

Intellectual Origins of Strong Kingship (Part 2)

Efforts to Rule as a 'Great King' with a Historical Consciousness

Before discussing the efforts of the king to rule under the new historical consciousness, it is first necessary to describe the political and social conditions of the time. These were important factors that shaped the intellectual forces of that era. The cooperation of the descendants of the old Ayutthayan royal family had enabled Phraya Chakri (later Rama I) to found Bangkok. At the same time, this cooperation divided royal authority. Professor Nidhi Aecuvongse observed "King Rama I was thus acting more as the chairman of the populace rather than exercising absolute power."¹ Some of these descendants maintained their power and gradually strengthened their influence until they could play a role in the selection of Kings Rama III and IV and in the appointment of *Kromphra Ratchawangbowon* in the Fifth Reign.

The loss of power in this way to other groups caused troubles to the state when the traditional monarchy was still in power. Efforts by the rulers prior to the accession of King Rama IV were taken not only to prevent anyone from having too much power but keeping rivals from

having access to too many subjects. For example, the early kings made it impossible for their subjects to change from being *phrai luang* (freeman subject to the king) to being *phrai nom* (freeman subject to nobles of lower royalty). In some cases the king appointed persons from different cliques to positions of authority whereby they had to share power. A true centralization of authority, however, was not a part of the traditional monarchy. Shared power was an important factor in the accession of King Mongkut and it had seemed this condition would persist throughout his reign. But it was the changed historical perspective of King Mongkut that caused him to differ markedly from his predecessors.

King Mongkut believed it was his mission alone to set the course of history; he found it troubling that he could not compel or influence all others to do his will. The existence of others with real power caused him to observe:

But when the king orders someone influential to do something, when that someone does not do that something as the king requests, it is not a problem. That is because the king does not cause those people to fear or be in awe. They can act as

they please . . . or follow their own destiny without fear because they believe the king will not interfere. This must be tolerated. But when it is that princes of different rank, even those lower princes will not fear his majesty either.¹

The king tried to rectify this problem in many ways. These were not the ways of a Bodhistattva.

In this situation King Mongkut was convinced that he was the only person with the mission and potential of making history progress, "nobody is wiser than what the king says".² Announcements stating that the king was more intelligent, clever, wiser than others occur throughout the fourth reign. They are an important sign that he aimed to be the supreme intellectual leader. This intellectual supremacy thus enabled him to "lead the Kingdom". Being the intellectual leader in this reign was important because it was at this time that the traditional cosmology had begun to be replaced. New explanations of the universe, the world and life were accepted as a part of this "new knowledge". King Mongkut showed clearly by his explanations of the universe, world, society, state and human beings that times were changing. They are also evidence of his efforts to show that he was himself progressing. The king gave explanations of astronomical events such as in his *Songkran* address for the year of the tiger, eighth year of the cycle.

Either on Monday, the second day of the fifth waning moon, a little after the fifth hour of the second evening watch when it was almost two *yam* (midnight) or on Sunday, the fifteenth day of the sixth waxing moon, at a little past eight hours, Saturn will enter the moon from the east and exit to the east. Anyone who sees this should not gossip or whisper to others that something important is about to happen. This is just the normal course of the heavenly bodies. It is not anything special.³

In this announcement on *Songkran*, the king also gave the dates for other occasions so that holy days and important ceremonies could be observed at the right time. The king also gave intellectual guidance in other areas such as by explaining to the people how they could engage

in trade under the new economic system being introduced after the Bowring Treaty. An example is in the *Prakat Phrarachathan Owat Kae Phusu Khao Khai Khao Hai Ru Thung Upasong Upathan Nai Raboh Sethakit Baep Ngoentra* (Announcement telling buyers and sellers of rice how to understand supply and demand in the new economic system of capitalism).⁴ The king made other announcements such as *Prakat Ham Mai Hai Taengtua Dek Duat Khruang Thong Ngoen Lao Plot Pat Thian Doi Lamphang* (Announcement forbidding children to be adorned with silver and gold and left to walk around alone)⁵ or *Prakat Ruang Ao Sop Wai Khang Khun* (Announcement regarding keeping a corpse overnight).⁶

The confidence shown by such outward displays of his intellectual leadership indicated that King Mongkut was determined to make the monarchy stronger. The lower royalty and nobility condoned his efforts, an important factor in facilitating the king's efforts to fulfill his historical role of bringing progress to society. Strengthening his power base enabled him, as king alone, to judge matters more effectively (such as in foreign affairs, judicial matters, proclaiming edicts, tax collections and projects for the public good). The consultative meetings once held between ministers and the king then began to decline in importance. As Prince Damrong Rajanubhab observed:

Later, when treaties with foreign countries were being made, it was necessary to deal with the consuls of different countries more than before. Sometimes it was impossible to hold these meetings when the king appeared in audience before the formally assembled members of the court as before. Sometimes they sent letters to the king. Responses to these letters were prepared and submitted to the king for consideration . . . On days when there were many urgent letters for the king to consider when he appeared to conduct the regular business in the evening, errors were sometimes made. This led to many senior officials saying that when the royal schedule was not fixed as in the time of King Rama III, they would sometimes not attend the royal meeting saying they were old and sleepy. Even those who were younger made the same excuse. Thus the tradition that high officials had to attend the royal

meetings every day declined. If important affairs arose, they could be dealt with in private consultations.⁸

The fact that members of lower royalty did not attend the meetings with the king as often as before could be seen as a sign that the king lacked real power. But for King Rama IV, his habit of deciding matters by consulting members of royalty individually without holding the large consultative meetings as before had one important result: it shows the king as "determining" various events through his own decisions. In another area, this can be seen as the king gaining additional power since it was his intention for the people to know that these decisions were made by the king himself. He also published the *Royal Gazette* to publicize his activities and decisions. The purpose of the *Gazette* was to "spread information correctly without it being abridged or exaggerated that then might damage government business or the kingdom's honor."⁹ Another reason was to protect the prestige of royal authority. As the king observed:

There were dishonest people who prepared documents with gold seals and made to appear they were from the Palace or the Front Palace ... giving various directives ... in accord with whatever they unfairly wanted.¹⁰

These actions by the king can be seen as an attempt by him to command the centralization of power at the center prior to the coronation of the first modern monarch, King Rama V.

Nonetheless it cannot be stated that these efforts met with total success. The king was aware that some members of royalty were "taking actions that were aimed at ingratiating themselves with people of merit who were expected to rise to the top in the future."¹¹ Such persons often took self-serving actions while making the excuse that they were carrying out the king's will.¹² King Mongkut tried to lessen such attempts to gain influence by ways other than publishing announcements in the *Royal Gazette*. He attempted to stimulate government officials to act in accord with his intentions.¹³ He also tried to implement measures so that his officials would do their duty. For example, he had some

officials copy royal edicts and ordered people not to disobey those edicts.¹⁴ He also laid down regulations for rulers of dependent states. These included their sending tribute to Bangkok, supporting armed troops, and conducting censuses of people in general, the monkhood and temple slaves. Other regulations were for people making a living, for others to drink the consecrated water pledging loyalty to the king twice annually, maintaining peace, arresting criminals, promoting promising individuals, and protecting Buddhists from attacks.¹⁵ In addition, King Mongkut improved the system by which commoners could make appeals to the king.

His Majesty the King will permit subjects to bring grievances to his attention by their attaching a written grievance to a hook at the end of a rope hanging from a pole in front of the throne.¹⁶

Besides making it easier for subjects to appeal the king, King Mongkut actually encouraged his subjects to do so. The king rewarded persons bringing their grievances to him by giving them one *salung*. If he found what they said was true, he granted another *salung* as a bonus.¹⁷ The king sought out persons with grievances who were unable to come and appeal, such as those in custody, and allowed their relatives to make the appeal instead.¹⁸

The significance of improving the appeal system is that this was an effort to control the influence of the lower royalty and nobility. When appeals by subjects were well received by the king, local officials were reluctant to trouble their subjects.¹⁹ This seems to have coincided with the "status" the new historical consciousness required of a "*phramahakasat*" (great king). Thus, King Mongkut reiterated just before his death that the new king should make it his business to hear the appeals of his subjects.²⁰

The desire to have the status of a "great king" under the new historical consciousness of King Mongkut led to his trying to centralize authority in the monarchy so that he could truly shape history. The king was also motivated to change his daily routine. It is clear from this effort that he wanted to have the status of "great king" with actual authority so that he would not just be filling a seat cosmologically designated for him.

bringing progress to different groups of his subjects. He referred to this in the following passage:

Phra Rachawonsanu Wong had a *krom* (Department) which then became a *Krom Yai* (Big *Krom*). Government officials and people of high and low rank who would like to maintain a better rank because of their lineage, will be given a position in accord with their aptitude and initiative . . . His Majesty has shown his kindness and concern for his subjects by allowing them to make appeals to him . . . the troubles caused them by high-ranking or wealthy persons has decreased. He takes two trips daily outside to his kingdom . . . in order to reduce the danger to his people that are angering them . . . His Majesty has set the course towards allowing trading to progress. The people of the kingdom are full of wealth, silver and gold because of the good qualities found in the kingdom much more than before . . . Many people are loyal to his powerful and good majesty under whom they have been long at peace and are progressing.³¹

King Mongkut was conscious of his status as a "Great King" who shaped history and who "acted" to bring progress to different groups of society. Stated differently, everything in the kingdom had its origin in and owed its maintenance to the king. This was what led the king to sign himself as *Krung Siam* (the city of Siam) in his correspondence with other monarchs. He also used the term *krung* to denote other countries.³² The term *ekarat* was also used at that time, this meaning a country unified under one king.³³ *Krung Siam* was used together with *ekarat*. The underlying reason for King Mongkut's using these terms was his desire to show that Siam was a unified state under one "Great King".

