

***Than Samai* in Modern Thai Architecture: Case Studies of Crypto-colonialism**

Supasai Vongkulbhisal

A dissertation

submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington

2022

Reading Committee:

Brian L. McLaren, Chair

Robert Mugerauer

Vicente L. Rafael

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

Built Environment

© Copyright 2022

Supasai Vongkulbhisal

University of Washington

Abstract

Than Samai in Modern Thai Architecture: Case Studies of Crypto-colonialism

Supasai Vongkulbhisal

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:

Brian L. McLaren

Department of Architecture

Though Thailand has never been formally colonized, emerging Thai Studies scholarship suggests that a more accurate term for Thailand's relationship to the west is “crypto-colonial.” This indicates cultural and economic, rather than political, subordination, and largely arose as direct colonization was on the wane in the rest of Southeast Asia. Crypto-colonialism is particularly evident in the transplantation of western Modern architecture into a Thai setting. Tracing Thai architectonics through the emergence of western disciplines in the Thai architectural field and a consolidation of Modern architectural consumerism in Thailand shows three separate facets of crypto-colonialism. The first, subordination, is shown in the distinct characteristics of Modern Thai architecture imposed by the West. The architectural design of subordination is dominated by spatial concerns privileging the powerful U.S. presence in Thailand over traditional Thai planning. The second facet, autonomy, refers to the way in which the Thai elite maintained local power through conspicuous consumption of western culture and ideas, in this context carried out by western-educated Thai architects. The final facet, ambiguity, refers to the architectural

characteristics that have contributed to the ambivalences, multiplicities, and hybridity of Thai engagement with the ambiguous allure of the West. An examination of the peculiarity of crypto-colonialism in Modern Thai architecture not only challenges the idea that colonial and postcolonial discourses were only confined to countries or regions directly occupied by western nations, but also it deepens our understanding of the western hegemonic presence in Thailand by illuminating Thailand's paradoxical path towards western civilization and modernization.

For the Thai who lost their lives or loved ones in
the fight for justice, liberty, and equality for the country.

For the Thai who share the dream of seeing Thailand
achieving full democracy once in their lifetimes.

Acknowledgements

This dissertation could not have been possible without the kind support of many fabulous people around me. I am indebted foremost to the guidance of my dissertation chair, Professor Brian McLaren. In 2014 and again since 2016, Professor McLaren has been my constant intellectual advisor throughout the process of researching and writing this dissertation. I could not have asked for more dedication or a better advocate and critical reader of my work. It has been my honor to be his advisee at the University of Washington.

I am wholeheartedly thankful to Professor Robert Mugerauer, or our Dr. Bob, one the most incredible men I have ever met in my life. Without his guidance, moral support, encouragement, and positive energy on my down days, I would not have made it to the end. Dr. Bob is more than an academic mentor, he is my life coach and is always there for me no matter what happens. I am more than thankful for his guidance through this long, rough, rewarding journey at UW.

I am also grateful to Professor Rafael Vincente, whom I met through Gun Arthit Jiamrattanyoo, and who became part of my reading committee. His sharp, crisp, and clear advice on Colonialism and Southeast Asian Studies has opened many doors that might have been otherwise closed to me. Vince turns tedious historical subjects into such an amazing class—like a magician. His enthusiasm, dedication in teaching, and brilliance will forever inspire me.

My deepest gratitude through all my years at UW goes to Professor Louisa Iarocci. When life is lonely and far away from home, Professor Iarocci's care, empathetic understanding, and sweet words keep me alive here. She has never doubted my ability to pursue my writing. Her trust and support are impossible to describe with words. I am so lucky to have known her at the University of Washington and to have her in my life.

Additionally, I would like to thank Professor Vikramaditya Prakash, Professor Alex Anderson, and Professor Jenna Grant (my GSR) for all the mentorship, opportunities, and tremendous support during the years of my study here. Without all the assigned TA classes and the funding from the College of Built Environments, this dissertation would have not been possible.

Of course, without the belief and support of my parents and extended family, who have been with me through every step of my life, I would not have come this far. I am deeply grateful for their unconditional love and care. And from the bottom of my heart, I dedicate my completed my doctoral dissertation to my late *Ah Ma* (grandma), who never questioned if my decisions were right or wrong. She only wanted to make sure that I had enough food, sleep, and love from her. I love you more than anything in this world.

Lastly, this dissertation could not have been completed without the financial supports of University of Washington's Chester Fritz International Research and Study Fellowship, Floyd A. Naramore Architectural Memorial Fund, John Morse Graduate Fellowship for International Travel, Dean's Dissertation Research Grant, GPSS Travel Grant, Graduate School and College of Built Environments' Conference Travel Awards, SAH Conference Travel Stipend, Fulbright Open-Competition Scholarship, and ENITS Scholarship awarded by Chulalongkorn University. I hope that future students of all social sciences programs will be able to avail themselves of the generosity of these remarkable institutions.

It is true that pursuing a history-theory degree requires solitude, concentration, and hardship. Days and nights passed without enjoying news, music, or even social life. There is a constant battle to maintain a positive state of mind and a motivated spirit. Without all the moral support from professors, staff, and friends (listed below), I could have not completed my doctoral

degree. These people are shelters for my mind—places where I could constantly escape rest during this long-haul journey. All my gratitude goes to:

Professor Laurie Sears	Sambe Kasemsit Y.	Peach Sirirat K.
Professor Ken Oshima	Ham Kanit W.	Friend Pitima S.
Professor Manish Chalana	P'Chaonai Arunrat T.	Dar Chawinda I.
Professor Kathryn Merlino	P'Pu Sani C.	UT Austin friends
Professor Ann Huppert	P'Ti Tidarat S.	Aj. Rujiroj Ananmbutr
Neile Graham	P'Amm Sawita K.	Aj. Wilasiney Suksawang
Claudine Manio	Aorair Sirima S.	Aj. Apiradee Kasemsook
Adnya Sarasmita	Dome Thitisan L.	Aj. Rerkdee Potiwanakul
Mia Ho	Ellie Miller	Aj. Chatri Praktinonthakan
Chung Ho	Wy-men Loh	Aj. Pinai Sirikiatikul
Barbara R. Droguett	Nok Nutchanan B.	Aj. Jeerasak Kueasombut
Sara Jacobs	Nut Nattanan B.	P'Pink Namtip Yamali
Lucky Pratama	Rit Rit L.	P'Pa Spavit D.
M. Sadra Fardhosseini	Ploy Picsacha N.	P'It Chomchon F.
Shuang Wu	Porrie Wassida W.	P'Peeh Pheereeya B.
Babita Joy	Aim Thannapat Y.	P'Non Arkaraprasertkul
Jennifer Engelke	Jeab Pattrarat J.	P'Beer Singnoi
Tera Williams	Nuch Anuttra N.	Love Kariya B.
Daniel E. Coslett	Arch SU Studio 49 friends	Breeze Phakakrong P.
James Thompson	Pear Suthida C.	Pui Wipawan S.
Naeun Gu	Wan Varittha V.	Trit Trittawan C.
Evan H. Carver	Jaoc Sirithorn S.	Tua Jeerapan S.
Xiao Shi	P'Bow Nicha S.	JM Pieng-or T.
Feiyang Sun	First Dangfun P.	Bum Sutheera S.
Boyang Sa	Ben Arpakorn T.	Tuck Piyawan K.
Sunho Choi	P'Pao Anusorn M.	Book Thitiyan S.
Meen Chel Jung	P'Jo Thitiphong L.	Fang Nuntakarn T.
Deepthi Bathala	P'Jo Puripant R.	Nut Nuttha I.
Please Pariyakorn M.	P'Wit Prawit T.	Oil Sukamolruttha T.
Yao Apichai Y.	P'Tip Porntip K.	Ink Phra-kwan T.
Gun Arthit J.	Pok Sakol S.	TCDC crews
Bum Khataleeya L.	Fulbright friends and staff	Graf Paphop, Art4d
Please Sarunporn B.	P'Fai Touchanun K.	Mai Tinnakorn, Art4d
Jibjoy Pamanee C.	P'Jaub Usanee T.	P'Nok Kanokwan, Art4d
Earn Chinabhorn V.	Paeh Seepong A.	P'Joy Bussara, Lizenn
Bank Thanakorn W.	Ike Pootip J.	MQDC Project RB team

Contents

Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	vi
Contents	ix
List of Figures	xii
Editorial Notes	xxiii

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Chapter Introduction.....	1
1.2 Modernization and Civilization: Meaning, Substitutes, and Politics of Translated Terms.....	12
1.2.1 Modernization: A Key to Access the <i>Farang</i> World.....	12
1.2.2 Civilization: A Thai Quest for <i>Siwilai</i>	19
1.3 Thailand’s Position during the Cold War.....	24
1.3.1 The American Era in Thailand.....	24
1.3.2 The American Aid.....	29
1.3.3 <i>Phattana</i> : The “Development” Agenda.....	33
1.3.4 The Cultural Cold War.....	36
1.3.5 Refashioning the Identity of <i>Thainess</i>	42
1.4 Figures.....	48

Chapter 2: “Subordination” in Modern Thai architecture

2.1 Chapter Introduction.....	58
2.2 “Subordination” Discourse in Siamese/Thai Society.....	60
2.2.1 <i>Farang</i> , <i>Tawan-tok</i> , and <i>Nork</i> in Thai Thought.....	60
2.2.2 The Allure of <i>Farang</i> -ness.....	62
2.2.3 Siamese Performance of Self-civilization.....	65
2.2.4 <i>Farang</i> as a Metric of Civilization.....	66
2.3 “Subordination” in Thai History during the Cold War Era.....	68
2.3.1 Paradoxical Sarit.....	69
2.3.2 The Changes of Thai Economic Policy Menu and Bureaucratic Infrastructures.....	70
2.3.3 The Earlier National Economic and Social Plans.....	73
2.3.4 The Anti-communist Effects.....	74
2.3.5 Implementation of the <i>Phattana</i> Policy during the Vietnam War.....	76
2.3.6 The Golden Era of Thailand’s Tourist Industry and Building Construction.....	79
2.4 Case Studies of “Subordination” Revealing through the Works of American Architects.....	81
Working in Thailand from the 1960s to 1980s.....	81
2.4.1 The Beginning of American Architectural Era in Thailand.....	81

2.4.2 The Story of Robert G. Boughey and His Works	83
Indoor Stadium, Hua Mak	85
Don Mueang Airport	93
Siam Commercial Bank Park Plaza	100
2.5 Figures	109

Chapter 3: “Autonomy” in Modern Thai architecture

3.1 Chapter Introduction	116
3.2 “Autonomy” Discourse in Siamese/Thai Society	118
3.2.1 Engaging in the New World Order	118
3.2.2 Establishing the Other Within	121
3.2.3 Pursuing a Self-civilizing Mission	123
3.3 Western Education was a Means to Secure “Autonomy”	125
3.3.1 The Foundation of Architectural Schools and the Rise of Social Distinction	125
3.3.2 The Settlement of Western Architecture in Siam	126
3.3.3 The Superiority of Foreign PWD over Thai Designers	127
3.3.4 Tracing the History: How Thai Architects were Sent to Study Abroad	129
3.3.5 Elite Background plus Western Education are a Pass to Enjoy Privilege	130
3.3.6 The Establishment of the Thai Architectural Schools in Siam/Thailand	133
3.4 Case Studies of “Autonomy” Revealing through the Emerging of Western-Styled Modern Architecture in Thailand	135
3.4.1 The Transplantation of Modern Architecture in Siam/Thailand	135
3.4.2 <i>Nak-rian Nork</i> : The Cultural Middlemen	141
3.4.3 Western Architectural Education is a Means to Advance the Position of Elite Groups	144
3.4.4 Western Architectural Education is a Means of Social Control	149
Chulalongkorn University Alumni Association Building	149
New Suan Amporn Pavillion	151
3.4.5 Building Power/Prestige by Assimilation Modern American Architecture	152
Chokchai International Building	153
Thai Farmers Bank Head Office, Phaholyothin	156
Panabhandhu School’s Building Nine	158
3.5 Figures	163

Chapter 4: “Ambiguity” in Modern Thai architecture

4.1 Chapter Introduction	172
4.2 “Hybridity” Discourse in Siamese/Thai Society	175
4.2.1 Homi Bhabha’s “Hybridity” Theory	175
4.2.2 Nestar Garcia Canclini’s “ <i>Mestizaje</i> ” Theory	179

4.2.3 Borrowing is a Civilizing Technique.....	182
4.2.4 Hybridity is a Part of Civilizing Process.....	183
4.2.5 Ruling Elites are the Civilizing Agents.....	184
4.3 Story of “Ambiguity” in Thai Architecture.....	186
4.3.1 Architectural Hybridization during King Rama I to III Reigns.....	186
4.3.2 Architectural Hybridization during King Rama IV to V Reigns.....	189
4.3.3 Architectural Hybridization during King Rama VI Reign to 1932.....	193
4.3.4 Architectural Hybridization from 1932 onward.....	195
4.4 Case Studies of “Ambiguity” Revealing through Thai-Western Hybridized Architecture.....	196
The Privy Council Chambers.....	197
U-Thong Nai Assembly Hall (The Second Parliament House of Thailand).....	204
<i>Sappaya-Sapasathan</i> (The Third Parliament House of Thailand).....	214
4.5 Figures.....	226
Chapter 5: Conclusion on Crypto-colonialism	
5.1 Chapter Introduction.....	245
5.2 “Subordination” Characteristics of Thai Society.....	247
5.3 “Autonomy” Characteristics of Thai Society.....	250
5.4 “Ambiguity” Characteristics of Thai Society.....	253
5.5 Conclusion.....	255
Appendix A: Names and Chronological Reigns of Siamese/Thai kings in the Chakri dynasty	257
Appendix B: Names and Chronological Orders of Thai Prime Minister	258
Appendix C: The Meanings of Transliterated Words (listed in alphabetical order)	261
Bibliography	267

List of Figures

Chapter 1

- 1-1 Siam’s King Mongkut (or King Rama IV) and the second king, Phra Pinklao, Photograph, from “ฤๅพระชะตา “พระปิ่นเกล้าฯ” แรงแจน “พระจอมเกล้าฯ” ตรัสให้ถวายราชสมบัติด้วยกันสองพระองค์?” *Silpa-mag*, last modified November 25, 2016. https://www.silpa-mag.com/history/article_4383.....48
- 1-2 King Mongkut (Rama V) acquired most of his western knowledge from missionaries who came to Siam during his days as a Buddhist monk; David Abeel, the first American missionary to visit Siam; and Jesse Caswell, who taught Prince Mongkut English, Photograph and illustration, in Jim Algie and el at., *Americans in Thailand* (Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, 2014), 39, 52, and 53.....48
- 1-3 King Mongkut's son, King Chulalongkorn (Rama V), and other members of the royal elite enjoyed western material culture, Illustration (Courtesy of London News), from “พระบาทสมเด็จพระจุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว ในสื่อตีพิมพ์ของชาวตะวันตก,” *Pantip*, last modified October 31, 2007. <https://topicstock.pantip.com/library/topicstock/2007/10/K5972293/K5972293.html>.....49
- 1-4 King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) fulfilled his wish to visit European countries in 1897, Photograph, from “ราชการลับรัชกาลที่ 5 ในการเสด็จพระราชดำเนินเยือนเยอรมนี” *Silpa-mag*, last modified December 26, 2021. https://www.silpa-mag.com/history/article_57297.....49
- 1-5 This image revealed the court’s enormous investment in the arts, Italian and Victorian buildings, royal paraphernalia, and public rituals—such as extravagant reception held upon King Rama V’s return from Europe, Photograph (Courtesy of หนังสือของเพื่อนให้), from “เมื่อ ‘เลี้ยงโต๊ะปี่ใหม่’ แบบตะวันตกเป็นสิ่งใหม่ เจ้านายใช้คบหาสมาคม-ปรับตัวตามยุคสมัย,” *Silpa-mag*, last modified January 1, 2022. https://www.silpa-mag.com/history/article_14058.....50
- 1-6 President Harry S. Truman briefed Edwin F. Stanton (left) for his assignment as head of the Bangkok legation (right) in 1946, Photograph, in Jim Algie and el at., *Americans in Thailand* (Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, 2014), 114 and 145.....50
- 1-7 During the second World War, Prime Minister Phibun Songkhram (left) and the majority of the cabinet granted Japanese troops (right) the right of passage through Thailand, and subsequently declared war on the Allies, Photograph, in Thanyaporn Buathong, “จอมพล ป. พิบูลสงคราม : 123 ปี ชาตกาล กับผลงานและเสียงวิจารณ์นายกรัฐมนตรีที่อยู่ในตำแหน่งนานที่สุด,” *BBC News Thailand*, last modified July 14, 2020. <https://www.bbc.com/thai/thailand-53399231>; and Peerasap Vichitrachanikorn, “ประวัติศาสตร์นอกกรอบ: 8 ธันวาคม...เมื่อไทยรบญี่ปุ่น,” last modified December 8, 2017. <https://www.gqthailand.com/culture/article/8-dec-thai-japan>.....51
- 1-8 In the U.S., Thai Minister M.R. Seni Promoj took a photo with other Thai government officials and students in front of the royal Thai embassy, Washington DC., in 1941, Photograph, from “ตำนาน ม.ร.ว. เสนีย์ ปราโมช ทูตไทย ไม่ยอมส่งคำประกาศสงครามต่ออเมริกา คือเรื่องจริงหรือ?” *Silpa-mag*, last modified March 3, 2022. https://www.silpa-mag.com/history/article_41522.....51
- 1-9 This resulted in efforts to control the presence of the large Chinese community in Thailand, thus further increasing restrictions on Chinese immigration. The situation led Phibun to turn to the West for aid and protection, Photograph, in “123 ปี ชาตกาล จอมพล ป. พิบูลสงคราม พระเอก

- หรือผู้ร้าย ในประวัติศาสตร์ไทย,” Matichon Weekly, last modified July 19, 2020.
https://www.matichonweekly.com/column/article_326517.....52
- 1-10 Thai soldiers arriving at Pusan, 1950, Photograph, from “Thailand in the Korean War,”
Wikipedia, last modified February 19, 2022.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thailand_in_the_Korean_War.....52
- 1-11 Mr. Orville Freeman, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture visited Thailand in 1961 and met with
 Field Sarit Thanarat, the Prime Minister, and Dr. Thanat Khoman, the Foreign Minister and
 Mr. Freeman visited the Irrigation Department, Photograph, in Patricia Norland, and al et.,
The Eagle and the Elephant: Thai-American Relations since 1833 (Bangkok: United States
 Information Service, 1997), 93.....53
- 1-12 U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower explained his theory of “domino effect” in regard to
 Southeast Asia that “if Indochina goes, several things happen right away,” Photograph, in
 Andrew Glass, “Eisenhower invokes ‘domino theory,’ Aug. 4, 1953,” *politico.com*, last
 modified August 4, 2017. [https://www.politico.com/story/2017/08/04/eisenhower-invokes-
 domino-theory-aug-4-1953-241222](https://www.politico.com/story/2017/08/04/eisenhower-invokes-domino-theory-aug-4-1953-241222).....53
- 1-13 The Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) set up its headquarters in Bangkok, led
 by the U.S., with Thai diplomat, Pote Sarasin, as its first secretary general, Photograph, in
 Jim Algie, *American in Thailand* (Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, 2014), 151.....54
- 1-14 The city of Takhli near the American-built airbase in Nakhon Sawan province. The U.S.
 military presence transformed numerous upcountry towns and provinces, Photograph, in
 Jim Algie, *American in Thailand* (Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, 2014), 183.....54
- 1-15 M. L. Pin Malakul, Minister of Education, talks with Dean Wendell Wright during M. L.
 Pin’s visit to Indiana University and Thai faculty members leave for advanced study at
 Indiana University, Photograph, in USOM, “Thai-American Joint Efforts,” *Thai-American
 Cooperation in Preparing Educational Leaders for Thailand* (Bangkok: Thai-American
 Audiovisual Service, 1960), 7 and 13.....55
- 1-16 King Rama IX and Queen of Thailand and Queen of Thailand took a photograph with East-West Center students in
 the U.S. on June 6, 1967, Photograph, “The Royal Sala Thai Scholarship Fund,” *East-West
 Center Association*, last accessed March 16, 2022.
<https://www.eastwestcenter.org/node/32652>.....55
- 1-17 Thai students apply to study in the United States under AFS in the early 1960s. U.S. Infor
 mation Service Officer Jack Zeller, on the left, helped start the AFS program in Thailand,
 Photography, in Patricia Norland, and al et., *The Eagle and the Elephant: Thai-American
 Relations since 1833* (Bangkok: United States Information Service, 1997), 107.....56
- 1-18 The second generation of AUA building compared to how it initially looked in 1962,
 Photograph, in Patricia Norland, and al et., *The Eagle and the Elephant: Thai-American
 Relations since 1833* (Bangkok: United States Information Service, 1997), 187.....56
- 1-19 Ambassador to Thailand William “Wild Bill” Donovan walks through the Thai jungle
 during the evacuation of Chinese Nationalist troops from Thailand in 1953, Photograph and
 illustration, in Jim Algie and el at., *Americans in Thailand* (Singapore: Editions Didier
 Millet, 2014), 148.....57

- 1-20 Image of South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) clinical research building in 1964 and image of SEATO headquarters building that was situated on a part of Ministry of Foreign Affairs' land parcel on Sri Ayutthaya road in Bangkok, Photograph, from "Exterior Photograph of the 4-story SEATO Clinical Research Building," *Alamy*, last accessed March 16, 2022. <https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-exterior-photograph-of-the-4-story-seato-south-east-asia-treaty-organization-173101124.html>.....57

Chapter 2

- 2-1 Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat, who led a coup that overthrew the government of Field Marshal Phibun in 1957, Photograph, in William Warren, *Chronicles of American Business in Thailand* (Bangkok: American Chamber of Commerce in Thailand, 2006), 53.....109
- 2-2 American Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Thai Foreign Minister Dr. Thanat Khoman after signing the Rusk-Thanat Agreement in 1962 in Washington DC., Photograph, in William Warren, *Chronicles of American Business in Thailand* (Bangkok: American Chamber of Commerce in Thailand, 2006), 55.....109
- 2-3 A march by members of the construction battalion, Photograph, in William Warren, *Chronicles of American Business in Thailand* (Bangkok: American Chamber of Commerce in Thailand, 2006), 54.....110
- 2-4 U.S. Marines from the Seventh fleet disembark in Klong Toey Port for a joint operations exercise in May 1962, Photograph, in William Warren, *Chronicles of American Business in Thailand* (Bangkok: American Chamber of Commerce in Thailand, 2006), 55.....110
- 2-5 American Servicemen on R&R leap onto shore into the arms of Pattaya's "Hawaiians," Photograph, in Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 149.111
- 2-6 The Siam InterContinental Hotel, opened in 1966 on the site of the present Siam Paragon; it was the first of many American hotel chains to operate in Thailand, Photograph (Courtesy of the Bangkok Post), in William Warren, *Chronicles of American Business in Thailand* (Bangkok: American Chamber of Commerce in Thailand, 2006), 64.2-7 Image of an American architect, Robert G. Boughey.....111
- 2-7 Robert G. Boughey, who came to Thailand in the late 1960s with Louis Berger, Inc. and opened his own architectural firm in 1973, Photograph, in Prabhakorn Vadanyakul, ed., *Kui gub Satapanik Tonbaeb* [Conversations with Architects Series vol. 6] (Bangkok: Li-Zenn Publishing, 2010), 116.....112
- 2-8 The interior of the Indoor Stadium at Hua Mak, Photograph by Beer Singnoi, "Indoor Stadium Hua Mak, designed by Louis Bergers Company since 1966" *SCG Experience*, accessed March 14, 2022. <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/454230312388406497/>112
- 2-9 The exterior of the Indoor Stadium at Hua Mak, Photograph by Beer Singnoi, "Indoor Stadium Hua Mak, designed by Louis Bergers Company since 1966" *SCG Experience*, accessed March 14, 2022. <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/454230312388406498/>113
- 2-10 Don Mueang International Airport was upgraded to become the Bangkok International Airport in 1955, Photograph, in Airports of Thailand, *19 Pi Karn Tah Argardsayarn heng Prated Thai* [19 Years of Airports of Thailand Public Company Limited] (Bangkok: Airports of Thailand, 1998), 34-35.....113

- 2-11 Don Mueang International Airport's terminal re-designed by Robert G. Boughey under Louis Berger (1968-71), Photograph by MNXANL, "201701 International Terminal of DMK," from Wikipedia, accessed March 14, 2022. <https://th.wikipedia.org/wiki/ท่าอากาศยานดอนเมือง>.....114
- 2-12 Samui Airport, designed by Thai architectural firm named Habita (1989), Poster Illustration and photograph by Habita Architects, "Samui Airport Customs Terminal," *Habita Architects*, accessed March 14, 2022. <https://www.habitaarchitects.com/project/samui-airport-customs-terminal/>.....114
- 2-13 The overall complex of SCB's headquarters, Photograph by Estopolis, "SCB Park Plaza," *Estopolis*, accessed March 14, 2022. <https://www.estopolis.com/>.....115
- 2-14 The atrium of SCB's headquarters, Photograph, in Jim Algie and el at., *Americans in Thailand* (Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, 2014), 214.....115

Chapter 3

- 3-1 *Abhinaonives* Throne Hall (1854), a new throne hall built by King Rama IV (Mongkut) decorated with a colonnade porch, internal naves, and crystal chandeliers, Photograph, in Pirasri Povatong, "Building Siwilai: Transformation of Architecture and Architectural Practice in Siam during the Reign of Rama V, 1868-1910" (Ph.D. Diss., (University of Michigan, 2011), 71.....163
- 3-2 *Phra Nakhon Khiri*, one of King Rama IV's provincial palaces, were assigned to assimilate western style intermixed with Chinese and Siamese architectural elements, Photograph, in Pirasri Povatong, "Building Siwilai: Transformation of Architecture and Architectural Practice in Siam during the Reign of Rama V, 1868-1910" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Michigan, 2011), n.p.....163
- 3-3 *Chakri* Throne Hall, located in the Grand Palace, Bangkok, was built with the western floor plan, although topped with traditional Thai spike roof (1882), Photograph, in Pirasri Povatong, "Building Siwilai: Transformation of Architecture and Architectural Practice in Siam during the Reign of Rama V, 1868-1910" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Michigan, 2011), 72.....164
- 3-4 Sumet Jumsai na Ayudhaya received bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees from St.John's College, University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom, Photograph, "Sumet Jumsai" *Wikipedia*, accessed March 14, 2022. www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sumet_Jumsai.....164
- 3-5 Krisda Arunvongse na Ayudhaya graduated with bachelor's (1955) and master's degrees (1956) from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), and a doctoral degree from Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, France, in 1960, Photograph, "Baan Klang Mueng khon Phu-wa Kor Tor Mor" [A House in the Middle of the City of Bangkok's Mayor], *Home Digest Magazine* (October, 1992): 40-41.....164
- 3-6 Rangsan Torsuwan obtained a bachelor's degree from Chulalongkorn University in

- Bangkok, Thailand (1962), and a master's degree from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) (1964), which he was studying under Eduardo Catalano who was also a student of Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer, Photograph, in Rerkdee Pothiwanakul, "Rangsan Torsuwan Architect" *Facebook* (photo album), May 12, 2019, <https://web.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1251735434945620&type=3>.....165
- 3-7 Jane Sakolthanarak graduated a bachelor's degree from Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand, and continued his master's degree at Cornell University in the United States, Photograph, in Pussadee Tiptus. *Satapanik Siam: Puentan Botbath Pholngan lae Naewkid, B.E.2475-2537* [Siamese Architects: Fundamentals, Roles, Works, and Concepts, 1932-1994] (Bangkok: The Association of Siamese Architects, 1996), n.p.....165
- 3-8 Lining from left to right in the front, Prasong Iamananta, Ruengsak Kantabutr, Sawai Mongkonkasem, Luang Visarnsilpagum, Somphop Pirom, Mom Rajawongse Thongyai Thongyai, Truengjai Buranasomphop, Intira Yommanart, and Sumet Jumsai, Photograph, in Rerkdee Pothiwanakul, "Sawai Mongkolkasem: Paris (BE 2500, 2520, 2532)" *Facebook* (photo album), January 21, 2018, <https://web.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1251735434945620&type=3>.....165
- 3-9 Chulalongkorn University Alumni Association building (completed in 1968), located as a part of Chulalongkorn University in Pathum Wan District. The building was designed by Jane Sakolthanarak, following the trend of western corduroy-box building, Photograph, in Thailand Creative and Design Center, *Keeping Up Modern Thailand* (Bangkok: Thailand Creative and Design Center, 2008), 24.....166
- 3-10 New Suan Amporn *Pavilion*, designed by Krisda Arunvongse and completed in 1972, for the purpose of serving the annual Red Cross Fair, Photograph, in Thailand Creative and Design Center, *Keeping Up Modern Thailand* (Bangkok: Thailand Creative and Design Center, 2008), 36.....166
- 3-11 New Suan Amporn Pavilion amazed the people with its gigantic 15-meter, column-free roof expanse, which was the new technology derived from the western country, Photograph, in Thailand Creative and Design Center, *Keeping Up Modern Thailand* (Bangkok: Thailand Creative and Design Center, 2008), 36.....167
- 3-12 King Rama IX (Bhumibol) was playing badminton in the hall of New Suan Amporn Pavilion, Photograph, in Thailand Creative and Design Center, *Keeping Up Modern Thailand* (Bangkok: Thailand Creative and Design Center, 2008), 36.....167
- 3-13 The first Thai investor in high-rise building, *Chokchai Bulakul*, stood in the middle of the construction site of *Chokchai International* building (1969), Photograph, in Thailand Creative and Design Center, *Keeping Up Modern Thailand* (Bangkok: Thailand Creative and Design Center, 2008), 42.....167
- 3-14 Chokchai International building, designed by Rangsan Torsuwan, was standing out on Sukhumvit Road in 1960s, Photograph, in Rerkdee Pothiwanakul, "Rangsan Torsuwan Architect" *Facebook* (photo album), June 12, 2017, <https://web.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1251735434945620&type=3>.....168

- 3-15 Chokchai International building was the tallest high-rise in Thailand back in the late 1960s. It was built with reinforced concrete technology together with curtain wall, Photograph, in Rerkdee Pothiwanakul, “Rangsan Torsuwan Architect” *Facebook* (photo album), June 12, 2017, <https://web.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1251735434945620&type=3>.....168
- 3-16 Bangkok Bank building (1981), designed by Krisda Arungvongse na Ayudhya, is still located on Silom Road till today, representing the Central Business District of Bangkok, Photograph, in Thailand Creative and Design Center, *Keeping Up Modern Thailand* (Bangkok: Thailand Creative and Design Center, 2008), 46.168
- 3-17 Kasikorn Bank building, designed by Rangsan Torsuwan, is recognized as the American-inspired office building that employed curtain wall and large plaza venue similarly to the office-building trend in the United States, Photograph, in Thailand Creative and Design Center, *Keeping Up Modern Thailand* (Bangkok: Thailand Creative and Design Center, 2008), 46.....169
- 3-18 Krisda Arunvongse na Ayudhya’s concrete-fin brise-soleil technique that was used with the American University Alumni Language Center building (AUA building), Photograph by Beer Singnoi, “100 Amazing Architecture with SCG 100th Year Anniversary” *SCG Experience*, accessed March 15, 2022. <https://www.pinterest.com/scgexperience/100-amazing-architectures-with-scg-100th-year-anni/>.....169
- 3-19 The Modernism of *Building Nine* of the Panabhandhu School, designed by Ong-ard Satrabhandhu, was standing amidst the suburban context of Bangkok in 1966, Photograph, in *Contemporary Architect in Thailand: an individual study report of 3rd-year students* (Bangkok: Faculty of Architecture, Silpakorn University, 1982).....170
- 3-20 Ong-ard Satrabhadhu studied architecture at Cornell University under Colin Rowe (degree awarded in 1965) and acquired the Master of Architecture at Yale University, which he studied under Charles Moore, in 1967. (Source: Richard H. Driehaus Prize, University of Notre Dame), Photograph, “Ong-ard Satrabhadhu” *Wikipedia*, accessed March 15, 2022. www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ong-ard_Satrabhandhu.....170
- 3-21 The comparison between Building Nine of the Panabhandhu School in Bangkok and a physical model of Le Corbusier’s French Embassy in Brasilia, Brazil, in 1964, Photograph, in Non Arkaraprasertkul and Reilly P. Rabitaille, “Differences, Originality and Assimilation: Building Nine at Panabhandhu School,” *Threshold 35* (2009): 8-15.....171
- 3-22 Entrance ramp at Le Corbusier’s Carpenter Center of Visual Arts at Harvard University (2005) comparing with entrance ramp at Satabhandhu’s Building Nine, Photograph, in Non Arkaraprasertkul and Reilly P. Rabitaille, “Differences, Originality and Assimilation: Building Nine at Panabhandhu School,” *Threshold 35* (2009): 8-15.....171
- 3-23 Brick circular cutaway at Louis Kahn’s Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad (1988) comparing with Satabhandhu’s Building Nine, Photograph, in Non Arkaraprasertkul and Reilly P. Rabitaille, “Differences, Originality and Assimilation: Building Nine at Panabhandhu School,” *Threshold 35* (2009): 8-15.....171

