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**From Commissions to Commemoration:
the Re-creation of King Chulalongkorn and His
Court, and the Thai Monarchy through Westernised
Art and Western Art Collection**

Volume One

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EKSUDA SINGHALAMPONG: CANDIDATE FOR DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (DPhil)

FROM COMMISSIONS TO COMMEMORATION:THE RE-CREATION OF KING CHULALONGKORN AND HIS COURT, AND THE THAI
MONARCHY THROUGH WESTERNISED ART AND WESTERN ART COLLECTIONSUMMARY

Official Thai history gives the iconic role of King Chulalongkorn as the civiliser of which is the theme underpinning my study. This thesis aims to complicate this narrative by investigating the historical specificity of Chulalongkorn's visual representation operating with the mechanisms of westernisation. The study discusses how the King presented and represented his royal person and his regal power and how the King consequently changed and shaped Siam's visual and material culture at the turn of the century. Chulalongkorn's royal family portraits and grand architectural programme, as well as his European art collection recreated a new concept of Siamese kingship and the monarchy: this wide-ranging analysis traces the shift from a semi-divine to a secular and modernised monarchy. This thesis argues that the westernisation programme was a process and product of transcultural exchange within the colonial encounters between Siam, the West and their colonies. Chulalongkorn's appropriation, adaptation and reinterpretation of Western art doubly transformed the monarchy and its kingdom into a modernising nation under the pressure of Western colonialism. This compelled Siam to become a crypto-colonial state of nation. Chulalongkorn's aspiration for westernised visual representation turned political loyalty into religious devotion in later years. Collective memory of Chulalongkorn was strongly embedded in the public's perception through the practice of remembrance, nostalgia and commemoration fed by the royalist narrative in official Thai history. This thesis also contributes to an ongoing dialogue on the relations between the monarchy, memory and national identity through an investigation of celebratory exhibitions of the Chakri Dynasty. The issues of visual representation and its impact addressed in this thesis are arguably as bound up with issues of national identity and national politics.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	The Archaeology Association
AKE	The Arts of the Kingdom Exhibition
ASA	The Association of Siamese Architects under the Royal Patronage of His Majesty the King
BMA	The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration
BRH	Bureau of the Royal Household (Thailand)
FAD	Fine Arts Department
JAS	The Journal of Asian Studies
JPS	Journal of Political Science (Ratthasartsarn)
JSS	Journal of Siam Society
JVC	Journal of Victorian Culture
OHMPPS	The Office of His Majesty's Principal Private Secretary
NAS	National Archives of Singapore
NAT	National Archives of Thailand
NLT	National Library of Thailand
QSMT	Queen Sirikit Museum of Textiles
MBJ	Muang Boran Journal (Ancient City Journal)
MECDKC	Memorial Exhibition of Centennial of Death of King Chulalongkorn
MPW	Ministry of Public Works
RG	Royal Thai Government Gazette (Ratchakitchanubeksa)
REH	The Rattanakosin Exhibition Hall
SSST	The Social Science Society of Thailand
SW	Silpa Watthanatham (Arts and Culture)
VME	Vimanmek Mansion Exhibition

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INTRODUCTION

1) Conceptual Matters

This thesis is an investigation of westernisation, by which I mean here a process of adopting and appropriating Western art styles and ideology, in the art of Thailand (formerly known as Siam)¹ during the reign of King Chulalongkorn (King Rama V of Thailand; reigned from 1868 to 1910), the fifth monarch of the Chakri Dynasty.² He commissioned portraits and architecture and created his collection following his Western aspiration. The western style had been adopted and applied to Siamese art. More importantly, western cultural and artistic influences substantially adjusted the perspectives of Siamese aristocrats in establishing their self-identities in the modern world dominated by the West. Both Siamese aristocrats and artists willingly welcomed Western art ideology. European artists were employed and commissioned by the King to produce works of art in a complete Western style throughout his reign. Meanwhile Siamese artists who became assistants or apprentices to the European artists had a great opportunity to practice in the Western artistic discipline. The circle of elites in King Chulalongkorn's court addressed in this thesis was that of the Chakri lineage which comprises the King, his brothers and half-brothers as well as female members of the royal family. They were the force behind Siam's westernisation. The thesis will explore the connection between a dynastic regime with territoriality in which Bangkok was a centre of modernisation as Bangkok as the capital city was founded by the first Chakri monarch. Henceforth Bangkok was reaffirmed as the Chakri Dynasty's seat of power. In this sense, the centrality of political power echoed the centralisation of their bureaucratic reforms.

Westernisation in the works of art of King Chulalongkorn was intimately tied to his socio-political reforms. In order to examine the ideas behind the art movement of the late nineteenth century, one needs to understand Siam's political and social processes of this period. A Western (read European) model had been brought to restructure the kingdom as the West and Western culture in the Thai imagination was a

¹ The former name of the country is Siam. In 1939, Field Marshal Plaek Pibunsongkhram, the prime minister, changed the name of the country from the Kingdom of Siam to the Kingdom of Thailand. In this thesis, the term 'Siam' is used within the context of the nineteenth century up until 1939. The term 'Thailand' is used to refer to the country in the present day or in an overall context. The same condition is also applied to the 'Siamese' term and the 'Thai' term. For further discussion about the changing of the name see Craig J. Reynolds, "Introduction: National Identity and its Defender," in *National Identity and its Defender: Thailand Today*, ed. Craig J. Reynolds, revised edition, First published 1991 (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books 2002), 1-6.

² See the list of the Chakri monarchs in Appendix A.

privileged Other.³ These reforms, later known as the 'Chakri Reformation,' marked the new era of the Kingdom of Siam in both political and socio-cultural changes under the leadership of King Chulalongkorn. Chulalongkorn's reign was a transitional period of Siam which transformed the traditional or 'Old Siam' to the 'New Siam.'⁴ The term 'traditional Siam' describes the socio-political structure prior to the Chakri reformation. This term is also used to identify the characteristics and periods of Thai art in the same sense.⁵ The influx of Western influences in the mid-nineteenth century is thus regarded as an essential effect which changed and shaped Siam into the modernising nation.

Modernity was the fundamental issue that underlay the reformation. Siamese sovereigns hailed the West as their prototype in the process of modernisation; hence, westernisation was chosen in order to achieve modernity. Civilisation is another term that is frequently used to describe the purpose of these changes.⁶ In contemporary anti-colonial nationalist thought, the Chakri Reformation is similar to what Partha Chatterjee calls 'the material domain' in which the East had succumbed to Western superiority only on the outside (economy, science and technology, state-craft).⁷ While the inner domain, 'the spiritual' that bore the essential marks of cultural identity must be preserved. This inner domain of Siam was Buddhism⁸ which was very vital to Siamese culture, as well as to the concept of kingship. The mechanism of westernisation was read by many scholars as a political strategy to impress the West indicating that Siam

³ Rachel V. Harrison, "Introduction: The Allure of Ambiguity: The 'West' and the Making of Thai Identities," in *The Ambiguous Allure of the West: Traces of the Colonial in Thailand*, ed. Rachel V. Harrison and Peter A. Jackson (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010), 10.

⁴ David K. Wyatt, *Thailand: A Short History* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1982), 223.

⁵ Santi Leksukhum, *Prawattisartsilpa Thai (Chabab Yor): Kan Roemton lae Kan Suebneung Ngan Chang Nai Sassana (A brief Art History of Thailand: Its Beginning and Continuity of Religious Art)* (Bangkok: Muang Boran, 2009), 191.

⁶ See Thongchai Winichakul's argument on Siamese aristocrats' conception of civilisation in Thongchai Winichakul, "Phawa Yang Rai Nor thi Riak Wa 'Siwilai' Mua Chonchunnam Siam Samai Ratchakan thi Ha Sawaeng Ha Sathana Khong Thonaeng Phan Kan Duenthang lae Pipittapan Thang Nai lae Nok Prathet" (What are the Conditions Called 'Siwilai'? When the Siamese Aristocrats Sought their Status via Travels and Exhibitions at Home and Abroad), *JPS* 24, 2 (2003), 6-17.

⁷ Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 6.

⁸ Thongchai Winichakul, "The Quest for 'Siwilai': A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam," *JAS*, Vol. 59, No. 3 (August, 2000), 530; Wilailekha Thavornthanasarn, *Chonchunnam Thai kab Kanrab Watthanatham Tawantok (Thai Aristocrats and the Derivation of Western Cultures)* (Bangkok: Muang Boran, 2002), 55-64.

was a civilised nation as a national defence against Western expansionism.⁹ The meaning of 'being civilised' thus ranged from etiquette to material progress. The practice of civilisation is a connotation of the 'modern lifestyle' among the Siamese elites wherein the westernised modes of practice and consumption were adopted and adapted. Infrastructure and public buildings were remodelled after European fashions. I argue that this late nineteenth century socio-cultural movement aimed to attract the local audiences as much as, if not more than, the approval from the West. My investigation will bring Siam's own internal political conflicts into the conversation.¹⁰ I argue that this political turmoil played a significant part in the way in which visual representation of the royalty were mass produced to reaffirm Chulalongkorn's hierarchical power.

2) Historical Context

Western influence in the Rattanakosin era¹¹ predated Chulalongkorn's reign, going back to the reigns of his last two predecessors, although on a much smaller scale. Prior to the mid-nineteenth century, the relationship between Siam and the West was distant and reserved. The reign of King Jessadabodindra (King Rama III; reigned from 1824 to 1851) saw the beginning of the impact of the West in Siam. The most active group of westerners were missionaries and Catholic priests from Europe and the United States. They introduced Western science and technology into the Siamese society, namely medication, science, astronomy, mathematics, naval architecture and printing. The impact of the West on Siam in a more official relationship was an agreement on trades and jurisdiction, including the Burney Treaty in 1826 between Britain and Siam.¹²

⁹ See for example Thavornthanasarn, *Chonchunnam*; Likhit Dhiravegin, *Political Attitudes of the Bureaucratic Elite and Modernization in Thailand* (Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich, 1973); Dhiravegin, *Siam and Colonialism (1855-1909): An Analysis of Diplomatic Relations* (Bangkok: Thai Wattana Panich, 1975); Atthachak Sattayanurak, *Kanplianplaeng Lokkatat Khong Chonchanphunam Thai Tangtae Ratchakan thi 4-phor. sor. 2475 (Changes in Siamese Aristocracies' Perspectives from the Forth Reign-1932)* (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 1995). In addition to Western colonialism, less income to royal revenues and internal disorder also led to the reforms, see Pasuk Phongpaichit and Chris Baker, *Thailand: Economy and Politics* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1997), 216-226.

¹⁰ See Chapter Three for details on the political conflicts between King Chulalongkorn and his regent and the Front Palace (vice king).

¹¹ Rattanakosin era or Rattanakosin Kingdom is a term in this era of Thai history which takes its name from one verse of the official name of its capital city, Bangkok (see the full official name of Bangkok in Appendix B). Hence another term is the Bangkok era. The era covers the period from 1782 (the year of the establishment of Bangkok as the capital city of the new kingdom) to the present day.

¹² Walter F. Vella, *Siam Under King Rama III: 1824-1851* (Germany: J.J. Augustin Glückstadt, 1957), 121-122.

The commercial treaties with the West were done as a political necessity, considering that within the first few decades of the nineteenth century, the British had expanded their power closer to Siam's territories: Java (1811), Singapore (1819) and Malacca (1824).¹³ The most threatening triumph of the British Empire over the Southeast Asia region to the Siamese aristocrats was the defeat of Burma, the most powerful adversary country of Siam, in 1826.¹⁴ Even the countries that Siam hailed as superior, such as China,¹⁵ were defeated in the Opium Wars in 1842, and India fell under British rule in 1858.¹⁶ King Jessadabodindra was fully aware of the pressure of Western expansion that had occupied the neighbouring countries of Siam. His last statement while he was lying on his deathbed on 2 April 1851 was advice on the West and the westerners, 'our wars with Burma and Vietnam were over, only the threats of the Westerners were left to us. We should study their innovations for our own benefits but not to the degree of obsession or worship.'¹⁷ Walter F. Vella reflects on this statement and argues that the youth of Bangkok Dynasty (established in 1782) and a struggle to unify the country also made Siamese aristocrats very cautious.¹⁸

The adopting and adapting of Western technologies and modes of practice increased in the reign of King Mongkut (King Rama IV; reigned from 1851 to 1868). King Mongkut had expressed his penchant for knowledge, culture and technologies of the West since he was still a Buddhist monk. He developed his interests in science, astronomy, geography and history of the Western nations. His library collection included *the Holy Bible*, *Webster's Dictionary*, textbooks of hydrography and navigation, a chart of a solar eclipse and a copy of a world map.¹⁹ Furthermore, Mongkut was acquainted with westerners, such as Bishop Jean-Baptiste Pallegoix (1805-1862), a French Vicar Apostolic of Eastern Siam, who was highly esteemed by the King. This relationship provided him great access to Western knowledge. He also

¹³ Vella, *Siam*, 116-121.

¹⁴ Andrew Porter, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume 3: The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 371-377, 401.

¹⁵ However, King Jessadabodindra's successor, King Mongkut, harshly criticised the Siamese court's ancient tradition of sending envoys to the Chinese court (Qing dynasty) as the mission that symbolised Siam's subjection to the Qing emperors. Siam's final tributary mission to China was in 1854. He then eliminated this tradition. See King Mongkut, "Hae Phraratchasan Krang Thut Thai Pai Muangchine Tae Boran," (The Description of an Ancient Tradition to Pay Tribute to China by King Rama IV) in *Choomnoom Phraboromrachathibai nai Phrabat Somdet Phra Chomklao Chaoyuhua (A Collection of King Mongkut's Journals)* (Bangkok: FAD, 1958), 61-62.

¹⁶ Porter, *The Oxford History*, 146 and 399-420.

¹⁷ Quoted in Chaophraya Thiphakonwong, *Phraratchaphongsawadan Krung Rattanakosin Ratchakan thi 3 (Royal Chronicles in the reign of King Rama III)* (Bangkok: FAD, 1961), 188. See Appendix H for the original text in Thai.

¹⁸ Walter F. Vella, *The Impact of the West on Government in Thailand* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1955), 332.

¹⁹ Thavornthanasarn, *Chonchunnam*, 32-33.

learnt English and Latin,²⁰ giving Mongkut access to Western colonial thinking and developments via books, Singaporean and Hong Kong newspapers as well as correspondence with foreigners.²¹

When he was crowned, this fascination developed into a political necessity. His government adopted more flexible foreign policy than the previous reign. It is commonly believed among Thais that Mongkut supported an open-policy with the West in order to lead his kingdom towards modernity. It is also interpreted as his vision of the new world order lead by the Western nations. The King was aware of the rise of British and French imperial powers.²² This awareness led him to perform a diplomatic-economic policy with the West throughout his reign in order to prevent the threat of Western imperialism, the Treaty of Friendship and Commerce between the British Empire and the Kingdom of Siam (the Bowring Treaty) in 1855 being an example of this. After the agreement on this treaty, in return Mongkut appointed Siamese envoys to the royal court of Queen Victoria in 1857. He also sent another envoy to re-establish diplomatic relations with the French Empire (broken off since the seventeenth century) to the royal court of Emperor Napoleon III in 1860.²³

The pressure from Western powers was interpreted as an external factor which motivated Siamese aristocrats to modernise their country. It should be noted that the process of modernisation or the execution of an open-policy also happened in Japan with pressure from Western countries who forced Japan to rescind its policy of isolation on the eve of the Meiji Restoration.²⁴ It was possible that Mongkut, apart from his admiration for Western knowledge, saw the benefit and necessity of welcoming the Western countries rather than separating Siam from them.²⁵ Mongkut was well known for instituting many innovative activities and a series of cultural reforms.²⁶ His royal court was very enthusiastic about Western science and technology, with photography among the favourites. These novel practices in the royal court of Siam were crucial in the visual representation of Siamese monarchs, especially in the reign of his

²⁰ Prince Damrong Rachanubhap, *Kwamsongcham (Memories)* (Bangkok: SSST, 1962), 61.

²¹ NAS, (2005), *Ode to Friendship: Celebrating Thailand-Singapore Relations: Introduction*. (online), accessed April 19, 2012, http://www.a2o.com.sg/a2o/public/html/online_exhibit/odetoFriendship/html/Introduction/index.htm.

²² Thavornthanasarn, *Chonchunnam*, 65-68 and Dhiravegin, *Political Attitudes*, 12.

²³ Chaophraya Thiphakonwong, *Phraratchaphongsawadan Krung Rattanakosin Ratchakan thi 4 (Royal Chronicles in the Reign of King Rama IV)* (Bangkok: FAD, 2005), 154.

²⁴ Likhit Dhiravegin, *The Meiji Restoration (1868-1912) and the Chakkri Reformation (1868-1910): A Case for a Comparative Study* (Bangkok: Thammasat University, 1981), 6-8.

²⁵ Dhiravegin, *Siam and Colonialism*, 13-14.

²⁶ For example, the custom of disrobing upper garments before attending the king in his court was annulled, as well as a disallowance of seeing the king's royal person when he appeared in public. Mongkut allowed his subjects to be present and to see his face when he paraded in public. See Prince Damrong, *Kwamsongcham*, 82-83.

successor. My study will further discuss the subject of royal visual representation in Chapter One.

The process of modernisation that had its foundation laid by King Mongkut was followed by his son. King Chulalongkorn succeeded to his father's kingdom when he was fifteen years old. He was still a minor in the Siamese custom; as a consequence, Somdet Chao Phraya Borom Maha Si Suriyawongse (born Chuang Bunnag, hereafter referred to as Si Suriyawongse) acted as regent until he came of age. Despite his age, Chulalongkorn was well-prepared by his father. He was educated by English tutors.²⁷ Moreover, the young King furthered his knowledge of the West and statecraft by going on trips in his country and abroad. In 1871, Chulalongkorn travelled to the Dutch and British colonies in Java, the Straits Settlements (now some parts of Malaysia and Singapore), Burma and India. During these visits, he surveyed many of the colonial administrations and public utilities, including schools, hospitals, prisons and post offices. Consequently, this trip, together with another trip to India which took place several months later played an important part in Chulalongkorn's reforms in Siamese court custom and in remodelling Bangkok after the British colonies.²⁸

When he turned twenty years of age, Chulalongkorn had his second coronation as reigning monarch in his own right in November 1873. He then began a series of reforms that revealed his modern sentiments and intentions. This political reform was the beginning of the centralisation which eventually instituted King Chulalongkorn as an absolute monarch in 1892.²⁹ From the 1870s to the 1880s, Chulalongkorn's 'Chakri Reformation' gradually decreased the old bureaucratic elites' power, especially after the death of the regent in 1883. However, during the first decade of his reforms, he struggled with the old ministers and officials (the 'Ancients' as the young king casually called them) who still secured their posts as the pillars of the state.³⁰ Chulalongkorn's goals for the reformation were thus accomplished mostly in the 1890s. He restructured

²⁷ Thavornthanasarn, *Chonchunnam*, 81-82. His most well-known tutor is Anna Leonowens (1831-1915), an English governess who was hired by King Mongkut from 1862 to 1867, to give his wives and children a modern Western education. Consequently, she wrote two volumes based on her experiences at the royal court of Siam, the books are entitled *The English Governess at the Siamese Court* (Boston: Fields, Osgood & Co., 1870) and *The Romance of the Harem* (Boston, J. R. Osgood And Company, 1873). However, within the context of popular culture, Leonowens is best known through the 1944 novel *Anna and the King of Siam* by Margaret Landon which was based on Leonowens' works. The novel then was adapted into musical plays and films under the title *The King and I*. Leonowens' accounts not only detail the lives of Siamese women in the Royal Court but also indicate the future king, Chulalongkorn's wide-ranging education.

²⁸ Phongpaichit and Baker, *Thailand: Economy*, 224. Also see Chapter Three for further discussion on this subject.

²⁹ Chaianan Samutwanit and Kattiya Kannasut, ed., *Ekkasan Kanmuang Kanpokkrong Thai phor. sor. 2417-2477 (Documentation on Thai Politics 1874-1934)* (Bangkok: SSST, 1989), 67-107.

³⁰ Wyatt, *Thailand*, 190-194.

the old Siamese bureaucratic system which was headed by 'Samuha Nayok' (the Chief Minister in charge of civilian affairs), 'Samuha Kalahom' (the Grand Commander of the military department) with modern ideas of the administration and political regime.

In 1892, Chulalongkorn introduced a new ministerial government with twelve new ministries with equal status were established to replace the old system. This reformation granted the thirty-three year-old Chulalongkorn centralised political power through these twelve ministries.³¹ Foreign advisors were employed to work with Siamese officials. He appointed his relatives to run these newly established ministries and provincial administrations, which were changed from the local autonomies or city-states to a 'Monthon' system instigated in 1897. Through this hierarchical system, composed of changwat (province), muang (city), amphoe (district), tambon (sub-district), and mhuban (village) in the descending order, the central authority now spread all over the country. This reform aimed to clarify the ambiguity of Siam's territories under Western colonial influences after the conflict with the French in the Paknam Incident in July 1893.³² This administrative reform is recognised as the most important shift in the Thai history of modernity.³³ The Siamese King, who was westernised by education, also initiated a modern Siamese law and judicial system with advice from foreign consultants.³⁴ The reign of King Chulalongkorn, according to Vella, changed Siam's policy from their previous 'survival diplomacy' to the adoption of Western techniques to strengthen and further centralise the government, strengthen the military force, and make the economy more productive. Moreover, the moral need to satisfy the national and cultural pride of Siamese leaders was also vital for Siam to prove to the West that they could survive and become equal to Western nations.³⁵

The brief historical background of the Bangkok era given above shows how Siam embraced Western technology and culture and adapted within their society during the first half of the nineteenth century. 'Civilisation' therefore became a more influential discourse in the late-nineteenth century among the Siamese elites and often merged with the term 'development.' To a certain degree, Siam's westernisation was a

³¹ Samutwanit and Kannasut, *Ekkasan Kanmuang*, 68-69.

³² Prince Damrong, *Thesaphiban (Monthon System)* (Bangkok: Matichon, 2002), 156-166. For details of the crisis, see Suwit Thirasassawat, *Chakrawatniyom Nua Maenam Khong (Imperialism over the Mekong River)* (Bangkok: Matichon, 2009), 20-36.

³³ Chalongsundravanich, "Ratchakan thi 5 kab Latthi Ananikom lae Siam" (King Rama V vs. Colonialism and Siam) in *Ratchakan thi 5: Siam kab Usakanay lae Chompoothavip (King Chulalongkorn: Siam-Southeast Asia-Jambudhavipa)*, ed. Charnvit Kasetsiri and Ornanong Thipphimon (Bangkok: Textbooks Project, 2004), 268.

³⁴ Emile Jottrand, *In Siam: the Diary of a Legal Adviser of King Chulalongkorn's Government*, trans. and introduction Walter E. J. Tips, (Bangkok: White Lotus, 1996), vii-xiii, 8-10.

³⁵ Vella, *The Impact of the West*, 336. The subject of nationhood of the nineteenth century Thailand was thoroughly explored in Thongchai Winichakul's study of cartography and mapping the boundaries of the country. See Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of A Nation*, reprinted edition (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2004).

counteraction to the pressure of the West's political domination over Siam's neighbouring countries which grew stronger during the course of the nineteenth century.³⁶ The Paknam Incident during the Franco-Siamese War was a critical moment that redefined Siam's geographical boundaries.³⁷ The result of the crisis was the loss of Siam's suzerainty over the left bank of the Mekhong (today Laos) to France. Territorial disputes also instigated the emergence of the modern conception of a nation which replaced indigenous conceptions of boundary and sovereignty; henceforth practically and symbolically changed the 'geo-body' (a term coined by Thongchai Winichakul) of Siam.³⁸ Western occupation on either side of Siam's boundaries: the annexation of Upper Burma to the British Raj in 1886 and the complete establishment of French Indochina in 1893, left Siam caught in the middle of European colonisation. Although Siam maintained its independence, colonial methods and hegemony were exercised to shape the sovereignty and geo-body of Siam. It was also intensified by Britain and France's official agreement in January 1896 on Siam's independence and that Siam should remain a buffer corridor to their colonies of British Burma and French Indo-China.³⁹ The results of these circumstances have shaped Siam/Thailand's socio-cultural and political changes, unofficially transforming the Old Siam into the New Siam.⁴⁰

3) Theoretical Approaches

There has been a long-running debate over whether or not Thai studies should be engaged in the colonial and postcolonial conversation.⁴¹ This ambiguity is reflected in Dipesh Chakrabarty's question, 'how does one apply categories or modalities of postcolonial or "colonial discourse" analysis to a country that was never formally colonised but where debates over modernity were overshadowed by a dominating

³⁶ Therefore westernisation can also be seen as both a form of mimicry and a resistance to western influences on non-western societies. Siam's Westernisation, in a way, was akin to their contemporary Asian counterparts: Japan and Turkey's outlook on the West; as a way to provide the tools that could sustain independence. See; Alastair Bonnett, *The Idea of the West: Culture, Politics and History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 5 and 12.

³⁷ See Appendix G for a map of Siam's territory. The effect of this crisis on Thai historiography will also be discussed further in the next section.

³⁸ Winichakul, *Siam Mapped*, 115-128.

³⁹ Chandran Jeshurun, "The Anglo-French Declaration of January 1896," *JSS* 58, pt. 2 (1970), 109-121.

⁴⁰ Sundravanich, "Ratchakan thi 5," 266-267.

⁴¹ An argument that Siam/Thailand was a semi-colonial state was put forward in the late 1940s-early 1950s by Thai Marxists, such as Udom Sisuwan's *Thai-Kueng Muang Khuen (Thailand, Semi-Colony: 1950*, later the book was banned in Thailand) and again in the 1970s. Cited in Hong Lysa, "Stranger Within the Gates: Knowing Semi-colonial Siam as Extraterritorials," *Modern Asian Studies* 38, 2 (May 2004), 327-328.

presence of the West or Europe?’⁴² Siam/Thailand, according to Benedict Anderson, was economically and juridically in an indirectly-ruled condition under the Western imperialist powers.⁴³ He also emphasises that Siam’s reformation, though operated by the Chakri king, was engineered under strong foreign guidance. For Anderson, nineteenth-century Siam was compatible with British colonies, such as Jahore or Kelantan,⁴⁴ therefore concluding that Siam was a semi-colony.⁴⁵ Siam’s claim to non-colonisation has been revisited since the late 1990s; a significant number of factors, especially those of extraterritorial issues have been taken up as evidence of its semicoloniality. Semicolonial debate was an analytical framework scrutinised in the work of both local and Western scholars, such as Chaiyan Rajchagool, Kasian Tejapira, Craig J. Reynolds, Hong Lysa, Peter A. Jackson, Tamara Loos and Michael Herzfeld.⁴⁶

⁴² Dipesh Chakrabarty, “Forward: The Names and Repetition of Postcolonial History,” in *The Ambiguous Allure*, ix.

⁴³ Benedict Anderson, “Studies of the Thai State: The State of Thai Studies,” in *The Study of Thailand: Analyses of Knowledge, Approaches and Prospects in Anthropology, Art History, Economics, History, and Political Science*, ed. Eliezar B. Ayal (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Center for International Studies, Southeast Asia Program, 1978), 209-210. See also Tamara Loos, *Subject Siam: Family, Law, and Colonial Modernity in Thailand* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2006), 17.

⁴⁴ In a response to Anderson’s argument, Sulak Sivaraksa, a Thai public intellectual, disapproves of this specific comparative study of Siam and the Sultanates in Malaya, although he does not note any further argument with Anderson’s comparison. See Sulak Sivaraksa’s comment in Anderson, “Studies of the Thai State,” 249.

⁴⁵ Anderson, “Studies of the Thai State,” 210.

⁴⁶ Cited in Harrison, “Introduction,” in *The Ambiguous Allure*, 9-14. See Chaiyan Rajchagool, *The Rise and Fall of the Thai Absolute Monarchy: Foundations of the Modern Thai State From Feudalism to Peripheral Capitalism* (Bangkok: White Lotus, 1994); Kasian Tejapira, *Commodifying Marxism: The Formation of Modern Thai Radical Culture* (Kyoto: Kyoto University Press, 2001); Craig J. Reynolds, “On the Gendering of Nationalist and Postnationalist Selves in Twentieth Century Thailand,” in *Genders and Sexualities in Modern Thailand*, ed. Peter A. Jackson and Nerida M. Cook (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1999); Hong Lysa, “Extraterritoriality in Bangkok in the Reign of King Chulalongkorn, 1868–1910: The Cacophonies of Semi-Colonial Cosmopolitanism,” *Itinerario: European Journal of Overseas History* 27, 2 (July 2003): 125-146; Lysa, “Stranger Within the gates,” 327-354; Peter A. Jackson, “The Performative State: Semi-coloniality and the Tyranny of Images in Modern Thailand,” *Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 19, 2 (October 2004), 219-253; Jackson, “Semicoloniality, Translation and Excess in Thai Cultural Studies,” *South East Asia Research* 13, 1 (March 2005): 7-41; Jackson, “The Ambiguities of Semicolonial Power in Thailand,” 37-56; Jackson, “Afterword: Postcolonial Theories and Thai Semicolonial Hybridities,” 187-205 in *The Ambiguous Allure*; Loos, *Subject Siam*; Michael Herzfeld, “The Absence Presence: Discourses of Crypto-Colonialism,” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 101, 4 (Fall 2002): 899-926; Herzfeld, “The Conceptual Allure of the West: Dilemmas and Ambiguities of Crypto-Colonialism in Thailand,” 178-186 in *The Ambiguous Allure*.

These scholars aim to engage Thailand and Thai studies in colonial networks politically, economically and culturally.⁴⁷

With a growing body of critical scholarship on Siam's semicoloniality, a condition which Loos calls 'the purgatory of in-betweens,'⁴⁸ scholars have asserted the relevance of postcolonial theory as a theoretical approach to the studies of Thai history, culture and identity. In addition to 'semicolonial,' the terms 'auto-colonial,' 'crypto-colonial,' and 'hybrid' are also used in these contributions to categorise Siam's relations with the West in the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century.⁴⁹ In this thesis I deploy the term 'crypto-colonialism' and its conceptualisation to apply to my study. The American anthropologist Herzfeld has coined this term to explain the situation in Thailand in which it stays independent but has been constrained by Western-dominated geopolitics.⁵⁰ I interpret the term 'crypto' as reflecting a denial and revealing a hidden inconvenient truth in Thai society, wherein a popular conviction of Thailand's independence during Western imperialism rejects any discussion of Western power and hierarchy in nineteenth century Thailand. Hence this term is more applicable than the term 'semi,' as Loos notes:

The use of the term *semi-*, used to modify *colonial*, *imperial*, or *modern*, risks interpreting Siam's historical situation as a failure to transition completely to a Eurocentric model of modernity. It positions Siam in between the binaries—tradition/modernity, colony/empire—that critical scholarship seeks to dismantle.⁵¹

Loos also states that this transition period in Thai history needs a discussion which exposes the complex and multiple power hierarchies at work in the relevant contexts.⁵² Jackson's argument mirrors Loos regarding the complexity and ambiguity of the manifold interactions between Siam and the West. He indicates that the process of

⁴⁷ I argue that Siam also engaged in the interplay between the colonies and the metropole. Through the mechanism of colonial networks, Siam had a complex interrelationship with both the 'core' and the 'peripheries' while attempting to gain a recognition of their own hierarchical power. For further discussion on colonial or imperial networks, particularly between the British Empire, South Africa and Australia, see for example Alan Lester, *Imperial Networks: Creating Identities in Nineteenth-century South Africa and Britain* (London: Routledge, 2001); Lester, "Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies," review of *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination* by Catherine Hall, *Journal of Historical Geography* 29, 2 (April 2003), 277-288, accessed December 3, 2015, doi: 10.1006/jhge.2002.0523; Lester, "Geographies of Colonialism," *JVC* 9, 2 (2004): 240-244, accessed December 2, 2015, doi: 10.1080/13555500409505853; Lester, "Imperial Circuits and Networks: Geographies of the British Empire," *History Compass* 4, 1 (January 2006): 124-141, accessed December 2, 2015, doi: 10.1111/j.1478-0542.2005.00189.x.; Lester, "Introduction: New Imperial and Environmental Histories of the Indian Ocean," in *The East India Company and the Natural World*, ed. Vinita Damodaran, Anna Winterbottom and Alan Lester (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 4-6.

⁴⁸ Loos, *Subject Siam*, 17.

⁴⁹ Harrison, "Introduction," 4.

⁵⁰ Herzfeld, "The Absence Presence, 8-9; Herzfeld, "The Conceptual Allure," 173.

⁵¹ Loos, *Subject Siam*, 17.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 17.

westernisation creates a hybrid effect on Siam's structure, politically and culturally, as Siam's westernisation was a multiplicity of appropriations, accommodations and resistance to Western Imperialism in order to achieve civilisation or becoming 'siwilai'.⁵³ Hence Jackson suggests that Siam's ideology of siwilai should be read as a hybrid discourse by drawing on Néstor García Canclini's and Homi K. Bhabha's theoretical concepts of cultural hybridity.⁵⁴ However, Jackson concludes that the ambiguity of the relationship between postcolonial approaches and Thai studies still remains, a condition which is complicated by Thailand's nationalist historiography.⁵⁵

The master narrative of Thai history during the Bangkok period perpetually depicts Siam's survival from Western colonisation, specifically focusing on the Paknam Incident.⁵⁶ Winichakul emphasises that this royalist-nationalist ideology was formulated as a consequence of this crisis. He also believes that this ideology has emerged from the official narrative in which the monarchy was celebrated for Siam's independence.⁵⁷ Consequently, many Thais are forced to memorise not only the events, but also the name of the leader who protected the country from any perils and secured its independence.⁵⁸ Memories, together with traditions which themselves were often invented or constructed and were always based on selections and exclusions, gave shape to cultural and social life. In the case of Thailand, the dominant royalist historiography has overshadowed Thai society and become part of political conviction. Rituals and celebrations have been created to support a certain ideology. For over a hundred years, the royalist-nationalist ideology has occupied the master narrative of Thai history, political regime and, importantly, public space. History was also the *mise-en-scène* of modernity, as evidenced by urban space which is replete with palaces, monuments and museums. Those edifices represent the material traces of the historical past in the present. Therefore, the presence of memories is used as a

⁵³ 'Siwilai' is a nineteenth century Thai term derived from English 'civilised/civilisation.' This term ties closely to Siamese elites' process of westernisation.

⁵⁴ Jackson, "Afterword," 187-192. Jackson's argument on the internal colonisation of Siam by Bangkok's ruling elites mirrors those of Winichakul's view on the similar subject, of which he calls "the Other Within". See Thongchai Winichakul, "The Other Within: Travels and Ethno-spatial Differentiation of Siamese Subjects, 1885-1910," in *Civility and Savagery: Social Identity in Thai States*, ed. Andrew Turton (London: Curzon, 2000), 38-62; Winichakul, "The Quest," 534-537.

⁵⁵ Jackson, "The Ambiguities," 38.

⁵⁶ Thongchai Winichakul, "Prawatisat Thai Baep Rachachatniyom: Chak Yuk Ananikhonm Amphrang su Rachachatniyom Mai rue Latthi Sadet Phor Khong Kradumphai Thai nai Patchuban" (Royalist-Nationalist History: From the Era of Crypto-Colonialism to the New Royalist-Nationalism, or the Cult of Rama V of Contemporary Thai Bourgeois). *SW* 23, no. 1 (November 2001), 57-59.

⁵⁷ Other scholars disagree with Winichakul in this argument. See Saichon Sattayanurak. "Wipak Sastrachan Doctor Thongchai Winichakul" (Critics on Professor Doctor Thongchai Winichakul). *SW* 25, 9 (August 2004): 130-147.

⁵⁸ Winichakul, "Prawatisat Thai," 58-59.

political means to direct and control national remembrance in terms of what should be remembered and believed.⁵⁹ This sense of nationalism founded on non-colonisation still exists in Thai society. Furthermore, the ideology of being 'independent' is significant to the construction of Thai national identity.⁶⁰

Interestingly, royalist nationalism in Thai history frequently synthesises with the discourse of 'Thai uniqueness'; a statement which declares that Thailand was uncolonised and therefore is different and incomparable with other colonised nations. The hegemony of a conservative discourse of uniqueness has been interwoven with Prince Damrong Rachanubhap's (1862-1943; hereafter referred to as Prince Damrong) proclamation of Thai identity. It is characterised by three key qualities: a dedication to national freedom ('itsara khong chart'), tolerance ('prassachak vihingsa'/ahimsa) and an acuity in assimilation ('prasan prayote').⁶¹ Prince Damrong's view was reflected in George Cœdès' post-World War II study on Southeast Asian archaeology and history, as he observed that 'the Thai have always been remarkable assimilators: they have never hesitated to appropriate for themselves whatever in the civilisation of their neighbours.'⁶² However, Anderson argues that Thai uniqueness is celebrated rather than interrogated in an intellectual discussion. This thus presents a paradox since uniqueness is mostly engaged in the studies of the ex-colonial nations.⁶³

As Thai uniqueness has become a mythology in the master narrative of Thailand's history, it inflicts an unconditional perspective on the study of Thai art history as well.⁶⁴ The notion of uniqueness has been treated like a mantra in historical, religious and, of course, cultural contexts. The conventional approach of Thai visual arts forcefully emphasises how Siamese artists skilfully assimilated and adapted imported styles of art, namely Indian, Ancient Cambodian, Chinese and European, into

⁵⁹ Patrick H. Hutton, *History as an Art of Memory* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1993), xxiii.

⁶⁰ Reynolds, "Introduction," 12.

⁶¹ Quoted in Saichon Sattayanurak, *Somdet Kromphraya Damrong Rachanubhap: Kan Sang Attalak "Muang Thai" lae "Chan" Khong Chaw Siam (Prince Damrong Rachanubhap: The Construction of the Identity of the Nation and Classes of Siamese)* (Bangkok: Matichon, 2003), 115.

⁶² George Cœdès, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*, First published 1944, ed. Walter F. Vella, trans. Susan Brown Cowing (Honolulu: East West Centre Press, 1968), 191.

⁶³ Anderson, "Studies of the Thai State," 197.

⁶⁴ The term 'Thai uniqueness' in Thai art history describes the nature of adapting and localising the style of art from the outside which is frequently found in many studies. See Suthee Kunavichayanont, *Chak Siam Kao su Thai Mai: Waduay Khwam Plikpun Khong Sinlapa Chak Prapeni su Samai Mai lae Ruamsamai (From the Old Siam to the New Thai: Changes in Thai Arts from Traditional to Modern and Contemporary)* (Bangkok: Silpakorn University Art Gallery, 2002), 17-19; Viboon Leesuan, *Sinlapa nai Prathet Thai: jak Sinlapa Boran nai Siam thueng Sinlapa Samai Mai (Art in Thailand: From Ancient Siamese Art to Modern Art)* (Bangkok: Ladpraw Books Center, 2005), 75-76.

'Thai' art.⁶⁵ This reflects one of Prince Damrong's components of Thai identity: an acuity in assimilation. This is why the discourse of uniqueness is encased and embedded incontrovertibly in Thai art historiography; as such discourse was blessed by Prince Damrong, 'the Father of Thai History.' The process of assimilation and adaptation by which Siamese artists as agents used to create their works was akin to localisation. In this regard, Winichakul points out, '[...]indeed any process of transculturation is not possible without an agency that translates, interprets, adapts, modifies and selects the elements of one culture to make them suitable for another.'⁶⁶

With this in mind, the notion of Thai uniqueness in Thai art historiography which ties closely to the nationalist social thoughts on Thainess and the concept of royalist-nationalist ideology, needs to be revisited. In doing so, my thesis will bring postcolonial theories and crypto-colonialism into the discussion. Since Thai historical documentation that establish an official discourse or a collective memory are incontrovertible with the addition of the semi-divine status of King Chulalongkorn, it is inexorable that all of his commissions are regarded as sacred, just as the King himself is. Evidently, the memories that have been made around Chulalongkorn have a certain impact on Thai art historiography. The works of art under his patronage have been related to the propagation of royalist nationalism and to the construction of national memory. An ongoing dialogue between the colonial and the postcolonial within the body of scholarship also effects a paradoxical situation on the study of westernised art in Thailand. On the one hand, the works of art under Chulalongkorn's patronage, his western-styled architecture to be specific, have been appraised and related to the state propagation of the royalist-nationalist narrative in Thai history. This grand narrative shapes the way in which Thais memorialise King Chulalongkorn and his westernisation scheme. On the other hand, Chulalongkorn's westernised art has been mentioned only briefly regarding its contribution to art movements in Thailand during those periods, as opposed to the traditional style of Thai art.

The reading of westernisation in visual arts in colonial and postcolonial dialogue also widens the discussion involving the concepts of the contact zone and transculturation. The term 'contact zone' refers to a reframing of colonial encounters, as conceptualised by Mary Louise Pratt. The impact of European colonialism created contact zones in the Southeast Asian region; Siam was inevitably drawn into these encounters. In a sense, Siam in the nineteenth century engaged in a cultural exchange during this intervention from the West. The adopting and adapting of Western cultures and techniques by Siamese elites can be considered a form of transculturation, which

⁶⁵ Kunavichayanont, *Chak Siam Kao*, 26.

⁶⁶ Winichakul, "Coming to Terms," 148.

is a phenomenon of the contact zone.⁶⁷ I argue that transculturation is not limited to the encounters between the colonised and the coloniser. Cultural exchanges, as Julie F. Codell points out, 'occur in the context of unequal power relations, while also opening up opportunities for exchange and interactions that may create space, a work of art or an encounter that momentarily suspends those imbalances.'⁶⁸ The works of art in late nineteenth to early twentieth century Thailand which were produced within the cross-cultural boundary between Bangkok, London and Paris through their colonies, as well as Florence, were transcultural visual products that emerged from colonial encounters. Thus, visual arts in this period can be examined through the lens of transculturation. They can be used to interrogate Chulalongkorn's adaptation, appropriation and reinvention in the cultural and political context of the contact zone. This analysis follows Pratt's conceptualisation of the contact zone wherein the encounters occurred in asymmetrical power relations. Thus the reading of westernisation in Thai art should be done in a larger framework, by bringing together historical, cultural, and political perspectives into a coherent critique of the study of Thai art. The thesis will address this analytical integration to open up the possibility of locating westernised art in Thailand in a wider intellectual landscape.

Modernity and western aspiration were key ideals of the Siamese elites of the late nineteenth century. However, in order to study the process of appropriation, adaptation and reinterpretation of Western models on Thai visual arts, the complexities of the topic should be scrutinised. As Loos questions, 'how can one study Siam's modern history without condemning it as an imitation of European modernity? How can a study emphasize Siam's *unique* trajectory towards modernity without glorifying the monarchy?'⁶⁹ Loos' perspective on Siam in the nineteenth century suggests a recognition of the Siamese aristocrats' westernisation as a distinct expression of agency. Responding to Loos' question, it is the objective of this thesis to contribute to the ongoing dialogue concerning Chulalongkorn's westernisation through the visual arts, as they were essential to Siam's quest for modernity. This thesis follows a colonial/postcolonial debate in Thai studies within the visual arts of late nineteenth century Thailand. Following Jackson's argument on hybridity in Siamese/Thai culture and cultural history, the thesis will also draw on the postcolonial theory of cultural hybridity. Together with the concept of transculturation, my research attempts to explore a range of interpretations of the uniqueness discourse and engage in a reinterpretation of westernised art in Thailand.

⁶⁷ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 4-6.

⁶⁸ Julie F. Codell, "The Art of Transculturation," in *Transculturation in British Art, 1770-1930*, ed. Julie F. Codell (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 2.

⁶⁹ Loos, *Subject Siam*, 18.

The outline of this thesis is intentionally broad in order to pinpoint the role of westernisation in Siamese/Thai art, which shifted nineteenth century visual culture in Siamese society. This research will consider the art of Chulalongkorn's court in which his commissions and collections facilitated the reinvention of the self-representation and self-identity of the Siamese monarchy amidst Western colonial domination. Since the construction of the self-identity of the Siamese elites intertwined with tastes and social classes, the thesis will also investigate cultural distinction in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Thailand. In doing so, Pierre Bourdieu's theories on Habitus and social distinction will form the basis for the analysis.⁷⁰ Siamese elites used their westernised modes of consumption to affirm and secure their hegemony in order to fashion themselves as a 'national' ruling class. In this sense, consumption and commodity were used as symbolic powers and a form of domination in the Siamese society. The way in which Siamese elites' expressed their power by appropriating practices or properties that are already classified (i.e. European culture) is an integral part of social reality. Siam, under the absolutist regime of Chulalongkorn, created class fractions, cultural hegemony and paradox. On the one hand, Siamese aristocrats attempted to unite the country in order to build a modern nation. On the other hand, their westernisation widened the gap between classes in Siamese society even more so by the end of the Fifth Reign.⁷¹ In addition to westernised modes of consumption, the Siamese monarchy also adopted pageants and ceremonies from Europe to display their royal powers to the public. *Fin de siècle* Bangkok resembled a theatre which was embellished with opulent Western-style architecture, the King's equestrian statue and modern infrastructure, and completed with pomp and ceremony to glorify the monarchy. Thus I will borrow Clifford Geertz's term 'theatre state' and his Balinese study⁷² to analyse Chulalongkorn's new Bangkok as a 'theatrical' city.

4) Literature Review and Established Scholarship

The works of art commissioned by the kings have always been the most important subjects for the study of art history in Thailand. The studies mainly consist of royal palaces and royal temples as well as the Buddha images and Buddhist mural paintings in the royal temples. Essentially, the traditional style of architecture, sculpture

⁷⁰ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London: Routledge, 2010), 485.

⁷¹ Wyatt, *Thailand*, 223-224.

⁷² See Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1980). This subject will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

and painting has been closely analysed.⁷³ The influx of Western technology and culture in the latter half of the nineteenth century caused an abrupt transformation of Thai art in which western style and thought had been introduced into traditional Thai art. Secular arts, as well as the works of art created in the complete Western style thus entered the Siamese art landscape. The fact that westernised art in the late nineteenth century was largely a royal commission, however, has received much less intellectual scrutiny. Therefore interpretation of the impact of social changes on styles of art has been overlooked in most Thai art historiography. This lack of interpretation, especially the exclusion of westernised art in its chronology, has caused a fracture in Thai art historiography. Hence, its impact has interrupted the comprehensiveness of Thai art history and more importantly, Thai society since the works of art embody thoughts, beliefs and movements within that society, which this research aims to explore.

The chronological studies of Thai art history such as the works of Santi Leksukhum and Piriya Krairiksh approach westernised art during the second half of the nineteenth century differently. Leksukhum positions the westernised art in the Transition period, also called early modern art,⁷⁴ whereas Krairiksh categorises this art movement as ‘the Royal Preferred Style’ or ‘baeb phraratchaniyom’ (1807-1907) which consists of both Sino-Thai art in the reign of King Jessadabondindra and westernised art in the reign of Mongkut and Chulalongkorn. However, Krairiksh also identifies the visual art produced during 1907-1957 as being part of ‘the Westernised Style.’⁷⁵ The westernised art in this second group began from the last few years of King Chulalongkorn’s reign towards the first decade of King Bhumibol’s reign. Nevertheless, his categorisation is still ambiguous and inconsistent. It appears that Krairiksh grouped the first category based on the Thai monarchy chronology, whereas the second category includes westernised art under royal patronage as well as the art of Thailand under the direction of the Fine Arts Department (FAD: established 1911).

As mentioned earlier, westernised art has been part of the intellectual discussion within Thai art historiography for over two decades—in Leksukhum’s work,

⁷³ See for example, Santi Leksukhum, *Khomoon kab Moommong: Sinlapa Rattanakosin (Informations and Perspectives on Rattanakosin Art)* (Bangkok: Muang Boran, 2005); Leksukhum, *Prawatsat Sinlapa Thai (Chabab Yor) (A Concise History of Thai Art)*, Fourth edition (Bangkok: Muang Boran, 2009).

⁷⁴ Mural paintings in the royal temples, such as Wat Bowonniwet Vihara in Bangkok by Khrua In Khong, a Thai monk artist from Phetchaburi Province, were regarded as the birth of westernised art in Siam and the beginning of the modern period in Thai art. His paintings show a technique imported from the West. They were Buddhist allegorical scenes, yet contain Western elements i.e. figures of foreigners, western-style buildings and landscape. See Leksukhum, *Prawatsat Sinlapa Thai*, 196-197; Kunavichayanont, *Chak Siam Kao*, 14-15. For a detailed study on Master Khrua In Khong, see Wiyada Thongmit, *Chittakam Baeb Sakunchang Khrua In Khong (Khrua In Khong’s Westernised School of Thai Painting)* (Bangkok: Thai Cultural Data Centre, 1979), 13-22.

⁷⁵ Piriya Krairiksh, *Prawattisatsinlapa nai Prathetthai Chabab Khumue Naksueksa (Art History in Thailand: A Student Handbook Edition)* (Bangkok: Amarin Printing, 1985), 302-333.

for instance—and was mentioned only briefly regarding its effect on art movements in Thailand during that time. From his perspective, one would assume that westernised art is barely significant to Thai art history. Furthermore, westernisation was blamed for the fall of traditional Siamese art, which means the art prior to the reigns of King Mongkut and King Chulalongkorn.⁷⁶ This argument mirrors Anderson's viewpoint on the stagnation of Siamese arts in the Fifth Reign juxtaposed with the country's modernisation. Anderson indicates that Siam's traditional art was in decline because of a dependent absolutism, a byproduct of European pacification and penetration.⁷⁷ However, I argue that the traditional style in Siamese/Thai art neither declined nor stagnated. Indeed it had decreased because the royal patronage was moved over to western-style arts; however, Buddhist arts were still created in traditional style.⁷⁸

Nevertheless, studies on westernised art in the late nineteenth to early twentieth century have increased over the past ten years, especially on architecture. Naengnoi Saksi has led an investigation on royal palaces in Bangkok and provincial areas which comprise both traditional and westernised styles.⁷⁹ Recent studies on the late nineteenth century architecture by other Thai scholars, such as Phirasri Phowathong, Chatri Prakitnonthakan and Somchart Chuengsiriarak widen their research to public buildings with more analytical approaches on socio-political context.⁸⁰ Phowathong's account focuses on four European architects who worked for Chulalongkorn in the early years of his reign, namely, Joachim Grassi (Italian-born French), John Clunis (British), Stefano Cardu and Joseph Ferrando (Italian).

⁷⁶ Piriya Krairiksh and Phaonthong Thongjuoar, *Sinlapakam Lang phor. sor. 2475 (Art Since 1932)*, Research Doc. No. 7 (Bangkok: Institute of Thai Studies, Thammasart University, 1982), 23.

⁷⁷ Anderson, "Studies of the Thai State," 227-230.

⁷⁸ For example see Leksukhum, *Khomoon*. Anderson also solely focuses on a few of 'the royal projects' whereas the traditional style of Thai arts and crafts were still produced elsewhere in the country during that period. In his comment to Anderson's paper, Sivaraksa also finds that Anderson's argument on Siam's cultural stagnation in the Fifth and Sixth reign was unconvincing, for Anderson only quotes his chosen literature that supports his own argument. See Sivaraksa's comment in Anderson, "Studies of the Thai State," 250.

⁷⁹ Nangnoi Saksi, *Phra Ratchawang lae Wang nai Krungthep (phor. sor. 2325-2525) (The Royal Courts and Palaces in Bangkok, 1782-1982)* (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 1982); Saksi, *Sathapattayakam Phra Borommaharatchawang (The Architecture of the Grand Palace)* (Bangkok: OOHMPPS, 1988); Saksi, *Moradok Sathapattayakam Krung Rattanakosin (Architectural Heritage of Rattanakosin Era)* (Bangkok: OHMPPS, 1994); Saksi, *Phra Apinaoniwet: Phraratchaniwet nai Phrabatsomdet Phra Chomklao Chaoyuhua (Apinaoniwet: the Royal Palace of King Mongkut)* (Bangkok: Matichon, 2006.)

⁸⁰ Phirasri Phowathong, *Chang Farang nai Krung Siam: Ton Phaendin Phra Phuttachao Luang (European Architects of Siam in King Rama V's Early Reign)* (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 2005); Chatri Prakitnonthakan, *Kanmueang lae Sangkhom nai Sinlapa Sathapattayakam: Siam Samai Thai Prayuk Chatniyom (Politics and Society in Art and Architecture: Siam in the Era that Thailand Adopted Nationalism)*, Second edition (Bangkok: Matichon, 2007); Somchart Chuengsiriarak, *Sathapattayakam Baeb Tawantok nai Siam: Samai Ratchakan thi 4-phor. sor. 2480 (Westernised Architecture in Siam: From the Reign of King Rama IV to 1937)* (Bangkok: Faculty of Architecture, Silpakorn University, 2010.)

Phowathong emphasises that these architects brought with them construction techniques and architectural styles from Europe which eventually changed and shaped Bangkok into the new phase. Political ideologies of the Siamese monarchy are heavily scrutinised concurrently with the architectural styles of Siam's architecture during the late nineteenth to early twentieth century in Prakitnontakarn's research.⁸¹ Absolutism and nationalism are the political thoughts which underpin and dictate his analysis,⁸² whereas Chuengsiriarak proposes that the appropriation of architectural styles from Europe was motivated by what he calls the 'ideology of the Age' which is the Siamese aristocrats' aspiration for civilisation.⁸³ This thesis will contribute to these architectural studies. It will engage westernisation in Chulalongkorn's architecture as part of the grander scale of the westernisation in the socio-political context as well as its role in (semi)colonial encounters.

Prince Damrong's conceptualisation of Thai identity has had both direct and indirect effects on some studies, for example, Apinan Poshyananda's 1990 doctoral thesis, 'Modern Art in Thailand in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries' and his subsequent book.⁸⁴ Poshyananda's work aims to establish an overview of the development of modern Thai art in which he identifies the art under King Chulalongkorn's patronage as a 'threshold' of Thailand's Modern art.⁸⁵ His analysis largely engages with Prince Damrong's concept of assimilation by which he uses the term 'eclecticism' to define the adoption and adaptation of imported styles in Thai art. However, his approach narrows the analysis of Siam's appropriation of Western style. Poshyananda classifies this appropriation simply as an imitation of style to suit the requirements of Siamese artists, to which he emphasises the characteristics of Thai uniqueness.⁸⁶ Poshyananda's study has yet to evaluate the appropriation and adaptation of Western art as both a process and product. This thesis will elaborate on his aesthetic study of eclecticism in Thai early modern art which scarcely engaged with political and cultural contexts. I argue that the Siamese/Western cultural interrelationship is neither a mere synthesis of foreign elements nor an eclectic style

⁸¹ Prakitnonthakan, *Kanmueang*, 155-168.

⁸² Ibid., 165-248.

⁸³ Chuengsiriarak, *Sathapattayakam*, 11-14.

⁸⁴ Apinan Poshyananda, "Modern Art in Thailand in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries" (PhD diss., Cornell University, 1990); Poshyananda, *Modern Art in Thailand* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1992).

⁸⁵ Poshyananda, *Modern Art*, xxiii. On the subject of royal patronage, Poshyananda defined Chulalongkorn as an art patron in the sense of Western culture; that is, the King did not only support the making of religious art which is an orthodox practice for Siamese kings, but also owned a great deal of Western art in his collection. The patronage of King Chulalongkorn played a major role in disseminating Western art to an art practice in Siam by which it created an eclectic style to Siamese art. See Poshyananda, *Modern Art*, 5.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 5.

that reflects a conservative and nationalistic notion of Thai uniqueness.⁸⁷ My research will investigate King Chulalongkorn's agency in the process of adaptation and how he used his adaptation of Western art as a product in his westernisation programme. Western styles of art in Siam had a different meaning from their originals as adaptation always reinterprets and creates something new, as well as constitutes the transformation of previous works in new contexts.⁸⁸ In this regard, appropriation and adaptation of the modes of consumption and practice in the Royal Court of Siam may not be comparable to their European counterparts, but the Siamese elites tactically created new meaning to serve their purposes.

In my analysis of self-representation and the practices of consumption, I will draw on Maurizio Peleggi's work in which Siamese elites' westernised modes of practice, residential and representational architecture, and the public spectacles are examined in a historical context.⁸⁹ Peleggi states that Royal public images were conclusively essential to the Siamese monarchy's project of asserting their civilised status, their claim to national leadership, as well as a trophy of a 'good taste.'⁹⁰ Following this line of thought, this thesis will investigate further by examining a wider range of paintings and sculptures as well as photographs. However, these new modes of presentation and representation of the royal self created a distinction in terms of audience. On the one hand, the images of Siamese royalty in photography and paintings were visible to a selected audience, which included high-ranking officials, the Bangkok foreigner community and the European public. On the other hand, the image of Chulalongkorn was widely circulated through the King's effigy on medals, coins and postage stamps. Needless to say that the dissemination of Chulalongkorn's effigy was the first time that the Siamese monarch was represented in such fashion. This thesis will address this wider dissemination. Although these visual representations, especially of the royal body, were considered a taboo in Siam's old belief, the iconic image of Chulalongkorn could certainly be used in the service of royal propaganda.

⁸⁷ Thainess (read Thai identity) or 'kwam pen thai' is the mainstream thought that originated within the context of the centralised political structure which was formulated around the time Siam needed to redefine most parts of Thainess in culture, to prevent from being seen as barbaric. Saichon Sattayanurak, "*The Construction of Mainstream Thought on 'Thainess' and the 'Truth' Constructed by 'Thainess'*," accessed April, 5 2012, <http://www.fringier.org/wp-content/writings/thainess-eng.pdf>, 2-7.

⁸⁸ Linda Hutcheon and Siobhan O'Flynn, *A Theory of Adaptation*, Second edition (London: Routledge, 2013), 20, 92 and 150; Julie Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation* (London: Routledge, 2006), 8.

⁸⁹ Maurizio Peleggi, *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002).

⁹⁰ According to Peleggi, this point is made but not developed by Chaiyan Rajchakool in *The Rise and Fall of the Thai Absolute Monarchy* (Bangkok: White Lotus, 1994). See Peleggi, *Lords of Things*, 20.

The abrupt change in Siamese society at the turn of the century also requires some explanation with regards to its effects on art-making. More importantly, the works of art in this period should be investigated in their socio-political context; both in its motivation and repercussion. Siamese aristocrats used their westernised modes of consumption to affirm and secure their hegemony in order to fashion themselves as a national ruling class. Hence I will explore the reactions and acknowledgement of public spectacles from both the locals and the West. I suggest that spectatorship is crucial to the Siamese monarchy's achievements in self-representation, as the late nineteenth century was the first time that the public was allowed to see royalty, while the royal court also provided grand ceremonies for the public to be engrossed and engaged in.

Given that the social context has underpinned the study of visual arts, it is impossible to study a visual representation of King Chulalongkorn without engaging with the Cult of King Chulalongkorn.⁹¹ The cult formed in the 1980s and reached its apex throughout the 1990s.⁹² Chulalongkorn is honoured with the epithet of 'the Great Beloved King' ('Somdet Phra Piya Maharat'), along with the Civiliser and the Reformist King. This social imaginary of the monarch who led his kingdom towards modernity and survived Western colonialism was a solid foundation of the cult. The King is worshipped and idolised, thus his visual images are crucial to this devotion. Scholars such as Nidhi Eoseewong and Irene Stengs provide empirical research which shows the worship of Chulalongkorn's portraits both in public spaces, such as the Equestrian Statue at the Royal Plaza and shops and private domains, including the household shrine. Royal portraits are commodified in various forms; for example, cameos, medals and posters.⁹³ Chulalongkorn's fascination with portraiture is hence instrumental in both constructing his self-identity during his reign and commemorating his public image within the Thai's collective memory. The relation between the cult and Thainess and nationalism is also indicated in these studies. Eoseewong and Stengs also point to the

⁹¹ The cult allegedly emerged from the discourse of Thailand's national history which glorifies and portrays King Chulalongkorn as a national hero. Practitioners believe that the King, in his divinity, is able to grant wealth and fortune. However, this mass cult of personality in the last decade of the twentieth century should not be confused with Chulalongkorn Day (in Thai, Wan Piyamaharat) on 23 October, which is the anniversary of his death (established in 1912 by King Vajiravudh). Chulalongkorn Day is an official memorial day and a national holiday in Thailand. On that day, a ceremony is held around the Equestrian Statue at the Royal Plaza wherein memorial wreaths are presented to commemorate the King by government sectors including public schools and universities. See Walter F. Vella, *Chaiyo!: King Vajiravudh and the Development of Thai Nationalism* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1978), 141-142.

⁹² Nidhi Eoseewong, "Latthi Phiti Sadet Pho ror. 5" (The Cult of King Rama the Fifth) *SW* 14, 10 (August, 1993), 77-98.

⁹³ Irene Stengs, *Worshipping the Great Moderniser: King Chulalongkorn, Patron Saint of the Thai Middle Class* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 97-117. In her Master's thesis, Thanavi Chotpradit observes that the emergence of Chulalongkorn's visual images as a commodity marks the reincarnation and revival of the royalist political ideology and he became an embodiment of the Neo-Royalist ideology in Thai history. See Thanavi Chotpradit, "The Eternal Lives of the Dead: A Comparative Study of the Images of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (Turkey) and King Chulalongkorn (Siam)" (MA Thesis, Leiden University, 2009), 39.

relation between the cult and nationhood as the cult emerged from the myth of King Chulalongkorn⁹⁴ which plays a critical role in constructing the Thai nation.⁹⁵ The cult therefore becomes a national cult which contributes to a sense of nationalism.⁹⁶ This relationship as well as the glorification of the Thai monarchy will be analysed through my study of recent exhibitions in Chapter Four.

All in all, most of the earlier scholarship in the art historical context, as mentioned earlier in the review of Poshyananda's study, tends to be influenced by the notion of Thainess and royalist-nationalist history. The notion of Thainess and patriotism have caused Thailand to live in paradox. My argument regarding the ongoing conversation of colonial/postcolonial debate will be executed within the framework of Herzfeld's crypto-colonialism. Since the rhetoric of hybridity is fundamentally associated with the emergence of postcolonial discourse, this approach clarifies the process of transculturation in the reign of King Chulalongkorn. An investigation into Chulalongkorn's visual representation aims to demonstrate the significance of visual and material culture in their historical specificity. Visual and material culture possess a powerful capacity to affirm collective identity and hierarchical power of the Siamese aristocrats. This research provides another perspective and brings out a reappraisal of westernised art in the late nineteenth to early twentieth century in Thai art history.

5) Source Materials

Westernisation in Siamese art was a complex process of appropriation, reinvention and reinterpretation. The purpose of this thesis is to explore the complexity of the appropriation of Western art in the Siamese socio-cultural context. This thesis will also explore the ambiguity of westernised art's position in Thai art historiography. Here, westernised art and architecture commissioned by Chulalongkorn, including his European art collection, are examined in order to investigate the process of the construction of self-identity. Chulalongkorn's iconic role as the civiliser and the modern monarch will be interpreted through his portrait paintings and sculptures, courtesy of the Bureau of Royal Household (BRH) and portrait photographs from the National Archives of Thailand (NAT). The thesis will further study the royal portraits of the first five kings of the Chakri Dynasty and their queen consorts at the Chakri Maha Prasat

⁹⁴ Stengs, *Worshipping*, 254.

⁹⁵ Eoseewong, "Latthi Phiti," 93-97. Eoseewong also emphasises the relation between the Equestrian Statue, rituals and the Thai nation, see Eoseewong, *Chat Thai, Maung Thai, Baeprian lae Anusaowari: Wadauy Wattanatham, Rat lae Rupkan Chitsamnuek (Thai Nation, Thai Country, Textbooks and Monuments: On Culture, the State and Forms of the Subconscious)*, Second edition (Bangkok: Matichon, 2004), 83-100.

⁹⁶ See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006).

Throne Hall in the Grand Palace as well as portraits of female royalty and nobility at the royal court from official portrait paintings in the care of BRH, photographs from NAT and prints from contemporary periodicals. In addition, Chulalongkorn's European art collection housed in various throne halls in the Grand Palace and the Dusit Palace is also instrumental in an interpretation of the Siamese monarchy's new self-identity.

It should also be noted that there is a limitation in documentation in the reigns of King Mongkut and King Chulalongkorn. Little supporting documents have survived or it was very rare that they had ever been documented. In addition, access to the documentation and archival materials concerning the Thai monarchy is highly restricted. Most portrait paintings in the royal court and photographs, for instance the photograph of King Mongkut's two wives, is an example of these problems. Thus their dates and origins could not be independently verified, in which case the study will have to be based primarily on visual analysis of the materials with the most relevant documentation.

The westernised architecture in Bangkok, namely the Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall on the ground of the Grand Palace, the Dusit Palace (Vimanmek Mansion, the Amphon Sathan Residential Hall and the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall) and selected governmental buildings which were constructed to house the new administration bodies, including the summer palaces in Ayutthaya and Phetchaburi Provinces, namely the Bang Pa-In Palace and the Phra Ram Ratchaniwet Palace are brought into the discussion of Chulalongkorn's grand westernisation scheme. This thesis also considers current celebratory exhibitions and museums in Bangkok: the Vimanmek Mansion Exhibition, the Memorial Exhibition of the Centennial of the Death of King Chulalongkorn and the Rattanakosin Exhibition in order to analyse collective memory and the commemoration of King Chulalongkorn. These visual materials will be examined to analyse the way in which these westernised arts were used by the Siamese aristocrats, politically, culturally and economically.

6) Summary of Chapters

The structure of the thesis is framed within the concept of King Chulalongkorn as the centre and an active agent of Siam's changing visual culture and visual representation. Henceforth the first chapter is the study of his portraits and the portraits of Chakri kings and queens, including those of the female members of royal family. This is immediately followed by King Chulalongkorn's art collecting and his other museum activities as modernised modes of practice in the second chapter in order to investigate King Chulalongkorn's centrality in socio-cultural changes and westernised modes of consumption. The study of European art collection, Royal Museum's

collection and Siam's displays at the international exhibitions also potentially reflect how Siamese elites in the Fifth Reign assessed their material culture.

