimicked European imperial states and their colonies. Finally, it was felt that those communities would integrate the modernising process of the court in Bangkok. Siam subsequently conveyed those absorbing knowledge and practices, albeit not entirely similar to European patterns, to local communities to mimic the central Siam culture as if under the relationship between a (colonial) master and its peripheral subjects, much as emerged elsewhere throughout the globe at that time.

Nevertheless, the outcome of mimicry would be a resemblance of the Siamese state and culture in these areas, but would never be the same thing. In Bhabha's words: "the ambivalence of mimicry [is] almost the same but not quite".⁵⁰ It stressed an unintended effect from the colonial discourse of mimicry under the political interaction of dominating and dominated powers that it always enables the reactions, violence and chaos among the subjects of colonialism.⁵¹ It, thus, becomes clearer that forms of response between (both Siam's response to the West and the local movement's response to Siam) could reproduce a new form of culture as outlined by Bhabha in his discussion as 'hybridity'.⁵² To fit the case of Siam and its subjects in this analysis, on the one hand, the three frontiers were instructed and/or forced to absorb all objectives of the *Thesaphiban* programme and the 'civilising' project (copied from Europeans) as the desire of central Siam. On the other hand, the Siamese enforcement led to cultural distractions from the original aim of Siam, particularly when the local elites and people confronted an intense dominance.⁵³ According to this, the local communities of the

⁴⁹ Chulalongkorn, *Speeches by King Chulalongkorn, 1874-1910*, 55-56.

⁵⁰ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 86.

⁵¹ Antony Easthope, 'Homi Bhabha, Hybridity and Identity, or Derrida Versus Lacan', *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies (HJEAS)*, Theory and Criticism [Part 1], 4, no. 1/2 (1998): 145.

⁵² Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 101; Shai Ginsburg, 'Signs and Wonders: Fetishism and Hybridity in Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture*', *CR: The New Centennial Review* 9, no. 3 (2009): 229.

⁵³ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 112.

three frontiers experienced and remodelled Siamese influences to fit with their societies. They even carried the political and cultural Siamese techniques to react against Siam. They turned the received knowledge into local forms in their disturbances of the 1901-2 conflict, which in turn became new forms of the local culture. The cultural transformation became ‘neither local nor central cultural practices’,⁵⁴ but a hybrid culture that fused with both the central and local cultural knowledge.

Conclusion

Therefore, the methods that Siam adopted and adapted from modern and western ideas, and which passed via the processes of selection and rearrangement to fit within Siamese conditions, created a cultural hybridity within central Thai state policies. This hybrid culture then became the discourse of mimicry that boosted the potential of modern Siam and provided powerful techniques for the central Bangkok administration to utilise in its penetration into areas where Siam and Thai culture did not predominate. Transferring the new social modalities of central Siam to its three frontiers, however, produced both imitation and reproduction of Thai national culture in these local areas. The new local forms of hybrid culture arose from the imitation of ideas, knowledge and authority and increased the feeling of alienation against the Siamese rulers at the turn of the millennium. This is part evidenced by the attempted rebellions of the Seven Malay principalities in the south, Holy Men in the northeast and the Shan rebellion in the north of Siam 1901-2.

⁵⁴ Bhabha, 28.

CHAPTER 4: THE APPEARANCE OF REVOLTS IN GLOBAL AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

Introduction

In reality, the local movements of opposition that appeared in the three frontier zones of Siam in 1901-2, known as the attempted rebellion of the Seven Malay principalities in the south, Holy Men in the northeast and Shan rebellion in the north were not just historical phenomena unique to the internal affairs of Siam. They were partial consequences of the process of the colonisation, the implement of modern technologies and the political and cultural transformations occurring across the globe. All through the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century numerous revolts of different characteristics, patterns and ideologies arose across the globe that seemed to challenge the European model by which unequal relationships were sustained. These local movements intended to contest the new practices in relation to modernisation or ‘the civilising mission’, which confronted them in their everyday lives.¹ Some movements were categorised as ‘millenarian’, whose leaders tied themselves to prophetic ideologies to determine their destiny. However, if we broaden out the scope to rethink other revolts that did not engage charismatic figures but produced the form of uprisings during this period, it provides us with a sample of references to gain a greater understanding of the three revolts in the Siamese frontiers. Therefore, to consider the world crisis that helped to create multiple manifestations of millenarian and other concurrent uprisings, as the primary objective in this chapter, will ensure that we do not exceptionalise these events or processes as being unique to Siam. The broader frame of the 1900s also reveals comparatively the outcomes of the process of mimicry or of creating a hybrid culture, in the Siamese case at least, which was framed in the two previous chapters.

James C. Scott’s viewpoint,² as someone who has made one recent contribution that theorises and engages with the idea of prophecy in his analysis, helps us to consider the importance of employing sources of prophet, magic, shamanism, animism and even

¹ Felicitas Becker, ‘Traders, “Big Men” and Prophets: Political Continuity and Crisis in the Maji Maji Rebellion in Southeast Tanzania’, *The Journal of African History* 45, no. 1 (2004): 1; Maitrii Aung-Thwin, ‘Structuring Revolt: Communities of Interpretation in the Historiography of the Saya San Rebellion’, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 39, no. 2 (2008): 298.

² Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*.

religious order by locals, in the case of Siam, to achieve political, economic and social agendas. Scott's idea illustrates how revolts carried prophetic resources combined with modern ideology and techniques to reveal their demands, and how they were also reactions to state expansion. In the process of these extensions of power and control, states with their power and authority often could not be extended efficiently to cover distant areas, especially frontier and marginal zones (i.e. marginal from the perspective of the centre). These conditions provided a window of opportunity for local communities to discharge their grievances, to voice their demands and to resist state authorities. Whether or not local movements succeeded in the end, we can at least comprehend how and why local peoples reacted. As Scott states, "much of the destination remains the same, but the means of transportation has changed".³ Therefore, to understand how the frontier communities of Siam revealed their claims, symbols and desires in their responses will help us to better understand the historical depth of Siamese internal affairs at the turn of the twentieth century. Most importantly, it reflects Thai national culture of the Siamese government itself through the lens of the reaction to it by local communities, especially by their reinterpretation of the meanings of symbols of Thai national culture and how this was manifested. For this reason, the rebellions in the north and the northeast will be discussed further in chapter 9. However, it is a strong argument in this thesis that even these local events can be understood more deeply by extending our frame of reference. These issues are often peripheral to historians when discussing the three rebellions of Siam in 1901-2. Thus, we should first consider the impact of the global connection that led to broader movements in the early 1900s and around that time. This will help to challenge some of the methodological nationalism that currently shapes most writing of Thai national history, particularly among Thai scholars and in the Thai education system.

4.1 Perfect timing: world situations and the stance of Siam at the turn of the century

Other examples of millenarian uprisings provide us with a comparison in their correlations between beliefs, cultural components, political and economic factors resulting from a changing world. In fact, the historical situation during the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth centuries significantly impacted upon the political and

³ Scott, 323.

social movements in both the colonised and non-colonised societies across the world.⁴ Although European powers were still dominant, the onset of the imperial limitations was also revealed around 1900. This can be seen from the fact that Britain as an imperial authority was confronted with difficulties in their triumph over the Boers or the Dutch-speaking settlers in South Africa (1899-1902), who enthusiastically fought to preserve their rights and economic independence in the Boer Republics (Republic of Transvaal and the Orange Free State).⁵ The French and German competitors created a very tense situation for the British. These events revealed some weaknesses of the British naval supremacy. The western world in general at the end of century was confronted by the ascension of socialist movements that appealed to the hearts of people who were pressured by unequal relations between capitalists and workers.⁶ In contrast, the Americans had already become a leading industrial power and began building a colonial empire, even though it found difficulties with the nationalist movement under the guerrilla tactics of Emilio Aguinaldo after taking over the Philippines from Spain after 1898.⁷ Ambitious Japan also surprised the world in the early 1900s by defeating from China to extend its influence over the Korean peninsula in 1894-95 and, then, triumphing over Russia in 1905 to preserve its power over Korea and extend its influence over Manchuria. In the meantime, these global shifting events seemed to be a difficulty for European dominating powers that boosted a channel for visions of millenarian and other social movements in opposition to the existing social arrangements of imperialism in several areas.

Changes across the world and the emergence of new challengers in the 1900s formed the background to the series of problematic situations in Siam during the 1890s-1900s. Although the 1890s onwards was the peak period of Siamese attempts to reinforce and strengthen its political capacity into the three frontiers,⁸ the stance of Siam in the global

⁴ John M. Court, *Approaching the Apocalypse: A Short History of Christian Millenarianism* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2008), 167.

⁵ Antony Best, ed., *International History of the Twentieth Century and Beyond*, 2nd ed (London; New York: Routledge, 2008), 13; Ronald Hyam and Peter Henshaw, *The Lion and the Springbok: Britain and South Africa since the Boer War* (Cambridge, UK; New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 53.

⁶ David Frank and Nolan Reilly, 'The Emergence of the Socialist Movement in the Maritimes, 1899-1916', *Labour / Le Travail* 4 (1979): 107; Diana Preston, *The Boxer Rebellion: The Dramatic Story of China's War on Foreigners That Shook the World in the Summer of 1900* (New York: Walker, 2000), xxiii

⁷ Chronis Polychroniou, 'Rise and Fall of US Imperialism', *Economic and Political Weekly* 30, no. 30 (1995): 56.

⁸ Bunnag, *The Provincial Administration of Siam, 1892-1915*, 136.

context, particularly during the 1890s-1900s, was insecure. Siam was “a target for concession-hunters” since the 1880s as Nigel Brailey has said.⁹ There were railways, forests, natural resources and canals in the Siamese boundaries that were under negotiation with Britain, France and Germany. Afterwards, it became well-known that Siam experienced a humiliation due to the European imperial expansions by ceding the Lao states east of the Mekong River to France in 1893.¹⁰ In 1896, Siam became a buffer zone between the British and French empires which confirmed the strengthening British influence in the Malay Peninsula or the southern area of Siam and the extending French power in the northern and northeastern part of Siam. In the following year, the British also required Siam to consult with Britain before providing any concessions to other countries, whereas the discussion between Siam and Britain over the issue of carving out the Malay Peninsula continued from the 1890s onwards. Until the official decision was made in 1909, Siam transferred the four northern Malay states: Kelantan, Terengganu, Perlis and Kedah, to the British.¹¹ Then, the uncertainty of the Siamese stance itself was recognised by local communities and was considered as an appropriate time to rise in revolts.

As was discussed in the Siamese proclamation to restrain the widespread panic in the northeast in the early 1900s, it was considered that “now, there are rumours about wars. Some people who did not know the exact information fell into widespread panic and mixed up true and false stories that brought about mass chaos. [Some of them] stockpiled supplies and moved or buried their treasure”.¹² These rumours had shown that the frontier communities recognised the signs of Siamese weakness. The northern community was also aware of the French intention when the Myingun Prince rumour spread, discussed by Mr Lyle, the British Vice Consul of Nan province in the north (this will be discussed further in chapter 9).¹³ The Malay elites also concentrated on

⁹ Nigel Brailey, ‘The Scramble for Concessions in 1880s Siam’, *Modern Asian Studies* 33, no. 3 (1999): 513.

¹⁰ Hong Lysa, “‘Stranger within the Gates’: Knowing Semi-Colonial Siam as Extraterritorials”, *Modern Asian Studies* 38, no. 2 (2004): 332; Winichakul, ‘The Quest for “Siwilai”: A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam’: 532.

¹¹ Ira Klein, ‘Britain, Siam and the Malay Peninsula, 1906-1909’, *The Historical Journal* 12, no. 1 (1969): 134.

¹² ‘An Announcement Addressing the Citizens Not to Succumb to Rumour-Panics [Prakat Ham Mai Hai Ratsadon Toktuen Nai Kan Laolue Tangtang-ประกาศห้ามมิให้ราษฎรตกตื่นในการเสาะสื่อต่างๆ]’, RG, 1902.

“บัดนี้มีการเลื่องลือกันด้วยการเกิดศึกสงครามต่างๆ ราษฎรบางจำพวกที่ไม่รู้เหตุการณ์แน่นอน ก็พากันตื่นตื่นแล้วลือ จับเรื่องโน้นผสมเรื่องนี้ ให้เป็นการข่าวใหญ่โต ถึงแก่ล่าสมสะเบียง แลยกย้ายทรัพย์สินบัติไปฝากไปฝังก็มี” (TT)

¹³ ‘Confidential No.41 from Lyle to Beckett: Phre (on Tour) in October 27, 1902’, FO628/23/280, *From Chiangmai. Shan Rising*, 1902, TNA.

negotiations with the British to determine their destiny when Siam intervened in their political affairs. Furthermore, some unintended situations in each area occurred such as the severe poverty in the northeast in 1899, flooding in the north in 1900 and the police intervention in the Mae Long gem mine in that same year, as well as the role of the British in the Malay peninsula which motivated acts of revolt.¹⁴ The uncertainty about the Siamese capacity to rule crucially triggered the three revolts in the frontiers as well, concurrent with the wider range of uprisings that spread across the globe, even though there was no general recognition of shared experiences that might be shared among them. This was an important reason for how the global framing that occurred in the 1900s under the colonial era provides us with correlations between the ambivalence of dominating authorities (strength and weakness) and ‘the perfect time’ for local collective movements that refused to accept the current situations.

When people feel compelled to revolt against the state authorities to gain justice, prosperity or happiness in their life for a new ‘perfect world’, situations become interwoven with notions of future expectation.¹⁵ A promise that the things to come would be better than the present day also arose in accordance with the coming of saviours that were tied to major religious traditions, sects or magical power, special symbols and could even be involved in determining the internal affairs of nations.¹⁶ These religious formulations became an ideological model of so-called ‘millenarianism’ that arose in response to political and economic disengagements among disadvantaged and disaffected people.

4.2 Perfect world: millenarianism across the globe

Historians have highlighted how the three revolts against Siam arose from political and

¹⁴ R5 M.58/14, Flooding (17 August 1893-24 October 1900) [Authokkaphai-อุทกภัย (17 ส.ค. 112-24 ต.ค. 119)], NA; R5 M.57/15, Letters of Phra Yannarakkhit on His Service in Monthon Isan (20 February 1901-3 September 1902) [Rueang Likhit Phra Yannarakkhit Waduai Ratchakan Nai Monthon Isan-ม.57/15 เรื่อง ลีขิตพระญาณรักจิต ว่าด้วยราชการในมณฑลอิสาน (20 ก.พ. 120-3 ก.ย. 121)], NA; R5 M.67/8 An Announcement of Shutting Down the Gem Mine in Long City [Phrakat Pit Bo Phoi Khwaeng Mueang Long-ม.67/8 เรื่องประกาศปิดบ่อพลอยแขวงเมืองลอง (9 เม.ย. - 27 เม.ย. 119)], NA.

¹⁵ Joseph M. Kitagawa, ‘The Many Faces of Maitreya: A Historian of Religions’ Reflections’ in Alan Sponberg, Helen Hardacre, and Princeton University, eds., *Maitreya, the Future Buddha* (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 8.

¹⁶ Albert I. Baumgarten, ed., *Apocalyptic Time* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000), viii–ix; Court, *Approaching the Apocalypse*, 2.; Charles F. Keyes, ‘Millennialism, Theravada Buddhism, and Thai Society’, *The Journal of Asian Studies* 36, no. 2 (1977): 285.

economic motivations and through somewhat secularised and rational goals.¹⁷ It is a fact that some movements had religious objectives, but they also projected a better political and economic life on earth.¹⁸ However, it is difficult to understand the local movements if religious expressions are considered as a short-term vehicle that was of little attraction in the movements. As Scott shows, religious misery could become a proxy of how locals experienced the real sufferings of their life. Religious beliefs, worship and practices, in fact, interwove with agriculture, sustainability and happiness in the daily life of humanity.¹⁹ Also, religious practice was shaped and influenced by geography, boundaries, economy and national ideology.²⁰ Religiosity, then, could reflect human expressions towards real-world incidents. Especially when humans are faced with unanticipated changes, religious beliefs could relieve distress and help people to recover emotional strength. In the words of Karl Marx, “religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, heart of heartless, soul of soulless conditions. It is an opium of the people”.²¹ Therefore, spirituality, prophecy and religiosity, no matter if Buddhist, Christian or Islamic, performed in millenarian movements around the world including Siam revealed an alternative perception of locality that reflected their aim of achieving the perfect world at the perfect time.

Both the understandings of apocalyptic time and the future perfect society are developed in the idea of Buddhism in relation to the appearance of Maitreya. Buddhists mainly believed in the historical Buddha, Gautama, and a future Buddha, known as Maitreya (*Phra Si Ariya Mettrai*-พระศรีอาริยมุตโตรย) as found in the story of *Chakrawattisut* (จักรกวัตตีสุต) or *Akkanyasut* (อัคคัณญสูต) of the Sutta Tripitaka (*Phra Sutantapidok*-พระสุตตันตปิฎก) that speak of Maitreya’s arrival.²² The not-yet-to-come

¹⁷ John B Murdoch, ‘The 1901-1902 Holy Man’s Rebellion’, *Journal of the Siam Society* 62.1 (1974): 47–66; James Ansil Ramsay, ‘Modernization and Centralization in Northern Thailand, 1875-1910’, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 7, no. 1 (1976): 16–32; Tej Bunnag, *The 1902 Rebellions [Kabot Roso 121-กบฏ ร.ศ.121]* (Bangkok: Foundation for the Promotion of Social Science and Humanities Textbooks Projects, 1981).

¹⁸ Roy Wallis, ‘Three Types of New Religious Movement’ in Lorne L. Dawson, ed., *Cults and New Religious Movements: A Reader* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 38.

¹⁹ Lindsay Falvey, *Religion and Agriculture Sustainability in Christianity and Buddhism* (Adelaide: Institute for International Development, 2005), 12–17.

²⁰ Max Weber, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, trans. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 268.

²¹ Karl Marx and Joseph J. O’Malley, *Critique of Hegel’s ‘Philosophy of Right’* (Cambridge [England]: University Press, 1970), 131.

²² *Tripitaka in Thai: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University Version, 45 Volumes (Blue Cover) [Phra Traapidok Chabap Maha Chulalongkorn Ratchawitthayalai-พระไตรปิฎกภาษาไทย ฉบับมหาจุฬาลงกรณราชวิทยาลัย 45 เล่ม (ปกสีฟ้า)]* (Bangkok: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 1996), 57.

Bodhisattva (being of enlightenment) was a person who would come into the world to rescue the human from suffering.²³ Lay people expected that his arrival would kickstart the transformation from a spoiled society to a paradise on earth, full of wisdom, justice, prosperity and long life. This social transformation relies heavily on the doctrine of charisma or *barami* and merit and demerit of both Bodhisattva or the saviour, and the people who await (charisma will be clarified further in chapter 6). Being a Bodhisattva or Maitreya (and righteous ruler) one should have extraordinary merits while survivors would be persons who practised meritorious accumulations. The idea of a millenarian expectation in collective movements in Buddhist societies, including Siam, therefore is centred on the worship of Maitreya.

However, the concept of millenarianism is not limited to Buddhist societies. During the turn of the century, it was linked significantly to a form of Christianity that believed in the vision of the last days, the final state of the world or the coming of the millennium (1000 years) called 'millenarianism'.²⁴ Not different from the Buddhist understanding, the Christian belief originated from the Book of Revelations, the last book of the New Testament, that predicted the future return of Jesus Christ to form and reign a kingdom of God on earth for one thousand years before the Last Judgement.²⁵ Millenarianism then became central to various collective movements of people dissatisfied with their present life.²⁶ Although charismatic movements reflected their beliefs in different ways based on their experiences, they projected similar intentions that all misery would be removed by returning saviours, who would guide people into a period delivering redemption, the perfect world, prosperity and happiness.²⁷ For believers who awaited

Phratraipidok (in Thai), Tripitaka (in Pali) or Pali Canon refers to canonical teachings of Theravada Buddhism. Tripitaka is divided into three parts, Vinaya Tripitaka (discipline), Sutta Tripitaka (discourse) and Abiddhamma Tripitaka (higher knowledge).

²³ Sang-t'aek Yi, *Religion and Social Formation in Korea: Minjung and Millenarianism* (Berlin; New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1996), 95.

²⁴ Thomas Flanagan, 'Modernity and the Millennium: From Robespierre to Radical Feminism' Martha F. Lee, ed., *Millennial Visions: Essays on Twentieth-Century Millenarianism* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2000), 3.

²⁵ Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1957), 1.

²⁶ Karl A Kottman, *Millenarianism and Messianism in Early Modern European Culture Volume II Catholic Millenarianism: From Savonarola to the Abbé Grégoire* (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2001), 2-3.

²⁷ Hue-Tam Ho Tai, *Millenarianism and Peasant Politics in Vietnam* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1983), VII (preface).

the end, it was a time of great hope and anticipation.²⁸ The turn of the century, therefore, was deemed to be a time that brought real hope to many rebels.

Nonetheless, the signs at the turn of the century lead us to analyse further the non-millenarian revolts that happened at the same time. The Malays planned revolt in the southern frontier of Siam did not engage with prophecy in their reaction, even though it did not mean that the millenarianism had never existed in the religion of Islam.²⁹ The absence of the millenarian character was a result of the fact that the south was confronted with different levels of central Thai influence compared to the north and the northeast, which will be further analysed in chapters 7 and 8. The attempted rebellion of the Seven Malay principalities that against the Siamese authority at the turn of the century, as well as two millenarian risings, can in many ways be considered to be a well-illustrated consequence of the awakening contact with modern advanced societies, ‘superior’ civilisation (missionaries, foreign traders and colonial rulers) and the appliance of technologies (steamships, railways, telegraphs and more accurate weapons).³⁰ These factors were partly absorbed by local people and were responsible for local grievances and sufferings, even though they might not be apparent or fully understood in those localities in a broader context or as part of an emerging experience of globalisation. Hence, the coming of the twentieth century was critical for numerous societies resulting from the wide-scale divergence, either colonised or non-colonised status, that aroused tensions about progress and governance.

In reality, experiencing outside incursion and/or facing unanticipated situations that prompted local uprisings was also found in other cases, notably the Boxer Rebellion in China (1899-1901), and the Tuka movement in Fiji, and the example of the Melanesian Cargo Cult in the Pacific Islands during the late nineteenth century. Both of the first mentioned revolts challenged foreign influences and were notable reactions to the indirect or direct experiences of colonial rule and its effects. The two cases above are fascinating examples that frame a wider context for comprehending the Siamese case. Although the movements in China and the Pacific Islands contained some different

²⁸ Richard Landes, ‘The Fear of an Apocalyptic Year 1000: Augustinian Historiography, Medieval and Modern’, *Speculum* 75, no. 1 (2000): 102.

²⁹ William Frederick Tucker, *Mahdis and Millenarians: Shi'ite Extremists in Early Muslim Iraq* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

³⁰ Jeffrey A. Frieden, *Global Capitalism: Its Fall and Rise in the Twentieth Century* (New York, NY: Norton, 2007), 16.

characteristics, conditions and patterns to Siam and between themselves, it is worth considering them to learn some key ideas from the two revolts that arose at the turn of the century; the same period as the three Siamese incidents.

4.3 Wide-scale divergence and meaningful local responses: the intersection between Chinese and Fijian cases

In the late nineteenth century, the situation in China and the Fiji Islands, a southern Melanesian Island of the Pacific Ocean,³¹ recorded local movements that challenged political and/or colonial orders in the same way as happened in Siam at the same time. The Chinese case illustrates the motivation that triggered the local uprisings and suggests how an embryonic nationalist movement evolved. The Fijian movements mainly brought notions of local agency and different cultural interpretation forward through the action of the movement. The comparison with the two cases will help us understand better the interaction between dominant influences and local responses, which is the primary objective of this study.

In China, the Boxer uprisings (1899-1901) arose in the three northern provinces: Shantung, Shansi and Chihli. The term 'Boxers' coined by Westerners referred to a person who was trained in the Chinese martial arts. The uprising in 1900 was initiated by I Ho Chuan (or Yehetuan), whose members fought against the eight western powers by claiming heritage to a longstanding traditional sect. The groups practised the martial arts of boxing, contained invulnerable power against bullets and called for spirits to take possession of their bodies.³² The Boxers believed that God sent a message to them that millions of men from Heaven would appear to rescue them from foreign aggression.³³ The superstitious actions amongst Boxers attracted sympathy from people and glued various ethnic and hierarchical groups in their community together to form a cohesive movement.³⁴ They enlarged their objectives in response to a wide range of

³¹ There are three main groups of Islands such as Melanesian, Micronesia and Polynesia scattered in the Pacific Ocean.

³² Lynn E. Bodin and Chris Warner, eds., *The Boxer Rebellion* (London: Osprey Publishing Ltd, 1996), 3; Yuji Muramatsu and Yuji Muramatsu, 'The "Boxers" in 1898-1899, The Origin of the "I-HO-CHUAN" (義和拳) Uprising, 1900', *The Annals of the Hitotsubashi Academy* 3, no. 2 (1953): 236. Eight-nation alliance was Britain, France, Germany, Russia, United States, Italy, Austria-Hungary and Japan.

³³ Lanxin Xiang, *The Origins of the Boxer War: A Multinational Study* (London; New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 173-190.

³⁴ Noboru Ishikawa, *Between Frontiers: Nation and Identity in a Southeast Asian Borderland*, No. 122 (Athens: Singapore: Ohio University Press; NUS Press, 2010), 17-18.

perceived enemies, including capitalists, intervention of foreigners, missionaries and migrants, those who operated in commercial activities, new technologies and western products.³⁵

By 1900, the Manchu rulers of China (1644-1912) were recovering from the economic consequences for throughout China stemming from a miserable sequence of defeats by Japan in the mid-1890s. This partly resulted in the failure to nurture those areas where revolt occurred. Several coastal areas were granted as concessions to Germany (Kiaochow Bay on the east coast, 1898-1914) after Chinese armed men had killed two German priests. After that, the French leased Kwangchowan in the south (1898-1946), the British leased Kowloon in parts of the new territories in the south (1898-1997), and Russia required a base in Port Arthur at the tip of the Liaodong Peninsula. Japan also increased its influence in the northern parts of China (or southern Manchuria) to protect the linkage between Japan and the Asian mainland. In 1897-8, flooding, crop failures, famine and environmental disasters in Shantung seriously hastened human sufferings. Local people then turned to blame on foreign interventions. The unanticipated signs finally triggered the launching of the boxer uprisings marking the decline of European supremacy but the ascent of Japanese power. It also revealed the weakness of the Qing Dynasty and triggered the rise of the nationalist movement, Kuomintang, which later overthrew Qing empire and established the Republic of China in 1911.

The activities of the Christian church activities became one of the significant victims of Boxer movements. After the end of the Second Opium War (1856-1860), the Qing government had to accept the opening of Chinese ports for foreigners and allowed Christian missionaries to preach, buy lands and build churches. Their activities were active propaganda relating to colonial administration and responsibilities; expanding western dominations and societies, forming organisational structures and converting local people to be Christianity.³⁶ This is why the Boxers targeted foreigners, Chinese Christian converts and workers in foreign employment respectively.³⁷ All these factors became a signal of the destruction on the earth that called for spirit possessions to heal and resolve all bad situations or the Christian millenarian expectation. Moreover, the

³⁵ Bodin and Warner, eds., *The Boxer Rebellion*, 3–4.

³⁶ Lian Xi, 'A Messianic Deliverance for Post-Dynastic China: The Launch of the True Jesus Church in the Early Twentieth Century', *Modern China* 34, no. 4 (2008): 408.

³⁷ Bodin and Warner, eds., *The Boxer Rebellion*, 4.

chaotic situation caused by wars and foreign pressures at the turn of the century provided an empty space that the autochthonous ideology could replace.³⁸ The Christian practices, in China's case, were notable activities that could not be monitored effectively by the state.³⁹ The religious activities, on the one side, became an instrument of the state to control effectively. On the other hand, religious affairs, including missionaries, sometimes were out of reach of state control, whether the state intended to restrict and control it or not.

The ascent of the Christian church in Fiji was also a result of one of the key intrusions of colonial authority in addition to administrative projects, plantation and labour recruiting. It was the missionary activities that opened the way into vast hinterlands on Fiji to establish towns and train local Fijian teachers from the 1850s, before the arrival of many European immigrants in search of their fortune in cotton.⁴⁰ The local communities included hinterland Ra province, the northern part of the Viti Levu which was the largest Island of Fiji, and which had changed dramatically after contact with colonial powers.⁴¹ In the late nineteenth century, Tuka or immortality was claimed by a potent Fijian priest, Navosavakadua, as his powerful strength and ability to forecast the return of the twin gods to bring about the demise of the European settlers. Indeed, the twin gods were the Jehovah and Jesus but were redefined as their ancestors, who existed before the coming of missionaries to Fiji. Although Navosavakadua was a disobedient person towards British colonial order at that time, he became a heroic symbol and a prophetic figure among Fijians later on.⁴²

Martha Kaplan's discussion about 'plural articulations' has direct application to this study as it reflects local understandings of and responses to external intrusions. The articulations of Fijian ritual politics, colonial authority and the Christian God became known as the Cargo Cult, which can be understood as a term relating to Western goods (cargo) that merged with Melanesian local rituals (cult).⁴³ Kaplan's debate highlights

³⁸ Preston, *The Boxer Rebellion: The Dramatic Story of China's War on Foreigners That Shook the World in the Summer of 1900*, x.

³⁹ L. P. Mair, 'Independent Religious Movements in Three Continents', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 1, no. 2 (1959): 123.

⁴⁰ Martha Kaplan, *Neither Cargo Nor Cult: Ritual Politics and the Colonial Imagination in Fiji* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 40.

⁴¹ Kaplan, 126.

⁴² Martha Kaplan, 'Meaning, Agency and Colonial History: Navosavakadua and the "Tuka" Movement in Fiji', *American Ethnologist* 17, no. 1 (1990): 3.

⁴³ Kaplan, *Neither Cargo nor Cult*, 3–5.

the techniques adopted by movements that fused several cultural streams to become a new power, new arrangement and new dimension of Fijian history.⁴⁴ By developing this practice, it disclosed how autochthonous people made a meaningful interpretation that one could understand by rethinking the operation of cultural power. The cultural dynamics provided further a sketch of local responses towards the world transformation and external order. Thus, in Kaplan's idea, similar to the idea of the mimicry, the foreign impacts created not only mimicry but also positive influences that shaped a new hybrid pattern of local rituals. These responses had differentiated their characteristics from both ancient traditions and modern elements; in other words, “neither indigenous nor colonial, they are both and neither”, said Kaplan.⁴⁵

Taking mimicry and plural articulation into account helps to shed light on the supernatural resources of reactions and responses to a colonising power that conveyed elements from the historical past and adapted these into varied forms depending on time and circumstance.⁴⁶ It is the characteristic of broader millenarian revolts in the 1890s-1900s that they revealed the fusion of at least two cultural streams, incorporating the local tradition and western modernity. This form was developed to be more complex than the previous types of local reactions that expressed their disagreement by either refusing to pay tributes or using spirit possession solely. The complexity of these movements becomes more obvious in a field of local practices. Many millenarian leaders later developed into myths of a returning cultural hero,⁴⁷ a descendent god or a special saviour, after they were influenced by outsiders and other religions. Later on, they were absorbed and reproduced into a meaningful alternative ideology.

Thus, the way that cultural reproductions were expressed in the movements at the turn of the century was especially concerned with the influences and experiences that they absorbed from either imperial rulers or foreign expansionists under a particular circumstance. The Boxers and Fijians had absorbed the western influences through several methods, of which a significant one was the dissemination of Christianity. These kinds of experiences generated local consciousness that became pronounced in

⁴⁴ Kaplan, 15-16.

⁴⁵ Kaplan, 16.

⁴⁶ Nikki R. Keddie, ‘The Revolt of Islam, 1700 to 1993: Comparative Considerations and Relations to Imperialism’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 36, no. 3 (1994): 465.

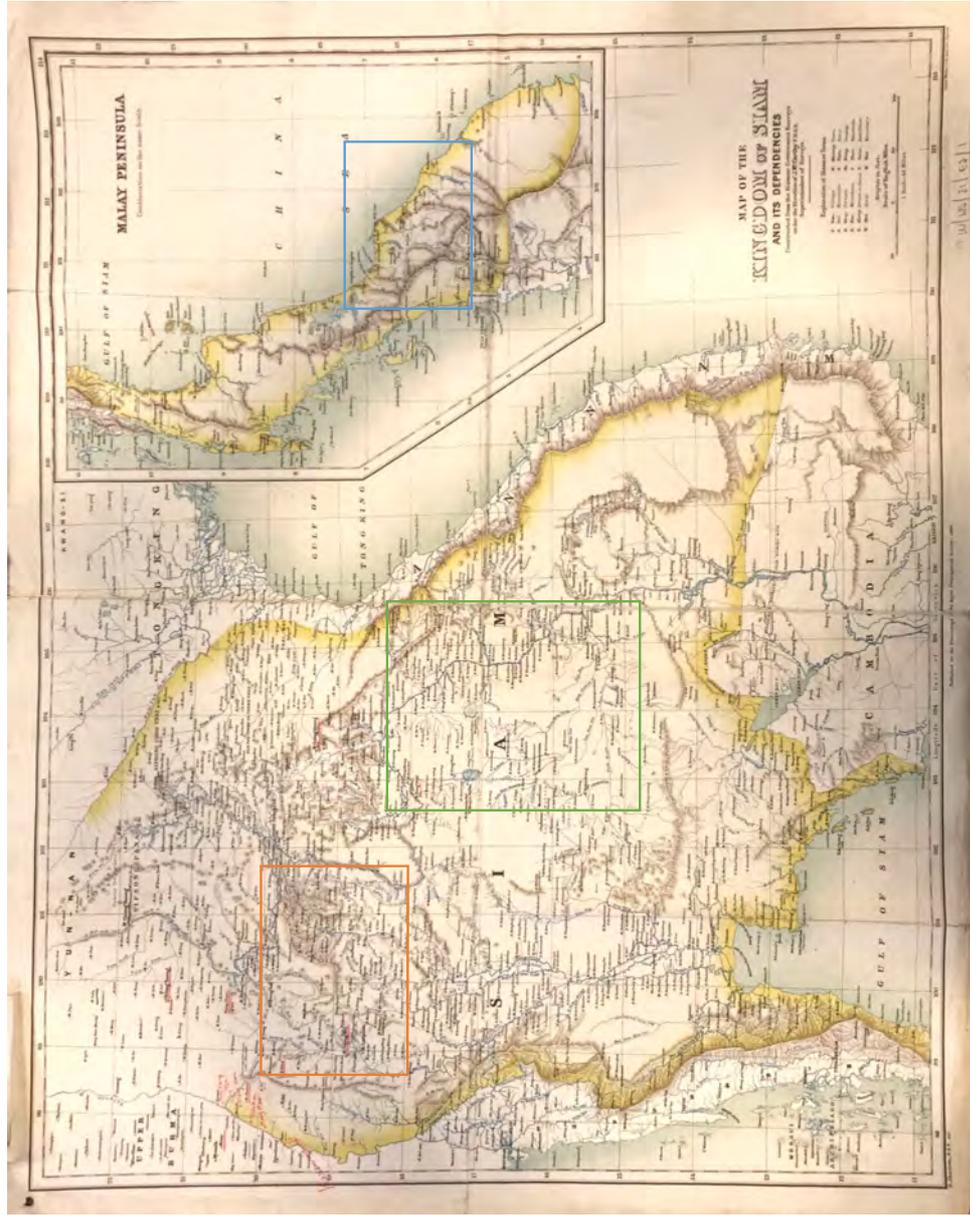
⁴⁷ Bryan Wilson, ‘Millennialism in Comparative Perspective’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 6, no. 1 (1963): 101.

their reactions and even developed into being in some cases, an ideological root for modern nationalist movements. Therefore, to understand non- and millenarian revolts in 1901-2 of Siam also requires that we reconsider how local people and communities experienced plural streams of culture, mainly from Siamese central power but inflected by many global influences that came to be felt in these regions at this time. Therefore, it is necessary to give a brief description of the three movements in Siam (see the three locations in Map no.4.1).

4.4 A brief description of the three rebellions against Siam in 1901-2

In the decade after the official reform programme of Siam in 1892 had been launched, the area of Lan Na had become Monthon Lao Chiang (later Payap). Laos on the right bank of the Mekong was changed to Monthon Lao Phuan and Lao Kao (later became Udon and Isan). The Patani Kingdom was divided into seven Malay principalities, Patani, Saiburi, Yiring, Raman, Yala, Ra-ngae, and Nongchik, and controlled through Monthon Nakhon Si Thammarat. The three Monthon or circles shared a similar geographical location. On the one hand, they were defined by Siamese notions as frontiers that required modernising efforts to improve politically and economically. These frontier communities increasingly had contact with the central Thai standard of governmental structure and the characteristics that the Siam state considered to be 'civilisation'. Although the three zones formerly had not been isolated from outside influences and had been involved with western commercial enterprises and other issues, the thinking brought by Siamese officials and intellectuals on science and modernisation since the late nineteenth century was new form of contact. A new bureaucracy, educational systems, infrastructures, treaties and boundaries, Thai representatives and 'civilising' standards, transformed the daily life of locals and made them follow guidelines of Siam. On the other hand, Siam itself and these frontier communities were pressed and influenced by other authorities such as British and French expansion on the other sides of boundaries that were being established. Later, the unsecured situations surrounding the frontier zones opened an opportunity for the uprisings in the northeast, south and north of Siam annexation. These rebellions shared

4.1: Map showing the three frontier zones of Siam, c.1900



From: Map showing the three frontier zones of Siam. Map of James Fitzroy McCarthy, (1900). IOR/W/L/PS/21/E/7/1. Map Collections. Kingdom of Siam and Malay Peninsula. 1:46. The British Library (with areas added by author)

similar characteristics. It was a fascinating feature of the local movements that these cases articulated the acculturation of Siamese reproduction (learnt from the West) into primitive supernatural traditions, albeit with different levels and patterns, to be a new political weapon to achieve their worldly objectives.

4.4.1 The attempted rebellion of the Seven Malay principalities

The attempted Malay rebellion in the south began with grievances among the Malay chiefs. The old Sultan of Patani, Tengku Abdul Kadir Kamaruddin (hereafter Abdul Kadir) or Phra Phiphitphakdi, asked for British assistance to request a change in the arrangements with Siam. The Patani governor was disappointed and disagreed with the abrupt expansion of Siam since 1898 after his father (Sulaiman Sharafuddin) passed away; he also seemed to be an unfavourable successor in the opinion of the Siamese.⁴⁸ The discontent was continued and supported by other Malay rulers when the Siamese government officially declared the Act of 116 (1897) in the same year. As Abdul Kadir, the Patani chief responded that “I cannot yield to the new regulation read last night”, even though later he seemed to accept it but requested a higher compensation.⁴⁹ The Siamese government then suspected a Malay rulers’ plot by contacting the British officer in Malaya, and this concern had a certain amount of truth.

On the other side, the secret contact of the Patani chief (which at that time was Rajah Muda who was next in succession to the throne) with officers in British Malaya showed the weakness of Siam in its attempts to compete with the British power in the Malay peninsula. Swettenham, the Resident-General of the Federated Malay States (1896–1901) pointed out that since 1898, Rajah Patani “called on me to express his disgust with Siamese suzerainty and rule, and to solicit that his State might pass under Her Majesty’s protection in the same way as the Federated Malay States”.⁵⁰ Other rulers who had lost their authority also revealed their anxiety and preferred to come under British protection, as seen from the fact that Rajah Muda of Saiburi asked the British for settlement in Perak to avoid the Siamese interference in all affairs concerning

⁴⁸ R5 M2.14/58, Phraya Sukhum’s Report on Inspections in Mueang Tani (5 August 1899) [Phraya Sukhum Rai-Ngan Truatchat Ratchakan Mueang Tani-พระยาสุขุมรายงานตรวจจัดราชการเมืองตานี (5 ตุลาคม 118)], NA.

⁴⁹ R5 M2.14/58, Phraya Sukhum’s Report on Inspections in Mueang Tani (5 August 1899).

“ข้อบังคับที่อ่านเมื่อคืนนี้เห็นจะทำไม่ไหว” (TT)

⁵⁰ ‘Correspondences from Sir F. Swettenham to the Marquess of Salisbury’, 17 November 1898, IOR/L/PS/20/FO80/1, FCRAS Part X 1898, BL.

revenue and religion in his state.⁵¹ In September 1901, the Patani ruler revealed his intention in a letter sent to Swettenham that he would resort to asking other great powers to intervene or make a violent disturbance to save his country from destruction if he failed to induce the British government to intervene in Siamese affairs.⁵² However, the British government confirmed to him that they would not interfere with Siam on his behalf.⁵³

Not long afterwards, the Patani ruler confirmed his standpoint to refuse the reforms and prevented a Thai representative from occupying a position in Patani in December 1901. Similar situations also occurred in Ra-ngae and Saiburi when Phraya Saksaei announced the regulations (Act of 116/1897) from January to February 1902. Siam swiftly assigned Phraya Sri Sahadheb, under-secretary of the Interior, and Phraya Sukhumnawinit, a special commissioner of Monthon Nakhon Si Thammarat to halt the chaotic situation immediately. The attempted rebellion of the seven Malay principalities unfortunately for them collapsed within a short time. The possibility of British interference encouraged the Siamese government to solve the problem by arresting the Patani chief and sending him to Songkhla and Phitsanulok, respectively. Siam immediately removed him from his position for inappropriate behaviour and mismanagement of rule.⁵⁴ The ruler of Ra-ngae was also sent to Songkhla, while the son of the Raman chief, Luang Raya Phakdi, was imprisoned in Bangkok. Although the population of Patani had shown no clear sign of cultural interpretation to resist Siam, some local inhabitants concentrated on ensuring the return of the Patani ruler after Siam had released him.

4.4.2 The Holy Men movement

The intensity of the Siamese domination that resulted in traces of the millenarian character became vivid in the Holy Men revolt in the northeast of Siam. Here, a movement, known as *phu mi bun*, a person who has merit, or *phi bun*, a spirit of a dead

⁵¹ 'Correspondences from Mr.Bozzolo to the Secretary to Government', Taipeng', 26 December 1898. IOR/L/PS/20/FO80/2, FCRAS Part X 1898, BL.

⁵² 'Correspondence from Abdul Kadir Kamarsedin to Governor Sir F. Swettenham', 13 August 1901, IOR/L/PS/20/FO80/4, FCRAS Part XIII 1901, BL.

⁵³ 'Correspondence from Governor Sir F. Swettenham to Mr.Chamberlain', 3 September 1901, IOR/L/PS/20/FO80/4, FCRAS Part XIII 1901, BL.

⁵⁴ 'The Announcement of the Dismissal of Patani Ruler [Prakatthot Phraya Wichitphakdi Phraya Tani Ookchak Tamnang Mueang Phraya Tani-ประกาศถอดพระยาวิชิตภักดี พระยาตานีออกจากตำแหน่งเมืองพระยาตานี]', RG, 1902.

person as defined by Siamese documents, arose in 1901-2. Several years before the rebellion, a copied letter had been circulated that repeated the prophecy of the coming of *Thao Thammikarat* (ท้าวธรรมมิกราช) or meritorious ruler to eliminate poverty, misery and restore a new society. Accordingly, many people gave up their everyday activities after receiving the news.⁵⁵ Likewise, people killed their pigs because they thought that pigs would turn into giants and eat people, instead of fostering their food as usual. They also stopped working to earn money and instead began collecting pebbles in the belief that they would turn into silver and gold when Thammikarat had arrived.⁵⁶ Many locals became followers of a hundred holy men who claimed to be heralds, seers or even claimed to be a returning Buddha-to-be by practising magical powers, being ordained and observing religious precepts as a power to protect local people from bad luck and calamity.⁵⁷ This seemed to be composed of groups that the Siam state referred to as Khas, Laos, Annamites and others crossing from the French side of the Mekong to participate in the risings.⁵⁸ (Annamites referred to Vietnamese, and Kha referred to Kmhmu. These names were mentioned in the British records but are no longer used today.) The prominent leaders in this movement were Ong Man and Thao Bunchan, traditional nobles who had lost their privileges and power. The movement was launched in Mahasarakam province and spread through several provinces of the northeast such as present-day Nong Khai, Udon Thani (hereafter Udon), Sakon Nakhon, Nakhon Phanom, Khon Kaen, Roi-et, Kalasin, Ubon Ratchathani (hereafter Ubon), Srisaket and Surin. The Holy Men movement attacked the Siamese authority and representatives, but in May 1902 they were arrested by Siamese troops from Bangkok led by Prince Sanphasitthiprasong.

Nonetheless, the uprisings of the Holy Men spread beyond the border of Siam extending across the Mekong river to come up against not just the Siamese government but also the French protectorates of modern-day Laos in 1901-2. Similar to the crisis in Siam, the restoration of the pre-colonial holy king occurred in the Bolaven revolt of

⁵⁵ R5 M.2.18/3, Holy Spirit: Correspondences from the Ministry of Interior (24 February 1901-7 April 1902) [Phibun Nangsue Krasuang Mahatthai-ม.2.18/3 ฟื้นฟู หนังสือกระทรวงมหาดไทย (24 ก.พ. 120-7 เม.ย. 121)], NA.

⁵⁶ 'Mr. Tower to the Marquess of Landsdowne', 8 April 1902, IOR/L/PS/20/FO81/1, FCRAS Part XIV 1902, BL.

⁵⁷ R5 M.2.18/3, Holy Spirit: Correspondences from the Ministry of Interior (24 February 1901-7 April 1902).

⁵⁸ 'Mr. Tower to the Marquess of Landsdowne', 8 April 1902, IOR/L/PS/20/FO81/1, FCRAS Part XIV 1902.

1901 in Laos, where the situation was connected to the political elites of Royal Champasak House and non-elite groups.⁵⁹ The situation not only implied the significance of marginal areas that had more political and cultural fluidities compared to inner regions but also due to the ineffective authority of the centre. It also marks the millenarian characteristics in the role of the returning righteous king among local groups. Particularly in the Siamese case, Thammikarat was deemed to be an expected ruler presenting another form of Maitreya descending from Second heaven.⁶⁰ By considering this situation, we can see that the notions of Thammikarat (and even the restoration of the pre-colonial holy king in Laos) were interrelated with the Bodhisattva's kingly power known as 'cakravartin': the connection between the political power and activities and Buddhist ideologies.⁶¹ More details of the cakravartin and kingship conception, reincarnation and the doctrine of charisma and merit will be laid out in Chapter 6 as it will help us to understand why and how northeastern locals used the role of Bodhisattva's kingly power or Thammikarat, a Maitreya cult, to respond to Thai national culture which will be analysed further in Chapter 9.

4.4.3 The Shan rebellion in 1902

Turning to the Shan rebellion or *ngiaw mueang phrae*,⁶² this saw the revival of the Burmese king as a prophetic tool to mobilise a movement in the north towards Siam. It began in Phrae province, on 25th July 1902 as a result of the government of Siam shutting down the Mae Long gem mine in the south-west of Phrae close to Lampang, where a group of Shans worked, with the specific aim of eradicating their habitats. The government believed that these Shan groups used the mine to assemble secretly to prepare a robbery. Tensions then triggered the uprising, which spread out to adjacent provinces throughout the north such as Lampang, Lamphun, Nan and Chiang Mai. One of the Shan rebels claimed that the Shan people were treated poorly by the Thai representatives who discriminated and persecuted them.⁶³ The uprising was deemed to

⁵⁹ Ian Baird, 'Millenarian Movements in Southern Laos and North Eastern Siam (Thailand) at the Turn of the Twentieth Century Reconsidering the Involvement of the Champassak Royal House', *South East Asia Research* 21, no. 2 (June 2013): 257–79.

⁶⁰ Kitagawa, 'The Many Faces of Maitreya: A Historian of Religions' Reflections' in Sponberg, Hardacre, and Princeton University, *Maitreya, the Future Buddha*, 3.

⁶¹ Manuel Sarkisyanz, *Buddhist Backgrounds of the Burmese Revolution* (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2013), 40–42; Theodore Stern, 'Ariya and the Golden Book: A Millenarian Buddhist Sect Among the Karen', *The Journal of Asian Studies* 27, no. 2 (1968): 300.

⁶² *Ngiaaw* referred to Shan people, which were called by Siam.

⁶³ 'Report upon Shan Rising at Phre, 23 July-14 Aug 1902', FO821/30, *Shan Rising at Phré*. 1902, TNA.

be a collaboration between the Shan groups and local Lao chiefs and nobles, who disagreed with the reforms introduced from Siam.⁶⁴ All things related to Siam were their target. The Shans robbed the city hall, post office and police station in Phrae. They intruded the house of Thai officials and killed everyone they found, including Phraya Racharitthanon, the unpopular High Commissioner of Phrae province.⁶⁵ A section of the Shan rebels moved forward to Lampang and persuaded local inhabitants to participate in their movements. However, they failed to seize Lampang. On 14th of August 1902, Phraya Surasak Montri and his troops from Bangkok arrived at Phrae to control the situation.

According to this, the rebellion seemed to become associated with ordinary criminals who robbed and killed without a plan and were put down easily by Siam.⁶⁶ Nonetheless, following the British records⁶⁷ and Andrew Walker's argument, who studied the French records,⁶⁸ a different picture encourages. Although the Shan rebellion had failed to occupy the five provinces of northern Siam, it glued other Shan groups in Kengtung, Chiang Rung and Chiang Saen. The network of Shan communities explicated the existing ambiguity and complexity of an area called the frontier, particularly during the time of drawing boundaries and colonial annexation. This situation provided an opportunity for the Shan groups to redefine the heroic royal Burmese leader, Prince Myingun, and they selected magical cults as symbols of the movement, which identified them in the form of a millenarian movement. The revival of the Burmese king was identified as a legitimate response to the Siamese influence, while the magical cults helped to glue followers to the revolt against Siam and to preserve the strong linkage between the Shan people in Siam, Upper Burma and the Upper Mekong.

Conclusion

What can be concluded from the backgrounds of the three uprisings is, firstly, they all shared a similar rejection of the new arrangements of Siam, as well as other foreign pressures and influences over the Siamese boundaries. Either from persuasion or enforcement, outside forces pressured local communities to keep on track in their

⁶⁴ R5 M.63/2, Ngiaw Oppression (31 July 1902) [Prap Ngiaw-ปราบเงี้ยว (31 กรกฎาคม ร.ศ.121)], NA.

⁶⁵ 'Report upon Shan Rising at Phre, 23 July-14 Aug 1902', FO821/30, *Shan Rising at Phré*. 1902.

⁶⁶ Bunnag, *The 1902 Rebellions*, 52-53.

⁶⁷ 'Report upon Shan Rising at Phre, 23 July-14 Aug 1902', FO821/30, *Shan Rising at Phré*. 1902.

⁶⁸ Andrew Walker, 'Seditious State-Making in the Mekong Borderlands: The Shan Rebellion of 1902-1904', *Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 29, no. 3 (November 2014): 565.

modernising practices. Nonetheless, the inconsistency of the Siamese stance seemed to enhance a new local consciousness, which then found form in their new millenarian movement and the expectations they expressed through this movement. The outcomes of mimicry, on the one hand, provided an opportunity to disrupt the prevailing authority in the form of a rebellion.⁶⁹ On the other hand, it led to a hybrid articulation of culture, as could also be seen in the examples cited earlier in this chapter from China and Fiji. This brought about not only series of modern encounters with the secular, rational and pragmatic but also provided key elements of the knowledge that would be necessary to help shape cultural and political meanings of local movements to respond to these circumstances and pressures. The historical and local cultural distinctions, as well as the different experiences relating to central Thai expansion, resulted in shaping different notions of and reactions to Thai national culture in each zone. This requires us to reinvestigate the distinctive circumstances of peoples of the three frontiers. By doing so, we notice some similarities but also distinctive cultures and traditions of the three local communities, as well as how communities and their cultural consciousness had been influenced by the new forms of encounter with Thai national culture and other outside influences.

⁶⁹ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 88.

CHAPTER 5: PEOPLES OF THE THREE FRONTIERS AND THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES

Introduction

We have seen from the previous chapter that local movements broke out in these different places during a similar period with each area utilising different forms to produce and pronounce their response to the Siam state. This illustrates that the areas farthest from Bangkok, which Siam had annexed as part of the Thai political and cultural unit, possessed distinct forms of political, cultural and social practices developed from their own unique circumstance. This chapter will attempt to outline these multiple circumstances. It will briefly compare historical legacies, political, cultural and social practices among the three frontier communities of Siam to give a general overview of how these produced local characteristics. By doing so, it will shed light on the similarities and differences between Siam and the three zones and amongst the three frontiers themselves. This analysis will allow us to understand how the various ethnic groups developed their internal networks politically, culturally and economically as well as external relationships with other polities (particularly with Siam). Various local conditions resulted in the building up of the daily life, experiences and historical legacies of the localities. They also reveal distinctive social, political and economic activities of the three frontiers before local peoples were confronted with new influences of political and cultural nature by the Siamese state, especially related to ideas of kingship and Thai Buddhism. This helps us to understand the different situation in each locality and how these circumstances influenced their willingness to absorb Thai national culture during the Chulalongkorn reign, or how they might choose to reshape it.

By making this comparison, it can be said that the historical legacies of the three frontiers and the Siamese polity developed in different levels. From the early nineteenth century onwards, the Lao polities west of the Mekong river established the political, economic and cultural relationships that tied them to Siamese state. Owing to the weaknesses of all Lao states on both sides of the Mekong river and the necessity to improve the financial situation in Bangkok, these conditions enabled the influence of Siam to become more obvious in the northeast periphery than the other two peripheral zones. Regarding the distinctiveness of the three areas, the north and

northeast shared close ethnic ties and traditional networks, while the ethnic identification and beliefs in the south diverged from the other two frontier zones and from Bangkok. However, all three frontiers had their distinctive ethnic, cultural and religious practices and local networks that differentiated them from Thai culture, and we can see clearly how these conditions changed after Siam expanded its influence from the late nineteenth century onwards. The legacies of local circumstances in the three frontier communities help us conceptualise the findings in relation to the context of state expansion and the local response following the attempts of Siam to incorporate them in the next part of the thesis.

5.1 Traditional political structure of the three frontiers and their relations with other polities

Lan Na or Laos west of the Mekong River and the Patani kingdom were zones that Siam under the reign of King Chulalongkorn referred to as its ‘frontiers’ or *chaipraratcha anakhet* (ชายพระราชอาณาเขต). They were marked as uncivilised areas in which the Siamese ruler had the legitimacy to ‘make people live with pleasure’. However, those three zones previously developed their polities with autonomous status. The political model of *mandala* means that a political centre diffused its power and secured their lesser polities (or *mueang*-เมือง¹) as tributary states with no perception of a fixed boundary as later existed in the nation-state model from the mid-nineteenth century. The political influence of the centre decreased with the distance from the centre, and sometimes the centre could not exert power due to this distance. Notably, the influence was slight in the peripheries linked to central power in the form of a tributary relationship. The *mandala* model was in accord with the relationship between the three zones (later becoming the frontiers of Siam) and traditional Ayutthaya and Bangkok polities. Chiang Mai and other neighbouring chiefs in the outline of Lan Na, including Lamphun, Lampang, Phrae and Nan could extend their polities to triumph over other significant influences.² Sometimes, they were also forced to be a tributary state which accepted the suzerainty of Bangkok

¹ Martin Stuart-Fox, ‘On the Writing of Lao History: Continuities and Discontinuities’, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 24, no. 1 (1993): 107.

² The ruling houses of Chiang Mai, Lamphun and Lampang mutually shared the same ancestors, while Phrae and Nan rulers came from another line of blood lineage.

or/and Burmese overlords.³ This was similar in the Malay Sultanates of Patani, which shifted between the mainland authorities of Ayutthaya (1351-1767) and later Bangkok (from 1782), and maritime empires of Majapahit (1293-1527) and Johore (1528-1818). The Lao chiefs of Ubon, Srisakhet or Roi-et not only created relations with Bangkok and Vietnam but also with China, its neighbours to the north.⁴ The *Chao* of Lan Na, *Chao* of Laos and *Raja* of several Malay states, therefore, commonly steered political, economic and cultural affairs within their powerful spheres. The political administration, judicial function and local revenues, including taxes and resources, were managed by the local-blood-lineage chiefs. Although those polities, from time to time, turned into *mueang prathet sarat* or one of the many tributary states of Siam at Bangkok, Siam only approved the new local leaders, received tributes triennially and received support in the form of human resources in times of war.⁵ Therefore, the three frontier zones that the Siamese government annexed during the Chulalongkorn era traditionally were spaces of well-established political independence, representing various ethnic, linguistic and cultural communities that were only slightly influenced by Siam.

Although the three peripheries interacted with Ayutthaya and Bangkok before, the central Siamese influence diffused into the three zones on different levels. This significantly created different experiences and historical linkages with Siam among the three areas. The small independent Lao units in the west of the Mekong, known as the northeast Thailand today (*Isan*), Champasak⁶ and Vientiane, had substantial experience with Siamese political expansion during the early eighteenth century that was even more tight in the early nineteenth century during the reign of King Nangklao (1824-1851). Lan Xang's gradual weakening provided the chance for Bangkok to construct a closer relationship with the Lao units in the northeast politically,

³ John Haskell Freeman, *An Oriental Land of the Free; or, Life and Mission Work Among the Laos of Siam, Burma, China and Indo-China* (Philadelphia: The Westminster press, 1910), 102.

⁴ James McCarthy, *Surveying and Exploring in Siam* (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1900), 60; Baird, 'Millenarian Movements in Southern Laos and North Eastern Siam (Thailand) at the Turn of the Twentieth Century Reconsidering the Involvement of the Champassak Royal House', 260.

⁵ Rajanubhab, *The Siamese Government in Ancient Times*, 25–26; Rajanubhab, *The Thesaphiban System of Provincial Administration*, 28.

⁶ Champasak, close to the northeastern frontier, was one of the three major political powers in the Mekong region or the Lan Xang Kingdom during the late-eighteenth century. The other two centres were Luang Prabang and Vientiane.

economically and culturally.⁷ As can be seen after the defeat of Chao Anuvong in 1828,⁸ Bangkok periodically surveyed the local population, collected taxes and levies, as well as opened concessionaires in those Lao units, including Surin, Sangkha (Surin), khukhan (Srisakhet) and Phrakhonchai (Buriram), through Mueang Nakhon Ratchasima. During this time, Champasak, Nakhon Phanom and Ubon were also other significant political units controlled in the name of the Bangkok polity. One of the main reasons that the Siamese king during the early-nineteenth century tried to expand his power north-eastwards was to receive human resources and tax farming to increase products and revenues. These tax farmers were mostly Chinese, who also bought local products for Bangkok such as sugar, rice, pepper and tin.⁹ All this was a response of Siam to British pressures regarding the basis for free trade during that period.¹⁰ As we have seen in chapter 2, Siam had the first principal experience with the British by way of the Burney treaty (1826), which made Siam realised the policy of free trade on global markets. The Mekong basin, where was suitable for growing rice,¹¹ could ensure a surplus of revenue for the Siamese government.¹² Therefore, although Siam could not engage too closely with the internal affairs of these Lao states except with the approval of the top four political ranks, the connection between Siamese authorities and Laos west of Mekong, Champasak and Vientiane through political and economic extensions in the early-nineteenth century were developed as had never happened before. This form of relationship was not found with other political entities of Lan Na and the northern Malay states of the Malay peninsula. Nonetheless, ethnic and cultural diversities, religious practices and local networks in the northern, southern and northeastern peripheral zones of Siamese polity are worth discussing. Taking these issues for granted, will not allow a sufficient understanding

⁷ Volker Grabowsky, 'Buddhism, Power and Political Order in pre-twentieth Century Laos' in Ian Harris and Becket Institute, eds., *Buddhism, Power and Political Order* (London; New York: Routledge, 2007), 133.

⁸ The Fine Arts Department, *A Chronicle of Nakhon Ratchasima [Chotmaihet Nakhon Ratchasima-จดหมายเหตุนครราชสีมา]* (Phranakho, 1954), 33–48.

⁹ Puangthong Pawakapan, 'Warfare and Depopulation of the Trans-Mekong Basin and the Revival of Siam's Economy', *The SEARC Working Paper Series*, no. 156 (2014): 8–9; Hans-Dieter Evers, 'Trade and State Formation: Siam in the Early Bangkok Period', *Modern Asian Studies* 21, no. 4 (1987): 763.

¹⁰ Lysa, *Thailand in the Nineteenth Century: Evolution of the Economy and Society*, 85.

¹¹ Vu Duc Liem, 'Rama III, Minh Mạng and Power Paradigm In Early Nineteenth Century Mekong Valley', *Rian Thai: International Journal of Thai Studies* 5 (2012): 305.

¹² Norman G. Owen, 'The Rice Industry of Mainland Southeast Asia 1850-1914', *The Journal of the Siam Society* 59.2 (1971): 83–85.

of the three local reactions towards Siam.

5.2 Ethnic and cultural diversities in the three frontiers

During this period, the three peripheral zones of Bangkok comprised of various ethnic groups due to several reasons; flight from political chaos and devastating warfare, escape captivity and heavy tributes, search for better locations in response to basic life needs, and being forced to move due to the slave hunting. Thus, the historical background of the area created diverse circumstances in the northern, northeastern and southern communities that differed from Bangkok as well as differing amongst themselves.