Chapter 4

- 4-1 Murals inside Wat Phakhininat temple and inside the ordination hall of Wat Ratcharasaram temple, reflecting the elite consumption of Chinese luxury goods during King Rama III's reign, Photograph, in Achirat Chaiyapotpanit, "King Rama III-Period Murals and their Chinese Home Decoration Theme," *Journal of the Siam Society* 101 (2013): 37 and 44.226
- 4-2 Western-perspective drawing method was picked up by *Khrua In Khong*, one of the most celebrated Thai artists active in the 1850s and 1860s, in the mural of Wat Borom Niwat temple, Mural painting, "Khrua In Khong," *Wikipedia*, accessed March 15, 2022. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khrua_In_Khong.....226
- 4-3 King Rama IV (the far right) with some of his heirs in 1875, Photograph, from Jeanette Bennett, "The Real King and I," *Wendell Howe Blogspot* (blog), March 3, 2012, <http://wendellhowe.blogspot.com/2012/03>.....227
- 4-4 The hybrid Thai-Western design of Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall, built during the reign of King Rama V, by overlaying the traditional-Thai spike roof over Western floor plans, Illustration, from Kid Yang Satapanik, "Sannistan Roopbab Satapattayagum Phra Tinung Chakri Maha Prasart" [Assuming the Architectural Pattern of Chakri Maha Prasart Throne Hall], *Twitter*, July 6, 2019. https://twitter.com/arch_kidyang/status/1147673774835134464.....227
- 4-5 King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) made several overseas trips to Europe and European colonies in Asia, Photograph, from Sornsakorn Chusawat, "Phra Ratchaprasong ti Taejing nai Karn Sadej Europe Krang ti Song khong Ratchakarn ti Ha" [The Original Intention of King Rama V in His Second Visit to Europe], *OK Nation*, September 6, 2012. <http://oknation.nationtv.tv/blog/alone-win/2012/09/06/entry-1>.....228
- 4-6 Ratchadamneon Avenue was built following to King Rama V's vision to turn his kingdom into a miniature European colony, Photograph, from Nipat Thonglek, "Pap Gao Lao Tumnan: Beunglang Kwam Oh-ar Sa-nga-ngam Nam Thanon Ratchadamneon" [The Narratives of the Old Images: Behind the Extravaganza of Ratchadamneon Avenue], *Matichon*, January 22, 2018. https://www.matichon.co.th/article/news_809778.....228
- 4-7 Ministry of Defense building and Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall, photograph, from Kid Yang Satapanik, "Kra-suang Kalahom" [Ministry of Defense], *Twitter*, April 9, 2020, https://twitter.com/arch_kidyang/status/1248204621589303296; and "Phra Ratchaphiti Thaleung Phraratchamontien Phra Tinung Anata Samakhom" [The Ceremony of Assumption of the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall], *Silpa Magazine*, June 1, 2020, https://www.silpa-mag.com/old-photos-tell-the-historical-story/article_11921.....229
- 4-8 Amphorn Sathan Residential Hall and Bang Khunphrom Palace, Photograph, from "Amphorn Sathan Residential Hall," *Wikimapia*, last modified October 23, 2021, <http://wikimapia.org/13674532/Amphorn-Sathan-Residential-Hall>; and "Bang Khunphrom Palace," *Foursquare*, accessed October 23, 2021, <https://foursquare.com/v/วังบางขุนพรหม-bang-khunphrom-palace/4d175a89bb64224b2dbef65>.....229
- 4-9 Portraits of King Vajiravudh or Rama VI while studying in England and when he was

- wearing the uniform of a General in the British Army, Photograph, from Wikipedia; and “Vajiravudh (Rama VI), King of Siam (1881-1925) c. 1916,” *Royal Collection Trust*, accessed October 23, 2021, <https://www.rct.uk/collection/2915342/vajiravudh-rama-king-of-siam-1881-1925>.....230
- 4-10 Vajiramongkut Building of Vajiravudh College and the Administrative Building of Chulalongkorn University are the examples of Applied Thai architecture, Photograph, from “Vajiravudh College,” *ASA Conservation Award*, June 19, 2016; and “Chulalongkorn University,” *V Charkarn.com*, last modified June 20, 2021, <http://www.reurnthai.com/index.php?topic=4350.240>.....230
- 4-11 The Army-branch members and the navy-branch members of Khana Ratsadon or People’s Party, Photograph, “People’s Party (Thailand)” *Wikipedia*, accessed March 15, 2022. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Party_\(Thailand\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Party_(Thailand)).....231
- 4-12 The Ministry of Justice building, an example of Modern Thai architecture after 1932, was torn down by the opponent viewers in 2012, Photograph, from Kid Yang Satapanik, “Sarn Deeka” [Ministry of Justice], *Twitter*, November 15, 2020 Kid Yang Satapanik, “Kra-suang Kalahom” [Ministry of Defense], *Twitter*, April 9, 2020, https://twitter.com/arch_kidyang/status/1248204621589303296.....231
- 4-13 Examples of the architectural concrete-structured style that based itself on traditional Thai elements: the main building of Phra Pratom Chedi temple and the pagoda, built from concrete, at Wat Phra Sri Mahathat Woramahawihan, Bang Khen, Photograph, in Vimolsiddhi Horayangkura and el at., *Pattanakan Naewkhwamkit lae Roopbaeb khong Ngansatapattayagum*, [Development of Concepts, and Architectural Patterns: Past, Present, and Future] (Bangkok: The Association of Siamese Architecture, 1993), 86 and 91.....232
- 4-14 The Privy Council Chamber, designed by Sumet Jumsai in 2013-2014, Photograph, from “Privy Council Chamber,” *World Architecture*, July 10, 2008, <https://worldarchitecture.org/architecture-projects/hnhm/privy-council-chambers-project-pages.html>.....232
- 4-15 Saranrom Park and Saranrom Palace. The later was designed by Henry Alabaster, who was deputy consul general to the British Embassy and advisor to the king, in Neoclassical style in 1866, Photograph, from Sense and Scene, “Ngan Aok-ran Rer-doo Nao Suan Saranrom” [The Winter Fair and Festival at Saranrom Park], *Facebook* (photo album), October 3, 2016, <https://m.facebook.com/BaanThaTienCafe/posts/613271575517803>).....233
- 4-16 Master plan layout of the Privy Council Chamber, Computational drawing, from “Privy Council Chamber,” *World Architecture*, July 10, 2008, <https://worldarchitecture.org/architecture-projects/hnhm/privy-council-chambers-project-pages.html>.....233
- 4-17 The colonnade design strategy of Sumet that derived from the Thai temples and European Classical architecture, Photograph, from “Privy Council Chamber,” *World Architecture*, July 10, 2008, <https://worldarchitecture.org/architecture-projects/hnhm/privy-council-chambers-project-pages.htm>.....234

- 4-18 In this façade, naked I-beams forming triangular frames, which perched atop the colonnade, invoke the traditional Thai gable roofs, Photograph, from “Privy Council Chamber,” *World Architecture*, July 10, 2008, <https://worldarchitecture.org/architecture-projects/hnhm/privy-council-chambers-project-pages.html>234
- 4-19 The old national assembly of Thailand, the U-Thong Nai Assembly Hall, built in 1970, Photograph, “Parliament House of Thailand,” *Wikipedia*, accessed March 15, 2022. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Assembly_\(Thailand\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Assembly_(Thailand)).....234
- 4-20 The “Draft Constitution,” signed by King Rama VII in 1932, Photograph, from “Phra Rajchahattalekha Ratchakarn ti Jed Phraratchathan Rathammanoon Chabab Rak kae Phuongchon Chao Thai” [King Rama VII Granted the First Constitution to Thai People], *Around Online*, December 10, 2019, <https://www.aroundonline.com/constitution-day/>...235
- 4-21 Four days after the legislature bestowed, the assembly met for the first time on June 28 in Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall, Photograph, “Rumruek Pad-sib-pad Pi Rathammanoon Chabab Raek” [Commemorating 88 Years of the First Thai Constitution], *Voice TV*, June 26, 2020, <https://www.voicetv.co.th/read/kBbt2l0YC>.....235
- 4-22 Sarit Thanarat, Thanom Kittikachorn, and Prapas Jarusathian, Photograph, from “Si-sib-hok Pi Sib-si Tula Yon Du Khum Toorakit Si-sao Sarit-Thanom-Prapas Korn Mod Amnaj Tang Kan-mueng?” [48 Years of October 14th: Tracing Back the Businesses of the Si-sao Group: Sarit, Thanom, Prapas, Prior to their Political Downfall?], *Isra News*, October 16, 2019, <https://www.isranews.org/content-page/item/81558-isranewsss-81558.html>.....236
- 4-23 King Rama IX granted a 7.9-acre plot of royal land, north of Ananta Samakhom, east of Dusit Palace, adjacent to Rajavithi road, to construct the new parliament complex, Photograph, in Koompong Noobanjong. *The Aesthetics of Power: Architecture, Modernity, and Identity from Siam to Thailand* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2013), n.p.....236
- 4-24 Pon Chulasawek, the chief architect of PWD, Photograph, from “Nai Pon Chulasawek,” *Department of Public Works and Town and Country Planning*, accessed October 25, 2021, http://eservices.dpt.go.th/eservice_6/ejournal/26/26-02.pdf?journal_.....237
- 4-25 The thin-shell roof structure over the chamber hall, Computational drawing from “The Parliament House of Thailand.” *Plenum, Places of Power: A Wiki on National Parliament Buildings Worldwide*, accessed September 21, 2021, <https://www.places-of-power.org/wiki/index.php?title=Thailand>.....237
- 4-26 As described by the main architect, the function layout was intended to be as simple as possible, Computational drawing, in Koompong Noobanjong. *The Aesthetics of Power: Architecture, Modernity, and Identity from Siam to Thailand* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2013), n.p.....238
- 4-27 A statue of King Rama VII situated on the highest point in front of the drop-off point, Photograph, from “Guide to Parliament,” *Parliament.go.th*, accessed October 25, 2021, https://web.parliament.go.th/doc.php?type=file&mt=application%2Fpdf&d=parcy&url=download%2Farticle%2Farticle_20180403084734.pdf.....238
- 4-28 At the center, Le Corbusier placed a hyperbolic tower with the circular-shaped general

- assembly hall underneath, Photograph, from Rajnish Wattas, “Colourful Enigmas of Corbusier’s Capitol,” *The Tribune India*, June 9, 2013,
<https://www.tribuneindia.com/2013/20130609/spectrum/main1.htm>.....239
- 4-29 The design component that vividly recalls Le Corbusier’s design to the utmost are the curved parapet and the concrete piers that wrapped around the building, Photograph, from “Pien-pan Rattasapha Thai” [The Changes of Thai Parliament Buildings], *Parliamentmuseum.go.th*, June 28, 2021,
<https://parliamentmuseum.go.th/89y/content4.html>.....239
- 4-30 In Oscar Niemeyer’s design, two “cupolas,” rising above the flat roof, indicate the assembly chambers of Brazil’s bicameral legislature, Photograph, from David Douglass-Jaimes, “AD Classics: National Congress / Oscar Niemeyer,” *ArchDaily*, September 21, 2015, <https://www.archdaily.com/773568/ad-classics-national-congress-oscar-niemeyer>
240
- 4-31 Thai Parliament House that it was closely similar to the interior design of Oscar Niemeyer’s *National Congress* in Brasilia, Brazil, Photograph, from Suthipat Kanitthakul, “Form of Parliament and Democracy,” *The Momentum*, August 8, 2019,
<https://themomentum.co/form-of-parliament-and-democracy/>.....240
- 4-32 By comparing two buildings’ floorplans next to each other, Thailand’s National Assembly seemed to duplicate the Brasilia’s Chamber of Deputies, both in terms of scaled proportion and layout, Photograph, in Koompong Noobanjong. *The Aesthetics of Power: Architecture, Modernity, and Identity from Siam to Thailand* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2013), n.p.
241
- 4-33 The decorative elements that wrapping around the rooftop were derived from the *Jumsai Throne*’s flower garland, Photograph, from Boon, “Nailuang-Phra Rachinee Sadej Phitee Suansanam Tawaiisat Pathiyai nai Wan Khongtap Thai” [King and Queen Join the Parade Ceremony on the Thai Armed Forces Day], *Educabla.com*, January 23, 2001,
<https://educabla.com/01/ในหลวง-ราชินี-เสด็จฯ-พิธี/>.....241
- 4-34 The connection between the new parliamentary complex and all the existing national significances situated on Ratchadamnoen Avenue such as the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall, the Dusit Palace Plaza, the Democracy Monument, the Royal Field, and the Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall, Photograph, in Koompong Noobanjong. *The Aesthetics of Power: Architecture, Modernity, and Identity from Siam to Thailand* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2013), n.p.....242
- 4-35 A director of the Arsomsilp Institute of the Arts, Theerapol Niyom, Photograph, from Arsom Silp Institute of the Arts, “Ajarn Theerapol Niyom,” *Facebook* (photo album), August 22, 2018,
<https://www.facebook.com/arsomsilp/photos/a.1907702359291922/1907703015958523/?type=3>.....242
- 4-36 The classic Thai Buddhist folklore *Trai Bhum Phra Ruang*, Photograph, from “Trai Bhum

- Phra Ruang,” *Seksanpantu Wordpress* (blog), August 13, 2014,
<https://seksanpantu.wordpress.com/2014/08/13/hell-earth-and-heaven/>.....243
- 4-37 The design of *Sappaya-sapa-sathan* is represented by a stepped pyramid, surmounted by a golden pagoda-liked structure, Computational drawing and photograph, from Southeast Asia Infrastructure, “Sapaya-Sapasathan,” *Facebook* (photo album), July 4, 2018,
<https://www.facebook.com/sea.infra/photos/a.118845385458567/194388471237591/>.....243
- 4-38 Hall of the Sun or *Suriyan Hall* (left) serves as the House of Representative and *Chantra Hall* or Hall of the Moon (right) houses the Senate meetings, Photograph, from “House Meeting at New Parliament First Time,” *Voice TV*, August 7, 2019,
<https://thestandard.co/house-meeting-at-new-parliament-first-time/>.....244
- 4-39 *Traibhum* diagram, Mount Meru is thus positioned at a center of the whole universe, surrounded by seven rings of mountains and cosmic oceans on its horizontal alignment. Parts of these (lower) landscapes are the locations of the four earths where humans live, Photograph, “ไตรภูมิพระร่วง,” *Seksanpantu.wordpress.com*, accessed March 15, 2022.
<https://seksanpantu.wordpress.com/2014/08/13/hell-earth-and-heaven/>.....244

Editorial Notes

Chronology

All the dates in this dissertation are written in Christian form for the convenience of international readers. However, the formal chronology in the Thai setting is generally written in Buddhist form (B.E. or Buddhist Era), as A.D. 1 was contemporary with B.E. 543. For instance, the year A.D. 2021 in which this dissertation was written equals the year B.E. 2564.

Siam/Thailand

Siam, the name of the country in English, was changed to Thailand in 1939, and the adjective Siamese was changed to Thai in the same year. This dissertation uses the name “Siam” when discussing the pre-1939 period, and “Thailand” thereafter.

Transliteration and Romanization

There is no generally agreed-upon system of representing Thai in Roman script, and all systems have some limitations because the 26 letters of the Roman alphabet are insufficient to represent all of the consonants, vowels, diphthongs, and tones of Thai. In this dissertation, I have adopted a modified version of the Royal Institute system of Romanizing Thai. The system makes no distinction between long and short vowel forms; and tones are not represented. Dashes are used to separate units of compound expressions that are translated as a single term in English, such as *khvam-pen-thai* for “Thainess.”

Thai social norms stipulate that Thai people should be called by their first names. I follow this norm here, and refer to Thai authors by given names, not surnames, and all citations by Thai authors are alphabetized in the bibliography and elsewhere by given names. I also follow the authors’ preferred spelling of their own names in English when known.

Additionally, various titles are used for royalty and members of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie. In the case of the former, these indicate the generational descent of a particular member of the royal family. Under the absolute monarchy, members of the royal family that entered the government service were also granted a rank. Bureaucrats and military officers were granted the following ranks in ascending order: *khun*, *luang*, *phra*, *chao phraya*, and rarely, *somdet chao phraya*. Individuals were also given a title, which was commonly used in place of their actual name. Many retained these titles as surnames following the 1932 change in government, for example, *Luang Phibunsongkhram*.

Chapter 1

Introduction

This dissertation offers an examination of crypto-colonial discourse in Modern Thai architecture. It argues that the transplantation of western Modern architecture in Thailand initiated a neo-colonial cultural dynamic. According to the recent scholarship of Thai postcolonial studies, the term *Crypto-colonialism* is applied to Thailand based on its unique form of political marginality. This theory characterizes Thailand's relation to the West as being a technically independent though essentially tributary nation-state, because the country was materially dependent on western economic and political power.¹ By tracing the historical consolidation of Modern architectural consumerism in Thailand and the emergence of western-adopted discipline, this dissertation will challenge the idea that colonial discourses were only confined to countries or regions that were directly occupied by western nations. In doing so, it seeks to deepen our understanding of the western hegemony's presence in Thailand by illuminating Thailand's path and paradox to obtain western civilization and modernization: how to become modern and to sustain the national spirit, within the historical and theoretical framework of architecture.

According to the history of Siam or Thailand, a desire to become "civilized" similar to Europeans, translated as *siwilai*, was rooted in the country since the mid-nineteenth century. But unlike the European experience, the Siamese quest for *siwilai* was a transcultural process in which ideas and practices from Europe, via colonialism, were transferred, localized, and hybridized in the Thai setting. However, the quest for *siwilai* was not simply a reaction to the

¹ Michael Herzfeld, "The Absent Presence: Discourse of Crypto-colonialism," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 101.4 (2002): 900-901.

colonial threat. Rather it was an attempt originated by various groups among the Thai elite, including urban intellectuals, to attain and confirm the relative superiority of themselves over the local population and among the nations within the region.² “The West” and “western technology” thus became a signifier in the discourse of *siwilai*, referring to a distant land that was an imagined model for progress and desirable change. To attain *siwilai*, the Thais interpret “imitating and consuming” western culture as a modern method of obtaining and gaining access to the new world order. The sense of transformation into the new age, or modernity, as opposed to the traditional, the ancient, to the bygone era became more influential in the 1960s with another term emphasizing modernization—*than samai* or keeping up with the times.³ This dissertation proposes that through western-inspired consumption practices that encompassed foreign goods and materials as well as architecture and urban planning, the Thai ruling class re-validated their symbolic capital by connecting to the original sources of civilization and modernization. What emerged was of a form of Modern Thai architecture—best understood through the translated terms of *siwilai* and *than samai*—that was a crypto-colonial formation.

Though the conventional Thai historiography often points out that the quest for *siwilai* was a necessity for Thai rulers and a clever strategy to secure the country’s independence from western imperialism, the “*farang*” or “westerners” were never seen as agents of colonial intent and conquest.⁴ Since the middle of the nineteenth century, Siam/Thailand has been acutely aware

² Thongchai Winichakul, “The Quest for ‘Siwilai:’ A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 59.3 (2000): 529.

³ According to Thongchai, *than samai* reveals the sense of secular development and material progress more obviously. *Than samai* also emerged in the late nineteenth century and became influential in the 1960s modernization. Literally, it means keeping up with the age or with the times. Indeed, both *siwilai* and *than samai* point to the forward and backward directions of time, rather than the recurrence in the predetermined and static cosmic time as in the Hindu-Buddhist sense of the past. For further descriptions of these translated words, see Thongchai, “The Quest for ‘Siwilai:’ A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam,” 531.

⁴ The Thai term *farang* emerges from a set of a pan-Asian identification markers for the West, western peoples, and western-derived things. The term ultimately derives from *Frank*, which originally referred to a

that *farang* are immensely more powerful and that the country has needed a way to contend with them.⁵ For the Thais, the supreme powers in the world were the cause for concern as much as for excitement and inspiration. For example, Jambudipa (India) and China before colonialism, and the United States after World War II, occupied similar positions in the Thai mentality.⁶ Therefore, aiming to become *siwilai* or *than samai* always captivates the Thai rulers as they did not want to be seen for being less civilized and did not want to be left behind or below. This self-calibration to the West has important implications for both internal and geopolitical dynamics. Siam/Thailand has long been seen as a site of something perhaps analogous to the West, perhaps as valiantly struggling to emulate the West, but never simply as the West itself.⁷ This conceptual inequality instills the subtly crypto-colonial presuppositions in Thai Modern architecture that the Thais are still struggling to move away from Eurocentrism.

Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, Thailand became increasingly subservient to the more powerful nations such as the United States. Politically, its foreign policy was tied explicitly to the Cold War logic that represented communism as the principal threat to the country. Economically, Thailand became integrated into the U.S. sphere of influence and Thai policy makers adopted much of the development agenda that firmly positioned Thailand as a third world economy.⁸ Furthermore, by joining the Free World's laissez-faire economy, Thai

Germanic speaking people in the region of modern France, but which came to be widely used in early medieval Egypt, Greece, and other Mediterranean areas to refer to Western Europeans in general. For further explanation on origin and meanings of the term, see Pattana Kitiarsa, "An Ambiguous Intimacy: Farang as Siamese Occidentalism," in *The Ambiguous Allure of the West: Traces of the Colonial in Thailand*, eds. Rachel V. Harrison and Peter A. Jackson (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 2010), 60-61.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 58.

⁶ Thongchai, "The Quest for 'Siwilai': A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam," 537.

⁷ Michael Herzfeld, "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*, eds. Rachel V. Harrison and Peter A. Jackson (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 2010), 176.

⁸ Matthew Phillips, preface to *Thailand in the Cold War* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2016), n. pag..

consumer culture was subjected to a Cold War agenda, applied through the promotion of American cultural and educational organizations set up in Thailand such as the Asia Foundation and the Fulbright Program. While the nation's rulers were responsible for imposing this cultural shift, a group of western-educated Thai architects acted as local agents by bringing in foreign models imbued with civilizational importance to the country, thus securing U.S. hegemony in Thai architecture.

This dissertation research will situate itself in relation to current scholarship on the transplantation of western Modern architecture in Thailand, while also addressing the recent discourse of crypto-colonialism within Thai Studies by applying it to Thai architecture. The crypto-colonial concept, which recognizes the subordinate position of Thailand in the western-dominated world order, has been used to describe the power-knowledge characteristics of colonialism that typify Thailand's relation with the modern West. The postcolonial understanding of this term has been explored by several prominent scholars in fields such as economics, political science, anthropology, and history. It has to a lesser extent been employed by those focusing on architecture and urban development. While repeated dialogues on global dominance of the West impacting Thailand have yielded a variety of studies of architectural hybridization during the period from the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, the period after World War II still remains insufficiently examined.

For the most part, researches on the acquisition of western technological advances in Thailand have focused on European artists and architects prior to the Siamese revolution of 1932. Their task was to reinvent the monarchy's public image and promote the kingdom's profile abroad in order to mitigate the imperialist threat and lay the basis for nation building.⁹ Spatial

⁹ Herzfeld, "The Conceptual Allure of the West: Dilemmas and Ambiguities of Crypto-colonialism in Thailand," 182.

discourse in relation to the Siamese quest for *siwilai* has been similarly well documented and studied. Their scholarship goes beyond the exploration of translated terms as building spaces and rationales are brought to be investigated. Studies such as those by Thongchai Winichakul and Pattana Kitiarsa may provide useful comparative and methodological references, but their limited focus only to the period of absolute monarchy and Chakri reformation may make them of limited use.¹⁰ Thongchai's translation of *siwilai* is particularly semiological in its allegory and symbolism—probably more so that this dissertation will be. It will, however, help situate the themes here, explored within the unique Thai context, and provide useful guidance in terms of things to study and details to analyze for the later periods.

Within the realm of western architectural historiography in Thailand, studies of the absolute monarchy and military-led democracy periods continue to dominate academic discourses on colonial and postcolonial architecture. Although the influence of World War II has been acknowledged, it has yet to be fully interrogated through studies of modern spaces in crypto-colonial Thailand, such as those of Maurizio Peleggi, Pirasri Povatong, and Lawrence L. Chua.¹¹ Chomchon Fusinpaiboon's doctoral dissertation *Modernisation of Building: The Transplantation of the Concept of Architecture from Europe to Thailand, 1930s-1950s* focuses primarily on the concept of modernity in Thai architecture before the World War II era, but nonetheless helps clarify the larger historical context for the dissertation.¹² Chatri

¹⁰ Thongchai, "The Quest for 'Siwilai': A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam," 528-549; and Pattana, "An Ambiguous Intimacy: Farang as Siamese Occidentalism," 57-74.

¹¹ Pirasri Povatong, "Building Siwilai: Transformation of Architecture and Architectural Practice in Siam during the Reign of Rama V, 1868-1910" (Ph.D. Diss., The University of Michigan, 2011), 1-312; Maurizio Peleggi, "Purveyors of Modernity? Europeans, Artists, and Architects in Turn-of-the-Century Siam," 91-101; and Lawrence L. Chua, "Building Siam: Leisure, Race, and Nationalism in Modern Thai Architecture, 1910-1973" (Ph.D. Diss., Cornell University, 2012), 1-407.

¹² Chomchon Fusinpaiboon, "Modernisation of Building: The Transplantation of the Concept of Architecture from Europe to Thailand, 1930s-1950s" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Sheffield, 2014), 1-748.

Prakitnonthakan's book *Politics and Society in The Arts of Architecture during the Nationalist Period of Siam* serves as compelling starting point for the very recent past and will likely help steer similar political inquiries in the more distant past.¹³ Thailand, with its notable claim to be politically independent though architecturally it followed the patterns very similar to those of colonized Southeast Asian countries, presents a unique opportunity to explore the hybridized nature unpacked by postcolonial theory. This goes to extend Thai Studies beyond the field of historical and anthropological studies that are too often taken as the only two dimensions to represent Thai crypto-colonial historiography.

The persistence of crypto-colonial theory and political-cultural borrowing, as well as national identity and architectural hybridization study approaches of the post-World War II period, will clearly be considered in this dissertation. This is yet another area lacking in serious scholarly consideration. Koompong Noobanjong's publication *Power, Identity, and The Rise of Modern Architecture: From Siam to Thailand* helps to frame and contextualize parts of this study, while Chatri's insightful chapter *The Art History of "Silpakorn Bureau: Building the Nation and The Transformation of Thai Nationalism in The Cold War Era* provides Cold War-specific information that provides a critical starting point.¹⁴ In addition to the perpetuation of design pedagogies and aesthetic traditions, some arts and film studies will be considered as links to the postwar era in Thailand. Few seem to have engaged these ideas at this point, and these will

¹³ Chatri Praktinonthakan, *Kanmuang Lae Sangkhom Nai Sinlapa Sathapattayakam: Sayam Samai Thai Prayuk Chatniyom* [Politics and Society in The Arts of Architecture during the Nationalist Period of Siam] (Bangkok: Matichon, 2004), 1-522.

¹⁴ Koompong Noobanjong, *The Aesthetics of Power: Architecture, Modernity, and Identity from Siam to Thailand* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2013), 1-461; and Chatri Praktinonthakan, "Ngan-kien Prawatsart Silapa Yuk Ton Songkram Yen: Samnak Silpakorn kab Naewkid Chatniyom Sai Klang [The Art of History of 'Silpakorn Bureau: Building the Nation and The Transformation of Thai Nationalism in The Cold War Era]," *Na Jua Architectural History and Thai Architecture* 15 (2018): 40-89.

likely be large elements of a dissertation that will also stand out from existing literature in its wide historical breadth and comprehensive thematic nature.

The historical method of this dissertation places its primary focus on the politics of architecture that initiate the cross-cultural architectural products of Thailand and the West. By integrating the interests in western modern architectural projects with questions of national economic and political policy, this dissertation addresses the ways architecture actually operated beyond the aesthetic claims of architects, their patrons, and the audience. It engages two bodies of historical evidence: one of the western-adapted Thai culture and architecture that were created by patrons, architects, artists, and intellectuals; a second of national economic and political factors, government policies and edicts, and administrative-class involvements of social and political upheaval in Thailand. Studying the diverse range of materials through the process of interpreting historical archives and interviews allows for a more nuanced understanding of how the architectural aesthetics and politics, often framed in binary opposition, complemented and contributed to each other's distinct development.

The methodology of this dissertation relies on the Thai-Study postcolonial discourse of crypto-colonialism by using the method of Semiotics, a study of symbolic and iconographic programs of buildings, in order to interpret the architectural meaning and its signification. In defining notions of crypto-colonialism, one must look at the roots of all the translated terms that signify modern Thai culture such as *siwilai*, *charoen*, and *than samai*. For example, Prince Bhidayaongkorn, the President of the Royal Institute of Siam, brought up the linguistic debate in his lecture titled “[W]hat are the conditions called *siwilai*?” Translated from an English word, civilized, the term was widely used in public without elaboration. Often referring to England, China, Haiti, Tibet, and many other countries, it was not clear what made them *siwilai* or not

siwilai. He went on to debunk the general understanding that wealth, power, territory, monogamy, gender equity, cleanliness, dress, etiquette, or mechanization constituted the notion of *siwilai*.¹⁵ These translated terms are critical because they indicate the ambiguous understanding of the Thais toward western modernization and civilization. Their ambiguous qualities were also revealed in the construction of modern Thai architecture.

Based on the above semiotic model of interpretation, this dissertation uses the translated terms to signify the adaptation of cultural and architectural artifacts, whose background started out by assimilation and became hybridized; a blend of two diverse cultures, traditions, or styles, as something heterogeneous in origin or composition. These architectural hybridizations are evident in the works of western-educated Thai architects such as Chulalongkorn University Alumni Association Building (1968), Building 9 of Panabhandhu School (1969), U-Thong Nai Assembly Hall (1970), and New Suan Amporn Pavilion (1972). As a part of a semiotic process, the study of linguistic interpretation explains how these translated terms denote the making of hybridized architecture, a combination of western Modern architectural mentality and Thai physicality.

In carrying out this dissertation research, I consulted a number of significant publications on Modern Thai architecture, including *Siamese Architects: Fundamentals, Roles, Works, and Approaches, 1932-1994* (1996) from the series that recorded the development of architectural profession in Thailand when it began to separate from hands-on craftsmanship. Another key publication is *Six Decades of Modern Thai Architecture* (1993), which reveals the impact of western modernization on Thai architecture in each decade. The Library of the Association of

¹⁵ Prince Bidayalongkorn, “Phawa Yangrai no thi Riakwa Siwilai [What is the Condition Called Civilized?],” in *Prachum Pathakatha khong Kromamun Phitthayakongkon* [Collected lectures by Prince Bidayalongkorn], (Bangkok: Ruamsan, 1970), n. pag, quoted by Thongchai, “The Quest for ‘Siwilai:’ A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam,” 528.

Siamese Architects contained the early issues of the architectural journal *ASA* (1949-74), where the new and updated works of Thai architects are documented, meanwhile The National Archives of Thailand also provided a collection of publications and documents that reference the broader context of Cold War and American economic aid to Thailand. These include journals and reports were published by the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, such as the *National Economic and Social Development Plans* (1961-91); as well as the Comptroller General of the United States, such as *Report to the Congress: U.S. Construction Activities in Thailand, 1966 and 1967* (1968); and publications on western geopolitics impacting Thailand, such as *Thailand and the United States: Development, Security, and Foreign Aid* (1990) and *Thailand in the Cold War* (2016).

The organization of this dissertation is drawn from the colonial dialectic of “autonomy” and “subordination,” which is distinct in Thai history. Many Thai-Studies scholars often referenced it in themes of “duality and ambiguity.” The latter two terms are closely related notions. They are invoked to describe the character of a society, marked by crypto-colonial forms of power that reflect local elite autonomy in the context of a general subordination to western power. To better explain the Thai situation, Peter A. Jackson, a professor in modern Thai cultural history summarizes Thai crypto-colonial case that it involves an interrelated system of power in which the connecting node is the Thai state. One dimension of power is at the international level and defines Thailand’s subordinate relations to the western imperial powers. This subordination is most visible in the domains of international economics and law, where the country looks most like a colony. The second dimension is in the domestic domain, which the Thai state acts as an autonomous authoritarian power over a subordinated local populace. This domestic domain of crypto-colonial power does not conform to the postcolonial model of western colonizer versus

Asian colonized, because it was Thailand's own ruling elite that did the work undertaken by foreign colonialists in the direct colonies.¹⁶

By following Jackson's analysis, the processes of opposition and acceptance indeed involved in the development of Thai culture and society. This East-West, Without-Within Thai dichotomy has created convergence, assimilation, transculturation, and transmediation in Thai cultural and architectural formations. Pattana Kitiersa and Michael Herzfeld furthermore stress that the contemporary patterns of Thai-Western cultural hybridity are marked by an "ambiguous intimacy" and emphasized by the "dilemmas and ambiguities" of crypto-colonialism in Thailand.¹⁷ Therefore, this dissertation is structured based on these three distinctive notions commonly found in the discourse of Thai crypto-colonialism: subordination, autonomy, and ambiguity, which also apply to the Modern Thai architectural framework.

This introductory chapter is divided into three major parts, each of which provides background information on Thailand. The first part contains a general introduction of the dissertation topic, purpose of the study, historical scope of the project, as well as archival materials and methodology, and chapter structure. The second part exposes the ways western modernization and civilization became instrumental within the political discourse of the Thai state. It examines the translated terms, such as *araya*, *charoen*, *than samai*, as contrived by the Thai ruling class dating in the middle of the nineteenth century. This section makes an attempt to argue that these terms were employed to set up the West as an imagined model for progress and desirable changes. At the same time, they were the philosophical innovations the Thai elite used

¹⁶ Peter A. Jackson, "The Ambiguities of Semicolonial Power in Thailand," in *The Ambiguous Allure of the West: Traces of the Colonial in Thailand*, eds. Rachel V. Harrison and Peter A. Jackson (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 2010), 53-54.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 51.

to maintain relative superiority over the local populations.¹⁸ The third part aims to support the overall argument by providing the historical background related to the impact of the Cold War in Southeast Asia. The writing offers theoretical framework for positioning Thailand within Cold War cosmopolitanism and identifies the Cold War cultural productions that affected Thailand. In order to achieve this, it examines Thailand's political and economic policies due to the administrative government of Prime Minister Sarit Thanarat (1957-63). Many western academics have claimed that Thanarat aligned many national policies with U.S. anti-communist foreign policy to receive financial and military aid.¹⁹

Chapter 2 introduces the first of the three major themes, which is "Subordination" in Modern Thai architecture. It looks at the "subordination" characteristics of Modern Thai architecture when western powers, especially the United States, imposed their culture upon that of Thailand to undermine or to deny its existence. During this time, urban infrastructure and the hospitality industry in Bangkok and its suburb grew rapidly due to American economic aid as well as to the need to provide accommodations for western tourists and the American military presence. The architectural design of this period was dominated by spatial concerns that reflected the new and powerful presence of the United States over the traditional Thai architectural planning accomplished by American architects working in Thailand.