The thesis then broadens out to an analysis of Chulalongkorn's architectural commissions in Bangkok and resort towns wherein royal portraits and European art collection were carefully selected to decorate Chulalongkorn's westernised palaces. Together, they effectively created a complete vista of modernisation/westernisation and a powerful visual representation of the modern Siamese monarchy to their audience. Here, the thesis' structure thus aims to fix upon the starting point of westernisation which is King Chulalongkorn, from his art commission and collection within his private domain to the public sphere. This is in order to guide readers to understand the key figure behind the machinations of Siamese elites' visual representation. As a result, the final chapter engages with Chulalongkorn's public images, in retrospect through his effigy on coinages and postage stamps and his presence in the royal ceremonies. Consequently, current public perceptions towards King Chulalongkorn and the Chakri Dynasty are interrogated in order to analyse how the Thais have memorialised and commemorated the King through celebratory exhibitions in Bangkok.

With these in mind, four chapters on portraiture, collecting, architecture and commemoration follow this introductory chapter. Within these four chapters, three major themes are woven throughout the thesis. The first theme is the Thai monarchy's self-identity and self-representation amidst colonialism and the modernisation scheme. The construction of new identity shifted the way in which the Siamese monarchy represented themselves in both private and public spheres through court custom and visual images. The second theme is a discussion of the appropriation and adaptation of western arts and culture which is analysed through a theory of transculturation. The adoption of westernised modes of practice was propelled by Siamese aristocrats' quest for civilisation as well as modernity. Together, Siamese aristocrats' western aspirations and colonial encounters orchestrated, although perhaps not jointly, Siam's social transformation in the late nineteenth century. Consequently, the third theme is an analysis of memorialisation through the public's perception as well as their spectatorship in order to investigate how King Chulalongkorn becomes an embodiment of Thailand's modernity. My focus is on the relationship between memory, visual culture and exhibition display, and how this has contributed to the Thais' memory of the King and, as a consequence, to the Chakri Dynasty over the century.

Chapter one interrogates the creation of the modern monarch's identity in the Fifth Reign through the interpretation of Siamese elites' portraiture whereby they fashioned a modern self-identity as a manifesto to present and represent themselves to the society. It also examines the relationship between art and politics in a socio-political context. The chapter investigates portraiture in King Chulalongkorn's royal court

through the King and his predecessors' portraits and the portraits of Siamese women at the royal court. The research explores how realism in portraits represents the sitters' status as they were made on the basis of European monarchs' portraits. Therefore, the investigation brings visual representation into the dialogue of the impact of the West on the change of the Siamese kingship and Siam's ancient custom regarding portraiture and realism in their visual culture. The research will also discuss gender and the agency of Siamese women in the royal court through their visual representation.

Chapter two moves on to explore Chulalongkorn's collecting and museum patronage. The study investigates Chulalongkorn's European art collection and his support of museum activities to examine his private and public persona. The investigation will detail how his collecting helped define his social class paralleling his European counterparts. My research on his art collection includes the identification and analysis of the paintings acquired from the Salon of 1907 in Paris, as well as the reattribution of European monarch's portraits in the collection. It will also discuss Chulalongkorn's role in establishing the Royal Museum and creating its collections as well as organising other exhibitions throughout his reign both in Siam and at the International Exhibitions in Europe and the United States. The discussion aims to position his collecting and museum activities in dialogue with Siam's westernisation and the colonial cultural exchange between Siam and the West.

Chapter three focuses on architecture with specific Western artistic influence along with an analysis of the reception of Western art aesthetics. This facilitates a discussion on the way Western artistic style was adopted and adapted to aid in the achievement of Siam's modernisation. In Bangkok, pomp, ceremony and ritual were central to the Siamese monarchy; I draw on Geertz's emphasis on the theatre state to refer to Chulalongkorn's new Bangkok. My research argues that Chulalongkorn's architectural commissions, in collaboration with royal ceremonies, create a theatrical scene for the capital city. It also aims to challenge the conventional understanding of Siam as an independent country by deploying Herzfeld's crypto-colonialism in order to explore the way in which Siam's westernised architecture related with colonial encounters in the Southeast Asian region.

Chapter four contextualises Chulalongkorn's commissions in a wider framework of current socio-cultural and political phenomena. The chapter pieces together the works of King Chulalongkorn, and focuses on his self-definition and self-representation and the public's perception of the King. Firstly, it maps out a circulation of Chulalongkorn's portraits in the public sphere, namely, his portraits on coins and postage stamps, as well as his appearance in royal ceremonies and pageantries. Secondly, the analysis aims to integrate Chulalongkorn's self-representation studied in earlier chapters in order to position them in a socio-political context. The second half of

the chapter considers the memorialisation of King Chulalongkorn as 'the Great Beloved King' through recent celebratory exhibitions in Bangkok. Spectatorship of the Thais in the present day is considerably affected by the nationalist-royalist ideology in Thai history. Drawing on the earlier scholarship surrounding the Cult of King Chulalongkorn, this chapter insists that many Thais still revere him as semi-divine, despite the King's effort in lessening the divinity of Siamese kingship. It also attempts to demonstrate the way in which the collective memory of King Chulalongkorn and the heritage of his works have an impact on the role of the Thai monarchy in creating a national identity.

Lastly, the conclusion of the thesis will summarise the issues and outcomes addressed and complicated by this study, positioning the analysis of research materials in a wider socio-political context to reassert and reinterpret Siam's westernisation of the late nineteenth to early twentieth century. A limitation of the examination and recommendations for future research will also be addressed.

CHAPTER ONE

THE POWER OF IMAGES: THE CREATION OF A MODERN MONARCH'S IDENTITY

I made a resolution that I shalt do my level best, my utmost to preserve the sovereignty of Siam with its independence and wealth intact.

King Chulalongkorn's speech to the people of Siam (1897)¹

This chapter aims to study the construction of self-identity among Siamese aristocrats. The works of art, namely, paintings, sculptures and photographs of Chakri kings and queens, are analysed to interpret their significance in the fashioning of Siamese monarchy's modern image relating to the civilised discourse in nineteenth-century Thailand. The chapter consists of three sections. Portraiture of King Chulalongkorn is examined thoroughly in the first section. His portraits vary in ages; from his childhood when he was still a young prince, his early years as the Fifth king of the Chakri Dynasty and countless photographs throughout his reign, taken both in Siam and abroad. This analysis aims to explore how Chulalongkorn presented himself as a modern monarch within and beyond the country through his portraits.

The second section studies portraiture of Chulalongkorn's four predecessors. These royal portraits were commissioned by Chulalongkorn to decorate two western style throne halls newly built in his reign, namely, the Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall (1876-1882) in the Grand Palace and the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall (1907-1915) in the Dusit Palace, both of which are located in Bangkok. The first set of royal portraits studied here are edisplayed on the upper floor of the east wing gallery of the Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall, King Chulalongkorn's first Western style reception hall that was designed by a European architect. The second set of royal portraits is the mural paintings at the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall, the Italian renaissance revival style reception hall. Unlike the portrait paintings at the Chakri Throne Hall which were displayed together in one same small section of the building, these mural paintings were painted separately for each of the Chakri monarchs onto the surfaces of apses and domes in the entirety of the throne hall's upper floor. Both set of the Chakri monarch's royal portraits are investigated in order to explore the symbolic meaning and socio-political context of these artworks. It aims to demonstrate that Chulalongkorn's

¹ Excerpted from King Chulalongkorn's speech in the ceremony on the occasion of his return from Europe in 1897, from "Phra Ratchadamrat Tob Prachachon Chaw Siam" (King Chulalongkorn's Oration to the Siamese), *RG* 14, (16 January 1897), 716. See Appendix H for the original text in Thai.

commissions of the portraits of Chakri rulers and the history of Chakri Dynasty frescos essentially reflect the new conception of kingship and enthronement in nineteenth-century Thailand. Additionally this investigation will reflect the significance of Bangkok, the location of Chulalongkorn's two throne halls where the royal portraits were displayed, which will consequently open up to an analysis of their architectural spaces as the Chakri Dynasty's places of royal power in Chapter 3.

The third and final section is an interpretation of women in the Siamese court's portraits. Ancient Thailand was a patriarchal society where men dominated the social organisations and held authority over women and children in their household. Men were viewed as the leaders; according to an old Thai proverb: 'men are elephant's front legs, women are elephant's hind legs.' In general, Siamese women had their roles in household management as wives and mothers, but they could work in various occupations to provide money for their families as well. However, Siamese women in the royal court were regarded differently. This group of women lived in the area reserved exclusively for use by them and the king, called the Inner Court ('Khet Phra Ratcha Than Chan Nai'). The residents of this area were unofficially called 'the Forbidden women' ('nang ham' or 'nang nai' in Thai), due to its restricted nature to outsiders. When photography was introduced to Siam in the first half of the nineteenth century, it was the first time that images of these forbidden women were revealed to outside viewers. Siamese women were captured in different costumes, locations, and activities. This new medium of portrait photography will be analysed alongside the oil painting portraits of Chulalongkorn's four queens on the upper floor of the Chakri Throne Hall's west wing gallery opposite the portraits of the kings. The study will explain how they present and represent the images of femininity and roles of Siamese female nobility.

INTRODUCTION

In the long history of the Siamese/Thai monarchy, the kings had been revered as a divine-like figure or a reincarnation of Hindu gods (particularly Indra, Vishnu and Shiva). This conviction was rooted in Thai society since the adoption of Indian culture in the thirteenth century.² Thai monarchs perpetually maintained their semi-divine status and image in their subjects' gaze. Jeremias Van Vliet, director of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in Ayutthaya (between 1638 and 1642), described the supremacy of a Siamese king who was 'honoured and worshipped by his subjects

² Thai kingdoms received Indian culture from the Mons and Khmers (Ancient Cambodia) who were true Indian states since the first expansion of Indianisation over Southeast Asia in the sixth-seventh century. See George Coédès, introduction to *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*, First published 1944, ed. Walter F. Vella, trans. Susan Brown Cowing (Honolulu: East West Centre Press, 1968), xvii.

more than a god.’³ Indian culture had immensely influenced Siamese royalty’s social and cultural identity through a process of selection and adaptation. Brahmanic rituals, court uniform and dress and Indic architecture functioned in this sense. The urban layout of early Bangkok and its predecessor, Ayutthaya (the capital city of Ayutthaya Kingdom; 1350-1767) were modelled after Indic cosmology with the royal palaces symbolising the Mount Meru, the centre of the universe. While Siamese rulers placed themselves as the central instrument of Siam’s polity, elite culture had played the leading role in the cultural discourse of ancient Siamese society as well. Indian culture was regarded as the apogee of high culture by Siamese elites. It seems plausible that Indianisation introduced the concept of civilising to Siamese sovereigns in an earlier era, from the mid fourteenth to the late eighteenth century. However, the expansion of Western imperialism over Southeast Asia in the nineteenth century had gradually altered the state of Siam’s Indianisation.⁴ The alteration of Siam was executed in a Western fashion: the bureaucratic and socio-cultural changes and even the mode of consumption of Siamese aristocracies. Westernisation was the chosen method King Mongkut and King Chulalongkorn employed to modernise their country.

Chulalongkorn’s oration to his subjects in the ceremony of his return from Europe in 1897 unmistakably declared his ambition to develop Thailand into a ‘civilised country’ like those in the Western world, particularly European countries, as he stated:

[...]the journey gave me such great opportunity to witness those civilisations which will greatly help developing this country. Many great countries in Europe are embellished with the splendid art and crafts from the collaboration of their sophisticates.⁵

According to this oration, the state visit to Europe was based on his intention to experience this civilisation firsthand. The speech makes clear that he viewed Europe as the archetype of civilised and modern countries. It also suggests Chulalongkorn’s perspective on his role as the country’s supreme leader. As King Chulalongkorn proclaimed in the epigraph to this chapter, he ranked his responsibility in benefitting the country as his top priority (as much as securing its independence).⁶ It’s not an overstatement to say that Siam in Chulalongkorn’s reign had developed into a modernising country. Many public services and public benefits were developed in this period, some of which continued from Mongkut’s reign. Roads, bridges, railways, public utilities, telegraph and postal systems were widely established in many cities across

³ L. F. Van Ravenswaay, trans., “A Translation of Van Vliet’s Description of the Kingdom of Siam,” *JSS* 7, 1 (1910), 18.

⁴ For more details on the indianisation in Thailand see Coédès, *The Indianized States*, 191-211.

⁵ “Phra Ratchadamrat,” 715. See Appendix H for the original text in Thai.

⁶ King Chulalongkorn’s first voyage to Europe took place only 4 years after the Franco-Siamese war in 1893 which resulted in the territorial loss of Siam. The loss was still a fresh wound then. So it is unsurprised that the King would raise this matter in his vow to his subjects. Independence has become a top priority issue among Thai patriots from then until now.

the country. Prior to the sovereignty of Chulalongkorn, the construction of infrastructure projects were rarely mentioned in the official historical records of Thailand. Rather, they promoted the achievements of Thai sovereigns from Ayutthaya Kingdom to the early Rattanakosin period (the late eighteenth to mid nineteenth century) as military leaders and devoted Buddhists (and occasional Hindu). Documentation on these public infrastructure projects indicate that the well-being of people was less important than the country's defence and support for religions.

Wilailekha Thavornthanasarn explains the nature of traditional Siamese bureaucracy and its relation to kingship with its connection to Buddhist laws. The Buddhist doctrine influenced and shaped the notion of Siamese kingship; the leader was the paragon of virtue. Therefore, the monarch would accumulate virtue by bringing happiness to his subjects.⁷ The Siamese king also bore the epithet of 'Phra Chao Phaendin' (literally in English: the Lord of the Land) which immediately granted him a mandate to do or not to do for the country. This authority and power was based on the notion of the king's personification as the avatar of Hindu gods or Buddhist Bodhisattva (one who seeks awakening and is on the path to becoming a Buddha), not a mere man.⁸ Practically, people or commoners were less important in the ancient Thai political regime. Hence the king's pious devotion to Buddhism and war campaigns against the enemies of the kingdom were enough to engender peace and blissfulness in the country and its people.

The increase in the discourse of civilisation in Siam during the nineteenth to twentieth century, also affected the conception of kingship. Atthachak Sattayanurak, a Thai scholar in political history, suggests that the connection between religious belief and kingship has been altered and loosened since the Third Reign, which he believes was caused by the expansion of international trade. Also in the Forth Reign, free trade under the conditions of the Bowring Treaty with the British Empire in 1855 and a new tax system were established. These changes greatly reshaped the wealth of Siamese kings. Because of the agreements of the Bowring Treaty, the royal government no longer maintained monopolies, while open trade with foreign countries expanded the production of commodities. The treaty and free trade set import and export duties at fixed, low levels and abolished most trading monopolies and internal taxes on goods and trades. Thus, the kingdom's financial support depended heavily on tariff and tax

⁷ Wilailekha Thavornthanasarn, *Chonchunnam Thai kab Kanrab Watthanatham Tawantok (Thai Aristocrats and the Derivation of Western Cultures)* (Bangkok: Muang Boran, 2002), 76-78.

⁸ Atthachak Sattayanurak, *Kanplianplaeng Lokkatat Khong Chonchanphunam Thai Tangtae Ratchakan thi 4-phor. sor. 2475 (Changes in Siamese Aristocracies' Perspectives from the Forth Reign-1932)* (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 1995), 29.

collection.⁹ King Mongkut rationalised the tax escalation by claiming that it was one of the king's duties to keep the country prosperous.¹⁰

This economic transition had progressively diverted the emphasis on the duties of the Siamese monarch from the accumulation of virtue toward the kingdom's welfare. This conviction was strengthened in the Fifth Reign. When Chulalongkorn ascended the throne in 1868, Siam had openly welcomed the West with the influx of Western economic and politico-cultural influences, modern technologies and the employment of foreigners by the court and royal government.¹¹ The interrelationship between Siam and the West proceeded as a Janus-faced character. While Siam embraced the trade, diplomatic arrangements and cooperations with the West, the Siamese aristocracy still remained very wary of the expansion of Western colonialism over their neighbours' territories which threatened Siam's sovereignty as well. Although powerful countries such as Britain and France did not proclaim their intention to annex Siam into their colonies, they were satisfied with Siam's role as the buffer state between France's Indochina and Burma as a province of British India.¹² Thongchai Winichakul examines the relationship between Siam and the West, he notes:

[While] studies on the influences of the West in Thailand have shown a diverse range of response, from dramatic Westernization to the persistence of Thai culture and identity [...] On the one hand, the West represents threat, danger, cruelty, abrasiveness and evil, and often arouses fear, apprehension and anxiety. On the other hand, it is also a figure of progress, modernity and aspiration for the tantalizing desirable future to which postcolonial societies wish to accede. The West is simultaneously a figure of the memory of a painful past and of anxious dreams about the future.¹³

Winichakul's critique of Siam/Thailand's strategy in dealing with the West clarifies the dilemma of westernisation in late nineteenth century Thailand.¹⁴ The interrelationship with the West pressed Siam to *modernise* itself, by which King Chulalongkorn and his administrators deployed Western knowledge and modern

⁹ Sattayanurak, *Kanplianplaeng*, 29-45; Robert E. Elson, "International Commerce, the State and Society: Economic and Social Change," in *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia Volume 2: The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Nicholas Tarling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 142.

¹⁰ Ibid., 45, cited in King Mongkut, *Prachum Phrakad Ratchakan thi 4 phor. sor. 2384-2400 (The Collection of Royal Announcements in the Forth Reign Between 1841-1857)* (Bangkok: Kuru Sabha, 1961), 133-134.

¹¹ Thavornthanasan, *Chonchunnam*, 81-84; Carl A. Trocki, "Political Structures in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," in *The Cambridge History*, 118-119.

¹² Nicholas Tarling, "The Establishment of the Colonial Regimes," in *The Cambridge History*, 46-53.

¹³ Thongchai Winichakul, "Coming to Terms with the West: Intellectual Strategies of Bifurcation and Post-Westernism in Siam," in *The Ambiguous Allure of the West: Traces of the Colonial in Thailand*, eds. Rachel V. Harrison and Peter A. Jackson (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010), 135 and 150.

¹⁴ Winichakul's investigation will be discussed further in my argument of postcolonial conditions in Thai studies.

technology to change Siam into a civilised country. The young King who was educated by European tutors, had begun a series of reforms in administration, education, social organisation, laws, economic infrastructure and telecommunications. During his reign (1868, 1910), Chulalongkorn made six voyages for both state and private visits. He had visited Singapore (1871-1896), Java (1871, 1896-1901), India (1871-1872) and Europe (1897-1907). While most of the studies on King Chulalongkorn's journeys highlighted his visits to Europe, Charnvit Kasetsiri, has recently argued that the most important visits were the voyages to the colonies of British Empire (Singapore and India) and the Netherlands (Java/Indonesia) during his early years. To support his idea, Kasetsiri states that the significant administration reforms in Siam transpired after these state visits and before his grand tour in Europe.¹⁵ Chulalongkorn's journeys to foreign countries were reported in the official documents of Siam and publicised in foreign newspapers along with numerous photographs and prints of Chulalongkorn and his entourage. Some of the images were regarded as propaganda for Siam's political benefit, such as the photograph of King Chulalongkorn with Tsar Nicholas II of Russia in 1897 during his sojourn in Saint Petersburg (Figure 1).¹⁶

Siam in the late nineteenth century was in transition towards modernity, with the gaze of the West fixed on the Southeast Asia region. It occurred to the Siamese monarch that the image and ideology of kingship should be changed. The traditional conception of kingship which regarded the kings as the reincarnation of Hindu gods and Buddhist Bodhisattva, was no longer a tenable and rational explanation amidst the westernised atmosphere burgeoning in Bangkok. Thus, Chulalongkorn refashioned his self-image and identity to perfectly complement his other efforts in reformation. During the reign of King Chulalongkorn, portraiture had become an essential part of the strategy for royalty to present themselves to the world. Portraits were not only a mere commemoration of the sitters, but also promulgated the westernised mode of creating self-identity. Together with the developments in public infrastructure and bureaucratic administration, works of art became the method for promoting and securing Siamese nobility's hegemony.

¹⁵ Charnvit Kasetsiri, "Ratchakan thi 5 kab Kan Sadet India phor. sor. 2414 lae Khwam Khaojai tor Kan Patisroop haeng Ratchasamai" (King Chulalongkorn and His Visit to India in 1871-72: The Comprehension of the Chakri Reformation) (paper presented at the seminar for the 150th Anniversary of the Birth of King Chulalongkorn "King Chulalongkorn: Siam-Southeast Asia-Jambudvipa"), Bangkok, Thailand, November, 20, 2003). I agree with Kasetsiri on the significance of his earlier state visit. The series of reforms had materialised after his visits to the colonies of the West and his second coronation in 1873, this will be discussed at length in Chapter Three.

¹⁶ This photograph of two monarchs from the East and the West was reproduced on a front page of French periodical, *L'Illustration*, 11 September 1897.

1.1 The Civilised King: Power and Persuasion of King Chulalongkorn's Official Portraits

The earliest extant image of King Chulalongkorn was taken when he was twelve years old by John Thomson (1837-1921), a Scottish photographer and writer who stayed briefly in Bangkok between 1865 and 1866. (Figure 2) The full-length portrait photograph shows the future king in the traditional costume and a top-knot hairstyle indicating that he was still a minor.¹⁷ Once he had succeeded to the throne, Chulalongkorn's portraits became more aligned with his reformation of Siam's bureaucracy and society. Trips to Singapore, Java and India (British Raj) in 1871-1872 were the first official occasions for Chulalongkorn to manifest his westernised royal body in public. During the trips, the young King was attired in almost completely Western fashion (a shirt with tie, jacket or frock coat, stockings and leather shoes) only the trousers were replaced by a 'chong kraben' (a knee-length lower garment, worn by both men and women) (Figure 3) which foreign correspondents called riding breeches or knickerbockers.¹⁸ Despite his hybrid costume, Chulalongkorn was praised in many foreign newspapers for his personality and sartorial display. A correspondent from *The Indian Public Opinion and Punjab Times* described Chulalongkorn's clothing as 'something very like an English gentlemen's morning dress' and that he was 'every inch a King!' while *The Rangoon Times* praised his character, '[...]like a well behaved English Gentlemen.'¹⁹ Major Edward Bosc Sladen, a British army officer posted in Burma who was chosen to accompany Chulalongkorn, also approved of the Siamese elites' Europeanised modes of practice that helped to construct an intimate domestic relationship between the Siamese and the British.²⁰

The first trips abroad memorably projected the representation of Chulalongkorn as a young monarch with a keen interest in Western technology and infrastructure. It is logical that Chulalongkorn may have gained an advantage from these state visits in proclaiming his role as the head of the state despite the fact that Si Suriyawong acted as his regent during that time. According to Prince Damrong's account, King

¹⁷ Traditionally, Siamese children wore a top knot until the age of eleven (for girls) and thirteen (for boys). The clipping of the top knots in the Soka (topknot-cutting) ceremony marked the entrance into their adulthood. This photograph was probably taken before his Soka ceremony on January 1866, according to Thomson who was invited to this ceremony by King Mongkut and took several photographs during the ceremony. See John Thomson, *The Straits of Malacca, Indo-China and China: Ten Years Travels, Adventures and Residence Abroad* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Low, & Searle, 1875), 95-96. During Thomson's sojourn in Bangkok, *Bangkok Recorder*, the newspaper run by Dr. Dan Bradley also published the advertisement for Thomson. See *Bangkok Recorder* 1, 15 (Oct 5, 1865), 133.

¹⁸ Sachchidanand Sahai, *India in 1872: As seen by the Siamese*, trans. Kanthika Sriudom (Bangkok: Textbooks Project, 2003), 170-174.

¹⁹ Sahai, *India in 1872*, 174 and 176.

²⁰ Edward B. Sladen, *King Chulalongkorn's Journey to India 1872* (Bangkok: River Books, 2000), 16-17.

Chulalongkorn's second coronation on 16 November 1873 significantly symbolised his rightful sovereignty, thus ending the first regency of his reign.²¹ Portrait photography of King Chulalongkorn taken by Francis Chit during the second coronation²² depicts the King seated on the throne, attired in the ceremonial dress with the Royal Regalia, and the Royal Utensils placed on either side (Figure 4).²³

His formal portraits which came after the second coronation mostly portray King Chulalongkorn in Western style garments, such as his portrait painting in the east wing of the Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall (Figure 5). Chulalongkorn is clothed in a Western style military uniform and a chong kraben, the same fashion of hybrid costume as appeared in his previous portrait. The ensemble of the Royal Regalia, the Royal Utensils, the royal gown and the royal decorations signifies the supremacy of the King. Although the date of the portrait is unknown, the Star of The Order of The Royal House of Chakri worn on his left chest implies that the painting was commissioned after the establishment of the Order in 1882, the year of the Bangkok Centennial.²⁴ Another commission executed in the same year is the mosaic of King Chulalongkorn (Figure 6), made in a workshop in Venice, Italy. Chulalongkorn is also dressed in military uniform with various types of Royal Decorations, the mosaic ornaments the segmental pediment of the Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall's main entrance.

The year 1882 was a crucial point for Chulalongkorn's commission to commemorate his regal power. It was the year that the Chakri Dynasty and Bangkok as the capital city celebrated their centenary; it provided Chulalongkorn a greatly opportune time for orchestrating his visual-representation as the reigning monarch. This portrait painting led to other portraits of King Chulalongkorn's predecessors executed between 1896 and 1897. The result of the Franco-Siamese War in 1893 in

²¹ Prince Damrong, introduction to *Prawat Chaokhunphra Prayoonwong (The Biography of Chaokhunphra Prayoonwong)* (Bangkok: FAD, 1943), 48-50.

²² Francis Chit who converted to Christianity, hence his Christian name 'Francis,' was the first Thai professional photographer. Chit opened his photography studio, 'Francis Chit and Son' in 1863. See Sakda Siriphan, *Kasat lae Klong: Wiwatthanakan Kanthaiphap nai Prathet Thai, phor. sor. 2388-2535 (King and Camera: Evolution of Photography in Thailand, 1845-1992)* (Bangkok: Dansuttha Kanphim, 1992), 61.

²³ The Royal Regalia of Thailand is the symbol of kingship, used mainly during the coronation ceremony. The set of Royal Regalia consists of Royal Nine-Tiered Umbrella (Phra Maha Sawetta Chatra) which is the most important regalia and is used more frequently than other items, Great Crown of Victory (Phra Maha Pichai Mongkut), Sword of Victory (Phra Saeng Khan Chai Si), Royal Staff (Tharn Phra Gorn), Royal Fan (Walawichani) and Flywhisk (Phra Sae Jammari) and Royal Slippers (Chalong Phra Baat Cherng Ngorn). The Royal Utensils comprises four items, namely, the Betel Nut Set (Phan Phrasi), the Water Urn (Phra Mondop Rattanakarund), the Libation Vessel (Phra Suphannaraj) and the Receptacle (Phra Suphannasi). They are always placed on either side of the throne or seat during royal ceremonies. They are recognised as the symbol more than the objects for the personal use of the royalty.

²⁴ "Phraratchabanyat Samrab Khrueng Ratcha Itsariyaphon An Mi Kiatti Khun Rung Rueang Ying Maha Chakkri Boromma Ratcha Wong," (The Act of The Order of the Royal House of Chakri) RG 11, section 14 (30 June 1894), 108.

which Siam was defeated, possibly pressured Chulalongkorn to commission the portraits of the Chakri kings to reaffirm his power and to regain the allegiance of his subjects. Interestingly, the aftermath of the Franco-Siamese War affected the self-identity and self-representation of Chulalongkorn as well. The hybrid costume ceased in the mid-1890s, by which time the chong kraben was replaced by trousers, presumably linked to the need to boost the image of the Siamese army after their failure in war.²⁵ From the late 1890s onward, King Chulalongkorn habitually wore military dress, comprised of a white jacket and black trousers, in his official portraits (Figure 7) and public appearance in the state ceremonies (Figure 8).

The zenith of King Chulalongkorn's portraits in military uniform (or portraits in general) were the commissions in 1907: his full-length portrait (Figure 9) by Charles Auguste Émile Durand, also widely known as Carolus-Duran (Figure 10) and the Equestrian Statue at the Royal Plaza, Bangkok (Figure 11) which was sculpted at the Susse Frère Foundry in Paris. In contrast to his other portraits, the Equestrian Statue was not his own commission, but it was funded by the public's donation at the cost of 800,000 baht (approximately) as part of the royal government's celebrations of the Fortieth Anniversary of the Accession of King Chulalongkorn ('Phraratchaphithi Ratchamongkhon').²⁶ However, the statue was produced with the King's consent. Chulalongkorn had sat for both the painter, Carolus-Duran, and the unnamed sculptor of the foundry during his second visit to Europe.²⁷ The painting portrays King Chulalongkorn in military dress with the gold-woven royal gown and the insignia. The King stood against a plain dark background as generally seen in portrait paintings during the same period of both Carolus-Duran's and other portraitists'. The absence of Royal Regalia suggests that the ancient symbol of kingship was no longer required to represent his regal power. Impressed by this portrait, Clément Armand Fallières, president of the French Third Republic borrowed the painting to exhibit in the Salon for a week, with the permission from the King.²⁸ While the portrait painting was on display for Parisians public, the Equestrian Statue was shipped to Bangkok to be celebrated in the fortieth anniversary of his reign, in order to make a good spectacle for his local subjects who assembled in the opening ceremony on 11 November 1908.²⁹ The statue which shows Chulalongkorn in military uniform on horseback, together with an

²⁵ Maurizio Peleggi, *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 59-60.

²⁶ Prince Damrong, "Rueng Sang Phra Borommaroop Song Mah" (The King's Equestrian Statue), in *Choomnoom Phra Nippon (Bang Rueng) (Selected Miscellaneous Writings)* (Bangkok: FAD, 1957), 67-69. These celebrations will be discussed further in Chapter Four.

²⁷ King Chulalongkorn, *Phraratchanipon Rueng Klai Ban (Klai Ban: King Chulalongkorn's Diary and Travel Writings)*, First published 1907 (Bangkok: Global Intercommunication, 2008), 179 and 328-329.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 426-427.

²⁹ The opening ceremony of the Equestrian Statue will be discussed at length in Chapter Four.

extravagant opening ceremony had an immediate propaganda impact as a visual image for the King in order to celebrate what was then the longest reign. The refashioning of King Chulalongkorn's self-representation was not that different from nineteenth-century fashionable consumption in Europe where sartorial desire and the notions of 'manliness' were applied to men to construct their masculine identity in the public sphere.³⁰ Chulalongkorn's clothing choice of military uniform for state affairs was not far from this practice.

Western fashion was invariably the King's preference when he visited European countries in 1897 and 1907, or what Peleggi terms the 'colonial stage'.³¹ The photograph of Chulalongkorn and his sons, who were then studying in England, captures Siamese royalty in morning dress (Figure 12). All of the young princes wore 'Eton suits,' a school uniform which became popularised in Edwardian times, known as the 'best wear' of young boys.³² Ten years later during his second visit to Europe, Chulalongkorn also had a full-length portrait photograph done, wearing in Cambridge University's academic dress for an honorary doctorate in law on 25 June 1907 (Figure 13).³³ The photograph of Siamese royalty in academic dress implies the significance of education in Siam's modernisation. A modern education system had been introduced in 1878 and members of the elite were educated in a Western system.³⁴ An engraving of King Edward VII's Windsor garden-party on 22 June 1907 from *the Illustrated London News* shows King Chulalongkorn in formal dress accompanying Queen Alexandra (Figure 14). The King of Siam's sartorial display in a frock coat and a top hat is comparable to the other distinguished and famous guests of King Edward VII.³⁵ Chulalongkorn, however, consciously acknowledged that Western hospitality and deference he had received during his trip was temporary; it did not eliminate the fact

³⁰ Christopher Breward, *The Hidden Consumer: Masculinities, Fashion and City Life, 1860-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 6-9.

³¹ Peleggi, *Lords of Things*, 61.

³² Jennifer Craik, "Modern Masculinity and the Rise of School Uniforms," in *The Men's Fashion Reader*, ed. Peter McNeil and Vicki Karaminas (Oxford: Berg, 2009), 316.

³³ Chulalongkorn also stated in his letter to Prince Damrong that he received an honorary degree from Oxford University prior to University of Cambridge. See King Chulalongkorn, *Phraratchahatthalekha Phrabat Somdet Phra Chulachomklao Chaoyuhua Phraratchathan Somdet Phrachaborommawongthoe Kromphraya Damrong Rachanubhap Naiwela Sadet Phraratchadamnoen Praphat Europe Krang thi 2 nai phor. sor. 2450* (H.M. King Chulalongkorn's Letters to H.R.H. Prince Damrong Rachanubhap During the Second Visit to Europe in 1907) (Bangkok: FAD, 1948), 32.

³⁴ Before the introduction of modern education in the Fifth Reign, the Buddhist monastery education had been the centre of instruction and learning in literacy and Buddhist canon. Most of the students educated in the Western educational system and curriculum were of royal and noble families. See David K. Wyatt, "Education and Modernization of Thai Society," in *Change and Persistence in Thai Society, Essays in Honor of Lauriston Sharp*, ed. G. William Skinner and A. Thomas Kirsch (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1975), 134-137.

³⁵ *Illustrated London News*, Saturday, June 29, 1907, 983.

that Siam was still unequal to the West.³⁶ Chulalongkorn's remarks suggest that the refashioning of Siamese elites can be considered as an ambivalent identification of colonial identity in which Siam adopted westernised modes of practice out of both desire and fear, despite their independence.³⁷

Self-representation of King Chulalongkorn in private space also strongly depicts his westernised modes of consumption. There are quite a large number of his portrait paintings and photographs with his family, presented his domestic life. The portrait of King Chulalongkorn and Prince Asdang Dejavadh depicts the King in caring paternal pose, holding his son who dresses in an elaborate Western style outfit (Figure 15).³⁸ More visual images which portray the royalty's domesticity were a series of unofficial photographs displaying Siamese royalty at leisure demonstrate the adoption of Western practices as much as the official portraits. These are even more varied, from driving a car (Figure 16) to holding a fancy dress party (Figure 17). Interestingly, King Chulalongkorn was also the first monarch of Siam who had his portrait printed on the label of imported merchandise (Figure 18).³⁹ Possessing European luxurious commodities and practicing European etiquette indicate the way in which Siamese elites constituted a cultural hegemony in the Siamese society. Their acquisition of imported goods and westernised modes of practice caused and widened fractions in Siam's social classes, in which case, were determined by taste, as tastes 'are the practical affirmation of an inevitable difference.'⁴⁰ David K. Wyatt also comments on the social schism created by the westernised mode of consumption of the Siamese elite which expanded the gap in the Siamese social classes even further than it was before Chulalongkorn's reign.⁴¹ Thus, Siam (particularly Bangkok) could be seen as Pratt's conceptualisation of a contact zone,⁴² both in the domestic sphere between the capital city and rural areas and between Siam and the West.

³⁶ King Chulalongkorn, *Phraratchahatthalekha*, 27.

³⁷ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 2004), 121-131.

³⁸ The date of this double portrait was unknown, however, this portrait was presumably executed around the early 1890s since Prince Asdang was born on 12 May 1889. Apinan Poshyananda attributes this portrait along with Queen Saovabha's portrait (Figure 57) to the workshop of Alexander Bassano, a famous Victorian photographer who also practiced in painting in his earlier days according to the information provided by the National Portrait Gallery, London.

³⁹ NAT, Ministry of the Royal Household, 6.2/18-19.

⁴⁰ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London: Routledge, 2010), 49-50.

⁴¹ David K. Wyatt, *Thailand: A Short History* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1984), 224.

⁴² Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 6-7.

1.2 Hegemonic Reaffirmation: The Portraiture of the Late Kings of the Chakri Dynasty

Between 1896 and 1897, the portraits of the Chakri kings and queens were produced to adorn 'the King and Queen Gallery' in the Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall, the very same gallery where the portrait of King Chulalongkorn (Figure 5) is displayed. The name of the artist(s) was unknown, but they were probably done in Europe while King Chulalongkorn made his first visit there.⁴³ The monumental oil paintings show full-length portraits of Chakri rulers, either in standing or seated postures.

The full-length portraits of King Phra Phutta Yotfa Chulaloke (hereafter referred to as King Yotfa; reigned from 1782 to 1809), King Phra Phutta Loetla Nabhalai (hereafter referred to as King Loetla; reigned from 1809 to 1824) and King Jessadabodindra (otherwise known as Phra Nangklao: his honorific name) (Figures 19-21) have a similar composition. The monarchs are shown in a room with a large window; the opulent curtains are drawn aside revealing the landscape of Bangkok in the background. The paintings show the first three monarchs of the Chakri dynasty standing, wearing the Gown of the Great House of Chakri with a high-collar jacket and chong kraben encircled by sashes or belts. They all hold a sword in their left hands, their right hands straight at the side, except for King Loetla whose right hand lifts up slightly to place it on the table top. There is also another pronounced distinction between the kings' posture; the first two kings have their faces turned away from the viewer, gazing into the distance whereas King Jessadabodindra looks directly at the viewer.

All three paintings show the Royal Regalia and Royal Utensils, placed beside the figures in the same fashion. The Great Crown of Victory, the Sword of Victory and the Royal Flywhisk are on top of the embroidered red fabric covered table on the left side of the canvas. The Royal Fan is placed among the Royal Utensils on the other side. In the background, a golden chair is arranged directly behind the kings. The chair or 'Phrathinang Kong' further magnified their kingship because it was the chair that was placed on the high pedestal throne in royal ceremonies.⁴⁴ The garuda motif detail in its pedestal also represents kingship, as garuda is the mount of Vishnu in Hindu mythology, and the Thai monarchs are believed to be his avatars, hence the name 'Rama' of the Chakri kings (Rama is one of Vishnu's reincarnations) was adopted. It is

⁴³ A telegram from *Krommuen Pitthayalab* to King Chulalongkorn, who was in Florence during his first visit to Europe in 1897, mentioned the measurements of canvas and frames of the portrait of King Phra Phuttha Yotfa Chulalok (King Rama I). Cited in Apinan Poshyananda, *Modern Art in Thailand* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1992), 12.

⁴⁴ For example, 'Phra Thinang Phuttan Kanchana Singhassana' in the Amarin Winitchai Throne Hall, used in the ceremony of the First Royal Assembly or on the sovereign's birthday.

believed that these portraits are based on photographs of the posthumous statues of the kings, now enshrined in Prasat Phra Thep Bidorn (literally in English: the Shrine of the Celestial Ancestors) or the Royal Pantheon in Wat Phra Si Rattana Satsadaram (commonly known as Wat Phra Kaew) (Figure 22).⁴⁵ These bronze statues were originally executed by the commission of King Mongkut, to venerate his predecessors (his grandfather, his father and his half-brother) as the celestial ancestors. However, he died before the works could begin. The models were made in 1869 and the casting started three years later in Chulalongkorn's reign.⁴⁶

In his letter to Prince Narissara Nuwattiwongse (1863-1947; hereafter referred to as Prince Naris), dated 12 May 1934, Prince Damrong mentioned the old Siamese tradition of making sovereign's statues in the forms of Buddha images or Hindu gods. For instance, the gilded bronze crowned Buddha images of King Yotfa and King Loetla (Figure 23) both stood about three metres high and were decorated with the Nine Auspicious Gems ('nopparat'). They were cast in the Third Reign and installed in the ordination hall ('phra ubosot') of Wat Phra Si Rattana Satsadaram.⁴⁷ Therefore, the statues of Siamese kings before the nineteenth century are not an accurate representation; rather they reflect the strong conviction of the divine status of the Chakri monarchs.

However, prior to his commission of his predecessors' statues, Mongkut already had his own realistic portrait sculptures done. This marked the first royal portrait statue that showed the sitter's physicality in the realistic style. It was done by a French sculptor, Émile François Chatrousse (Figure 24). The gilded bronze statuette is approximately sixty centimetres high. It portrays the king wearing a jacket over a high-collar button-down shirt with chong kraben and a Scots cap. The costume was probably the same one which he wore in the photograph of himself and Queen Debsirindra (Figure 25). The sculptor designed the King Mongkut statuette in Western fashion. It features a slight muscular figure in *contrapposto* stance and a structural support for the statuette behind the right leg. The statuette was sent from Paris to Bangkok in 1863. In 1934, Prince Damrong's correspondence stated that King Mongkut probably was not satisfied with the statuette's inaccurate details of his physical likeness. King Mongkut later ordered another life-size statue to be done by Luang

⁴⁵ Poshyananda, *Modern Art*, 12.

⁴⁶ Prince Narissara Nuwattiwongse and Prince Damrong Rachanubhap, *San Somdet Lem 3 (Correspondence between Prince Narissara Nuwattiwongse and Prince Damrong Rachanubhap, Volume 3)* (Bangkok: Kuru Sabha, 1962), 269.

⁴⁷ These Buddha images were named Phra Phuttha Yotfa Chulalok and Phra Phutta Loetla Nabhalai; thus they have become the honorific names of King Rama I and II whose regnal names were undocumented. See M.R. Suriyawutthi Suksawad, *Phra Phuttapattima nai Phra Borommaharatchawang (Buddha Images in The Grand Palace)* (Bangkok: OHMPPS, 1992), 100-103.

Theprojana in the same clothing but with more slender physical appearance. (Figure 26).⁴⁸

There are yet earlier realistic sculptures in Thailand which are the statues of high-ranking monks. They were also the first Thai sculptures that portrayed the physical characteristics of the sitters, instead of the ideal images of gods, deities or Buddha images. According to Prince Naris, four portrait sculptures of the Buddhist patriarchs and high-ranking monks were already created prior to King Mongkut's commission of the kings' statues. However, only two of them bear an inscription with the details of the dates and the names of the sitters and their sculptors, namely Somdet Phra Phuttha Kosachan at Wat Molee Loke and Somdet Phra Sangkaraja Suk at Wat Mahathat. The former was sculpted in 1843 by Luang Kalama Wichit and Master Chim, the latter in 1844 by Phra Thep Rotchana by the commissions of King Jessadabodindra and made posthumously (Figure 27).⁴⁹ These Buddhist patriarchs' statues are shown in seated posture, similar to general seated Buddha images, except for the faces which bear a slight physiognomy of the sitters.⁵⁰ Despite their representation of the appearances of the sitters, these statues still function as religious idols as stated in the inscriptions.

The statues of King Mongkut and Buddhist patriarchs have raised a very interesting problem of realistic sculpture in Thailand. The most important question is not about its stylistic development over the course of time, but the motivations and visions behind the shift in the idea of creating portraiture among the Siamese. Before the nineteenth century, portraiture was foreign to Siamese society. Siamese figurative sculpture was limited to only the creation of Buddha images, Hindu god idols or minor deities from Buddhist and Hindu mythologies. The closest statues to portrait sculpture were the statues of Buddhist monks who were highly revered as holy figures (akin to Christian saints) as mentioned above. The first real portrait which was done when the subject-model was alive was that of King Mongkut. In which case, Prince Damrong suggested that King Mongkut's portrait sculpture by Chatrousse was possibly done with inspiration from the portrait busts of Emperor Napoleon III (r. 1852-1870) and Empress Eugénie of France (Figure 28) which were sent to the Siamese court.⁵¹ However, Prince Damrong's speculation is, in fact, mistaken. The bronze busts were actually given to King Mongkut several years later when Gustave Duchesne de Bellecourt was sent by Emperor Napoleon III as his envoy extraordinary to the Court of Siam in

⁴⁸ Prince Narissara Nuwattiwongse and Prince Damrong Rachanubhap, *San Somdet Lem 4 (Correspondence between Prince Narissara Nuwattiwongse and Prince Damrong Rachanubhap, Volume 4)* (Bangkok: Kuru Sabha, 1962), 164-169 and 192-193.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 295-296.

⁵⁰ Poshyananda, *Modern Art*, 8.

⁵¹ Prince Naris and Prince Damrong, *San Somdet Lem 3*, 269.

November 1867.⁵² It would appear that Mongkut had seen portrait statues elsewhere or had an idea of commissioning his portrait sculpture before he received these gifts from the French emperor.

Nevertheless, King Mongkut, as a science and technology enthusiast, was accustomed to the concept of portraiture long before that time. The camera and photography were introduced to the Siamese around the mid-nineteenth century. It is believed that Bishop Pallegoix was the first person who bought the daguerreotype camera from France to Siam in 1845. King Mongkut was well acquainted with Bishop Pallegoix and was therefore probably familiar with this newest technology from the West even before his ascension in 1851. Between 1856-1861, Mode Amatayakul, a Siamese official and the first photographer of Thailand, had taken a series of daguerreotypes of King Mongkut and his family, for example, a daguerreotype photograph of King Mongkut which was sent as a gift to Queen Victoria in November 1857 (figure 29) and a daguerreotype of King Mongkut and his daughter was sent to James Buchanan, President of the United States in 1861 (Figure 30). Mongkut also permitted John Thomson to take his photograph in the Grand Palace in 1865 (Figure 31).⁵³ In addition, at least three other portrait paintings of King Mongkut existed. One of them is the painting which was reproduced as an engraving in Sir John Bowring's volume *The Kingdom and People of Siam*, first published in 1857 (Figure 32). Also, the King had extended his portrait collection with those sculptures mentioned earlier in 1863 and 1868.

King Mongkut's sculptures and the monks' statues distinctively signify and function in dissimilar ways. While the statues of the Buddhist patriarchs were designated as religious idols and still display the Buddha image posture, King Mongkut's statuette and life-sized sculpture were fashioned in an accurate likeness of himself. The idea of the commemoration of Chakri kings had changed considerably from the Third Reign to the Forth Reign, from the symbolic representation of the Buddha images to the likeness in portrait sculptures. King Mongkut's enthusiasm for portraiture had ended the superstitious belief in the royal court at the very least; that portraiture, especially photography, would shorten that person's life. He instituted a new mode of practice in which a secular image was intended to commemorate a living king.⁵⁴ Henceforth, royal portraiture no longer held the purpose of being iconic images for worshipping as it was in the old Siamese custom. This new practice was continued and intensified by Chulalongkorn who also commissioned his father's full-length portrait in the same Chakri kings' portraits set in the Chakri Throne Hall (Figure 33).

⁵² Amédée Gréhan, *Le Royaume de Siam* (Paris: S. Raçon, 1868), 65-69.

⁵³ Thomson, *The Straits of Malacca*, 93-95.

⁵⁴ Poshyananda, *Modern Art*, 9.

In contrast to the portrait paintings of the first three Chakri kings, King Mongkut's portrait depicts different details from the former. Here, Mongkut is shown in three-quarter profile. He is seated in a chair, holding a staff in his right hand. The likeness of King Mongkut is very accurate, the artist even captured the imperfection of his mouth; the king had suffered a partial paralysis during his monkhood. However, the flaw is less noticeable than in the frontal view, which might be the reason for this selected pose. The King wears a mix of clothing of a uniform of French Field Marshal and a chong kraben. The Crown of Victory is placed on the side table along with the Royal Utensils. The composition and other details in the painting are identical to the photograph of King Mongkut by Thomson in 1865. However, instead of the whole Western military uniform, Siamese chong kraben replaces the uniform trousers, matching the embroidered slippers, which replace leather shoes, in the painting. The mixed clothing of King Mongkut is similar to the style King Chulalongkorn wears in his portrait in the same collection.

From the portraits of King Yotfa to King Chulalongkorn, the portrayal of the monarchs' attires cautiously presents the invention of royal self-identity. The first three kings are shown in Siam's traditional court dress. Significantly, this clothing denotes the periods of their sovereignty which is called 'Premodern Siam' in the chronology of Rattanakosin period's official history. Afterward, the Siamese royal court's sartorial custom had dramatically changed around the second half of the nineteenth century. The Western style military dress was adopted and became favourable attire among royalty and nobility when posing in front of the camera. The same manner could be found in other non-Western monarchs, such as King David Kalākaua (reigned from 1874 to 1891), the last monarch of Hawaii and Emperor Meiji of Japan (Matsuhito: reigned from 1867 to 1912).⁵⁵

As Thomson noted in his journal, when he was granted permission to photograph the Siamese King and his palace in 1865, King Mongkut's original idea was to be photographed in the ritual white robe but he changed his mind and reappeared in a French Field Marshal's uniform.⁵⁶ King Mongkut's knowledge of portraiture showed in the way the King effectively orchestrated the sitting; to Thomson's surprise, he was unable to control the situation.⁵⁷ The images of King Mongkut and King Chulalongkorn dressed in Western style military uniforms resemble European monarchs' fashion in the contemporary official photographs and paintings. Siamese monarchs' self-

⁵⁵ Peleggi, *Lords of Things*, 8 and 19.

⁵⁶ Thomson, *The Straits of Malacca*, 93-94.

⁵⁷ Originally, Thomson made the initial approaches to make a photograph rather than a direct commission from the royal court of Siam. This opportunity of photographing a group of interesting and unusual portraits would prove to be of considerable interest to his British audience. See Richard Ovenden and Michael Gray, *John Thomson (1837-1921) Photographer* (Edinburgh: Stationery Office, 1997), 110.

representation from the mid-nineteenth century onwards was not only the new modes of practice towards modernity, but was also an opportunity to conform their kingship to Western sophistication. Mongkut's sudden reconsideration of his attire exemplifies his concern for the benefit of westernised appearance in the eyes of the westerner.

The use of visual representation by King Mongkut has been analysed as a strategy to legitimise his monarchical status upon local power as well.⁵⁸ This analysis is well-reasoned, considering the succession was in disarray when King Jessadabodindra died without appointing an heir apparent. King Mongkut's ascension to the throne was supported by Grand Commander Dis Bunnag, not by the late king's appointment.⁵⁹ Moreover, his younger brother, Prince Chutamani (1808-1866) who was crowned Second King and entitled King Pinklao, received much admiration from foreign dignitaries. Most importantly he owned private troops which rivalled that of the King's royal army.⁶⁰ Here, the legitimacy and security of Mongkut's ascension and the Vice King inevitably obscured the King's sovereignty thus sartorial play was applied to reaffirm his kingship. Rosalind C. Morris notes that the photography of King Mongkut of Siam wearing a French Field Marshal's uniform marked and expressed his status as 'the King of Siam.'⁶¹ However, the dissemination of King Mongkut's photography was limited. The use of his westernised images to strengthen his kingship was less influential than his son's. His daguerreotype photograph sent as a gift to Queen Victoria in 1857 endorsed his sovereignty more significantly than Thomson's unofficial photography. The daguerreotype of King Mongkut was taken by Amatayakul in the early years of his reign. King Mongkut appears attired in the traditional regal dress,

⁵⁸ Caverlee Cary, "In the Image of the King: Two Photographs from Nineteenth-Century Siam," in *Studies in Southeast Asian Art: Essays in Honor of Stanley J. O'Connor*, ed. Nora A. Taylor (Ithaca N.Y.: Southeast Asia Program Publications, 2000), 122-124 and 126-128.

⁵⁹ Before 1886, there was no codified law of formal system governing Siam's royal succession. The problematic case includes the ascension of King Jessadabodindra who was a firstborn son to King Rama II and his mistress, despite King Mongkut's birthright as the legitimate son of King Rama II (born to Queen Srisuriyendra). The problematics of the unauthenticated statement of succession can be a plausible explanation to King Mongkut's concern in the relation between birthright and kingship. This issue had been intensified and solved by King Chulalongkorn who abolished the title of 'the Front Palace' which was granted to the heir presumptive to the throne. The term 'Front Palace' was also applied to the office and residence of the heir presumptive (also known as the Vice King). The last occupant and the last Front Palace was Prince Wichaichan (6 April 1838 – 28 August 1885) who was the eldest son of King Pinklao, the Second King in the reign of King Mongkut, which made him a first cousin to Chulalongkorn. After the death of Prince Wichaichan the office of Front Palace was left vacant. Thus Chulalongkorn established the title of Crown Prince to which he made his eldest son by Queen Savang Vadhana: Prince Maha Vajirunhis Siam's first Crown Prince on 14 January 1886, following the European tradition of succession. The title of Front Palace or the Second King was thus abolished. See "Kan Prakad Chaleom Phra Poramabhi Thai," (The Appointment of the Title of the Crown Prince of Siam Announcement) RG 3, section 44 (March, 1st, 1886), 368-370.

⁶⁰ Wyatt, *Thailand*, 310.

⁶¹ Rosalind C. Morris, "Photography and the Power of Images in the History of Power," in *Photographies East: The Camera and Its Histories in East and Southeast Asia*, ed. Rosalind C. Morris (Durham, United States: Duke University Press, 2009), 126.

sitting on a throne with one hand holding a ceremonial sword. The photograph illustrated him as a rightful king of Siam, while King Pinklao, Siam's Second King, never had such a privilege: the symbol of kingship was absent from his portrait painting (Figure 34).

Between 1906 and 1908, another series of paintings depicting the Chakri kings was commissioned to decorate Chulalongkorn's new Western style throne hall: the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall in the Dusit Palace. The wall paintings decorating five apses and one dome are designed to depict the history of the Chakri Dynasty from the First to the Fifth reign (later the King Vajiravuth scene was added) which strongly suggest their intentional propaganda value. These wall paintings were executed by Italian painters: Carlo Rigoli (1883 - 1962) and Galileo Chini (1873-1956). The fresco of the north transept's apse shows King Yotfa, then Somdet Chaophraya Maha Kasatsuk (the supreme military leader), upon returning from the battle in Cambodia (Figure 35). He was the first noble who was promoted as 'Somdet Chao Phraya,' the highest rank the nobility could attain, equal to that of royalty. This title was granted to him for his successful exploits in war. He appears in the ceremonial gown with a wide brimmed hat, the same one as shown in his portrait at the Chakri Throne Hall. The founder of Bangkok rides on a war elephant's back, leads his troops back to the capital city and is welcomed by the nobles. The fresco illustrates the monarch as the warrior king who defeated the enemies of the land and reunited the country.

Continuing on the theme of Chakri kings' political agency, King Loetla and King Jessadabodindra are portrayed as patrons of art and pious Buddhists (Figures 36-37) as Buddhism had been essential to Siamese kingship for many centuries.⁶² The fresco adorns the ceiling of the east dome. The scenes depict both monarchs in the same setting on either ends of the oval dome. The kings are presented in the ceremonial procession during the construction of the Buddhist temple. The fresco in the apse at the west end, which is the representation of King Mongkut (Figure 38), continues on this theme. During his monkhood, Mongkut had reformed Buddhist practices and continued his interest after ascending to the throne. The artists designed the scene depicting Mongkut sitting in front of a grand Buddha image, Phra Buddha Shinnasi. The King's seat is on the high pedestal throne and is surrounded by Buddhist monks and other priests from various religions. It signifies King Mongkut as the great patron and advocate of every religion. However, his seat being right under the monumental Buddha image suggests the King's supreme devotion to Buddhism.

The scene of King Chulalongkorn's absolutism and the abolition of slavery was chosen to decorate the apse at the south wall of the central throne hall (Figure 39). The

⁶² Horace Geoffrey Quaritch Wales, *Siamese State Ceremonies: Their History and Function* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1931), 3 and 31-32.

fresco shows Chulalongkorn standing gracefully in the centre of the scene, presumably modelled after his portrait by Carolus-Duran, with a group of former slaves bowing and kneeling at the base of his pedestal. The construction of the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall is displayed on the right hand side in the background, while the opposite side shows international trade. This, as well as the other four frescos, is an imagined scene.⁶³ On the one hand, the artists succeeded in manifesting this historical event in a heroic display. It looks as if the freed slaves are worshipping the divine-like monument of the King rather than Chulalongkorn himself. On the other hand, the irony is clear; Chini and Rigoli chose to portray the glorification of the King instead of depict a sense of liberation or focus on the freed slaves. To emphasise Chulalongkorn's greatness and hierarchal power, his initial, 'Chor Por Ror' is also painted on the ceiling of the Central dome. Western iconography was effectively deployed to support Chulalongkorn's modernising hierarchy and create the new myth of the Siamese monarch.

As the construction of the throne hall carried on and was completed in the Sixth Reign, the scene from the coronation of King Chulalongkorn's successor is shown in the tympanum above the central throne hall. King Vajiravudh's coronation took place in the Dusit Maha Prasat Throne Hall, the Grand Palace in 1911 (Figure 40). Vajiravudh's coronation scene, though elegant, lacks the potency of the heroic composition when compared to the historical paintings of his predecessors. The series of the Chakri Dynasty's historical paintings at the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall reflects the Chakri Dynasty's illustrious lineage. It produces the ideal images of Siamese sovereigns who protect the country, support art, culture and religions and secure the freedom and happiness of the people. Although they do not represent the kings' duties accurately, they express an iconographic illustration which served King Chulalongkorn's aim well.⁶⁴

1.3 Presentation and Representation of Women at the Siamese Royal Court

With the arrival of portraiture, the presentation and representation of Siamese women (particularly those of the royal family and nobility) became more visible to the

⁶³ In terms of an imaginary locus, this fresco is very similar to Thomas Jones Barker's *The Secret of England's Greatness (Queen Victoria presenting a Bible in the Audience Chamber at Windsor)* (1863) at the National Portrait Gallery, London. Both paintings were created imaginatively with real historical figures portrayed in a patriotic subject. They also share an image of figures (a group of slaves with a darker complexion and an African envoy) kneeling and bowing down to the monarchs. These are a projection of imperial iconography thus made the paintings the icon of their age. For further analysis of Barker's painting see Jan Marsh, "Icon of the Age: Victoria and The Secret of England's Greatness," in *Black Victorians: Black People in British Art*, ed. Jan Marsh (Burlington, VT: Lund Humphries, 2005), 57–67; Lynda Nead, "The Secret of England's Greatness," *JVC* 19, 2 (April 2014): 161–182, accessed December 3, 2015, doi:10.1080/13555502.2014.919083.

⁶⁴ The Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall's wall paintings, its architecture and landscape, as well as the Equestrian Statue of King Chulalongkorn will be analysed further in Chapter Three.

public. Prior to the nineteenth century, the presence of the women in the royal court had been kept within the palace wall. Their abodes were located separately in the specific area called the Inner Court. This territory admitted only the women (the king's spouses, their young children, ladies-in-waiting and female servants) and the King.⁶⁵ A set of photographs of King Mongkut's wives which will be discussed shortly and Anna Leonowens' volume describing her time at the Siamese Court as an English tutor of King Mongkut's children and wives,⁶⁶ had first introduced visual representations of Siamese women to outsiders.⁶⁷ Photography had become an illuminating medium for the complexity of Thai royal consorts' titles and styles. Polygyny had been an old custom among Siamese royalty and nobility. However, as the head of the state, King Mongkut who had fifty-four wives and concubines chose to appeal to the Western monogamous sensibilities in his royal photography portrait. The photograph which was sent to the president of the United States in 1856 (Figure 41), best exemplifies this practice. This photograph now in the Smithsonian Institution shows King Mongkut seated next to Queen Debsirindra (born Princess Rampoei). She was Mongkut's second consort and received the title of Queen Consort after giving birth to Prince Chulalongkorn in 1853.

The Queen is shown here in the traditional Siamese court dress with a very short traditional haircut. Siamese women's court dress comprised 'song saphak' (the long and narrow gold embroidered cloth wraps around torso and across one shoulder) and 'phra phusa' (lower garment which is equivalent to an ankle-length skirt) pleated in the front and held by a belt ornamented with gems. She was seated closely and equally to King Mongkut; the Queen's position confirming her rank as a major queen and eliminated any doubts Western leaders might have towards King Mongkut's married life.⁶⁸ The King and Queen of Siam were photographed four years later in

⁶⁵ Sons were raised in the inner court until they reached their adulthood marked by the cutting of their topknot during the Sokan Ceremony.

⁶⁶ See Anna Leonowens, *The English Governess at the Siamese Court* (Boston: Fields, Osgood & Co., 1870); and Leonowens. *The Romance of the Harem* (Boston, J. R. Osgood And Company, 1873).

⁶⁷ However, Leonowens' claims in these volumes have since been seen with considerable skepticism. For recent criticism on Leonowens' accounts concerning their historical accuracy see Pramin Khruathong, "Kru Farang Wang Luang kab Chomrom Khon Kliet Anna" (Thai Public's Hostile Conviction Against Anna, a Foreign Teacher at the Royal Court), *Aan (Read)* 2, 1 (April-September 2009), 85-94.

⁶⁸ In her book, *The English Governess at the Siamese Court*, Leonowens quoted King Mongkut's verbal retort to the comment on King Mongkut's polygynous marriage in the Royal family written by the editor of *The Bangkok Recorder* (the newspaper of Dr. Dan Bradley, the American missionary), the King remarked, "[W]hen the Recorder shall have dissuaded princes and noblemen from offering their daughters to the king as concubines, the king will cease to receive contributions of women in that capacity." King Mongkut's comment criticises Siamese old custom in which the nobles would propose their daughters or female relatives to the kings in a hope of acquiring their fortunes in treasure or professions in return. Quoted in Anna Leonowens, *The English Governess at the Siamese Court*, originally published; Boston: Fields, Osgood & Co., 1870 (Bedford, Massachusetts: Applewood Books, 2009), 257.

another similar image (Figure 42). The photograph shows King Mongkut and Queen Debsirindra seated on chairs in full length. The costume of Queen Debsirindra is not different from the previous photograph, whereas King Mongkut appears dressed in the combination of the Western style military jacket and Siamese lower garment with a Scottish cap. Unlike her husband, Queen Debsirindra's few photographs always captured her in the traditional Siamese court dress. Another portrait of the Queen was arranged in Siam's customary composition (Figure 43); the table was placed next to the sitter with the Royal Utensils placed on top of it indicating her royal authority. The Queen's dress is the same as in her second double portrait with King Mongkut. Mongkut and Debsirindra's double portrait signifies the king's faux monogamous marriage, while it had been known among westerners that Mongkut had many spouses.⁶⁹ The photograph presents the King and Queen in formal and conventional postures. This double marital portrait of the royal couple reflects formality rather than intimacy, albeit sitting closely next to each other.

Queen Debsirindra's portrait photograph distinctly represents her as the Queen consort and the mother of the heir apparent. She was the only one of King Mongkut's wives photographed with him and interestingly she was seated in an equal position.⁷⁰ Queen Debsirindra's elegant traditional court dress represents her as an ideal woman of the highest rank of Siamese social class as well. However, if the Western style military dress on male bodies demonstrates their power, authority and ability to become civilised as appeared in King Mongkut's sartorial statement, Queen Debsirindra's traditional court dress perhaps projects an opposite effect. One can assume that European women's fashion had not yet made it way successfully to the royal court of Siam in Mongkut's reign. However, their styles of dress suggest the wearers' gender roles. Their sartorial difference significantly indicates how the male Siamese aristocrats was advancing towards modernity, the female was still more restricted to the traditional world. Additionally, the way in which Mongkut always appeared holding the Royal Staff, the symbol of kingship, also intensifies his royal authority. Here, the Siamese royalty's

⁶⁹ Henri Mouhot noted that he believed King Mongkut did not possess wives fewer than some dozens, but the title of queen he bestowed only to the one whose portrait hanged by the side of his own. Mouhot did not mention the name of this queen but it could be none other than Queen Debsirindra. He also stated that after the queen's death, King Mongkut was overcome with grief. See Henri Mouhot, *Travels in the Central Parts of Indo-China (Siam), Cambodia, and Laos, During the Years 1858, 1859, and 1860: Volume 1* (London: John Murray, 1864), accessed January 22, 2013, <http://www.archive.org/details/travelsincentral01mouh>, 50. It should be noted that none of his official photographs was taken with his other wives after Queen Debsirindra's death in 1861.

⁷⁰ The portrait photograph of King Mongkut and Queen Debsirindra was successful in presenting Debsirindra as the Queen of Siam to foreigners in Bangkok. When the Queen died in 1861, King Mongkut's letter to Phraya Sri Phiphat (Pae Bunnak), Siamese envoy to France said that the consuls in Bangkok all expressed their mourning and respect to the Queen by flying their flags at the half-mast for three days. See King Mongkut, *Phraratchahatthalekha nai Phrabat Somdet Phra Chomklao Chaoyuhua Ruam Krang thi 6 (King Mongkut's Records, Volume 6)* (Bangkok: Sophonphiphat Thanakon, 1927), 38-40.

sartorial display radiates a political signification as the portrait photograph of the King and Queen of Siam was sent as a state gift to foreign head of state.

There is also another set of photographs of Mongkut's mistresses in European dress with a set of Siamese style jewellery. Several consorts of King Mongkut who held the title 'Chao Chom' and 'Chao Chom Manda',⁷¹ were photographed in these fanciful dresses (Figure 44a). These photographs are a rare documentation of European fashion for women of the Inner Court in King Mongkut's reign. The composition of these photographs is not dissimilar to other Siamese royalty's preference in display; the sitters were sitting next to a table on which some objects of the Royal Utensils were placed. They were dressed up in flounced skirts and adorned with the mismatched jewellery. Although these photographs of Chao Chom Mandas juxtapose Siamese royalties' life of luxury and westernised modes of practice, they look less content and elegant than the objects and costumes. These Chao Chom Mandas carried themselves with a rather stiff posture and their eyes cast down or glancing sideways avoiding the viewer's gaze. It seems that being either photographed or dressed in European dress alienated them or made them feel uncomfortably exposed.

These images of female members of Siamese royalty wearing an evening gown with tiara, necklace and bracelets mirror the portrait of young Empress Eugénie of France, a diplomatic gift from the Second French Empire to Siam (Figures 45a-b).⁷² It is not certain when the Chao Chom Manda photography set was taken. It is plausible that these photographs were taken after Empress Eugénie's portrait was sent to Siam. These photographs were attributed to Francis Chit, the official photographer of King Mongkut's royal court, a role which Chit continued in the reign of King Chulalongkorn.⁷³ Therefore, Empress Eugénie's portrait could possibly be the motivation behind this sartorial display of Chao Chom Mandas. The similarity of glamorous costume display between the Chao Chom Mandas photograph and the portrait of Empress Eugénie is too pronounced not to infer the former being an imitation of the latter. The portrait shows the French empress in standing posture wearing an elegant gown with a tiara, a

⁷¹ Chao Chom is the title held by the royal consorts who were born commoners. If they were successful in producing a child for the king, the title would be changed to Chao Chom Manda ('manda' means mother).