This new consciousness was manifested in newly-introduced ceremonies such as the celebration of the king's birthday.³⁴ When the king ordered everyone in the kingdom to celebrate his birthday this was a way of showing his supreme authority and that because of him all classes and groups had prospered. The announcement regarding the birthday celebration in 1864 stated that the king had "brought progress to the royalty, officials, and commoners". Therefore, the announcement called on "councillors and

those who are the dust under the king's feet (commoners), important and unimportant people in Bangkok . . . provincial governors and other officials" in "southern and northern provinces . . . announce, call upon, and invite all people in the *krung* (i.e. capital) and outside the *krung* to celebrate the auspicious occasion of His Powerful and Benevolent Majesty's birthday together with the understanding that there are many who through his *horami*, power, and goodness, have progressed and found happiness for a long time. They should remember his power and goodness at this time."³⁵

Due in part to changing economic conditions after the Bowring Treaty the effort to act as a "Great King" in line with the new historical consciousness of King Mongkut was carried out without opposition. After the Bowring Treaty sanctioned free trade, efforts to amass wealth by the nobility and royalty changed from traditional ways that were basically independent of the trade system monopolized by the king. In the new economic order, the basis of financial wealth required the political generosity of the king. This might include the appointment to a certain rank for which high compensation was received. With regards to the monetary compensation which he provided, King Mongkut placed importance on finding new ways of raising tax revenues without relying solely on tax farmers. By this means he could afford the increased level of compensation. As he told some nobles regarding the payment of this compensation, "these funds do not come from overseas sources; they are derived from domestic tax payments."³⁶ The king realized that the government compensation was too low for the nobility and royalty to maintain a family. The king then raised the amount given.

It is noteworthy that after signing the treaty to allow free trade, King Mongkut increased taxation. The king decided which individual tax farmers were to continue in their position³⁷ and forbade his officials from helping bidders for tax farms. Another measure implemented by the king was to keep the money in the royal treasury from falling into anyone's hands without the king knowing. For example, he controlled how debtors repaid debts to members of royalty or nobility. Most importantly, the king tried to ensure that all money paid as tax actually was

deposited in the royal treasury and not kept elsewhere without the king's knowledge. Thus, the king tried to keep tax farmers from giving tax money to government officials.³⁸ If tax farmers refused to give tax money to these officials (but to the treasury instead), those officials could not protest. If they did indeed protest, "the tax farmers could appeal and these appeals would be upheld".³⁹ At the same time, the king also asked the tax farmers to cease making such payments. In doing this, the king was trying to reduce the "income" of the other royalty and nobility while increasing the king's "income". The king encouraged the tax farmers to send the full amount of tax they had promised to raise. Those who were successful could extend their tenure as tax farmers or be given special consideration in the event that there was more than one applicant.⁴⁰ The king also told the officials in charge of deciding who would be the next farmers, "if you suspect that any applicants are not honest, you must refer the matter to His Majesty".⁴¹

The reason for King Mongkut's active interest in tax collection was that he wanted to centralize the nation's financial reserves under the crown, which itself strengthened his power. This would then put him in the position of being able to apportion benefits among all his subjects that would help the different groups in the country. Such royal generosity was a measure by which the officials could provide public services for the subjects. Another benefit was that he would lessen the economic strength of the lower royalty and nobility which would then increase their dependence on him.

Thus King Mongkut's efforts to attain the status of a "great king" achieved a degree of success in his being able to remove those who opposed his economic reforms. Freeing the barriers to trade benefited his position considerably. These economic changes strengthened the king's resolve.

Another aspect of the king's determination to be a "great king" according to his new historical consciousness was his decision to "act" fittingly as a member of the Chakri Dynasty. As such, he was following up on the history of previous Chakri kings who had changed the course of history before him. This was to have a major impact on the characteristics of the state as was to become obvious in later years.

The consciousness of being a member of the Chakri Dynasty inspired the king to "act" in many ways based on his understanding of major and minor issues of the time. The king believed that his actions were responsible for the honor of the dynasty. In many of his responses to problems, his desires to uphold the honor of the dynasty remained an important motivating force for him. Thus when members of royalty refused to respond to appeals by the subjects against them, the king observed "when the members of the dynasty cannot accept or pay in such cases, this damages the honor and reputation of the kingdom just like bandits who dishonor the kingdom's base of justice because of which it has ruled for generations."⁴² The king distinguished between commoners and members of the dynasty by saying "women in rural areas are descended from commoners subject to the king and to the nobility as well as slaves. His Majesty does not want to take them to be his wives. If children resulted, it would ruin his reputation."⁴³

These beliefs led King Mongkut to try and make the Chakri Dynasty an obvious reality. This is shown, in his announcement ordering that the names of royalty be stated correctly, that such member of royalty be called *from*.⁴⁴ The king drew a clear line between the low members of royalty, such as those with only the title *mom chao* by stating that the next lower ranks, *mom rachawong* and *mom luang* should not be called "chao" (prince). He observed, "do not call *mom chao* and *mom rachawong* 'chao' do not say anything crazy like that."⁴⁵

In a process that unfolded just like the setting up of the dynasty, the king reminded his subjects to maintain the honor of the dynasty. This was a continual theme for him, which he noted once by saying "Remember your business at all times. This adorns the honor of His Majesty the King in this dynasty".⁴⁶

Both the "making of a dynasty" and the emphasis on fulfilling the mission of a king gave honor to the ancestors. This resulted in this new understanding of history and membership in the Chakri Dynasty being passed on to the next generation of the Thai elite. When they "acted" on the basis of this understanding, the results in the next generation were widespread.

This historical consciousness as members of the Chakri Dynasty resulted in King Mongkut

taking another important action that affected the new type of state emerging at this time. With the belief that the first king in the dynasty was the "founder of the capital", the king acted in ways that enhanced the prestige of the monarchy. This led to the belief, since the reign of King Rama I, that the king should obtain "the royal property as his inheritance". This can be seen in the understanding that *Chaofa Mongkut* gave to the position of Crown Prince.⁴⁷ His title was then changed to *Phra-ong Chao Mongkut*⁴⁸ (*mongkut* means crown). There was no reason for this except for the fact that the title *phra-ong* was seen as appropriate for one holding royal power descended through the purest bloodlines. He "was a person of good birth on both sides - this delicate birth coming ready with high rank and ample wealth".⁴⁹ Another important factor was that this consciousness of dynasty influenced the king's personal behavior. The king tried to pass on his "royal property" in the way he wanted, that is to his royal son born of a major queen, and that this son would succeed him to the throne. He had decided to hand over power to Prince Chulalongkorn on the occasion of his twentieth birthday. King Mongkut would then have taken the title "*Phrachao Luang*" (Senior King) and then served as an advisor. He had even constructed a palace in which to live after leaving the throne.⁵⁰

This desire to pass on his "royal property" led King Mongkut to try to have Prince Chulalongkorn accede to the throne in as appropriate a manner as possible. King Mongkut promoted Prince Chulalongkorn as having a higher birth than all the other high born princes. The ceremonies arranged for the royal son were appropriate. One example was the *Phra-rachaphithi Rap Suphannabat* (Royal Ceremony to Receive the Gold Plaques of High Rank) for Prince Chulalongkorn.⁵¹

In addition, the king took actions that could be seen as signals to the nobility and other royalty. The king wanted Prince Chulalongkorn to succeed him. The king consulted with Phrachao Sisurayawong regarding his succession to the throne in the event that the crown prince could not serve. He accepted but with the stipulation that the king had Krommamun Worawichaichan made senior. He wanted Prince Phra-ong Chao Sisurayawong to be over Prince

Phra Pinklaö. The king gave the title *Phra-rachawang Bawonsutha Mongkhan*⁵² thus creating the status of Crown Prince Chulalongkorn.⁵³ This resulted in the status of Prince Chulalongkorn gaining the favor of everyone and the prince was accepted as the next great king.

At the same time, King Mongkut used one form of traditional statecraft that had an impact on the status of the crown prince. He had Khun Phae, the daughter of Phraya Surawong, Chaophraya Sisuriyawong's only son, to be a wife of Prince Chulalongkorn.⁵⁴ This had been a conventional method for unifying the elite in previous reigns.