Chapter 3 examines the theme of "Autonomy" in Modern Thai architecture. It examines how this discourse enabled local elites to maintain their grip on power over local citizens in ways that elsewhere proved vulnerable.²⁰ It argues that the autonomy of the elites was expressed

¹⁸ Thongchai, "The Quest for 'Siwilai': A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam," 545-546.

¹⁹ Daniel Fineman, *A Special Relationship: The United States and Military Government in Thailand, 1947-1958* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), 251.

²⁰ Herzfeld, "The Absent Presence: Discourse of Crypto-colonialism," 919-920.

through architectural features and culminated by the hands of western-educated Thai architects. This group of professionals started to assimilate western Modern ideology and employed modern cultural and architectural artifacts to respond to the Cold War's neo-colonialism, at the same time, to secure their political autonomy in the Southeast Asian arena

The fourth chapter studies the theme of “Ambiguity” in Modern Thai architecture through the characteristics of the ambiguities of Thai-Western relations. While they emerge from the self/other dynamic common to all postcolonial settings, the dialectic of crypto-colonial forms of power adds a further dimension that also contributes to the ambivalences and multiplicities of Thai engagements with the West. This chapter thus traces how some of the diverse accounts of duality in Modern Thai architecture point to the cast of crypto-colonial power relations, as one of the apparent sources of the ambiguities of the West's allure in Thailand.

In conclusion, this dissertation reflects on the impact of the Thai-translated terms on Thai architecture in the near future, asking questions, such as: how will these ambiguous characteristics be implemented in the new governmental regime of Thailand? Freed from the aid supported by the West, how will the new generation of Thai architects perceive their own traditional identity? What might this mean to locals struggling to articulate new architectural identities? How have supposed dualities—tradition/modernity, colony/empire—changed in light of this consideration of Thailand's Modern architecture?

1.2 Modernization and Civilization: Meaning, Substitutes, and Politics of the Translated Terms

1.2.1 Modernization: A Key to Access the *Farang* World

According to the history of Siam or Thailand, a desire to become “civilized” similar to Europeans was rooted in the country since the mid-nineteenth century. But unlike the Italian

civiltà discourse or the French imperial *mission civilisatrice*, the Siamese quest for *siwilai* was a transcultural process in which ideas and practices from Europe, via colonialism, had been transferred, localized, and hybridized in the Thai setting.²¹

However, the Siamese quest for *siwilai* was not simply a reaction to the colonial threat. Rather, it was a strategy of rule, originated by various groups among Siamese elites and later including urban intellectuals, to attain and confirm both the relative superiority of Siam as the traditional imperial power in the region and the superiority of the ruling elite controlling the local population. This Siamese modified version of “civilization” had been made over in the image of the West, starting from the era of the absolute monarchy when the kings started to learn western culture and traveled to Europe. The king and his royal descendants sought to strengthen their legitimacy at a time when their claim to divine status was diminished, most crucially among rival factions within the Siamese court. The quest for *siwilai* offered a valuable opportunity to acquire symbols of westernization as attributes of status and markers of prestige.²² Thongchai Winichakul, A Thai historian and Southeast Asian studies researcher, argues that a long-standing precedent of legitimizing rule by appropriating a foreign idiom of power allowed Siam’s elite to rapidly “recapitalize” their symbolic authority in a western form, with little local disruption:

Siamese rulers seemed to find minimal difficulty in looking outward, as a strategy for surviving and prospering in the modern world ... When the centers of the traditional [Siamese] universe, namely China and India, fell to the West, and thereby lost their hold on Thai mentality, Siamese rulers were quick to abandon them ...²³

²¹ Thongchai, “The Quest for ‘Siwilai’: A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam,” 529.

²² Harrison, “Introduction: The Allure of Ambiguity: The ‘West’ and the Making of Thai Identities,” 18.

²³ Thongchai Winichakul, “The Others Within: Travel and Ethno-spatial Differentiation of Siamese Subjects, 1885-1910,” in *Civility and Savagery: Social Identity in the Tai States*, ed. Andrew Turton (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2000), 38-62.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the Siamese elite became aware of the West and its imperialist influence due to the military defeat of traditional regional powers such as Burma, Vietnam, and China. Siam's nobility, including King Mongkut (Rama IV, r. 1851-1868), the second king *Phra* Pinklao, and *Chao Phraya* Srisuriyawong, realized that "the Siamese should begin to try and acquire knowledge about the western people so as to be prepared for future eventualities" (Figure 1-1).²⁴ These persons formed a group of young progressive Siamese intellectuals during the reign of King Nangklao (Rama III, r. 1824-1851), and were "modern men [*jamphuak-samai-mai*] of vision who wished to learn *farang* (western) languages and other knowledge for the benefit of the kingdom."²⁵

Although King Mongkut never had a chance to travel to Europe during his lifetime, he acquired most of his western knowledge from missionaries who came to Siam during his days as a Buddhist monk (Figure 1-2). Manich Jumsai, a Thai educationist, attributes the king's cosmopolitan views in part to his competency in English and other foreign languages, as "he loved writing correspondence in English with westerners very much." He was a great admirer of *farang* inventions and luxury goods, which he frequently ordered through his agents in Singapore, Hong Kong, New York, and London.²⁶ Starting from King Mongkut's reign onward, the court began to break with prior Siamese tradition by adopting certain *farang* ways of life and

²⁴ The Executive Committee of the Eighth Congress, Far Eastern Association of Tropical Medicine. *Siam: General and Medical Features* (Bangkok: The Bangkok Times Press, 1930), 37.

²⁵ The term *farang* refers literally to a "white person," or Caucasian, though it emerges more broadly from "a set of pan-Asian identification markers for the West, western peoples, and western-derived things." Glossed in *Hobson-Jobson*, the cognate word *Firinghee* is noted to have derived from the Farsi: *Farangi* or *Firingi* and the Arabic: *Al-Faranj*, *Ifranji*, or *Firanji* referring to a Frank. See Harrison, "Introduction: The Allure of Ambiguity: The 'West' and the Making of Thai Identities," 2; and Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, *Phrarachaphongsawadan Rachakan thi Ha* (The Royal Chronicles of the Reign of King Rama V) (Bangkok: Matichon, 2002), 92.

²⁶ King Mongkut, *The Writings of King Mongkut to Sir John Bowring (A.D. 1855-1868)* (Bangkok: The Historical Commission of the Prime Minister's Secretariat, 1994).

consuming *farang* things in order to further their quest for *siwilai*.²⁷

Two professors in Southeast Asian Studies, Maurizio Peleggi and Pattana Kitiarsa, argue that during the reigns of Siam's last three absolute monarchs, Chulalongkorn (Rama V, r. 1868-1910), Vajiravudh (Rama VI, r. 1910-1925), and Prajadhipok (Rama VII, r. 1925-1935), the royal elite occupied a privileged position as "civilizing agents," introducing *farang* models to the country.²⁸ In the eyes of these three monarchs, *farang* goods and ideas were sources of and methods for achieving the *siwilai* status among the "civilized" countries.²⁹

Like his father, King Mongkut's son King Chulalongkorn and other members of the royal elite enjoyed western material culture (Figure 1-3). Following the precedent set by previous dynasties, they used their familiarity with western goods and cultures as a marker of civilization and legitimacy, strengthening their royal image and identity.³⁰ King Chulalongkorn himself was a great fan of Europe. He had expressed a wish to go to Europe to see "*charoen*" ever since he assumed the throne in 1868.³¹ The king started off his grand tour with month-long trips to nearby European colonies such as Singapore, Java, Colombo, and India, and fulfilled his wish to see Europe thirty years later in 1897 (Figure 1-4).

²⁷ Thongchai frames their "quest for *siwilai*" as an attempt to achieve the "civilized status" in the eyes of the West. See Thongchai, "The Quest for 'Siwilai': A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam," 528-549.

²⁸ Maurizio Peleggi, *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 10; and Pattana, "An Ambiguous Intimacy: Farang as Siamese Occidentalism," 66.

²⁹ Peleggi, *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image*, 93.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 164.

³¹ *Charoen* is a term giving an approximately similar meaning to *siwilai* and can be used interchangeably. According to So Sethabutra's *Thai-English Dictionary*, its definition is to prosper, to wax, to grow, or to thrive. See So Sethabutra, *Thai-English Dictionary* (Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich Publishing, 2001). In Thongchai's writing, he explains the meaning of *charoen* thusly: [I]n the older sense, it means cultivating, growing, increasing, building up, or expanding until compete in a positive sense. It is applied mostly to nonmaterial matters, such as cultivating merit and Buddhist awakening, making (someone) happier, growing up, increasing maturity, and so on. This older meaning of *charoen* gave way in the nineteenth century to connoting secular or worldly development, material progress, and technological advance, until it became an alternative to the alien word *siwilai* in this latter sense. To understand its further context, see Thongchai, "The Quest for 'Siwilai': A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam," 531 and 538.

While King Mongkut relied entirely on his agents overseas for his western goods, King Chulalongkorn demonstrated his commitment to *siwilai* and to Siamese “reformation” by personal contact with the West. He sent his sons to be educated in Europe, made several overseas trips to European colonies in Asia, and travelled in Europe twice during his reign.³² However, his love for the West and western things did not blind him to the geopolitics consequences of western colonial activity. Even as western practices came to be a model of civilization and modernization for Siam’s rulers, the Franco-Siamese crisis of 1893 forced the Siamese elite to experience extra-territorial difficulties and political threats from the colonial powers. The royal elite could not hide their fondness for *farang* (westerners) and their desire for *khong farang* (western goods), but none the less, they felt betrayed by the British, and King Chulalongkorn warned that *farang* could not be trusted.

Western influences became more obvious and yet more ambiguously conflicted during the following reign of King Vajiravudh, King Chulalongkorn’s son. At the age of seventeen, Vajiravudh was sent to England to receive an education at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst. He returned to Siam in 1903 after spending more than a decade of his life in Britain. Renowned as the first Thai king to be educated in the West, King Vajiravudh employed European patterns for civilization in his quest to raise Siam to the level of Europe and America.

His nationalist program, though fundamentally based on the English model, was to include a crucial intermixing of Buddhist morality, and this revealed the ambiguity at the core of the Siamese royal elites’ relationship to the West. Though he himself subscribed to *farang* civilization, Vajiravudh’s nationalist vision led him to be cautious of western and other foreign influences, and he warned against imitating the West. The more Siam has followed *farang* ways,

³² Pattana, “An Ambiguous Intimacy: *Farang* as Siamese Occidentalism,” 66.

the less it has been able to retain Buddha's Dhammic principles.³³ The king maintained that "Thai should not hate foreigners, but should just not trust them completely."³⁴ The vocal distrust of two generations of Siamese royalty underscores a history of ambiguity toward cultures viewed as "indexes to civilization" which stretches back to the premodern kingdom of Ayutthaya. In summary, it is worth noting that the Siamese response to the challenges of western imperialism was performative rather than military in nature.³⁵ Indeed, Jackson argues that as part of this performative process, a "regime of images" was introduced as a new form of local power.³⁶ The regime created a sharp divide between a "civilized," westernized public domain on the one hand and a private domain that remained local and Thai on the other.³⁷

During the imperialist era, colonialism not only spread through political and economic policies, but also through cultural and intellectual channels. This led to drastic cultural upheaval in countries across the globe, as indigenous values were challenged and often directly opposed by the moral, intellectual, and social precepts of the colonizing nations. According to Thongchai's examination of the Southeast Asian region, he argues that:

[I]n the older world order, the legitimation of power of an overlord was claimed by establishing his genealogy or association with the supreme sources of power. The claims were comprehensible in two ways. The first one was the religious ideology in which the overlord claimed his supremacy owing to his ability to access the superior of cosmic power ... The second comprehension was the complex system of tribute payment and mutual recognition. Exchanges of gifts and tributes, conferring of honors, and offerings of women among the higher and lower kings, and among comparable ones as well, signified the relative status of the givers and the recipients ... In the new world order,

³³ Ibid., 67.

³⁴ Stephen Greene, "King Wachirawut's Policy of Nationalism," in *In Memoriam Phya Anuman Rajadhon*, eds. Tej Bunnag and Michael Smithies (Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1970), 256.

³⁵ Harrison, "Introduction: The Allure of Ambiguity: The 'West' and the Making of Thai Identities," 17.

³⁶ 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, no.2 (2004): 220.

³⁷ Ibid., 249.

Europe emerged as the new *axis mundi*.³⁸ And its ethos was no longer cosmic like heavens or gods. It was civilization.³⁹

For the Siamese ruling class, one of the most urgent tasks was retaining their majestic status even as new values eroded their traditional basis of power. The need to find a new strategy for legitimizing their power was an important underlying motive for the embrace of western goods and ideas. The desire to retain power in the face of colonial threats was not, however, the only motivation for pursuing westernization. It also prevented the Siamese ruling class from falling into indignity and inferior existence. Although the conventional historiography of Thailand suggests that “modernization” since the mid-nineteenth century was necessary to satisfy the Europeans or minimize the preconditions of colonization, the quest for *siwilai* was not the only tactic to escape conquest. The country was not yet hostile to westerners until they became a threat to Siam later in the nineteenth century. The desire for *siwilai* and *charoen* was not only compelled by colonialism. It was common among aristocrats and urban intellectuals inside and outside the court.⁴⁰ The Siamese elite’s desire to keep up with the world was significant in itself: not as a response to western influences, but rather an adjustment to a new ethos of civilization that measured Siam against other leading countries.

³⁸ *Axis Mundi*, the hub or axis of the universe, is a technical term used in the study of the history of religions. The vivid images of this axis of universe vary widely, since they depend on the particular worldview promoted by a specific culture. Foremost among the images designated by the term *axis mundi* is the cosmic mountain, a sacred place deemed to be the highest point of the universe and perhaps identified with the center of the world and the place where creation first began. The well-known examples of the cosmic mountain are such as Mount Meru of South Asian cosmology, Haraberazaiti of Iranian tradition, and Himinbjorg of Scandinavian mythology. See Encyclopedia, s.v. “Axis mundi,” accessed May 29, 2021, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/environment/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/axis-mundi>

³⁹ Thongchai, “The Quest for ‘Siwilai:’ A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam,” 532-533.

⁴⁰ David K. Wyatt. *Thailand: A Short History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), 180-212; and Thongchai, “The Quest for ‘Siwilai:’ A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam,” 532.

1.2.2 Civilization: A Thai Quest for *Siwilai*

Beginning in the 1830s, “Europe” was as much a locus of desire as a cause of distress for Siam. “The West” and “western technology” thus became signifiers in the discourse of *siwilai*, referring to a distant land that was an imagined model for progress and desirable change. The Siamese elites and intellectuals leaned toward one mutual desire—to become *siwilai*—although their understanding of *siwilai* remained vague and slippery no matter how anybody tried to claim and use it politically.⁴¹ A debate on the issues of “what are the conditions called *siwilai* ?” and “whether Siam was or was not yet *siwilai*” was brought up in a special lecture delivered in 1932 by Prince Bidayalongkorn, the President of the Royal Institute of Siam. The prince started out by ridiculing the usage of the term in public, as it was widely used without explanation. He went on to debunk the general understanding that western values of wealth, power, territory, monogamy, gender equity, cleanliness, dress, etiquette, or mechanization constituted the notion of *siwilai*.⁴² Thongchai added on to the prince’s argument by stating that:

[N]ot unlike the eclectic ideas of what constituted civilization that evolved in Europe over many centuries, ideas on how to make Siam *siwilai* ranged from etiquette to material progress, including new roads, electricity, new bureaucracy, courts and judicial system, law codes, dress codes, and white teeth. The list could be much longer.⁴³

Situating this translated term in the local Thai context, *siwilai* is credited as a brilliant philological innovation. It reveals that the Siamese elite tried to contextualize the western term and concept for local comprehension and consumption. The success of *siwilai* is not only determined by the contemporary usage; it became an indicator of the need for western

⁴¹ Prince Bidayalongkorn, “Phawa Yangrai no thi Riakwa Siwilai” [What is the Condition Called Civilized?], n. pag..

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York, NY: Urizen Books, 1978); and Thongchai, “The Quest for ‘Siwilai:’ A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam,” 528-529.

consumption and of the appearance that westerners were controlling Thai hierarchical society. This relationship is exemplified by the remark of an intellectual that “the changing norm of Thai men wearing shirts marked the departure of Siam from being barbarian to becoming ‘*siwilai* like the Europeans.’”⁴⁴ The Thai understanding of *siwilai* was also developed into a normative discourse and code of conduct for the nation, as seen in documents such as in the influential treatise in Thai, *Sombat khong Phudee* [Qualifications of the Gentility].⁴⁵ These arguments affirm the significance of western “civilization” as a generic trope for *siwilai*, modernity, and progress.

The term *siwilai* dates from the mid-nineteenth century and was among the earliest translated words derived from the English word “civilized.” In general, it was used interchangeably as an adjective, a noun, or a verb, both in writing and speaking, and still remains in use today.⁴⁶ Similar to its English origin, *siwilai* connoted a wide range of meanings. On one hand, it referred to refined manners and etiquette. On the other hand, it was loaded with the ideas of “an achieved state of development” or progress.⁴⁷ Thongchai analyzes the employment of the term in Thai context and concludes that no matter how essentialized it might be, the notion of *siwilai* could only be conceptualized by comparative geographical categories implying the varying degrees of advancement.⁴⁸ Therefore, to attain *siwilai*, the Siamese elite interpreted “imitation and consumption” of western culture as a modern method of gaining access to the new

⁴⁴ K.S.R. Kulap, *Ayatiwat* [Progress] (Bangkok: Thai-Japanese Friendship Association, 1995), 81-82.

⁴⁵ Thongchai, “The Quest for ‘Siwilai:’ A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam,” 530.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 528-529.

⁴⁷ Thongchai notes that the quotation is from Raymond Williams in which he discusses the sense of the term civilization in English from the eighteenth century. Williams notes the “spirit of the Enlightenment,” the secular and progressive development, and the condition of “modernity.” Yet he recognizes that the meaning is inherently relative. See Thongchai, “The Quest for ‘Siwilai:’ A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam,” 530.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 545.

world order, as they tried to locate their position in this geography of civilization. This is consistent with Thai historian Charnvit Kasetsiri's observation that “western things and ways of conduct” were also considered *siwilai*.⁴⁹ This was revealed through the court’s enormous investment in the arts, Italian and Victorian buildings, royal paraphernalia, and public rituals—such as extravagant reception held upon the king’s return from Europe (Figure 1-5).⁵⁰ This event marked the success not only of diplomatic negotiations, but also of the quest of “*siwilai*”—which was outward looking yet fundamentally a self-confirmation of the Siamese ruling class.

The sense of transformation into a new age and a definitive break with the bygone era became stronger in the 1960s with the invention of another term for modernization—*than samai*, or keeping up with the times.⁵¹ Beginning in King Vajiravudh’s period (King Rama VI, r. 1910-1925), “modernity” becomes particularly important as an element of the nation-building program. King Vajiravudh's efforts toward modernization were motivated by a desire for the esteem of the West. For him, “nationalism and modernization” were inseparable responses to westernization.⁵²

This sets a pattern of Thai nationalism that has persisted to the present day. Pattana, demonstrating the continued Thai fondness for the West, quotes from a 2004 Thai film named *Thawiphop*, in which the protagonist harshly criticizes the western influence in modern Thai society:

[O]ur country is very modern. There are many skyscrapers. Everything has changed. We have cars, electricity, movie theaters. We dress in a western style. We accept westerners more than we accept one another [*rao nap-theu farang mak kha phuak-diaw-kan*]. We

⁴⁹ Charnvit Kasetsiri, “Siam/Civilization, Thailand/ Globalization” (unpublished paper presented at the International Association of Historians of Asia (IAHA), Bangkok, 1996), 6.

⁵⁰ Maurizio Peleggi, “The Making of Siamese Monarchy’s Modern Public Image,” unpublished Ph.D. Diss., The Australian National University, 1997.

⁵¹ Thongchai, “The Quest for ‘Siwilai:’ A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam,” 531.

⁵² Walter Vella, *Chaiyo! King Vajiravudh and the Development of Thai Nationalism* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1978), xiv.

have everything the westerners have, we are everything that they are, and we eat everything that they eat ... We want to be them and refuse to be ourselves.⁵³

This speech epitomizes the dominant nationalist discourse in Thailand, and demonstrates that even in the twenty-first century, the country's path to modernity has been under the dominating influence of the West.

In the Thai perspective, “modernity” takes on the function of indicating “the improved way to do things,” while “tradition” in its original, pre-modern context means “the right way to do things” and later turns into “this is *our* way to do things” in the modern context.⁵⁴ Michael Rhum, an independent scholar specializing in the classical languages of Buddhist cultures and of northern Thai, argues that “tradition” is an internal criterion of validation for a society, while “modernity” is external. In order to validate something as “modern,” one (the nation) is forced to compare oneself (and one's whole society) to an external standard; and to balance between the authenticity of the Thai culture and the allure of the latest western styles and ideals, the Thais need to achieve an idealized and foreshortened West.⁵⁵ They need to distill western culture to its basic concepts and apply those concepts to Thai institutions, but essentially fill in the cultural blanks with “Thainess.”

A nation which successfully modernizes is rewarded with wealth and international recognition. A survey of the popular uses of *siwilai* in the early period and the newly created

⁵³ The name *Thawiphop* or *The Renaissance* was translated into English as “the dual worlds.” The film is based on a 1993 novel of the same name, narrating the story of Manee—a young Thai woman from the early twenty-first century who has grown up and been educated in France, and who travels back and forth between Thailand's postmodern present and Siam's early modern past. The quote, from a scene set in the nineteenth century, is Manee's response questions from two nobles at the court of King Mongkut (r. 1851-1868) regarding the postmodern world. The novel is well known, and has been from time to time adapted into popular TV dramas and movies. The author, Thommayanti, is renowned for her ultra-royalist nationalism. See Pattana, “An Ambiguous Intimacy: *Farang* as Siamese Occidentalism,” 57.

⁵⁴ Michael R. Rhum, “‘Modernity’ and ‘Tradition’ in ‘Thailand,’” *Modern Asian Studies* 30, no. 2 (1996): 328.

⁵⁵ According to Rhum, to measure the term “modernity” is quite impossible because its standard is ideal-typical and not descriptive in realistic term. See *Ibid.*.

term *than samai* in the later period shows clearly a widespread feeling that Siam/Thailand had a mission to keep up with the global modern era.⁵⁶

The introduction of a new concept of historical time is reflected in Thai language in the ways that the meanings of some words have shifted, and the introduction of new words.⁵⁷ The term *than samai* is a good example of a linguistic novelty arising to describe a new idea. *Than* can be generally translated into English as “to catch up with” or “to keep abreast of,” while *samai* means “age, era, period, or time.”⁵⁸ When combining these two words together, the new perceptive of *than samai* involves the notion of modernization, notably attached with westernization. *Than samai* is currently used as both a verb and an adjective, and often translated as “to be modern, to be up-to-date, to be in fashion, or new.” In order to catch up with the West, it is interesting to see that these terms—*siwilai*, *charoen*, and *than samai*—shift their semantics and point both forwards and backwards in time, rather than remaining in the predetermined and static cosmic time that characterizes the traditional Thai Hindu-Buddhist sense of the past.⁵⁹

The terms “the West,” “western,” and “westerners” have become the most powerful markers of Siamese/Thai cosmopolitan modernism. The need of westernization is repeated *ad nauseam* in Thai public discourse, together with an insistence that in order to become a “modern” nation, Thailand must develop politically, scientifically, and economically in a western manner. The marriage of “modernization” and “nation-building,” initiated by Siam’s royal elite in the nineteenth century and continued by military dictators and bureaucrats through the twentieth century, is now driven by middle-class consumers and the mass media.⁶⁰ In summary,

⁵⁶ Thongchai, “The Quest for ‘Siwilai’: A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam,” 531.

⁵⁷ Rhum, “‘Modernity’ and ‘Tradition’ in ‘Thailand,’” *Modern Asian Studies* 30, no. 2 (1996): 348.

⁵⁸ So Sethaputra. *Thai-English Dictionary*. Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich Publishing, 2001.

⁵⁹ Thongchai, “The Quest for ‘Siwilai’: A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam,” 531.

⁶⁰ Pattana, “An Ambiguous Intimacy: Farang as Siamese Occidentalism,” 58.

both the English translated word—*siwilai*—and the Thai’s newly created transplanted word—*than samai*—perform as terms which legitimize a state of affairs in a society. They are ideological constructs to support those who wish either to maintain or transform society in ways concordant with their material or ideal interests, which in this case is westernization.

This dissertation therefore proposes that through western-inspired consumption practices, encompassing not only foreign goods and materials but also architecture and urban planning, the Thai ruling class regained their symbolic capital by connecting to western sources of civilization and modernization. What emerged was a form of modern Thai architecture—best understood through the translated terms of *siwilai* and *than samai*—which was fundamentally a crypto-colonial formation.

1.3 Thailand’s Position during the Cold War

1.3.1 The American Era in Thailand

At the close of the second World War, the United States had supplanted the European colonizers of the imperialist era as the dominant world power. U.S. policy makers were relatively inexperienced in Southeast Asian affairs, and the region posed a dilemma. American sympathy for the post-war nationalist movements in Asia was in direct opposition with the close diplomatic ties between the United States and the western colonial powers which still controlled much of the region, such as Britain, France, and the Netherlands. As relations deteriorated with the Soviet Union, the American government feared that the independence of former European colonies in Southeast Asia might create a power vacuum, which communists could exploit to their advantage.⁶¹

⁶¹ Norland and al et., *The Eagle and the Elephant: Thai-American Relations since 1833*, 68.

However, in the case of Thailand, the only independent state in the region, the U.S. took no risk in breaking with its European allies. From Washington's point of view, Thailand had only declared war on the western powers because of Japanese coercion, and therefore deserved to receive American assistance. President Harry S. Truman emphasized this U.S. support for Thailand when briefing Edwin F. Stanton for his assignment as head of the Bangkok legation in 1946 (Figure 1-6).⁶²

From the 1940s onward, the United States became Thailand's new foreign patron, supporting the country with various kinds of aid, far greater than anything the country had received during the colonial era. While France and Britain had focused on their colonies and had never taken more than peripheral interest in Thailand, the U.S. seized on Thailand as an ally and a base for countering the spread of communism in Asia.⁶³ To retain Thailand as an American "free world" ally during the Cold War, the U.S. helped to revive and strengthen Thai military rule, promoted Thai development by boosting economic growth through private capitalism, and pushed the mechanisms of the nation-state more deeply into Thai society in order to assure that the country successfully set up its "national security." Under this regime, a new elite group emerged, consisting of ruling generals, senior bureaucrats, and the heads of new business conglomerates.⁶⁴ Strengthened by the ideology of "development" and unconstrained by "democracy," American businesses were able to exploit both the Thai people and the country's natural resources on a new scale, leading to a significant and fundamental change in urban planning and Thai architectural form.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Baker and Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand*, 139.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

During the second World War, Prime Minister Phibunsongkhram and the majority of the cabinet granted Japanese troops the right of passage through Thailand, and subsequently declared war on the Allies (Figure 1-7). A number of Thais inside and outside the country strongly protested their government's position.⁶⁵ Some prominent members of the government, including Pridi Phanomyong, a member of the Regency Council, also greatly disagreed with the government's decision. In the U.S., Thai Minister M.R. Seni Promoj refused to accept the declaration of war, convinced that the declaration did not represent the will of the Thai people. With other Thai government officials and students in the U.S., he formed *Seri Thai*, a Free Thai resistance movement (Figure 1-8). *Seri Thai* had a threefold plan of operations: to disseminate political propaganda and engage in public relations outreach; to provide voluntary military support; and to contact and persuade people in Thailand and abroad to join forces in resisting the Japanese.⁶⁶

The efforts of the Free Thai movement made an important contribution to Thailand's negotiations with the Allies when the war was over—a contribution through which Thailand largely escaped the fate of being a defeated country. Following Japan's surrender on August 14th, 1945, the king's Regent issued a peace proclamation stating that Thailand's 1942 declaration of war on Britain and the U.S. was null and void because it was unconstitutional and opposed to the will of the Thai people. A week later on August 21st, U.S. Secretary of State James Byrnes

⁶⁵ On December 7th, 1941, Japanese attacked the U.S. bases at Pearl Harbor and declared war on Britain and the U.S.. On December 8th, Japanese troops invaded Thailand at Songkhla, Pattani, Prachuab, Khiri Khan, Nakhon Srithammarat, Surat Thani, and Bangpoo. As Thai troops fought back, the Japanese ambassador requested right of passage for Japanese troops through Thai territory to Malaya and Burma, giving assurances that the Japanese would respect the independence, sovereignty, and honor of Thailand. Realizing that the Thai armed forces were not strong enough to resist the Japanese, Thai government led by Prime Minister Phibunsongkhram granted the right of transit to Japanese troops. See details in Norland and al et., *The Eagle and the Elephant: Thai-American Relations since 1833*, 81.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 82.

accepted Thailand's peace proclamation.⁶⁷

From the end of World War II to 1950, Thailand suffered great economic disruption and political tumult. Despite internal political conflicts, Thai foreign policy was still based on the firm principle that the country should make as many friends as possible, while avoiding close ties that could later constrain it. According to a Southeast-Asian scholar Daniel Fineman:

[I]n the immediate postwar years, the Thais worked intimately with Britain in the commercial sphere, but resisted London's proposals for closer military cooperation. They courted French favor but played host to thousands of Indochinese insurgents. And though the Thai sought out American aid and diplomatic support, they maintained proper relations with the Soviet Union.⁶⁸

This statement is affirmed in Edwin Stanton's 1949 report as head of the Bangkok legation. Stanton reports that Thai policy toward the western attempt to contain communism in Southeast Asia was to "run with the hare and hunt with hounds" and Phibun was very skillful in addressing both sides of this conflict. However, toward the end of the decade, Phibun saw much to be gained by taking the American side, and thus he moved the country closer to the West. What brought him over to the American side was the prospect of military aid. Of all the things the Thai government wanted from the United States—such as economic assistance, trade concessions, and a security commitment—none was as alluring as the prospect of modern arms.⁶⁹ With his decision to break with the middle-of-the-road policies in 1950, Phibun positioned the country in defiant opposition to the Soviet Union and the new People's Republic of China. This move revolutionized Thailand's postwar foreign policy and represented the country's most significant foreign-affairs initiative since the alliance with Japan in 1941.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 86.

⁶⁸ Fineman, *A Special Relationship: The United States and Military Government in Thailand, 1947-1958*, 66-67.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

The wartime era in Thailand was succeeded by the American era, as the U.S. achieved its mission in recruiting Thailand as an ally and a base for pursuing its Cold War maneuvers in Asia. The colonial concept of “progress” and its local interpretation as the cultivation of a new national citizen was replaced by the concept of “development” and its more precise focus on economic improvement through private enterprise.⁷⁰ Coming side-by-side with this growth was a more intensive exploitation of natural resources and people, such as a new policy of converting Thailand’s forests into agricultural land. Increasing numbers of peasant landholders were squeezed out of the villages to work in the factories and service industries of the expanding neocolonial city.

Yet the results of Thailand’s adoption of the American Cold War ideology were complex, and this made Thailand a subject of academic study, particularly in the U.S. During the American era, the mainstream of American thought held that the current military dictatorship in Thailand—ruling over a passive society and legitimized by monarchy—was a natural outcome of Thai history and culture, and was unlikely to be threatened. A Thailand-based British writer, Chris Baker, provided a good summation of Thailand’s complex situation and ideological contest during the Cold War:

[I]n Thailand, the U.S. underwrote dictatorship, but at home it exemplified ideals of liberalism and republicanism, which were experienced by more and more Thai visiting the U.S. as students or absorbing its cultural output in literature, song, and film. Opposition to neocolonialism, military dictatorship, and rapid capitalist exploitation also looked for inspiration both backwards into Thailand’s pre-American past and outwards to American’s Cold War rivals. The crucible for this conflicting mix of new ideas was a new generation of students.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Baker and Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand*, 164-166.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 166.

Subsequently, some students in this group protested against American domination and became the channel through which radical, liberal, nationalist, Buddhist, and other discourses were focused against militarism, dictatorship, and unrestrained capitalism in the later decades.

1.3.2 The American Aid

The most significant issue that drew the United States and the new Thai government together was a mutual concern over the rise of communism in China. During the late 1930s, the conflict between supporters of the Kuomintang of China and Communists, mainly the members of the Chinese diaspora, intermittently erupted in battles on the streets of Bangkok. This surge of Chinese nationalism and the civil disorder that resulted made the Phibun government worried. This resulted in efforts to control the presence of the large Chinese community in Thailand, thus further increasing restrictions on Chinese immigration. The situation led Phibun to turn to the West for aid and protection (Figure 1-9). In May 1950, he told *New York Times* reporter C. L. Sulzberger that he intended to seek an alliance with the western powers. If attacked, he added:

[W]e will fight to the best of our ability—even if China is behind the aggressors. Our people cannot accept a communist regime or foreign domination willingly. Under existing conditions, the only threat to us would come from the Communists.⁷²

In Washington, the State Department was laboring to develop a new Asian policy. While determined to contain China, which the U.S. believed was under Soviet control, the U.S. remained cautious about making any commitment to defend countries on the Asian mainland. In February 1950, Ambassador-at-Large Philip C. Jessup was sent to Asia on a fact-finding mission. He met with Ambassador Stanton and other American diplomats assigned to the region.⁷³ After lengthy discussions, the officials recommended that the U.S. should provide

⁷² Norland and al et., *The Eagle and the Elephant: Thai-American Relations since 1833*, 89.