⁷² The original portrait was painted by Franz Xaver Winterhalter in 1853. See Richard Ormond and Carol Blackett-Ord, *Franz Xaver Winterhalter and the Courts of Europe 1830-70* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1987), 47. Thai chronicle records state that Charles de Montigny, Emperor Napoleon's ambassador brought the portraits of the emperor and the empress as a gift to King Mongkut in 1856. See FAD, *Prachum Phongsawadan Bhak thi 62 Rueng Thoot Farang nai Samai Krung Rattanakosin (The Chronicles of Siam Part 62: The Envoys from the West in the Rattanakosin Era)* (Bangkok: Phrachan, 1963), 318-319. However, in Poshyananda's 1993 book published by the Bureau of Royal Household, he has mistakenly identified this painting as Queen Victoria's portrait. See Apinan Poshyananda, *Chittakam lae Pratimakam Baeb Tawantok nai Ratchasamnak Lem 1 (Western-Style Paintings and Sculptures in the Thai Royal Court Volume 1)* (Bangkok: BRH, 1993), 158.

⁷³ Siriphan, *Kasat*, 61-69.

set of pearl necklace and bracelets which were all mirrored in Chao Chom Mandas' visual images as well. However, their jewellery is of Siamese styles. As the Empress's portrait was very famous after it was done in 1853, its demands for reproduction was huge. Numerous special request forms were printed to handle the demand from préfectures, consulates and embassies. The portrait of the Empress, along with her husband's became universal talismans of the Second Empire.⁷⁴ Purposefully or not, the way in which Siamese women mimicked Western high-fashion costume from Empress Eugénie's portrait, would have been recognised by westerners as them endeavouring to appear civilised. By displaying the royal bodies with the new technology of photography and by dressing in a combination of traditional and Western dress superimposed on images laden with the archaic regal symbols, the trajectory of the modernised monarchy was set.

Despite their lack of dynamism, the image of the King of Siam's wives in cross-cultural dress had drawn attention from westerners. A drawing from the photograph of Chao Chom Manda Huang and Chao Chom Manda Peng by H. Rousseau (Figure 44b) illustrated Henri Mouhot's journal titled *Travels in the Central Parts of Indo-China (Siam), Cambodia, and Laos*. Its first edition was published in 1863, two years after the death of Mouhot (note that in the drawing, Rousseau adjusted Chao Chom Manda Peng (left figure)'s eyes to look directly at the viewer).⁷⁵ A drawing from the photograph of King Mongkut and Queen Debsirindra also accompanied the portraits of Chao Chom Mandas as the frontispiece in this volume. Significantly, photography had brought the images of Siamese women in the initial phase of Siam's modernisation into the visible space of a Western viewing subject. Queen Debsirindra's photograph symbolises her superiority as the Queen consort of Siam, yet her conventional dress contrasting to her husband's westernised appearance reflects Siamese women's subordination. On the other hand, the photographs of Chao Chom Mandas in western fashion shows a certain degree of how they engaged with high-ranking European women's sartorial elegance in order to illustrate themselves as fashionable 'modern' Siamese women.

Photography as a westernised practice had allowed the forbidden women to sit for portraiture and engage in westernised modes of self-fashioning. They were shown as active agents of luxury, elaborate fabrics and designs in both traditional and westernised sartorial arrangement, and yet it did not so much ease the stiffness of the polite posed figures. It was not until the next reign that their successors were more confident in their portraits, than those of Siamese women in the court of King Mongkut. During the Fifth Reign, the demand for portrait painting and photography increased dramatically. Photography became a popular leisure activity among Siamese royalty

⁷⁴ Ormond and Blackett-Ord, *Franz Xaver Winterhalter*, 47.

⁷⁵ See Mouhot, *Travels in the Central Parts*, 51.

and nobility, not only men, but women had an interest in photography. Siamese noble women of the late nineteenth century were portrayed from their own perspectives for the first time. Chao Chom Erb Bunnag was a well-known female amateur photographer at the Siamese court.⁷⁶ Several photographs by Chao Chom Erb capture the lives of her sisters and other royal consorts within their quarters at the Dusit Palace. The royal residences in the area of Dusit Park were constructed between 1897 and 1901; thus, these photographs were taken sometime between 1901 and 1910. They show images of these women performing their domestic activities. One of her photographs captured her sister, Chao Chom Aab in simple and homely dress while preparing a meal in the kitchen (Figure 46). She sat modestly in the centre of the frame and was surrounded by disorderly placed kitchenware. The impression from this photograph is unlike a well-arranged studio photograph. Despite its unsystematic composition, the photograph captures instantaneously that reveals her everyday life as a housewife in the most typical fashion of Siam's household. It functions as an accurate visual representation of Siamese women's role and self-identity. If this photograph were taken by a male photographer, a reading through the theory of the male gaze would be inevitable. On the contrary, it was taken by a woman who was also the sister of the sitter, hence the reversed interpretation. Picturing femininity through the eyes of a woman as in the case of Chao Chom Erb's photograph suggests a vast degree of willingness of the sitter in the way in which her body language is expressed in the photograph. The sitter positioned herself in her familiar place, her own space, as a voluntary subject. This presentation demonstrates new independence for women, here; they can hold both active and passive roles in a new paradigm for photographic fascination in Siam.

This very same period also saw the rise of formal portraits of Siamese women at the royal court in both portrait photographs and portrait paintings. Following his father's path, Chulalongkorn commissioned several Thai and foreign photographers to record his family.⁷⁷ In addition, many photographs were sent to Europe as models for paintings.⁷⁸ These formal portraits of Siamese women not only functioned as visual images, but they also represented Siamese women's status and identity. His four Queen Consorts, namely, Queen Sunandha Kumariratana, Queen Sukumala Marasri, Queen Savang Vadhana and Queen Saovabha Bongsri (hereafter Queen Saovabha), had their official portraits displayed alongside the Chakri monarchs' at the Chakri

⁷⁶ Chao Chom Erb, along with her sisters served as a royal consort to King Chulalongkorn. They're known as 'Kok Oh' (the Oh Clique), derived from the initial letter of their names (in Thai letter 'oh'), namely, Ohn, Iem, Erb, Aab and Uen.

⁷⁷ Francis Chit continued serving the monarchy as a court photographer, along with many nobles who became amateur photographers, such as, Prince Damrong, Prince Sapprasat, Prince Prachak and Phraya Sukhum Nattahwinit. See Siriphan, *Kasat*, 129-161.

⁷⁸ During the last decade of the nineteenth century to the end of his reign, the Siamese monarch commissioned a large number of portrait paintings of himself and his family from artists in Europe. See Poshyananda, *Chittakam Lem 1*, 112-195.

Throne Hall (Figures 47-50).⁷⁹ They all married Chulalongkorn in 1878 and were his half-sisters on the father's side which directly granted them the highest rank of the royal wives hierarchy (the princess and/or queen consort in the Western sense).⁸⁰

As feminist scholars have indicated, in marriage a woman was positioned as a sign of the exchange as well as its object which, in turn, signifies social order, i.e. socio-sexual relationship and power.⁸¹ As a Siamese monarch's marriage was directed by the patrilineal pattern of descent, the royal wives' powers and positions relied on the conferral of their paternal lineage. Siam's patriarchy also affected the commissioning of Siamese women's visual representation. Griselda Pollock indicates that visual representations of women in works of art as signifying systems of culture, allow the viewers to 'recognise the centrality and critical importance of the representation of woman in patriarchal culture. And hence to grasp the radical potential of its analysis and subversion.'⁸² Interestingly, the visual representation of Siamese women in this patriarchal culture at its shift towards modernity expressed a dichotomy between real and perceived authority in Siamese society. While the visual representation inevitably exposed the polygynous marriage and male dominance, a large number of royal consorts from powerful houses enhanced the Siamese monarch's sovereignty. Here, women at the royal court manifested their role and power as an assurance of support and allegiance to the Crown.

The portrait paintings of King Chulalongkorn's queen consorts share the same elements as those in the Chakri kings' portraits. They were plausibly executed around the same time as well, based on the older photographs. The queen consorts all wear the elaborate traditional court dress, consisted of a long-sleeved blouse with an embroidered shawl over it and a long skirt with pleated folds in the front; however, the shoes are of Western fashion. They also wore the Pendant of Chakri, one of the insignia of The Order of the Royal House of Chakri which was given the highest precedence of Royal Thai Decorations.⁸³ More importantly, this order of Royal Decoration is awarded to members of the House of Chakri who are direct descendants

⁷⁹ King Chulalongkorn also commissioned the portrait of Queen Debsirindra at the same time. Her portrait painting was based on her 1860 photograph with King Mongkut.

⁸⁰ In accordance with the rules of the Palace Law (Kot Monthian Ban), the hierarchy in the royal wives and consorts rank was governed by the paternal lineage. Therefore, the highest title would be bestowed upon the royal wives who shared the same father of the active king. See Darani Srihathai, *Somdet Regent (The Queen Regent)* (Bangkok: Matichon, 2011), 62-77.

⁸¹ Griselda Pollock, "Vision, Voice and Power: Feminist Art Histories and Marxism," in *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art* (London: Routledge, 1994), 30-34.

⁸² Pollock, "Vision, Voice," 32.

⁸³ The highest royal order in Thailand is now the Order of the Rajamitrabhorn, established by King Bhumibol, the reigning monarch. See "Phraratchabanyat Khrueang Ratcha Itsariyaphon An Pen Mongkhon Ying Ratchamitrabhorn phor. sor. 2505," (The Act of The Order of Rajamitrabhorn 1962) RG 79, section 52 kor. (12 June 1962), 674.

of King Yofa.⁸⁴ Consequently, the insignia does not only demonstrate their status, but also promulgates their lineage.

According to the historical record, during the time of the commission, the concept of queen (in Thai, 'rajini') in the Western sense was not introduced to the Siamese Royal Court, until King Chulalongkorn appointed Queen Saovabha as his regent in 1897.⁸⁵ The most prestigious title among the royal wives then was 'Phra Boromarajadevi' (or Her Majesty the Queen) which was held by Queen Sunandha (although she was given this title posthumously in 1880), Queen Savang Vadhana and Queen Saovabha. They were addressed by the honorific, 'Somdet Phra Nang Chao',⁸⁶ followed by their given names and their other titles, for instance, Somdet Phra Nang Chao Savang Vadhana Phra Boromarajadevi. Whereas Queen Sukumala held a lesser title of 'Phra Rajadevi'; therefore by her title, she was a Royal Highness, Princess Consort or Phra Nang Chao Sukulmala Marasri Phra Rajadevi in Thai. Their honorific and titles were bestowed upon them for their success in producing a son for the king, with Queen Sunandha's elevation as the only exceptional case.

The different titles among Chulalongkorn's royal wives did not seem to affect the equality of the queen consorts' visual representation. Accordingly, the equalisation could have been contingent upon the fact that all of these queens had the same father. Traditionally, it was determined to conceptualise the queen consorts' self-identity on the basis of patriarchal values, by promoting their patrilineal descent instead of their consort titles. Within this conception, the four of them were equal as the daughters of King Mongkut. Furthermore, their direct descent from King Mongkut not only shaped their advancement in status in the royal wives' hierarchy,⁸⁷ but also influenced the designation of the heir apparent and succession matters. Siamese monarch's endogamy strengthened their Chakri's bloodline which benefited the assertion of their birth right in the political context. The intention of King Chulalongkorn in propagating the sovereignty of the Chakri Dynasty as the heads of the state was substantiated by this series of Chakri kings and queens' portrait paintings at the Chakri Throne Hall.

Siam's polygyny⁸⁸ was closely associated with political power and alliance; it also demonstrated the hierarchical gender role of men in both their own families and the political regime. It is undeniable that Siam's practice of polygyny clashed with the

⁸⁴ "The Act of The Order of the Royal House of Chakri," *RG*, 108-109.

⁸⁵ Srihathai, *Somdet Regent*, 77-84.

⁸⁶ King Chulalongkorn coined this term to be equivalent to the Western concept of the queen. See Srihathai, *Somdet Regent*, 77-80.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 53-59.

⁸⁸ During his reign (42 years), King Chulalongkorn possessed 152 wives and mistresses. The number of a man's wives and children signified his masculinity and capacity to lead or 'barami' (merit, virtue, prestige), as it was the core of Siam's polygynous politics.

Western ideology of a monogamous family structure, which was asserted as a legal standard of marriage.⁸⁹ Male dominance in marriage and family has dictated women's gender role in Siamese society. In the case of the royal wives, the title of the queen was bestowed upon them from their success in producing the heir to the throne in addition to their patrilineality. Since the title was determined by gender role as the mother of the heir apparent, the queen status could be transferred from one royal wife to another who had a son as well. It was also significant to the self-representation and self-identity of the Queens of Siam. Queen Savang Vadhana's portrait was engraved alongside King Chulalongkorn's on the cover of the French newspaper, *Le Petit Journal* dated Saturday 10 June 1893 (Figure 51) two years before her son, the Crown Prince Maha Vajirunhis died at the age of sixteen. The highest title was passed to her youngest sister, Queen Saovabha, whose son: Prince Maha Vajiravudh, had become the second Crown Prince in 1895. In response to this shift, *Le Journal Illustré*, another French press, featured the engraved portraits of King Chulalongkorn and Queen Saovabha accompanying the news of his visit to France in 1897 (Figure 52).

Queen Saovabha continuously maintained her supremacy towards the end of the Fifth Reign. Siamese male aristocrats' determination in pursuing modernity had an impact on Siamese women's gender roles, particularly high-ranking woman such as Queen Saovabha. Traditionally, the queen consort's authority and responsibility was limited within the Inner Court. However Queen Saovabha was given the opportunity to present herself in public alongside Chulalongkorn. The Queen opened the first railway of Siam on 26 March 1896 together with the King. Siam's officials, both Siamese and foreigners also attended this ceremony. Queen Saovabha, who wore a European style lace puff sleeve blouse with a chong kraben, took a role in fastening the first rail spike, while Chulalongkorn stood beside her (Figure 53). The image marks Queen Saovabha as doubly modern both in her dress and in role in launching rail transport. The picture of their dual role in an event was also comparable to image of monarchs in the European press. Additionally, the public images of King Chulalongkorn and Queen Saovabha, if not displacing the knowledge of King of Siam's polygynous marriage, certainly weakened the debate against this controversial practice. Moreover, this event also shows more active roles for women in public space.

When Chulalongkorn planned his first state visit to Europe between April and December 1897, during his absence, he designated Queen Saovabha as his regent.

⁸⁹ Tamara Loos, *Subject Siam: Family, Law, and Colonial Modernity in Thailand* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2006), 7. Loos also states that the ideology of the nineteenth-century colonial modernity in a marriage associated modernity with monogamy. In turn, a society that did not at least formally abide by this standard of a civilised marriage was not considered fully modern. However, Siam, even during its 'quest for civilisation,' did not adopt a monogamy law or promulgate a family law code until 1935 by the democratic government of Thailand. See Loos, *Subject Siam*, 120-129.

Consequently, Saovabha was given an honorific name of 'Phra Sri Patcharindra'.⁹⁰ She became the first female regent in the history of Siam, the role normally appointed to male aristocrats, such as Si Suriyawongse, Chulalongkorn's first regent between 1868 and 1873. During the regency, Queen Saovabha acted as head of the state. The King communicated directly with her concerning matters of state and foreign affairs. One of Chulalongkorn's telegraphs sent to Queen Saovabha advised her personally on the trial of French prisoners who were expelled from Siam to avoid any conflicts with France. In addition, the King recommended some payments to recompense the victims. Although at the King's insistence, the compensation was publicised as the Queen Regent's idea.⁹¹ Therefore giving her the appearance of autonomy on matters of state on foreign diplomacy. The image of Queen Saovabha seated among Siam male officials in the council had elevated women's authority within Siam's patriarchal society (Figure 54).

Afterward, Queen Saovabha's higher status was paralleled by an increase in her visual representations. During his travels in Europe, Chulalongkorn visited artists' studios in Rome, Florence and Paris. On several occasions, he posed in their studios while the photographs of the Queen and their children were sent from Bangkok to the studios before his arrival so that they could be portrayed together.⁹² Chulalongkorn's enthusiasm for patronising of artists' and photographers' studios was acknowledged by a correspondent from Florence for the *Journal de Genève*:

For the ten days that he [Rama V] has been with us, his chief desire seems to have been to have himself painted, and represented in sculpture, and also photographed[...]and not content with so many portraits and busts, as he is a model husband, he has had portraits painted and busts sculptured of his wife. Here people like him very much, because he is simple, cordial, in a word *alla mano* as we say.⁹³

Westerners praised the King of Siam for not only his patronage, but also his devotion to his wife. Chulalongkorn's commissions for his and his wife's portraits, as stated by the foreign correspondent, effectively persuaded Europeans to view Siamese monarch's marriage as equivalent to their preference for monogamy. The alabaster busts of King Chulalongkorn and Queen Saovabha which were comparable with their European

⁹⁰ "Phraratchakamnode Phu Samret Ratchakan Phaendin," (The Regency Act 1897) *RG* 13, section 51 (21 March 1897), 559-605; "Prakat Nai Kan Thi Ok Phranam Somdet Phraboromrajininath," (The Announcement of the Name of the Queen Regent) *RG* 14, section 1 (1 April 1897), 10.

⁹¹ FAD, *Kan Sadet Praphat Europe Khong Phrabat Somdet Phra Chulachomklao Chaoyuhua ror. sor. 116 Lem 1-2* (King Chulalongkorn's Visit to Europe in 1897, Volume 1-2) (Bangkok: FAD, 1999), 35.

⁹² King Chulalongkorn explained the process of his commissions several times in the letters and telegraphs sent to his family during his sojourns in Europe. See FAD, *Kan Sadet Lem 1*, 320; and King Chulalongkorn, *Klai Ban*, 170-224.

⁹³ Quoted in *The Bangkok Times*, 21 July 1897. Cited in Peleggi, *Lords of Things*, 66.

counterparts'⁹⁴ (Figure 55) can be taken as exemplary in this westernised mode of practice as well.

One of the most imposing royal portraits created during Chulalongkorn's first visit to Europe is the group portrait of his family (Figure 56a) by a Florentine artist Edoardo Gelli (1852-1933) whom King Chulalongkorn praised for his artistic skill and successful career which already had 'fifteen portraits of various monarchs to his credit.'⁹⁵ This group portrait shows King Chulalongkorn and Queen Saovabha seated, surrounded by the group of their five children: Prince Asdang (Prince of Nakhon Rajasima), Prince Maha Vajiravudh (the Crown Prince of Siam, later King Vajiravudh), Prince Chakrabongse (Prince of Phitsanulok), Prince Chudadhuja (Prince of Phetchabun) and Prince Prajadhipok (Prince of Sukhothai, later King Prajadhipok). This commission was planned before the King departed for Europe. The royal family had themselves photographed at Robert Lenz's studio in Bangkok (Figure 56b)⁹⁶ which Gelli relied on for the painting. The artist kept most of the details in the arrangement and the postures of the photograph. In the painting, Prince Vajiravudh and Prince Chakrabongse replaced their half brothers, Prince Chriaprawati and Prince Sommatiwongse who posed in their place at Robert Lenz's studio, since the formers were studying in England. Gelli also replaced the studio props and painted background with a majestic interior, presumably that of the Chakri Throne Hall. One must assume that a photograph of the Chakri Throne Hall showing its interior was also taken to Italy as a reference for the painter. The Western-styled room furnished with the European collections of furniture, vases and sculpture (probably a replica of a variant type of *Venus Pudica*) similar to those one could find in palaces in Europe. The sailor suits of the youngest princes were changed as well. Peleggi notes that Gelli changed the colour from navy blue (the colour for daily wear) to white (the colour for summer wear), presumably to suit the weather in June while he was painting.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ King Chulalongkorn received the busts of King Umberto I and Queen Margherita of Italy and Tzar Nicholas II and Tzarina Alexandra as gifts from these European sovereigns. See Poshyananda, *Chittakam, Lem 1*, 158-167.

⁹⁵ King Chulalongkorn, *Phraratchahatthalekha Suan Phra'ong Somdet Phraramathibodi Srisindramaha Chulalongkorn Phra Chulachomklao Chaoyuhua Song Mi Phraratchathan dae Somdet Phra Sriphatcharindra Boromrajininat Phraphanpeeluang Naiwela thi Song Samret Ratchakan Phaendin Tang phra'ong Mue Sadet Phraratchadamnoen Praphat Europe phor. sor. 2440, Bhak 1 (The King's Correspondence to Queen Saovabha During the Regency in 1897, Volume 1)* (Bangkok: FAD, 1958), 162-165.

⁹⁶ Robert Lenz originally had his photography studio based in Singapore where King Chulalongkorn and his entourage had visited and sat for taking the photographs during his tour in Singapore on 17 May 1896. P. Lim Pui Huen, "In the Footsteps of the King: Recalling the visits of King Rama V to Malaya," in *King Chulalongkorn: Siam-Southeast Asia-Jambudvipa*, 10. In the same year, Lenz had opened the branch named Robert Lenz & Co. in Bangkok early in August after which King Chulalongkorn appointed him and his business partners as the court photographers. His studio became the royalty's favourite. See Siriphan, *Kasat*, 161-162.

⁹⁷ See Peleggi, *Lords of Things*, 187. King Chulalongkorn visited Gelli's studio in the early of June, Gelli probably restyled the youngest princes' costume to suit the season.

Queen Saovabha does not wear her usual garment: a hybrid costume of a lace leg o'mutton sleeve blouse with a chong kraben, but rather a long skirt or 'nah nang' replaces a chong kraben which was suitable for an outdoor activity such as the opening ceremony of the first railway discussed earlier. On the one hand, the lace blouse combined with the long skirt as opposed to trousers, enhances her femininity, a contrast to her husband's and her sons' military uniform. On the other hand, wearing the lace leg o'mutton sleeve blouse with a long skirt expresses the Queen's fashionability in her sartorial display. The long skirt and blouse combination were common in 1890s Europe. The painting presents Queen Saovabha as a wife and a mother; she sits casually and slightly turns towards her husband with the youngest children on her side. King Chulalongkorn's military uniform, sword and pose suggest his role as the leader of both the land and the family. The royal couple and their two eldest sons who already reached their age of majority (marked by the cutting of their top knot), wear the insignia of the Order of the Royal House of Chakri. The combination of costume and insignia add to the impression that this portrays the formal facet of the Siamese royal family, whereas the youngest princes in more casual clothing and poses represent the familial aspect. Gelli succeeded in depicting the royal family's gender roles and its functions as a positive image of family. After the signing of the Bowring Treaty in 1855, Siam and Britain had a very close relationship. In all likelihood, Siamese would be familiar with the value placed on appearance of family life in Victorian society; Asa Briggs remarks that, 'Family was extolled as an institution[...]'⁹⁸ Thus, this painting suggests King Chulalongkorn's purpose in introducing a morality of family values to Siamese society, the same aspect which *The Royal Family* (1846), the group portrait of Queen Victoria's family by Franz Xaver Winterhalter, had done successfully.⁹⁹ However, the group portrait of the Siamese royal house fails to represent the strong family bond which is the most touching aspect of Queen Victoria's family portraits.

Poshyananda also remarks on Chulalongkorn's awareness of the images of European courtiers at leisure through reproductions of prints and photographs. He states that the composition of this painting reflects the contrasts between public and private facets, between formality and intimacy in the painting.¹⁰⁰ Peleggi's analysis emphasises its function as celebratory portraiture. However, given the lack of

⁹⁸ Asa Briggs, "Victorian Values" in *In Search of Victorian Values: Aspect of Nineteenth Century Thought and Society*, ed. Eric M. Sigsworth (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 22.

⁹⁹ Jennifer Scott, *The Royal Portrait: Image and Impact* (London: Royal Collection Publications, 2010), 144-146.

¹⁰⁰ Poshyananda, *Modern Art*, 13.

reproductions as was common with the portraiture of European royalty,¹⁰¹ Gelli's *The Siamese Royal Family* may have just served as Chulalongkorn's self-image as a modern monarch, by having his portrait done by an artist famous for his royal patrons. Either way, this group portrait strongly represents the acts of consumption by which the Siamese royalty identified with their Western counterparts.¹⁰² Chulalongkorn's keen interest in this portrait can be found in his telegraph to Queen Saovabha; he noted, 'it will be very remarkable and the most expensive painting in Siam.'¹⁰³ The King was very satisfied with the completed group portrait, once it was sent to Bangkok, he rewarded Gelli with a royal decoration in 1899.¹⁰⁴

The last decade of the nineteenth century presented a fruitful field for tracking the formation of modern female gender identities. As evidence suggests, Queen Saovabha's sartorial display had directed the conduct of women's roles in the royal court of Siam. The representation of Queen Saovabha in her formal painting and photograph portraits indicates her status as the Queen of Siam in a variety of clothing, traditional court dress, a hybrid costume and European dress. Queen Saovabha's sartorial-self shared similarity with Chulalongkorn's, whose official appearance had become more *westernised* towards the end of his reign. The visual representation of Queen Saovabha indicates that her preference in clothing was the hybrid costume from the early years of 1890s onward, and she often wore it with beautiful sets of jewellery purchased from Europe (Figure 57).¹⁰⁵ The popularity of the hybrid costume seemed to increase dramatically at the turn of the century. It then became court dress in place of Siam's traditional dress.¹⁰⁶ During the late nineteenth century and early twentieth cross-cultural dress in Britain was considered fashionable as exemplified by the wearing of 'Chinese' coats and Japanese kimonos. In her analysis of fashionable 'Chinese' interiors and fashionable dress, Sarah Cheang suggests that 'feminine imperial identities were complicated by a modernity/femininity/Orient triangle.' Cross-

¹⁰¹ Gelli's *The Royal Family* may not have been reproduced for circulation but there were requests from foreign enterprises in Bangkok for reproducing other portraits of King Chulalongkorn. See NAT, Ministry of Privy Seal 20/7 and NAT, Ministry of the Royal Household, 6.2/18-19.

¹⁰² Peleggi, *Lords of Things*, 67-68.

¹⁰³ FAD, *Kan Sadet, Lem 1*, 320.

¹⁰⁴ NAT, Ministry of Privy Seal 16.2/92.

¹⁰⁵ Prince Chula Chakrabongse, Queen Saovabha's grandson, mentioned his grandmother's possession of a significant number of jewellery, European silverware and dinnerware sets in his autobiographies. See Prince Chula Chakrabongse, *Koet Wang Parut: Samai Somburanayasitthirat (Born in the Paruskavan Palace: In the Age of Absolute Monarchy)* (Bangkok: Klang Wittaya, 1958), 66; Prince Chula Chakrabongse, *The Twain Have Met, Or, An Eastern Prince Came West* (London: G. T. Foulis, 1958), 88.

¹⁰⁶ Susan Conway, *Thai Textiles* (London: British Museum Press, 1992), 100.

cultural fashion trends in fin de siècle Siam also point to an interdependence between fashionable dress and modern 'Siamese' femininities.¹⁰⁷

Queen Saovabha also appeared in full European dress when she accompanied her husband on a trip to Singapore and Java in 1896 (Figure 58). The Queen and Chao Chom Manda Chum who acted as her secretary wore a walking suit or tailor-made, comprising of an A-line skirt and matching jacket with leg o' mutton sleeves, completed by a flamboyant hat and an umbrella, which had been a fashionable morning wear in Britain from 1889 to the middle of the 1890s. This outdoor dress was worn by many women in the 1890s who worked for their living and were determined to show they were equal to men. It was associated with the professionalism and independence of the New Woman.¹⁰⁸ Queen Saovabha's sartorial display in European dress, together with her presence in the colonies of European countries, effectively represents both her status and Siam's modernising state. European clothing thus marks the Queen's modernity, fashionability and upper class Habitus.

Her role was widely known both domestically and on the world stage through the London press: *The Pall Mall Gazette* publishing the news of King Chulalongkorn's visit for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897, also mentioned Queen Saovabha as his 'chief wife' in the article;

The King is greatly influenced in his policy by the opinions of the Queen, his chief wife. She is a remarkably clever woman, and is the real ruler of Siam. The King always consults her on the affairs of State, and relies almost entirely on her judgment.¹⁰⁹

A remark from British journalist interestingly echoed the Queen's increased authority in Siam's domestic affairs which substantially escalated from her elevation in 1895. Similar to her husband in modernising the country, she contributed much to Siamese society in women's health, education and welfare during her queenship.¹¹⁰ Siamese royalty's modes of consumption were central to fashioning their social identity. Peleggi explains that this practice was the way in which Siamese aristocrats defined

¹⁰⁷ Sarah Cheang, "The Ownership and Collection of Chinese Material Culture by Women in Britain, c.1890-c.1935" (PhD diss., University of Sussex, 2003), 80, 93-97 and 109.

¹⁰⁸ Jane Ashelford, *The Art of Dress: Clothes and Society, 1500-1914* (London: National Trust, 2009), 236-237. See also Meaghan Clarke, "Sex and the City: The Metropolitan New Woman," in *The Camden Town Group in Context*, ed. Helena Bonett, Ysanne Holt, Jennifer Mundy, Tate Research Publication, May 2012, accessed October 28, 2015, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/camden-town-group/meaghan-clarke-sex-and-the-city-the-metropolitan-new-woman-r1105659>.

¹⁰⁹ Quoted in "The King of Siam at Home: An Amiable Despot," in *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 8 June 1897, 8.

¹¹⁰ Her support and patronage in women and children's health, education and welfare are, for example, sitting as the first president of the Thai Red Cross Society (established in 1893) and establishing a school of nursing and midwifery (1897) and the Rajini Shcool, a school for girls (1904). See Srihathai, *Somdet Regent*, 98-101 and 186-192. For further detail of the establishment of the Thai Red Cross Society see Chapter Two.

themselves as the national ruling class and part of the world aristocracy.¹¹¹ However, the image of Queen Saovabha wearing a chong kraben caused curiosity among the Europeans who likened the Siamese lower garment to knickerbockers or trousers. *The Illustrated London News* reproduced the images of the Queen in a chong kraben twice in 1905 and 1907 (Figures 59-60) with dubiousness,¹¹² but still commented that the Queen of Siam's curious attire should be gratifying to the Rational Dress Society,¹¹³ an organisation advocating women's dress reform in Victorian era.¹¹⁴ The Siamese Queen might not wholly be defined as a New Woman with late nineteenth century feminist ideals. However, she became a more active participant in social and political roles. Queen Saovabha's attire signalled an association with modern outdoor activities and therefore plausibly suggests a form of empowerment. Together with the wearing of European garments, this hybrid dress offered Siamese women an opportunity to participate in the King's westernisation scheme as well.

The curious gaze towards the Eastern Queen in a peculiar attire, possibly bears comparison to the photograph of Princess Dara Rasmi of Chiang Mai (Figure 61),¹¹⁵ one of Chulalongkorn's princess consorts. Princess Dara Rasmi and her attendants continued to wear their Lanna¹¹⁶ costume ('pha sin,' a long skirt made of Chiang Mai

¹¹¹ Peleggi, *Lords of Things*, 19-20.

¹¹² Note the difference of the terms that the periodical used for identifying Queen Saovabha's chong kraben: 'knickerbockers' (1905) and 'trousers' (1907), interestingly, the image published in 1905 also drew the chong kraben's hem reminiscent of an actual knickerbockers. These headlines suggest the struggle of British press, as well as the West, to learn and understand Siamese fashion. The images of the Queen of Siam wearing relatively short trousers, which reveal too much of her legs to be appropriate in public for European etiquette, must have aroused curiosity and, very likely, a scandal in Britain's Edwardian Society. However, the Siamese Queen's attire of choice also drew the British press' attention to map the Eastern fashion onto their own radical reform of women's clothing which began in the previous century, especially on trousers. For more reading on trousers in the nineteenth-twentieth century women's fashion see Patricia A. Cunningham, "Trousers: The Rational Alternative to Skirts," in *Reforming Women's Fashion, 1850-1920: Politics, Health and Art* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2003), 31-74.

¹¹³ *The Illustrated London News*, 28 January 1905, 115 and 29 June 1907, 1025.

¹¹⁴ Founded in London in 1881, their goal was to promote a style of dress for women based on 'considerations of health, comfort and beauty' appropriate for the outdoor activity. See Ashelford, *The Art of Dress*, 236.

¹¹⁵ During the Fifth Reign, Chiang Mai was a tributary state of Kingdom of Siam and was a subject in the territorial disputes between Siam and British Empire. See Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2004), 67-74 and 117-119. Their natives, including those who dwelled in the neighbouring areas, were disdainfully called 'Lao' by Thai/Siamese, the people from the central part of Thailand.

¹¹⁶ Lanna or Lan Na is the term applied to the Kingdom centred in present-day northern Thailand and part of Burma from the thirteenth to nineteenth century, however the kingdom was under the Burmese rule since the mid sixteenth century. The Burmese rule started to decline in the end of the eighteenth century, the kingdom was consequently broken down into several tributary kingdoms, one of which is the Kingdom of Chiang Mai which became a vassal state of Siam during the nineteenth century. Culturally, the people of the Kingdom of Chiang Mai practiced their own customs which are closely related to the Tai cultures; they spoke their own language ('Kham Mueang,' literally means town language) and dressed differently from the central region of Siam as seen in the photograph of Princess Dara Rasmi of Chiang Mai.

style textile) with their long hair pulled up into a neat bun, in contrast to the fashion and hairstyle of the Siamese women in the royal court as perfectly displayed in Queen Saovabha's visual representation. Her distinctive elements of dress and hairstyle and her ethnic origin conspicuously opposed Siamese aristocrats' obsession with the modernisation scheme.¹¹⁷ Ethnic difference was also engaged in Siam's civilising process as they employed the colonial construction of the 'Others,' hence the Lanna became the Other Within.¹¹⁸

'Fin de siècle Siam' is acknowledged to be the high point of the Siamese elite's portraiture. From the late nineteenth century, the significance of portraiture in Siam had emerged from the process of Siamese royalty and aristocrats' modernisation scheme. Modernity was Siam's greatest aspiration which in turn, affected the Siamese elites' perspective on their old customs, meanwhile encouraging them to invent new traditions. The account of formal and private portraits of Chakri kings and queens which has been studied here demonstrates the formulation of their self-representation and self-identity. The constructing of self-identity does not merely articulate Siamese royalty's desire to achieve modernity. Hegemonic reaffirmation was another attempt if not accomplishment of the Chakri Dynasty to promulgate their sovereignty amidst Western Imperialism. Chulalongkorn's commission of Chakri kings and queens' portraits has instituted the tradition of modern Thai monarchy's portraiture; the portraits of his successors (King Rama VI-IX) now adorn the King Gallery in the Chakri Throne Hall, next to King Chulalongkorn's and their predecessors' portraits. This shift in Siam's visual representation and visual culture was the result of colonial encounters Siam had experienced during the late nineteenth century. It powerfully displays the process of transculturation and cultural contact between Siam and the West and, more importantly, how it was used to celebrate the glory of the Chakri Dynasty.

Most importantly, Chulalongkorn's portrait has been used to make the collective memory of neo-royalist narrative in Thai history. The most renowned demonstration is the use of the 1897 double portrait photograph of Chulalongkorn and Tzar Nicolas II of Russia. This well-known photograph was heavily influential in the narrative of Siam's independence in official history; a plot was fabricated to authorise its role in Siam's plan for preserving their national autonomy. The narrative was that this photograph functioned as a message to the British Empire and the French Republic that Russia

¹¹⁷ Photographs of Princess Dara Rasmi by Chao Chom Erb portray the great difference from her fellow Siamese consorts which reflects Siam's visualisation of a crypto-colonial hierarchy of civilisation. See Leslie Woodhouse, "Concubine with Cameras: Royal Siamese Consorts Picturing Femininity and Ethnic Difference in Early 20th Century Siam," *Trans Asia Photography Review* 2, 2 (Spring 2012): 17-31, accessed September 25, 2012, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.7977573.0002.202>.

¹¹⁸ Thongchai Winichakul, "The Quest for 'Siwilai': A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam," *JAS*. 59, 3 (August, 2000), 534-537.

was an ally of Siam.¹¹⁹ Despite the fact that this photograph was taken a year later since Britain and France already reached their agreement on Siam's boundary and to remain as a buffer state between their Southeast Asian colonies in the Anglo-French Declaration of January 1896.¹²⁰

However, Siamese elites' sartorial display through their portraits resemble a colonial desire of the colonised to mimic representation of the coloniser. To borrow Bhabha's conception of mimicry, the way in which Siam had chosen to assimilate a colonial discourse expresses their erratic and eccentric strategy of pursuing authority, domestically and globally.¹²¹ The images of Siamese royalty dressing in Western clothing and performing the westernised modes of practice in public display is 'merely camouflage and a form of resemblance,' to quote Bhabha's use of Lacan's idea of mimicry.¹²² In the case of the Siamese female nobility, a hybrid costume became their formal wear in the public. Ironically, it appears that in the privacy of their living quarters, Siamese elites returned to their traditional dress which more suitable for the hot climate of Siam. Moreover, even Chulalongkorn also mentioned in his journal that he yearned for Siam's custom such as chewing the mixing of areca nut and betel leaf during his trip in Europe. From such instances, the visual representation of Siamese royal's self-identity then also suggests the representation of the difference between being European and being Europeanised. In contradiction to the meta-narrative of Thai official history which concerns the persistence of Siam/Thailand's independence, the paradox in Siam's non-colonised presence is exposed in their complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, without an actual colonisation.

¹¹⁹ See for example, Krairoek Nana, "Tueng! Konlayuth Ratchakan thi 5 Plian Sathana Chaw Siam chak 'Phae' Pen 'Chana' (King Chulalongkorn's Astonishing Strategy Rebounded Siam from the Defeat to the Winner), *SW* 27, 12 (October 2006): 114-131.

¹²⁰ See Introduction, 8.

¹²¹ Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 121-131.

¹²² Jacques Lacan, "The Line and the Light," in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, trans., Alan Sheridan (London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1977), 99. Quoted in Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 121 and 128-129.

CHAPTER TWO

VISION OF KINGDOM: THE ROLE OF ART COLLECTIONS AND EXHIBITIONS IN SIAM'S CULTURAL POLITICS

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the shop was literally taken by storm both inside and out. The eagerness of the purchasers and the rapidity with which different articles were selected for intended purchase.

Edward B. Sladen's journal during
King Chulalongkorn's tour in Bombay (1897)¹

This chapter examines the art collection, as well as the museum and its collection created by Chulalongkorn. The practice of collecting works of art reflects the way in which the King chose to construct his self-identity, in a similar way to commissioning the royal portraits. The study seeks to investigate his role as an art collector and art patron. King Chulalongkorn's predilection for both art collection and art commission suggests that he favoured the works of art with a more Classical and Academic style.² Although Chulalongkorn was very keen on a new and modern technology of photography as both a sitter and a photographer, he commissioned a series of Academic style paintings throughout his reign. He'd also bought many paintings and sculptures, most of which were Academic art from Europe. By bestowing his favour on art collection which is central to the analysis of the first section of this chapter, Chulalongkorn had aligned himself with European royalty within the hierarchy of European civilisation as it was a high cultural practice among European royal families.³

The national museum in Bangkok was also officially created by Chulalongkorn in 1874; the Siamese monarch had supported all related museum activities, including archaeological surveys. The contents of museum collections will be analysed in the second section of this chapter, in relation to Chulalongkorn's westernised modes of practice and Siam's self-representation in the era of colonial cultural exchange. The exhibitions in World's Fairs were another method by which Siamese aristocrats chose to represent their identity in the world stage through the arts, handicrafts and agricultural products. These will be discussed in the final section. These museum

¹ Edward B. Sladen, *King Chulalongkorn's Journey to India 1872* (Bangkok: River Books, 2000), 24, 40-41.

² In comparison, his predecessor's portraits and collection indicate his interests in science and technology as discussed in Chapter One.

³ Eva Rovers, "Introduction: The Art Collector-Between Philanthropy and Self-glorification," *Journal of the History of Collection* 1, 2 (2009), 157.

collections and exhibitions may have offered a view of colonial discourse, which in turn, caused an ongoing cultural paradox within Siamese/Thai society.

INTRODUCTION

Chulalongkorn's portrait commissions studied in Chapter One characterise his public persona as a westernised monarch. He had adopted the westernised practice of constructing his self-identity by the same method used by the members of the royal houses of Europe for centuries. The visual representation of his royal body was not the only practice Chulalongkorn had borrowed from his European counterparts; the collecting of art objects was also a European flamboyancy he had acquired. During his tours in Europe in 1897 and 1907, Chulalongkorn had shown his keen interest in European fine arts. He had visited museums, art galleries and art exhibitions in Europe. Among them were the Venice Biennale both in 1897 and 1907, and the International Art Exhibition of 1907 in Mannheim, Germany. He became acquainted with many artists, such as, Michele Gordigiani, Edoardo Gelli and Carolus-Duran whom he visited their studios. From these visits, he bought a large collection of paintings and sculptures to enhance his identity as a sophisticated and cultured sovereign from the East who also had a good taste as a patron of fine arts.

Little evidence is available concerning how the collecting of art was practiced among Siamese elites before the nineteenth century. Although art patronage in the royal court of Siam was not a novelty, since it had always been their obligation to support religious art and architecture. Pre-modern Siamese monarchs' patronage was motivated by their faith in religious rather than the aesthetic value of art. Also the art patronage in the Siamese royal court involved commissioning rather than collecting art objects. Collecting (in a European tradition), was also an imported tradition in early modern Siam in Mongkut's royal court, just as portraiture had been. Mongkut's practice of collecting had in all probability begun with his interest in Western technology. Most of his collection consisted of various items he had been collecting since before he succeeded to the throne. King Mongkut also assembled the collection of his gifts from abroad. His collection was housed in his residential quarters in the Grand Palace where he frequently invited his guests to visit his private collection. One of the guests was a British diplomat, Sir John Bowring who visited Siam in April 1855 to negotiate a treaty of commerce. Bowring's description of King Mongkut's collection in his journal when he received an invitation from King Mongkut to visit his private apartments on April 6, is worth quoting at length:

He took me to his private apartments, ornamented with beautiful pendules [sic] and watches, statues of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, handsome barometers, thermometers, &c. He then led me

through two or three small chambers, where were fine specimens of Chinese porcelain services, and other costly decorations. Almost everything seemed English. There were many new books on the shelves...Inscribed on the apartments to which his Majesty had conducted me, were the words "Royal Pleasure" in English, and in Sanskrit characters with the same meaning.⁴

According to Bowring's account, King Mongkut's collection consisted of various items from scientific instruments, mechanical devices, statues to Chinese porcelain which he effectively deployed as home decoration.⁵ In 1854, Mongkut commissioned Somdet Chaophraya Borom Maha Pichaiyat (Tat Bunnag, an uncle of Si Suriyawongse) to build a hall called Phrathinang Prabhat Piphittaphan (now destroyed) for housing this very same private collection. This exhibition hall was built as a complex of Phrathinang Aphinao Niwet on the eastern side of the Grand Palace.⁶ Although the Praphat Piphittaphan Hall was not yet opened to the public, it demonstrated the idea of housing the collection in a specific space. As a result of this commission, this period is widely regarded as the beginning of the practice of the collecting and displaying of artworks in Thailand.⁷

Collecting had become a new fashionable practice in King Mongkut's court and it was inevitably regarded as the epitome of high culture during this reign. It seems that the Siamese elites were very eager to demonstrate their sophistication by showing collected objects from abroad to westerners as evidenced in Bowring's account. Besides visiting Mongkut's apartments, he had also been invited by many Siamese dignitaries to visit their residences, such as Prince Wongsā Dhiraj Snidh (King

⁴ Sir John Bowring, *The Kingdom and People of Siam: With a Narrative of the Mission to that Country in 1855 Volume 2*, Originally published: London: John W. Parker and Son, 1857 (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 279. The apartment which was mentioned in Bowring's journal was probably the Phrathinang Ratcharuedee. However it was rebuilt twice after King Mongkut's reign which entirely altered its old construction.

⁵ Collecting of Chinese ceramics in Siamese Royal Court was particularly well-known before the reign of King Mongkut. Chinese porcelain had been imported to Siam for many centuries. A considerable quantity of Chinese ceramics was uncovered in many archaeological sites, the earliest Chinese ceramics founded in Thailand was the wares of the T'ang Dynasty or the eighth century. The wares trade between China and Thailand was substantial and prosperous throughout their interconnection. Chinese ceramics and porcelain were very popular among Thai/Siamese elites. Thus, Chinese wares were introduced to Thailand before Europe which began in the sixteenth century and developed into a craze in the eighteenth century. See Nattaphat Chantawit, *Kreungthuay Chine thi Phob chak Lang Borankadee nai Prathet Thai (Chinese Ceramics from the Archaeological Sites in Thailand)* (Bangkok: FAD, 1994), 373-376. However, the issue is still debatable due to lack of evidence whether Chinese export wares in Thailand before the mid-nineteenth century were for collecting, or they were for utilising. If they were utilised by their original functional capacities, then it did not count as collecting practice. See Russell W. Belk, "Collecting as Luxury Consumption: Effects on Individuals and Households," *Journal of Economic Psychology* 16 (1995), 479.

⁶ Nangnoi Saksi, Naphit Krittikakul and Darunee Maungkaew, *Phra Ratchawang lae Wang nai Krungthep (phor. sor. 2325-2525) (The Royal Courts and Palaces in Bangkok, 1782-1982)* (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 1982), 119-124.

⁷ Prince Damrong, *Athibai waduy Hor Phra Samut Wachirayan lae Piphittaphansathan Samrap Phra Nakhon (A Description of Wachirayan Library and Bangkok Museum)* (Bangkok: Royal Institute, 1927), 1-2.

Mongkut's half brother and Chief Counsellor) and King Pinklao, Siam's second king. Bowring observed that these apartments were furnished and decorated in Western style. He enthusiastically expressed his admiration towards King Pinklao and his apartments:

His own apartments are convenient, tastefully fitted up, and, except from the suspended punkah and the great height of the rooms, the furniture and ornaments would lead you to believe you were in the house of an English gentleman. His conversation, in excellent English, is cultivated and agreeable. He has a well-selected library of English books, a considerable museum of mechanical instruments, with models of late improvements in many of the departments of science, excellent sextants and quadrants, miniature screw-steamers, and a variety of modern weapons.⁸

The influx of westernised modes of practice and the frequent visits of westerners at the court of King Mongkut doubtlessly affected Prince Chulalongkorn's transcultural upbringing. From the age of eight, he was educated by an English tutor and later by an American tutor, during this time the young Prince had shown his interest in and become well acquainted with European cultures. When he was enthroned in 1868, it seems that he did not only succeed King Mongkut's throne, but he inherited an interest in collecting from his father. In 1874 he relocated his father's private collection from the Praphat Phiphittaphan Hall to the new building, Concordia Hall which opened to public in the same year.⁹

In 1889, an article in the *Wachirayanviset*, a weekly journal of Siam's first public library, the Wachirayan (now the National Library),¹⁰ reviewed the practice of collecting and the collected objects. The author also gave examples of the objects which were the most sought-after by Siamese collectors, such as, Siam's and foreign postage stamps, photographs, cut crystal glassware, porcelains, and meerschaum pipe.¹¹ The article offers rare documentation of collecting in Siam. It demonstrates the popularity of collecting in Siam's upperclass circle around the end of the nineteenth century. He had approached this method from the perspective of biography. Here the emphasis will be on the objects themselves in their wider social and cultural context. It should be noted that most of the collected objects were from foreign countries, these commodities were

⁸ Bowring, *The Kingdom*, 324.

⁹ Songsan Nilkamhaeng, "Henry Alabaster: Phu Amnuaykan Phiphittaphansathan lae Suan Saranrom mue phor. sor. 2417" (Henry Alabaster: Director of the National Museum and the Saranrom Park in 1874), *Silpakorn (Fine Arts)* 18, 3 (September 1974), 33-34.

¹⁰ The journal was run by the committees of the library. The first issue was circulated on 12 January 1885. It was originated from the library's internal newsletter launched in a previous year. Its contents covered from news concerning the library, academic articles, poems, Thai and foreign literature to Thai and world histories contributed by editorial staff and members of the library. See Ratchani Sapwichit, "Tamnan Wachirayanviset," (A Story of Wachirayanviset) last modified June 11, 2009, <http://www.sac.or.th/databases/siamrarebooks/wachirayan/index.php/2008-08-17-14-21-36>.

¹¹ Mom Chao Phoem, "Reung Khong Len Tang-tang" (A Note on Collecting and Collection), *Wachirayanviset (Wachirayan Library Journal)* 4, 35 (30 June 1889), 407-410.

either bought from abroad by the collectors, or they were imported to Siam through European shops in Bangkok. As for being the pioneer of westernised modes of practice, Chulalongkorn owned a significant amount of the most exquisite items of the aforementioned objects in his collections. It seems plausible that he took an inspiration from his father's private collection which he had witnessed developing since he was very young. Parts of his private collection are now displayed at Vimanmek mansion which will be discussed at length in this chapter.

According to the article, works of art had not yet become Chulalongkorn's subject of interest in collecting in the early years of his reign. Although he commissioned portrait paintings from the early 1880s and the demand had increased dramatically around the mid 1890s, the art objects in his private collection were not noticeably evident. King Chulalongkorn's indulgence in art collecting became more prominent when he visited Europe where he bought a significant number of paintings and sculptures to enrich his collection. Due to a revered worship bestowed upon the Thai monarchy,¹² most of Chulalongkorn's private collection has never been displayed for the public, with the collection in Vimanmek Mansion as an exceptional case. In 1993, the BRH, published an editorial volume featuring Chulalongkorn's private art collection in celebration of Queen Sirikit's sixtieth birthday anniversary. It was the first and only time that his art collection has been publicised. This publication, edited by Apinan Poshyananda, reveals an astonishing art collection.¹³ Since access to the art collection is restricted and supporting textual material is scarce, there has not been sufficient study of Chulalongkorn's collecting and collection.

In her major study on collecting, Susan M. Pearce addresses many of the important issues surrounding the practice of collecting. Pearce investigates collecting as a set of things which people do, as an aspect of individual and social practice which is important in public and private life. Her investigation explains the way in which the collector constructs their relationship with the material world through their collections, and thus shape their life.¹⁴ On the individual aspect, Jean Baudrillard views the practice

¹² The Siamese revolution of 1932 ended the absolutism under the Chakri Dynasty and caused the change of the system of government from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy in a *coup d'état* operated by the Khana Ratsadon or the People's Party, a group of militants and officials). Even though the 1932 Revolution has toppled the monarchy and terminated the political authority of the Chakri kings, the institution still commands the respect and reverence of the Thai people. Each constitution has maintained the king as 'enthroned in a position of revered worship and shall not be violated.' See Piyawan Panto, "Phra Maha Kasat Thai kab Rattathammanoon" (Thai Kings and the Constitution), in *Kwamru Bueng Ton Kiewkab Phra Maha Kasat (An Introduction to the Monarchy of Thailand)* accessed June 9, 2013, <http://www.kpi.ac.th/wiki/index.php/>.

¹³ Apinan Poshyananda, *Chittakam lae Pratimakam Baeb Tawantok nai Ratchasamnak Lem 2 (Western-Style Paintings and Sculptures in the Thai Royal Court, Volume 2)* (Bangkok: BRH, 1993).

¹⁴ Susan M. Pearce, *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1999), 4, 13-20.

of collecting as a personal possession, of which the collector tries to piece together his world or his personal microcosm.¹⁵ Nonetheless, collecting is considered a social activity as the collectors construct their relationship with the material world, it shapes and characterises their social identities. Mieke Bal is also interested in collecting and its story: she studies collecting and collection as the narrative. She believes that:

[...]collecting comes to mean collecting precisely when a series of haphazard purchase or gifts suddenly becomes a meaningful sequence. That is the moment when a self conscious narrator begins to tell its story, bringing about a semiotics for a narrative of identity, history and situation. Hence, one can also look at it from the perspective of the collector as agent in this narrative.¹⁶

These scholars interestingly interpret the meaning and narrative of collecting to which it is very significant to apply King Chulalongkorn's account of his passion for collecting. This study seeks to investigate the way in which his collections demonstrate an interwoven narrative of desire and identification, alongside changing notions of cultural value. Moreover, King Chulalongkorn's strategy of art patronage was intimately tied to the construction of New Siam as it was called in his reign and their cultural identity, and eventually helped introduce and promulgated the dawn of modern art in Thailand.

2.1 Finding Identity: Tastes, Social Classes and Self in Chulalongkorn's Royal Collection

When he accompanied Chulalongkorn and his entourage to various European shops in India in 1872, Major Edward Bosc Sladen witnessed Siamese elites' eagerness in purchasing an eclectic variety of articles of European manufacture, such as shawls and sealskin tobacco pouches.¹⁷ Sladen's account of the early years of Chulalongkorn's rule shows Siamese nobility's enthusiasm for foreign commodities which conveniently benefited them both in economic and cultural value. It should be noted that their consumption of imports was not solely stimulated by their desire for acquisition of the objects for collection. However, it indicated that they were willing to indulge in valuable commodities. Siam's trading figures indicate that the consumption on imported products during the Fifth Reign was so extensive that the large sums of money spent on imports were not much different from the income from their exports. For instance, the import/export merchandise totals from the port of Bangkok for 1892

¹⁵ Jean Baudrillard, "The System of Collecting," in *The Cultures of Collecting*, ed. John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (London: Reaktion Books, 1994), 7.

¹⁶ Mieke Bal, "Telling Object: A Narrative Perspective on Collecting," in *The Cultures of Collecting*, 100-101.

¹⁷ Sladen, *King Chulalongkorn's Journey*, 40-41.

shows a small gap between the prices of exports and imports, 10,084,077 US dollars for exports and 9,425,192 US dollars for imports.¹⁸

Bal alludes to collecting as a series of haphazard purchases or gifts suddenly becomes a meaningful sequence.¹⁹ As in the case of the Siamese elites, the Meerschaum pipe probably falls into this category. The National Museum in Bangkok holds a considerable number of these carved smoking pipes in their collection. Most of these Meerschaum pipes have been part of the museum collection since the beginning and have no specific background detail concerning to whom they belong. However, some of them are identified as King Chulalongkorn's property regardless, presumably relying on Prince Damrong's account which referred to one of the pipes he found in the museum collection and recognised it as one of the King's collection of Meerschaum pipes.²⁰ Mom Chao Phoem mentioned that the smoking pipe was one of the objects widely acquired by Siamese collectors. A Meerschaum pipe was probably given to the museum by the collectors when it was established and the popularity of collecting Meerschaum pipes gradually ceased around 1930s.²¹ Collecting, for Siamese elites, was a form of luxury consumption par excellence. Mom Chao Phoem indicated that the practice of collecting among Siamese, presumably ones in high social classes who were wealthy enough to possess those luxury goods, was a well regarded and a competitive activity.²²

The habit of collecting European art in the royal court of Siam probably started with the gifts received from the courts of European royal houses in the Forth Reign, such as the portrait paintings of Emperor Napoleon III and Empress Eugénie²³ (Figures 1-2) and the monumental historical paintings depicting the reception of Siamese embassies in French and British courts which now hang in the Chakri Throne Hall

¹⁸ Frédéric Meyer, *Siam and the Siamese Exhibits at the World's Fair* (Chicago: s.n., 1893), 6.

¹⁹ Bal, "Telling Object," 100.

²⁰ Prince Damrong, *Kwamsongcham (Memories)* (Bangkok: SSST, 1962), 155.

²¹ Dendao Silpanon, "Klong Meerschaum" (Meerschaum Pipe), *Silpakorn (Fine Arts)* 45, 2 (March-April, 2002), 41-43.

²² Phoem, "Reung Khong Len," 409-410.

²³ The portraits of the French emperor and empress were sent to Thailand twice. The first portraits was sent in August 1856 with the French envoy led by Louise Charles de Montigny, and in 1867. King Mongkut had arrange grand ceremonial processions of the portraits on both occasions. See FAD, *Prachum Phongsawadan Bhak thi 62 Rueng Thoot Farang nai Samai Krung Rattanakosin (The Chronicles of Siam Part 62: The Envoys from the West in the Rattanakosin Era)* (Bangkok: Sophonphiphat Thanakon, 1936), 318-120 and 436-438. However, the portrait painting of Emperor Napoleon III was mistakenly identified as Emperor Wilhelm II of Germany in Poshayanan's account: *Chittakam, Lem 1*. This half-length portrait is the copy of Winterhalter's work in 1853, similar to the case of Empress Eugénie's portrait.

(Figures 3-4).²⁴ The tradition of sending portraits of the head of state as gifts continued in Chulalongkorn's reign, such as the portrait busts of Tzar Nicholas II and Tzarina Alexandra of Russia, and of King Umberto I and Queen Margherita of Savoy (Figures 5-6), and the portrait paintings of Emperor Wilhelm II of the German Empire and of Duke John Albert of Mecklenburg who visited Siam twice in 1883 and 1910 (Figures 7-8). These royal portraits are now displayed at the Chakri Throne Hall and Vimanmek Mansion. Chulalongkorn had extended the collection of royal portraits with his commissioning of the portrait paintings of Siamese royal family discussed in the previous chapter, together with the collection of fine arts he acquired from Europe.

Chulalongkorn collected primarily oil paintings, a type of which had become a status symbol elevated to the pinnacle of prestige in European society for many centuries. The medium of painting was transmuted into a sibling of poetry which was universally considered a major art forms.²⁵ The position of painting within the hierarchy of European civilisation grants it both cultural and economic value which were inevitably ascribed to the collector or patron in their motivation of collecting. Its privileged position is supported by studies on collecting pointing out that fine arts collecting is restricted to the highest social classes.²⁶ Chulalongkorn shared the European elites' passion for arts and collecting. He proved to be a westernised and modernist monarch from his early years on the throne. He reformed many traditions in his royal court with the practices he adopted from European royal courts. For instance: the orders of Royal Decorations and court dresses, including hairstyles for both men and women.²⁷ His letters and telegraphs to Queen Saovabha during his European visit in 1897 express his admiration for the art collections of European royal houses where he visited their palaces, such as Windsor Castle in Berkshire, United Kingdom, the Pitti

²⁴ The painting of the Siamese envoy at Fontainebleau was painted by Jean Marius Fouqué after the painting of the same depiction by Jean-Léon Gérôme which hangs in Chateau de Versailles, France. As for the oil painting of the Siamese Ambassadors at the Windsor Castle, there are two potential original versions of this oil painting; one is a full-page print from *The Illustrated London News* (December 5, 1857) and the another one is a watercolour painting by Robert Thomas Landells, signed and dated in 1858 which belongs to the Royal Collection. See Krairoek Nana, *Na Nueng nai Siam: Prawatsat Choeng Wikhroh (Siam-the First Page of Her History)* (Bangkok: Matichon, 2013), 2-13. Besides these two historical paintings, there are two more painting portraying similar scenes. One depicts Siamese Ambassadors from King Narai of the Ayutthaya Period in an audience with King Louis XIV at Versailles (the event took place on 1 September 1676). The other shows King Mongkut and the French ambassador from Emperor Napoleon III at the old Ananta Samakhom Throne, the Grand Palace. See Poshyananda, *Chittakam, Lem 2*, 32-39.

²⁵ Jonathan Brown, *King and Connoisseurs: Collecting Art in Seventeenth-Century Europe* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1995), 243.

²⁶ Belk, "Collecting", 485.

²⁷ Chulalongkorn decided to change the honour system after the Emperor of Austria (Franz Joseph I) awarded him Austrian decoration. However, by that time, Thai Royal Decorations had no decorations or medals which was appropriate to be bestowed onto foreign dignitaries, thus he established new orders and reformed the honour system in 1869. See Prince Damrong, *Kwamsongcham*, 144-145 and 165-168.

Palace in Florence, Italy, as well as Peter the Great's Winter Palace and the Hermitage in Saint Petersburg, Russia.²⁸ Collecting European arts was, perhaps, one of the conformities Chulalongkorn adopted from royal courts in Europe. As previously stated, art patronage was not unknown in the royal court of Siam. However, Chulalongkorn's art patronage was purely secular in nature as opposed to the religious art which was almost exclusively supported by his predecessors.²⁹ His European art collection and his patronage therefore promoted secularism to an unprecedented high level in Siam's art scene.

His letter from Florence to Queen Saovabha indicates his passion for art, to which he remarked, 'it won't be an overstatement to say that I have spent most of my time here visiting these sculptors and painters, because I've always been fascinated in art.'³⁰ Chulalongkorn began collecting immediately during his first visit to Europe and commissioned several portraits as previously detailed in Chapter One. There is no documentation to indicate that Chulalongkorn hired any professional or connoisseur to assist him in his acquisitions of European art. Although his time spent with artists highly placed at the time would have given him an education in the subject which must have informed his eye for choosing art. His primary source of acquisitions of European art were from art exhibitions, art dealers and directly from artists' studio.

At the Chakri Throne Hall, the audience chamber and galleries are hung with official portraits of Siamese royalty and European monarchs and dignitaries. They are also accompanied by the replicas of masterpieces and classic sculptures, such as Giambologna's famous *The Rape of the Sabine Women*, the Head of Michelangelo's *David* (by Cesare Lapini), and the set of *Crouching Venus* type marble sculptures (Figures 9-11) which is very similar to the *Lely Venus* at the British Museum (Figure 12). These replicas of masterpieces were put on display surrounded by the embellished decor of the Western style throne hall, where both Siamese officials and foreign guests would witness the persona of Chulalongkorn as a collector of high art. He also acquired reproductions of the Old Master paintings, such as Titian's *Danaë*

²⁸ King Chulalongkorn, *Phraratchahatthalekha Suan Phra'ong Somdet Phraramathibodi Srisindramaha Chulalongkorn Phra Chulachomklao Chaoyuhua Song Mi Phraratchathan dae Somdet Phra Sriphatcharindra Boromrajininat Phraphanpeeluang Naiwela thi Song Samret Ratchakan Phaendin Tang phra'ong Mue Sadet Phraratchadamnoen Praphat Europe phor. sor. 2440, Bhak 1* (*The King's Correspondence to Queen Saovabha During the Regency in 1897, Volume 1*) (Bangkok: FAD, 1958), 162-165; FAD, *Kan Sadet Praphat Europe khong Phrabat Somdet Phra Chulachomklao Chaoyuhua ror. sor. 116 Lem 1* (*King Chulalongkorn's Visit to Europe, 1897 Volume 1*) (Bangkok: FAD, 1999), 356-357.

²⁹ In a figurative sense, Chulalongkorn had sponsored secular architectures more than Buddhist temples during his long reign of 42 years. He commissioned seven temples which is a very small number compares to other building projects, such as, palaces, bridges, government buildings, hospital, prison and school included. See Phirasi Phowathong Chaiyaboon Sirithanawat and Mongkhonlak Yaimeesak, *Sathapattayakam nai Samai Phra Phuttachao Luang* (*The Architecture of King Chulalongkorn*) (Bangkok: Advance Info Service, 2010).

³⁰ King Chulalongkorn, *Phraratchahatthalekha*, 162. See Appendix H for the original text in Thai.

(the archetype was probably *Danaë with Eros*, dated 1544 which is now on display at National Museum of Capodimonte, Naples, Italy) (Figure 13) and a reproduction of Raphael's *Madonna of the Chair* (*Madonna della seggiola*, circa 1513-1514) housed in the Pitti Palace (Figure 14).³¹ Chulalongkorn never mentioned the latter specifically in his accounts, but when he visited the Pitti Palace on 1 June 1897, he probably would have seen this Old Master and this motivated him to acquire a copy for his collection. He also bought a copy of *L'Atelier de Raphael Sanzio*, an engraving by Paul Allais, depicting a scene of Raphael's workshop (Figure 15).³² In these personal artistic acquisitions, Chulalongkorn projected his image as one who favoured works of Academic art. His collecting focused on the works of the artists who followed the traditional rules of Academic art more than the modern style which flourished dramatically during the late nineteenth century. In 1907 he frequently expressed his distaste for modern art while he visited the seventh Venice Biennale, International Art Exhibition in Mannheim, Germany and the Salon in Paris.³³

Since his first acquisition in 1897, the pattern of his collecting indicates the beginning of his interests in genre subjects which later developed into his main selection in 1907. The gallery of Florentine art dealer Luigi Pisani on Borgo Ognissanti Street was the place in which Chulalongkorn selected most of his acquisitions during his first European visit. Chulalongkorn's selection of paintings included Giovanni Battista Quadroni's paintings entitled *A Painter in His Studio* (1871) and *The Prisoners* (1880), B. Bachy's French-style painting depicting a music lesson scene and Achille Glisenti's *The First Quarrel* (Figures 16-19). He also acquired many marble sculptures from Italian sculptors, this collection consisted of both genre subjects: Cesarre Lapini's

³¹ The reproduction of *Danaë with Eros* and *Madonna of the Chair* are now housed in the Boromphiman Residential Hall, the private apartment Chulalongkorn built for the Crown Prince (the construction was between 1897-1903). Initially it was intended as a gift to Prince Maha Vajirunhis, but he died before the construction finished. Once completed it was handed to the next heir, Prince Maha Vajiravudh.