In another example of traditional practices, King Mongkut was the one who trained the crown prince. As Prince Damrong noted, it "became the task of the king to train the Crown Prince in the art of ruling".⁵⁵ The king saw it as his responsibility to pass on the art of ruling to his son and successor. Part of the information transmitted to his son was the new historical consciousness. King Chulalongkorn himself confirmed this by writing, "for as long as I can remember, my elders were telling me about the ancient Dvaravati kingdom even more than the chronicles that they had revised".⁵⁶ The knowledge of this ancient history had in fact been only recently compiled. In some cases, only after ascending to the throne were the questions about this ancient history asked or learned from Kromluang Wongsa Thiratsanit or Prince Bamrapporabak,⁵⁷ both of whom had been involved in the historical research of King Mongkut. These two then helped the king transmit much of this knowledge to the crown prince so that he came to have a strong sense of belonging to the Chakri Dynasty. This can be seen in the king naming Prince Chulalongkorn as "*Kromakhun Phichit Prachanat*" meaning he who triumphs over the people.⁵⁸ Names such as this were meaningful and also reflected the conviction that the king held supreme power on which others depended. The happiness to the people was a new conception in Thailand that King Chulalongkorn came to grasp as a member of the Chakri Dynasty. He wrote that he had received a very strong sense of how to act as king from his father. In a letter to his son, Prince Vajirunahit, King Chulalongkorn wrote that

he had tried to act according to what his father had taught."⁵⁹

It may be that it was the consciousness of King Chulalongkorn's father that his "actions" were often very difficult to accomplish that led him to observe that founding the Thammayut sect must have been "a very difficult fight".⁶⁰ The conviction that he had to act like a "great king" which he gained from his father served to bind King Chulalongkorn together with his father. As King Chulalongkorn's brother, Prince Damrong noted, "wherever King Chulalongkorn went and stayed, there was likely to be a picture of his father in his room. He once told me 'if I grew discouraged, I could gain confidence by the thought that he was near'".⁶¹

The passing on of the "art of ruling" from King Mongkut to his son as Crown Prince enabled him when he became King Chulalongkorn to act similarly to his father. Thus, with his belief that he must "act" as a king when encountering the new conditions during his reign led to his strong kingship described below.

Nonetheless, it is necessary to state that the factors resulting in the emergence of such strong kingship in the Fifth Reign were not only reflected in the borrowing of new technology such as railroads. One of the most important factors was the king's conviction that he had to act as a "great king".

There is more to the situation than merely the effort by King Mongkut to act as a "great king". The political condition of the time must also be examined. Even though the king "acted" in accord with his conviction of being a great king and this had a significant impact on later conditions, contemporary political events were important too. At this time, the lower royalty and nobles still held considerable power; it was in fact them that had put King Mongkut on the throne. The king noted that "he had become king because those inviting him knew only his ears and saw only his eyes."⁶² That is, the person they had selected to be king had recognized his ability to relate well to them. The king observed that before he "travelled anywhere, he consulted with Khun Sisuriyawong every time."⁶³ Such political factors persisted into the reign of King Chulalongkorn, who was obliged to depend on the nobles and officials because of his young age. Thus, the nobility continued to exercise considerable power.

The major result of King Mongkut acting in ways befitting a "great king" was the impact they had on King Chulalongkorn. Even though the nobles and lower royalty continued to exercise some power, it was increasingly dominated by that of the king. A clear indication that many nobles and lower royalty accepted the king's power was their acceptance of the transfer of royal authority. When the crown prince was going to take power, "it appeared that people in general ... accepted that the king's son was the rightful heir."⁶⁴

It can thus be stated that strong kingship had its origins in the reign of King Mongkut. The king enjoyed increased power. Also, the state began to exercise control over an increasingly large territorial area. This occurred despite the continued need to rely on personal relationships and the persistence of communication difficulties. The territory of this kind of state arose out of a desire to fulfill the status of "great kingship" under the new historical consciousness of King Mongkut. This later was considered to be the "royal property" of King Chulalongkorn. This consequently facilitated various "actions" by the king.

The rise of the strong kingship will be discussed here from the intellectual point of view, that is, regarding the "historical consciousness". Many of the elite, who mostly belonged to the dynasty themselves, shared this sense of history with King Mongkut and the conviction that the king "acted" in response to political and socio-economic conditions at the time. These actions led to the beginning of the strong kingship of King Rama IV and its fuller emergence in the Fifth Reign.

One point that must be clarified is that during the first five years of King Chulalongkorn's reign, a regent was in charge of the government, namely Chaophraya Sisuriyawong of the Bunnag family. This regent, therefore, held significant power with only a few departments, such as the treasury which was controlled by Prince Bamrapporapak, under direct royal power. Still, the ability of the dynasty to control the source of income for the treasury was limited. Thus, during this time, King Chulalongkorn was not in a position to be the decision-maker. This is shown in accounts of the daily affairs of the king. "Chaophraya Sisuriyawong visited the

king (but not daily) to discuss the affairs of the kingdom and to carry out any order made."⁶³ Under these conditions, the king was seen by others as in the account that "as for the head of the dynasty . . . he was only a figurehead."⁶⁶

Nonetheless, even though during the early years of the reign of King Chulalongkorn, the king did not enjoy the full power to "act", this did not mean he accepted this condition readily. "Coming to power", he wrote, "certainly sounds melodious . . . but *karma* and suffering comes with it!"⁶⁷ He added that "our childhood was a fateful period when all the royal power was taken away",⁶⁸ leaving the king little more than a figurehead. Even after he had taken complete power, he often recalled the time when "I was testing our new knowledge when I was a doll without any power except in name . . . this was a very difficult time".⁶⁹ The reason that King Chulalongkorn felt bitter over his not having power at this time because he was unable to "act" as he felt he was compelled to under the new historical consciousness. Since he was unable to perform his duty as king, he was unable to shape Thai history. The king believed that even though there was a regent, he was obliged to "maintain the kingdom", a conviction that is reflected in the following passage:

From when I became king, the biggest duty as the officer in charge of the taking care of the kingdom was to be the head officer. It was very difficult to work efficiently and correctly . . . Even though at first there was a regent, it was as if he was responsible for everything and I was subordinated to him. But it was only like that for three years when I came to enjoy full royal power. But personally I felt that I had entered into a great responsibility by coming to sit under the tiered umbrella and on the throne.⁷⁰

As a "great king" whose historical consciousness made it his duty to take many actions, the fact that he was a "figurehead" made "action" impossible. He compared this, in a message to his son, Prince Vajirunahit, to a candle that was nearly extinguished. But the king refused to allow it to go out because of his "actions" to keep it lighted.

These "actions" during the early part of King Chulalongkorn's reign resembled those advo-

cated in his message to Prince Vajirunahit, namely "efforts to keep conditions stable in a timely fashion".⁷¹ The king dealt with problems in different areas saying he "acted as an intermediary . . . determined to be sure in what we did . . . to be a secure point of reference . . . who had no ill intentions regarding anyone. Anything that would bother others, no matter how large or small would be discarded once and for all".⁷² This had implications on his acting in the status of a great king who was both just and a guiding light for the royal dynasty and high-ranking officials. An important factor implicit within this acting as a great king was that he was a "giver". As he noted, "even when aware someone is an enemy or indifferent, after something good was done, it was necessary to give praise."⁷³

In another important area, King Chulalongkorn tried to appoint a new group of government officials, particularly from among those close to him. He "tried to make use of those he trusted, such as his younger brothers as they became old enough."⁷⁴ These individuals believed that the king was the only person capable of changing the course of history and bringing progress. Later these persons gave considerable assistance to the king's government. Since power was largely concentrated in the king, he was able to establish a royal page's corps based on the Western model. As it became more accepted, the corps assisted the king in many ways.⁷⁵

Additionally, the king was interested in travelling overseas. His first trip was to Singapore and Batavia.⁷⁶ After returning to Siam, the king decided to travel to Europe but he changed his mind and went to India.⁷⁷ These trips were usually explained as providing the opportunity to introduce new forms of government or colonialism that could be adapted to administering the kingdom of Thailand.⁷⁸ In fact, however, "changing the government of the kingdom" had begun so long before these trips that it is impossible to say they were taken for the purpose of studying the types of government used in other countries. These overseas trips by the king in fact were more for "observation" than anything else.

To understand the political motive for these overseas trips, it is necessary to understand their "essence" as seen by people of that era. Thais and non-Thais saw them as study trips for the

purpose of "improving" Thailand.⁵⁹ This meaning was broader than "reforming the kingdom's rule". When King Chulalongkorn returned from his first overseas trip, his desire to "improve Thailand" resulted in various "actions". He believed that "if he did nothing on his return, he would be admonished for taking wasteful pleasure trips or be attacked as having no intelligence".⁶⁰ However, because the king at that time had not assumed full royal power, he could only change some practices such as having waiters serving him dressed in a Western style.⁶¹ It might be more accurate to say that he took these trips overseas for the purpose of gaining the ability to "act" as the protagonist of history and have the country progress. As the intellectual leader of the country, King Chulalongkorn was at least as important, if not more so than King Mongkut as the leader of the now stronger monarchy. There were now many persons holding the new conception of time and who favored progress. They were predisposed towards the king acting as an agent of progress.