⁷³ The American legation in Bangkok was upgraded to be an embassy in March 1947.

technical and economic assistance to help Asian nations develop, and provide military aid to enable them to maintain their security against communist attack or subversion.⁷⁴

As a consequence, the U.S. started to grow more interested in Thailand.⁷⁵ This was due partially to the U.S. regional plan to rebuild Japan's economy and partially to the desire to position Thailand as an ally and a base for prosecution of the Cold War to stem the spread of communism in Asia. In March 1950, the Phibun government, under strong U.S. urging, officially supported the French-endorsed, anti-communist emperor Bao Dai in Vietnam and was rewarded with \$15 million in U.S. support. In July 1950, Thailand became the first Asian country to offer troops and supplies for the U.S. campaign in Korea (Figure 1-10). Phibun told parliament that "by sending just a small number of troops as a token of our friendship, we will get various things in return."⁷⁶ A month later, the U.S. provided another \$10 million in economic aid, the World Bank gave a \$25 million loan, and the arms supplies began to arrive.⁷⁷

In addition to providing equipment and training for the Thai army under the U.S. technical assistance agreement, the American government paid special attention to Thai agriculture (Figure 1-11). In a 1952 message to Congress, President Truman explained the objective of U.S. assistance to Thailand:

[T]o support a friendly government which has unreservedly committed itself to the cause of the Free World in maintaining stability in this country situated not far from China's Red Army, and bordering on unsettled areas in Indochina and Burma. It is one of the

⁷⁴ Norland and al et., *The Eagle and the Elephant: Thai-American Relations since 1833*, 90.

⁷⁵ U.S. became Siam's protector since the 1945-46 according to the peach negotiations in regard to ward off any extension of British colonial influence. After the 1947 coup, Phibun asked the U.S. for arms and dollars to strengthen the Thai army, but the U.S. rejected Phibun's request as they saw Phibun as a wartime enemy. However, two years later, the U.S. decided to find the allies in Asia right at a time while Phibun and his allies became practiced at espousing anti-communist and anti-Chinese sentiments to appeal for patronage. Henceforth, in September 1949, in order to counterattack the consequences of Mao Zedong's revolution in China, the U.S. made \$75 million available for supporting allies in Asia, including Thailand, and released [Pound sign] 43.7 million, which Japan owed Thailand for wartime purchases. This was the first aid of monetary offering that the U.S. provided to support Thailand during the Cold War era. For more information, please see Baker and Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand*, 143-149.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 143.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

world's great rice producers and exporters, on whose supply many countries of the free world depend, and it is also a source of critical materials.⁷⁸

Thus, from 1950 to 1957, a Cornell University agriculturist, H.H. Love, was sent to lead the establishment of a special rice department and training programs in rice breeding in Thailand.⁷⁹

The United States also assisted in the rebuilding of Thailand's war-damaged railroad system, contributed to the planning and building of three repair shops, provided \$1 million worth of materials and parts, and trained more than a hundred Thai railway employees in the U.S..

Between 1955 and 1957, American aid contributed to the reconstruction of rail lines and improvements to port infrastructure.

Under heavy U.S. pressure, during the first half of the 1950s the Thai government moved decisively against individuals and groups believed to be sympathetic to communism. The government harassed the press, expatriated Chinese involved in political activity, disrupted labor organizations, and supported the anti-communist propaganda of the military and *Sangha*.⁸⁰ The Thai government rushed to pass a new anti-Communist law, phrased generally enough to encompass any dissent, which passed through all three necessary legislative stages through three readings in one day. Provisions included increasing the alien tax, curbing remittances, reintroducing laws reserving occupations for Thai nationals, and changing the Nationality Law to impede naturalization. The U.S. was then satisfied with the Thai government.

When Dwight D. Eisenhower assumed the presidency in 1953, he committed to a hard stance against communism in Asia and echoed the Thai government's dismay over French moves

⁷⁸ Norland and al et., *The Eagle and the Elephant: Thai-American Relations since 1833*, 94.

⁷⁹ According to this creation of a special rice department and training programs, six best-quality strains were selected after some 200,000 samples from all over the country had been tested. These strains produced 10-80 percent higher yields. By 1960, they had received sufficient distribution to boost nationwide production by six percent. The production increase reached 15 percent by 1965, when the improved varieties had spread to 30 percent of all fields. For further information on agricultural initiatives, see Norland and al et., *The Eagle and the Elephant: Thai-American Relations since 1833*, 91-92.

⁸⁰ Baker and Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand*, 144.

toward a negotiated settlement in 1954. He warned of a “domino effect” in Southeast Asia, predicting that if one nation fell to communism, the others would surely fall in turn (Figure 1-12).⁸¹ In July 1953, the U.S. National Security Council pronounced Thailand an “anti-communist bastion,” from which to “extend U.S. influence—and local acceptance of it—throughout the whole of Southeast Asia.”⁸² U.S. Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, attempted to rally non-communist states in the area into a defensive alliance, hoping to discourage further growth of communism by drawing clear lines of allegiance. Thailand, the Philippines, Pakistan, Italy, France, New Zealand, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States subsequently signed the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty in Manila in September 1954. From this Manila Pact emerged the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), headquartered in Bangkok, led by the U.S., with Thai diplomat, Pote Sarasin, as its first secretary general (Figure 1-13).⁸³ In addition to establishing joint military exercises, SEATO promoted cultural and educational exchanges and set up a Graduate School of Engineering which has evolved into the present-day Asian Institute of Technology (AIT).

The flow of U.S. aid to Thailand continued through the 1950s, especially in the form of funds for highway and airport construction (Figure 1-14). The U.S. sent \$13.6 million for a 400-kilometer highway project and upgraded communication equipment, lighting, and navigational systems in seven airfields.⁸⁴ Approximately half of the U.S. technical aid between 1954 and 1960

⁸¹ Norland and al et., *The Eagle and the Elephant: Thai-American Relations since 1833*, 95.

⁸² Fineman, *A Special Relationship: The United States and Military Government in Thailand, 1947-1956*, 173.

⁸³ Norland and al et., *The Eagle and the Elephant: Thai-American Relations since 1833*, 96.

⁸⁴ For details, this 400-kilometer highway project was built in 1954, in order to link Bangkok with Korat and the rest of Northeast Thailand. Successfully, completed on July 10, 1958, this “Mittraphap Road” or “Friendship Highway” shortened the drive from Bangkok to Korat by about 150 kilometers and helped improve communications with the Northeast. Moreover, the assistance in developing the Thai airports also began in 1954. Airfields at Korat, Takhli, Phisanuloke, Udon Thani, Chiang Mai, Phuket, and Bangkok’s Don Mueang received new communication equipment, lighting, and navigational systems. See *Ibid.*, 97.

was allocated for transportation projects. While the emphasis on building transportation facilities reflected concerns for national security, particularly in the Northeast, the new roads and airports also stimulated economic development, a high priority for Sarit's government.⁸⁵ Thailand had thus become a U.S. client-state under military rule, although this resulted in a severe division between the army and the police within Thailand's ruling junta.

1.3.3 *Phattana*: The “Development” Agenda

The U.S. effort to maintain Thai allegiance in the Cold War was not restricted to infrastructure aid, but extended to the diligent development of a free-market economy in Thailand. In 1947, President Truman introduced the word “development” in his first televised presidential speech, which Sarit Thanarat perceived and interpreted it as a key concept of the U.S. global mission. He adopted the term as a new, powerful justification for the power of the nation-state, and translated this American “progress” by coining a new Thai word, *phatthana*.⁸⁶ He then positioned *phatthana* at the center of his policy objectives: “[O]ur important task in this revolutionary era is to *phatthana*, which includes economic development, educational development, administrative development, and everything else.”⁸⁷ One of Sarit's popular slogans stated his his laissez-faire economical focus more succinctly: “[W]ork is money. Money is work. This brings happiness.”

Sarit's rise to power through a coup on September 17, 1957, marked a decisive stage in Thailand's integration into the *Pax Americana*.⁸⁸ When Sarit visited the U.S. for a medical

⁸⁵ Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat staged a coup in 1957, which replacing Plaek Phibunsongkhram as Thailand's prime minister until Sarit died in 1963.

⁸⁶ See more information regarding *Phattana* in Chapter 2.

⁸⁷ Baker and Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand*, 149.

⁸⁸ *Pax Americana* is a term applied to the concept of relative peace in the western hemisphere and later became the hegemon of the global structure, beginning approximately around the middle of the twentieth century. It

checkup in shortly after the coup, President Eisenhower invited him to be his personal guest and impressed on him the importance of the *Pax Americana*, describing it as a means to both suppress communism and aid Thailand's "economic development." Eisenhower emphasized the important of private foreign investment in development, and Sarit was quick to grasp the persuasive implication. He ordered a copy of the Industrial Promotion Act to be dispatched to the U.S.⁸⁹ Consequently, the U.S. became increasingly active in financing Sarit's political activities, and in dictating the terms of Thailand's relations with U.S. businesses.

Upon his return to Thailand on September 20, 1958, Sarit dissolved the parliamentary system, citing the threat of communism. This second attempt to seize power, he explained, was a revolution rather than a coup. At the same time, he announced his plans to improve Thailand's economic well-being. Sarit relied on American advice and strategy to implement his plans. The word "*phattana*" was increasingly preferentially used in all official documents, replacing terms like "*phaen phattana*."⁹⁰

Sarit welcomed a World Bank mission to Thailand after his second coup and urged the ministers to study the translated version of the resultant development strategy recommendations in the report. These recommendations were incorporated into Thailand's first five-year

is thought to be caused by the preponderance of power enjoyed by the United States. See Wikipedia, s.v. "Pax Americana," last modified October 3, 2020, 18:39 (UTC), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pax_Americana

⁸⁹ According to Kullada Kesboonchoo Mead, a professor at the Faculty of Political Sciences, Chulalongkorn University, the effects of the Industrial Promotion Act of 1954 and of changes at the most senior levels of Thai politics committed Thailand ever more tightly to Pax Americana. The rationale of the Industrial Promotion Act of 1954 was that "[I]ndustry is an important component of the national economy and needs to be urgently promoted. But naturally the state is not in a position to engage in all industries. Without the support of the state, private investors will be unable to compete with foreign industry. Furthermore, foreign investors need the ability to withdraw when they wish and repatriate their profits; without these guarantees there will be no foreign investment in Thailand. Many industries require high levels of capital and expertise that can only come from abroad. Thus, we need to legislate this law in order to ensure that foreigners can benefit from their investments." See further in formation in Kullada Kesboonchoo Mead, "A Revisionist History of Thai-U.S. Relations," *Asian Review* 16 (2003): 56-59; and Ukrist Pathmanand, "Saharat Amerika kap noyabai sethakit Thai" (The U.S. and Thai Economic Policy) (master's thesis, Chulalongkorn University, 1983), 47-48.

⁹⁰ For example, the Revolutionary Proclamation no. 11, dated on October 22, 1958, referred to the need for "an economic plan," which was later changed to its name to *phaen phattana* or "development plan."

development plan, released in 1961. The new American plan condemned the former state-led development policies which had been pursued since the late 1930s: “[T]he key note of the public development program is, therefore, the encouragement of economic growth in the private sector.” On December 5, 1958, Revolutionary Proclamation no. 33 specified the role of the state in foreign investment. In this document, Thailand promised not to set up new industries to compete with the private sector and not to nationalize private industries. Various tax exemptions and incentives were imposed. The National Economic Council was created on July 4, 1959, and henceforth the concept of “development” began to take root in Thai society.

The suggestions made by the World Bank and U.S. advisors were implemented. New development organizations were established and manned by the cadres who had been trained in U.S. aid and scholarship programs. The U.S. also helped Sarit’s team set up and run a new bureaucratic infrastructure for bolstering development, including a planning board, a budget bureau, investment promotion machinery, and a restructured central bank. U.S. advisors suggested a subtle approach in the suppression of the labor legislation and policies set up by Phibun. Many new regulations were put in place to control the urban labor force and a new labor bureaucracy was set up to monitor them. As the first generation of the Thai technocrats had often been educated in the old world countries such as in England and France, the U.S. created a new generation of technocratic recruits who shared the American viewpoint, and several senior officers were taken to the U.S. for training. As part of this first effort, approximately 1,500 persons travelled with Fulbright or similar grants between 1951 and 1985, and the number of Thais attending U.S. higher educational program rose from a few hundred in the 1950s to 7,000 by the early 1980s.⁹¹

⁹¹ Baker and Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand*, 150.

Thailand was also tied into the *Pax Americana* by the first national economic plan (1961-1966). The early economic plans created for Thailand by the U.S. were comprised of three aims: to stimulate growth by intensifying exploitation of Thailand's natural resources; to invest some of the resulting surplus into the urban economy; and to facilitate foreign investment in order to acquire technology.⁹² This last aim tended to benefit Americans the most, as U.S. firms were allowed 100 per cent ownership while other foreign investors were limited to a minority share. Not only was the country locked into a security alliance with the U.S., but also its economic policies increasingly tended to ensure U.S. industrial investment in Thailand. The two countries' mutual goal was to launch another phase of capitalist development in Thailand, to build on the nineteenth century development arising from the *Pax Britannica*. This resulted in an industrialization process that transformed the country in the late 1980s.

1.3.4 The Cultural Cold War

The United States did not restrict its post-war involvement with Thailand to economic matters. U.S. policies also emphasized the importance of "national security," as they sought to further its own national security ends by molding Thailand into a nation-state conducted upon American social principles. Educational aid, provided for the purposes of modernizing the population, also served as a means of acculturation. This American educational aid produced a set of paradigms of social life that distorted the fundamental fabric of Thai society and was used to manipulate the Thai people. These paradigms served to accelerate the extension of American academic values and programs within Thai universities, and at the same time, this "cultural

⁹² Ibid.

imperialism” deterred the growth of an indigenous scholarship.⁹³ According to Peter Bell, a specialist on economies of developing countries who has examined the character and purpose of American scholarship on Thailand after the second World War, American influence has been the single most important element in the pattern of social change in Thailand. It has affected the evolution of the class structure, the economy, political institutions, and external relations. This attempted Americanization was at the core of the ideal of “Cold War cosmopolitanism,” in which American aid was subtly used to cultivate a “cosmopolitan” ethos in artists, writers, filmmakers, and others involved in creating a nation's culture.⁹⁴ Creating cosmopolitanism was a major objective for Americans waging the cultural Cold War in Asia, and the American foundations and scholarship opportunities set up by Washington were the primary instruments for doing so.

The particular character of American scholarship in the post-World War II period was shaped by the integration of the university into the needs of capitalist accumulation, and by the position of the U.S. in the world economy. The modern university had been converted into an office of external research for the State Department, the Pentagon, and international corporations.⁹⁵ To give some examples, the Cornell Southeast Asia Project was the fundamental source of what soon became the established paradigm of Thai Society.⁹⁶ It produced thirty-six

⁹³ Peter F. Bell, “Western Conceptions of Thai Society: The Politics of American Scholarship,” (presentation, Thai-European Seminar on Social Change in Contemporary Thailand, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, May 28-30, 1980).

⁹⁴ The intention of “Cold War cosmopolitanism” here moves beyond its traditional definition. It encompasses both aesthetics and practices: the term characterizes the expressive qualities of postwar Asian scholarships as well as the material processes of their production, circulation, and exhibition. As a postcolonial discourse, it superseded the older cosmopolitan vision such as of Japanese imperial culture. As a postwar discourse, it was strictly delimited to the “free world” and highlights the forging of ties with the United States and, crucially, other noncommunist Asian countries. For further details, please visit Christina Klein, “Cold War Cosmopolitanism: The Asia Foundation and 1950s Korean Cinema,” *Journal of Korean Studies* 22, no. 2 (2017): 281.

⁹⁵ David Horowitz, “Billion Dollar Brains,” *Ramparts*, May 1969, 9; and David Horowitz, “Sinews of Empire,” *Ramparts*, August 1969, n.p..

⁹⁶ Bell, “Western Conceptions of Thai Society: The Politics of American Scholarship.”

doctoral theses on Thailand in their period, 1951-76, the bulk of which were in anthropology and history. The remainder dealt with government, linguistics, economics, and rural sociology.⁹⁷ The Rockefeller Foundation, which helped to finance the Cornell Program, also lay behind the establishment of the Agricultural Development Council in 1953 (which maintained an important presence at Kasetsart University through a series of visiting professors), and the foundation of the Asia Society in 1955.⁹⁸ Another 1955 program helped to create the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) in cooperation with Thammasat and Indiana Universities. The program later became a part of the National Institute of Development Administration, a graduate school under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of University Affairs.⁹⁹

Other U.S. aid programs focused on developing Thai educational practices, such as an eight-year contract relationship between Indiana University and Prasarnmitr College of Education, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID), which led to major changes in Thai teacher education (Figure 1-15).¹⁰⁰ As part of an effort toward decentralization, the Thai government opened two new universities in the northern part of the country, Khon Kaen and Chiang Mai, which received training assistance from the University of Illinois, which also hosted Thai instructors in the U.S. These initiatives led to the growth of international studies, especially Thai studies, in the American university, which was the result of a conscious act of planning, especially by the Rockefeller Foundation.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ Frank H. Golay and Peggy Lush, *Directory of the Cornell Southeast Asia Program, 1951-1976* (Ithaca, NY: Southeast Asia Program, Department of Asian Studies, Cornell University, 1976), n.p..

⁹⁸ Bell, "Western Conceptions of Thai Society: The Politics of American Scholarship."

⁹⁹ This 1955 graduate education project, funded by about \$2 millions of U.S. assistance over a nine-year period, sent 41 Thais to the United States for training, and brought 40 staff members from Indiana University to teach in Bangkok. See Norland and al et., *The Eagle and the Elephant: Thai-American Relations since 1833*, 94.

¹⁰⁰ Under this Indiana University and Prasarnmitr College relationship, 30 Indiana staff came to Thailand as advisors, while 150 Thais went to the United States for advanced studies. Prasarnmitr's enrollment ballooned from 130 students in 1954 to 2,500 in 1962. See *Ibid.*, 92.

¹⁰¹ Bell, "Western Conceptions of Thai Society: The Politics of American Scholarship."

Because plans for stabilization required accurate information, the form and the content of U.S. scholarship on Thailand are critical parts of American strategies for “stabilizing” Thailand (Figure 1-16). Studies of Thailand in the U.S. served this need in two ways: firstly, they provided a database, and secondly, they translated this information into a set of programs.¹⁰²

Throughout the 1960s, the Thai-American relationship flourished through many exchanges, which primarily concerned education, training, and joint research. One of the principal objectives of the American foundations and the scholarships offered to Thailand was the cultivation of “mutual respect and understanding” between Thailand and the West. For instance, the American Field Service (AFS), a private organization designed to promote international friendship and understanding, evolved from its 1914 origins as an ambulance corps into a student exchange program. The AFS sponsored international educational exchanges primarily for senior high school students of various countries to live in the United States and for American students to live and study abroad (Figure 1-17).¹⁰³ The grants from the Fulbright Foundation also encouraged Thai-American educational exchanges. Before Thai Fulbright grantees began embarking for U.S. universities, many students developed their English skills at American University Alumni, “AUA,” the Bangkok language center established by the American government in 1952 in cooperation with the private, bi-national, American University

¹⁰² Bell finds that these Thai Studies take various forms: (1) dissertation research under the auspices of Southeast Asian programs, underwritten by foundation grants; (2) research which emerged from U.S. advisory functions in Thai universities, particularly in the fields of public administration and economics; (3) data-gathering linked directly to the manipulation of minority populations such as the hill-tribes; (4) research conducted directly by the U.S. Defense Department under the local auspices of the Military Research and Development Center in Bangkok; (5) work done through liaison committees, which linked academics to the Defense Department, such as the Academic Advisory Council on Thailand, coordinated through the Southeast Asia Development Advisory Group of the Asia Society; (6) research done by subcontracting universities and research groups in the U.S. and Thailand (Rand, Stanford Research Institute, etc.). In addition to this research, U.S. influence in Thai institutions provided a framework for research for Thai graduate students, whose dissertations completed both in the U.S. and in Thailand, reflected the same underlying methodologies as their American counterparts. See *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ Norland and al et., *The Eagle and the Elephant: Thai-American Relations since 1833*, 106.

Alumni Association (Figure 1-18).¹⁰⁴ In 1967, the Ford Foundation set up its office in Bangkok, primarily focusing on strengthening planning staff in government agencies, then secondarily supporting national training and research institutions. The Asia Foundation (TAF) also opened its Bangkok office in 1955. It was guided by a goal of fostering bi-national friendship while helping to build and strengthen Thailand's public and private institutions. TAF funded projects for rural, urban, and human resource development. The program also enabled selected National Assembly officials and others to participate in the prestigious U.S. Congressional Fellowship program. Christina Klein, an expert in American Studies, argues that TAF sought to revitalize the nation's cultural heritage, while also encouraging the selective embrace of new ideas from abroad.¹⁰⁵ Ideally, the country's new cosmopolitan culture would foreground the nation's distinct traditions, while also demonstrating its willingness to be modernized.

These cooperative academic exchanges were a complement to official U.S. institutions such as the United States Operations Mission (USOM or AID), a planning center of the Defense Department. The research produced in the universities provided the data used by U.S. government agencies to sketch out their plans for modern Thai society. Research, primarily from Cornell University, was immediately translated into political use through the preparation of the Human Relations Area File Handbook on Thailand.¹⁰⁶ These guidelines were originally prepared for the use of the U.S. Army, and later converted into a reference work for diplomatic and aid personnel.¹⁰⁷ This document would serve as a general introduction to Thailand for use in the everyday relations between American personnel and the Thai people.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 94.

¹⁰⁵ Klein, "Cold War Cosmopolitanism: The Asia Foundation and 1950s Korean Cinema," 284.

¹⁰⁶ The first edition of the Human Relations Area File Handbook was prepared in 1955-56 by Luriston Sharp with the collaboration of the new "Thai specialist" created by Cornell. See Eric R. Wolf and Joseph G. Jorgensen, "Anthropology on the Warpath," *New York Review of Books*, November 19, 1970; and a further exchange, April 8, 1971.

¹⁰⁷ Wendall Blanchard, *Thailand* (New Haven, CT: Human Relations Area File, 1958).

Further, American-trained Thais returned home prepared to put American ideas into action. Bell finds that, as of March 1974, 8,000 students had been trained in the U.S., with 1,500 receiving academic degrees. The ripple effect this created in the Thai government was clear, as these graduates provided one in four officials for the top four Thai Civil Service classes.¹⁰⁸

In conclusion, all of these cultural exchange programs were undeniably related to a postwar discourse about the “free world,” and they particularly highlighted Thailand’s ties with the U.S. American policy in Thailand was consistent with its policy towards other non-communist Asian countries, with the aim of bringing a “free Asia” into existence. Non-communist Asians and Americans alike were encouraged to turn their attention to the world beyond their borders and to engage with each other.¹⁰⁹ This conception of free-world inclusivity engaged the ideals of individualism, personal freedom, and capitalist exchange and expressed a commitment to social and technological modernization along western lines. According to Klein, this attitude of openness toward the “free world” took form in stylistically hybrid works of Asian culture that combined indigenous and foreign elements, and was exhibited in works that enabled the display of distinctive national cultures on a world stage.¹¹⁰ However, this shift of scholarly paradigms could not have happened in Thailand had there been resistance from the locals, particularly in the ruling classes. Because this group was aligned with Sarit’s belief in the value of technocrats, they actively endorsed the virtues of modernization and stability in Thailand and invited American specialists of all kinds to act as advisors of new governmental agencies, created in the late 1950s and early 1960s, in order to rationalize capitalist development.¹¹¹ It was

¹⁰⁸ Laurence D. Stifel, “Technocrats and Modernization in Thailand” (presentation, Annual Meetings of the Association for Asian Studies, San Francisco, CA, March 24, 1975).

¹⁰⁹ Klein, “Cold War Cosmopolitanism: The Asia Foundation and 1950s Korean Cinema,” 283.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ The new governmental agencies that were assisted by American consultants included National Economic Development Board, Board of Investment, Ministry of National Development, etc.

certainly the case that the U.S. saw its role as “steering” Thailand’s development, and it arrogantly attempted to influence the direction of policy in almost every area of social planning. Like the European “civilizing mission,” American Cold War cosmopolitanism was able to manipulate foreign culture in desirable directions. However, it could not succeed without the help of the nation’s rulers, who were responsible for imposing this broader cultural shift and acted as local agents to bring in foreign models imbued with civilizational importance to the country.

1.3.5 Refashioning the Identity of *Thainess*

The removal of Phibun Songkhram in a coup in 1957 and the “revolution” campaign proposed by a new government in 1958 were a proof that the new political elite had decided to move the country forward with a new set of objectives. The new government, led by Sarit, clearly showed a disinclination to be neutral on the world stage and subtly sought to transform the nation into a client of the United States, both politically as an ally in the Cold War and as an economic partner in the expansion of U.S.-led capitalism.¹¹² During this period, the U.S. established an imposing new embassy in Bangkok and sent a prominent Second World War soldier, “Wild Bill” Donovan, to serve as a local ambassador (Figure 1-19). Soon after the U.S. located the SEATO headquarters in Bangkok, several UN bodies, international organizations, and American foundations followed this lead (Figure 1-20).¹¹³ At the same time, Thailand acquired large amounts of U.S. investment, aid, and loans; all of these factors led to a rapid growth and a rise in living standards for many urban Thais. While favored military authorities

¹¹² Matthew Phillips, *Thailand in the Cold War*, 145.

¹¹³ Baker and Phongpaichit. “The American era and development, 1940s to 1960s,” 148.

and civilian bureaucrats of Thailand continued to gain benefits from the growing wealth of the nation, the revolutionary era opened economic doors to many people of other classes as well, and significantly transformed notions of Thai culture.

To counter any accusations of submitting too much to the U.S., the new Sarit regime placed great emphasis on “staging cultural events” which offered a stable and timeless identity of Thainess, such as the royal barge ceremony, the Surin elephant round-up, and the *Loi Kratong* festival. These spectacular events were widely disseminated by local media and provided the basis for modelling an “authentic” Thai way of life. Matthew Phillips, a lecturer in Modern Asian History, finds it particularly significant that Thai cultural narratives during the Sarit era continued to be constructed principally for consumption by an elite urban leadership. Additionally, by constructing Bangkok as a political and economic center for a global class of consumers, these new ideas about what it meant to be Thai consolidated themselves as a new “high-society urban identity.” When engaging in the global stage, urban Thais were encouraged by the government to think of themselves as “cultural actors,” who should participate in the preservation, celebration, and spread of knowledge about Thai culture based on a historic sense of freedom. Such a cultural life free from the complex political and economic situation of being in Thailand was essentially the only way in which the new world aristocracy could feel at ease—by forgetting the history and contradictions that underpin their position and lifestyle. Thailand had thus become an Asian outpost of the free world which, while fully modern, still retained the markers of its historic cultural authenticity.

The Tourist Organization of Thailand, one of the principal institutions established during the Sarit regime, was thus a confirmation that Sarit’s ideological basis was influenced by a global consumer culture, emanating from the United States, that was primarily concerned with the logic

of the Cold War. Established less than a year after the Sarit revolution, this organization based its strategies on the belief that a successful tourist industry in Thailand depended on the capture of American hearts and minds, as stated in Baker and Phongpaichit's narrative:

[F]or over a decade, U.S. representations of Thailand had depicted it as *an Oasis on a Troubled Continent*. Home to a pristine cultural community, uninhibited by the baggage of colonialism and in need of protection from the threat of Communist aggression, Thailand's status as a peaceful haven remained intact and, despite the anti-American sentiment that had dominated the country's foreign relations over the previous years, Thailand remained a friend and an ally. Maintaining the relationship with the USA would therefore require the Sarit regime to find its own way of replicating the constructions that dominated American visions of Thai society.¹¹⁴

The Sarit government felt it wise to present Thailand in a way that was attractive to a U.S. population. As a result, tourism became a way of extending American influence and another channel through which American consumer culture could shape the world in its own image. The Intercontinental Hotel's promotional material, which was sent to the Thai government in 1960, pointed out that American tourism was the "biggest single item of all dollar earning for the United Kingdom, France, and Italy," and that the same could be possible for countries of the "Far East."¹¹⁵ Two years later, the initial investigations of the Tourist Organization of Thailand confirmed that Americans were by far the most important group and the statistics showed that American visitors accounted for the largest number of arrivals.¹¹⁶ Tourism promotions in Thailand, therefore, provided an opportunity for creating benevolent and mutually beneficial encounters between Thailand and the United States.

Due to the many foreign investors visiting Thailand following the country's opening up to European interest, the hotel industry in Thailand prospered. Capitalizing on this boom, many new hotels were constructed. Thailand, in the eyes of a western traveler in the 1960s, was "a

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 151.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

unique experience” that “represents the Orient at its best.”¹¹⁷ Accordingly, hotels built in the colonial period, such as the Oriental, which had acted as spaces within which a privileged Thai community could seek access to the European-centered world, found that they needed to adjust to a new type of cultural imperialism in the form of the expectations of modern western tourists.¹¹⁸ With the influx of foreign tourists in the 1960s, the desire to project Thailand as a modern and civilized community, and to foster deeper relations with those powerful nations, led to the building of a number of Thai-owned hotels. The Sarit government commissioned the building of a new hotel at the end of Rachadamnern Avenue, completed in 1942. The Rattanakosin Hotel was designed with the intention of rivaling the great modernist hotels of Europe and America, while offering visiting bureaucrats the chance to stay at a Thai Hotel built to display the elegance of the Thai people. However, it was widely recognized to be a failure. A former editor of Bangkok Post, Alexander MacDonald, described the hotel as “a government building enterprise, which assembled into one structure all the worst sins of modern architecture.”¹¹⁹

By the middle of the 1950s, with visitors continuing to prefer foreign-owned establishments, the promise of Thai-owned hotels becoming symbols of pride for the Thai nation still remained unfulfilled. However, attempts continued to be made. In 1954, the Prime Minister concluded that as the numbers of foreign visitors continued to increase, there was an urgent need to build an “even more modern” hotel. The construction of the Erawan hotel, which was design by western-trained Thai architect Rangsan Torsuwan and completed in 1956, was intended to overcome this problem and in many ways proved an instant success among foreign visitors.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 156-160.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

Though it provided a “first-class” experience, the hotel was largely ignored by the local press, as it was felt to be constructed only to serve American visitors. As such, instead of creating a place for a Thai “victory” on the world stage, the Erawan Hotel was a site for elite interaction and relationship building. It failed to capture the imagination of an urban Bangkok population which continued to view the Thai-American governmental partnership as opaque and corrupt.¹²⁰

During this time, the Sarit government undertook a number of cultural initiatives, such as *Anusan Osotho* magazine, the Tourist Organization of Thailand, and the Thai-owned western-standard hotels. These initiatives were a proof that the Thai ruling elite were making efforts to re-establish the arenas of privilege within which urban Thai communities could successfully integrate into an outside world increasingly shaped by American cultural imperialism. This group sought to transform the image of the U.S. alliance from one of competition to one based on a mutual celebration of difference. However, the tourist spaces of the 1940s located Thailand’s participation in the global culture by referencing Thai culture as an attractive but outdated decoration on the practical and sturdy edifice of American-led modern culture.¹²¹ Indeed, while the Erawan Hotel was promoting itself in order to meet with American tourists’ expectations by claiming that it provided “a Thai atmosphere” or “a Thai treat for tourists,” it did so while being one of the most civilized and international spaces in the city. Apart from the Erawan Hotel, the Tourist Organization opened a number of buildings that were to become central locations for Thais to mingle with foreign visitors, and within which Thailand’s revitalized cultural life could be displayed. These buildings included the shopping center on Sri Ayutthaya Road and a new modern headquarters for the Tourist Organization on Rachadamnern

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

Avenue.¹²² However, the actions to direct the country's development were still in the hands of a group of wealthy Thais who were no longer committed to an ethnically Thai nation premised upon economic and political independence. Rather, all the development occurring during the Cold War period was built upon a common interest in U.S. consumer culture and a familiarity with the ideological premises of the alliance with the American government. The architecture and urbanism produced during this era can nevertheless be interpreted as evidence of a willingness to abandon an essential Thai identity in exchange for access to a modern world shaped by American money and American cultural expectations. The Sarit-era buildings of Bangkok are a definitive product in the internationalization of the Thai state. While it has long been argued that the Sarit revolution represented a return to the Thai traditional cultural practices, it is important to recognize that U.S. Cold War ideology was instrumental to the construction of that new cultural universe.

¹²² Ibid.

Figures



Figure 1-1 - Siam's King Mongkut (or King Rama IV) and the second king, Phra Pinklao, Photograph, from “ฤๅพระชะตา “พระปิ่นเกล้าฯ” แรงจน “พระจอมเกล้าฯ” ตรัสให้ถวายราชสมบัติด้วยกันสองพระองค์?” *Silpa-mag*, last modified November 25, 2016. https://www.silpa-mag.com/history/article_4383

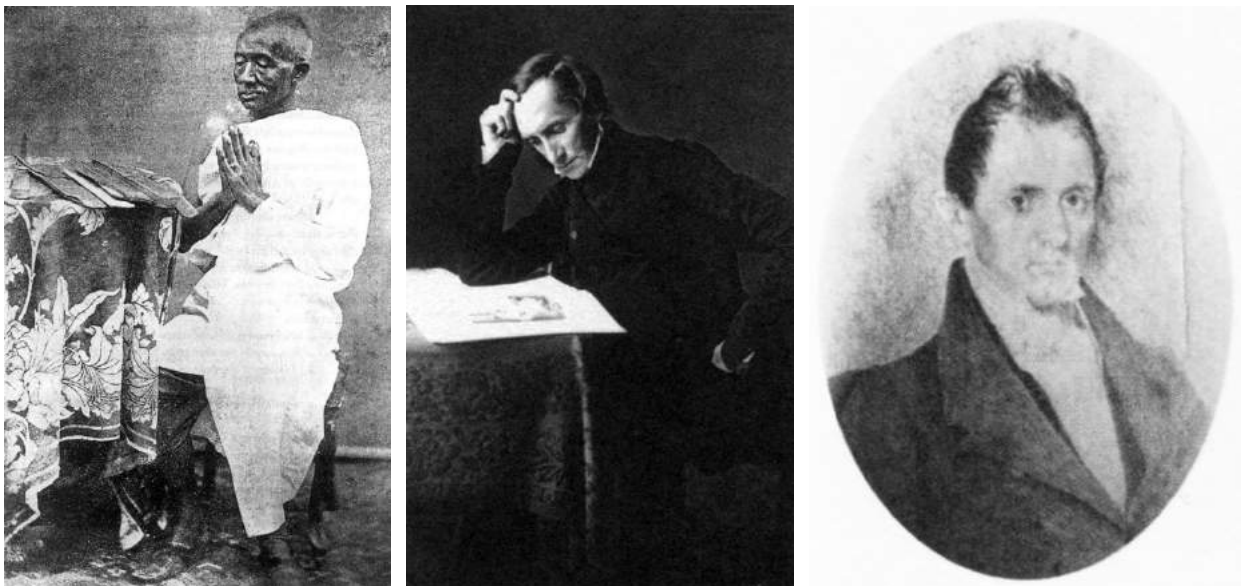


Figure 1-2 - (Left) King Mongkut (Rama V) acquired most of his western knowledge from missionaries who came to Siam during his days as a Buddhist monk; (middle) David Abeel, the first American missionary to visit Siam; and (right) Jesse Caswell, who taught Prince Mongkut English, Photograph and illustration, in Jim Algie and el at., *Americans in Thailand* (Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, 2014), 39, 52, and 53.