It can be said that the north and northeast frontiers of Siam shared some ethnic ties, beliefs and linguistic traits. In the context of Lan Na, the Lua' people (called by Thais *Lua or Lawa*-ลัวะ หรือ ละว้า), a highland community, were supposed to be one of the earliest groups to have inhabited this region. Their ancestors were supposed to have dwelled in the Lan Na Kingdom and later fled to the mountains due to defeats in war at the end of the thirteenth century.¹³ Nonetheless, the exact historical origin of the Lua' is still uncertain.¹⁴ Lan Na also comprised of Shan and Lao groups who are Tai-speaking, and other non-Tai speaking groups including Hmong, Mien and Karen etc. Previously, the people called Lao were considered a branch of Tai people scattered over the Lan Na (Tai of the north) and the Lan Xang kingdoms (Tai of the northeast Siam and today Laos).¹⁵ Several western records of observers at the end of the nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries such as Lillian Curtis and John Freeman,¹⁶ used the word 'Lao' to refer to a dominant ethnic group of the northern Tai. Siam, differently, named the northern Lao people following the geographical aspect as *Lao Chiang* (ลาวเฉียง) or the northwest Lao of Siam.¹⁷ However, the word 'Lao' was used interchangeably with Yuan, and *Khon meang* (คนเมือง): people of the town. The name

¹³ Peter Kunstadter, 'Residential and Social Organization of the Lawa of Northern Thailand', *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 22, no. 1 (1966): 64.

¹⁴ Joachim Schliesinger, *Ethnic Groups of Thailand: Non-Tai-Speaking Peoples* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2000), 101.

¹⁵ Freeman, *An Oriental Land of the Free*, 16–17.

¹⁶ Lillian Johnson Curtis, *The Laos of North Siam* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1903); Freeman, *An Oriental Land of the Free*.

¹⁷ During the process of drawing boundaries of Siam, the north of Siam was Luang Prabang and the modern-day upper northeast (or Monthon Udon) and the north today was the northwest, using Bangkok as the centre of the Siam to determine the directions.

Khon meang was preferred by the northern Tai people to call themselves and to differentiate them from the other Thai of Siam.¹⁸ The other two major groups of the north were the Shan or greater Tai (*Thai Yai* or *Ngiaw*-ไทใหญ่ หรือ เจ็ยว) and the Lue, another two bodies of Tai-speaking groups. The Shan groups from areas of the Salween River and Kentung, and the Lue from Xishuangbanna or *Sipsong Panna* periodically settled down in the northern States such as Nan, Phrae, Lamphun, Lampang and Toen. In particular, the Nan polity was the Lue's destination due to its location, and later Nan became a Bangkok representative in dealing with political power in Xishuangbanna.¹⁹

During the mid-eighteenth century, it was believed that a small group of Mon had split from the larger community in western Siam and settled in Lamphun and Chiang Mai, close to the Mae Ping River. Following this, the Bisu (*Lua in Chiang Rai*-ลัวะ เชียงราย) came from Yunnan provinces as war captives in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries and later the Lisu (*Li-saw*-ลีซอ), also from Yunnan, left the Burmese Shan States and reached the traditional Lan Na area in the early twentieth century. Most of the Akha (*I-Kaw*-อีเก้อ) fled from Burma around 1880 and again in 1921 from Laos because of the civil war.²⁰ During the same period, the hill-dwelling Hmong (*Meo*-เมี้ยว) and Mien (*Yao*-เย้า) moved from Laos after 1850 and early nineteenth century respectively. The Hmong and Mien mostly lived in the highlands and cultivated opium. Similar to some of the Kmhmu (*Kha Che*, *Kha*²¹-ชา), they were forced by the Lao people of the Mekong to move up to the hills, with some working in the forests of the northern states.²² Lahu (*Mussur*-มุสอ) and Pwo and Sgaw Karen (*Ka-riang*-กะเหรี่ยง) came from Burma during the second half of the nineteenth century approximately, but it is difficult to trace their movements precisely.

¹⁸ Gehan Wijeyewardene, 'Introduction: Definition, Innovation, and History' in Gehan Wijeyewardene, ed., *Ethnic Groups across National Boundaries in Mainland Southeast Asia*, Social Issues in Southeast Asia (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1990), 4.

¹⁹ Ratanaporn Sethakul, 'Tai Lue of Sipsongpanna and Muang Nan in the nineteenth-century' in Turton, *Civility and Savagery*, 2000, 322.

²⁰ Anthony R. Walker and Wolfgang Laade, eds., *Farmers in the Hills: Ethnographic Notes on the Upland Peoples of North Thailand* (Singapore: Suvarnabhumi, 1986), 170.

²¹ According to a well explanation of Ronald Renard and Andrew Turton, they define the word 'Kha' as the non-Tai and forest peoples who did not dominate in the city, while the Tai people are the rulers of the city and were not hill people. For more details in Turton, *Civility and Savagery*.

²² Holt S. Hallett, *A Thousand Miles on An Elephant in the Shan States* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Son, 1890), 21.

These people with their complex historical origins, dialects or languages were distinct from each other but also from central Thai, which brought complications for the Siamese dominion. Although Thai/Siamese, Lao, Shan and many other related groups are all Tai speakers and shared a large degree of vocabulary, whereas these groups had different dialects that were not mutually understandable. Several proclamations of Siam made to the three frontiers necessarily had to be translated into Lao and Shan language and scripts.²³ While Hmong and Mien are Meo-Yao speakers, Karens speak several different dialects belonging to the vast Sino-Tibetan linguistic group, which includes Chinese and the various Tibeto-Burman languages.²⁴ The Akha, Lahu, Lisu and Bisu are speakers of Tibeto-Burman languages.²⁵ The Lua' (*Lua in Chiang Mai and Mae Hong Son*), Mon, Kmhmu and Maal or Htin (*Thin*), a sub-group of the Lua', are Mon-Khmer speakers.

Some ethnic communities and various dialect groups in the north were also found in the northeastern frontier. Ethnic Lao people were the vast majority of the population in the northeast and modern-day Laos on both sides of the Mekong River. The Lao peoples of the upper and lower zones of the northeast were named (by Bangkok) as *Lao Phuan* (ลาวพวน) and *Lao Kao* (ลาวขาว) respectively.²⁶ However, they regarded themselves as Lao people, unlike people in the north who reluctantly called themselves Lao. Small groups of Kmhmu, Hmong and Mien who left northern Laos were also found in the northeastern frontiers including Loei province. Another Tai group were the Phu Tai (*Phu Thai*-ภูไท, ผู้ไท) who probably extended their territory from northwest Vietnam, passing Laos and then Siam by crossing the Mekong river during the eighteenth century onwards. Due to their origin, they shared similarities with both Tibetan races and people of the Upper Mekong.²⁷ Today, they are settled in the upper and middle northeastern provinces such as Sakon Nakhon, Kalasin, Nakhon Phanom and Mukdahan. A small number of the Kui (*Suai*-ส่วย), a Mon-Khmer

²³ R5 M.58/100, A Report from Chao Phraya Rattanabodin (5 July-3 September 1889) [Chao Phraya Rattanabodin Krapbangkhom Thun-ม.58/100 เจ้าพระยารัตนบดินทร์ กราบบังคมทูล ฯลฯ (5 ก.ค. - 3 ก.ย. 108)], NA.

²⁴ Walker, Laade, and Stiftung Niedersachsen, *Farmers in the Hills*, 88.

²⁵ Anthony R. Walker, *Merit and the Millennium: Routine and Crisis in the Ritual Lives of the Lahu People* (New Delhi: Hindustan Publishing Corporation, 2003), 91–92.

²⁶ According to Prince Damrong's perception, Lao Kao came from white-bellied Lao, while Lao Chiang referred to black-bellied Lao, who had tattoos on their bellies.

²⁷ Henri d'Orléans, *Around Tonkin and Siam: A French Colonialist View of Tonkin, Laos, and Siam (1892)* (Bangkok: White Lotus Co, 1999), 149–50.

speaking group, were also found in the lower northeast of Burirum, Sri Saket and Surin provinces of Thailand.²⁸

In contrast, the south comprised ethnic groups of people whose languages and cultures differed from the northern, northeastern and even the Siamese populations in Bangkok. The majority group of the Southern frontier of Siam were part of the Malay world, with which the Malays (of South Siam) being considered part of the Austronesian-speaking people. As Geoffrey Benjamin and Anthony Milner argue, people who are defined as ‘Malay’ can be understood collectively as an Austronesian-speaking people scattered throughout Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Sarawak, parts of Indonesia, Philippines and even Madagascar in Africa.²⁹ The scope of the word ‘Malay’ here is mainly in reference to the majority group of people in the northern Malay peninsula that has become southernmost Thailand: Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat. It is also associated with Perlis, Kedah, Perak and Selangor in the west, and Kelantan, Terengganu, and Pahang in the east of peninsular Malaysia. These Malay groups practised two main forms of beliefs such as Islam (a feature of being Melayu) and autochthonous animism. In the early fifteenth century at least, Arabic traders arrived and converted some Malays to be ‘Melayu’, Muslim converts, without any force.³⁰ Later, the term Melayu was seen as a marker of shared political culture among the Malays scattered around coastal areas.³¹ Due to their geographical location on the coast and the trade route through the Straits of Malacca, the Malays in the south of Siam increasingly shared resemblances regarding dialects, cultures, political form and economic networks to several groups of people in peninsular Malaysia, the coast of Borneo and the east coast of Sumatra today.³² For these reasons, they were not deeply connected with the

²⁸ Ronald D. Renard and Anchalee Singhanetra-Renard, eds., *Mon-Khmer: Peoples of the Mekong Region* (Chiang Mai, Thailand: Chiang Mai University Press, 2015), 483–85.

²⁹ Geoffrey Benjamin and Cynthia Chou, eds., *Tribal Communities in the Malay World: Historical, Cultural, and Social Perspectives* (Leiden, the Netherlands: Singapore: International Institute for Asian Studies; Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002), 1; A. C. Milner, *The Malays* (Malden, MA; Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 2.

³⁰ Howard Malcom, *Travels in South-Eastern Asia, Embracing Hindustan, Malaya, Siam and China*, vol.2 (Boston: Gould, Kendall, and Lincoln, 1844), 100.

³¹ Virginia Matheson, ‘Concepts of Malay Ethos in Indigenous Malay Writings’, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 10, no. 2 (1979): 370.

³² Leonard Y. Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree: Trade and Ethnicity in the Straits of Melaka* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008), 137.

culture and ethnicity of peoples in mainland south east Asia or, particularly in the context of this thesis, central Siam and the north and northern frontiers of Siam.

Nonetheless, Melayu was referred to as Islamic Malay speakers and subjects of Sultans after contact with the Europeans.³³ The ethnic marker of being Malay Muslim was considered to be those of the present-day Malays and excluded some autochthonous people, known as the Orang Asli (Original People) who speak Mon-Khmer languages.³⁴ The Orang Asli were a group of people who were denied the ability to become Malay, as they refused to adopt Islam and preferred to preserve their autochthonous practices.³⁵ Some of them also fled to the interior.³⁶ The Orang Asli group in the southern frontier of Siam were known as Orang Semang and in some early records including those of Rathborne³⁷ and Skeat³⁸ as *Sakai* (ซำไก). The central Thai state however referred to them as *Ngo pa* (เงาะป่า), which was derogatory and literally meant a person with ‘curly hair like rambutan’ lived in the forest.³⁹ However, they referred to themselves as Maniq (มันนี, มานี),⁴⁰ and regarded themselves as the original and autonomous inhabitants, their appearance being significantly different from the Malays.⁴¹ Although most of the Semang lived relatively scattered in the mountainous zone of Songkhla (Singgora), Perak, Kedah, on the border of Pattani, Selangor and modern-day Satun province, they were also in contact with Malay farmers, bartering with outsiders and foraging forest products.⁴² In contrast, most Malays based in the lowlands such as cities and coasts were traders, shopkeepers, and administrators.

³³ A. C. Milner, ‘Islam and Malay Kingship’, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, no. 1 (1981): 58; Matheson, ‘Concepts of Malay Ethos in Indigenous Malay Writings’, 370.

³⁴ Benjamin and Chou, *Tribal Communities in the Malay World*, 44.

³⁵ Benjamin and Chou, 9–10.

³⁶ Pierre Étienne Lazare Favre, *An Account of the Wild Tribes Inhabiting the Malayan Peninsula, Sumatra and A Few Neighbouring Islands* (Paris: Printed at the Imperial Printing-office, 1865), 8

³⁷ Ambrose B. Rathborne, *Camping and Tramping in Malaya: Fifteen Years’ Pioneering in the Native States of the Malay Peninsula* (London: Swan Sonnenschein and Co., Limited, 1898).

³⁸ Walter William Skeat, *Malay Magic: Being an Introduction to the Folklore and Popular Religion of the Malay Peninsula* (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1900).

³⁹ Chulalongkorn, *Ngo Pa: Romance of the Sakai [Rueang Ngo Pa-เรื่องเงาะป่า]* (Pranakhon: Rongphim Bamrungnukunkit, 1906), 1.

⁴⁰ Annette Hamilton, ‘Tribal People on the Southern Border: Internal Colonialism, Minorities, and the State’ Benjamin and Chou, *Tribal Communities in the Malay World*, 83.

⁴¹ Von Mikluho-Maclay, ‘Ethnological Excursions in the Malay Peninsula—November 1874 to October 1875. (Preliminary Communication)’, *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, no. 2 (1878): 209.

⁴² Benjamin and Chou, *Tribal Communities in the Malay World*, 34.

In the late nineteenth century, the Siamese rulers categorised non-Thai groups along its border lines as having limited knowledge. One of the many governmental records by Luang Monyothanuyok, a Thai commissioner in Wangkham (today Kalasin), reflected how the Siamese administrators at that time used the word *Kha* when referring to Kmhmu people (see image no.5.1).⁴³ It referred to as servant or slave.⁴⁴ Even Chulalongkorn, used the term *Ngo pa* in his book “*Rueang Ngo pa*” instead of Semang.⁴⁵ The Semang people were also labelled by Thais as a person with unwashed clothes and bodies, captured and taken to the royal palace in Bangkok and defined as a curious thing to explore (see image no.5.2).⁴⁶ As Winichakul has argued, their identity represented the most ‘Other’ of the Thai perception.⁴⁷ These examples gave a sense of inferiority and categorised some local groups of people as barbaric. It was well-illustrated that there was a wide ethnic and linguistic gap between the central Thai culture and traditional cultures of the three frontier communities. Amongst the frontiers themselves, they also illustrated both obvious or nuanced differences and similarities, that their local beliefs would further help us shed light on the points of comparison.

5.3 A wider range of distinctive beliefs

We know to some degree from the historical legacy above that some local groups in the north (vicinity of Lan Na) and the northeast Lao communities adhered to some form of Buddhism.⁴⁸ Concurrently, most highland and lowland peoples living in these two frontiers worshipped natural spirits and gods.⁴⁹ The Lua’, Kmhmu, Lue, Kui and Phu Tai belief system involved several types of spirits (*phi-ผี*); lower deities, ancestral spirits, house spirits, natural and animal spirits. The highland Pwo Karens particularly

⁴³ R5 M.59/14, Luang Monyothanuyok Levied Kha and Phutai from Mueang Wang Kam, Ordered Supplies from Lao Phuan and the Collection of Head Taxes (30 July 1892-4 November 1893) [Luang Monyothanuyok Ken Khon Kha Khon Phuthai Mueang Wang Kam Sang Sabiang Kongdan Thang Lao Phuan Lae Rueang Kep-Ngeon Kharatchakan-ม.59/14 เรื่องหลวงมลอโยธานุโยคเกณฑ์คนเข้าคณภูมิไทย เมืองวังคำ สั่งเสียบึงกองด่านทางลาวพวน และเรื่องเก็บเงินค่าราชการ 30 ก.ค. 111-4 พ.ย. 112], NA.

⁴⁴ Turton, *Civility and Savagery*, 2000, 6.

⁴⁵ Chulalongkorn, *Ngo Pa: Romance of the Sakai*, 3.

⁴⁶ R5 M.72/16, A Draft of Royal Writing on Journey to Western Coastal Cities, June-July 1905 [Rang Phraratchahat Pen Rai-Ngan Sadetphraphat Huamueang Chaithalae Tawantok-ม.72/16 ร่างพระราชหัตถ์เป็นรายงานเสด็จประพาสหัวเมืองชายทะเลตะวันตก เดือนมิถุนาและกรกฎาคม 124 [25 มิ.ย. -9 ก.ค. 124)], NA.

⁴⁷ Winichakul, ‘The Others Within: Travel and Ethno-Spatial Differentiation of Siamese Subjects 1885-1910’ in Turton, ed., *Civility and Savagery: Social Identity in Tai States*, 39.

⁴⁸ Charles F. Keyes, ‘Buddhism and National Integration in Thailand’, *The Journal of Asian Studies* 30, No. 3 (May 1971): 552.

⁴⁹ Hallett, *A Thousand Miles on An Elephant in the Shan States*, 52.

5.1: Kmhmu people (or 'Kha' who were called by Siamese and French explorers in the Pavie Mission)



From: Auguste Pavie, *The Pavie Mission Indochina Papers, 1879-1895* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 1999), 421.

5.2: A Photograph of Semang people taken by Chulalongkorn



From: Chulalongkorn, *Ngo Pa: Romance of the Sakai [Rueang Ngo Pa-เรื่องเงาะป่า]* (Pranakhon: Rongphim Bamrungnukunkit, 1906), 11.

regarded the spirits of the area as inhabiting entities such as land, water, rocks, trees and earth that impacted upon their daily lives.⁵⁰ The Akha believed that bad spirits could cause sickness, and animals could strengthen older people.⁵¹ The Mons relied on the ancestor's spirit called *phi puya* (ผีปู่ย่า) to preserve health and have better crops. Further, there was a vital spirit who lived within the body, known as *khwan* (ขวัญ). It provided guardianship, psychological well-being and physical health for all Shan, Yuan, Lao and other branches of Tai peoples.⁵² There was a common tradition called *khwan* to bless the excellent health of new-born children, to bring happiness to newly-arrived people and to recall *khwan* to stay inside when people passed through frightening experiences. Both *phi* and *khwan* were significant autochthonous beliefs amongst the Shan, Yuan and Lao. While *Phi* was outside, and *Kwan* was inside the human body.

Thus, the Shan, Yuan and Lao peoples, at least, were often entangled with different sorts of spirit mediumship (*songchao khaophi*-ทรงเจ้าเข้าผี), fortune-tellers (*phu thamnai*-ผู้ทำนาย), shamans and other spirit practitioners and belief practices.⁵³ The locals believed that the spirit of the dead became obsessed with a living body and could predict the future, transfer a prophecy, warn of dangers and cure illnesses, as well as being able to use magic spells (*khatha*-คาถา) to protect their bodies from bullets or steel (*khongkraphan*-คองกระพัน). Merit monks (*tonbun*-ตบบุญ), who were respected by ethnic groups of people, often were spiritualists and performed spiritual ceremonies.⁵⁴ Buddhist monks were sometimes even responsible for guiding people to worship spirits, distinguishing local religious beliefs amongst the northern and northeastern frontier communities from the newly introduced central Thai Buddhism. Although there are some different kinds of spiritual patterns between the north and northeast, the 'supernatural' or spiritual affairs essentially dominated everyday life in

⁵⁰ Somphob Larchrojna, 'Pwo Karen, Spirits and Souls', in John McKinnon and Wanat Bhruksasri, eds., *Highlanders of Thailand* (Kuala Lumpur; New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 169.

⁵¹ Schliesinger, *Ethnic Groups of Thailand*, 182.

⁵² Anuman Rajadhon, 'The Khwan and Its Ceremonies', *Journal of the Siam Society* 50.2 (1962): 119.

⁵³ George Blagden Bacon, *Siam, the Land of the White Elephant, as It Was and Is* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1892), 223.

⁵⁴ Freeman, *An Oriental Land of the Free*, 45–51; Archibald Ross Colquhoun, *Amongst the Shans* (New York: Scribner & Welford, 1885), 141.

both societies. The spiritual and superstitious practices not only appeared in the north and northeast Siam, but also in some communities of the southernmost of Siam.

The local Malay believers worshipped an unseen essence known as *Jin* (จิ้น) or genie. This was similar to the *Phi* in the north and northeast. The Malays believed in an invisible spirit who protected the natural balance; water, rain, stream and forest as well as their body and soul.⁵⁵ Sometimes, the power of a shamanic person or medium, called as *Pawang*, conveyed a message, cured illness and relieved bad luck.⁵⁶ The supernatural treatments remained a vital tradition of Malay society, before and after their conversion to Islam.⁵⁷ These sorts of spiritual practices and shamanism were also accepted by the Orang Asli, who sacrificed natural things, including thunder and animals. Therefore, both groups of Malays and the Orang Asli were entangled with the supernatural beliefs.

Although the three communities seemed to affiliate with the existence of spirits, within each community were variant forms and different methods of practice. This was even more complex because of the broader ethnic diversity of these societies. Likewise, some groups focused heavily on ancestral spirits, but some others relied on spirits of nature. Some ethnic groups of the north and northeast contained religious roots related to Buddhism, and the outstanding performance of these practices could boost the individual status of a Buddhist monk to be widely respected in a village or society.⁵⁸ Yet, their Buddhist backgrounds functioned at a different level with magical practices and the worship of spirits. Nonetheless, the Islamic religion distinguished the southern frontier society from the other communities: the north, northeast and particularly that of central Thai society. Furthermore, certain ethnic members in each location developed a social cohesion and reciprocal local networks over a long period of time. Therefore, the communities along the frontiers of Siam shared common

⁵⁵ Skeat, *Malay Magic: Being an Introduction to the Folklore and Popular Religion of the Malay Peninsula*, 62–63.

⁵⁶ Rathborne, *Camping and Tramping in Malaya: Fifteen Years' Pioneering in the Native States of the Malay Peninsula*, 131–32.

⁵⁷ Andries Teeuw and David K Wyatt, *Hikayat Patani: The Story of Patani* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970).

⁵⁸ John Holt, *Spirits of the Place: Buddhism and Lao Religious Culture* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009), 19–21; Keyes, 'Buddhism and National Integration in Thailand': 552–53.

historical legacies, social interactions and economic networks that spread beyond the modern boundaries determined by Europeans and Siamese administrators.

5.4 Ethnic interactions and networks along the three frontiers of Siam

Traditionally, the local people moved freely or moved under the master's control without the modern notion of any political boundary between states.⁵⁹ Some servants moved following their lord as they were born-to-be slaves, had become a slave by war or a debt slave sold by their parents or masters. Nonetheless, being a slave in Siam slightly differed from a free man. This diverged somewhat from the notion of slavery among Europeans.⁶⁰ Siam and other political power in south east Asia refer to dominion over people rather than territories and the unitary identity – land was plentiful, but people for human resources were quite rare. When James McCarthy attended the ceremony of hair-cutting of the princesses in the Siamese court, he illustrated that “the rear of procession is brought up by women of all nationalities, subjects of the King of Siam, dressed in their national costumes—Malays, Burmans, Cambodians, Cochin Chinese, and Native of Annam”.⁶¹ These subjects provided all kinds of services; maintaining a household, acting as bodyguards and traders, but sometimes they did no service except being a prosperous symbol of aristocrats who possessed the largest number of subjects.⁶² This displayed the great importance of slave raiding, enslavement and bondage as a common tradition of population movement in south east Asia; not only in Siamese polity but also among societies of the traditional Patani, Lan Na and Lao states on both sides of the Mekong river.⁶³

In the southern Malay communities, Orang Asli was captured and sold to the Malays

⁵⁹ John Torpey, ‘Coming and Going: On the State Monopolization of the Legitimate “Means of Movement”’, *Sociological Theory* 16, no. 3 (1998): 242.

⁶⁰ Karine Delaye, ‘Slavery and Colonial Representations in Indochina from the Second Half of the Nineteenth to the Early Twentieth Centuries’ in Gwyn Campbell, *The Structure of Slavery in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia* (London: Frank Cass, 2004), 134.

⁶¹ McCarthy, *Surveying and Exploring in Siam*, 19. James McCarthy, a director-general of the Siamese government Survey Department, engaged in produced a scientific map of Siam.

⁶² Josiah Conder, *The Modern Traveller: A Popular Description, Geographical, Historical, and Topographical, of the Various Country of the Globe (Birmah, Siam, and Annam)*, vol. 2 (Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh, M.Ogle, Glasglow; and R.M.Tims, Dublin: Printed for James Duncan, 1830), 286.

⁶³ Freeman, *An Oriental Land of the Free*, 100; Andrew Turton, ‘Violent Capture of People for Exchange on Karen-Tai borders in the 1830s’ in Campbell, *The Structure of Slavery in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia*, 77; Anthony Reid and Jennifer Brewster, eds., *Slavery, Bondage, and Dependency in Southeast Asia* (St. Lucia; New York: University of Queensland Press, 1983), 216.

aristocrats and Malay Headmen.⁶⁴ The Malays themselves could be subject to slavery and servitude if they committed a crime or were indebted. Some Orang Asli decided to live in isolation and used the natural space of the mountainous ranges to avoid being hunted and included in raiding exploitation from the outside world. Some of them played a crucial role in bartering with the Malays in forest products.⁶⁵ They also exchanged their labour by working in the Malay plantations during the harvest season to get food or products such as rice, iron, tobacco, knives and clothes in return. By doing so, the Malays could get cheap labour, access valuable resources and monopolise some products from local forests, while the Orang Asli received security under the Malay protectors, which was better than suffering from being a captive.

Similarly, hunting the Kmhmu people was a traditional activity amongst Lao people. This sometimes was organised to please the Lao chiefs due to the uncollectible taxes. When hunters had taken enough captives, they sold them to local merchants who sold them into servitude in Bangkok, Korat and Phnom Penh.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, the Kmhmu from the east of the Mekong, or modern-day Laos, also voluntarily worked as labourers in the dense forest. Due to their sturdy and rich experience in forest dwelling, they became the favourable lumbermen for the Shan headmen and their timber commerce, particularly in Lan Na. Moreover, they traded among the Lao and other ethnic groups in northeast Siam by way of barter. Nothing differed from the north, the various ethnic servants of the Lan Na chiefs mediated commodities. The ruling houses of Chiang Mai, Phrae, Nan, Lampang and Lamphun sometimes played a commercial role to draw benefits from forest resources; betel nut, betel, tobacco, salt, ginger, lac, elephant, tiger, ivory, pottery, textiles, cattle, iron, gem, silver, gold and so on.⁶⁷ The commoners who were free from work on their farms made profit by peddling trade, which became a typical way of life.⁶⁸ All in all, this is a special form of social networks within the frontiers of Siam before boundaries were drawn.

⁶⁴ W. E. Maxwell, 'The Aboriginal Tribes of Pêrak', *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, no. 4 (1879): 47.

⁶⁵ Mikluho-Maclay, 'Ethnological Excursions in the Malay Peninsula—November 1874 to October 1875. (Preliminary Communication)', 211.

⁶⁶ François-Jules Harmand and Walter E. J. Tips, *Laos and the Hilltribes of Indochina: Journeys to the Boloven Plateau, from Bassac to Hué through Laos, and to the Origins of the Thai* (Bangkok, Thailand: White Lotus Press, 1997), 20–21.

⁶⁷ Sahapat Insee, 'Commercial Relationship Between Chiang Tung and Lanna, 1558-1774' (M.A. (Asian History), Srinakharinwirot University, 2012), 85–91.

⁶⁸ Freeman, *An Oriental Land of the Free*, 93.

It was interesting that Bangkok and the Lao states in the west of the Mekong in the early nineteenth century developed closer relationships which were not found in the other two frontiers of Siam. The peoples of the southern frontier had distant relations with Bangkok, while the northern frontier of Siam was relatively influenced by Burma rather than Bangkok. Nonetheless, local circumstances and structures amongst the three zones themselves had developed multi-cultural and ethnic traits that contained their ethnic, linguistic and religious uniqueness and differed markedly from the central Thai culture.

Conclusion

Internal and historical linkages between the northeastern and northern frontiers before Siam attempted annexation have been clearly seen. The peoples of the north and northeast frontiers mobilised, interacted and exchanged political and socio-economic activities from frontier to frontier. Some cultural influences, ethnic resemblances and population mobilisation were exchanged across both sides of the Mekong River to the Upper Mekong, close to the traditional Lan Na polity. Nevertheless, the relationship between Siam and the Lao states before the late nineteenth century, which did not exist in the Lan Na polity, crucially encouraged the potential of Thai expansion into the northeastern communities. However, the peoples of the southern frontier evolved their social conditions far from the experiences of Siam and the other two frontiers. Thus, the peoples of the three frontiers and their traditional circumstances comprised of complicated relationships, both internal and external, including overlords and vassals, local rulers and their clients and with various ethnic groups in each area. These distinct conditions resulted in different possibilities of success when extending Thai influence after Siamese elites launched their cultural programme in the three frontier communities. Therefore, we should now turn to understand the development of the meaning of Thai national culture of the central Siamese state, such as Thai kingship and central Thai Buddhism. It will provide an understanding of how Siam readjusted its notion of Thai culture to form a hybrid culture. Later, this culture and its symbolism became the essential tools for attempting to merge the three frontier communities into a national entity with a predominate Thai national culture, as well as how this had to be modified in line with local differences and historical experiences of interacting with Thai national culture.

**Part II – Redefining Thai National Culture and its Expansion to
Frontier Zones**

CHAPTER 6: READJUSTMENT OF THAI KINGSHIP AS A NATIONAL CULTURE

Introduction

The 1850s was a significant period of Siamese efforts for finding its position in the new global situation. The Siamese court adopted not only modern technological advancements (steamship, photograph, telegraph and railways) but also those of secular intellectual pursuits (sciences, astronomy and geography). King Mongkut played an important role in Siam's adaptation of modernity and became a major model for his son, King Chulalongkorn. Nevertheless, we have only limited knowledge of how Siamese rulers (both Mongkut and Chulalongkorn) and their advisors preserved the remnants of cultural tradition and combined these with new modernising elements to create new socio-economic environment, a hybrid Thai culture that laid the foundation of Siamese political centralism. In particular, we need to uncover the cultural ideology and methods used in dealing with the global situation from the 1870s onwards, which became a critical period of change and even more during the Chulalongkorn period.

This chapter will analyse the dynamics of cultural readjustment to understand the idea of kingship and provide examples of Thai national culture (Buddhism will be discussed in chapter 8) that emerged in central Siam from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries. Both elements – kingship and Buddhism – were superimposed to support the annexation of the three distinctive frontier areas. Kingship and Buddhism were by no means the only two elements of Thai national culture. In reality, other cultural elements were also expanded to construct Thai culture, including language, customs, and the myth of Thai-state warfare. However, this research intends to explore the conceptions of Thai kingship and Buddhism mainly, because they were represented and displayed as powerful symbols in referring to Thai national culture. Other elements will be mentioned when they are linked to the role of kingship and Buddhism.

A further understanding of Thai national culture in the Chulalongkorn era needs to be traced back to specific cultural traits over a long time; since its pre-modern historical past was redefined by King Mongkut, the official confrontation with the

western knowledge from the 1850s, and some elements were reshaped again during Chulalongkorn's reign. By doing this, we learnt that Thai national culture, kingship and Buddhism, are in some ways interrelated units that were transformed into new forms of cultural hybridity due to dominant western pressures. The remaking of new Thai culture helped Siam to boost its potential role as a colonial master to sustain political hierarchy, national integration and broad interactions with local communities. Analysing this through Anthony Smith's lens of ethnosymbolism sheds light on the role of myth, memory, symbol and value, and illustrates how kingship and Buddhism were changed, subdued or developed throughout various historical conditions. Thus, we can fill in gaps regarding the meaning of Thai national culture to reach a further understanding of Siamese perspectives about kingship and Buddhism as the two major elements in the national culture. Secondly, it also lays the fundamental elements of Thai kingship (and Buddhism that will be discussed further in chapter 8) in relation to cakravartin, Bodhisattva-Maitreya, reincarnation and the doctrine of charisma and merit, that later became interrelated with the manifestation of local movements. Last but not least, understanding Thai national culture also provides us with an understanding of what Thai culture had remained the same, changed or were adapted by Siamese elites once it was implemented in the three distinct regions that will be discussed in the next chapters. The centre-periphery cultural interactions will deal with not only the three cultural units of the three frontiers but also the cultural unit of the Thai centre itself. We will begin, therefore, with the relationship between symbolic power and the idea of Thai kingship.

6.1 The symbolic power and conception of Thai kingship

Siam will be secured in the future if Westerners respect us...It is necessary to be associated with Westerners in the future. If Siam does not change its politics and policies to improve as a civilised nation, Siam will be unable to secure its stability. To turn to the Western civilisation, nation will be survived. However, the development is not only related to the Western civilisation, but many of them are also concerned with Thai traditions.¹

¹ Damrong Rajanubhab, *On King Mongkut [Rueang Phrachomkloa-เรื่องพระจอมเกล้า]* (Bangkok: Triranasan, 1957), 39, 54, 59.

เห็นว่าประเทศไทยจะปลอดภัยในอนาคตได้แต่ด้วยทำให้ฝรั่งนับถือ ...ต่อไปในภายหน้าจะมีการเกี่ยวข้องกับฝรั่งมากขึ้นทุกที ถ้าไม่เปลี่ยนรัฐธรรมนูญของประเทศไทยให้ฝรั่งนิยมว่าไทยพยายามบำรุงบ้านเมืองให้เจริญตามอารยธรรม ก็อาจจะไม่ปลอดภัยได้มั่งคง ...หันเข้าหาอารยธรรมฝรั่ง บ้านเมืองจึงจะพ้นภัยอันตราย แต่การต่างๆที่ทรงจัดนั้นที่ไม่เกี่ยวกับอารยธรรมฝรั่ง แต่เป็นการสำคัญใน ขนบธรรมเนียมไทยก็มีมาก

The statement of Prince Damrong, Interior Minister, indicates two significant things. First, the external pressure of imperialism produced an increasing tension and a cultural form of response in Siam as it avoided being colonised by French and British imperialism. Reacting to the imperial supremacy, Thai rulers and elites had learnt and adopted the principles of civilisation to develop the nation and promote centred royally nationalism.² The centralised political structure of King Chulalongkorn (reigned in 1868-1910) was an important move for Siam to shift from traditional Thai polity to a modern state. They copied the Western political model and transferred it to the frontiers.³ This is evident from the bureaucratic reform, tax collecting system, new court standards, laws and public welfare in general.

Meanwhile, the national culture of modern Siam was fused with both Western civilisation and old traditions. The meaning of national culture was based on the three moral pillars which are: the love of national independence, tolerance, and power of assimilation.⁴ The last pillar, ‘power of assimilation’ (*khwamchalat naikan sanprayot*-ความฉลาดในการสานประโยชน์), evidenced that Thai national culture as defined by the ruling house of Siam was obtained from a combination of the advantages of Western civilisation and enduring cultural traditions.⁵ Ancient beliefs and values built over a long time were expressed through ethno-symbolist symbols.⁶ Thus, Thai national culture was not solely a product of modernisation from the mid-nineteenth century in King Mongkut’s time. Instead, it consisted of ancient cultural remnants

² Kullada Kesboonchoo Mead, *The Rise and Decline of Thai Absolutism* (New York; London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 66.

³ Loos, *Subject Siam: Family, Law, and Colonial Modernity in Thailand*, 2; Winichakul, ‘The Quest for “Siwilai”’: A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam’, 531.

⁴ Rajanubhab, *The Siamese Government in Ancient Times*, 9.

⁵ Rajanubhab, 12–13.

⁶ Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations and Nationalism* (London; New York: Routledge, 1998), 170–73.

that had been preserved, hidden or remodelled to form new meanings of Thai national culture in the modern period.

Thai national culture not only shaped by people's intentions, but by time and circumstance. There is the need to explore further the Siamese ruler's hidden intention that is not mentioned directly or publicly which will also help us to perceive how they shaped its culture. Objects such as architecture, statues, costumes or ceremonies are believed to be able to bring out the lively world of human behaviours and their intentions.⁷ Symbolism, therefore, becomes a fascinating power within political activity that enable rulers to gain authority equivalent to as if they had obtained it through force. Symbolic forms, on the one hand, can reveal how humans express, improve, deliver and perpetuate their cultural attitude and knowledge of life.⁸ On the other hand, symbolic forms also serve the mysterious potential of a person who exercises power to convince people to see, believe and transform their vision towards the world.⁹ Kingship, in the Thai case at least, is the most sacred symbolic power that steered a greater change in hierarchical relationships. The kingship exercised by one person over others or communities had its roots in pre-colonial times, and its values endured. As Evans-Pritchard has shown, sacred kingship can pass through the present time of a living king to future generations even after the king has passed away.¹⁰ The symbolic strength of kingship does not only refer to the king per se but his ancestors, reign, royal family and advisors who were also compositions of a powerful kingship. Most notably, activities surrounding his life (elegance and proper clothes, respectable manners, ceremonies, ways of living and dignified behaviour) were interpreted as the value of kingship.¹¹ Analysing Thai kingship in modern times, thus, associates closely with understanding the methods by which the Siamese court redefined belief and prestigious values to distinguish the king from ordinary people, to prolong righteous power during the rapid stream of scientific and

⁷ Alfred North Whitehead, *Symbolism, Its Meaning and Effect* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1985); Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 16.

⁸ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1973), 89.

⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, John B. Thompson, and Gino Raymond, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), 170.

¹⁰ E. E. Evans-Pritchard, 'The Divine Kingship of the Shilluk of the Nilotic Sudan: The Frazer Lecture, 1948', *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 1, no. 1 (1 December 2011): 413.

¹¹ Declan Quigley, ed., *The Character of Kingship* (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2005), 4.

rational consciousness. To understand Thai kingship as a national symbol, one needs to consider the traditional function of kingship and its ideological development.

6.2 Merit and *barami*: The old concept of divine kingship

Before the mid-nineteenth century, the path of the righteous Thai kings (*dhamma racha*-ธรรมราชา) usually came with the idea of cakravartin¹² (*chakkraphat*-จักรพรรดิ) or the ideal universal king originating from the integration of Hinduism, Buddhism and supernatural belief. Known for its legacy from the Indian Ashoka emperor, the idea of ruler and state is entangled intimately with religious perceptions; ‘merits (*bun*-บุญ) and charisma (*barami*-บารมี in Thai or parami in Pali)’.¹³ These essential elements are derived from the cosmological basis of all common and supreme beings. It can be found in well-known old Thai tales of “the Three Worlds According to King Ruang”¹⁴ (*Trai bhummi phra ruang*-ไตรภูมิพระร่วง) and “*Phra Malai* story”¹⁵ (พระมาลัย); didactic stories explaining the results of karma that cause humans to be reborn in a higher or lower live. The stories of Jataka (*chadok*-ชาดก) also reflect that merit accumulation in former rebirths encouraged the Bodhisattva (*phothisat*-โพธิสัตว์) to achieve enlightenment and become Siddhartha Gautama or the Buddha. Some stories such as *Chakrawattisut* or *Akkanyasut* highlight that charismatic authority of rulers that was related to the perfect society also arose from merit and charisma. However, the Three Worlds of Phra Ruang is deemed to be the oldest source written by King Lithai (reigned in 1347-68) of the Sukhothai period. The tale is ideally reinterpreted to support Thai national culture and is still read and circulated in primary and high

¹² Cakravartin (in Sanskrit) is compounded from two words: ‘cakra’ refers to a wheel and ‘vartin’ is defined as person who turns the wheel, which is same as cakkavatti in Pali, chakkraphat in Thai or setkyamin in Burmese.

¹³ Patrick Jory translated barami in English as ‘perfection’. However, in this thesis will be use the term ‘charisma’, similar to several Thai scholars including Nidhi Eoseewong and Kobkua Suwannathat-Pian, because ‘charisma’ obviously refers to the religious idea, personal power and political culture, rather than focusing only on the religious domain or the achievement of enlightenment. See in Nidhi Eoseewong, *Thai Politics during the Reign of the King of Thonburi, 1734-1782 [Kanmueang Thai Samai Phrachao Krung Thon Buri-การเมืองไทยสมัยพระเจ้ากรุงธนบุรี]* (Bangkok: Sinlapawatthanatham, 1986); Kobkua Suwannathat-Pian, *Thai-Malay Relations: Traditional Intra-Regional Relations from the Seventeenth to the Early Twentieth Centuries* (Singapore; New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

¹⁴ Lithai, *Traibhumikatha: Three Worlds According to King Ruang [Traiphum Phra Ruang-ไตรภูมิพระร่วง]* (Bangkok: Khurusapha, 1960).

¹⁵ ‘Phra Malai Story’ in Thammathibet, *Thammathibet’s Biography and His Poems [Phraratchaprawat Lae Phraniphon Botroikrong Nai Chaofa Thammathibet-พระราชประวัติและพระนิพนธ์บทร้อยกรองในเจ้าฟ้าธรรมธิเบศร์]* (Bangkok: Sinlapabannakhan, 1970), 239–94.

schools up to the present day.¹⁶ Thus, the conception of pre-modern Thai kingship was united with the religious cosmology which determined how hierarchical merit and ethical action impacted on the ruling and ruled status in its polity.

To understand the correlations of Buddhist religious cosmology, merit and barami accumulation and the status of a righteous ruler clarifies not only the fundamental idea of Thai kingship, but also the idea of Maitreya (or Thammikarat). Other forms of righteous rulers are also mentioned in Chapter 4, also shared the same path of this explanation. According to Hindu-Buddhist beliefs, Mount Meru is the centre of the cosmological world that determines the meritorious hierarchy of all human and mysterious beings (see an image of Mount Meru no.6.1). Horizontally, seven mountains and seven oceans surround Mount Meru. They belong to mythical animals and plants, including garuda, naga, kinnarah or nariphon, as well as four kinds of auspicious animals---elephant, horse, cow and lion. Vertically, it comprises of thirty-one levels. Setting from the Mount Meru, above the top of the mountaintop are the abode of superconscious deities known as the Brahma deities, consisting of the upper four levels of formless beings (*Arupa Bhumi*-อรุณภูมิ) and lower sixteen levels forming Brahma deities (*Rupa Bhumi*-รูปภูมิ). Below the Brahma deities are eleven levels of sensational beings (*Karma Bhumi*-กามภูมิ), which are the key idea of the religious cosmology that is entangled with the merit-demerit concept of humans and their political and cultural activities. The sensational beings are divided into the upper six levels of sensational deities, a terrestrial level of human beings and the four levels of painful existence. The second level of sensational deities is the mountaintop of Meru named Second Heaven (*Daodeung*-ดาวดึงส์) where Indra, the king of thirty-two deities, remains and guards the world, while the four heavenly kings maintaining four cardinal directions exist in the first heaven, below the summit of Mount Meru.¹⁷ The human realm situated in the terrestrial level is the divider of the heaven zone and the hell zone. In short, the vertical layers of the cosmos with the centre of Mount Meru performed a social and moral level.¹⁸ It illustrated the hierarchy of natural and

¹⁶ Craig J. Reynolds, 'Buddhist Cosmography in Thai History, with Special Reference to Nineteenth-Century Culture Change', *The Journal of Asian Studies* 35, no. 2 (1976): 203–4; Chula Chakrabongse, *Lords of Life: A History of the Kings of Thailand* (London: A. Redman, 1967), 116.

¹⁷ Lithai, *Traibhumikatha: Three Worlds According to King Ruang*, 202–6.

¹⁸ Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, *World Conqueror and World Renouncer: A Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand against a Historical Background*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 35.

supernatural beings conditioned to ‘the concept of merit and charisma’ that justified the political role of righteous rulers and the people they rule.

The positioning of each being is not static and everlasting. Anyone can reach a higher level by accumulating merit and charisma or can also be downgraded. The thirty-three deities of the Second Heaven are beings who relish happiness and eternal beauty because of their abundant meritorious conducts in previous human life, such as caring for parents and respecting ancestors, refraining from killing, conveying polite words and expressions, sincerity, generosity and self-restraint.¹⁹ Although some meritorious persons are reborn in the human realm, they may be elevated to a higher social rank, having a great retinue and enjoying prosperity.²⁰ This explanation also includes the forms of holy men or magical monks widely found in the northeastern and the northern communities respectively. By contrast, creatures such as subhuman beings (*sat narok*-สัตว์นรก), hungry ghosts (*pret*-เปรต), demons (*asurakai*-อสูรกาย) and animals (*diratchan*-ดิรัจฉาน) are on the lower levels masked by painfulness levels beneath the terrain, because they have ‘sinned’ in their past life. Both merit and charisma are received by preserving good deeds, sharing and sacrifice. Merit can be given to others as benevolence and simultaneously stored as self-merits. Likewise, hungry ghosts in hell are unable to accumulate merit by themselves. They depend on merit-sharing by beings on upper levels such as the human realm and deities to be freed from suffering.²¹ Those above the painful existences can share merit to the dead person to accumulate their own merit. In comparison, although charisma is also received as a result of generosity, it cannot be shared to others except the self; one who has high charisma or *barami* becomes an exceptional qualification of a human. Patrick Jory has provided a good definition of *barami* in Thai political culture. He defined *barami* as an individual authority or power derived partly from merit accumulation. The high morality, distinguished bravery and supernatural ability created the idealised authority. Therefore, merit and *barami* actions could elevate all beings, commoner, monk, ruler or deity, to a better level as well as enlarging the charismatic authority in

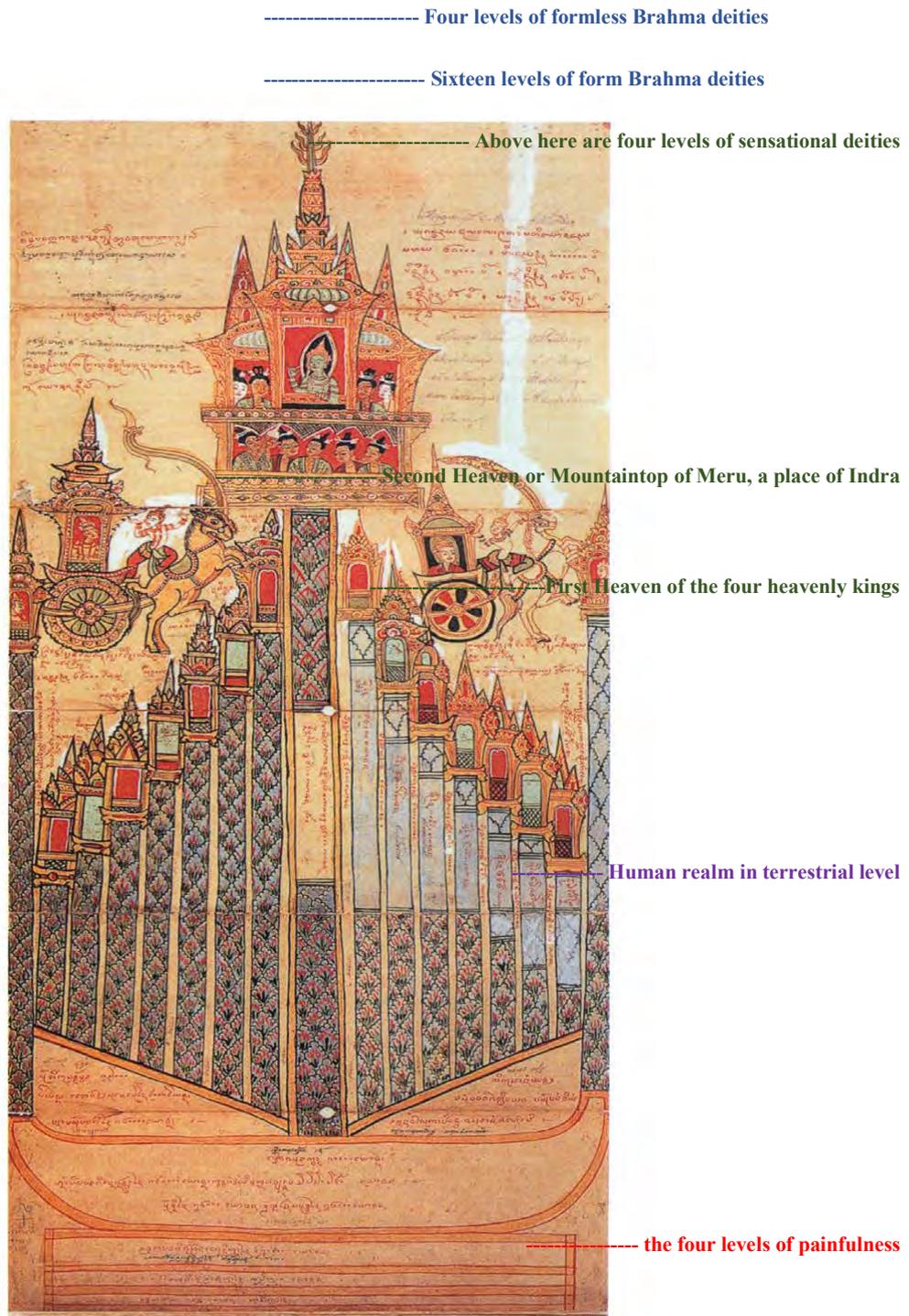
¹⁹ Lithai, *Traibhumikatha: Three Worlds According to King Ruang*, 183–86.

²⁰ Lithai, 93–94.

²¹ Sathiankoset (Anuman Rajadhon), *Narrative of Three Worlds According to Traibhumikatha [Lao Rueang Nai Traiphum-เล่าเรื่องในไตรภูมิ]* (Bangkok: Phrachan, 1970), 27–28.

which the accumulation of *barami*, particularly, could articulate a sense of sacred feeling within political powers.

6.1: Mount Meru and the hierarchical level of beings



From: Lithai, Traiphūmikathā (Bangkok: The Fine Arts Department, 2012), details added by author

The Thai kings who claimed to be high *barami* rulers exemplified divine kingship under the order of the Hindu-Buddhist cosmos. The rulers, who were reborn according to merit, became manifest through the expansion of military campaigns. This made their claiming of supreme power in the world becomes reasonable and proper.²² Thus, one way to prove superior *barami* of leaders became manifest in warfare.²³ Another one was in the form of administration. The Thai administration since the Ayutthaya era (c.1351-1767), Thonburi (c.1768-1782) and the beginning of Rattanakosin era (c.1782-before the mid-nineteenth century) duplicated the cosmology to fulfil the concept of kingship. The statecraft of the king symbolised the core of Mount Meru where Indra was in charge and controlled other god kings, lands, waters and populations. Under the idea of divine kingship, there are the seven precious gems²⁴ that marked the powerful meritorious person who could be reborn to be a great king on earth.²⁵ The traditional rulers, in early-Thai and mainland south east Asia, enthusiastically sought to possess the seven gems to mark themselves as the universal king. The illustration of the Ayutthaya King Maha Chakkraphat (c.1509–1569) was praised as a great king because he owned seven white elephants that were deemed to be the emblem of seven kingly gems.²⁶ Even the Burmese King Tabinshwehti (c.1516-1550), under the influence of a similar idea, eagerly desired those two elephants from the Thai king.

Meanwhile, the officials of Thai kings were divided into four quarters to imitate the four cardinal directions of heaven.²⁷ Known for its *chatusadom* (จตุสดมภ์-the four pillars), they supported the political structure of the king. Although there were adjustments of the officialdom over time, the central idea of Mount Meru and *barami* carried on. The Rattanakosin King Buddhayodfa of the Chakri Dynasty (c.1737-1809) also called for the righteous divine kingship. Evidently, he restored a version

²² Chutintaranond, 'Cakravartin: Ideology, Reason and Manifestation of Siamese and Burmese Kings in Traditional Warfare (1538-1854)', 96–101.

²³ Michael W. Charney, *Southeast Asian Warfare, 1300-1900* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2004), 2.

²⁴ Seven gems in Phratraipidok are wheel gem, elephant gem, horse gem, gem of gems, wife gem, advisor gem and elder-son gem.

²⁵ Lithai, *Traibhumikatha: Three Worlds According to King Ruang*, 96–103.

²⁶ *Collected Royal Chronicles Part 64 (The Royal Chronicle of Ayutthaya: Phanchanthanumat (Choem) Version [Prachumphongsawadan Phakthi 64 Phongsawadan Krungsri Ayutthaya Chabap Phanchanthanumat (Choem)-ประชุมพงศาวดารภาคที่ 64 (พงศาวดารกรุงศรีอยุธยาฉบับพันจันทนุมาศ เจิม]* (Bangkok: Sophonphiphatthanakon, 1936), 57–60.

²⁷ Robert Heine-Geldern, 'Conceptions of State and Kingship in Southeast Asia', *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 2, no. 1 (1942): 20.

of the Three Worlds of King Ruang to promote his virtue as a righteous and religious ruler. Thai kings therefore employed cakravartin, particularly *barami* authority, to appear as absolute kings, to stabilise their political networks and to protect Buddhism from devilish enemies.²⁸ However, *barami*, the fundamental idea of cakravartin, that sustained divine kingship was redefined to be more westernised and rationalised since the reign of King Mongkut after officially coming into contact with the West, and this later became increasingly more obvious during the Chulalongkorn era.

6.3 Translating the reproduction of Thai kingship in modern times

The initiation of the ‘power of assimilation’ pillar owed very much to King Mongkut, father of King Chulalongkorn and Prince Damrong, who opened himself to modern ideologies, especially within cultural and intellectual spheres. The definition of Thai kingship as a modern Thai culture now began its long process of reconstruction. It was King Mongkut who was the initial reformer at the Siamese court who piloted the notion of modernity with scientific, humanistic and realistic ideas in response to western modernity because the traditional ways of the Siamese thinking seemed to challenge the role of the Siamese monarchy. King Mongkut questioned several issues that he considered lacked a factual basis and attempted to persuade modern intellectuals to either prove or help him to understand them from a more rational perspective. Regarding geography, he criticised a lack of scientific knowledge and exaggeration in the memoirs of envoys who recorded experiences in France, which created misunderstandings.²⁹ He was keen on learning foreign languages, travelled throughout Siam and was interested in foreign customs³⁰ as well as engaging in the process of boundary demarcation around Siam as encouraged and led by Britain.³¹ In the field of religion, it was well-known that before becoming King Mongkut, he joined the monkhood for twenty-seven years. During that time, he was the key reformer who instituted the new Theravada Buddhist order, the *Thammayut* (ธรรมยุต), that revised precepts to be more precise and strict. Mongkut enthusiastically pursued modern knowledge, scientific astronomy and even used them in routine court life of

²⁸ Chutintaranond, ‘Cakravartin: The Ideology of Traditional Warfare in Siam and Burma, 1548-1605’, 116–27.

²⁹ Mongkut, *The Royal Writings of King Mongkut Vol.2 [Phrarachahatthalekha Phrabatsomdet Phrachomklao Chaoyuhua Lem 2-พระราชหัตถเลขาพระบาทสมเด็จพระจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัวเล่ม 2]* (Bangkok: Khurusapha, 1963), 21.

³⁰ Rajanubhab, *A Biography of King Mongkut*, 13.

³¹ Mongkut, *The Royal Writings of King Mongkut Vol.2*, 71.

Siamese elites.³² Nevertheless, there are still uncertainties about how this modernising ruler dealt with local traditions through the tide of modernisation.

Actually, Siam had readjusted the concept of kingship to respond to foreign pressures and to secure the king's legitimacy. It helped the institution to survive in the new political and social environment in which the modernity was superimposed on tradition. That meant both the remnants of the old and new elements existed side by side, rather than removing the old one for the new.³³ It was realised that some traditions were rooted in public memory and the value system of the people, which were therefore too durable to be removed. In some ways they were still worth to be retained.³⁴ By this idea, the concept of kingship, of which was the vivid foundation of Thai polity since pre-modern times, became the prominent arena to illustrate how Siam translated its tradition into the architecture, statues and material objects to develop its national model from the 1850s onwards.

It is widely known that King Mongkut resided at *Wat Bowon Niwet Ratchaworawihan* (วัดบวรนิเวศราชวรวิหาร, hereafter Wat Bowon) when he was a monk. He became the first abbot and found the *Thammayut* fraternity of Theravada Buddhism at this temple. Later he gradually restored the surrounding area of Wat Bowon where one side duplicated the Buddhist cosmology, and the other side represented the realism of imperialist influences that Siam was confronted with at that time. The adapted architecture of the Mongkut era mainly resulted from this political tension.³⁵ Mongkut added four golden animal statues, representing four auspicious animals, which were placed at the four cardinal points of the pagoda as required by ancient cosmological doctrine.³⁶ He retained the Mount Meru concept by using the golden pagoda (*chedi*-เจดีย์) to signify himself, a common practice where the pagoda and stupa in Thai referred to the centre of Mount Meru and the royal institution (see image no.6.2).³⁷ The king still referred to himself as the centre and

³² William L Bradley, 'Prince Mongkut and Jesse Caswell', *Journal of the Siam Society* 54, no. 1 (1966): 29–41; Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation*, 37–47; Ian Hodges, 'Western Science in Siam: A Tale of Two Kings', *Osiris* 13 (1998): 80–95.

³³ Rajanubhab, *A Biography of King Mongkut*, 59.

³⁴ Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, 15.

³⁵ Somkhit Chirathatsanakun, *The Ubosatha and Vihara in the Reign of King Rama IV* (Bangkok: Mueang Boran Press, 2004), 206–7.

³⁶ Lithai, *Traibhumikatha: Three Worlds According to King Ruang*, 281.

³⁷ Hiram W. Woodward, 'The Thai "Chêdi" and the Problem of Stūpa Interpretation', *History of Religions* 33, no. 1 (1993): 75; Pastraporn Keanprom, 'Architectural Style of Phra Prangs and

retained the transcendent idea of King of Kings. Nevertheless, the ancient and auspicious animals (found in Three Worlds According to King Ruang) such as the elephant, horse, cow and lion were replaced with three realistic imperialists who at that time were the sea powers in the Thai frame of mind.³⁸ The animal statues built in 1866³⁹ comprised of a horse representing France; a lion representing Britain and an eagle (replacing the cow) representing the United States.⁴⁰ The last one, the elephant statue, symbolised Siam, which showed its sovereign authority was equal to the three great powers (see images no.6.3). In contrast to this interpretation, the guidebook of Wat Bowon suggested that the four animals referred to Burma (horse-ม้า), Lan Xang (elephant-ช้าง), Singapore (lion-สิงโต) and Yonok (eagle-เหยี่ยว).⁴¹ Nonetheless, they were understood by using Thai terms referring to the similar name of political polities, for example, ‘Xang’ of Lan Xang in Thai referred to ‘elephant’ or ‘Sing’ of Singapore in Thai referred to Lion.

6.2: The golden pagoda in Wat Bowon as the centre of Mount Meru



Photograph by Author, November 2018

Steeple Prangs during the Reign of King Rama IV-VI’ (MA Thesis in History of Architecture, Silpakorn University, 2013), 1–3.

³⁸ Mongkut, *The Royal Writings of King Mongkut Vol.3 [Phrarachahatthalekha Phrabatsomdet Phrachomkiao Chaoyuhua Lem 3-พระราชหัตถเลขาพระบาทสมเด็จพระจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัวเล่ม 3]* (Bangkok: Khurusapha, 1963), 89, 90, 134; Wat Bowonniwet Vihara, *The Photograph Album of Wat Bowonniwet Vihara [Samutphap Watbowonniwetwihan-สมุดภาพวัดบวรนิเวศวิหาร]* (Bangkok: Surawat, 2008), 56.

³⁹ Vajiranavarorasa, *The Legend of Wat Bowonniwet Vihara [Tamnan Watbowonniwetwihan-ตำนานวัดบวรนิเวศวิหาร]* (Phranakorn: Hophrasamut Wachirayan, 1922), 45.

⁴⁰ Mongkut, *Royal Writings of King Mongkut Vol.3*, 28, 221.

⁴¹ Wat Bowonniwet Vihara, *The Photograph Album of Wat Bowonniwet Vihara*, 56.

6.3: The four animal statues surrounding the golden pagoda at Wat Bowon represented sea powers in the Thai frame of mind



Eagle statue



Lion statue



Horse statue



Elephant statue

Photograph by author, November 2018

The white elephant that gradually became a national Siamese/Thai emblem was used several times by King Mongkut. A well-known example was found in the royal set of regalia that Siam gave to France to preserve friendly relations in 1865. “[Siam] provided a Royal regalia, following the ancient customs which consisted of a nine-gem ring and belt. Also, [I] intended to create a new regalia with a *white elephant and crown stamps*, other regalia and a flag decorated with gems. [This is] to highlight the significant role of Siam” [highlighted by the author], said Mongkut.⁴² The crown represented the king himself according to his name ‘Mongkut’ which referred to ‘crown’ in English. Meanwhile, the ‘white elephant’, which is an auspicious animal surrounding Mount Meru and was one of seven precious gems of a universal rule, was typified as the righteous authority of Thai kings. However, it was continuously readjusted by Mongkut to be a tangible and symbolic object of the king’s nation. It was not only employed the Royal Thai insignias but other materials. Likewise, the elephant-headed daggers and swords were also defined as the Thai representation and were used by the king only.⁴³ The white elephant with the wheel flag (image no.6.4) created by the late King Phra Phutthaloetla Naphalai (c.1767-1824) even appeared on the new red trading flag of Thai Royal ships, replacing the wheel, which preserved for the great king only (image no.6.5). The three-headed white elephant with the layered umbrella was placed in the flag of Siam (*thong aiyara pot-ธงไอยราพต*)⁴⁴ in image no.6.6, while the elephant with the crown was also displayed on Thai coins (image no.6.7). Both the flag and the coin represented the way the king adopted symbols of a modern nation-state. Other things used in routine court life such as his attire also displayed the compromise between western and Thai style, using Thai pants, known as *chongkraben*, Thai-styled girdle, along other western accessories (image no.6.8). Symbols and values in architecture, insignias, flags and coins surrounding Mongkut’s life, therefore, performed the initial function of creating hybridity between old and new mundane frames of modern Thai kingship. Some of

⁴² Mongkut, *Royal Writing of King Mongkut Vol.3*, 215–16.