From what was stated above, it can be seen that in the first five years of King Chulalongkorn's reign, he was not idle. The new historical consciousness held by the king motivated him to act continually to realize his potential as a protagonist of history.

This active consciousness together with what the king's preparations allowed him to begin "acting" within one month of his installation as king after coming of age. He acted to remove the traces of the "old power" base in order to centralize this power in his own hands. He first took control of the financial system. He established an office of the treasury in 1873 to serve as a collection point for tax income. That year he also issued an edict calling for all taxes to be paid to the central government.⁶² Efforts such as this to control the economy were an important indicator that the king was able to act fully as a "great king", something he felt was essential. This showed that he was able to act as a royal benefactor in dispensing royal favors. Additionally, this showed that the king was able to "determine" the course of history by using these royal favors to "create" anything for which money was needed.

At the same time as the king was moving to control the economy, he was also trying to re-

move the last vestiges of the old power. During the regency it is significant that the government was still administered on a very personal basis. This can be seen in the patronage provided by the regent for the royal household when government meetings were held at the regent's own residence.⁶³ Also the administration of the government still adhered to practices used during the reign of King Mongkut.⁶⁴ This enabled the rulers from the previous reign to continue to hold significant power. King Chulalongkorn began removing the old guard by setting up a Council of State and a Privy Council. It has been written that these two councils represented an effort to create political institutions that King Chulalongkorn could use as part of his effort to increase his hold on the government.⁶⁵ This explanation, although not in error, still leaves much unexplained.

The establishment of these two councils clearly showed King Chulalongkorn's historical consciousness. As has been noted, "King Chulalongkorn was the great king in the Fifth Reign of the dynasty which situated and carried out his role of leadership in Bangkok".⁶⁶ Furthermore, "there was a royal order for everyone to know that, from the time of his coming to full power, he had become determined to maintain and develop the royal capital, including the members of the dynasty, government officials, and the commoners so that they would improve permanently".⁶⁷ The importance of the historical consciousness shown in the announcement is that it indicates the king "possessing" power because he is the great king of the dynasty installed in the "great capital" of Bangkok. This announcement shows too that the king envisioned himself as a "great king" in the Chakri Dynasty. As such he had the responsibility for realizing progress among all segments of society. This announcement stressed that his taking power was to remove the old power that was only meant to be temporary. Secondly, this announcement emphasized that he was the king in the Chakri Dynasty with the responsibility for leading the state to progress. In later reigns, this was to become the singular feature of kingship in the eyes of society.

Besides indicating the new historical consciousness, another important aspect of establishing these two councils was that they signaled

clearly and in writing the passing of personal-based power characterized by the spoken word. Now, the responsibility for law-making rested in these two councils over which the king presided.

By establishing these two councils, the king sought to resolve a political conflict. At first the king had intended that the regent be a member of the two councils. However, the regent declined the offer.⁴⁵ The reason for wanting to have Chaophraya Sisuriyawong sit on the Privy Council and the Council of State was that the king wanted to show he was the more powerful. But when the regent refused the offer, the officials supporting King Chulalongkorn concluded that Chaophraya Sisuriyawong did not accept the king as the protagonist of progress. Their resentment of the regent is well shown in the journal *Kharunowat* which they established soon afterwards.⁴⁶ This interpretation, however, is only one side of the story since there is no record of the attitudes of Chaophraya Sisuriyawong.

The existence of the faction supporting King Chulalongkorn is another important indication of the intellectual force of the new historical consciousness. Manifesting this consciousness this became another means for supporting King Chulalongkorn. They were convinced that the king was the intellectual leader who would bring progress. As shown in *Kharunowat*, King Chulalongkorn "acted" to implement progress in many ways which the book praised. These actions included the elimination of the tradition of prostrating before the king, a development which the book saw as progressive.⁴⁷ *Kharunowat* also included articles on history, including one chronicling the establishment of Ayutthaya and its kings. This was a long article, with chapters appearing in all the issues from volume 1 part 5 until volume 2 part 12, the journal's final issue. The publishing of this chronicle shows an agreement by the king's supporters of him as the "protagonist of history".

This acceptance of the role of the king as the person who set the course of history by the political faction that published *Kharunowat* displaced Chaophraya Sisuriyawong. This was done in a retelling of the fable about the lion and the elephant in which King Chulalongkorn was seen as the lion who was the rightful ruler. Chaophraya Sisuriyawong was compared to the

elephant. They quarreled over who could live in a certain cave, with the lion claiming:

We are not afraid of you at all. We, the lion king, are the king of animals. You insult us. You must leave our cave. We do not want two individuals to be living in the same cave. We will take care of it by ourselves.⁴⁸

Through this fable, the faction was able to make an observation about those who did not accept the king's approach to his role. A Mr. Wisit and a Mr. But were discussing a conservative man who was dissatisfied with King Chulalongkorn and his efforts to bring about progress.

Even though the king was the Thai ruler who through his good works brought happiness to his people there were still persons displeased with him . . . These were persons born 50-60 years before, who were old-fashioned and who knew the old way of government. Whenever they hear of the king changing these old ways, they are displeased.⁴⁹

When a dispute arose between the king and other members of the royal household, *Kharunowat* proposed in an article, "*Prathet Thi Charoen Tong Mi Government Mankhong Wai*" (To Progress, a Country Must Have a Stable Government) that everybody should be loyal to the leader which would then result in the country progressing. Since the leader of the country was described as having the duty to reduce suffering under his authority, the councilors, officials, and commoners should be loyal to him. They should take issue with the changes the leader was implementing. When a quarrel arose it was also the duty of the leader to settle it.⁵⁰

Kharunowat clearly shows was that this political faction possessed the historical consciousness that only the king of the Chakri Dynasty could shape history. This was shown in an article about the oath taken by the Privy Council, a portion of which is as follows:

We all affirm fidelity and devotion to His Majesty the King of Siam and also to the Crown Prince, the Heir Apparent . . . whom through the

Kingdom of Siam shall progress because he shall continue as the supreme royal personage."⁴

As stated above regarding the position of the faction which produced *Kharuowat*, this position was based on the important intellectual basis of the new historical consciousness accepted by the sons of King Chulalongkorn. They had held this view from when the king did not yet hold real power. Together with the political faction, most of whom were members of the dynasty, the intellectual force of this new consciousness gained even more strength.

Despite King Chulalongkorn's efforts to "determine" the course of history, and move it in a progressive direction, problems were encountered. In particular, his efforts to centralize economic power precipitated disputes with members of the government and Chaophraya Sisuriyawong. However, this did not cause the king to cease "acting". He continued to "act" but was careful not to disturb the old guard. To do this he began to stress changes in education. For example, when the king founded the Suan Kulap Palace School in 1881 and a surveying school in 1883, the people saw such actions as progressive.⁵

At the same time that King Chulalongkorn was trying to remove the old guard from power, problems arose from external sources. The new threats posed by European super-powers were a factor in causing the king to avoid taking actions that intensified internal disputes. As the king told his son, Prince Vajirunahit, external affairs took precedence over domestic affairs.⁶

Regional affairs during the reign of King Chulalongkorn had changed markedly. Western countries had colonized most of the states surrounding Siam. Western colonial powers had also begun to move into areas "under royal Thai power". The British, for example, had expanded forestry operations into the northern Thai states and mining efforts into the south of Thailand. Combined with the historical consciousness of the Thai elite, this caused Thailand's strong kingship to act in new ways. The central government then began to expand its control into new areas.

Before explaining this process, it is necessary to understand the "attitude of the central authority" towards the distant provinces of the

dependent states. King Chulalongkorn explained:

The kingdom of Siam, expansive in some places, narrow and insignificant in others, is the area His Majesty the King protects . . . Sometimes the king provides only partial control as in the Lan and the Malay states.⁷

This means that the kingdom of Siam depended on the intentions of the king. Expressed oppositely, if the kingdom expanded or shrank, this reflected directly on the honor of the Thai monarchy. Thus, as King Chulalongkorn noted following the loss of Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah, Perlis and various islands, "this loss severely damaged royal prestige."⁸

At that time, however, the traditional understanding of the meaning of holding power over and governing provinces and dependent states had begun to change. As Prince Damrong Rachanubhap noted:

By the new and old meanings of title, both aim to provide a peaceful country. However, the understanding of the meaning of the term "peaceful" itself differs under the old and the new. The old meaning refers to a place free of such dangers as bandits. However the [new] meaning to be peaceful [means] the government has to manage conditions so they are normal; this is new and perhaps dates only from the Fourth Reign.⁹

The belief that the king in Bangkok used his power to govern the provinces and dependencies so as to "shelter and protect" them so progress could occur is reflected in the case of Luang Prabang. In 1874, King Chulalongkorn traveled to Luang Prabang and installed a viceroy there. The viceroy's duties were to suppress the Yunnanese-Chinese bandit forces in the area and to protect the area from French claims. King Chulalongkorn, "in a top secret order for his viceroy's eyes only" stated that the viceroy should govern the Lao royalty by "saying directly that Bangkok forbids them from any contacts with other countries. Foreign affairs in the case of Luang Prabang is the sole right of the viceroy."¹⁰ King Chulalongkorn then ordered the viceroy "to tell the Lao to be loyal and kind towards Bangkok and to trust that they

will be protected from dangers and that [Bangkok] will lead the Lao princes and country to progress."¹⁰¹ Furthermore, it was the duty of the viceroy to:

Be an employee bringing progress to Luang Prabang so that its benefits will extend to Bangkok both in terms of politics and trade without spilling into other countries. You will do whatever is necessary to maintain stability in Luang Prabang and [keep it] under the control of Bangkok for its benefit and that of those in the future.¹⁰²

These orders of King Chulalongkorn reflect his intentions to spread progress throughout his kingdom. He stressed economic progress, not just for the benefit of Luang Prabang but also for the benefit of Bangkok.