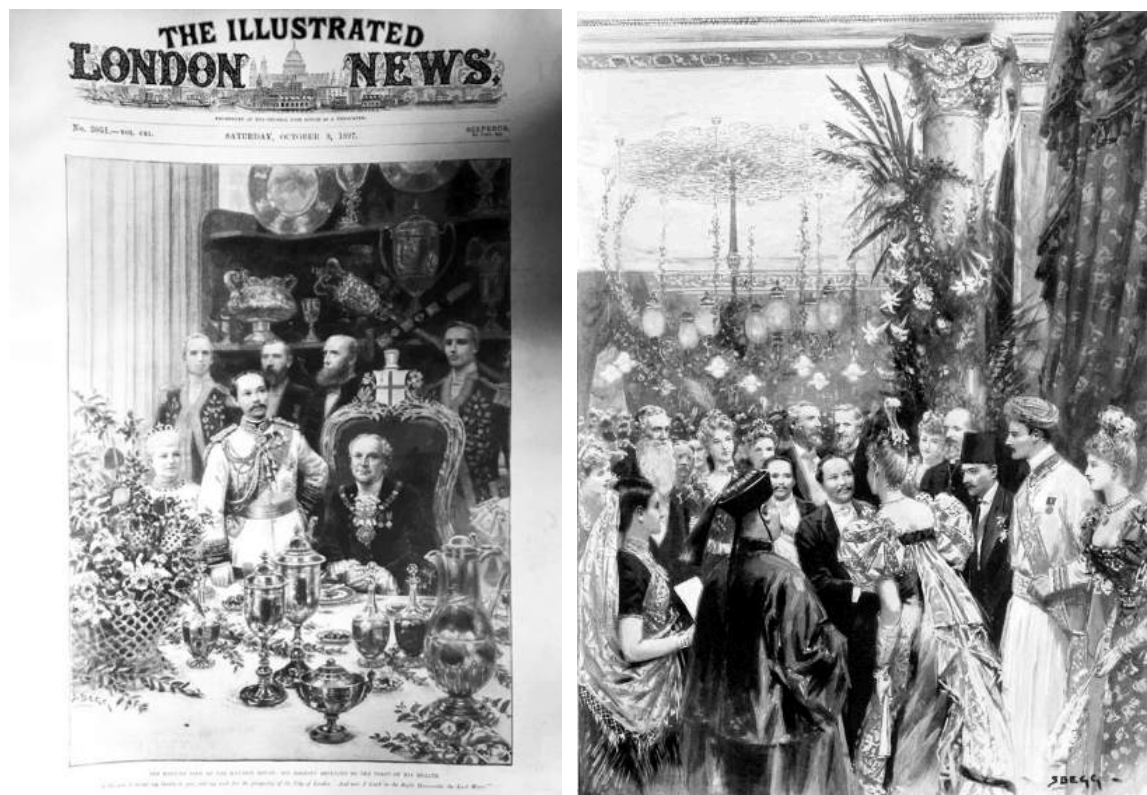


Figure 1-3 - King Mongkut's son, King Chulalongkorn (Rama V), and other members of the royal elite enjoyed western material culture, Illustration (Courtesy of London News), from “พระบาทสมเด็จพระจุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว ในสื่อตีพิมพ์ของชาวตะวันตก,” *Pantip*, last modified October 31, 2007. <https://topicstock.pantip.com/library/topicstock/2007/10/K5972293/K5972293.html>



Figure 1-4 - King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) fulfilled his wish to visit European countries in 1897, Photograph, from “ราชการลับรัชกาลที่ 5 ในการเสด็จพระราชดำเนินเยือนเยอรมนี” *Silpa-mag*, last modified December 26, 2021. https://www.silpa-mag.com/history/article_57297



Figure 1-5 - This image reveals the court's enormous investment in the arts, Italian and Victorian buildings, royal paraphernalia, and public rituals—such as extravagant reception held upon King Rama V's return from Europe, Photograph (Courtesy of หนังสือของเพื่อนให้), from “เมื่อ ‘เลี้ยงโต๊ะปีใหม่’ แบบตะวันตกเป็นสิ่งใหม่ เจ้านายใช้คบหาสมาคม-ปรับตัวตามยุคสมัย,” *Silpa-mag*, last modified January 1, 2022. https://www.silpa-mag.com/history/article_14058



Figure 1-6 - President Harry S. Truman briefed Edwin F. Stanton (left) for his assignment as head of the Bangkok legation (right) in 1946, Photograph, in Jim Algie and et al., *Americans in Thailand* (Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, 2014), 114 and 145.



Figure 1-7 - During the second World War, Prime Minister Phibunsongkhram (left) and the majority of the cabinet granted Japanese troops (right) the right of passage through Thailand, and subsequently declared war on the Allies, Photograph, from Thanyaporn Buathong, “จอมพล ป. พิบูลสงคราม: 123 ปี ชาตกาล กับผลงานและเสียงวิจารณ์ายกรัฐมนตรีที่อยู่ในตำแหน่งนานที่สุด,” *BBC News Thailand*, last modified July 14, 2020. <https://www.bbc.com/thai/thailand-53399231>; and Peerasap Vichitrachanikorn, “ประวัติศาสตร์นอกกรอบ: 8 ธันวาคม...เมื่อไทยรบญี่ปุ่น,” *GQ Thailand*, last modified December 8, 2017. <https://www.gqthailand.com/culture/article/8-dec-thai-japan>

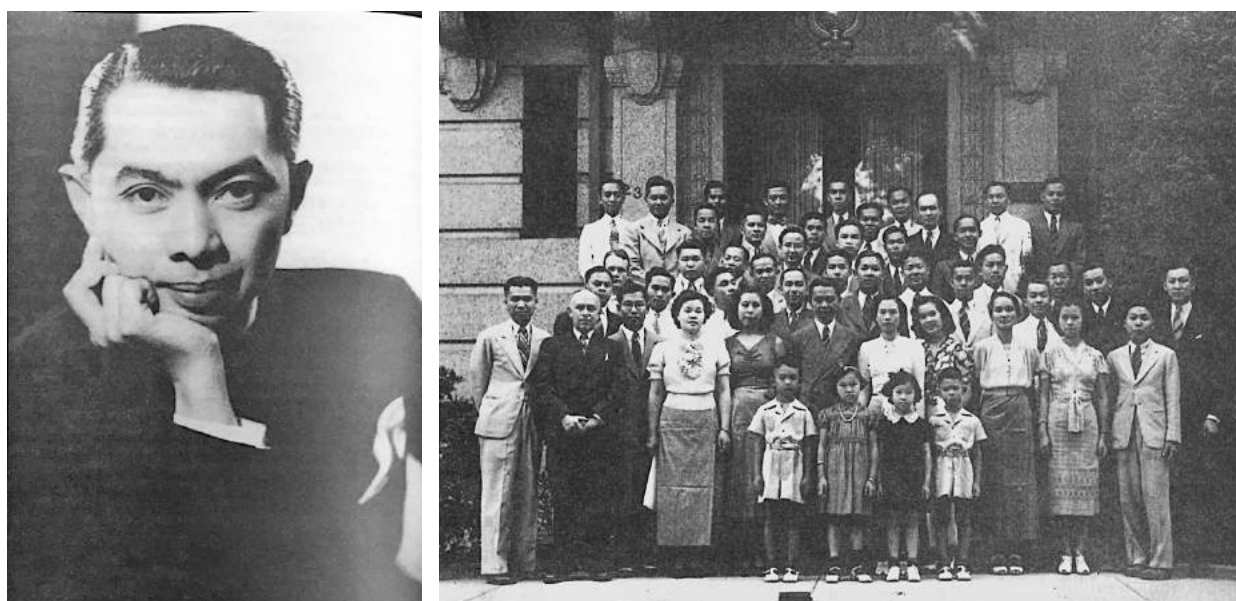


Figure 1-8 - In the U.S., Thai Minister M.R. Seni Promoj took a photo with other Thai government officials and students in front of the royal Thai embassy, Washington DC., in 1941, Photograph, from “ตำนาน ม.ร.ว. เสนีย์ ปราโมช ทูตไทย ไม่ยอมส่งคำประกาศสงครามต่ออเมริกา คือเรื่องจริงหรือ?,” *Silpa-mag*, last modified March 3, 2022. https://www.silpa-mag.com/history/article_41522



Figure 1-9 - This resulted in efforts to control the presence of the large Chinese community in Thailand, thus further increasing restrictions on Chinese immigration. The situation led Phibun to turn to the West for aid and protection, Photograph, in “123 ปี ชาตกาล จอมพล ป. พิบูลสงคราม พระเอก หรือผู้ร้าย ในประวัติศาสตร์ไทย,” *Matchon Weekly*, last modified July 19, 2020. https://www.matchonweekly.com/column/article_326517



Figure 1-10 - Thai soldiers arriving at Pusan, 1950, Photograph, from “Thailand in the Korean War,” *Wikipedia*, last modified February 19, 2022. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thailand_in_the_Korean_War



Figure 1-11 - (Left) Mr. Orville Freeman, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture visited Thailand in 1961 and met with Field Sarit Thanarat, the Prime Minister, and Dr. Thanat Khoman, the Foreign Minister and (right) Mr. Freeman visited the Irrigation Department, Photograph, in Patricia Norland, and al et., *The Eagle and the Elephant: Thai-American Relations since 1833* (Bangkok: United States Information Service, 1997), 93.



Figure 1-12 - U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower explained his theory of “domino effect” in regard to Southeast Asia that “if Indochina goes, several things happen right away,” Photograph, in Andrew Glass, “Eisenhower invokes ‘domino theory,’ Aug. 4, 1953,” *politico.com*, last modified August 4, 2017. <https://www.politico.com/story/2017/08/04/eisenhower-invokes-domino-theory-aug-4-1953-241222>



Figure 1-13 - The Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) set up its headquarters in Bangkok, led by the U.S., with Thai diplomat, Pote Sarasin, as its first secretary general, Photograph, in Jim Algie, *American in Thailand* (Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, 2014), 151.

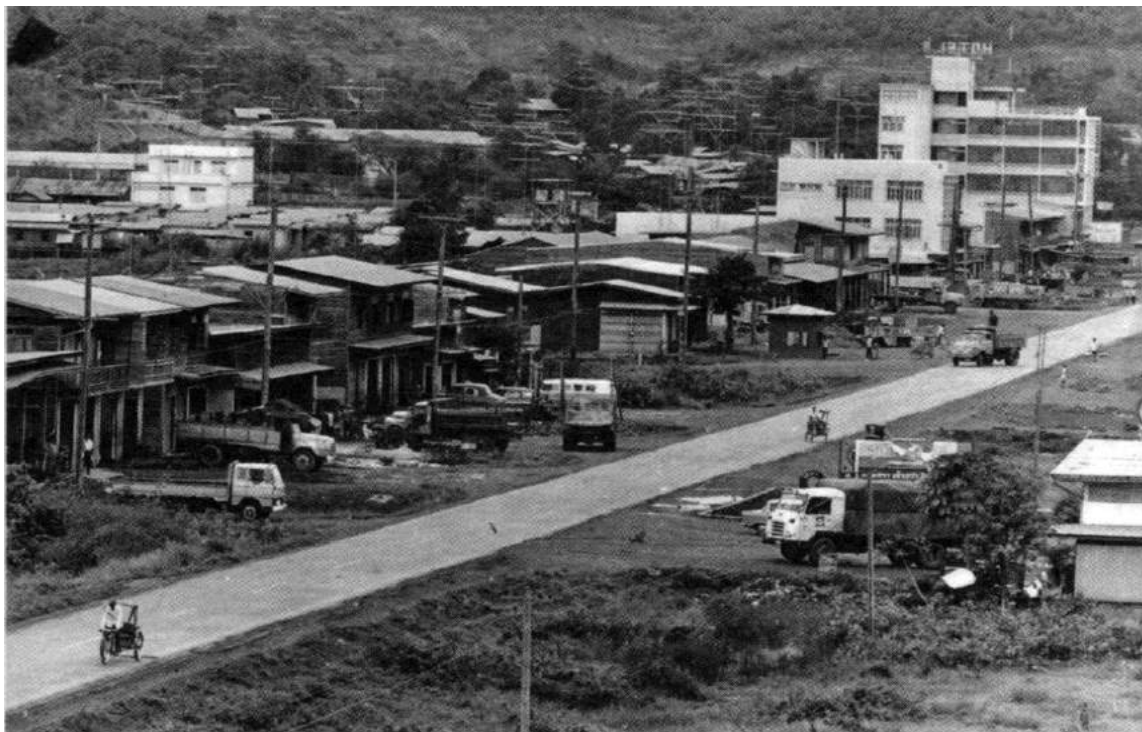


Figure 1-14 - The city of Takhli near the American-built airbase in Nakhon Sawan province. The U.S. military presence transformed numerous upcountry towns and provinces, Photograph, in Jim Algie, *American in Thailand* (Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, 2014), 183.

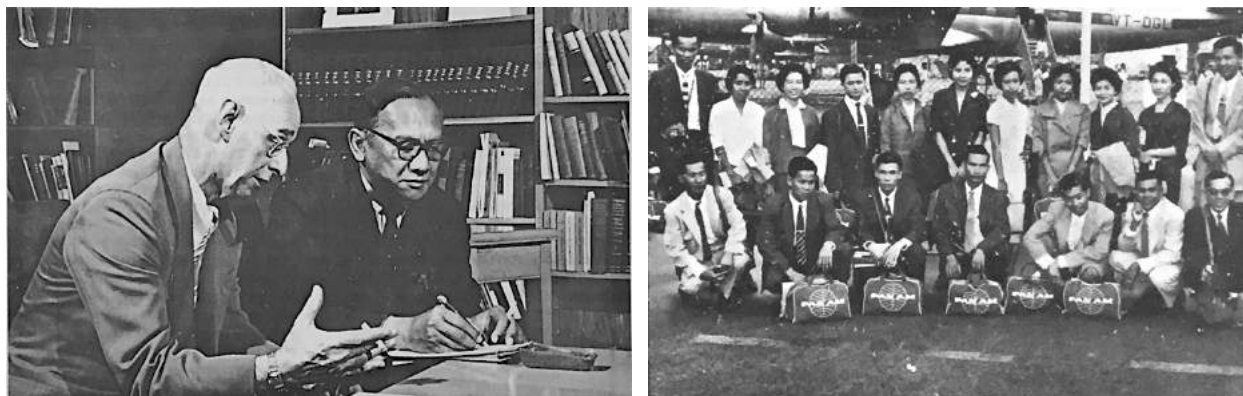


Figure 1-15 - (Left) M. L. Pin Malakul, Minister of Education, talks with Dean Wendell Wright during M. L. Pin's visit to Indiana University and (right) Thai faculty members leave for advanced study at Indiana University, Photograph, in USOM, "Thai-American Joint Efforts," *Thai-American Cooperation in Preparing Educational Leaders for Thailand* (Bangkok: Thai-American Audiovisual Service, 1960), 7 and 13.



Figure 1-16 - King Rama IX and Queen of Thailand took a photograph with East-West Center students in the U.S. on June 6, 1967, Photograph, "The Royal Sala Thai Scholarship Fund," *East-West Center Association*, last accessed March 16, 2022.
<https://www.eastwestcenter.org/node/32652>



Figure 1-17 - Thai students apply to study in the United States under AFS in the early 1960s. U.S. Information Service Officer Jack Zeller, on the left, helped start the AFS program in Thailand, Photography, in Patricia Norland, and al et., *The Eagle and the Elephant: Thai-American Relations since 1833* (Bangkok: United States Information Service, 1997), 107.

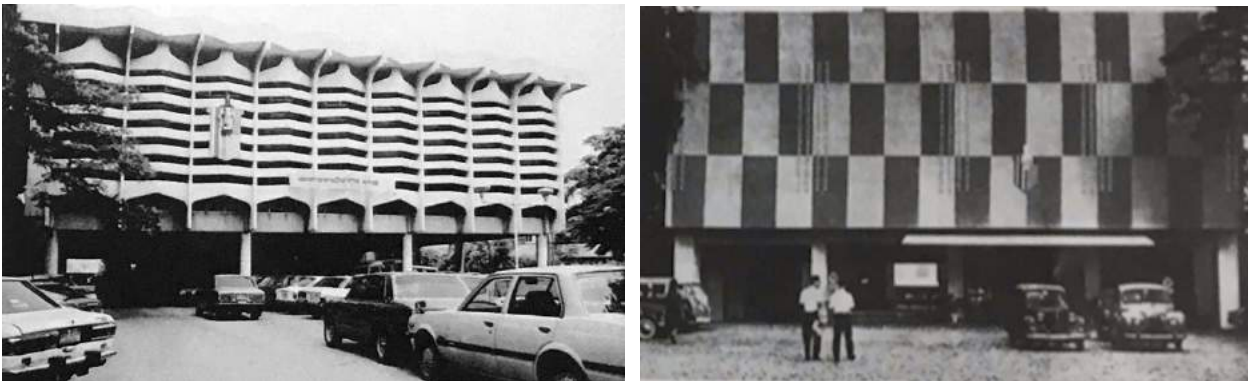


Figure 1-18 - The second generation of AUA building compared to how it initially looked in 1962, Photograph, in Patricia Norland, and al et., *The Eagle and the Elephant: Thai-American Relations since 1833* (Bangkok: United States Information Service, 1997), 187.

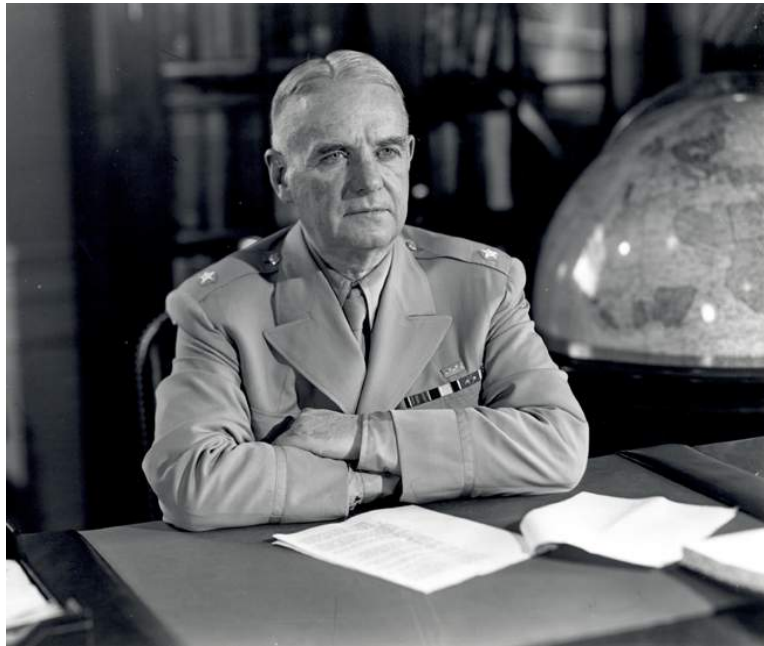


Figure 1-19 - Ambassador to Thailand William “Wild Bill” Donovan walks through the Thai jungle during the evacuation of Chinese Nationalist troops from Thailand in 1953, Photograph and illustration, in Jim Algie and el at., *Americans in Thailand* (Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, 2014), 148.

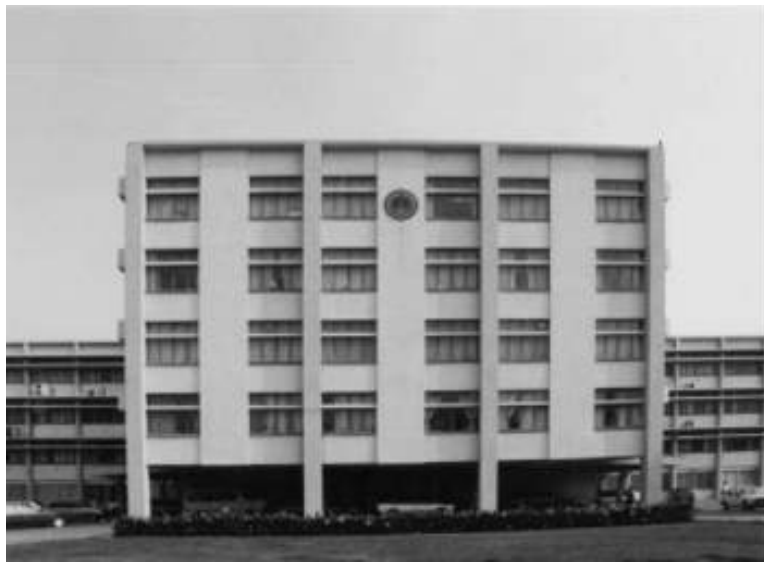


Figure 1-20 - (Left) Image of South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) clinical research building in 1964 and (right) image of SEATO headquarters building that was situated on a part of Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ land parcel on Sri Ayutthaya road in Bangkok, Photograph, from “Exterior Photograph of the 4-story SEATO Clinical Research Building,” *Alamy*, last accessed March 16, 2022. <https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-exterior-photograph-of-the-4-story-seato-south-east-asia-treaty-organization-173101124.html>

Chapter 2

“Subordination” in Modern Thai Architecture

“... the very place of identification, caught in tension of demand and desire, is a place of splitting.”¹

In the nineteenth century, Thailand—as Siam—was forced not only to cede territory to the British and the French, but also to reform its administrative institutions in order to win grudging acceptance of its right to self-administration within newly constricted borders. The country emerged uncolonized at the end of imperialist era, and was the only non-postcolonial state in Southeast Asia—although the terms of its autonomy were unavoidably constrained by western-dominated geopolitics.

Outsiders were often amazed by the Thai people's relative comfort with foreigners, which often read as an illogical contradiction between official repressiveness and interpersonal tolerance. According to Herzfeld's theory of “cultural intimacy,” this phenomenon demonstrates a key paradox of Thai history. The external values drive the state's suppression of traditional Thai identities, while at the same time the state covertly relies upon those identities to sustain the continuing loyalty of its citizens. This paradox is particularly to the fore in conditions of crypto-colonialism, in which the ultimate humiliation of invasion is deferred through this balance between the display of respectability (judged in terms of a global hierarchy of value) and the acceptance of a much less polite understanding of how things get done in practice.² Neither in theory nor in reality can Thailand or Siam deny its position as a crypto-colonial state, occupying

¹ Homi Bhabha, “Foreword: Remembering Fanon, Self, Psyche, and the Colonial Condition,” in *Frantz Fanon's Black Skin, White Masks: New Interdisciplinary Essays* (London: Pluto Press, 1986), vii-xxv.

² Herzfeld, “The Conceptual Allure of the West: Dilemmas and Ambiguities of Crypto-Colonialism in Thailand,” 176.

a colony-like space in the western-dominated world order, in spite of having escaped direct colonization. A central point of this chapter is that, in its “subordination” to western colonial powers since the nineteenth century, a particularly local idiom of Thai governance has grown.

Chapter two will examine the characteristics of this “subordination,” particularly in relation to Modern Thai architecture from the 1960s to the 1980s, when the United States imposed its policy and culture upon Thailand to undermine or deny its existence. The analyses elaborated in this chapter show that, since the Cold War years, urban infrastructure and the hospitality industry in Bangkok and its suburb grew rapidly due to American economic aid as well as the need to provide western-standard accommodations for western tourists and the American military presence. The architectural design of this period was thus dominated by spatial concerns reflecting the new and powerful presence of the United States. This domination over traditional Thai architectural planning was accomplished by several American architects working in Thailand.

The first section begins with an investigation on the historical constructions of *farang* (westerners) and *tawan-tok* (the West) in Thai thought, as these European-derived terms construct a way of knowing, dealing with, criticizing, condemning, consuming, and imagining the West as an ambiguous, alluring subject.³ The second section examines the broader political and economic context of Thailand after the Second World War, as the United States became a new foreign patron, more intrusive than anything Siam/Thailand had ever experienced in the colonial era.⁴ For the Thai people, this period was considered an era of “development.” It brought more Thais into the national market economy, and the U.S. brought together the military, businesspeople, and royalists—the three Thai forces that had tussled since 1932—in a

³ Pattana, “An Ambiguous Intimacy: Farang as Siamese Occidentalism,” 58.

⁴ Baker and Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand*, 139.

powerful alliance, to achieve development and to fight off an external enemy, communism. Yet, the alliance's strength was subtly undermined by the generals' abuse of power and their obvious subordination to American policy.⁵ The last section examines how architecture in Thailand during the period was exposed to geopolitical circumstances under the guise of American aid-funded policies and through the mutual agreement of the Thai ruling elite, who often relied on American finances. Selected government and civic structures offer excellent case studies for inspecting this ideology of Thai "subordination."

2.2 "Subordination" Discourse in Siamese/Thai Society

2.2.1 *Farang*, *Tawan-tok*, and *Nork* in Thai Thought

"*Tam kon farang*" or "kissing the ass of the *farang* (westerners)" is one of the most popular Thai idioms, used by people of all ideological stances and backgrounds to mark Thailand's blind imitation of the West.⁶ The sentiment is mirrored in other sayings: "*rao nap-theu farang mak kwa phuak-diaw-kan* (we accept westerners more than we accept one another)"⁷ and "*khong farang sung, khong pheun-meuang tam* (western things are superior or highly valued, while the native ones are inferior, lowly valued, or to be looked down upon)."⁸ These three idioms inarguably display the fact that Thailand's path to modernity has been dominated by western influences.

⁵ Ibid., 167.

⁶ The Thai term *farang* emerged from a set of a pan-Asian identification markers for the West, western peoples, and western-derived things. The term ultimately derives from *Frank*, which originally referred to a Germanic speaking peoples in the region of modern France, but which came to be widely used in early medieval Egypt, Greece, and other Mediterranean areas to refer to western Europeans in general. Linguistically, *farang* can be used as an adjective or noun, and can be singular or plural. This writing reflects that usage. For further explanation on the origin and other interpretations of this term, please see Pattana, "An Ambiguous Intimacy: Farang as Siamese Occidentalism," 57; 60-61.

⁷ Ibid., 66.

⁸ Michael Wright. *Farang Lang-Tawan-Tok* (The Postwestern Westerner) (Bangkok: Matichon, 2004), n.p..

To understand Siam/Thailand's subordinate position in the western-dominated world order, one must first understand the historical construction of *farang* (westerners) and *tawan-tok* (the West) in Thai thought, and the connection of these terms to the making of Thai national and cultural identities. In this section, we begin by investigating how *farang* and other western-derived terms became part of the discourse of Thainess, what effects *farang* have had on the Thai mentality since the second half of the nineteenth century, and how Thai rulers in each period dealt with *farang*.

According to Prince Damrong Rajanubhab's lecture, "The Introduction of Western Culture in Siam," read at the Rotarian dinner in 1925,

[O]f all the European nations, the Portuguese were the first to come to Siam. It was in 1511 that they first came to establish friendly relations and obtained permission to trade. Thereafter, a large number of Portuguese followed and settled in Ayudhya, but the Siamese called them "*Farang*" following the example of the Indians, who called all Europeans "*Frenghi*." ⁹

Subsequently, the term *farang* came to be used widely in Siam to refer to all Caucasians and the West in general. However, because this Thai word is generic, Thongchai complains that the term *farang* is a "usually ill-defined" Thai "reference to otherness," an "adjective and noun referring to western people without any specification of nationality, culture, ethnicity, language, or whatever."¹⁰ *Farang* is further employed as a classifying category applied to western-originating

⁹ Foreign culture came to Siam from India long before it did from any other country. The Siamese received their religion, art, science, and writing scripts originally from India. Indian culture alone predominated throughout the Indo-Chinese peninsula for a long time, but became less important starting from the thirteenth century as the power of Islam grew in India. Within the same century, the Chinese also emigrated to Cambodia and Siam as a consequence of the Mongol invasion of China, and from that period onwards, Chinese culture began to enter Siam. In terms of westerners, the Portuguese are thus considered as the first Europeans to visit Siam in significant numbers. The Portuguese initially arrived in India before any other European and the Indians called them "Frenghi." Despite having contact with many European nationalities, the Indians have still retained this name for the Portuguese and their racially-mixed descendants. The Siamese later adopted the term from trading with India. See Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, "The Introduction of Western Culture in Siam" (a paper presentation, the Rotarian dinner of the United Club, Bangkok, August 7, 1925); Prince Naritsara Nuwattiwong and Prince Damrong Rajanubhab. *San Somdet vol. 24* (Correspondance between two princes) (Bangkok: Khurusapha, 1962).

¹⁰ Thongchai, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-body of a Nation*, 5.

things, material inventions, and belongings. The term also appears in a wide range of Thai terms describing fruits, plants, animals, and goods: *man farang* (potato); *nor-mai farang* (asparagus); *mak farang* (chewing gum); and *nang farang* (western movie). Sometimes, the term can be replaced with another term *thet* (foreign), which is also used to describe *farang*/foreign-originated things. Pattana points out that the term *thet* is used to contrast such objects and phenomena with indigenous ones, which may be labelled as *thae* (genuine) or *pheun-ban* (local, indigenous).¹¹

Another Thai term that emphasizes a contradiction between domestic and distant is *nork*, which literally means “outside” but came to mean “foreign,” and specifically refers to western things and contexts. For example, *meung nork* (foreign/western countries) came to refer to European countries (and some of their colonies in Asia) and implied a site of civilization where *khrong nork* (highly valued foreign goods) were produced. *Hua nork*, foreign- or modern-minded people, originally referred to the privileged groups of people who studied abroad, mainly the royal children and siblings from well-to-do families, but also came to mean Siamese/Thai who kept up with trends through the consumption of foreign goods and the adoption of *farang* ways of life. *Nak-rian nork* were students who returned from an education in Europe.¹² This set of Thai phrases in reference to *farang* not only indicates their foreign origins, but also signifies some superior qualities of the western Otherness compared to indigenous Thai counterparts.

2.2.2 The Allure of *Farang*-ness

Since the era of King Rama IV onwards, the allure of *farang*-ness has been embraced and institutionalized as part of Siam’s historical consciousness. Adopting certain *farang* ways of life

¹¹ Pattana, “An Ambiguous Intimacy: Farang as Siamese Occidentalism,” 61.

¹² *Ibid.*, 68.

and consuming *farang* things were crucial methods for building and civilizing the “New Siam” empire during King Mongkut’s era. To meet the Siamese elite’s desire to become civilized and to join the modern cosmopolitan world, Siam’s rulers and intellectual nobility have turned the Othernesses of *farang* into ambiguous objects by progressively stripping them of their foreignness and making them part of civilized Thai selves.

On the one hand, *farang* were seen by the Siamese rulers as wicked and dangerous as far as Siam’s economic, political, and cultural-religious interests were concerned, and in these arenas, they could never be fully trusted. On the other hand, Siam looked to *farang* as models of a materially more advanced civilization. As Thak points out, modernity in Siam is commonly associated with an appropriation of western advancements, and the general discourse on modernity [*khwam than samai* or *khwam samai mai*] in Thai is closely related to “the Thai obsession with *khwam jaroen*, or ‘prosperity and progress.’”¹³ This was reflected in a material well-being often derived from the adoption of western technologies. The dawn of Siamese modernization in the mid-nineteenth century was made possible largely through the selection, importation, adaptation, and consumption of Euro-American inventions.¹⁴

Prince Damrong, known as “the father of Thai history,” explains the Thai attitude toward foreign cultures:

[T]he *Tai* (Thai) knew how to pick and choose. When they saw some good feature in the culture of other people, if it was not in conflict with their own interests, they did not hesitate to borrow it and adapt it to their own requirements.¹⁵

Siam's awareness of the West was due to the colonial exploitation following the military defeat of traditional regional powers such as Burma, China, and Vietnam in the first half of the

¹³ Rachel V. Harrison and Peter A. Jackson, “Introduction: Siam’s/Thailand’s Constructions of Modernity Under the Influence of the Colonial West,” *South East Asia Research* 17, no. 3 (2009): 330.

¹⁴ Pattana, “An Ambiguous Intimacy: Farang as Siamese Occidentalism,” 63.

¹⁵ Peleggi, *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy’s Modern Image*, 12.

nineteenth century. King Rama IV's strategy for preserving the Thai political autonomy—to deal flexibly with the strong imperialist nations—offered a good excuse for the ruling class to admire *farang* inventions and avoided the need to reject *farang* influence entirely. During this era, *farang* were rarely depicted by the Siamese as coolies or lowly people. They were shown as engaged in a variety of different professions: teachers, shipbuilders, missionaries, and doctors. This contrasted with the earlier presentations of westerners with whom Siam had had its first contacts. The Thai royal elite came to consider themselves as “civilizing agents,” who “refashioned” themselves on the model of *farang* civilization, turning away dramatically the practices of “traditional” Siamese rulers.¹⁶ Military uniforms, portraits in oils, and suburban villas replaced silk robes, Brahmanic rituals, and Indic architecture, which were the ruling elite's previous strategy for displaying the Bangkok royalty's association with a foreign civilization. In both cases, the ruling regime used foreign markers to align themselves with nations whose potency was manifested by means of trade, diplomacy, proselytizing, and military might.¹⁷

Peleggi notes that in addition to adopting the European tradition of the Grand Tour, extensive royal shopping sprees supplied the elite with such European consumer goods as jewelry, porcelain, paintings, bronze statues, cameras, toys, rocking chair, and Venetian lace.¹⁸ Thanos points to King Rama V's conspicuous consumption of Italian, French, and English cuisine at home and abroad.¹⁹

From this period onwards, *farang*-modelled “*rotsaniyom* (taste)” has been culturally constructed through the consumption of goods by the Thai elite as part of their civilizing and

¹⁶ Ibid., 10 and 3.