“...สิ่งจัดได้อำมรงค์ประดับพลอยเกาอย่าง ซึ่งเป็นเครื่องยศฝ่ายสยามตามธรรมเนียมเก่าโบราณ และประคตเป็นเครื่องยศฝ่ายสยามสำหรับกันกับอำมรงค์นั้นสำหรับหนึ่ง กับให้คิดให้ช่างทำเครื่องประดับสำหรับยศอย่างใหม่ มีรูปช้างเผือกและมงกุฎ และเครื่องสูงและธงสำคัญอย่างสยาม แวดล้อมเป็นเครื่องลงยาและฝังเพชรพลอยต่างสีเพื่อจะแสดงสำคัญของแผ่นดินสยาม” (TT)

⁴³ Mongkut, 28, 221.

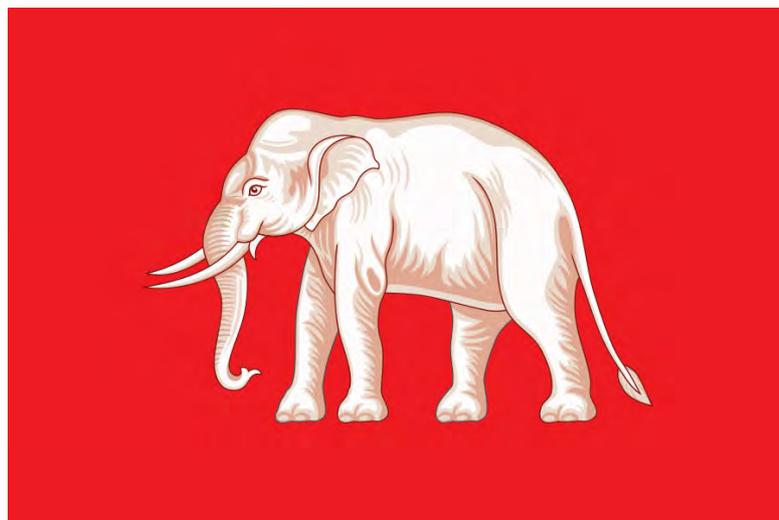
⁴⁴ Damrong Rajanubhab, *The Description of Thai Flag [Athibai Rueang Thongthai-อธิบายเรื่องธงไทย]* (Thonburi: Prasertsamut, 1933), 3–4.

6.4: The white elephant with the wheel flag created by the late king Phra Phutthaloetla Naphalai (c.1767-1824)



From: Thai National Flag Museum

6.5: Trading flag of royal Thai ship



From: Thai National Flag Museum

6.6: The three-headed white elephant with layered umbrella, the flag of Siam (thong aiyara pot)



From: Chawi-ngam Macharoen, *Thai Flags [Thong Thai-ธงไทย]* (Bangkok: The Fine Arts Department, 1977).

6.7: Thai coin designed by King Mongkut



From: 'Currency', Royal Thai Mint, Accessed 9 November 2017, http://www.royalthaimint.net/ewtadmin/ewt/mint_web/ewt_news.php?nid=46&filename=index

6.8: The image of King Mongkut displaying how he compromised between Thai pants, Thai-styled girdle, and western top and Scottish hat as well as note western-style seat instead of Thai elevated seat and kneeling sideways



From: Mongkut, *The Royal Writings of King Mongkut Vol.3 [Phrarachahatthalekha Phrabatsomdet Phrachomklao Chaoyuhua Lem 3-พระราชหัตถเลขาพระบาทสมเด็จพระจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัวเล่ม ๓]* (Bangkok: Khurusapha, 1963).

these symbols such as the elephant flag, royal insignia and half Thai-western attires were continued, to represent the power of the Thai king, the authority of Thai kingship and Thai national culture during the Chulalongkorn reign.

The traditional Thai idea of kingship (righteous king, *barami* and military prowess) was blended with westernised intellects in which both of them can still be visualised. The way the king adapted, imitated and displayed these traditional symbols (white elephant, wheel or Mount Meru or four auspicious animals) materialised the idea of kingship and preserved the significance of the royal institution. The cultural combination reflected how Siam changed its modalities to respond to western pressures. Although Mongkut realistically presented himself to be a human being in the public space, he symbolically claimed the highest sacred power of the new modern nation through architecture and insignia that surrounded his life. The power of kingship was still absolute and unlimited and relied on the Buddhist religion in several ways. (The relationship between kingship and Buddhism is complex and will be discussed below) Even Siam, developing to be a modern state, was still influenced and dependent on the traditional concept of *barami* to continue the notion of sacred kingship. The charisma was remodelled to be rational, tangible and provable. It will be seen that the concrete idea of *barami* in its modern form in relation to kingship during the reign of King Chulalongkorn, was a concept based on the ideologies of the Mongkut era.

6.4 Continuation of modern kingship and paving the way for annexing frontiers

The events during the Chulalongkorn era continued to challenge the modernisation of the Siamese court. In the late nineteenth century, imperialistic influences reached its peak and spread throughout South East Asia. Surrounded by pressures from the British and French, a variety of activities on the three frontiers of Siam that were dominated by distinctive cultural and ethnic groups of people, became an urgent problem requiring a response of Siamese sovereignty. The idea of kingship became the most important function to extend and shape Thai national culture into the frontiers, where Thai people and culture did not predominate. With the notion of being a master of the colonial project, the righteousness of Thai kingship under the idea of *barami*, therefore, needed to be pronounced rationally to increase the Siamese

capacity and to explain why the Thai ruling house at Bangkok had authority over the independent states of Lan Na, Laos and the Malay principalities, where Siam expected to fit them into the territory of the Thai state.

Agreeing and feeling indebted to his father's intuition and initiative,⁴⁵ Chulalongkorn revealed his intention to take a middle path between ancient traditions and progressive western cultures.⁴⁶ The king of Siam utilised the persisting ideas of *cakravartin* to underpin the legitimacy of modern Thai kingship in a new way. Charisma or *barami* according to the ancient model of the righteousness of the kings significantly changed during the Chulalongkorn period to derive from the prudential concerns of the king and his attempts to improve the civilisation and people of Siam in the way of the Europeans did. Chulalongkorn affirmed that "...in our country, there is only the king who realises what should be done to improve the civilised conditions and to make people live with happiness".⁴⁷ To achieve this goal, the Thai king continued to adhere to the notion of *barami*, which was at the heart of the royalty and kingship, through the special character of the king who was 'an extraordinary and wise human', such that was not generally found among common people. Thus, kingship since Chulalongkorn found a combination of traditions of *barami* handed down from the past with the scientific approach to human beings. It will be clearer and more tangible when modern Siamese elites used the new definition of *barami*, 'an extraordinary and wise human', rather than through the myth of ancient kings in the remote past to reiterate the legitimacy of modern Thai kingship.

6.4.1 A hallmark of the ancient great king: the legitimacy of modern Thai kingship

Since the mid-nineteenth century, it seemed that the Thai court had departed from the divine or sacred and began to combine these with realism and a sense of modernity. Both Mongkut and Chulalongkorn attempted to have an intimate relationship between the king and his people. For instance, it was no longer required to kneel in front of the king. His advisors could stand or sit close to him, and the king allowed

⁴⁵ *A Chronicle of King Chulalongkorn's Journey to Singapore, Batavia and India*, 13.

⁴⁶ Chulalongkorn, *Royal Explanations on Solidarity by King Chulalongkorn [Phraborom Rachathibai Rueang Khwamsamakki-พระบรมราชาธิบายเรื่องความสามัคคี]* (Phranakhon: Phrachan, 1946), 7–15.

⁴⁷ Chulalongkorn, *Speech of King Chulalongkorn Explaining the Governmental Reform*, 62–63.

"ในเมืองเรานี้เป็นแต่พระเจ้าแผ่นดินคิดเห็นว่าควรจะทำ เพราะจะเป็นการเจริญแก่บ้านเมืองและเป็นความศุขแก่ราษฎรทั่วไปจึงได้คิดทำ"
(TT)

his advisors to comment and reject his ideas. The practice gradually shifted away from the relationship between god-like ruler and ruled people towards a form of paternalism; the way that a father instructed his children. Paternalism had been well-known around the world when divine kings were no longer logical to people. It seemed to be in the Thai context as well, but in slightly different ways. The campaign for modernisation or what this thesis identified as a discourse of mimicry was blended with the remnants of traditional kingship. It was further notable when Siamese elites remodelled other traditions to shape a national history using archaeological bases referring to the Sukhothai King Ramkhamhaeng (c.1279-1298), who was used as the model of the great Thai king who had founded kingship. The king was then characterised as a role model who came with an extraordinary capacity of a human on earth. This idea, on the one hand, framed the modern Thai kingship to be more down-to-earth and realistic. On the other hand, it also shaped the definition of *barami* in relation to kingship as the extraordinary ability of a Thai king that would differentiate him from the common people. Therefore, Thai kingship in modern times, as in David Canadine's phrase, "is often political and mystical phenomenon, and that kings are frequently both human and divine".⁴⁸

It should be clarified that Thai-state history was deemed to originate from the Sukhothai Kingdom, and this became common knowledge from the late nineteenth century until today.⁴⁹ The history of Thai state developed from Sukhothai (c.1249-1538), Ayutthaya (c.1350-1767), Thonburi (c.1768-1782) to the Rattanakosin period (c.1782-present). This linear history of the Thai state helped Siamese rulers to strengthen dominant nationalism throughout the boundaries of Siam. The myth and knowledge regarding Sukhothai became the culture of the Thai nation, Thai national culture, the Thai political model and even the historical origins of Thai people.⁵⁰ The cohesion produced by myths and facts surrounding the Sukhothai era tells us how the

⁴⁸ David Cannadine and S. R. F. Price, eds., *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies* (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 5. Please also see Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1957), introduction.

⁴⁹ David K. Wyatt, 'The Bangkok Monarchy and Thai History', *Crossroads: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 2, no. 2 (1985): 135; Cheuy Suetrong, 'Reflections in King Ram Khamhaeng of Sukhothai', *Crossroads: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 3, no. 1 (1986): 2.

⁵⁰ David K. Wyatt, 'Relics, Oaths and Politics in Thirteenth-Century Siam', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 32, no. 1 (2001): 3.

modern Thai elites have achieved knitting of myths, folktales and archaeological evidence together. Primarily, Ramkhamheang's stone inscription discovered during the reign of King Mongkut⁵¹ was claimed as the principal evidence of the righteous power of modern Thai kingship. This is the available cultural resource that was matched to national collectives in modern times.⁵² Finally, the cultural traits from the past were utilised to affirm that the king's power descended from the Sukhothai kingly virtues, confirming the legitimacy of expanding territoriality and modelled the ideal king as a blessing brought to the people.

As the story has been told, when King Si Inthrahit was crowned as the first king of Sukhothai (c.1238-1270), he named his territory as Sukhothai. King Ramkhamhaeng claimed the throne rule after his father and elder brother, King Si Inthrahit and King Ban Muang, had passed away. He was one of the most heroic and gifted leaders in Thai history. He expanded military prowess to vast areas during his reign.⁵³ Sukhothai expanded its territory southward to Phraek (Chai Nat), Suphannaphum (Suphan Buri), Ratchaburi, Petchburi and Nakorn Sri Thammarat (controlled over the Patani Kingdom); westward to all the Mon Kingdom at Hongsawadi (Pegu in Burma); northward over Phrae, Nan and reaching to Luang Prabang; and eastwards to the Mekong river close to Vientiane and Vienkam. King Ramkhamhaeng thus was the absolute and righteous ruler (also called *phokhun*-พ่อขุน) who protected his territory like a “father protecting his children...[and] listens to the misery of his people”.⁵⁴ He adopted Theravada Buddhism and often encouraged the building of temples and Buddhist statues. Although Theravada Buddhism was amalgamated with spiritual cults and superstition, this sort of Buddhism encouraged the glorious Sukhothai to survive and become today's Thailand.⁵⁵ King Ramkhamhaeng also acted as the judge to solve petitions and lawsuits of his subjects who rang the bell in front of his palace. As Damrong said “due to the golden age in his reign, Ramkhamhaeng should be glorified as the first great king of Siam”; in other words, a model king.⁵⁶ By this

⁵¹ Beach Cornelius Bradley, ‘The Oldest Known Writing in Siamese: The Inscription of Phra Ram Khamhæng of Sukhothai 1293 AD’, *Journal of the Siam Society* 6, no. 1 (1909): 7.

⁵² Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 13.

⁵³ Rajanubhab, *The Siamese Government in Ancient Times*, 19.

⁵⁴ Rajanubhab, p. 17–18.

“...พระเจ้าแผ่นดินก็วางพระองค์แต่เป็นอย่างบิดาของประชาชน เช่น ใครมีทุกข์ร้อนก็ให้ไปสั่นกระดิ่งร้องทุกข์ได้ดังนี้” (TT)

⁵⁵ Rajanubhab, *Story of Phra Ruang*, 10.

⁵⁶ Rajanubhab, 17.

narrative, the myth of Ramkhamhaeng echoed extraordinary abilities of the ancient king that typified the character of modern Thai kings.

6.4.2 ‘Barami’ as a blissful bringer to people

The mythical story of Ramkhamhaeng indicated that *barami* equalled the extraordinary ability of a human being. In order to be a righteous king with *barami* in modern times one had to develop a political campaign of territorial expansion, justice and Buddhism. *Barami* of the modern king, therefore, is derived from working hard and being of outstanding cleverness, instead of as a gift from a previous life. The unique ability or *barami* of King Chulalongkorn was visible from his second coronation in 1873. As we have already seen in Chapter 3, the king’s position in the first phase (1868-1873) was critical, notably from internal pressures of the old conservative camp and externally from European supremacies. The confirmation of the king’s power and righteousness was a significant moment.⁵⁷ To glorify the king’s abilities then was the main response to those western influences. The image that the king had the highest *barami*; dignified characteristics, seniority, intuition, unique capacity, wisdom, mercy, and prominent abilities, was heavily promoted. Simultaneously, the king could also implement western knowledge by expanding the territories, developing religious uniformity in Buddhism, and improving modern infrastructures (e.g., roads, railways, jurisdiction, education). Then, Chulalongkorn subsequently became the legitimate person to protect his people and to preserve the territory.⁵⁸ These activities of the king established the sacred feeling which empowered the ruler to control his subjects during his reign.⁵⁹ The narration of King Ramkhamhaeng, therefore, became a mythical legitimation for modern kingship and a model to be copied in human form. Although the king defined himself as a human, he still was the sacred and meritorious person because of his extraordinary abilities. The idea of kingship, thus, penetrated into the burdens of the Thai king in saving his territory, being Head of the Buddhist state and blessing people to live with pleasure

กรุงสุโขทัยเมื่อรัชกาลพระเจ้ารามคำแหง ...เรียกว่า “สมัยรุ่งเรืองถึงสูงสุด” และควรเฉลิมพระเกียรติพระเจ้ารามคำแหงไว้ในพงศาวดารว่า “พระเจ้ามหาราช” พระองค์ ๑ ของเมืองไทย (TT)

⁵⁷ William L. Bradley, ‘The Accession of King Mongkut (Notes)’, *Journal of the Siam Society* 57, no. 1 (1969): 154–56.

⁵⁸ Damrong Rajanubhab, *Biographies of Notable People [Prawat Bukkonsamkan-ประวัติบุคคลสำคัญ]* (Phranakhon: Phrachan, 1950), 97.

⁵⁹ Arthur M. Hocart, Rodney Needham, and Edward E. Evans-Pritchard, *Kings and Councillors: An Essay in the Comparative Anatomy of Human Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 69.

(the two charts no.6.9 show the transformation of the kingship idea from its traditional form to the modern forms).

The notion of ‘live with pleasure’ (*yu yang romyen pensuk*-อยู่อย่างร่มเย็นเป็นสุข), as the crucial objective of King Mongkut’s and King Chulalongkorn’s time,⁶⁰ was repeated many times as seen in the recommendations for Thai officers,⁶¹ royal guidance⁶² and the speeches of King Chulalongkorn.⁶³ This was said to remind people that there is a necessity to develop the living standard of society and to improve civilisation throughout all areas under the righteous king’s authority. The notion of ‘live with pleasure’ is linked closely to the attempts of the Siamese government to expand the idea of modernisation into areas seen as uncivilised; in other words, to those places where they did not recognise Thai national culture and the *Monthon Thesaphiban* (the provincial administration). It is the foremost responsibility of the Thai ruler to educate the people and to further the ‘prosperity’ of his subjects that include resource allocation, educational development and administrative improvement.⁶⁴ Along with this process, the notion of Thai kingship was responsible for the typicality of Thai national culture in Bangkok and propagated how any ‘civilised’ project was an advantage to the local community.

Royal rituals and ceremonies fused traditional and western ideological roots that included *barami* Thai kingship to justify its occurrence. For instance, Chulalongkorn’s birthday was combined with the traditional birthday anniversary of previous Siamese rulers (copied from the Chinese birthday celebration known as *saeyit* (เสวยีต) or the sixtieth anniversary of age fused with a Buddhist merit making) in a western style, after Chulalongkorn copied this from Singapore and Batavia. As Chulalongkorn explained, the birthday anniversary was a fortune of luck that we should also make merit. “This was initiated by Mongkut and I followed this since I

⁶⁰ Rajanubhab, *The Thesaphiban System of Provincial Administration*, 19.

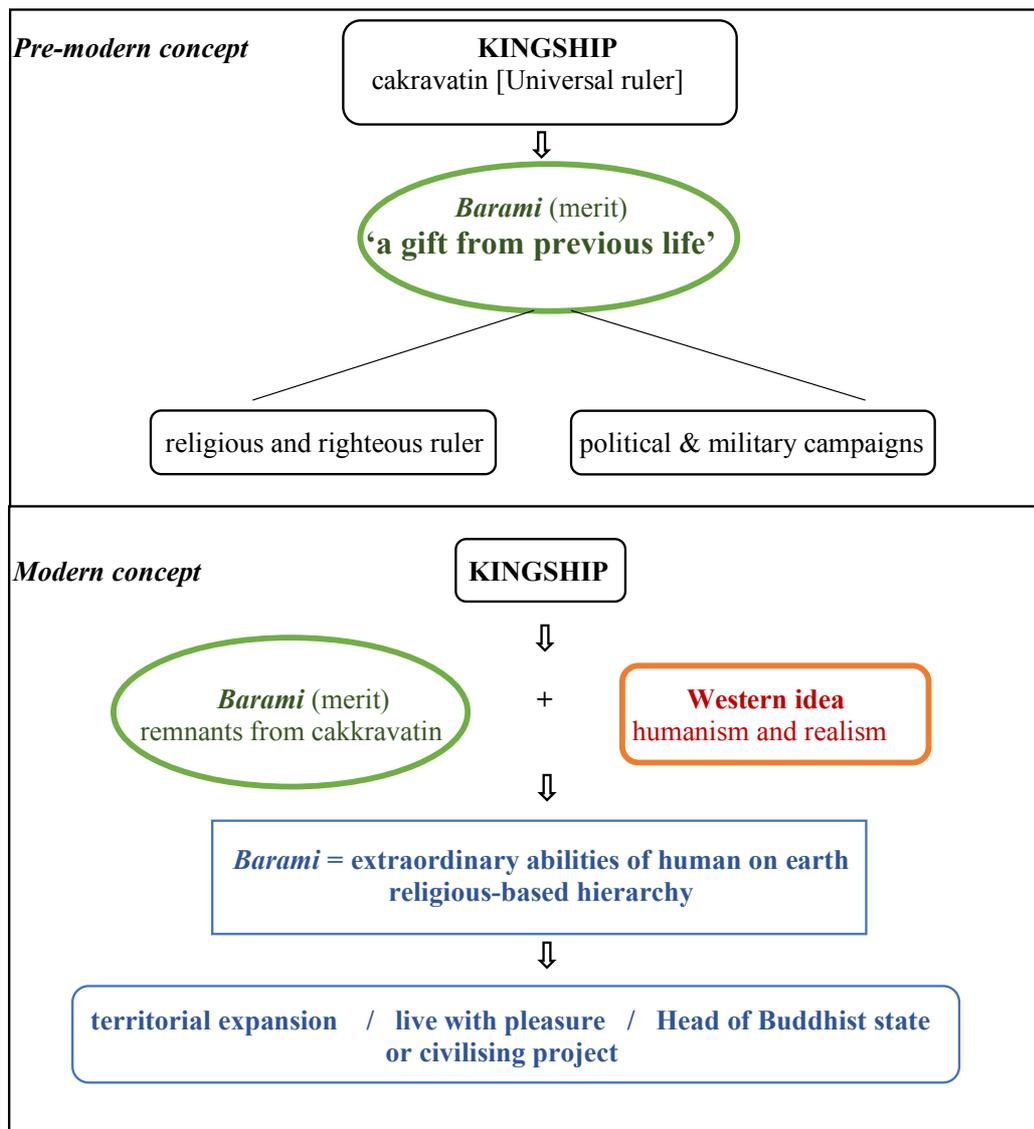
⁶¹ Damrong Rajanubhab, *Instructions of the Head of Ministry of Interior [O-Wat Khong Saenabodi Krasuangmahatthai-โอวาทของเสนาบดีกระทรวงมหาดไทย]* (Bangkok: Sophonphiphatthanakon, 1931), 1.

⁶² Chulalongkorn, *The Royal Speeches Addressed to the Military [Phraborom Rachawat Phrarachathan Kae Thahan-พระบรมราโชวาทพระราชทานแก่ทหาร]* (Bangkok: Sophonphiphatthanakon, 1916), 6–7.

⁶³ Chulalongkorn, *Speech of King Chulalongkorn Explaining the Governmental Reform*, 64.

⁶⁴ Winichakul, ‘The Quest for “Siwilai”’: A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam’, 537.

6.9: Two charts showing the idea of kingship in traditional and modern forms



was a novice...later, it is a time to imitate [*lian*-เลียน] new western culture... For foreigners, they believed that the birthday of a monarch was the national holiday and [I] agreed with that”.⁶⁵ Then, from 1870 onwards, on the king’s birthday anniversary, Buddha statues would be built equal in number to the age of the king. The king would offer food for monks and give alms as practised by previous Thai kings. The king would also invite royal members, high and low ranking officials and foreigners to

⁶⁵ Chulalongkorn, *The Merit-Making Ceremony on the King’s Birthday [Praphaeni Kanthambun Wankoet-ประเพณีการทำบุญวันเกิด]* (Phranakhon: Sophonphiphatthanakon, 1935), 24–30.

“ตามกระแสพระราชดำริของพระบาทสมเด็จพระจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว ที่ได้ทรงพระราชดำริทำการพระราชกุศลในวันประสูติตั้งแต่ยังทรงผนวช เช่น ได้กล่าวมาข้างต้นแล้วนั้น ข้าพเจ้าเกิดความเลื่อมใสเห็นจริงด้วย จึงได้เริ่มทำบุญวันเกิด ...ในครั้งนั้นเป็นเวลาที่ยุทธธรรมนิยมฝรั่งใหม่ๆ ...ด้วยเขา[ฝรั่ง]ถือวันเกิดพระเจ้าแผ่นดินเป็นนักษัตรลุลิเดก็กลับเห็นดีไปด้วย” (TT)

attend the ceremony. He also made speeches to inform how far Siam had developed in the advance of technologies, education, trade, natural resources of crops and rain, annually. It became a grand national celebration and decoration within the capital city and its outer zones. The fusion of traditional and western elements was not only found in the king's birthday celebration but also other symbolic acts of the king, such as pomposity, a ceremony of taking an oath of loyalty to the king, the king's image, the elephant flag and proper attires. Known as *Ratchapataen* (ราชปะแตน) or Raj Pattern with half Thai pant and western-styled top (image no.6.10), the hybrid dress still appears today on several ceremonial occasions relating to kings and his court such as the Ploughing Ceremony, *phuet mongkhon charot phranangkan* (พิธีมงคลจรดพระนังคัล) (image no.6.11).⁶⁶ They are connected to the dignified *barami* as an extraordinary power in relation to the Thai idea of kingship during the Chulalongkorn era, as Mongkut piloted these articulations. Thus, Thai kingship gradually became the symbol of power, national culture and feeling, and a centre for the life of the modern Thai state.

Conclusion

Thai national culture had been shaped and transformed throughout the two reigns of King Mongkut and Chulalongkorn. Such adaptation became a crucial technique for Siamese elites as they responded to the tide of modernisation and imperialist expansions. In Thai kingship, we see the attempt to depart from an emphasis on divine power to be replaced with a focus on more humanist dimensions. However, the traditional function of the king as a 'superior *barami*' hybridised with 'scientific and human' abilities in providing good welfare, fighting enemies and bringing abundance to society crucially prolonged the sacred concept of *barami* within modern Thai kingship. Moreover, the fusion of Thai kingship between *barami* and the sources of extraordinary human capacity had been confirmed by the myth of King Ramkhamhaeng. The reproduction of the myth of Ramkhamhaeng and other cultural materials surrounding the Thai king gave way to the idea of modern Thai kingship and its righteousness in the three frontiers of Siam. These symbolic tools were used to expand the Siamese territory, enforce the 'civilising' project and diffuse Thai

⁶⁶ Maurizio Peleggi, *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), 59.

national culture. The diffusion of Thai kingship into the three frontier areas will be further discussed in the chapters to follow.

6.10: King Chulalongkorn in *Ratchapataen*, with half Thai pant and western-styled top, and his two sons, Prince Yugala Dighambara (left) and Prince Chakrabongse Bhuvanath (right)



From: Chulalongkorn, *The Account of Distance in Chulalongkorn's Journey on Land and Water around Malay Peninsula 1890* [Rayathangsadetpraphat Thangbok Thangruea Roplaem Malayu r.s. 109-ระยะทางเสด็จประพาสทางบกทางเรือรอบแหลมมลายู ร.ศ.109] (Phranakhon: Sophonphiphatthanakon, 1932).

6.11: Performing the Ploughing Ceremony in 1893 with all Thai officials wearing *Ratchapataen*



From: James McCarthy, *An Englishman's Siamese Journals, 1890-1893 (Report of a Survey in Siam, Published Anonymously in London, in 1895 for Private Circulation)* (Bangkok: Siam Media International Books, 1983), 223.

CHAPTER 7: THE SYMBOLISM OF THAI KINGSHIP AND ITS EXPANSION TO THE THREE FRONTIER REGIONS

Introduction

We have seen from the previous chapter how the fusion between the *barami* of kingship and western knowledge, such as humanistic and scientific notions, shaped Thai culture and its national sentiment towards the king's practices and various symbolic attributes. It has shown how the Siamese kings and their advisors remade the core concepts and fitted them to the needs of various circumstances. Particularly, Thai kingship became one of the ideological tools of the central government to gain its political capacity over areas that had experienced limited Thai cultural influences during the Chulalongkorn era. The idea of Thai kingship reached its peak when Siam employed it to remove the unsettled status of Lan Na, Laos and Patani, which the Bangkok power considered to be significant drawbacks to the modernisation of the Siamese nation. Evoking what we know of the concept of the American Frontier, the great effort of Siam to regulate its frontiers, gain economic and political control and remove the ambiguity indeed pioneered extending certain common traits to a broader range of local groups and communities.¹

This chapter will compare how the Thai monarch and his advisors embedded utilised the modern Thai kingship to boost the national culture through the implementation of administrative reform and 'civilising' projects into the three frontier zones of Siam. The spreading of Thai influences from Bangkok through cultural symbolism in the effort to appeal to the peoples of the three frontiers is mainly discussed in this chapter. It focuses on the myth of the great Thai King Ramkhamhaeng and other symbolic materials such as the ceremony of drinking the water of allegiance, the King's images, the royal birthday, and the pomp and attires that nourished the loyalty to the Thai King as the central theme of Thai national culture. A three-way comparison thus is therefore relevant as it helps us to see how these symbolic elements of Thai kingship were extended to distinctive circumstances of the three regions, none of which that

¹ Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (Leopold Classic Library, 2015), 16-7.

had not previously been predominated by the Thai state or its cultural forms, whether or not they were Buddhist or Islamic in religious orientation.

By doing this, it suggests that the state expansion of Siam into the three frontiers during the Chulalongkorn period is seen from the king's inauguration proclamations and the Thai cultural symbolism that permeated along with Thai state expansion. It also suggests that although Siam intended to achieve unique Thai national culture, some limitations of Siam itself caused different levels of Thai cultural expansion within the three areas. In the north and northeast, we could see how the modern Thai kingship borrowed and fitted into some local myths and beliefs to make them complements of Thai kingship and its idea of Thai national culture. Then, the Thai-Lao sibling relationship and other elements of the king's symbolism were transplanted in the northern and northeastern societies with a decisive vision of the centre. In contrast, the linkage between Thai culture and the southern communities through the myth of Thai kingship was confronted by considerable limitations. One main reason was the restriction of the Siamese colonial discourse towards tolerance of the Islamic and Malay traditions in politics and culture, which was an approach that was also influenced by the British model. The south became influenced heavily by official regulations to conform to the Thai unit and its authority over this area. There was no deployment of any local Malay vestiges as a component of the myth of Thai kingship in contrast to how the process was enacted in the north and northeast. The kingly materials were also performed in the south as a surreptitious mode of expansion, instead of by decisive reinforcement.

Whether the Siamese government encountered some limitations in its colonial discourse or whether it intended to compromise with some frontier communities, led to the so-called 'partial reform' inspired by Charles Grant according to Bhabha's idea.² This idea, on the one hand, highlighted the reform that the dominant Thai authority attempted to be effective in guiding the dominated frontier peoples to imitate its cultural quality and to remove a variety of autochthony. On the other hand, the Siamese government inevitably continued local traditions to maintain its stability, to preserve its moral sense of improvement and to decrease the chance of local turbulence. This partial reform in the case of Siam could have been 'a critical

² Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 86–87.

difference’ of the cultural process of Thai state expansion in the three frontiers, rather than seeing them as a single and undifferentiated process of extension. The partial reform or the differences in expansion will become more obvious when we consider the extension of central Thai Buddhism in Chapter 8. Thus, we must look at how the notion of the Thai state was projected to ambiguous spaces in the three ‘frontiers’ during the rise of central Thai cultural expansion.

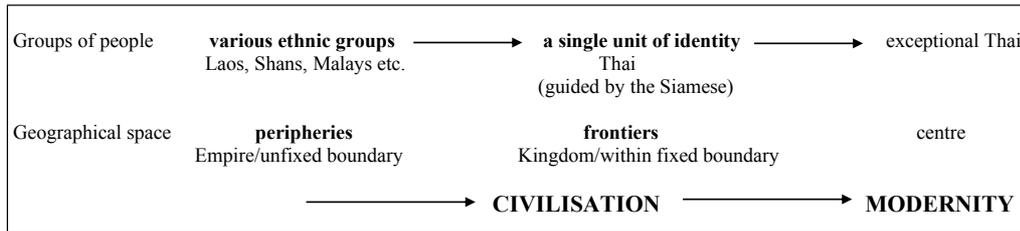
7.1 From being peripheries to being frontiers of Siamese annexation

From the second coronation of Chulalongkorn in 1873 onwards, influence of the British and the French considerably increased in the outlying regions of Siam. The pressures resulted in the provincial reform of Siam into the frontier areas. Due to the extended reform programme, the political and cultural perceptions of the Thai state towards the distant and ambiguous spaces of land, which later became the modern Thai state, changed dramatically. As Winichakul stated, the interrelationship between space and levels of civilisation (*siwilai*-ศิวิไลซ์) that geography tells us, was not only the actual geographical space – forest, village and city – but also the lower to higher degrees of the ‘civilising notion’ determined by Siam.³ The Siamese considered the hill tribes living in the forest as the most uncivilised people. Although villagers living in rural areas were more civilised than the forest zone, they were still less civilised when compared to the Bangkok city people in the centre, which represented a superior civilisation. Similarly, the shift from state at the ‘periphery’ to ‘frontier zone’ was a changing notion from ‘an empire’ (*mueang khon tang chat tang phasa*-เมืองคนต่างชาติต่างภาษา) with the sense of multiple ethnic peoples and languages to become ‘a kingdom’ (*mueang chai phraratcha Anakheth*-เมืองชายพระราชอาณาเขต) where Siam realised its supremacy over them with the burden to remove cultural diversities.⁴ This meant that ‘peripheries in an empire’ became uncivilised due to the unfixed boundary and ethnic and cultural distinctions. In contrast, ‘frontiers within a kingdom’ would become more civilised owing to being situated within the fixed modern Siamese boundary and being a single Thai unit of identity (guided by Siam), see diagram 7.1.

³ Winichakul, ‘The Quest for “Siwilai”’: A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam’, 529.

⁴ Damrong Rajanubhab, *Historical Anecdotes [Nithanboranakhadi-นิทานโบราณคดี]* (Phranakhon: Klang Witthaya, 1951), 381.

7.1: The diagram shows the relationship of spaces and different degrees of civilisation between periphery and frontier adapted from Winichakul's idea



From: Thongchai Winichakul, 'The Others Within: Travel and Ethno-Spatial Differentiation of Siamese Subjects 1885-1910' in Turton, *Civility and Savagery: Social Identity in Tai States* (Richmond: Curzon, 2000), 57. (adapted by the author)

Accordingly, the new cultural value of 'a single unitary identity' was the key notion of shifting the three peripheral zones of the premodern Thai empire to become 'frontiers' in the Kingdom of Siam/Thailand. As Frederick Turner claimed in his model of the American Frontier, is frontier zone was the edge of the settled area which became "the meeting point between savagery and civilization".⁵ The national culture of central rulers was viewed as a high-value civilisation. So, they had to readjust distinctive cultures of frontier peoples seen as savage to meet the standard civilisation of the centre.⁶ By this idea, the Siamese expansion defined itself as unique and civilised, being led by people who had authority intrinsically to bring 'civilising' projects to make people in those three frontiers 'live with pleasure' under the *barami* of Thai kingship, even though the authority did not originate by nature but through the self-recognition of Siam. Chulalongkorn's speech on his birthday in 1885 and after the death of the Front Palace Wichaichan (mentioned in Chapter 3) reveals the ultimate goal of the Siamese King. He was ready to project blessings of civilisation (national unity, technologies and education) through the provincial administrative reform in its 'frontier zones' as was the duty of the Great Thai Ruler. He announced:

The administrative transformation in Siam is the development of happiness of our state...It includes provincial areas in the vast territory that consisted of peoples who speak the same or different languages...Thai, Lao, and Shan are all in the same nation. So [it] means that I am their Great Ruler who would support convenient transports, trade [and] new various skills for the happiness of human

⁵ Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, 8.

⁶ J. A. Burkhart, 'The Turner Thesis: A Historian's Controversy', *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 31, no. 1 (1947): 70.

beings...[including] postal services throughout Siam...telegraph lines...map making. The education that leads to the onset of progress is supported, including reading literacy and increasing number of students to attend schools. Increasing students would be a sign of achievements.⁷

ราชการบ้านเมืองที่ได้จัดการเปลี่ยนแปลงไปคราวใดเราก็เชื่อว่าการนั้นเป็นไปเพื่อความสุขของบ้านเมือง...อันประกอบด้วยหัวเมืองทั้งหลาย แฝงขยายอยู่ในแผ่นดินอันไพศาล มีราษฎรอาศัยอยู่พูดภาษาอันเดียวกันเพี้ยนกันบ้างดังนี้...ไทย ลาว ขานทั้งปวงนี้ ก็นับถือว่าตัวเป็นพวกอยู่ในชาติเดียวกันอันหนึ่ง แลตั้งตาคอยหมายว่าเราเป็นเจ้าของใหญ่ผู้อุปถัมภ์บำรุงทั้งนั้น ทางบกทางน้ำที่ไปหนทางจะได้เจริญการค้าขาย...ที่วิชาใหม่ๆได้เกิดขึ้นสำหรับประโยชน์ความสุขแก่มนุษย์ การไปรษณีย์ ให้เป็นการใช้ได้ตลอดไปทั้งกรุงสยาม...การจัดโทรเลข...ตรวจตราทำแผนที่...การวิชาของคนทั้งปวงซึ่งเราก็เห็นเป็นต้นเค้าของความเจริญนั้น ได้จัดให้มีการไลหนังสือแลตรวจบัญชีคนเข้าเรียนในโรงเรียนที่ตั้งขึ้นใหม่เป็นการหลวงเป็นอันมาก มีนักเรียนมากขึ้นเสมอคงจะเป็นการสำเร็จได้ตัวอย่างหนึ่ง

As the bless bringer of blessings, it authorised the Siamese government to become the great ruler to stretch its power to the three distinct communities of Lan Na, Laos and the Malay States. Therefore, the reform of the *Thesaphiban* system of Siam was mainly projected to diminish the power of local chiefs to become officials under the Siamese government and replace them with central Thai representatives. The control over administration of justice, finances, governmental offices, land, military and foreign policy, were transferred into the hands of the Siamese government. Alongside the administrative reform in the three frontier communities, the cultural diffusion such as royal myth, ceremonial, pomp or other royal properties played a critical role in reinforcing loyalty of Thai kingship and the central theme of Thai national culture and feeling.

In reality, Thai commissioners or ‘*khaluang*’ (ข้าหลวง) who were sent to inspect, guide and govern the new provincial administration in the three frontier areas were the principal actors who shaped and embedded Thai national culture. On the one hand, they implemented the *Thesaphiban* system through official proclamations, laws and political policies. On the other hand, these Thai representatives signified the standardised knowledge of Thai national culture to local communities. The term ‘*khaluang*’ in Thai was developed from the sense of honour and duty to serve the

⁷ Chulalongkorn, *Speeches by King Chulalongkorn, 1874-1910*, 41–42.

king and his crown. They were close to the king and the same level as the members of the king's household, and this special status was one reason that their behaviours represented the honour of the Thai king.⁸ Their titles and responsibilities then were tied closely to the notion of Thai kingship in those frontiers. The appointment of many Thai representatives, therefore, was the first engine to encourage successful annexations of the Siamese government through reform programmes.⁹

7.2 The administrative programme in the three frontiers of Siam

During the 1880s, there was serious pressure from British and French imperialists upon the borders of Siam. Cambodia became a French protectorate in 1884, and Auguste Pavie, a French vice-consul in Luang Prabang, launched his inspection along the Mekong river, the northeastern side of Siam in 1886. While Burma was finally annexed in 1885 and became a part of British India, forest issues and foreign subjects increased in the northern frontier of Siam. Sometimes, the concession of timber was offered to two tenants at the same time and led to lawsuits between British subjects and Lao people.¹⁰ In the south of Siam, France increased its interest in building a canal across the Kra Isthmus, the narrowest point of land on the Malay Peninsula that linked the Andaman Sea and the Gulf of Thailand. The prolonged Perak-Raman border issue between British and Siamese governments, who acted on behalf of Perak and Raman respectively, became intense in outlining their boundaries from 1882 to 1909. Therefore, outside pressures along its borders hastened Siam to respond by using the reform programme to confirm its authority over their previous tributary states. Lan Na in the north became Monthon Payap, Laos in the northeast became Monthon Udon and Isan and, the Patani Kingdom in the south turned into Monthon Pattani separated from Monthon Nakhon Si Thammarat in 1906, see the map no.7.2. (This map depicts all nineteen circles under the *Thesaphiban* system during the Chulalongkorn era and the year of setting up each Monthon. The last two Monthon (in red colour): Monthon Syburi (Kedah, Perlis except for Satun province) ceded to

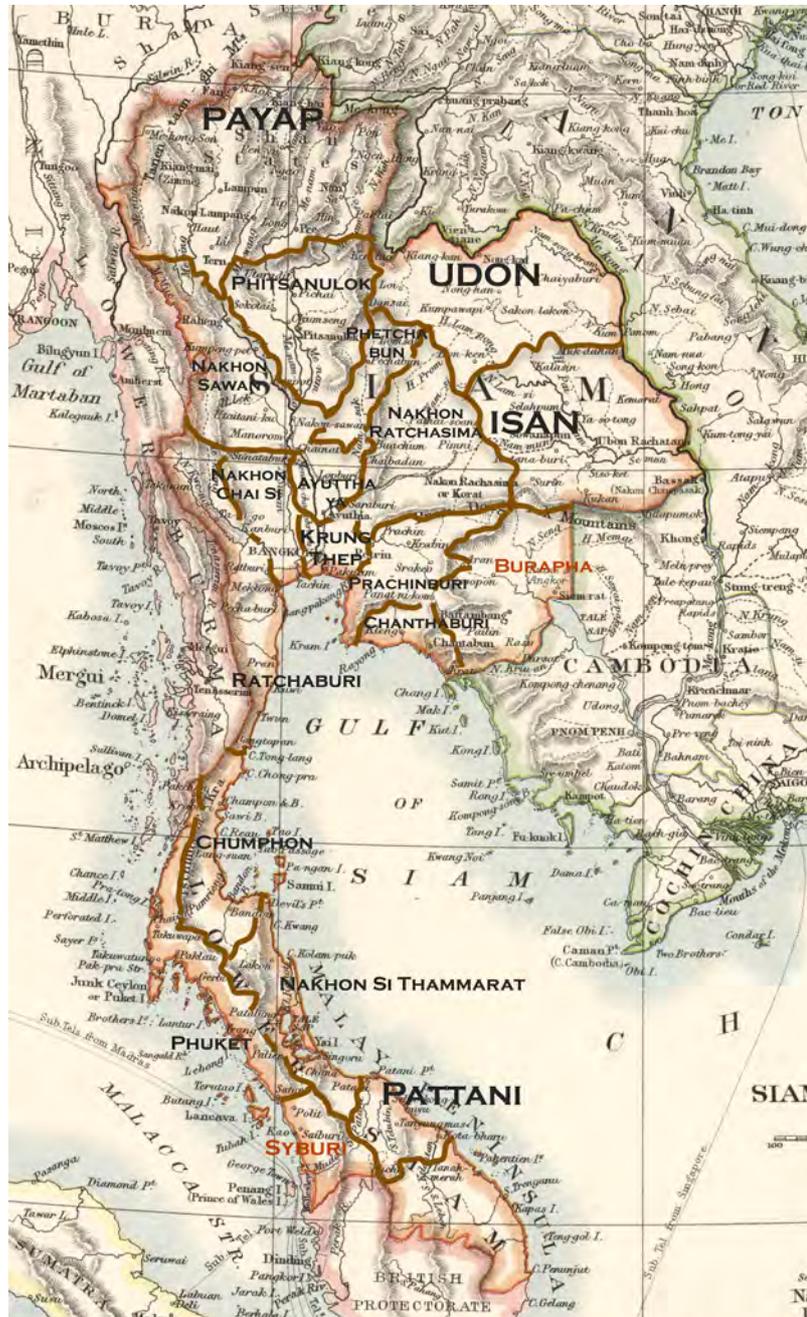
⁸ Chulalongkorn, *Speeches by King Chulalongkorn, 1874-1910*, 145–46.

⁹ *Collected Royal Chronicles Part 74 (Prince Prachak Silapakhom Administrated Lao Phuan) [Prachumphongsawadan Phakthi 74 Rueang Kromluang Prachak Silapakhom Sadetpai Ratchakan Na Huamueang Lao Phuan-ประชุมพงศาวดาร ภาคที่ 74 เรื่องกรมหลวงประจักษ์ศิลปาคมเสด็จไปจัดราชการ ณ หัวเมืองลาวพวน]* (Phranakhon: Phrachan, 1959), 50.

¹⁰ Daniel McGilvary, *A Half Century Among the Siamese and the Lao :An Autobiography*, ed. Beach Cornelius Bradley (New York; Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1912), 192.

Britain in 1909, and Monthon Burapha (Siem Reap, Battambang and Serei Saophoan) ceded to France in 1906 in exchange with Trat province and some outlying islands.)

7.2: Map shows names (in capital letters) of the nineteen circles in the *Thesaphiban* system during the Chulalongkorn period



- | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Payap or Lao Chiang (1899) | 2. Nakhon Sawan (1895) | 3. Phitsanulok (1894) | 4. Phetchabun (1899) |
| 5. Udon or Lao Phuan (1899) | 6. Isan or Lao Kao (1900) | 7. Nakhon Ratchasima (1893) | 8. Ayutthaya (1893) |
| 9. Nakhon Chai Si (1895) | 10. Krung Thep (1897) | 11. Prachinburi (1893) | 12. Chanthaburi (1906) |
| 13. Ratchaburi (1895) | 14. Chumphon (1896) | 15. Phuket (1898) | 16. Pattani (1906) |
| 17. Nakhon Si Thammarat (1896) | 18. Syburi (1897) | 19. Burapha (1903) | |

From: W. & A.K. Johnston Limited (1906), Siam & French Indo-China. 1: 6035000. In David Rumsey Historical Map Collection. (divided into 19 circles and added Monthon names by the author)

Accordingly, the permanent appointment of Thai officials was done with the intention of transforming the previous situation of the tributary states to be the three circles or *monthon* of Siam. A *Monthon* was under the authority of High Commissioner (*khaluang Thesaphiban*), who enforced laws and finalised all decisions. The lower levels comprised governors, who were responsible for administration, judiciary, finance and some assistants, including junior officers, clerks and guards.

The west of Lan Na, Chiang Mai, Lampang and Lamphun, were the first areas Siam decided to become involved with. In order to solve the logging issues and lawsuits with foreigners, the Chiang Mai Treaty of 1873 was signed between the Siamese ruler and local chiefs. In brief, the treaty allowed Bangkok to intervene in the judicial system. Also, all contracts made between foreigners and local chiefs of Chiang Mai, Lampang and Lamphun had to consult Siam before signing.¹¹ However, it was not until 1884 that Bangkok allocated Thai representatives to introduce the administrative reform of Siam in Lan Na. Prince Pichitprichakorn (hereafter Prince Pichit, his image no.7.3) and a number of Thai officials launched the six departments (*saenabodi hok tamnang*-เสนาบดีหกตำแหน่ง): Interior, governmental officer, justice, finance, palace and land, which local Lao officials administered but were regulated by Thai officials in each department.¹² It was the initial step of Siam to control the local judicial system and the ‘local financial spheres’ such as revenues from forests, head taxes and other concessions.¹³ Following this, it gradually reduced the administrative activities of the local chiefs who had been turned into salaried servants of the crown of the Thai king in Bangkok. Nevertheless, the administrative enforcement became noticeable when Siam appointed Phraya Songsuradet (An Bunnag) to be High Commissioner in 1893-1899 (see his image no.7.4 while he was High Commissioner in the north). Crucially during this period, the administration was considerably expanded to Nan and Phrae that covered all five main provinces in the north.¹⁴

¹¹ R5 M.58/191, The Contract Signed Between Siam and the Chiang Mai Chief in 1873.

¹² R5 M.58/88, Reports on Administration in Chiang Mai, Lamphun and Lampang (May 1884) [Rai-Ngan Krommuean Pichitprichakon Rueang Chatkan Chiangmai Lamphun Lampang (r.s.103)-ม.58/88 รายงานกรมหมื่นพิชิตปรีชากร เรื่องจัดการเชียงใหม่ ลำพูน ลำปาง (พ.ศ. 103)], NA.

In Thai, the six departments referred to *Mahathai* (มหาดไทย), *Krom Kan* (กรมการ), *Yuttitham* (กรมยุติธรรม), *Klang* (กรมคลัง), *Wang* (กรมวัง), *Na* (กรมนา)

¹³ ‘The Thesaphiban Report (11 November 1898) [Rai-Ngan Thesaphiban-รายงานเทศาภิบาล (11 พฤศจิกายน ร.ศ.117)]’, RG, 1898.

¹⁴ R5 M.58/171, Taxations and Appointing Position in Phrae [Phasi Akon Lae Rueang Tangtamnang Mueang Phrae-ม.58/171 ภาษีอากร และเรื่องตั้งตำแหน่งเมืองแพร่ (22 มิ.ย.115-7 ต.ค.115)], NA.

In 1882, the Thai governors, Phraya Aumattayathipbodi and Luang Phakdi Narong were also appointed to Champassak¹⁵ and Ubon respectively in the northeast of Siam.¹⁶ Thereafter, Prince Pichit, who set up the administration in the north, was appointed to be High Commissioner to establish the administration in Lao Kao or later Monthon Isan in the lower northeast. Simultaneously, Prince Prachaksinlapakhom (hereafter Prince Prachak, see image no.7.5) was responsible for Lao Phuan (between 1891-1899), which later became Monthon Udon in the upper northeast.¹⁷ Aside from the establishment of the administration, they were responsible for protecting and solving the issues along the borders, including inspecting population movements, demarcating boundaries and improving the standard of living of frontier communities.¹⁸ Following the Franco-Siamese War in 1893, Prince Sanprasitthiprasong (hereafter Prince Sanprasit, see image no.7.6) replaced Prince Pichit and became High Commissioner of Monthon Isan until the end of the Chulalongkorn era in 1910. Thus, the despatches of Chulalongkorn's half-brothers to become High Commissioners were to respond to western pressures, deal with complicated issues and confirm the Siamese rights over the northern and northeastern borders of Siam.

Although Siam delayed the reform programme in the southern frontier compared to the north and northeast, the Siamese intention to annex the Malay communities did not differ from the north and northeast. Siam dispatched Prince Sai Sanitwongse to inspect the general situation in the seven Malay states in 1891. However, there was no apparent transformation among the Malays in the south, except for the inspection of Thai officials in those areas. As Prince Damrong stated, the population of the Malay States were Malay mixed with Thai peoples, and their governmental system was strongly dependent upon Malay customs. Then, it needed to understand the Malay customs before establishing the central Thai administration.¹⁹ Until 1896, Phra

¹⁵ Champassak was a tributary state that relied upon Siam until it was ceded to France in 1904.

¹⁶ *Collected Royal Chronicles Vol.3 (Part 3 and Beginning of Part 4) [Prachumphongsawadan Lem 3 (Phakthi 3 Lae Phakthi 4 Tonton)-ประชุมพงศาวดารเล่ม 3 (ภาคที่ 3 และภาคที่ 4 ตอนต้น)]* (Bangkok: Khurusapha, 1963), 319–31.

¹⁷ ‘Thai Commissioners Departed for Lao Phuan [Khaluang Huamueang Lao Phuan Thawaibangkhomla-ข้าหลวงหัวเมืองลาวพวนถวายบังคมลา]’, RG, 1891; ‘Thai Commissioners Departed for Lao Kao [Khaluang Huamueang Lao Kao Thawaibangkhomla-ข้าหลวงหัวเมืองลาวกาวยถวายบังคมลา]’, RG, 1891.

¹⁸ *Collected Royal Chronicles Vol.3 (Part 3 and Beginning of Part 4)*, 370–71.

¹⁹ Damrong Rajanubhab, *The Letters of Prince Damrong Rajanubhab during A Tour of Inspection in the South, 1896 [Saenabodi Krasuangmahatthai Sadeetruat Ratchakan Huamuangpaktai r.s.115-*

Wichit Worasat, who later was known as Phraya Sukhum Naiwinit (hereafter Phraya Sukhum, see figure no.7.7), became commissioner of Monthon Nakhon Si Thammarat and attempted to establish the administration in the Malay states. Yet, it was not until 1897 that the administration was put into practice in the seven Malay principalities.

Over time, the provincial administration under the recommendation of Thai representatives in the north, northeast and the south controlled all local administration and officially terminated the independence of all local chiefs from 1897 onwards. The Local Administrative Act 1897²⁰ was launched in Monthon Isan and Monthon Udon of the northeast in 1897 and 1898 respectively, Monthon Payap of the north in 1899 and the Malay states under Monthon Nakhon Si Thammarat in 1901. This became the standard form of the provincial administration that was launched with the same pattern in all *monthon* of outlying regions of Siam.²¹ Thus, the three frontiers were reinforced through the same regulations and unitary level regarding their administration, judiciary and financial system.

However, we have seen the way the influence of Siam impacted on each local area depended crucially upon the individual abilities of the Thai representatives, as well as geographical and cultural characteristics of each region. These conditions caused that impact to be quick or delayed, neat or complicated, decisive or compromised forms of Thai expansionism.²² Thus, despite the apparent similarities of the expanding administrative reform programme across each region, there were important differences between the frontier zones. Especially, when we focus on the expansion of Thai national culture upon those three frontier regions, it can be seen that the idea of Thai kingship over time was central to the attempts of the far-flung Thai representatives. However, they also had to find ways to transplant the idea of kingship in ways that made it fit with various local circumstances of the three frontiers while also maintaining the integrity of the symbol and of the myth. There were attempts to reproduce the myth of Thai kingship to raise a shared notion of Thai

เสนาบดีกระทรวงมหาดไทยเสด็จตรวจราชการหัวเมืองปักษ์ใต้ ร.ศ.115] (Bangkok: Damrong Rachanuphap and Chongchitthanom Foundation, 1991), 39.

²⁰ ‘The Local Administrative Act 1897 [Phraratchabanyat Pokkrongthongthi r.s.116-พระราชบัญญัติปกครองท้องที่ ร.ศ.116]’, RG, 1897.

²¹ Bunnag, *The Provincial Administration of Siam, 1892-1915*, 124–25.

²² ‘The Thesaphiban Report (11 November 1898)’.

national culture with local communities. Thai royal rituals, ceremonies and materials also played a prominent part aside from the modern political system of provincial reform. These symbolic dimensions marked the different paths for Thai cultural extension into the three frontiers. The myth of Ramkhamhaeng was in some respects a ‘grand project’ of Siam that played a fundamental role in framing a single Thai national culture between the Thai and frontier communities, and this will now be discussed in the following section.

7.3: Prince Pichitprichakorn, High Commissioner of Monthon Payap (Lao Chiang)



From: National Archives, Thailand in Nua'on Khruathongkhiao, *History on Political Conditions of Northern Thailand [Poet Phaen Yuet Lanna-เปิดแผนยึดล้านนา]* (Bangkok: Matichon, 2016), 37.

7.4: Phraya Songsuradet (An Bunnag), the first person on the left side, with Prince Damrong (the fourth person) while inspecting the northern area in 1898 and the Lampang chief (Chao Bunwat Wongmanit) on the right side



เสด็จตรวจราชการหัวเมืองฝ่ายเหนือ ณ เมืองนครลำปาง
 ๑. สมเด็จฯ กรมพระยาดำรงราชานุภาพ ๒. พระเจ้าบรมวงศ์เธอ
 พระองค์เจ้าประวิตรวิมลโนดม กรมหลวงปราจิณกิติบดี ๓. พระยาทรงสุรเดช
 ๔. เจ้าบุญวาทย์วงศ์ เจ้านครลำปางองค์สุดท้าย ๕. เจ้าราชภาติกวงศ์
 ๖. เจ้าบุรี

From: Damrong Rajanubhab, *Provincial Inspection of Prince Damrong Rajanubhab [Kan Sadet Truat Huamueang Khong Somdet Kromphraya Damrong Rachanuphab-การเสด็จตรวจราชการหัวเมืองของสมเด็จพระเจ้าบรมวงศ์เธอกรมพระยาดำรงราชานุภาพ]* (Bangkok: Prince Damrong Rajanuphap Institute, 2012), 543.

7.5: Prince Prachaksinlapakhom in 1887, four years before being High Commissioner of Monthon Udon (Lao Phuan) in 1891-1899



พระรูปกรมหลวงประจักษ์ศิลปาคม
 ทรงฉายเมื่อ พ.ศ. ๒๔๓๐

From: *Collected Proclamations of King Mongkut (Miscellany Part 2) [Prachumphrakat Ratchakan Thi Si-ประชุมประกาศรัชกาลที่ 4 (ภาคปริณิษยะ ส่วนที่ 2)]* (Phranakhon: Sophonphiphatthanakon, 1926). (Digitised by Chulalongkorn University Library)

7.6: Prince Sanphasitthiprasong, High Commissioner of Monthon Isan (1893-1910)



From: Damrong Rajanubhab, *Provincial Inspection of Prince Damrong Rajanubhab [Kan Sadet Truat Huamueang Khong Somdet Kromphraya Damrong Rachanuphab-การเสด็จตรวจราชการหัวเมืองของสมเด็จพระเจ้าบรมวงศ์เธอกรมพระยาตาดำรงราชานุภาพ]* (Bangkok: Prince Damrong Rajanuphap Institute, 2012), 564.

7.7: Phra Wichit Worasat (later became Phraya Sukhum Naiwinit)



From: Damrong Rajanubhab, *Provincial Inspection of Prince Damrong Rajanubhab [Kan Sadet Truat Huamueang Khong Somdet Kromphraya Damrong Rachanuphab-การเสด็จตรวจราชการหัวเมืองของสมเด็จพระเจ้าบรมวงศ์เธอกรมพระยาตาดำรงราชานุภาพ]* (Bangkok: Prince Damrong Rajanuphap Institute, 2012), 519.

7.3 The myth of Ramkhamhaeng: embedding Thai kingship in the three frontier communities

King Ramkhamhaeng of Sukhothai (c.1279-1298), as discussed in the previous chapter, represented the ideal of a modern Thai king should be like and how Chulalongkorn should behave in his rule over his subjects. Ramkhamhaeng was represented as the Great King, just ruler, supporter of Buddhism and protector of Thai culture. The myth of the Sukhothai king itself legitimised the political power of the Siamese king to control the north, northeast and the south through territorial expansion. The myth of Ramkhamhaeng then was a pivotal mechanism to define the authority of modern Thai kingship, its kingdom and Thai national culture in the three frontiers that did not belong to Siam. Chulalongkorn highlighted the significance of Ramkhamhaeng of Sukhothai and the modern Thai king for the first time in 1877:

[It] was believed that the empire of Siamese rulers had already existed at least 1,239 years...The ruler started from Arunkuman or Phra Ruang at Sri Satchanalai city where there was Sukhothai, the great city centre...this empire of Siam sometimes was vast and sometimes was narrow depending on the potential of each ruler. At that time, the [Sukhothai] king perhaps extended his power to all Lao and Malay states.²³

แต่จะต้องถือว่าพระเจ้าแผ่นดิน ผู้ปกครองราชอาณาจักรสยามนี้ ได้มีขึ้นไม่ต่ำกว่า ๑,๒๓๙ ปี ...พระเจ้าแผ่นดินนั้น คงนับเอาพระเจ้าอรุณมหาราช คือ สมเด็จพระร่วงเป็นต้น ว่าเป็นพระเจ้าแผ่นดินสยาม ตั้งอยู่ในเมืองศรีสัชชนาลัย คือเมืองสุโขทัย เป็นราชธานีมหานครใหญ่ ...และพระราชอาณาจักรสยามนี้ บางทีกว้าง บางทีแคบ คอดๆกึ่งๆตามพระบรมราชานุญาตของพระเจ้าแผ่นดิน ผู้ปกครองในครั้งนั้น คราวนั้น บางทีพระเจ้าแผ่นดินจะมีอำนาจแผ่ไปถึงเมืองลาว และเมืองมลายูทั้งปวง

The narrative of Sukhothai-Ramkhamhaeng as redefined by Siamese elites not only represented how the Siamese rulers recognised the differences between being a premodern empire and a modern kingdom. The myth also became the central theme of the Siamese to construct the historical origin of annual Thai ceremonies (found in the royal twelve-month ceremonies), Thai national history, homogenous Thai

²³ Chulalongkorn, *The Royal Commentaries on the Royal Chronicle and the Royal Ceremony on the Selection of the Crown Prince*, 2–3.

ethnicity and Thai language to build a close relationship between Siam and the three frontiers. The Thai representatives became responsible for carrying and embedding these ideas to fulfil the meaning of Thai national culture in those frontier communities. Their activities, behaviour in daily life and styles of clothing were linked to the significance of Thai kingship. Nevertheless, the reinforcement of Thai kingship through the Ramkhamhaeng narrative was applied differently within the three frontier zones. The myth was revised to conflate with the traditions of the north and northeast, but this did not happen in relation to the southern communities.

7.3.1 Thai-Lao sibling relationship in the north and northeast

In the north, the narrative of the Sukhothai king was embedded in the form of sibling relations between the Sukhothai and Lan Na kingships. The central Thai narrative mainly borrowed from the myth of King Ruang found in *Phongsawadan Nua* (พงศาวดารเหนือ), which was distilled from several myths in the north.²⁴ On this, it reminds us of Bénédicte Brac de la Perrière's discussion of the sibling relationships of the Burmese spirit cult of *nat*. She describes how Burmese King Anawratha (c.1044-1081) destroyed local spirits and promoted Theravada Buddhism. The King, instead of removing these traditions, borrowed local spirit cults to form the symbolic structure of central Burmese kingship in non-Burman Buddhist areas. The local spirits then became part of the Burmese spirit cult of *nat* otherwise known as the Thirty-seven Lords. Some *nat* were reinvented as brother-sister stories linking central and local spirit cults. It was expected by the royal Burmese authority that the borrowing and fusing with the spirit cults in sibling relationships gradually caused them to subvert these local popular beliefs in favour of the new version with its state-kingship definition.²⁵ Then, both local and national components were integrated into the Burmese tutelary spirits by which local elements were encompassed by Burmese Buddhism and sovereignty. The sibling relations, therefore, were considered mechanisms for rearranging the hierarchical power between dominating and dominated peoples through rituals and values of belief.

