

# THE ROLE OF PRINCE CHUTHAMANI IN THE MODERNIZING OF SIAM

and

## His Court Position During the Reigns of Rama III and Rama IV

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Prince Chuthamani's<sup>1</sup> position in nineteenth century Siamese history clearly reflects the influence of the West. It also depicts his foresight, initiative and perseverance. Since Chuthamani's contributions to the modernizing of Siam have never been analyzed, his creative and adaptive abilities are unknown to students of history. Furthermore, when the modernizing, or westernizing, of Siam is discussed, the usual beginning date is set at 1851, and credit as *the* enlightened leader is given to Mongkut, who ascended the throne in that year. As increasing research in this period of Siamese history is undertaken, though, the date, 1851, assumes a transitional meaning, and Mongkut's role as *a* modernized leader is placed in its proper perspective. But these are not startling revelations. To be sure, many people contributed to the modernizing of Siam, and a partial list would include Mongkut and his only full-brother, Chuthamani. Mongkut's contributions to the modernizing endeavor have been discussed by many authors<sup>2</sup>; Chuthamani's contributions will be discussed in this paper.

Chuthamani's role as a modernizer is better appreciated if his princely rank is understood. Being a prince, he had to be considered in the line of succession to the throne. And, although orderly succes-

- 1) Although Chuthamani was the name given to him at birth, nineteenth century western writers called him either Prince Momfanoi, literally Prince of Heaven, Junior or Prince Chow Fa-noi. Today the latter would be spelled Chaofa noi, meaning "junior Chaofa".
- 2) Two of the better and more recent works on Mongkut are Abbot Low Moffat's *Mongkut, the King of Siam* 1961, 254 pp. and Alexander B. Griswold's *King Mongkut of Siam* 1961, 60 pp.

sion was not the rule in Siam, princes were given certain titles at birth. These titles were divided into three classes: 'Chaofa was the title of the child of a king by a queen; Phraongchao, of the child of a king by a lesser wife, the child of the heir apparent, or the child of a Chaofa; Momchao, the child of a Phraongchao.'<sup>3</sup> As the son of Rama II by a queen, Chuthamani was of Chaofa rank. And as the younger brother of Mongkut, he was second in line to the throne. Having the highest title, though, was not a guarantee that its holder would become king.

In theory the Uparat, or heir apparent, was the highest-ranking official in the kingdom below the king. Since the Uparat was appointed by the king, the latter, therefore, had a degree of control in choosing his successor. This absolute power enabled the king to choose a successor, even on his deathbed, if there was no Uparat. If no successor was chosen, the choice then fell to the Senabodi, or chief ministers of the country. These circumstances arose in 1824 when Rama II fell suddenly ill and died. He had not appointed an Uparat in 1817, when the first one died, nor had he named a successor. According to inherited titles, then, the two Chaofa princes—Mongkut and Chuthamani—had the clearest right to the throne. Mongkut's claim, though more legitimate, was weakened by three factors. Being only twenty years old he did not have a background in government affairs, and he had no political affiliations with the Senabodi.<sup>4</sup> But perhaps the most significant factor was that he had just entered the priesthood to fulfill his obligations as a monk.<sup>5</sup> Chuthamani's youth (he was only sixteen years old) weakened his claim to the throne. As a result, the Senabodi selected Chetsadabodin, who was a Phraongchao prince, to become Rama III. Even though Chetsadabodin's princely

3) Vella, W.F., *Siam Under Rama III, 1824-1851* 1957, p. 4.

4) *Ibid.*

5) Lingat, R., 'History of Wat Mahadhatu,' *The Journal of the Siam Society* vol 24 pt 1, 1930 pp. 12-13 & 16-18 (see whole article for particulars of Mongkut's case); Moffat, *op. cit.*, p. 9. According to Lingat, it was a custom dating from the Ayuthia period that 'all younger members who were intended for positions of public service, and in particular the members of the royal family, should serve in the priesthood for two periods, the first as a novice at the age of fourteen years, and the second as a monk at the age of twenty-one.' Mongkut entered the priesthood for the second, and shorter, period just ten days prior to the sudden death of his father, the king.

rank was lesser, he was the eldest son of Rama II, being thirty-eight years old, and he had also acquired vast experience in government affairs.

Due to this chain of events, and since he was already in a wat, Mongkut decided to remain in the priesthood. One western source stated that he also turned down Rama III's invitation to become the Uparat, the contention being that Mongkut wanted to somehow command the king's respect. Since the king had to bow before all priests, Mongkut's decision to remain in the priesthood allowed him to receive the respect he sought. In addition, as a priest he did not have to bow before the king.<sup>6</sup> It is also quite probable that Mongkut used monkhood as a political sanctuary, especially after refusing to become the Uparat.