³² Old Master prints were popular among collectors since the eighteenth century both in England and Continental Europe; especially in the Continental which reproduced prints in a larger scale. See Sheila O'Connell, *The Popular Print in England* (London: British Museum Press, 1999), 192-202. The catalogue of Christie Manson and Woods featuring an auction of the collection etchings, engravings and drawings of the Earl of Aylesford date Monday 17 July 1893 also shows a fine example of the Old Masters prints collected by the Victorian elites. Earl of Aylesford's collection comprised works by and after Albrecht Dürer, Lucas Van Leyden and Rembrandt, see *Catalogue of the Collection of Etchings, Engravings and Drawings, by and after Old Masters, the Property of the Earl of Aylesford* (London: Christie Manson and Woods, 1893), accessed November 8, 2015, <http://www.archive.org/details/engravingsdrawings00chri>. Engravings in Chulalongkorn's collection are only small in number or it is possible that some of them are uncatalogued. This suggests that the King was not an avid collector of prints. Nevertheless, his knowledge in art collecting was considering vast and well-informed with collecting trends of his European equivalents.

³³ King Chulalongkorn, *Phraratchaniphon Rueng Klai Ban* (*Klai Ban: King Chulalongkorn's Diary and Travel Writings*), First published in 1907 (Bangkok: Global Intercommunication, 2008), 251-252 and 356-358.

Sorpresa (Surprise) and mythological themes: Raffaello Romanelli's *Cupid and Psyche* (Figures 20-21).

Chulalongkorn was continually entertained by collecting and displaying his European art collection in his new palaces. He moved out from his private apartment in the Chakri Maha Prasat group, after the completion of his new Western style apartments in the Dusit Palace, namely Vimanmek Mansion (completed in March 1901); it served as a royal residential hall for five years until the completion of Amphon Sathan Residential Hall in 1906. Whereas the European art collection at the Chakri Throne Hall consisted of official portraits of Siamese and European monarchs, history paintings and replicas of Old Masters, Chulalongkorn's new private apartments housed a collection which depicted more intensely personal subjects, such as, nude paintings, genre paintings and landscape paintings. This group of works was mostly from his second visit to Europe in 1907 which was known as Chulalongkorn's personal visit, rather than a state visit as was the first trip in 1897. Essentially, the personal reasons for the 1907 visit give an explanation for the extent of such acquisition.³⁴

His acquaintance with European artists such as Carolus-Duran, Gordigiani and Gelli had affected the trajectory of his art collecting. Gordigiani and Gelli were the artists to whom Chulalongkorn paid a visit in their studio in Florence and bought many of their works. While Carolus-Duran, who was the member of the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts and the director of the French Academy in Rome, recommended one particular painting then showing in the Salon to Chulalongkorn during a dinner hosted by Chulalongkorn at his hotel (Villa Nobel) in San Remo, on 11 May 1907. The letter, however, did not mention the title of the painting or the name of the artist.³⁵ When Chulalongkorn sojourned in Paris, he did visit the Salon of 1907, during which he acquired many paintings from various artists which will be discussed at length shortly.

When Chulalongkorn stayed briefly in Venice, he visited the Venice Biennale on 17 May 1907, where he saw the assembly of exhibited works from modern artists such as August Rodin and Claude Monet side by side with the traditional art which he preferred.³⁶ The Siamese monarch was quite disappointed that many paintings which he liked—although he did not specifically mentioned their titles—were already acquired by King Victor Emmanuel III of Italy. Nevertheless, Chulalongkorn eventually bought a

³⁴ Chulalongkorn's second visit to Europe was chiefly based on a recommendation of his German physicians who suggested a spa treatment at Baden-Baden in Germany to remedy his condition. See "Phra Ratchaphithi Praphat Europe Krang thi Song," (The Royal Ceremony of the Second Visit to Europe), *RG* 23 (31 March 1907), 1333-1334.

³⁵ King Chulalongkorn, *Klai Ban*, 224.

³⁶ *Catalog of the Venice Biennale, Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte della Città di Venezia: Seventh Exhibition, 1907* (New York: Arno Press, 1971).

few paintings from the Biennale.³⁷ Chulalongkorn then left Venice for Florence where he was impressed by the city's artistic scenery. The King arrived in Florence on 20 May and visited the Pisani Gallery, his usual source, where he bought a collection of oil paintings. Here, he showed his admiration for two paintings depicting the scene of *the Temptation of St. Anthony* and the subject of *the Three Graces*, specifically the detail of the realistic style on the figures. However, he stated that he could not afford the prices (6,000 and 2,000 pounds sterling, respectively). Eventually he bought other paintings, including some reproductions, indicating that his interest and selection was not purely driven by expectations of appreciation in monetary terms. There were seven paintings in total.³⁸ The following day, he visited the studios of Gelli and Gordigiani who had been commissioned to paint Chulalongkorn's portraits in 1897. Chulalongkorn purchased six paintings from Gelli during his visit to the artist's studio in the number 10 on Via Marsilio Ficino; most of them were female nude paintings.³⁹ They were acquired to decorate his private apartments at Vimanmek Mansion and the Amphon Sathan Residential Hall: itself an Art Nouveau villa (Figures 22-23).

According to his own account, Chulalongkorn's favourite painting by Gelli was the one depicting a woman standing against a dressing table with a peacock (Figures 24-25). His letter describes, presumably reporting the artist's own explanation, that the painting was an allegory of the beauty of the nature.⁴⁰ Behind the model, on her right hand side, are shown a skull and an hourglass, common *vanitas* symbols used in the *memento mori* theme. Interestingly, the decoration in the background with the combination of geometric patterns and floral motif is comparable to the patterns commonly associated with Islamic art. Other works by Gelli in Chulalongkorn's collection also suggest that he was occasionally influenced by the Orientalism movement. For example, a painting depicts a female nude reclining on an Eastern style embroidered blanket with a brass vessel, which probably is a middle eastern water pipe in the foreground (Figure 26). Continuing his interest in an idealised representation of the female nude, Chulalongkorn acquired two female nude paintings of similar theme by Harold Speed, an English artist, and by the unnamed artist. Speed had one-man exhibition of Italian landscapes at the Leicester Galleries in February 1907,⁴¹ who also exhibited three paintings at Salon de la Société Nationale des beaux-

³⁷ King Chulalongkorn, *Klai Ban*, 251-251.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 269-270.

³⁹ Poshyananda, *Chittakam, Lem 2*, 72-73.

⁴⁰ King Chulalongkorn, *Klai Ban*, 273.

⁴¹ "Art Music and the Drama," *Illustrated London News* (London, England) 16 February 1907: 260. The Illustrated London News Historical Archive, 1842-2003, accessed August 8, 2013, <http://find.galegroup.com/dvnw/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=DVNW&userGroupName=asiademo&tabID=T003&docPage=article&docId=HN3100200166&type=multipage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0>.

arts in the same year.⁴² The paintings depict a full-length female nude standing in front of a waterfall and stream. Both paintings feature a rumpled piece of clothing, presumably their discarded dresses, suggesting a bathers subject which was a popular theme in the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries (Figures 27-28). Another of Gelli's paintings which Chulalongkorn also acquired, entitled *Dopo il bagno (After the Bath)* (Figure 29) was of the same subject. These acquisitions later hung in both his private apartments at the Amphorn Sathan Residential Hall and Vimanmek Mansion. Nonetheless, showing a nude figure in artistic modes of presentation, both within and outside art galleries or art exhibitions, even in Western cultures, had incited a debate concerning an ongoing dichotomy between idealism and indecency.⁴³

However, it is noticeable that the way in which he assimilated these nude paintings into his collection was by using them in private space, as he hung these paintings in his own areas in those apartments, a contrast to a more formal collection at the Chakri Throne Hall. It is also worth pointing out that Queen Victoria often gave Prince Albert nudes as birthday gifts, a custom regarded as a pure gesture that also fostered high art.⁴⁴ Thus, the presentation of female body in Chulalongkorn's collection may suggest his awareness of the appreciation of female beauty from an aesthetic perspective, a reflection of his British counterpart. In contrast to Europe, from a culturally specific perspective, nudes had never been a subject of controversy in Siamese traditional art. Many figures, especially female characters from Buddhist mythology, for example the Mother Earth ('Phra Mae Thorani') (Figure 30), were always rendered as nudes or partially dressed. These were commonly portrayed in the frescos of Buddhist temples.

Landscape paintings were another subject Chulalongkorn selected for inclusion to his collection, for instance, a winter landscape by Hermann Dischler (Figure 31) and a scene at the *Isle of Capri* by Karl-Theodor Böhme. Both were works by German artists, which he purchased in Baden Baden.⁴⁵ However, genre painting remained

⁴² Speed's paintings exhibited at the Salon were the portrait of King Edward VII of the United Kingdom, along with other two paintings entitled '*Elihn Vedder*' and '*Le châle mauve*.' See Société Nationale des beaux-arts, *Catalogue Illustré du Salon de 1907*, ed. Ludovic Baschet (Paris: Bibliothèque des Annales, 1907), XXIV, accessed July 30, 2013, <http://www.archive.org/details/catalogueillust1907soci>.

⁴³In Victorian society, the focus of debates on nude paintings and moral restriction was typically referred to as 'the English Nude,' see Alison Smith, "The Nude in Nineteenth-Century Britain: 'The English Nude'" in *Exposed: The Victorian Nude*, ed. Alison Smith (London: Tate Publishing, 2001), 11-14. James Jackson Jarves, the nineteenth-century American critic stated that a controversy surrounding the nude in arts was 'born of religious scruples,' see James Jackson Jarves, "The Nude in Modern Art and Society," *Art Journal* (March, 1874), 65, accessed August 13, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/docview/6794452?accountid=14182>.

⁴⁴ Smith, "The Nude," 12.

⁴⁵ King Chulalongkorn, *Klai Ban*, 332.

central to his collecting practice with his acquisitions at *Salon des Artistes Français*, which he visited in late June 1907. These acquisitions mainly consisted of Impressionist paintings, the art movement which Chulalongkorn appraised as a 'better modern style' than other modern styles he had seen and disliked in the art exhibitions in Germany (possibly Fauvism).⁴⁶ He selected six oil paintings of scenes from everyday life: Pierre Ribéra's *La Conquista (The Conversation)* and *The Fight* (two panels from *Andalusia, triptych*) (Figures 32-34), Jean-Eugène Buland's *Plus le sou-après un coup de tête (Penniless; After Running Away)*, Gaston Édouard Guédy's *Maternité (Maternity)* (Figures 35-36) and of ordinary people in work and recreation: Armand Guéry's *Coucher du Soleil aux approches de l'orage, Champagne (Sunset, Storm Breaking, Champagne)*, Édouard Bernard Debat-Ponsan's *Impression d'été sur la Loire (Summer on the Loire)*, Hubert Denis Etcheverry's *Sur la plage de Biarritz (On the Beach in Biarritz)* (Figures 37-39). He acquired a further three oil paintings of mythological and allegorical themes: Léon Comerre's *Pluie d'or (Golden Rain)*, Ludovic Alleaume's *Les jeux de la vague (The Playfulness of the Wave)* and Gaston Bussière's *Réveil de Brunhild (Brunhild's Awakening)* (Figures 40-42).

From the same Salon, Chulalongkorn added a significant work to his collection through a Realist painting titled '*Les Rouffions; scène de grève (Anzin) (Ruffians, Strike Scene at Anzin)*' by Lucien Hector Jonas, a French artist who won the second Prix de Rome in 1905 (Figure 43). This painting depicts a scene of a coal miners' strike at Anzin, a commune in the Nord department in northern France. The artist who was a native of the Nord department supposedly portrayed the Anzin Strike of 1884 (from 21 February to 17 April); an uprising which was also a background for Émile Zola's 1885 novel entitled *Germinal*.⁴⁷ According to *Le Petit Journal Illustré*, this painting caused a sensation at the Salon, both for its design and the vigorous realism of his execution. There was also a report in the same article of the acquisition of this Realist painting by King Chulalongkorn.⁴⁸ However, the proletarian subject of the painting ironically conflicted with Chulalongkorn's absolutist regime in Siam's political landscape. Chulalongkorn hung this painting at the Amphon Sathan Residential Hall, alongside Louis Roger's *L'Effort; travaux du métropolitain (The Tug; Metropolitan Railway)* (Figure 44) another Realist painting purchased from the same Salon. Unlike '*Les Rouffions*,' Roger's '*L'Effort*' which depicts the railway workers at work, had a more direct effect on Siamese elites as it can be related to Siam's development of rail services established in 1891.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 352-354.

⁴⁷ Richard H. Zakarian, *Zola's "Germinal": A Critical Study of its Primary Sources* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1972), 167-170.

⁴⁸ "Les Rouffions. Tableau de M. Lucien Jonas (Salon de 1907)," *Le Petit Journal Illustré* (September 15, 1907), accessed July 30, 2013, <http://cent.ans.free.fr/pj1907/pj87815091907b.htm>.

Chulalongkorn was very concerned with the safety of the collection, he designated Chaophraya Yommaraj (born Pun Sukhum), the Minister of Public Works, to be in charge of the transport.⁴⁹ His European art collections were installed between Chulalongkorn's apartments in Bangkok (the Chakri Throne Hall and the Amphon Sathan Residential Hall) and Ayutthaya Province (Bang Pa-In Palace) after he arrived in Bangkok on 17 November 1907.⁵⁰ However, it should be noted that some of the collected objects are now relocated to other palaces which were built or completed after Chulalongkorn's death, such as the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall (completed in 1915) and Chitralada Villa (built in 1913). Most importantly, these palaces were left uninhabited and abandoned for many years following the Siamese Revolution of 1932, after which members of the royal family sought refuge abroad. King Prajadhipok (King Rama VII; reigned from 1925 to 1935) abdicated in 1935, and left Siam never to return (he died in England in 1941). His successor, King Ananda Mahidol (King Rama VIII; reigned from 1935 to 1946) spent most of his time studying in Switzerland as he became a monarch at a very young age. He visited Thailand only twice to stay briefly in 1938 and 1946, until his premature death on 9 June 1946 in Bangkok. King Bhumibol Adulyadej ascended the throne following the death of his brother. It is in his reign that the abandoned palaces have been rebuilt, redecorated and reused. With the Thai monarchy securely and majestically re-established and the royal family resettled in these palaces, public access to the building is mostly not permitted. However, Vimanmek Mansion is an exception. It is now the museum which exhibits parts of King Chulalongkorn's collections under the guidance of Queen Sirikit.⁵¹ Hence, it is possible that some of these collected objects are not in their original contexts.

However, their inaccessible location in royal palaces raises the question why Chulalongkorn collected Western art that only he and his household could see. Frederick Baekeland proposes that the motivations for collecting that drive art collectors have a psychological aspect. He remarks that the art collector tends to use his collection and collecting to enhance his self-definition, to the extent that there must be elements of exhibitionism in the collector's desire to have others see his collection.⁵² Eva Rovers similarly observes that the collector's impulse lies on the borderline

⁴⁹ King Chulalongkorn, *Samnao Phraratchahatthalekha Suan Phra'ong Phrabat Somdet Phra Chulachomklao Chaoyuhua thung Chaophraya Yommaraj (Pan Sukhum) kab Prawat Chaophraya Yommaraj (King Chulalongkorn's Personal Letters to Chaophraya Yommaraj (Pan Sukhum) and Chaophraya Yommaraj's Biography)* (Bangkok: Bamrungtham, 1939), 36-37, accessed July 30, 2013, <http://www.archive.org/details/samnaophrart00chul>. Chulalongkorn's collection consists of seventeen marble sculptures, six bronzes and fifty-five paintings.

⁵⁰ King Chulalongkorn, *Samnao*, 56 and 65.

⁵¹ BRH, *Chotmai het Reung Phrathinang Vimanmek: Kan Sang lae Kan Burana Phrathinang Vimanmek (The Construction and Restoration of Vimanmek Mansion)* (Bangkok: BRH, 1985), 35.

⁵² Frederick Baekeland, "Psychological Aspects of Art Collecting," in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. Susan M. Pearce (London: Routledge, 1994), 206-216.

between philanthropy and self-glorification.⁵³ However, these interpretations do not explain Chulalongkorn's case appropriately. As previously mentioned, his collection was never designed to be open to the public, at least during his lifetime. Nevertheless, Chulalongkorn even stated that he regarded his collecting as a form of investment which was one of Baekeland's interpretations of the drives behind art collecting.⁵⁴ The King assented that his collection would eventually become the nation's heritage, as the fund for his acquisitions came from the Privy Purse.⁵⁵

Russell Belk concludes that collecting is something done in the service of science or art, and enriches the life of the collector and sometimes others as well.⁵⁶ Spiritual and religious aspects of collectors have also been addressed. Many studies agree on the relationship between collectors and their collecting practices involving immortality and existence only insofar as the owners live on through their collections, hence they became immortal.⁵⁷ Baudrillard theorises that collecting is a complex game, involving the recycling of birth and death within an object-system, thus the collector can live out his or her life uninterruptedly and in a cyclical mode and 'thereby symbolically transcend the realities of an existence before whose irreversibility and contingency he remains powerless.'⁵⁸ This analysis is based in the views of Western religion or Western cultural discourse whose conceptions and perceptions are different from those in the Eastern world. The idea of life and death or afterlife in Buddhist philosophy would have affected Chulalongkorn's collecting. The ultimate aim in Buddhism is to approach liberation (*nirvana*), the state of being free from suffering which is the cycle of death and rebirth known as *samsara*. This involves rejecting objects and possessions as encumbrances to freedom from the eternal cycles of suffering in the *samsara*. Collecting artworks could be seen as the antithesis of Buddhist doctrine. The Siamese monarch was a devoted Buddhist who had entered his monkhood at the traditional age of twenty, thus he held this doctrine as a strong conviction. According to Chulalongkorn's belief in a Buddhist philosophy, the collecting practice's potential to extend beyond this life was meaningless to him. Furthermore, his statement on the possession of the art collection suggests that he viewed his ownership as provisional as it would eventually be transferred to the nation. In this regard, Baudrillard's views on collecting which associated collectors with the material world might not have applied to Chulalongkorn's art collecting with a Buddhist perspective.

⁵³ Rovers, "Introduction," 160.

⁵⁴ Baekeland, "Psychological Aspects," 205.

⁵⁵ King Chulalongkorn, *Samnao*, 57-58.

⁵⁶ Belk, "Collecting," 487.

⁵⁷ See Baudrillard, "The System of Collecting," 17.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 17.

However, Chulalongkorn spent a considerable amount of money on both luxurious travel and art collecting. His fascination with collecting European art mirrors his relationship to the material world. Pearce observes that all societies use objects to construct their social lives.⁵⁹ Additionally, collected objects constitute themselves, to borrow Baudrillard's term, as a system which the collector seeks to piece together as his personal microcosm.⁶⁰ Following this concept, Bal's interpretation of collecting proposes that collecting reflects the collector as an agent in the construction of a narrative of identity, history and situation.⁶¹ Chulalongkorn's art collecting and collection went beyond aesthetic gratification. The objects defined his self-construction amidst the rise of modernity discourse in Siamese society and was the means through which he established himself as its cultural centre. European art he acquired played a crucial role in how Chulalongkorn presented himself to the people of Siam, who learnt about his acquisitions through his travel journal titled *Klai Ban*.⁶²

Following Pierre Bourdieu's theory of class distinction, Chulalongkorn's art collecting signalled the aesthetic consumption which was the new obsession of the dominant social classes in addition to the adopting of European modes of practice as discussed earlier in Chapter One. Chulalongkorn, as the monarch was characterised by taste cultures and the possession of cultural capital and his European art collection is embodied as class Habitus. Bourdieu views that taste, be it the taste of necessity or the taste of luxury, commands the classifying practices rather than high or low income. He further remarks, '[T]hrough taste, an agent has what he likes because he likes what he has, that is the properties actually given to him in the distributions and legitimately assigned to him in the classifications.'⁶³ The purchase of works of art, for Bourdieu, is objectified evidence of personal taste and it is closest to the most irreproachable and inimitable form of accumulation. Such accumulation is the internalisation of distinctive signs and symbols of power in the form of natural distinction, personal authority or

⁵⁹ Pearce, *On Collecting*, 28.

⁶⁰ Baudrillard, "The System of Collecting," 7.

⁶¹ Bal, "Telling Object," 100-103.

⁶² *Klai Ban* was edited by Prince Damrong, by Chulalongkorn's appointment. This travel journal was an expurgation of King Chulalongkorn's letters to his daughter, Prince Nibha Nobhadol during his 1907 European tour and was modelled after Queen Victoria's *Leaves from the Journal of Our Life in the Highlands* which was published in 1868. See King Chulalongkorn, *Phraratchahatthalekha Phrabat Somdet Phra Chulachomklao Chaoyuhua Phraratchathan Somdet Phrachaborommawongthoe Kromphraya Damrong Rachanubhap Naiwela Sadet Phraratchadamnoen Praphat Europe Krang thi 2 nai phor. sor. 2450 (H.M. King Chulalongkorn's Letters to H.R.H. Prince Damrong Rachanubhap During the Second Visit to Europe in 1907)* (Bangkok: FAD, 1948), 31-32 and 65. *Klai Ban* was originally published as a serial in December 1907 for an annual Wat Benchamabophit's winter fête. The first edition was a four-volume journal and was reportedly sold a thousand copies. It was widely circulated among Siamese elites. In 1923 the Wachirayan Library published the second edition as a two-volume journal. See Prince Damrong Rachanubhap, introduction to *Klai Ban*, (2)-(4).

⁶³ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London: Routledge, 2010), 171

culture.⁶⁴ In this sense, by collecting European art, Chulalongkorn not only constituted fractions in Siam's social classes in which Siamese elites dictated what was regarded as 'high culture' or 'civilised customs,' but he also still managed to accumulate cultural profit to both himself and society. Although Chulalongkorn neither owned any Old Masters, nor could his collection be compared with the collections of the royal courts in Europe, he developed collecting practices similar to those of European elites. The decoration of his apartments with the art he acquired expressed the level of agency Chulalongkorn brought to his collecting and the way he determined that art collecting was integral to his role as the modernist monarch of Siam. He acquired works of art from well-known contemporary artists such as Speed, Gelli, Gordigiani and Carolus-Duran. They were very famous as portrait painters of European elites; among their subjects was King Edward VII who sat for Speed⁶⁵ and Gordigiani.⁶⁶ Carolus-Duran, whose pupils included the renowned portrait painter John Singer Sargent, was celebrated for his stylish rendering of members of high society in Third Republic France; he was also a director of the French Academy in Rome during Chulalongkorn's visit.⁶⁷

Chulalongkorn's acquisition of nude paintings for his art collection was probably adopted from European sovereigns as well. The most prominent example is Emperor Napoleon III and Empress Eugénie who acquired Alexandre Cabanel's *The Birth of Venus* and Paul Baudry's *The Pearl and the Wave* from the Salon of 1863.⁶⁸ Queen Victoria and Prince Albert also acquired an impressive collection of nude works, most of which were based on themes from national history and literature to promote national supremacy, for example, William Dyce's '*Neptune Resigning the Empire of the Seas to Britannia*' (1847) at Osborne House.⁶⁹ During his European visits, Chulalongkorn was a royal guest at many royal residences of European monarchs as mentioned earlier. In all probability, Chulalongkorn would have visited the art collections of those royal palaces. Following European elites' modes of practice, he could demonstrate that his taste in art was equal to his European counterparts. However, his acquisitions had some limits. Frequently, Chulalongkorn visited the art exhibitions in their last days,

⁶⁴ Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 279.

⁶⁵ Harold Speed's portrait of King Edward VII was among the exhibits at the Paris Salon of 1907. See "Hanging the King at the Paris Salon," *Illustrated London News*, April 20, 1907, 622

⁶⁶ A photographic print of King Edward VII's portrait published by F. Barsotti, after Michele Gordigiani is among the collection of National Portrait Gallery, London.

⁶⁷ H. Barbara Weinberg, *The Lure of Paris: Nineteenth-century American Painters and Their French Teachers* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1991) 189, 193-219.

⁶⁸ Alison McQueen, *Empress Eugénie and the Arts: Politics and Visual Culture in the Nineteenth Century* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 176-177.

⁶⁹ Smith, "The Nude," 11-12.

when all the finest works had already been acquired therefore, the Siamese monarch was forced to settle for ‘the second best.’

Given that Chulalongkorn’s acquisition of European art was principally a private mode of consumption and was less influential than his other modernisation programmes; it allowed him to appear directly comparable with European sovereigns to a certain degree. His European art collection was engaged in promoting Chulalongkorn’s public persona as a civilised monarch with the potential to govern Siam to achieve modernity, following the presentation of Siam on the world stage conveyed from the beginning of Chulalongkorn’s reign. Moreover, as Siam’s head of state, his acquisition of works of art from the Salon and his commissions given to French artists, namely, the full-length portrait by Carolus-Duran and the Equestrian Statue by a Parisian metallurgist of Susse Frères Foundry possibly had a diplomatic significance in Siam and France’s interrelationship. Following the Franco-Siamese War in 1893, the relationship between the two countries soured and they were constantly faced with series of conflict. Chulalongkorn also ratified the treaty on subsequent post-war agreements in Paris on 21 June 1907 with the Minister of Foreign Affairs.⁷⁰ His support of French art and artists demonstrates how Chulalongkorn’s patronage functioned as a method of cultural diplomacy which might have helped Siam reconcile with France in political friendship terms. All things considered, his art collecting and patronage illustrate the tastes, interests, and aspirations of Siam’s modern monarch both in the domestic and public sphere.

In addition, Chulalongkorn was also a patron of Thai artists, his most important artistic patronage was of Phra Soralak Likhit (born Mui Chandralak; hereafter referred to as Phra Soralak), who was appointed in 1890 at the age of fifteen to serve the King as his royal page. Phra Soralak was trained as a traditional painter at the workshop of Prince Sappasart Suphakit, the chief of the Royal Artisans department, where he learned the basics of Siamese fine arts. However, Phra Soralak was also interested in Western art and received Chulalongkorn’s support. Phra Soralak was granted permission to practice with foreign artists who worked for the Crown, such as Cesare Ferro Milone (1880–1934), an Italian painter from Turin (Figure 45).⁷¹ In 1907, Phra Soralak accompanied King Chulalongkorn on his second visit to Europe. There, he met and shared information with several famous European artists whom the Siamese King visited. Afterward, Phra Soralak was awarded a royal scholarship to study painting at the Academy of Rome for several years, this marked him historically as the first European-trained Thai artist. After his graduation and return to Siam, he served as a

⁷⁰ King Chulalongkorn, *Klai Ban*, 360.

⁷¹ Sompoj Sukaboon, “Phra Soralak Likhit: A Thai Painter of the Early Period, a Creator of Western Style Paintings,” *Silpakorn (Fine Arts)* 44, 6 (November-December, 2001), 79-82.

court painter of King Vajiravudh's court. He was best known as a portrait painter and became a pioneer of Western style portraiture in Siam. During his career as a court painter, Phra Soralak produced many royal portraits. His most important works are the portraits of King Vajiravudh at the Kings Gallery in the Chakri Throne Hall (Figure 46) and of King Prajadhipok (now housed at Vimanmek Mansion). He also produced several copies of the royal portraits in the Kings and Queens Gallery, for instance, portraits of King Loetla and Queen Savang Vadhana, and reproductions of Renaissance masterpieces, plausibly based on his study in Italy, such as *Sleeping Venus* (dated 1510) (Figures 47a-b) by Giorgione, an Italian Renaissance painter of the Venetian School.

Similarly to many court officials whose lives and professions were affected by the Siamese Revolution of 1932. The newly formed democratic government retired Phra Soralak at the age of fifty-seven. He then opened his own studio in Bangkok for portrait commissions. However, a year later, FAD established Thailand's first academy of art, following European academic modules. Phra Soralak was offered a position to teach Western style painting,⁷² alongside other well known contemporary artists and scholars in Thailand, such as Silpa Bhirasri (sculptor and later the founder of Silpakorn University), Luang Wichitvathakan (Thai historian)⁷³ and Phra Phromphichit (architect).⁷⁴ It was during his years as an art instructor that Western style took root in Thai art and spread out beyond the Royal court.⁷⁵ The first graduates of the School of Fine Arts ('Rongrian Praneetsilpakam') immediately received commissions to execute works of arts for the government. As a result, foreign artists were no longer necessary as they were in the previous period.⁷⁶ In the last few years of his life, Phra Soralak was hired by the BRH to take charge of the three-year course restoration of the portraits of Chakri Kings and Queens at the Chakri Throne Hall in 1953. The restoration took three years to complete.⁷⁷

⁷² Piriya Krairiksh and Paothong Thongchua, *Silpakam Lang phor. sor. 2475 (Thai Art After 1932)* (Bangkok: Thammasat University, 1982), 27.

⁷³ Luang Wichitvathakan was also prominently engaged in politics and the modernisation of Thailand and was in his time the most significant figure in the establishment of Thai national identity. See Saichon Sattayanurak, *Kwamplianplaeng nai Kan Sang "Chat Thai" lae "Kwam Pen Thai" doy Luang Wichitvathakan (Changes and Developments in the Making of "Thai Nation" and "Thai National Identity" by Luang Wichitvathakan)* (Bangkok: Matichon, 2002).

⁷⁴ Sudara Suchaxaya, "Phra Soralak Likhit," *MBJ* 9, 2 (April-July, 1983), 84.

⁷⁵ Among his pupils were Sanit Dittthapan, Sawaeng Songmangmee, Kit Kosolwat and Manee Yamsakha who were notable Thai artists of the next generation. *Ibid.*, 84.

⁷⁶ Krairiksh and Thongchua, *Silpakam*, 27.

⁷⁷ Suchaxaya, "Phra Soralak," 85.

2.2 Royal Museum, Museum Collections and the 1887 Historical Painting Exhibition

Prior to his personal acquisitions during the period 1897-1907, Chulalongkorn had already created museum collections for the Royal Museum in the Grand Palace. He opened the Royal Museum on the eve of his birthday (19 November 1874) to celebrate his maturity, in which case he finally assumed his full royal powers.⁷⁸ His choice of venue for the exhibition symbolically reflects his assumption of government when he established the Concordia Hall as the Royal Museum (Figure 48). Concordia Hall was built in 1872 by Chulalongkorn, modelled on the Military Concordia Society he saw in Batavia (Now Jakarta, Indonesia) in 1870.⁷⁹ Initially, Concordia Hall was a military club for the First Infantry Regiment, King's Own Bodyguard ('Ratchawanlop' in Thai, literally means the king's loved ones).⁸⁰ Thus during its beginning, the Royal Museum was under the direction of the Royal Guards Units. Chulalongkorn appointed his English advisor Henry Alabaster⁸¹ as a head curator of the Royal Museum.⁸²

The original collection of the Royal Museum was composed of articles of Siamese and foreign workmanship and artefacts of natural history. They originated as Mongkut's 'Cabinet of Curiosity' which Chulalongkorn had relocated from the Praphat Piphittaphan Hall.⁸³ The opening ceremony of the Royal Museum was held in the late evening of 19 November as part of Chulalongkorn's birthday celebrations. Among the King's guests which consisted of Siamese royalty, nobility, court officials, consuls, merchants and commoners, was Prince Kasemsan Sobhak, the editor of a Siamese periodical titled *Darunovad*. Prince Kasemsan wrote the exhibition review for *Darunovad*; he described that the exhibition was composed of three rooms and

⁷⁸ Traditionally, Chulalongkorn was already declared of age when he resigned his priesthood and had his second coronation on 16 November 1873. However, the opening of the Royal Museum was the first grand event after he assumed the government.

⁷⁹ Prince Damrong, *Kwamsongcham*, 173-174.

⁸⁰ This Royal Guard regiment was established by Chulalongkorn in order to be trained in European military education, in opposition to his regent's archaic armed forces department: Samuha Kalahom.

⁸¹ Henry Alabaster (1836-1884), a native of the Isle of Wight, arrived in Bangkok in 1856 as a student interpreter of the British Consul. He served as Acting British Consul between 1867-1868. By the end of 1868 he resigned and travelled back to England; he then returned to Siam on 3 July 1872. King Chulalongkorn employed Alabaster as a Siamese official in 1873. Alabaster supervised many development programmes in Siam, for instance, cartography, constructions of road and bridge, postal services and telegraph and creating public park, the national library and the royal museum. Alabaster continued his position as the King's personal advisor until his death in 1884. See Nilkamhaeng, "Henry Alabaster," 30-33.

⁸² In the same year, Chulalongkorn appointed Alabaster to supervise the royal park project near Saranrom Palace (built by King Mongkut in 1866) as a place for the public to relax and study plants and animals. Alabaster designed and constructed Suan Saranrom (the Saranrom Gardens) following the example of Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew in London, England. *Ibid.*, 43-44.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 33-34. According to a historical record, this exhibition was planned and set up during the course of seven days before its official opening.

displayed various articles ranging from a set of antlers to an extensive range of crowns. The first room showed articles of Siamese craftwork, crystalware, porcelains, coins, an extensive collection of weapons (firearms, swords, daggers, spears, staffs, shields, bows, flags), artefacts of natural history (white elephant's hide, preserved animals specimens in jars, minerals and rocks, hippopotamus ivory and antlers, taxidermy birds, collectible butterflies). The grandest objects were presented in the second room: the very wide range of sovereign's attires, Royal Regalia and Royal Utensils and ceremonial arms. Lastly, gifts from foreign heads of state, such as portraits, paintings, terrestrial globes, world maps, including a model of a steam locomotive, a gift from Queen Victoria, were on display in the third room (Figure 49).⁸⁴ Prince Kasemsan, who was one of the westernised Siamese elites, gave the exhibition a positive review.⁸⁵ He remarked that the exhibition was an indication of Siam's civilisation.⁸⁶ Prince Kasemsan's remark mirrors Siam's discourse on civilisation and modernity during that period.⁸⁷ Essentially, the exhibition not only conveyed Chulalongkorn's political ascent, but also played an important role in his cultural and political reforms.

The year 1874 was a crucial year of Chulalongkorn's regime. The establishment of the Royal Museum was one of his first significant acts after he assumed the reins of government. After a successful first exhibition of the Royal Museum, it had become part of his birthday celebrations and as a special exhibition for foreign visitors with royal permission.⁸⁸ Chulalongkorn continued his support for museum activities. In 1878, the Royal Museum was transferred to the Ministry of Education's supervision. This transfer initiated Chulalongkorn's strategy to repurpose the museum activities for educational ends. This association of museums with education echoed trends in mid-nineteenth century Europe where international exhibitions became an educational arena to their

⁸⁴ Prince Kasemsan Sobhak, "Kwam Charoen Nai Krung Siam" (A Development in Siam), *Darunovad*, 1 (1874), 141-155, cited in Nilkamhaeng, "Henry Alabaster," 35-38.

⁸⁵ Prince Kasemsan was one of the 'Young Siam,' a group which lead by King Chulalongkorn. The Young Siam is a term coined by David K. Wyatt describing the party of young Siamese royalty and court officials who were the second westernised generation and shared a determination of modernising Siam to equalise the Western countries. Alongside the Young Siam, Wyatt also classified another two groups in Siamese Society during the early years of Chulalongkorn's reign, namely, the 'Conservative Siam' which lead by Si Suriyawongse and the 'Old Siam,' a group of ultra-traditionalist Siamese elites which had Prince Wichaichan of the Front Palace as their leader. See David K. Wyatt, *Politics of Reform: Education in the Reign of King Chulalongkorn* (Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich, 1969), 44-50. Cited in Chai-Anan Samudavanija and Khattiya Kannasutra, *Ekkasan Kanmuang Kanpokkrong Thai phor. sor. 2417-2477 (Documentation on Thai Politics 1874-1934)*, Second edition (Bangkok: SSST, 1975), 10-12.

⁸⁶ Nilkamhaeng, "Henry Alabaster," 38.

⁸⁷ Siamese aristocrats frequently used the words, such as 'the progress of the Kingdom,' 'civilisation' or 'cultivated' to promulgate their campaign on westernisation. See Atthachak Sattayanurak, *Kanplianplaeng Lokkatat Khong Chonchanphunam Thai Tangtae Ratchakan thi 4-phor. sor. 2475 (Changes in Siamese Aristocracies' Perspectives from the Forth Reign-1932)* (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 1995), 9.

⁸⁸ Nilkamhaeng, "Henry Alabaster," 38-42.

visitors of all social classes.⁸⁹ For instance, the Great Exhibition in 1851⁹⁰ was among the first events which committed to mass education, to enlighten the public with lessons in geography, physics, chemistry and arts in the form of domestic and international produce.⁹¹ Later, its profit and many objects were used to create the South Kensington museum and its collection (now the Victoria and Albert Museum).⁹²

However, the Royal Museum still maintained its prestige in Siam's cultural politics as it was at the beginning, when Chulalongkorn relocated the museum to the Front Palace in 1887 (Figure 50).⁹³ The act of relocation of Chulalongkorn's Royal Museum to the vacant Front Palace reevaluates the space from political hegemony to cultural values. This process, as Michael Herzfeld points out, produces 'social and cultural evacuation of space.'⁹⁴ This progressive move is what he called 'spatial cleansing,' a concept which conceptually and physically maps and clarifies boundaries of properties in order to define and pinpoint spaces in the national master-narrative of history.⁹⁵ To borrow Herzfeld's conceptualisation of spatial cleansing, the Front Palace occupied by Chulalongkorn's Royal Museum is probably a displacement of monumental space in the earliest 'globalising' processes. Moreover, the way in which Chulalongkorn evacuated the Front Palace and imposed his Royal Museum onto the space represents the relationship between spatiality and power. It embodies 'the intrusive presence of regimentation and aesthetic domination.'⁹⁶ The Front Palace culturally and politically embodied the old and traditional Siam and most importantly, was an office of a major rival to Chulalongkorn's descendants. The relocation thus did not only provide a larger space for the museum which elevated its significance and glorified the Chakri regime, but also symbolically annihilated Chulalongkorn's political challenger as the Front Palace (as the title) is traditionally an heir presumptive prior to the establishment of the Crown Prince title. It also served as an affirmation of

⁸⁹ Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 18-22.

⁹⁰ The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations was organised by Henry Cole and Prince Albert. The exhibition ran from 1 May to 15 October 1851.

⁹¹ Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas*, 19 and Paul Greenhalgh, "The Art and Industry of Mammon: International Exhibitions, 1851-1901," in *The Victorian Vision: Inventing New Britain*, ed. John M. MacKenzie (London: V&A Publications, 2001), 266.

⁹² "Study Room Resource: The Great Exhibition," Victoria and Albert Museum, accessed November 2, 2015, <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/s/study-room-resource-the-great-exhibition/>.

⁹³ Prince Damrong, *Athibai*, 1-2.

⁹⁴ Michael Herzfeld, "Spatial Cleansing: Monumental Vacuity and the Idea of the West," *Journal of Material Culture* 11 (2006), 132, accessed February 12, 2012, doi: 10.1177/1359183506063016.

⁹⁵ Herzfeld, "Spatial Cleansing," 142.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 127.

Chulalongkorn's active role in Siam's pursuit of cultural and political hegemony in the regional and perhaps international spheres.

Chulalongkorn extended the museum collections from the arts and handicrafts from the Royal court and foreign gifts, for example Kanasha statues from Java, to art objects from around the country.⁹⁷ In 1885, Prince Mahamala, the Chief Minister (Akkhara Maha Senabodi) in charge of civilian affairs of the Samuha Nayok was given an order by Chulalongkorn to collect ancient porcelains from the northern region of Siam. This acquisition plausibly intended to demonstrate diversity of Siamese culture, especially to foreigners as specifically stated by Chulalongkorn.⁹⁸ From 1890, the museum collections comprised Siamese arts and handicrafts, manufactured goods, household goods, antiquities, and coins of Siam and of neighbouring countries (Figure 51). The museum was open from 10:00 to 17:00 daily, however, the public were only admitted in the afternoon from 14:00 to 17:00.⁹⁹ The Royal Museum was elevated to the National Museum in the reign of King Prajadhipok.

During the first two decades of his reign, Chulalongkorn had enthusiastically promoted arts and museum activities. They became a crucial part of his campaign for cultural and political supremacy. In 1887, Chulalongkorn commissioned paintings depicting selected historical events from the Royal Chronicles: from the Kingdom of Ayutthaya to the reign of King Mongkut, in order to be displayed at the Royal Cremation ceremony of his children (Princess Bahurada Manimaya, Prince Tribek Rudhamrong and Prince Siriraj Kakudhabhandu) and his royal consort, Princess Saovabhak Nariratana, who died in the same year. The ceremony was held at the Royal Cremation Ground ('Thung Phra Meru'), now widely known as 'Sanam Luang' or the Royal Ground. Chulalongkorn saw that this was a great opportunity to demonstrate his support for Siamese fine arts and handicrafts, as the royal ceremony would attract many people. Prince Sappasart as the Chief of the Royal Artisans department was assigned to organise a competition; thirty artists enrolled for this competition and ninety-two paintings were displayed. All paintings were framed and installed at the Royal Crematorium with their companion poems narrating the scenes. The competition resulted in Chulalongkorn awarding 18 prizes. Prince Naris won the first prize with his painting depicting the hunting scene of King Sanpetch IX of the Kingdom of Ayutthaya (reigned from 1708 to 1732) and his brother, Phra Maha Uparaja (Figure 52).¹⁰⁰ Shortly after the end of the ceremony, all paintings were redistributed to decorate Phrathinang

⁹⁷ NAT, Miscellany, 3.1/13.

⁹⁸ NAT, Department of Royal Secretariat 1.2/25.

⁹⁹ Arnold Wright, *Twentieth Century Impressions of Siam: Its History, People, Commerce, Industries, and Resources*, First published 1908 (Bangkok: White Lotus, 1994), 251-152.

¹⁰⁰ "Rangwan Chang Khian thi Mee Feemue," (Awards for Best Painters) RG 4, 47 (11 March 1887), 365.

Amarin Winitchai in the Grand Palace and Phrathinang Warophat Phiman at Bang Pa-In Palace, Ayutthaya Province.¹⁰¹

These historical paintings portray the kingship in a positive light, the glorification of the war campaigns, the bravery of Siamese kings in the battlefields, religious contributions and the prosperity of Siam in culture and economy granted by the monarchs (Figures 53-55). It is important to note that most of the historical events chosen to be illustrated were from the wars against ancient Burma. This selection, presumably, was directed by the collapse of Burmese social and political order in 1885, after the defeat in the Third Anglo-Burmese War which resulted in the establishment of the Province of Burma in British India in the following year.¹⁰² Not unexpectedly, Chulalongkorn engaged in manipulating cultural politics to reaffirm his power and the power of the Chakri regime amidst the expansion of colonialism which was too close to Siam's border for comfort. The presentation of these Siamese historical paintings was not only the very first art exhibition in Siam, but also refashioned Siamese art practices and art ideology. Realistic style was a crucial element for selecting the best paintings. Chulalongkorn had given his guidance for the judges that the paintings which bore 'the very precise detailed and careful depiction of visual appearance of scenes and objects' would be awarded, which opposed the idealised depictions used in the traditional style of Siamese art.¹⁰³ Despite Chulalongkorn's preference for a more 'modern' or Western style of art, however, most of the paintings were tempera painting, an indigenous technique of Siamese traditional paintings. His preference for realistic characters in paintings mirrors his admiration for an accurate visual representation in art as seen in his European art collecting in the later years.

Chulalongkorn's reign was also known for the establishment of archeology as a practice in Siam. He instituted a council for Thai archaeology called 'Borankadee Samosorn' (the Archaeology Association: 'AA'). The project began following his Fortieth Anniversary of the Accession in 1907,¹⁰⁴ during which he had visited the Ancient Palace in Ayutthaya Province as it was the venue for the ceremony. On 2 December 1907, Chulalongkorn called a meeting to discuss the institution of the AA for studying Siam's history, he assigned his brothers, half-brothers and cousins as initial members

¹⁰¹ Prince Damrong, introduction to *Khlong Phab Phraratchaphongsawadan (The Illustrations and the Verses of the Royal Chronicles)*, First published 1922 (Bangkok: FAD, 2007), (3).

¹⁰² Nicolas Tarling, "The Establishment of the Colonial Régimes," in *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia Volume 2: The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Nicolas Tarling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 39-41

¹⁰³ "Rangwan Chang Khian," 365. See Appendix H for the original text in Thai.

¹⁰⁴ This ceremony will be discussed further in Chapter Four.

and designated himself as the president of the association.¹⁰⁵ Prior to this, another institute for archaeological study in Siam was established: 'the Siam Society.' It was founded in 1904 by Gerolamo Emilio Gerini (an Italian-born officer who served in the Siamese Military between 1881 and 1906) to encourage research and information gathering on art, history, culture and natural sciences of Siam and neighbouring countries. Its first patron was Prince Vajiravudh.¹⁰⁶

At the beginning, the AA worked in collaboration with the Wachirayan Library to collect Siam's old books of historical accounts.¹⁰⁷ The AA's notable works were the editing and reprinting of Siam's early tomes of literature, such as *Lilit Yuan phai* ('*The Defeat of the Yuan*', a historical work celebrates Ayutthaya Kingdom's defeat of the forces of the Northern Lan Na Kingdom) and the archaeological surveys of the ruins in Ayutthaya Province by Phraya Boranratchathanin (then Phraya Boranburanurak; born Phon Dechakhup), Governor General of Ayutthaya Monthon¹⁰⁸ and the secretary of the AA.¹⁰⁹ Empirical processes and methods from the West were heavily adopted to examine Siam's history. Chulalongkorn encouraged Siamese scholars to investigate and criticise all kinds of literary works concerned with Siamese history, not only the Royal Chronicles, but also legends, myths or folk tales. Furthermore, he stated that 'one should not take the Royal Chronicles for granted [...] as it was only a monarchy's account[...] any other affairs of Siam outside the Crown were deliberately left out.'¹¹⁰ Before the establishment of the AA, Chulalongkorn had his own edition of the royal ceremonies published, entitled '*The Royal Ceremonies of the Twelve Months*' (written in 1888), a compilation of royal ceremonies from the ancient sources. He also wrote some critiques on Thai history, tradition and legends. Chulalongkorn's support of museum activities played an important part in helping to promote Siamese history

¹⁰⁵ "Khaw Sadet Phraratchadamnoen Pai Songbamphen Phraratchakuson Ratchamongkhon thi Krung Kao" (The News of the King Travelled to Ayutthaya for the Ratchamongkhon Ceremony), *RG* 24, 36 (8 December, 1907), 921-927.

¹⁰⁶ Maurizio Peleggi, "G. E. Gerini kab Kamnoed Borankadee Siam" (G. E. Gerini and the Origins of Siamese Archaeology), trans., Kanokwan Ritthipairoj, *MBJ* 31, 3 (July-September, 2005), 53.

¹⁰⁷ Kanthika Sri-Udom, "Roi Pi Borankadee Samosorn" (Borankadee Samosorn: A Centenary) *SW* 29, 2 (December 2007), 45-46.

¹⁰⁸ Monthon (a country subdivision of the late nineteenth-early twentieth Siam) Ayutthaya was created in 1893, also known as Monthon Krung Kao (literally means Ancient City), consisting of the city Ayutthaya (formerly known as Krung Kao, the old capital), Ang Thong, Singaburi, Lopburi, Phrumburi, Saraburi, Indraburi, Pathum Thani and Thanyaburi.

¹⁰⁹ FAD, *Prachum Phongsawadan Bhak thi 63: Rueng Krung Kao (Collection of Royal Chronicles of Thailand, Volume 63: The Ancient Capital City)* (Bangkok: Sophonphiphat Thanakon, 1936), (21).

¹¹⁰ Quoted in Chatri Prakitnonthakan, "Phra Ratchadamrous Somdet Phraphuttachao Luang Rueng Song Tang Borankadee Samosorn" (Chulalongkorn's Speech on the Founding of Borankadee Samosorn), *Na Jua: Journal of the Faculty of Architecture, Silpakorn University* 3, 4 (September 2006), 163-165. See Appendix H for the original text in Thai.

culminating in his progressive state completing the narrative, as well as a modern educational system open to the public.

Accumulation of ancient Buddha images from every region of Siam was one of Chulalongkorn's goals to increase museum collections. The most renowned acquisition is the fifty-two Buddha images installed at Wat Benchamabophit Dusitvanaram in Bangkok. When Chulalongkorn ordered the temple to be built in 1899, he also proposed that his temple should house the old Buddha images selected from various regions and at different periods. He wished the temple to be a centre for the public to access the knowledge of Buddhist Iconography.¹¹¹ The collecting was completed in 1910, all Buddha statues of various styles, dates and origins were housed in the cloister ('Rabiang kot') adjacent to the west end of the ordination hall (Figure 56).¹¹² Chatri Prakitnontakarn analyses Chulalongkorn's idea of collecting Buddha images which mirrored Siamese aristocrat's political ideologies, particularly the bureaucratic administrative reform in 1892. He proposes that the collecting of Buddha statues was executed under the same strategy of centralisation in Prince Damrong's 'Thesaphiban' bureaucratic administration. Prakitnontakarn underlines the political agenda in the acquisition of Buddha statues from provinces such as Chiang Mai and Chiangsaen (former vassal states of Siam) (Figure 57). The process was to delocalise and establish a new ideology of a single nation, namely the Kingdom of Siam.¹¹³ Prince Damrong's involvement in both the acquisition and the provincial administration is another key factor in this analysis.¹¹⁴ Prince Damrong was assigned by Chulalongkorn to perform the collecting, his position as the Minister of Interior (1892-1915) granted him convenient access to the locations of statues in each provinces, as well as being aided by his personal interests in history and archaeology.

However, Rungroj Phiromanukul, a Thai historian, argues that the Buddha statues do not completely represent Chulalongkorn's centralisation, as the collection also includes statues from Sri Lanka, India, Japan and Burma (Figures 58-59) which were hardly relevant to Siam's political hierarchy. Phiromanukul further indicates that the acquisition did not spread out to every major province. On the contrary, many statues are from the same provinces, such as, Chiang Mai, Phetchaburi, and Bangkok. He also points out that there is no statue from any of the provinces in Southern or Eastern Siam in the collection. Most importantly, if the collecting of Buddha images was

¹¹¹ Prince Damrong, "Wat Benchamabopit and Its Collection of Images of the Buddha," *JSS* 22, 1 (July 1928), 20-21.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 21.

¹¹³ Chatri Prakitnonthakarn, *Kanmueang lae Sangkhom nai Sinlapa Sathapattayakam: Siam Samai Thai Prayuk Chatniyom (Politics and Society in Art and Architecture: Siam in the Era that Thailand Adopted Nationalism)*, Second edition (Bangkok: Matichon, 2007), 175-187.

¹¹⁴ Prakitnonthakarn, *Kanmueang*, 182-183.

the symbol of Chulalongkorn's absolutism, the most important and sacred statues, such as Phra Buddha Sihing from Chiang Mai and Nakhon Si Thammarat Provinces, or at least their copies, should have been acquired for the collection.¹¹⁵ Phiromanukul believes that the cloister of Wat Benchamabophit was intended to function as a museum as King Chulalongkorn had initially planned. Chulalongkorn's correspondence to Krom Phraya Wachirayanwarorot, the abbot of Wat Bowonniwet mentions, 'Wat Benchamabophit is the place which houses many selective greatest Buddha statues as a museum.'¹¹⁶ Forrest McGill, Chief Curator of the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, also considers that this accumulation of the Buddha images was a museum acquisition. McGill indicates that these Buddha images were selected specifically to represent the whole range of styles of different periods and regions which reflected new ideas and methods of locating, collecting, cataloging and displaying. Essentially, this assembly was the result of a curator-like art historical impulse of Chulalongkorn's agent.¹¹⁷

Moreover, a significant detail was omitted from Prakitnontakarn's study, namely, the previous acquisitions of ancient artefacts from various regions of Siam which were done before the administrative reform was founded, such as the collecting of porcelains mentioned earlier, as a result of the establishment of the Royal Museum in 1874. If the purpose of collecting the Buddha images from various regions was to represent Siam's provincial administration, the lack of complete representatives as Phiromanukul points out, might not accomplish the success of the strategy. However, Prakitnontakarn's analysis on the concentration of the government's power should not be overlooked. The collecting of the statues from different provinces to relocate in Bangkok, evidently, is centralisation. The process had removed the ancient statues not only from their location, but also their original context. The statues were carefully selected to represent different styles and periods as specifically instructed by Chulalongkorn.¹¹⁸ According to Chulalongkorn's order, all Buddha images should be bronze statues and have the same proportions. Some of the selected images,

¹¹⁵ Rungroj Phiromanukul, "Khati Kwamplianplaeng Naiyafaeng: Phra Phuttaroop nai Rabiangkot Wat Benchamabophit" (Principle, Changes and Hidden Meanings: The Buddha Images at the Galleries of Wat Benchamabophit), *Damrong Wichakan Journal*, Special Issue (December 2012), 87-101.

¹¹⁶ The letter dated 27 July 1908. See King Chulalongkorn, *Phraratchahatthalekha Phrabat Somdet Phra Chulachomklao Chaoyuhua Song Mi Pai Ma kab Somdet Phra Maha Samanachao Kromphraya Wachirayanwarorot (Correspondence Between King Chulalongkorn and Abbot Wachirayanwarorot)* (Bangkok: Sophonphiphat Thanakon, 1929), 194, accessed September 19, 2013, <http://www.archive.org/details/phrartchahatth1929chul>. See the original text in Thai in Appendix H.

¹¹⁷ Forrest McGill, "The Culture of Burma and Siam in the Nineteenth Century," in *Emerald Cities: Arts of Siam and Burma 1775-1950* (San Francisco, CA: Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, 2009), 21.

¹¹⁸ Prince Damrong, "Wat Benchamabopit," 21.

however, were not compatible with other statues, in which case, the replicas were cast in the same size of other images to be put on display in place of the originals, for a completely harmonious visual aesthetic. This procedure indicates that their most important consideration was to regard the statues as historical artefacts, museum collections or even works of art rather than as religious images. In addition, Chulalongkorn specifically ordered that the gallery should be erected to house the Buddha images. Therefore the cloister of Wat Benchamabophit was designed differently from conventional galleries of Buddhist temples which usually enclose a stupa or ordination hall, to function exclusively as an exhibition of the Buddha images of a wide range of styles and periods.

The historical investigation of ancient Buddha images, however, was initiated by King Mongkut who saw and valued the significance of historical awareness, and passed it on to his successors.¹¹⁹ Whether the exhibition of Buddha images at Wat Benchamabophit was the politicisation of 'culture' or the culturalisation of power and politics, most importantly, it was a crucial point in Thai art historiography. Prince Damrong's classification has formed and dominated the way in which Thai art historiography is conveyed, and consequently how the constructed Thai national identity was formed. The collecting of works of art and creating museums during the nineteenth to twentieth century was a practice the ruling elites of the East deployed to accomplish their reforms. For instance, Sayajirao Gaekwad III (the Maharaja of Baroda State from 1875 to 1939)'s collection reflects the relationship between such practices and political authority as it helped maintain the Maharaja's power and create a dialogue with European culture.¹²⁰ Both Eastern sovereigns were driven by their intentions to promote themselves, their country and to educate their people within the context of colonial cultural exchange.

2.3 Siamese Displays at the International Exhibitions

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the Western world had embraced an influx of international exhibitions, the great events which carried on to the eve of the Second World War. The Great Exhibition of London in 1851 is widely seen as the pioneer in advancing exhibitions, which were formerly held domestically, into the international arena to celebrate a modern industrial technology and design. Referred to under various terms, in Britain as *Great Exhibitions*, in France as *Exposition Universelles*, and as *World's Fairs* in the United States, the expositions had remained

¹¹⁹ See Sattayanurak, *Kanplianplaeng*, 48-52.

¹²⁰ Julie F. Codell, "Ironies of Mimicry: The Art Collection of Sayaji Rao III Gaekwad, Maharaja of Baroda, and the Cultural Politics of Early Modern India," *Journal of the History of Collections* 15, 1 (2003), 140.

constants in promoting peace among nations, education, trade and progress. With these grand displays, the exhibitions had emphatically expressed that the West completely ruled the material world. Each nation had manifested their exhibitions in the most flamboyant bombastic state which were acclaimed as, in Paul Greenhalgh's words, 'a medium of national expression.'¹²¹

International Exhibition represented a great opportunity for the new Siam to introduce itself to the world. However, Siam's debut on the world stage was, in actuality, conducted by the French consul in Paris' International Exposition of 1867, granted by official permission from King Mongkut. The Siamese were participating in international exhibitions in the last quarter of the century, when exhibition activity peaked. It was in 1876 at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, the United States that the Siamese were first fully responsible for their own exhibition. American audiences witnessed an impressive range of Siamese artefacts, agricultural and manufactured goods of 728 items, including items related to court culture, such as the Royal Nine-tiered Umbrella, the Royal Seal and scale models of the Royal Barges (Figures 60). Along with the Siamese exhibition materials, a portrait photograph of King Chulalongkorn dressed in the coronation attire on the day of his second coronation in 1873 was also sent as a gift to the US government.¹²² This repeated King Mongkut's act of sending his portrait photographs to President Franklin Pierce and President James Buchanan. However, Chulalongkorn's visual representation in the exhibition witnessed by a wider audience as international exhibitions attracted a large number of visitors from various social classes. From the very beginning, the visual representation of Siamese monarchy was brought into play at the international expositions. Thus, Siam not only wanted to promote their produces and development, but also highlighted the role of the monarchy in that prosperity.

Considering that the monarchy was an essential part of Siam's displays at the international exposition, it is rather a surprise that they joined in the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1889 as it marked the centenary of the French Revolution in which the ruling aristocracy and royal family had been executed. The French government had sent an invitation letter to Siam on 2 May 1887 which Siam had accepted enthusiastically in the following two weeks. It was stated in the acceptance that Chulalongkorn gave the committee an assurance that the exhibit would arrive in Paris on schedule.¹²³ As the international exposition became *en vogue*, Siam could not decline such a major event as this, even though the motive behind the 1889 Paris Universelle was against the royalist ideology. Siam's exhibition was located in the Asian

¹²¹ Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas*, 1-2 and 16-17.

¹²² Lisa McQuail Taylor, "Articles of Peculiar Excellence: The Siam Exhibit at the U.S. Centennial Exposition (Philadelphia, 1876)," *JSS* 79, 2 (1991), 12-14 and 19-20.

¹²³ NAT, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 54/2.

section of *Le Palais des Industries Diverses*, alongside displays of China, Japan and Persia. The Siamese display occupied an area of 250 square metres, filled with gilded furniture such as beds, sofas, stools and table sets. The display also consisted of elaborately decorated litters, caskets, teapots, perfume boxes, silk fabrics, dried flowers, fermented beverages, silver repoussé, and carved ivory (Figures 61).

Another highlight was the Siamese pavilion; it was an open pavilion, modelled after ancient Thai architecture, built on a cruciform layout (Figures 62). Its plan and structure was very similar to Phrathinang Aphorn Phimok Prasat in the Grand Palace, only the spire of five-tiers on the rooftop was absent. Even without the golden spire, a symbol of kingship, the pavilion still offered an astounding view of gilded and ornamental Eastern architecture. The model of a sacred building became an archetype for Siam's pavilion in later exhibitions, such as the Siamese pavilions at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in 1904 and the Turin International Exposition in 1911 (Figures 63-64). The pavilion and the skilled handiwork of Siam's craftsmen were much admired by visitors to Paris in 1889.¹²⁴ The Siamese section, organised by Phra Siam Dhuranuraks (born Amédée Gréhan), General Consul of Siam, reflected Siam's determination to present their civilisation and to demonstrate that Siam's cultural display was distinct and above the imperial display of French colonies which formed the core of the Exposition.¹²⁵ There is a great possibility that Western viewers' admiration for Siam's craftsmanship evoked their nostalgia for the loss of individual genius of the craftsman caused by the Industrial Revolution.¹²⁶ The anti-industrial design movement generally known as Arts and Crafts flourished between 1860 and 1910, inspired by key figures such as William Morris and John Ruskin.¹²⁷ As Maurizio Peleggi points out, the irony lies in the fact that the European appreciation of the intrinsic aesthetic value of Siamese arts and crafts was contrasted with the Siamese elites' craze for Western luxury items.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Émile Monod, *L'Exposition Universelle de 1889: Grand Ouvrage Illustré, Historique, Encyclopédique, Descriptif* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1890), 68-71, accessed October 15, 2013, <http://www.archive.org/details/lexpositionunive03mono>.

¹²⁵ Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas*, 66-67.

¹²⁶ In a similar context, Saloni Mathur also discusses the appetite for India's material products and more important, images of Indian craftsman by the Victorians during the 1880s through the study of the Indian Village display at Liberty's department store and the Indian display at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886 in London. Mathur points out that an emergence of cultural and ethnological display within the nostalgic conception of a timeless, traditional India, was a phenomenon related to industrialisation in the colony and the modernising processes of the period. See Saloni Mathur, *India by Design: Colonial History and Cultural Display* (London: University of California Press, 2007), 27-79.

¹²⁷ Karen Livingstone, "Art and Crafts in Britain: Origins and Development," in *International Arts and Crafts*, ed. Karen Livingstone and Linda Perry (London: V&A Publications, 2005), 40-61.

¹²⁸ Maurizio Peleggi, *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 148.

Thongchai Winichakul theorises Siam's motivation for participating in the exposition which was based upon three factors. Firstly, Siam particularly participated in the expositions organised or, at least, officially supported by the governments as in the case of American World's fairs. Secondly, fame and purchase orders were what the Siamese government expected from their participation and lastly, and perhaps most importantly, the budget for the exhibitions highly influenced Siam's consideration. Winichakul concludes that Siam would decide to participate only in the grand expositions which benefited Siam economically and without overpayment.¹²⁹ Accordingly, Siam never missed the grandest of great expositions, such as the Paris Expo 1889 and 1900 and Chicago's World's Fair in 1893 and 1904 St. Louis Purchase Exposition. The Siamese government was well aware that these events would bring Siam fame and fortune, thus the imperial theme, of white domination and the ethnological or racial agenda in Euro-American expositions could be disregarded in favour of such a beneficial effect.

At the World's Columbian Exhibition of 1893 Chicago, the Siamese government still expected their exhibition to illustrate Siam as an industrious, productive and resourceful land. Phra Suriya Nuwat, the Commissioner General also suggested the selection of handicrafts should be articles which were more suitable for Western manners and practice than authenticity.¹³⁰ These were strategic decision made to enhance the export market. This suggestion was clearly made for the benefit of Siam's trade, in high hopes that the West would order the exports of Siam's commodities. Apart from agricultural products, Siam was delighted to demonstrate their progress in the postal services which had been in an operation for a decade. Chicago World's Columbian Exhibition was also widely known as a precedent for later expositions all over the world in firmly establishing the women's section as a necessary part of events.¹³¹ Siam's display in the Women's building was managed by Mrs. Phra Suriya who was appointed by Queen Savang Vadhana. An official letter from Bertha M. Honoré Palmer, the president of the Board of Lady Managers was directly addressed to

¹²⁹ Thongchai Winichakul, "Phawa Yang Rai Nor thi Riak Wa 'Siwilai' Mua Chonchunnam Siam Samai Ratchakan thi Ha Sawaeng Ha Sathana Khong Thonaeng Phan Kan Duenthang lae Pipittapan Thang Nai lae Nok Prathet" (What are the Conditions Called 'Siwilai'?" When the Siamese Aristocrats Sought their Status via Travels and Exhibitions at Home and Abroad), *JPS* 24, 2 (2003), 38-40.

¹³⁰ NAT, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 54/12.

¹³¹ Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas*, 174.

the Siamese Queen to invite Siamese women to participate in the exhibition.¹³² When the invitation was accepted, the meeting and consultation was arranged in the Queen's apartment on 26 September 1892. The Queen was the president of the committee; the members consisted of her ladies-in-waiting and other female courtiers. All members were responsible for handicraft exhibits, even the Queen offered to make a collection of embroidery in silk, silver and gold.¹³³ One of the craft works made by the Queen was an embroidered photograph album cover (Figure 65); the album presented a collection of photographs of Siam's views. Through this photograph album, Queen Savang Vadhana tactfully constructed a representation of female agency with both traditional (embroidery) and modern (photography) fashions. It also echoes the way Siamese female aristocrats were aware of the power of photography which they deployed to represent themselves as discussed in the previous chapter. It also shows that she shared an interest in photography with the King.

Most of the Siamese arts and handicrafts in the Women's building represented those of court culture, including the costume of princes worn at the Sokan Ceremony as the highlight. The amount of embellished embroidery, silk scarfs, tapestry and a collection of antique jewellery had enthralled American viewers who appraised Siamese women as 'excellent housewives, remarkable needle women and embroiderers of great merits.'¹³⁴ An overall perception of the notion of domesticity and traditional feminine identity still clung on.¹³⁵ This appraisal ironically—considering that the 1893 Chicago World's Columbian Exhibition vocally acknowledged women's role and their works— suggests a notion of female non-genius as a creative force in patriarchal society, that their works here were craft which belong to the domestic sphere implicating the trivial nature of feminine collecting.¹³⁶ However, the majority of exhibition objects which were accumulated or produced for the Women's Building

¹³² Peleggi states that the letter was addressed to Queen Saovabha, see Peleggi, *Lords of Things*, 155. Mrs Palmer's letter did not specifically address the queen's name, however, it was Queen Savang Vadhana rather than Queen Saovabha as in 1892 the latter was not yet elevated to High Queen (the position of the mother of the Crown Prince), thus her status ranked lower than Queen Savang Vadhana. Moreover, Chulalongkorn's correspondence helpfully clarifies this uncertainty to which he referred to the Queen in the letter as 'Mae Klang' (means the middle one), a nickname of Queen Savang Vadhana. NA, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 54/8.

¹³³ NAT, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 54/13.

¹³⁴ Frédéric W. Mayer, *Siam and The Siamese Exhibits at the World's Fair* (Chicago, IL: s. n., 1893), 12.

¹³⁵ The exhibition at the Women's Building, among displays showing domestic and maternal roles of women, also featured displays on the accomplishments of many female artists and inventors. Greenhalgh remarks that the Women's Building at the Columbian established notions of gender in relation to all art-forms. See Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas*, 178-181.