This pattern was also true for Siamese elites in dealing with the Thai king myth. Even

²⁴ *Collected Royal Chronicles Part 1 (The Beginning) [Prachumphongsawadan Phakthi 1 Tonton-prachumphongsawadan ภาคที่ 1 ตอนต้น]* (Bangkok: Khurusapha, 1963), 8–18.

²⁵ Bénédicte Brac de la Perrière, 'Sibling Relationships in the Nat Stories of the Burmese Cult to the "Thirty-Seven"', *Moussons, Recherche En Sciences Humaines Sur l'Asie Du Sud-Est* 5 (2002).

though Siam attempted to revise, remove and insert some explanations that benefited the history of a modern Thai state, the state-sponsored version of the Thai king myth was first discussed by Chulalongkorn in the Royal Commentaries on the Royal Chronicle (1877)²⁶ unveiling the pattern they had borrowed from the local version of King Ruang. The local myth of King Ruang was known as the story of Arunkuman ('Arun' in Pali refers to the glory or 'Ruang' in Thai). According to the chronicle, Phraya Aphaikhamani, the chief of Hariphunchai met a Naga disguising herself as a human figure, while he was hibernating on a mountain. They were intimate for seven days and later the Naga got pregnant and had Aphaikhamani's son. However, she left her son in the forest with a ring and a blanket received from the Hariphunchai chief. Later, a huntsman found the boy and realised that he had supernatural power and great merit. When Aphaikhamani heard the news, the boy was taken to his palace. He was confident that he had found his son. Then Aphaikhamani gave the name 'Arunkuman' to his son. Aphaikhamani also had another son born with the queen, whose name is Ritthikuman. The two sons grew up together until Arunkuman got married with the daughter of a Sri Satchanalai chief or known as Sukhothai. Arunkuman became the Sukhothai king, namely Phraya Ruang. His brother, Ritthikuman, married with a daughter of a Chiang Mai chief. Later, Ritthikuman claimed the throne of Chiang Mai known as *Phra Lue*. By this story, it signified a blood relation between Sukhothai (referred to as Siamese) and Lan Na Kings. Siamese elites thus subtly accepted 'Thai-Lao' sibling relations, even though they criticised unnatural, magical or overstated information of the story.

The intention of borrowing local myths to form the Thai-Lao sibling relation was disclosed in Chulalongkorn's comments. He agreed with the linkage between the ruling blood of Ayutthaya, a centre of ancient Thai state handed down from Sukhothai, and the Royal Lao family. After he confirmed the existence of 'Arunkuman and Sukhothai' as the origin of Thai kings, he continued that "now I want to remove some unproven and irrelevant information and incorrect dates. I will explain from c.s.712 [c.1350], the year that established the Thavaravadi Sri Ayutthaya. However, there needs to be an introduction to know the origin of the royal family who established Thavaravadi Sri Ayutthaya...It was found that the ruler of

²⁶ Chulalongkorn, *The Royal Commentaries on the Royal Chronicle and the Royal Ceremony on the Selection of the Crown Prince*.

Thavaravadi Sri Ayutthaya descended from a Lao monarch, and he established a city centre named Thepnakhon [Bangkok]”.²⁷ Chulalongkorn also reiterated that because they were descended from a Lao monarch, there were many Lao states that came under Ayutthaya’s protection.²⁸ From the king’s statement, it was true that Siamese elites still had a blurred idea of the historical continuity between Sukhothai and Ayutthaya kings at that time. However, the Thai and Lan Na sibling relations, called Sister Cities (*mueang phi mueang nong*-เมืองพี่เมืองน้อง),²⁹ were already clear in the Siamese mind. Thai rulers in some ways connected to the origin of the Lao ruling elite. The blood relation then became a mythical tool of Siam to support claims about the righteousness of Thai kingship as it extended into Lan Na.

In the north, the sibling relationship and the legitimacy of Chulalongkorn became a reality when Siam initiated its strategy of political marriage. In 1886, two years after Prince Pichit launched the *Thesaphiban* system in Chiang Mai, Lampang and Lamphun, Siam built a relationship with Lan Na through the marriage between King Chulalongkorn and Chao Dara Rasmi, a daughter of a Chiang Mai chief (image no.7.8). It became an unusual event because it was the first time that Siam held the ancient Thai Tonsure Ceremony for the Lao princess of Lan Na, which typified a symbol of the Chakri dynasty. It had never happened before in the Siamese-Lan Na history.³⁰ It also was the first time that members of the ruling family in Bangkok accepted a marriage with a ‘Lao’ princess of Lan Na.³¹ The action drew the Chiang Mai Chief and Bangkok together, as well as being pleasing to other Lao ruling officials in the north.³² This could be seen from the response of Chao Inthawichayanon, Chiang Mai chief and father of Princess Dara Rasmi who ruled in 1870-1896. He held a grand celebration in the city and was overwhelmed by tears of

²⁷ Chulalongkorn, *The Royal Commentaries on the Royal Chronicle and the Royal Ceremony on the Selection of the Crown Prince*, 5.

“บัดนี้จะขอตัดความที่ไม่มีพยาน ไม่มีสำคัญและศักราชเลอะเทอะนั้นเสียให้ตลอด จะกล่าวความพิสดารตั้งแต่จุลศักราช ๗๑๒ ปีชกาล โทศก ซึ่งสร้างกรุงทวารวดีศรีอยุธยาขึ้นมาจนถึงบัดนี้ แต่จะต้องกล่าวความต้นบ้างเล็กน้อย ให้รู้ว่าราชตระกูลผู้สร้างกรุงทวารวดีศรีอยุธยาแต่เดิมนั้นมาจากเมืองใด... ได้ความว่าผู้สร้างกรุงทวารวดีศรีอยุธยา เป็นเชื้อราชวงศ์มาแต่ทางฝ่ายลาวและตั้งพระนครอันหนึ่ง ชื่อ เทพนคร” (TT)

²⁸ Chulalongkorn, 8.

²⁹ Rajanubhab, *Story of Phra Ruang*, 4.

³⁰ Chao Keaw Nawarat, *Biography of Princess Dara Rasmi [Phraprawat Phraratchachaya Chao Dara Rasmi-พระประวัติ พระราชชายา เจาดารารัศมี]* (Phranakhon: Bamrungrukunkit, 1934), 3.

³¹ The title of Princess Dara Rasmi was Phraratcha Chaya or Her Highness.

³² R5 M.58/33, Phraya Sri Sahadheb Managed Monthon Payap with the Attachment of Land Tax Act (30 January 1899-30 June 1900) [Phraya Sri Sahadheb Ookpaichat Ratchakan Monthontawantok Chiangnua Lae Phraratchabanyat Akhonthidin-ม.58/33 พระยาศรีสหเทพ. ออกไปจัดราชการมณฑลตะวันตกเฉียงเหนือ และมีพระราชบัญญัติอารกรที่ดินด้วย (30 ม.ค. 118- 30 มิ.ย. 119)], NA.

joy that his daughter became ‘a royal member’ in Bangkok.³³ From time to time, Bangkok reiterated the Thai-Lao cultural linkage on various special occasions relating to Princess Dara Rasmi in Chiang Mai. It could be seen most obviously at the birthday of Vimolnaka Nabisi, a daughter of Chulalongkorn and Dara Rasmi, on which occasion Siam sent her image to the Chiang Mai chief, her grandfather.³⁴ The record of Prince Sonabandit, one of Chulalongkorn’s half-brother who was a special commissioner in Chiang Mai in 1889, described how the Thai cultural practices called attention from the northern communities and promoted Thai-Lao relations. He wrote:

The Chiang Mai chief, the crown prince, and other nobilities were ready at my residence. I showed her [Vimolnaka Nabisi’s] image to everyone. The Chiang Mai chief could not stop crying...Other elites were relatively joyful...Thai commissioners installed the image on a royal vehicle and paraded it from the commissioner’s house which was adjacent to the Ping River, passed Thaprae street, entered the city centre...and arrived at Inthawichayanon’s residence. There were [Thai] officials and special commissioners surrounding the Lao chief’s residence who wore fully decorated attires to welcome them. Inthawichayanon who wore a gown and headdress held the image in his arms with cheerfully and brought it to be installed in his house...In the afternoon monks chanted inside the residence, and several entertainments were held including boxing, plays, distributing wishing trees and gambling which many people attended. The celebration continued for four days and nights with dinners for foreign consuls in Chiang Mai.³⁵

³³ R5 M.58/103, Official Letters in 1889-1890: Prince Sonabandit’s Report on Chaing Mai and Personal Issues [Nangsue Ratchakan r.s.108-109: Phra-Ong Chao Sonabandit Rueang Chiang Mai Lae Kan Nai Phra-Ong-ม.58/103 หนังสือราชการปี 108-109 พระองค์เจ้าโสณบัณฑิต เรื่องราชการเชียงใหม่แลการในพระองค์], NA.

³⁴ She died at almost three years.

³⁵ R5 M.58/106, Given Vimolnaka Nabisi’s Image to Chiang Mai [Phraratchathan Phrurup Ongchao Nabisi Kuenpai Chiangmai-ม.58/106 เรื่องพระราชทานพระรูปองค์เจ้านาคนพิสัยขึ้นไปเชียงใหม่ [2-5 มี.ค.108], NA; Jirachat Santayos, *A History of Dara Rasmi’s Presence and Lan Na Annexation of Siam* [*Prawattisat Kanthawaitua Phraratchachaya Chao Dara Rasmi Kap Kanruamlanna Khong Ratchatsayam-prawattisatstara-kaway-tuwa-phra-rachaya-jea-dara-rasmi-kep-kap-rum-lanna-na-ong-rat-sayam*] (Bangkok: The Foundation for the Promotion of Social Science and Humanities Textbooks Projects, 2009), 12.

พระเจ้านครเชียงใหม่ เจ้าอุปราชา เจ้านายบุตรหลาน หลายคนมาพร้อมกันที่ที่พักของข้าพระพุทธเจ้าฯ ได้เชิญพระรูปให้ดูพร้อมกัน พระเจ้านครเชียงใหม่ดูพระรูปแล้วกลัมน้ำตาไม่ได้...เจ้านายคนอื่นอยู่ข้างปิติยินดีเชยชมกันมาก...ข้าหลวงเชิญพระรูปตั้งบนยานมาศแล้ว ขบวนแห่พระรูปจากบ้านพักข้าหลวงพิเศษริมแม่น้ำปิง ไปทางถนนท่าแพ เข้าในเวียง...ถึงคุ้มท่าพระเจ้าอินทวิชยานนท์ บริเวณคุ้มมีพลับพลาข้าราชการรวมทั้งข้าหลวงพิเศษ แต่งชุดเต็มยศรอรับ พระเจ้าอินทวิชยานนท์สวมเสื้อครุย และชฎา ขึ้นรับพระรูปบนเกยเข้าทอดพระรูปอย่างสุดปลื้ม เชิญพระรูปขึ้นบนตึก...จนเวลาบ่ายพระสงฆ์เจริญพุทธมนต์ในบริเวณคุ้ม มีการละเล่นเช่น มวย มีละคร มีการโปรยผลกัลปพฤกษ์ด้วย ที่ขาดไม่ได้ และคนสนใจร่วมด้วยมากคือ บอนบ๊อง ฉลองสมโภชกัน 4 วัน 4 คืน มีงานเลี้ยงอาหารมือค่า แก่บรรดาทางสุด และฝรั่งในเชียงใหม่ด้วย

This was arranged with the intention of making Princess Dara Rasmi a mediator between the Bangkok government and the Chiang Mai court. The event became a cultural meeting point between Thai and Lao peoples. Thousands of people in the north witnessed the Thai-style dresses, a Buddhist ritual and oaths of obedience for the Thai King. Therefore, the marriage between the King and Dara Rasmi was considered a successful step for Siam to create a close Thai-Lao relation that empowered the Thai king among local elites, commoners and foreigners in the northern area.³⁶ It became a milestone for Siam to replace the local beliefs, memories and practices with the performance and symbolism of royal Thai kingship and Thai-Lao relations.

Not only local Lao peoples in Lan Na but also the ‘Lao ethnic people’ of the northeast were part of the ‘mythical Thai king’ project concerning Thai-Lao relations. This is because Siam classified the Lao of the north and the northeast in a similar way. This can be seen from the fact that Siam named the two frontiers as ‘Lao’ circles such as ‘Lao Chiang’ in the north, ‘Lao Phuan’ and ‘Lao Kao’ in the northeast. The sibling notion towards the Lao people in the northeast was also recounted in an easy reading book, known as *bandai thong Vol. I* (บันไดทอง เล่ม 1), that Siam distributed in these regions at that time (see the original first page of this book in figure no.7.9). This book regarded peoples of the northeast (Monthon Isan) and Bangkok as *mueang phi mueang nong*, Sister Cities.³⁷ For this reason, the northeast was given a similar political status as the northern frontier. Prince Sanphasitthiprasong, High

³⁶ Santayos, *A History of Dara Rasmi's Presence and Lan Na Annexation of Siam*, 12.

³⁷ Department of Education, “*Golden Stairs*”: *A Textbook of an Advanced Step [Bandaitong-บันไดทอง]* (Phranakhon: Phisan Sannit, 1900), 86–87.

Commissioner of Monthon Isan and Chulalongkorn's half-brother, then married Chao Chiang Kam, a niece of Thao Surinchomphu of Ubon. In reality, the marriage between the Siamese elite and the northeastern Lao princess was not the first time.³⁸ Yet, the marriage with Chao Chiang Kam in 1893 helped Siam tighten its grip on one of the greatest Lao polities in the northeast. It also was a bridge to connect Lao elites of the northeast with Thai elites and reduce the cultural gap between the local population and Bangkok.³⁹ This can be seen from Chiang Kam's attire that fused a white western-styled lace blouse with messy pump hairstyle that was copied from Bangkok elites and the Lao-style tube skirt called as *pha sin* (ผ้าซิ่น), (see her attire in image no.7.10). Thus, the influence of sibling relations between Thai and Lao in the northeastern zone became the gateway for extending Thai political and cultural influence into northeastern society in the same way as Siam had extended its authority symbolically to the north.

The Thai perspective of the sibling relationship that borrowed the idea from the local Lao communities created a significant interplay between Siam and the north and northeastern areas. It helped Siam to disseminate the notion of Thai national culture among Lao peoples and made them believe that they all shared a single political and cultural community that was essentially Thai. This was reflected in Prince Damrong's address given when he inspected Monthon Udon (Lao Phuan) and Isan (Lao Kao) in the northeast in 1906. He stated that "if [we] mixed five Lao people from Chiang Mai, five Lao people from Ubon and five Thais from other provinces (in which they have no tattoo or ear-piercing). Then try to identify which person was Thai, Lao Chiang Mai or Lao Ubon. [We] could not do so because those three groups were all Thai".⁴⁰ This notion showed the continuity of the Thai state expansion regarding Thai cultures into the north and northeast. Compared to the south, which revealed how

³⁸ King Buddha Yodfa, the first king of the Chakri dynasty (reigned 1782-1809), had a marriage with Princess Kunthon Thippayawadi, daughter of Chao Inthawong, a Vientiane chief (reigned 1794-1805)

³⁹ Iamkamon Chanthaprathet, 'Status of Local Elites in Ubon Ratchathani, 1882-1933 [Sathanaphap Chaonai-puenmueang Ubonratchathani-สถานภาพเจ้านายพื้นเมืองอุบลราชธานี ระหว่างปี พ.ศ.2425-2476]' (MA thesis (History), Mahasarakham University, 1995), 122-23.

⁴⁰ SB.2/102(8), A Draft of Lectures on History of Siam (7 July-14 August 1924)[Rangkambanyai Phongsawadan Sayam Khong Somdetkromphraya Damrong Rachanuphap Songsadaeng Thi Chulalongkorn Mahawitthayalai-ม.ส.บ.2/102 (8) ร่างคำบรรยายพงศาวดารสยามของสมเด็จพระยาดำรงชานุภาพ ทรง

แสดงที่จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย (7ก.ค.-14 ส.ค. 2467)], NA.

"...คราวนี้ว่าจะจัดเอาลาวเชียงใหม่อีกห้าคน ลาวชาวอุบลอีกห้าคน กับไทยชาวเมืองไหนก็ได้สักห้าคน (ซึ่งมิได้แต่งตั้งให้ผิดกัน เช่น เจาะหู หรือสักมอม เป็นต้น) มาคละกัน แล้วให้คัดโดยสังเกตุแต่รูปพรรณ ว่าคนไหนเป็นไทย คนไหนเป็นลาวเชียงใหม่ ลาวอุบล ก็ไม่สามารถคัดให้ ถูกได้ เพราะความจริงคนทั้งสามพวกนั้นเป็นชาติไทยด้วยกันทั้งนั้น" (TT)

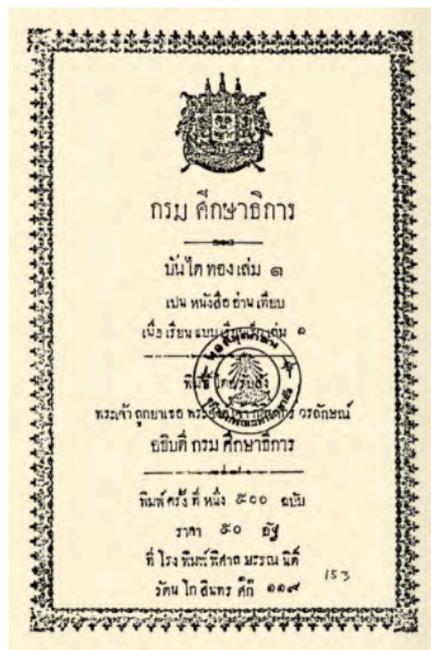
limitations of the idea of Thai kingship and state expansion through the use of the Ramkhamhaeng mythical tool were expressed.

7.8: Princess Dara Rasmi (a daughter of the Chiang Mai chief)



From: Chao Keaw Nawarat, *Biography of Princess Dara Rasmi [Phra Prawat Phraratcha Chaya Chao Dara Rasmi-พระประวัติ พระราชชายา เจ้าดารารัสมิ]* (Phranakhon: Bamrunnkunkit, 1934)

7.9: The cover page of *Bandai thong* (an easy reading book Vol.1), c.1900



From: Department of Education, *"Golden Stairs": A Textbook of an Advanced Step [Bandaitong-บันไดทอง]* (Phranakhon: Phisan Sannit, 1900).

7.10: An image of Chao Chiang Kam with the fusion styles



From: “Weaving and Textile Design of the Ubon City Court [Kantopha Lae Luatlaipha Baep Khong Chaonai Mueang Ubon-การทอผ้าและลวดลายผ้าแบบของเจ้านายเมืองอุบล]”, p.134

7.3.2 Siam’s policy of non-interference towards the Malay communities in the south of Siam

Turning to the southern Malay communities, there were no ‘perceived’ cultural interactions based on kinship or claims of common ancestry that could create a closer symbolic relationship between Siam and the Malay states as compared to the north and northeast. Both states were interrelated but only with competing patterns of political dominance in the region. Chulalongkorn made a firm statement that “the Siamese territory indeed extended its influence to the south end of the Malay Peninsula”.⁴¹ His words implied that Siam historically controlled the Malay states and their chiefs due to the triumph of the Ramkamhaeng era.⁴² This was the only evidence Siam had of its claim to having supremacy over the Malay states.

⁴¹ Chulalongkorn, *The Royal Commentaries on the Royal Chronicle and the Royal Ceremony on the Selection of the Crown Prince*, 6–7.

“อาณาเขตสยาม...ข้างใต้ได้ตลอดแหลมปลายมะลายู” (TT)

⁴² Rajanubhab, *Lectures on History of Siam*, 26.

The limitations of the king's power in the Malay communities can be seen from Chulalongkorn's activities during his trip in 1890. It was the first visit as the King of Siam, when he inspected the general situation in the Malay Peninsula and built a political relationship with local Malay rulers.⁴³ Chulalongkorn's gestures during the trip illustrate that Siam was a new colonial player in the Malay Peninsula and was expected to leave the non-interference policy in the south. The king himself avoided being disrespectful to the Malay customs; he attempted to learn the proper Malay terms in using the political ranks of the Malay ruler when addressing him and avoided breaking the Malay custom concerning the chief of Kedah's funeral.⁴⁴ In the meantime, Siam also limited its attempts to interfere with both political and cultural issues. Likewise, the internal affairs of Nongchick and Patani were still beyond Bangkok's influence. The king did not provide any decision on the border issue between them.⁴⁵ He even complained twice about the weakness of his power through the decoration of elephant flags that indicated the Thai influence in the Malay Peninsula. The king's complaint could be interpreted that there were many elephant flags that decorated the ships to honour his power in the Malay coast because the Malay locals knew of his visit. It was only a temporary gift for him (see Malay's welcome and elephant flags to honour the king in image no.7.11). They would not use the king's elephant flag but just a standard red flag, which was generally used at that time when he was absent. It was the fact that "I now have no ruling power in practice", said Chulalongkorn.⁴⁶

Siam had no increased capacity to embed Thai kingship and extend its influence as they did in the north and northeast. British records pointed out that Siamese policy in the Malay States during the 1880s had been to leave Malay chiefs to administer on their own lines. When the British began to exercise direct control in its Malay States,

⁴³ Chulalongkorn visited the Malay peninsula three times before this for various reasons; the first time was when he followed King Mongkut and the second and third trips were to recover from the queen's health and his own health in 1889.

⁴⁴ Chulalongkorn, *The Account of Distance in Chulalongkorn's Journey on Land and Water around Malay Peninsula 1890* [*Rayathangsadetpraphat Thangbok Thangruea Roplaem Malayu r.s.109-ระยะทางเสด็จประพาสทางบกทางเรือรอบแหลมมลายู ร.ศ.109*] (Phranakhon: Sophonphiphatthanakon, 1932), 151–78.

⁴⁵ Chulalongkorn, 338–45.

⁴⁶ Chulalongkorn, 144, 160.

"เรือที่ชักธงช้างเพราะพระยาโหราเข้ามาใช้ในการรับเสด็จ ภายหลังพบอีกลำ ๑ พระยาปลัดเข้าชักธงช้างเหมือนกัน เป็นการให้รางวัลเรา คราวหนึ่งเท่านั้น (น.160)" และ "...ว่าให้ช้างเราก็ใช้แต่เวลาเราอยู่ แล้วก็ใช้ธงแดงไปตามเดิม ...เราไม่เห็นเป็นการสำคัญอันใดที่ใช้ธงช้าง) เป็นแต่แสดงอาการภายนอก การที่จริงอำนาจเราไม่มีปกครองอันใดยิ่งกว่าเดี๋ยวนี นี้ ถึงจะใช้ธงช้างจะเป็นประโยชน์อันใด (น.144)" (TT)

“the Siamese, whenever they had an opportunity, were fond of pointing out to Malay Rajas the advantages of the Siamese system which was one of non-interference”.⁴⁷ Siam pressured on the south with compromise, which imitated the British colonisers. The King declared that Siam would expand its power with caution in the same manner as the British extended their rule to their Malay subjects. The influence of Siam in the Malay states would “gradually proceed until they would be under the same [administrative system]. We were not the only one who had to compromise but the British too”, said Chulalongkorn.⁴⁸ Thus, to imitate the British idea was a better choice for Siam in their interactions with the Malay states. This is why the extension of the central Thai myth and the implementation of Siamese policy was experienced more lightly and in a rather limited manner in the seven Malay states compared with the north and northeast at that time.

The limited impact of Thai kingship within the southern frontier and how they copied the British model becomes more obvious when we consider the various royal materials that were publicised on the *barami* of Thai kingship before the turn of the century. It is a fact that the narrative of the Siamese master required a long time to be absorbed and recognised by the people at the frontier and to change their mindset. Yet, the main objective of the myth of Thai king, at that time, was to introduce the existence of the idea of Thai kingship that could exceed the authority of local chiefs in the eyesight of frontier communities. The function of the national myth of Siam, therefore, was an ongoing process. Mody Boatright has referred to this as the nature of myth such that “mythical narratives are descriptions of processes, accounts not merely of what has taken place, but of what now takes place and of what will take place in the future”.⁴⁹ Therefore, the Siamese government further employed various symbolic elements to engineer and reiterate the value and *barami* of Thai kingship in its frontiers, particularly the north and northeast, to achieve its national project.

⁴⁷ Frank Swettenham, ‘Memorandum on Siamese Relations with Malay States and Recent Communications Concerning this Subject’, CO273/282, Despatches. Native States., 1 January 1902, TNA.

⁴⁸ Chulalongkorn, *The Account of Distance in Chulalongkorn’s Journey on Land and Water around Malay Peninsula 1890*, 180.

“...ให้ค่อยเป็นค่อยไปตามลำดับจนกว่าจะสมอกันได้ การจำเป็นต้องผ่อนผันเช่นนี้ข้าว่าเป็นแต่เรา ถึงอังกฤษก็ต้องเป็น” (TT)

⁴⁹ Mody C. Boatright, ‘On the Nature of Myth’, *Southwest Review* 39, no. 2 (1954): 132.

7.11: Ship procession in Patani with elephant flags decorating the Malay ships to honour the king



From: Chulalongkorn, *The Royal Correspondences of King Chulalongkorn While Visiting Malay Peninsula in 1889, 1890, 1898, 1901* [Phraratchahatthalaekha Nai Phrabatsomdet Phrachunlachomklao Chaoyuhua Rueang Sadepraphat Laem Malayu Muea r.s.108, 109, 117, 120 Ruam Si Krao-พระราชหัตถเลขาพระบาทสมเด็จพระจุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว เรื่อง เสด็จประพาสแหลมมลายูเมื่อ ร.ศ.108, 109, 117, 120 รวม 4 คราว] (Phranakhon: Rongphim Thai, 1925), 44.

7.4 A variety of symbolism: reiterating *barami* of Thai kingship in the three frontiers

The expansion of Thai kingship was marked by many formal and informal activities surrounding the life of Thai representatives and their governmental activities such as the ceremony of drinking the water of allegiance and other royal celebrations (veneration of king's images, pomp, attire and royal birthdays). They contributed to the construction of Thai kingship and the Chakri Dynasty in local public spaces and demanded loyalty to the Thai nation of the frontier communities. Although Thai kingship and its symbolism were used by Siam to establish nationalist Thai feelings in its frontier communities, the impact of royal symbolism was intensified only in the north and northeast, rather than the south where it was reproduced in an incomplete form.

7.4.1 Rituals of royalty: Thai kingship in the north and northeast

• *The ceremony of drinking the water of allegiance: ceremonial, hierarchy and power*

It was a fact that the *barami* of Thai kingship was extended in the frontiers through the ceremony of drinking the water of allegiance or *phithi thue nam phiphat satcha* (พิธีถือน้ำพิพัฒน์สัตยา).⁵⁰ In the pre-colonial times, the ceremony was conducted by tributary states annually or triennially of drinking water into which the royal sword had been dipped. It was believed that persons would die by the sword if they broke the promise. This traditional way of expressing obedience by a vassal to an overlord state had also been conducted by the chiefs of the three frontier areas and Siam in the old days. However, the ceremony was remodelled by Siamese elites to be a fusion between traditional forms of practice and a modern vision. It became a crucial ceremony practised in the frontier regions that compelled local chiefs to prove their loyalty to Thai kingship and the modern Thai nation.

The ceremony was precised over by the highest-ranking Thai commissioner in each local area. It was also attended by all senior Thai officials who laid the background for hierarchical power and the legitimacy of Thai kingship in local courts and society in general. In the process of the ceremony, the presiding Thai official would be the first person to drink the water, as the King did in central Bangkok, and water was distributed to all Thai and local officials in order of rank and seniority. By doing this, the most senior Thai officials were considered higher than local chiefs, while everyone in the society then was arranged according to their position, duties and Thai and Lao ethnic identities. The hierarchical relationship between the Thai and frontier communities in the royal ceremony of taking an oath could be categorised in a diagram as:

Thai King → the most senior Thai man → local chiefs → general Thai/ Lao officials

This ceremonial procedure thus helped Siam to highlight not only the loyalty to Thai kingship and the Thai nation, but coloniser-colonial inequalities that reiterated how the Thai rulers were superior to all frontier subjects.

⁵⁰ It was also known in Thai as *Phithi thue nam phra phiphat sattaya* (พิธีถือน้ำพระพิพัฒน์สัตยา) or *Phithi si satcha pannakan* (พิธีศรีสัตยาพนากาล)

The superiority of Thai kingship was also emphasised through other symbolism. Besides the water of allegiance, the ceremony consisted of Buddhist rites and dress code. Usually, the ritual of swearing the oath was involved with sweet-scented drinking water. With the Siamese reproduction, the water called *Thikhawu* (ที่ขมาวู) in Thai increased its sanctity by its association with the Buddhist rituals before it was distributed to the chiefs and all participants in the ceremony both in Bangkok and local areas. (in image no.7.12 showing local chiefs being summoned in Bangkok to practise the ceremony). Making the water for swearing the oath is connected to Thai Buddhist monks as the religious experts and producers of holy water (*nammon-nám-nát*). It emphasises the significance of central Thai Buddhism in this ceremony. This was confirmed by Chulalongkorn who explained the special nature of the water after it was performed consecration by Buddhist monks. “People who drink *Thikhawu* water soaked with the sword would receive auspiciousness the same as drinking holy water”, said Chulalongkorn.⁵¹ The ceremony was conducted in an important temple in each local area, and the Buddhist monks took the lead in performing the chanting of the ceremony. Therefore, Siam was able to introduce central Thai Buddhism while they forced local elites to practise the royal ceremony to respect the king.

The dress code was also implemented and dignify the ceremony. In this new pattern, all attendees were compelled to wear white: Thai-styled pants (*chongkraben*-โจ่งกระเบน) and white upper-body clothes knitted with golden thread, which style was introduced by Mongkut (see the ceremony of swearing the oath held in Chiang Mai with almost all Thai representatives wearing the Thai-styled dress image no.7.13).⁵² This formal dress became a marker of Thai cultural unity, differentiated from traditional practices of swearing the oath. It thus boosted the consecration of the ceremony to empower the modern Thai kingship and its nation as the superior position in the frontier societies. It even reconceptualised the ceremony of drinking

⁵¹ Chulalongkorn, *The Royal Twelve-Month Ceremonies*, 226.

“ว่าด้วยน้ำล้างพระแสงขันทข้อที่ขมาวู นับว่าผู้ได้กินนั้น ได้รับความสวัสดิมงคลคล้ายน้ำมนต์” (TT)

⁵² R5 M.58/93, A Report from Chao Phraya Rattanabodin (3 April 1889-24 June 1890) [Chaophraya Rattanabodin Krapbangkhomthun-ม.58/93 เจ้าพระยารัตนบดินทร์กราบบังคมทูล ฯลฯ (3 เม.ย. 108-24 มิ.ย. 108)], NA; Chulalongkorn, *The Royal Twelve-Month Ceremonies* [*Phraratchaphithi Sipsongduean*-พระราชพิธีสิบสองเดือน] (Phranakhon: Phrachan, 1953), 259.

the water of allegiance to be an event of Thai national significance, which every frontier had to conduct as required by the central authority.⁵³

The northeast was the first place to introduce the modified pattern of the drinking ceremony guided by a senior Thai representative in 1882. An official report on ceremony led by Phraya Ratchasaena at Ubon recorded that “on the day of drinking water of allegiance...I and other local officials in Ubon and its smaller provinces swear the oath of royalty...to His Majesty”.⁵⁴ This was the first time that Siam employed the ceremony to tighten the Thai king’s position and national sense in the northeastern community. Presiding over the ceremony by Thai officials was hereafter practised by the High Commissioner of Monthon Udon and Isan, Prince Prachak and Prince Sanphasitthiprasong.⁵⁵ Not long after, Chiang Mai, Lampang and Lamphun were also the first three places in the north to conduct a similar ceremony to that of the northeast in 1889, and Phrae, Toen (part of Lampang today) and Nan followed in the same direction later in 1893.⁵⁶

In this national event, it was fascinating that both the north and northeast displayed pomp in its ceremonial events and paraded the King’s image throughout the city and its surrounding area, stopping at the temple.⁵⁷ The officials also put the King’s image as an object of veneration in the highest position on an altar, turning their faces to Bangkok and taking an oath to swear their loyalty while practising the ritual. The images provided the presence of the king and made him preside over the ceremony.

⁵³ Chulalongkorn, *The Royal Twelve-Month Ceremonies*, 266.

This would take place twice in a year: in May known as *thue nam trut* (เดือนน้ำตรุศ) and in October called as *thue nam sat* (เดือนน้ำสารท).

⁵⁴ R5 M.2.12/K3, Official Reports of Ubon Ratchathani Province (1885) [Baibok Mueang Ubonratchathani-ม.2.12/ก3 ใบบอกเมืองอุบลราชธานี (จุลศักราช 1247)], NA.

“ด้วยเป็นวันรับพระราชทานน้ำพระพิพัฒน์สัตยา...ข้าพระพุทธเจ้าพร้อมด้วยหัวเวียง กรมการเมืองอุบลราชธานีและเจ้าเมืองหัวเวียง กรมการเมืองต่างๆซึ่งขึ้นกับเมืองอุบลราชธานี อ่านคำโองการสาบานให้มีความสวามิภักดิ์...ต่อสมเด็จพระเจ้าอยู่หัว” (TT)

⁵⁵ R5 M.59/28, Monthon Lao Phuan Dedicated Their Respect to the King (24 May 1895-21 February 1899) [Monthon Lao Phuan Khothawai Phraratchakuson Naikankuson Tangtang-ม.59/28 มณฑลลาวพวน ขอถวายพระราชกุศล ในการกุศลต่างๆ (24 พ.ค. 114-21 ก.พ. 118)], NA.

⁵⁶ R5 M.58/93, A Report from Chao Phraya Rattanabodin (3 April 1889-24 June 1890); R5 M.58/205, All Officials of Monthon Lao Chiang Attended the Ceremony of Drinking an Oath of Allegiance (24 January 1893-14 June 1895) [Rueang Kharatchakan Thahan Phonlaruean Monthon Laochiang Tuenamphiphatsattaya-ม.58/205 เรื่องข้าราชการฝ่ายทหารพลเรือนมณฑลลาวเฉียงเดือนน้ำพิพัฒน์สัตยา (24 ม.ค. 112-14 มิ.ย. 114)], NA.

⁵⁷ R5 M.2.14/16, Reports on Monthon Nakhon Ratchasima (8 February 1901-30 July 1909) [Rai-Ngan Monthon Nakhonratchasima-ม.2.14/16 รายงานมณฑลนครราชสีมา (8 ก.พ. 120-30 ก.ค. 128)], NA; R5 M.58/170, The Budget for Students and Forest Inspection in Phrae (12 June 1896- 18 July 1896) [Rueang Ngoenkaphahana Thi Chaomueangphrae Chatsong Nakrien Truatpamai Lae Rueangpamai-ม.58/170 เรื่องเงินค่าพาหนะที่เจ้าเมืองแพร่จัดส่งนักเรียนตรวจป่าไม้แลเรื่องป่าไม้ (12 มิ.ย. 115-18 ก.ค. 115)], NA.

The oath was also revised by Siam to invoke spirits as the witness to ‘the righteousness of King Chulalongkorn’, the Thai king who protected all officials with the kingly virtue.⁵⁸ These public processions not only boosted the meaning of Buddhist performance in the ritual by holding the ceremony in a temple but also placed the essence of the national event into the view of commoners along the public streets. The grand procedure thus was designed to communicate the supreme status of Thai kingship and represent the central power over local communities in the north and northeast. The ceremony of drinking water gradually reaffirmed that all previous local chiefs bowed to the power of Thai kingship at Bangkok. The ‘loyalty to Thai kingship’ henceforth became a central theme of Thai culture and national feeling. As it was reiterated through the circulation of king’s objects such as images and ceremonial events in the northern and northeastern regions.

7.12: The local chiefs during the ceremony of drinking the water of allegiance with King’s image in Bangkok



From: Picture Lanna, Chiang Mai University, Accessed 9 February 2019,

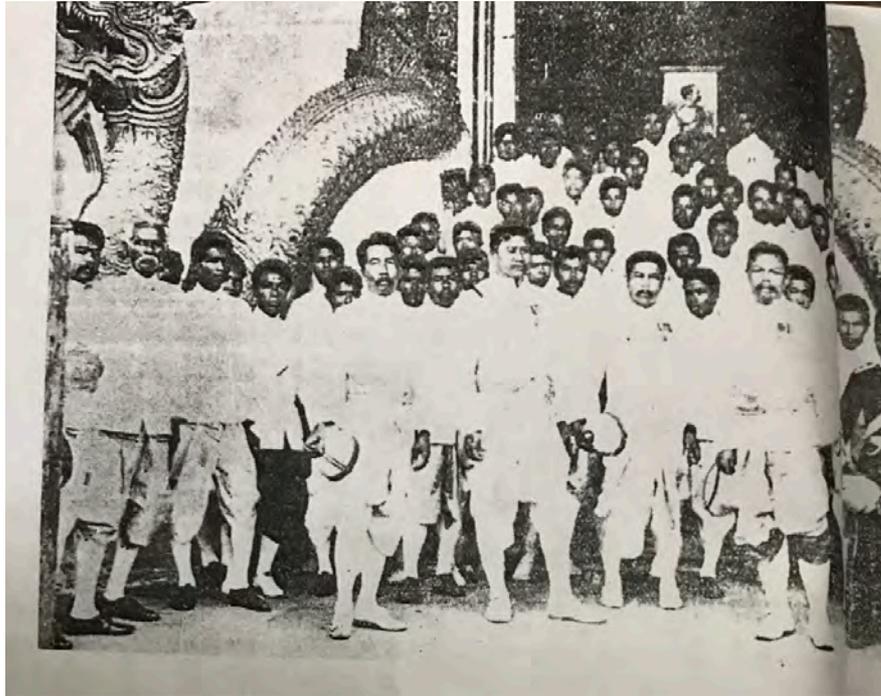
http://library.cmu.ac.th/ntic/picturelanna/detail_picturelanna.php?picture_id=1989

Back role (left to right): 1.Chao Phiriya Thepawong (Phrae chief), 2.Chao Bunwat Wongmanit (Lampang chief), 3.Abdul Hamid Halim (Sultan of Kedah), 4.Chao Inthawarorot Suriyawong (Chiang Mai chief), 5.Phraya Ammat (Seng, representative of Ministry of Interior), 6.Chao Intha Yongyotchot (Lamphun chief)

Front role (left to right): 1.Chao Suriyaphong Pharidet (Nan chief), 2.Prince Damrong, 3.Chao Utithammathorn (Champassak chief), 4.Phraya Ratchanukun (Auam, Permanent Secretary)

⁵⁸ Sommut Amornphan, *Proclamation in Royal Ceremonies Vol.1 (for Annual Ceremonies) [Prakat Phraratchaphithi Lem 1 (Samrap Phraratchaphithi Prachampi)-ประกาศพระราชพิธีเล่ม 1 (สำหรับพระราชพิธีประจำปี)]* (Phranakhon: Rongphim Thai, 1916), 26–28.

7.13: The ceremony of drinking the water of allegiance in front of the king image with officials wearing white dress at a temple, Chiang Mai



From: Boonserm Satrabhaya, *Proceedings on Lan Na Vol.1 [Sadet Lanna Lem Nueng-เสด็จล้านนา]* (Bangkok: Thipwisut Publishing, 1989), 40–41.

- *The propagation of Thai kingship as a theme of Thai national culture*

Thanks to the technological advances in printing, photography and telegraphy, new media would be used to propagate Thai kingship and its ceremonies and make it more visible in frontier communities. Photographic images of the King, *phra borommarup* (พระบรมรูป), were distributed widely in all provinces in the north, including Phrae, Chiang Mai, Lampang, Nan, Lamphun and Khun Yuam (Mae Hong Son) from 1887. Monthon Isan and Udon in the northeast received the King's images during the 1890s, during the early administrative reform in those areas. Some areas received images of the five kings of the Chakri Dynasty.⁵⁹ Even both King Chulalongkorn and Queen Saovabha Phongsri's images were distributed to outer Bangkok.⁶⁰ The broader circulation of Thai royal images became further significant when Thai officials carried themselves to administer local provinces. Some officials also asked the central

⁵⁹ R5 M.59/28, Monthon Lao Phuan Dedicated Their Respect to the King (24 May 1895-21 February 1899), NA; R5 M.58/93, A Report from Chao Phraya Rattanabodin (3 April 1889-24 June 1890)

⁶⁰ R5 M.58/155, The Request for King's Images to Be Placed in Nan and Chiang Mai (21 April 1897-9 March 1899) [Rueang Mueang Nan Mueang Chiangmai Khophraratchathan Phraboromrup Khuenpai Praditsathan-ม.58/155 เรื่อง เมืองน่าน เมืองเชียงใหม่ ขอพระราชทานพระบรมรูปขึ้นไปประดิษฐาน (21 เม.ย. 116-9 มี.ค. 118)], NA.

government to send images to them. On occasions such as New Year, the king provided his images and calendars as gifts for Thai officials, soldiers and assistants who were positioned in frontiers.⁶¹ It was interesting that they paraded the royal images in a celebration the first time they received them. A parade with full pomp in Mae Hong Son was one splendid example. The parade glorified the King's image received from Bangkok forming the procession with at least six hundred people holding guns and a huge music band for seven days and nights. While they were parading, there was heavy rain. The Thai officials became overwhelmed believing that the falling rain was a sign of the sacredness of the Thai king. They said that "since the parade day, we lived with pleasure every day because the *barami* of the king protected us".⁶² This well illustrates the *barami* of Thai kingship as a bringer of fortune within the frontier communities.

The royal images were used to publicise the *barami* of Thai kingship on several occasions in the frontier zones. Especially on the King's (and Queen's) birthday or *wan chaloem phrachonmaphansa* (วันเฉลิมพระชนมพรรษา), the royal image was installed in public spaces to gather local commoners to keep their focus on the Thai king and Thai nation. Chulalongkorn's birthday was also proclaimed as a national holiday held in Bangkok and other provincial areas in the middle of September in every year. By 1901, the Thai King's birthday was celebrated in several provinces, including Chiang Mai, Lampang, Lamphun, Phrae, Nan, Toen in the north and Sri Sakhet, Roi-et, Kalasin, Buriram, Chaiyaphum and so on in the northeast.⁶³ It became such a memorable event with fireworks, lantern decorations and entertainments in the city centre for three full days. The king also provided memorial gifts such as money, clothes and elephant flags for local officials, soldiers and ordinary people of the area.⁶⁴ By doing this, Siam transplanted Thai activity to suit the life of locals and call

⁶¹ R5 M.59/18, Given Things and Clothes to Soldiers in Monthon Lao Phuan (26 December 1893-15 July 1896) [Rueang Phraratchathan Singkhong Sueapha Kaethahan Thang Laophuan-ม.59/18 เรื่องพระราชทานสิ่งของเสื้อผ้าแก่ทหารทางลาวพวน (26 ธ.ค. 112-15 ก.ค. 115)], NA.

⁶² R5 M.58/102, Documents from the Ministry of Interior on Chiang Mai, Nan, Phrae, Lamphun and Lampang (27 July 1889-27 December 1891) [Nangsue Krasuangmahatthai Ratchakan Fai Mueang Nakhonchiangmai Nan Phrae Lamphun Lae Lampang-ม.58/102 หนังสือกระทรวงมหาดไทย ราชการฝ่ายเมืองนครเชียงใหม่ แลเมืองน่าน แพร่ ลำพูน ลำปาง (27 ก.ค. 108-27 ธ.ค. 110)], NA

"ข้าพระพุทธเจ้าทั้งปวงก็อยู่ดีมีสุขเพราะพระเดชพระคุณของพระเจ้าอยู่หัวปกเกล้าเป็นที่พึ่งอยู่ทุกวันนี้" (TT).

⁶³ R5 M.99/94, Celebrations Part 2 of Ministry of Interior (23 January 1901-9 January 1906) [Pueknueng Chalerm Phakthi Song Thang Krasuangmahatthai-ม.99/94 ปีที่ ๑ เฉลิมภาคที่ ๒ ทางกระทรวงมหาดไทย (23 ม.ค. 120-9 ม.ค. 125)], NA.

⁶⁴ R5 M.58/101, Documents from the Ministry of Interior on Chiang Mai, Nan, Phrae, Lamphun and Lampang (18 July 1889-29 July 1890) [Nangsue Krasuangmahatthai Ratchakan Fai Mueang

attention to Thai kingship. The “Report of Survey in Siam”, a full-version record of James McCarthy who explored northern and northeastern Siam during 1890-1893 gives a vivid example. He described that the King’s birthday was keenly observed in Luang Prabang, which at that time was under the Siamese influence:

That was followed by the holidays for the King’s birthday, the 20th, 21st, and 22nd of September. On this *fête* the Commissioner, a man of great taste, surpassed himself. The whole of LUANG PHRABANG was tastefully decorated and illuminated, and a handsome new wooden building, which was just completed, was converted into a reception-hall. It was thronged with people, who crowded in to see a painting of the King, much to the annoyance of Dr.Massie, who was constantly asking if it was a “divinity”. Now was he pleased with the few English words, “Long live the King,” in a conspicuous part of the decorations. Had it been in French it would, I have no doubt, been right and proper, but it had become a French *fad* to resent anything English on the ME NAM KAWNG [Mekong River].⁶⁵

The description not only depicted how prominent, grandiose, and extraordinary the circulation of Thai King’s image on Chulalongkorn’s birthday was but also that it attracted numerous people. We can also understand better about the exceptional duties of ‘the most senior Thai men or commissioners’ who represented the superiority of Thai royal rituals in areas far from central Bangkok. It even showed how the tastes of the ritual produced by Siam were seen as an imitation from ‘English’ cultural influences which then became unpleasant to a French official who was Head Pharmacist in the Pavie Mission, tasked with carving out areas on the Left Bank of the Mekong River at that time (see image of Dr.Massie and Pavie no.7.14). Hence, Thai kingship with glorified among both northern and northeastern communities, even though they were not eyewitnesses of Chulalongkorn, King of Siam.

Nakhonchiangmai Nan Phrae Lamphun Lampang-ม.58/101 หนังสือมหาชาติไทย ราชการฝ่ายเมืองนครเชียงใหม่ น่านแพร่ ลำพูน ลำปาง[18 ก.ค. 108-29 ก.ค. 109]], NA.

⁶⁵ James McCarthy, *An Englishman’s Siamese Journals, 1890-1893 (Report of a Survey in Siam, Published Anonymously in London, in 1895 for Private Circulation)* (Bangkok: Siam Media International Books, 1983), 225.

7.14: Dr Massie, Head Pharmacist in the Pavie Mission, with his white dress in the middle and Auguste Pavie on his right side



Fig. 45 — Cambodgiens. MM. Pavie, Massie, général Bégin, Messier de Saint-James, Garanger, aide de camp et Vaele.

From: Pavie Auguste, *Mission Pavie Indo-Chine 1879-1895: Géographie et Voyages Vol. 7, Journal de Marche (1888-1889); Evenements Du Siam (1891-1893)* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1919), 127.

The imagination of the *barami* of Thai kingship can also be further noticed by events conducted by Thai officials in the north and northeast. As we have already seen in the case of Dara Rasmi's daughter, the ceremonial procedure of swearing an oath and the King's birthday helped to convey Thai national culture and unity symbolically. In the north, there were noticeable parades held during the journey of the King, royal family members, Thai elites and Thai officials. The huge parade was staged to glorify Thai kingship and Thai power, and this mode of advancing Thai dominance can be seen in several situations. The grand pomposity of the royal commissioner in Chiang Mai in 1870, the first time that Siam engaged with the north, was recorded by an American Presbyterian, Daniel McGilvary. He noted that, when a royal commissioner, *khaluang*, arrived with two foreigners and a train of eighteen elephants and fifty attendants, "their coming with a royal commissioner and with a 'Golden Seal' as the royal letter is called...the commissioner immediately notified the Prince [of Chiang Mai] of his arrival with the 'Golden Seal'. Nine O'clock next morning was named as the hour for the audience...an officer was sent with a palanquin to

escort the ‘Golden Seal’ under the golden umbrella to the palace”.⁶⁶ The record reveals how people of the north witnessed an extraordinary arrival of the Siamese procession with political authority. Moreover, the visit of Thai representatives to the north was prepared with great diligence. Prince Pichit, the first high commissioner of Chiang Mai and Chulalongkorn’s half-brother, and his followers who passed by Lampang to Chiang Mai received a warm reception with thousands of rice baskets, ducks and valuable food. “One or two such visits would cause a famine in the land”, criticised Holt Hallett, a British railway engineer, who travelled to northern Siam and shed light on how luxurious and grandiose the preparation for the Thai state visits, which was not normally seen in the daily life of locals.⁶⁷

Similar to the northeast, the intention of the Siamese government was to create a huge parade for Prince Pichit when he first went to the northeast as a High commissioner in 1891. In his procession, there were two hundred followers, fifty peddlers, sixty carts, fifteen elephants, forty oxen and a huge number of armaments.⁶⁸ It was the prince’s intention to avoid any insult and to glorify the Thai King in the eyes of the French in Indochina and particularly among the ethnic Lao, along the route to the northeast.⁶⁹ As time passed, royal events and pomp transplanted the *barami* of the Thai ruler (*Chao Thai*-เจ้าไทย) and increased hierarchical relationships among local northeastern people. A decade later from the first day of arrival of royal Thai elites in the 1890s, there were crowds of people along Prince Damrong’s journeys. The commoners offered flowers, joss sticks and candles to salute the Prince when he visited the northeast in 1906 (see image no.7.15).⁷⁰ He experienced that “many people sat and besieged me everywhere when I had a short visit. Someone paid respect to me with their palms pressed together. Someone brought me an oblation. Someone

⁶⁶ McGilvary, *A Half Century Among the Siamese and the Lao :An Autobiography*, 121–22.

⁶⁷ Hallett, *A Thousand Miles on An Elephant in the Shan States*, 283.

⁶⁸ Paitoon Meekusol, ‘Provincial Reform in Monthon Isan during the Period When Prince Sanphasitthiprasong Was High Commissioner [Kanpatirup Kanpokkhong Monthon Isan Samaitthi Phrachaoboromwongthoe Kromluang Sanphasitthiprasong Songpen Khaluangyai (Pho.so.2436-2453)-การปฏิรูปการปกครองมณฑลอิสานสมัยที่พระเจ้าบรมวงศ์เธอกรมหลวงสรรพลัทธิตธิประสงคฺ์ทรงเป็นข้าหลวงใหญ่ (พ.ศ.2436-2453)]’ (MA thesis, College of Education, 1972), 29–30.

The author cited documents from Archives of Thailand which presently are no longer open for access.

⁶⁹ Meekusol, 29.

⁷⁰ Damrong Rajanubhab, *The Travel Stories Part 4: Nakhon Ratchasima Circle, Udon Circle and Roi-et Circle [Rueang Thiao Thitangtang Phak Si: Waduai Monthon Nakhonratchasima Monthon Udon Lae Monthon Roi-et-เรื่องเที่ยวที่ต่างๆ ภาคที่ 4 ว่าด้วยมณฑลนครราชสีมา มณฑลอุดร และมณฑลร้อยเอ็ด]* (Phranakhon: Sophonphiphatthanakon, 1923), 23, 48.

asked me to make holy water for them”.⁷¹ These acts show how local people honoured the Thai ruler as they now equated this sacred ruler with higher merit and *barami*. Therefore, the rituals surrounding the Thai king helped the Siamese government to shape the real figure of the Thai king and Thai national culture to be seen publicly. It, thus, illustrated the transforming perception of northern and northeastern communities in understanding and absorbing the *barami* of Thai kingship as the configuration of Thai national culture. Nevertheless, there was a far different result in the reinforcing of the royal Thai ceremony and royal materials in the south, compared to both the north and the northeast.

7.15: Prince Damrong visited the northeast (Monthon Udon) with people saluting him, c.1906



From: Damrong Rajanubhab, *Provincial Inspection of Prince Damrong Rajanubhab [Kan Sadet Truat Huamueang Khong Somdet Kromphraya Damrong Rachanuphab-การเสด็จตรวจราชการหัวเมืองของสมเด็จพระเจ้าบรมวงศ์เธอกรมพระยาดำรงราชานุภาพ]* (Bangkok: Prince Damrong Rajanuphap Institute, 2012), 559.

⁷¹ Rajanubhab, *Historical Anecdotes*, 396–97.

“เวลาไปหยุดพักที่ไหน พวกราษฎรก็พากันมานั่งห้อมล้อมรอบข้าง บางคนก็มาไหว้ด้วยมือเปล่า บางคนมีเครื่องสักการะมาด้วย บางคนก็ถือเอาน้ำใส่ขันมาขอให้ทำน้มนต์” (TT)

7.4.2 Ceremony and royal items: the silence of Thai royal rituals in the south

In contrast to the ceremony of taking an oath that was prominent in the north and northeast, the scope for similar activities in the south was limited. Similar to the mythic and symbolic extension of Thai power, the ceremony in the southern region was rather less overpowering and conducted in the traditional southern way of practice, instead of forging it into the Thai styled pattern. “In Patani, it was conducted in a quiet way by taking water to the temple, passing the chanting and then taking an oath”, remarked Chulalongkorn.⁷² His complaint gives us a sense that there was no pomp or glorified parade of the Thai king. There was no senior Thai man who orchestrated the ceremony in the local streets. The silent process was continued until 1898 when Phraya Sukhum led a Thai-style ceremony. Yet, the Buddhist ritual denied by local chiefs had never been significant in any ceremonial process.⁷³ The royal ceremony was met with silence by the Malay community. These conditions revealed the outcome of the royal ritual of Thai kingship that confronted with opposition when it attempted to force Thai national culture in the southern sphere. This also found in the propagation of Thai kingship through parades, pomp and royal images.

In fact, the Siamese rulers expected to expand these royal ceremonies and the king’s symbolic power into the south as they did in the other frontier areas. In Chulalongkorn’s travelling diary to the Malay Peninsula in 1890,⁷⁴ he recorded that whenever he found his images decorated in local pavilions or staterooms he visited. It indicated that the king himself and his government also paid attention to the welcome and local gestures, and were pleased to see royal materials displayed in these local decorations and public places. In the king’s record, it was found that his images were widely dispersed and displayed throughout the northern part of Southern Siam such as Ranong, Phang Nga and Nakhon Si Thammarat. However, his images were hardly seen in the seven Malay states, except only in the house of the Patani chief.⁷⁵ While twenty students sang the royal anthem to salute the king when he

⁷² Chulalongkorn, *The Royal Twelve-Month Ceremonies*, 266.

“ที่ห้องอยู่อย่างเช่นเมืองตานี เมื่อถึงวันกำหนดก็นำกัณฑ์พาน้ำไปที่วัด พระสงฆ์สวดพาหุงเสียดหนึ่งแล้วก็ถือน้ำกันก็มี” (TT)

⁷³ ‘Letter from Tunku Abdul Kadir Kamarsedin to Governor Sir F. Swettenham on 13 August 1901’, CO273/282, Despatches. Native States., 1 January 1902, TNA.

⁷⁴ Chulalongkorn, *The Account of Distance in Chulalongkorn’s Journey on Land and Water around Malay Peninsula 1890*.

⁷⁵ R5 M.99/37, Phraya Si Thammarat Requested the King’s Image (11 June 1895) [Phraya Sri Thammarat Kho Phrarachathan Phraboromrup-ม.99/37 พระยาศรีธรรมราชขอพระราชทานพระบรมรูป (11 มิ.ย. 114)],

visited the northern zone of the south, it was difficult to notice the significance of royal Thai symbols in the Malay States of the southernmost area.⁷⁶ Chulalongkorn's welcome in 1896, 1898 and 1900 also continued the lesser power of Thai kingship in the south. There was no representation of Thai influence in the procedures, accessories, objects and practices to salute the king in the daily life of Malay locals. Instead, the Raja of the Malay states preferred to welcome the King in the Malay style, which was a typical welcome in other Malay states such as Kelantan and Terengganu. They dressed up in Malay attire, created white marquees and arranged many soldiers with spears along the road along which the king would travel (images no.7.16-7.17).⁷⁷ The diffusion of royal items and Thai culture was as a common pattern in the northern part of the south but was rarely seen in the Malay southernmost frontier.

The inaccessibility of Thai royal influences, both the mythical idea and materials was partly a consequence of the limitation of the colonial discourse concerning Islamic and Malay tolerance that Siam intentionally copied from the policy of British Malaya.⁷⁸ This led to the limited capacity of Siam to construct a Thai kingship that adhered to Buddhism in the Malay communities. The limitation enabled 'the partial reform' of Siam during the Chulalongkorn era that will be more conspicuous with further investigation of the discourse of mimicry of Siam in the case of the Malay southern community.

NA; Chulalongkorn, *The Account of Distance in Chulalongkorn's Journey on Land and Water around Malay Peninsula 1890*, 40, 53, 121.

⁷⁶ Chulalongkorn, *The Royal Correspondences of King Chulalongkorn While Visiting Malay Peninsula in 1889, 1890, 1898, 1901* [Phraratchahatthalaekha Nai Phrabatsomdet Phrachunlachomklao Chaoyuhua Rueang Sadetpraphat Laem Malayu Muea r.s.108, 109, 117, 120 Ruam Si Krao-พระราชหัตถเลขาพระบาทสมเด็จพระจุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว เรื่อง เสด็จประพาสแหลมมลายูเมื่อ ร.ศ.108, 109, 117, 120 รวม 4 คราว] (Phranakhon: Rongphim Thai, 1925), 12.

⁷⁷ *A Chronicle of King Chulalongkorn's Journey to Malay Peninsula in 1890, 1898, 1900, 1905 and 1909* [Chotmai het Phrabatsomdet Phrachunlachomklao Chaoyuhua Rueang Sadetpraphat Laem Malayu Muea r.s.109, 117, 119, 124, 128 Ruam Ha Krao-จดหมายเหตุพระบาทสมเด็จพระจุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว เสด็จประพาสแหลมมลายู ร.ศ.109, 117, 119, 124, 128 รวม 5 คราว] (Phranakhon: Sophonphipatthanakon, 1924), 85.

⁷⁸ Chulalongkorn, *The Account of Distance in Chulalongkorn's Journey on Land and Water around Malay Peninsula 1890*, 180.

7.16: The Malay-style welcome in Terengganu which typified other Malay provinces in southern Siam



From: Chulalongkorn, *Royal Correspondences of King Chulalongkorn While Visiting Malay Peninsula in 1889, 1890, 1898, 1901* [Phraratchahatthalaekha Nai Phrabat Somdet Phra Chunlachomklao Chaoyuhua Rueang Sadet Praphat Laem Malayu Muea Ro So 108, 109, 117, 120 Ruam Si Krao-พระราชหัตถเลขาพระบาทสมเด็จพระจุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว เรื่อง เสด็จประพาสแหลมมลายูเมื่อ ร.ศ.108, 109, 117, 120 รวม 4 คราว] (Phranakhon: Rongphim Thai, 1925), 140.

7.17: The Malay-style welcome with Malay attires, white marquees and soldiers with spheres along the road that the Siamese king passed



From: Chulalongkorn, *Royal Correspondences of King Chulalongkorn While Visiting Malay Peninsula in 1889, 1890, 1898, 1901* [Phraratchahatthalaekha Nai Phrabat Somdet Phra Chunlachomklao Chaoyuhua Rueang Sadet Praphat Laem Malayu Muea Ro So 108, 109, 117, 120 Ruam Si Krao-พระราชหัตถเลขาพระบาทสมเด็จพระจุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว เรื่อง เสด็จประพาสแหลมมลายูเมื่อ ร.ศ.108, 109, 117, 120 รวม 4 คราว] (Phranakhon: Rongphim Thai, 1925), 144.

7.5 The partial reform of Siam: the limitation of its colonial strength in the south

Islamic religious practice was one of the primary limitations preventing Siam from being fully successful in the southern area. It was known that British policy towards the Federated Malay States (FMS), Pahang, Selangor, Perak and Negeri Sembilan, promoted the Resident as the actual ruler, whereas the local Malay chiefs were turned into executors of the British reform programme. However, an exception of British rule over the Malay States was that British residents had to “be asked and acted upon on all questions other than those touching Malay religion and custom” as enacted in the Pangkor Treaty in 1874 between the British and Sultan of Perak.⁷⁹ Although this was deemed to be a compromise and show of tolerance towards Islamic and Malay customs, it indeed guaranteed the British administration to secure the peace among Malay people.⁸⁰ Thus, the Christian missions were allowed to work, but they were not directly encouraged in the Malay states and societies. Afterwards, the strategic policy of the British ruler became a model for Siamese policy towards the seven Malay principalities.

To preserve Islamic belief and Malay customs in the south, they were protected in the Constitution Act of Court of 1895/r.s.114. This exempted the south from developing Thai customary law.⁸¹ Tamara Loos provides an explanation regarding the colonial force of the Islamic court in the southern Malay regions created by Bangkok when she states that “the Islamic courts revealed the colonial sensibilities of Siam’s leaders who sought to show that they too could protect “native” customs of a population they ruled”.⁸² Hence, it was the strategy to preserve the Siamese outlook of colonial toleration concerning the Islamic law in southern Siam, which did not apply to the north and the northeast.