Chuthamani, on the other hand, did not become involved in the political developments which followed Rama II's demise. There appears to be little or no mention of his position in the Siamese court until the 1830s.<sup>7</sup> Although this could be due in part to the lack of written material on this period, his youth undoubtedly prevented him from becoming involved in matters of state. At any rate when Christian missionaries began to arrive in Siam in 1828, they all made special note of Chuthamani's interest in learning the English language and western ways. Whatever his motives for wanting to acquire a knowledge of a western tongue and western customs, the prince's perseverance in these endeavors revealed itself in his contributions to the modernizing of Siam.<sup>8</sup>

In early nineteenth century Siam the enlightenment, or westernizing, of an individual was dependent upon his knowledge of the

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- 6) Ruschenberger, W.S.W., *Narrative of a Voyage Round the World, 1835-37* 1838, p. 291; Bradley, D.B., *The Journal of Rev. Dan Beach Bradley, M.D.* April 7, 1836 (hereafter referred to as *Bradley Journal*); Abeel, D., *Journal of a Residence in China and the Neighboring Countries* 1836, p. 234.
- 7) There are no such references in the *Burney Papers* or the *Crawford Journal*.
- 8) Smith, S.J., ed., *The Siam Repository* 1869 vol 1 p. 61. In discussing Chuthamani's motives almost forty years after the prince's first contact with westerners, Smith said: 'His watchword was progress. He purposed to know what gave to the west their development, their success, their power, and their influence. His ear was open and his mind awake to all that commanded attention in the arts.'

English language. This was due in the main to the fact that the most prominent modernizing influences were British and American. Since the first missionaries in Siam said that Chuthamani had a 'little' knowledge of English, the assertion that Robert Hunter, a merchant who enjoyed the good graces of the Siamese court for almost twenty years<sup>9</sup>, was his teacher appears to be correct.<sup>10</sup> But, W.S.W. Ruschenberger, the doctor on the second voyage of the *Peacock* to deliver the ratified Roberts Treaty, said that Chuthamani had been taught English by the missionaries.<sup>11</sup> Ruschenberger's comment that the prince spoke English 'very intelligibly' probably reflects the fact that in addition to Hunter's teaching Chuthamani had received some instruction from the missionaries. Although only one of these early missionaries, the Rev. J.T. Jones, M.D., is credited with having taught him English<sup>12</sup>, the three missionaries who preceded Rev. Jones—the Messrs. Jacob Tomlin, Carl Gutzlaff and David Abeel—in telling of the prince's desire to cultivate his limited knowledge of English implied that he also sought their instruction. In his journal Abeel said that 'he [Chuthamani] is desirous to obtain a correct knowledge of our language, and probably makes this his principal object in visiting us.'<sup>13</sup> In another instance Abeel said that he had made an agreement with the prince, 'which affords to me advantages for the acquisition of their language, and opens a door for instructing him.' The teaching schedule was as follows: 'Every second day, he [Chuthamani] sends for me to come and teach him the English, and the alternate day he

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9) Vella, *op. cit.* p. 126. In 1831 Hunter was given the title of Luang Awuwiset.

10) Neale, F.A., *Narrative of a Residence in Siam* 1852 p. 87; Landon, M., *Anna and the King of Siam* 1944 p. 307.

11) Ruschenberger, *op. cit.* p. 263.

12) Smith, *op. cit.* vol 1 p. 61. In substantiating the earlier references to Chuthamani's initiative and perseverance, Smith said, with regard to the prince's pre-1833 (when Jones arrived in Siam) English instruction: 'The Fact that he made progress, under this tedious method alone open to him, shows that he was a man of great energy. He *then* knew only a few words of English, and there was *then* no foreign resident, with whom he communicated, who understood Siamese. Afterwards DR. JONES taught him to read English and gave him some knowledge of arithmetic and mathematical astronomy.'

13) Abeel, *op. cit.* p. 234.

sends a teacher to instruct me in Siamese.'<sup>14</sup> The Gutzlaff journal gave an even broader interpretation of the prince's zealous character in stating that 'he courts the friendship of every European; holds free conversation with them, and is anxious to learn whatever he can.'<sup>15</sup>

The friendly relationship with the missionaries, which grew out of Chuthamani's desire to learn about the West, came to be the cornerstone of his enlightenment. And, just as his early contacts with the missionaries were based on his desire to learn English, he continued to seek instruction in this subject while developing interests in the fields of science, watch repairing, military science and shipbuilding. The years 1839 and 1840 are prominent ones in the latter respect. In seeking the assistance of Rev. Dan Beach Bradley, M. D., to help him develop his proficiency in English in 1839, he presented a plan to Rev. Bradley whereby another young man would also learn English. He wanted to prepare this other person to visit England and America 'for information'.<sup>16</sup> Again, in 1840, Chuthamani prevailed upon Bradley to send some missionaries to help him improve his English. It seems that at this time the prince was working on two dictionaries. One was of English words with Siamese definitions; the other contained Siamese words with English definitions.<sup>17</sup> In addition, Chuthamani's knowledge of English placed him in a favored position in the court of Rama III. The king sought his assistance in translating English documents and sending out English correspondence.<sup>18</sup>

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14) *Ibid.* p. 296. The agreement lasted less than two weeks. It was halted by the death of one of Chuthamani's aunts. Compared with Smith's comment, above, the problem of pinpointing Chuthamani's English instructors is further complicated.