These efforts to extend power over the dependencies were part of a series of events beginning when King Chulalongkorn assumed real power on his becoming 21 years old, that is, when he became a "great king in his own right". As the king who had to exercise supreme power, he felt obliged to protect all "royal property" that he had inherited from his royal father in order to preserve "unified rule".¹⁰³ This area refers to that over which the king has supreme power and in which the king acted for the purpose of bringing progress. In areas over which the king did not exercise supreme power or could not enforce unified rule, the king observed:

Having these areas will only create anxiety because the English are determined to have them. When it seems that no matter what we do, the English will get one of our provinces, we would do better to rule only those places over which our rule is certain. Otherwise we will exercise only incomplete rule. Such rule is better not to exert at all.¹⁰⁴

The process of extending authority over the provinces and the dependencies "and to extend complete rule" took a long time. Beginning with the sending of viceroys, the effort was not completed until these dependencies were installed as *monthian* within the Siamese state.¹⁰⁵ Another important factor was that in the midst of this long process much care was exerted to prevent disputes between the dependencies and the cen-

tral government. Thus explanations that King Chulalongkorn instituted his provincial reforms because of his overseas "study trips" are facile and superficial.

At the same time that King Chulalongkorn was trying to extend his authority over all territory considered his "royal property", domestic difficulties declined due to the death of Chaophraya Sisuriyawong and Prince Wichai-phan in 1882 and 1885, respectively. The deaths of these two prominent members of the old guard left King Chulalongkorn as incontestably the supreme ruler. One of his first actions in 1885 was to eliminate the practice of having a "Front Palace". The following year he instituted the position of Crown Prince. This showed clearly that royal power rested in the monarchy and that it could be "willed" to his successor. These two events were seen as appropriate for the time and for a progressive country.¹⁰⁶

Because of these efforts to control fully the institution of the monarchy, King Chulalongkorn was displeased by the petitions of certain princes and nobles. They had requested changes in the government in 1884. He responded to these princes and nobles who had submitted the request that he was aware of certain problems and that he had accepted some of their suggestions.¹⁰⁷

In 1887, King Chulalongkorn did make some changes to the government system. But he held firm to the principle that these changes were for the purpose of bringing progress to the country.

Since I ascended to full power, as the highly-placed employee responsible for maintaining peace and order in the kingdom . . . I wish very much to reform ways of governing so they are appropriate for this era and a means by which progress can come to this country.¹⁰⁸

He also made the comparison that as the Thai king, he saw himself as one who "acted". He performed his duty to benefit every group in society and the kingdom as a whole. He noted in this regard,

In other countries, the people remind the king to take action. In our country, it is the king alone who does the acting for the benefit of the country and the happiness of the people. This is why he

acts. Normally, the people are willing to accept the king's actions which are more just and more benevolent than all other people.¹⁰⁶

In the belief that the king must create progress for the "state", the boundaries of which are equal to what he "inherited" and once Chaophraya Sisuriyawong and Prince Rachawanghowon had died giving the king truly supreme power, King Chulalongkorn extended more control over the provinces. He began by defining the areas of responsibility for the Ministries of Defense and Interior in 1894, with a Royal Proclamation on the Characteristics of Local Administration in 1897, and with a Directive on Local Administration in 1898. These acts reformed Thai administration from the lowest to the highest levels. They also institutionalized centralized rule throughout the kingdom.¹⁰⁷

It was historical consciousness that emboldened King Chulalongkorn to take such actions. The king, acting out his conviction that he had to bring progress to the state as a king who "acts", believed there were three important areas that strengthened the authority of the monarchy. These were improving tax collection, making legal reforms, and changing the country's social relations. The reform of taxation clearly indicated that King Chulalongkorn wished to gain access to tax monies that were held up at various points in the collection process. The king wished to collect all tax monies in the central treasury where he could make use of them to further national progress.

Efforts to set up a tax collection system to bring funds into the central government, besides establishing a Ministry of Finance, included a decision to establish a bureau to devise national budgets. In this connection, once the Ministry of Treasury had drawn up the methodology for budget planning, the approval of the king was necessary. This was insurance for the king against unauthorized expenditures. It was also extended royal power over the country's economy by making the king be aware of and having absolute control over changes within the state. The king was convinced that absolute control over the economy was an important means for him to solidify his political power. In a letter to Prince Damrong on January 18, 1896, the king observed that reforming the govern-

ment and reforming the tax collection system complemented each other and that each was indispensable to the other.¹⁰⁸

Tax reform was an important means by which King Chulalongkorn extended his power over the provinces and dependencies and was carried out under the belief that it was his duty to bring progress to the province.¹⁰⁹ This led to tax reform being characterized as follows:

The government must find persons who have enough knowledge, expertise and are sufficiently progressive to help plan reforms that will spread benefits throughout the country. The government has taken on the responsibility to help bring material progress to the provinces, a share of which will benefit the national government too.¹¹⁰

Based on such principles, when the *Tesaphan* provincial administration system was implemented, the result was:

That when the income derived from "eating" the kingdom [under the traditional Thai tributary system] was no more, the tax income was supposed to cover all the expenses.

Under the new system the only income derived was the salary; there were no ways to earn money by the old non-salaried "eating the kingdom" system. When officials were transferred their only recourse was to move.¹¹¹ Thus this new taxation system, together with the new provincial administrative system, much strengthened the hold the king had on the country.

In any case, the system outlined above could be expected to achieve success only with difficulty, especially when the regional economic changes were considered. Following the expansion of capitalist trade after the Bowring Treaty in 1855, the search for income changed from what it had been under the previous order when the rulers of dependencies sought to amass manpower. Under the new conditions, regional rulers began to sell assets under their control such as through logging concessions in the northern states or mining rights in the south. The use of concessions was preferred by the regional elite because they were not in a position to market the products themselves or to produce them on the same

scale.¹¹⁵ These concessions, however, led to the formation of a new group with economic power that was in a position to challenge the regional elite. New groups with such economic power were the Chinese in Phuket or the Shans in the northern states. At the same time, they motivated the regional elite in the provinces and dependencies to seek new sources of cash income. This led to the emergence of a new kind of regional ruler who was appointed by the central government and was able to maintain domestic order, such as occurred in the south.¹¹⁶

In the area of legal reform, an important development was the attempt to make the monarchy the source of authority. The newly reformed laws thus would then come under the royal center. This change is evidenced in remarks by the Prince Ratchaburi:

Those laws and directives of the governor, from the kingdom to the subjects—when they are disobeyed, there will be penalties. . . . We must be careful not to think of these laws as good or bad or just. These laws are orders that we are compelled to obey. But in fact, there are cases in which the laws are bad or unjust. Ideas on what is good or bad have arisen from many sources and many regions. But these laws are derived from only one source, the ruler of the kingdom, or from what that ruler allows.¹¹⁷

At the same time that these reforms were introduced, the government was attempting to increase its power. This was in the midst of rapid and intense changes affecting the people. This made the maintenance of domestic order a top priority, as seen in the following Ministry of Justice directive issued in 1892.

Every day the number of cases arising out of disputes between the subjects increases in the courts. This is because they are more and more trading with each other and interacting with each other in other ways.

In another area, there were efforts to hasten legal reform for the purpose of reducing extraterritorial rights by Western citizens and subjects. The existence of extraterritorial rights interfered with the king's authority because he was unable to control persons enjoying them. Even though

they might have committed a crime, it was impossible to bring them before a Thai court, the legal representative of the king himself. As the number of persons seeking to be Western subjects increased, King Chulalongkorn grew distressed. He wanted legal reform to go forward as quickly as possible in order to make it impossible for the West to claim that the Thai legal system was backward.

One change among social relations in society was that the traditional system for controlling manpower ended. This lengthy process began in 1874 when the king consulted with the Council of State. In that year he issued a proclamation ordering slaves owners to survey how many they controlled. Beginning with limits on the age of a person subject to slavehood, the process proceeded until, at last, slavery was ended in 1905.¹¹⁸ The process of ending the control of manpower and the semi-feudal *phrai* system also was time consuming.