¹⁷ Ibid., 13.

¹⁸ Following to King Rama IV's period, his heir King Rama V visited Europe twice during his reign in 1897 and 1907. They both were a lengthy journey that took him throughout most of Europe, including Russia. See Peleggi, *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image*, 26-27, 99, and 143.

¹⁹ Harrison and Jackson, “Introduction: Siam's/Thailand's Constructions of Modernity Under the Influence of the Colonial West,” 329.

nation-building project. When western powers began to convey different and new impressions of the Siamese, the elite class began to conceive of themselves as distinct and different from the common Thai people, due to their access to modern knowledge and technology from the West. The notion of “taste” has been employed as a means to achieve social distinction, class consciousness, and material and symbolic power.²⁰ The acquisition of western objects and self-representations in the western style provided the ruling elite with more than merely personal pleasure, and played a vital role in refashioning the monarchy’s image as modern and civilized.

2.2.3 Siamese Performance of Self-civilization

Like the elite in most times and places, the Siamese aristocracy regarded themselves as carriers of novelty and models of sophistication, and such self-perception provided a degree of self-esteem as well as “international” prestige.²¹ In order to ward off external colonialism while still retaining their domestic authority, the absolute monarchy needed to create a new image of power. Constructing a public image of a “civilized” Siam required the pursuit of western symbols, both physical and ideological. The resulting “regime of images” would broadcast “civilized” behavior.

Jackson argues that there were two key audiences for the Siamese performance of civilization. It was only partly enacted for the benefit of foreigners within the domestic realm; and for the second audience—the colonizers—who lived remotely, thousands of kilometers distant in the imperial centers of Europe and North America. For the purpose of informing and entertaining metropolitan western audiences with impressions of Siam’s “civilization,” a

²⁰ Somrak Chaisingkananon, *Rotsaniyom: Phasa nai Sangkhom Thai Yuk Boriphokeniyom* (Taste: Language in Thai Society in the Era of Consumerism) (Bangkok: Institute of Social Research, Chulalongkorn University, 2001): n.p..

²¹ Peleggi, *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy’s Modern Image*, 12.

projected image was often sufficient.²² The surface-oriented form of power in modern Thailand also has roots in the Thai concept of “face,” described by Morris as a traditional cultural practice in which “one is required to maintain the appearances of ideal cultural order in Thailand. ... This performance (this masking) need have no particular relationship to one’s subjective thoughts or commitments.”²³

The symbolic representations of the authority, legitimacy, and power of the Siamese Court invented from the Forth and the Fifth Reigns (1851-1868 and 1868-1910) onwards, created by adopting western culture in order to impress westerners, affirm the impact of western dominance on culture, identity, and knowledge in a geopolitically subordinated society.²⁴ The new signifiers of power and progress demonstrate that Siam/Thailand had a clear crypto-colonial relationship with the West.

2.2.4 *Farang* as a Metric of Civilization

Since the mid-nineteenth century, *farang* has served the Thai as a metric for civilization. Reynolds gives a critical assessment of the *farang*’s influential positions toward the Siamese elite, calling it a form of colonization: “the elite whether royalist before 1932 or commoner after 1932, was colonized in consciousness.”²⁵ Though Siam/Thailand remained politically independent, economically, and culturally it followed a pattern very similar to that of the colonized Southeast Asian societies. Herzfeld notes that during the colonial era, this pattern of

²² Jackson, “The Performative State: Semi-Coloniality and the Tyranny of Images in Modern Thailand,” 220.

²³ Rosalind C. Morris, “Failures of Domestication: Speculations on Globality, Economy, and the Sex of Excess in Thailand,” *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 13, no. 1 (2002): 48.

²⁴ Jackson, “The Ambiguities of Semicolonial Power in Thailand,” 37.

²⁵ Craig J. Reynolds, “On the Gendering of Nationalist and Postnationalist Selves in Twentieth Century Thailand,” in *Genders and Sexualities in Modern Thailand*, eds. Peter A. Jackson and Nerida M. Cook (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1999), 263.

nominal independence pertained in a wide range of countries—including Ethiopia, Nepal, and Greece—all of whose subordinate positions in the western-defined “global hierarchy of value” have been insufficiently discussed.²⁶ Like these other nations, Siam/Thailand could not escape the reality of their place in the same global hierarchy. Siam’s semi-colonial relation to the West was molded within a distinctive network of global and local power relations. The refashioning of the public image is simply one of the forms of imperial power in the semi-colonial conditions of informal empire. Asian economies and legal systems were forced to conform to western norms while political regimes, educational systems, and cultural productions remained in local hands.²⁷

In Siam’s case, western pressure opened its previously closed doors when the country’s leaders recognized that domestic modernization and revision of foreign policies were required to accommodate the West. To accomplish this, a quest for *siwilai* was established in Siam and imparted its distinctive characteristics to the Siamese regime of images. Siam’s entry into “civilized” international society was more like Japan’s than China’s: an essentially voluntary accommodation in the face of less desirable alternatives.²⁸ Within the discourse of “civilization” used to justify the imposition of western legal regimes, non-western countries like Siam/Thailand were labelled as “un-Christian,” “uncivilized,” “non-progressive,” and “stagnant.” Christian westerners, according to this view, could not be expected to submit themselves to morally inferior foreign legal systems. Under treaties of free trade and friendship, it was made clear that “the capitulations (extraterritorial legal regimes) would remain until the uncivilized country

²⁶ Michael Herzfeld, *The Body Impolitic: Artisans and Artifice in the Global Hierarchy of Value* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 323.

²⁷ Jackson, “The Performative State: Semi-Coloniality and the Tyranny of Images in Modern Thailand,” 230.

²⁸ Gerrit W. Gong, *The Standard of “Civilization” in International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 217.

civilized itself along western lines.”²⁹ In short, that is, non-western societies were required to “self-civilize” to a standard imposed by the West as a legal condition for the withdrawal of foreign rule. Self-civilization was not achieved by amicable processes of “emulation” or “cultural borrowing.” It was imposed as an explicit requirement of the regime of capitulations.³⁰ Siam/Thailand’s economy, legal system, and public culture were subordinated to western norms, and the country was in a very real way subordinated to western imperial power.

2.3 “Subordination” in Thai History during the Cold War Era

An examination of Thailand from the 1960s to the 1980s reveals only slight changes from the era of Phibunsongkhram or the Siam of King Rama V. All the central institutions were strong: the kingdom was a constitutional monarchy, the bureaucracy pervaded almost every aspect of national life, the military dominated the political sphere, and the economy remained predominantly agricultural with a culturally anomalous urban business sector.³¹ Thailand retained its paradoxical nature as an independent country which still subtly relied on others.

The country was active in international affairs, but was situated in a network of close (and subordinate) alliances. Economically it had ties with Japan and the western industrial powers, politically with the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) neighbors and the United States, and culturally with the West.³² Thailand’s leaders broadcast an image to the world of an Asian haven of political stability and compelling economic growth, a nation which had escaped socialist decay and imperialist modernization while managing to maintain its

²⁹ David P. Fidler, “A Kinder, Gentler System of Capitulations? International Law, Structural Adjustment Policies, and the Standard of Liberal, Globalized Civilization.” *Texas International Law Journal* 35, no. 3 (2000): 393.

³⁰ Jackson, “The Performative State: Semi-Coloniality and the Tyranny of Images in Modern Thailand,” 234-235.

³¹ David K. Wyatt, *Thailand: A Short History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 266.

³² *Ibid.*

original cultural identity. Behind the scenes, however, it was the same as it had always been, with endless internal conflicts, political violence both on and off the streets, and continual unrest, strikes, and demonstrations. In a country without an historical tradition of firmly-held ideological passions, the 1970s arrived amid a massive eruption of political sentiment from both left and right wings, leading to regular contests between the Communist party of Thailand and the parliamentary constituencies.³³

2.3.1 Paradoxical Sarit

Amid a crisis of cultural transition in the mid-fifties, Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat seized power from the political experiments of Phibun regime (Figure 2-1). The Thai commoners were caught between the old order of the royal ruling elite and the new Phibun regime, with its project to build Thai nationalism. Traditional societal bonds were loosening. The expected democratic institutions were developing unexpectedly slowly, while Phibun's attempts to unite the country through a resurgence of Thai tradition were too weak to promote real nationalism. In these circumstances, Sarit chose an ideal moment to take power. His regime offered a clear way forward through the tangled questions of traditional values and national identity.

Sarit's rise to power was representative of the rise of a unique generation of Thai leaders. His was the only generation of modern Thai leaders to have been educated entirely in Thailand, as the sending of Thai students abroad had been extremely limited from the late 1920s to the early 1950s.³⁴ Sarit constructed his political regime with the assistance of Luang Wichit

³³ The Communist party of Thailand suddenly emerged and became popular among large numbers of young Thai, as well as bourgeois Chinese and intellectuals; and the Socialist party came to seemingly permanent prominence. Wyatt comments that the self-assertion of the left was so strong and its appeal to youth so powerful as to belie the widely held impression that anti-establishment ideology and Western political thought in general. See *Ibid.*, 267.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 269.

Wathakan, drawing on the indigenous principles of authority, on a traditional type of social and political hierarchy, and on the old paternalistic styles of rule—all expressed in terms of traditional Thai values.³⁵ He replaced Phibun's primary emphasis on civic loyalty to an abstract state or constitution by drawing all attention to the monarch, as both the focal point of loyalty for the citizen and the source of legitimacy for the government.

Sarit's ultimate goal was to redefine Thai democracy to emphasize governmental and monarchical responsiveness to the people's needs and aspirations. In return, Sarit's government was seen as a secular arm of the semi-sacral kingship, and was felt to be worthy of respect and obedience by virtue of that connection.³⁶ His government gained more than authority by this association; it also gained credibility, by recruiting highly qualified experts and technicians, the vanguard of a new generation of foreign-trained Thai, to take specialist jobs in cabinet and sub-cabinet positions. Lastly, in a bid to gain popularity by presenting itself as a democratic regime, Sarit's government advertised its efforts towards promoting economic development in the public interest.³⁷

2.3.2 The Changes of Thai Economic Policy Menu and Bureaucratic Infrastructures

A comparison with previous governments shows that the country's substantial accomplishments during this period were due to Sarit's commitment to development, especially in terms of economic growth. In 1954, Thailand shifted its Economic Policy focus from Economic Nationalism to Economic Liberalism. This change of direction during Sarit's term is

³⁵ Thak Chaloehtiarana, *Thailand: The Politics of Despotism Paternalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018), 152-171.

³⁶ Wyatt, *Thailand: A Short History*, 271.

³⁷ By referring to what his government did, Sarit considered that his government, alone of all those since 1932, deserved the appellation "revolutionary," for he considered his regime to be devoted to a total restructuring of the social and political order. See *Ibid.*, 272.

widely considered the most progressive and successful move, with tremendous impact on all facets of Thai culture, since the change of constitution in 1932. In an interview, economics professor Rangsan Thanaphonphan explains that there are two schools of thought regarding the decision making behind the policy change. The first school holds that the final decisions in regard to Thai monetary, financial, and macro-economic policy changes were accomplished solely by Thai bureaucrats, without any help from foreigners. The second view contends that the decision was suggested by the British consultant, who at the time was an advisor to Thailand's Ministry of Finance.³⁸ Rangsan notes that if the change of policy was indeed driven by the Thai technocrats who worked in the Ministry of Finance and the Bank of Thailand, their views on economic policy were a product of their western education.³⁹

As a result of the policy change, the Thai economic program turned toward the development of a free-market economy. Sarit began by inviting a World Bank mission to Thailand after his first coup, to generate a national economic report. This research was the basis of the first five-year development plan in Thailand, launched in 1961. The new plan began by condemning the previous state-led development policies, pursued since the late 1930s, and

³⁸ The advisory presence of a British national regarding Thai financial policy was a constant, beginning in King Rama V's period. It was only revoked when Thailand declared war with the British during the World War II.

³⁹ The first Thai recruits to the new technocracy included both nobles and commoners. They had often been educated in the West. Though many in this group took high-ranking positions in the Ministry of Finance and the Bank of Thailand, none of them graduated with a specific degree in Economics. For instance, Sunthorn Hongladarom graduated with a degree in Modern Languages, Serm Vinitchaikum obtained a bachelor's degree in Law, and HRH Prince Wiwattanachai received a Bachelor of Arts degree in History. Prior to World War II, Economics was a very new subject in Thailand and the government was not interested in sending people to study in the field. Only after the war did the following generation of Thai technocrats earn Economics degrees abroad before returning home. This second generation was comprised of Puey Engphakorn, Boonma Wongsawan, Suparb Yossunthorn, Sommai Hoontrakul, and Chalong Peungrakoon. Following this generation, the United States set out to create a new generation of technocrats who shared an American viewpoint. Several senior officials were taken to the United States for training. Around 1500 went on Fulbright or similar grants between 1951 and 1985. The numbers attending US institutions of higher education rose from a few hundred in the 1950s to 7000 by the early 1980s. See Rangsan Thanaphonphan, "Setthakit lae Sungkom Thai nai Chuang Hoksip Pi Ti Pan Ma [Thai Economy and Society in the Past 60 Years]," interview by Buncha Thanaboonsombut. *MTEC Journal of Materials Technology* 44 (July-September, 2006): n.p., and Baker and Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand*, 150.

announced that “[T]he keynote of the public development program is, therefore, the encouragement of economic growth in the private sector.”⁴⁰

In 1954, pursuant to the advice of the World Bank, the state launched the Investment Promotion Act to align with the new economic policy. The first mission statement of the Act stated that the Thai economy could not grow through the unaided effort of the Thai government. Private-sector investment was required to stimulate the national economic growth. The second mission statement announced that the country also needed foreign investors to invest in Thailand. This second statement represented a complete break with the former nation-building policy, Economic Nationalism, that Phibun had tried so hard to institute in the previous decade.

Beginning in 1959, Sarit's first year as Prime Minister, Thailand's bureaucratic infrastructure expanded dramatically. The many newly established bureaus were set up with the assistance of the United States, including the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council (a planning board), the Industrial Finance Corporation of Thailand, a Budget Bureau, the Office of the Education Council, the National Research Council of Thailand, the Tourist Organization of Thailand, and a remodeled central bank. During this prosperous era, the former Office of the National Economic Council was restructured into the Office of the National Economic and Social “Development” Council or NESDC,⁴¹ Its mandate was to lay out national policy and economic development strategy, as well as to select suitable economic investment projects for the country. This was the first time that Thailand had ever had an economic plan formulated and delivered from the central administration.

⁴⁰ Thak, *Thailand: The Politics of Despotism*, 229.

⁴¹ Chatichai Muksong, “Karn Judtum Pan Pattana Settakit lae Sungkom hang Chat [A Planning Process of the National Economic and Social Development Plan],” *King Prajadhipok's Institute*, accessed October 5, 2020, <http://wiki.kpi.ac.th/index.php?title=การจัดทำแผนพัฒนาเศรษฐกิจและสังคมแห่งชาติ/>

2.3.3 The Earlier National Economic and Social Plans (1961-1976)

This was a notable period of intense economic activity, as the government planned and applied a series of three national economic five-year plans (1961-1966, 1967-1971, and 1972-1976). These early plans had three aims: to intensify exploitation of Thailand's natural resources to deliver growth; to transfer some of the resulting surplus for investment in the urban economy; and to facilitate foreign investment, in order to acquire technology.⁴² Thailand was also tied into the *Pax Americana* by these proposed economic plans, which had implications for Thailand's national autonomy.⁴³ Not only was the country locked in a security alliance with the U.S., but its economic policies were now largely controlled by U.S. advisors, whose role was to ensure U.S. industrial investment in Thailand.⁴⁴

The first of Thailand's national economic plans (1961-1966) was a modification of the Ellsworth Report. This initial report on Thai economic conditions, by economist Paul Ellsworth, the head of World Bank Mission and a professor at the University of Wisconsin, was translated into Thai under the title *Krongkarn Pattanakarn khong Rat sumrub Prated Thai* [The National Development Project for Thailand]. On Sarit's orders, it was implemented as a national policy. The plan had into two phases: 1961-1963 and 1964-1966. Its later part was based on the advice of Laurence D. Stifel, an assistant of the United States Operations Mission (USOM), whom NESDC hired to be an economic advisor and later became a secretary to the Rockefeller

⁴² Baker and Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand*, 150.

⁴³ *Pax Americana* (Latin for "American Peace," model after *Pax Romana* and *Pax Britannica*) is primarily used in its modern connotations to refer to the peace among great powers, established after the end of World War II in 1945. It was also called the Long Peace. In this modern sense, it has come to indicate the military and economic position of the United States in relation to other nations. For example, the Marshall Plan, which spent \$13 billion to rebuild the economy of Western Europe, has been seen as "the launching of the *Pax Americana*." See Wikipedia, s.v. "Pax Americana," last modified October 3, 2020, 18:39 (UTC), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pax_Americana

⁴⁴ Kullada, "A Revisionist History of Thai-US Relations," *Asian Review* 16 (2003): 60.

Foundation.⁴⁵ American economist Forrest E. Cookson was brought in for the third plan, in which he helped to lay out a national micro-economic strategy.⁴⁶ As a consequence, U.S. firms were allowed 100 per cent ownership in their investment in Thailand, while other foreign investors were limited to a minority share.

Thus, beginning in the late 1950s, U.S. firms began to set up their businesses in Thailand, as they were given superior opportunities in comparison to others.⁴⁷ Most of the U.S. investment was confined to mining and petroleum firms, a small number of consumer businesses, such as Coca-Cola, and projects directly connected to the war in Indochina.

2.3.4 The Anti-communist Effects

In addition to domestic challenges, the Sarit government faced a threatening international climate which affected Thai development. The rise of Communist power in Vietnam resulted in Vietnamese support for the leftist Pathet Lao movement of Prince Souphanouvong in Laos. Thailand countered by developing close relations with right-wing Lao elements, including General Phoumi Nosavan—who happened to be Sarit’s cousin.⁴⁸ This fear of communist endeavors forced Thailand to strengthen its relations with the United States in the early 1950s, and in 1954 it joined SEATO.

⁴⁵ In the 1960s, Laurence D. Stifel mainly worked for the Economic Growth Center at Yale University. On his sabbatical leave, he came to be a visiting professor at the Faculty of Economics, Thammasat University, and the Faculty of Sciences, Mahidol University. Previously, he was a Fulbright scholar at the University of the Philippines and a program economist for USAID in Burma, prior to become an economic advisor to the NEDB Thailand. See The Siam Society, “Biographical Notes on Contributors,” *Journal of the Siam Society* 59, part 2 (1971): 298-302.

⁴⁶ Forrest E. Cookson was later arrested in Africa as being an agent from the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). For further information, see Rangsan, “Setthakit lae Sungkom Thai nai Chuang Hoksip Pi Ti Pan Ma [Thai Economy and Society in the Past 60 Years],” n.p..

⁴⁷ Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand*, 150.

⁴⁸ Wyatt, *Thailand: A Short History*, 273.

The crucial turning point came during the Laos Crisis, when in April 1960 Phoumi staged a coup d'état and installed another right-wing regime in Vientiane. The situation in Laos deteriorated into civil war. Thai leaders were alarmed at the growth and military advances of the Pathet Lao, feeling that communism had come to their doorstep. They began to believe that SEATO had failed to accomplish its mission to prevent communism from gaining ground in the region.⁴⁹ They felt more betrayed still when the United States abandoned the Lao right wing and supported the neutralist Souvanna Phouma, whose position at the head of a Lao government of national unity was secured by the Geneva Conference on Laos in July 1962.

Paradoxically, the outcome of this situation moved Thailand to further tighten the bonds of its relationship with the United States, largely motivated by a continued fear of communism. Their objectives were apparently obtained: first, by the receipt of a clear U.S. commitment to defend Thailand, whether or not SEATO agreed to do so; second, by the stationing of American troops in Thailand; and third, by major increases in U.S. military and economic aid.⁵⁰ As a result, Thailand agreed to forego further economic development aid in the interest of pursuing more military aid. Already they had come to the conclusion that U.S. aid would need to be redirected to address national security concerns sparked by a wave of anti-government insurgency in the northeast.

Inopportunately, the successful Sarit regime came to an end when Sarit's rapidly failing health led to his death on December 8, 1963. Not long after, his reputation was tarnished by an investigation revealing that he had left a large personal fortune approaching \$150 million, including holdings in numerous business enterprises (such as the company that held the

⁴⁹ For more information in regard to the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), see "Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), 1954," *Office of the Historian, Foreign Service Institute, United States Department of State*, accessed September 27, 2020, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/seato>.

⁵⁰ Wyatt, *Thailand: A Short History*, 274.

monopoly on supplying gunny sacks for Thai rice sales), 20,000 rai (8,000 acres) of land, and numerous houses, hidden from the public.⁵¹ Worse still, when the public began to experience his successors, they wondered whether the success of the Sarit regime was worth the price the nation now found itself paying. The former leader had been ruthless, greedy, arbitrary, and authoritarian, and his regime had turned back the clock on parliamentary democracy and human rights.⁵² His major successes had actually hitched Thailand's international position to the brightly shining American star, which with he had mortgaged the nation's future.

However, in spite of everything, Sarit's accomplishments were respected because of the two paradoxical concepts central to his style and policies: his revolutionary goal to restore a social and political order based on traditional Thai values by returning to monarchical and hierarchical systems, and his promotion of development intended to reinforce and justify the traditional order. In spite of the recognition of these goals, the practical result of his policies achieved the opposite of his desired result. His development propaganda not only undermined traditional Thai values, it urged middle-class Thai to adore westernization and observe Thai culture with skepticism. As Wyatt summarized, "[I]n the end, short-term strength and stability were purchased at the price of longer-term instability and even political crisis."⁵³

2.3.5 Implementation of the *Phattana* Policy during the Vietnam War

On the basis of the new concept of *phatthana* or progress, which Sarit derived from President Truman's first televised presidential speech on "development" in 1947, Thailand's

⁵¹ Ibid., 275.

⁵² Sarit coopted the small class of Western-educated technocrats by encouraging their participation in the expanding bureaucracy. Those who still opposed him, whether rural politicians or leftist intellectuals, he silenced or eliminated.

⁵³ Ibid., 276.

economic program was permanently shifted from Phibun's nationalism to Sarit's private-sector capitalism in the 1950s.⁵⁴ Due to the government's policy of welcoming foreign investments, Thailand was drawn more deeply into the complex geopolitical situation involving Japan, China, and the western powers; and because of Thai involvement in the Vietnam War, Thailand was often accused of having abandoned their traditional independence or neutrality in foreign policy in favor of close identification and involvement with a single great power, the United States.⁵⁵ The more threatened the Thai felt by circumstances in Indochina, the more they turned to the United States, the only great power with both the strength and the will to assist them.

As the Indochina War grew into the Vietnam War during the 1960s, Thailand became a little more than a U.S. client-state under military rule, a situation codified in the secret Rusk-Thanat agreement, which committed the United States to defend Thailand against subversion both from within and abroad (Figure 2-2). The increasingly threatening situation in Indochina in 1964 spurred Thailand to agree to substantially upgrade their military-base facilities and logistical systems at Takhli airfield in Nakhon Sawan in order to let the U.S. aircraft use it as a base. Following the Gulf of Tonkin incident in August of the same year, additional U.S. aircraft were based at Korat, while other military contingents operated out of Nakhon Phanom, mainly against the Ho Chi Minh Trail region of southeastern Laos. Toward the end of the 1960s, there were nearly 45,000 U.S. military personnel (primarily Air Force) stationed in Thailand, with

⁵⁴ At that time, "development" had been coined without any specific meaning and was referred to as Point Four. The World Bank's development policy originated from Raul Prebisch's recommendation to the United Nations Economic Commission in regard to Latin America. He argued that underdeveloped countries could only progress by adopting an import substitution industry (ISI) strategy. Upon Sarit's return from the US in 1958, he proclaimed the goal of improving the economic well-being of the country. From that point on, the word "development" was increasingly used in all official documents. For instance, the Revolutionary Proclamation no. 11, dated 22 October 1958, referred to the need for an "economic plan." This was later changed to *phaen phattana* or "development plan." See Gilbert Rist, *The History of Development: From Western Origins to Global Faith* (London: Zed Books, 2002), 115 and; Kullada, "A Revisionist History of Thai-US Relations," 59.

⁵⁵ Wyatt, *Thailand: A Short History*, 277.

nearly 600 aircraft, including B-52 bombers based at U Tapao (Figure 2-3).⁵⁶ During the most critical period of the Vietnam War from 1965 to 1977, Thailand hosted as many as 200,000 U.S. Army and Air Force personnel; and Bangkok was chosen to be the GIs' Rest and Recreation spot (R&R). By 1967, the *farang* population of Bangkok had grown to approximately 45,000 visitors (Figure 2-4).

The effects of Vietnam War extended through nearly every aspect of Thai national life. It brought large segments of the Thai population face to face his with the outside world in unprecedented ways. The economy was pumped up with American dollars, and hundreds of thousands of Thais became dependent upon the American presence for their livelihoods. Additionally, the Vietnam boom brought widespread corruption, and commercialized vice teemed in the hotels and honky-tonks clustered around the U.S. air bases both in Bangkok and Udon.⁵⁷ New Phetchaburi Road became an "American strip" lined with bars, nightclubs, brothels, and massage parlors. Don Mueang airport added a new runway to accommodate jet planes to serve foreign visitors, which grew rapidly from only 40,000 in the late 1950s to over 600,000 by 1970.⁵⁸

As disruptive as these surface-level changes were, the effects of the American era in Thailand ran much deeper. The economic attraction of the city, particularly the service sector, changed the fundamental way Thai social relationships are constructed. Young women and men from farm families went to the city to learn English and work as waiters, bartenders and hotel desk clerks, prostitutes and masseuses, tour guides and souvenir shop clerks. When there, they were exposed to a kind of rapid access to western culture, ideas, values, and fashions that had

⁵⁶ Ibid., 278.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 279.

⁵⁸ Baker and Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand*, 148.

previously been limited to only the small group of Thai elites. With western tastes and fashions came new social ideologies, encompassing sexual morality, ideas of romantic love, and a cult of youth which supplanted the traditional respect of seniority.

2.3.6 The Golden Era of Thailand’s Tourist Industry and Building Construction

Thailand’s emergent tourist industry also took off during the 1960s, starting with the opening of the Tourism Authority of Thailand in 1960. This was intended to expand business sectors related to travel and tourism. Sarit hoped to make this a major focus of Thai efforts, urging the nation that “the promotion of tourism can be best achieved for the benefit of our people and our country only when every government office, individual enterprise, and the people themselves give their full co-operation and support.”⁵⁹

By the mid-1960s, the Thai tourism industry was still supported by the American war effort, with somewhere between 11 to 16 percent of total visitors composed of U.S. soldiers on leave from Vietnam. This specific R & R demographic spent twice as much money as the average tourist—the liberal spending fueling growth in many areas, particularly in the sex industry (Figure 2-5). The period from 1965 to 1969 was the golden era of building construction in Thailand, as the tourist boom created massive new demand for hotel rooms, with 14 luxury or international-class hotels in construction in Bangkok.⁶⁰ In 1966 alone, 2,500 hotel rooms were added to a city which had fewer than 800 a decade previously, together with roads, airstrips, coffee shops, and palatial dwellings for high-ranking foreigners and nouveau riche Thai.

⁵⁹ Jim Algie and el at., *Americans in Thailand* (Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, 2014) 187.

⁶⁰ Vimolsiddhi Horayangkura and el at., *Pattanakan Naewkhwamkit lae Roopbaeb khong Ngansatapattayagum* [Development of Concepts and Architectural Patterns: Past, Present, and Future] (Bangkok: The Association of Siamese Architecture, 1993), 99-101.

Americans played a significant role in developing the Thai tourist industry. The first of a long list of American hotel chains arrived in Bangkok with the opening of the Siam InterContinental hotel, partly owned by Pan American World Airways (Figure 2-6).⁶¹ This striking building with multi-tiered tiled roofs rising to a central peak was located on 26 acres of land in the heart of Bangkok. Its form reminds some people of a volcano and others of a traditional hat worn by ancient Thai royalty. Tellingly, it was located on part of a 43-acre site belonging to the royal family. The site also houses Wat Pathum Wanaram, built by King Rama IV in 1857. Offering 411 rooms and a variety of dining and conference facilities set in a lushly tropical landscape, the hotel remained a distinctive landmark for nearly three decades before it was removed to make room for Siam Paragon shopping center, which opened in 2005. The government owned Erawan Hotel, located a few blocks away, had been torn down several years before, and was replaced by the Grand Hyatt, another American chain. Still other noted names entered Thailand in the following years, including Hilton, Marriott, Sheraton, Regent, Holiday Inn, Westin, and Conrad.⁶²

The building boom led to the flourishing of the architectural profession in Thailand. Due to the rising economy and the number of Thai architecture graduates who successfully completed a five-year bachelor's degree, newly hired personnel in Thai architectural firms increased approximately 90 per year. These students were taught a Modern architectural curriculum by western-educated Thai architects, who themselves had directly received their education from the

⁶¹ Along with normal tourists, many of Bangkok's new hotels catered directly to U.S. military personnel working in Thailand. The May 1969 issue of *Investor* magazine noted that "the Chavalit, which opened in 1966 with 300 rooms, took U.S. personnel in 1967 and has since turned itself into an apartment house for long-term lease ... the Chao Phraya[has] 230 rooms for sergeants." By 1972, three years after the U.S. began reducing both the military presence and aid spending in Thailand, the World Bank estimated that 20,000 Thais worked in the hotel industry alone. See Algie and el at., *Americans in Thailand*, 187.

⁶² William Warren, *Chronicles of American Business in Thailand* (Bangkok: American Chamber of Commerce in Thailand, 2006), 64.

Modern masters such as Frank Lloyd Wright, Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, Louis I. Khan, and others. As Vimolsiddhi remarks in *Development of Concepts and Architectural Patterns*, between 1958 and 1972 more than half of Thai architecture professors went to study in the United States and obtained a master's degree.⁶³ Not only Thai architects benefited from this boom, however; as foreign architects, especially Americans, also received commissions during this period.

2.4 Case Studies of “Subordination” Revealing through the Works of American Architects Working in Thailand from the 1960s-1980s.

2.4.1. The Beginning of American Architectural Era in Thailand

The era of American architects in Thailand began with the opening of the architectural firm Bourne Associates International in Bangkok, led by the architect John W. Rifenburg who was later set up a new company with Rirk-rit Kaewvichien, registered under the name *Rifenburg and Rirk-rit Architects*.⁶⁴ Rifenburg was renowned both for his interior designs, including the Oriental Hotel (1876, renovated in the 1960s), the Siam InterContinental Hotel (1966), the Montien Hotel (1967); and for his architecture, as seen in the Fedders Building (1976), Chidlom Place (1989), and Baan Kai Mook Condominium (1990) in Hua Hin.⁶⁵ The Louis Berger Group,

⁶³ Vimolsiddhi and el at., *Pattanakan Naewkhwamkit lae Roopbaeb khong Ngansatapattayagum* [Development of Concepts and Architectural Patterns: Past, Present, and Future], 99-101.

⁶⁴ Pussadee Tiptus, *Satapanik Siam: Puentan Botbath Pholngan lae Naewkid, B.E.2475-2537* [Siamese Architects: Fundamentals, Roles, Works, and Concepts, 1932-1994] (Bangkok: The Association of Siamese Architects, 1996), 377.

⁶⁵ See Rerkdee Pothiwanakul, “Rifenberg and Rirkrit Architects” Facebook (photo album), December 27, 2015, <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.837842756334892&type=3>

Inc. was another in the small group of American firms to receive commissions in Thailand prior to 1965, due to the U.S.-Thai OICC military agreement.^{66 67}

The majority of Louis Berger's construction activities in Thailand can be classified, in general, as being for U.S. military purposes, including facilities constructed under the Military Assistance Program (MAP). Berger's civilian projects included facilities constructed for the Agency for International Development (AID).⁶⁸ Because of the continuing interest of the U.S. Congress in their own activities in Southeast Asia, the U.S. supported substantial dollar expenditures for facilities in Thailand, which increased military construction activities in Thailand dramatically within a few years.⁶⁹ In early 1966, in anticipation of large increases in

⁶⁶ The Louis Berger Group was founded in the United States in 1950 as a civil engineering consultancy. It expanded rapidly both in the United States and overseas. In 1959, an Architectural Division was established in Europe and subsequently extended to some fourteen foreign countries in Latin America, Africa, Europe, and the Far East. The work of the Architectural Division has been completely diversified, embracing the design of buildings of all types with particular emphasis on public buildings, auditoria, and buildings designed for exhibition purposes. It has attracted a number of international architects of repute as well as some brilliant young architects who have already demonstrated exceptional ability in the design of unique buildings. This included Robert G. Boughey, a chief architect of the Bangkok Office. See Stanley E. Jewkes, "Letter to Gardner Meade: Qualification of the Louis Berger Group and Mr. Robert G. Boughey, Chief Architect, Bangkok Office" (Archives of United States Information Agency (USIA) and United States Information Service (USIS), National Archives and Records Administration, USA, 1966), RG 306 Entry P36 4744833.