15) Gutzlaff, C., 'Journal of a Residence in Siam, and of a Voyage Along the Coast of China to Mantchou Tartary,' *The Chinese Repository* 1832, I, 19.

16) *Bradley Journal* December 17, 1839; Moffat, *op. cit.*, p. 19. In using the Bradley Abstract, Moffat evidently confused Chuthamani with Mongkut. He said that the latter had sought English instruction in 1839.

17) *Bradley Journal* June 18, 1840; Moffat, *op. cit.* p. 20. Moffat stated that no Siamese-English dictionary existed in the 1840s. Since there is no evidence of either of these above-mentioned works having been published, Moffat may have been correct. On the other hand, Chuthamani did teach English to his servants and his family, and he may very well have used a two volume, hand-written dictionary in this endeavor.

18) Landon, *op. cit.* p. 307.

Chuthamani's use of his knowledge of English and contact with westerners, especially the British, is reflected in his early contributions to a modernized Siam. In 1832 he constructed a small-scale ship in imitation of the European square-rigged design.<sup>19</sup> This ship, *The Royal Adelaide*, was originally intended to be a junk, but when the work was well-advanced, the plans were changed. Considering the early date and the previous comment on his desire to imitate the West, the fact that he was able to enlist the aid of some English sailors probably had a bearing on the altering of the original plans.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, it is said that the prince 'studied navigation and the art of shipbuilding very early, even before there were resident Protestant missionaries in Siam.'<sup>21</sup>

As his knowledge of western concepts became more profound, the modernizing process was hastened by his contributions. And, as this process began to catch hold in all fields, Chuthamani's interests naturally expanded. In addition to shipbuilding, his early mechanical ventures included the repairing of watches, which was described as 'his favorite occupation', and the introduction of the first turning lathe into Siam.<sup>22</sup> Having established himself as a naval man, though, Chuthamani wanted to construct the latest types of nautical vessels. His efforts were greatly advanced when a Mr. Chandler arrived in Bangkok in 1843 to replace Rev. Jones. Although Chandler was there only two years, he helped the prince establish the first machine shop in Siam in 1844.<sup>23</sup> Under Chandler's tutelage, Chuthamani also introduced the steam engine into Siam in 1846. By 1848 he had constructed Siam's first steamship and was using it to travel up and down the Chao Phrya River. This great achievement was noted in the United States when in 1849 the *New York Tribune* reprinted an article which had appeared in the *Singapore Free Press* on October 19, 1848. In paying tribute to Chuthamani, who generally acted as steersman on the steamer, the article said:

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19) Gutzlaff, *op. cit.* p. 20

20) Ruschenberger, *op. cit.* p. 292.

21) Smith, *op. cit.* vol 1 p. 61.

22) Neale, *op. cit.* p. 90; Smith, *op. cit.* vol 1 p. 61; Mario E. Cosenza, ed. *The Complete Journal of Townsend Harris* 1930 p. 158.

23) Smith, *op. cit.* vol 1 pp. 328 & 332.

The workmanship of even the most minute part of the engine itself is truly admirable, and reflects the greatest credit on its royal constructor, who had every portion of it made under his immediate superintendence and constant inspection, and by workmen all self-instructed, being his Highness' body servants and retinue.<sup>24</sup>

In his role as Major General in charge of the King's Artillery, Chuthamani introduced English drill procedures and English-style uniforms into Siam.<sup>25</sup> Although they did not create as much excitement as his nautical efforts, his name continued to be linked with drill methods well into the twentieth century. And in 1924 the manual, which he had translated from English into Siamese in 1841 (keeping the words of command in English), was republished.<sup>26</sup>

Chuthamani's interests were not confined to military and naval matters. One of his most significant, but less-known, contributions to a modernized Siam lies in the field of medicine. The first case of midwifery according to western concepts was performed on the wife of Prince Krom Luang Wongsa in 1852,<sup>27</sup> but interest in the western method was first shown by Chuthamani as early as 1835. When he had known Bradley less than a month, he discussed the Siamese method of midwifery with him and requested the loan of a book Bradley had on the western method.<sup>28</sup> That his interest was more than intellectual curiosity is evidenced by the request he made in December, 1835, to

24) Moffat, *op. cit.* pp. 49-50, quoting the *New York Tribune*; Smith, *op. cit.* vol 1 334-36; John C. Templer, ed., *The Private Letters of Sir James Brooke, K.C.B., Rajah of Sarawak, 1803-1868* 1853 vol 2 p. 299.