Eliminating these two systems was of great political significance. The ending of these methods of the control of manpower sharply curtailed political control by lower royalty, nobility, and others. Nidhi Aeusrivongse observes succinctly that this "turned *phrai* into the king's and only the king's subjects."¹¹⁹

In summary, the results of the "actions" in different areas by King Chulalongkorn, when taken together with administrative changes in taxation, legal reform, and the control of manpower, was that the king gained true power over the provinces and the dependencies. At the same time, this power was over all the "king's subjects" throughout the kingdom. The king found it necessary no longer to deal with the regional elite or nobility. The final word here is a Royal Decree on Royal Customs:

The king rules with absolute power according to his own desires. There is nothing greater than this. The king has the absolute power to 1) rule as the lord over the land and is the source of refuge for all in its territory, 2) is the source of justice, 3) the source of all ranks and what is high and what is low in the kingdom, and 4) the commander in chief of the armed forces who maintains order by waging war, or by engaging in friendly relations with another country, the king acts without error. There is no power that can judge or punish him.¹²⁰

Notes

¹ Nidhi Aeusirvongse, *Kanmuang Samai Phrachao Krung Thonburi*, (Politics in the Times of King Thaksin), p. 261.

² King Mongkut, *Phrarachahatlekha* (Royal Correspondence), p. 203.

³ *Prachum Prakat Ratchakan Thi 4 Ph.S. 2405-2408*, (Collected Announcements of the Fourth Reign, 1862-1865). "Prakat Ham Mai Hai Tuntan Ruang Kapae Ai Lae Sophat Cha Chai Mai Dai" p. 43.

⁴ *Prachum Prakat Ratchakan Thi 4 Ph.S. 2408-2411*, "Prakat Mahasongkran Pi Khan Atasok" (Announcement of Songkran in the Year of the Tiger, Eight Year of the Cycle). Besides announcing the date of Songkran, other topics included explaining of phenomena in the universe and world. Examples were "Prakat Waduai Withi Khit Athikamut" (Announcement on Calculating the Inter-Calendar Month), and "Prakat Withi Bok Sakarat" (Announcement on Calculating the Sakaraja Calendrical Era) as well as of the Western calendrical system in "Phraracha Kamnot Ruang Nilika" (Royal Definitions on Clocks).

⁵ *Prachum Prakat Ratchakan Thi 4 Ph.S. 2405-2408*, "Prakat Phrarachathan Owat Kae Phusu Khao Khai Khao" (Royal Announcement telling Buyers and Sellers of Rice), pp. 230-234 and "Prakat Rakha Khao" (Announcement of Rice Prices), and "Prakat Tuansai Hai Sanguan Khao Wai Hai Pho Kin Talawt Pi" (Announcement Warning to Conserve Rice for Use the Whole Year).

⁶ *Prachum Prakat Ratchakan Thi 4 Ph.S. 2408-2411*, "Prakat Ham Mai Hai Taengtua Dek Duai Khrung Thong Ngorn Lae Ploi Pai Thiao Doi Lamphang" (Announcement Forbidding Dressing Children in Gold, Silver and Jewelry, and Going Out Alone).

⁷ *Prachum Prakat Ratchakan Thi 4 Ph.S. 2408-2411*, "Prakat Ruang Ao Sop Wai Khang Khun" (Announcement on Storing Corpses Overnight), pp. 264-266.

⁸ Prince Damrong Rachanubhap, *Khvam Songcham* (Reminiscences), pp. 149-150.

⁹ *Prachum Prakat Ratchakan Thi 4 Ph.S. 2401-2405*, "Ruang Ok Nangsu Rachakitchanubeksa" (On the Issuing of the Royal Gazette), p. 4.

¹⁰ *Prachum Prakat Ratchakan Thi 4 Ph.S. 2401-2405*, "Prakat Waduai Khan Thi Riuk Bai Ok Lae Thong Tok," p. 152.

¹¹ *Prachum Prakat Ratchakan Thi 4 Ph.S. 2394-2400*, "Prakat Phraboromarachawat Kha Luang Ok Pai Sak Lek Hua Muang Ph.S. 2398" (Announcement on Viceroy's Tattooing the Official Registration Number), p. 155.

¹² *Prachum Prakat Ratchakan Thi 4 Ph.S. 2394-2400*, "Prakat Waduai Tra Tang Tang Thi Chai Prathap Tra Phum," pp. 178-183.

¹³ *Prachum Prakat Ratchakan Thi 4 Ph.S. 2394-2400*, "Prakat Phraboromarachawat Kha Luang Ok Pai Sak Lek Hua Muang," p. 154.

¹⁴ *Prachum Prakat Ratchakan Thi 4 Ph.S. 2394-2400*, "Prakat Hai Kharachakan Lok Phrarachabannyal Chak Ho Luang," p. 20.

¹⁵ Vajiranan Library, R4, RS 122 (1855) No.3 *Phraboromarachawat Phrarachathan Kae Phra Phanom Sarakham* (Royal Order to Phra Phanom Sarakham), cited in Narumon Thirawat, *Phrarachadamri Thangkan Muang Khong Phrabat Somdet Phrachomklao Chanayidua* (Official Communications of King Mongkut), Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University M.A. thesis in history, 1982), p. 240.

¹⁶ Vajiranan Library R4 C.S. 1213 (1851), No.59 *Phrarachabannyal Ruang Hai Ratsadon Rong Tika* (Royal Proclamation on Commoners Submitting Appeals to the King) cited in Narumon 1982, p. 249.

¹⁷ Sathian Lailak, *Prachum Kotmai Prachum Sok* (Collected Laws, Arranged Chronologically) Vol.5, p. 164.

¹⁸ *Prachum Prakat Ratchakan Thi 4 Ph.S. 2399-2400*, "Prakat Ruang Thawai Dika" (Royal Announcement on Appeals), p. 189.

¹⁹ Prince Damrong Rachanubhap, *Khvam Songcham*, p. 171.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 148.

²³ *Prachum Prakat Ratchakan Thi 4 Ph.S. 2405-2408*, "Phrarachaprap Ruang Doem Pen Phuwarachakan Muang" (Royal Inquiry into Provincial Governors), p. 152.

²⁴ As shown by King Mongkut founding seven muang dependent to Kanchanaburi, in *Prachum Prakat Ratchakan Thi 4 Ph.S. 2401-2404*, "Prakat Tang Tamnaeng Phusamretrachakan Muangkhu Muang Kanchanaburi Lae Tang Khun Wai Pen Khun Rachapatakan, Ph.S. 2401" (Announcement of the Appointing Rulers of Seven Dependencies in Kanchanaburi Province and the Appointment of Khun Wei to be Khun Rachapatakan, 1858).

²⁵ Prince Damrong Rachanubhap, *Khvam Songcham*, p. 143.

²⁶ King Mongkut, *Thammiam Rachatrakun Nai Krung Sayam*, p. 143.

²⁷ Vajiranan Library, R4 C.S. 1222 (1860), No.10, *Phraboromarachawat Phrarachathan Chao Nakhon Lampang* (Royal Directive to the Prince of

Lampang.

²⁵ Vajirana Library, R4 C.S. 1214 (1852), *Prakat Khomsaban Ruang Kha Rachakan Dai Rap Nam-phiphatanasataya* (Announcement Regarding the Sacred Oath of Loyalty Taken by Government Officials).

²⁶ Prince Damrong Rachanubhap, *Khwan Song-cham*, pp. 140–147.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Prachum Prakat Ratchakan Thi 4 Ph.S. 2405–2408*, “*Prakat Chaloen Phrachanomphansa*” (Celebrating His Majesty’s Birthday), pp. 208–209.

²⁹ King Mongkut, *Phrarachahalekha*, “*Phrarachahalekha Thi Mi Pai Yang Tungprathet*” (Overseas Correspondence), pp. 646–692.

³⁰ *Akkharaphithunsarap Khong Maw Bradley* (Dr. Bradley’s Dictionary), p. 798.

³¹ King Mongkut, *Phrachaphithi Sipsang Duan* (Royal Rituals of the 12 Months), p. 666.

³² *Prachum Prakat Ratchakan Thi 4 Ph.S. 2405–2408*, “*Prakat Chaloen Phrachanomphansa*” (Announcement on Celebrating the Royal Birthday), pp. 209–210.

³³ *Prachum Prakat Ratchakan Thi 4 Ph.S. 2394–2400*, “*Prakat Ruang Hai Nangsu Khum Phasi-akon Dai Phalakan*” (Announcement Regarding the Issuing Documents to Control Taxation), p. 260.

³⁴ King Mongkut, *Prachum Prakat Ratchakan Thi 4 Ph.S. 2394–2400*, “*Phraboromachowat Phrachathun Rangwan Phoen Plawat Phra Boramawongsanuwong*” (Order Increasing the Compensation for Phra Boramawongsanuwong), p. 265; Vajirana Library R4 C.S. 1215 No.82 “*Ruang Khwamladu Sam Prakan Thamnam Phrarachawang Phrachaphuendin*” (Telling About Three Aspects of Traditions of the Kingdom), King Mongkut, *Prachum Prakat Ratchakan Thi 4 Ph.S. 2401–2405* “*Ruang Akun Tao Sura Thi Krung Kao*” (About the Liquor Tax in Ayutthaya), pp. 11–13; King Mongkut, *Prachum Prakat Ratchakan Thi 4 Ph.S. 2401–2405* “*Prakat Ruang Phasi Phlu*” (Announcement on the Siree Leaf Tax), p. 42.