⁶⁷ In the 1950s, the United States Department of Defense assigned responsibility for contract construction in support of military assistance and military construction in regions around the world to the three major branches of defense: the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force. The Navy was assigned as the Department of Defense contract construction agent in Southeast Asia, among other regions. The Navy, therefore, established its first contracting officer in Southeast Asia with the Officer in Charge of Construction (OICC), Thailand, located in Bangkok, in December 1955, and in 1958, the name was changed to OICC Southeast Asia in order to encompass the construction work undergoing in Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. See Richard Tregaskis, *Southeast Asia: Building the Bases; the History of Construction in Southeast Asia* (Superintendent of Documents, US government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 1975), 13; and Paul E. Seufer, "Construction Program in Vietnam," *The Military Engineer* (May-June 1968), accessed October 19, 2020, <https://sameneews.org/tme-looks-back-vietnam-construction-program-in-vietnam/>

⁶⁸ The Comptroller General of the United States, *Report to the Congress: US Construction Activities in Thailand, 1966 and 1967* (Department of Defense, Department of State, Agency for International Development, Washington DC, 1968), 4, accessed October 19, 2020, <https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=6wpl3cToflAC&hl=en&pg=GBS.PP1>

⁶⁹ United States construction activities in Thailand begun in 1956 consisted of the construction of facilities for joint use in the common defense of the United States and Thailand. The original construction was performed primarily by the use of local fixed-price contracts. The initial dollar input was relatively small. However, as of June 30, 1967, the U.S. construction program had increased to about \$337 million in construction projects, and the greater part of the work was being accomplished by U.S. military troop construction forces and civilian U.S. contractors. Ibid., 4.

construction work, the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) mobilized two cost-reimbursable contractors from the United States to Thailand. By June 30, 1967, an estimated \$165 million worth of construction had been assigned to these contractors, including to the Louis Berger firm. This situation led one young American architect to make the decision to move to Thailand. This was Robert G. Boughey, who is considered to have made the most impact on the physical appearance of Bangkok since the Vietnam War.

2.4.2 The Story of Robert G. Boughey and His Works

In 1964, Pottsville, Pennsylvania native Robert G. Boughey came to Thailand to take a lead designing role of the International Division of Louis Berger Group. (Figure 2-7). The firm had been awarded the Indoor Stadium project in Bangkok for Thailand's First Asian Games.⁷⁰ As Boughey is often recognized as one of the first-generation American architects to help pioneer architectural professions and set standards in Thai society, an examination of his background and his design signature will serve to illuminate the American influence on Thai architecture of this time.

Robert G. Boughey received his bachelor's degree at New York's Pratt Institute in 1959 where, at that time, most of the teachers were "essentially the next generation after the Bauhaus." Boughey's own mentor had studied under Walter Gropius. Boughey recalled that the instruction from the Bauhaus School "emphasized a very systematic approach to design, a logical rather than an artistic approach, not only in terms of function of the building, but in terms of the design

⁷⁰ While Boughey was in charge of the Bangkok office, he was working under Stanley Edward Jewkes, an American chief architect, who had completed a similar sport stadium project in Malaysia called the Merdeka Stadium. See Prabhakorn Vadanyakul, ed., *Kui gub Satapanik Tonbaeb* [Conversations with Architects Series vol. 6] (Bangkok: Li-Zenn Publishing, 2010), 116-158.

itself.”⁷¹ The Bauhaus approach to education was particularly strong on abstract three-dimensional design, which Boughey has found a very useful tool for conceptualizing a building, seeing it through in an integrated step-by-step fashion. These fundamentals were subsequently displayed in his designs, which reflect an expression of logic and a systematic approach to problem-solving. The mathematical coldness implicit in this approach is avoided by a keen aesthetic stance.

Boughey never practiced in Pennsylvania and has not admitted to the particular influence of any individual architect, explaining, “you admire different people at different stages of your career.”⁷² Later in his career he conceded to the possibility that his symmetrical design language was derived from western “classical” buildings and from Mogul architecture. The latter explains his fondness for geometry. Indeed, it was on the Indian subcontinent that Boughey received his first practical experience.⁷³ Soon after his graduation from Pratt, his exceptional abilities came to the attention of the Berger Group, and in 1962, Boughey accepted a Chief Architect position with them, in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). The three-year experience triggered his interest in tropical architecture, which led him to pursue postgraduate studies at the Architectural Association School of Architecture in London in 1967. This was followed by a professorship in the Department of Tropical and Middle East Architecture and Planning at Pratt Institute in 1969.⁷⁴

On a personal level, the architect was fascinated by Asia and the idea of travel itself. According to an interview published in 1993, he thought that “it would be nice to live and work

⁷¹ Robert G. Boughey. *Robert G. Boughey and Associates projects, 1973-1993* (Bangkok: The Key Publisher, 1993), 8.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 10.

⁷³ It should be mentioned that in 1960, prior to moving to the Far East, Boughey accepted an architectural assignment in Geneva, Switzerland for a short period of time.

⁷⁴ “Robert G. Boughey: Biography,” RGB Architects, accessed March 3, 2021, <https://www.rgbarchitects.com/BIOGRAPHY/57e9e5cbb0e014010094a70d>

in 20 different countries,” but came to realize that “you can only work (as an architect) in the country where you live and which you understand.”⁷⁵ A love of Asia coupled with the need for a permanent base led ultimately to his settling in Bangkok in 1964, and initially heading The Louis Berger Group in Thailand as a Chief Architect. In 1973, Boughey decided to make Thailand his permanent home and established Robert G. Boughey and Associates Co., Ltd.. Major projects on which his company has worked in Bangkok include the Siam Commercial Bank Head Office (1994), the Bank of America building (1983) on the Wireless Road, and the Siam Discovery Center (2016). His firm designed Dietham Towers (1992), also on Wireless Road, where the American Chamber of Commerce or the AMCHAM’s office is presently situated.

Among more than 40 projects undertaken by Boughey and his firm, a number have become modern landmarks of Thailand. In undertaking an investigation of the Louis Berger Group and Boughey’s works, Thai architectural trends from the American Era offer excellent examples of American cultural transplantation. Among them, Thai-government commissioned architecture provides several obvious cases in point, leading to an insight on the dynamism and mechanism of the period of Thai subordination to America. The previous portion of this chapter provides the political, economic, and cultural context which sets the stage for the following discussion of architecture, examined in detail through the following case studies:

Indoor Stadium, Hua Mak (1966)

The Indoor Sports Stadium at Hua Mak was the first project that the American firm of Louis Berger designed in Thailand.⁷⁶ Chuchawal Pringpuangkeo, who worked with the firm

⁷⁵ Boughey, *Robert G. Boughey and Associates projects, 1973-1993*, 10.

⁷⁶ The Indoor Stadium Hua Mak was subsequently named *Kittikachorn Stadium* in honor of Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn, the Prime Minister who ordered the commission of this building.

between 1968 and 1969, explained that the Berger firm was chosen to receive the commission because the President of the Thai Olympic Committee was impressed by Louis Berger's design for Stadium Negara (National Stadium) while visiting Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.⁷⁷ He invited the Berger firm to design the Indoor Stadium for the fifth Asian Games, to be held in Bangkok in the Fall of 1966. Though a Chief Architect in the Bangkok office, Boughey still reported directly on all matters of the execution of the final design to Stanley E. Jewkes, the Chief Architect of the entire Berger Group, who led the design of the Malaya Stadium Negara.⁷⁸

As the stadium was intended to enrich the lives of the Thai people and to serve as a national monument, the building was conceived for multipurpose use. It was primarily designed to serve sporting and cultural functions in Thailand, which required a large, covered amphitheater. It also needed to be adapted for exhibition purposes and for large meetings and rallies. This flexibility needed to be achieved without impairing specialist features required by the individual activities for which the stadium was intended.

The stadium was situated in the area chosen for the 1966 International Trade Fair, on the south side of the Phra Khanong-KlongTan-Bangkapi Road. At the time, this was considered to be the north-eastern edge of Bangkok, which was approximately 12 kilometers (7.5 miles) traveling by road from the existing Olympic Stadium (when the Petchburi Road extension to

⁷⁷ Chuchawal Pringpuangkeolater became the managing director of Chuchawal-de Weger International. See Pussadee, *Satapanik Siam: Puentan Botbath Pholngan lae Naewkid, B.E.2475-2537* [Siamese Architects: Fundamentals, Roles, Works, and Concepts, 1932-1994], 378.

⁷⁸ Stanley Edward Jewkes was an American engineer-architect living between 1913-2011. He was a key figure in Southeast Asian post-independence architecture. His close relationship with the former Malaysian Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, led to his getting several prominent architectural commissions in Malaysia, including for Stadium Merdeka (Freedom Stadium) and Stadium Negara (National Stadium). Jewkes practiced in Malaysia from 1941 until 1962, then he continued his works in the United States for a multi-national architectural and engineering practice. See Lai Chee Kian, *Building Merdeka: Independence Architecture in Kuala Lumpur, 1957-1966* (Kuala Lumpur: Petronas, 2007), n. pag.

Phra Khanong-Klong Tan-Bangkapi Road was completed). The site and its surrounding area were low-lying paddy land, as Boughey recalled:

[O]riginally, it (the stadium) was to be set somewhere on Sukhumvit. At the last minute, the government changed the location to Hua Mak. There were only rice fields there at that time, but we had to start the construction. Petchburi road was no further than about Soi Asoke. We had to build a small boat and went to the site every day using Klong San Saeb. We got into some trouble the first time since no one had a captain's license to navigate the boat. Finally, we hired some Thai boy and got him a license. At Hua Mak, we parked our boat at a Thai Muslim family's house. We were afraid that someone might steal it, so they guarded it during the day while we went to site. It was a nice story, nice memory.⁷⁹

The pristine natural setting influenced the form of the building, resulting in the design of a raised podium as the main circulating level (Figure 2-8). This gives a distinctive character to the building, which makes use of the large overhang of the upper-terrace seats and the main concourse to provide additional covered accommodation. This additional space eventually gives an increase of 50 per cent or 400 square meters for exhibition purposes.

The general concept of the stadium is that of a vast oval amphitheater, which is a circular shell (Figure 2-9). The oval was chosen as the best shape for viewing sports and other spectacles, since most game courts have a long and short axis, while pageants and other spectacles have a specific front towards which they face and where the best seats must be as near as possible to the performers. The circular shell, therefore, is the most economical form of structure. As a sports arena, seating accommodation is provided on three levels for approximately 10,200 persons. For boxing matches, stage shows, or musical performances where the spectacle will be performed on a raised platform, foldable seats may also be placed on the floor of the stadium, giving a total seating capacity for 12,000 persons.

⁷⁹ Prabhakorn, ed., *Kui gub Satapanik Tonbaeb* [Conversations with Architects Series vol. 6], 122-123.

Careful attention has been paid to crowd distribution in order to provide easy, rapid entrance and exit. There are three public entrances placed radially, each entrance providing two channels of inlet and outlet to each terrace. The public is distributed into the terrace seats by a downward filtering, since this is easier and offers faster distribution from the entrances. Conversely, the public leaves the stadium by filtering upwards, which moderates movement and avoids congestion at the exits. Each entrance has ten turnstiles and ticket eaters for approximately one-third of the total audience, or 3000 to 4000 persons. The stadium can be filled within 20 minutes. Exit is provided through wide swing doors, which are designed to be locked in an open position. When a performance is over, the stadium can be cleared within five minutes.

The catenary roof design caught the public eye. According to Jewkes, “for large span roofs, as for bridges, the cheapest form is the catenary or suspension type. This was adopted for the stadium, employing a thin cobweb of high-tensile wires ... the problem of flutter was also overcome by using a double system, thereby reducing the period of the harmonic and giving stiffness in the central area. This also provided clerestory lighting and ventilation between the upper and lower roofs.”⁸⁰ The Indoor Stadium roof thus consists of two main elements. The outer element, which spans 76 meters, carries a circular clerestory truss 30 meters in diameter, supporting the inner catenary element. A complementary system of cables running counter to the suspension cables and lying in the folds of the roof helps to lock the system against vertical harmonic movement and dampen aerodynamic flutter. The outer shells are supported on the long columns, which pass through apertures in the upper concourses and are hinged at the podium level. These columns also contain internal rainwater pipes through which the roof is drained. Because of its long spans, this form of roof is very light in weight and is very economical. The

⁸⁰ Jewkes, “The Effect of Finances, Materials, and Environment on Architectural and Structural Design with Illustration from the New Stadia at Kuala Lumpur” 100.

roofs over the main and side entrances are also constructed economically, made of thin folded reinforced concrete shells. Additionally, their general shapes and lines are reminiscent of the traditional Thai roof forms.

On the grounds of initial cost and running costs, the main amphitheater space did not install an air-conditioning system, which would have placed the stadium economically beyond the reach of many user organizations. In Thailand, with its relatively high humidity, the deep verandah was developed to give shade and protection from the rain while permitting breezes to enter. The double roof with clerestory openings encourages convection currents and keeps the building cool.⁸¹ However, in this case, general ventilation, involving large bulk air movement, is undesirable because it interferes with badminton, an important indoor sport in Thailand.

In view of the high humidity, however, it is essential for comfort that there should be appreciable air movement in the vicinity of spectators. Thus, a special form of ventilation has been employed for this purpose. Fresh air is blown into a large tunnel completely ringing the amphitheater under the central aisle. From this tunnel, air is then blown through narrow slits in the seats of the concert terraces, as well as through the arms and backs of the upholstered seats. By this means, a high-speed jet of air provides comfort to spectators without inducing bulk air movements which might upset the flight of a badminton shuttlecock.

Over the central arena, slow speed natural convection stack-type currents are induced through the clerestory louvers and through the central ventilator jack-roof. The perimeter of the main concourse is encircled with a continuous band of vertical louvers 3 meters deep. These louvers, which are of gold and bronzed anodized aluminum, are electrically operated by remote control from the central control room.

⁸¹ Ibid., 93-107.

The question most relevant to this discussion is not the design techniques which the Louis Berger Group and Robert G. Boughey brought to Thailand; it is how this *farang* firm received permission to design one of the most iconic stadia in the nation, meant to represent *Thainess*, rather than the job being given to the Thais themselves. Were these western architects merely an instrument by which modernizing sovereigns could effect a transformation of the local cultural landscape, or should they rather be seen as cultural middlemen in their own right, who brought the technical and artistic capabilities to Thailand and benefited from a typical Thai belief in the superiority of western civilization? By means of western consumption practices informed by utilizing *farang*, which encompassed architectural designs as well as luxury goods and public spectacles, the Thai Government achieved the re-validation of their symbolic capital by connecting to the source of international “civilization.” The belief in the superiority of *farang* over the Thai can be seen even more clearly when Boughey was asked in a later interview about the need for a Thai architecture license or any governmental restrictions he faced during the design process. He answered:

[Y]es, I had a license from the very beginning. Actually, I asked for a license even though nobody required it at the time. (There was no restriction). Not even for the Indoor Stadium. The client, the government, did not ask for any license. There were few building-form documents, not a definite requirement, as I remember. But it all changed, slowly becoming more regulated. The professionalism came along with the new generation of Thai architects. Most about my age. Some little bit younger, some a little bit older. We all worked about the same time.⁸²

This example was one of many instances in which the ruling elite, the Thai Government, relied on these foreign employees and neglected the common rules in order to fulfill their

⁸² Prabhakorn, ed., *Kui gub Satapanik Tonbaeb* [Conversations with Architects Series vol. 6], 122-126.

aspiration to appear as a civilized nation.⁸³ These actions naturally gave Thai architects a painful impression of their own secondary status. Sumet recalls,

[I]t was in the American Era that many Americans came to work in Thailand, while Thai architects got not praise from Thai commissioners. ... During that period, the only Thai architect who worked full time in architectural profession was Jane Sakolthanarak. The others had to obtain other jobs during the day, then used the nighttime to work on the design because of the economic situation (30 years ago). ... I was once discussing with Professor Puey Ungphakorn about the design of the Bank of Thailand, saying that the Thais also have the ability to design this type of building. There is no need to hire *farang*. ... I used to live with *farang* and saw no differences. The Thais sometimes are even better, but in general Thais are too fond of *farang*. Back then, there were many (Thai) designers that often referred to *farang* when presenting their works.⁸⁴

Prabhakorn, again, asked Boughey about the advantage of being a “*farang*,” and whether that gave him better job opportunities. Boughey replied:

I think, in the beginning, several of my buildings were better because I could concentrate on the design and have a stronger position with the owner since I was not under such social pressure as a young Thai architect would be.⁸⁵

This position of subordination, particularly in terms of the devaluation of Thai architects' abilities in comparison to foreigners, continues to be a sore point to the present day. Krisda explains,

⁸³ In this era, a new elite emerged consisting of ruling generals, senior bureaucrats, and the heads of new business conglomerates.

⁸⁴ Sumet Jumsai is a Thai architect, who was named a National Artist of Thailand in 1998; Honorary Fellow of the American Institute of Architects in 2001; Member of the French Academie d'Architecture in 2002; and Fellow Commoner of the St. John's College and Cambridge University in 2003 and 2013 consecutively. See Wikipedia, s.v. “Sumet Jumsai,” last modified February 7, 2021, 14:58 (UTC), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sumet_Jumsai.

Puey Ungphakorn was a Thai economist, who served as Governor of the Bank of Thailand (1959-1971) and Rector of Thammasat University (1975-1976). He was the author of *From Womb to Tomb: The Quality of Life of a South-East Asian*, which to date remains one of the most influential writings about social security in Thailand. Ungphakorn is hailed as a founding father of the modern Thai economy, role model, and larger-than-life figure who was influential during some of the most momentous years of Thai history. See Anchalee Kongrut, “Unforgettable Puey Ungphakorn,” *Bangkok Post*, last modified March 9, 2016, <https://www.bangkokpost.com/life/social-and-lifestyle/891356/unforgettable-puey-ungphakorn>; Wikipedia, s.v. “Puey Ungphakorn,” last modified February 8, 2021, 11:26 (UTC), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puey_Ungphakorn; and Pussadee Tiptus, *Satapanik Siam: Puntan Botbath Pholngan lae Naewkid, B.E.2475-2537* [Siamese Architects: Fundamentals, Roles, Works, and Concepts, 1932-1994], 379.

⁸⁵ Prabhakorn, ed., *Kui gub Satapanik Tonbaeb* [Conversations with Architects Series vol. 6], 130.

[F]irst, the Thai Government was more than willing to accept help and aid from other nations (for example, aids to construct government facilities). In this manner, they agreed on every term, including the conditions attached. These agreements, nevertheless, came with advantages that would definitely repay the assistance. Secondly, project patrons always thought that the Thais and Thai designs were inferior to others, despite the fact that we (the Thais) know everything better than the foreigners. ... Lastly, the subordination occurred because some Thai architects also helped *farang* to break the legal agreements, as they tried to find the loopholes of the laws that were formulated to protect Thai rights.⁸⁶

Yongsrit elaborates on this situation:

[T]he project commissioners are not interested in the final results or the differences (between the works of Thai architects and westerners). They just want to promote their project by using the image of *farang* architects ... even though a few understood that having good-quality architecture is worth the investment in all facets, for instance, suiting Thai environment, efficiency, endurance, and maintenance. At the end of the day, when the owners decide to invest in something, the significant returns need to come along with the project's fame.⁸⁷

This role of western image-making techniques, from urban planning to architectural practices, can be considered crucial for facilitating and circulating the image of the Thai Government and as the prime symbol of the modern Thai state, both domestically and internationally. The Thai commissioners' consumption of westernism was central to the fashioning of their social status as both a “national” ruling class and as members of the enduring world aristocracy. Ultimately, the significance of the modernizing elite's choices is subordinated to what are deemed to be the more fundamental transformations concerning the political and economic realms, maintaining close ties with the West.

⁸⁶ Pussadee, *Satapanik Siam: Puentan Botbath Pholngan lae Naewkid, B.E.2475-2537* [Siamese Architects: Fundamentals, Roles, Works, and Concepts, 1932-1994], 386.

⁸⁷ Yongsrit Charuburana was the first Dean of the School of Fine and Applied Arts, Bangkok University, from 1989-1990. See Pussadee, *Satapanik Siam: Puentan Botbath Pholngan lae Naewkid, B.E.2475-2537* [Siamese Architects: Fundamentals, Roles, Works, and Concepts, 1932-1994], 396.

Don Mueang Airport (1989)

Construction of Don Mueang Airport began in the reign of King Rama VI, a few years after aviation was introduced in Thailand, while the country was still called “Siam.” On January 31, 1911, Charles van den Born, a French-Belgian pilot for the Societe d’Aviation d’Extreme Orient, performed the first airshow in Siam. Flying a Henry Farman IV biplane, he landed on the racetrack of Sra Pathum Horse Racing Course, currently known as the Royal Bangkok Sports Club (RBSC) on Henry Dunant Road.⁸⁸

This historic event caused King Rama VI to pay an unexpected visit to the club in order to inspect the machine and talk with the pilot himself. Soon after the first public demonstration, the Siamese government, who had long been keen advocates for aviation, displayed an active interest in acquiring fighter planes for national defense. They foresaw that this new type of vehicle would be useful as a means of transport. At the end of February 1911, the Ministry of Defense selected three army officers—Major Luang Sakdi Sanlayawut (Sunee Suwanprateep), Captain Luang Arwut Sikikorn (Long Sinsuk), and First Lieutenant Tip Ketuthat—to be trained as pilots in France between 1912-1913.⁸⁹ Shortly thereafter, the Military Aviation Division was founded in Siam. A temporary hangar was built in the Police Constable Training School (presently the site of the Royal Thai Police Headquarters located at the Ratchaprasong Intersection) and the Royal Bangkok Sports Club was used as the national airfield, becoming the first airport in Thailand.

⁸⁸ Some other sources explain that air show was arranged during

⁸⁹ Having completed their training, the three returned to Thailand on November 2, 1913, with eight airplanes that the Thai government had ordered. The four Breguets and for Nieuports were the first batch of Thai aircraft. Fittingly, these three new pilots became the first group of pilots and were honored as the forefathers of the Royal Thai Airforce. See Airports of Thailand. *19 Pi Karn Tah Argardsayarn heng Prated Thai* [19 Years of Airports of Thailand Public Company Limited] (Bangkok: Airports of Thailand, 1998), 144.

Siam's sole airfield, "Sra Pathum Airfield," was limited to a confined space and situated on lowlands which flooded during the rainy season. The Government requested Major Luang Saksi Sanlayawut, leader of the first pilot group, to search for an appropriate location for a permanent airport. An aerial inspection showed some promising rice fields known as *Don E Yiew* in Bang Khen District, north of Bangkok, where the land was relatively high and less subject to floods.⁹⁰ The Ministry of Defense thus purchased, expropriated, and asked for donations of the land until they succeeded in acquiring a combined total area of 1,770 rais (708 acres) for building the new airport, hangars, and other essential facilities. The construction was completed on February 23, 1914, and this new airfield was called Don Mueang Airport because of the topography of its site.⁹¹ In the early morning of March 8, 1914, Lieutenant Colonel Phraya Chalerm Akas flew a Nieuport plane in an inaugural flight from Sra Pathum Airfield to Don Mueang Airport. This was considered to be the official opening of the first standard airport in Siam/Thailand.⁹²

In 1948, the Government elevated Don Mueang Airport to international status, but it was not until seven years later that the name was changed to Don Mueang International Airport (Figure 2-10). Since the very first day of its construction, Don Mueang International Airport has been famous as an important node of Southeast Asian air transportation, a strategic connecting point to all continents. The airport was also known for its standard and efficient management, trusted by all international airlines. It was overseen by the Airport Authority of Thailand or AAT, founded in 1979.⁹³ Shortly after the AAT assumed responsibility over the three other

⁹⁰ The name *Don E Yiew* the large number of hawks seen regularly flocking at the site.

⁹¹ *Don* means highland in Thai.

⁹² Lieutenant Colonel Phraya Chalerm Akas was Sunee Suwanprateep's new title after he was promoted from Major Luang Sakdi Sanlayawut. He was later promoted to Air Marshal Phraya Chalerm Akas.

⁹³ The Airports of Thailand Public Company Limited, formerly a state enterprise, was founded on July 1, 1979, under the name "Airports Authority of Thailand—AAT." As a result of the government's privatization policy in 2002, AAT became a registered public entity and changed its name to "Airports of Thailand Public Company

regional airports, Chiang Mai, Hat Yai, and Phuket, the agency realized the urgent need for airport development to cope with the rapid growth of air traffic. They designed the Bangkok International Airport Development Plan in two phases, with phase I spanning 1980 to 1989 and phase II covering 1989 to 1990. The engineering-architectural firm of Louis Berger was hired to study, design, and supervise the construction of a new terminal, air cargo facilities, and a parking garage at Bangkok's Don Mueang International Airport in September 1989.⁹⁴

Pursuant to the contract signed on January 24, 1990, the Louis Berger Group's responsibilities included: generating medium-term and long-term master plans for all four airports, operating under the AAT; evaluating the current short term plan for efficiency of integration into the new master plan; evaluating the ways in which the AAT could assist the new master plan; forecasting the importance, size, and timeframe for construction of the secondary international airport; training AAT officers in producing the airport master planning and airport future-development plans; and reporting on financial feasibility.

The firm proposed three new directions for the master plan for Don Mueang Airport. The first was that the airport should be renovated to be able to serve the public until the year 2010,

Limited or AOT." See Airports of Thailand, *Tah Argardsayarn tai Rom Phra Barami* [Airports of Thailand under the Patronage] (Bangkok: Airports of Thailand, 2011), 44-45.

⁹⁴ Phase I of the Bangkok International Airport Development Project (1980-1989) placed an emphasis on the upgrading and modernization of all facilities at the airport. This was to bring it up to international standards. A major long-term project was initiated with a capital investment of 5,074 million baht. After its completion, the airport was annually able to handle approximately 16 million international passengers, 2 million domestic passengers and 532,000 metric tons of cargo. The above-mentioned development of Bangkok International Airport resulted in greater efficiency and the raising of standards to those of other international airports. However, AAT was following the growth of air traffic closely, especially in 1987 (which was Visit Thailand Year), and found that further expansion was needed. As a consequence, Phase II of the Bangkok International Airport Development Project (1989-1990) invested 637 million Baht in various projects. The first was the extension of the east runway for long haul aircraft landing and taking off with maximum loads. The second was the expansion of cargo warehouses, and the third, the installation of a Y position boarding bridge. Phases III and IV followed. For details see Airports of Thailand. *19 Pi Karn Tah Argardsayarn heng Prated Thai* [19 Years of Airports of Thailand Public Company Limited], 171; and Warren, *Chronicles of American Business in Thailand*, 65-66; and Airports of Thailand. *Paen Karn Pattana Tah Argardsayarn Krungthep* [Bangkok Airport Development Plan] (Bangkok: Airports of Thailand, 1991), 2-3.

with allowances for some building removals and expansions. The second proposal was to improve the existing conditions of the airport so as to serve the public until the year 2000, without any demolition or new construction. The third plan was to enhance the abilities of the current airport to be able to serve the public until the secondary international airport was done. The additional construction in this proposal would be arranged similarly to the first proposal.⁹⁵ The committee selected the second proposal for the project, due to the lesser construction requirements.

Decades earlier, Robert G. Boughey had enumerated the specific challenges of designing an airport for a Southeast Asian setting. In the January-February issue of *T-AB* magazine in 1971 (Figure 2-11), he explained,

[T]he usually large groups of non-passengers meeting and seeing off travelers at Asian air terminals, and the differences between Thai and western customs and immigration procedures posed unique challenges for an American engineering firm. ... The response involved designing essentially two airports in one. A bi-level concept separates arriving and departing passengers, within a single building to alleviate congestion and allow rapid, one-way passenger flow. By means of a high-speed overpass from the adjacent highway, departing passengers arrive and remain on the second level from baggage check-in through aerobridge aircraft embarkation. Arriving passengers disembark on a second level concourse and proceed down ramps to retrieve baggage from giant carousels. Preliminary design began in December 1968. Then Pan American announced that Bangkok was on the itinerary of its new Boeing 747, and design had to be greatly accelerated. Although the scope of the project was amplified several times during this period, final design documents were completed and submitted within six months. The final estimate for construction exceeded five million US dollars, more than double the original appropriation.⁹⁶

Though the Berger firm was asked to train Thai architects to design future airports, and though their work came in at double the original cost, the American firm was nonetheless hired to complete the master plan of Thailand's second international airport, Suvarnabhumi Airport,

⁹⁵ Airports of Thailand, *Paen Karn Pattana Tah Argardsayarn Krungthep* [Bangkok Airport Development Plan], 2-6.

⁹⁶ Warren, *Chronicles of American Business in Thailand*, 65-66.

opened in 2006.⁹⁷ Shortly after the opening of Suvarnabhumi Airport, Thai officials decided that Don Mueang would still need to handle domestic commercial flights due to faster-than-projected air traffic growth throughout Asia. AAT, later renamed Airports of Thailand Public Company Limited or AOT, determined that using the existing facilities at Don Mueang would increase the flexibility needed to handle the growing air traffic demands before Suvarnabhumi Airport could be expanded.⁹⁸

This project was one of the causes of controversy among Thai architectural professionals who objected to the hiring of westerners as designers of Thai iconic buildings. Members of the Thai architectural society separated into three groups according to their reaction to the project. The first group was able to accept the GATT free trade agreement, which allowed foreign architects to come and work in Thailand without any restriction. They argued that certain complex buildings and advanced techniques required experts with specific knowledge and technical skills, and in these cases it could be vital to seek foreign technicians.⁹⁹ Manoon

⁹⁷ The architectural part of the Suvarnabhumi Airport was designed by the Chicago-based architects, Murphy/Jahn, the winner of an invitational international competition held in 1994. See John Morris Dixon, "Suvarnabhumi Airport," *Architectural Record*, last modified August 19, 2007, <https://www.architecturalrecord.com/articles/8047-suvarnabhumi-airport>.

⁹⁸ On behalf of AOT, the International Civil Aviation Organization contracted Louis Berger to prepare a traffic allocation strategy for the two airports and a plan for their future development. Louis Berger proceeded with a revised master plan that included: a statue review; inspection and appraisal of airside and landside facilities at both airports; passenger surveys; a strategic plan for air traffic allocation; comprehensive airport planning and design parameters; landside and airspace capacity analysis and planning, including simulations, a land-use and facility plan, and an environmental impact study; and alternatives for airport development, including financial assessments (capital and operational expenditures). See "Revised Master Plans for Suvarnabhumi and Don Mueang International Airports, Bangkok, Thailand," *WSP (Formerly Louis Berger)*, accessed January 17, 2021, <https://www.louisberger.com/our-work/project/revised-master-plans-suvarnabhumi-and-don-mueang-international-airports>

⁹⁹ *General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade*, or *GATT*, aims to liberalize and to achieve greater security in world trade through the reduction or elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers, and provides a forum for negotiation over current international trade issues, thereby contributing to economic growth and development. The General Agreement has a number of provisions which deal particularly with the trade interests and needs of developing countries; some of these provisions were reinforced as a result of the Tokyo Round of multilateral trade negotiations in GATT, which concluded in 1979. Thailand became the 88th Contracting Party to GATT on November 20th, 1982. See "Thailand Joins GATT," *World Trade Organization*, accessed February 18, 2021, <https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/GATT/1322.PDF>.

Leewiraphan argued that “there are some building types that required western architects to handle, for example, the international airports, especially the Suvarnabhumi Airport. We have to admit that this category of buildings needs specialist services with experience and expertise, similar to meeting specialist doctors.”¹⁰⁰

The second group did not object to having *farang* carry out certain Thai architectural works, but insisted that the designs needed to be controlled by Thai rules and regulations. On the opposite side, feelings of professional suppression ran deeply and brought the third group of Thai architects to advocate for an entire prohibition of foreign architects working in Thailand. Krisda explains that

“this problem occurs because the commissioners do not give as much credit to the Thai architects as they are giving to *farang*, and it is hard to change their thoughts to believe in us that ‘they will lose more money if hiring foreigners. Besides, those westerners are not familiar with our weather conditions, local materials, and quality controls of the Thai blue-collar workers.’ ... Moreover, the fascination with *farang* reflects what Thai owners appraise as their social value to express themselves as having high-class taste and use it as a labelling to display their own manifesto. This kind of norm is really hard to change.”¹⁰¹

In fact, some of the regional airports in Thailand were designed entirely by Thai architects, and were much praised by foreigners who remarked that their planning and characteristics truly reflected the Thai identity and climate. Koh Samui Airport, which opened in 1989 the same year that the renovation of Don Mueang Airport was completed, is often described by visitors as “the most beautiful airport in the world” (Figure 2-12). The Samui Airport was designed by the Thai architectural firm Habita, and was intended to fit sensitively into its natural surroundings while being environmentally friendly by employing local materials

¹⁰⁰ Manoon Leewiraphan is a representative architect from M., N., and Associates Co., Ltd.. See Pussadee, *Satapanik Siam: Puentan Botbath Pholngan lae Naewkid, B.E.2475-2537* [Siamese Architects: Fundamentals, Roles, Works, and Concepts, 1932-1994], 392.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 398.

such as palm, wood, and rattan, together with a largely open-plan layout negating the need for air conditioning. Its terminal combines the ambiance of a Polynesian resort with contemporary Thai design elements, impressing visitors with its minimalistic architecture.¹⁰² Koh Samui Airport has won several awards for its design, notably gaining first place in the Outstanding Architecture competition held by the Association of Siamese Architects in 1998 and a Board of National Environment Award for aviation environmental protection and awareness in 1989. The reception of this project makes it clear that prejudice against Thai design and technical skill can be groundless, and that Thai architectural patrons (especially government commissioners) have often simply been blinded by the allure of the West and *farang* goods.

Another remarkable story regarding the subordinate position of Thai professionals took place in 1975, when the Ministry of Education was searching for an expert to design the Science Center for Education Planetarium. The Ford Foundation, which was both the sponsor and the consultant for the project, suggested a western-graduated Thai architect, Dr. Sumet Jumsai, and introduced him to the Thai educational authorities as a museum design specialist. The Thai ministers were surprised, and wished to know why a Thai expert had been proposed rather than a *farang*. In an interview in *Satapanik Siam*, Sumet expressed disappointment and sorrow for the Thai architectural profession, in that even the Thai authorities looked down on people from their own nation.¹⁰³

These instances affirm Pattana's argument that the Siamese/Thai have consistently been active in seeking *farang* expertise and influence, rather than purely receiving it passively. It also confirms that since the beginning of the quest for *siwilai*, Siamese/Thai agents have chosen to

¹⁰² "Project on the Koh Samui Airport in Thailand," *Airport Technology*, November 12, 2007, <https://www.airport-technology.com/projects/koh-samui/>

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 383.

employ the discourse of *farang* as a tactical method for locating their cultural and national selves, alongside and against the historically interweaving western-initiated projects such as colonization, modernization, and globalization.¹⁰⁴ Beginning with Siam’s royal elite in the nineteenth century, continued by military dictators and bureaucrats through the twentieth century, and now driven by middle-class consumers and the mass media, the consumption of *farang* goods aroused a sense of cosmopolitan pleasure, which marked emerging new cultural identities and confirmed social status.¹⁰⁵ However, this created an opposite pole for those Thai who were not selected to participate in the building of their own nation and culture too much—a feeling of disgrace, subordination, and inferiority for being less admirable or less “civilized.” Ultimately, it confirms that the traditional forms of hierarchy continue to form an important part of the psychology of Thai peoples’ minds, which would become a fundamental part of Thai statecraft and, in the end, its propaganda.