25) *Bradley Journal* August 15, 1835; Sir John Bowring, *The Kingdom and People of Siam* 1857 vol 2 p. 315. In noting the file of soldiers through which he passed on his way to the second king's palace, Bowring said that they 'had been obviously under European training.' He also made a timely comparison of the king and second king when he said of the ceremonies prepared by the latter, 'there was a higher tone of civilization and better knowledge of European customs exhibited.'

26) H.R.H. Prince Chula Chakrabongse, *Lords of Life* 1960 p. 195; H.R.H. Prince Damrong, 'The Introduction of Western Culture in Siam', *The Journal of the Siam Society* vol 20 pt 2, 1926 p. 97.

27) Moffat, *op. cit.* p. 64; *Bradley Journal* February 2, 1852. Prince Wongsa was a physician himself and a member of the New York Academy of Medicine.

28) *Bradley Journal* August 25, 1835.

have Bradley attend his expectant wife. Although Bradley arrived four hours after the woman had been delivered, he noted in his journal that the prince 'expressed abhorrence' of the Siamese custom of placing the mother before a large fire, which was thought to help to dry away any post-natal diseases that might develop. Chuthamani told Bradley that although court pressures would not allow such a high official as himself to adopt the western method, he would allow Bradley 'to practice his method on the lower order of females.'<sup>29</sup> Such an opportunity arose two weeks later, but this time the patient, a slave of Chuthamani, was not yet ready to be delivered when Bradley arrived.<sup>30</sup>

No further references in regard to midwifery can be found in the missionary's journal until 1839, but it is interesting to note the increased interest in the western method at that time. When a treatise that Bradley had prepared on smallpox was delivered to the king in March, 1839, the latter requested a similar work on midwifery.<sup>31</sup> Unlike the smallpox treatise, though, it took Bradley many years to complete the text on midwifery, and, as previously stated, the first use of the western method in Siam did not occur until 1852. In pressing for the adoption of this method, Chuthamani once again demonstrated his foresight, initiative and perservance.

Chuthamani's interest in the West caused him to have both a position of favor and suspicion in the court of Rama III. By dividing the western impact during the Third Reign into three stages, a more meaningful explanation of the prince's political position emerges. The period from 1824 until 1838, although commercial treaties were negotiated with Great Britain and the United States, was one of passive acceptance of the westerner.<sup>32</sup> In the second stage (1838-44) western ways were actively and vigorously accepted. The expulsion of Hunter in 1844 marked the beginning of the final, or recoiling, stage.<sup>33</sup>

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29) *Ibid.* December 28, 1835.

30) *Ibid.* January 8, 1936.

31) *Ibid.* March 24, 1839.

32) In 1826 the Siamese and British signed the Burney Treaty, and in 1833 the Siamese-American agreement, known as the Roberts Treaty, was negotiated.

33) Vella, *op. cit.* p. 129.



It was not until late in the first stage that Chuthamani's enlightenment began to affect Siam. With the increasing influx of westerners, especially after the Americans began arriving in 1832, the passivity of the court began to wane. Chuthamani came to play a dominant role in challenging certain Siamese customs and introducing western ways and objects into Siam. As a result, the westerners thought of him as the heir apparent, or second king<sup>34</sup>, and a rumor began to circulate in 1836 that Rama III was going to appoint him to the rank of Uparat.<sup>35</sup>

Although the rumor, which held that Chuthamani was going to marry the king's favorite daughter, did not materialize, its validity cannot be simply brushed aside. Bradley was the first person to note the proposed union in his journal in December, 1835, and it would be well to analyze the circumstances which existed at that time. Bradley's journal entry was made when the prince's interest in midwifery had brought him, from the standpoint of daily contact, close to the missionary doctor. In stating why the prince did not want to pressure the court into allowing Bradley to use his method of post-natal care, Bradley said :

The relation of Chow Fah [Chuthamani] to the king is such just now that he is exceedingly fearful of offending him. He evidently was afraid that such an innovation of sacred custom as he desired would meet with the frowns of his brother [the king]. The rumor is and there can be little doubt of the genuineness of its foundation that the king proposes to promote Chow Fah to the station of 2 King by giving him in marriage his favorite daughter and that the nuptials are to be celebrated in a short time. Such is the delicateness of Chow Fah's

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34) The western writers in Siam during the reign of Rama III did not refer to the Uparat position by either its official designation or heir apparent. Rather, in speaking of Chuthamani as the second ranking person in the kingdom, they called him 'the second king'.