¹³⁶ Sarah Cheang, "The Dogs of Fo: Gender, Identity and Collecting," in *Collectors: Expressions of Self and Other*, ed. Anthony Shelton (London: Horniman Museum, 2001), 57-58. See also for further discussion on a feminine mode of collecting in Maureen Daly Goggin and Beth Fowkes Tobin, ed., *Material Women, 1750–1950: Consuming Desires and Collecting Practices* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

integrated with court culture and domesticity; they therefore demonstrate the Siamese female aristocrats' desired positioning within the ideologies of gender and class. Although the collection or the display reflects these elite women's femininity and female identities, it potentially suggests a certain level of their cultural agency. More importantly the photography album featuring the Siamese landscape opposes the concept of gendered collecting as it exceeds the Siamese women's domestic realm.

It is also worth mentioning that in the same year as the 1893 Chicago World's Columbian Exhibition there was a contemporaneous movement by Siamese women, namely, the founding of the Thai Red Cross Society (then known as the Red *Unalom* Society) in late April 1893. Thanpuying Plien Pasakornravongse proposed the idea of establishing a humanitarian organisation to Queen Savang Vadhana, in order to assist the military casualties from the Franco–Siamese territorial dispute which started in March 1893. Eventually, Chulalongkorn granted royal permission and appointed Queen Savang Vadhana as maternal patron, Queen Saovabha was appointed the first president, and Pasakornravongse acted as the society secretary.¹³⁷ Thus Queen Savang Vadhana was simultaneously acting as matron of women's work both humanitarian aid and handicraft. Public role for women inside and outside Siam increased in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Subsequently, the Siamese queens had a major role in supporting women's rights, particularly in public health and education, an aspect very much akin to contemporary Victorian society.¹³⁸ For example, between the 1890s to the early 1900s, Queen Saovabha established a school for nursing and childbirth care and schools for girls in Bangkok as mentioned previously in Chapter One.¹³⁹

The Siamese government's aim was to exhibit to the world Siam's rich culture, plentiful natural resources and progress in modernising industrial manufacturing processes and transportation, in the meantime, there was also a representation of the Siamese monarchy at their displays. As Chulalongkorn never made a royal visit to international expositions like Western monarchs, the appearance of his royal person was represented through portrait photography and the symbols of kingship instead. The appearance of monarchs at international expositions hugely helped represent them as modern monarchs through this new performing role within national frames.¹⁴⁰ Although Chulalongkorn was absent from the expositions, his images which indicated

¹³⁷ "Sabha Unalom Daeng haeng Chat Siam" (The Red Unalom Society of Siam), *RG* 10, 13 (25 May 1893), 151-158.

¹³⁸ Jan Marsh, "Votes for Women and Chastity for Men: Gender, Health, Medicine and Sexuality," in *The Victorian Vision*, 109-115.

¹³⁹ Darani Srihathai, *Somdet Regent (The Queen Regent)* (Bangkok: Matichon, 2011), 95-99.

¹⁴⁰ Maria Grever, 'Staging Modern Monarchs: Royalty at the World Exhibitions of 1851 and 1867,' in *Mystifying the Monarch: Studies on Discourses, Power, and History*, ed. Jeroen Deploige and Gita Deneckere (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 167-179.

that he was a representative of the Kingdom of Siam, helped the international audiences to recognise Chulalongkorn as the model modern monarch. These displays of power also showed the hierarchy of Siamese power with the monarch as their superior.

During Chulalongkorn's reign, Siamese aristocrats had already formulated a national consciousness and sense of national identity, the monarch as the embodiment of the nation was eventually developed into the conceptualisation of the 'Country, Religious, and King' ideology during the 1910s-1920s. On a local scale, the Siamese government also made an effort to gain public attention by welcoming products from a private company in Bangkok for the displays,¹⁴¹ or publicising the awards and prizes which were given to Siamese exhibitions.¹⁴² Thus a double purpose is served by the exhibitions by both projecting a positive image of Siam to the people as well as the world at large. In 1882, the Siamese government organised their own localised version of the international exhibitions for the public at Sanam Luang to commemorate the centennial celebrations for Bangkok and the Chakri Dynasty. On display were a collection of the king's jewellery, royal wares as well as other natural and manufactured products, fine arts and handicrafts, as well as Kulab Trissananon's¹⁴³ collection of old volumes of Thai literature.¹⁴⁴

Winichakul suggests that Siam's continued engagement with World's Fairs was for the sake of local affirmation as part of a quest to represent Siam's position among the world's civilisations.¹⁴⁵ Given the Eurocentric anthropological aspect of the exhibitions' organisers, especially in the American World's Fairs¹⁴⁶ and France's original plan to locate Siamese display in the colonies' section in the Paris Expo 1900,¹⁴⁷ Siam, however, was not classified equally with their Western counterparts. Winichakul also argues that presenting the Royal Regalia or other Chakri Dynasty's heirlooms in the international exhibitions had replaced the royal ceremonies as the

¹⁴¹ "Kan Sadaeng Phiphittaphan Krung Paris kor. sor. 1900, Suan Khong Krung Siam" (Siamese Exhibition at Paris Universelle Exposition of 1900), *RG* 14, 44 (30 January 1897), 757.

¹⁴² "Kan Sadaeng Phiphittaphan Muang Chicago" (Siamese Exhibitions at Chicago World's Fair), *RG* 11, 2 (8 April 1894), 13-14.

¹⁴³ A Thai journalist of the late nineteenth century who was famously known as Kor. Sor. Ror. Kulab (1834-1921), he was also one of the first historians who challenged the royal prerogatives in writing the history of Siam which led him to publish many critiques of the Siamese monarchy.

¹⁴⁴ *Ngan Sadaeng Nithassakan Sinkha Phuenmuang Thai nai Phraratchaphithi Sompoch Phra Nakhon Krob Roi Pi phor. sor. 2425 (Siam Products Exhibition in the Commemoration of Bangkok Centennial of 1882)*, First published 1882 (Bangkok: Ton Chabab, 2000), 1-8.

¹⁴⁵ Winichakul, "Phawa Yang Rai," 45-46.

¹⁴⁶ Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 55-56.

¹⁴⁷ Peleggi, *Lords of Things*, 149.

principle method for displaying their sovereignty.¹⁴⁸ In fact the situation was more complex. Although these representations were important, rituals continued and played a crucial part in Siam's royal court. For example, when Chulalongkorn returned from Europe, the government organised huge ceremonies in both traditional Siamese rituals and European style pageants in which the King was presented in all ceremonies. Atthachak Sattayanurak analyses Mongkut and Chulalongkorn's awareness of the changing kingship, he argues that they conformed to a new ideology of Siamese kingship whose duty was to orchestrate progress and development for the kingdom.¹⁴⁹ Sattayanurak also suggests that Chulalongkorn's suffering from being a relatively powerless and vulnerable young monarch under the regency was crucial to the way in which he wielded his royal power in later years.¹⁵⁰ This motivated Chulalongkorn to lead his kingdom towards modernity which earned him recognition as an intelligent and accomplished monarch. However, it was not only his reforms, he also used visual culture effectively to promote and affirm Chulalongkorn's sovereignty, both on a domestic scale and to the world as seen in the Royal Museum and Siamese displays in the international exhibitions.

It is also worth mentioning that gender played a role in the visual culture reflected in Chulalongkorn's modernised mode of operation. Among his art collection are a number of female figures which could be interpreted as a celebration of female form, or indeed female strength, such as Bussière's *Brunhild's Awakening*. Apart from female characters in mythologies, there was also a representation of female bodies in contemporary settings, including, for example, Guédy's *Maternity*, a genre painting which displays a caring role in the nature of women. Siam's display in the woman's building at the World's Columbian Exhibition was another example which shows Chulalongkorn's support for Siamese women's developing position in the society. His permission and approval in assigning women to curate and organise the exhibition in International Exhibitions indicates his awareness of women's identity, position and capacity. In a general acknowledgement, Chulalongkorn's continuity of polygynous marriage and a lack of support for female education have been implicated as acts of objectification.¹⁵¹ However, at least within his royal court, his wives and his daughters were well educated, some of whom were very fluent in reading English literature, such

¹⁴⁸ Winichakul, "Phawa Yang Rai," 37-38.

¹⁴⁹ With Chulalongkorn's bureaucratic administration reforms, political authority controlled by ministers, was transferred to the monarch which eventually led to the establishment of an absolute monarchy in Thailand. See Sattayanurak, *Kanplianplaeng*, 122-124.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 125-129.

¹⁵¹ For arguments on the equality and status of women within a framework of gender and laws, see Tamara Loos, *Subject Siam: Family, Law, and Colonial Modernity in Thailand* (Chiang Mai: Silkwood Books, 2006), 7-13 and 110-129.

as Princess Nibha Nobhadol.¹⁵² Chulalongkorn's reforms might not have directly contributed to women's rights but he gave approval to his queens and his daughters to support women's welfare and education.

¹⁵² His letter to the Princess mentioned that he visited Verona and Mantua which she knew from Shakespeare's writings. See King Chulalongkorn, *Klai Ban*, 209.

CHAPTER THREE

DESIGNING THEATRICAL CITIES: THE APPROPRIATION OF WESTERN ARCHITECTURE IN BANGKOK AND RESORT TOWNS

[O]nly by the support of a powerful country can a weak one be rapidly developed, and therefore we beg that your Excellency, appointed by H. M. Queen Victoria to govern a British Colony which is very close to Siam, will suggest and advise us as to whatever is likely rapidly and largely to develop our resources.¹

King Chulalongkorn's letter to Sir Andrew Clarke,
Governor of Straits Settlements (1873)

This chapter examines King Chulalongkorn's strategies for the appropriation of Western architecture in Bangkok and resort towns, namely, Ayutthaya and Phetchaburi Provinces. The Western artistic influence on architecture, especially the art and ideology of Neoclassicism, and the purpose of adopting and adapting Western art ideology will be discussed. In order to investigate the influence of Western art in the royal court, King Mongkut's 'westernised' buildings will also be taken into account. The chapter thus opens with an overview of Siamese architecture of the early Rattanakosin Period (during the first three reigns) or 'the pre-modern period' up until the early stage of westernisation of King Mongkut's architecture. Recent studies of Chulalongkorn's architecture by Thai architectural historians, such as Somchart Chungsiriarak, are primarily concerned with the historical and aesthetic value. Chulalongkorn's westernised architecture as a historical document, is seen as evidence of a major change in Siamese culture, as well as a predecessor of modern architecture in Thailand. Chungsiriarak's study states that Chulalongkorn's buildings also express the eclectic aesthetics of Thai art, as the Western style was adjusted to suit Siamese artistic taste.²

According to this interpretation, the appropriation of Western aesthetics in architecture is mainly considered as a process of derivation and adaptation as per Thai aesthetics. It is based on the integrity of foreign elements which are often found in Thai architecture. The concept of appropriation is related to the discourse of Thainess conceptualised by Prince Damrong in the 1920s. Prince Damrong emphasised that the Thais have a 'wisdom in reconciliation of interests,' one of the three characters or

¹ Robert Hamilton Vetch, *The Life of Lieutenant General the Honorable Sir Andrew Clarke* (London: John Murray, 1905), 124.

² Somchart Chungsiriarak, *Sathapattayakam Baeb Tawantok nai Siam: Samai Ratchakan thi 4-phor. sor. 2480 (Westernised Architecture in Siam: From the Reign of King Rama IV to 1937)* (Bangkok: Faculty of Architecture, Silpakorn University, 2010), 11.

virtues of the Thai race.³ Thus, westernisation was driven by both external and internal factors. On the one hand, adopting westernised modes of practice was very similar to Thailand's previous art and cultural appropriation from outside such as India, Cambodia and China, as such practice was 'natural' for Thais. On the other hand, many Thai historians recognise Chulalongkorn's westernisation as a contribution to the securing of the country's independence from the threat of Western expansion. The latter recognition relates to the nationalist ideological approaches in Thai historiography, which heavily places emphasis on Siam/Thailand's independence. Hence Chulalongkorn's westernised architecture is subsequently justified through Thainess discourse and thus resists any critiques towards it.

Accordingly, this chapter aims to explore Chulalongkorn's architectural commissions in contrast to conservative nationalist-royalist accounts of Thai official history based on the notions of Thai uniqueness and pride in being a non-colonised country. I argue that it is necessary to bring this study into dialogue with debates in postcolonial analyses in order to understand the complexity and ambiguity of the manifold interactions between Siam and the West. Hence it is important to discuss the postcolonial theories of hybridity. This hybridity shaped the paradox of Thai society and what Michael Herzfeld called 'crypto-colonialism,' although it stayed independent, Thailand was constrained by Western-dominated geopolitics.⁴ Therefore, I will analyse the hybrid character of Chulalongkorn's westernised architecture in order to complicate this ongoing dialogue.

INTRODUCTION

In 1782, Bangkok was established as Siam's capital city by King Yotfa the founder of the Chakri Dynasty and the Rattanakosin Kingdom. The new capital was situated on the Chao Phraya River's eastern bank, opposite its predecessor, the Thonburi Kingdom (1768-1782). King Yotfa began the actual construction works in 1783, with the defensive fortifications encircling the city in an area called the Rattanakosin Island. The City of Bangkok in this early period was approximately 4.14 square kilometres.⁵ It initially consisted of two areas, the Inner and the Outer Town, quartered by Thonburi's old moat (Map 1-2). The following constructions were the

³ See detail of Prince Damrong's conceptualisation of Thainess in Introduction.

⁴ Michael Herzfeld, "The Absence Presence: Discourses of Crypto-Colonialism," *South Atlantic Quarterly* Fall 2002 101(4), 8-9; and "The Conceptual Allure of the West: Dilemmas and Ambiguities of Crypto-Colonialism in Thailand," in *The Ambiguous Allure of the West: Traces of the Colonial in Thailand*, ed. Rachel V. Harrison and Peter A. Jackson (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010), 173.

⁵ Chaophraya Thiphakornwongse (Kham Bunnag), *Phra Ratchaphongsawadan Krung Rattanakosin Ratchakan thi 1 (The Royal Chronicle of the Rattanakosin Kingdom, the Reign of King Rama I)* (Bangkok: Sophonphiphat Thanakon, 1935), 7-8 and 63-65.

Grand Palace, the Front Palace and two royal Buddhist temples.⁶ His Grand Palace is a complex of throne halls and apartments which are divided into three quarters: 'the Outer Court' (office buildings and Wat Phra Si Rattana Satsadaram), 'the Middle Court' (residential and state buildings) and 'the Inner Court' (residential quarter exclusively for the king and his family (Figure 1). The Middle Court is considered the heart of the royal court, for it constitutes the most important buildings and covers the largest area of the Grand Palace. It comprises three groups of throne halls, namely Phra Maha Monthien group, Phrathinang Chakri Maha Prasat group and Phra Maha Prasat group, and a garden called Siwalai Garden (Figure 2). Most of these throne halls were built by King Yotfa, except for those of the Phrathinang Chakri Maha Prasat group.

Similar to his city plan, King Yotfa chose traditional architecture of the Ayutthaya period to glorify the Chakri Dynasty.⁷ An excellent example of his building that should be mentioned here is Phrathinang Dusit Maha Prasat (Figure 3). This building is considered to be the finest example of traditional palatial architecture. It was built to replace his first throne hall, Phrathinang Amarinthraphisek Maha Prasat (completed on 18 February 1784) which was burnt down in 1789. Like its predecessor, the Dusit Maha Prasat was modelled after one of the throne halls from the Ayutthaya Kingdom, Phrathinang Suriyamarin. The Dusit Maha Prasat was built on a symmetrical cruciform groundplan equivalent to a Greek-Cross plan. Raised on a high podium, the throne hall also features a small porch projecting out on the northern side (front) and is flanked by two doors. The portico shelters the Bussabok Mala Throne used in royal ceremonies in which the king was to give an audience.⁸ The southern transept is attached to an adjoining rectangular section leading to Phrathinang Phimanrattaya, King Yotfa's royal apartment.

Dusit Maha Prasat Throne Hall is imbued with symbolism from its structure to its decoration. The most outstanding element is the four-layered, green tile roof decorated with gilded wood carving along the edges. This special type of roof is, in fact, a reduction of a multiple-storey buildings which Siam derived from ancient Indian architecture. The multi-layered roof thus stands for a tall, multiple-storey building known as 'prasat' or 'kudhakhan' reserved for religious architecture for gods or Buddha

⁶ Thiphakornwongse, *Phra Ratchaphongsawadan*, 68. However, this throne hall was struck by lightning and burnt to the ground in 1789. King Yotfa then commissioned a new throne hall to be built on the same site, but with a different floor plan. The new symmetrical cruciform throne hall was named 'Phrathinang Dusit Maha Prasat.'

⁷ Santi Leksukhum, *Prawatsat Sinlapa Thai (Chabab Yor) (A Concise History of Thai Art)*, Forth edition (Bangkok: Muang Boran, 2009), 191.

⁸ This throne was used by King Vajiravudh during his coronation in 1911, which was portrayed in the Ananta Samakhom Throne hall's fresco. See the discussion of this fresco in Chapter One.

and for palatial architecture for the monarch.⁹ Thus, it was very important for Siamese kings to construct buildings with multi-layered roofs and spires as they are a symbol of royal power and a semi-divine status. It is exclusively in the top rank in the hierarchy of traditional Thai architecture.¹⁰ Furthermore, the crossing is surmounted by a golden spire supported by garudas (a large mythical creature of half-human and half-bird hybrid) on its four corners (Figure 4). The multi-layered roof itself already reflects the hierarchical architecture, but the golden spire decidedly intensifies the royal power and the semi-divine status of King Yotfa. Even the doors and windows are decorated with spires, which echo the spire on top of the building itself. The garuda also contributes to this symbolism. It is the mythical creature of the Himavanta Forest surrounding Mount Meru, home of Indra from Hindu and Buddhist mythology. In another aspect, garuda is a mount of Vishnu, the god who is attributed to the Chakri kings; therefore, the garuda is also a symbol of kingship. The interior decoration, such as a fresco depicting the seated praying deities ('thepphanom') motif, strongly echoes the celestial theme as well.¹¹

Wat Phra Si Rattana Satsadaram was built on the ground of the Grand Palace, yet another example of the Chakri mimesis of the Ayutthaya Kingdom. It is an echo of Wat Phra Si Sanphet which was located inside the compounds of the Ayutthaya's Royal Palace (currently called the Ancient Palace). King Yotfa commissioned this royal temple to house Phra Kaew Morakot (widely known in English as the Emerald Buddha), the 'palladium' of the Kingdom.¹² Moreover, the term 'Rattanakosin' is associated with this Buddha image,¹³ a symbol of the nation as well as the Chakri Dynasty. Hence, the term also features in the official name of Bangkok.¹⁴ Paul Wheatley remarks on designing the new city according to the ancient plan that it was 'natural that the archetypes on which they were patterned should have been drawn from the past.'¹⁵ Especially when the establishment of such cities is associated with the

⁹ Somphob Phirom, *Kudhakhan (Spired Castle)* (Bangkok: FAD, 2002), 11.

¹⁰ Watthana Bunchab, ed., *Thananusak nai Ngan Sathapattayakam Thai (Hierarchy of Traditional Thai Architecture)* (Bangkok: FAD, 2008), 26-29.

¹¹ Santi Leksukhum, *Khomoon kab Moommong: Sinlapa Rattanakosin (Information and Perspectives on Rattanakosin Art)* (Bangkok: Muang Boran, 2005), 23-27 and 45.

¹² Thiphakornwongse, *Phra Ratchaphongsawadan*, 68-70.

¹³ Phra Kaew Morakot symbolically means the 'Holy Jewel Buddha.' The statue is enshrined in the ordination hall of Wat Phra Si Rattana Satsadaram. It is believed to be of either Northern Thai art or Laotian art and dated around the fourteenth century. See Sakchai Saising, "Phra Kaew Morakot kue Phraphuttaroop Lanna thi Mi Kwam Samphan Kab Phraphuttaroop Hinsai Sakunchang Phayao" (Phra Kaew Morakot: The Lanna Style and its Relation with the Sandstone Buddha Statue of the Phayao School), in *Phra Kaew Morakot (The Emerald Buddha)* ed. Piset Chiachanphong and Pramin Kruethong (Bangkok: Matichon, 2003), 313-323.

¹⁴ The term was coined in order to present Bangkok as the city where the Emerald Buddha dwells. See the official name of Bangkok in Appendix B.

¹⁵ Paul Wheatley, *City as Symbol: An Inaugural Lecture Delivered at University College London, 20 November 1967* (London: H. K. Lewis, 1969), 11.

construction rituals such as in the case of Bangkok. It also reflects the cosmo-magical symbolism as the ideal-typed traditional city.¹⁶

The journal of George Finlayson,¹⁷ a Scottish naturalist, describes Bangkok in 1821 as a town which 'derives but little architectural ornament from the state of its public buildings, if we except the sacred edifice called "Pra-cha-di"' (phra chedi or chedi is a Thai term for a Buddhist stupa).¹⁸ Finlayson's account gives an impression of Bangkok in the early nineteenth century as Theravada Buddhist city. Siamese palatial and Buddhist architecture have also shared a similar design of a single-storey building with a multi-layered wooden roof often attached with a spire. This depiction distinctly manifests Bangkok as a sacred city of Theravada Buddhism, besides its political status as a seat of government. Bangkok's dual states also reflect the *Lokuttara* (transcendental) and *Lokiya* (mundane) aspects of Buddhist philosophy. This ethical dualism was also associated with the Siamese kings' position concerning the creating of the capital as 'the kings could be seen as a mediator or broker between lokiya (as an administrative body) and lokuttara' (as the incarnation of gods or a Bodhisattava),¹⁹ representing both worldly and spiritual power.

Drawings by the westerners who came to Bangkok in the early nineteenth century often show the view of Bangkok from across the River. Finlayson's drawing depicts the Grand Palace and the royal temple with the floating homes stretching along the bank of the river. This famous scene was repeatedly depicted in other drawings and prints by westerners, such as a drawing from the Wynford Album (the collection of British Library) drawn in 1826 and a print published in John Crawford's journal (in 1828) (Figures 5-7). These works portray the image of Bangkok with the western riverbank or Thonburi and the Chao Phraya River in the foreground and middle ground. The background shows the multi-tiered and spired roof of palaces, and Buddhist temples dominate Bangkok's skyline. These facets of Bangkok accurately denote its monarch and religious sacredness, while reflecting the settlements in an early period of Bangkok. The riverbank area was an ideal settlement in the early Rattanakosin era due to the mode of transportation via rivers or canals. Some areas were settled along the

¹⁶ Wheatley, *City as Symbol*, 9.

¹⁷ George Finlayson accompanied John Crawford to the court of King Rama II of Siam in a trade mission during 1821-1822 as a medical officer.

¹⁸ George Finlayson, *The Mission to Siam, and Hué, the Capital of Cochin China, in the Years 1821-2: From the Journal of the Late George Finlayson with a Memoir of the Author, by Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, F.R.S.* (London: John Murray, 1826), 216, Digitised July 14, 2005, accessed October 10, 2014, <http://www.archive.org/details/missiontosiaman00raffgoog>.

¹⁹ Hans-Dieter Evers and Rüdiger Korff, *Southeast Asian Urbanism: The Meaning and Power of Social Space* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2000), 67-69.

city walls and canals in between uninhabited lands (Figure 8).²⁰ Crawford, a British envoy, noted Bangkok's environment and revealed his own amazement at the river scene:

Numerous temples of Buddha, with tall spires attached to them, frequently glittering with gilding, were conspicuous among the mean huts and hovels of the natives, throughout which were interspersed a profusion of palms, ordinary fruit-trees, and the sacred figs. On each side of the river, there was a row of floating habitations, resting on rafts and bamboos, moored to the shore[...] The face of the river presented a busy scene, from the number of boats and canoes of every size and description which were passing to and fro. The number of these struck us as very great at the time, for we were not aware that there are few or no roads at Bangkok, and that the river and canals form the common highways, not only for goods, but for passengers of every description.²¹

King Yotfa's Two consecutive successors, namely King Loetla and King Jessadabodindra, continued minor construction of buildings in the Grand Palace as well as the expansion of the capital, including construction and reconstruction of Buddhist temples. During the reign of Jessadabodindra, renovation and construction of Buddhist temples in Bangkok and nearby towns became a primary project of his royal commission.²² However, Jessadabodindra favoured a Chinese style over the traditional Thai style.²³ His preference hence created a shift in the construction of hierarchical architecture. His successor, King Mongkut continued this inventiveness in bringing an alternative style into Siamese architecture. Contrary to Jessadabodindra, King Mongkut retained a traditional style for Buddhist temples he built; however, he crucially introduced the European style to Siamese palatial architecture.

In 1854, Mongkut commissioned a new building complex in the Inner Court, named Phra Aphinao Niwet, which consisted of eight throne halls and three towers

²⁰ Cited in Kanchana Tangchonlathip, "Krungthep Mahanakhon: Muang To Diaw Talod Kan Khong Prathet Thai" (Bangkok Metropolis: The Primate City of Thailand) in *Prachakon lae Sangkom 2550 (Population and Society 2007)* ed. Worachai Thongthai and Sureephon Phanphueng (Nakhon Pathom: Institute for Population and Social Research Press, 2007), n.p.; Sujit Wongthes ed., *Krungthep Ma Chak Nai? (Bangkok: A Historical Background)*, Third edition (Bangkok: Dream Catcher, 2012), 126-128.

²¹ John Crawford, *Journal of an Embassy to the Court of Siam and Cochin China*, First published 1830 (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1967), 78-79.

²² Leksukhum, *Prawatsat Sinlapa*, 190-191.

²³ See Sakchai Saising, *Ngan Chang Samai Phra Nangklao (The Arts in the Reign of King Jessadabodindra)* (Bangkok: Matichon, 2008).

(Figure 9).²⁴ These interconnected buildings were built in a combination of Siamese, Western and Chinese style architecture. The principal building of the Phra Aphinao Niwet was the reception hall named Phrathinang Ananta Samakhom (Figure 10). This hall was situated on the east of King Mongkut's residential halls. The Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall (not to be confused with King Chulalongkorn's Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall at the Dusit Palace) was used as a grand audience chamber where the King received his visitors and foreign emissaries; thus, the building was intentionally designed in European style. One of such events was when Mongkut received Emperor Napoleon III's envoy, Gustave Duchesne de Bellecourt in November 1867 as depicted in the oil painting (Figure 11).²⁵ The European style also resulted from Mongkut's perspective on the traditional style of Siamese architecture. The King felt that the traditional styled building was not suitable to be decorated with the gifts he received from Europe and the United States.²⁶ Based on the surviving photographs, prints and paintings, the old Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall was a two-storey building with Chinese style ceramic tile roof. It was built on a rectangular plan with a projecting two-storey portico at the centre of the west façade and small porches at the end of both wings. The throne hall was designed with Corinthian columns for both exterior and interior supporting structures. A Greek pediment was another element of classical architecture used for interior decoration above the windows (Figure 12). Three pointed arches behind the throne, however, seemed very likely to be an influence of Islamic architecture rather than Gothic architecture (Figure 13).

Another example of Mongkut's eclectic architecture is Phra Nakhon Khiri, a summer palace in Phetchaburi Province. It was built in 1859 and was completed in 1861.²⁷ This palace is a group of buildings constructed on the three peaks of a ninety-two-metre-high hill (Figure 14), hence its name which means 'the city on the hill.' The palace complex is on the western peak. On the central peak is a white circular chedi

²⁴ Chaophraya Thiphakornwongse, *Phra Ratchaphongsawadan Krung Rattanakosin Ratchakan thi 4 (The Royal Chronicle of the Rattanakosin Kingdom: The Reign of King Rama IV)*, Sixth edition (Bangkok: Amarin Printing, 2005), 90-95. However, all the buildings have now been demolished. After the death of King Mongkut, the Aphinao Niwet group was left vacant and was dilapidated. King Chulalongkorn then commanded that the buildings to be brought down and created the new garden in their place. During the celebrations of Rattanakosin Bicentennial in 1982, the clock tower was reproduced and located opposite the Grand Palace. See NA, FAD, *Chotmai het Kan Anurak Krung Rattanakosin (The Archives of the Restoration of the Rattanakosin Island)* (Bangkok: FAD, 1982), 662-664.

²⁵ FAD, *Prachum Phongsawadan Bhak thi 62 Rueng Thoot Farang nai Samai Krung Rattanakosin (The Chronicles of Siam Part 62: The Envoys from the West in the Rattanakosin Era)* (Bangkok: Sophonphiphat Thanakon, 1936), 443; Amédée Gréhan, *Le Royaume de Siam* (Paris: S. Raçon, 1868), 65-69.

²⁶ Cited in Naengnoi Saksri, Naphit Krittikakul and Darunee Maungkaew, *Phra Ratchawang lae Wang nai Krungthep (phor. sor. 2325-2525) (The Royal Courts and Palaces in Bangkok, 1782-1982)* (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 1982), 119.

²⁷ Thiphakornwongse, *Phra Ratchaphongsawadan Krung Rattanakosin Ratchakan thi 4*, 297-299.

named Phra That Chom Phet. The eastern peak accommodates Wat Phra Kaew, a mirror of Wat Phra Kaew (Wat Phra Si Rattana Satsadaram) in Bangkok. The palace complex consists of three royal apartments, a throne hall, a royal chapel and a tower. The buildings were constructed in a combination of Chinese and Western styles, similar to the Aphinao Niwet, except for the royal chapel named Phrathinang Wetchayan Wichian Prasat which was built in traditional Thai style (Figure 15). Chatchawan Wiangchai Tower was built in accordance to his interest in astronomy, to observe the celestial body.²⁸ Alternatively, this tower functions as the lighthouse and a watch tower overlooking the city. The tower was built in a Western style, in contrast to the eclectic styles of the other buildings. It was built on a circular plan with two levels. The lower level is a colonnade, a structure of columns and arches. The upper level is a circular dome with a glass roof. The dome is encircled by a balustrade and adorned with a cupola.

The construction of the palace was supervised by the Bunnag brothers: Chuang and Tuam, and Prince Chumsai, the court artist. Tuam Bunnag, then the deputy-governor of Phetchaburi, was the only one who had seen actual Western architecture when he accompanied King Mongkut's ambassadors to Queen Victoria's court in 1857.²⁹ John Thomson, a Scottish photographer, mentioned Tuam's role in the construction during his visit to the town of Phetchaburi which he thought to resemble English towns.

The builder of this new town was a very clever young noble, who had visited England with the Siamese embassy, and who, at the time of my visit, was the deputy-governor of Petchaburee. It was he, too, who designed and erected the king's new summer palace, after the model of Windsor (sic.), on the top of an igneous mountain which rises boldly above the plains about two miles beyond the town.³⁰

There is no supporting documentation on Thomson's statement that Phra Nakhon Khiri Palace was actually designed after Windsor Palace in England. However, it can be said that imitation was part of the process of Siamese aristocrats' appropriation of Western architecture, either from observation at the actual sites or through photographs, postcards, prints or paintings imported to Siam from the West. Imitation or what was classically known as mimesis, is a basic concept in Western art and architecture; it is

²⁸ King Mongkut was very keen on astronomy. He acquired knowledge in astrology from both ancient Thai and Western disciplines. His well-known achievement was the precise calculation of the total solar eclipse of 18 August 1868 in which he and other Siamese officials including Europeans traveled to Prachuap Khiri Khan Province to witness this natural phenomenon. See Thiphakornwongse, *Phra Ratchaphongsawadan Krung Rattanakosin Ratchakan thi 4*, 314-318.

²⁹ NAT. Miscellany 16/24.

³⁰ John Thomson, *The Straits of Malacca, Indo-China and China* (London: Sampson Low, 1875), 112.

said that imitation is the first stage of apprenticeship to the past.³¹ Siam's appropriating Western architectural elements, however, is not a theatrical reinterpretation of the past, but a search for ideal types for a new modern period. Mongkut's eclectic architecture, in Clarence Aasen's words, 'reflects a transitional period in Siamese aesthetics between traditional eclecticism and aspiring modernism.'³²

To a certain extent, Siamese aristocrats in the mid-nineteenth century were no different to the British nobles in the Georgian era whose grand country houses were built with the rows of pillars, pedimented structures, symmetry and clean lines of an imported architectural style.³³ King Mongkut expressed his determination to construct his palaces with the Western style attributable to the frequent visits of the ambassadors from the West whom he openly welcomed to his court. The imitation of Western architecture in his palaces also reflects his inquisitiveness about Western cultures, science and technology as evidenced by the construction of the clock tower in the Aphinao Niwet and the observatory towers at Phra Nakhon Khiri Palace and the Chandra Kasem in Ayutthaya Province.³⁴ The modes of practice and customs from the West he acquired affected changes in Bangkok as well. Mongkut's Bangkok was 13.32 square kilometres with more roads for carriages; the very first road was titled the New Road or 'Charoen Krung' in Thai (literally means the prosperous city). It was paved in Bangkok at the request of the westerners who resided in Bangkok.³⁵ The addition of new roads and carriages to Siam's mode of transportations had altered the way in which the Siamese generally commuted on boat as Crawford remarked several decades earlier. These new modes of transportation also led to the construction of shophouses along the new roads.³⁶

Significantly, the imitation of Western architecture also signified Siamese aristocrats' mode of representation, in order to present their newly constructed self-identity to the West. Mongkut's effort proved to be quite successful. Dr. Dan Beach Bradley, an American physician missionary and the editor of *Bangkok Recorder* newspaper who lived in Bangkok between 1835-1873, publicly praised his westernised

³¹ David Mayernik, *The Challenge of Emulation in Art and Architecture: Between Imitation and Invention* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2013), 2-5 and 15.

³² Clarence Aasen, *Architecture of Siam: A Cultural History Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 136.

³³ Ian Sutton, *Western Architecture: A Survey from Ancient Greece to the Present* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999), 226-229.

³⁴ See Chungsirialak, *Sathapattayakam*, 41-55.

³⁵ Chaophraya Thiphakonwong, *Phraratchaphongsawadan*, 169-170; *Prachum Prakad Ratchakan thi 4 (phor. sor. 2405-2411) Lem 2 (A Collection of Royal Announcements of King Mongkut, 1862-1868, Volume 2)* (Bangkok: Krungthep, 1998), 353.

³⁶ Cited in Tangchonlathip, "Krungthep Mahanakhon," s.n.

palaces as 'charming and tasteful.'³⁷ From the first to the third reign, palatial architecture were mostly constructed within the area of the old city centre, the so-called 'gem of the Rattanakosin'.³⁸ It had continued to preserve traditional and custom lore of Ayutthaya kingship which had its roots from India and Cambodia until Mongkut introduced the integrity of Siamese, Chinese and European style in his palaces. This change marked the new beginning of Siamese palatial architecture one which King Chulalongkorn endorsed willingly. By the end of nineteenth century, westernised architecture entirely replaced Siam's symbolic multi-tiered roofs with spire structures. Chulalongkorn's appropriation of Western architecture hence shifted an image of Bangkok as a sacred city of 'the Divine Incarnations' in the pre-modern period to a metropolis of modernising Siam. The building of this new Bangkok was greatly affected by Chulalongkorn's first official state visits to the colonies of the West which will be discussed further in the following section.

3.1 Chulalongkorn's First Royal Tours and the Aftermath: The Road to the Reforms and Hegemonic Struggle between *the Old* and *the New Siam*

As discussed above, during the beginning phase of the new found capital city, the construction mainly featured a defensive wall, as well as palace buildings and religious architecture.³⁹ The latter half of the nineteenth century, however, was the most crucial time for Bangkok; a huge development was conducted under Chulalongkorn's royal command. Chulalongkorn's sponsorship succeeded his father's initiation in modernising Bangkok's infrastructure and the adoption of Western architectural styles. The development of Bangkok has recently been identified as a consequence of Chulalongkorn's first state visits to foreign countries between 1871 and 1872.⁴⁰ These royal tours marked him as the first Thai king who did not go abroad upon warfare or pilgrimage. The first state visit to Singapore and Java in 1871 was designed to be Chulalongkorn's field trip to observe government administration in the colonies. Although suggested by the Regent, Si Suriyawongse, a plan to visit Siam's neighbouring countries was originally an idea of King Mongkut who proposed a royal visit to Sir Harry Ord, then the Governor of Straits Settlements (1867–1873) during the

³⁷ Cited in Wilailekha Thavornthanasarn, *Chonchunnam Thai kab Kanrab Watthanatham Tawantok (Thai Aristocrats and the Derivation of Western Cultures)* (Bangkok: Muang Boran, 2002), 71-72.

³⁸ NA, *Chotmai het Kan Anurak Krung Rattanakosin (The Restoration of the Rattanakosin Island Archive)* (Bangkok: FAD, 1982), 646-647.

³⁹ Evers and Korff, *Southeast Asian Urbanism*, 83.

⁴⁰ See Chapter Two.

observation of the solar eclipse on 18 August 1868. However, the visit was prevented by Mongkut's unexpected death on 1 October 1868.⁴¹

The trip to Singapore and Java was between 9 March and 15 April 1871. In both colonies, Chulalongkorn attended state receptions held in his honour, not only from consul generals, but also representatives from merchant guilds which expressed a wish to strengthen trading relationships between Siam and Western colonies. In Singapore, Chulalongkorn visited banks, the botanic gardens, the Supreme Court, the waterworks, the fire station, the post office, a school, a prison, a military barracks, a shipyard and a tin-smelter. While in Batavia, local newspapers reported that the Siamese King was enthusiastic about the manufactures and operations he had seen for the first time, such as a manufactured gas factory, military programmes and rail services. His correspondence with European sovereigns, namely, the British and Dutch monarchs, stated Chulalongkorn's high aspiration to bring prosperity to Siam by following Western models and his wish that the West, as Siam's longtime ally, would give their utmost support and advice.⁴² When Chulalongkorn returned to Bangkok, he immediately started small reforms within his royal court such as customs and practices, in favour of Western manners. Some minor city planning was underway such as roads along the city walls and the Royal Garden (Suan Saranrom) located on the opposite side of the Grand Palace. Additionally, the modes of consumption of Siamese elites' (as discussed in Chapter One and Chapter Two) changed after the first royal tour subsequently increased the numbers of European shops selling imported goods which were built along new roads.⁴³

At the end of the same year, Chulalongkorn embarked on his second royal tour to the British Raj or India. The journey started on 16 December and ended on 16 March 1872. Chulalongkorn also paid a brief four-day visit to Burma before continuing his journey to India. During the trip in British India, Chulalongkorn visited many places of interest in and around Calcutta (the Fort, the Mint, the Gun Foundry at Cossipoor, Alipore Jail, the Museum and the Jute Mills at Baranagore), Delhi (attending the Delhi Camp of Exercise),⁴⁴ Agra (Agra Fort, Taj Mahal and Tomb of Akbar the Great),

⁴¹ Prince Damrong, *Kwamsongcham (Memories)* (Bangkok: SSST 1962), 182-184.

⁴² See FAD, *Chotmai het Sadet Praphat Tangprathet nai Ratchakan thi 5 Sadet Muang Singapore lae Muang Batavia Khrang Raek lae Sadet Praphat Prathet India (A Royal Chronicle of King Chulalongkorn's First Journey to Singapore, Batavia and India)* (Bangkok: FAD, 1966); Orn-Anong Thippimon, "Kan Sadet Praphat Singapore lae Malayu: Phrabat Somdet Phra Chulachomklao Chaoyuhua kab Kan Sadet Praphat Tangprathet" (King Chulalongkorn's Visits to Singapore and Malay Peninsular), in *Ratchakan thi 5: Siam kab Usakanay lae Chomphoo thaweeep (King Chulalongkorn: Siam-Southeast Asia-Indian Subcontinent)*, ed. Chanvit Kaset Siri and On-anong Thippimon (Bangkok: Textbooks Project, 2004), 202-215.

⁴³ Thippimon, "Kan Sadet Praphat," 212-214.

⁴⁴ Delhi Camp of Exercise was the largest gathering of British troops in peace time. The exercise included sports and military training.

Lucknow (Memorial Well at Cawnpore/Kanpur), Bombay (the fort, the arsenal, the dockyard, the turret ships and the new lighthouse) and Varanasi (the Ramnagar Fort, palace of the Maharaja of Vijayanagaram, Vishwanath Hindu Temple, the Observatory Tower and Sanskrit College at Sarnath). Throughout these visits, the young King and his retinue travelled by train, a new transportation which Chulalongkorn aspired to introduce into Siam.⁴⁵

A Thai scholar, Chalong Suntharawanit, has recently argued that these extensive journeys in Chulalongkorn's early years on the throne provided great inspiration for the young King to undertake the development of his country. Suntharawanit points out that the Chakri Reformation was a product of an emulation or an appropriation of the experiences Chulalongkorn had gathered from the colonies.⁴⁶ This analysis is contrary to a mainstream notion which regards Chulalongkorn's grand tour to Europe in 1897 and 1907 as the most important factor in Siam's development. In fact, most of Chulalongkorn's reforms had been carried out before he visited Europe; hence, the prototype of Chulalongkorn's 'New Bangkok' was based on the blueprint of what the empires planned for the colonies rather than the empires themselves. This chapter will complicate this narrative by investigating Chulalongkorn's architecture in accordance with his development plans in relation to colonial networks, in order to explain the way in which they conjointly affected Bangkok's landscape and shaped the capital as it has been known since the turn of the century.

Additionally, Kannika Satraproong states that King Chulalongkorn's royal visits to these colonies were in effect a declaration of Siam's stature as an independent state to the West. Satraproong's study offers a view from the West. By drawing on official correspondence from the Dutch government to the royal government of Siam, she indicates that the grand receptions of Chulalongkorn in the colonies of the West affirmed equality between the Siamese King and European monarchs.⁴⁷ These investigations of Chulalongkorn's early royal visits reflect Siamese aristocrats' self-contradiction regarding their status on the world stage. Satraproong's study offers a viewpoint in which Siamese aristocrats led by Chulalongkorn aimed to use these visits as a stage to manifest that the Siamese monarch was not inferior to those of civilised monarchs of Europe. Whereas Suntharawanit argues that despite the Siamese

⁴⁵ From an interview of the Governor of Paknam, His Excellency Phraya Samud Buranarak, one of the King's entourage, published in the *Bombay Gazette*. Cited in Sachchidananda Sahai, *Ror. 5 Sadet India (India in 1872: As Seen By the Siamese)*, trans. Kanthika Sriudom (Bangkok: Textbooks Project, 2003), 513-514.

⁴⁶ Chalong Suntharawanit, "Ratchakan thi 5 kab Latthi Ananikom lae Siam" (King Rama V with Colonialism and Siam), in *Ratchakan thi 5*, 272-273.

⁴⁷ Kannika Satraproong, "Kan Sadet Praphat (Singapore) Batavia lae Semarang nai Pi 1871 lae Kan Phisut "Tuaton" Khong Siam nai Thana Khong Rat Ekkarat" (A State Visit to Singapore, Batavia and Semarang in 1871: A Declaration of Siam's Existence as an Independent State), in *Ratchakan thi 5*, 179-190.

aristocrats' self-esteem, they still needed to duplicate the structure of the colonies of the West, not from the West itself, in their quest for civilisation.

The year after the visit to British India was the end of the Regency Period (1868-1873), marked by Chulalongkorn's second coronation on 16 November 1873. The twenty-year-old King had his full power to start socio-cultural and political reformations inspired by invaluable experiences from his royal tours. English education for royalty and nobility was Chulalongkorn's initial platform for reform. He established an English school inside the Grand Palace and hired Francis George Patterson, an Englishman to be a tutor at the Royal School.⁴⁸ Earlier in 1873 Chulalongkorn instituted the Auditing Office (the Ratsadakon Phiphattana Hall, later the Ministry of Finance). With the establishment of the Auditing Office, the collection of state revenues and taxes went straight to the treasury which deprived the nobility as landowners of control over tax farms. This modernised taxation scheme caused friction between the Crown and nobility which consequently provoked some conflicts in later years.⁴⁹ To modernise the system of Siamese government, Chulalongkorn also created the Council of State (of 12 members) on 8 May 1874 and the Privy Council of Siam (of 49 members) on 15 August 1874.⁵⁰ One of the prime projects from the act of Council of State was the Abolition of Slavery which was initially started in 1874 and formally abolished all acts of slavery in 1911.⁵¹

However, the dissension between the Royal Court and the Front Palace known as the Front Palace Crisis (28 December 1874-25 February 1875) suspended Chulalongkorn's plan to modernise his country. Chulalongkorn suspected that an immediate change in Siam might not be well accepted among some Siamese senior officials, also known as the Old Siam. The same conclusion was shared by Sir Andrew

⁴⁸ Prior to the establishment of the Royal School, Chulalongkorn already enrolled fourteen of his cousins in the Raffles Institution in Singapore shortly after his return from Singapore. When the Royal School was finally founded, these princes that were sent to study in Singapore were called back except for some princes who furthered their studies in England. See David K. Wyatt, "Education and the Modernization of Thai Society," in *Change and Persistence in Thai Society: Essays in Honor of Lauriston Sharp*, ed. G. William Skinner and A. Thomas Kirsch (Ithica, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1975), 132.

⁴⁹ Chulalongkorn's modernisation and centralisation caused three rebellions in 1901-1902 in the countryside especially in the Northern and Northeastern part of Siam, namely the *Ngeaw* rebellion in Prae, the Holy Man's Rebellion in Northeastern provinces and the Rebellion of Seven Sultans in the South. See Chaianan Samutwanit and Kattiya Kannasut, ed., *Ekkasan Kanmuang Kanpokkrong Thai phor. sor. 2417-2477 (Documentation on Thai Politics 1874-1934)* (Bangkok: SSST, 1989), 70. Also see Ansil Ramsay, "Modernization and Reactionary Rebellions in Northern Siam," *JAS* 38, 2 (February 1979), 286-293.

⁵⁰ Samutwanit and Kannasut, *Ekkasan Kanmuang*, 15-30.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 13; "Phraratchabanyat Thas Rattanakosinsok 124" (Law of Rattanakosin Era 124 on Slavery), *RG* 22, 1 (2 April 1905), 9.

Clarke, the Governor of the Straits Settlement who was appointed to be a mediator.⁵² Clarke believed that the Old Siam opposed the innovations and thus tried to prevent the young King from reforming the old customs.⁵³ Chulalongkorn's awareness of such opposition was reflected in his letter to Sir Andrew Clarke a year later, on 27 November 1876:

[...]I have felt it better to defer the prosecution of further plans of reform until I shall find some demand for them among the leaders of my people. I have not relinquished them, but act according to my opportunities.⁵⁴

It appeared that his opportunities would have to be postponed until most of the powerful and conservative senior officers passed away. Modernisation schemes chiefly resumed after the death of the ex-Regent Si Suriyawongse in 1882 and of Prince Wichaichan in 1885.

Chulalongkorn's most audacious act in the second phase of his reformation schemes was the political reformation in 1892.⁵⁵ By the 1890s the developments in postal services (established in 1883), healthcare, water supply, transport and infrastructure were progressing. The first hospital was the Siriraj Hospital, established in 1888 on the western bank of the Chao Phraya River. The hospital was named in commemoration of his 18-month-old son, Prince Siriraj Kakuttaphan who died a year earlier.⁵⁶ Railways, a transport which Chulalongkorn was very keen to initiate in Siam, were finally constructed in 1891. The first railway which initially connected Bangkok to Samut Prakan Province (Paknam Railway Service) was opened on 11 April 1893.⁵⁷ By the turn of the century, electricity, water supply, trams and postal services including telegraph were fully supplied for public use. More roads were built within the city compound, simultaneously with the construction of governmental and ministerial buildings. Bangkok, at that point, became what Chulalongkorn had seen in the colonies during his early state visits. The development and new political landscape also introduced new categories to Siamese architecture. Prior to the late nineteenth century, royal commissions for architecture were to construct either palaces or Buddhist

⁵² As Prince Wichaichan took refuge in the British Consulate shortly after the beginning of the crisis, this inevitably pressed the British Foreign Office to play the part to which the British authority regarded this affair as a domestic quarrel. See David K. Wyatt, *Thailand: A Short History* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1982), 193.

⁵³ Vetch, *The Life of Lieutenant General*, 138.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 197-198.

⁵⁵ See detail of Siam's new bureaucratic administration in Introduction.

⁵⁶ "Wadauy Committee Phuchadkan Rong Phayaban" (Naming the Committee for the Royal Hospital Project), *RG* 4, 5 (5 May 1887), 34; "Prakad Tang Grom Phayaban" (The Establishment of the Health Department), *RG* 5, 40 (13 February 1888), 342.

⁵⁷ "Khaw Sadet Phraratchadamnoen Klab Chak Koh Sichang lae Kan Poed Rodfai Paknam" (The King Returned From Si Chang Island and the Opening Ceremony of Paknam Railway), *RG* 10, 3 (16 April 1893), 17.

temples. Late nineteenth-early twentieth century Bangkok looked to foreigners like a colonial city with Western style architecture of ministerial buildings, schools, hospitals, railway stations and post offices.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, Chulalongkorn still sponsored the construction of many palaces for himself and for his brothers and sons, including the summer palaces in the countryside.

3.2 King Chulalongkorn's Bangkok: Meaning and Power in the Construction of Palatial Architecture and Urban Space

When Chulalongkorn ascended the throne on 11 November 1868, the young King did not only inherit the Crown but he also shared the architecture ambitions of his father. Many of his architectural commissions continued throughout his reign, and even after his death. Chulalongkorn took a larger step in westernising his royal architecture; he hired European architects and engineers to build his modern Bangkok. Western architectural style became an ideal type for Siam's palatial architecture and government offices in his reign, a sign that the monarch aimed to guide Siam towards modernity along with his other socio-political reforms. Such reforms instigated a shift in royal architectural philanthropy from religious devotion to secular affairs and from the sacred city to the earthly modern metropolis. The extensive architectural projects commissioned throughout his reign symbolise the absolute power Chulalongkorn wielded as the head of state. The great numbers of royal commissions to build royal palaces, princely palaces, government offices and infrastructure thereafter contributed to an expansion of the city. Chulalongkorn's Bangkok would be built of bricks and stones. More roads were paved replacing dirt tracks. Interestingly, apart from the King who exerted himself in Bangkok's urbanism, other members of the royal family also donated their money to build bridges for public use.⁵⁹

Chulalongkorn's determination to introduce basic infrastructure to Siam was also shown in his early years on the throne. It was hinted at in his comment during a visit to the Fort and the Taj Mahal in Agra. Sladen, the British official who accompanied the Siamese monarch reported that, whereas the young King openly admired the beautiful marble and well-proportioned architecture, he was heard saying that such money spent in the construction would have been more advantageously employed in making roads and bridges, and digging canals.⁶⁰ During his reign, more canals, roads and bridges were constructed in Bangkok and other regions of Siam. Furthermore, he

⁵⁸ Evers and Korff, *Southeast Asian Urbanism*, 84.

⁵⁹ "Somdet Phrachaolukthoe Chaofah Valaya Alongkorn Song Borichak Sap Sang Taphan" (Princess Valaya Alongkorn Donated for the Bridge), *RG*, 17, 12 (4 November 1900), 428.

⁶⁰ Cited in Sahai, *India in 1872*, 560.

established other public infrastructure such as telegraph, mail service, water and power supplies.⁶¹ The amount of the construction devoted to public infrastructure, as well as secular architecture in his reign, noticeably overwhelms the number of Buddhist temples constructed by the royal commissions. Chulalongkorn's practical judgment was perhaps based on the fact that, by his time, the temples built by his predecessors were already in abundance. However, Chulalongkorn's motivation for modernising his kingdom most likely played a more important role in all schemes.

Chulalongkorn's modernisation scheme changed Bangkok geographically. The city which began as a sacred site with, to borrow Wheatley's term, 'cosmo-magical symbolism' had developed into the national capital of early modern Siam. Chulalongkorn built his capital with Western-style palatial and political architecture as a physical manifestation of his royal power. On the relationship between architecture and political hegemony, public architecture has dual effects of creating an efficient comfortable society and securing the power of monarchs who saw to their construction.⁶² Similar to his father, Chulalongkorn began his changes within the compound of the Grand Palace. Almost immediately after his coronation in 1868, Chulalongkorn's first architectural commission was the reconstruction of his old apartments where he was born and lived with his mother and young siblings. His childhood residential halls were twin buildings laid on an east-to-west axis, namely Phrathinang Moon Satharn Borom Ard, and Phrathinang Sommuti Thevaraj Uppabat, whose name literally means 'the hall in which the divine-king was born,' indicates its important status as the birthplace of Chulalongkorn (Figure 16).⁶³

Amidst Thai traditional style throne halls, Chulalongkorn created a set of westernised buildings on the middle ground between the traditional architecture of the Phra Maha Prasat group and the Phra Maha Monthien group. The twin halls shared the eclectic style of Mongkut's palatial architecture: a Chinese style tile roof was combined with a Greek pediment and rows of classical order columns. The project was also supervised by Tuam Bunnag who previously worked on Phra Nakhon Khiri Palace.⁶⁴ More buildings were added to the plan soon after the original buildings were built. Chulalongkorn commissioned two smaller structures, namely Phrathinang Damrong Sawad Ananwong, adjacent to the Sommuti Thevaraj Hall and Phrathinang

⁶¹ See Piyanath Bunnag, *Kan Wang Rakthan Kan Khamanakhom nai Ratchasamai Phrabat Somdet Phra Chulachomklao Chaoyuhua (The Establishment of Transport Infrastructure in the Reign of King Chulalongkorn)* (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 1975).

⁶² Mark Anthony Micalef, *The Politics of Art* (Malta: Progress Press, 2008), 3.

⁶³ Chotmaiher Rueng Sang Phrathinang Lem 1 (jor. sor. 1230) (The Construction of the Residential Halls Volume 1, 1868), (black paper folding book) National Library of Thailand, number 918-93/2, Chronicle of King Rama V.

⁶⁴ Phra Borommaratcha'ongkan Rueng Sang Phrathinang Phra'ong Mai (jor. sor. 1238) (The Royal Commission on the Construction of the New Throne Hall, 1876), (black paper folding book) National Library of Thailand, number 922-93/4-5, Chronicle of King Rama V.

Niphatpong Thawornwichit next to the Moon Sathan Hall. Together they form the side wings of the grand halls of the Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall which was built a few years later. Upon his return from Singapore in April 1871, Chulalongkorn built a banquet hall at the very back of the Chakri Maha Prasat group which he named Phrathinang Borom Ratchasathit Mahoran. In 1873, with most of the construction completed, the King then created the Moon Sathan Hall as the King's Chamber, while the Niphatpong Thawornwichit Hall served as his wardrobe.

Earlier in 1872 Chulalongkorn had already initiated a plan to build his throne hall following the instruction of his Regent, Si Suriyawongse, that according to the ancient custom every monarch should build a Maha Prasat. The idea eventually materialised four years later. In early 1876, King Chulalongkorn, once again, assigned Tuam Bunnag to supervise the construction of the throne hall which was later given the name, Phrathinang Chakri Maha Prasat. The throne hall was designed by a Singapore-based British architect John Clunis who was hired as court architect upon the return of Chulalongkorn from Singapore. Henry Clunies-Ross was appointed as assistant foreman.⁶⁵ The porches of the Moon Sathan and the Sommuti Thevaraj Hall were pulled down in order to build the Chakri Throne Hall in front of them (Figure 17). On 17 May 1876, the Hindu-Buddhist ceremony was conducted, then King Chulalongkorn laid the foundation stone at 9:36 AM.⁶⁶

As the chief building of the Chakri Maha Prasat group, the grand T-shape structured Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall is three storeys high with a monumental façade which hides the rest of the structure (Figures 18-19). The design is a blend of Neoclassical and Italianate styles on a symmetrical plan. The north front consists of three-bay porticos connected by seven-bay transepts; each side is a mirror image of the other. A contemporary source shows the throne hall shortly after its completion, revealing the original colours of the building. The Corinthian engaged columns of the middle floor were originally painted in a darker colour making its appearance more

⁶⁵ In his letter to Prince Naris, dated 27 May 1941, Prince Damrong stated that Clunis also designed the Borom Ratchasathit Mahoran hall. See Prince Narissara and Prince Damrong, *San Somdet Lem 22 (Correspondences Between Prince Narissara Nuwattiwongse and Prince Damrong Racanubhap, Volume 22)* (Bangkok: Kuru Sabha, 1962), 74-75.

⁶⁶ NLT, Phra Borommaratcha'ongkan (1876).

distinguishable from the unpainted ground floor (Figure 20).⁶⁷ The biggest and tallest central portico is the entrance with a double staircase leading to the middle floor, an element commonly seen in Palladian architecture. Moreover, the middle floor is distinctively decorated with symbols which significantly identifies its function as the State Floor. It is divided into three throne rooms at the centre, flanked by several reception rooms and galleries at each wing (Figures 21-22).

On the exterior, details of Siam's Coat of Arms, together with garlands and volutes form the pediment shape over windows at the transepts. Directly above the windows, there are medallions depicting Chulalongkorn's monogram adorning the frieze (Figures 23-24). At the central portico, the metalwork at the door and window panels was decorated with the royal cypher of King Chulalongkorn and the emblem of the Chakri Dynasty (Figure 25). Most importantly, the segmental pediment is decorated with a mosaic of King Chulalongkorn's portrait.⁶⁸ To emphasise the significance of the Chakri Throne Hall's main entrance, it is also roofed with the tallest golden spire adorned with the Coat of Arms echoing the windows' pediments (Figure 26). The interior decoration is as highly symbolic as the exterior. It is where the portraits of Chakri kings and their consorts (as discussed in Chapter One) are hung in the east and the west galleries, respectively. The audience chamber is decorated with four large oil paintings depicting the diplomatic relationships between Siam and the West.⁶⁹

In its original plan, the throne hall was to be a triple domed structure. However, due to the Regent's complaint, traditional Thai Prasat's golden spire roofs replaced the Italian Renaissance domes.⁷⁰ This hybridisation inevitably creates room for interesting interpretations. Koompong Noobanjong proposes the comparison of the building and human anatomy; the roof is the head whereas the lower structure is the body. He points out that the traditional Thai spire roofs over the European body were a parody and an emphasis on Siam aristocrats' act of Anti-colonialism, due to Siamese custom of regarding the head as the most sacred body part. Hence, the lower part, the

⁶⁷ Arnold Wright, ed., *Twentieth Century Impressions of Siam: Its History, People, Commerce, Industries, and Resources*, First published 1908 (Bangkok: White Lotus, 1994), 88. This volume is in itself a travel book, edited by Arnold Wright, an English author and journalist who wrote and edited many volumes regarding the British empire and its colonies. The volume, however, offers varied subjects on Siam's history, bureaucratic administration and economy, resources, infrastructure, education, people, traditions and cultures which, according to Wright, was rendered with some assistance from Prince Damrong. Prince Damrong's contribution was in the form of his insights on the subjects of the articles in the volume and his own collection of photographs in addition to the publisher's, especially the photography of Bangkok's architecture illustrating the modernising capital city. Hence, it offers a vivid and accurate pictorial representation of Bangkok in the early twentieth century.

⁶⁸ See Chapter One.

⁶⁹ See Chapter Two.

⁷⁰ Cited in Saksri, Krittikakul and Maungkaew, *Phra Ratchawang*, 80-81.

European architectural style, is inferior to the traditional Thai style roofs.⁷¹ This analysis, however, leaves the historical record out of the account. It was Si Suriyawongse who initially proposed the idea of constructing a new 'Maha Prasat' to honour Chulalongkorn's kingship. As it happened, the Western style throne hall Chulalongkorn very much favoured did not bode well for the Regent's traditional ideology. From the Regent's perspective, as a conservative aristocrat, a westernised throne hall would possibly lead to a prospect of Siam being a colony of the West. Opposition from the Regent challenged Chulalongkorn enormously; the young King had to cope with how the ambition of royal architecture could deal with the reality of his restricted royal power. The hybrid architectural elements of the Chakri Throne Hall hence reveal a compromise between retaining the ancient custom of the Siamese royal court and a Western aspiration towards modernity. It also epitomises an internal political struggle between the traditionalist ruling-class and young modernists in the early years of Chulalongkorn's reign. Notwithstanding the traditional spire roofs, the Chakri Throne Hall eminently denotes the shift in Siam's palatial architecture which corresponds to Chulalongkorn's attitude to kingship. This westernised throne hall echoes his commissions for portrait paintings and sculptures, such as his equestrian statue, instead of a Buddha image self-portrayal of his ancestors.

The Chakri Throne Hall was completed in 1882, the year of Rattanakosin's Centennial, hence the name of Chulalongkorn's very first throne hall which derived from the name of the Dynasty. The grand opening ceremony of the throne hall, as well as other buildings in the group, consisted of Buddhist and Hindu rituals.⁷² The name of the throne hall, together with the royal emblem, as well as Chulalongkorn's royal cypher and portrait, gloriously portrayed Chulalongkorn's seat of power on this very auspicious occasion. The Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall group, however, did not affect the change in Bangkok's urban space. Yet it is substantial evidence of Chulalongkorn's motivation to reform the city and the country. It demonstrates how he began to exercise his royal authority, albeit limited, during his early years on the throne by using his palatial architecture as a visual representation of his modernisation scheme.

⁷¹ Koompong Noobanjong, "Power and Identity, and the Rise of Modern Architecture: From Siam to Thailand" (PhD diss., University of Colorado at Denver, 2003), 186-187; Noobanjong, "Tales from the Throne Hall: The Chakri Maha Prasat Unveiled," *Journal of Industrial Education* 5, 1 (October 2005 - March 2006), 40-41.

⁷² Kamnodkan Rueng Tang Phraratchaphiti Chaloe Phrathinang Chakri Maha Prasat (jor. sor. 1244) (The Grand Opening Ceremony of the Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall, 1882), (black paper folding book) National Library of Thailand, number 937 - 95/7, Chronicle of King Rama V.

During the 1880s, government office buildings, such as the Royal Household (Figure 27), the Treasury, Tax Revenue Office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,⁷³ were in the process of construction at the Outer Court to accompany the Concordia Hall which was built earlier in 1872.⁷⁴ These edifices, very much like the Chakri Throne Hall, were constructed with classical orders, pediments and arch windows. Classical styles or Neoclassical architecture, to be precise, was predominantly an ideal archetype for Siam's government buildings in the early period of Chulalongkorn's reign. It became a new top-rank style of Siamese hierarchical architecture. However, this should not be regarded as only a mere reflection of the European fantasy of public buildings. In Europe, the creation of Neoclassicism combined the imaginative use of the past with the new scientific and archaeological approach mixed in with a sense of nostalgia.⁷⁵ In Siam, the appropriation of Neoclassical architecture was motivated by a sense of the new era in order to modernise the country. For the Siamese, the revival of classical style did not reflect a conception of living in the ancient style in their minds as it did to their European counterparts. Alternatively, it subsequently had a significant impact on the construction of national identity for Siam.

In response to Chulalongkorn's second phase reforms after 1882, more westernised ministerial and public buildings were gradually constructed outside of the Grand Palace. Apart from Clunis, more European architects such as Joachim Grassi and Stefano Cardu received royal commissions to build civic buildings as well as princely palaces and private residences of Siamese nobility. These civic buildings were built on a grand scale and a similar design. The building of the Ministry of Defence (former barracks), the Court of Justice and the Customs House designed by Grassi are fine examples of monumental public architecture. They have a striking powerful portico at the centre of a façade flanked by Renaissance palazzo-styled wings to form an impressive block of buildings (Figures 28-31). When the Public Works Department was established in 1889 (it was elevated to the Ministry of Public Works (MPW) in 1892), European architects and engineers were employed. Most of them were from Italy, such as Carlo Allergi, Mario Tamagno and Annibale Rigotti, with one German architect, Karl Siegfried Döhring.⁷⁶ By the end of 1890s, MPW had many post offices, railway stations,

⁷³ See Saksri, Krittikakul and Maungkaew, *Phra Ratchawang*, 62, and Phirasri Phowathong, Chaiyaboon Sirithanawat and Mongkhonlak Yaimeesak, *Sathapattayakam nai Samai Phra Phuttachao Luang (The Architecture of King Chulalongkorn)* (Bangkok: Advanced Info Service Public, 2010), 336-347.

⁷⁴ See Chapter Two. This building was originally built as the military club, then served as the Royal Museum (1874-1888) and the Royal Library or Wachirayan Library (1892-1916). Now it is called Sala Sahathai Samakhom, used for state receptions and meetings.

⁷⁵ Damie Stillman, *English Neo-classical Architecture Volume 1* (London: A. Zwemmer, 1988), 28.

⁷⁶ Chungsirialak, *Sathapattayakam*, 90-98.

hospitals and schools finished or under construction. Moreover, town halls and courts were built in the provinces following the establishment of the Monthon system.

At the turn of the century, Chulalongkorn's westernised architecture dominated Bangkok's skyline in lieu of the spires and chedis of Buddhist temples. An article in a contemporary periodical titled *the Siam Repository* discusses the changing landscape of late nineteenth century Bangkok with an increase of these vast buildings.

During these past fifteen-sixteen years, Bangkok has been largely developed. It was known that along the Chao Phraya River, multi-storey buildings were rarely seen[...] Today, more tall handsome buildings have been erected everywhere in the city, such as Phrathinang Borom Ratchasathit Mahoran, Phrathinang Moon Satharn Borom Ard, Phrathinang Sommuti Thevaraj Uppabat, Phrathinang Chakri Maha Prasat[...], guardhouses, barracks, police garrisons, the Royal Mint, and houses of the nobles along the River and within the wall. On Charoen Krung Road, rows of building were constructed along its length. All of these show the progress of Bangkok because of His Majesty the King's philanthropy.⁷⁷

The article indicates that Siamese elites wholeheartedly welcomed the new style of architecture derived from the West which soon overshadowed the single-storey buildings of local residents. The landscape of Bangkok filled with these monumental westernised public buildings bears a resemblance to the views of Singapore and India where Chulalongkorn saw during his royal visits in the early 1870s.