⁷⁹ Pangkor Treaty (20 January 1874) in J. de V. Allen, A. J. Stockwell, and L. R. Wright, eds., *A Collection of Treaties and Other Documents Affecting the States of Malaysia, 1761-1963* (London: New York: Oceana Publications, 1981), 390–92.

⁸⁰ Gordon P. Means, ‘The Role of Islam in the Political Development of Malaysia’, *Comparative Politics* 1, no. 2 (1969): 276.

⁸¹ ‘The Regulations for Administration of the Seven Malay Principalities, 1901 [Kotkhobangkap Samrap Phokkrong Boriwen Chethuamueang-กฎข้อบังคับสำหรับปกครองบริเวณเจ็ดหัวเมือง ร.ศ.120]’, RG, 1901.

⁸² Tamara Loos, ‘Competitive Colonialisms: Siam and the Malay Muslim South’ in Harrison and Jackson, eds., *The Ambiguous Allure of the West: Traces of the Colonial in Thailand*, 79.

In the north and northeast, the Siamese rulers realised that the traditional legal system of Siam contained outdated functions and needed to be replaced with modern, civilised laws and which were more convenient to the people. A uniform national legal system was implemented throughout the outlying regions of Siam such as the north and the northeast. The national system comprised of three court levels: circle court, provincial court and district court from higher to lower levels. It also had a special court for any specific appeals. The circle and provincial courts were run by at least three chief judges and/or judges, while the district court had one judge. The Siamese government appointed all of them.⁸³ The new court system was then introduced to the north and northeast between 1898-1900.⁸⁴ Throughout this time, there were some obstacles such as shortage of qualified judges in some local areas, inconvenient communication due to different languages (including Thai and Lao), a lack of knowledge of the new system and the existence of political patronage between local chiefs and disputants.⁸⁵ The appointed commissioners were obstructed by these factors in following the new regulations fully. However, although there were hardships for Siam to fulfil its ambition in the northern and northeastern zones within a short period, both areas were gradually adjusted to fit the same standard of national law and system.

In contrast, to preserve some regulations of Islamic civil law, known as Sharia law, and imitate the British model became ‘the commitment of royal policy towards the Malays throughout the Chulalongkorn era. The king and his advisors stated that the local legal system in the south was based on Islam. The transformations of the law which had been enforced in the north and the northeast, would have created problems among Malay people regarding their understanding of the rationale and intentions of this change. Therefore, as Damrong admitted, “we decided to continue the Islamic

⁸³ R5 Y.8/4, The Regulations of Provincial Court [Phrathammanun San Huamueang-พระธรรมนูญศาลหัวเมือง], NA.

⁸⁴ R5 Y.8/22, Damrong Requested for Approval to Apply Legal System in Monthon Udon (24-27 May 1900) [Rueang Krom Damrong Kho Phraboromrathanuyat Hai San Monthonfainuea Chai Phraratchabanyat Withi Phicharanakwam Aya Mithotluang-ย.8/22 เรื่องกรมหลวงดำรงขอพระบรมราชานุญาตให้ศาลมณฑลฝ่ายเหนือใช้พระราชบัญญัติวิธีพิจารณาความอาญามีโทษหลวง (24-27 พ.ค. 119)], NA; R5 Y.8/7, The Reports of Ministry of Interior on the Establishment of Provincial Court and Judges (12 September 1895-23 December 1900) [Nangsue Ratchakan Krasuangmahatthai Rueangchattang San Huamueang Lae Phuphiphaksa-ย.8/7 หนังสือราชการกระทรวงมหาดไทย เรื่องจัดตั้งศาลหัวเมือง แลผู้พิพากษา (12 ก.ย. 115-23 ธ.ค. 119)], NA.

⁸⁵ R5 Y.8/7, The Reports of Ministry of Interior on the Establishment of Provincial Court and Judges (12 September 1895-23 December 1900).

court system...we could resolve in the future if it did not work”.⁸⁶ Accordingly, this led to the existence of the Islamic legal system for issues that were related to marriage, divorce and inheritance for Muslims in the south in particular.

The Siamese outlook of colonial toleration for Muslims was also illustrated several times in the first draft of the ‘Regulations for Provincial Court in Seven Malay Principalities, 1897/r.s.116’. Chulalongkorn highlighted that the Siamese policies should be excepted for the Islamic religion and ethnic Malay issues.⁸⁷ Phraya Sukhum, the first special governor, with experience in the southern zone, also recommended a point of compromise. He suggested that it would be better to allow five or six *Tokali*, who specialised in Islamic learning by themselves, to sue the lawsuits, and all their decisions should be final. “Traditionally, Muslim chiefs always avoided contacting with Thai officials...it would be detestable if the decision of the Muslim judges needed approval from the Thai officials”, said Sukhum.⁸⁸ Then, the final version of the regulations provided the choices for both Muslim disputants or only Muslim defendants to sue their lawsuits based on religious doctrine, and the disputants could choose a Muslim judge or *Tokali* by themselves.⁸⁹

They all reflected the different vision of Siamese elites towards Malays in the south during the period of state expansion. Siam attempted to preserve the special status, and this is why there was no fierce reinforcement to make them appear to honour the Thai king. The drinking of water allegiance was essentially a lifeless ceremony, and the king’s ritual artefacts and other pomp were still arranged with Malay customs. Therefore, the limitation of the Siamese colonial discourse was essential to differentiate the consequences of Thai state expansion regarding Thai kingship and its symbolism between the south and the northern and northeastern communities.

⁸⁶ R5 M.2.14/74, An Inspection in the South of the Head of Ministry of Interior (7 December 1896) [Saenabodi Krasuangmahatthai Sadettruat Ratchakan Huamueangpaktai-ม.2.14/74 เสนาบดีกระทรวงมหาดไทย เสด็จตรวจราชการหัวเมืองปักษ์ใต้ (7 ธ.ค. 115)], NA.

“จึงตกลงให้เวลาข้าสวนไต่สวนวิธีปกครองอย่างแยกให้เข้าใจอย่างหนึ่งก่อน การอย่างใดไม่ค่อยคิดแก้ไขตั้งแบบแผนต่อไป” (TT)

⁸⁷ R5 M.1.3/4, Regulations for Provincial Court in Seven Malay Principalities (6 February-1 March 1897) [Rueang Khobangkhap San Huamueang Khaek Chetmueang-ม.1.3/4 เรื่องขอบังคับศาลหัวเมืองแขก 7 เมือง (6 ก.พ.-1 มี.ค.116)], NA.

⁸⁸ R5 M.1.3/4.

“อีกประการหนึ่งธรรมเนียมเจ้าเมืองแขกมักจะร้องรักษาอำนาจอยู่ว่า การสิ่งใดที่ไม่ควรให้ถึงข้าหลวงก็ไม่อยากให้ถึง ในข้อที่สั่งให้เรียงคำตัดสินมาเสนอข้าหลวง คงจะเป็นข้อที่มีความรังเกียจเป็นอันมาก” (TT)

⁸⁹ ‘The Regulations for Administration of the Seven Malay Principalities, 1901.

Other limitations that led to the partial reform of Siam concerning Buddhism will be further discussed in the next chapter.

Conclusion

The provincial administration was a response to British and French expansion along the borders of Siam and was viewed as a Siamese mechanism for developing civilisation and modernity in these areas.⁹⁰ Later, it became the primary tool to form a single Thai unit under Bangkok. However, when we compare the expansion of Thai kingship as a facet of this reform into the three frontiers in more depth, it created different outcomes and effects. It was expanded with strength in the north and the northeast to replace local forms with forms of Thai national culture. The myth of sibling relationship in both regions was a Thai power that borrowed local myths and replaced them with a new national narrative of Thai kingship. The myth came into reality by its repetition within the administrative policies of the state and through the actions of Thai representatives. Also, cultural materials of Thai kingship encouraged a feeling of the significance of the Thai king both in the north and northeast. Nonetheless, the south was far from accepting the value of Thai kingship, except through the historical narrative of the unequal political relationship between the Siamese ruler and the Malay chiefs. This was because Siam imitated the policy of Islamic religious tolerance from the British. It resulted in limitations upon the degree to which an expanding Thai kingship could be enacted. Partial rather than unitary reform then emerged from the multiple-level expansion of Siam at that time. This strategic limitation became a significant reason why Siam had difficulties in extending not only Thai kingship but also central Thai Buddhism in the three frontiers. For this reason, therefore, it is necessary to turn now to understand the definition of central Thai Buddhism which was another primary element of Thai national culture that was expanded in the frontiers at that time.

⁹⁰ 'Inclosure 2 no.78 from Mr Lyle to Mr Black (Nan in December 1986)', 1 May 1900, IOR/L/PS/20/FO80/3, FCRAS Part XII 1900, BL.

CHAPTER 8: SOCIETY AND RELIGION IN THE FRONTIERS IN THE CONTEXT OF STATE EXPANSION

Introduction

The readjustment of modern Thai kingship and its performance in the three frontiers of Siam, albeit with some different levels and limited expansion, in previous chapters, tells us that the modern Thai kingship and its symbolic objects could not operate without taking the fundamental knowledge of religious functions such as the *barami* concept and Buddhist practices into account. It was not only Thai kingship that helped Siam to extend its capacity to annex the frontiers. Buddhism was part of Thai national culture, serving as the official or state religion of Siam. The official Buddhism was essential to nurture Thai kingship and unite a feeling of Thai nationalism. However, the complexity of local superstitious beliefs was a central issue of the Buddhist state expansion to the frontier societies of the north, the northeast and the south that contained diverse local spiritual practices (as discussed in Chapter 5). The Siamese government had to engage with various religions such as the different practices of Theravada Buddhism in the north and northeast and the Islamic faith in the south. Therefore, it is interesting to explore how local beliefs and practices were dealt with by the Siamese, and how central Thai Buddhism influenced local peoples in these frontiers during the Chulalongkorn era.

The comparisons of the symbolism of central Thai Buddhism that extended beyond the Bangkok centre into the three frontier areas of Siam is the primary purpose of this chapter. The way in which Buddhist symbols and materials – religious holidays and Buddhist services, prayer books and Pali scripts, temple was function and approval of monastic boundary – became powerful tools that worked in tandem with the modern Thai kingship to incorporate the three distinctive frontiers into the Thai nation state. It also examines how an educational system was developed by Siam to support the religious mission of Thai Buddhist monks who were dispatched and carried various symbols and materials with them to promote Thai state Buddhism as Thai national culture into the frontier communities.

By doing this, it suggests that ‘the partial reform’ of Siam as discussed in chapter 7 and will be further clarified in this chapter through the expansion of the Thai state Buddhism. The impact is seen in the three local circumstances in varying degrees.

Siam chose to transform the northeast with direct enforcement and decisiveness. Religious holidays, prayer books and the Pali language, monastic boundary, Thammayut version of monastic discipline and education were expanded significantly in the northeast. In contrast, the north and the south were less influenced by central Thai Buddhism. The reason that Siam influenced the north with compromise was due to a lack of knowledge of local contexts, whereas the Siamese government compromised in the south because of the Malay and Islamic toleration as part of the Siamese discourse. It, therefore, reiterated that the Buddhist idea as one of the cultural elements of the Thai nation in the Chulalongkorn period was dynamic and was modified over time and should not be understood as a single strategic unit of state expansion. While it was expected that the expansion was less successful in the south, evidence in the north and northeast also showed differences. We should understand the history of this period as one of continued differentiation with elements of fragmentation rather than as unitary national history. In this analysis we need to track the historical relationship of Mongkut and Dhammayuttika Nikaya or Thammayut (hereafter Thammayut).¹ It is first necessary to comprehend the continuous transformation of central Thai Buddhism, which was one of the main tools during the Chulalongkorn era in extending its cultural symbolism to the three frontiers.

8.1 Tracking the historical backdrop of central Thai Buddhism along the lines of Thammayut sect

During the Chulalongkorn reign, Theravada Buddhism became one of the cores of Thai national culture that reflected nationalism and identity. Although the state-sponsored Buddhism was officially enacted in the Sangha Act of 1902, the idea of a central Thai Buddhism gradually developed along the lines of Thammayut before the proclamation. Known for its Sangha reform of the mid-nineteenth century, it was initiated by King Mongkut or Vajirayana Bhikkhu when he entered the monkhood at Wat Mahathat in 1824. After travelling to several places all around Siam and meeting with locals, Europeans and Christian missionaries, the experiences caused Vajirayana to rethink of orthodoxy and religious practices relating to Theravada Buddhism. He adopted methods of Christian Protestant propagation and modern perception as a

¹ Thammayut referred to “in accordance with teachings of Buddha”

guideline to refine the idea of Buddhism. Wat Bowon then became the first centre of the Buddhist reform in 1836.²

Vajirayana received inspiration from a Mon monk, Phra Sumetmuni, who had been ordained in Sinhalese tradition when he was ordained. Vajirayana decided to purify Theravada Buddhism known now as Thammayut by following the interpretation of the Vinaya according to Sinhalese.³ It was deemed to be the oldest version of Theravada Buddhist ways of practice rooted in Siamese society. As Vajirayana claimed that “because of the intention of Thammayut learners...[the monks] found no other sect was older and better than the Sinhalese Buddhism...[we] see the way of Ramanwong [Mon Buddhism] preaching is original and resembles Sinhalese”.⁴ Then Mon lineage, which adhered to the strict Sinhalese Vinaya in Vajirayana’s view, became the role model for Theravada Buddhism of the Thammayut fraternity that is differentiated from the main body of the Thai sangha known as Maha Nikaya. Vajirayana as a leading figure questioned and refined the Buddhist religion to be more rational as seen in his writings on Buddhism. He criticises that someone who claims to be a Buddhist, they should comprehend Buddhist values and the benefits of being Buddhist. Today, the behave of Buddhists’ behaviours are crude and unconscious, and so they are Buddhists because of their parents. He continued that “they provide alms to someone who wears yellow saffron because they expect to receive merit. They do it without conscious thought of what merit is and how to behave to receive merit...”⁵ His rational vision along those lines led to the refinement of the Buddhist doctrine to remove some supernatural elements.

² Vajirananavarorasa, *Sects and Biographies of Monks [Rueang Nikaya Lae Thaeraprawat-เรื่องนิกายของสมเด็จพระเจ้าบรมวงศ์เธอ กรมพระยาวชิรญาณวโรรส: เถระประวัติของสมเด็จพระพุฒาจารย์ (เขียบ) แลสมเด็จพระพุทธโฆษาจารย์ (ฤทธิ)]* (Phranakhon: Sammit, 1914), 23.

³ Chulalongkorn and Mongkut, *Preaching Royal Biography and Royal Writing of Mongkut on Buddhism [Thetsana Phraratchaprawat Lae Phraratchaniphon Bangrueang Nai Phrabatsomdet Phrachomklao Chaoyuhua Rueang Phraphuttasatsana-เทศนาพระราชประวัติและพระราชนิพนธ์บางเรื่องในพระจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัวเรื่องพระพุทธศาสนา]* (Bangkok: Thai Kasem, 1980), 7.

⁴ Mongkut, *The Mission of Thammayuttika Monks to Langka [Samanasassana Phrathera Thammayuttika Mipaiyang Langkathaweep-สมณศาสน พระเถระธรรมยุติกามีไปยังลังกาทวีป]* (Phranakhon: Bamrungnukunkit, 1925), 46.

“พวกข้าพเจ้าขอออกความประสงค์ของเหล่าบัณฑิตผู้ธรรมยุติกาตามเป็นจริงโดยสังเขปในที่นี้ ...หากไม่ได้วงศ์เก่าเช่นนั้น (สีหวงศ์) ไม่เห็นวงศ์อื่นดีกว่า ก็ตั้งอยู่ในรามัญวงศ์ที่นำไปแล้วแต่สีหวงศ์เท่านั้นเทียว สำคัญอยู่ที่วงศ์นั้นว่าประเสริฐกว่าวงศ์ทั้งปวง ด้วยความที่มีผู้นำไปแต่สีหทวีปในกาลก่อนบ้าง ด้วยความที่วิธีปลงเสียดังอักขระของรามัญบัณฑิตนี้ใกล้เคียงสีหบ้าง” (TT)

⁵ Chulalongkorn and Mongkut, *Preaching Royal Biography and Royal Writing of Mongkut on Buddhism*, 48.

“ได้อินเขาว่าได้ให้ข้าของแก่นุ่งเหลืองหมเหลืองได้บุญเท่านั้นแล้วก็ให้ไป ไม่ได้ตริกรตรงว่าบุญนั้นอย่างไร เพราะทำอย่างไรจึงจะได้บุญ...” (TT)

The fundamentals of the Thammayut doctrine was an attempt to refine and tighten regulations for the monastic community (Vinaya or *winai*-วินัย). The focus on Pali texts, the sacred and ancient scripts, was revived to be a crucial part of Buddhist chanting in the Thammayut version. Vajirayana also was a role model in the proficiency of Pali reciting and a prominent characteristic of Thammayut monks.⁶ In contrast, Thammayut reformers were dissatisfied with the practice of ascetic meditation to develop mystical prowess by local monks, known as *Wipatsana* (วิปัสสนา). The isolation of wandering forest monks was considered as of lesser significance compared to the skill of reciting Pali texts and permanent stay in a temple. The Thammayut way of dressing with the Mon-style robe, which covering one shoulder only or *hom waek* (หม้อแหวก), also differed from the previous practices known as *hom klum* (หม้อคลุม) that covered both shoulders. This Thammayut practice exemplified not only the authentic Thai Buddhist dress code but also the absolute power and arrogance of Thammayut monks.⁷ For lay people, Thammayut doctrine was also remade for a simpler way of practice. Laymen were to rely on the Triple gems (*phrarattana trai*-พระรัตนตรัย)⁸—the Buddha (พระพุทธ-the enlightened one), the Dhamma (พระธรรม-Buddha’s teachings) and the Sangha (พระสงฆ์-monastic community), keep the Five Precepts (ศีลห้า)⁹ and perform meritorious actions at the temple (*wat*-วัด) or monastery. Through these practices, laymen then could expect happiness in the current life rather than associating with superstition and future life. All changes for both the Sangha and lay communities had come under the strict rules of the Thammayut fraternity.¹⁰ It was felt necessary by Thammayut reformers to question and erase irrational functions that were the critical reform of the Thammayut development from the early nineteenth century.

Yet, there was still an other side of the coin. Vajirayana, who later became King Mongkut, still preserved some irrational elements such as ‘supernatural beings’ or

⁶ Damrong Rajanubhab, *On King Mongkut*, 20–21.

⁷ Craig J. Reynolds, ‘The Buddhist Monkhood in Nineteenth Century Thailand’, 97.

⁸ Mongkut, *Relating to Buddhist Affairs and Describing Dhamma Spell [Waduai Kan Nai Phraphutthasatsana Lae Khathathambanyai- ว่าด้วยการในพระพุทธศาสนาและคาถาธรรมบรรยาย]*, 4th ed. (Phranakhon: Sammit, 1971), 2.

⁹ The Five Precepts: refrain from (1) killing, (2) stealing, (3) adultery, (4) telling a lie and (5) intoxicant

¹⁰ Vajiranavarorasa, *Sects and Biographies of Monks*, 24.

what Westerners refer to as ‘mythology’,¹¹ rather than removing them from the modern Thai Buddhism. The western rational vision adapted in the Buddhist reform was fused with traditional Buddhist ideas, which became obvious in the domain of *Barami* in relation to Thai kingship as will be discussed in the following section.

8.2 Buddhism that encouraged *barami* of the Thai Kingship

When Vajirayana left his monkhood career and ascended the throne as King Mongkut in 1851, some traditional rites including supernatural elements increasingly compromised the attempts for a purified Buddhism. It seemed that the responsibilities of monkhood and being the king of a nation brought about complex ideas of Buddhism in Mongkut’s mind. He had to decide between continuing the rigorous Buddhist reform order in the field of religion and preserving traditional Buddhist beliefs such as *barami* that supported the king’s position as the matter of the world. As we have seen in Mongkut’s writing on the Buddha’s biography. He contested that Gautama Buddha was a human being similar to everyone, but the Buddha contained extraordinary wisdom to rescue other lives. His wisdom originated from the account of merit accumulated in his previous lives.¹² In his opinion, on the one hand, the Buddha was human on earth rather than a god descended from heaven as told in the old version of the story. On the other hand, the concept of *barami* originated from merit making remained alive in the King’s notion. A well-known source that provided how the *barami* concept still flourished in the Siamese court at this time is *Kitchanukit* (A Book Explaining Various Things) written in 1867 by Thiphakorawong, who was an advisor of Mongkut.¹³ Scholars working on Thai state Buddhism have noted that the book provided an insight of Siamese elites who supported the shift from ‘traditional’ to ‘modern’ vision regarding the modern Buddhist idea.¹⁴ A hundred pages of *Kitchanukit* were dedicated to replace the traditional religious cosmology (as discussed in Chapter 6) with western science and rational understandings. He pointed out that the phenomena of rain-drought, day-

¹¹ Sathiankoset (Anuman Rajadhon), *Narrative of Three Worlds According to King Ruang*, 5.

¹² ‘Mongkut’s writing on instructions for practitioners to be appropriated’ in Chulalongkorn and Mongkut, *Preaching Royal Biography and Royal Writing of Mongkut on Buddhism*, 48–50.

¹³ Thiphakorawong, *A Book Explaining Various Things [Nangsue Sadaeng Kitchanukit-หนังสือแสดงกิจจานุกิจ]*, 1872.

¹⁴ Tomomi Ito, *Modern Thai Buddhism and Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu: A Social History* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2012), 17; Craig J. Reynolds, ‘The Buddhist Monkhood in Nineteenth Century Thailand’, 129–34; Anne Ruth Hansen, *How to Behave: Buddhism and Modernity in Colonial Cambodia, 1860-1930* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007), 85.

night, moon-sun, terrain-mountain, tidal current and so on was based on the natural laws of science rather than supernatural forces of deities siding in the Mount Meru.¹⁵ Although Thiphakorawong's vision criticised traditional assumptions regarding supernatural force, he continued the concept of *barami*, which necessarily sustained the hierarchy in Thai society. As he stated, "all human beings and animals in the world today were different".¹⁶ He further clarified that some were born to be a master. Some had superior or lesser power. Some were rich, ordinary or deprived. It still could not be proven why these things happened, and the future life was an existence or not. However, it was a better way to recognise that the next life does exist so that no one would stop trying to acquire more merit.¹⁷ Thus, merit and *barami* were central to Thai kingship status and the modern Buddhist idea during Mongkut's time from Thiphakorawong's discursive explanation.

It was true that Mongkut's ability in both the secular and religious world was inseparable as Craig Reynolds's discussion of Vajirayana's role as a monk and as a royal persona. He said that "his [Vajirayana] accomplishments in the Sangha confirmed for Bangkok Siamese that he was born with kingly merit".¹⁸ Then, Mongkut's solution to the reform of central Thai Buddhism did not differ from the concept of Thai kingship. It was fused the rational vision and traditional culture such as supernatural beliefs rooted in the society for a long time. This was reiterated by Mongkut when he had already positioned himself as the head of the Siamese state, "the king every day believed in the Buddhist religion... Impure and nonsensical ideas should not be held. We should criticise if we find something wrong [regarding Buddhist religious belief]. However, some previous customary traditions should be left as they should be."¹⁹ This is why we could see the new doctrine of central Buddhism led by the Thammayut movement potentially supporting the king's position and vice versa. Some traditional and supernatural elements were remodelled into forms of religious symbolism in which they were not trimmed or undermined.

¹⁵ Thiphakorawong, *A Book Explaining Various Things*, 25–101.

¹⁶ Thiphakorawong, 188.

"ด้วยมนุษย์แลสัตว์ทั้งปวงซึ่งมีอยู่ในโลกทุกวันนี้ ไม่เหมือนกัน" (TT)

¹⁷ Thiphakorawong, 190–92.

¹⁸ Reynolds, 'The Buddhist Monkhood in Nineteenth Century Thailand', 69.

¹⁹ Mongkut, *Relating to Buddhist Affairs and Describing Dhamma Spell*, 11–12.

"ไม่น่าเชื่อว่าที่แท้ในหลวงทุกวันที่ถือพระพุทธศาสนา แต่ว่าถือเฉพาะแต่เนื้อแต่แก่น เปลือกและกระพี้จริงๆทุกปรกโสโครกที่สะสมปายนระคนกันอยู่จะถือด้วยไม่ได้ เมื่อเห็นว่าสิ่งไรไม่ดีก็จะต้องตีสั่งนั้น ถึงกระนั้นการอันใดเป็นอย่างไรเป็นธรรมเนียมเป็นแบบแผนเคยมาแล้วก็ยอมให้เป็นไปตามเคย" (TT)

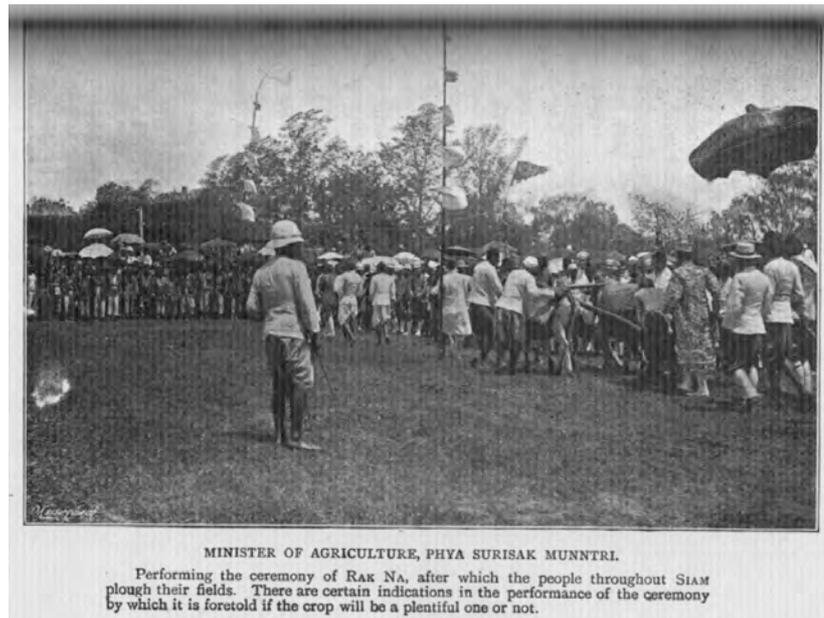
The older traditions relating to Brahmanism and supernaturalism were even revived during Mongkut's time because the ancient rites were some of his favourites.

Nonetheless, Buddhism was considered higher than other religious beliefs, even though Mongkut favoured some ancient rites. All beliefs in Siam were rearranged into a hierarchy. The Thai (Theravada) Buddhism was at the top of all beliefs, followed by deities (*Thewada*-เทวดา),²⁰ such as Brahmanical gods (including *Phra Phrom*/Brahma, or *Phra Pikhanet*/Ganesha, the elephant-headed god) and other spirits. The superiority of Buddhism was recognised by 'Buddhist services of chants and rituals' (*phiti song*-พิธีสงฆ์) that were implemented in many ancient rites. Likewise, the Ploughing Ceremony, which is known in Thai as *phuet mongkhon charot phranangkan* (พิธีมงคลจรดพระนังคัล), was previously called as *phranangkan* led by Brahmins. Afterwards, Mongkut added Buddhist chants referred to as *phuet mongkhon* to lead the ritual. It allowed the Buddhist monks to chant all the first day and night until the second day morning. Afterwards, the ancient Brahmanical rite would be conducted on the second day.²¹ The ceremony involved both Buddhists and Brahmins respectively every year before the period of rice growing (image no.8.1). This ceremony became a vivid example of how Thai state Buddhism and its symbolic marker such as Buddhist services was elevated to the top position while other non-Buddhist beliefs were preserved to prolong the *barami* of Thai kingship from Mongkut downed to the Chulalongkorn era. The tendency towards the compromise between Buddhism and superstition was even more apparent and profound when his successor, Chulalongkorn, tracked his father's approach and shaped actual practices which were not limited to the centre but spread throughout the frontiers of Siam which comprised diverse beliefs. We now turn to the relationship between the Siamese centre and its frontiers in relation to Buddhism.

²⁰ Chulalongkorn, *The Royal Twelve-Month Ceremonies*, 53, 279.

²¹ Chulalongkorn, 395.

8.1: Performing the Ploughing Ceremony, c.1893



From: James McCarthy, *An Englishman's Siamese Journals, 1890-1893 (Report of a Survey in Siam, Published Anonymously in London, in 1895 for Private Circulation)* (Bangkok: Siam Media International Books, 1983), 223.

8.2: Image of Vajiranana, head of the Thammayut order and the tenth Supreme Patriarch of Siam



From: Vajiranavarorasa, *Inspections of Vajiranavarorasa Regarding the Sangha, 1912-1917 [Somdet Phramaha Samanachao Kromphraya Wachirayanawarorot Sadei Truat Kan Khanasong-สมเด็จพระมหาสมณเจ้า กรมพระยาวชิรญาณวโรรส เสด็จตรวจการณคณะสงฆ์ พ.ศ.2455-2460]* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University, 1994).

8.3 The bilateral development of Thai nationhood between the centre and its frontiers in relation to the central Thai Buddhist idea

Prince Vajiranana – a son of Mongkut, Chulalongkorn’s half-brother and later the tenth Supreme Patriarch of Siam (*phrasangkharat*-พระสังฆราช, see image no.8.2) – was a key figure in spreading central Thai Buddhism in accordance with the Thammayut order throughout Siam during the Chulalongkorn era. From 1889, he and other monks started their inspections in several provinces of Siam including the northern and the southern frontier areas. Generally, the central Siamese sought to understand local conditions such as the numbers of monks, novices and temples, norms, lessons, educational quality of monks, disciplines and modes of behaviour of monkhood in rural areas. Also, some areas such as in Patani and Nongchick in the south were appointed two abbots to foster the Buddhist religion.²² The clerical inspectors advertised Bangkok-style teachings, practices and disciplines, as well as distributed other books regarding Buddhist doctrines as widely as they could, including prayer books, Tripitaka, Buddhist proverbs or good behaviours for monks.²³ These activities, however, seemed to form a kind of trial or experiment, and the central Buddhist influences were still limited in changing religious attitudes of local communities, particularly in the south and the north. Yet, the religious inspections in frontiers seemed to make certain the relationships of civilisation and space between central Siam and the frontier areas (as discussed in the previous chapter). It illustrated how the central Buddhist monks and Siamese elites saw the religious world beyond Bangkok as further down the religious and political hierarchy. We can see this in the extract below from a report of Bangkok monks during the inspection in 1889:

Usually, the practices, laws, religion, technical knowledge and education, no matter what nations, were referred to as civilisation. They gathered in the *mueang* [city] or districts where many people lived. Rather scatter in small districts such as *bannok* [rural village] which are situated farther from *mueang*. Generally,... that literate or knowledgeable person lived in *mueang*, which contained abundant

²² ‘The Inspections of Krommuen Vajiranavarorasa Regarding Buddhism [Rai-Ngan Khong Krommuen Vajiranavarorasa Sadetpai Truatkan Phraphutthasatsana-รายงานของกรมหมื่นวชิรญาณวโรรส เสด็จไปตรวจการพระพุทธรูปศาสนา]’, RG, 1889.

²³ ‘The Buddhist Inspections of the Royal Clergies [Phrarachakhana Ookpai Truatkan Nai Phraphutthasatsana-พระราชอาคณະออกไปตรวจการในพระพุทธรูปศาสนา]’, RG, 1889.

and delicate food. [In contrast], people who lived in *bannok* are deprived persons... live in poverty... Thus, they found an obstacle to reach knowledge such as laws, religion, technical knowledge and education as gathered in *mueang*. Thus, **the monks living in *bannok* knew the Buddhist practices less than the monks in Bangkok.**²⁴ [author's emphasis]

เพราะเหตุว่า ธรรมดาการประพฤติ ฤกความรู้ในกฎหมายทั้งปวงก็ดี การศาสนาทั้งปวงก็ดี ฤกสรรพวิชา ข้างต่างๆ วิชาหนังสือต่างๆก็ดี ไม่เลือกว่าชาติใดภาษาใดคงจะเป็นที่เจริญรุ่งเรืองสะสมอยู่ในเมืองฤก ตำบลที่คนตั้งรวบรวมกันอยู่นั้นมากกว่า ตำบลที่คนตั้งอยู่เล็กน้อยห่างๆกัน เช่น บ้านนอก คือ ตำบลที่ไกลจากเมืองเป็นต้น เป็นธรรมดาของโลกย่อมเป็นอย่างนี้...เพราะเหตุที่คนมีทรัพย์มีวิชาต่างๆ ย่อมจะรวบรวมกันอยู่ในเมืองที่บริบูรณ์ด้วยที่อยู่ แลเสบียงอาหารที่เปนของประณีต ส่วนคนที่อยู่บ้านนอกนั้น เปนคนขัดสนจะอยู่ในไกลเคียงบ้านเมืองก็หาที่แผ่นดินทำมาหากินได้โดยลำบาก ...ก็ยอมขัดขวางด้วย วิชาความรู้ ที่เกิดในบ้านเมืองเช่นกฎหมาย แลการศาสนา วิชาช่างวิชาหนังสืออยู่เอง เพราะเหตุนั้น พระสงฆ์ที่อยู่บ้านนอก จึงมีความรู้การปฏิบัติตามพระพุทธศาสนา น้อยกว่าพระสงฆ์ในกรุงเทพฯ

The messages reiterated the perception of the (Bangkok) centre towards its frontiers that the centre saw itself as a higher civilised society not only in the political but also religious domain. The higher standard of society had to provide more flourishing in religious and educational knowledge. The Buddhist monks and the Siamese rulers in Bangkok then confirmed in their view that the three frontiers indeed were not frontiers by nature. However, they became ‘frontiers’ because the central Siamese perception saw itself as ‘being exceptional’, similar to the idea of the American Frontier discussed in Chapter 7. Thus, the religious beliefs and practices conducted in rural zones including ‘frontier’ were stigmatised with markers of being savaged: undisciplined, unknowledgeable and less Buddhist purity. It then became the Siamese burden to boost the ‘appropriate and pristine’ religious practices in those frontier communities.

From the early phase of inspections, the Thai education system was an essential vehicle for Siam to spread central Thai Buddhism and its new ways of practice at nationwide and into the frontiers. This new idea was also translated into the educational policy of Siam in the centre during the time of setting up of the Education

²⁴ ‘News from Sangha Clergies on Buddhist Inspections [Khao Phrasong Paitruatkan Phraphutthasatsana-ข่าวพระสงฆ์ไปตรวจการพระพุทธศาสนา]’, RG, 1889.

Department (1892). It provided the basic model for a modern Buddhist-related Thai education that should be practised not only in frontiers but also in the centre itself. Any children from both rich and poor families in Bangkok and its surrounding areas were educated by monks in monasteries (see an atmosphere of the traditional education in a temple in image no.8.3).²⁵ While monks taught fundamental knowledge for children and provided religious services for communities, lay people (or their parents) would provide sustenance for the monks and look after the temples in return. The Siamese government then decided to proclaim the regulations for establishing primary schools in the centre and provincial areas in 1891. The government pointed out that the relationships between monks, laymen (children and parents) and education were traditional ways of life found everywhere in Siam.²⁶ All temples where monks had already educated at least ten children had to register to the central government and request for Thai textbooks to become an official monastery school.

The Thai modern-styled education tied with Thai state Buddhism came into reality for the first time when the prince-priest Vajiranana established Mahamakut Rajchawitthayalai or the Mahamakut Academy in Wat Bowon in 1893 (see the academic building in Wat Bowon in image no.8.4). It provided two sections: the education system for Buddhist monks (religious curriculum and the annual system of ecclesiastical examination) and the education system for commoners. Perhaps, this partly was the outcome of Vajiranana and other central Buddhist monks' experiences received during their religious inspections in the 1890s as they complained about 'a lack of knowledge among rural Buddhist monks', mentioned above.²⁷ Vajiranana also reiterated the reason for establishing this school that conformed with the proclamation of 1891 that the traditional education in outlying Siam was in the hands of Buddhist monks. Laypeople always left their children to learn from monks, even though there was no educational standard among those monks. Then, monks should be trained by a uniform system to make them efficient in providing the same standard of knowledge

²⁵ Sathiankoset (Anuman Rajadhon), *The Daily Life of Thais in Former Times [Chiwit Chaotai Samaikon-ชีวิตชาวไทยสมัยก่อน]* (Bangkok: J.N.T, 1988), 134–51.

²⁶ 'A Proclamation for Establishment of Primary Schools [Prakat Tang Rongrien Munsaman-ประกาศตั้งโรงเรียนมูลสามัญ]', RG, 1892.

²⁷ Vajiranavararasa, *Education [Kansueksa-การศึกษา]* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University, 1971), 22.

for commoners.²⁸ Afterwards, the establishment of the Mahamakut Academy by Vajiranana brought about considerable improvement in the religious education for the monkhood and modern-styled schools for commoners run by Thammayut monasteries.²⁹ Perhaps, Siam became more clear themselves in the national model of unity, when they had inspected, travelled and interacted with the frontier communities.

The education policy of Siam at the centre partly became clearer after Vajiranana presented his experimental work in the Mahamakut monastery school. The progress of the school made the King to take Vajiranana's advice into account, particularly in the issue of how Siam should bring modern education into provincial areas.³⁰ They realised that it was necessary to tie education to central Thai Buddhism to succeed in the development of the model of the Thai nation. The following statement of the King revealed his decisiveness during the special meeting on education in 1898 that “the Thai education today did not worsen in all aspects owing to [having] Mahamakut Rajchawitthayalai. It ameliorated and improved thanks to Vajiranana. Therefore, the Thai education system must be associated with Buddhism. Unrelated to Buddhism is impossible, because [we] do not only guide the [Thai] alphabets but also the understandings of Buddhism. This is our main intention because many peoples were blamed on a lack of Five Precepts”. He continued that “according to Damrong's inspections in provincial areas, the deterioration of Buddhism makes Thai people become non-religious persons. People's lives were getting worse. [This is why] the [educational] management was projected to interrelate with the religion”.³¹ The central Buddhism would be advantaged for education and vice versa. Thus, the new model of Thai national culture in relation to Buddhism and the education policy over

²⁸ Mahamakut Buddhist University, 'History of Mahamakut Buddhist University', accessed 30 March 2019, <http://www.mbu.ac.th/index.php/2012-11-14-02-09-46/2012-11-14-02-25-49?showall=&limitstart=#.XKiQUutKjOQ>.

²⁹ David K. Wyatt, *The Politics of Reform in Thailand: Education in the Reign of King Chulalongkorn* (New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1969), 217.

³⁰ Wyatt, 217–18.

³¹ R5 SS.12/7, The Administration Education in Provincial Areas (September 1898-February 1899) File No.1 (1-45) [Rueang Chatkan Laorian Tam Monthon Tangtang Puekthi 1 (1-45)-ศ.12/7 เรื่อง จัดการเล่าเรียนตามมณฑลต่างๆ (ก.ย.117-ก.พ. 117) ปีที่ 1 (1-45)], NA.

“การเล่าเรียนที่จัดอยู่บัดนี้มีแปลกที่คนจะเถียงว่าไม่ดีไม่งามนั้น ก็แต่หมามกุฏราชวิทยาลัย...คือดีได้เพราะกรมหมื่นวชิรญาณ ฉะนั้นจึงเห็นเป็นตัวอย่างอันดีที่ได้จัดให้เกี่ยวข้องกับพระพุทศศาสนา การเล่าเรียนที่จะจัดไปในทางอื่นไม่เกี่ยวกับแก้ววัดนั้นไม่ได้ เพราะใช้แต่จะสั่งสอนอัชระวิธี ต้องสั่งสอนถึงการศาสนาด้วย ข้อนี้เป็นความปรารถนาอันใหญ่ยิ่ง เพราะมีการฟ้องกันมากกว่าคนไทยไม่รู้จักศีลห้าโดยมาก แลกรมหมื่นดำรงได้ตรวจสอบตามหัวเมือง เห็นเสื่อมทรามมากดูเป็นคนไทยไม่มีศาสนา จึงทำให้คนเสื่อมกันไปหมด การที่จะจัดนี้ขออย่าให้เกี่ยวกับศาสนาด้วย” (TT)

time was modified to function under the unique conditions of the frontier zones as well as in the centre after Siamese elites experienced the diverse local circumstances during their travels and inspections outside Bangkok. Later, the cooperation of the three sections – temple, society and school (education) – was deemed to be the real key to success for central Thai administrative monks who were dispatched to permanent positions in the frontier communities from 1898 onwards.

Nevertheless, the consequences of the Thai Buddhist extension from the late 1890s was different between the deliberate attempts in the northeast and the suspended actions in the north and south, even though it appeared that Siam was creating a unitary national history. This variant consequence of Buddhist extension in each frontier would further confirm how the centre, in practice, was modified its ideas and methods because of distinctive local conditions in the three frontiers. It was a fact that paved the way for Buddhist Thammayut connections between the centre and the northeast in former times that created shared historical legacies that pulled the central and local religious thoughts and practices together, which made a difference between to the northern and southern conditions, as shall be seen in the next section.

8.3: An image showing the traditional education system in Siam that a Buddhist monk was instructing a boy in a monastery



From: Sathiankoset (Anuman Rajadhon), *The Daily Life of Thais in Former Times* [Chiwit Chaothai Samaikon-ชีวิตชาวไทยสมัยก่อน] (Bangkok: J.N.T, 1988), 144.

8.4: The first building of the Mahamakut Academy situated in Wat Bowon, c.1893



From: Mahamakut Buddhist University, 'History of Mahamakut Buddhist University', accessed 30 March 2019, <http://www.mbu.ac.th/index.php/2012-11-14-02-09-46/2012-11-14-02-25-49?showall=&limitstart=#.XKiQUutKjOQ>.

8.4 The Buddhist influences grew intense in the northeast

8.4.1 Sharing historical legacies between the centre and the northeastern frontier

The trial with Buddhism by Prince Vajiranana and other Buddhist monks in 1889 focused on the northern and southern frontiers did not mean that the Siamese rulers took the northeastern Laotian areas for granted. In fact, Siamese elites had more confidence in expanding central Buddhism into the Lao communities west of the Mekong compared to the north and south. This was because central Thai Buddhist practices and disciplines had been introduced to the northeast in earlier times before the Chulalongkorn era. When Lan Xang became weak, and Siam defeated Anuvong in the early nineteenth century, Siam took this opportunity to construct a closer relationship between Bangkok and the northeastern Lao units. Political and economic relations between the two states had developed closer than the other two frontiers of Siam (as discussed in Chapter 5). The Thammayut version of Theravada Buddhism also was one of the essential elements that tied Bangkok and the Lao units of the northeast together. Of course, other ethnic groups of people such as in Lan Na or what is northern Thailand today also partly practised Theravada Buddhism. They were even accustomed to the conception of religious kingship as the universal ruler as in the traditional Lao states in the northeast. Although these conditions might have

helped to facilitate the work of central administrative monks and Thai officials during the Chulalongkorn period, there is a debate how and which the Theravada Buddhist practices in the north differed from the Lao states and Bangkok.

The local Theravada Buddhist practices of northeastern Lao communities were influenced by the Sinhalese doctrine expanded from the Khmer empire during the time of Fa Ngum (reigned 1353-1372).³² Thereafter, Lan Na Buddhist doctrine, called Yuan cult³³ or Yuan Buddhism³⁴ from the western neighbour of Lan Xang, reached the Lao Kingdom in the fifteenth century. The Yuan style of practices differed from the Sinhalese style in many ways; scripts, the structure of rituals and little hierarchical organisation of Buddhist clergy.³⁵ Afterwards, a spin-off version of the Lan Na school influenced Lan Xang in the sixteenth century. The Lan Na Chronicle showed that Phra Mueang Kaeo, King of Chiang Mai (reigned 1495-1525) sent sixty volumes of Tipitaka to Lan Xang to expand the Buddhist faith in 1522.³⁶ In addition to the Buddhist Khmer and Lan Na traditions, which expanded into the Khorat plateau or the northeast of Thailand today, Buddhism in the northeastern Lao community was also influenced by local spirit cults to take a distinct form.³⁷ Nonetheless, from the early eighteenth century, the development of Lan Na Buddhism was interrupted, and so the Sinhalese school was revived again in the Lao kingdom due to the successful establishment of the ruling house at Champassak.³⁸ At that time, Lan Xang Kingdom was divided into three houses: Champassak, Vientiane and Luang Prabang. From the late 1820s, when the Thammayut's 'doctrine' was founded in Bangkok it was this moment that Bangkok had the opportunity to develop the Thammayut doctrine of central Thai Buddhism, which was closer to Sinhalese than to Yuan Buddhism, in the outlying northeastern frontier of Siam.

³² Please see 'The Legend of Khun Borom [Nithan Rueang Khunboromracha-นิทานเรื่องขุนบรมราชา]' in *Collected Royal Chronicles Part 70 (Champasak) [Prachumphongsawadan Phakthi 70 (Champasak)]-ประชุมพงศาวดาร ภาคที่ 70 [เรื่องเมืองนครจำปาศักดิ์]* (Bangkok: Khurusapha, 1969).

³³ William C. Dodd, *The Tai Race, Elder Brother of the Chinese: Results of Experience, Exploration and Research* (Cedar Rapids IA (USA): Torch Press, 1923), 75.

³⁴ Paul T. Cohen, 'Buddhism Unshackled: The Yuan "Holy Man" Tradition and the Nation-State in the Tai World', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 32, no. 2 (2001): 227.

³⁵ Charles F. Keyes, 'Buddhism and National Integration in Thailand': 552.

³⁶ Phra Rattanapanyataera, *Lan Na Chronicle [Chinnakanmalipakon-ชินนากนมาลีปกรณ์]* (Phranakhon: Siwaporn, 1958), 150.

³⁷ Kamala Tiyavanich, *Forest Recollections: Wandering Monks in Twentieth-Century Thailand* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), 5.

³⁸ Grabowsky, 'Buddhism, Power and Political Order in pre-twentieth Century Laos' in Harris and Becket Institute, *Buddhism, Power and Political Order*, 135.

Phra Panthulo (Di) living in Nonglai district of Ubon province was the first monk who was trained by the Thammayut sect at Wat Maha That and then Wat Bowon in 1836. This was at the same time that Vajirayan Bhikkhu (King Mongkut) resided at the temple. When Phra Panthulo finished training, he persuaded his nephew, Phra Thewathammi, from Ubon to train at Wat Bowon as well. Both monks then associated directly with the first batch of Thammayut reformers. They also became the key figures to transfer the central Buddhist doctrine to their place of origin in the northeastern region when King Mongkut provided private funds of eight hundred baht to establish Wat Supattanaram Worawihan in 1851, which was the first Thammayut temple in Ubon (see Wat Supattanaram's image no.8.5). Phra Panthulo was invited to be the first abbot,³⁹ while Phra Thewathammi was responsible for setting up a school for both religious and secular subjects in this temple.

The number of Thammayut monasteries thereafter increased, and the lineage of trained monks therefore expanded continuously. Phra Panthulo and Phra Thewathammi set up another five reform monasteries, including Wat Sithong (Wat Si Ubonrattanaram today) in Ubon headed by Thewathammi, Wat Suthatsanaram in Ubon headed by Than Phila from Wat Supat, Wat Chaiyamongkon in Ubon headed by Than Sing from Wat Sithong, Wat Sakeaw in Phibun Mangsahan district headed by Phanthulo and Wat Hokhong in Maha Chana Chai district headed by Than Sida from Wat Supat. All abbots of the reform temples were from the lineage of Phra Panthulo and Phra Thewathammi. These temples, particularly Wat Sithong, became Thammayut centres for training new badges of northeastern monks and novices before sending them to study further at important monasteries of the Thammayut fraternity in Bangkok,⁴⁰ as well as providing Thai education for laymen. Phra Ariyakawi (Aon, 1845-1903), Phra Sangkharakkhito (Phun, not known -1909), Phra Thammathiro (Saeng, not known -1915), Phra Chayasaeno (Sitha, 1853-1925), Phra Ubali (Chan Siritho, who was later known as Phra Yannarakkhit, 1857-1932) and

³⁹ R5 SS.51.4/1, Phra Khru Wichitthammapaphani's Restoration of Wat Supat in Ubon Ratchathani and Founding a Monastic School There, 1897 [Phrakhru Wichitthammapaphani Wat Supat in Ubonratchathani Daichatkan Patisangkxon Wat Supat Setsinlaew Lae Daitang Rongrien Thi Supat Haengnueng-ศธ.51.4/1 พระครูวิชิตธรรมปภาณีวัดสุปัฏมืองอุบลราชธานี ได้จัดการปฏิสังขรณ์วัดสุปัฏเสร็จแล้วและได้ตั้งโรงเรียนขึ้นที่สุปัฏแห่งหนึ่ง. 116], NA.

⁴⁰ Vajiranavarorasa, *The Legend of Wat Bowonniwet Vihara*, 62–63.

Wat Bowon, Wat Bupharam, Wat Pichaya Yatikaram and Wat Thepsirin are some exemplary Thammayut monasteries in Bangkok.

Phra Phrommuni (Tisso Auan, 1867-1956) were some remarkable monks, who were born in Ubon except Phra Thammathiro (Saeng) coming from Nong Bua Lamphu, ordained at Wat Sithong. Thereafter, most of them were sent to pursue advanced Pali studies in Bangkok after finishing their acquisition of basic religious knowledge, practice of chanting and Thai grammar.⁴¹ The centralised monastic education known as *parian* degree (เปรียญ or penetrative knowledge) consisted of nine grades.⁴² Mostly when provincial monks achieved Grade 3 (*parian prayok sam* or *parian tri*-เปรียญประโยค 3 หรือเปรียญตรี, which is equal to lower secondary school in the secular curriculum), they returned to their dwelling to disseminate central Thai Buddhism and to teach Thai and Pali. In order to hold *parian* (level 1-9), monks had to pass dhamma examinations (*Phra Pariyattham*) in both written and oral exams, including Pali grammar and translating Pali to Thai in front of the king, the representative of Buddhist monks, other monks and laymen at the Buddhist main hall in Wat Phra Sri Rattana Satsadaram (Wat Phra Kaew).⁴³ *Parian* monks generally spent about seven years studying to achieve Grade 3, whereas it was very rare to find a monk who had completed Grade 9. Nonetheless, *parian* monks could more easily secure administrative posts.⁴⁴ Likewise, Phra Ariyakawi (Aon) returned to his monastery in Ubon after completing Grade 4 and being promoted to be *Phra Rachakhana* (พระราชาคณะ), the third-highest rank in the Thai sangha in 1889.⁴⁵ He later became the first Sangha General Governor (*chao khana yai*-เจ้าคณะใหญ่) for Monthon Isan in 1891

⁴¹ *Phra Thepworakhun's Biography and His Works and Phra Ubali Khunuphamachan's Biography with His Poem in Isan Dialect [Phrawat Phra Thepworakhun Lae Phonngan Khong Than Kap Attaprawat (Phra Ubali Khunuphamachan) Promduay Kap Lae Khamklon Phasa Isan-ประวัติพระเทพวราคุณและผลงานของท่าน กับ อัดตประวัติ (พระอุบาลีคุณูปมาจารย์) พร้อมด้วยภาพและคำกลอนภาษาอีสาน]* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University, 1969), 5.

⁴² Khammai Dhammasami, *Buddhism, Education and Politics in Burma and Thailand: From the Seventeenth Century to the Present*, New York: Bloomsbury Academic, An imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2018, 137.

Level 1-3 = *parian tri* (เปรียญตรี)

Level 4-6 = *parian tho* (เปรียญโท)

Level 7-9 = *parian ek* (เปรียญเอก)

⁴³ 'Reporting to Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs Regarding Annual Dhamma Examination [Chaeng Khwam Krasuangthammakan Panaekkromsangkhakari Lae Kromsueksathikan Rueang Kansoplai Phrapariyattham Prachampi-แจ้งความกระทรวงธรรมการ แผนกกรมสังฆการี แลกรมศึกษาธิการ เรื่อง การสอบไล่พระปริยัติธรรมประจำปี]', RG, 1894.

⁴⁴ *Karuna Kusalasaya, 'Buddhism in Thailand: Its Past and Its Present' in Collected Wheel Publications*, vol. VI, 76 to 89 (Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 2010), 285.

⁴⁵ Ecclesiastical honorific titles or the *Samanasak* system (สมณศักดิ์) in Thai Sangha consist of the highest rank of Somdet Phra Sangkharat (สมเด็จพระสังฆราช), Somdet Phra Rachakhana (สมเด็จพระราชาคณะ), Phra Rachakhana (พระราชาคณะ) and Phra Khru (พระครู). Their titles base on ecclesiastical exams and performance on religion and administration.

and lived at Wat Sithong until his death. Phra Ariyakawi was a prominent monk who strengthened the Thai administrative programme by regularly reporting the numbers of monks and novices for Bangkok. He also led chanting for laymen and prohibited monks to engage with local rituals such as the rocket festival, horse riding, boat racing or being a shaman, which were considered ‘inappropriate’ behaviour.⁴⁶ Phra Sangkharakkhito (Phun), like Phra Ariyakawi, had studied at Wat Bowon in Bangkok and then brought religious and Thai textbooks back to distribute in Ubon. He became an educationist and the abbot at Wat Supat. Later, Phra Sangkharakkhito expanded two new reform monasteries, Wat Klang and Wat Banphueng during the 1870s-1880s. Similarly, Phra Ubali (1856-1932) was ordained at Wat Sithong and left Ubon to study in Bangkok. After passing the examinations at Grade 3 (and later completing Grade 4 in 1894-5), he travelled between Bangkok and Ubon several times to find an opportunity to advertise central Thai Buddhism and encouraged his disciples in the northeastern region to study further in Bangkok. Later, his prominent disciples, Phra Phrommuni (Tisso Auan, 1867-1956), Phra Maha Anthawangso (Keaw) and Phra Maha Thitapho (Lom), became the next generation of provincial monks to carry on the projects of Buddhism and educational reform of the central Thai state in the northeast. It was not until 1899 that Phra Ubali ranked *Phra Rachakhana* and became the education director. He was a key figure to spread Buddhism and the Thai educational system for both secular and religious subjects in the northeast. With the support of his disciples, Phra Phrommuni and Phra Maha Thitapho became Thai and Pali teachers at Wat Supat at the turn of the century (the expansion during the Phra Ubali or Phra Yannarakkhit era will be discussed further in the next section below).

The lineages of Phra Panthulo and Phra Thewathammi also raised the authority of central Thai Buddhism throughout Monthon Udon (the upper northeast) where Thammayut had never existed before. Phra Thammathiro (Saeng), who was a former member of Mahanikaya, converted to the Thammayut order at Wat Sithong. Later, he established and became the abbot at Wat Mahachai in Nong Bua Lamphu. Mahachai temple which therefore became the first Thammayut monastery in Monthon Udon. By this time, Phra Thammathiro was able to expand to four new

⁴⁶ R5 SS.12/13, The Administration of Education and the Sangha Community in Provincial Areas, (May 1899-March 1900) [Chatkansueksa Lae Khanasong-ศ.12/10 จัดการศึกษาระดับคณะศาสนาตามหัวเมือง พ.ศ.118-มี.ศ.119], NA.

reform monasteries in this area: Wat Chom Si, Wat Chom Mani, Wat Si Sa-ad and Wat Chan. These temples were headed by his disciples who efficiently increased the numbers of trained monks and, later on, extended the Thammayut lineages; likewise, a famous Thai-Lao lineage of monks, Man Phurithato and Sao Kantasilo (Man's teacher) developed. They had many disciples and followers, and they continue until today.⁴⁷ (Further details about the lineage of northeastern monks and their reform monasteries, which were initiated by Phra Panthulo and Phra Thewathammi, can be seen in diagram no.8.6)

Most importantly, the lineage of Thammayut monks and the spread of central Thai Buddhism, as well as Thai education in the northeast, could not be strengthened without the Thai monarch's funds and devotion to this expansion. Besides the private fund for building Wat Supat, King Mongkut also positioned sixty men to facilitate in this temple and gave a monthly allowance to the abbot of eight baht in order to support the monk's food.⁴⁸ The private funds that the king initiated to support the monks who made benefits for religion and society were called *nitayaphat* (นิตยภัต). Later, Chulalongkorn and his half-brothers, who administrated the northeastern area, continuously provided their private funds for all Thammayut monks in the region and for the expansion of Thammayut monasteries. Generally, monks who passed the central examinations in Bangkok would receive *nitayaphat* and other awards, including honorific accessories (fans of rank), new yellow robes, cigarette cases, other souvenirs and food.⁴⁹ When northeastern monks finished their studies and returned to their place of origin, they were also supported annually with fares for transportation and food. The amount of money depended upon their ecclesiastical honorific titles, their administrative position and their levels of responsibility.⁵⁰ Phra Phrommuni (Tisso Auan), a disciple of Phra Ubali from Ubon, was a good example. He received 448 baht from the Siamese government when he helped his master (Phra Ubali) carry Thai and Pali textbooks to distribute in the northeast. The government

⁴⁷ Jim Taylor, *Forest Monks and the Nation-State: An Anthropological and Historical Study in Northeastern Thailand* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1993), 18.

⁴⁸ Toem Wiphakphotchanakit, *History of the Northeast [Prawattisat Isan-ประวัติศาสตร์อีสาน]*, 4th ed. (Bangkok: Thammasat University, 2003), 490.

⁴⁹ 'A Feast For Pariyat Examinees [Kan Liang Nueang Nai Kan Soplai Phra Pariyattham-การเลี้ยงเนื่องในการสอบไล่พระปริยัติธรรม]', RG, 1901.

⁵⁰ 'Reporting to Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs Regarding How to Reimburse Monthly Allowance for Monks [Chaengkwam Krasuang Thammakan Phanaek Sangkhakari Rueang Withi Boek Nitayaphat Phrasong-แจ้งความกระทรวงธรรมการ พแนกกรมสังฆการี เรื่องวิธีเบิกนิตยภัตพระสงฆ์]', RG, 1902.

awarded him, like other *parian* monks, 80 baht when he passed the examinations in Bangkok. Later, he received *nitayaphat* of 500 baht per year when he became the assistant of the Sangha General Governor of the northeastern region (*phu chuai chao khana monthon Isan* - ผู้ช่วยเจ้าคณะมณฑลอิสาน) in 1899 (and later became the Sangha General Governor in 1904).⁵¹ Furthermore, Prince Pichit (administering Ubon between 1891-3) and Prince Sanphasitthiprasong (between 1893-1910) contributed from their private funds one baht to all Thammayut monks in order to sustain the Thammayut fraternity in the northeastern area throughout their period of supervision, while every newly established school received 800 baht from the princes on its opening day.⁵²

Besides the support of the Thai king, the spiritual standing of being a Buddhist monk also encouraged the religious activities associated with Siamese expansion. It was in this way harder for local rulers or their people to reject them. This is demonstrated by the collaboration shown by local elites, who donated their lands and private funds and gave assistance to Siam to establish reform monasteries in the northeastern region.⁵³ Wat Supat, the first Thammayut monastery, was built with the support of Phra Phrom Ratchawongsa (Kuthong), a son of the first Ubon ruler (Phra Prathum Worarat Suriyawong or Chao Khamphong), to meet the demand of King Mongkut. Wat Sithong, Wat Chaiyamongkon and Wat Hokhong, the second, the fourth and the sixth Thammayut monasteries respectively, were established successfully due to the support and donations of local Lao elites in Ubon. Provincial monks and laymen also found it hard to deny the Thammayut order and Thai language when the provincial monasteries were maintained by local monks (who converted to Thammayut order), who also distributed Thai prayer books.⁵⁴ Although Thammayut was established mainly in the city centre of Ubon, it was fundamental support in reassuring Siamese rulers that they should be free from doubt about the validity of the religious project associated with state extension into the northeast during the Chulalongkorn period. Following this, the practices of central Thai Buddhist festivals, such as national holidays and other religious materials such as religious holidays, prayer books and

⁵¹ Wiphakphotchanakit, *History of the Northeast*, 501, 518.

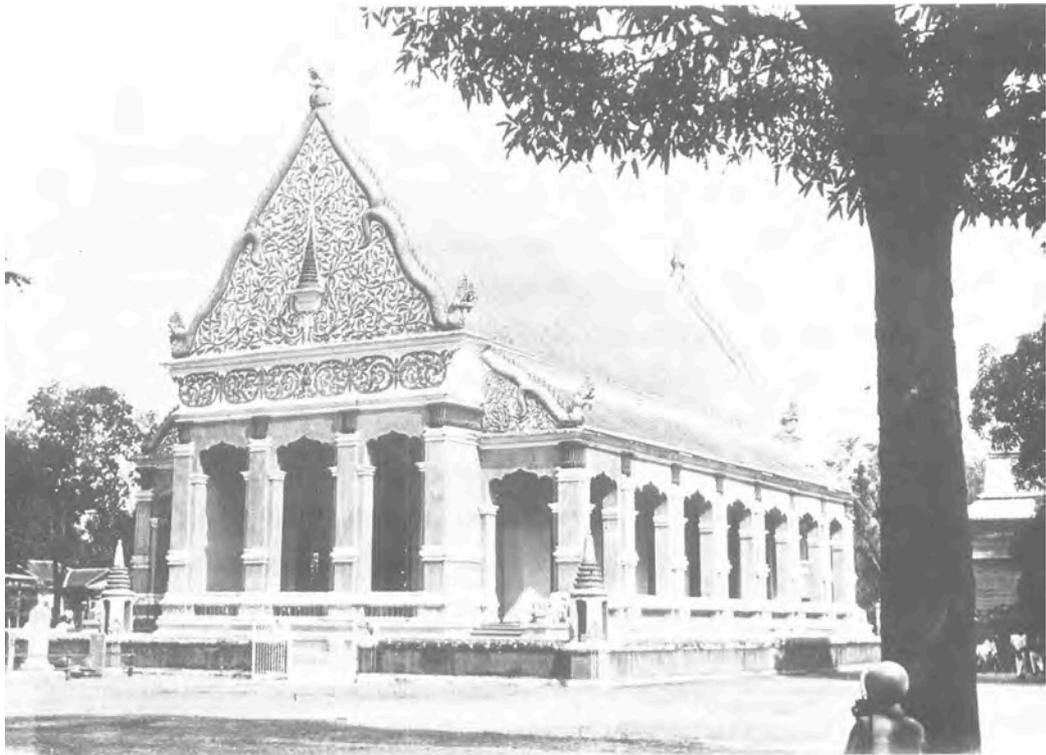
⁵² *Phra Thepworakhun's Biography and His Works and Phra Ubali Khunuphamachan's Biography with His Poem in Isan Dialect*, 35.