35) Vella, *op. cit.* p. 8. Vella pointed out that this post was vacated on May 1, 1832 with the death of the first Uparat appointed by Rama III. He also discussed the king's decision to leave the post vacant and promote leading princes to higher department ranks.

relations to the throne that he is constrained to be wise as a serpent with the apparent harmlessness of a dove.<sup>36</sup>

In addition, it should be noted that Ruschenberger's comment—'Prince Momfanoi has crept into the favor of Rama III and was about to marry his favorite daughter'—was made nearly a year later in October, 1836.<sup>37</sup>

Despite the close friendship of Bradley and Chuthamani and the long existence of the rumor, its factual foundation remains unclear. One could argue that Ruschenberger's comments resulted from his desire to see Chuthamani become king, since he outlined the course of events that would follow such a change in administration.<sup>38</sup> On the other hand, Bradley's notation came at a time when both he and the prince were involved in a highly emotional matter, and the latter's reluctance to contradict the views of the court must have been a difficult decision. Furthermore, since active acceptance of western ways by the court was still three years away<sup>39</sup>, the prince's enlightenment had caused him 'to be watched with a jealous eye.'<sup>40</sup> This latter comment, made in late 1836, is probably the key to the whole question. Perhaps in 1835 Rama III had proposed the marriage, but as Chuthamani became more endeared to western customs, especially in regard to midwifery, the king may have become less inclined to follow through with his proposal.

Even though he did not become Uparat, Chuthamani continued to hold a high position in the king's court. When Rama III began to actively accept certain western practices in 1838, the political influence

36) *Bradley Journal* December 28, 1835 and June 13, 1836; Abeel, *op. cit.* p. 296. Abeel said of Chuthamani, 'he bids for the throne, and is perhaps afraid of anything which might render his success doubtful.'

37) Ruschenberger, *op. cit.* p. 292.

38) *Ibid.* p. 298. The changes that he outlined were: improvements in industry; more general and liberal education; the missionaries benefiting more from their labors; adoption of Christianity; and, a commercial treaty of great worth to the United States.

39) The reference here is to the king's interest in the prevention of smallpox by the use of inoculation in late 1838.

40) Ruschenberger, *op. cit.* p. 292; *Bradley Journal* August 15, 1835; Neale, *op. cit.* pp. 91-2.

of the prince was probably at its peak. Nevertheless, his friendship with the westerners and their suggestion that he could do much for his country if he became king seems to have directed his desires more towards that goal. In contrast with his early attachment to western ways for personal reasons, the prince's interest in the West now began to manifest itself in contributions to a modernizing Siam.<sup>41</sup> In addition, he began to subtly oppose the king. For example, he obtained an American newspaper announcing the projected voyage of the *Peacock* and containing a list of its officers but did not tell the king about the voyage.<sup>42</sup> On another occasion, when the king was confronting Bradley with numerous obstacles in finding a place to live, Chuthamani offered the missionary a brick edifice for his housing.<sup>34</sup> But perhaps the subtlest move of all was his patronization of the poet Sunthon Phu. Rama III had dismissed this poet from his post in the department of writers early in his reign and had stripped him of his title, *Khun Sunthonwohan*, which Rama II had given him. As a result, many of Sunthon Phu's poems during the Third Reign referred to his personal difficulties.<sup>44</sup>

Despite growing difficulties with the king, which caused Chuthamani to live in a state of constant apprehension, the prince continued to foster his interest in western ways throughout the 1830s and 1840s. But by 1844, when Siam began to recoil from the western impact, he was faced with a dilemma. Should he conform to court policy, as he had done in 1835, or should he continue to pursue his western interests? As we have seen, he followed the latter course for a while, but in about 1847 or 1848 he began a mysterious withdrawal from both political affairs and the western impact.

Perhaps this withdrawal, more than anything else, showed Chuthamani's true character. He has been described as a gentleman

41) Dr. Richardson, 'Journal of a Mission from the Supreme Government of India to the Court of Siam', *The Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 1840 vol 9 p. 248. As an example he noted Chuthamani's interest in desiring to take a leave from his duties to make a map of the kingdom from survey.

42) Ruschenberger, *op. cit.* p. 296.

43) *Bradley Journal* August 14, 1838.

44) Vella, *op. cit.* pp. 56-7. Vella noted that he 'has been called the Siamese Shakespeare.'

and a leader, and taken separately they appear to have been accurate assertions. He was a leader by virtue of the fact that he introduced many western concepts and objects into Siam. And he was a gentleman because of his humble but yet inquisitive nature. Going one step further, however, he was not a 'gentleman leader' in the sense that he did not waiver when confronted with opposing views by his superiors. Instead of attempting to prove that he was right, he compromised his views in the court's favor. Being, rather, a 'gentleman innovator', Chuthamani kept his discontent contained within himself and limited his opposition to subtle, but harmless, actions.

When Rama III fell ill with what proved to be a fatal sickness in 1850, speculation in regard to a successor began to be voiced. At the same time, Bradley made a timely comment in his journal to the effect that Chuthamani's former position as the most promising individual in Siam<sup>45</sup> had drastically changed. He said:

. . . he has for a long time, a number of years, secluded himself from both the missionaries and the English. He was once exceedingly intimate with them and made rapid advances in the acquisition of the English language and English names and customs. It is said that his conduct [of late] is very mysterious and such as does not give much promise of his making a good king if he should ascend the throne.<sup>46</sup>

By withdrawing, as he did, Chuthamani opened the way for his enlightened brother, Mongkut, to assume his (Chuthamani's) former position of prominence among the westeners and court members, and in April, 1851, Mongkut succeeded to the throne.