The growth of Bangkok at the turn of the twentieth century was affected by the construction of another building, Chulalongkorn's new royal residence on a large area north of Rattanakosin Island. Upon his return from the first visit to Europe, Chulalongkorn purchased land with his personal funds in 1899. This area was designated for his summer home as the King commented on the heat in summer and the confined space of the Grand Palace which affected his health. The designated area was composed of orchards and paddy fields between Padung Krungkasem Canal and Samsen Canal bordered by the railway to the east. It was given the name Suan Dusit (Celestial Garden) reflecting the green landscape of his new rural retreat.⁷⁸ A number of suggestions for the reason for the relocation of Chulalongkorn's royal residence have been proposed. Many Thai scholars view the King's desire for a new palace away from the stresses of court life as the result of his stay in the country houses of European royal families during the 1897 visit. Sanitary conditions are another concern taken into account. The growing numbers of female inhabitants in the Inner Court of the Grand

⁷⁷ "Kwam Charoen Khong Krung Siam" (Siam's Civilisation), *Chotmai het Siam Samai (The Siam Repository)*, February 11, 1885, 407-408. See Appendix for the original text in Thai.

⁷⁸ "Chang Kwam Ruang Suan Dusit" (Announcement of the Establishment of the Suan Dusit), *RG 15*, 50 (12 March 1899), 543.

Palace must have created problems in maintaining the cleanliness and hygiene in the palace due to overcrowding.⁷⁹

The Dusit Palace⁸⁰ is comprised of gardens, lawns, sixteen residential halls and two throne halls on 64,749 square metres of land. The main edifices of the palace grounds are on the east side, consisting of Vimanmek Mansion, Amphon Sathan Residential Hall, Abhisek Dusit Throne Hall and Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall. The residential halls of Chulalongkorn's consorts and children are on the west side, separated by canals and gardens (Figure 32). The separation of the residential quarter for his consorts and the royal residential halls and audience halls suggests the maintenance of the traditional layout of the Inner, Middle and Outer Courts. Upon the completion of the residential halls in 1906, Chulalongkorn moved his royal court to the Dusit Palace, but his royal government was still based on the grounds of the Grand Palace. The preparation of the grounds started in February 1899; a temporary wooden pavilion for the King's sojourn was created along with the park. On 15 August, Chulalongkorn ordered the construction of the Ratchadamnoen Avenue's first segment: Ratchadamnoen Nok Road to connect the Dusit Palace to Rattanakosin Island. He also remarked that the construction of the road in this undeveloped area could subsequently provide more public space for transportation and trade.⁸¹

The first main building on the palace grounds is Vimanmek Mansion (Figures 33-34). It was reconstructed from an unfinished teakwood villa at Koh Sichang, Chonburi Province, under the supervision of Korn Hongsakun, the chief court carpenter. Chulalongkorn performed the foundation stone laying ceremony on 31 August 1900 at 08:35 AM.⁸² It was completed in March 1902. Vimanmek Mansion is a three-storey building on an 'L' shape plan. The building is emphatically horizontal, with the sixty-metre-long wings. The building consists of thirty-one rooms to accommodate Chulalongkorn's extended family. The four-storey octagonal tower, however, exclusively served as his royal apartments. The design of Vimanmek mansion resembles American Stick Style,⁸³ which began in 1840 and had the constructivist aesthetics of Japanese

⁷⁹ Maurizio Peleggi, *Lords of Things: the Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), 84.

⁸⁰ Initially, this royal residence was not designated as a palace, as it was built by his personal funds. Thus, it was not state-owned. At the beginning, this summer house was called 'Wang Suan Dusit' (Suan Dusit Royal Residence). See "Announcement of the Establishment of Suan Dusit," 543. Eventually, Wang Suan Dusit was elevated to palace in 1909 when the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall was added to the grounds. See "Prakad Riak Wang Suan Dusit Pen Phraratchawang" (Wang Suan Dusit Elevated to the Dusit Palace), RG 26, 0 ngor. (11 April 1909), 45.

⁸¹ "Prakad Chad Thi Sang Thanon Ratchadamnoen" (Royal Commission for Ratchadamnoen Road), RG 16, 22 (27 August 1899), 276-279.

⁸² "Kan Kor Roek Sang Phrathinang Vimanmek" (The Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony of Vimanmek Mansion), RG 17, 24 (9 September 1900), 302-305.

⁸³ Chungsirialak, *Sathapattayakam*, 123.

architecture in its origin.⁸⁴ This style was, in fact, introduced to Siam during the reign of King Mongkut, probably by American missionaries.⁸⁵ As a summer house, the skeletal wood structure of the Stick Style is very suitable for Vimanmek Mansion due to its wooden structure which is more suited to the heat climate than a Western-style brick building. It also suggests the aesthetics of the Arts and Crafts Movement through the finely crafted woodwork decoration. Although Siam around that period was not an industrialising society, the design of the mansion seemingly revived the old techniques of traditional Siamese architecture, an attitude which was shared with the Arts and Crafts Movement.⁸⁶ Besides the mansion, the revival of traditional style in Chulalongkorn's palatial architecture at Phra Tamnak Ruen Ton (Figure 35) which sits opposite the Vimanmek Mansion, shows the skilled carpentry of Siam's craftsmanship. This could be considered as an early sign of a search for Thai identity which was formally established in the early twentieth century to counter the Western dominance in Thai art and architecture.⁸⁷

Prince Naris also revived Siam's hierarchical style of traditional palatial architecture when he designed two pavilions on the Dusit Palace ground, namely Phrathinang Ratcharudi and Phra Saowakonthakudi (Figures 36-37).⁸⁸ The intricate and elaborate woodwork decoration seen in Vimanmek Mansion was intensified in the decoration of the Abhisek Dusit Throne Hall (Figure 38) situated to the east of the Mansion. Delicate woodwork decoration on the eaves and porches of the throne hall was distinctively inspired by the decorative art of Moorish Architecture mixed with Art

⁸⁴ Marcus Whiffen and Frederick Koeper, *American Architecture 1607-1976* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 294.

⁸⁵ Thai scholars generally call this style the 'Gingerbread' style. See Chungsirialak, *Sathapattayakam*, 123. During the reign of King Chulalongkorn, this architectural style was still in favour among Siamese elites, see Phowathong, Sirithanawat and Yaimeesak, *Sathapattayakam*, 288-333.

⁸⁶ At the beginning, the Arts and Crafts philosophy in aesthetic value was influenced by John Ruskin's detailed study of ancient buildings in Europe which expressed his admiration for medieval craftsmanship. See Linda Perry and Karen Livingstone, "Introduction: International Arts and Crafts," in *International Arts and Crafts*, ed. Karen Livingstone and Linda Perry (London: V&A Publications, 2005), 14-20.

⁸⁷ Around the same decade in Colonial India, artists joined a nationalist political campaign called 'Swadeshi' (indigenouness) in 1905 in order to restore Indian traditional arts and crafts and free Indian art from Western dominance. Significant figures who advocated Indian craftsmanship were both British and Indian, for example, George Birdwood (who championed Indian traditional arts long before the Swadeshi Movement), Ernest Binfield Havell and Abanindranath Tagore. See Pathar Mitter, *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India: 1850-1922 Occidental Orientation*, Reprinted (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 234-266. See also Saloni Mathur, *India by Design: Colonial History and Cultural Display* (London: University of California Press, 2007), on visual representations of traditional India in Victorian society.

⁸⁸ Phowathong, Sirithanawat and Yaimeesak, *Sathapattayakam*, 102-107.

Nouveau characteristics (Figure 39).⁸⁹ This single-storey building was built between 1902 and 1904 to serve as an audience hall and banquet hall. Occasionally, cabinet meetings were held in this throne hall.⁹⁰ Once the throne hall was officially opened on 16 April 1904, the palace also acted as the ceremonial meeting place of Chulalongkorn's royal government concurrently with the Grand Palace.

Chulalongkorn resumed his preference for elegant Western style architecture at the Amphon Sathan Residential Hall (Figure 40), his second house on the palace grounds. In 1902, he commissioned MPW to construct the residential hall under a supervision of Phra Sathit Nimankan, Director of Public Works Department. On 5 December, Chulalongkorn laid the foundation stone of the building, only nine months after the inauguration of Vimanmek Mansion.⁹¹ C. Sandreczki, the Chief architect of the department, was appointed to design the house for which he drew on the style of Art Nouveau, also known as *Jugendstil* in Germany. The German architect in all probability opted for the style due to his background. However, in the official announcement of the construction, it interestingly stated that Chulalongkorn commissioned this house to be built 'in accordance to his desire.'⁹² Additionally, Sandreczki's previous work, the Boromphiman Residential Hall (formerly known as Phanumart Chamroon Residential Hall, was constructed between 1897-1903) in the Grand Palace, was designed in the French Neo-Renaissance style; thus, the Art Nouveau style of the Amphon Sathan Residential Hall was possibly designed under Chulalongkorn's direction rather than the initial idea of the chief architect. The edifices on the Dusit Palace grounds suggest that Chulalongkorn's inclination towards architectural styles changed from the classical revival style to contemporary art movements in his later years.

The Amphon Sathan Residential Hall proved to be a place where the King could live in a proper European fashion. Cesare Ferro, an Italian painter from Turin was hired

⁸⁹ Prince Naris was well-known for his cultural integrity inspiration for architectural designs. His other designs, such as the ordination hall of Wat Rachathiwas, Bangkok, were inspired by an ancient Cambodian architectural style. As for the Islamic architectural styles, it seems plausible that Prince Naris had seen from mosques in Bangkok. See Manop Issaradetch, *Sathapattayakam Fee Phrahat Somdet Chaofa Kromphraya Narissara Nuwattiwongse (The Oeuvre of Architecture of H.R.H Prince Narisaranuvattivongse)* (MA thesis, Silpakorn University, 1990), 225-228.

⁹⁰ "Kan Chaloem Phrathinang Abhisek Dusit lae Kan Tang Parian" (The Opening Ceremony of Abhisek Dusit Throne Hall and the Award of Graduate of Buddhist Dhamma Ceremony), *RG* 21, 4 (24 April 1904), 46-48.

⁹¹ "Kan Kor Roek Sang Phrathinang Amphon Sathan" (The Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony of Amphon Sathan Residential Hall), *RG* 19, 38 (14 December 1902), 743-744.

⁹² "Prakad Phra Borommaratchaongkan Sang Phrathinang Amphon Sathan sueng Banchu nai Sila Phraroe" (The Royal Announcement on the Construction of Amphon Sathan Residential Hall Inscribed on the Foundation Stone), *RG* 19, 38 (14 December 1902), 744.

to decorate the interior of the house.⁹³ Ferro's work was fresco, in which he blended floral motifs of European style with Siam's characters (Figures 41-42). One of his most outstanding paintings was a scene from Thai literature titled *Phra Suthon and Manora* (Figure 43). The painting depicts a scene where Phran Boon, the hunter, tries to capture Manora, the protagonist of the story who is a kinnari, a half-human and half-bird mythical creature. Apart from fresco by an Italian painter, the interior decoration of Amphon Sathan Residential Hall was also Europeanised with the decoration of paintings, sculptures and furniture Chulalongkorn purchased from Europe (Figure 44).⁹⁴ Nude subject was rather distinctively thematised in the decoration idea for the palace: in fresco, paintings and sculptures.⁹⁵

It is also worth mentioning that the nude was a favourite among elites as well as middle classes in Britain during the nineteenth century. Notable patrons such as the 4th Earl of Darnley commissioned William Etty to paint historical paintings with nude figures during 1825-1826, as well as Queen Victoria and Prince Albert whose summer house, the Osborne House on the Isle of Wight, was reportedly cluttered with nude statues and paintings.⁹⁶ Henceforth, displaying the nudes for Chulalongkorn was, perhaps, another mode of practice drawn from his European counterparts, though half a century late. The nudes in the palace's decoration also mirror another strong characteristic of Art nouveau works which prevalently feature nudity and eroticism.⁹⁷ It is possible that Chulalongkorn might have come upon this style of arts during his visits in continental Europe. The interior decoration then plausibly synchronised with the Art Nouveau architecture of the Amphon Sathan Residential Hall. The residential hall was inaugurated on 22 February 1906.⁹⁸ Chulalongkorn thus moved to the Amphon Sathan Residential Hall and stayed there until his death on 23 October 1910.⁹⁹

⁹³ The young painter from Turin was recommended by Emilio Giovanni Gallo, the Engineer-in-Chief of the Ministry of Public Works through Count Ceppi, a professor at Turin University. Ferro received a three-year contract with a salary of 48 pounds sterling. See NAT, Ministry of Public Works, 40/49.

⁹⁴ Chulalongkorn ordered furniture to be made from furniture stores on Tottenham Court Road in London since 1893. See "The King of Siam's Furniture," *The Sketch* (June 28, 1893), 467.

⁹⁵ See Chapter Two for Chulalongkorn's collection of the nudes.

⁹⁶ Alison Smith, *The Victorian Nude: Sexuality, Morality and Art* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 68-74.

⁹⁷ "Art Nouveau and the Erotic," Victoria and Albert Museum, accessed December 11, 2014, <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/a/art-nouveau-and-the-erotic/>.

⁹⁸ "Kan Chaloem Phraratchamonthon Phrathinang Amphon Sathan" (The Opening Ceremony of Amphon Sathan Residential Hall), *RG* 23, 49 (3 March 1906), 1241-1251.

⁹⁹ Following Chulalongkorn's death, Vimanmek Mansion became a storage place for the Bureau of the Royal Household before it was renovated and converted to a museum in 1982 whereas the Amphon Sathan Residential Hall is now resided in by Thailand's current Crown Prince. The reinstitution of the Vimanmek Mansion as a museum will be discussed further in Chapter Four.

Two residential halls and one throne hall as main establishments of the Dusit Palace were still insufficient for Chulalongkorn to display his royal power which, by then, reached the level of absolutism. The construction of a new throne hall was announced in March 1907. The throne hall was given the name 'Ananta Samakhom' to retain the name of King Mongkut's throne hall in the Grand Palace.¹⁰⁰ It is a two-storey hall with a striking central dome (Figure 45). This throne hall is Italianate in every sense. It was designed in Neo-Italian Renaissance and Neoclassical styles by Italian architects, Tamagno, Ricotti and Ercole Manfredi. Carlo Allegri and Emilio Giovanni Gallo engineered the throne hall which was supervised by Phraya Sukhum Naiwinit (born Pan Sukhum, later Chao Phraya Yommaraj), the minister of Public Works. Carrara marble from a quarry in Northern Italy was among other imported construction materials. The domes and ceilings are covered with paintings by Chini and Rigoli as discussed in Chapter One. The only non-Italian contribution was an unnamed French company which was employed to prepare a site and add a concrete foundation of the throne hall.¹⁰¹

The idea of establishing this grand throne hall was indubitably a celebration of Chulalongkorn's fortieth anniversary of his accession to the throne. The foundation stone laying ceremony was on 11 November 1908, the anniversary of his first coronation, also the day of the opening ceremony of the Equestrian Statue. Spectacles and entertainments were conveyed for over a week in this celebration.¹⁰² This throne hall is unlike any other throne hall that had been built in Siam. From the exterior, the edifice resembles a Christian church with a basilica plan. Although the floor plan is in a shape of a Latin cross with double transepts, the hall is not vertically divided into nave and aisles as in a basilica plan. Rather, it is formed of a single space though functionally sectioned off with screens (Figure 46). These sections lie on a west to east axis: the inner audience chamber, the central throne room and the entrance way (narthex) or reception hall. Each section was built on three different plans.

The inner audience chamber is a four-bay rectangular plan with circular wings and a semicircular end. It connects to the central throne room, the most significant quarter of the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall. A plan of the central throne room echoes its high status; it was built on a Greek cross plan with a tall, large dome on the exterior. This centralised plan interestingly corresponds to Chulalongkorn's centralisation in political regime. The room was decorated with historical scene frescos: the King

¹⁰⁰ "Prakad Krasuang Wang Hai Riak Nam Phrathinang sueng cha Sang Khuen Mai thi Wang Suan Dusit wa Phrathinang Ananta Samakhom" (The New Throne Hall of the Dusit Palace Named Ananta Samakhom), *RG* 24, 49 (8 March 1907), 1321.

¹⁰¹ "Krasae Phra Borommaratcha'ongkan sueng Banchu wai nai Sila Phrarok Phrathinang Ananta Samakhom" (The Royal Announcement Inscription on the Foundation Stone of the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall), *RG* 25, 35 (29 November 1908), 934-937.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 934-937.

Chulalongkorn's abolition of slavery (south semi-dome), the King Vajiravudh's coronation (east tympanum) and the King Yodfa's return from a battle campaign frescoes (north semi-dome).¹⁰³ Moreover, Chulalongkorn's monogram on the ceiling of the central dome (Figure 47) further displays the symbolic meaning in the political context of this throne hall. The eastern end is an oval shape room connecting to the central throne room with a vestibule. The fresco scheme of this room illustrates King Loetla and King Jessadabodindra's religious deeds which echoes the fresco of King Mongkut as an advocate of all religion at the western end. The structure of the exterior and the interior decoration theme of the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall conjointly indicate that this throne hall was carefully designed to mark the royal power of the Chakri Dynasty. For Chulalongkorn, this throne hall was to be the brightest gem of his reign. Finally he would have a complete Western style throne hall in the way that the Chakri Throne Hall should be if his plan succeeded. Unfortunately he did not live to see the completion. The construction of the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall lasted eight years; the building was completed later in 1915.¹⁰⁴

The extension of the Ratchadamnoen Avenue was executed simultaneously with the construction of the Dusit Palace. The construction of Ratchadamnoen Klang Road started in September 1901.¹⁰⁵ By November 1903, Ratchadamnoen Nok Road and Makkawan Rangsang Bridge were completed and opened for public use (Figure 48).¹⁰⁶ They terminate at the Royal Plaza where the great Equestrian Statue was erected. The three-carriageway avenue, lined with rows of trees leading to the Royal Plaza and the grand façade of the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall, together create a magnificent landscape for Chulalongkorn's new Bangkok. Peleggi defines Chulalongkorn's Dusit Palace as a suburban playground as it was built as the new rural retreat for the royal family.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, the initial plan and construction exclusively benefited the royalty. This grand scheme construction, however, was not restricted to royal projects. Roads and bridges were constructed north of the city wall as a consequence of the Dusit Palace. Prior to Chulalongkorn's intensive constructions, Bangkok's urban space and infrastructure were rare. The development of Bangkok

¹⁰³ See Chapter One for the analysis.

¹⁰⁴ Despite its façade of grandeur, the throne hall was never used as the official throne hall to serve the royal purpose. This edifice was not put to use properly, until the Khana Ratsadon had overthrown King Prajadhipok in 1932 and used the throne hall as their headquarters, later as the first National Assembly. See Chapter Four for further discussion on the reutilising of the throne hall.

¹⁰⁵ "Prakad Chad Thi Sang Thanon Ratchadamnoen Klang" (The Construction of Ratchadamnoen Klang Road), *RG* 18, 26 (29 September 1901), 406-410.

¹⁰⁶ "Kan Poed Thanon Ratchadamnoen Nok lae Poed Saphan Makkawan Rangsang" (The Opening Ceremony of Ratchadamnoen Nok Road and Makkawan Rangsang Bridge), *RG* 20, 34 (22 November 1903), 569-570.

¹⁰⁷ Peleggi, *Lords of Things*, 75-77.

significantly extended beyond the area of the Rattanakosin Island, the centre of pre-modern Bangkok. Thus, the construction of the Dusit Palace was not only a relocation of the royal residence, but also a dramatically mapping of new area and transformed Bangkok in response to Chulalongkorn's growing royal power.

Additionally, Chulalongkorn built a new Buddhist Temple to replace an old one which had to be brought down during the construction of the Dusit Palace.¹⁰⁸ This new temple, Wat Benchamabophit, was also built with Carrara marble, hence its epithet, 'the Marble Temple' (Figure 49). It was one of a few temples constructed by his royal commissions. Interestingly, another role of Wat Benchamabophit in public use apart from religious function was being a venue for winter fêtes with a variety of activities including a photographic competition in 1905 which drew Siamese elites, people and foreigners to participate (Figure 50).¹⁰⁹ The cloisters of the ordination hall also house a large collection of old and newly cast Buddha images displayed for the public as discussed in Chapter Two. Edward Soja states that urban planning was critically examined as a tool of the state to serve the dominant classes.¹¹⁰ Siamese aristocrats promoted Europeanised architecture as integral aspects of their westernisation. Bangkok flourishing into a semi-modernised capital effectively signifies how Siamese aristocrats self-fashioned to place themselves within a larger political and socio-cultural continuum, namely the Western expansions over Southeast Asia. Considering that this transformation was established from a secondary knowledge of the West and an experience from the visits to the colonies during the early 1870s, his reforms reflect how Chulalongkorn attempted to civilise his kingdom in a way which was curiously similar to the Western colonialism. Chulalongkorn's appropriation of Western cultures and technology, perhaps, can be seen as a self-colonising process which affected the discussions of socio-cultural debates in post-colonial narrative in later periods.

Chulalongkorn's architectural projects originally benefited Siam's ruling class; nevertheless, they created a larger urban space than before. During the first decade of the twentieth century, the landscape of Bangkok had changed dramatically; jungles and wastelands as seen in the drawings from earlier periods were mostly replaced by public infrastructure, buildings and dwellings (Map 3). A rapid increase in 'modern' constructions instigated population growth in Bangkok, an estimate census figure for

¹⁰⁸ "Kan Thawai Wisoongkhamasima Wat Benchamabophit" (Donating Land to Build Wat Benchamabophit), *RG* 16, 50 (11 March 1899), 694-695.

¹⁰⁹ Sakda Siriphan, *Kasat lae Klong: Wiwatthanakan Kanthaiphap nai Prathet Thai, phor. sor. 2388-2535 (King and Camera: Evolution of Photography in Thailand, 1845-1992)* (Bangkok: Dansuttha Kanphim, 1992), 94-102.

¹¹⁰ Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geography: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London: Verso, 1989), 95.

Bangkok and suburbs in 1909 was 628,675.¹¹¹ Views of Bangkok captured in photographs representing Bangkok as a city of bricks with Europeanised buildings, roads and bridges (Figures 51-52) were circulated more frequently than the image of floating houses by the river as seen in the early nineteenth century drawings by travellers.

3.3 The Art of Emulation in King Chulalongkorn's Westernised Architecture in Resort Towns

The appropriation of Western architecture was not only restricted to Siam's capital, Chulalongkorn brought his Western aspiration to his summer palaces in resort towns: Bang Pa-In District in Ayutthaya Province which lies about 60 kilometres north of Bangkok and Phetchaburi Province which is about 130 kilometres southwest of Bangkok. This section focuses on a study of summer palaces which were built at different points of time; one was built in the early period of Chulalongkorn's reign whereas construction of others began at the end. Pursuing his father's initiative, Chulalongkorn renovated Ayutthaya monarch's former summer palace in Bang Pa-In region of Ayutthaya Province (Figure 53). Bang Pa-In Palace was originally founded by King Prasat Thong of the Ayutthaya Kingdom (reigned from 1629 to 1656). Up until King Mongkut's renovation in the middle of nineteenth century, the site was left vacant and overgrown after the Sack of Ayutthaya in 1767.¹¹² Chulalongkorn ordered a reconstruction of this palace in 1872. The construction of the majority of the buildings occurred at the same time as the construction of westernised buildings in Bangkok and were completed in 1889. Here, several architectural styles coexist in the group of buildings that grew up in Bang Pa-In Palace. It is also divided into the Inner Court and Outer Court, similar to the other royal residences. Most of the buildings were built in Western styles, such as Phrathinang Warophat Phiman, Phrathinang Uthayan Bhumisathian (destroyed and now rebuilt), Sabhakhon Ratchaprayoon Hall and Thevarat Kanlai Gatehouse (Figures 54-57).

The Warophat Phiman, a royal residence and an audience hall, was built on the ruins of Mongkut's residential hall named Phrathinang Aisawan Thippaya-Ard after King Prasat Thong's original palace. Chulalongkorn's Warophat Phiman is the first building to be constructed on the site in 1872. This house is another example of Neo-Italian Renaissance architecture designed by Grassi who remained attached to classical styles for Siam's westernised architecture as seen in his other works in Bangkok. The building was originally two storeys high but in 1886 its structure started

¹¹¹ Larry Sternstein, "Bangkok at the Turn of the Century: Mongkut and Chulalongkorn Entertain the West," *JSS*, LIV, Part 1 (January 1966), 64-70.

¹¹² Prince Damrong, *Tamnan*, 66-67.

to collapse; Chulalongkorn ordered a rebuild which finished in 1889.¹¹³ After the renovation, it was a single-storey house built on a rectangular plan with an imposing portico. Grassi chose a Greek pediment and engaged Corinthian order columns for the portico (Figure 58) which are replicated throughout the building as decoration of doors and windows.

Another interesting structure in Bang Pa-In Palace is the bridge which leads to the Warophat Phiman House. There are eight plaster statues of Greek deities erected on both rails of the bridge (Figure 59). This element peculiarly resembles those of the ten angel statues at the Ponte Sant'Angelo in Rome, Italy (Figure 60). As in most cases, there is no surviving documentation to substantiate a hypothesis as to whether the Bang Pa-In bridge was inspired by this particular ancient bridge in Rome. Nevertheless, the bridge in Bang Pa-In Palace is a vivid evidence of broad inspirations from the West which Siamese elites had remodelled. Similarly, statues of Greek deities indicate Chulalongkorn's preference for classical antiquity in his early years of reign. Florence Caddy, an English writer and traveller who visited Siam in 1888, remarked on Siamese elites' fascination with classical sculptures which she encountered at the Saranrom Palace in Bangkok and Bang Pa-In Palace:¹¹⁴

[...]the Siamese have a taste for classical temples. Several small specimens of these are mingled with the Buddhist national temples, as well as fifth-rate statuary such as abounds in the precincts of the Palace of Calm Delights (Saranrom Palace), Floras, Hebes, and most killingly French Cupids. The young Siamese nobles sent to Europe to study bring back a taste for these classical temples, and for artificial stone statuary purchased in the Euston Road[sic] the palace of Bang Pahin [sic], the king's favourite country-seat[...]; and a little further on the shore to our right (going up) is the Palladian palace of Bang Pahin. [...]a white palace in several separate detachments in Italian Renaissance, the favourite modern style in Siam. A very elegant Siamese wat, constructed chiefly of timber, stands in the centre of piece of water round which the palace is built. It is really a bathing pavilion of very beautiful design, built like a pier on piles or tall posts. Near it is a fine arched stone bridge, with lamps alternating with spread-eagles in Napoleonic French style. In the centre of a grass-plot stands a French statue of a nymph with a lute.

As mentioned earlier, Bang Pa-In Palace displays a coexistence of multiple architectural styles. The Summer Palace also houses a traditional style of Thai prasat at the Aisawan Thipha-Ard, a pavilion constructed in the middle of a pond in commemoration of King Prasat Thong's original palace (Figure 61). Another architectural style is the Chinese architecture of the Wehart Chamroon Residential Hall sponsored by the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Siam and given to Chulalongkorn

¹¹³ Phowathong, Sirithanawat and Yaimeesak, *Sathapattayakam*, 137.

¹¹⁴ Florence Caddy, *To Siam and Malaya in the Duke of Sutherland's yacht 'Sans Peur'* (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1889), 109 and 174-175, accessed November 13, 2012, <http://www.archive.org/details/cu31924084657141>. On a side note, Caddy's mention of the stone sculpture purchased from the Euston Road is plausibly her own speculation, as there is no documentation of this acquisition.

in 1889 (Figure 62). The Chinese-style mansion was an exceptional commission for the royal residences as it was built as a gift to the monarch who had generously supported Chinese trade and their welfare in Siam throughout his reign. Chulalongkorn proclaimed in 1907:

[I]t has always been my policy that the Chinese in Siam should have the same opportunities for labor and profit as are possessed by my own countrymen. I regard them not as foreigners but as component parts of the kingdom and as sharing in its prosperity and advancement.¹¹⁵

The Summer Palace's picturesque landscape of vast gardens, ponds and diverse styles of architecture, as well as the location, only a short way from Bangkok, made Bang Pa-In Palace one of Chulalongkorn's favourite rural retreats. As repeatedly reported in the *RG*, Chulalongkorn frequented this summer palace throughout his reign, courtesy of railway networks which reduced the journey time. The establishment of rail services replaced the royal visits' previous means of transportation, namely a royal barge by which the royal family travelled to this palace. In Europe, trains facilitated leisure travel of the middle class;¹¹⁶ however, in Siam train travel was primarily a privilege reserved for the elites. Bang Pa-In Palace was frequently designated to receive royal guests from abroad. His most notable guests were Nicholas II of Russia (when he was the Tsesarevich) and his cousin, Prince George of Greece (March 1891),¹¹⁷ Count of Turin (Prince Vittorio Emanuele of Savoy-Aosta) (December 1898),¹¹⁸ Grand Duke Boris Vladimirovich of Russia (May 1902)¹¹⁹ and Duke John Albert of Mecklenburg and Duchess Elisabeth (February 1910) (Figure 63).¹²⁰ A fanciful rural retreat at the eclectic summer palace at Bang Pa-In enabled a westernised modes of practice which allowed Chulalongkorn to welcome his European counterparts to witness Siam's achievement of civilisation. It is also possible that his friendship with

¹¹⁵ "Phraratchadamrat Tob Khong Phokha Chine" (The King Addressed to the Chinese Traders), *RG* 24, Special Issue (24 November 1907), 875. English translation by George William Skinner, cited in G. William Skinner, *Chinese Society in Thailand: An Analytical History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1957), 161-162.

¹¹⁶ Carol Breckenridge, "The Aesthetics and Politics of Colonial Collecting: India at World Fairs," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31, 2 (April 1989), 200-201.

¹¹⁷ "Kan Rab His Imperial Highness Grand Duke Tsesarevich Krung Russia" (Reception for His Imperial Highness the Tsesarevich of Russia), *RG* 7, 52 (29 March 1891), 475-481.

¹¹⁸ "Kan Rab His Royal Highness Prince Vittorio Emanuele di Savoia Count of Turin phrachaolanthar Krung Italy" (Reception for His Royal Highness Prince Vittorio Emanuele of Savoy, Count of Turin, the Grandchild of King of Italy), *RG* 15, 38 (18 December 1898), 394-399.

¹¹⁹ "Kan Rab His Imperial Highness Grand Duke Boris Vladimirovich Krung Russia" (Reception for His Imperial Highness Grand Duke Boris Vladimirovich of Russia), *RG* 19, 9 (1 June 1902), 146-147.

¹²⁰ "Kan Rab Duke John Albert Phu Samret Ratchakan Muang Brunswick" (Reception for Duke John Albert of Mecklenburg, Regent of the Duchy of Brunswick), *RG* 26, 0 ngor. (6 March 1910), 2586-2603.

these members of European royalty may have unofficially assisted Chulalongkorn's acquisition for his collection and art commissions.¹²¹

On the small island opposite the summer palace, Chulalongkorn commissioned Grassi to build a Buddhist monastery named Wat Niwet Thammaprawat (Figure 64) in Western style. The construction of this monastery started on 26 January 1877 and the foundation stone laying ceremony was held on 25 May. The monastery was completed and consecrated on 24 February 1879. Unlike any other Buddhist monasteries ever built in Siam, Wat Niwet was constructed in a Neo-Gothic style. Caddy also remarked the architectural style of Wat Niwet as a 'copy of modern Gothic Church' during her visit.¹²² Chulalongkorn's declaration to consecrate this unorthodox architectural style for a Buddhist temple was inscribed on a marble slab attached on the ordination hall's wall:

[...]the King donates his money to fund construction of the monastery of Wat Niwet Thammaprawat. European architect was employed to design the monastery in a Western style. It should be said that the King bears no will to convert to any other religious, but remain a faithful Buddhist. The monastery is meant to be a wonder to be consecrated to Buddhism, as well as a spectacle for Siamese as such style has never been created in other monasteries in Siam.¹²³

It seems plausible that the visit to Singapore in 1871 might have been an inspiration behind Chulalongkorn's rather anomalous idea of constructing a Neo-Gothic Buddhist temple, as while in Singapore the King visited St. Andrew's Cathedral (Figure 65), a Neo-Gothic cathedral designed by Ronald MacPherson.¹²⁴ Chulalongkorn overturned the architectural style of a Christian church for his Buddhist temple. The ordination hall of Wat Niwet shares a similar plan to St. Andrews Cathedral, but in a smaller scale. The building was built on a rectangular plan with the main steeple at the South end. This tower has a miniature brass chedi erected instead of a bell commonly seen in the Gothic bell tower. At the North entrance, the twin pinnacles of the portal contain two bronze statuettes of Buddhist deities (Figure 66). These are typical symbolic decoration found in Buddhist temples. In contrast, Siam's Coat of Arms on the pediment and a stained glass above the entrance depicting a portrait of Chulalongkorn in a traditional royal gown were extremely novel and unconventional in religious architecture (Figure 67). These exceptional decorations, a mirror of the decoration at

¹²¹ It is also likely that gifts were exchanged between Siamese and European royalty. However, there is no surviving record such as correspondence between Chulalongkorn and his royal guests indicating these matters, but in his journal, *Klai Ban*, he occasionally mentioned that they maintained a very good friendship for many years after their visits to Siam.

¹²² Caddy, *To Siam*, 174.

¹²³ *Charuek thi Wat Niwet Thammaprawat (The Inscriptions from Wat Niwet Thammaprawat)* (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 1968), 7-12. See Appendix H for the original text in Thai.

¹²⁴ Jane Beamish and Jane Ferguson, *A History of Singapore Architecture: The Making of a City* (Singapore: Graham Brash, 1989), 48-51.

the Chakri Throne Hall, purposefully displayed the King's proprietorship. They secularised the temple, so its primary purpose was publicity for its westernisation. Mirroring the exterior, the interior of the ordination hall was built and embellished in Neo-Gothic style, including the high altar housing the Buddha image and two disciples (Figure 68). The hammerbeam roof, a timber roof truss typical of English Gothic architecture, interestingly suggests that the construction of Wat Niwet was based on English Gothic architecture and thus made Wat Niwet an anglicised Buddhist temple. Chulalongkorn seemed to be quite partial to this style, as in his another Buddhist royal temple: Wat Ratchabophit, the interior of its ordination hall was decorated in a blend of Neo-Gothic and Siamese styles (Figure 69).

'Architectural diversity' at Bang Pa-In Palace suggests how the Siamese welcomed diverse architectural styles, both imported and domestic. Phra Ram Ratchaniwet Palace (initially known as Ban Puen Villa), a country house in Phetchaburi Province (Figure 70) is another example of such welcome. Abandoning a historic style, such as the Neo-Classical and Neo-Gothic styles seen at Bang Pa-In Palace, Chulalongkorn commissioned Döhring to design this house in a modern style (Art Nouveau) which flourished in Europe around 1900.¹²⁵ Döhring and his German team of engineers and interior designers eventually created a combination between a Baroque and Art Nouveau country house for Chulalongkorn. Döhring might have drawn an inspiration from a contemporary Art Nouveau building in Germany; the exterior of the south dome of the palace (Figure 71) slightly resembles the municipal theatre in Bremerhaven, (Figure 72) designed by Oskar Kaufman, a very famous architect in Germany at that time.¹²⁶ Döhring studied architecture in Berlin and graduated in 1905, at which point Kaufman was active in Berlin. During his years in Berlin, it is possible that Döhring had seen Kaufman's works and was inspired by them.

The interior of the villa contains a vast space decorated with Art Nouveau ironworks, ceramic tiles and figurines and marble floors (Figures 73-74). In general, Art Nouveau characteristics of Phra Ram Ratchaniwet Palace are more pronounced than the Amphon Sathan Residential Hall in Bangkok. This construction was a final commission of Chulalongkorn's royal residences; it was to be his lodging place during the rainy season in September as an alternative to Mongkut's Phra Nakorn Khiri as its location on the hilltop caused some difficulty to visit during the wet season.¹²⁷ Although Phetchaburi Province was a seaside resort, the Palace was built further inland, on the

¹²⁵ "Krasae Phraborommaratcha'ongkan Khien Banchu Sila Phraroeek" (An Inscription of Royal Commission on the Foundation Stone), *RG* 27, 0 ngor. (28 August 1910), 1106.

¹²⁶ Krisana Honguthen, "Karl Dohring and His Architecture in Siam," *MBJ* 25, 1 (January-March 1999) accessed January 1, 2015, <http://www.muangboranjourn.com/modules.php?name=Sections&op=viewarticle&artid=141>.

¹²⁷ Prince Damrong, *Tamnan*, 94-95.

western bank of the Phetchaburi River. The construction began in September 1909 during which only a new road from the railway station to the palace's grounds and a temporary wooden pavilion were completed. The foundation stone was laid on 19 August 1910.¹²⁸ Chulalongkorn died two months after the ceremony, and the villa was eventually completed in 1916. The villa not only indicates a remarkable architectural movement towards modernism echoing its European counterparts, but its location was also very significant as a domestic political symbol. Firstly, it is the ancient custom that the water from the Phetchaburi River, along with other four principal rivers of Thailand, is used in the coronation ceremony;¹²⁹ thus, the province bears symbolic significance to Siam's kingship. Secondly, the province was already connected to the Crown when Mongkut built Phra Nakhon Khiri in 1859. Lastly, Phetchaburi Province was a base of the Bunnag Family's power; its governor around the time of Phra Ram Ratchaniwet's construction was Chaophraya Suraphan Phisut (Thet Bunnag), the father of Chulalongkorn's five mistresses from the Bunnag Family, namely Ohn, Iem, Erb, Aab and Uen.

Drawing on the appropriation of Western architectural styles discussed above, I propose in this conclusion to address some key issues in Chulalongkorn's architectural projects. In order to resist colonial power from the West, Siam adopted Western colonial discourse as an inevitable force through ideological constructs of alliance, identity and philanthropic reforms or modernisation.¹³⁰ Mark Crinson argues that architecture in any colony played its role as both a functional material object and a representation.¹³¹ Although Siam was not a colony, Chulalongkorn's architecture played a similar role. Many buildings in Bangkok and other provinces were constructed to house new ministerial offices and public infrastructure; at the same time, their architectural styles were designed to promote Siam as a civilised and modern country. Chulalongkorn's educational background with British tutors and his state visits to British colonies affected the way in which the King fashioned his capital city. During the early period of his reign, political and public architecture was built in classical revival styles similar to his Victorian contemporaries. Siam's new centralised bureaucratic administration effectively and promptly promoted Bangkok as a political and ceremonial centre of the Kingdom. Siamese institutions and practices were refashioned within

¹²⁸ "Kan Kor Roek Phra Tamnak Ban Puen" (The Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony of Phra Tamnak Ban Puen), *RG* 27, 0 ngor. (28 August 1910), 1103-1105.

¹²⁹ Horace Geoffrey Quaritch Wales, *Siamese State Ceremonies: Their History and Function* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1931), 74.

¹³⁰ Conversely, such appropriation could be seen as a process of an internal colonialism within Siam in which Bangkok was a centre of power and social development whereas the rest of the country was subordinated to the capital city.

¹³¹ Mark Crinson, *Empire Building: Orientalism and Victorian Architecture* (London: Routledge, 1996), 229.

Western ideology frameworks concurrently with the reinstatement and invention of royal ceremonies which were required to reaffirm the hierarchy of Chakri kings.

In addition to the westernised architecture, spectacles of a royal procession conducted several times during Chulalongkorn's reign also played an important role in a modernising Bangkok scheme.¹³² The performance of royal processions in the celebrations of Chulalongkorn's return from Europe together with traditional state rituals, such as coronations, cremations and the First Ploughing ceremony,¹³³ empowered Bangkok to be, to borrow Clifford Geertz's term, a 'theatre state.'¹³⁴ Geertz's Balinese study in *Negara* provides a useful framework for examining Siam's state rituals and ceremonies as a political statement. Both Bangkok and Bali shared the same Indic/Hindu influenced background before the intervention from the West. Their similarity also lies in the name, Bali's *Negara* and Bangkok's official name, 'Krunghthep Mahanakhon.' *Negara* and *nakhon* are a Sanskrit loanword, *nāgara* which means town or city: a centre of high culture and politics.¹³⁵ Ceremonies and rituals conducted in both cities were the symbology of power. They were an extravagant performance as much as a form of rhetoric as Geertz points out: 'kingship was what power was; and what power was, was what kings were.'¹³⁶ Spectacle existed in nineteenth century Bangkok; however, unlike in *Negara*, it did not exclusively organise power manifestation. It cooperated with westernised architecture which 'acted' as a theatre stage for the spectacles in order to impress both natives and foreigners.

On adopting an architectural style, Aasen suggests that adopting occurs as strategically selective appropriation by which architecture's role in culture is turned into the subject of policy-making by government agencies and powerful elites.¹³⁷ To build was to create meaning;¹³⁸ Chulalongkorn's appropriation of the grandeur of Neo-Palladian and Neoclassical architecture to be built between the 1870s and 1890s manifests aspirations of Siamese elites for civilisation. These classical styles which reigned supreme in the Western world for many centuries were favourite styles chosen for public architecture in Europe, especially but not exclusively in Britain, as well as the

¹³² See further discussion in Chapter Four.

¹³³ This Brahmanic ceremony is essentially conducted to bless the rice field, marking the growing season. It takes place in the sixth month of the Thai lunar calendar (May).

¹³⁴ Geertz studies the cremation ceremony in the nineteenth-century Bali and he argues that Balinese state ceremonies were what the state was, hence the term, theatre state. See Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1980). 13-17 and 104-105.

¹³⁵ Geertz, *Negara*, 4.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 124.

¹³⁷ Aasen, *Architecture of Siam*, 243.

¹³⁸ Crinson, *Empire Building*, 9

United States.¹³⁹ Such emulation coincided with Chulalongkorn's state visits to the colonies of the West and the Western expansions which dangerously breathed down Siam's neck during the first years of his reign.

Chulalongkorn's architectural projects also created more public spaces and transformed architecture into an attractive visual phenomenon as described in an article in *the Siam Repository* and in Caddy's account. New architecture was often presented to foreign visitors, as to petition for a cultural recognition. Interestingly, the grandeur style of classical architecture lessened gradually in Chulalongkorn's architectural projects during the last few decades of his reign. Although foreshadowed by the classical-revival Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall, the majority of Chulalongkorn's architecture built at the turn of the century manifests a quasi-contemporary style related to art movements in Europe. The shift in aesthetic ideology at the early twentieth century plausibly gave rise to a modern period of Thai art which was firmly established around the 1930s.

Chulalongkorn's architecture is the reflection of a transitioned period, an embodiment of transculturation and evidence of changes in socio-cultural and political aspects. It varied from Siamese Traditional style, Neo-Palladian, Neoclassicism, Italian Renaissance, Neo-Gothic to Art Nouveau. Siamese appropriation of Western architecture spread from the capital to the rest of the kingdom, either as royal residences or administrative buildings or infrastructure. Imitation was what Siamese elites deployed to achieve progress and civilisation which shaped a paradoxical notion of Thainess. Although the pressure of Western Imperialism did not politically eclipse Siamese hegemony, it put massive pressure on Siamese elites to make an adjustment to the new regime led by the West. Western expansionism is considered an early form of globalisation which transmits flows of information and knowledge from the West. Following Henri Lefebvre's concept of space as concrete abstraction, under an influx of information, 'space is transformed into abstract space; in architecture, abstraction allows anything to be built anywhere in any style or combination of styles.'¹⁴⁰ In the case of Chulalongkorn's Western architecture appropriation, it occurred amidst a colonial encounter between the West and the East. Thus, in becoming a 'civil society' by means of westernisation, Siam's adoption of the Western models would immediately be examined under the colonial gaze.

¹³⁹ Roger Dixon and Stefan Muthesius, *Victorian Architecture*, Reprinted 1983 (London: Thames and Hudson, 1993), 17.

¹⁴⁰ Evers and Korff, *Southeast Asian Urbanism*, 11-12. Also see Lukasz Stanek, "Space as Concrete Abstraction: Hegel, Marx, and Modern Urbanism in Henri Lefebvre," in *Space, Difference, Everyday Life: Henri Lefebvre and Radical Politics*, ed. Kanishka Goonewardena et al., (London: Routledge, 2008), 69-76.

In recent decades, Thai and non-Thai scholars have been broaching the concept of colonial power in a Thai context.¹⁴¹ Siam's Western-derived modernity induced a state of paradox and ambiguity which Herzfeld called crypto-colonialism, a condition in which 'the very claim of independence marks a symbolic as well as material dependence on intrusive colonial power.'¹⁴² Chulalongkorn's architecture was, in a way, a camouflage within a colonial aesthetics of world-dominating cultures: a 'self-colonisation' as termed by Peter A. Jackson.¹⁴³ In the crypto-colonial narrative, Herzfeld states that crypto-colonies place great emphasis on their political independence and cultural integrity and manifest signs of a sense of almost aggressive national pride. In which case, the Rattanakosin Island Restoration project (originated from the mega-plan to celebrate Bangkok's Bicentennial in 1982) demonstrates the concept of crypto-colonialism.¹⁴⁴ Rattanakosin Island is a symbol of pride in national history epitomised by the magnificence of the royal temples and the Grand Palace, symbolising Thailand's success in development and modernisation.¹⁴⁵

In 1976, the Bangkok Metropolis Administration (BMA) launched a master plan to restore and reconstruct historical buildings on the Rattanakosin Island.¹⁴⁶ Chulalongkorn's architecture, along with other royal and religious architecture, was selected for a project of restoring and enhancing the old dynastic city on Rattanakosin Island. Here, Chulalongkorn's westernisation scheme was chosen to represent a Thai quintessence, which Herzfeld comments as highly suggestive in order to present order and civilisation.¹⁴⁷ Following Gramsci's definition of hegemony, Herzfeld remarks that this selective representation of Thailand's national heritage threatens the vernacular architecture of several communities on Rattanakosin Island.¹⁴⁸ He further critiques that this representation of the rhetorics of Thainess and national culture in any postcolonial society would be easily recognised as a remnant of, in Bhabha's word, 'colonial mimicry' albeit its vaunted independence from Western imperialism.¹⁴⁹ BMA's restoration and conservation project selected architecture strongly tied to Thai official

¹⁴¹ See Peter A. Jackson, "The Ambiguities of Semicolonial Power in Thailand," in *The Ambiguous Allure*, 39-46.

¹⁴² Herzfeld, "The Conceptual Allure," 173.

¹⁴³ Peter A. Jackson, "Afterword: Postcolonial Theories and Thai Semicolonial Hybridities," in *The Ambiguous Allure*, 188.

¹⁴⁴ See Herzfeld, "The Conceptual Allure," 180-186; Herzfeld, "The Crypto-Colonial Dilemmas of Rattanakosin Island," in *Protecting Siam's Heritage*, ed. Chris Baker (Bangkok: Siam Society, 2013), 209-221.

¹⁴⁵ Evers and Korff, *Southeast Asian Urbanism*, 5-6.

¹⁴⁶ NAT, *Chotmaihet Kan Anurak Krung Rattanakosin (The Archives of the Restoration of the Rattanakosin Island)* (Bangkok: FAD, 1982), 647-649.

¹⁴⁷ Herzfeld, "The Conceptual Allure," 180.

¹⁴⁸ Herzfeld, "The Absent Presence," 900-903.

¹⁴⁹ Herzfeld, "The Crypto-Colonial," 214-215.

history rather than its cultural history.¹⁵⁰ In the case of Chulalongkorn's westernised architecture, the buildings serve as a commemoration of Siam's triumph over the Western imperialism in the nineteenth century. Thus they are 'rightfully' privileged in the BMA's project although their architectural styles are 'non-Thai.' Herzfeld's study of the Rattanakosin Island project identifies one of many dilemmas in which the Thai nation has been left to live in paradoxical and ambiguous conditions of crypto-colonialism, an inevitable impact from the nineteenth century westernisation. The way in which Chulalongkorn's westernised architecture is treated in this mega restoration project exemplifies this ambiguity: to be civilised or not to be (self)colonised. Either way, Chulalongkorn and his westernised architecture are celebrated for their success in contributing to Thailand's achievement of modernity even though such imitation is in strong contrast with proud independence and 'authentic Thai' characteristics.

¹⁵⁰ See detailed discussion on BMA's project in Chartri Prakitnonthakan, "Rattanakosin Charter: The Thai Cultural Charter for Conservation," in *Protecting Siam's Heritage*, 123-148.

CHAPTER FOUR

REMEMBERING 'THE GREAT BELOVED KING': IMAGES OF KING CHULALONGKORN THROUGH THE EYES OF THE PUBLIC

It's very beautiful, Kul. It's a very beautiful land to me. Though it looks uncivilised and they are called barbarians, they've kept fighting. They've never abandoned their homeland. What matters is that, 'they' mean 'we.' 'We' (who) always forget how we went through it[...] I went back to see them with my own eyes and with my own heart.

Maneechan, *Thawiphob (The Siam Renaissance)* (2004)¹

This chapter aims to explore memorialisation of King Chulalongkorn, both in retrospective view and contemporary impression. To explore the Thai public's perception of the King, the chapter opens with a memorialisation in popular culture, namely the 1986 novel titled *Thawiphob* as an introduction to the chapter. This historical novel is analysed in relation to the official narrative of Thai History, particularly in the reign of Chulalongkorn. Following this line of study, the chapter then investigates how Chulalongkorn represented himself in public and how visual representation of the King in the public eye, together with the official history, affect the way in which the Thai public has been memorialising the King. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section discusses the way in which Chulalongkorn presented his image and his royal person in the public sphere during his reign through various media, namely, coinage, postage stamps and processions in royal ceremonies. As his portrait paintings by European artists, which are studied in Chapter One reflect only his domestic life, Chulalongkorn needed to present his image to the Siamese public as well. The iconography of his images, as well as the circulation, is analysed in order to interpret its effects on the public's perception. Chulalongkorn's method in circulating his image shared similar processes and purposes to those of colonialism; this was comparable to his grand modernisation scheme.

The second section focuses on Thais' collective memory of Chulalongkorn in recent exhibitions in Bangkok which display the glorification of Chulalongkorn in the narrative of Thai official history. Following this line of study, this section analyses a current conflict between the royalists and the anti-royalists to which the spaces established by Chulalongkorn, especially the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall, the

¹ Arporn Pinijkhar and Uncle, *Thawipob (The Siam Renaissance)*, DVD, Directed by Surapong Pinijkhar (Bangkok: Tai Entertainment, 2001), 1:13:50. The film was adapted from Thommayanti's 1987 novel of the same title *Thawiphob*, literally means 'the two worlds.' Pinijkhar's 2004 version is the second film adaptation of the novel and released internationally as *The Siam Renaissance*. *Thawiphob* was first adapted as a film in 1990, and has since been adapted into a television drama (1994, 2011) and a musical (2005, 2011). See Appendix H for the original text in Thai.

Royal Plaza and Ratchadamnoen Avenue are used in political demonstrations. It should be noted that the same area is also used in royal ceremonies. Furthermore, Queen Sirikit, the queen consort of the current monarch, also plays a crucial role in refashioning Thai monarchy. The analysis includes her royal patronage in exhibitions held in Chulalongkorn's buildings such as the Vimanmek Mansion Exhibition (VME), the Arts of the Kingdom Exhibition (AKE) and the Queen Sirikit Museum of Textiles (QSMT). Queen Sirikit's establishment of royalist museums and exhibitions also interestingly takes part in conducting and promoting Thai national identity. As Thais have been deeply concerned with defining some sort of collective national essence, thus, the museum objects, namely traditional Thai arts and handicrafts and national dress, have been used in her campaigns. The study of QSMT also aims to explore its function in the politics of appearance in which dress intersects with politics in order to explain how national dress has been fashioned and refashioned and which body of citizens it claims to represent.

INTRODUCTION

Historian Asa Briggs questioned Margaret Thatcher's proclamation of Victorian values during her broadcast interview in April 1983, in which Thatcher recalled moralities in the Victorian era which characterised the period as a 'good nineteenth century,' contrasted with a 'bad' twentieth century. Briggs indicates that Thatcher's statement focused only on specific examples that illustrated her appraisal of Victorian values, noticeably for political purpose. Furthermore, Briggs suggests that Thatcher drew a parallel between the Victorian era and the twentieth century that she sought to put back in a proper direction. He argues: 'History is being used, not explained.'² Coincidentally, a trace of nostalgia for a 'better past' was also found in another part of the world at nearly the same time that Thatcher gave her interview. In 1986, the novel titled *Thawiphob* by Thommayanti (a pen name of Wimon Chiamcharoen) was published.³ The story is set in the late 1980s and focuses on Maneechan, an overseas-educated woman who time-travels to Chulalongkorn-era Siam, precisely in 1893; the year that

² Asa Briggs, "Victorian Values," in *In Search of Victorian Values: Aspect of Nineteenth-Century Thought and Society*, ed, Eric M. Sigsworth (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 10-12.

³ Wimon Chiamcharoen (née Siriphaibun) is a Thai novelist, widely known as Thommayanti, one of her many pen names. *Thawiphob* is very popular and successful; after appearing monthly as a magazine serial in *Sakun Thai* magazine, it was compiled and released as a two-volume novel. Many of her works grant her a recognition as a veteran nationalist novelist. Her well-known works include *Rom Chatra* and *Khu Kam*. Her successful writing career earned her the title of National Artist in Literature (Novel) by the Office of the National Culture Commission of Thailand in 2012. See Department of Cultural Promotion, "Kan Prakat Kiettikun Khunying Wimon Siriphaibun" (Honorary Certificate of Khunying Wimon Siriphaibun), accessed January 11, 2013, <http://www.culture.go.th/subculture8/attachments/article/260/vimol.pdf>.

the confrontation between Siam and the French Third Republic boiled over into the Franco-Siamese War.⁴ It should be noted that the way in which the author specifically designates Maneechan's time travel at the eve of the incident attests to Thais' wounds of history, of losing territories and granting extraterritoriality to France as the resulted of the conflict.⁵

The author portrays her protagonist as a 'modern' young woman with a westernised upbringing and educational background who paid no interest in the history of her motherland. However, her time travel changed her attitude to Thai history. Maneechan's character arc was carefully developed to arouse a sense of nationalism and oppose the Western influences through globalisation in the 1980s. Her viewpoint was becoming increasingly nationalist; Maneechan manifested her anger while reading a correspondence between the British and French governments on the borders of their Southeast Asian colonies and Siam:

[...]When two powerful countries 'make an agreement,' they seem to ignore how Siam would 'feel'[...] The flickering flames from a lantern causes her eyes to become sore but this cannot be compared to an ache in her heart[...] **Resolved to cede the territory to Siam**' is nothing but stripping Siam of its territory!⁶

Nationalism in *Thawiphob* ties closely to royalist ideology, especially on the matter of maintaining Siam's independence. The character of King Chulalongkorn made no appearance in the story. However, it is his portrait that was significantly featured in one particular scene in which Maneechan was reading a historical account on the Franco-Siamese War. The royal portrait was placed in her household shrine which she looked upon while reading. Maneechan remarked the outcome of the crisis which resulted in Siam maintaining her independence with an exclamation: 'A divine grace of His Majesty!'⁷ It is only a short phrase but powerful in a way that explained the King's manoeuvre on the crisis. Not only does this scene relate nationalism to royalist

⁴ Thommayanti, *Thawiphob Lem 1 (The Two Worlds Volume 1)*, Third edition (Bangkok: Na Baanwannagum, 2008), 248.

⁵ Losing territories to the West (i.e. the British Empire and France) is one of, if not, the most severe wounds of history for many Thais. The most recent incident that clearly reflects this melancholia is the dispute with Cambodia over the area surrounding Preah Vihear temple which has been the centre of a border dispute since 1958. The Thailand-Cambodia temple dispute led to a 1962 ruling at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which awarded the Preah Vihear temple to Cambodia but did not rule on the border line around it. The case was reopened in 2011 after Preah Vihear temple was listed as a UNESCO world heritage site in 2008, reigniting the dispute over the surrounding area. On 11 November 2013 ICJ ruled that the natural promontory bearing the temple is Cambodian but not the 4.6 square kilometre, the areas that were the source of the recent conflict. See "ICJ backs Cambodia's Claim to Preah Vihear Temple Promontory," *Bangkok Post*, November 11, 2013, accessed November 11, 2013, <http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/security/379288/icj-backs-cambodia-claim-to-preah-vihear-temple-promontory>.

⁶ Thommayanti, *Thawiphob Lem 2 (The Two Worlds Volume 1)*, Third Edition (Bangkok: Na Baanwannagum, 2008), 596-597. See the original texts in Thai of all quotations from the novel in Appendix H.

⁷ Thommayanti, *Thawiphob Lem 2*, 372.

ideology, but it also emphasises on how royal portrait plays a crucial role in this narrative.⁸

It could be said that Thai history in the reign of King Chulalongkorn has been romanticised in order to accentuate his obligation to the country, especially the Paknam Incident of 1893. However, this conflict leads to a contradictory memory for Thais; on the one hand, it resulted in the loss of territory to France and, on the other hand, Siam still maintained its independence. Thommayanti's novel memorialises this dispute between Siam and France, as well as embodying Thais' patriotism and nationalism which has arisen from the outcome of the crisis. Memorialisation of the Franco-Siamese War in *Thawiphob* shares similarities with Thatcher's proclamation of Victorian values 'You were taught tremendous pride in your country.'⁹ Likewise, Thais are taught to be extremely proud of their independence and that Siam remained independent because of Chulalongkorn's royal grace,¹⁰ as illustrated by Maneechan's patriotic lines:

We were not dominated by the French or the British. We will get through this threat, we will be better than Burma, Laos and Cambodia. It is a traumatic experience but we will keep our independence[...] I am very proud in all of our Siam's history with no rebuke, no argument. [...] **Our independence is worth more than anything else.**¹¹

Despite the fact that Chulalongkorn's reign witnessed the perils of colonialism, the loss of extraterritoriality and some parts of suzerainty, this period is still memorialised as the golden era in Thai history. *Thawiphob* is also hugely motivated by such nostalgic impulse with Maneechan as a representative of Thais who yearn for a golden era in their history. *Thawiphob*'s golden era is represented with the age of tranquility, prosperity and virtuousness through the eyes of the young woman from the late twentieth century like Maneechan: 'Strangely enough, I used to think that the old world was slow, sluggish and uncivilised. Now I think it is so peaceful and beautiful.'¹² In the 2004 *Thawiphob* film adaptation, Maneechan's admiration towards Thailand's

⁸ It should also be noted the way in which Chulalongkorn's portrait is treated as an object of worship is the practice of the cult of King Chulalongkorn. For further study and arguments regarding the cult see Nidhi Eoseewong, "Latthi Phiti Sadet Pho ror. 5" (The Cult of King Rama the Fifth) *SW* 14, 10 (August, 1993), 77-98; Irene Stengs, *Worshipping the Great Moderniser: King Chulalongkorn, Patron Saint of the Thai Middle Class* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009).

⁹ Briggs, "Victorian Values," 10.

¹⁰ Benedict Anderson, "Studies of the Thai State: The State of Thai Studies," in *The Study of Thailand: Analyses of Knowledge, Approaches and Prospect in Anthropology, Art History, Economics, History, and Political Science*, ed. Eliezer B. Ayal (Athens, OH: Ohio University Center for International Studies, Southeast Asia Program, 1978), 198.

¹¹ Thommayanti, *Thawiphob Lem 2*, 652.

¹² *Ibid.*, 461-462.

golden age remains intact.¹³ Her statement: 'I went back to see them with my own eyes, and with my own heart' compellingly represents Maneechan as 'essentially Thai' at heart,¹⁴ in contrast to her westernised background. This strongly indicates a concern of the national self in twenty-first century Thailand.¹⁵ The original and adaptation versions of *Thawiphob*, collectively project a demand for Thai conservatism against westernisation as their major thematic concern.¹⁶

Nostalgia for Chulalongkorn's golden era, as indicated in *Thawiphob*, embodies a collective memory of Thai history in the late nineteenth century wherein Thai culture had confronted an interference from the West. Due to globalisation during the 1980s and 1990s, Thais were facing rapid development as well. Craig J. Reynolds indicates that with globalisation, especially in the colonial and post-colonial periods, comes anxiety about the survival prospects of indigenous cultures. Such anxiety is an instinctive worry about the authenticity of self, culture, community and nation.¹⁷ Svetlana Boym also suggests that globalisation encourages stronger local attachments. It generates an affective yearning for a community with a collective memory, a longing for continuity in a fragmented world. Her study on nostalgia reveals that nostalgic longing is about the future as much as the past; it can be both retrospective and prospective.¹⁸ In this case, when late twentieth-century Thais were forced to contend with globalisation, it tricked their memory and took them back to globalisation in the past. The longing for a cultural identity or 'authentic Thai' (Thai Thae) is the object of nostalgia in *Thawiphob* and, to a greater extent, in a modern Thai society.¹⁹

Such nostalgia is convolutedly connected to the loss of territory in the reign of Chulalongkorn which consequently prevented Siam from a potential loss of its national

¹³ See the excerpt from Maneechan's dialogue with her friend Kul at the beginning of this chapter.

¹⁴ Rachel V. Harrison, "Mind the Gap: (En)countering the West and the Making of Thai Identities on Film" in *The Ambiguous Allure of the West: Traces of the Colonial in Thailand*, ed. Rachel V. Harrison and Peter A. Jackson (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010), 116-117.

¹⁵ Harrison, "Mind the Gap," 114.

¹⁶ However, Thommayanti significantly ignored the fact that Thailand was already introduced to the westernised modes of practice as early as the beginning of the Fifth Reign.

¹⁷ Craig J. Reynolds, "Globalization and Cultural Nationalism in Modern Thailand," in *Southeast Asian Identities: Culture and the Politics of Representation in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand*, ed. Joel S. Kahn (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1998), 119-120.

¹⁸ Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), XIV-XVI.

¹⁹ See the discussion of the concept of the authentic Thai and the synthetic Thai in Craig J. Reynolds, "Thai Identity in the Age of Globalization," in *National Identity and its Defenders: Thailand Today*, ed. Craig J. Reynolds (Chiang Mai: Silkwormbooks, 2002), 311-316.

autonomy and identity to Western colonialism.²⁰ Significantly, the memorialisation of this particular historical event emphasises Chulalongkorn's leadership. A monument of King Chulalongkorn at the Phra Chulachomklao Fortress in Samut Prakan Province exemplifies the royalist narrative of Thai official history focusing on this collective memory. The monument was established in 1993 to commemorate the battle of 1893 during the Franco-Siamese War. More importantly, the fortress has also become a monument and had been memorialised as having a key role in protecting the country's sovereignty. The remembrance of the Franco-Siamese War prominently centres around Chulalongkorn; rarely are the dead individuals mentioned in the history or at the monument. The memory of the event has been shifted from the defeat to the securing of sovereignty by the symbolisation of the King's monument. Therefore it does not function as war memorial.

How Thais remember Chulalongkorn is, in fact, a product of Prince Damrong's critical accounts on the fifth Chakri monarch. His construction of the representation of Thai monarchy is so effective that the influence of Thai collective memory of Chulalongkorn often surfaces in present day society. The conception of 'Phra Piya Maharat/the Great Beloved King' was first created in 1908 by Prince Damrong. The term was inscribed on the bronze plaque at the plinth of the Equestrian Statue: '[W]ith his benevolence, he is the father of the people. His kingdom has flourished immensely, his people are blessed with greater welfare than ever. Therefore he is the Great Beloved King, a highly esteemed monarch of the people.'²¹ The Equestrian Statue which was funded by the public's donation, together with the inscription, contributed to the grand scheme of Prince Damrong's conceptualisation of the Great Beloved King honorific. The Equestrian Statue serves as a symbolic monument of the public's idolisation of Chulalongkorn. By promoting the King's modernisation project in terms of contribution to society and public welfare, a formidable, rigid and unapproachable image of a sacred king was replaced by a caring, merciful and beloved monarch.²²

²⁰ Boym suggests a distinction between two kinds of nostalgia which she calls 'restorative' and 'reflective nostalgia.' Restorative nostalgia puts emphasis on *nostos* and proposes to rebuild the lost home and patch up the memory gap. Reflective nostalgia dwells on *algia*, in longing and loss, the imperfect process of remembrance. On the connection between nostalgia and loss, Boym follows Freud's account of mourning which is connected to the loss of a loved one or the loss of some abstraction (a homeland or liberty). She also states that reflective nostalgia is 'a form of deep mourning that performs a labour of grief both through pondering pain and through play that points to the future.' See Boym, *The Future*, 41-55.

²¹ "Kam Charuek thi Praditsathan Phra Boromrup" (The Equestrian Statue Inscription), *RG* 25, 35 (23 November, 1908), 944-945. See Appendix H for the quotation's original text in Thai. See also a full English translation of the inscription published in the *Bangkok Times* in Appendix D; however, its version of translation omitted to translate the keyword of 'the Great Beloved King.'

²² Saichon Sattayanurak, *Somdet Kromphraya Damrong Rachanubhap: Kan Sang Attalak "Muang Thai" lae "Chan" Khong Chaw Siam (Prince Damrong Rachanubhap: The Construction of the Identity of the Nation and Classes of Siamese)* (Bangkok: Matichon, 2003), 142-175.

The Royal Plaza with the Equestrian Statue and the Chulachomklao Fortress with the King Chulalongkorn's monument have become a site where a memory was reconstituted and a history was mythicised. Borrowing Pierre Nora's concept of the 'sites of memory' (*les lieux de mémoire*), the materialisation of memory was created deliberately, in this case, the King's monuments which play a critical role as a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of community. Nora further proposes that sites of memory also provide a sense of social cohesion and identity, a similarity the site shares with Chulalongkorn's commemoration as mentioned earlier.²³ The narrative of memory of the King is anchored to these space; commemorative function and symbolic meaning of the space crystallise the social imaginary of Chulalongkorn as the Moderniser, the Civiliser and the Great Beloved King. However, it is also possible to question whether this memory work itself establishes a form of forgetting. A repetition of this narrative in a mass media engenders political loyalty to Chulalongkorn, as well as providing an exaltation to the divine rank of sacred king. Conversely, a historical narrative of Chulalongkorn's reign reflects an interaction between remembering and forgetting. For instance, in an account of liberty, while Chulalongkorn was praised for his abolition of slavery, an authoritarianism in his reign was conveniently disregarded.