⁵³ Wiphakphotchanakit, *History of the Northeast*, 491.

⁵⁴ Dhammasami, *Buddhism, Education and Politics in Burma and Thailand*, 141.

Thai textbooks, were expanded more straightforwardly, having religious validation locally and religious support. In this way, their objectives came into reality and were part of the decisive process of Thai state expansion in the northeast.

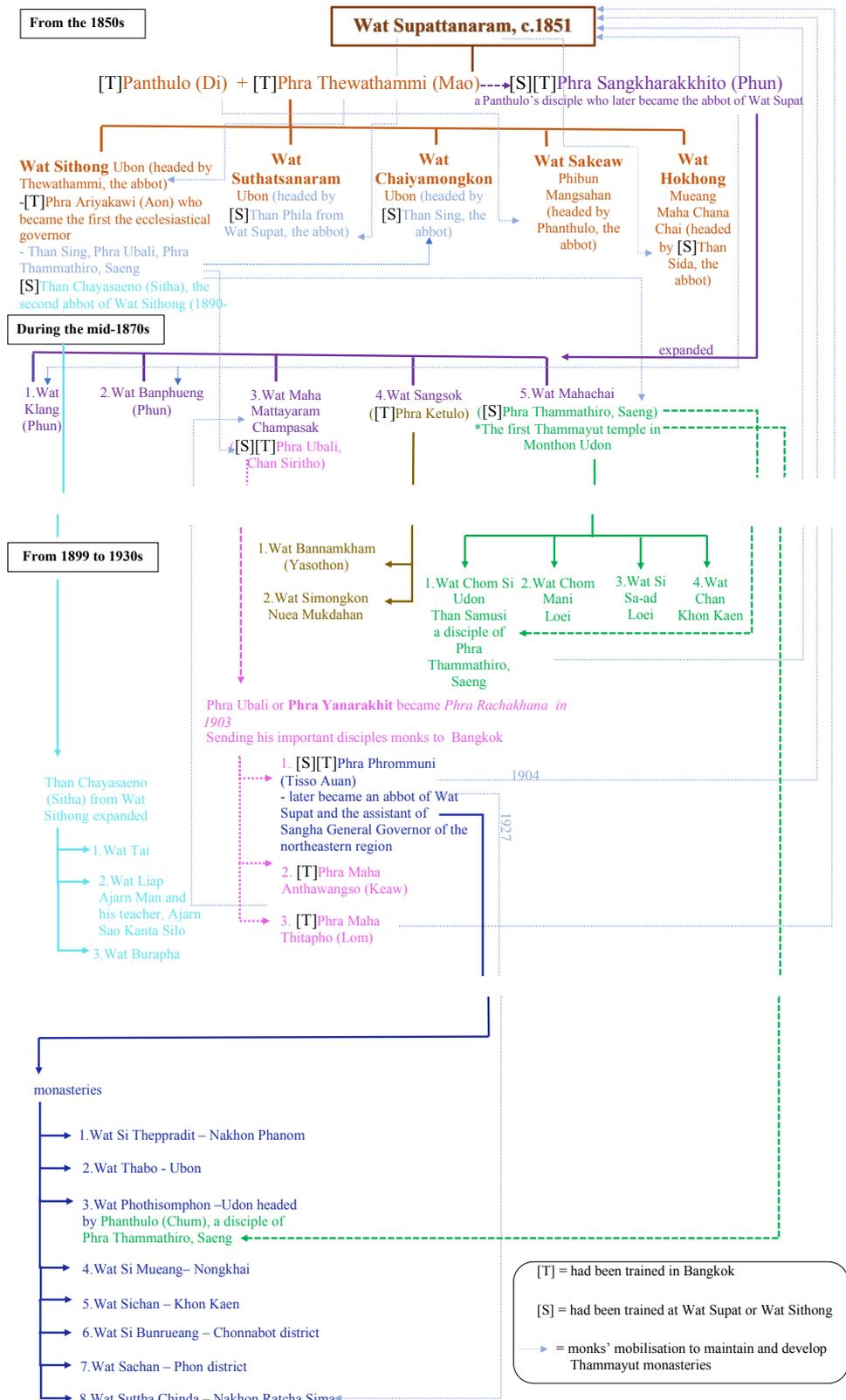
8.5: Wat Supattanaram Worawihan, Ubon Ratchathani



วัดสุปฏิหาราม จ. อุบลราชธานี

From: Toem Wiphakphotchanakit, *History of the Northeast [Prawattisat Isan-ประวัติศาสตร์อีสาน]*, 4th ed. (Bangkok: Thammasat University, 2003), 491

8.6: The lineages of Panthulo and Phra Thewathammi starting from Wat Supattanam, the first Thammayut temple in the northeastern region



8.4.2 The strengthening of Thai religious materials in the northeast

Before Mongkut's reform, local monks in the northeast practised Buddhism with more flexibility. In some areas, monks only gave a sermon during Lent in the rainy season (from August to October), and so the sermons that practised every season were rare. The religious activities of local monks were 'general sermons' (*thetsana*-เทศนา) that referred to precepts (Sila-ศีล) and the Vessantara Jataka (*Mahachat Chadok-maha-chadok*), a story of the last incarnation of Gautama Buddha, which is why Siam considered them as less civilised.⁵⁵ This was because the local practices did not conform to 'pristine practices' of central Thai Buddhism, which consisted of the strictness of monastic disciplines and practised Buddhist chants following a national calendar of Siam. Local lay people barely preserved the Five Precepts even though they were accustomed to them. Similarly, the ritual of rain making for which buffaloes were sacrificed to the gods by villagers was seen by the Thai officials as 'silliness'. As Phra Yannarakkhit (his previous name was Phra Ubali), a high-ranked administrative monk in Monthon Isan appointed by the king complained about undisciplined ways of local Buddhist practices that "the chanting continued as 'a traditional version' (รักษาตามพื้นเดิม)... laities often listened to 'fables' (วัดถุณีทานต่างๆ) rather than virtue codes" (see Phra Yannarakkhit's image no.8.5).⁵⁶ From the central Thais' views, traditional sermons, the Vessantara Jataka, fables and superstitious practices in the ritual seemed to be unsophisticated, even though they exemplified the popular religious stories and practice among local Buddhist communities in the northeast.⁵⁷ They, therefore, needed to be replaced with the 'orthodox' version of central Thai Buddhism. For lay communities, the Siamese also wanted them to at least be more strict to the Five (or Eight) precepts that stipulated to the refrain from killing animals and visit temples to listen to 'the Thammayut chanting' when religious events were held.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ R5 SS.12/4, A Summary of Sangha and Educational Administration in Provincial Areas, 1898-1899 [Sarup Rai-Ngan Kanchatkan Khanasatsana Lae Kansueksa-ศ.12/4 สรุปรายงานการจัดการคณะศาสนาและการศึกษา หัวเมืองปี 117-118], NA.

⁵⁶ 'The Report of Phra Yannarakkhit on Buddhist Religion and Education in Monthon Isan (1900).

⁵⁷ Patrick Jory, *Thailand's Theory of Monarchy: The Vessantara Jataka and the Idea of the Perfect Man*, 149-51.

⁵⁸ R5 M.59/22, A Report on Rainwater (26 July-28 September 1895) [Rai-Ngan Namfon Namtha-ม.59/22 รายงานน้ำฝนน้ำท่า [26 ก.ค. -28 ก.ย. 114]], NA.

In doing so, the Buddhist trainers were first dispatched to the northeast before the other two frontiers. Many Buddhist events were introduced and practised in the Lao communities after the appointments of *khaluang* (commissioner) and *khaluang yai* (high commissioner) in the 1890s. They were the primary mechanism in transferring Buddhist performances of religious holidays, Buddhist rituals and chanting in line with the Thammayut version to local monks and communities. The official Buddhist events comprised of the Uposatha Day (*wan phra*-วันพระ) and Vesakha Day (*Wisakhabucha*-วิสาขบูชา) or the Buddha day, known as the day to commemorate the birth-enlightenment-nirvana of Gautama Buddha. Chulalongkorn also brought back Magha Puja (*Makhabucha*-มาฆบูชา), also known as the Sangha day and Vassa (*wan khaophansa*-วันเข้าพรรษา) to be listed in the national holidays of Siam.⁵⁹ These religious events propagated central Thai Buddhism by penetrating the life-cycle of the people, as well as shaping the new notion of a central Thai Buddhist world-view. Although not many laymen could read Thai at the time, Vajiranana had to readjust to this by creating an accessible version of prayers and preaching books for regional zones. He also trained and examined all monks before sending them out to provincial zones to carry out their duties.⁶⁰ Then, the Buddhist religious holidays, ceremonies and Buddhist rituals became part of every royal and national event. They helped Siam to disseminate the ‘orthodox’ Thai Buddhism into frontier areas, where it had not been seen before.

The Thai-style Buddhism became more intense from 1898 when the government decided to despatch well-trained Buddhist monks from central Bangkok to the northeast of Siam. Since the central Buddhist monks going to the northeast led by Phra Yannarakkhit,⁶¹ the religious events of Uposatha, Vesakha, Magha Puja and

Eight precepts were the same with Five Precepts and plus three precepts which were (1) to refrain from eating after midday, (2) from singing, dancing and wearing perfume and (3) from sleeping on soft mattress.

⁵⁹ R5 SS.1/3, File No.2 Affairs in Education (1889-1892) [Ratchakan Nai Kansueksa-ศ.1/3 ปีที่ 2 ราชการในการศึกษาปี (ร.ศ.108-111)], NA.

⁶⁰ Vajiranavarorasa, *Buddhist Sermon [Phra Thammathetsana-พระธรรมเทศนา]* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University, 1971), 18; Vajiranavarorasa, *The Supreme Patriarch of the Buddhist Thai Kingdom: Short Excerpts from the Writing of Vajiranavarorasa [Phramahasamanachan Haeng Phuttachakthai: Khorkhwam Sansan Khatchak Phraratchaniphon Tangrueang Khong Somdetphramaha Samanachao Kromphraya Wachirayanawarorot-พระมหาสมณเจ้ากรมพระยาวชิรญาณวโรรส]* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University, 1969), 44.

⁶¹ ‘Buddhist Monks Leave to Administrate Education in Provincial Areas [Phrasong Thunlapaichat Huamueang-พระสงฆ์หลาไปจัดหัวเมือง]’, RG, 1898.

Vassa were practised on notable days in many northeastern communities. The missionary monks inspected the numbers of local monks and novices, the standard of education, and identified for more local monks who could be sent to Bangkok for study. It was a shortcut to reshape local Buddhist monks and their practices to follow the lines of Thammayut and the Sangha of central Siam. Local monks and laity gradually adjusted and participated in these Buddhist activities following a national calendar of Siam. Thus, although the Sangha Act was officially proclaimed as an official law in the frontiers in 1902, the sangha framework in the northeastern area, de facto, was initially launched from the late 1890s.

8.7: Image of Phra Yannarakkhit, who played an essential role in the Buddhist reform programme of Siam in the northeast



From: *Phra Thepworakhun's Biography and His Works and Phra Ubali Khunuphamachan's Biography with His Poem in Isan Dialect* [Phrawat Phra Thepworakhun Lae Phonngan Khong Than Kap Attaprawat (Phra Ubali Khunuphamachan) Promduay Kap Lae Khamklon Phasa Isan-ประวัติพระเทพวรคุณและผลงานของท่าน กับ อัตตประวัติ (พระอุบาลีคุณูปมาจารย์) พร้อมด้วยภาพและคำกลอนภาษาไทยอีสาน] (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University, 1969).

The establishment of Thai medium education inside temples not only increased the numbers of literate people but also spread the central Thai system and religious activities for laymen in the northeast. From 1897-1901, ten schools with 513 students were established in Ubon to teach Thai and Pali; another fourteen schools in Si Sakhet, Maha Sarakham, Roi-et and Kalasin with more than 250 students.⁶² It was even fascinating in some of the details found in textbooks circulated in these schools such as ‘Thai Textbooks for Intensive Learners Vol.1-3’ (*Bap Rien Reo-แบบเรียนเร็วเล่ม 1-3*) and ‘Morality’ (*Thamma Chariya-ธรรมจริยา*). Although they were reading books providing knowledge as short stories or sentences, they guided children to recognise that all people should attend merit making and listen to a Buddhist sermon in temples on Uposatha Day, Thai New Year Day and other important days.⁶³ At these times, schools would be closed three days to let students attend the events, and all good lay people had an opportunity to observe the five precepts to accumulate merit, including refraining from alcohol, gambling or telling lies.⁶⁴ The textbooks also reiterated the responsibilities of children as well as adult lay people to pay attention to education.⁶⁵ For instance, parents were to send their children to a temple (or school) at the proper age and let Buddhist monks educate them in order to protect their children from poverty and hardship.⁶⁶ Therefore, textbooks established the central Thai guidelines: Thammayut version, Thai-Pali languages, Five Precepts, religious events, Thai educational system as well as a sense of nationhood, in northeastern communities by creating a cultural linkage between Buddhist monks and its monasteries, villagers and its communities, and the benefits of Thai national education.

The context of Buddhist expansion into the northeast reminds us of the ultimate goal of Siamese elites who attempted to define a more ‘orthodox’ Buddhism along the

⁶² ‘The Report of Phra Yannarakkhit on Buddhist Religion and Education in Monthon Isan (1900).

⁶³ Damrong Rajanubhab, *Thai Textbooks for Intensive Learners Vol.1 [Baprien Reo Lem 1-แบบเรียนเร็วเล่ม 1]*, 10th ed. (Phranakhon: Government Publishing, 1900), 170; Damrong Rajanubhab, *Thai Textbooks for Intensive Learners Vol.2 [Baprien Reo Lem 2-แบบเรียนเร็วเล่ม 2]*, 2nd ed. (Phranakhon: Aksonranit, 1911), 34, 48.

⁶⁴ Phra Phaisan Silapasat and Luang Anukitwithun, *Morality Vol.1 [Thamma Chariya Lem.1-ธรรมจริยาเล่ม 1]*, 4th ed., vol. 1 (Phranakhon: Aksonranit, 1906), 28; Rajanubhab, *Thai Textbooks for Intensive Learners Vol.2*, 10, 13–14, 18, 64, 67.

⁶⁵ Department of Education, “*Golden Stairs*”: *A Textbook of an Advanced Step*, 54.

⁶⁶ Damrong Rajanubhab, *Thai Textbooks for Intensive Learners Vol.1*, 189–93; Damrong Rajanubhab, *Thai Textbooks for Intensive Learners Vol.3 [Baprien Reo Lem 3-แบบเรียนเร็วเล่ม 3]*, 9th ed. (Phranakhon: Aksonranit, 1904), 1; Phra Phaisan Silapasat and Luang Anukitwithun, *Morality Vol.1*, 66.

lines of Thammayut and build the triangle relationship of Buddhism, society and education as discussed above. The appropriate religious instructions were introduced to communities of the northeastern frontiers in almost every aspect. This was to drop local religious and superstitious practices and inserted the national model of central Thai Buddhist activities and day-to-day disciplines into the routine life of society. Siam also expected to transform the north and the south into one single model. However, the capacity of Thai state expansion in the Chulalongkorn era did not operate in a single direction due to limitations of its thoughts, policies and actions, even though Siam anticipated to operate it in this way. The continued differentiation of the Siamese state expansion and how diverse local conditions beyond Bangkok reshaped the policy in the centre during this period would be more clear-sighted. As can be seen from the various modes and levels of the Buddhist symbolic extension to the north and the south which differed from the northeast in the sections to follow.

8.5 Limitation of central Thai Buddhist expansion

8.5.1 The inaccessible area of the north

From the 1890s until the Shan rebellion in 1902, Thai officials in the north attempted to introduce Buddhist festivals, prayer books and Buddhist practices in almost all temples in the north. Nonetheless, it was difficult for the Thai state Buddhism to fully replace the strength of local Lan Na Buddhist practices. Traditionally, many monks in the north chose to practise Yuan Buddhism that was categorised by Siam as part of Mahanikai sects.⁶⁷ This was because they could read Pali language but did not adhere to the strict Vinaya and religious examinations, which were central for Thai monks in Bangkok. The Yuan monks, in contrast, engaged in wandering in the forest and sitting in deep meditation to accumulate merit and mystical prowess.⁶⁸ By doing this, a wandering monk (Phra thudong-พระธุดงค์) could become famous for having magical powers, enabling him to connect with spirits, and having good skills at fortune-telling (see an image of wandering monks no.8.6).⁶⁹ Then, the majority

⁶⁷ R5 M.58/125, A Report of Udom Phongpensawat, a Thai Commissioner in Chiang Mai (21-25 April 1900) [Rai-Ngan Mom Udom Phongpensawat Khaluang Mueang Chiang Mai-ม.58/125 รายงานหม่อมอุตมพงษ์เพ็ญสวัสดิ์ ข้าหลวงเมืองเชียงใหม่ [21-25 เม.ย. 19]], NA.

⁶⁸ R5 SS.12/46, A Report on Religious and Educational Affairs in Monthon Payap (2 July-4 September 1908) [Rai-Ngan Chatkan Khanasong Lae Chatkansueksa Monthon Payap-ศ.12/46 รายงานจัดการคณะสงฆ์และจัดการศึกษามณฑลพายัพ [2 ก.ค. 124-4 ก.ย. 127]], NA.

⁶⁹ Tiyanich, *Forest Recollections: Wandering Monks in Twentieth-Century Thailand*, 280.

people of the northern society undoubtedly followed the voices and instructions of *Khruba* (ครูบา) or known as sacred, highly meritorious and well-experienced monks. Not only monks but also lay people from various social groups could possess magical powers and firmly believed in the efficacy of talismans to bless their family and community members. As seen from the court of Lampang and Chiang Mai, it was common that shamans were preferred choices to cure sickness and recommend medicines for the Lampang and Chiang Mai chiefs.⁷⁰ Therefore, *Khruba* with their highest status in the religious domain in the north became significant persons who created a linkage between religious knowledge and life matters of the communities. “When a *Khruba* leader said ‘yes’, all activities could be done easily. In contrast, everything would become difficult if *Khruba* said ‘no’”, said Phra Khru Thamwarodom, a Thai administrative monk who fell in a dilemma while he inspected and planned to extend Thai Buddhist affairs in the northern region.⁷¹ Thus, the uniqueness of local Yuan Buddhist practices protected them from Bangkok’s intervention at least until the turn of the century.

In reality, the situation hugely concerned the Thai representatives and Siamese elites in Bangkok, who were unhappy with the local Buddhist and superstitious norms of monks and people in northern communities. It was similar to the situation when Siam was confronted with popular Buddhist practices in the northeast. The local beliefs and conducts were deemed to move people away from the ‘orthodox’ doctrine of Buddhism the Siamese preferred. The central government then labelled diverse spiritual practices as anomalous (*wiparit*-วิปริต),⁷² deteriorated (*sueam sam*-เสื่อมทราม) and misguided (*leo lai*-เหลวไหล) conditions.⁷³ Instead of replacing with the central doctrine as they pressured on the northeast, Siam reflected in contrast by conducting compromise with the local practices in the northern region.

⁷⁰ R5 M.58/208, Phra Mueang Kaen Volunteered to Be under the French Protectorate (8 October 1894-19 October 1896) [Phra Mueangkaen Samak Paiyukap Farangset-ม.58/208 พระเมืองแก่นลัมครไปอยู่กับฝรั่งเศส (8 ต.ค. 113-19 ต.ค. 115)], NA.

⁷¹ R5 SS.12/46, A Report on Religious and Educational Affairs in Monthon Payap (2 July-4 September 1908)

“ถ้าหัวหน้าลงหรือนับถือแล้วก็เป็นกรง่ายที่สุด ถ้าหัวหน้าไม่ลงหรือนับถือแล้วก็เป็นกรยากที่สุด คอยฟังเสียงของครูบาเท่านั้น ถ้าครูบาว่าอย่างไรแล้วก็แล้วกัน ไม่มีใครมีปากเสียง” (TT).

⁷² ‘A Speech of King Chulalongkorn Addressed to Buddhist Monks [Phraratchadamrat Kae Phrasong Doi Phra-Ong-พระราชดำรัสแก่พระสงฆ์โดยพระองค์]’, RG, 1889.

⁷³ R5 SS.12/7, The Administration Education in Provincial Areas (September 1898-February 1899) File No.1 (1-45).

8.8: Umbrella tents of wandering monks, c.1900



From: Bonnie Davis, *Postcards of Old Siam* (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Editions, 2012), 59.

In 1884-9, Siam reallocated some revenue to support worshipping monks and spirits (*kha phra kha thewada phi*-คำพระคำเทวดาผี) every year, from the tax levies in Chiang Mai, Lamphun and Lampang.⁷⁴ Because Siam provided a compromise in the north, they also continued practising the trance of royal ancestral spirit in 1889. Prince Pichit, who was High Commissioner in Chiang Mai at that time, complained of the signs of disorder concerning superstition stating that “there were chaotic affairs of spirit mediums everywhere throughout the city”.⁷⁵ One of the servants working in the Chiang Mai court was possessed by Chao Fa Chai Keao (Lampang ruler who reigned in 1758-1774)⁷⁶ and Chao Kawilorot (Chiang Mai ruler who reigned in 1856-1870), the late king of Chiang Mai and the grandfather of Chao Inthawichayanon, the Chiang Mai chief (who reigned in c.1870-1897). Simultaneously, other mediums emerged in several other places who blamed the tax collections as causes of drought and crop damage in Chiang Mai. On the one hand, the emergence of many spirit mediums in

⁷⁴ R5 M.58/89, The Miscellany of Administration in Chiang Mai (June 1885-December 1888) [Bettalet Rueangratchakan Mueang Chiangmai-ม.58/89 เบ็ดเตล็ดเรื่องราวการเมืองเชียงใหม่ปีระกา สัปตศก 1247 (มิ.ย. 104-ธ.ค. 107)], NA.

⁷⁵ R5 M.58/89.

“...มีฐานะในการเล่นผีทรงผีนุ่นขุนไปทั้งเมือง” (TT)

⁷⁶ The first alphabet in the primary document is slightly blurred. It looks like ‘**Ta**’ Chai Keao. However, the actual name that seemed to fit with names of previous royal Chiang Mai ancestors should be ‘**Fa**’ Chai Keao. He was father of the *Chet Ton* (the seven lords) or Tipchak Dynasty who ruled over Chiang Mai, Lampang and Lamphun.

Chiang Mai informs us that the superstitions among the northern communities were still holding firm even after the arrival of Thai commissioners and Thai influences for a half decade. On the other hand, instead of launching a policy for oppression or minimising the strength of spiritual belief, Siamese elites continued their force with compromise. They expanded their influence with more caution and attempted to understand how and why local peoples associated with these various superstitious beliefs.

In 1899, there was another complaint from the Chiang Mai and Lamphun chiefs about the taxes on pigs introduced by Phraya Song Suradet (High Commissioner in 1893-1899). He planned to establish a slaughterhouse tax on pigs. However, the local rulers claimed that commoners regularly offered pigs for sacrifice to their spirits. Building the slaughterhouse in the city centre would affect local villagers who lived far from the official site. It wasted their time to take a long journey from their homes to the city, and their pigs might have gone bad even before they arrived home.⁷⁷ Actually, the diminished power of the Lan Na chiefs was a severe issue for local leaders, and the plan for building a slaughterhouse was one small element of this. The tax on pigs would increase financial benefits to the Siamese government, whereas all kinds of taxation began to slip out of local chiefs' hands. Thus, the local chiefs had to find a way to stop the building of the slaughterhouse. The letter of the Chiang Mai chief that was sent to consult with Chao Bunwat Wongmanit, the Lampang chief, showed that the dissatisfaction of local chiefs in the excessive power of the Thai representatives who entirely grabbed local revenues (concessions and other taxes on beasts, alcohol, gambling and timbers) that previously belonged to local rulers. Yet, to claim for the protection of spiritual sacrifice would be an indirect expression to achieve any success in halting the Thai expansionism in their lands and preserve their political power. However, the Lampang chief disagreed with the plan of the Chiang Mai chief and recommended him to show this real disappointment to Siam frankly. He replied to the Chiang Mai chief that, "according to you asked me for some advice, I think section 9 [complaints about taxes on pigs and slaughter house] was still ambiguous. The main issue that caused your resentment was section 2,3,4,5 [the complaint about

⁷⁷ R5 M.58/41, The Lao Chiefs in Monthon Payap's Incrimination against Phraya Songsuradet on Management (27 June-August 1898) [Rueang Chao Lao Monthonpayap Klaothot Phraya Song Khaluang Rueangchatkan Banmueang-ม.58/41 เรื่องเจ้าลาวมณฑลพายัพกล่าวโทษพระยาทรงข้าวหลวง เรื่องจัดการบ้านเมือง(27 มิ.ย. 118-30 ส.ค. 118)], NA.

diminishing revenues and excessive power of Thai representatives]. If you do not expose the problems clearly in what you want to say to the Siamese court, [your resentment] would be unclear.”⁷⁸ It can be inferred from this correspondence that the local chiefs recognised the limitation of Siamese government in extending central Thai Buddhism, and so Siam chose to compromise and avoid subverting local spiritualities in the north. The Chiang Mai chief, therefore, complained only about impacts on local spiritual practices to stop the excessive Thai expansionists, rather than mention the real problem of political intrusion. The spiritual practices then were turned into a pretext for local chiefs to halt the unlimited power of Thai representatives in their land, even if they had never been impacted by central Thai Buddhism at that time.

As expected by the local chiefs, the Siamese government showed compromise in its response. The government reminded the Thai representatives in the local area that they should comprehend more about local spiritual practices so that they could achieve in extending the Thai authority in the north. Siam also attempted to establish a political administration that allowed the local people to participate in the administration, receive a reasonable salary equal to Thais and stop the Thai representatives using their authority in inappropriate ways.⁷⁹ This can be seen in the compromise of the central government on local spirit worship in Prince Damrong’s recommendation. He said, “although we did not believe in those spirits, we need to pay attention and learn. It did not matter that the spiritual practices were real or not as long as locals believed in them. [Thus,] it would be difficult to change locals to believe in other ways”.⁸⁰ According to this, Siam continued an exemption for pig taxes to make it more convenient for people to conduct their sacrifices and eat the

⁷⁸ R5 M.58/41.

“ข้าผู้พิฆาตศรีครองโดยนิสโยมาประกอบกับความซึ้งใจของเจ้าอันเปนน้องมาปฤษา ...ตามที่น้องบอกหาหรือมา 9 ข้อนั้น มารินิจนัยดูยังละ สิ้นปนกันอยู่ยังไม่กระจัดชัดแจ้ง ข้าผู้พิเห็นว่าขอใดหนักแน่นแค้นใจมิขอ 2,3,4,5 ถ้าไม่บอกขอให้ชัดแจ้งก็เป็นการเคลือบคลุม” (TT)

⁷⁹ R5 M.58/33, Phraya Sri Sahadheb Managed Monthon Payap with the Attachment of Land Tax Act (30 January 1899-30 June 1900); R5 M.58/41, The Lao Chiefs in Monthon Payap’s Incrimination against Phraya Songsuradet on Management (27 June-August 1898); R5 M.58/126, On Market in Chiang Mai (24-25 April 1900) [Rueang Talat Thi Mueang Chiangmai-ม.58/126 เรื่องตลาดที่เมืองเชียงใหม่ [24-25 เม.ย. 119]], NA.

⁸⁰ R5 M.58/126, On Market in Chiang Mai (24-25 April 1900).

“เรื่องความเชื่อถือผีสงของพวกลาว ถึงเราไม่ถือก็ควรจะต้องเอาใจใส่เล่าเรียนเสียหน่อย เพราะถ้าความเชื่อถือของพื้นเมืองเป็นอย่างนั้น จะจริงหรือไม่จริงก็ยากที่เราจะให้เขาเชื่อเป็นอย่างอื่นได้” (TT)

meat as medicine at least until 1901.⁸¹ This was a state policy that was modified owing to confronting with the distinctive local circumstance of the north.

Accordingly, the central Thai Buddhist programme following the Thammayut fraternity was reduced in this way in the northern frontier. The status of compromise was reiterated according to the opinion of Udom Phongpensawat, Thai Commissioner in Chiang Mai in 1900. He said that “it would be amazing if we could achieve the establishment of [Thammayut] temples. I think if we do not feel proficient in [local Buddhist practices], it would be better to avoid worsening [the situation]”.⁸² Thus, it was not a surprise why Thai Buddhism, as well as the education system, was extended to the northern frontier at slight levels compared to the northeast. The strength of local Buddhist practices in previous Lan Na blended with various superstitious practices that resulted in an exception, preserving and delaying the ultimate goal of the Thai Buddhist religious project as they did in the northeast. While the Siamese government forced many critical changes upon the northeast, extension of Thai centralised power in the north was developed through a compromise and the persistence of a status quo. The limitations of central Thai Buddhist expansion emerging in the northern communities also existed in the south, where their religious belief and ethnic communities differed quite sharply from Thai national culture.

8.5.2 Leaving compromise towards Malay Communities in the southernmost region

As we have seen from Chapter 7 the restrictions of the Thai state expansion in relation to the symbolism of Thai kingship in the south mainly resulted from the colonial discourse of mimicry – preserving the Islamic and Malay customs – that Siam imitated from the British model to govern the Malay communities. Thus, central Thai Buddhism became one of the most significant parts of the colonial tolerance project of the Thai expansionists. The Buddhist belief in the south was mostly developed by local Buddhist believers, rather than being forced upon by the Thai government. Therefore, Nongchick, as the city most accustomed to Thai culture, and other six Malay principalities – Patani, Yaring, Yala, Raman, Saiburi, Ra-ngae – had been

⁸¹ R5 M.58/44, Reports on Monthon Payap (11 September 1901-10 September 1910) [Rai-Ngan Ratchakan Monthonpayap-ม.58/44 รายงานราชการกรมณฑลพายัพ (11 ก.ย. 120-10 ก.ย. 129)], NA.

⁸² R5 M.58/125, A Report of Udom Phongpensawat, a Thai Commissioner in Chiang Mai (21-25 April 1900).

“ถ้าจะจัดเรื่องอารามสำเร็จได้แล้วก็นับว่าเป็นอัศจรรย์ยิ่ง แต่ฉันเห็นว่าไม่สำเร็จถ้าไม่สิ้นเหตุแล้ว ระวังอย่าให้ไปเสีย” (TT)

affected by the central Thai Buddhist power only slightly. It only penetrated their communities from the significance of Thai kingship (that adhered to Buddhism) which was practised in silent ways. Thus, the Malay communities could continuously preserve not only their Islamic religious beliefs but also some Malay traditions.

The surveys taken in the 1880s found that more than two hundred thousand people in the southern frontier zone were Muslims, who were ethnically and culturally Malay and formed the majority of the population, with 3 per cent of Chinese descent and 1 per cent of Thai.⁸³ Nongchick, one of seven Malay principalities, was influenced most by Thai culture and Buddhism compared to the other six provinces. This was because Bangkok replaced the rulers of Nongchick in 1837. Man Mueang was appointed as the first Thai ruler in Nongchick, followed by Nai Kliang, Nai Wiang and Nai Ming. Afterwards, Nai That, a brother of the Songkhla ruler, was appointed to rule over Nongchick in the 1890s.⁸⁴ This created a nuance of difference between Nongchick and the other six Malay principalities. Nongchick was engaged with Thai and Buddhist culture through Songkhla, whereas other Malay principalities had preserved their Malay customs and Islamic religion through blood lineage, marriage and custom relations.⁸⁵ Nonetheless, the existence of Malay norms and cultures was still strong in the six Malay principalities as well as in Nongchick. Thus, Siamese elites avoided hastening the expansion of Thai state Buddhism in these Malay provinces.

Siam continued to allow the Malays to participate in the judiciary in their communities to preserve its role as benevolent Thai rulers. It did not, however, allow Malay judges in Nongchick, due to the close relationship with Thais, (see more details of the different judicial structure between Nongchick and other Malay provinces in table no.18). To search for appropriate officials to be dispatched to the southern frontier was also an essential issue in the Chulalongkorn era to keep the Siamese

⁸³ Bhanurangsi Savangwongse, *Chiwiat: Travel Reports on Cities in Southwest and East in Malay Peninsula [Chiwiat: Waduai Khunkwamdi Haengkantiao Lae Pen Rayatang Raingan Huamueangtawantok Nai Laem Malayu Faktawan-Ook-ชีวิวัฒน์: ว่าถึงคุณความดีแห่งการเที่ยวในที่ต่างๆแลเป็นระยะทางรายงานหัวเมืองตะวันตกในแหลมมะลายูฟากตะวันออก]* (Phranakhon: Bamrunnukunkit, 1909), 77.

⁸⁴ ‘The Royal Chronicle of Pattani’ [Phongsawadan Mueang Pattani-พงศาวดารเมืองปัตตานี], in *Collected Royal Chronicles Vol.3 (Part 3 and Beginning of Part 4)*, 20.

⁸⁵ R5 M.2.12/2, British Scholars’ Observations in the Malay Peninsula (21 March 1898-22 July 1900) [Rueang Nakprat Angkrit Paitiao Truat Kanwicha Nai Laem Malayu-ม.2.12/2 เรื่องนักปราชญ์อังกฤษไปเที่ยวตรวจการวิชาในแหลมมะลายู (21 มี.ค.117 - 22 ก.ค.119)], NA; *Collected Royal Chronicles Vol.3 (Part 3 and Beginning of Part 4)*, 22–25.

outlook of toleration regarding Malay religion and culture. The Malay language and distinctive local traditions were considered serious problems that had to be taken into account by the Siamese government. They believed that sending poorly trained representatives who did not know local traditions and Malay languages would turn the royal policy to be seen as an evil intention. As Damrong complained that “it was not difficult for the Siamese government to search for someone who was sincere and had English skills, but to find someone who is fruitfully experienced in the Malay Peninsula was onerous”.⁸⁶ Therefore, the necessary qualifications of a Thai representative working in the south was comprised of being accustomed to local circumstances, being popular and respected by locals, and being able to speak Malay. The Siamese government officially implemented those qualifications through the ‘Regulations for Administration of the Seven Malay Principalities, 1901’ for the southern frontier, in particular to encourage the achievement. Sections 27-29 determined that all Thai officials in the Malay provinces should study the Malay language.⁸⁷ They had to be able to speak Malay within one year and read or write Malay within three years. These officials would not receive their monthly salary until they could communicate in Malay. Besides, some officials were approved by Malay rulers and *Tokali* as reaching the qualification in Malay language and would receive a bonus of about 100-400 baht.⁸⁸ This was a significant commitment of Siam to connect intimately with local Malay communities and to succeed in the royal policy of compromise without uprooting any local Malay traditions and Islamic beliefs.

Therefore, there was no direct attempt to stretch central Thai Buddhism by the Siamese government in the border areas of the south throughout the reign of King Chulalongkorn, except for kingship attractions. This was similar to conditions in the north until after 1902, albeit in the different levels of kingship expansion compared to the south. The Buddhist condition in the northeast, however, was quite the opposite. Thai administrative monks, Buddhist materials and their symbolic religious influences strongly affected and took root in the northeast since 1893 and continued even after the Holy Men uprising in 1901-2. The direct enforcement in the northeast

⁸⁶ R5 M.2.3/37, The Appointments and Transfers Official Positions in Monthon Pattani (7 December-7 January 1895) [Tang Lae Yaitamnang Kharatchakan Mueang Monthonpattani-ม.2.3/37 ตั้ง และย้ายตำแหน่งข้าราชการเมืองมณฑลปัตตานี [7 ธ.ค.-7 ม.ค. 114]], NA.

⁸⁷ ‘The Regulations for Administration of the Seven Malay Principalities, 1901.

⁸⁸ In 1898, 15 kilograms of rice was about 40-60 at [อัฐ] and 64 at [อัฐ] = 1 baht (บาท)

and the partial reform between the compromise in the north and south would become more apparent when we compare the Siamese methods in expanding its religious idea and borders through the approval of monastic boundaries as we further discuss this in the following section.

8.9: Details of the official staff of Malay states in 1899 (containing Malay judges in Patani and Jalor (Yala) and no Malay in Nongchick)

Patani	Commissioner (<i>i.e.</i> in 1899, Phya Sukhum) Governor, called <i>Raja Muda</i> (<i>i.e.</i> , Phra Pipit) ²⁶ Vice-Governor Judges (4 = 1 Siamese and 3 Malay) Court Clerks (3) Treasurer (1, Siamese) Assistant Treasurer (<i>ibid</i>) Officer Clerks (2) Customer (sic) & Post-master Inspectors of Customs (4) Superintendent of Police : with 2 sergeants, 2 corporals, and 1 lance-corporal Constables (24)
Nawang Chik	Commissioner (with Patani: in 1899, Phya Sukhum) Governor (Siamese) Judges (2, both Siamese) Office Clerk (for Governor's Office) Court Clerks (2) Office Clerks (2) Customer Inspectors of Customs (2) Stamp Agent ²⁵
Jalor	Governor (Raja of Jalor) ²⁶ Commissioner (Siamese) Judges (2, one Malay, one Siamese) Court Clerks (2) Customers (2, one Siamese, one Chinese) Stamp Agent ²⁵

From: C. A. GIBSON-HILL, W. W. Skeat, and F. F. Laidlaw, 'The Cambridge University Expedition to the North-Eastern Malay States, and to Upper Perak, 1899 - 1900', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 26, no. 4 (164) (1953): 49–50. (It was readjusted from original to be seen easier by author)

8.6 Strengthening Buddhist symbolism through *Wisungkhama Sima* (monastic boundary) in the three frontiers

To encourage Thai administrative monks who had permanent positions in frontier zones, the temple or monastery became a symbolic centre of communities, summoning people to participate in religious activities arranged by Siam. Buddhist monks following the Thammayut order practised their routines at the monastery rather than wandering to gain mystic insight, while each community needed a sacred

compound to be completed for this to happen.⁸⁹ The monastic boundary (*wisungkhama sima*-วิสุ่งคามสีมา⁹⁰), a Buddhist way of determining Buddhist space, became a symbolic tool to demarcate the central Thai Buddhist boundary and the political border in the modern sense. The Buddhist monastery not only became a significant area to validate ordination as a central Thai-style practice,⁹¹ but it also performed the Thai state authority outlined in the Buddhist space and obtained rights over ambiguous areas throughout the frontiers.

Thus, without the demarcating a ritual boundary, the regulation of the sangha would function with difficulty.⁹² A *Sima* was required for ordination and the Buddhist monastic assembly. In Siam, the demarcation of a Buddhist space could happen everywhere except in the land belonging already to someone or areas that were already demarcated as dwellings or fields. The process included placing one or two carved stones (*bai sima* or *saema*-ใบสีมาหรือเสมา) on the soil to mark it as an area for establishing a main Buddha hall (*ubosot*-อุโบสถ). This would be the gathering place used for all Buddhist religious activities. The area inside the *Sima* was then declared as a monastic zone. However, it was quite difficult to find empty land with appropriate size for marking as a Buddhist ritual place. It was felt necessary to introduce an exception so that the monastic boundary could be demarcated anywhere if approval from the Siamese king had been received or if the king ceded land to someone else.⁹³ The demarcating of the monastic boundary was another way to pin down the Thai state Buddhist influence and also to symbolise the political authority of Thai kingship as the religious benefactor. As Chulalongkorn stated, “many temples are requested for *Wisungkhama Sima* by Thai commissioners or provincial officials. They believed that *Sima* approval was evidence to prove the territory of Siam”.⁹⁴ It

⁸⁹ Vajiranavarorasa, *Sects and Biographies of Monks*, 23; Richard A. O’Connor, ‘Interpreting Thai Religious Change: Temples, Sangha Reform and Social Change’, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 24, no. 2 (1993): 331; Lucien M. Hanks, *Rice and Man: Agricultural Ecology in Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992), 104.

⁹⁰ *Wisungkam* means an area of tax exempt and *Sima* means boundary. It consisted of two kinds of *Sima*; (1) *phatthasima* – a boundary determined by monks with specific rituals (2) *Aphatthasima* – a boundary determined by the state in which monks are part of a community.

⁹¹ Craig J. Reynolds, ‘The Buddhist Monkhood in Nineteenth Century Thailand’, 82.

⁹² Ian Harris, ‘Rethinking Cambodian Political Discourse on Territory: Genealogy of the Buddhist Ritual Boundary (*Sīmā*)’, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 41, no. 2 (2010): 220.

⁹³ Vajiranavarorasa, *Sects and Biographies of Monks*, 32–34.

⁹⁴ R5 SS.12/10, The Administration of Education and the Sangha Community, 1899 [Chatkansueksa Lae Khanasong-ศ.12/10 จัดการศึกษาและคณะสงฆ์ รศ.118], NA.

meant that the requests for *Sima* mostly by Thai representatives in each local area were not to achieve religious benefits but political benefits in the Thai state expansion. *Sima* approval of the Thai King, therefore, guaranteed that temples, monks and ways of practice were officially controlled by the Thai Sangha and its doctrinal regulations.

It was a further noteworthy point that the numbers of temples that were allowed to be demarcated as sacred areas dramatically increased in the northeast from 1893. In contrast, there was a slight number of *Sima* approval in the north before the Shan rebellion, the number was unchanged in the seven Malay principalities. The pluralistic influence of Buddhism in the Siamese state expansion was also evidenced in the records of the Siamese approval for demarcating monastic boundaries, which was another powerful Buddhist symbolism from Siam during the Chulalongkorn period.

Before 1893, the extension of Thai Buddhist power through approval of the monastic boundary (*Sima*) was limited to inner Bangkok and outer provinces but not in the tributary zones; the three frontiers of Siam. The first set of *Sima* approval was given to the northeast in 1893⁹⁵ when Siam officially despatched High Commissioner, Prince Sanphasitthiprasong to Monthon Isan. It was a significant sign that Siam launched its expansion through both political and cultural programmes of central Thai Buddhism into the northeast. The monastic boundary was asked by the Thai officials working in the area. There were at least five temples per year in the northeast that received the *Sima* approval from Siam in 1894-1897.⁹⁶ The number of monastic boundary markers significantly increased to 16-40 temples per year from 1898-1902. Interestingly, the increased number in 1898 was the same year that the Siamese government despatched Buddhist administrative monks and embarked more fully in the project of extending central religious practices in the northeast. On the one hand,

“คือวัดที่มีข้าหลวงถวายผู้ว่าราชการเมือง คิดเห็นว่าการที่มีใบพระราชทานวิสุงคามสีมาอันเป็นพยานอันหนึ่ง ว่าเมืองซึ่งตั้งวัดนั้นเป็นพระราชอาณาเขต...” (TT)

⁹⁵ ‘Giving Monastic Boundary in 1893 [Phraratchathan Wisungkhama Sima Saman r.s.112-พระราชทานวิสุงคามสีมา สามัญ ร.ศ.112]’, RG, 1893.

⁹⁶ ‘Giving Monastic Boundary in 1894 [Phraratchathan Wisungkhama Sima Saman r.s.113-พระราชทานวิสุงคามสีมา สามัญ ร.ศ.113]’, RG, 1894; ‘Giving Monastic Boundary in 1895 [Phraratchathan Wisungkhama Sima Saman r.s.114-พระราชทานวิสุงคามสีมา สามัญ ร.ศ.114]’, RG, 1895; ‘Giving Monastic Boundary in 1896 [Phraratchathan Wisungkhama Sima Saman r.s.115-พระราชทานวิสุงคามสีมา สามัญ ร.ศ.115]’, RG, 1896, 1900; ‘Giving Monastic Boundary in 1897 [Phraratchathan Wisungkhama Sima Saman r.s.116-พระราชทานวิสุงคามสีมา สามัญ ร.ศ.116]’, RG, 1900.

Sima approval was a Buddhist process of renovating the living place of monks to be under the Sangha system of Siam. On the other hand, it marked a symbolic space to present influences of Thai Buddhism in frontier areas where Siam had a slight influence. Therefore, all existing temples and newly established temples in the northeast with *Sima* approval gradually transferred into Siamese hands. Although commoners sometimes asked for *Sima* approval, most *Sima* was requested by Thai representatives and Thai Buddhist administrative monks in each local area. In 1901, 21 out of 27 temples in the northeast were subjected to requests by Thai representatives to receive *Sima*.⁹⁷ The Buddhist expansion through *Sima* continued even after the chaotic situation of the Holy Men revolt in 1901-2. There were 34 temples in 1903 and 41 temples in 1906. The enlargement of temples every year demonstrated that the Siamese objectives were intensified to strengthen the idea of central Thai Buddhism in the northeast, particularly from 1898 onwards.

However, the demarcations of sacred space in the north and the south were found to be very slight in numbers, compared to the northeast. In the north, a small number of *Sima* approvals were requested by local peoples rather than Thai representatives or Thai monks. In 1900, there was only one temple that requested for *Sima* by Chao Bunwat Wongmanit, the Lampang chief (reigned in 1897-1922).⁹⁸ Two years later, two of four temples were processed by Chao Burirat⁹⁹ and Chao Piriya Thepawong, Phrae chief. The other two temples (in Chiang Mai and Lamphun) were requested by local people in 1902.¹⁰⁰ Although the requests for monastic boundaries by the local chiefs were possibly a result of pressure from Thai commissioners, there were no Thai representatives to play a direct role in demarcating temples with *Sima*. It shows the limitations of the extent to which the central Thai Buddhist authority and its symbolism had impacted on the northern frontier before 1902. It was not until after the incident of the Shan rebellion that we notice an increase of the Buddhist influence in the north. The Sangha Act of 1902 was implemented in the northern frontier, and

⁹⁷ ‘Giving Monastic Boundary in 1901 [Phraratchathan Wisungkhama Sima Saman r.s.120-พระราชทานวิสุงคามสีมา สามัญ ร.ศ.120]’, RG, 1901.

⁹⁸ ‘Giving Monastic Boundary in 1900 [Phraratchathan Wisungkhama Sima Saman r.s.119-พระราชทานวิสุงคามสีมา สามัญ ร.ศ.119]’, RG, 1901.

⁹⁹ The top five titles in the north were *Chao Luang* (chief or เจ้าหลวง), *Chao Uparat* (เจ้าอุปราช), *Chao Ratchawong* (เจ้าราชวงศ์), *Chao Ratchabut* (เจ้าราชบุตร) and *Chao Burirat* (เจ้าบุรีรัตน์)

¹⁰⁰ ‘Giving Monastic Boundary in 1902 [Phraratchathan Wisungkhama Sima Saman r.s.121-พระราชทานวิสุงคามสีมา สามัญ ร.ศ.121]’, RG, 1902.

Siam despatched Thai Buddhist monks to inspect and plan to construct the central Thai Buddhist practices. By 1906, four years after the revolt, local temples in the north were in the process of *Sima* approval, and three of nine temples were processed by Thai officials.¹⁰¹ Several temples were historical places of previous Lan Na including Wat Chedi Luang (representing the Buddhist cosmology), Wat Chiang Man in Chiang Mai (established by King Mengrai) or Wat Pa Pao in Chiang Mai (supported By Chao Bualai and the Shan people). After the Shan rebellion, therefore, it became critical to the Buddhist system in the north, which was then adjusted to conform to the Sangha Act and the central Thai Buddhist structures.

Turning to the south, the expansion of Buddhism through *Sima* did increase only very slightly in numbers both before and after the attempted Malay rebellion in 1901-2. Initially, a *Sima* approval was given to Thai rulers in Nongchick in 1889.¹⁰² However, the numbers of *Sima* approvals did not change significantly either in Nongchick or other principalities of the area. There was a *Sima* approval for two temples in Yala and for one temple in Yaring in 1895, two temples in Nongchick in 1899, one temple in Patani in 1900 and two temples in Ra-ngae in 1901.¹⁰³ Even after the attempted Malay rebellion in 1901, there were not more than five temples per year that were in the process of *Sima* approval until the end of the Chulalongkorn period (1902-1910). The low numbers of *Simas* reveal that Siam had a low capacity or local demand to secure its southern boundary by demarcating a Buddhist space. There was no apparent intention to demarcate Buddhist spaces in the southern frontier beyond the necessity to fulfil the Buddhist faith of Thai and Chinese groups of people. It could be confirmed that the enlargement of Thai Buddhist influence was not of paramount importance in the Siamese commitment towards the southern communities throughout the reign of Chulalongkorn and was not seen as an effective way of extending power over this area, in real terms or symbolically, because the limitation upon its discourse was too significant.

¹⁰¹ ‘Giving Monastic Boundary in 1906 [Phraratchathan Wisungkhama Sima Saman r.s.125-พระราชทานวิสุงคามสีมา สามัญ ร.ศ.125]’, RG, 1906.

¹⁰² ‘Giving Monastic Boundary in 1889 [Phraratchathan Wisungkhama Sima Saman r.s.108-พระราชทานวิสุงคามสีมา สามัญ ร.ศ.108]’, RG, 1889.

¹⁰³ ‘Giving Monastic Boundary in 1895; ‘Giving Monastic Boundary in 1899 [Phraratchathan Wisungkhama Sima Saman r.s.118-พระราชทานวิสุงคามสีมา สามัญ ร.ศ.118]’, RG, 1901; ‘Giving Monastic Boundary in 1900; ‘Giving Monastic Boundary in 1901.

8.7 Partial reform: ‘the critical difference’ of Thai kingship and Buddhism in the context of Thai state expansion in the three frontiers

By this point, we have seen from Chapter 7 and this chapter that the limits of cultural and symbolic extension seemed to be paramount and underpinned the Thai state political power and its limitation. The cultural activities predisposed the political objectives of the Siamese government, even though they expected to extend its political power within a single form of expansion. As seen by the ultimate goal of Siam regarding Thai kingship and Buddhist extension being very decisive in the northeast. Siam, in contrast, expressed that they did not expect to trespass the diverse ways of local practices in both the north and south in relation to Thai state Buddhism. Consequently, the Siamese compromised on the variety of ethnic peoples in the north and the special status of the Islamic religion and Malay cultural tolerance in the south. The north then was only impacted by the full version of Thai kingship but not Buddhism. The south received even less impacts on cultural influences of the Thai state in both kingship and Buddhism. However, there were different reasons regarding the compromise between the north and the south.

The compromised situation in the northern region resulted from the limited capacity of the Siam state rather than imitating the British colonial policy as they did in the south. However, some parts of the administrative reform programme of Siam extended in the north was inspired by the indirect control of British Burma over various ethnic groups of people in northern Burma. As the British indicated after they conquered Mandalay in Upper Burma in 1885, they did not want to fight with other ethnic groups (including Shans, Karennis, Kachins and Chins).¹⁰⁴ They preferred to preserve the local customs and culture which differed from the rest of Burma.¹⁰⁵ Yet, it was reflected in contrast that Siam preferred to tighten its grips in the north with direct control regarding cultural dominance rather than following the British traces of toleration. Siam, however, found itself unable to immediately force direct control over the northern communities. As Damrong discussed, the British method applied to northern Burma resulted from a lack of the British capacity to control them directly.

¹⁰⁴ Michael Aung-Thwin, ‘The British “Pacification” of Burma: Order without Meaning’, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 16, no. 2 (1985): 252.

¹⁰⁵ Maung Maung, *Law and Custom in Burma and the Burmese Family* (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 1963), 30.

For Siam, it was oriented to control the north as similar to other inner zones of Siam. Nonetheless, “the unknown of Lao traditions and customs and how they were different from other areas resulted in the necessity of compromise rather than applying the new reform. It became a frustration in my mind since there was a lack of local knowledge”, said Damrong.¹⁰⁶

In contrast, the compromise in the south resulted from the Siamese view of the colonial toleration. This was the main reason that led to the ambivalence of the Siamese colonial mimicry. It was not an easy task for Siam to extend its legitimacy of the Thai state that contained Buddhist fundamentals without affecting the Islamic and Malay issues. Siam attempted to maintain distance from the Islamic and Malay interferences. They also avoided harshly enforcing the authority of Thai kingship and Buddhism even though they did this in the northeast decisively. However, the hints of Buddhism that was inseparable with Thai kingship became a source of great difficulty for the Thai state expansion in the south. Siam expected the Malays to bow to their political loyalty, not culturally, to the Thai king by introducing some symbolism of kingship. However, it still triggered the unexpected interference of Thai Buddhist influences. In 1901, Abdul Kadir, Raja of Patani complained on the Buddhist intervention resulting from the symbolism of Thai kingship that:

The inhabitants of the State of Patani are Mohammedans. At certain Siamese festivals the Commissioner above [Phraya Sukhum] referred to calls upon leading native inhabitants of the State requiring them to bow and make obeisance to the picture of the King of Siam, before which joss sticks are being burnt. This bowing to pictorial representations of living beings is in gross violation of the tenets of the Mohammedan religion and gives great offence to the native inhabitants...The Siamese Commissioner has lately attempted to compel the Mohammedan High Priest in Patani to take an oath that he will not fight against the King of Siam. He was called upon, as part of the ceremony, to drink water prepared and handed to him by the

¹⁰⁶ R5 M.58/64, Problems and Prevention Bandits in Monthon Lao Chiang (24 September 1894-3 July 1900).

“ไม่แน่ใจว่าด้วยหัวเมืองลาวเฉียงพื้นพลเมืองเปนลาว ขนบธรรมเนียมเดิมแลความนิยมในพื้นที่บ้านพื้นเมืองซึ่งผิดกับหัวเมืองชั้นในมีอยู่อย่างใด จำต้องคิดอนุโลมกับแบบใหม่ที่จะจัดการจึงจะตลอด การทั้งนี้ยังเป็นที่ยึดอัดขัดข้องในใจข้าพระพุทธเจ้าด้วยยังไม่มีความรู้การในท้องที่เปนหลัก” (TT).

Buddhist priest of Siam. On his refusal he was locked up, but released after one day and night.¹⁰⁷

In reality, the influence of Thai kingship was just introduced and was active from 1898 onwards, or after Abdul Kadir's father (Sulaiman Shariffaddin) passed away. Then, Thai national culture was slightly transformed to the south. The complaint of the Patani Raja indeed was a political issue rather than a cultural intrusion as seen from the significant reasons found in other two letters of Raja of Saiburi and Ra-ngae (Legeh) sent to the British Commissioner in Malaya at the same time (See images of the three Raja and their letters sending to the British Commissioner in images no.8.8-8.9).¹⁰⁸ Yet, the messages of the Patani Raja above tells us that there was some inconsistency in the Siamese policy regarding the non-intervention in the south. On the one hand, Siam necessitated a compromise and avoided interfering with Islamic and Malay customs as its colonial discourse. On the other hand, Thai kingship was central to establishing Thai nationhood to keep the Siamese order in the southern region. Thus, Siam decided to extend the exclusive authority of kingship and simultaneously preserve tolerance towards Islam. Nevertheless, there were various traces of Buddhism contained in the symbolism of Thai kingship such as the ceremony of swearing the oath, king's materials and particularly in the claims of *barami* of the Thai king himself. Much of the rituals of royalty indeed were Buddhist fundamentals. The Islamic religion, without enforcement, became too challenging for attempts to accept the central Thai power. Thus, the results of the Thai state expansion regarding both kingship and Buddhism that Siam attempted to succeed in its deep commitment to follow the British colonial administration failed in practice. In this regard, the failure and ambivalence of Siam in relation to its cultural governance could be inferred from the words of Frank Swettenham, a British governor who provided an insight of the methods of Siam in dealing with the Malays, particularly during the 1880s-1900s that:

It is quite evident that the Siamese do not grasp the situation, especially as it affects the Malay Rajas and the Malay people. It is

¹⁰⁷ 'Letter from Tunku Abdul Kadir Kamarsedin to Governor Sir F. Swettenham on 13 August 1901', CO273/282, Despatches. Native States.

¹⁰⁸ 'Letter from Raja Legeh to Governor of the Straits Settlements on 5 November 1901' and 'Raja Sai's Letter on 29 November 1901' in CO273/282, Despatches. Native States.

equally evident, both from history of their relations with the Malay States during the last 100 years and the last few months, that they do not understand how to deal with Malays and that they do not possess officers capable of developing such States as Petani, Kelantan and Trengganu, and introducing a form of administration which will secure the sympathy and support of the people.¹⁰⁹

Thus, due to the extreme pressure on the northeast, semi-pressure on the north and lesser pressure on the south with its inconsistency led to the multiple levels of Thai state expansion or the so-called partial reform of Siam. This partial reform or the critical difference was the sign of the ambivalence of colonial expansion, of which Bhabha referred to as the unexpected activities of a dominating state that were conducted in forms of slippage, excess and difference. Subsequently, the ambivalence of the colonial state created the ambivalence of mimicry in the local arena.¹¹⁰ Thus, the critical difference of the Thai cultural expansion produced a space for intervention that allowed local communities to reproduce their demands in new forms of disturbances (as will be discussed in the next chapter).¹¹¹

Conclusion

The model of Thai national culture at the centre had changed over time to allow it to fit under various and changing circumstances. Siam attempted to readjust itself to reach a civilising standard, including in the Buddhist domain. Western knowledge was central to the refinement of Buddhism to meet its modern standard as it became Thai state Buddhism in accordance with the Thammayut doctrine. Yet, the refinement of Thai Buddhism itself found difficulties when it tried to remove superstitious remnants, because non-Buddhist beliefs were still significant in sustaining the status of Thai kingship in many areas. This became more challenging when central Thai Buddhism came into contact with the three frontier areas that adhered to various versions of Theravada Buddhism, proclaimed belief in hundreds of spirits and, in the south, recognised a completely distinct belief system in the Islamic religion. During

¹⁰⁹ Frank Swettenham, 'Memorandum on Siamese Relations with Malay States and Recent Communications concerning this Subject', CO273/282, Despatches. Native States.

¹¹⁰ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 86.

¹¹¹ Satoshi Mizutani, 'Hybridity and History: A Critical Reflection on Homi K. Bhabha's Post-Historical Thoughts', *Ab Imperio* 2013, no. 4 (2013): 36; Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 86.

the early years of the reforms, Siam modified central Buddhism and Thai education, which relied on the relationship between monastery, society and education. Later, Thai representatives and Buddhist administrative monks became significant players in the enforcement of Thai state Buddhism in the frontiers through education and religious materials¹¹² – prayer books, textbooks for Pali and Thai studies, religious holidays and monastic boundaries.

Nonetheless, Thai national culture of Siam had modified again when the central policy came into practice in those frontiers. Due to the historical relations between Bangkok and the northeastern Lao states, central Buddhist influences were driven forward intensively in the northeast. However, the possibility of Thai state Buddhism penetrating the northern and southern communities was more limited and had to develop in different ways and with some points of compromise. The lesser capacity of Siam to extend its authority in the north and its colonial mimicry of benevolence in the south resulted in these differences, compared to the Thai state activities in the northeast. This suggests the importance of cultural and symbolic elements that influenced the political objectives of the Siamese at that time. Although they expected to force the frontiers to be a single unit, the central idea and policy of Siam became diverted due to their confrontation with distinct cultures in the frontiers. Therefore, the pluralistic way of expansion regarding the central Buddhist idea as well as Thai kingship (as discussed in the previous chapter) unveiled the fragmentation of national history during the Chulalongkorn era. Because of the multi-level expansion, it led to the different patterns of reaction in the three frontiers. The focus of the next chapter, therefore, will be to consider in more depth how the three local uprisings became distinctive vehicles of resistance in response to the attempt of the Siamese state to expand itself.

¹¹² Jim Taylor, *Forest Monks and the Nation-State: An Anthropological and Historical Study in Northeastern Thailand*, 45–46.