The relationship of Chuthamani and Mongkut, both prior to and following the latter's accession in 1851, is significant for two reasons. Prior to Rama III's demise and Mongkut's appointment as king, the brothers seemed to be on very friendly terms. But, following Mongkut's succession, despite the fact that he invited Chuthamani to become the second king and accorded him with honors higher than

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45) *Bradley Journal* June 13, 1836; Ruschenberger, *op. cit.* pp. 262-3.

46) *Bradley Journal* October 17, 1850.

those paid to any previous Uparat in the Chakkri dynasty<sup>47</sup>, this friendship diminished into one of suspicion, fear and even hatred.

In addition to the fact that their Chaofa titles made them the only children of Rama II having the highest princely rank, Mongkut and Chuthamani were brought closer together as a result of the early western impact in Siam. Acting as the go-between for his priestly brother and Bradley, Chuthamani asked the latter to visit Mongkut when he was seriously ill with a disease which had caused a condition of paralysis of the face. After convincing the court physicians that the western doctor could cure the disease, Mongkut willingly placed himself under the exclusive care of Bradley.<sup>48</sup> Although Bradley's treatment saved the patient's life, the king (Rama III) soon ordered Mongkut to be cared for by the court physicians.<sup>49</sup> It appears, however, that this medical experience, which was noticeable for the remainder of Mongkut's life, opened the door to further acceptance of western ways. A few years later, in 1840, Mongkut took up printing as a hobby, because he wanted to romanize the Pali scriptures.<sup>50</sup> Since his only access to type was through Bradley, the earlier medical relationship and the ever-present religious consideration formed a basis for this new venture.

The relationship of Mongkut and the westerners took a new turn in 1845 when he arranged to have Joseph Caswell teach him

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47) Chakrabongse, *op. cit.* pp. 184-85.

48) *Bradley Journal* April 23, 1836. Bradley gave a detailed description of the disease, which the Siamese called 'wind', as it affected Mongkut. He said:

He [Mongkut] had had a complaint in his head and right ear a long time which had come to be paralysis of the nerve (which proceeds out of the skull) just behind the ear and supplies the muscles of the face, consequently the right side of the face was much relaxed and the mouth drawn round to the left side. To talk he was obliged to take hold of the right side of his mouth and support it. The right eye was much congested with blood and the lids a little relaxed and there was also some time-faction under the right ear.

49) *Ibid.* May 6, 1836. Bradley suspected that this was done because the court physicians wanted to take credit for his work.

50) Board of Foreign Missions, *Missionary Letters* vol 1 Letter no. 8, William P. Buell to Hon. Walter Lowrie, July 1, 1840.

English.<sup>51</sup> Mongkut's interest in learning English may have been due in the first instance to Chuthamani's enlightenment.<sup>52</sup> This suggestion is made because it was not until the 1840s that the priestly prince began to actively court western ways, and Caswell had had a previous arrangement with Chuthamani to instruct him in English. Moreover, in 1842 Caswell wrote a treatise on astronomy which Bradley translated and printed in Siamese.<sup>53</sup> Considering Mongkut's interest in astronomy<sup>54</sup>, this was likely another factor in his desire to have Caswell teach his English.

The brothers continued to share a strong friendship throughout the 1840s. Certain events, however, had begun to unfold in the late 1830s which paved the way for Mongkut's succession to the throne. Both he and Chuthamani were accorded various honors by Rama III indicative of being recognized as the second king, though neither was formally so recognized. In 1837 Mongkut was transferred to a new European style wat. It was called Wat Pavaraniveca. This name is very similar to the official name of the second king's palace, *Pavarasthana*, meaning 'excellent residence'. And, it has been concluded that 'everything contributed to represent Prince Mongkut as the Second King of Siam who had voluntarily retired from public life.'<sup>55</sup> The circumstances surrounding Chuthamani's recognition

51) Moffat *op. cit.* p. 20; *Bradley Journal* November 21, 1845. Caswell instructed Mongkut one hour a day, four days a week. The arrangement was that after teaching him in the wat, Caswell would retire to a room which the prince had fitted up for him to preach the gospel and distribute tracts.

52) Chakrabongse, *op. cit.* p. 182. Chula suggested that Chuthamani followed Mongkut's example in learning English. He stated further that Mongkut studied English for six years. Considering previous citations of Chuthamani's having studied English as early as 1830, the former seems to be an erroneous assertion. Furthermore, another statement by Chula that Mongkut's 'knowledge of English was the key which unlocked the door to other studies' is an indication that Mongkut followed his brother's example in learning English.

53) *Bradley Journal* September, 1842. No date was entered.