³⁵ King Mongkut, *Prakat Ruang Akantao Sura Krung Kao* (Announcement Regarding Taxes on Liquor in Ayutthaya), p. 14.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

³⁸ King Mongkut, *Prachum Prakat Ratchakan Thi 4 Ph.S. 2401–2404* “*Prakat Phikat Akonkhanam Hat Kep Tam Khruang Mu*” (Announcement on Setting the Water Tax Which Depends on the Collection Instrument), pp. 187–188.

³⁹ King Mongkut, *Phrarachahalekha*, p. 368.

⁴⁰ King Mongkut, *Prachum Prakat Ratchakan Thi 4 Ph.S. 2405–2408* “*Prakat Ruang Phraya Phiphatthritdudet Phu Samret Rachakan Muang Trat Song*

Ying Khao Ma Thawai 3 Khon (Announcement on Phraya Phiphatthritdudet, Governor of Trat, Presenting 3 Girls [to the king]), p. 144.

⁴¹ King Mongkut, *Prachum Prakat Ratchakan Thi 4 Ph.S. 2394–2400* “*Prakat Hai Chai Nai Kham Wa Somdet Hai Tuk Tong Tam Kiatyot*” (Announcement Ordering the Correct Use of the Title *Somdet* and in Accord with the Person’s Rank), pp. 38–39.

⁴² King Mongkut, *Prachum Prakat Ratchakan Thi 4 Ph.S. 2405–2408* “*Prakat Ham Mi Hai Ruak ‘momra-chuwong’ lae ‘mom luang’ ‘chan’*” (Do Not Refer to *mom rachawong* or *mom luang* as *chao*), p. 237.

⁴³ *Prachum Prakat Ratchakan Thi 4 Ph.S. 2394–2400* “*Phraboromachowat Phrachathun Phoen Blawat Phrarachamawongsanuwong*,” p. 266.

⁴⁴ King Mongkut, *Phrarachahalekha*, p. 29.

⁴⁵ *Phrarachaphongsawadan Chabap Phrachahalekha*, p. 552.

⁴⁶ King Mongkut, *Phrarachaphongsawadan Yo Krung Ratanakosin Phitsadan Nai Ratchakan Thi 4*, p. 32.

⁴⁷ Prince Damrong Rachanubhap, *Khwan Song-cham*, pp. 164–165.

⁴⁸ Chaophraya Thipphakotwong, *Phrarachaphongsawadan Krung Ratanakosin Ratchakan Thi 4*, Vol.2, p. 11.

⁴⁹ Prince Damrong Rachanubhap, *Khwan Song-cham*, p. 167.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

⁵¹ King Mongkut, *Phrarachahalekha*, p. 227.

⁵² Prince Damrong Rachanubhap, *Khwan Song-cham*, p. 164.

⁵³ King Chulalongkorn, “*Samakham Siguan Khong Boran Nai Prethet Sayam*,” p. 44.

⁵⁴ See information regarding the relationship between King Chulalongkorn and Prince Bannraporabak in Churrit Kiantamaphan, “*Boiphat Thang Dan Kamuang Lao Kanpokkhong Khong Somdet Chaofa Mahamala Kromphraya Bannraporabak (Ph.S. 2411–2429)*” [The Political Role of Prince Bannraporabak 1868–1886 (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University M.A. thesis in History, 1980)].

⁵⁵ The meaning of the names at this time in the Chakri Dynasty were undergoing a change to stress the dynasty’s “mission” as well as using words in the title that expressed the condition and potential of the dynasty. Additionally, in giving names to the crown princes and the princesses King Mongkut placed great emphasis on giving them meaningful titles.

See details in King Mongkut, *Khatha Phrachaniphon Nai Phrabat Somdet Phrachomklao Chaoyuhua Phrachathun Phranam Phraracharorasot Thida* ([Royal Verse by King Mongkut on Naming the Royal Children (Bangkok: Sophonphanthanakorn, 1929)]. Also see an analysis of the royal names in Sophaphan Na Ban Chiang, *Konchai*

Phasa Nai Kantangchu Khong Khon Thai (Language Use in Choosing Thai Names), Research Report funded by a grant from the 700 Years of Thai Writing Scholarship Fund, 1983.

²⁹ King Chulalongkorn, "Phaboromarachawat Kae Chaofa Vajiranihit," in Chai-anan Samudavanija and Khatiya Karnasutra, eds., *Ekasan Kamnuang Kanpokkhong Thai Ph.S. 2411-2477* (Documents on Thai Politics and Administration 1868-1934), p. 130.

³⁰ King Chulalongkorn, *Phaboromarachawat Phrachathan Somdet Phaboroma-orasathirat Sayam Makut Rachakaman* (Royal Addresses Delivered by The Royal Highness of Siam), cited in Achara Kanchanomai, "Kanfaifu Phraphutthasatsana Nai Samut Ratanakosin Ton Ton" (The Revival of Buddhism in the Early Bangkok Dynasty) (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University M.A. thesis in History, 1979), p. 157.

³¹ Prince Damrong Rachanubhap, *Khwan Songcham*, p. 44.

³² King Mongkut, *Phrarachahatlekha*, p. 203.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

³⁴ Prince Damrong Rachanubhap, *Khwan Songcham*, p. 165.

³⁵ Prince Damrong Rachanubhap, *Khwan Songcham* (Bangkok: Silapabannakan, 1973), pp. 188-189.

³⁶ King Chulalongkorn, "Phrarachahatlekha Phrarachathan Somdet Phaboromosathirat Chaofa Mahawachirunahit" (Message of His Majesty the King to Prince Vajiranihit), in Chai-anan Samudavanija and Khatiya Karnasutra, eds., *Ekasan Kamnuang Kanpokkhong Thai Ph.S. 2417-2477* (Thai Political and Administrative Documents 1874-1934) (Bangkok: Thai Watani Panich, 1975), p. 131.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

³⁸ King Chulalongkorn, "Phrarachadamrat Top Khwamkhithen Khong Phu Cha Hai Plianplaeng Kanpokkhong Ch.S. 1247" (Royal Address Giving Opinions on the Change of Government in 1885), in Chai-anan Samudavanija and Khatiya Karnasutra, eds., *Ekasan Kamnuang Kanpokkhong Thai Ph.S. 2417-2477*, p. 130.

³⁹ King Chulalongkorn, "Phrarachadamrat Top Khwamkhithen Khong Phu Cha Hai Plianplaeng Kanpokkhong Ch.S. 1247" (Royal Address Giving Opinions on the Change of Government in 1885), in Chai-anan Samudavanija and Khatiya Karnasutra, eds., *Ekasan Kamnuang Kanpokkhong Thai Ph.S. 2417-2477*, p. 76.

⁴⁰ King Chulalongkorn, "Phrarachadamrat Na Phrabat Somdet Phrachulaachomklao Chanyuhua Song Thalaeng Phaboromarachobai Kae Chai Kanpokkhong Phaendin" (Explanation by King Chulalongkorn on Administering the Kingdom), in Chai-anan Samudavanija and Khatiya Karnasutra, eds.,

Ekasan Kamnuang Kanpokkhong Thai Ph.S. 2417-2477, p. 89.

⁴¹ King Chulalongkorn, "Phrarachatlekha Lokha Phrarachathan Somdet Boromorasathirat Chaofa Mahawachirunahit" (A Royal Writing to the Royal Son, Prince Vajiranihit), in Chai-anan Samudavanija and Khatiya Karnasutra, eds., *Ekasan Kamnuang Kanpokkhong Thai Ph.S. 2417-2477*, p. 133.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 131.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

⁴⁵ The role of this group appears clearly in the king's writings. See Prince Damrong Rachanubhap, *Khwan Songcham*, pp. 242-243.

⁴⁶ See details in Department of Fine Arts, ed., *Chotmaihet Sadet Praphat Nai Raichakan Thi 5 Sadet Muang Singapore Lao Batavia-Khrang Raek Lao Sadet Praphat India* (Records of Royal Trips During the Fifth Reign, The First Trip to Singapore and Batavia and the Trip to India) (Bangkok: Phrachan, 1963).

⁴⁷ Prince Damrong Rachanubhap, *Khwan Songcham*, p. 264.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Prince Damrong Rachanubhap, *Khwan Songcham*, p. 258.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 258-264.

⁵² See details on the subject of taxation in Ramphae Udomphaichatrakun, "Kansawaengha Raidai Khong Phaendin Phutnai Rachakan Anachak Thai Ph.S. 2398-2458" (Seeking Income for the Thai Kingdom from 1855-1912) (Bangkok: Silapakorn University M.A. thesis in Southeast Asian History, 1983).

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

⁵⁴ See detail in Chonthira Bunnag, "Kumsuam Amnat Thang Kamnuang Khong Khunnag Nai Samai Ratchakan Thi 5 Ph.S. 2416-2435 Suksakovani Khunnag Trakun Bunnag" (The loss of Political Power by the Nobility in the Fifth Reign [1873-1892: A Case Study of the Bunnag Family]) (Bangkok: Silapakorn University M.A. thesis in Southeast Asian History, 1983), and Piyarat Bunnag, pp. 230-236.