In Chapter One, I discussed portraiture, one of Chulalongkorn's Western aspirations which was commissioned to represent himself as a modern Siamese monarch. Almost a century later, his portrait played an important role in a nation-wide personality. Royal portraits have been turned into commodity; photographic materials held at the National Archives of Thailand have been reproduced to supply the needs of the public. Chulalongkorn's images had been reproduced in various forms such as posters, statuettes and lockets.²⁴ However, the practice of idolising Chulalongkorn's images as sacred portraits has already existed since the time when the King was still alive. Prince Damrong's journal of his travel in which he accompanied the King to rural areas in 1904 states that Chulalongkorn's portrait was worshipped similarly to a religious object. During their travel within the country, when the King and his entourage were guests of the locals, several residences had Chulalongkorn's portraits to adorn their walls in a similar fashion to the Buddha images in a household shrine.²⁵ It could be said that how the Siamese had adopted the worshipping of the King's portrait was motivated by Chulalongkorn's own keenness in representing his royal person through various media which was circulated in public, such as his studio portrait photograph,

²³ Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," trans. Marc Roudebush, *Representations* 26, (Spring, 1989), 12. Also See Anne Whitehead, *Memory* (Oxford: Routledge, 2009), 130-147.

²⁴ Stengs, *Worshipping*, 80-84 and 87-98.

²⁵ Prince Damrong, *Chotmai het Rueng Praphatton nai Ratchakan thi 5 (Sadet Praphatton) (A journal on King Chulalongkorn's Visits to the Country)* (Bangkok: Phrae Phittaya, 1976), 5-7, 15 and 40.

his profile on coinage and postage stamps and royal pageants, all of which were his Western aspiration. Chulalongkorn's westernised mode of practice of using portraiture ultimately had a critical impact on his memorialisation and commemoration which is investigated in the first section of this chapter.

4.1 Parade of King Chulalongkorn's Public Images and Royal Body

Chulalongkorn had invented many customs and practices for the modern monarchy especially a representation of a royal image in the public sphere. Presenting the royal body of a Siamese monarch in public was initially introduced by King Mongkut, who had his portrait photograph printed in foreign periodicals. He also granted his subjects permission to gaze upon him during royal processions.²⁶ Chulalongkorn's awareness of the value of public image which led him to commission his extensive portraits in various media and organise many royal ceremonies. In all possibility, they played an important role in contributing to the rise of his absolutism. His public images helped in the recognition of his sovereignty, the unity of monarch and nation, and more importantly it demystified Siamese monarchy whose essence of kingship arose from Hindu and Buddhist philosophy. Chulalongkorn's exploitation of portraiture strategically brought modern and secular aspects into Siamese kingship, meanwhile diminishing an image of the severe and distant semi-divine king. As a moderniser, Chulalongkorn adopted a mode of practice in representing the royal body from the West in public in the form of coinage and postage stamp portraiture, as well as a royal ceremonial procession.

4.1.1 Coinage and Postage Stamp Portraiture: The Circulation of Chulalongkorn's Public Image

The finest example of Chulalongkorn's public image is the Equestrian Statue at the Royal Plaza. Not only was the opening ceremony of the statue in 1908 very sumptuous, Chulalongkorn also issued a special postage stamp and medallions depicting the Equestrian Statue to commemorate his Fortieth Anniversary of Accession. These will be explored shortly. However, before Chulalongkorn's public images reached its zenith with the Equestrian Statue, he initiated a representation of his public image in coinage and postage stamp portraiture earlier in his reign. This adoption of a westernised mode of practice marked him as the first king of Thailand who had his portrait minted on coins and printed on stamps. Coinage and stamp portraits gave Siamese wider access to their sovereign's visual images than portrait paintings hung in the palaces, as they were circulated on a national scale.

²⁶ Horace Geoffrey Quaritch Wales, *Siamese State Ceremonies: Their History and Function* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1931), 34-35.

Before Chulalongkorn issued coinage which bore his profile, the visual representation of Siamese monarchs on coins was only their privy seal along with the emblem of Siam, a white elephant in the circle of *chakra* (disc) (Figure 1).²⁷ Chulalongkorn's earliest coins (1868-1875) still followed the same tradition of depicting his privy seal and the White elephant-Chakra emblem. Chulalongkorn's privy seal depicted phra kiao (a coronet)²⁸ on the high pedestal tray sided by two chatras (tiered umbrella) on either side (Figure 2). It was in 1876 that Chulalongkorn issued a series of coins depicting his profile minted by the imported machine from Birmingham.²⁹ On the obverse shows the profile of a young King in his early twenties circled by an inscription of his full regnal name: Somdet Phra Poraminthra Maha Chulalongkorn Phra Chunla Chom Klao Chaoyuhua, the reverse depicts Siam's Coat of Arms which was created three years earlier (Figures 3-4).³⁰ The European inspired Coat of Arms shared most elements of a European Coat of Arms, but the components of the emblem are traditional Siamese royal symbols, namely the Royal Regalia, together with the mythical beasts: Gajasimha (a lion with an elephant's trunk) and Rajasimha (a lion). The shield is divided into three quadrants. The first quadrant depicts the Airavata (a three-headed white elephant vehicle of Hindu god Indra) on a yellow field, representing the heartland of Siam (northern, central and southern regions). The lower left quadrant shows a white elephant on a red field, symbolising the Laotian suzerainty (the Kingdom of Lan Xang which represents Vientiane in particular). Lastly, the lower right quadrant depicts the crossing daggers or krises, a representation of the Malay suzerainty in the South.³¹

This coin series shows a strong European influence, namely the monarch's profile and the Coat of Arms, in the early years of Chulalongkorn's reign. At the age of twenty-three: three years after his second coronation, Chulalongkorn had reclaimed his

²⁷ Prince Damrong and Phra Pinit Wannakorn, *Tamnan Ngoentra lae Pathagatha Rueang Ngoentra Siam-Thanabat (A History of Thai Coins and a Lecture on Thai Currency-Banknotes)* (Bangkok: FAD, 1961), 4.

²⁸ Chulalongkorn adopted this symbol as his personal emblem, as it coincided with the literal translation of his regnal name, 'Chula Chomklao' which means the Little Crown. Whereas his father's regnal name was 'Chomklao,' the Great Crown.

²⁹ When the first Thai coin with a king's profile was introduced, Chulalongkorn made a proclamation to assure that the people could handle the coins and put them in cash boxes without being charged with *Lèse-majesté*. See Prince Damrong and Phra Pinit, *Tamnan Ngoentra*, 15-17.

³⁰ Siam's Coat of Arms was created at the command of King Chulalongkorn in 1873 and was designed by Prince Prawit Chumsai, a court artist, in a Western heraldic style. It served as national emblem of Siam until 1893 when 'Phra Khрут Pha' (Garuda as the vehicle of Vishnu) was created to use as a joint national emblem. Then King Vajiravudh abandoned the Coat of Arms altogether in 1910 and used the Garuda as the primary national emblem. Luang Boriban Buriphan, "Tra Phaendin" (Coat of Arms), *Tamruad (Police)* 10, 12 (13 October 1951), 91. Cited in Songsan Nilkamhaeng, "Phra Prawat Mom Chao Prawit Chumsai" (A Biography of Prince Prawit Chumsai), *Silpakorn (Fine Arts)* 15, 6 (March 1972), 65-67.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 65-67.

full hierarchical power from Si Suriyawongse's regency. Minting coins with his effigy was a very crucial symbolical strategy at that stage; it is an approach to reassert his full royal authority and his kingship as Siam's reigning monarch. Moreover, the use of Coat of Arms significantly reflects on Siam's proclamation of territories; the issue which was highly related to Western imperialism spreading over the region of Southeast Asia. Siam's suzerainty over Laos and the Malay Peninsula indicated in the Coat of Arms suggests Siam's attempt to confront Western imperialism over their sovereignty. The Coat of Arms featured in Siamese coins until 1887 when it was replaced by more traditional symbols, such as Phra Siam Thevathirat, a patron deity of Siam with the shield from the Coat of Arms and the Airavata afterwards.³² Phra Siam Thevathirat and the Airavata were a personification of Siam; with the appearance of Chulalongkorn's profile on the opposite side of coins, it represented the roles of the king and his divine power which dominated the kingdom. It was also very likely that these deities were more recognisable to the Siamese across the country than the European-style Coat of Arms.

As for the postal service, the first series of stamps featuring Chulalongkorn's profile was issued later in 1883 (Figure 5). It was widely called the 'Sorot' stamp after its value.³³ Chulalongkorn's effigy in his first instalment of coins and stamps bore a resemblance to his early portrait painting at the Chakri Throne Hall in which Chulalongkorn wore a Western-styled black military jacket decorated with royal insignias, a uniform adopted by Siamese elites as their official court dress, yet another example of the Siamese royal court's Western aspiration. Circulation of coins and stamps which featured the portrait of the King in the late nineteenth century paralleled the mapping of Siam's boundary which originated around the same period. Prior to that time, the majority of map-making or cartography practice was of Buddhist cosmology whereas geographic maps or modern geography was still an uncommon concept and knowledge to Siam. The making of Siam's nationhood by Western technologies and knowledge of mapping, was discursively created through various moments of confrontation and displacement. The mapping of Siam's territory, according to Thongchai Winichakul's study, was a long and laborious process for both Siamese and European authorities from France and the British Empire because of the shared sovereignty over certain territories such as Cambodia between Siam and Vietnam. Modern geographical knowledge was brought to resolve an ambiguity and confusion of this tributary relationship and overlapping borders.³⁴ However, the map showing Siam's

³² Prince Damrong and Phra Pinit, *Tamnan Ngoentra*, 17-19.

³³ Sorot is a unit of currency formerly used in Thailand, dated back to the thirteenth century and was in the circulation until the early twentieth century. It was equivalent to $\frac{1}{128}$ of the Thai baht.

³⁴ See Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2004), 84-112

total boundaries did not appear until after the Paknam Incident,³⁵ conversely, this can explain the three symbols of the Siam's territories which were strategically and deliberately designed for the Coat of Arm and featured on Chulalongkorn's earlier coins.

The circulation of Siam's coins with a profile of the reigning monarch, together with the Coat of Arms which shows its territories as stated above, concerns not only the territoriality of a nation, but also the essence of sovereignty. Therefore, coinage and postage stamp portraiture was not simply an imitation of the Western model. They were an important means of disseminating the King's image of power throughout the kingdom. In addition to coins and stamps, photographs of the king and his family also appeared on picture postcards and New-Year's greeting cards, and were reproduced on a large scale for distribution, at least in urban and elite circles. Mass reproduction and memorialisation of Chulalongkorn's images seem to have been circulated extensively during his reign so that the image of the King was embedded in the memory of the Siamese more than any other antecedent Chakri kings.³⁶

4.1.2 Chulalongkorn in Royal Ceremonies and Royal Pageants

Siam's royal ceremonies are mainly Hindu and Buddhist in origin and are also related to the kingship and heavily influenced by Indian tradition.³⁷ It was not until the nineteenth century that Mongkut initiated new state ceremonies following a custom of the 'modern world.' Among them are the anniversary of the coronation, this celebration known as 'Chatra Mongkhon' (literally the 'blessing of the Royal Nine-tiered Umbrella,' one of the Royal Regalia) and the celebrations of the king's birthday.³⁸ Furthermore, Mongkut abolished an ancient custom in which, when in the king's presence, his subjects were to have their faces flat to the ground, and, during the royal procession, the populace along the route was obliged to keep out of sight behind the lattice fences erected for such occasions.³⁹ Mongkut's invented ceremonies, however, still retained much of the religious, especially Buddhist, rituals.

Following in his father's footsteps, Chulalongkorn took initiatives and intensified the secularised and modernised rituals in Siamese State ceremonies. Traditional old

³⁵ Winichakul, *Siam Mapped*, 128.

³⁶ Portraits of Chulalongkorn, together with Thai reigning monarch, King Bhumibol's portraits both share the same popularity in the reproduction of their portraits in Thai mass media. For more details on the comparative study of the visual representation of King Chulalongkorn and King Bhumibol, including Turkey's political leader Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881-1938), see Thanavi Chotpradit, "The Eternal Lives of the Dead: A Comparative Study of the Images of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (Turkey) and King Chulalongkorn (Siam)" (MA Thesis, Leiden University, 2009).

³⁷ See Wales, *Siamese State Ceremonies*, vii.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 213-217.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 32-35.

court ceremonies had been consistently performed throughout Chulalongkorn's reign as stated in *the Royal Ceremonies of the Twelve Months*. It was only near the end of his reign that Chulalongkorn introduced an extravagant royal pageant based on the European fashion of royal pageants in addition to the Royal Barge Procession during the Kathin Ceremony (a Buddhist festival) which the Siamese was more familiar with. Horace Geoffrey Quaritch Wales, a British intellectual and an adviser to the courts of King Vajiravudh and King Prajadhipok, remarks on the abolishment of the old customs:

This taboo no doubt had an eminently practical value for the safety of a tyrannical monarch who could never be sure of the loyalty of his oppressed subjects, *and it required a strong king who had endeared himself in the hearts of his people to break through this tradition.*⁴⁰ (emphasis added)

As stated earlier, Mongkut was the one who eliminated such a taboo; however, it was Chulalongkorn who demonstrated the public image of an endearing monarch. Wales also reflects on Siamese' loyalty and endearment to Chulalongkorn; the Siamese wore a deep personal affection for the King as apart from an inveterate traditional respect for the kingship, because he had done so much to ease the hardships of his people.⁴¹ Due to his profession, Wales' judgement was unquestionably informed by royalist ideology. Yet, the number of people who attended the royal pageants, as well as their donations for Chulalongkorn's grand celebrations affirmed Wales's assessment. The purpose of court ceremonies is to support the power of the monarchy. These 'performances' were very crucial part of Siam as the theatrical state.⁴² However, at the end of nineteenth, impressive royal ceremonies also effectively attracted public attention. In doing so, they had created an innovation, namely the performing monarchy for the New Siam.

To explore Siamese monarchy as a performing monarchy, this study focuses on the state ceremonies held between November 1907 and November 1908. The grand scheme of celebrations started from the ceremony for Chulalongkorn's return from his second visit to Europe in November 1907 which was shortly followed by Phraratchaphithi Ratchamongkhon (the Fortieth Anniversary of Accession of King Chulalongkorn: alternatively the Ruby Jubilee). Sumptuous ceremonies continued a year later with Phraratchaphithi Ratchamangkalabhisek or the Celebrations of King Chulalongkorn's 'Record Reign' (the Forty-First Anniversary) as the finale in which the Siamese, particularly Bangkokian, spent a whole week rejoicing at many celebrations. It began with the opening ceremony of the Equestrian Statue which arrived in Bangkok

⁴⁰ Ibid., 35.

⁴¹ Ibid., 171-172.

⁴² Nidhi Eoseewong, "Rat Nattakam" (Theatrical State), *Matichon sudsapda (Matichon Weekly)* (1-7 June 2012), last modified June 2, 2012, http://www.matichon.co.th/news_detail.php?newsid=1338583414.

in early November 1908 from a Parisian foundry, followed by the Motor-cars Parade and the opening of the Chaloem 55 Bridge. On the one hand, the rituals performed in the court ceremonies were beneficial to the kingship in a traditional sense. On the other hand, they appeased the public with striking spectacles which, in turn, granted them an opportunity to perform their loyalty to the monarchy. It is also very interesting that the secularisation of Siamese State ceremonies in the early twentieth century caused a sociocultural shift in which court ceremonies were not only a sacred ritual for the monarchy, but had also become a public interest.

The celebrations were lavishly organised for the return of the Siamese King after his eight-month visit to Europe which he embarked in on 27 March 1907.⁴³ Chulalongkorn made his first stops to accept a welcome ceremony in Trad and Chantaburi Provinces on the coastline of the Gulf of Thailand on 13 and 15 November 1907, respectively. As these two provinces were part of the dispute between Siam and France during the 1890s, these visits, presumably, were politically and diplomatically arranged in order to display a time of peace and reaffirm Siam's authority over the region. On 17 November 1907, Chulalongkorn arrived in Bangkok where glorious ceremonies awaited him. Crown Prince Vajiravudh was the organiser of the ceremony. Chulalongkorn received a formal reception at the Palace Pier (Tha Ratchavoradit). The ceremony started with a Buddhist ritual inside the Grand Palace and Wat Phra Si Rattana Satsadaram. A climax of the ceremonies was the royal pageant which departed from the Grand Palace to the Dusit Palace via Ratchadamnoen Avenue. King Chulalongkorn who donned military dress,⁴⁴ decorated with the Order of the Royal House of Chakri, was accompanied by the Crown Prince in a carriage (Figures 6-7). The royal procession through road transport firmly demonstrated that Chulalongkorn was a moderniser king of the New Siam, witnessed by enthusiastic crowds assembled along the route. A contemporary account states that the public had contributed towards the cost of decorations. Along Ratchadamnoen Avenue, ten celebratory arches were erected by various departments and ministries. They were, undoubtedly, the highlight of the royal pageant.

The arches that should be mentioned here in terms of their significance, are the Indian styled Arch by MPW and the Elephants Arch by the Department of Royal Military

⁴³ When Chulalongkorn returned to Siam from his first visit to Europe in 1897, the ceremonies were held inside the Grand Palace with only the royalty and officials as participants. For the public, the Siamese government organised various kinds of performances for one month. See FAD, *Chotmai het Kan Rab Sadet Phrabat Somdet Phra Chulachomklao Chaoyuhua Sadet Klab Chak Praphat Europe Krang Lang ror. sor. 126 (A Record of the Ceremonial of King Chulalongkorn's Return from His Second Visit to Europe in 1907)* (Bangkok: FAD, 1970), 1.

⁴⁴ He wore the same uniform in his portrait painting by Carolus-Duran. This sartorial practice formulated an image of modern monarchy which became an official and ceremonial royal attire for male royalty afterwards.

(Figures 8-9).⁴⁵ MPW's arch was the last celebratory arch of the ten which led to the Dusit Palace. It was built as a gateway with a large Indic-Islamic style arch. Two towers, also built in Indian style sat on top of the arch. Above the archway was decorated with King Chulalongkorn's royal cypher and monograms. In addition to the oriental style arch, MPW also built a statue of Brihaspati (God of Planet Jupiter) mounting a stag. This statue was situated on the same location as Chulalongkorn's Equestrian Statue which would be erected a year later. This leads to an analysis that it might have been an experimental work for the grander establishment of the Equestrian Statue.⁴⁶ The Elephants Arch was the first arch at the starting point of the Royal procession on the Ratchadamnoen Nai Road. It consisted of a pair of war elephants stood facing each other with their trunks upraised to support phra kiao, the sigil of Chulalongkorn. Interestingly, a hundred years later, the elephant monument with a very similar style to the Elephants Arch was erected to celebrate King Bhumibol's 80th Birthday Anniversary in 2007, precisely at the same location (Figure 10). This duplication was inevitably calculated to manifest Chulalongkorn's unceasing role in Thai monarchy's public image. It was also another example of a comparison between King Chulalongkorn's and King Bhumibol's greatness.

On 29 November 1907, the Siamese government organised imposing and lengthy ceremonies to celebrate Chulalongkorn's Ruby Jubilee. The ceremonies took place at the Ancient Palace in Ayutthaya Province which ended on 2 December 1907. The King traveled to Ayutthaya by train instead of the more traditional Royal Barge. The location of the ceremonies was significantly chosen, because Chulalongkorn's reign was equal to King Ramathibodi II's of the Ayutthaya Kingdom (reigned from 1491 to 1529) who then had the longest reign at forty years. Furthermore, the imaginary of the Ayutthaya Kingdom held a nostalgic memory of the 'golden age' to the Siamese.⁴⁷ Connecting Chulalongkorn to his predecessor and the Rattanakosin Kingdom to the illustrious Kingdom of Ayutthaya emphasised an effort to glorify his long reign which would bring glory to Siam. The ruin of the Ancient Palace was reconstructed for the ceremony, a project supervised by Prince Damrong (as the Minister of Interior) and Phraya Boranratchantanin who was also an antiquarian. The reconstruction included rebuilding Phrathinang Sanphetmahaprasat (the old throne hall) temporarily for the ceremony (Figure 11). The reconstruction cost came in at 20,000 Baht.⁴⁸ In addition to

⁴⁵ FAD, *Chotmai het*, 7-28 and 35-75.

⁴⁶ Yuwadee Siri, *Soom Rab Sadet Phraphuttachao Laung (The Celebratory Arches of King Chulalongkorn)* (Bangkok: Matichon, 2006), 191-201.

⁴⁷ Anongnart Takoengwit, "Pleng Yao Nirat Kromphraratchawangboworn Maha Surasinghanart," (Ode to Ayutthaya by Prince Maha Surasinghanart) accessed June 29, 2014, http://pioneer.chula.ac.th/~tanongna/history/documents/10_nirat.htm#5.

⁴⁸ NAT, *Chotmai het Phraratchaphithi Ratchamangkalabhisek ror. sor. 126, 127 (A Chronicle of the Ratchamangkalabhisek Ceremonies, 1907-1908)* (Bangkok: FAD, 1984), 5-6.

court rituals and formal speeches, the celebrations provided entertainment for the public who participated in the ceremony, such as traditional plays and fireworks which lasted for three nights. In addition, commemorative medallions and relic pendants which were cast by La Monnaie de Paris (Paris Mint) were given to officials and students, respectively by Chulalongkorn's royal commission.⁴⁹ On 3 December, Chulalongkorn and his entourage visited ruins in Ayutthaya; consequently, the Archaeology Association was officially launched, as mentioned in Chapter Two.

The closing act to complete Chulalongkorn's Jubilee celebrations was Phraratchaphithi Ratchamangkalabhisek held between 10 and 18 November 1908 with a 200,000 baht budget.⁵⁰ The festivities marked the occasion that Chulalongkorn's reign surpassed that of any of his predecessors which was celebrated with pomp and splendour. All venues as well as numbers of houses were illuminated and decorated. Similar to the celebrations a year earlier, entertainments and firework shows were provided to captivate the public's attention. The celebrations reached a crescendo on the second day, 11 November. That day, Chulalongkorn laid the foundation stone for the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall, his final grand architectural scheme of the Dusit Palace. At noon, the opening ceremony for King Chulalongkorn's Equestrian Statue was held. Chulalongkorn unveiled the statue after the Crown Prince, as a representative of the Siamese, dedicated this very first equestrian statue of Siam to their monarch (Figure 12). The ceremony was followed by gun salutes, then twelve regiments performed Trooping the Colour at the Royal Plaza, after which traditional entertainments were launched to finalise the ceremonies.⁵¹ Afterward, Chulalongkorn commissioned the Susse Frères foundry to produce one hundred bronze replicas of the Equestrian Statue,⁵² commemorative medallions and stamps depicting the statue (Figures 13-14).⁵³

The next two days of ceremonies provided extravagant parades. On 12 November, the parade of 112 elaborately decorated motor-cars, including two royal cars were rallied around Wat Phra Chetuphon, south of the Grand Palace. Among the

⁴⁹ NAT, *Chotmai het*, 11-18.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 48-54. During the first decade of the 1900s, the average wage for unskilled workers was around 0.75-1.00 baht per day. See James C. Ingram, "Thailand's Rice Trade and the Allocation of Resources," in *The Economic Development of South-East Asia: Studies in Economic History and Political Economy*, ed. C. D. Cowan (Oxon: Routledge, 2012), 113-115. As of 1908, the exchange value of the Thai baht in terms of the Pound Sterling was 13 baht to the Pound, see Ian G. Brown, "Paper Currency: The Government Note Issues in the Reign of King Chulalongkorn," *JSS* 60, part 2 (July 1972), 39.

⁵¹ NAT, *Chotmai het*, 97-98.

⁵² Following this, Siamese officials asked for Chulalongkorn's permission to cast more replicas (two hundred) as a relic. NAT, Ministry of Public Works, Yor. Tor./20.

⁵³ NAT, Ministry of Public Works, 3.5/3. The prices were rated from 40 baht to 1 at. (value relative to 1/64 baht)

passengers, who chiefly consisted of members of the royal family, were foreign diplomats and their spouses. The Motor-cars Parade, provided by Siamese elites and merchants, ran around the city centre (via the Royal Plaza) en route to the Chaloem 55 Bridge, where Chulalongkorn performed an opening ceremony to celebrate his record reign (Figures 15-16). In the afternoon, the King hosted a garden party at the Abhisek Dusit Hall.⁵⁴ This idea was probably borrowed from King Edward VII's Windsor Garden Party on 22 June 1907 which Chulalongkorn attended during his sojourn in England. On 13 November, the Crown Prince led the parade of government agencies which consisted of bearers of banners and models. All banners were created to demonstrate Chulalongkorn's endeavours to his country and people, for example, banners of postage stamps and postcards from the Postal Services Department (Figure 17) whereas the Department of Railways presented models of railway and bridge (Figure 18). A contemporary source reported that these attracted very excited crowds as was expected by the organisers.⁵⁵ Between 14 and 17 November, Chulalongkorn attended numerous Buddhist and Court rituals. He also made a visit to the China Town (known to Thais as Yaowarat) and the display of decorated motor-cars from the parade. Lastly, a military parade at Sanam Laung on 18 November marked the end of these extravagant celebrations (Figure 19).⁵⁶

The celebrations of 1907-1908, as Siam's 'theatre of state,' were successfully instrumental in highlighting the modernised public image of the Siamese monarch and the accomplishment of Chulalongkorn throughout his reign. The contribution of Prince Damrong and the Crown Prince, especially the latter who was educated in Victorian Britain, strongly assisted this final act of successful transformation, with the combination of the conventional rituals that were essential to the kingship and the invented ceremonies to represent the modern image of monarchy. Chulalongkorn also mentioned the necessity of reforms publicly in his speech during the opening ceremonies of the Equestrian Statue.⁵⁷ His public announcement and appearance were fundamental to his position as a figurehead of Siam's politics. The monarchy had become a target for criticism as a result of the social changes in Siam.⁵⁸ However, the modern society, according to scholars such as Wales and Ian Glamour, still required royal pageantry or ceremonial display.⁵⁹ Glamour remarks that a monarch is a unique

⁵⁴ NAT, *Chotmai het*, 138-178.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 48-54 and 175-177.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 195-205.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 127-128.

⁵⁸ David K. Wyatt, *Thailand: A Short History* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1982), 390.

⁵⁹ See Wales, *Siamese State Ceremonies*, 318, and Ian Glamour, *The Body of Politics* (London: Hutchinson, 1971), 313.

symbol of the history, continuity, permanence, and unity of a people,⁶⁰ all of which pave the way for the formation of national identity. Thus, it is inevitable that the monarchy, along with the royal ceremonies, has always been a tremendously effective centrepiece of Thailand's national identity. Naturally, the splendid state ceremonies were designed to leave a literally unforgettable impression on the attentive crowds and to embed memorable ideas of how majestic the monarch was in these occasions.⁶¹ In the case of Chulalongkorn's Jubilee celebrations, official narrative contributes to this memory-making. The public's extreme loyalty and affection for the Crown were emphasised repeatedly and consistently in the royal chronicles. For example, the accounts of the public's donations to cast Chulalongkorn's Equestrian Statue and the ceremonies funds were crucial evidence to indicate the popularity of King Chulalongkorn.⁶² The official narrative, together with the King's public appearances, effectively contributed to the collective memory of Chulalongkorn in Thai society which induced a growth in his commemoration in twenty-first century Thailand.

4.2 Commemoration and Legacy of King Chulalongkorn

For the sovereign who reigned for forty-two years and brought a number of developments to the country, it was certain that many honorific titles, such as 'the Father,' 'the Great Beloved King' and 'Phraphuttachao Luang' (literally in English, 'the Royal Buddha')⁶³ would be bestowed upon King Chulalongkorn. To understand how Chulalongkorn became known and revered by such designations, as previously mentioned, one should look at the works of Prince Damrong. According to Prince Damrong, Chulalongkorn contrived to be both grand and domestic, a father-figure to the whole country.⁶⁴ This conception is not dissimilar to David Cannadine's remark on the embodiment of the British monarch in which he reflects that 'The king was the father to his people, and the patriarch of Empire.'⁶⁵ Chulalongkorn's *opus modernum* was held in high esteem by many Thais, and, this together with his recurrent public

⁶⁰ Glamour, *The Body of Politics*, 313.

⁶¹ David Gross, *Lost Time: On Remembering and Forgetting in Late Modern Culture* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), 79.

⁶² According to Prince Damrong's account, a fund raised by the Thai people for the Equestrian Statue was around one million baht. The remainder of the fund was spent by King Vajravudh on the establishment of Chulalongkorn University. See Prince Damrong, "Rueng Sang Phra Borommarup Song Mah" (The King's Equestrian Statue), in *Choomnoom Phra Nippon (Bang Rueng) (Selected Miscellaneous Writings)* (Bangkok: FAD, 1957), 67-69.

⁶³ 'Phraphuttachao Luang' is, in fact, a general epitaph for the late kings, but it has become popularly for referring exclusively to King Chulalongkorn in recent years.

⁶⁴ See Sattayanurak, *Somdet Krom Phraya Damrong*, 141-175.

⁶⁵ David Cannadine, "The British Monarchy and the 'Invention of Tradition', c. 1820—1977," in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 150.

display in both the state ceremonies and travels, assisted in his commemoration more effectively than any of his predecessors.

Chulalongkorn's illustrious portrayal in the master narrative of Thai official history facilitates the social imaginary of Chulalongkorn as the Populist king. Thongchai Winichakul suggests that the (neo)royal-national history contributes to the conversion of collective memory into commodity.⁶⁶ Winichakul's evaluation is not entirely incorrect, the master narrative of Thai history plays a crucial role in constructing a social phenomenon in which Chulalongkorn has been apotheosised due to his merit and grace bequeathed to the country and its people. However, it should be noted that the King's image had already become commodified during his reign.⁶⁷ In addition to studio photographs and postcards, there were a number of foreign companies and traders in Bangkok who asked for a royal permission to print Chulalongkorn's portrait on their labels and goods.⁶⁸ Even the King himself ordered a glass pitcher and wash bowl set from Italy and had his portrait printed on them (Figure 20).⁶⁹

It is clear that Chulalongkorn was very enthusiastic about portraiture which were part of his modern/Western aspiration. Chulalongkorn sought to erase the conventional idea of the King's person as an avatar of gods in which the king's royal body was too sacred to be portrayed in any type of media. His popularity was the result of his own contribution on the royal portraiture. However, the royal images were eventually subjected to the purpose of worship. Studies of the cult of King Chulalongkorn also indicate that Chulalongkorn's endeavours during his reign were subsequently transformed to signal his divine power in order for the cult's participants to achieve successes. This, however, contradicted his desire in adopting modern practices in portraiture and public display to illustrate himself as the modernised king. Following this conceptualisation of Chulalongkorn's visual images, this section aims to explore how and which aspects of Chulalongkorn is conveyed in recent exhibitions in Bangkok, as well as his architectural heritage which has been renovated as an exhibition space.

⁶⁶ Thongchai Winichakul, "Prawatisat Thai Baep Rachachatniyom: Chak Yuk Ananikhonm Amphrang su Rachachatniyom Mai rue Latthi Sadet Phor Khong Kradumphi Thai nai Patchuban" (Royalist-Nationalist History: From the Era of Crypto-Colonialism to the New Royalist-Nationalism, or the Cult of Rama V of Contemporary Thai Bourgeois), *SW* 23, 1 (November 2001), 64. Winichakul proposes that Thai royal-national history emerged from the loss of Siam to France in the Paknam Incident, in which the West has become a villain and the monarchy was the saviour of Siam.

⁶⁷ Coinage, stamps and commemorative coins or medallions from his reign attract many collectors with exceptional high economic values as well.

⁶⁸ See Chapter Two.

⁶⁹ Prasert Dedjjaruwat, "A Set of Blue Glass Pitcher and Wash Basin, Art Nouveau style in Thailand," *Vimanmek Journal* 6, 33 (October-November, 2002), 70-72. However, the detail of this acquisition or commission was undocumented.

4.2.1 Displaying the 'Great Beloved King'

Interestingly, the social imaginary of Chulalongkorn in Thai society has been conveyed in both aspects of a mystified and demystified monarch. On the one hand, his monuments across the country are rooted in the master narrative of Thai official history which reflects the image of Chulalongkorn as the highly esteemed monarch, in a form of monument (Figure 21). On the other hand, a photograph of Chulalongkorn cooking and smoking a cigarette wearing only his lower garment, has been seen hung on the wall of many restaurants in Thailand (as well as in abroad) (Figure 22). Such diversity in Chulalongkorn's commemoration embodies the King's standing in Thai society as the populist king which the people choose to memorialise in both of his public and private image. Celebratory exhibition is another tribute to the King. Three exhibitions in Bangkok are chosen to examine the visualisation of King Chulalongkorn's social imaginary, namely VME, the Memorial Exhibition of the Centennial of the Death of King Chulalongkorn (MECDKC) at Chulalongkorn Memorial Exhibition Building and the Rattanakosin Exhibition Hall (REH: literally in Thai, Nitasrattanakosin)

4.2.1.1 King Chulalongkorn's Collection Exhibition at the Vimanmek Mansion, Dusit Palace (VME)

Vimanmek Mansion was last used as a residence of the Thai monarchy in 1926. Its last inhabitant was Princess Indrasakdi Sachi, Princess Consort of King Vajravudh. Afterwards, it functioned as the BRH's depository until 1982 when Queen Sirikit asked for King Bhumibol's royal permission to renovate the former royal summer house as a museum.⁷⁰ Originally, the exhibition of Chulalongkorn's royal collection at Vimanmek Mansion was part of the grand scheme on the Royal Bicentennial Celebrations of Bangkok Celebration in 1982. VME holds altogether thirty-one exhibition rooms, some of which, such as, the bed chambers, the audience hall, the bath chambers and the dining room, were restored with old furniture and adornments as they were in their original state in order to provide an atmospheric setting (Figures 23-24).

The display is composed of Chulalongkorn's European art and handicrafts collection and gifts from foreign countries. Many rooms were redecorated to display these museum objects in different categories, for instance, a silverware room, a ceramic room, a crystal glassware room and an ivory room. Among these collection was French porcelain made by the Sèvres factory. There are two sets of Sèvres porcelain in the collection: a dinner set and tea sets. The blue and gold-gilt dinner plates with Chulalongkorn's Royal Cypher in the centre, according to the official journal

⁷⁰ BRH, *Chotmaihet Reung Phrathinang Vimanmek: Kan Sang lae Kan Burana Phrathinang Vimanmek (The Construction and Restoration of Vimanmek Mansion)* (Bangkok: BRH, 1984), 3-4 and 35.

of the exhibition,⁷¹ are said to be a gift from the Sèvres factory when King Chulalongkorn visited there on 15 September 1897 (Figure 25).⁷² However, this is not the first Sèvres porcelain at the Siamese royal court. Ten years earlier, Chinese tea sets were specifically ordered from the Sèvres factory as a token of the Royal Cremation Ceremony in 1887 (Figure 26). Each set was painted accordingly to the colours of the day in Thai astrology and decorated with flowery patterns.⁷³ The tea sets, known as the Chakri tea sets, were then given away to the members of royal family. The emphasis on the Sèvres porcelain display reflects the exhibition organisers' intention to relate Chulalongkorn's collection to those of European courts when it was customary to collect or order porcelain as a gift to display their royal power.⁷⁴ This is despite the fact that during Chulalongkorn's reign the Sèvres factory lost much of its royal clientele.

Displaying portraits of foreign monarchs potentially draws a connection between the Siamese court and European courts. Portraits of European royalty, such as Queen Victoria (Figure 27), Tzar Nicholas II and Tzarina Alexandra of Russia, Emperor Wilhelm II of German Empire, King Victor Emmanuel III of Italy and Duke John Albert of Mecklenburg are shown separately. Their original location was unknown; however, it is possible that these portraits were reallocated purposefully to show the interrelationship between the Thai and the European monarchies. In addition to these royal portraits, other paintings in Chulalongkorn's collection which were studied in Chapter Two also feature in the display. The art collection, as well as Western commodities, which were once acquired for private affairs and personal usage is now on display to present a modern and luxurious domestic life of Chulalongkorn and his family in their private quarters.

VME perfectly mirrors Chulalongkorn's social imaginary as the populist king; the display of worldly goods also represents the King as a demystified monarch. Paradoxically, this demystification does not have an impact on the way in which people who visit the exhibition still venerate Chulalongkorn's collection, particularly his personal effects, as if they were relics of holy saints. Such conviction, on the one hand, may be based on the conception of Thai kingship that is deeply rooted in Thai society. On the other hand, the exhibition emphasises Chulalongkorn's acquisition of Western

⁷¹ Prasert Dedjjanuwat, "Sèvres Porcelain: A souvenir from the French Royal Court," *Vimanmek Journal* 6, 33 (October-November, 2002), 54-56.

⁷² Phraya Srisathap, *Chotmai het Sadet Praphat Europe ror. sor. 116, Volume 2 (Journal of King Chulalongkorn's Visit to Europe in 1897, Volume 2)* (Bangkok: FAD, 1995), 148-151.

⁷³ "Chakri Tea Sets: Memento of the Royal Cremation Ceremony," *Vimanmek Journal* 6, 33 (October-November, 2002), 61-63.

⁷⁴ Peter Braun, "Meissen Porcelain and Porcelain Diplomacy: Concluding Remarks," in *Fragile Diplomacy: Meissen Porcelain for European Courts ca. 1710-63*, ed. Maureen Cassidy-Geiger (New York: Yale University Press, 2007), 301-305.

commodities as the act of philanthropy rather than a self-indulgence, presumably following Chulalongkorn's statement that his art collection would be a national heritage after his death.⁷⁵

4.2.1.2 King Chulalongkorn Memorial Exhibition at the Thavorn Watthu Building (MECDKC)

This memorial exhibition displays a life and works of Chulalongkorn in order to serve as a commemoration of the Centennial of his death. It was opened to the public on the precise date of the centennial of Chulalongkorn's death on 23 October 2010. Tuek Thavorn Watthu (literally in English, the Permanent Structure Building), which formerly housed the National Library of Thailand, was renovated and functions as an exhibition space.⁷⁶ MECDKC is a complete visualisation of a collective memory of the King in the master narrative of Thai official history. His leadership has been distinctively thematised into six themes, each theme located in a separate room. The first room titled 'the Great Beloved King' profiles a brief biography of Chulalongkorn after which the rest of the exhibition unfolds the reasons why Chulalongkorn earned such a title. The second room displays Chulalongkorn's social reforms, particularly on the abolition of slavery and his numerous trips to visit his subjects in the rural areas which are grouped under the title 'People's Monarch.' The highlight of the display is the reproduction of the Abolition of Slavery scene from the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall's fresco (Figure 28). As surviving visual representation of slavery in Thailand is scarce, the fresco inevitably serves as an iconic image of Chulalongkorn's abolition of slavery movement. As the fresco is democratised through this reproduction, therefore the engraving helps to disseminate the ideology of Chulalongkorn's greatness to a wider audience.⁷⁷

The next three rooms display the famous roles of Chulalongkorn regarding his reforms and policies against Western dominance. Siamese aristocrats were forced to both resist and collaborate with these policies. It begins with the 'Sovereignty' room which displays objects related to Chulalongkorn's foreign policy and trips abroad. The next display centres around the modernisation scheme of Chulalongkorn on Siam's infrastructure and public utilities based on Western systems. This room titled 'New

⁷⁵ See Chapter Two. This statement is also published on the official website of the exhibition. It states that King Chulalongkorn's collection exhibition serves as a showcase of the Thai national heritage for future generations although his collection was Western objects. See BRH (2004), *Exhibit: Vimanmek Mansion*, accessed July 3, 2012, <http://www.vimanmek.com/exhibit/vimanmek.php?lang=>.

⁷⁶ The Thavorn Watthu Building was built by the order of King Chulalongkorn for the cremation of Crown Prince Maha Vajirunhis (1878-1895). After the Royal Cremation Ceremony, the building had served many functions, including the national library and national museum.

⁷⁷ The interior of the Ananta Samakhom is not allowed to be photographed by the visitors who can access the throne hall in limited areas by visiting (with admission fees) the Arts of the Kingdom Exhibition, whereas the MECDKC is free entry.

Siam' exhibits a set of photographs which shows the urban life of Bangkok in the late nineteenth century highlighted by the new infrastructure such as postal service, telephone, tram, and new public roads filled with imported motor cars. According to the narrative of Thai history, his policy with foreign countries and his modernisation are recognised as an instrumental role in securing Siam's independence. The fifth room represents Chulalongkorn as the patron of art, under the title 'Architectural Heritage' room. It displays models of five examples of Chulalongkorn's architecture; among them are the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall and the ordination hall of Wat Benchamabophit, the jewels in the crown of King Chulalongkorn's reign (Figures 29-30).

The final section shows some examples of Chulalongkorn's historic documentation which were registered in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register in 2009. The overall displays consist of numerous photographs, mockup scenes and models to create, or in fact, sustain, the collective memory of the Monarch. These displays portray Chulalongkorn as the great king with a heavy burden and responsibility to 'his country' by which the title of the Great Beloved King was bestowed upon him. Unsurprisingly, the visitors must pay their respect to the small altar of King Chulalongkorn before entering the first room (Figure 31), the very same practice as the visitors are asked to do at VME, where visitors are asked to pay respect to the full-length portrait of Chulalongkorn by Phra Soralak.

4.2.1.3 The Rattanakosin Exhibition Hall (REH)

REH displays Bangkok's history in a large space. Established by the Crown Property Bureau, the exhibition was officially launched in March 2010. The exhibition narrates the history of the Rattanakosin Period from the very beginning in the reign of King Yotfa in 1782 up to the present day, including Thai art and culture. As stated by the official history, the history of Thailand (read Bangkok) after the fall of Ayutthaya Kingdom is divided into three phases: Old Siam (from the late eighteenth to mid nineteenth century), New Siam (from the late nineteenth to early twentieth century) and Modern Thailand (from 1932 onwards).

The exhibition content is divided into nine topics in separate exhibition halls in a two-storey building on the Ratchadamnoen Klang Road. Its contents consist of both historical and cultural contexts. Out of nine topics, three exhibition halls display the historical events following the timeline which is marked by each reign of the Chakri kings (Figures 32-33). All displays strongly demonstrate that the development of Thailand has increased throughout the centuries as a result of the Chakri kings' abilities, such as 'The Heart and Soul of The Nation' room which shows a chronological narrative of Chakri kings' royal duties. Furthermore, the displays are designed to show the development of city life in Bangkok throughout the periods and unsurprisingly hint at the influence of the royal court (Figure 34). For instance, the art and culture

exhibition hall focuses on 'high art,' including the performing arts which once belonged to the royal court such as 'khon' (Thai classic masked play), Thai puppet shows, and the arts and architecture of the Grand Palace and Wat Phra Si Rattana Satsadaram (Figure 35).

Most importantly, even though all Chakri kings' political and cultural agency are shown here, the highlight of the exhibition emphasises the magnificence of the Modern Bangkok which emerged from the modernisation scheme of Chulalongkorn. The display of Bangkok in Chulalongkorn's reign illustrates Chulalongkorn's establishment of infrastructure, the abolition of slavery and, most significantly, the securing of Siam's independence as well as his westernised architecture and urban planning. These exhibition contents project the way in which the Modern Bangkok thrived due to Chulalongkorn's endeavours. It should be noted that Chulalongkorn's section bears a repetition of the MECDKC mentioned above. This echoing of the representation of the fifth king of the Chakri Dynasty emanates from the collective memory which dictates the way in which the public projects the images of King Chulalongkorn.

Altogether, the exhibition of Chulalongkorn's European art collection at the VME, which manifests a private and domestic self of the King and the displays of Chulalongkorn's public image at the MECDKC and the REH aim to present Chulalongkorn as the civiliser king who developed the country into the civilised world. These exhibitions thus embody the notion of the 'Populist King' in the official history as Winichakul states. This very successful propaganda makes Chulalongkorn's westernisation legacy become an exception to the nationalist concept of Thailand.

4.2.2 The Rhetoric of Monumentality: Re-utilisation of Chulalongkorn's Historic Space from 1932 to the Present

The previous section has touched upon the alteration of Chulalongkorn's architecture to exhibition space. This section explores the way in which the historic space in Bangkok is used in the late twentieth to twentieth-first century, politically and culturally. Commemorative practices which concern the memory of Chulalongkorn in Thai society have affected a transformation of his commissions in architecture into monuments. The re-signification of Chulalongkorn's historic spaces to the status of monument began shortly after his death. According to Wales' account, people wanted to mourn and commemorate their beloved king. In doing so, the commemorative ritual was provided at the Royal Plaza, together with the Equestrian Statue.⁷⁸ This historic and monumental space provides such qualities that embody a state of monumentality. The term monumentality implies permanence and eternity⁷⁹ which is endorsed by

⁷⁸ Wales, *Siamese State Ceremonies*, 171-172.

⁷⁹ Michael Herzfeld, "Spatial Cleansing: Monumental Vacuity and the Idea of the West," *Journal of Material Culture* 11, 1/2 (2006), 129.

social memory and commemorative practices towards Chulalongkorn. Yet monuments are also living, vital, immediate and accessible. Monuments can also 'achieve a powerful symbolic agency.'⁸⁰ The latter characteristics corresponds to the way in which Chulalongkorn's architecture is revisited and symbolically reconstructed in order to serve as socio-political and cultural space, and more frequently after the shift of political regime in Thailand. Spaces such as the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall, the Royal Plaza and Ratchadamnoen Avenue, although unceasingly functioning as ritual space for the Thai monarchy, have become the centre of political rallies which will be discussed at length shortly. In addition to these spaces, one of Chulalongkorn's buildings on the Grand Palace's ground was renovated and serves as a museum as well.

For Henri Lefebvre, space is the ultimate locus and medium of struggle, and is therefore a crucial political issue. He believes that space is a social and political product; the class struggle between bourgeoisies and aristocrats at Le Marais in Paris was Lefebvre's example in his study of space and spatialisation.⁸¹ Refurbishment of the French aristocracy's historic space at Le Marais to transform it into a business quarter and a residence for the middle class is reflected in similar cases in Thailand during its political transformation period. Following this line of study, the following section seeks to investigate the relationship between space and a reconstruction of history, particularly of the Fifth Reign, in light of Thailand's ongoing political conflict and class struggle.

4.2.2.1 Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall, the Royal Plaza and Ratchadamnoen Avenue

Among Chulalongkorn's numerous commissions of infrastructure and architecture, Ratchadamnoen Avenue and the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall, including the Royal Plaza are an exceptional embodiment of symbolic importance of spatiality and political power, especially in the context of Thailand's political regime change. Chulalongkorn was determined to have the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall as his brightest jewel. The two-storey throne hall and the Royal Plaza embellished with King Chulalongkorn's very own Equestrian Statue offer a grand vista to be beheld from Ratchadamnoen Avenue (Figure 36). The symbolic importance of the space is distinguished as much by its aesthetic grandeur as its plan to monumentalise Chulalongkorn's absolute power. However, Chulalongkorn died before the completion of the throne hall in 1915. King Vajiravudh, his successor, barely used it and openly criticised Siam's westernisation or what he called 'the cult of imitation' which, in his

⁸⁰ Robert S. Nelson and Margaret Olin, *Monuments and Memory: Made and Unmade* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 3-4.

⁸¹ Henri Lefebvre, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell 1991), 56-58.

opinion, failed to conform to European standard.⁸² It was several decades later that this complex of historic spaces became a highlight of Thai socio-political history.

Ironically, it was the new political regime that initially instigated a novel mode of practice in Thai political culture on the Royal ground. At dawn on 24 June 1932, a key operation of the Siamese Revolution of 1932 took place at the Royal Plaza, in front of the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall (Figure 37). Military troops of the Khana Ratsadon assembled there. Phraya Phahonphon Phayuhasena (hereafter referred to as Phraya Phahon), one of the leaders, climbed onto one of the tanks and read the *Khana Ratsadon Manifesto (Declaration of the New Siamese State)*. Its content was a critique of the corrupt order of the absolute monarchy and a declaration of the establishment of a new constitutional state in Siam.⁸³ Later in 1936, Khana Ratsadon pin was installed right on the spot where Phraya Phahon read the manifesto (Figure 38). The pin was laid side by side with the Equestrian Statue of King Chulalongkorn, the symbol of absolute monarchy; thus, it marked a growing competitiveness over this historic space for socio-political superiority. The Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall was also occupied during the Khana Ratsadon's *coup d'état* as the headquarters for the first four days of the operation. On 28 June, the first National People's Assembly convened in this throne hall (Figure 39).⁸⁴ Most importantly, later on 10 December, the Khana Ratsadon conducted a state ceremony in the central audience chamber of Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall in which King Prajadhipok signed the Constitution of the Siam Kingdom 1932, the first constitution of Thailand.⁸⁵

The promulgation of the 1932 Constitution was circulated and popularised with a set of photographs showing Prajadhipok signing and handing over the Constitution during the ceremony (Figures 40-41). Although under the new political regime, the power of the monarchy had been stripped, this entire state ceremony followed the old court customs. Prajadhipok appeared in a full traditional royal attire while sitting on the Phrathinang Phuttan Kanchana Singhassana underneath the Royal Nine-Tiered

⁸² King Vajiravudh wrote an article for a periodical titled 'the Cult of Imitation' under his pen-name, Asvabahu in 1915. The article was a diatribe against slavish copying of the West, such as the westernisation of clothes, customs and manners. See Vajiravudh, *Latthi Aow Yang lae Klone Tid Lor (The Cult of Imitation and Mud on Our Wheels)* (Bangkok: FAD, 1963), 1-9.

⁸³ "Kwanpenma Khong Kanplianplaeng Kanpokkrong phor. sor. 2475" (Transition in Thai Politics in 1932), in *Ekkasan Kanmuang Kanpokkrong Thai phor. sor. 2417-2477 (Documentation on Thai Politics Between 1874-1934)*, ed. Chaianan Samutwanit and Kattiya Kannasut (Bangkok: SSST, 1989), 156-161.

⁸⁴ After that, Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall was used as a home of the National Assembly, until the new Parliament House was opened in 1974. However, the throne hall is still used for the State Opening of Parliament marking the first assembly in consequence of a general election for the House of Representatives.

⁸⁵ Before the leaders of the Khana Ratsadon promulgated a permanent constitution on 10 December 1932, the Temporary Charter for the Administration of Siam Act 1932 was codified and enacted. See Nakin Mektrirat, *Kan Patiwat Siam phor. sor. 2475 (Siam Revolution in 1932)* (Bangkok: Textbooks Project, 2003), 217-218.

Umbrella. A long and heavy curtain separated the King from the audiences; this curtain was to be drawn open only at the presence of the King during the ceremony. Prajadhipok became the last absolute Chakri monarch and the first constitutional monarch of Thailand. However, symbols of kingship attributed to Prajadhipok in the ceremony affirmed that Thai monarch's divinity was still preserved. The representation of a divine-like king that Prajadhipok appeared in the ceremony, in fact, echoed the re-enactment of the supremacy of the king stated in *the 1932 Temporary Charter*.⁸⁶ This re-enactment played a crucial role in the existence of the Thai monarchy in the post-revolution period until the present day. Moreover, the handing over scene was circulated and memorialised in order to propagate that the democracy and constitution were 'initially granted' to the Thais from Prajadhipok instead of the Khana Ratsadon. This state ceremony and the adjustment of the constitution, initiated the beginning of compromises, power struggle and opposition from both sides. The political manoeuvres of the Thai monarchy and its opponents have played a crucial part in Thai political history, especially in the physical space of this case study which will be detailed further.

It is important to interpret the significance of utilising the space of the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall and the Royal Plaza in the 1932 Revolution, how and why this barely used throne hall was chosen over the Grand Palace, the very heart of the Thai monarchy and the nation. The possibility was that, firstly, the Grand Palace, despite its most illustrious status, was as vacant as the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall and had not been resided in by the kings or any royalty since Chulalongkorn relocated to the Dusit Palace. Secondly, the *coup d'état* needed a vast space for a demonstration and troop assembling of which the Royal Plaza could provide such necessity. Finally, the Royal Plaza was an open space; thus, the public could witness the revolution so that the Khana Ratsadon would benefit from public recognition of their success, whereas the Grand Palace was enclosed by a high wall and battlements.

After securing their political power, the new political regime's propaganda strategy was to map symbolic icons onto physical spaces. The Democracy Monument (Figure 42), commissioned in 1939, in the centre of Ratchadamnoen Klang Road was another crucial symbolic action, as important as reading the manifesto and installing the pin at the Royal Plaza.⁸⁷ Its location significantly and symbolically disrupts the passage from the Grand Palace to the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall in the Dusit

⁸⁶ The 1932 Temporary Charter was a draft document written by Pridi after French model whereas the permanent constitution (the 1932 Constitution) generally followed the British parliamentary structure. See Mekrirat, *Kan Patiwat*, 218-224.

⁸⁷ For further analysis of the monument's construction, designs and symbolic meanings, see Chatri Prakitnonthakan, *Kanmueang lae Sangkhom nai Sinlapa Sathapattayakam: Siam Samai Thai Prayuk Chatniyom (Politics and Society in Art and Architecture: Siam in the Era that Thailand Adopted Nationalism)*, Second edition (Bangkok: Matichon, 2007), 311-313; Malinee Kumsupha, *Anusaowari Phrachathippatai kab Kwammai ti Mong Mai Hen (The Democracy Monument and the Invisible Denotation)* (Bangkok: Vibhasa, 2005).

Palace. The old and the new palaces were connected by Ratchadamnoen Avenue (hence the name of the avenue which literally means 'the royal procession'), Chulalongkorn's initial commission (Map 1). The disruption by installing the Democracy monument can be interpreted as an attempt to monumentalise the space as the victory of people's power over the old political regime of the monarchy. The Democracy Monument not only provides cultural values which channel the attribution to the new regime of many kinds of significance, but also gives rise to Thailand's new found political culture.

Since then the avenue has been the site of many demonstrations, including the 14 October Uprising of 1973 (a student uprising to oust the military dictatorship of Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn) (Figure 43) as well as the 2006 *coup d'état* subsequent to the 2005-2006 political crisis ignited by the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) to oust the Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and his government. One of many accusations charged against Shinawatra is anti-royalism, as it was claimed by many scholars and royalists that the former Prime minister frequently insulted the current Thai monarch. The supporters of PAD then adopted the royal-yellow shirt as their official colour, often with the slogan 'Fight for the King.' Political history of Thailand has since been instilled with a series of crises and periods of unrest. The overthrowing of Shinawatra's government led to the formation of the United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship (UDD) or the Red-Shirt protesters, a political group opposed to PAD and the 2006 military coup.⁸⁸ Demonstrators from both groups occupied a large area on Ratchadamnoen Avenue, especially around the Democracy monument and many economic and financial centres across Bangkok during the periods of 2008-2010, as well as a more recent controversial anti-government protests formed in December 2013.⁸⁹

However, as much as the democratic political activities seem to dominate this space, the Thai monarchy still has a strong grip on this environment. Every year on the royal birthdays of the reigning monarch and the queen, BMA organises a decoration at the Ratchadamnoen Avenue with dazzling displays of lights and their portraits. The lights start to colourfully illuminate the avenue on the eve of the royal birthday and end at the early dawn of the day after. The Trooping of the Colour is also performed at the Royal Plaza to mark the King's birthday, another court traditions derived from the British royal court. Furthermore, on very special occasions such as the 80th birthday of

⁸⁸ See Thongchai Winichakul, *Prachathippatai thi Mi Kasat Yu Nue Kanmuang (A Democratic Regime Under the Constitutional Monarchy)* (Bangkok: Same Sky Books, 2013).

⁸⁹ Since July 2014, Thailand has been governed by the military junta lead by General Prayuth Chan-o-cha as a consequence of the *coup d'état* on 22 May 2014. It replaced the civilian government of Yingluck Shinawatra, youngest sister of Thaksin Shinawatra.

King Bhumibol in 2007, flamboyant arches were decorated along the avenue from Sanam Luang to the Royal Plaza (Figure 44).

One year earlier, both royal ceremonies and state ceremonies was held as part of the official celebrations to mark the Sixtieth Anniversary Celebrations of King Bhumibol Adulyadej's Accession to the Throne 2006 (the Diamond Jubilee). The highlights of the celebration were the royal and state ceremonies held between 8 and 13 June which the King and his family attended, in addition to a number of events held throughout the year 2006. On 9 June 2006, King Bhumibol and Queen Sirikit held a grand audience at the balcony of the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall, a focal point for the ceremonies. The royal couple appeared in front of tens of thousands of Thais wearing royal-yellow shirts who clustered together at the Royal Plaza and along the Ratchadamnoen Avenue while waving flags and chanting 'Long Live the King' repeatedly (Figures 45a-b). Photographs of a sea of yellow shirt wearing Thais were circulated widely in the mass media to reassert people's support for the Thai monarchy. Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall was also a venue for the Thai King and Queen, as well as members of the royal family to welcome visiting monarchs on 12 June (Figure 46). On 5 December 2012, King Bhumibol also held a grand audience at the balcony of the throne hall on the occasion of the celebration of his 85th birthday. The balcony was enlarged to accommodate members of the royal family who accompanied the King in the ceremony (Figure 47).

King Bhumibol is not the only key figure in the royal performances in this historic space; Queen Sirikit also has a crucial role in reclaiming the throne hall for royal purposes. The Queen is well recognised for her support of Thai handicrafts and her Foundation of the Promotion of Supplementary Occupations and Related Techniques of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit of Thailand (SUPPORT Foundation), established in 1976. Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation provides their members, especially those from rural areas, with training, materials, encouragement, and a ready market, hence her illustrious reputation as 'Patroness of Thai crafts' and 'Mother of Thai Silk'.⁹⁰ Thai villagers who are the members of the SUPPORT Foundation are commissioned to produced handicrafts which were selected to be displayed at the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall for the temporary exhibition series titled 'Arts of the Kingdom Exhibition' (AKE) organised by the Sirikit Institute. The first AKE was held in 1992, on the occasion of Queen Sirikit's Sixtieth Birthday Anniversary during 8-31 August. Since

⁹⁰ "Kan Thawai Phraratchasamanya 'Phra Manda haeng Mai Thai' dae Somdet Phranangchao Sirikit Phra Borommarachininat" (Her Majesty Queen Sirikit to be Bestowed the title 'Mother of Thai Silk'), *RG* 129, 180 Ngo. (27 August 2012), 22-23. Queen Sirikit also initiated 'Queen Sirikit Gallery' or 'Queen's Gallery,' an art museum on Ratchadamnoen Avenue, Bangkok. The gallery was established in 2003 after the request by Queen Sirikit to found a permanent public exhibition and promote the works of acclaimed and young Thai artists, as well as members of her SUPPORT foundation.

then, exhibitions have been arranged on special occasions such as King Bhumibol's Golden Jubilee during 12-22 December 1996, and the Seventy-second Birthday Anniversary of King Bhumibol and Queen Sirikit in 1998 (23 July-8 August) and 2004 (3 July-3 August), respectively. The Fifth exhibition on the occasion of King Bhumibol's Diamond Jubilee from 18 December 2007 to 13 January 2008 was opened as the last temporary exhibition. On 2 May 2008, King Bhumibol granted permission to arrange the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall as a permanent exhibition space for displaying masterpiece handiworks from the Sirikit Institute.

The thematic subjects of the displays are the craftsmanship of traditional royal court art and Buddhist art, which are generally considered 'high art,' restored and preserved by the SUPPORT Foundation (Figures 48-49). The exhibition occupies both floors of the throne hall. On the upper floor, the exhibition features replicas of royal thrones, royal barges, wood-carved screens depicting scenes from Thai literature, Buddhist relics such as the footprint of the Buddha, and the replica of the royal dinner table once used for receiving the royal guests on King Bhumibol's Diamond Jubilee on 9 June 2006. Embroidered panels and examples of Thai textiles are on display on the ground floor. The objects were made by unnamed members of the foundation who came from rural villages. The characteristics of traditional Thai arts and handicrafts displayed within a westernised style of architecture offers a paradoxical vision to the audience. As the museum was initially a unique Western institution, it is similar to museums in the Western world which exhibit oriental objects, a collection from the colonial era.⁹¹ Here, whether intentionally or not, the display suggests Thailand's distinct gap between social classes as a parallel to the opposition between a coloniser and a colonised.

Following Walter Benjamin's concept of aura and authenticity concerning the reproduction of the work of art,⁹² these replicas of royal court arts perhaps vitiate the uniqueness of the authentic works, especially the historical objects such as the Royal Barge or the Royal Throne. However, the reproductions of royal art objects, as Benjamin suggests, satisfy the desire of contemporary masses to bring things closer spatially and humanly, and vice versa.⁹³ Thus, the reproduction of objects used in royal ceremonies can bring the monarchy closer to the public as well. The subjects of the displays, together with the title of the exhibition, mirror the royalist ideology in the narrative of Thai history. The 'masterpieces' of Thai works of art are craftsmanship from

⁹¹ Ivan Karp, "Culture and Representation," in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington; London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 16.

⁹² Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (London: Pimlico, 1999), 212-218.

⁹³ Benjamin, "The Work of Art," 217.

the royal court, which represent the identity of the kingdom. The high art of the royal court displayed here is an effort deployed to ensure a continuity of the monarchy in Thai history, as well as an attempt to forge Thai national identity within the royalist ideology framework.

Moreover, the exhibition has returned an inaccessible space to the public, more so than when it still served for the State Opening of Parliament and acted as the Parliament House during 1932-1974.⁹⁴ The frequency of the royal rituals and ceremonies held at the throne hall which consist of holding the grand audience of the reigning monarch in the twenty-first century, as well as the venue for Queen Sirikit's royal commission on the exhibition, indicates an attempt of the monarchy to repossess the space. Interestingly, here it is the Queen not the King who has repossessed the space under the auspices of 'heritage art.' In retrospective, it also solidifies an initial function of the throne hall to serve as the 'theatre of power' of the Chakri Dynasty originated in Chulalongkorn's royal commission. The accessibility of this former throne hall has finally served its purpose as the grandest publicity for the creation of Chulalongkorn's royal self-identity. Eventually, the propaganda of the fresco, along with the official history of Thailand, has firmly established the images and identities of Chakri kings in the Thais' memories.

4.2.2.2 The Ratsadakorn Bhibhattana Building, Grand Palace

King Chulalongkorn's Western style Ratsadakorn Phiphattana Building on the Grand Palace's grounds was originally built for the Royal Department of Tax Revenue (later the Ministry of Finance) in 1870. The then-vacant building has recently been transferred into QSMT (Figure 50). The museum project started in 2003 to mark Queen Sirikit's support for traditional Thai textiles. The museum collects, displays, and preserves textiles from Thailand and Southeast Asia, with an emphasis on the heritage of Thailand and Queen Sirikit's collections of ethnographic, royal and personal textiles. It officially opened to the public on 9 May 2012. The current exhibitions consist of three thematic displays designed to honour Queen Sirikit's work in preserving and promoting the textile arts and crafts of Thailand; namely, 'Gallery 1: Artistry in Silk: The Royal Style of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit,' 'Gallery 2: Fashioning Tradition: Queen Sirikit Creates a National Dress for Thailand,' and 'Galleries 3 and 4: For the Love of Her Country: Her Majesty Queen Sirikit Creates the SUPPORT' (Figures 51-53). The following analysis focuses on the content of Gallery 2, in order to investigate Queen Sirikit's invention of national dress during the 1960s and how it creates public awareness of Thai cultural identity. This exhibition seeks to demonstrate Queen Sirikit's cultural agency: her role in the establishment of Thai national dress for women. It

⁹⁴ Before the establishment of AKE, the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall was opened to public once a year on Thailand National Children's day (on the second Saturday of January).

features historic court textiles, archival photographs, film and a selection of the Queen's personal wardrobe made of Thai silk and traditional Thai textiles, such as 'khit.'⁹⁵

The invention of sartorial tradition originated from the 1960 State Visits, when Queen Sirikit accompanied King Bhumibol to foreign countries.⁹⁶ Queen Sirikit regarded this performance of her duties as a representation of Thai women. She heeded a need for a modern national attire suitable for a formal occasion. In her memoirs, Queen Sirikit stated that Thai Court dress had changed over time, especially since the mid-nineteenth century which was heavily influenced by Western styles.⁹⁷ More importantly, in 1941, the government of Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram (hereafter referred to as Phibun) had issued a decree requiring all Thais to wear only Western style clothing (Figure 54).⁹⁸ In order to recreate Thailand's national dress, the Queen enlisted a team of consultants and advisors who had a specialty in Thai history. Members of the team included Pierre Balmain, a French couturier designer, whom Queen Sirikit met earlier in 1958 and commissioned to design her Western style gowns for the same extensive state visit.⁹⁹

Diverse sources, such as surviving court textiles and photographs of court women taken between 1850 and 1925, were used as reference for designing new Thai national dress. Traditional materials, historical influences and Western dressmaking techniques restyled and brought hybridism to this new design. Eight styles of Thai national dress were created in various forms, fabric and levels of formality, namely, Thai Ruean Ton, Thai Chitralada, Thai Amarin, Thai Boromphiman, Thai Siwalai, Thai Chakri, Thai Dusit and Thai Chakraphat (Figure 55). This collection was named 'Thai Phra Rajaniyom,' which means 'Royal Favour,' by Thanpuying Maneerat Bunnag, the Queen's lady-in-waiting. Queen Sirikit's reinvented national dress interestingly marks

⁹⁵ Khit is a type of hand woven cloth produced in certain areas of the northeastern region of Thailand.

⁹⁶ See further discussion on the US royal tour and its effect on the construction of Thai national identity by Thai ruling classes as well as the Queen's travelling wardrobe in the recent volume of Thai history during the Cold War in Matthew Phillips, *Thailand in the Cold War* (Oxon: Routledge, 2016), 181-187. This volume was published during the submission of this dissertation hence its contribution to the research cannot be properly included.