54) Chakrabongse, *op. cit.* p. 182; Moffat *op. cit.* chap. 10 *passim*. This was a major contributing factor in his death in 1868. He contracted his fatal disease while on an astronomical journey to southern Siam to observe the total eclipse of the sun.

55) Lingat, R., 'History of Wat Pavaraniveca,' *The Journal of the Siam Society* vol 26 pt 1, 1933 pp. 76-7.

as second king have already been discussed. Briefly, they include the rumor of his proposed marriage to one of Rama III's daughters and his political position in the Third Reign.

Irregardless of the implications that may be drawn from these events, it still remains that by retiring to the priesthood Mongkut lived in seclusion from political life.<sup>56</sup> Chuthamani, though, lived in the midst of this hazardous life. He was susceptible to suspicion, which, in fact, was prevalent.

Another factor, which influenced the 1851 turn of events, is that Mongkut did not allow his enlightenment to have the personal effect on him that it had had on Chuthamani. This is seen most clearly in their reaction to Christianity. Chuthamani, it should be noted, availed himself to the influence of Christianity as early as 1830 when he asked Rev. Tomlin for a Bible.<sup>57</sup> By 1836 he had adopted the Christian custom of suspending labor on the Sabbath.<sup>58</sup> On the other hand, the Christian influence caused Mongkut to lead a reform movement in Buddhism which 'attempted to change the outlook of Buddhism from concentration on the monastic life to concentration on enlightening the people.'<sup>59</sup> But, when the westerners attempted to convert him to Christianity, he rebuked their advances saying, 'What you teach people to do is admirable, but what you teach them to believe is foolish.'<sup>60</sup>

The specific events that caused the Phrakklang, the most powerful member in the Senabodi in 1851, to support Mongkut's claim to the throne are yet to be analyzed. However, a discussion of Mongkut and Chuthamani, as Rama IV and Phra Pinklao or the first and second kings, respectively, in the Fourth Reign, will afford us with further insights in regard to their roles as modernizers and their reactions to the resurging western impact after 1851.

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56) Lingat, 'History of Wat Mahadhatu' *op. cit.* p. 18.

57) *The Missionary Herald*, 'Mission of the London and Netherlands Societies in Siam,' (Boston 1830) vol 26 p. 218.

58) *Bradley Journal* January 10, 1836.

59) Vella, *op. cit.* p. 41.

60) Griswold, *op. cit.* p. 21.

It has been said that 'Mongkut wanted the council to offer the throne jointly to his brother and himself.'<sup>61</sup> Although the council did not accept the request, Chuthamani was named second king. Prince Chula has suggested two reasons for this action. The first concerned Chuthamani's horoscope, which 'was so strong that he was likely to be king one day.' This could have, he said, 'made Mongkut feel that, if he were king alone, he would not live very long.' The other suggestion dealt with the concept of brotherly love. By making Chuthamani second king, perhaps Mongkut 'was able to demonstrate his great love and at the same time put an end to any ambition which the younger prince might have entertained.'<sup>62</sup> The second alternative seems to be a more realistic explanation.

At any rate this great love soon degenerated into conflict. But unlike the subtle conflicts of the Third Reign, those in the subsequent one were open and, oddly enough, initiated by the king. Two revealing examples are a letter that Rama IV wrote to his ambassadors in London in 1855 and his reaction to Bradley's translation of the account of his enthronement.

In the letter he not only substantiated certain rumors of the mutual suspicion and jealousy of the two kings, he also recognized certain superior characteristics of Phra Pinklao. One 'small matter' that worried him was 'the common talk of the town', which held 'that the Second King has more military strength in the country than all other persons.'<sup>63</sup> Could it be that he feared the possibility of a *coup* by his younger brother?<sup>64</sup>

A second point concerns the earlier references to the fact that the second king was more enlightened than himself. His further comments on this matter lead one to conclude that he was very much aware and quite concerned that his years in the priesthood had hurt his political image at home, as well as abroad. This and Phra Pinklao's superior command of English were alluded to when the king

61) Chakrabongse, *op. cit.* p. 185; United States *Senate Documents*, 32 Cong, 1 sess, no. 38, 'Report of Jos. Balestier to Sec. of State, Nov. 25, 1851', p. 23.

62) Chakrabongse, *op. cit.* p. 185.

63) Moffat, *op. cit.* pp. 56-7.

64) Vella, W.F., *The Impact of the West on Government in Thailand 1955* p. 321.



said, 'Whenever he [Rama IV] is called upon to receive foreign guests, the Second King must always be behind his back to tell him what to say.'<sup>65</sup> Of course, this was probably a derisive comment, but it does convey the concern of Rama IV about being compared with his younger brother.