⁵⁵ Chai-anan Samudavanija and Khatiya Karnasutra, eds., *Ekasan Kamnuang Kanpokkhong Thai Ph.S. 2411*, p. 13.

⁵⁶ *Prakat Wadui Tang Khawin Lac Phrarachabannvat* in Chai-anan Samudavanija and Khatiya Karnasutra, eds., *Ekasan Kamnuang Kanpokkhong Thai Ph.S. 2411-2477*, p. 17.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Piyarat Bunnag, *Bothai Khong Senabodi Trakun Bunnag* (The Role of Councilors from the Bunnag Family), p. 229.

⁵⁹ *Kharunawat* was first published in July 1874.

Twelve in tongue and wrung from every land,
Gladly come and stand, safe in this sire
Of cities, whose men are freed of danger dire,
Of sin, desire, pain, sorrow and distress.

This is hardly the colloquial street-English of the late twentieth century. It is sophisticated, and at times even archaic, poetry. It reads and sounds more like the English of King James's time—but then, King James was close to being a contemporary of King Narai!

All this should support the argument that Cushman was an uncommonly good translator of Thai. He was not a long-term student of Thai, having studied it only during his brief service as a U.S. Peace Corps teacher in Thailand in the mid-1960s, and when conducting anthropological research in Thailand in the early 1970s. He was unusually gifted with languages, having mastered Classical and Modern Chinese, French, and Yao, as well as Thai. His translations show an unusual gift for earlier English as well, as readers can see in his synoptic translation of *all* the various versions of the royal chronicles of the Kingdom of Ayutthaya (1351–1767), published by the Siam Society (Cushman 2000).



Notes

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³ *Phleng yao phayakôn Krung Si Ayutthaya*: "Phleng yao" is a poetic form whose meaning has probably shifted over time. It is often translated as "ballad" but Cushman preferred the literal rendering "long song."

⁴ An alternative reading, based on Cushman's rendering of the last line of his eighth stanza, would be that the prophecy is intended for the 2,000th year of Ayudhya (AD 3351), not for 2000 in any particular era. This reading would fit with the sixteenth line of the poem.

⁵ It is curious that most of the works discussed in this last volume are illustrated with photographs of the original manuscripts, but those of King Narai lack such photographs.

⁶ This version, which retains the archaic spelling, is taken from Ongkankha Kumsapha (1969). Prince Damrong (FAD 1968) converted it to modern Thai spelling. The original is continuous; the division into verses was made by Cushman.

⁷ Words "come to" added in last line per Cushman's handwriting on one copy ("TACOA Copy 2—Volume 1").

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just one month after the Council of State was established in May of that year.

⁹⁰ "Waduat Bao Thai Nai Krung Sayam" (Regarding Commoners and Slaves in Siam), *Kharunowat* 1 (December 1874).

⁹¹ "Nithan Boran Waduat Rachasi Lae Chang" (The Fable of the Lion and the Elephant), *Kharunowat* 1 (July 1874).

⁹² "Waduat Kho Thai Nai Krung Sayam" (On News of Slaves in Siam), *Kharunowat* 1 (December 1874).

⁹³ "Prathet Thi Chaoen Tong Mi Government Mankhong Wai" *Kharunowat* 1 (December 1874).

⁹⁴ "Ruang Phraboromachawat" (On the Royal Announcement) *Kharunowat* 108 (August 1884).

⁹⁵ Kasem Sirisamphan and Neon Snidvongse, "Naeo Phrarachadamri Thung Kanmuang Nai Phrabat Somdet Phrachunlachomklao Chaoyuhua" (Trends of Royal Writing by King Chulalongkorn) in *Prawatisat Lae Kanmuang* (History and Politics), p. 197.

⁹⁶ "Phraboromachawat Thung Chaofa Wachirannulit" in Chai-anan Samudavanija and Khattiya Karnadutra, *Ekasan Kanmuang Kanpakkhong Ph.S. 2411-2477*, p. 133.

⁹⁷ King Chulalongkorn, *Phrarachaniphon Nai Phrabat Somdet Phrachunlachomklao Chaoyuhua Song Wichan Ruang Phrarachaphongsawadan Kap Ruang Prapheni Kandung Phramajaparat* (Royal Writings of King Chulalongkorn on Analyzing the Royal Chronicles and Traditional Matters Regarding the Installation of the Crown Prince) (Bangkok: Phrachan, 1936), p. 3. Distributed at cremation for Princess Oraphinphenphat.

⁹⁸ King Chulalongkorn, "Phrarachadamrat Song Nai Thi Prachum Senabodi Ruang Tham Nungsu Sanyu Thank Maitri Kap Angrit R.S. 128" (Royal Address in the Councilors Meeting On the Treaty with the English 1906) *Warisan Sinlapakon* 20 (September, 1976), p. 69.

⁹⁹ Prince Damrong Rachanubhap, "Thesaphiban" (The Provincial Government System), in *Monthon Thesaphiban: Wikho Priapthiap* (Circle and Province: A Comparative Analysis) p. 5.

¹⁰⁰ N.A. R5 RL3/32 *Phraboromachawat Lap (praiset) Phrarachathun Khulung Pra-ham Muang Luang Prabang*.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ From the term *ekaracha* (unified rule) has come the word *ekarat*, the meaning of which has changed to "independence".

¹⁰⁴ "Phrachadamrat Song Nai Thi Prachum Senabodi Ruang Tham Nungsu Santisanya Thang Phrarachamitri Kap Angkrit R.S. 128," *Sinlapakon* 20 (September 1976), pp. 68-69.

¹⁰⁵ See details in Wuthichai Munsin and Somchot

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¹⁰⁶ This was noted in "Phrarachaniphon Wichan Ruang Rachapraphaini Kantang Phramahaparai," and in "Prakat Chaloem Phraporomaphithai Somdet Chaofa Wachirannulit" (Announcement Celebrating the Installation of Crown Prince Vajirannulit), *Phrarachaniphon Nai Phrabat Somdet Phrachunlachomklao Chaoyuhua Songwichan Ruang Phrarachaphongsawadan Kap Ruang Rachaprapheni Kantang Phramahaparai*, pp. 35-66.

¹⁰⁷ King Chulalongkorn, "Phrarachadamri Tu Khwamhen Phu Cha Hai Phianpleng Kanpakkhong Long Wan Thi 29 Mesayon 2428" (Responses to Those Petitioning for Changes in the Government Dated 29 April 1885) in Chai-anan Samudavanija and Khattiya Karnadutra, *Ekasan Kanmuang Kanpakkhong Thai Ph.S. 2411-2477*, p. 77.

¹⁰⁸ "Phrarachadamri Nai Phrabat Somdet Phrachunlachomklao Chaoyuhua Songthalaeng Phraboromachathubai Kaekhai Kanpakkhong Phaelin" (Royal Speech by King Chulalongkorn Explaining Reforms to the Government of the Kingdom) in *Prawatisat Lae Kanmuang*, p. 126.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Somkiat Wanthana, "Muang Thai Yuk Mai Samphanthaphap Rawang Rat Kap Prawatisat Samruk" (A New Era for Thailand: Relations Between the State and the History of Thought) in *Yu Muang Thai* (Living in Thailand). Essays in Honor of Professor Sanay Jamarik on his 60th birthday (Bangkok: Thammasat University, 1987), p. 91.

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¹¹² See details in notes 1 and 2.

¹¹³ Royal Secretariat, (Siri Thephatsadin Na Ayutthaya), "Kanpakkhong Rahop Thesaphiban" (Administering the Provinces), in Wuthichai Munsin and Somchot Ongsakul, eds. *Monthon Thesaphiban: Wikho Priapthiap*, p. 11.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ See details in Punnee Aungsakul, "Kichakan Muang Rawdibuk Kap Kanphanlaeng Thang Sethakit Phak Tai, Ph.S. 2411-2474" (Tin Mining and Economic Changes in Southern Thailand, 1868-1931), in *Prawatisat Sethakit Thai Chon Thung Ph.S. 2484* (History of the Thai Economy Until 1941), pp. 400-444; Phonphun Chongwatana, "Korani Phliphat Rawang Chao Nakhon Chiang Mai Kap Angrit An Pon Het Hui Rathahan Sayam Chat Kanpakkhong Monthon Phuyap, Ph.S. 2401-2445" (The Dispute Between the Rulers of Chiang Mai and the English as a Cause for the Government of Siam Instituting Provincial Rule in

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¹⁰⁶ Nidhi Aeusrivongse, “*Chak Rai Chaikhop Thung Monthan Thesaphiban: Khwamsuamsalai Khong Klum Annat Doem Nai Ko Phuket*” (From the States on the Periphery to Province: The Decline of Traditional Power Groups on the Island of Phuket), *Thammasat Journal* 13 (September 1984), pp. 78–79.

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Full citations of some references will be found in Part 1 of the author's article.