8.10: Photographs of Raja of Patani, Raja of Ra-ngae (Legeh) and Raja of Saiburi



Tengku Abdul Kadir Kamaruddin (Raja of Patani)



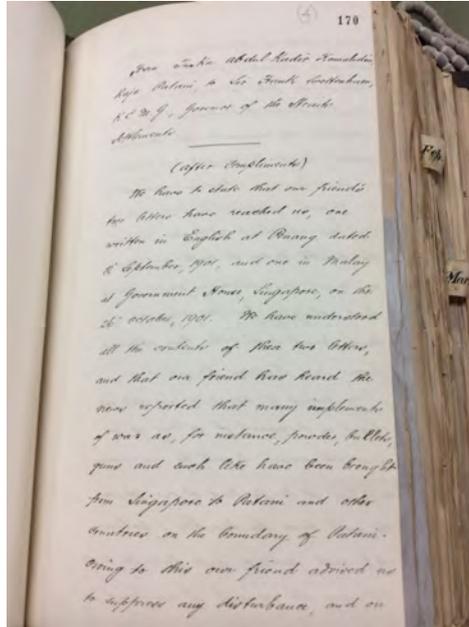
Tengku Ngoh Shamsuddin (Raja of Ra-ngae or Legeh)



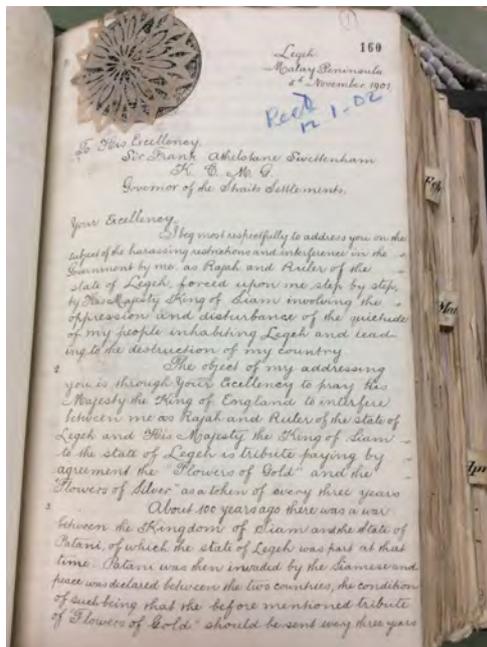
Tengku Abdul Muttalib (Raja of Saiburi)

From: 'Saiburi Royal Family Escaped to Kelantan [Hetkan Klum Ratchanikun Mueang Saiburi Ni Ratchaphai Pai Mueang Klantan-เหตุการณ์กลุ่มราชินิกุลเมืองสายบุรี หนีราชภัยไปเมืองกลันตัน]', Lek-prapai Viriyahpant Foundation, accessed 27 February 2019, <http://www.lek-prapai.org/home/view.php?id=960>.

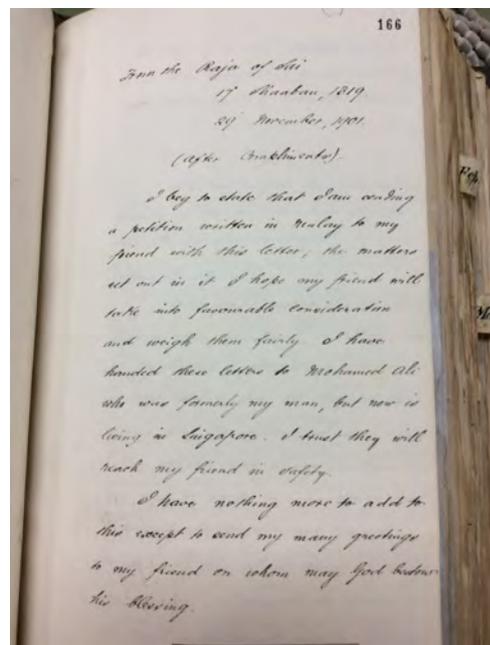
8.11: The first pages of original translated letters from Patani Raja, Legeh Raja and Saiburi Raja kept in National Archives, London



Letters from Raja of Patani



Letters from Raja of Legeh



Letters from Raja of Saiburi

From: the National Archives, London (Photograph by author, 22 March 2016)

Part III – The Three Frontier Zones and their Reactions

CHAPTER 9: THE REACTIONS FOLLOWING THE ATTEMPTS OF EXPANDING THAI NATIONAL CULTURE

Introduction

We have known from previous chapters that Siamese elites and their government launched the administrative programme in the three frontiers partly in response to European pressures, but mainly to integrate these areas into Siam. Unambiguous territorial demarcations, systematic tax collections and administrative institutions were introduced and replaced the previous socio-political system of Lan Na, Laos and the Patani Kingdom to form the modern Siamese nation. Along with its political programme of administration, the cultural symbols of Thai kingship and Buddhism, were pivotal mechanism of the Thai state to make itself acceptable to the three communities (though less influence in the south) to form the nation.

The Siamese expansion led to the local rebellions that broke out in 1901-2 in the three frontier areas of Siam: the attempted rebellion of the seven Malay principalities in the south, Holy Men in the northeast and Shan rebellion in the north. All revolts shared similar causes of political, economic and social disappointments. The seven Malay principalities disclosed their grievance in the first place by denying the positioning of permanent Thai representatives in their land at the end of the year 1901. They decided to request British assistance as a mediator between the Malay rulers and the Siamese government to preserve their autonomy. Nonetheless, their objective failed because the British preferred to maintain the status quo with Siam. Subsequently, Siam halted the Malay attempt in the early year of 1902 before they had a chance to engage in the physical fighting to reach their desire. Concurrently, the news of Thammikarat, the religious saviour who was expected to arrive and improve Lao society in the northeast, became more severe and widespread from the end of 1901. Lao people stopped working and turned to worship holy men and their heralds who were deemed to appear in association with a Thammikarat. In early 1902, the rumour turned violent when some groups of the Holy Men movement launched attacks Thai representatives and governmental buildings in several cities in the northeast. The Siamese government put down the movement with military force from Nakhon Ratchasima and restored order in the northeast by mid-1902. In July of the same year, the Shan rebels conspired with local chiefs at Phrae and manifested their will to fight for the

return of the Burmese king and to free themselves from Thai authority in the north. In their operation, they targeted Thai representatives and governmental buildings. While the rebellion spread to Lampang, adjacent provinces fell into chaos. It took several weeks before the Thai expedition reached the north, suppressed the rebellion and sued the rebels for the damage caused by them in late August. Some members of the Shan movement were subdued by Siam, whereas other members fled to the Upper Mekong. Although the three rebellions in Siam during the 1900s were considered temporary affairs, they all expressed the collective sentiments against the Thai state expansionists at almost the same period.

The inconsistency of Siam's policy, as well as the inactivity of other imperial powers at the turn of the century, triggered some kinds of millenarian anxiety for those local groups. It was an excellent opportunity to express their sufferings under a colonial regime, as other rebellions occurred elsewhere but no shared cause for them. The Boxer Rebellion in China, the Tuka Movement in Fiji and the three uprisings in Siam, at least, were resulted from the global situation. Then, the occurrence of revolts in global and regional contexts partly resulted from the pressures of globalisation and the tide of imperialism (world-economy, technologies, political and cultural transformations and formal territorial demarcations). Some reactions along the frontiers of Siam in the 1900s even carried prophetic resources such as the notion of millenarianism in reactions to the attempts of Thai state expansionists. They also fused their religious pursuit with modern visions in their collective movements to attempt to attain their political demands. Thus, the three revolts in Siam challenged imperial (Thai) influences and performed reactions to the colonial apparatus.

This chapter will further compare and investigate political activities and cultural symbolism among the three local rebellions in 1901-2 as a response to Siamese expansion, reclaiming the empty space between nation and locality. It highlights patterns and cultural articulations of local reactions to understand how local cultures were transformed after they were confronted with the newly assertive Thai national culture of this period – kingship and Buddhism – and the pressures of the global transitions that were taking place. By doing this, it suggests that all three local revolts saw the Siamese authority as being similar to colonising intruders and contested the Thai nation-state building with a collective sentiment during the Chulalongkorn

period. The rebellions in the north and the northeast even produced a copy of Thai national culture in their strategies to respond to the nature of Siamese expansion. The innovations of the three cases, albeit in different ways, then could be considered as a ‘proto-nationalist rebellion’.

As already mentioned in the introduction chapter regarding the limitations of comparison in relation to the rebellion in the southern case, this chapter further clarifies that the collective feeling developed among the Malay rebels during 1902 was largely distinctive because of its lack of reflection back upon Thai national culture within their manifestations of discontent. It was also a much smaller rebellion in the sense that it did not seek to incorporate large popular involvement. In contrast, the Holy Men in the northeast and the Shan rebellion in the north interpreted their pluralistic articulations of culture that was provoked by the Thai state expansion. Both these rebellions developed their autochthonous practices fused with the experiences of Thai national culture to make claim for their political demands, albeit through different lens, perceptions and forms. The cultural interpretations of Holy Men and Shan rebellions in 1901-2, therefore, were “neither indigenous nor [a] colonial [Thai idea], they were both and neither”, to paraphrase Kaplan’s words.¹ They were instead a reflection of a new hybrid culture or a fusion of two things that could be seen as both national and local dimensions of culture.

This chapter also confirms that Thai national culture had taken root in the three frontier communities with multiple levels and elements of fragmentation. The difference between the three local rebellions was associated not only with their own stories and unique historical backgrounds. It also resulted from the different attempts of the Siamese state in shaping the meaning of Thainess and its cultural symbolism within these non-Thai communities before the turn of the century. The three reactions then responded to different levels of Siamese expansion depending on experiences the rebels had made in their interaction with the Siamese state. It, therefore, is worth beginning with how the perception of local movements was shifted from ‘traditional’ revolts to be ‘proto-nationalist’ rebellions when the locals participated in the cultural symbolism of Thai state extension and the process of globalisation.

¹ Kaplan, *Neither Cargo Nor Cult: Ritual Politics and the Colonial Imagination in Fiji*, 16. Insertions by the author of the thesis.

9.1 Traditional forms of conflict along the outlying borders of Siam

Although it was challenging to break sharply between ‘traditional’ and ‘proto-nationalist’ uprisings, the primary goals in the conflict of south east Asian premodern warfare crucially inform us of the broad criteria of what ‘traditional rebellion’ means. Following Michael Charney’s discussion regarding a unique culture of early modern warfare in south east Asia, it can be summarised into three relevant points: patron (oaths), bloodshed and invulnerability.² Generally, traditional conflicts caused either to keep the interests of the village or to keep their oaths under a patron-client relation. This created a form of relationship between commoners and local lords or between overlords and lesser lords that existed everywhere in south east Asia. The bloodshed that happened – killings, headhunting, arson – and destroying cultivation were widely conducted to achieve their patron-client commitments. It was also common that traditional fighting was conducted by leaders claiming charismatic power, rather than fighting skills to determine the outcome of the conflict. Women who stayed at home were essential to perform rites and spirituality to provide an invisible shield for their men to be invulnerable in the field of combat. Therefore, these traits were considered as the characteristics of traditional conflicts. The conflicts were mainly fought to keep the stability of villagers and patron-client networks without a sense of collectivity and the relevance of fixed boundaries.³ This was the significance that is differentiated from the proto-nationalist movement (that will be discussed further below). This can be seen in the ‘traditional’ patterns of conflict in the insular revolts before the 1900s along the borders of Siam such as the Wan Mali rebellion in 1838 (หวันหมาดหลี) in Kedah (part of Malay peninsula), Haw rebellions in 1865-1890 (ฮ’อ) in the farther northeastern border and Phraya Phab rebellion in 1889 (พญาปราบสงคราม) in the northern border.

The relationship between the Siamese and the Kedah state in the Wan Mali rebellion in the 1830s characterised the traditional protest that highlighted the liberation from the patron-client relations between Kedah and its Siamese overlord. Kedah (ไทรบุรี), a Malay state on the west coast of the Kra Isthmus was situated next to Perlis and Perak, generally submitted its political authority to various overlords such as Siam, Burma

² Charney, *Southeast Asian Warfare, 1300-1900*, 1–22.

³ Charney, 9; Michael Adas, ‘From Avoidance to Confrontation: Peasant Protest in Precolonial and Colonial Southeast Asia’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23, no. 2 (1981): 219–23.

and other Malay states. The Wan Mali rebellion was not the first conflict between Kedah and Siam. Amed Tajuddin II (reigned 1803-1821 and 1842-1845) once denied sending tribute to Siam and became an ally of Burma in 1821. Afterwards, he had to flee to Penang and Malacca under the British protection to avoid being chased by Siam. For the Wan Mali rebellion in 1838, Tengku Muhammad Saad, the nephew of the ex-chief of Kedah (Amed Tajuddin II) cooperated with Wan Mali to rebel against Siam again. Wan Mali was a close relative of Kedah's ex-chief and was a chief of Langkawi. Siam, however, considered him as a pirate.⁴ Nonetheless, the Wan Mali rebellion also failed to regain the independence of Kedah from Siam. The failure plunged Kedah into a bloody conflict, and the state was divided into four parts to minimise Kedah's political power. John T. Thomson described the outcomes of revolt as "Keddah was utterly destroyed; its fertile plains wasted; the herds were driven off the fields, and the fruit groves were cut down; mother fled with the infant at her breast, and the father crept through the jungles with his little one in his arms...In 1838 Keddah is itself a desert".⁵ Although it illustrated the brutality of Siam who won this fight, the raiding, burning the city and leaving unoccupied land were typical results for losers in traditional forms of conflicts.

The traditional form of fighting is seen in the Haw rebellions during 1870s-1880s. They broke out at the same period when the central Siam was in the process of readjustment to be a modern nation. The term 'Haw' (ฮ่อ, จีนฮ่อ) was called by Siam and south east Asian peoples to identify Yunnanese Chinese, although they did not recognise that Yunnanese Chinese from Yunnan in southern China today mainly consists of two distinctive groups of Han and Hui peoples.⁶ The unique character of Hui people or Muslim Yunnanese that differentiated from Han people was their outstanding ability in building political and commercial networks with the south east Asia.⁷ Hui people always caravans to trade between Yunnan and South East Asia including the north of Burma, Laos, and Thailand today.⁸ They were also known as

⁴ Maziar Mozaffari Falarti, *Malay Kingship in Kedah: Religion, Trade, and Society*, Asia World (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013), 117–21.

⁵ John Turnbull Thomson, *Some Glimpses into the Life in the Far East* (London: Richardson and Company, 1865), 157–58.

⁶ The Yunnanese Chinese consisted of three ethnic groups of Hui, Han and yi.

⁷ David G. Atwill, *The Chinese Sultanate: Islam, Ethnicity, and the Panthay Rebellion in Southwest China, 1856-1873* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2005), 45.

⁸ Atwill, 46.

‘Panthay’, a Burmese term for Muslim used by the British, but the Hui people had never called themselves by in this name.⁹ Then, even though the term ‘Haw’ was widely used to refer to Haw rebellions (including in this thesis), it should be noted that the group of peoples whom Siam and local people of Lao states called as ‘the Haws’ mostly were the Hui people.¹⁰

During the mid-nineteenth century, waves of Chinese migrated southwards across the borders between Vietnam and China due to the failed Taiping Rebellion in China (1850-1864). These many Chinese migrants also included Muslim Chinese, the Hui or the Panthay, after the failure of the Panthay Rebellion.¹¹ This conflict led by the Hui people in Yunnan against the Qing authority in 1856-1873, occurred simultaneously with the Taiping Rebellion. The Chinese migrants partly regrouped and presented themselves as Yellow, Red, Black and Striped Flags, and so they became known as Chinese Flag Gangs (see an image of Chinese Black Flag as an example in no.9.1). They even allied with Lao chiefs and plundered areas in Luang Prabang, Sip Song Chau Tai, Houaphanh province (Huaphanhatanghok), which at that time were buffer states between Siamese and Vietnamese influences. Siam then sent several military expeditions to suppress the Haws, and afterwards the rebels became weakened by the cooperation between Siamese and French troops. Sending the Siamese military to put down Haws was important because it was the first attempt by Siam to claim formal boundaries over their previous tributary states in the northeast.¹² In contrast, the local Lao chiefs, Haw leaders and their followers did not understand the Siamese imperial design. Instead, they continued to practise the patron-client relations and performed the traditional revolt in the form of bandit organisations to avoid drought, poverty, famine and heavy taxations without having the sense of collectivity and fighting against colonial outsiders.

The traditional forms of conflict were also reflected in Haw strategies and their movement. McCarthy, an enthusiastic Irishman working for Siam, provided an

⁹ Moshe Yegar, ‘The Panthay (Chinese Muslims) of Burma and Yunnan’, *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 7, no. 1 (1966): 75.

¹⁰ Andrew D. W. Forbes, ‘The “Čin-Hō” (Yunnanese Chinese) Muslims of North Thailand’, *Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs. Journal* 7, no. 1 (January 1986): 175.

¹¹ Atwill, *The Chinese Sultanate: Islam, Ethnicity, and the Panthay Rebellion in Southwest China, 1856-1873*, 187; Forbes, ‘The “Čin-Hō” (Yunnanese Chinese) Muslims of North Thailand’, 175.

¹² Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation*, 98–107.

insight into Haw oppressions during the 1880s. He was intrigued with the Haws who conducted their fight with magical chants; likewise, the Haws believed that blood from an unborn baby would devastate a hundred lives or using coins with charm could destroy their enemies.¹³ This does not mean to present the magical chants as a primitive thing. Nonetheless, it is evidenced that the Haw rebellions employed beliefs of invulnerability into their fights as a general practices to preserve individual interests of the flag gangs. However, there was no cultural articulation fused with external influences, including universal Buddhism, Christianity or Islam.

This was similar to the chaos in Chiang Mai emerging in 1889 when the locals firstly experienced the Siamese administration in 1884. The disturbance led by Phraya Phab, an army leader of a Chiang Mai chief who controlled tax collections over areas of today San Sai, Doi Saket and San Kamphaeng in Chiang Mai. He led a small group of people against the Bangkok law demanding tax on coconut and betel collected annually.¹⁴ Phraya Phab's superstitious power was an essential tool that attracted local supporters.¹⁵ However, being poorly armed and disorganised activity, Siam quelled the protest within a short period without much damage. Although the revolt groups associated with local popular belief and began to feel disappointment towards Siam due to the new tax systems, they mainly reacted to the hardship of paying tax collections as the response to the early stage of the economic expansion by Siam.¹⁶ They had no common aim and global experiences as seen in the Shan rebellion in the 1900s.

Thus, the three cases – Wan Mali, Haws and Phraya Phab rebellions – informs us of the variation of local responses before the turn of the century. The Wan Mali rebellion illustrated the traditional uprising concerning bloodshed activities between states under the patron-client relationship. The Haw and Phraya Phab revolts conducting the spiritual practices to encourage victory were in general during the pre-colonial

¹³ McCarthy, *Surveying and Exploring in Siam*, 87–88.

¹⁴ R5 M.58/1, Phraya Phra Songkhram's Conspiracy to Revolt [Phraya Phra Songkhram Kitkokan Kamroep-ม.58/1 พระยาประสงครามคิดก่อกบฏกำเรือบ], NA.

¹⁵ Sarasawadee Ongsakul, 'Phraya Phab Songkram Rebellion, an Army Leader of Chiang Mai (1889) [Kabot Phraya Phab Songkram Maethap Mueang Chiangmai-พระยาปราบสงครามแม่ทัพเมืองเชียงใหม่ พ.ศ.2432]' in Pornpen Hantrakool and Ajcharaporn Kamutsamai, eds., *A Belief in Maitreya and Holy Men in Thai Society [Kwamchuea Phra-Si-An Lae Kabot Phumibun Nai Sangkomthai-ความเชื่อพระศรีอาริย์และกบฏผู้มีบุญในสังคมไทย]* (Bangkok: Sangsan, 1984), 132.

¹⁶ Ramsay, 'Modernization and Centralization in Northern Thailand, 1875-1910', 290.

era, even though they broke out during the early period of Siam launching the modernising transformation to redefine its national identity. It did not change in its form until the universal Buddhism, Islam and Christianity spread throughout South East Asia.¹⁷ These cases still characterised traditional forms of movement rather than reproducing colonial influences and interpreting them to form an innovation of collective movements as found in the three local reactions along the three frontiers of Siam in the 1900s.

9.1: An image of Yunnanese Chinese Black Flag, known as Chinese Flag Gangs



From: James McCarthy, *An Englishman's Siamese Journals, 1890-1893 (Report of a Survey in Siam, Published Anonymously in London, in 1895 for Private Circulation)* (Bangkok: Siam Media International Books, 1983), 183.

¹⁷ Michael W. Charney, *Warfare in Premodern Southeast Asia*, Oxford Research Encyclopedia, Asian History, vol. 1. (2018): 5.

9.2 Proto-nationalist rebellions in Siam at the turn of the century

Siam launched its reform programme and its cultural symbols, albeit in multiple levels, in the three frontier areas from the 1880s onwards. The political and cultural expansions reached its peak after the loss of the eastern Lao states to French imperialists in 1893. This situation impacted not only on the perception of Siam that had been changed to disclose its real face of being a coloniser towards the three frontier communities. The perception and pattern of the three revolts along the frontiers in the 1900s – attempted rebellion by the Malay, the Holy Men revolt and the Shan rebellion – which responded to the political and cultural expansion of the Siamese for a decade began to shift. In numerous events from the 1890s onwards, traditional performances of rebellion sooner or later were capable of adapting themselves to modernity due to the governmental, economic and social forces.¹⁸ They had been changed critically from the ‘traditional’ conflicts to become ‘proto-nationalist’ rebellions.

Eric Hobsbawm plays an influential role in defining what “proto-nationalist sentiment” means. As he calls ‘proto-nationalism’, it refers to “certain variants of feelings of collective belonging which already existed and which could operate, as it were, potentially on the macro-political scale which could fit in with modern states and nations.”¹⁹ Although his viewpoint sheds light on the elite’s activities during the period before modern nationalism became a mass political force, he provides an interesting idea to understand the meaning of proto-nationalism as a collective consciousness that tied numerous groups of people together. Nevertheless, a critique of Anthony Smith against Hobsbawm’s argument further helps us to comprehend the significance of proto-nationalism performed by the role of the ‘masses’. As he discusses that Hobsbawm’s proto-nationalism “fails to account for the passion and fervour of mass followings for nationalist movements, and the frequent willingness on the part of the unlettered and poor to make great sacrifices and even court death to defend their countries and drive out tyrants.”²⁰ This provides a persuasive idea of

¹⁸ Eric Stokes, *The Peasant and the Raj: Studies in Agrarian Society and Peasant Rebellion in Colonial India* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 128.

¹⁹ Eric. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, Second edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 46.

²⁰ Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations and Nationalism*, 128.

how proto-nationalist sentiment became fundamental for locals to forge a modern nation as the counterpart of the elite's construction of nationhood and its manipulation.²¹ The proto-nationalist rebellion, in this context was associated with the collective sense performed by the masses and the ambition of driving out intruders as a part of the process of national construction. This is also true for the three widespread uprisings that reacted to Siam in the 1900s after the rebels experienced global forces and external influences of Thai national culture, even if they might have not comprehended this entirely in their localities.

The local rebellions in Siam in 1901-2 were apparently the subsequence of globalisation. Mandy Sadan's discussion of the cultural transformation in upheaval forms in the Kachin society regarding the relationship with the Burmese monarchy helps us to understand the reactions in Siam as well. She stated that the widespread upheavals that responded to pressures of external forces seemed to produce "newly sharpened and contested meaning". She continued that "this does not seem to have been a primitivist circle of ideological reproduction, or a complete rupture with the past, but a more complex evolution of ideas in response to rapidly changing historical condition".²² Turning to Siam with this notion, the political and cultural expansion of Siam (which imitated European models) laid political and social backgrounds that cohered to the process of globalisation for daily lives of locals. Yet, the limits of the Siamese colonial policy resulted in shaping the ambivalence of mimicry in the three frontiers. Its limited power finally opened the opportunities for locals to interpret their meaning of cultures and contest the cultural and political activities provoked by Siam when the global and internal Siamese situations became retarded. In this sense, the fighting against 'Thais' was not Thai overlordship anymore as found in the cases of Wan Mali, Haws and Phraya Phab. However, they collectively responded to 'the superior Thai foreign intrusion' or the marker of the coloniser and articulated their cultural forms following the attempt of Thai imperial expansionists, even if their manifestations were considered as short-lived rebellions.

²¹ Smith, 127–28.

²² Mandy Sadan, *Being and Becoming Kachin: Histories Beyond the State in the Borderworlds of Burma*, First edition (Oxford: Published for The British Academy by Oxford University Press, 2013), 138-9.

9.2.1 Three frontier revolts of 1902: proto-nationalist sentiment and anti-colonial unrest

The three revolts in 1901-2 resulted from intensified administrative penetration and especially tax collection of Siam that had not existed before in those three areas.²³ Simultaneously, a powerful symbolic mechanism underpinned the political apparatus and infiltrated the possibilities of recognition and practice into the everyday lives of locals.²⁴ Even though the south was pressured by kingship and Buddhism with compromise compared to the north and northeast (discussed in Chapters 7-8), the southern case is worth discussing to typify how the colonial structure of Siam impacted the frontier circumstances (see the location of the attempted rebellion in the seven Malay principalities in map no.9.2). It characterised the local perception during the 1900s that had been imbued with globalisation and the Siamese expansionism, who established an unequal relationship between coloniser and colonised with them. The Malay rebels even developed an ideological frame of proto-nationalism in their attempted revolt which had never occurred before in this area.

Even though the Malay rebellion that attempted liberation from Siam became only ‘an attempt’ rather than ‘being done’, their plan pronounced the disagreement of the existing Thai permanent officials as foreign intruders in their homeland.²⁵ R.D. Davies, who was a reporter and managing director of the Singapore Free Press, discussed how the Malay perception was transformed in the attempt of the Malay rebellion in 1901-2. In other words, Malay people changed to perceive Siam as a coloniser, instead of an overlord. He said, “there is no doubt that they [Malays] are growing to see that Siam now is not the Siam of 100 years ago”.²⁶ The perception of the Malay people was also transformed to a collective feeling of disappointment with the Siamese. The Malay feelings developed bottom-up, from a village to several of them more than one until it made the Siamese rulers feel intimidated by the majority of the Malays.²⁷ The collective consciousness of Malays proved to be real by

²³ Bunnag, *The 1902 Rebellions*.

²⁴ Jean Comaroff, *Body of Power, Spirit of Resistance: The Culture and History of a South African People* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 124–25.

²⁵ ‘Correspondence from Abdul Kadir Kamarsedin to Governor Sir F. Swettenham’, 13 August 1901, IOR/L/PS/20/FO80/4, FCRAS Part XIII 1901.

²⁶ Davies, *Siam in the Malay Peninsula (A Short Account of the Position of Siam in the States of Kelantan, Patani, Legeh and Siam)*, 2.

²⁷ Davies, 2.

expressions of Malay rioters. The planned collaboration of the Patani, Sai and Rangaie chiefs that brought the British to be a negotiator with Siam translated their robust political agenda into collective resistance in the modern sense as Davies has discussed. They sought to regain their autonomy and to create a new (socio-)political arrangement for Malay communities that was better than under the Siamese authority. The collectivity of Malays also proved its realism when many people in Patani awaited with hope the return of Abdul Kadir, the Patani raja, when Siam released him almost two years later. There were five hundred people with eighty ships, and more than two thousand people who welcomed the Patani ex-chief as their hero both on river and riverside. Also, a hundred people regularly visited the ex-chief's house every day.²⁸ Even though there was no sign of cultural articulation in the project of the Malay rebels due to the colonial tolerances of the Thai state in this field, the attempted Malay revolt of the 1900s signified the characteristic of a proto-nationalist sentiment among the Malay communities. They labelled Thais and its administration as foreign intruders that had to be driven out from their land.

'The colonial Thai intruder' was also the main target of the northeastern and northern movements as Holy Men and Shan operations mainly attacked Thai institutions (see the locations of the Holy Men revolt in map no.9.3 and Shan movement in five northern provinces in map no.9.4). In the north, the proclamation of Shan rioters stated that "[they fought] against the Siamese whose oppression and colouration had become intolerable", as recorded by Mr Lyle, the British Vice Consul of Nan.²⁹ Then, the high-rank commissioner and their family were beheaded, while other lesser officials and commoners who represented 'Thai' ethnic markers with their clothes, official uniform and other objects were hunted and attacked by the Shan rebels. The episode with two Thai policemen was a vivid example. A Thai policeman explained that he was not harmed by the Shan groups because he disguised in Lao-styled clothes posting in Phrae city during the event, while his colleague who wore the Thai police uniform was killed.³⁰ Some Thai officials admitted that having their haircut and changing their clothes into Buddhist yellow robes may have saved their lives during

²⁸ Tej Bunnag, *The 1902 Rebellions*, 97–98.

²⁹ 'Report upon Shan Rising at Phre, 23 July-14 Aug 1902', FO821/30, *Shan Rising at Phré*. 1902.

³⁰ *Collected Royal Chronicles Part 78 (Continue)-79 (Ngiaw Suppression Part 2 and Records of Jeremais van Vliet) [Prachumphongsawadan Phakthi 78 (to)-79 Rueang Prap Ngiaw Tonthi Song Lae Chotmai het Wanwalit (Chabapsombun)-ประชุมพงศาวดาร ภาคที่ 78 (ต่อ)-79 เรื่องปราบเงี้ยวตอนที่ 2 และจดหมายเหตุวันวลิต (ฉบับสมบูรณ์)]* (Bangkok: Khurusapha, 1970), 7.

the turbulent time of the Shan rising.³¹ The Shan groups even targeted symbols of modern technology such as telegraph lines, post offices, police stations and state prisons. Their destruction of Siamese communication installations between cities also shows the local dissatisfaction of those new technologies as a collaboration with Thai colonial authority. This crucially signified how the rebellions shifted to a new mode in their challenge with the colonial authorities.³²

Similarly to the northeast, there were various versions of rumour against Thai ‘foreigners’ and their culture. Some Thai officials, Thai houses, offices and the government prison were the targets of the Holy Men movement.³³ Toem Wiphakphotchanakit, whose father was a Siamese official during the time of the Holy Men revolt, stated in his book that local people, in the meantime, destroyed white non-glutinous rice and killed all chickens because they were the favourite foods of the Thais.³⁴ They even planned to expel all Thai rulers from their land when the due time had arrived. These situations provide us with some hints that Thai dresses, symbols and other materials signifying Thai culture were interpreted as a cultural intrusion by the rebels, which expressed the inner world of locals hidden behind their political action.

Therefore, the three revolts in the frontiers of Siam in the 1900s similarly developed the collective sense in their movements to fight with the Thais as a colonial authority. The extensive local participation in the revolts also typified how locals modified their consciousness of proto-national bond in response to the Thai nation. It was also fascinating to see that when the Holy Men and Shan rebels in the northeast and the north articulated cultural interpretations that mimicked and responded to Thai national culture once the two communities had interacted with the Thai cultural reinforcement of kingship and Buddhism, which will be analysed in the sections to follow.

³¹ Luang Tuaihan Raksa, *A Poem Depicting a Journey to Luang Prabang and Reports of Ngiaw Suppression [Nirat Mueang Luangphrabang Lae Rai-Ngan Prap Ngiaw-นิราศเมืองหลวงพระบางและรายงานปราบเงี้ยว]* (Phranakhon: Sophonphiphatthanakon, 1926), 375.

³² Adas, ‘From Avoidance to Confrontation: Peasant Protest in Precolonial and Colonial Southeast Asia’, 244–45.

³³ R5 M.2.18/7, Holy Spirit: Correspondences from the Ministry of Interior (Isan and Udon Circles, 24 February 1901–7 April 1902) [Phibun Nangsue Krasuangmahatthai (Monthon Isan Lae Udon)-ม.2.18/7 ฝึบุญ หนังสือกระทรวงมหาดไทย (มณฑลอิสาน-อุดร) 3 เม.ย.-21 พ.ค. 121], NA.

³⁴ Toem Wiphakphotchanakit, *History of the Northeast*, 443.

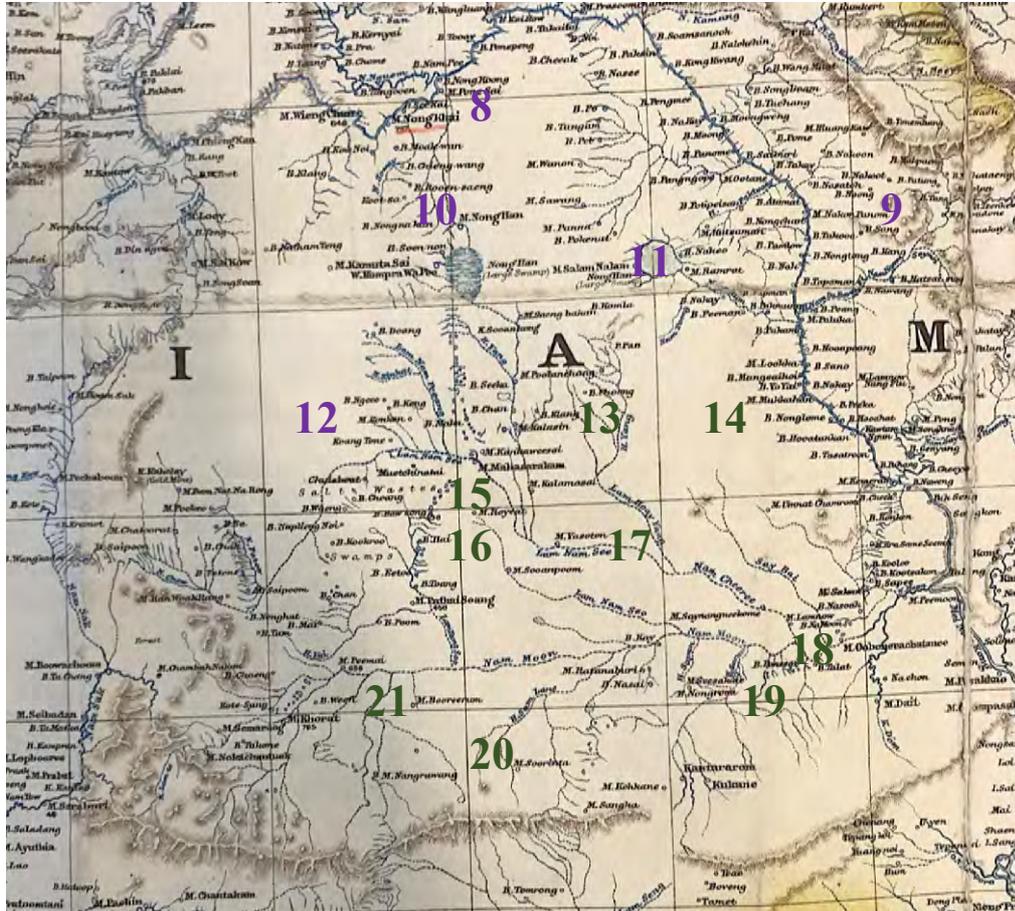
9.2: Map showing the seven Malay principalities or the southern frontier of Siam



From: James Fitzroy McCarthy, (1900). IOR/W/L/PS/21/E7/1. Map Collections. Kingdom of Siam and Malay Peninsula. 1:46. The British Library, size and numbers adjusted and added by author

- 1 Nongchick
- 2 Patani (Tani)
- 3 Yaring
- 4 Yala (Jala, Jalor)
- 5 Raman
- 6 Ra-ngae (Legch)
- 7 Sai Buri (Teluban)

9.3: Map showing the lists of provinces in the northeastern frontier of Siam

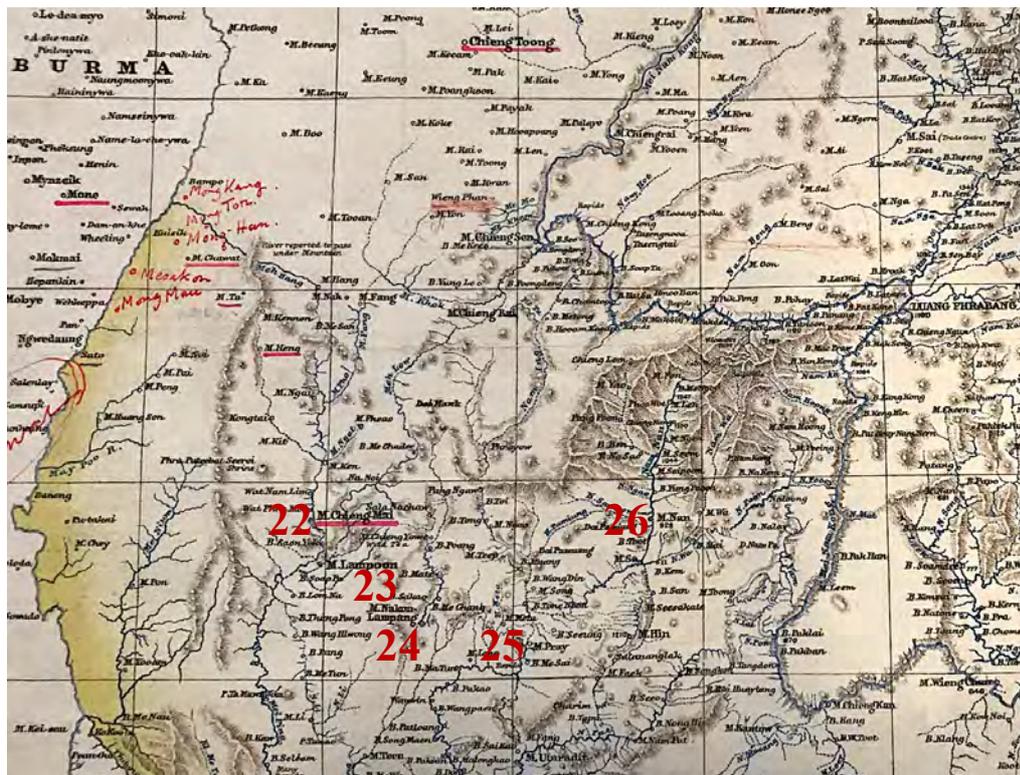


From: James Fitzroy McCarthy, (1900). IOR/W/L/PS/21/E/7/1. Map Collections. Kingdom of Siam and Malay Peninsula. 1:46. The British Library, size and numbers adjusted and added by author

(• Udon • Isan)

- 8 Nong Khai
- 9 Nakhon Phanom
- 10 Udon Thani
- 11 Sakon Nakhon
- 12 Khon Kaen
- 13 Kalasin
- 14 Mukdahan
- 15 Mahasarakham
- 16 Roi-et
- 17 Yasothon
- 18 Ubon Ratchathani
- 19 Sisaket
- 20 Surin
- 21 Buriram

9.4: Map showing the northern frontier of Siam where the Shan rebellions occurred



From: James Fitzroy McCarthy, (1900). IOR/W/L/PS/21/E/7/1. Map Collections. Kingdom of Siam and Malay Peninsula. 1:46. The British Library, size and numbers adjusted and added by author

- The north (Payap)**
- 22 Chiang Mai
- 23 Lamphun
- 24 Lampang
- 25 Phrae
- 26 Nan

9.3 Mimicry: cultural articulations of the Holy Men and Shan rebellions in response to the nature of Siamese expansion

As Siam chose to allow compromise and provide multiple ways to introduce Thai national culture to the three frontier communities (indicated in Chapters 7-8), it was a coin that had two sides. On the one hand, the partial reform helped Siam to keep order in those frontier communities. Some autochthonous practices stigmatised as non-Thai elements then were not completely suppressed but preserved by the Thai cultural policy in its expansion. On the other hand, the partial conditions presented failures of state incorporation that potentially caused millenarian resistances who employed religious beliefs to attain their political demands.³⁵ The ambivalence of Siam between the state enforcement and its tolerance became an opening and in-

³⁵ Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*, 229–30.

between space for local communities to give their own interpretations in reaching to the nature of Siamese expansion including kingship and Buddhism. Local performances of copying were something that was influenced by others that made them perceived the values and benefits in possessing those things.³⁶ They thus reproduced what Bhabha called “the double vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse [which] also disrupts its authority”.³⁷ This was a form of a hybrid culture that is fused between local practices and imposed cultural productions in which locals experienced from the outside knowledge to disrupt the central authority itself. This could be seen in the millenarian expectation, features of mimicry and hybrid cultures as the central theme of the Holy Men and Shan rebellions in 1901-2.

Nevertheless, the variation of Thai state expansionism of kingship and Buddhism not only reflected the similarities of millenarian resistances but also the differences between the northern and northeastern communities. The northeastern people gave their cultural interpretation based on local spiritual practices fused with both central Thai kingship and Buddhism because they absorbed both influences. Although Buddhism was fundamental in the northern Shan communities, the Shan revolt in 1902 expressed the influence of kingship clearer than the hints of Buddhism. This was because the Thai monarchy and its symbolic power was the single influence from the central Thai authority that challenged and forced locals to absorb it at that time. Thus, the local interpretation regarding Buddhist symbolism was slight in the northern case. The similarity and difference of both local revolts will become more explicit when we investigate how the local rebels in the northeast and the north reinterpreted Thai national culture.

9.3.1 The Holy Men movement: interpreting and responding to the nature of Thai kingship and central Thai Buddhism

We have known that the modern Thai kingship relied on the personal abilities of a human on earth and the Buddhist idea of merit and *barami* to gain sympathy from non-Thai frontier peoples. The Holy Men movement that spread through Monthon

³⁶ Mack C. Stirling, ‘Violent Religion: René Girard’s Theory of Culture’ in J. Harold Ellens, ed., *The Destructive Power of Religion: Violence in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Westport, Conn: Praeger Publishers, 2007), 12–14.

³⁷ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 88.

Udon and Isan in 1902 also relied on the ruler who claimed to be righteous and meritorious, similar to Thai kingship, in times of revolt.³⁸ Thao Thammikarat was another version of a Buddha-to-be who was deemed to be an excellent characteristic of a ruler, full wisdom of Buddhist doctrine and having the ability to bring fruitful life to communities.³⁹ By selecting Thammikarat to be a righteous and religious ruler for local communities, the Holy Men leaders signified the Theravada Buddhism in their movement.⁴⁰ This was the crucial point that marked the differentiation between the Holy Men rebellion and the Shan uprising. The Thammikarat's narrative then was the sign from the Holy Men movement that challenged the nature of Thai kingship and Buddhism by which they produced their orthodox version of the meritorious king fused with Thai cultural influences.

On the one hand, the characteristics of Thammikarat per se inform us of some autochthonous remnants of the pre-colonial time regarding Hindu-Buddhist practices. Such an ideological reincarnation, the existence of Indra god, the sense of higher-lower meritorious accumulation and the extraordinary charismatic king were still alive in local perceptions and their movements.⁴¹ On the other hand, with these orthodox beliefs, the Holy Men patterns of opposition reproduced hints of Thai influence such as the resemblance to sibling relationship, the colonial hierarchy of power, royal accessories and the central Thai Buddhist inspiration. It may be questioned as to how far it could be proved that cultural articulations of revolts mainly reproduced and mimicked the colonial discourse of Thai national culture. Nevertheless, it was confirmed by archival evidence such as the palm-leaf predictive letters – Holy Men's letter, Thao Thammikarat's letter, Phraya In's letter, Tamnan Phuen Mueang Krung's letter – that they were the primary mechanism of the Holy Men revolt in spreading the Thammikarat's rumour, to connect thousands of people and to make them practise the same rituals. These letters tell us that the cultural

³⁸ Keyes, 'Millennialism, Theravada Buddhism, and Thai Society', 296.

³⁹ Patrick Jory, 'The Vessantara Jataka, Barami, and the Bodhisatta-Kings: The Origin and Spread of a Thai Concept of Power', *Crossroads: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 16, no. 2 (2002): 45.

⁴⁰ Yoneo Ishii, *Sangha, State, and Society: Thai Buddhism in History* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986), 182.

⁴¹ Murdoch, 'The 1901-1902 Holy Man's Rebellion', 64; R5 M.2.18/10, Holy Spirit: Correspondences from the Ministry of Interior (27 May-27 June 1902, Isan and Udon Circles) [Phibun Nangsue Mipaima Krasuangmahatthai (Monthon Isan-Udon)-ม.2.18/10 เรื่องผีบุญ หนังสือมีไปมา กระทรวงมหาดไทย 27 พ.ค.-27 มิ.ย. 121 [มณฑลอิสาน-อุดร]], NA.

articulation of the Holy Men revolt was associated significantly with the absorption of Thai cultural expansion by the local movement.

One of the key leaders, Ong Man (องค์มัน), who led the uprising in Khemmarat was Ubon (see provinces in the northeast in map no.9.3), claimed himself to be a holy man by adopting ‘Ong Prasatthong or Ong Hasatthong (องค์ปราสาททอง หรือ องค์หาสารตทอง)’⁴² as his assumed name. This name resembled the name of a king of Ayutthaya, King Prasat Thong (c.1629-1656). It was remarkable that he employed a royal Thai epithet, instead of other well-known autochthonous deities that local people worshipped in daily life. It was also the first time that the local movement in the northeast claimed a charismatic authority that originated from the Thai king’s predecessor, who was claimed by Siam as one of their royal ancestors and a principal actor of Thai historical origin. The path of Thai history was also found in one of four predictive letters or Tamnan Phuen Mueang Krung letter (Local accounts of the capital-ตำนานพื้นเมืองกรุง). The main content of Tamnan Phuen Mueang Krung concerns the history of Ayutthaya town and its monarch, even though its story was readjusted to convince local people to believe in the story of Thammikarat (as correlated with the Holy Men’s letter, Thao Thammikarat’s letter and Phraya In’s letter). Some parts of the letter mentioned that “Thao U Thong [ท้าวอุทอง] occupied the throne in Bangkok... [he] had mighty power and supported Buddhism”.⁴³ This was a close resemblance to the name of the first king of Ayutthaya, King U Thong (c.1350-1369, พระเจ้าอุทอง). The letter further narrated the beginning of Sri Yotthiya city (เมืองศรียศธิยา) and a story of Naretracha (นารศรราชา) that reminded us of the name of Ayutthaya city and Ayutthaya King Naresuan (c.1590-1605, สมเด็จพระนเรศวร). It is true that the narrative diverged from the master version of the Ayutthaya history. However, the reproduction of Ayutthaya history in the letters circulated by the rebels manifested that Thai national culture influenced the northeastern communities and had been absorbed by locals. It could be seen further how the autochthonous belief of Thammikarat conflated with the Thai cultural experience including the sibling

⁴² Yoneo Ishii, ‘A Note on Buddhist Millenarian Revolts in Northeastern Siam’, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 6, no. 2 (1975): 122.

⁴³ ‘Phuen Mueang Krung’s letter’ in R5 M.2.18/10, Holy Spirit: Correspondences from the Ministry of Interior (27 May-27 June 1902, Isan and Udon Circles).

‘แต่เดิมนั้นยังมีมหากษัตริย์ ตนหนึ่งชื่อว่าท้าวอุทองได้เสวยราชสมบัติในกรุงเทพมหานครมีฤทธิ์อานุภาพอันมากนัก ได้สืบสายงสาสนาพระตะกาศตะ...’ (TT)

relationship to form a hybrid culture and to rally the political resistance.

The Thammikarat version of the Holy Men in the 1900s was revised and reinterpreted,⁴⁴ to state that the story that Thammikarat had an elder brother that was never actually told in any previous Thammikarat's narratives. Thao Thammikarat's letter produced by the leaders of the Holy Men not only informed about the Thammikarat's biography, including his characteristics, appearances and supernatural powers. It also proclaimed that Thammikarat was a younger brother of Phra Khetsatha Wihachaofa (พระเกตส์ตฐาวีหาเจ้าฟ้า), and both of them lived in Baan Nalao, part of present-day Mahasarakham province.⁴⁵ This local version reminds us of Brac de la Perrière's discussion in Chapter 7 that Siam chose to borrow and fuse local stuff with the master narrative into the form of a Thai-Lao sibling relationship to subvert local beliefs. This method helped Siam to gradually shape and replace local beliefs with the central version. The other side of the coin was that of borrowing the idea left a space between the 'national dimension' of Thai national culture and a 'local dimension' of borrowed autochthonous beliefs. Somewhere in the in-between space turned into an opportunity for locals to interpret in their own version responding to the nature of Thai kingship as found in the Thammikarat's sibling version produced by local rebels. The form of a blood relation in Thammikarat's story, thus, was inspired by the central idea of a Thai-Lao sibling relationship whereby Siam attempted to create a single unit of Thai national culture through its political marriage, materials and administration.

The made-up story of sibling relations gained credibility when the Holy Men leaders pinned down Thammikarat's living place and his networks as real locations in the northeastern region. Although it was not known historically who was Phra Khetsatha Wihachaofa, he came into reality and operated the revolt in Mahasarakham province.⁴⁶ He even attracted many people from several provinces in the lower

⁴⁴ Soontaree Asawai, 'History of Thai Society, 1851-1902: A Critique of Holy Men Rebellion, r.s.121 (1901-2) [Prawatthisat Sangkhomthai: Botwikhro Korani Kankoetkuen Khong Khabuankan Phumibun Isan-ประวัติศาสตร์สังคมไทยพ.ศ.2398-2445: บทวิเคราะห์กรณีการเกิดขึ้นของขบวนการผู้มีบุญอีสาน ร.ศ.121 (พ.ศ.2444-2445)]' (Bangkok: Thai Khadi Research Institute (Thammasat University), 1987, 30.

⁴⁵ 'Thao Thammikarat's letter' in R5 M.2.18/3, Holy Spirit: Correspondences from the Ministry of Interior (24 February 1901-7 April 1902).

⁴⁶ Keyes, 'Millennialism, Theravada Buddhism, and Thai Society', 296.

northeast.⁴⁷ The re-creation of the sibling relationship of Thammikarat potentially allured locals to believe that other non-Thammikarat pretenders perhaps were associated with Thammikarat in some way or another. Likewise, a holy man in Chiyaphum province claimed that he had an elder brother in Surin province who was also a holy man. Many people then searched for him, requested holy water from him and attended to be his followers.⁴⁸ Thereafter, hundreds of pretenders and heralds became connected as parts of the Thammikarat's network through the sibling and relative imagination. It demonstrated that the colonial activities gave rise to revolts that made them possible to recruit and organise many peoples over the large-scaled area.⁴⁹ It was also a shared unit that laid the fundamentals of a proto-national bond through its made-up story of the Thammikarat. The major leaders could mobilise people in different areas who might not have met each other to believe, practise and manifest the same political objectives.⁵⁰ The Holy Men leaders even controlled their followers with the experiences of colonial hierarchy, royal accessories and hints of Buddhist symbolism within the network of Thammikarat that showed how locals modified these to be modern forms of resistance.

The participants who joined in the Holy Men revolt could be found from the top to lower classes of the society such as previous local Lao rulers, lesser Lao officers, local monks and commoners from various ethnic groups.⁵¹ The speciality of noble-born rights, nonetheless, was less important in the Holy Men operation. It, on the one hand, disclosed local disagreements to the alien regime of the administration introduced by Siam through the umbrellas of Thai kingship and the national Buddhist sangha.⁵² Their process stratified the frontier societies into top-down and centralised colonial order by which Thais were at the top and reduced the former legitimacy of local Lao status and other ethnic groups. This was new definition of classes that

⁴⁷ Meekusol, 'Provincial Reform in Monthon Isan during the Period When Prince Sanphasitthiprasong Was High Commissioner', 106.

⁴⁸ Asawai, 'History of Thai Society, 1851-1902: A Critique of Holy Men Rebellion, r.s.121 (1901-2)', 41.

⁴⁹ Adas, 'From Avoidance to Confrontation: Peasant Protest in Precolonial and Colonial Southeast Asia', 247.

⁵⁰ Ishii, 'A Note on Buddhistic Millenarian Revolts in Northeastern Siam', 124; Meekusol, 'Provincial Reform in Monthon Isan during the Period When Prince Sanphasitthiprasong Was High Commissioner', 107.

⁵¹ Murdoch, 'The 1901-1902 Holy Man's Rebellion', 56-58.

⁵² Constance M. Wilson, 'The Holy Man in the History of Thailand and Laos', 351.

differed from their previous image of society.⁵³ In response to this vertical pattern, the Holy Men leaders did not necessarily have to be descendants of an ancient ruling family or aristocracy, but everyone: ordinary people, ordained man or a ten-year-old child (Dek Suk, Holy Man in Burirum), shaman or magical practitioners could be a leader, which was stemmed from individual supernatural abilities instead of birth right. Some became leaders by performance in the strength of their body such as protecting their body from bullets.⁵⁴ They also claimed their unique abilities such as being invisible, flying through the air by magic, transforming a banana tree to be a snake and having a shining golden body.⁵⁵ Here it could be considered as an achievement of locals in their political mobilisation horizontally that linked people together with a feeling of being close like kinship and territoriality.⁵⁶ On the other hand, within the Holy Men system of operation, they also engaged with the new system of top-down rank from the highest leaders, lesser leaders and their followers. This may be a form of the consciousness of people that participated with the hierarchical association of the central order.⁵⁷ Their tasks and status were indicated and categorised by their use of titles, clothing, and charismatic skills in the movement. Particularly the acts of the top-ranked leaders implied the nature and acts of Thai kingship in the local mindset.

It was common among the Lao community to use the term ‘Ong’ (องค์) and ‘Thao’ (ท้าว) to refer to the specific group of the society such as the Buddha, Buddhist statues and members of Sangha, as well as members of the royal family who were in an uncommon level of social status.⁵⁸ However, the two terms were employed intentionally and specifically by the highest leaders in the Holy Men movement as a title of honour of their assumed names. This helped to represent their special rank and

⁵³ Kaplan, *Neither Cargo Nor Cult: Ritual Politics and the Colonial Imagination in Fiji*, 141.

⁵⁴ ‘Inclosure 2 in No.82 from Mr T. Ff Carlisle to Mr W. M. J. Archer-Report on the Circumstances Connected with the Release from Custody of One Kobia, or Mong Byah, by French Troops at Chantaboon’, 13 March 1897, IOR/L/PS/20/FO79/2, FCRAS Part IX 1897, BL.

⁵⁵ R5 M.2.18/11, Holy Spirit: Correspondences from the Ministry of Interior (30 June-3 August 1902) [Phibun Nangsue Mipaima Krasuangmahatthai-ม.2.18/11 เรื่องผีบุญ หนังสือมีไปมากระทรวงมหาดไทย (30 มิ.ย.-3 ส.ค. 121)], NA.

⁵⁶ Ranajit Guha, ‘On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India’ in Ranajit Guha, ed., *Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History & Society* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press India, 1982), 4.

⁵⁷ Kaplan, *Neither Cargo Nor Cult: Ritual Politics and the Colonial Imagination in Fiji*, 124.

⁵⁸ H. Leedom Lefferts, ‘The Cultures of Boxes: Information Flow and Social Organisation among the Northeast Thai and Lao’, *Crossroads: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 5, no. 1 (1990): 61.

higher status as to be equated with the legitimate ruler and distinguishing themselves from common people.⁵⁹ At that time, there were Holy Men leaders who defined themselves under numerous names involved with meritorious or superstitious power persons, generic gods, local and ancestral spirits; likewise, Ong Ruesi Tafai (องค์ฤๅษีตาไฟ), Ong Indra (องค์อินทร์), Thao Thammikarat (องค์ธรรมมิกราชา), Thao Phothisat (ท้าวโพธิสัตว์ or Bodhisattva), Ong Maitreya (องค์อริยมเมตไตร), Ong Thong (องค์ทอง, a death son of Vientiane ruler), Ong Kaew (องค์แก้ว) or known as Bac My and so on.⁶⁰ By using the local titles of ‘Ong’ and ‘Thao’, reveals how top leaders of the resistance imitated the nature of being a meritorious king, royal member and noble status. The traces of kingship became obvious when these leaders interpreted the various materials decorated on their body to define their higher status and sacredness to attract commoners. This reminds us of the special status of the Thai monarchy and the King’s representatives in the eyes of local communities.

Clothes and the ways people treated their body were important symbols for how locals have conceived, constructed and challenged the modernising influence during the colonial era.⁶¹ Similarly, the extraordinary status of the highest leaders in the Holy Men movement prompted by the external Thai influences was represented through clothing, equipment and other decorations on their body. Official Thai reports describe the unusual meaning of the attires of the Holy Men. Although the Siamese government at that time could not be fully understood the reasons behind the local expressions, details of dresses worn by the Holy Men rebels were recognised and recorded. Their style of dress, colour and accessories were an unlikely resemblance to the ways that Thai officials wore and applied when they practised central Thai ceremonies in local communities. Likewise, the white colour partly flashed us on the formal dresses that Thai representatives regularly wore in the taking an oath ceremony and other royal rituals to create a cohesiveness of Thai-styled practices and symbolise the layering of Brahmanical religious sacredness in their rituals. This became fascinating when the Holy Men leadership in each group mostly wore white

⁵⁹ Ishii, ‘A Note on Buddhist Millenarian Revolts in Northeastern Siam’, 125.

⁶⁰ R5 M.2.18/3, Holy Spirit: Correspondences from the Ministry of Interior (24 February 1901-7 April 1902); R5 M.2.18/7, Holy Spirit: Correspondences from the Ministry of Interior (Isan and Udon Circles, 24 February 1901-7 April 1902).

⁶¹ Hildi Hendrickson, ed., *Clothing and Difference: Embodied Identities in Colonial and Post-Colonial Africa*, Body, Commodity, Text (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 13.

dresses to distinguish their high and sacred qualification from lesser leaders and ordinary followers. As one Thai official noticed that “while I fought with the rebels, there was one of them who wore a white dress which was shot and fell into the ground...later, it was known that he was Ong Man”, a key leader that Siam chased after.⁶² In contrast, the lesser leaders intentionally employed colourful dress codes to indicate their secondary position and omitted the white clothes that were worn by the major leaders of each group. Wiphakphotchanakit stated that “all followers of Ong Man leader dressed similar to a newly ordained monk [*nak*-นาค] but in different colours including red, yellow and dark green”.⁶³ It became a truism that the classification of colours was a representation of experiences or semantic codes of social, economic and ritual values of social relations; individual or groups, differentiated or combined.⁶⁴ Then, their colours of dress could signify the colonial experience of hierarchical layers in the Holy Men operations.

The white-colour dress worn by local leaders was also fused with the Buddhist influence in which they utilised the pattern of the monk robe, candles and flowers to embellish their dresses.⁶⁵ To employ white-coloured clothes with a Buddhist pattern, instead of the yellow-monk robe referring directly to the Buddhistic world, implicated the local imagination regarding Thai influences during their operation. Their dress not only revealed the local-level sacredness of believing in deities as traditional forms of local belief.⁶⁶ It also fused with the national-level influence of the Thai royal white dresses and the central Thai Buddhist inspiration in their religious accessories. Thus, it illustrates how local movements absorbed and imagined the hierarchical relationship of power, such as the special status of kingship and the significance of Buddhism, that was symbolised through colour and style of clothing.

⁶² R5 M.2.18/3, Holy Spirit: Correspondences from the Ministry of Interior (24 February 1901-7 April 1902).

“เมื่อรบนั้นเห็นคนนุ่งหม้อผ้าขาวถูกปืนล้มลง...มีข่าวว่าองค์มันถูกปืนเจ็บอยู่ในบึงเหียนแล้ว” (TT)

⁶³ Wiphakphotchanakit, *History of the Northeast*, 436.

“พวกที่ตั้งตนเป็นองค์ต่างๆได้ติดตามองค์มันมีบุญหัวหน้าใหญ่ไปในคราวนั้น...องค์เหล่านี้แต่งตัวนุ่งผ้าสีแบบบวชนาคสีต่างๆกันคือ แดง สิว (สีเขียวเข้ม) เหลืองอย่างจีวรของพระ” (TT)

⁶⁴ Marshall Sahlins, ‘Colors and Cultures’ in Janet L. Dolgin, ed., *Symbolic Anthropology: A Reader in the Study of Symbols and Meanings* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), 165–80.

⁶⁵ R5 M.2.18/10, Holy Spirit: Correspondences from the Ministry of Interior (27 May-27 June 1902, Isan and Udon Circles).

⁶⁶ Murdoch, ‘The 1901-1902 Holy Man’s Rebellion’, 56.

The reproduction of the nature of Thai kingship is also seen when Holy Men leaders used other decorative objects and accessories that reminded others of the power of royalty and the luxurious king's life. The performance of Ong Chakkrawan who was one of the top-ranked Holy Men rebels and collaborated with Ong Man to attack Ubon, provides a good example. It was found that he wore crown-like headwear while active in the movement. Later, Siam kept the crown as an important symbol of rebellion in the National Museum. Damrong, head of the Ministry of Interior mentions that "Sanphasitthiprasong [High Commissioner in Monthon Isan, northeast] sent the crown of the Holy Men to Bangkok. It was a red velvet hat with a dark blue edge and golden embroidery...It seemed to be a second-hand hat of someone else. Thao Thammikarat reused it as his royal insignia of rank".⁶⁷ This form of imagination regarding the special status of royalty was reiterated by other rebels who also wore crown-like headwear that made from pieces of white paper with inscriptions in Pali.⁶⁸ These acts of locals showed how they interpreted the meaning of a crown that the Thai King utilised it to symbolise and enforce his authority in local society at that time. Other sacred and valued accessories linking the nature of kingship were similarly used to embellish the higher and sacred status of other Holy Men leaders in the eyes of their followers such as a plain copper ring (*waenpokmit*-แหวนปลอกมี้ด), silver trinket box, red silver coffer, golden bowl (*khanthong*-ขันทอง), golden casting armband and headband and holy images (*rupkhaorop*-รูปเคารพ).⁶⁹ They even created a procession with a person sitting on the litter and paraded around their village to attract more participants into their operation. These performances refreshed our memories concerning the grandiose Thai royal processions, pomposity and the gestures of Thai representatives and the King's brothers while travelling to local areas in several cases (discussed in Chapter 7). The resemblance between local performances in their movements and Thai rituals with their royal accessories significantly echoed the way that locals comprehended and mimicked the pretension of Thai kingship which had never been found in any previous forms of revolt. The innovation of Holy Men rebels further found in their cultural articulation with hints

⁶⁷ Rajanubhab, *Historical Anecdotes*, 174.