In 1852, when Bradley was asked to translate into English the account of Rama IV's enthronement, the latter was upset by the missionary's rendition. The king's indignation stemmed from the interpretation which made it appear 'that his younger brother was endowed with more wisdom and ability to rule the kingdom than himself.' Bradley said that 'the mistake had arisen from a loose and ambiguous mode of speaking of the Second King.' The passage in question implied that the first king was younger than someone, but it was not clear who that someone was. Bradley assumed that it meant the second king was younger than Rama IV.<sup>66</sup>

The strained feelings, though, were not displayed exclusively by Rama IV. An example of the mutuality of the conflict of personalities is revealed in the acceptance of midwifery by the Siamese. Credit for allowing the first case of midwifery among the Siamese can be given to Rama IV,<sup>67</sup> but credit for its complete acceptance must be given to Phra Pinklao. During the months of August, September and October, 1852, the queen suffered under the effects of a premature delivery caused by a fight in the harem. The king, in a good example of clinging to the old order while accepting the new, consulted both the court physicians and Bradley during this period. But it was to no avail as she died on October 10.<sup>68</sup> The second king, in a move reminiscent of his actions in the former reign, called Bradley to care for his favorite concubine who began to labor two weeks later. Unwittingly, Bradley said that he had feared he would no longer be popular because of the queen's death. Phra Pinklao not only restored his faith, but he placed the concubine under the exclusive care of Bradley.<sup>69</sup>

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65) Moffat, *op. cit.* pp. 57-9.

66) *Bradley Journal* February 7, 1852.

67) See footnote 33.

68) *Bradley Journal* August 14-October 10, 1852; Moffat, *op. cit.* Appendix II.

69) *Bradley Journal* October 25, 1852.

In 1853 the birth of a Chaofa son, Chulalongkorn, to Rama IV made it only too clear to Phra Pinklao that his ambitions for the throne had been thwarted for the last time. His complacency was revealed by several writers of the period. Mrs. Anna Leonowens said that on Rama IV's accession the second king turned his great talents away from desires for the throne to modest works of construction within his palace grounds.<sup>70</sup> In his journal Sir John Bowring pondered what Phra Pinklao was doing since he did not occupy himself with nautical and mechanical studies, as he formerly had. In another instance Bowring came closer to the point when he remarked on meeting with Phra Pinklao, 'the Second King avoided talking of political affairs.'<sup>71</sup> An account in the *Siam Repository* noted that 'the change for Chow Fa-noi [his succession to second king] was to a position of less notoriety.' This position, it held, 'was not favorable to the full development, or full exertion of his native and acquired abilities.' It said, further, that 'he was more strictly a private gentleman than while he was a prince, and gave himself to those departments that could not awaken suspicion.'<sup>72</sup>

Prince Chula was more specific when he said that Phra Pinklao pleaded illness and would not attend many important family functions. Not only was this rebellious attitude shown in public matters, but it was reflected in domestic troubles as well. Physically torn by a prolonged illness, he accused a wife who had borne him twelve children of trying to poison him with 'love potions.'<sup>73</sup>

In his declining years, then, it appears that the restraint, which had characterized his life, had begun to wane. This development was responsible, in part, for the estrangement from Rama IV and finally for his death. But, although Phra Pinklao's demise on January 7, 1866, ended the life of one who had wanted to be the king, it marked

70) Landon, *op. cit.* p. 307.

71) Bowring, *op. cit.* vol 2 pp. 257 & 331.

72) Smith, *op. cit.* vol 1 p. 62.

73) Chakrabongse, *op. cit.* pp. 220-21. Chula said that Phra Pinklao was sick during the last five years of his life.

74) Smith, *op. cit.* vol 1 p. 63.

the beginning of a new era in Siamese history for on this date the hair-cutting ceremony was performed on Chulalongkorn<sup>75</sup>.

It is apparent that both Rama IV and Phra Pinklao were enlightened individuals and far ahead of their time in regard to the modernization of Southeast Asia.<sup>76</sup> But, one cannot dismiss a basic fact of history: As a leader of people, the ruler must be more enlightened than his people, but he should not be so advanced as to cause new ways to be adopted by revolution, not evolution. Too rapid development leads to revolution against the regime, not the modernizing process. On the basis of material presented in this paper one could safely conclude that had Chuthamani succeeded to the throne his enlightenment might have caused him to detach himself too much from the old order to properly lead the modernizing process. Or, his withdrawal in the late 1840s may have alienated his relationship with court leaders and interested foreigners to the point of actually hindering the advancement of this process. Either of these occurrences would have caused radical developments, and the Senabodi may have realized this in 1851. No matter what their reasons, though, the choice of Mongkut to be Rama IV seems to have been a wise one.

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75) Quaritch Wales, H.G., *Siamese State Ceremonies* 1931 p. 132. Wales said that the importance of this ceremony (*Tonsure*) lies in its sociological value. In rivalling the enthronement in splendor and ceremony, it makes a first and lasting impression upon the Chaofa recipient. Specifically, Wales said it signified that 'he must begin to take life seriously [and] break with childhood days', because 'he is now a person of great importance on whom will eventually rest the responsibility for the welfare of the people.'

76) Damrong, *op. cit.* p. 98.