⁹⁷ Queen Sirikit, *In Memory of the State Visits of His Majesty the King: The Royal Compositions of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit* (Bangkok: Thai Chuay Thai Foundation, 2004), 83-87.

⁹⁸ During 1939-1942, the government of Field Marshal Phibun issued a series of 12 edicts titled 'the Cultural Mandates or State Decrees' (in Thai: Ratthaniyom) which aimed to create a uniform and 'civilised' Thai culture. The tenth State Decree, promulgated on 15 January 1941, mandated that Thais should adopt a dress code 'in accordance with civilisation' which meant Western clothing was a proper formal wear rather than Thai traditional dress and should be worn in public space. See Charnvit Kaset Siri, *Prawat Kanmuang Thai 2475-2500 (Political History of Thailand 1932-1957)* (Bangkok: Textbooks Project, 2001), 199-203 and 219-223; Phillips, *Thailand*, 62-68.

⁹⁹ Queen Sirikit, *In Memory*, 89-91.

the transition from the wrapped to the stitched vestimentary regime by which she aims to honour the past with the design pattern while channelling a practical, modern Thai identity. Peleggi compares this development of Thai sartorial practices with Claude Lévi-Strauss's analysis of socio-cultural formations using binary opposition in 'The Raw and the Cooked':

The dress of both royalty and commoners still belonged, however, to the regime of wrapped rather than stitched clothing – a distinction in vestimentary habits comparable to that between raw and cooked food in alimentary habits. The reform of court dress in the second half of the nineteenth century meant, above all, the transition from the wrapped to the stitched vestimentary regime as befitting a "civilized" nation.¹⁰⁰

However, in the case of Queen Sirikit's national dress, it was an appeal to nationalist tradition rather than a modernisation scheme which was more applicable to the adoption of Western attire in nineteenth century Thailand. It should also be noted that Siamese elites had sought out a sartorial signifier for benefitting a 'civilised' nation from the import of Indian garments and textiles long before they started adopting Western style clothes. However, with the addition of modern and contemporary features from Western technique, the Queen's bodily practice exemplified the transnational concept in refashioning and reinterpreting traditional Thai dress as well. According to Mina Roces and Louise Edwards, fashioning a national dress always manifests a continuous modification of its history, as well as incorporating influences from transnational or transcultural spaces. Alternatively, it plays to the nostalgia for a romanticised past as well.¹⁰¹

A selection of Queen Sirikit's national dresses worn on various occasions at home and abroad, dating from 1960 to 1989, is elaborately shown together with its process of invention and various types of textiles used for Queen Sirikit's personal collection of national dress at the exhibition. The royal revival of traditional Thai dress can be considered in relation to Hobsbawm's theory of invented tradition, by which Queen Sirikit sought to establish continuity with a suitable historic past.¹⁰² Interestingly, the reinvention of national dress was done precisely when the Thai Monarchy was reinstated by Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat, the eleventh Thai Prime Minister (1959 - 1963), after the monarchy had been restricted from a public role under Phibun's premiership and military dictatorship (1938-1944 and 1948-1957). After the decade of being marginalised from national politics, Queen Sirikit's revival could be seen as a signifier of a liberation from Phibun's authoritarian regime. Bodily practices, fashioning

¹⁰⁰ Maurizio Peleggi, "Refashioning Civilization: Dress and Bodily Practice in Thai Nation-Building," in *The Politics of Dress in Asia and The Americas*, ed. Mina Roces and Louise Edwards (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2008), 67-68.

¹⁰¹ Mina Roces and Louise Edwards, "Trans-national Flows and The Politics of Dress in Asia and The Americas," in *The Politics of Dress*, 5-6.

¹⁰² Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition*, 1.

and refashioning of the body politics have been a crucial method in addressing the head of state's status quo in political regimes.¹⁰³ One of the illustrious exemplars of such practice is Aung San Suu Kyi of Myanmar who always appears in traditional Burmese dress for her opposition campaign against Myanmar's military authoritarianism.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, Peleggi indicates that the royal revival of traditional court dress in the 1960s was to reconstitute the monarchy's mystical-religious aura based on the Buddhist ideal of paternal ruler.¹⁰⁵ Queen Sirikit's reinvention of national dress based on traditional and historic court dress therefore underlines her 'authentic Thai' inheritance as well as Thailand's dynastic paradigm before the political reform in 1932.

The Royal Tour in 1960 was a success as result of Queen Sirikit's clothing practice and sartorial elegance. She quickly became a fashion icon in the Western press, and was named in the International Best Dressed List in 1965 among the world's famous figures, such as Jacqueline Kennedy.¹⁰⁶ As mentioned earlier, Queen Sirikit has established herself as a supporter of Thai textiles and handicrafts; thus, she is known as the 'Patroness of Thai Crafts.' In hindsight, Queen Sirikit's sartorial aspiration is quite similar to Queen Saovabha's invention of formal wear during the reign of King Chulalongkorn. They both reflect a strong female agency in the representation of the female body in the public sphere. The refashioning of women dress in both eras were also rendered from the influx of Western influence in Thailand, although in an opposed derivation and reflection. Moreover, the impact from their sartorial reinvention to their respective society was quite different. Whereas the hybrid costume of Siamese women at King Chulalongkorn's court shaped the wearers' Habitus and constructed a class distinction as well as created Siam's feminine modernity; Queen Sirikit's reinvented national dress functioned more resolutely in a political context. Phibun's State Decree dictating Thais to adopt Western clothing which left Thai traditional dress and textiles on the edge of extinction was implicated in the significance and signification of dress as an expression of political identity in Queen Sirikit's revival. The Queen's national dress, therefore, symbolised the regaining of power of the monarchy which was suppressed during Phibun's authoritarianism.

Queen Sirikit's support of the Thai textiles industry also hugely influences and inspires many Thai designers to embrace traditional Thai pattern and Thai textiles in

¹⁰³ Wendy Parkins, "Introduction: (Ad)Dressing Citizens," in *Fashioning the Body Politics: Dress, Gender, Citizenship*, ed. Wendy Parkins (Oxford: Berge, 2002), 2-3.

¹⁰⁴ See Penny Edwards, "Dress in a Little Brief Authority: Clothing the Body Politic in Burma," in *The Politics of Dress*, 132-134.

¹⁰⁵ Peleggi, "Refashioning Civilization," 77-78.

¹⁰⁶ Nicholas Grossman and Dominic Faulder, ed., *King Bhumibol Adulyadej: A Life's Work: Thailand's Monarchy in Perspective* (Bangkok: Editions Didier Millet, 2011), 112.

their design collections. The eight styles of Queen Sirikit's national dress have become a court uniform, the Queen and Thai princesses are frequently seen wearing the national dress in royal ceremonies and formal occasions (Figures 56-57). Their nationalist sartorial style suggests an attempt to present themselves as nationalist icons. In a national scale, the eight styles of national dress are adopted by Thai women and have been widely used as wedding gowns and service and work uniforms. This bodily practice and modes of consumption indicate that the monarchy remains a significant arbiter of taste, as well as powerfully impact on twenty-first century Thai patriotism.

One recent internet phenomenon mirrors the influence of Queen Sirikit's invention of tradition on Thai patriotism and national cultural identity. The appearance of a Thai actress, Rhatha Phongam in a hybrid Thai traditional silk gown while posing with the 'wai' gesture to journalists at the Cannes Film Festival Premiere in May 2013 stirred up an overwhelming response on the internet from many Thais. Wai is a hand gesture used in formal greeting as well as to express gratitude and to apologise. Although Thai's wai is originated from the Indic *Anjali Mudra*, it is highly regarded as 'an authentic Thai tradition.' A popular Thai-language website and discussion forum called 'pantip.com' was thrown into a state of patriotic frenzy from topics related to Phongam's sartorial statement and the wai gesture (Figure 58).¹⁰⁷ Moreover, her posting on her personal social networking service which was circulated in the same website indicates her awareness of nationalism projected from the dress and the wai. These two practices were what she identified as 'our ways': i.e. Thainess, in order to project her representation of Thai national identity to the world. Such perception strongly affirms national dress as an important signifier of ideological and cultural values as well as a fundamental marker of 'us' and 'them.'¹⁰⁸

Another Thai actor, Vithaya Pansringarm, was also present in the same event wearing a hybrid Thai dress: a Western-style jacket with Thai chong krabane, which was very similar to the style once worn by King Chulalongkorn on his first visit to India in 1872. Visual representation of the Thais to the world in the twenty-first century, again, traces back to the modernist king Chulalongkorn. This internet phenomenon strongly exemplifies the influence of Queen Sirikit's support and promotion of Thai textiles and national dress to the public which consequently helps construct Thais' consciousness of their national identity.

¹⁰⁷ See "Yaya Ying Ngam Baeb Thai 'Go Inter' thi Muang Cannes," (Beautiful in Thai style, Yaya Ying to Go Global at Cannes) accessed February 21, 2014, <http://pantip.com/topic/30518179> and "Phap Raek Khong 'Yaya Ying' Doen Phromdaeng Thessakan Nang Muang Cannes," (First Image of 'Yaya Ying' on the Red Carpet at Cannes Film Festival) accessed February 21, 2014, <http://pantip.com/topic/30519676>.

¹⁰⁸ Roces and Edwards, "Trans-national Flows," 2.

All in all, the narrative of 'arts of the kingdom,' 'national dress' and 'Bangkok/Rattanakosin's glorious history and legacy' shares the same projection by which the political independence and cultural integrity of the Thai nation were bestowed from the monarchy. Thai monarchy's exhibitionary agency is, in fact, more significant than the contexts or objects of display, as Ivan Karp points out that the most powerful agents of the exhibition are the exhibition makers themselves, especially how they represent and construct the identity of such nation.¹⁰⁹ The role of Queen Sirikit and the Crown Property Bureau as well as their choice of space in establishing the 'royalist' exhibitions are symbolically significant in order to reassert the power of the monarchy onto the space and to public interest. Representing the monarchy through the exhibitions and royal ceremonials in the conflicted space is a bold statement of Chakri sovereignty. It manifests their effort to ensure a continuity of monarchy in Thai history, as well as to forge Thai national identity within the royalist ideology framework.

¹⁰⁹ Karp, "Culture and Representation," 15.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has sought to investigate the westernisation of art and architecture in late nineteenth century to early twentieth century Thailand, formerly known as Siam. Westernisation, a politico-cultural ideology deployed as a national policy, was a motivating force behind dramatic social transformation in King Chulalongkorn's reign. This particular period, apart from Chulalongkorn's socio-political reforms, was also an era of a massive production of visual representation which hugely changed Thai visual culture. Siamese aristocrats of Chulalongkorn's royal court strove to construct a new identity by adopting westernised modes of practice. The thesis draws on a body of scholarship that understands Siam's westernisation as a political strategy to impress the West, to indicate that Siam was a civilised nation. I have argued that this late nineteenth century movement was for local audiences as much as it was for the West. The royal endeavours were engineered to create an estimable public image of the Siamese monarchy. By doing so, the Thai monarchy was subject to veneration which has helped to construct a collective memory of Chulalongkorn among Thais for many decades since the beginning of the twentieth century.

In this study I have traced the Siamese elites' westernised modes of practice and consumption through portraits, collections, architecture and royal pageants in order to relate these materials to wider social, cultural and political discourses operating with, or intersecting with late nineteenth century visual culture. Modernisation and westernisation were used interchangeably throughout the thesis, as the nineteenth century Siamese aristocrats considered an adoption of Western cultures and technologies as a means towards modernity in order to achieve civilisation: in order to conform with Western classifications. By focusing on Chulalongkorn's art and architectural commissions and his art collection, the methodological approach of this thesis has been to attempt to investigate the nineteenth century construction of self-representation. Each of the case studies in the thesis was set out to interpret the way in which the adopting of westernised modes of practice or appropriation of Western art styles affected Thai society in the *fin de siècle* and up until the present day.

The opening chapter examined the adoption of portraiture in the second half of nineteenth century in Chulalongkorn's royal court. A study of Chulalongkorn's official portraits showed the fashioning of the Chakri Dynasty's self-representation corresponding to a discourse of civilisation. Portrait paintings, sculptures and photographs of King Chulalongkorn were designed to portray both his kingship and modernisation. Sartorial display in portraits was one of the adopted modes of consumption deployed to portray a civilised Southeast Asian king. I traced Chulalongkorn's portraits commissioned for the duration of his reign which reflected the

process of westernisation and the Chakri Reforms: from hybrid costumes to Western-style military dress, as well as the absence of the Royal Regalia, a traditional symbol of Siam's kingship. The full-length portrait painting by Carolus-Duran and the Equestrian Statue made in Paris were the last formal portraits of Chulalongkorn and a crucial example of Chulalongkorn's visual representation after Western fashion. Most importantly the Equestrian Statue became a symbol of how Chulalongkorn was venerated as the Great Beloved King in Thailand. The study moved on to investigate Chulalongkorn's commission of his predecessors' full-length portraits to adorn a gallery in the Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall. The display of the Chakri monarchs was repeated in another commission later in Chulalongkorn's reign for mural paintings of the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall. The frescos depict the first five kings of the Chakri Dynasty in their political and cultural agency with the addition of King Vajiravudh's coronation scene. I argued that these paintings were designed to circulate and celebrate a royal authority of the Chakri Dynasty amidst a power struggle with the West during the last decades of the nineteenth century. The last section of the first chapter explored female agency through portraits of Siamese women in the royal court during the reigns of King Mongkut and King Chulalongkorn. Here, the transformation in Siam's royal court heavily affected the levels of how they could be represented to the public as well as the way in which Siamese female aristocrats, especially Queen Saovabha, presented their visual image. The tragic presence of the forbidden women at the royal court of Siam whose lives were shut away from the public mentioned in Anna Leonowen's accounts was dramatically changed under the façade of westernisation operated by men.

The major strand of research in Chapter Two was the interpretation of Chulalongkorn's private collection, the National Museum Bangkok and its collection created by Chulalongkorn. Thinking through a collecting narrative, I demonstrated the motivation behind Chulalongkorn's acquisition which mirrored the appropriation of Western style in his paintings, sculptures and architecture. Among his art collection were paintings acquired from the Salon of 1907 which have never been identified in earlier studies. Chulalongkorn's acquisition from the Salon in Paris clearly indicated Chulalongkorn's discerning taste from an exhibition which was prestigious and having a very high standard in Europe. By doing so, Chulalongkorn defined his social class and enhanced his self-definition in order to achieve civilisation. Though they could not be accessed by the public during his lifetime, Chulalongkorn stated that his art collection would eventually become the nation's heritage as it was funded by the Privy Purse; his private collection therefore was transformed into a cultural profit to the society. In addition to the analysis of Chulalongkorn's art collection, this study also re-attributed portraits of Emperor Napoleon III and Empress Eugénie of the Second French Empire in the Royal collection which had been previously identified as Wilhelm II, the German

Emperor and Queen Victoria of the British Empire, respectively. I also discussed Chulalongkorn's major role in the institution of the Royal Museum (later National Museum of Bangkok) and the organising of exhibitions in an unorthodox space such as the royal cremation ceremony and a Buddhist temple. This new establishment, together with Siamese displays at the International Exhibitions, promoted the Siamese monarchy and the Thai/Siamese nation as well as created a dialogue with the West within the context of colonial cultural exchange.

Chulalongkorn's appropriation of Western architectural styles in order to build a new Bangkok was the centre of my study in the third chapter. During his reign, many European architects and engineers were employed to construct his palaces and civic buildings. Drawing on Suntharawanit's argument on the remodelling from British colonies and Herzfeld's crypto-colonialism, I explored Chulalongkorn's architecture built during the 1870s-1880s in order to complicate this scholarly examination of colonisation as well as Siam's role in colonial networks in the reign of King Chulalongkorn. I discussed Chulalongkorn's appropriation of architectural styles, namely Neo-Palladian and Neo-Classical styles for his early architecture in Bangkok which worked together with his newly established public infrastructure. They collectively created the new landscape of Bangkok that transformed a traditional, sacred city into a westernised metropolis and, in turn, thus was reminiscent of the colonies. Bangkok in the reign of Chulalongkorn grew rapidly with both the growth of population and public architecture. Chulalongkorn's new palace in the Dusit District played an important role in the expansion of Bangkok. This area soon rivalled the Rattanakosin Island in terms of a royal ground and development. However, the appropriation was not completely controlled by the structure of colonial power. This chapter also explored Chulalongkorn's agency in the ways in which he appropriated and overturned certain European architectural styles such as the Neo-Gothic style to gratify his ambition in his architecture both in Bangkok and in resort towns, especially during the last decade of his reign.

Chapter Four looked at the public's perception and memorialisation of Chulalongkorn. Whereas the first chapter explored the royal portraits in the palaces, my final chapter engaged in a dialogue of collective memory of King Chulalongkorn developed from the circulation of his visual image, royal pageant and spectacles in the public sphere. Chulalongkorn, as a moderniser, introduced coinage and postage stamps which featured the sovereign's portrait to the Siamese. Such invention, I argue, indicated the extent of Chulalongkorn's awareness of the value of his public image and its power to manifest his royal authority in a modern way, as opposed to his predecessors. His appearance in the royal processions and ceremonies, especially his Jubilee celebrations witnessed by the attentive crowd, helped to diminish a god-like,

tyrannical and remote portrayal of Siamese monarchs. Chulalongkorn and his government created a public image of a beloved father-figure and illustrious monarch which shaped the way in which Thais memorialise the King.

This chapter also indicated how Chulalongkorn's visual representation which was discussed in the previous chapters mutually contributed to the accomplishment of modernisation, both for the monarchy and for the nation. Chulalongkorn's new Bangkok perfectly served as a majestic theatre for extravagant royal pageants to parade the King's modernised public image. By exploring Chulalongkorn's method in portraying his public image, I have demonstrated that visual image as well as royal pageantry were vital instruments in the construction of Thai national identity. For example, the public donation for the Equestrian Statue was often read as a symbol of unity and loyalty of the Thais; thus, the royal statue was an embodiment and a physical manifestation of the Thai nation. This reading in the official narrative of Thai history also suggested that, in a way, the monarchy (the Chakri Dynasty) is a nation. This suggestion led to the final section of the chapter which investigated the commemoration of Chulalongkorn in the present time through celebratory exhibitions in Bangkok, most of which were closely related to Chulalongkorn. This exhibition phenomenon was analysed in an attempt to interpret the second phase of the reaffirmation of Thai monarchy's status which was effected by a wider context of political conflicts in the twenty-first century: a mirror image of over a century ago.

Gender and female agency were also discussed as the chapter explored the role of Queen Sirikit in re-occupancy of Chulalongkorn's historic space and transformation of the sites into museum space. Queen Sirikit's Museum of Textiles and the Arts of the Kingdom Exhibition, on the one hand, aim to promote traditional arts and handicrafts of Thailand. On the other hand, they reflect a crucial role of the monarchy in operating the construction of Thailand's cultural identity. Additionally, Queen Sirikit's contribution to the reshaping of gender roles in Thailand's patriarchal society mirrors her predecessor, Queen Saovabha, whose role in the public sphere affected both political regime and cultural stance. Their visual representation particularly through their sartorial display demonstrates them as an active agent in dress politics. The sartorial display of the Queens is no longer just an affair of the queen's wardrobe. Their formal appearance engendered a paradigm shift in refashioning the country where Queen Saovabha's hybrid costume represented Siam's progress towards modernity and Queen Sirikit's reinterpretation of female court dress has reputedly become a national dress.

The emphasis on royalty in the thesis has been placed in order to initiate a dialogue on the role of the monarchy in creating a national identity from the past to the present, and to demonstrate that the popularity of the royalty has been a key factor in

the complexity of the construction of Thainess. It is undeniable that the Chakri Dynasty has always been at the centre of the narrative of the official Thai history to manifest a regal power and sometimes even romanticise the royals. However, ever since Chulalongkorn created a new narrative for the monarchy in which he reworked a traditional representation of kingship — from a religious or divine kingship to a modern and secularised royalty—, it has changed the public's perception of the monarchy as the century progressed. I also tried to show how Chulalongkorn modernised his self-representation in order to demythologise the monarchy. But after his death, the King was apotheosised, and his westernisation was glorified under the influence of the neo-royalist ideology in the official history of Thailand. Many invented traditions, such as the Chulalongkorn Day and its ceremonies as well as the Cult of Chulalongkorn were an embodiment of this ideology in Thai society. The collective memory of Chulalongkorn regarding his reforms and his victory over the Western expansion within the royalist narrative in Thai history helps securing the Thai monarchy, or to be precise, the Chakri Dynasty's hegemony, and the public is expected to be very loyal to the royals to the extent that: 'to be Thai is to love the King.'

However, Chulalongkorn's westernisation presented a paradox. Thailand was never colonised but neither did westernisation help Thailand come through unscathed. The way in which many Thais, including scholars, emphasise King Chulalongkorn's role as the protector of Thailand's independence reflects the trauma and fear of colonialism. Hence, Thai history in certain periods had been written with post-colonial narrative. For many decades, colonialism and post-colonialism have remained a debate in critical research on Thailand. In contributing to this debate, I addressed some of the case studies concerning the cultural revival and the invention of tradition as a counter to Western cultural domination of Siam and colonial India. This comparative study did not aim to place Siam in the same situation as in India; it tried to indicate that with or without the impact of direct colonial rule, the Western expansion had an intense effect regardless.

To locate westernised art in Thailand during the late nineteenth to early twentieth century in the colonial networks, I argue that the works of art of Siam in Chulalongkorn's reign were products of colonial encounters albeit the absence of direct colonisation. Westernisation was a new initiative Siamese elites deployed as both a diplomatic manoeuvre and counter-manoeuve in relation to the supremacy of European power. In this sense, Siamese elites deployed European modes of practice to renegotiate their relationship with the West, to balance their position against the imbalance of power. In earlier scholarship, westernisation has been analysed with emphasis on the extensive program of reform. My study, in turn, addresses Siam's political and cultural contact with the West through visual arts in transcultural relations.

Siamese works of art under King Chulalongkorn's Western aspiration created a new visual vocabulary for Siam's nineteenth century visual culture. As closely analysed in Chapter One, the most significance shift was portraiture which was previously regarded as a taboo in Siamese society. It transformed and reshaped Siamese elites' identity in order to conform to European hegemonic values and ideas. My investigation proposes that this visual representation also created a development in Siamese kingship which ultimately affected the memorialisation and commemoration of King Chulalongkorn. In a wider context of international diplomacy, Siam's appropriation of Western arts was brought into the service of political negotiation. Transculturation which was entangled in the unequal power relations between Siam and the West played a crucial part in the era of British and French imperial ascendancy in Southeast Asia. The role of elite visual culture was explored in order to analyse its effect on the non-colonised Siam's geopolitics during Western imperialism as well as a reaffirmation of the hegemonic sovereignty of the Chakri Dynasty.

However, Siam's role in this transcultural field was scarcely an embodiment of submissiveness. The act of imitation, mimicry or colonial mimesis in nineteenth century Siam, on the one hand, was a socio-political phenomenon which is duly interpreted as crypto-colonialism. On the other hand, in appropriating Western styles of art, Siamese elites also demonstrated a significant level of agency. They performed as a willing active participant in a process of transculturation and colonial cultural exchange in their own terms to achieve their conceptualisation of modernity. Though my subject is the uncolonised rather than the colonised, my aim has been to contribute to the scrutiny of the crypto-colonialist narrative by focusing on the complex representation of Siam/Thai national identity shaped by Chulalongkorn's westernisation. The paradox in Thai identity is how the ideology of the authentic Thai clashes with the westernisation or self-colonised method Siamese aristocrats in the late nineteenth century deployed to maintain being Thai.

Here, I have attempted to locate the westernisation in art and architecture as well as spectacles in the dialogue of Thai visual culture in the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. By taking the materials into different aspects, such as collecting and memory, I tried to piece together Siamese aristocrats' visual representation through diverse means and socio-political transformation. Nevertheless, the limitation of accessibility to certain primary sources as well as the rarity of contemporary documentation were problematic for the study to the extent that some of identification and investigation inevitably could not be done. My study dealt with a vast number of materials in order to map the westernised art in the Chulalongkorn Era on a timeline of Thai art historiography. By doing so, I hope to bridge a transition between the pre-modern to the modern periods in Thai art history. Westernised art in King

Chulalongkorn's reign should not be addressed as an isolated moment in Thai art history; rather, it should be considered a beginning of a movement for modern period of Thai art. The appropriation of Western art did not merely changed the style of art and architecture created in Thailand, but also gave rise to a secular art which rapidly increased as the twentieth century progressed.

Moreover, this research has the intention to challenge the deep-seated notions of Thainess and Thai uniqueness in academic writing. These conservative thoughts have isolated Thailand's early modern scholarship from the contemporary political and socio-cultural movements of its neighbouring nations. By engaging in the ongoing colonial-postcolonial debates in Thai studies and a broader field of the concept of contact zones and transculturation, this thesis should offer a variety of interpretative strategies to westernised art in late nineteenth to early twentieth Thailand. Certainly, 'non-colonised' Siam and the Western empires' peripheries often intersected: with Burma in the North, the Straits Settlements in the South, the French Indochina in the Northeast and potentially as far as India, China, Japan or Hawaii. These countries collectively experienced the influence of Western culture, either through colonisation or westernisation, which had immediate effects on social and legal aspects of life in their respective societies. The Siamese elites' practice of westernisation thus echoed those of their Asian-Pacific elites counterparts, for example the visual images of King Chulalongkorn of Siam, Emperor Meiji of Japan and King David Kalākaua of Hawaii all share similarity in the wearing of Western military dress. The study of Siamese westernisation in relation to the flow of Western influence across the Indian and Pacific Ocean world has been left open for further discussion aiming for a much more thorough and meticulous inquiry into the global contexts for Siam's late nineteenth century visual culture. By placing Siam within a wider geo-political arena, this offers a prospect for further research regarding the art of Thailand at the turn of the century in colonial networks of which my research aspires to establish.

In this study, Siam's *fin de siècle* visual culture in its historical specificity as well as its impact on the memorialisation and commemoration of the Thai monarchy in the twenty-first century was extensively emphasised. As the thesis interrogated ways in which Siamese elites deployed a visual representation to promote a dynastic regime, this was in part achieved to instigate the rise of city or urban space in early twentieth century Bangkok as the Chakri Dynasty's hegemonic territoriality, it brought forth many issues with constructive potentiality. Prospective directions that the study suggests include cross-cultural or hybrid dress in the Siamese society as the effects of networked practices. This thesis has addressed this sartorial practice of both men and women in Siam, however, it should be interrogated in a wider discussion with other cultures in Southeast Asia and Asia-Pacific as mentioned above. Siamese women's

participation in cultural exchanges which has been examined here also needs more art historical scrutiny by bringing female agency in art and culture of early modern Thailand to the fore, particularly on female connoisseurship, collecting and shopping. All in all, this thesis has not only scrutinised Siamese elites' deployment of visual representation to facilitate their hierarchical dynastic power, but has also tried to locate the position of Siam or Bangkok in particular within the networks of colonial cultural exchanges during the late nineteenth to early twentieth century.

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APPENDIX

A

List of Thai Monarchs

The Rattanakosin Period

The Chakri Dynasty (1782-Present)

TITLE	NAME	BIRTH	MARRIAGE	DEATH	SUCCESSION RIGHT	KEY ARCHITECTURE
RAMA I	Phrabat Somdet 'Phra Phutta Yotfa Chulaloke' Maharat (the Great) 6 April 1782 - 7 September 1809 (27 years)	20 March 1737 in Ayutthaya Province	Queen Amarindra (1761-his death) at Amphawa, Samut Songkhram Province 42 children with various consorts	7 September 1809 (72 years old)	The founder of the Chakri Dynasty/First king of the Rattanakosin Era	1) Grand Palace, Bangkok
RAMA II	Phrabat Somdet 'Phra Phutta Loetla Nabhalai' 7 September 1809 - 21 July 1824 (15 years)	24 February 1767 at Amphawa, Samud Songkhram Province	1) Queen Si Suriyendra (1801-his death) 2) Princess Kundhon Dibyavadi (1816-his death) 3) Princess Sri Sulalai (1787-his death) 73 children with various consorts	21 July 1824 (57 years old)	Son of Rama I by Queen Amarindra	1) Grand Palace, Bangkok
RAMA III	Phrabat Somdet Phra Paramintharamaha Jessadabodindra 'Phra Nangklao Chaoyuhua' 21 July 1824 - 2 April 1851 (26 years)	31 March 1787 at the Old Palace, Thonburi	51 children with various consorts	2 April 1851 (63 years old)	Son of Rama II by Princess Sri Sulalai	-

TITLE	NAME	BIRTH	MARRIAGE	DEATH	SUCCESSION RIGHT	KEY ARCHITECTURE
RAMA IV	Phrabat Somdet Phra Paramentharamaha <i>Mongkut</i> 'Phra Chomklao Chaoyuhua' 2 April 1851 - 1 October 1868 (18 years)	18 October 1804 at the Old Palace, Thonburi	1) Queen Somanas (1851-1852/her death) 2) Queen Debsirindra (1851-1861/her death) 3) Princess Pannarai (1861-his death) 84 children with various consorts	1 October 1868 (64 Years old)	Younger brother of Rama III/Son of Rama II by Queen Si Suriyendra	1) Phra Aphinao Niwet, Grand Palace, Bangkok 2) Phra Nakhon Khiri Palace, Phetchaburi Province
RAMA V	Phrabat Somdet Phra Paramintharamaha <i>Chulalongkorn</i> 'Phra Chunla Chom Klao Chaoyuhua' Maharat (the Great) 1 October 1868 - 23 October 1910 (Under Regency from 1868-1872) (42 years)	20 September 1853 at the Grand Palace, Bangkok	1) Queen Sunanda (1876-1880/her death) 2) Queen Sawang Vadana (1876-his death) 3) Queen Saovabha Bongsri (1876-his death) 4) Queen Sukhumala Marasri (1876-his death) 77 children with various consorts	23 October 1910 at the Amphon Sathan Residential Hall, the Dusit Palace, Bangkok (58 years old)	Son of Rama IV by Queen Debsirindra	1) The Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall Group, Grand Palace, Bangkok 2) Dusit Palace and the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall, Bangkok 3) Bang Pa-In Palace, Ayutthaya Province 4) Ram Ratchaniwet Palace, Phetchaburi Province
RAMA VI	Phrabat Somdet Phra Paramentharamaha <i>Vajiravudh</i> 'Phra Mongkut Klao Chaoyuhua' 23 October 1910 - 26 November 1925 (15 years)	1 January 1879 at the Grand Palace, Bangkok	1) Queen Suvadhna (1924-his death) 2) Princess Consort Indrasaksachi (1921-his death) 3) Princess Laksami Lawan (1921-1922/divorced) 4) Phra Sucharitsuda (1921-his death) 1 daughter by Queen Suvadhana	26 November 1925 at the Chakraphat Phiman Hall, the Grand Palace, Bangkok (45 years old)	Son of Rama V by Queen Saovabha	1) Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall, Bangkok (completed) 2) Bangkok Railway Station/ Hualamphong Station (completed) 3) Chitralada Royal Villa, Dusit Palace, Bangkok

TITLE	NAME	BIRTH	MARRIAGE	DEATH	SUCCESSION RIGHT	KEY ARCHITECTURE
RAMA VII	Phrabat Somdet Phra Paramintharamaha <i>Prajadhipok</i> 'Phra Pok Klao Chaoyuhua' 25 November 1925 - 2 March 1935 (abdicated) (9 years)	8 November 1893 at the Grand Palace, Bangkok	Queen Ramphai Phanni on 26 August 1917, at the Warophat Phiman Throne Hall, Bang Pa-In Palace, Ayutthaya Province no issue	30 May 1941 at Compton House, Surrey, England (47 years old)	Younger brother of Rama VI/Son of Rama V by Queen Saovabha	-
RAMA VIII	Phrabat Somdet Phra Paramentharamaha <i>Ananda Mahidol</i> 'Phra Atthama Ramathibodin' 2 March 1935 - 9 June 1946 (Under Regency from 1935–1946) (12 years)	20 September 1925 in Heidelberg, Germany	Unmarried	9 June 1946 at the Boromphiman Residential Hall, the Grand Palace, Bangkok (20 years old)	Nephew of Rama VII/Grandson of Rama V by Prince Mahidol Adulyadej	-
RAMA IX	Phrabat Somdet Phra Paramintharamaha <i>Bhumibol Adulyadej</i> Maharat (the Great) 9 June 1946 - Present	5 December 1927 at Mount Auburn Hospital, Cambridge, Massachusettes, USA	Queen Sirikit Kitiyakon on 28 April 1950 at Sa Prathum Palace, Bangkok 4 children (Princess Ubolrat, Prince Vajiralongkorn, Princess Sirindhorn, Princess Chulabhon Walailak)	Living	Younger brother of Rama VIII	-

NOTE:

* *Maharat* means the Great

* *italicised* = given names

* '...' = regnal name

APPENDIX
B**Official Name of Bangkok (*Krung Thep*), Capital City of Thailand**

[Thai]

กรุงเทพมหานคร อมรรัตน โกสินทร์ มหินทรายุทธยา มหาดิลกภพ นพรัตน์ราชธานีบุรี
รมย์ อุดมราชนิเวศน์มหาสถาน อมรพิมานอวตารสถิต สักกะทัตติยวิษณุกรรมประสิทธิ์

[Romanisation]

Krung Thep Mahanakhon Amorn Rattanakosin Mahintara Yutthaya
Mahadilokbhoph Noppharat Ratchathani Burirom Udom Ratchaniwet Maha
Sathan Amorn Phiman Avatan Sathit Sakkatattiya Vishnukam Prasit.

[English Translation]

Great City of Angels, the supreme repository of the Emerald Buddha, the
great land unconquerable, the grand and prominent realm, the royal and
delightful capital city of nine auspicious gems, the highest royal dwelling and
grand palace, the divine shelter and living place of the reincarnated spirits,
created by Visvakarman at Indra's behest.

APPENDIX
C**The Cultural Mandates (State Decrees: Ratthaniyom)
by the Government of Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkram****Mandate 10**

"Announcement of the 10th Mandate on Thai dress from the Prime Minister's Office," RG 58 (21 January 1941), 113.

Statement of the Prime Minister's Office

State Decree

The 10th Mandate
On the sartorial practice of the Thais

Through an observation conducted by the Thai Government, many Thais are still clothe in an inappropriate dress in public or at public gatherings which is an unseemly practice to an utmost decorum of Thai culture.

The Cabinet hereby issues an edict, in accordance to the State Decree, which consists of two items as follows:

1. Thai people should not appear at public gatherings, in public places, or in city limits without being appropriately dressed. Inappropriate dress includes wearing only underpants, wearing no shirt, or wearing a wraparound cloth.
2. Appropriate dress for Thai people consists of:
 1. Uniforms, as position and opportunity permits
 2. Polite international-style attire
 3. Polite traditional attire

Issued on 15 January 1941

Phibunsongkram
Prime Minister

APPENDIX
D

The inscription on a plaque on the base of King Chulalongkorn's Equestrian Statue

The translation was given by the *Bangkok Times* (12 November 1908), cited in Maurizio Peleggi, *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), footnote 53 of chapter 5; reads as follows:

In the year 2451 of the Buddhist Era and the 127th of the Rattanakosin Era, His Most Gracious Majesty King Chulalongkorn attained a reign of forty years over his Kingdom. This period of rule has never been reached by any other monarch in the history of the Siamese nation. His Majesty is endowed with all the greatest attributes of wise ruler. He has ruled his country with an unswerving sense of equity. He has devoted his whole heart to the care of his dominions, to preserve them in a state of national independence and to promote the unity and contentment of his people. He is highly gifted with a keen perception of all that is good and evil in the manners and customs of His country, and has always eliminated the bad and introduced nought but what is good and beneficial. He has always set himself as a meritorious example and guided his people in the path of progress and lasting benefits. He has succeeded by his high personal qualities in conferring happiness and contentment upon his people. He has never been deterred by any obstacle, however great, nor has he hesitated to sacrifice his own personal comfort, whenever the welfare and advancement of the people and the State were concerned. He has been the true father of his people. His great qualities and exalted traits of character have brought the Kingdom of Siam to the high state of prosperity and independence which she enjoys at the present time, and earned the undying love and gratitude of his people. Now that his Majesty has attained this unprecedented historical distinction by the great length of time he has sat upon the Throne, we, his grateful people, from the highest to the lowest, have felt deeply moved by the remembrance of all the immeasurable blessings conferred upon us all during his long reign, and have heartily united in erecting this royal statue as a token which shall be preserved for all generations of our supreme appreciation, gratitude and love for Our Great and Good King Chulalongkorn. Long live the King!

APPENDIX
E

Translation of Address to His Majesty the King read by H.R.H the Crown Prince at the Unveiling of the Royal Statue.

From National Archive of Thailand, *Chotmai het Phraratchaphithi Ratchamangalabhisek ror. sor. 126, 127 (A Chronicle of the Ratchamangalabhisek Ceremonies, 1907-1908)* (Bangkok: Fine Arts Department, 1984), 108-111.

May it pleased Your Majesty, Sire,

The Princes of the House and noble, officers of Your Majesty's administration both military and civil together with the monks, priests, preceptors, squires, tradesmen and commoners; all Your Majesty's subjects assembled here to-day are jubilant at the thought that Your Gracious Majesty has now fully completed the forty years of Your glorious reign. It is the reign in record that surpasses all those of the ancient Sovereigns of Ayudhya [sic] epoch, from King Uthong the Founder of that impregnable capital down to the present time. Nor even in the history of the Siamese Nation of remoter past was there to be founded reliable record of any Monarch that had equalled Your Majesty in the duration of rule. Were it for this unique historical distinction alone, our pride in Your Majesty's attainment would have sufficient reason; but we prefer to look further: in our estimation, a Sovereign is not to be judged by the length of his reign only but that we should rather seek to find how, under his long rule, he has promoted the welfare of the people: and if it can be shown that he has conscientiously striven to bring good to the nation, then can he be called a Sovereign who has not reigned long in vain. Now, when he call to mind the degree of progress and prosperity Siam has attained during the last forty years, we are moved by feelings of appreciation for Your Wise Rule and of gratitude for the blessings which Your Majesty has bestowed on the State and the people in incomparable measures. I venture to say, Sire, that You are the incarnate Sovereign of right divine having come among us at the most opportune epoch when Siam endeavoured to tread from old way to the new path of progress, for if it had not the benefit of Your ripe Statesmanship guiding the people by Your sagacious polity in the right path, this Land of the Free would never have reached the stage of advancement and prosperity which it now enjoys.

The instances of Your Majesty's love for Your people are too numerous for enumeration. It is a love as deep as wide as the great ocean whose shores are beyond the ranged of human visage. Time would fall to detail even a tithe of them what words could be found to extoll the praise of that supreme act of grace, by which Your Majesty had granted unto Your people the liberty, making them free in fact as well as in name, the honoured patronymic of our Race. The sacrifice of inherent prerogatives did not deter Your Majesty from obeying the dictates of Your patriotic heart which places the interests of the nation at large always before your own. This act of love is indeed an ornament that becomes a Sovereign rather than any coat of mail; it is a weapon mightier than all others, with which he is able to achieve that greatest of victories, the conquest of the hearts of men. For this can be done by Love and benevolence. In this respect then. Thus You are the great Victor, for not only have Your Majesty won the heart of Your People but you have consolidated Your conquest with friendship and mercy. There could only be one feeling amongst Your subjects, that of devotion to Your person and a sense of security under Your protection. Even the people of other nations are unanimous in their admiration and value the friendship and international intercourse with our Country because of the friendly feelings You have shown them that move them to appreciate Your rare qualities and wise administration.

The evidences of Your Majesty's sincere solicitude for Your people are before our eyes; how You are striving conscientiously to execute the sacred duties that devolves on You in all matters, in order to promote peace and happiness; how You are persuading Your subjects to follow in the path of righteousness and to eschew evil ways as a loving Father watches over his dear children; how You concentrate Your attention in fostering the best interests of Your people as the highest aims of Your life, untiring in Your work, unsparing in Yourself for Your recognize no obstacle as unsurmountable. Above all as a man, Your Majesty has set your Royal Person as example for men in strict probity, succeeding in this by Your fortitude and constancy.

Sire, what I have tried to say is but a feeble part of what is due to Your Majesty; but it will suffice to show how one and all of us regard Your Majesty with feeling of undying loyalty and devotion, a sentiment which will be handed down as a sacred inheritance to our prosperity.

It is our cherished desire that there should be preserved for future generations, the testimony of national feelings for Your most gracious Majesty and to this end, we have resolved unanimously to erect a statue of our Beloved King which shall for all times stand as a national monument of our heartfelt devotion to Your Royal Person. In this object, I am happy to mention that foreigners enjoying the benefits under Your wise Rule, have also participated in order to show their high esteem for Your Majesty.

The Statue has been completed and with Your Majesty's permission, has been erected in the center of the Open Court at Dusit Park.

With gladden hearts, we now pray Your Majesty to be pleased to unveil the Statue, this favour we crave shall be the augury of increased unity and prosperity of the nation under Your Majesty's benevolent Rule.

APPENDIX
F

Translation of Draft of His Majesty's Reply to the Address at the Unveiling of the Royal Statue.

From National Archive of Thailand, *Chotmaihet Phraratchaphithi Ratchamangalabhisek ror. sor. 126, 127 (A Chronicle of the Ratchamangalabhisek Ceremonies, 1907-1908)* (Bangkok: Fine Arts Department, 1984), 125-131.

Princes, Nobles, and People!

Our heart is deeply touched by the friendly and joyful sentiments in praise of Ourselves and the sincere, albeit searching, appreciation of Our conduct during the past forty years, which have just been expressed on behalf of you all by Our very beloved son the Crown Prince.

We have felt no greater pleasure than when we listened to your repeated assurances that the efforts which We have made to govern the State and promote the welfare and prosperity of the nation have produced results which meet with your united satisfaction and approbation. It is, indeed, true that a Sovereign has sat upon the Throne need be no cause for admiration, for though such an event as Our own long reign may perhaps be looked upon with appreciative wonder, seeing that no previous monarch has equalled it in our national history, yet there have been many sovereigns of other countries who have reigned quite as long and even much longer.

To Us, however, this lengthened period of Our own rule has a special significance in that it has enabled Us to pursue uninterruptedly a policy of government upon which We had set Our mind.

Every ruler is faced by the problems and is given the opportunities peculiar to the time and place within which his lot is cast. Whether his rule has been truly beneficial to his people, depends on how well he has dealt with those problems and how successfully he has taken advantage of those opportunities.

It will be remembered that in the times of Our more remote Royal Ancestors the chief cares of government were fighting the country's enemies, repelling invasion, extending and consolidating the power of Siam, and, again, fostering the development of agriculture among the people. To these tasks they devoted themselves. There was little foreign trade, and what there was of it was confined to adjacent countries and carried on by only certain classes of the population.

When our August Father came to the throne, he entered into friendly relations with foreign nations and opened the way to more extensive international commerce. This brought about an important change in the existing condition of things, and while productive of great benefit to the people at large, it also involved a necessary alteration in the ways of government. Time was not permitted him, however, to carry these changes far, and the measures then adopted could only be described as initial steps to suit the altered circumstances.

Upon Our succession, the necessity for further changes became more and more pronounced; it became apparent that the provisional measures introduced by Our Illustrious Parent were becoming inadequate, and that only a complete reform in the methods of administration would meet the new times and circumstances. To suddenly bring about sweeping changes in the deep-rooted institutions and popular ideas of a nation, without causing serious political disturbance, would be to attempt the impossible; and ways had to be considered whereby these reforms could be gradually but effectively introduced without producing any internal discontent. To accomplish this great aim thus became an object for constant thought and careful consideration of details to suit the progress of the times, and a strict watch was necessary in order that the opportunities to introduce improvements might not be allowed to pass by. It was in the nature of things that at the beginning the new institutions had no solid support on which they could rest. Everything had perforce to be created anew, and—what is most important—the people had to be educated in their ideas and ideals to an appreciation of the improvements. But such a result cannot be obtained in less than a generation.

For these reasons, the progress of reforms could not be so rapid as was desired. Furthermore, the condition of things outside Siam was, at the same time, undergoing great changes, to such an extent that Siam was rapidly finding herself placed in a situation created by surrounding circumstances, widely different from what in which she had stood from older times. Hence it

became incumbent upon us to endeavor to meet this changed external order of things, in addition to the attention given to our internal affairs.

The changes which have taken place during the last forty years are such as even five hundred years of our previous national existence could not have accomplished. It makes Us especially happy to think that it is We who have occupied the throne throughout these forty eventful years and have enabled our beloved country to be guided in the path of administrative improvement and national prosperity along the line of a single and continuous policy which has not swerved or retrogressed nor had its steady course checked or turned aside by any circumstance, down to the present day, with the result, as testified by you all, that our country and nation have attained the state of advancement and prosperity which is so evident. There results are, indeed, to Us a source of deep gratification.

It should not be left out of consideration that a sound and good administration must needs depend for its chief support upon a universal unity of sentiment. In former times, when our country stood aloof and had not entered intercourse with foreign nations, our own conception of things was limited, little things were regarded as great, and the scope of our aims and desires was circumscribed; each one acted according to his own narrow ideals. But when our country contracted international friendships with foreign Powers, and there arose the ardent desire to place the government on a firm basis in order to preserve the independence of the country and at the same time to foster the welfare of the people, then it became evident that nothing but mutual confidence and help among all, from Prince to peasant, could accomplish the end in view. This spirit of unity, too, is necessary if we would instil in the minds of the people a feeling that they may confidently trust in the Government to guide them in the path of prosperity and progress, to do away with injustice and oppression. The same spirit is needed to make them feel that they belong to one nation without regard to origin or religious faith, to inculcate a spirit of patriotism, and to encourage them in the pursuit of industry to better their general condition.

To produce all these happy results, a combination of circumstances was necessary — wise administration, popular support, intelligence to perceive and distinguish the useful and the detrimental, and, above all, the ability and experience to bring the great national aims to a happy consummation. In mentioning these, WE have only enumerated some of the difficulties which had to be surmounted internally, and have chosen to omit the external factors which have exercised a retarding influence. Nevertheless, it is evident from the gradual but successful results we see at this present moment, that the true course of our national progress has not been materially interrupted.

The Statue which you all have enthusiastically joined to erect in Our honor is a durable proof of the feeling of patriotism which animates your hearts and a testimony of your confidence and trust in your Ruler and the Government. It will serve as an incentive to greater efforts to create more happy results to our nation in the future.

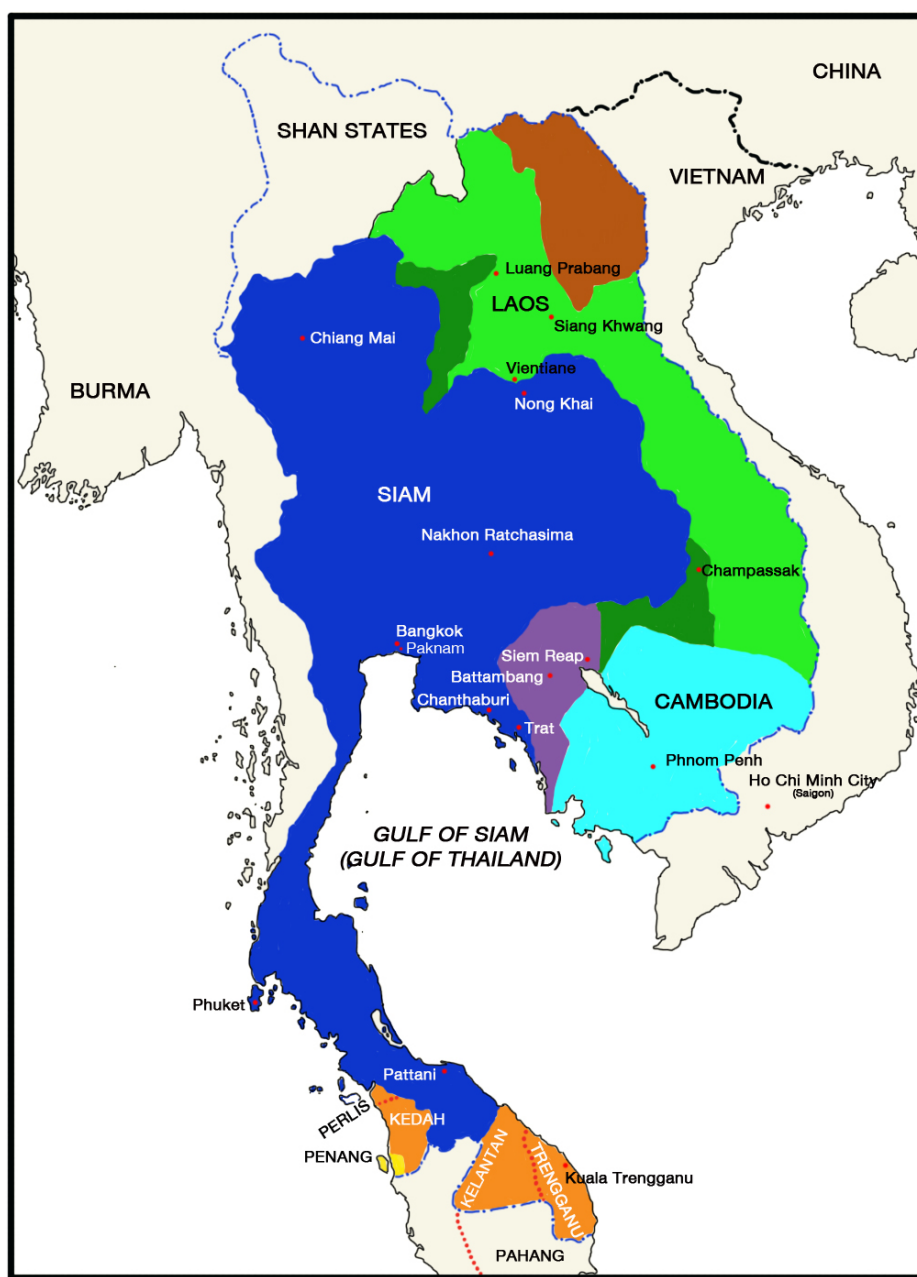
To the citizens and subjects of foreign States who have so kindly manifested their good will by participating in the creation of this beautiful monument, We offer Our very sincere thanks; and to you, Princes, Nobles and our Good People, the memory of this great honor which you have done Us during Our lifetime will always remain a source of profound gratification, equalled only by Our pleasure at witnessing the united fervor and enthusiasm which you have displayed towards Us on this auspicious occasion. The occasion appeals to Us as a happy augury for drawing closer and closer the ties of friendship between Our nation and foreign countries, which can conduce only to increased prosperity for our country and help to stir the hearts of our people to renewed efforts to raise the dignity of our beloved nation and spur us all on in the path of the highest national attainment.

We gladly accept your kind invitation, and will now unveil this lasting monument of the patriotism of the Siam Nation. Long may it stand as a great national testimony to future generations.

APPENDIX G

Map of Siam's territory

Based on "Map of Thai Territorial Losses, 1785-1909" in David K. Wyatt, *Thailand: A Short History* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1982), 207.



- Cessions to Britain by the Sultan of Kedah, 1785-1800.
- Cambodian Territory placed under French protection by Franco-Siamese Treaty, 1867.
- Black Tai muang taken by France, 1888.
- East bank of Mekong ceded to France by Franco-Siamese Treaty, 1893.
- West bank territories ceded to France by Franco-Siamese Treaty, 1904.
- Western Cambodian provinces ceded to France by Franco-Siamese Treaty, 1907.
- Malay States ceded to Britain by Anglo-Siamese Treaty, 1909.

APPENDIX

H

Quotations from Thai Textual Materials

INTRODUCTION:

การศึกสงครามข้างญวนข้างพม่าก็เห็นจะไม่มีแล้ว จะมีอยู่ก็แต่ข้างพวกฝรั่งให้ระวังให้ดีอย่าให้เสียที่แก่เขาได้ การงานสิ่งใดของเขาที่ดีควรจะเรียนร่ำเอาไว้ก็เอาอย่างเขาแต่อย่าให้นับถือเลื่อมใสไปทีเดียว.

Our wars with Burma and Vietnam were over, only the threats of the Westerners were left to us. We should study their innovations for our own benefits but not to the degree of obsession or worship.

Chaophraya Thiphakonwong, *Phraratchaphongsawadan Krung Rattanakosin Ratchakan thi 3 (Royal Chronicles in the reign of King Rama III)* (Bangkok: FAD, 1961), 188.

CHAPTER 1:

เราตั้งใจอธิษฐานว่า เราจะกระทำการจนเต็มกำลังอย่างที่สุดที่จะให้กรุงสยามเป็นประเทศอันหนึ่งซึ่งมีอิสรภาพและความเจริญ[...]

I made a resolution that I shall do my level best, my utmost to preserve the sovereignty of Siam with its independence and wealth intact[...]

“Phra Ratchadamrat Tob Prachachon Chaw Siam” (King Chulalongkorn’s Oration to the Siamese), RG 14, (16 January 1897), 716.

ว่าจะเป็นการช่วยให้เราได้เห็นจริงในสิ่งอันสมควรที่จะกระทำได้ ณ เมืองนี้ ในทางที่จะจัดการแก้ไขให้เจริญดีขึ้นได้โดยมาก หากว่าเราจะได้ไปถึงประเทศยุโรปเอง อันเป็นประเทศที่มีเมืองใหญ่ๆ หลายเมือง มีการช่างซึ่งเป็นฝีมืออย่างงดงาม แลเปนความเพียรช่วยกันลงแรงทำการใหญ่ๆ อาไศรยความคิดของผู้มีความรอบรู้ในประเทศนั้นๆ

[T]he journey gave me such great opportunity to witness those civilisations which will greatly help developing this country. Many great countries in Europe are embellished with the splendid art and crafts from the collaboration of their sophisticated.

“Phra Ratchadamrat Tob Prachachon Chaw Siam” (King Chulalongkorn’s Oration to the Siamese), RG 14, (16 January 1897), 715.

CHAPTER 2:

ด้วยฉันมาอยู่ที่นี้เกือบจะเรียกว่าพบปะแต่ช่างปั้นช่างเขียน ช่างแกะ ช่างสลัก วันยังค่ำด้วยการช่างเช่นนี้ย่อมเป็นที่พอใจลุ่มหลงของฉันมาแต่เดิมมาแล้ว

It won't be an overstatement to say that I have spent most of my time here visiting these sculptors and painters, because I've always been fascinated in art.

King Chulalongkorn, *Phraratchahatthalekha Suan Phra'ong Somdet Phraramathibodi Srisindramaha Chulalongkorn Phra Chulachomklao Chaoyuhua Song Mi Phraratchathan dae Somdet Phra Sripacharindra Boromrajiniat Phraphanpeeluang Naiwela thi Song Samret Ratchakan Phaendin Tang phra'ong Mue Sadet Phraratchadamnoen Praphat Europe phor. sor. 2440, Bhak 1 (The King's*

Correspondence to Queen Saovabha During the Regency in 1897, Volume 1 (Bangkok: FAD, 1958), 162.

ฝีมือที่เขียนสัตว์เหมือนสัตว์คนเหมือนคนเขาไม่บ้านเรือน ที่วางท่าทางแลเงาให้เหมือนจริง

[T]he very precise detailed and careful depiction of visual appearance of scenes and objects.

“Rangwan Chang Khian thi Mee Feemue,” (Awards for Best Painters) *RG* 4, 47 (11 March 1887),

แต่ยังมีเรื่องราวว่านั้น ตกมาในชั้นหลังไปยอมรับพระราชพงษาวดารกรุงเก่าว่าเป็นเรื่องราวของแผ่นดินสยาม[...] ความจงใจมุ่งหมายที่จะเรียงพระราชพงษาวดารนั้น เขาหมายจะเรียงเรื่องราวของพระเจ้าแผ่นดิน ซึ่งสืบสันตติวงศ์ลงมาจนถึงเวลาที่เขียนนั้น เรื่องราวกิจการบ้านเมืองอันใดที่กล่าวในพงษาวดาร เขาประสงค์จะกล่าวประกอบประวัติเป็นไปของพระเจ้าแผ่นดินนั้น[...] ไม่ได้ตั้งใจจะกล่าวถึงประเทศสยามโดยทั่วไป

[O]ne should not take the Royal Chronicles for granted, as it was only a monarchy's account, any other affairs of Siam outside the Crown were deliberately left out.

Quoted in Chatri Prakritnonthakan, “Phra Ratchadamrour Somdet Phraphuttachao Luang Rueng Song Tang Borankadee Samosorn” (Chulalongkorn's Speech on the Founding of Borankadee Samosorn), *Na Jua: Journal of the Faculty of Architecture, Silpakorn University* 3, 4 (September 2006), 163.

แต่พระเช่นนั้นควรจะอยู่วัดเบญจมบพิตร ซึ่งเป็นที่รวบรวมพระต่างๆ เป็นมิวเซียม

Wat Benchamabophit is the place which houses many selective greatest Buddha statues as a museum.

King Chulalongkorn, *Phraratchahatthalekha Phrabat Somdet Phra Chulachomklao Chaoyuhua Song Mi Pai Ma kab Somdet Phra Maha Samanachao Kromphraya Wachirayanwarorot* (*Correspondence Between King Chulalongkorn and Abbot Wachirayanwarorot*) (Bangkok: Sophonphiphat Thanakon, 1929), 194, accessed September 19, 2013, <http://www.archive.org/details/phrartchahatth1929chul>.

CHAPTER 3:

ความเจริญของกรุงสยามในระหว่างสิบห้าสิบหกปีนี้มีความสมบรูณ์ขึ้นมาก ด้วยแต่ก่อนเมื่อเราทั้งหลายยังเป็นเด็กๆ อยู่กัน ได้ทราบด้วยกันว่าในลำน้าเจ้าพระยานั้น ไม่มีตึกอันงามมาชมเลย[...] บัดนี้มีตึกใหญ่ๆ งามมากหลายแห่ง คือพระที่นั่งบรมราชสถิตยมโหฬาร พระที่นั่งมณีสถฐานบรมอาสน์ พระที่นั่งสมมุติเทเวศราชูปถัมภ์ พระที่นั่งจักรีมหาปราสาท [...] และโรงพยาบาลเล็ก โรงพยาบาลหน้า และทิมดาบกรมวัง ทิมดาบตำรวจ โรงกระสาปน์ [...] แลตึกเจ้านายข้าราชการผู้มีทรัพย์หลายสิบบ้านตามลำแม่น้ำเจ้าพระยาตั้งแต่สามเสนถึงบางคอแหลม แลในกำแพงพระนครก็มีมากหลายแห่ง ที่ถนนเจริญกรุงก็มีตึกตลอดไปทั้งนั้น เป็นที่สง่างามแก่บ้านเมืองเป็นอันมาก เพราะพระเดชพระคุณของสมเด็จพระมหากษัตริราชเจ้า[...]

During these past fifteen-sixteen years, Bangkok has been largely developed. It was known that along the Chao Phraya River, multi-storey buildings were rarely seen[...] Today, more tall handsome buildings have been erected everywhere in the city, such as Phrathinang Borom Ratchasathit Mahoran, Phrathinang Moon Satharn Borom Ard, Phrathinang Sommuti Thevaraj Uppabat, Phrathinang Chakri Maha Prasat[...], guardhouses, barracks, police garrisons, the Royal Mint, and houses of the nobles along the River and within the wall. On Charoen Krung Road, rows of building were constructed along its

length. All of these show the progress of Bangkok because of His Majesty the King's philanthropy.

"Kwam Charoen Khong Krung Siam" (Siam's Civilisation), *Chotmai het Siam Samai (The Bangkok Repository)*, February 11, 1885, 407-408.

[...]พระราชทานนามพระอารามนี้ว่า วัดนิเวศน์ธรรมประวัติ แลพระอารามนี้ได้ทรงบริจาคพระราชทรัพย์ให้เจ้าพนักงานจ้างเหมาช่างชาวประเทศตะวันตก กะวางแผนที่แลแบบอย่างพระอุโบสถ หมู่กุฏิ มีหลักฐานเป็นแบบอย่างข้างตะวันตกทั้งสิ้น ซึ่งพระราชดำริให้สร้างโดยแบบอย่างเป็นของชาวต่างประเทศดังนี้ ไซ้จะมีพระราชหฤทัยเลื่อมใสนับถือศาสนาอื่นนอกเหนือจากพระพุทธศาสนานั้นหาไม่ได้ พระราชดำรินี้พระราชประสงค์จะทรงบูชาพระพุทธศาสนาด้วยของแปลกประหลาด แลเพื่อจะให้อาณาประชาราษฎร์ทั้งปวงชมเล่นเป็นของประหลาดไม่เคยมีในพระอารามอื่น

[...]the King donates his money to fund construction of the monastery of Wat Niwet Thammaprawat. European architect was employed to design the monastery in a Western style. It should be said that the King bears no will to convert to any other religious, but remain a faithful Buddhist. The monastery is meant to be a wonder to be consecrated to Buddhism, as well as a spectacle for Siamese as such style has never been created in other monasteries in Siam.

Charuek thi Wat Niwet Thammaprawat (The Inscriptions from Wat Niwet Thammaprawat) (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 1968), 8.

CHAPTER 4:

มันงดงามมาก กุล มันเป็นดินแดนที่งดงามในสายตาของฉัน ถึงมันจะเป็นเหมือนแดนเถื่อน ถึงพวกเขาจะถูกเรียกว่าชาวเถื่อน แต่พวกเขาเป็นนักสู้ ไม่มีใครทอดทิ้งแผ่นดิน ที่สำคัญคือ 'พวกเขา' ก็คือ 'พวกเรา' นี่แหละ 'พวกเรา' ที่มักลืมไปแล้วว่าเราเคยต้องผ่านวิกฤตการณ์มาอย่างไร[...] ฉันได้กลับไปเห็นด้วยตาของชั้นด้วยหัวใจของฉัน

It's very beautiful, Kul. It's a very beautiful land to me. Though it looks uncivilised and they are called barbarians, they've kept fighting. They've never abandoned their homeland. What matters is that, 'they' mean 'we.' 'We' (who) always forget how we went through it[...] I went back to see them with my own eyes and with my own heart.

Arporn Pinijhar and Uncle, *Thawipob (The Siam Renaissance)*, DVD, Directed by Surapong Pinijhar (Bangkok: Tai Entertainment, 2001), 1:13:50.

'ดำริ' ระหว่างอภิเษกอำนาจ ดูจะไม่เคยสงสัยเลยว่าสยามประเทศจะ 'รู้สึก' อย่างไร[...]แสงตะเกียงเด่น ทำให้ปวดตา แต่...ไม่เท่าความเจ็บปวดในใจ เรา...ดำริจะยกให้สยามประเทศ จริงแท้คือการ 'ตัด' อาณาเขตสยามประเทศออกต่างหาก!

[...]When two powerful countries 'make an agreement,' they seem to ignore how Siam would 'feel'[...] The flickering flames from a lantern causes her eyes to become sore but this cannot be compared to an ache in her heart[...] **Resolved to cede the territory to Siam**' is nothing but stripping Siam of its territory!

Thommayanti, *Thawiphob Lem 2 (The Two Worlds Volume 2)*, Third edition (Bangkok: Na Baanwannagum, 2008), 596-597.

พระมหากษัตริย์คุณใหญ่หลวง!

A divine grace of His Majesty!

Thommayanti, *Thawiphob Lem 2 (The Two Worlds Volume 2)*, Third edition (Bangkok: Na Baanwannagum, 2008), 372.

สบายใจเออะคะ เราไม่ได้เป็นข้าฝรั่งเศสหรืออังกฤษ เราจะไปได้ตลอดรอดฝั่ง เราจะดีกว่า พม่า ลาว เขมร วันนี้ของเราดีขึ้น แต่เรารักษาความเป็นเอกราชไว้ได้[...] ฉันทภูมิใจ[...] ในอดีตทั้งหมดของสยามประเทศของเรา ไม่มีข้อตำหนิ ไม่มีข้อโต้แย้ง [...] เอกราชมีค่ากว่าสมบัติทั้งปวง

We were not dominated by the French or the British. We will get through this threat, we will be better than Burma, Laos and Cambodia. It is a traumatic experience but we will keep our independence[...] I am very proud in all of our Siam's history with no rebuke, no argument. [...] **Our independence is worth more than anything else.**

Thommayanti, *Thawiphob Lem 2 (The Two Worlds Volume 2)*, Third edition (Bangkok: Na Baanwannagum, 2008), 588 and 652.

แปลกนะคะ ฉันทเคยคิดว่าโลกยุคเก่าล้าสมัยอืดอาดอันคิวิไลซ์แหละคะ แต่ตอนนี้ฉันทกลับคิดว่าพีชแอนต์บิวตีฟูล

Strangely enough, I used to think that the old world was slow, sluggish and uncivilised. Now I think it is so peaceful and beautiful.

Thommayanti, *Thawiphob Lem 2 (The Two Worlds Volume 2)*, Third edition (Bangkok: Na Baanwannagum, 2008), 461-462.

โดยทรงพระกรุณาปรานี พระองค์คือบุรพการีของราษฎร เพราะเหตุเหล่านี้แผ่นดินของพระองค์ จึงยังยืนด้วยสภาพรุ่งเรืองงาม มหาชนชาวสยามถึงความสุขเกษมล่วงล้ำอดีตสมัยที่ได้ปรากฏมา พระองค์จึงเป็นปิตมหาราช ที่รักของมหาชนทั่วไป

[W]ith his benevolence, he is the father of the people. His kingdom has flourished immensely, his people are blessed with greater welfare than ever. Therefore he is the Great Beloved King, a highly esteemed monarch of the people.

"Kam Charuek thi Praditsathan Phra Boromrup" (The Equestrian Statue Inscription), RG 25, 35 (23 November, 1908), 945.