"กรมหลวงสรรพลีทธีฯ ท่านส่งแต่มงกุฎของผีบุญเข้ามากรุงเทพฯ เป็นหมวกหนึ่งใบล้าดลี้ดั่งของขบสีขามมีไหมทองปักเป็นลาย พิจารณา ดูเหมือนจะเคยเป็นหมวกของคนอื่นเขาไว้แล้ว ทำวธรมีกราชจึงได้มาทำเป็นเครื่องยศ" (TT)

⁶⁸ Wiphakphotchanakit, *History of the Northeast*, 436.

⁶⁹ R5 M.2.18/6, Holy Spirit: Correspondences from The Department of War and Marine [Phibun Krom Yutthanakan-ม.2.18/6 เรื่องผีบุญ กรมยุทธนาการ], NA.

of Buddhism reiterate the senses of colonial hierarchy and royalty they attempted to achieve in their mobilisation. This was seen vividly in the performing rite of making holy water.

The ability to make holy water became a complex performance among the Holy Men to increase their following besides other magical performances. Holy water not only symbolised purification and protection called *Phithi tatkam tatwen* (พิธีตัดกรรมตัดเวร).⁷⁰ It was also redefined to be the essential element that created the loyalty between a leader and their followers in the movement.⁷¹ There was more than eighty per cent of the approximate sixty Holy Men pretenders that were associated with making, drinking and sprinkling holy water for their followers. This was seen in an interesting case from ‘the Testimony of Nai Dok’, a person who claimed himself to be a meritorious man in Khon Kaen. He explained his role and the rite of holy water to Thai officials that his mother brought him and his younger brother to request holy water from Holy Men in Mahasarakham. After being sprinkled with holy water made by the Holy Men predecessors, they were appointed to be Thao Kalanak (ท้าวกาละนาค) and Thao Dabot (ท้าวดาบส), two new Holy Men. Afterwards, one of them went back to his home in Khon Kaen and began making holy water for two hundreds of newcomers.⁷² Thus, employing holy water became the crucial means to forge loyalty between the Holy Men and their followers as well as among groups of followers that reminded us of the process in the ceremony of drinking the water of allegiance practised by Thais. They drank holy water to confirm the loyalty between Thai officials and the King. Similarly, followers who received holy water from Holy Men leaders bow to the loyalty between holy-water makers and recipients.

The recipients also had to follow some recommendations of water makers. The most popular order was to collect pebbles from Roi-et province, keep them in white fabric, worship them and recite Pali verses over pebbles every day. These pebbles were expected to turn into gold and silver when the right time had arrived.⁷³ They had to

⁷⁰ R5 M.2.18/7, Holy Spirit: Correspondences from the Ministry of Interior (Isan and Udon Circles, 24 February 1901-7 April 1902).

⁷¹ Asawai, ‘History of Thai Society, 1851-1902: A Critique of Holy Men Rebellion, r.s.121 (1901-2), 45.

⁷² R5 M.2.18/11, Holy Spirit: Correspondences from the Ministry of Interior (30 June-3 August 1902).

⁷³ R5 M.2.18/3, Holy Spirit: Correspondences from the Ministry of Interior (24 February 1901-7 April 1902).

stop feeding chickens, ducks, pigs and beasts of burden because otherwise, the pebbles would not become gold, and those animals would turn to poisonous food or giants instead. Owing to a feeling of fear, all people performed these similar things according to the Holy Men's orders.⁷⁴ This method successfully attracted thousands of commoners to participate in the collective reaction against the central Siamese authority as never seen before in other local mobilisations. Holy water, on the one hand, therefore was an autochthonous rite that was commonly employed to protect people from pain, calamity and unfortunate luck in the northeast. On the other hand, the process of making holy water was developed to be a new form of cultural material to make people bow their loyalty to the Holy Men leaders who gave holy water to them in the same way that the King did to his representatives in the ceremony of drinking the water of allegiance.

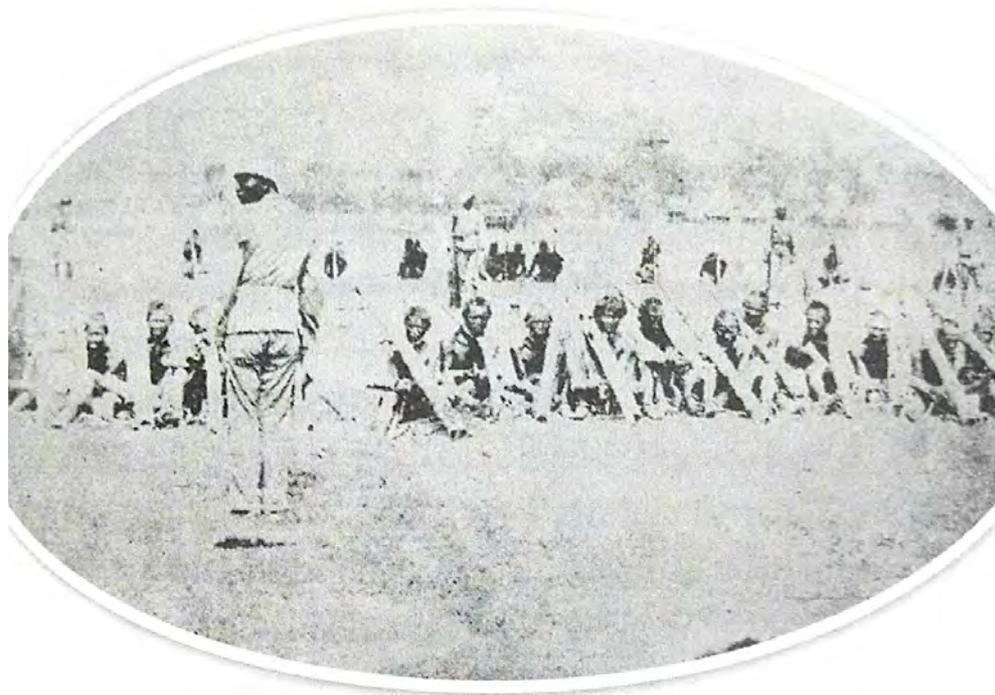
The reactions of Thai monks and the high-ranking officials proved its reality in the reproduction of holy water among the Holy Men that was copied from Thai cultural practices. As a Thai administrative monk, Phra Yannarakkhit, criticised and arrested three local monks in Yasothon while he inspected the chaotic situation in the northeast. This was because those monks provided cleansing water and performed rites to rinse the bad luck from people.⁷⁵ The suppression of Siam reflected that locals did not produce holy water as in its usual meaning and traditional ways of practice. Siam recognised the danger of making holy water that could threaten the state order, and so they decided to punish local people engaging in this process. Later, High Commissioner Sanphasitthiprasong also made and distributed drinking water for the oath of allegiance to local people who still believed in the power of Holy Men. The holy water made by the Thai royal family was used as a symbol of Thai state ritual that talks back to the cultural transformation of local communities regarding holy water. This was the first time that the central ceremony of drinking water of allegiance was widened to gain loyalty between the Thai monarchy and commoners. The water given by the prince (King's representative) would cleanse and break a hidden loyal linkage between the Holy Men leaders and their followers. With this strategy, it

⁷⁴ R5 M.57/15, Letters of Phra Yannarakkhit on His Service in Monthon Isan (20 February 1901-3 September 1902).

⁷⁵ Wiphakphotchanakit, *History of the Northeast*, 433.

helped Siam to regain loyalty among locals back to the Thai King.⁷⁶ Thus, the Holy Men revolt not only expressed their cultural traditions in the mobilisation to fight with Siam. They also reproduced Thai national culture which occurred for the first time in local forms of resistance in the outlying northeastern region. The innovation of the Holy Men rebellion such as the collectiveness in wide-scale mobilisation and the double visions of culture between their autochthonous practices and the Thai influences significantly reflected how the locals interpreted and reacted to the nature of Thai state expansion at that moment. The pluralistic articulations by local movements at the turn of the century responding to the Thai cultural provocation were also found in the Shan rebellion in the northern frontier of Siam.

9.5: Holy Men arrested at Thung Sri Mueang in Ubon Ratchathani, 1902



From: Toem Wiphakphotchanakit, *History of the Northeast [Prawattisat Isan-ประวัติศาสตร์อีสาน]*, 4th ed. (Bangkok: Thammasat University, 2003), 447.

⁷⁶ R5 M.2.18/3, Holy Spirit: Correspondences from the Ministry of Interior (24 February 1901-7 April 1902).

9.3.2 The Shan rebellion: the returning Burmese king and its response to the nature of Thai kingship

Because the Shan community practised Buddhism and believed in the idea of meritorious kingship, the Shan movement followed the pattern of millenarian expectation that was similar to the arrival of Thammikarat or a Maitreya cult in the northeast. They believed in the return of the righteous ruler regarding the extraordinary status of Burmese kingship. A descendant of the Burmese royal family, Prince Myingun, became a figure of hope for the northern community. Many locals in the north believed that Myingun planned to rebel against Siam (and Britain) to reclaim his rightful position in Mandalay, as well as liberate the northern part from Siam. Hardships such as the destruction of religion, political oppression, drought and starvation would be eliminated in the next dry season or in 1902, which was the appropriate time for mobilisation led by this Burmese prince.⁷⁷ The cultural reproduction of the Shan rebels challenged and responded to the legitimacy of Thai kingship mainly. There was no explicit hint of Buddhism as found in the Holy Men case. The absence of Buddhist markers thus illustrated the slight recognition of the northern communities regarding the expansion of Thai national culture before the turn of the century. Despite the low degree of Buddhist symbolism, the richness of a shared ideology and a challenge to Thai kingship was performed critically in the Shan rebellion through the narrative of the Burmese prince, which was a potent marker of kingship and modern nation.

Prince Myingun (1844-1921, also spelt Mingun or Mingoan in British records) was one of the many sons of King Mindon, the last dynasty that ruled Burma (1752-1885, see his image no.9.6). He (and his brother, Myinkondaing) became prominent because he once revolted against their father's regime in 1866. Although Myingun's plan failed in the end, his operation helped to establish political networks with some Shan-Karenni forces in the Karenni hill areas, geographically close to present-day Mae Hong Son and Chiang Rai in Thailand.⁷⁸ Myingun afterwards fled Burma to the Andaman Islands, Benares, Chandanagar (French factory near Kolkata), Pondicherry

⁷⁷ 'Evidence of Chao Bua Lai-Me Chao Luang of Phre', FO628/23/280, *From Chiangmai. Shan Rising*, 1902.

⁷⁸ Terence R. Blackburn, *Executions by the Half-Dozen: The Pacification of Burma* (New Delhi: A.P.H. Pub. Corp, 2008), 51; Tzang Yawngwe, *The Shan of Burma: Memoirs of a Shan Exile* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2010), 197.

and later Saigon. Nonetheless, the pervasive story of the return of Prince Myingun as the certain legitimacy was continually narrated during the political instability in the widespread Valley and Upper Burma at that time.⁷⁹ It was intriguing that the rumour of the return of the potential Burmese king also animated and was the central theme in the Shan movement in 1902.

9.6: The photograph of Prince Myingun taken in Saigon where he died in 1921



From: 'Prince of Myingun', Lost Footsteps (A Project of U Thant House), accessed 15 October 2018, <https://lostfootsteps.org/en/history/prince-of-myingun>.

Penny Edwards's discussion provides us with interesting points about Myingun.⁸⁰ She explained that Myingun's previous royal life and his various stations of exile shaped him to be a visionary person for both the state and stateless elite. Myingun's characteristics illustrated in his letters, which he wrote with western vision and archival knowledge. His letters added to the anxiety of the British and French authorities, even though Myingun had never succeeded in the establishment of a potential army in his real life. These letters became "a ghost in the archival machine"

⁷⁹ Thant Myint-U, *The Making of Modern Burma*, 178.

⁸⁰ Penny Edwards, 'Watching the Detectives: The Elusive Exile of Prince Myngoon of Burma' in Ricci, *Exile in Colonial Asia*, 248–78.

to conjure up the firm belief in Burmese, Shan and Karen thoughts. They truly believed that Myingun bore a certain legitimacy by which he promised to return and rally the potential of resistance to regain his political power. Thus, “in Myngoon’s case, that nostalgia is framed as the intent of the throne and nation”, said Edwards.⁸¹ In this way, Myingun’s story became alive and attracted the heart of various groups in their rally to resistance as occurred in the Shan case in Siam.

When Phraya Surasak Montri, Head of the Command, arrived at Phrae to quell the Shan rebellion in July 1902, he pursued the Shans, local Lao chiefs and other accomplices who engaged in the disturbance. What made him feel astonished from the investigation was the presence of Prince Myingun’s story. In fact, it was not the first time that Siam recognised the role of this Burmese prince. In 1889, the British Indian government requested Siam’s collaboration to arrest a forty-five year old man with below average height, broad chest, black beard, high cheekbones, left-handedness and polite manners.⁸² It was the time when Myingun escaped in disguise from India to Saigon, Vietnam. Seven years later, another rumour of the prince spread in the Phailin district, Chanthaburi province in the eastern part of Thailand today. It was a French Protectorate and settled by thousands of Burman and Shan workers, who were British subjects and often travelled from the Phailin district to the Upper Mekong and the northern frontier of Siam.⁸³ Many of them claimed to be Myingun’s followers and persuaded others to be French subjects to travel to meet Myingun in Saigon. It was also at this time that Myingun’s narrative spread widely in the northern community. What we have seen from the Thai archival records was the Siamese suspicion about Myingun due to the British information. It also revealed the weaknesses of Siamese power along the boundaries in its surveillance between the Lower to Upper Mekong. Then, Myingun’s rumour always heightened confusion in the Siamese government, similar to the situations in the colonial British and French as Edwards’s discussed. His story even aroused the northern people of Siam to reinterpret the nature of the Thai king’s legitimacy and national sentiment. They finally against the Thai government at the turn of the century.

⁸¹ Edwards, 250.

⁸² R5 TP.18/1, Prince Myingun and His Companions Visited Chanthaburi (19 January 1889-3 March 1896) [Phuak Chao Menggun Phama Mathi Muangchantaburi-ต.18/1 พวกเจ้าเมงกุนพามาที่เมืองจันทบุรี (19 ม.ค. 108-3 มี.ค. 115)], NA.

⁸³ R5 TP.18/1.

It is further interesting that the Shans and Lao people in the northern frontier of Siam had developed ‘the nostalgia of the legitimate Burmese king of Myingun’ to form a collective sense and cultural articulation in response to the Siamese government. They not only continued producing their autochthonous practices in magical power and invulnerability but also conflated them with the royalist and nationalist framework of Myingun as well as Thai royal inspiration to react to the nature of Thai kingship and its nationhood.

It was in common that the Shan movement employed superstitious and magical power to uplift their powerful fighting as was the case of the Phraya Phab rebellion in 1889. The use of magical power continued to be practised in the Shan rebellion in 1902 as seen from the rites before joining the group of operation. Luang Prathet, a member of the Shan rebellion, described the rite that predecessors would have a jar of scented water mixed with syrup. This was distributed among new members and sprinkled among their followers near the arch of victory. Besides, they were given sugar cane syrup and tamarind water to drink.⁸⁴ This rite made participants believe that they had supernatural powers, *phuwiset* (ပျံ့လွယ်စေ့), seen in great body strength and could not be killed.⁸⁵ The Shan revolt further added to the interpretation of Myingun’s story to form a proto-nationalist rebellion in reaction to Siamese expansion which went beyond the use of spirituality to gain victory.

The heroic story of Prince Myingun became the tool to form a collective sense among the Shan groups to obstruct Thai state expansionists, even if Myingun was never freed from the active surveillance of the French authority in Saigon after 1889 until his death in 1921. This was a form of proto-national rebellion mobilised by a wide range of classes and groups with a feeling of collective belonging.⁸⁶ The shared imagination of the Burmese king in the northern community came into reality when Chao Piriya Thepphawong (image no.9.7), the Phrae chief who was one of the major leaders in the Shan rebellion, established a political network with other northern Lao rulers and the Shan groups by employing Myingun’s narrative. In the testimony of Chao Bua

⁸⁴ ‘Testimony of Chao Yuan Kam and Luang Prathet’, FO628/23/280, *From Chiangmai. Shan Rising*, 1902.

⁸⁵ ‘Inclosure 2 in No.82 from Mr T. Ff Carlisle to Mr W. M. J. Archer-Report on the Circumstances Connected with the Release from Custody of One Kobia, or Mong Byah, by French Troops at Chantaboon’, 13 March 1897, IOR/L/PS/20/FO79/2, FCRAS Part IX 1897.

⁸⁶ Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, 46.

Lai, Chao Piriya Thepphawong's wife (see her image no.9.8), she admitted that Myingun's myth was widespread in the north from 1895.⁸⁷ Several men in Phrae who went to work in the Phailin mine insisted that they had been travelled to Saigon to meet Myingun. The prince recruited hundreds of people and prepared to arrive in Chiang Rung to meet his nephew, known as Mengsa. Both of them planned to reunite all the people from the five northern provinces of Siam in an army to regain his crown. Consequently, the Phailin mine became a crucial location to establish the Shan network between the restrained Myingun in Saigon and thousands of Shans that were mobilised between the north of Siam, British Burma and the Phailin mine. The spreading of this news of Myingun, therefore, was reproduced to glue various ethnic groups in the northern communities several years before the real-time emergence of the Shan uprising in 1902.⁸⁸

Some people in the north had witnessed the outstanding person, the assumed nephew of Myingun as told by the Phrae chief's wife. He travelled between Chiang Rung and Phrae several years before the Shan uprising. His assumed name, 'Meng' or 'Mang' referred to a prince or royalty, widely spread and became well known for many local people. Chao Yuankham and Luang Prathet, who participated in the Shan resistance, confirmed that they saw the man with their own eyes.⁸⁹ This man was called by his followers as 'Mengsa', because he was a polite and charismatic person. He always wore a white Burman dress and was surrounded by many followers. Although no one knew who he was, all participants believed that the person who was called Mengsa was an agent of Myingun. One way or another, he was connected to the Burmese monarch due to his charisma. The Myingun myth then became alive and increased its credibility in the local people's mindset.⁹⁰ This was the achievement of a well-organised process of local leaders who interpreted the rumour of the potential

⁸⁷ 'Evidence of Chao Bua Lai-Me Chao Luang of Phre', FO628/23/280, *From Chiangmai. Shan Rising*, 1902.

⁸⁸ Prachum Amphunan, *Travel into the Past: When Shans Robbed Phrae and Lampang [Tiawpainai Adit Muea Ngiaw Plon Mueangphrae Lae Mueang Nakhonlampang-เที่ยวไปในอดีต เมื่อเจียวปล้นเมืองแพร่ และเมืองนครลำปาง]* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University, 1984), 89.

⁸⁹ 'Testimony of Chao Yuan Kam and Luang Pratet', FO628/23/280, *From Chiangmai. Shan Rising*, 1902.

⁹⁰ 'Confidential no.41 from Lyle to Beckett: Phre (on Tour) in October 27, 1902', FO628/23/280, *From Chiangmai. Shan Rising*, 1902.

Burmese king to mobilise people to attain their political objectives in anti-Thai government and its influences.

9.7: A photograph of Chao Piriya Thepphawong



From: *Collected Royal Chronicles: Shan Robbed Phrae in 1902 (Wat Phrabat Mingmueang)*
[Prachum Phongsawadan: Ngiaw Plon Mueang Phrae]-ประชุมพงศาวดาร ตอนเงี้ยวปล้นเมืองแพร่ (Bangkok:
CP Publishing, 1993).

9.8: A photograph of Chao Bua Lai, wife of the Phrae chief

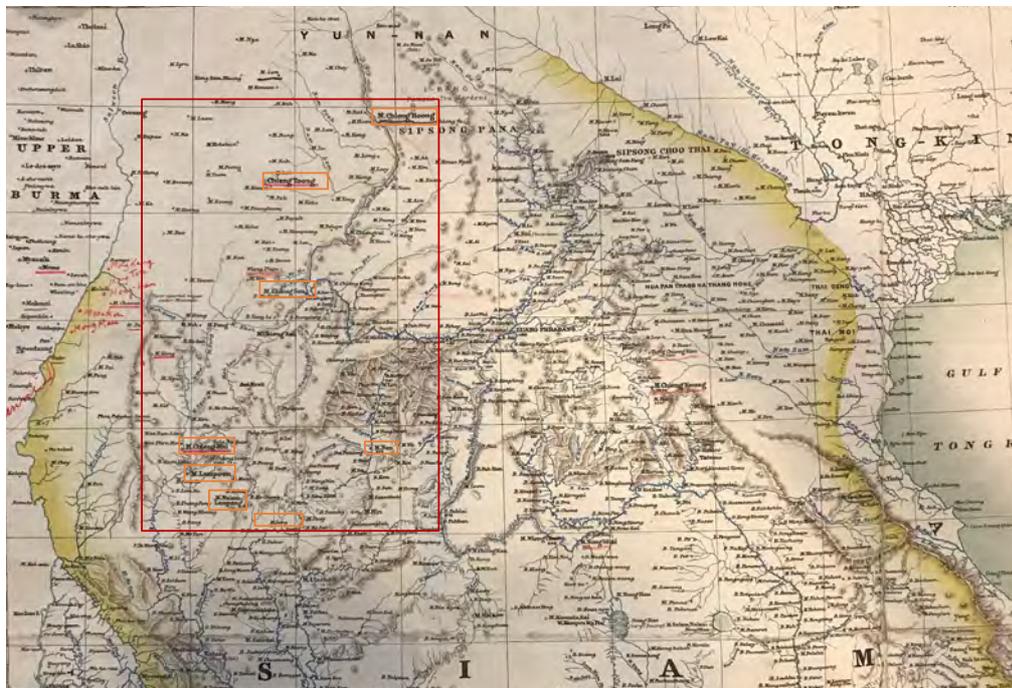


From: *Collected Royal Chronicles: Shan Robbed Phrae in 1902 (Wat Phrabat Mingmueang)*
[Prachum Phongsawadan: *Ngiaw Plon Mueang Phrae*]-ประชุมพงศาวดาร ตอนเงี้ยวปล้นเมืองแพร่]
(Bangkok: CP Publishing, 1993).

The collective manifestation among the Shan rebellion was even developed to frame the imagination of the pre-colonial political reunion with the modern sense of a nation between Lao, Shan, Khmhu ethnic groups in the northern Siam, Upper Mekong such as Kengtung, Chiang Rung and Chiang Saen (see map no.9.9). These local elites took advantage of the restrictions of the Siamese and other colonial authorities along the northern boundary to form what may be called a blueprint of their modern nation that challenged the pseudo-boundary demarcated by the British, French and Siamese colonial encroachments. In 1900, it was found that Princess Tiptila (or Chao Nang Wen Tip), the sister of Sawbwa of the Kengtung chief, came down and made a treaty with Chiang Mai, Lamphun and Lampang. The Kengtung chief also begged for a daughter of the Nan chief to create close linkages in every province in the north.

Afterwards, the Chiang Rung chief sent down Rachapanya Rachasali to approach the son of the Phrae chief, In Peng, his future son-in-law in December 1901. Chao Noi Bunsri, Chao Rachawong of Phrae who committed suicide after the rebellion failed, also went up to Chiangkham (a district in Phayao province) and persuaded the Lue group to become his supporter in return for tax exemptions.⁹¹ Their planned project of a political network was not a primitive form of resistance. Instead, it “made use of distinctly modern elements in the new landscape of power in the Siamese borderland”, as suggested by Andrew Walker, who studied the scattered Shan groups after the 1902 rebellion fleeing to the Mekong borderlands and areas intersected with Siam, Indochina and Burma.⁹² Although the local interaction in the borderlands beyond the Siamese state-making is not the main objective of the thesis, it reflects how the Shan rebellion absorbed and responded to the modern sense of the global force as well as the Siamese colonial expansion during the turn of the century.

9.9: Upper Mekong (Five northern provinces, Kengtung, Chiang Rung and Chiang Saen), c.1900



From: James Fitzroy McCarthy, (1900). IOR/W/L/PS/21/E/7/1. Map Collections. Kingdom of Siam and Malay Peninsula. 1:46. The British Library, size, colours and numbers adjusted and added by author

⁹¹ ‘Enclosure 1 in Mr Lyle Conf. 1902 Testimony of Chao Rachabut’, FO628/23/280, *From Chiangmai. Shan Rising, 1902.*

⁹² Walker, ‘Seditious State-Making in the Mekong Borderlands: The Shan Rebellion of 1902–1904’, 555.

Perhaps, the interpretation surrounding the Pakamong's life, one of the principal leaders in the Shan rebellion, clearly signified the colonial order such as Thai kingship within the imagination of the Shan rebels (see Pakamong's image no.9.10). They framed the legitimacy of Burmese monarchy to challenge and devalue the authority of the Thai King. As the peacock symbol of Burmese kingship found on flags and royal seals of the Shan leaders explained how they employed royal symbols with complex interpretation to signify the king's legitimacy in their own way. In general, the peacock flag was first used by King Alaungpaya (1714-1760) as an emblem of the dynasty he founded. The peacock emblem was employed by various Burmese groups who resisted the British power as a claim that they represented the whole Burmese nation.⁹³ Myingun used the peacock symbol in his letters as a personal emblem (image no.9.11).⁹⁴ The peacock then became the symbol of royalty when it appeared in the Shan rebellion. Pakamong intentionally used the peacock flag as a marker of his authority in his planned revolt.⁹⁵ Noi Kantawong, a Lao forester, witnessed that he had seen a red flag with a peacock banner in Pakamong's house.⁹⁶ He also found two golden umbrellas, a royal symbol of kingship, and a white flag with the word that in English referred to 'commander' in possession of Mong Yunna, Pakamong's father-in-law. Mong Yunna was the same person who heralded his honour as one of the previous fighting retainers of King Thibaw.⁹⁷ This symbolism explicated how local Shan leaders brought various materials that were linked with Myingun to legitimise their movement and reaffirm their credibility of being Burmese royal agents, even though they had never met Myingun in real life. Moreover, the use of the peacock emblem not only disclosed the innovation of the Shan rebels who adopted the Burmese royal narrative to express their response to Thai authority. They also significantly utilised those symbolic materials of royalty in relation to Burmese kingship to equate themselves with a royal blood-lineage status or claim to be the real

⁹³ Alleyne Ireland, *Colonial Administration in the Far East: The Province of Burma (A Report Prepared on Behalf of the University of Chicago Vol. 1)* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1907), 49.

⁹⁴ Maung Maung, *Burma's Constitution* (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 1959), 206; Edwards, 'Watching the Detectives: The Elusive Exile of Prince Myingun of Burma' in Ronit Ricci, ed., *Exile in Colonial Asia: Kings, Convicts, Commemoration*, 270.

⁹⁵ 'Confidential no.28 from Lyle to Beckett: Phre (on Tour) in October 10, 1902', FO628/23/280, *From Chiengmai. Shan Rising*, 1902.

⁹⁶ 'Confidential no.41 from Lyle to Beckett: Phre (on Tour) in October 27, 1902', FO628/23/280, *From Chiengmai. Shan Rising*, 1902.

⁹⁷ 'Confidential no.41 from Lyle to Beckett: Phre (on Tour) in October 27, 1902'.

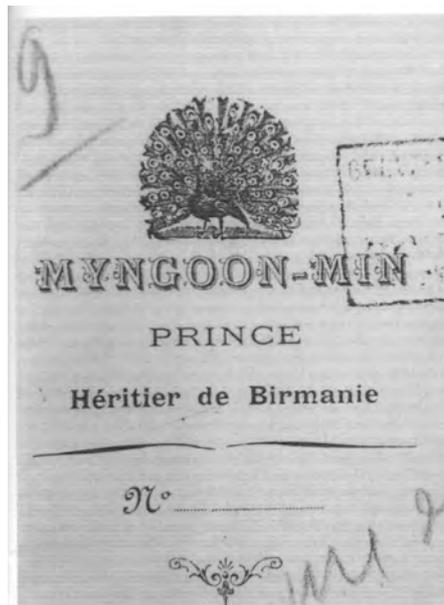
competitor for the Thai ruler as it could be seen apparently in Pakamong's performance.

9.10: An image of Pakamong, a Shan resistance leader in the Shan rebellion



From: 'Shan Rebellion, 1902 - A Resistance of Lan Na towards Siam', Human Excellence, accessed 19 March 2019, <http://huexonline.com/knowledge/22/165/>.

9.11: Prince Myingun's letterhead representing his peacock emblem



Prince Myingun's letterhead, Saigon, 1909.

From: Penny Edwards, 'Watching the Detectives: The Elusive Exile of Prince Myingun of Burma' in Ronit Ricci, ed., *Exile in Colonial Asia: Kings, Convicts, Commemoration*, Perspectives on the Global Past (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2016), p.259.

It was true that a body or physical sign was a tangible frame that potentially informed the interrelationship between an individual or collective experiences of a people and the social circumstances surrounding their life.⁹⁸ As performances of the Shan leadership, Pakamong, imply the connection between his experiences and the social enforcement of Siam he lived within. A splendid example of how Pakamong reproduced himself as a legitimate ruler influenced by Thai kingship can be seen when he used a peacock emblem as his private label in the essential contract between Shans, local Lao chiefs and other ethnic groups. In the meeting of the Shan rebels, “Pakamong was eager to show off his one golden and one silver royal seals with a peacock symbol to the Phrae chief, local Lao elites and Shans while they were signing the contract in the meeting. This peacock was associated with the label of the Burmese king”.⁹⁹ In this way, we have seen the way he copied royal materials to claim his superiority in their movement. His superior performance and the use of royal seals reflected how the nature of the Thai king’s authority was modelled upon for the cultural imagination of local communities. This was a form of recognition of a dominant culture that provoked them to engage with power relations and symbolic forms in their response.¹⁰⁰ In the next paragraph, it becomes obvious the extent to which Pakamong’s gestures and other Shan members were inspired by colonial orders – the force of Thai kingship – that made the locals talk back to the nature of Siamese expansion in their opposition.

After the Shan groups attacked the city centre of Phrae, the Thai official uniform and the royal insignia of Phraya Racharitthanon, a senior Thai official who lost his life by Shan rioters, were stolen. Later, it appeared that Pakamong wore the looted uniform decorated with Thai royal accessories. In Thai lyric poetry (*Nirat*-นิราศ) of Luang Tuaihan Raksa, a soldier in the Thai military expedition who had been sent up to the north during the Shan uprising gave the telling evidence during his journey. He recorded the atmosphere, situation and general information from local interviewees.

⁹⁸ Comaroff, *Body of Power, Spirit of Resistance: The Culture and History of a South African People*, 6.

⁹⁹ Amphunan, *Travel into the Past: When Shans Robbed Phrae and Lampang*, 80.

“ขณะเมื่อขึ้นสัญญากันนั้น พะกำหมองได้อาตรานกยูงทอง 1 ตัว เงิน 1 ตัวมาอวด แสดงให้เจ้าหลวงแพร์ เจ้านายพื้นเมืองและเจ้ยวในที่ประชุมนั้นดู ตรานกยูงเป็นตราที่เกี่ยวข้องกับกษัตริย์พม่า” (TT)

¹⁰⁰ Allan Pred, ‘Capitalisms, Crises, and Cultures II: Notes on Local Transformation and Everyday Cultural Struggles’ in Allan Pred and Michael Watts, *Reworking Modernity: Capitalisms and Symbolic Discontent* (New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 112; Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 110.

He also described Pakamong's action that proved the way that the Shan leader mimicked the nature of Thai kingship in the meeting that:

Pakamong performed with full solemnity. [He] wore Phraya's dress with sword, golden pointy hat and insignia... [He] sat on the chair and proclaimed his power as the ruler to rule over the north. There were noblemen gathered in the meeting, swore the oath and drank water...¹⁰¹

ส่วนตัวอ้ายปะกาหม่องจงหองเหลือ ฉวยเอาเสื้อพระยาหีบมาใส่ กระบี่หมวกยอดทองผ่องอำไพ เต็มยศใหญ่ติดตราทำท่าทาง นั่งเก้าอี้ชี้ขาดประกาศยศ บ้านเมืองหมดเป็นของมันมาขึ้นจ้าง ให้หาท้าว เจ้าฟุ้งดำไม่อำพราง ทั้งขุนนางในพารามาประชุม กระทำสัตยสัญญากันคนล้าคล้า แล้วกินน้ำนี้ปกป้องตั้ง ซองสุ่ม...

This was a splendid utterance of how Shan rebels pronounced their absorption of Thai national culture and remodelled it to respond to Siamese expansion. His performance also shed light on the mimicry of the King's gesture; to dress up with royal attires and luxurious accessories and to perform as if he was the highest ruler attending a royal ceremony.

Pakamong's followers also produced the meeting that resembled the annual meeting of the Thai representatives to swear their oath to the King. This extraordinary performance of the Shan rebels was noticed and highlighted in Mr Lyle's letter, the British Vice Consul of Nan.¹⁰² His underlined words of 'the drinking water of an oath of allegiance' clearly reveals the resemblance between the meeting of the Shan rebels and the ritual of loyalty performed by Thais. In the procedure of the Shan meeting, the head leader similarly requested all participants to drink water to prove their sincerity. One of the participants in this meeting admitted to the Siamese investigators that the water giving him to drink had passed the sacred ritual practised by local monks to increase its sacredness. The process "resembled the water of the oath given by the King".¹⁰³ Although it was known that taking water of the oath as a symbol of sincerity was not a new rite in the northern society, it seemed that making and employing water of the oath had modified its meaning and performance among the

¹⁰¹ Luang Tuaihan Raksa, *A Poem Depicting a Journey to Luang Prabang and Reports of Ngiaw Suppression*, 375–76.

¹⁰² 'Report upon Shan Rising at Phre, 23 July-14 Aug 1902', FO821/30, *Shan Rising at Phré*. 1902.

¹⁰³ *Collected Royal Chronicles Part 75 (Ngiaw Suppression Part 1) [Prachumphongsawadan Phakthi 75 (Prap Ngiaw Tonthi Nueng)-ประชุมพงศาวดาร ภาคที่ 75 เรื่องปราบเงี้ยวตอนที่ 1]* (Phranakhon: Amphon Phitthaya, 1959), 40–43.

Shan rebels. It was not a retrospective form in the northern community that the ritual of drinking water of allegiance was performed between ‘commoner and commoner’ or amongst the local groups who promised to cooperate in the resistance and shared mutual manifestation. It was similar to the modification of Holy Men in the northeast who created a unit of shared loyalty through the distribution of holy water that proved the impact of the cultural contact between the frontier communities and the central Siamese expansionists. Therefore, the Shan rebellion, as well as the Holy Men, were not necessarily pronouncing the only political demand or the simple rejection of ‘the content of another culture as a difference’ in their perception. As what Bhabha pointed out, “it is the effect of an ambivalence produced within the rules of recognition of dominating discourses as they articulate the signs of cultural difference and reimplicate them within the deferential relations of colonial power – hierarchy, normalization, marginalization and so forth”.¹⁰⁴

9.12: Shan prisoners were imprisoned in Bangkok, 1 January 1903



From: Prachum Amphunan, *Travel into the Past: When Shans Robbed Phrae and Lampang [Tiaw Pai Nai Adit Muea Ngiaw Plon Mueang Phrae Lae Mueang Nakhon Lampang-เที่ยวไปในอดีต เมื่อเจ็ยวปล้นเมืองแพร่ และเมืองนครลำปาง]* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Buddhist University, 1984), 153.

¹⁰⁴ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 110–11.

Conclusion

The three rebellions along the frontiers of Siam at the turn of the century – the attempted Malay rebellion, the Holy Men and Shan rebellions – were consequences of Siamese expansion coinciding with global forces. The rebellions in the north in particular similarly shared a sense of opposition to the Thai as colonial intruders and developed proto-national bonds to mobilise wide scales of people to participate in their movements, in which these conditions had never been found in traditional forms of resistance before the 1900s. They even reproduced the Thai cultural influences to react to the attempts of Siamese expansion: kingship and Buddhism. However, although there was the emergence of a proto-nationalist idea in the southern Malay case, it had no clear expression as a cultural articulation in the nature of the movement.

The traces of kingship and Buddhism were pronounced clearer in the Holy Men revolt regarding the return of Thammikarat or the king of righteousness rather than the Shan rebellion. This was because Thai kingship and Buddhism were stretched deliberately in the northeastern communities. Differently, the Shan revolts only highlighted the inspiration of kingship as their principal objective in response to Siam because they recognised slight Thai state Buddhism. The narrative of Burmese kingship that was fused with Thai national culture became an innovation in the Shan revolt prompted by Siamese expansion. Thus, the patterns of the three resistances in Siam in 1901-2 not only modified their modern forms to achieve in their political demands, but they even reproduced the Thai cultural experiences fused with local practices to react to Siam to claim its space between nation and locality. This was the significant outcome of cultural and symbolic interactions between dominating Siam and its three frontiers. It revealed how the three local communities perceived, absorbed and responded to the national culture and the Thai state expansion during the first phase of the administrative reform with the path of differentiation and fragmentation.

CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSION

This thesis aims to fill a knowledge gap by concentrating on how the dynamics of cultural symbolism in relation to Thai national culture were expanded in the three frontier zones – Lan Na, Lao states in the west of Mekong and the Patani Kingdom – by applying a comparative lens and focusing on an essential period of political development: the reign of Siam's King Chulalongkorn reign from 1873-1910. Cultural expansion has been discussed alongside that of administrative reform, the *Thesaphiban* system. The thesis argues that the reform programme of Siam was introduced to operate as more than just an idealistic influence in frontier communities. In doing so, the thesis began by investigating the role of Siamese elites in transforming and reinterpreting the pre-existing traditional elements of Thai culture to form a national Thai cultural symbolism. It became a primary tool of Siam to empower political reform through Thai culture and to assert its national supremacy in the modern era. Nonetheless, understanding Thai national culture cannot be done by focusing only on the internal conditions of Siam. The changing mode of Siamese elite political operation during this period was significantly indebted to influences and connections with wider global transformation. Thus, it was necessary to stretch our consideration of these issues beyond a narrow framework, challenging aspects of Thai historical methodological nationalism, into a broader context to observe the situation of Siam and its place in the world from the mid-nineteenth century.

Siam was forced to remodel its 'modern' vision to be more scientific and rational as a consequence of the changing social worldview arising from these wider influences, including where those influences penetrated directly into Siam itself through colonialism and geo-politics. From the 1850s, the changing world order was marked by the presence of the British envoy – John Bowring – which led to critical events that changed the course of Siam's history. It put pressure on every inch of Siam's territory as well as related to widespread changes affecting the so-called global south generally, including Africa, the Pacific islands and south east Asia. The new transformations of the capitalist economy, technologies, political and territorial demarcations, social mobilities and the unique cultural aspects that modernisation produced significantly shaped populations globally into unequal relationships between dominating colonisers and dominated groups of people. There were a few

‘empty spaces’ as a result of colonial mapmaking. There were few exceptions to the unequal binary relations within this new global order. Nonetheless, the role of Siam is intriguing, as Siam was never colonised by Europeans directly. On the one hand, they were intimidated and had an indirectly colonised status as a result of British and French European pressures. On the other hand, Siam gradually imitated the modern European vision of a modern nation and shifted its internal paradigm to be a superior coloniser towards its previous tributary states in the peripheral zones of Siam, such as Lan Na, Laos and Patani, from the late nineteenth century.

In its new role as a coloniser, Siam abruptly copied and readjusted its outlook to pursue the attributes of a global power. It first experimented with and launched these adjustments during the time of King Mongkut (1851-1868) who ascended the throne just four years before the arrival of John Bowring to the Siamese court in Bangkok in 1855. Following this, Thai national culture was critically redefined to copy western standards of science and rationality. Yet, the Thai notions were still dependent upon some legacies from its traditional ways of thinking. Yet these changes were intended to instil the credibility, continuity and historical values for the modern national imagination. This thesis has utilised Homi Bhabha’s idea regarding the ambivalence of mimicry, with the claim in this thesis that the transformation of Thai national culture resulted from the response of Siamese elites to the European pressures that they were experiencing. The modern form of Thai national culture mimicked modern western standards while at the same time not rupturing its ancient cultural roots. Yet the readjustments of Thai culture manifested as a hybrid form of culture: parts were copied from European colonial standards and parts were pre-colonial cultural remnants. Thus, Thai national culture was built upon various traditional elements or what Anthony Smith called as *ethnies*. Siamese elites then employed the remnants of these *ethnies* found in symbolic forms – myth, memory, symbol and value – to remodel and remake Thai culture at the national level.

Kingship and Buddhism became the two core themes to shape the ‘cultural symbolism’ of a modern Thai national culture. The legacies of King Mongkut remained: various ceremonies, clothing, accessories, emblems and physical materials relating to kingship and Buddhism in the historical past became reified and tangible materials that configured a new way of thinking and forms of practice to symbolise

the modern Thai nation. In later years, these two core symbolic attributes of the modern Thai nation became consolidated as the cornerstone of Thai national culture and feeling for King Chulalongkorn, who ascended the throne in 1868 and performed his second coronation in 1873 during the high-water mark of colonialism. Kingship became a 'memory structure' linking to the pre-colonial period that helped to sustain the sturdiness of Thai kingship and its nation in the modern era. It then became a pivotal strategy of Siamese elites to stress the value of this ancient tradition to serve modern Thai national objectives. Buddhism was also realigned from its previous involvement with superstitious elements into the new lines of Thammayut practice, which was deemed to be Buddhism in its pristine form. However, the non-Buddhist elements, instead of being completely removed, were rearranged under the umbrella of a Buddhist value. Many non-western ideas and beliefs such as merit and *Barami* and superstitious practices remained embedded in the subculture of the nation, but they were also rearranged and sometimes hidden to sustain the potency of the modern ideas of Thai kingship and central Thai Buddhism. This was because the non-Buddhist remnants significantly helped to sustain the strength of Thai kingship and glued the unitary Thai national community together. This further contributed to making a hybrid Thai national culture. The 'colonial discourse of mimicry' produced in Siam therefore had the capacity to shape the distinctive communities living in peripheral zones to be part of the Siamese modern nation through the implementation of the *Thesaphiban* reform programme during the Chulalongkorn era. A binary colonising-colonised relationship between Siam and its frontiers came into being, as was seen where European colonialists directly and indirectly colonised peoples throughout the globe.

While Siamese elites expected to fit Thai national culture and the modern political structures of the Thai state into the fabric of their peripheries, local circumstances still meant that these interventions developed locally hybrid and complex forms incorporating elements from pre-colonial societies. Although the political and cultural structures of the three frontier areas contained distinctive social conditions, before this time, cultural differences had never been a significant issue between them and Siamese authorities to whom they paid tribute. Nonetheless, the daily life of local people now became interrupted both politically and culturally with the emergence of

new kinds of interaction with the Bangkok centre during the high tide of colonial pressure.

In terms of politics, the *Thesaphiban* system was enforced throughout the three zones at different times and with slightly different strategies to support the centralisation of a single unit for tax collections, administration and judiciary. Siam made rapid political progress in the frontiers during the 1890s by appointing permanent Thai officials and undertaking military expeditions in local areas. However, with regard to cultural aspects, Thai national expansion led to a new clash of cultures between what seemed to be a dominating coloniser and potentially dominated colonised peoples. If we adopt the notion of the American Frontier to the Thai case, Siamese elites saw themselves as 'exceptional'. They believed that they had innate authority to transform distinctive ethnic groups whom Siam stigmatised as 'savaged' people. Siam then felt responsible for removing 'uncivilised' conditions or uplifting them through new attachments to 'proper' Thai civilised standards. Thus, the frontier communities were not a 'frontier' by their nature, but they were labelled as such because of their diverse cultures and different social practices compared to Thai national culture. Following this, the cultural symbolism of Thai national culture became the central dynamic that forced local communities to imitate and copy the Siamese model defined by the Bangkok centre.

In doing so, Siam promoted the national myth of the great King Ramkhamhaeng and reiterated the supremacy of the Thai king through rituals of royalty such as swearing an oath of allegiance and other royal attributes including King's images, celebrating the King's birthday, mimicking the luxurious clothes and grandiose pomp of the Bangkok court. National religious holidays and events at temples were raised to be essential practices to publicise the discipline of the central sangha, including Pali recitation and the significance of Thammayut fraternity. Monastic demarcation by the Siamese government also helped to enforce Siam's boundaries and the borders of Thai cultural influence. The intention of Siam to integrate these regions could not be fulfilled if the central government did not despatch hundreds of Thai representatives and Thai Buddhist administrative monks to steer and oversee these activities. Nevertheless, although Siam attempted to operate the governance of the three frontier regions using the same methods, local communities challenged the capacity of the

Siamese to do so. Cultural expansion, as a corollary of this integration in the three frontiers, was therefore conducted through multiple ‘partial reforms’ and local contingencies during the 1880s to 1902 (the first phase of the Chulalongkorn era). In other words, cultural expansion also predisposed political limitations of Siam at that time because it made cultural difference, as well as reflecting the political limitations of its political ambitions.

The northeastern region experienced the most concerted and deliberate attempts to assert the cultural symbolism of Thai national culture regarding kingship and Buddhism as a primary referent of national identity. The Thai-Lao sibling relationship, or the central strategy that borrowed local beliefs to subvert local culture to Bangkok dominance, was conducted in the northeastern Lao communities, while other royal attributes were also utilised to embed the potency of Thai kingship in the local mindset. The closer political relationship between Bangkok and the northeastern Lao states and the existence of early Thammayut Buddhist linkages also encouraged the Siamese to expand Thai national culture into northeastern communities more directly, compared to the other two zones. The northeast thus experienced the most intensive and decisive Thai influences as the Siamese government projected its ultimate goal of incorporating its three frontiers as a single unit.

The northern frontier interacted with and was influenced by the idea of Thai kingship in a somewhat similar way to the northeast. The infiltration of Thai-Lao sibling relations and many symbolic rituals of royalty were also utilised by Thai representatives in the north. Nevertheless, central Thai Buddhism could not influence and tighten its grip in this area as significantly. Siamese elites had more limitations of local knowledge in this areas, and this made it more difficult to replace the potent local Yuan Buddhist activities and the manifold spiritual beliefs in the north with those that were derived from central Thai Buddhism. It was not until after the Shan rebellion in 1902 onwards that central Thai Buddhism increased in its influence in the north. Then, Siam forced their Buddhist culture and symbolism in the northern region with compromise rather than force, even though they intended to operate directly as they did in the northeast.

In contrast with the two frontier zones above, although some royal Thai rituals and state ceremonies emphasising the significance of Thai kingship were practised in the

south, they did not make a huge difference to the recipient Malay communities. The spread of central Thai Buddhism was also limited by Siam in these regions, as they preferred to preserve some parts of the Islamic religious practices partly in imitation of the British administrative policy of ruling Malay communities in British Malaya. This was also used to promote a Siamese image of colonial tolerance, compromise and philanthropy. The cultural expansion of both Thai kingship and central Buddhism therefore impacted on the south more slightly compared to the northeast and the north. It indicates that the cultural symbolism of Thai national culture was expanded in multiple ways, instead of a being single-faceted expansion. However, it may also be fair to say that this indicates that Siamese elites themselves were ambivalent with regard to the limitations in their capacity to embed Thai national culture uniformly before the turn of the century. Bhabha notes that ambivalence, and perhaps uncertainty and indecisiveness were attributes of mimicry, and with ambiguities in their thinking about similarity and difference and the relative possibilities of acting with aggression or compromise, this prevarication may crucially have influenced the ways local communities formed their resistance to these pressures.

The cultural diffusion associated with Thai state expansion not only attempted to shape a shared Thai national imagination in the three frontiers but also aroused innovative forms of local uprising in response to these attempts at state expansion. If we use Bhabha's idea of ambivalence in mimicry, we could see that Siam justified itself as the superior colonial master. The colonial ambivalence and disorder of Siam, however, caused unexpected responses from local groups. Thus, the limits of the Thai state capacity to reinforce its colonial discourse enabled a channel or empty space between nation and locality in which the frontier communities could disrupt the idea of a 'national' Siam that incorporated them. This condition became obvious when Siam failed to keep order at the turn of the century. This can also be understood within the broader frame of global uprisings during the 1850s to the 1900s. As discussed in this thesis, the three reactions to Siam in 1901-2 – the attempted Malay rebel, Holy Men revolt and Shan rebellion – were not exceptional when seen from a global scale, and we should avoid the methodological nationalism that exceptionalises them. They were, to a degree, a part of more global trends produced by a binary relationship between the coloniser and colonised. Local resistances in the frontiers of Siam were an outcome of the weaknesses of the insular Thai state as well as the imbroglio of

global imperial strategies. The world disruption and disorder as challenges to imperial/colonial claims began to be felt globally produced a concurrence of opportunities for local communities to resist their colonisation; in the case of the frontier rebellions in Siam, this was expressed a quest for their millenarian expectation of a new perfect world, a world determined by locals and not by foreign intruders.

The attempted Malay rebellion, Holy Men revolt and Shan rebellion in Siam shared some similar aspects. They critically developed the ideological roots of proto-nationalist rebellions and were manifestations of opposition to Thai state expansionism, which they perceived as conducted by ‘the Thai colonial intruder’. Yet there are also some obvious and significant differences between the three local responses which need to be taken into account in any comparative analysis, and which this thesis had also tried to make clear. The attempted Malay rebel in the southern frontier differed from the north and northeast due to the absence of any cultural articulation by the Malay community. Nonetheless, this also illustrates the limitations of how they reinterpreted the nature of Thai cultural expansion in their movement. Holy Men in the northeast and the Shan rebellion in the north demonstrated in contrast that the local protestors responded to the extension of Thai national culture in different ways and reproduced it in their own, new forms of cultural articulation. They fused their autochthonous practices with the new assertions of Thai culture, albeit with different patterns of imitation and response visible between the northeast and the north. This demonstrates how the Thai cultural and symbolic elements were expanded in the three local frontiers with different effects and with some fragmentation.

The Holy Men revolt of the northeast fused Thai kingship and Buddhism with their autochthonous beliefs of *Thammikarat*. The local pretenders and Thammikarat heralds produced copies of the colonial hierarchy of power, the sibling relationship and symbols of kingship and monarchical supremacy. They evoked royal Thai gestures, the performances of Thai representatives in the region, royal ceremonies and kingly accessories embedded in local governance by Siam. The Holy Men revolt revealed the way that locals reproduced the essence of the central Buddhist idea and expressed it through cultural symbols such as holy water, monk-robe dresses and

other religious accessories – joss sticks, candles and holy threads. This concerted Buddhist engagement also marked a key difference between the northeastern and northern uprisings. Compared to the Shan rebellion, although reference to the return of the Burmese king revealed a Buddhist underpinning the movement, there was no significant reference to reproduction of symbols of central Thai Buddhism. The Shan rebellion, however, was remarkable. The local movements interpreted a national collectiveness and Burmese kingship that connected them with the wider regional context and ignored the settled boundary of colonisers. They employed the myth of Prince Myingun to challenge the Thai King's power and even framed their imagination of a modern boundary that was linked to various Shan ethnic groups in the Upper Mekong (Kengtung, Chiang Rung and Chiang Saen).

We have seen that all three local rebellions failed to attain their political goals. They did, however, represented cultural shifts among local rebels who absorbed and developed their turn-of-the-century forms of movement to respond to the Siamese cultural provocation to try to progress their political demands. The cultural interactions between centre and frontiers made and remade the contents of Thai national culture and symbolism in response to the nature of Siamese expansion. These interactions had not been conducted in the same way in previous local movements before the 1900s, which could be seen comparatively in the case of Wan Mali (1838), the Haw rebellions (1860s) and Phraya Phab Rebellion (1889). Hence, the proto-nationalist rebellions, through their new forms of mimicry and cultural articulation, revealed how each region had internationalised this and the idea of Thai national culture in different ways and on different levels.

Yet, all studies have their limitation in one way or other, and this thesis is no exception. It has not been an easy task to investigate the historical research within a limited time scale covering a vast geographical area such as the three regions of Siam. Moreover, these regions were extraordinarily different in many ways, being comprised of different languages, cultures, beliefs and having varied social complexities. They also felt compelled to have contact with external powers, not only modern Siam but also the British and French imperialists and this heightened, contested and complicated their local conditions during the rise of colonialism. It is a fact that the complexity, uniqueness and cultural diversity of these three frontier

zones brought about the questions in the thesis and fuelled the endeavours to understand them better as significant parts of Thai history rather than as isolated blocks that could not be considered through the lens of cultural dimensions of Thai national expansion. However, the realities of conducting field research within the context of a PhD in all three areas were that such a focus is challenging to bring to fruition. Travelling to the north, northeast and the south was not simple being both time-consuming and with high expense. But most importantly, the limitations upon accessing some primary sources and repositories have already been acknowledged as being crucial points of limitation in this study. The consequence of this, as well as the time constraints of the programme of study, are that inevitably, the extent to which it is possible to analyse the ways in which all three frontiers influenced and produced a change to the nature of Thai national culture at the centre will require further research which will occupy many years to come. This thesis is a detailed but nonetheless preliminary study.

Nonetheless, we have learnt from preliminary findings of the thesis that we should not see Thai national culture as being a fixed form that was unmodified through encounters not only with western developments but also internally. The limits and compromise in the creation of Siam as it came into contact more directly with the areas it started to see as ‘frontiers’ – the strategy of using the mythic sibling relationship and borrowing local beliefs, the absence of Buddhism in the north and south and the speciality of Malay and Islamic tolerance – are obvious elements that we should study to consider how Thai national culture could have been reshaped, transformed and modified by frontier peoples and their distinct circumstances. Also, the role of Princess Dara Rasmi who diffused Lao culture while living in the Siamese court and the experiences of administrative monks who travelled in provincial areas implied us that there were flows back to the centre in this time and even after as discussed in Chapters 7-8.

The Sangha Act of 1902 reveals how Siamese policy in relation to Thai national culture became clearer after the rebellions. Siam increased its pressure on the northeast after the Holy Men revolt. In the early twentieth century, Thai Buddhism and regulations of the national sangha following the Thammayut line were

significantly promoted by the Bangkok centre.¹ One of the keys in the Sangha Act proclaimed by Siam to strengthen central Thai Buddhism in the frontiers was the regulation of establishing a monastery.² It determined that monks could establish a new monastery (which was controlled under the monastic administration) to serve villagers and their religious activities. Yet, if laity moved out of the area, that living space could not be a monastery anymore. It meant that local people needed a request for a *Sima* (monastic boundary) from the Siamese government as official approval to maintain a monastery and to help local monks to gain their living place. It was also an attempt by Siam to reaffirm their policy of building a closer relationship between society, education institutions and monasteries. On the other hand, Siam gradually brought all monasteries and local monks under the umbrella of the national sangha after 1902. They could increase the numbers of monks in each monastery and control wandering monks and their activities by stating that all monks needed to carry identification cards when leaving their monastery.³ Traditional spiritual beliefs and magical practices were also discouraged in both the Buddhist sangha and among laymen. For example, Prince Sanphasitthiprasong proclaimed that the practices of mediums were prohibited and fines or imprisonment were imposed.⁴ Thus, it became clear that the superstitious practices both of laymen and monks were to be controlled without exception, while local monks were forced to accept the Thammayut style of practices to meet the national framework of central Thai Buddhism.

Similarly, there was no exceptional treatment for the north regarding the national sangha. Siam deliberately shaped it there into the system of the national sangha, similar to other regions of Siam.⁵ The Buddhist Yuan Holy Man in the case of Khruba Siwichai (1878-1939) was an example of the 1902 Sangha regulation and Thai cultural expansion of Siamese state in the north after the Shan rebellion. Khruba Siwichai first challenged the Thai state in the 1920s and afterwards reached its critical

¹ Taylor, *Forest Monks and the Nation-State: An Anthropological and Historical Study in Northeastern Thailand*, 110.

² Taylor, 98.

³ Tiyanich, *Forest Recollections: Wandering Monks in Twentieth-Century Thailand*, 172; Taylor, *Forest Monks and the Nation-State: An Anthropological and Historical Study in Northeastern Thailand*, 98.

⁴ Wiphakphotchanakit, *History of the Northeast*, 448.

⁵ Sopha Chanamul, 'Khruba Siwichai: A Lan Na Tonbun (1878-1933) [Khruba Siwichai "Tonbun" Haeng Lanna-ครูบาศรีวิชัย "ตนบุญ" แห่งล้านนา (พ.ศ.2421-2481)]' (MA thesis (History), Thammasat University, 1991), 72; Taylor, *Forest Monks and the Nation-State: An Anthropological and Historical Study in Northeastern Thailand*, 82.

conflict with the national Buddhist order in 1932 in more confrontational ways in relation to the assertion of ‘right’ Buddhist practice than was ever seen in the 1902 revolt. This was because many monks in the north were categorised as *Mahanikai* sect and were therefore considered to be unqualified monks – who did not know Thai regulations and did not take exams designed in Bangkok.⁶ Then, their independent power in ordaining new monks, which was part of local practice, became prohibited by Siam. Only monks appointed by Siam, called *phra upatcha* (พระอุปัชฌาย์ or preceptor), could practise ordination ceremonies following the monastic order of the Thai state.⁷ It was one of the main issues that marked a critical change in northern society in the relations between state, Sangha and laity.⁸ This unavoidably led to the defiance by Khruba Siwichai’s rejection of the national rule and the grip of its traditional Buddhist practice emanating from Bangkok. His charismatic ability attracted and mobilised thousands of followers (laity, monks and novices) against the Buddhist monastic hierarchy of Siam. Although Siam became more decisive in its attempt to impose order upon the north as they detained Khruba Siwichai in a temple and arrested him on several occasions during 1908-1936, they forced Yuan Buddhist practices to compromise and released him anyway.⁹ It was true that the cultural and symbolic expansion of Siam regarding central Thai Buddhism in the north during the early twentieth century increased, but it could not achieve as much as in the northeastern region. Yet, the resistance of Khruba Siwichai was considered a critical outcome of strengthening central Thai Buddhism in the north from 1902 onwards.¹⁰

In the southern case, the authority of Thai kingship increased in the Malay communities. Siam abdicated the Patani chief and all his rights as a royal Malay-blood lineage. They also captured the Ra-ngae chief in Songkhla and arrested a son of a Raman chief to keep state order in the south. Although the special status of the Islamic and Malay traditions was still preserved for the south, other parts of administrative reform were more decisively enforced in the south, just as Siam did in the northeast and the north a decade earlier. The southernmost region was established

⁶ Tiyanich, *Forest Recollections: Wandering Monks in Twentieth-Century Thailand*, 43–44.

⁷ Ishii, *Sangha, State, and Society: Thai Buddhism in History*, 73.

⁸ Katherine A. Bowie, ‘Of Buddhism and Militarism in Northern Thailand: Solving the Puzzle of the Saint Khrubaa Srivichai’, *The Journal of Asian Studies* 73, no. 3 (2014): 714.

⁹ Chanamul, ‘Khruba Siwichai: A Lan Na Tonbun (1878-1933)’, 79–86.

¹⁰ Cohen, ‘Buddhism Unshackled: The Yuan “Holy Man” Tradition and the Nation-State in the Tai World’: 229.

to be Monthon Pattani (a circle) in 1906 in which all administrations were under the control of Thai representatives. This strengthening of Siamese expansion after 1902 led to the local discontent in 1922 due to the administrative programme, particularly head-tax collections.¹¹ Although the aftermath of the 1901-2 rebellions in the three frontiers was brief, they tell us that the rebellions in the frontier areas possibly remade or refocused thinking about the cultural and political intentions of the centre afterwards and its mode of operations. Thus, this suggests that it was not the unilateral development of Thai national culture that shaped and changed frontiers, but frontiers to some degree also influenced the central Thai state in the form of bilateral development. This is a very uncontroversial viewpoint in many respects, but it does, nonetheless, run counter to almost all methodological nationalist interpretations of Thai history which currently prevail in the country. This thesis is intended to open up debates on this issue going forward, recognising that the complexities of such a research project can lead to only preliminary, broadly scoped findings at this stage.

Numerous studies have been undertaken to explain various issues regarding the meaning of Thai national culture as a single unit of the Thai national development, and it has been considered almost solely from a political perspective. This thesis attempted to unmask the expansion of the Thai state also through its policies and practices of expanding a Thai national culture in three frontier areas where Thai culture did not predominate. In doing so, the thesis proposes that the Siamese expansion regarding Thai national culture and its symbolism was always dynamics. Thai national culture was expanded in the three frontier areas in multiple ways and on different levels, which in turn created different local responses shaped by the nature of Siamese expansion in various forms that was experienced. Thus, the comparison of cultural symbolism as a component of Thai state expansion in the three frontier zones was central in this study to understand the idea of Thai national culture during the Chulalongkorn era and later on. It is true that the expansion of Thai national culture in the three frontiers at that time should be considered as a history of continued differentiation and elements of fragmentation rather than a linear step by step process towards a unitary history of the creation of the Thai nation.

¹¹ Phan-ngam Gothamasan, 'The Pattani Crisis of 1922: Lessons Learned from the King Rama VI Period [Wikrittakan Monthon Pattani 2465: Botrian Samai Ratchakan Thi Hok-วิกฤตมณฑลปัตตานี 2465: บทเรียนสมัยรัชกาลที่ 6]', *Security Studies Project* 41 (2008): 5-40.

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