Siam Commercial Bank Park Plaza (1996)

The Siam Commercial Bank Park Plaza is mentioned as one of Robert G. Boughey’s very favorite projects.¹⁰⁶ The building took four years to construct, costing an estimated 10,000 million baht (\$400 million) and covering a site of 52 rai (8.4 hectares). The SCB complex consists of a series of buildings that together aim to fulfill the architectural goal of an integrated city environment (Figure 2-13). The Siam Commercial Bank is known as Thailand’s first banking institution, founded in 1906, and its Head Office building was to stand both as a remarkable architectural achievement and as a symbol of Thailand’s unparalleled economic

¹⁰⁴ Pattana, “An Ambiguous Intimacy: Farang as Siamese Occidentalism,” 60.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 68.

¹⁰⁶ Prabhakorn, ed., *Kui gub Satapanik Tonbaeb* [Conversations with Architects Series vol. 6], 151.

success. Using the most advanced building technology available in the 1990s, it was designed to optimize efficiency, comfort, safety, and energy conservation based on the concept of Intelligent Building Systems.

The genesis of the head office project came in the form of an original brief from the Siam Commercial Bank, calling for a design for a complex of buildings to serve as a nucleus for a new urban center, capable of creating an environment unique to itself. The bank building was to dominate the entire architectural composition. Robert G. Boughey explained,

[T]he idea of a complex was considered necessary because it was felt that with a single building in Bangkok, you can never sufficiently control the surrounding environment—the appearance of the building, the approach to it. Essentially, we wanted the background buildings to control the look of the main bank tower. At the same time, the other buildings had to be supportive. Another consideration dictated by environmental concerns—notably sight and sound—was that the owner did not want any car parking above ground. This is very expensive to do, not only in terms of building, but also in the design of ventilation systems meeting U.S. standards.”¹⁰⁷

It was decided from the beginning, again for environmental reasons, that much of the land should be left absolutely empty. Apart from an 11-rai (1.8-hectare) landscape area in the front of the site, the open spaces presented a challenge, in that they had to be designed as hardscape, as the underground parking garage inhibited the planting of large numbers of trees. The result is a series of buildings grouped together, emphasizing the bank's head office at their core, to achieve the architectural goal of an integrated city environment.

The SCB's main office building is patterned on three connecting triangles, with one third of the plan rising to form a 37-story tower, culminating in a gold-colored apex. This roof form, along with the other two smaller golden peaks, is intended to echo the gilded spires of traditional Thai architecture. Boughey recalls,

[O]n the SCB Project, the owner was supportive about this. I remember why I designed the roof with a gold finish. The reason for the gold roofing is that when the Chinese first

¹⁰⁷ Robert G. Boughey, *Siam Commercial Bank Park Plaza* (Bangkok: The Key Publisher, 1993), 22.

came to Ayudhaya, they said it was a city with golden roofs. I have jokingly said that I thought that eventually everybody should have a golden roof. Bangkok could be quite beautiful. And now we have so many different kinds of building tops and spires. That is interesting too. For a while everyone did flat roofs because there was a regulation in place that required a space for helicopter landings. It seems that now we have relaxed that rule a little. My interpretation of Thai architecture is only a perception because one is not even sure of the success of what one is doing, but you can't ignore the fact that we are in a unique place. Everyone should try it ... However, there are times when it isn't as successful as other times.¹⁰⁸

Adjoining the main tower is a 23-story office building, and together the two offer a total floor area of 196,000 square meters. Supporting the core structures are the flanking developments, known respectively as SCB Commercial Park Plaza West and SCB Commercial Park Plaza East. The former, located to the right of the main building tower, consists of two buildings: one of 12 stories with a total floor area of 16,500 square meters and one of 22 stories offering 21,000 square meters of space. On the opposite side, SCB Commercial Park Plaza East has a 12-story tower and another smaller 5-storey building, rising from the podium, with floor areas of 32,400 square meters and 4,200 square meters consecutively.

Each building group in the complex has its own underground parking, thus eliminating the need for on-grade parking and allowing for adequate landscaping. In particular, the landscape design of the central mall area is meant to echo the main building forms and to anticipate the related indoor spaces. All the outdoor spaces are designed to be utilized. There are spaces to sit and paths throughout the area to give pedestrians access to the fountains, while the entire site adjacent to the main road is reserved as a green area with trees and native flowers to act as a pollution buffer. This natural park also serves to complement the more geometric central mall.

What is unique here is that an entire building complex was developed rather than the individual buildings. The series of buildings and public spaces are interlinked and interdependent

¹⁰⁸ Prabhakorn, ed., *Kui gub Satapanik Tonbaeb* [Conversations with Architects Series vol. 6], 149.

at the same time. This is a result of the “triangular” form—a pattern which Boughey had previously employed to good effect in other buildings, and which was here to be given its fullest, most complex expression. Boughey explains,

there is the need to find a plan that fits the site, and there is the question of how to solve the visual image of the building. ... The site of the SCB complex is basically triangular, and if you put the building at the most important part of the site, it is at the apex of the triangle. Also, we have always regarded the triangle as a very rigid form and, at the same time, a very flexible one. It is rigid because of the dimensions between the three sides, and it is flexible because it can be combined into many different shapes.¹⁰⁹

It was decided to have a building composed of three connecting triangles, in which one third of the plan rises to form a tower, capped by a large golden colored pyramidal roof. Here, the beauty of the triangle is that it works equally well in plan and elevations—with the pyramidal roof of the main tower being a primary component when viewed from a distance. The triangular grid permits more varied access, allowing passage throughout the site in a less formal manner than is possible with other geometric forms such as rectangles. It also affords interesting prospects from any side, not just the front of the building; and the composition is constantly changing depending on the angle from which it is viewed.

However, several difficulties arose from this triangular-planned design. First of all, by having one triangle taller than the others in order to retain verticality, there was a problem of getting a symmetrical axis on a building which is not symmetrical. In this case, Boughey referred to the design of Gothic cathedrals, many of which do not have symmetrical towers. He echoed the roof of the main tower in the two smaller peaks of the lower adjoining buildings and added a huge triangular skylight over the entrance, which both provides symmetry and anticipates the roof. The second problem was that the profile of the buildings is only apparent from a distance, similar to Gothic cathedrals. Up close, the tower disappears. Therefore, some element is required

¹⁰⁹ Boughey, *Siam Commercial Bank Park Plaza*, 22.

to echo the roof. The triangular skylight hence also serves this purpose. Its form leads the eye into the shape of the roof even though it cannot be seen. The skylight modifies the elevation, relieving the bulk of the buildings.

Not only is the triangular form used symbolically in many Thai and Buddhist motifs, it also inspires the silhouette-roof design of the main SCB building. While the composition of the building with different heights owes something to Gothic cathedrals, the silhouette of the roof aims to capture the multi-level concept typically found in traditional buildings such as the Buddhist temples, which, unlike European churches, is composed of a complex of buildings. In terms of space, the SCB complex nevertheless relates more to the western cathedrals rather than to the classical Thai models:

[L]arge public enclosed spaces are not very common in Asian architecture. As temples were built primarily to enshrine sacred images, there was never a great need to build enclosed spaces for worship or public assembly as there was in the West. Hence, the technology of vaults and dome, as volume spaces, was never really explored (or perhaps the reasons are reversed). With the SCB complex, we wanted to do two things in this regard. We thought it was important that there should be a definite visual link with the outdoor spaces. Also, we wanted to create some exciting indoor covered spaces that would be appropriate considering the large volume of people moving throughout the building complex. Thus, the major public spaces that include the banking hall are sloped to lift the eye upward. These spaces are essentially triangular in plan, filling the plan voids of the office tower. Smaller spaces are roofed with flat sloped skylights, which create direction in the plan.¹¹⁰

Overall, the complex is unified by being enclosed with similar materials, while all of the buildings rest on a granite podium, which contains the major public spaces and circulation areas. Large atria are part of the podium, and the sloped roofs of these areas lead into the tower forms (Figure 2-14). The landscaping, especially that of the central mall area, further resembles the main building forms and continues the related interior experiences. Complementing the whole

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 24.

development is the interior design, for which the Gensler company of San Francisco acted as a consultant.

This last case study also demonstrates that the Thai elite class explicitly relied on “foreign talent” to give visibility to their modernizing policies. Since the early nineteenth century, ideas and technologies from the West were welcomed, although there were also anxieties about losing Thai identity and independence. As shown in *Siamese Architects, 1932-1994*, a group of Thai architects protested the presence of *farang* working in the architectural profession in Thailand with the objection that the foreigners would not intrinsically understand the essence of Thainess, which might cause architectural outcomes deviating from the Thai norm and patterns. They argued that if there must be an involvement with the foreign architects, Thai architects should either lead the projects or authorize the buildings in Thailand, not the *farang*.¹¹¹ These strong reactions by Thai intellectuals across ideological camps against threats from the West were evident once again in the face of globalization, particularly the 1997 economic crisis.¹¹² As Reynolds notes, “Thai intellectuals were wary of globalization. They saw a great opportunity to take a place among the rising economic stars in Asia, but they worried about losing the distinctiveness that makes Thai identity.”¹¹³ Since the 1980s, ethnic nostalgia has risen amid perception of diminishing Thainess. Efforts to rescue fading local identities are also on the rise. This is the context in which academic enterprises in search of authentic Thainess, including ideas about community culture, acquire their significance.

¹¹¹ Pussadee, *Satapanik Siam: Puentan Botbath Pholngan lae Naewkid, B.E.2475-2537* [Siamese Architects: Fundamentals, Roles, Works, and Concepts, 1932-1994], 399.

¹¹² Thongchai Winichakul, “Nationalism and the Radical Intelligentsia in Thailand,” *Third World Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (2008): 585-586.

¹¹³ Craig 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 Khan (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1998), 115-145.

As an example, Professor Vimolsiddhi Horayangkura, a prominent Thai architectural scholar, researched theories, concepts, and guidelines in the development of modern Thai architectural identity and identified five fundamental characteristics of Thai architecture from the past to the present. First, there are abstract characteristics, including lightness/buoyancy, transparency/spaciousness, enclosure, shadiness/coolness, brightness/dimness/darkness, and tranquility/quietness. These abstract qualities reflect the Thai spirit, nurtured through conditions of tropical climate and Thai wisdom.

Secondly, there are non-abstract characteristics, mainly the outcomes of localism. These effects are achieved by means of design in harmony with nature, integration with a natural setting, and adding more green areas in landscape layout and in enclosed space. The wisdom brought to bear on the creation of comfortable living conditions, as codified in the traditional Thai house, is inherent in the contemporary vernacular design regarding climatic protection, the provision of semi-outdoor space and the enclosed courtyard.

The third characteristic is the curvilinear style and its certain structural limitations, such as the graceful catenary curve of the traditional roof structure. These refined decorative features, originally revered in both royal and religious architecture, are becoming less sophisticated in the modern context, in which talented workmanship is lacking.

The fourth characteristic is the representation of symbolism through the application of iconic imagery, especially images that are related to the prevalent belief system of Buddhism. The widespread belief in reincarnation among the Thai people has permeated daily life. In architecture, the symbolic representation is based on the cosmological model *Traiphum*, which accommodates the Three Worlds for a human being after death. Favored applications of iconic

features are the high-pitched gable roof, the spired roof structure, the lotus-shaped motif and the pool as a source of water.

The final characteristic is the spirit-driven nature of Thainess, found in both formal and popular development, reflecting the enduring history of a changing Thai society. The formal multiplicity and colorful manifestation of Thai architecture, past and present, are partly the outcomes of the joyful nature of the Thai people.¹¹⁴

When comparing Vimolsiddhi's conclusions about essential Thai architectural elements and Boughey's claim of references to traditional Thai architecture, several design concepts of the SCB Park Complex are missing or conflicting with the essence of Thainess, such as the rigid triangular roof in contrast to the curvilinear pitched roof, or the Christian Gothic-derived design rather than the Buddhist hierarchical structure. However, the Thai commissioners still chose *farang* over Thai architects, to design the architecture meant to symbolize Thailand's premier financial institution. Chuchawal views this practice critically:

[F]irst, they believe that foreigners can provide new, creative outcomes, differing from what the Thai are able to generate. Second, the foreign architects have more freedom in designing and more time to concentrate on their deliverables. Third, even though the cost of hiring *farang* is higher than the Thais, the project investors believe that they will get designers with more experience that are able to design more complex buildings such as high-rises, large-scale projects, and constructions requiring advanced technology. These reasons have been 'motivating the Thai owners to choose foreign architects over Thais. However, often, they forget that *farang* always install for us what they already have done abroad, which does not fit with Thai context. When they realize this, it is already too late.¹¹⁵

The desire to present an image of modernization encompassed a variety of social and cultural practices, and was approached by a familiarity with the tastes and habits of consumption of

¹¹⁴ Vimolsiddhi Horayangkura, "In Search of Fundamentals of Thai Architectural Identity: A Reflection of Contemporary Transformation," *Athens Journal of Architecture* vol. 3, no. 1 (2017): 21-39.

¹¹⁵ Pussadee, *Satapanik Siam: Puentan Botbath Pholngan lae Naewkid, B.E.2475-2537* [Siamese Architects: Fundamentals, Roles, Works, and Concepts, 1932-1994], 389.

western elite (the aristocracy as much as the haute bourgeoisie) that allowed the ruling elite to experience affiliation with the civilizational vanguard of the western-centric sphere. However, this transnational dimension needs also be reconsidered from a domestic angle, particular regarding the concerns of Thai identity. At this point, the priority of Thai-ness had become secondary and clearly subjected to the elite's own whims—which, at that moment, were centered on the allure of *farang* and *tawan-tok*. Modern elite tastes and practices thus did not differ materially from those of the royal Thai elite of a hundred years prior.

Figures



Figure 2-1 - Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat, who led a coup that overthrew the government of Field Marshal Phibun in 1957, Photograph, in William Warren, *Chronicles of American Business in Thailand* (Bangkok: American Chamber of Commerce in Thailand, 2006), 53.



Figure 2-2 - American Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Thai Foreign Minister Dr. Thanat Khoman after signing the Rusk-Thanat Agreement in 1962 in Washington DC., Photograph, in William Warren, *Chronicles of American Business in Thailand* (Bangkok: American Chamber of Commerce in Thailand, 2006), 55.



Figure 2-3 - A march by members of the construction battalion, Photograph, in William Warren, *Chronicles of American Business in Thailand* (Bangkok: American Chamber of Commerce in Thailand, 2006), 54.



Figure 2-4 - U.S. Marines from the Seventh fleet disembark in Klong Toey Port for a joint operations exercise in May 1962, Photograph, in William Warren, *Chronicles of American Business in Thailand* (Bangkok: American Chamber of Commerce in Thailand, 2006), 55.



Figure 2-5 - American Servicemen on R&R leap onto shore into the arms of Pattaya's "Hawaiians," Photograph, in Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 149.



Figure 2-6 - The Siam InterContinental Hotel, opened in 1966 on the site of the present Siam Paragon; it was the first of many American hotel chains to operate in Thailand, Photograph (Courtesy of the Bangkok Post), in William Warren, *Chronicles of American Business in Thailand* (Bangkok: American Chamber of Commerce in Thailand, 2006), 64.



Figure 2-7 - Robert G. Boughey, who came to Thailand in the late 1960s with Louis Berger, Inc. and opened his own architectural firm in 1973, Photograph, in Prabhakorn Vadanyakul, ed., *Kuib Satapanik Tonbaeb* [Conversations with Architects Series vol. 6] (Bangkok: Li-Zenn Publishing, 2010), 116.



Figure 2-8 – The interior of the Indoor Stadium at Hua Mak, Photograph by Beer Singnoi, “Indoor Stadium Hua Mak, designed by Louis Bergers Company since 1966” *SCG Experience*, accessed March 14, 2022. <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/454230312388406497/>



Figure 2-9 – The exterior of the Indoor Stadium at Hua Mak, Photograph by Beer Singnoi, “Indoor Stadium Hua Mak, designed by Louis Bergers Company since 1966” *SCG Experience*, accessed March 14, 2022. <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/454230312388406498/>



Figure 2-10 - Don Mueang International Airport was upgraded to become the Bangkok International Airport in 1955, Photograph, in *Airports of Thailand, 19 Pi Karn Tah Argardsayarn heng Prated Thai* [19 Years of Airports of Thailand Public Company Limited] (Bangkok: Airports of Thailand, 1998), 34-35.



Figure 2-11 - Don Mueang International Airport's terminal re-designed by Robert G. Boughey under Louis Berger (1968-71), Photograph by MNXANL, "201701 International Terminal of DMK," *Wikipedia*, accessed March 14, 2022. <https://th.wikipedia.org/wiki/ท่าอากาศยานดอนเมือง>

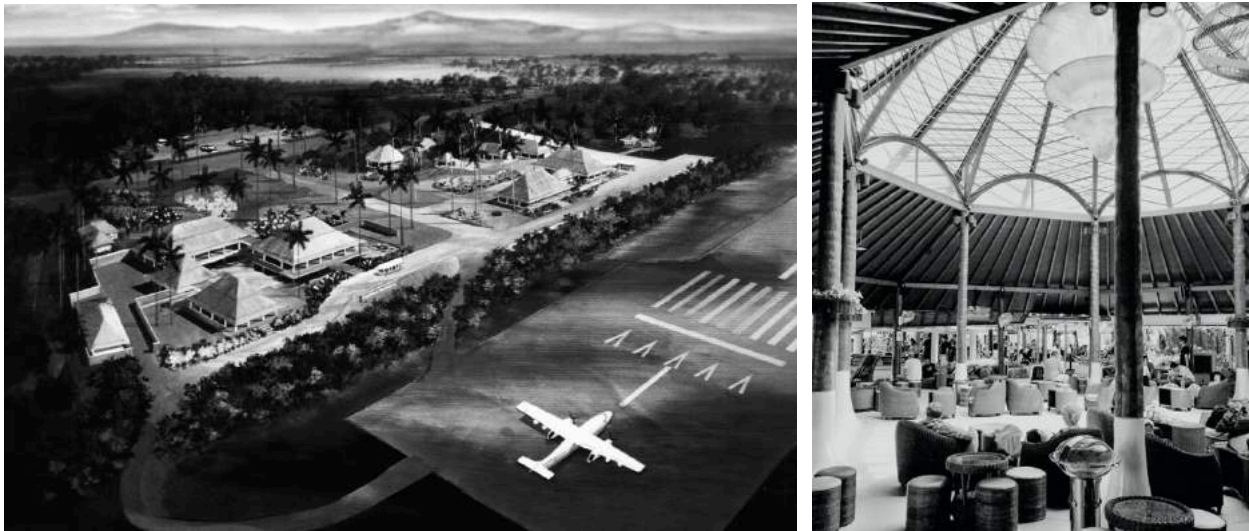


Figure 2-12 - Samui Airport, designed by Thai architectural firm named Habita (1989), Poster Illustration and photograph by Habita Architects, "Samui Airport Customs Terminal," *Habita Architects*, accessed March 14, 2022. <https://www.habitaarchitects.com/project/samui-airport-customs-terminal/>



Figure 2-13 - The overall complex of SCB's headquarters, Photograph by Estopolis, "SCB Park Plaza," *Estopolis*, accessed March 14, 2022. <https://www.estopolis.com/>



Figure 2-14 - The atrium of SCB's headquarters, Photograph, in Jim Algie and el at., *Americans in Thailand* (Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, 2014), 214.

Chapter 3

“Autonomy” in Modern Thai Architecture

An architect should neither compete in the war of images, nor be concerned with absolute originality—Ong-ard Satrabhandhu¹

Since the age of imperialism began, Siam/Thailand has been considered the luckiest of Southeast Asian nations. It neither needed to wage a war of independence, nor had to expel foreign colonizers. Since the late nineteenth century, when Siamese royal elites began to look anxiously at the encroaching western powers, their eagerness to modernize the Siamese state, bureaucracy, and society to accord with western norms exceeded even the standards generally dictated by the colonial powers.² To preserve their national autonomy, the Siamese elite created a new form of local power, and enlisted their own population as a supporting cast of millions in the theatrical performance of Siamese “civilization” (*siwilai*), a spectacle for western consumption which served as a central element of the effort to secure the monarchy’s position.³

A theatrics of power thus emerges from this strategic mobilization of local power, as Siamese rulers calculated that western markers of “civilization” would preserve the nation's independence.⁴ This chapter, therefore, reveals the double gaze of all Thai ruling class pre-and-post 1932, as they governed with one eye toward the West and the other toward the local populations.⁵ In the view of the ruling class, for Siam to remain “free” (*thai*) from western

¹ Non Arkaraprasertkul, “A Sudden Appearance of Modernism in Thailand,” in *Keeping Up Modern Thai Architecture, 1967-1987*, ed. Thailand Creative and Design Center (Bangkok: Thailand Creative and Design Center, 2008), 70.

² Thongchai Winichakul, “Siam’s Colonial Conditions and the Birth of Thai History,” in *Unraveling the Myths of Southeast Asian Historiography*, ed. Volker Grabowsky (Bangkok: River Books Press, 2011), 28.

³ Peter A. Jackson, “Autonomy and Subordination in Thai History: The Case for Semicolonial Analysis,” *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 8:3 (2007): 341.

⁴ Jackson, “The Performative State: Semi-coloniality and the Tyranny of Images in Modern Thailand,” 219.

⁵ 1932 was the year that the coup d’état ended absolute monarchy regime and turned Siam into a constitutional monarchy.

domination, the Siamese populace must be “enslaved” (*that*) to that monarchy in new ways.⁶

This third chapter examines the concept of “autonomy,” which has enabled local elites to maintain their grip on power over local citizens in ways that seem remarkably similar in some crypto-colonial situations.⁷ Craig J. Reynolds, a professor of Southeast Asian history, illustrates the Thai nature:

[C]ompared with other countries in mainland Southeast Asia, Thailand more readily accepted the printing press, cinema, radio, FM radio, and color and cable television. Long historical habits of developing the theatrics of power as well as a rich repertoire in the performing arts help explain the predisposition for modern technologies of representation, but the canniness and ambition to control these technologies is not well understood.⁸

The autonomy of the Thai rulers and their ambitions are investigated through the lens of one form of these physical representations of political power—in this case, the western-rooted architectural spaces created by the hands of western-educated Thai architects—in order to prove that something more is at work than merely the persistence of traditional cultural forms into the modern era.

In moving from the nineteenth century to the 1960s, the upper-level bureaucrats working in the architectural profession started to absorb western modern ideology and employed modern cultural and architectural artifacts. These innovations not only corresponded to Cold War cosmopolitan trends, but also they secured political autonomy in the domestic arena for the architects.

To provide supplemental details to support this argument, the first section of this chapter begins with an explanation of the concept of *siwilai*—a Siamese discourse on modernity that partly reflected an indigenous concept of progress (*charoen*) and partly incorporated western

⁶ Jackson, “Autonomy and Subordination in Thai History: The Case for Semicolonial Analysis,” 341.

⁷ Herzfeld, “The Absent Presence: Discourse of Crypto-colonialism,” 919-920.

⁸ Jackson, “The Performative State: Semi-coloniality and the Tyranny of Images in Modern Thailand,” 226.

ideas of civilization. It will also examine how Siamese/Thai aristocrats formulated their “civilizing” mission, responding creatively to the challenge of West while maintaining domestic order using various methods.⁹ The second section offers a deeper investigation of one of the ways that Siamese/Thai aristocrats exercised their “cultural capital” through the formation of architectural schools and education in Thailand. Both western graduates and Thai graduates from western architecture schools used their degrees as a tool for gaining benefits, leading to the establishment of the class segregation found in modern Thai society within the architectural profession. The last section demonstrates how western Modern architecture aided the Thai ruling elite by obscuring their internal tyranny over the local population, allowing them to use the resulting hegemonic power to secure their own political autonomy internationally and domestically. Numerous architectural examples are examined in this chapter to demonstrate the ways in which physical buildings can write a cultural narrative which serves to enhance power, at the cost of bringing about a collective subjugation of Thailand to a global political hierarchy.

3.2 “Autonomy” Discourse in Siamese/Thai society

3.2.1 Engaging in the New World Order

By the mid-nineteenth century, Siam/Thailand encountered what Mary Louise Pratt calls a shift in “planetary consciousness.” The colonizing powers of Europe, whose primary ideologies focused on “civilization,” were at the peak of their quest to establish a new world order. As a result of colonial encounters, Europe differentiated conceptions of itself in relation to something which it was now possible to call “the rest of the world.”¹⁰ Although Siam escaped formal

⁹ Thongchai, “The Quest for ‘Siwilai’: A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam,” 529-530.

¹⁰ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 1992), 5 and 9.

colonization, it could not escape European influence. However, the process of colonial transculturation was hardly a simple imposition, diffusion, or imitation of knowledge and practices. It always involved the location by local agents to suit their setting and, more often than not, serve their interests.¹¹ Thongchai explains that in the older world order, the legitimation of power of an overlord was claimed via his association with the supreme sources of power. The claims were comprehensible in two ways. In one, the overlord claimed his supremacy in a religious context, claiming access to the superior sources of cosmic power—such as the Hindu gods, or the Buddhist powers (*bun* and *barami*). The second aspect was a complex system of tribute payment and mutual recognition: exchanges of gifts, conferring of honors, and offering of women signified the relative status of the givers and the recipients.¹² Thongchai argues that in order to engage with a new consciousness of the world, Siam had to reconceptualize itself in relation to the rest of the globe, including the new supreme sources of power. If Siam/Thailand was to survive, let alone measure up to other world powers, Siamese rulers needed new metric for assessment to correspond to the new ethos of civilization.

In the new world order, since Europe emerged as a new center of power, Siam's rulers needed to maintain their dignity. The term *siwilai* offered a Thai rendering of colonial-era notions of "civilization," and was as much a performance for local audiences as it was for the western powers.¹³ To maintain their status as local, hierarchical imperial lords, the Siamese elite needed to display their ability to access the superior sources of cosmic power, which in this case were *farang* and western civilization. The discourse of *farang* thus became a strategy of elitist Occidentalism, establishing a completely new cultural practice in service of maintaining their

¹¹ Thongchai, "The Quest for 'Siwilai': A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam," 532.

¹² *Ibid.*, 533.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 528-549.

local power.¹⁴ Siamese agents have employed the discourse of *farang* as a tactical method for locating their cultural and national selves alongside and against the western-initiated projects of colonization, modernization, and globalization.¹⁵ Subsequently, western social manners and ways of life are shown as being part of Siam's high culture, while also being modern. Educated persons had to acquire *farang* manners as a social license to enter Bangkok high society, even if they did not go to school abroad.¹⁶ It is interesting to note that, rather than having been imposed by a colonizing West, the discourse of *farang* emerges from a local agency that has at times actively imposed its own logic in dealing with the West as Other.

The Siamese elite voluntarily adopted and adapted models of legitimizing power from the West because there were gains to be had from doing so.¹⁷ Peleggi explains how the demonstration of being civilized individuals and instigators of progress obviously supported the royal elite's hold on power. He suggests "self-regard" as one of the rationales underpinning the royal elite's refashioning of themselves as individuals and as a social group. The Siamese elite themselves created an image of a non-Siamese Other, to whom they could "self-consciously insist that We—Siam—are not uncivilized or barbaric."¹⁸ By embracing westernization and admiring their own altered image in their new clothes, new domestic settings, and new urban spaces, the Siamese court convinced themselves, above all, of their modernity.¹⁹

¹⁴ Somrak, *Rotsaniyom: Phasa nai Sangkhom Thau Yuk Boriphokeniyom* [Taste: Language in Thai Society in the Era of Consumerism], n.p..

¹⁵ Pattana, "An Ambiguous Intimacy: Farang as Siamese Occidentalism," 60.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 69.

¹⁷ See Thongchai, Kasian, Peleggi, and Jackson in Harrison and Jackson, "Introduction Siam/Thailand's Constructions of Modernity under the Influence of the Colonial West," 336.

¹⁸ "We—Siam," refers only to the elite ruling class in this case. Davisakd Puaksom, *Khon Plaek-na Nana-chat khrong Krung Sayam* [Siam's International Strangers], ed. Suchit Wongthet (Bangkok: Matichon, 2003), 137; Davisakd Puaksom, "Chatiphan-wanna nai Jareuk Wat Phra Chetuphon: Thi Sila Mahawitthayalai [An Ethnography in the Inscriptions of Wat Phra Chetuphon: At the University in Stone]," *Sinlapa Watthanatham* 24, no. 5 (2003): 104; and Maurizio Peleggi, "Purveyors of Modernity? Europeans, Artists, and Architects in Turn-of-the-Century Siam," *Asia Europe Journal* 1.1. (2003): 91.

¹⁹ Peleggi, *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image*, 3.

3.2.2 Establishing the Other Within

Siamese rulers adopted western colonial strategies to extend their influence in Siam's outlying regions, such as the provinces of the deep south, the mountainous areas between Siam and Burma, and the highland areas of Laos today (Lan Sang, Phuan, and others at the time). The most remarkable feature of this effort was a construction of otherness for the people of these remote regions, which mirrored the practices of the colonial powers. Unlike European colonizers, however, the Siamese elite were willing to view members of their own nation as the Other. Siamese elites traveled, wrote ethnography, and organized exhibitions and museums as a means to display the otherness of their mysterious fellow countrymen.²⁰

The many writings of leading Siamese intellectuals created from the 1880s to the 1920s, which include reports, diaries, and travel narratives, display this preoccupation with the Siamese Other. Excursions to faraway places within Siamese territory and abroad became popular among the urban elites and nobility, who traveled for curiosity and pleasure. According to Thongchai, these written records were instrumental to the discursive construction of a conceptual scheme of two kinds of the Others, which were distinguishable by two spatial domains: the jungle and the rural sphere.²¹

The first people to be ethnographically observed by traveling Siamese commanders and administrators were the *chaopa*, which literally means “the jungle people” or “people of the wilderness.” The writings mentioned encounters with many ethnic groups, including the Karen, Lua or Lawa, Khamu, Lahu, Hmong, and Mrabri. In each case, a few sentences are given to describe their distinctive clothes, hairstyles, houses, plants, food, and weapons.²² The

²⁰ Thongchai, “The Quest for ‘Siwilai’: A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam,” 534.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 534-537.

²² *Ibid.*

descriptions focus on unusual or strange characteristics and on customs which would seem outlandish to authors and readers from Bangkok. As late as 1972, Chaophraya Surasakmontri conveys his amazement for *chaopa*:

[T]he peoples of this kind live in the jungles on the mountains at the frontiers far away from town (*banmuang*). But they never settle down in any place or have any homeland, preferring to wander in the jungles. Supposing that any country kindly wished to care for and protect these races, they might not be able to absorb the *charoen* (progress) anyway. They might naturally avoid or escape, in order to return to the jungles and mountains.²³

For the urban elite, the *chaopa* were uncivilizable peoples, no matter how much one might try to see them otherwise. The urban elite's view of the *chaopa* as uncivilized predated their own preoccupation with *siwilai*. Before the term *siwilai* was popular, an antonym created from *pa* and its synonym *thun* (or their doublet, *pathun*) was in wide use to denote wildness and uncivilizability.

The second people within Siam identified by elites as primitive were the *chaobannok* or rural villagers. In this case, ethnic difference was not the significant element of otherness for the elite. “*Chaobannok*,” or rural folk, toiled the lands and produced, and elite travelers were very familiar with rural people. The main othering attribute of the *chaobannok* came from the stereotype of an uneducated and backward peasantry. This type of Other was described in Prince Damrong Rajanuphap's *Nithan Borankhadi* as people who live in a backward space, in the domain of simplicity, superstition, ignorance and uneducatedness—that is, in a space that existed before.²⁴ Both *chaopa* and *chaobannok* provided the urban elite with a background against which

²³ Chaophraya Surasakmontri, “Waduai Chaopa Chat Tangtang” [On Various Jungle Races], in *Lathi Thamniam Tangtang* 1 [Various Customs 1] (Bangkok: Khlangwitthaya, 1972. Originally in *Wachirayanwiset* 5, 1889), 518, 534, 548, 558, and 567.

²⁴ Prince Damrong Rajanuphap considered the architect of the modern Thai state and the “Father of Thai History,” traveled extensively to the interior of Siam during the integration of former tributaries. The title of the book *Nithan Borankhadi* means fables or stories from/of the past. Thongchai, “The Quest for ‘Siwilai’: A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam,” 534-537.

they could look at themselves. For the educated class in the city, the *chaopa* were the uncivilizable and the *chaobannok* were the loyal but backward subjects, when measured with the people and space of *siwilai* and *charoen*.

The people who lived in the domain beyond the normal social and political power of Siamese central governance were gazed at, dissected, catalogued, recorded, and sometimes described collectively as races or tribes. This practice reveals the influence of western anthropology and the racial discourse of the late nineteenth century. The Siamese commanders and administrators' documentation resembled analogous western research on indigenous races, ordering observed data neatly into topics such as physical description (eye color, hair, skin, lips) and living conditions and cultures (styles of housing, dress, language, beliefs, coinage, and birth, funeral, and wedding rituals). Viewed in this light, Tamara Loos concludes that "Siam resembles an imperial nation that instituted within its territory forms of European colonial modernity."²⁵

3.2.3 Pursuing a Self-civilizing Mission

Colonialism always comes disguised as modernization. In Siam/Thailand, this process is known as *Chakri Reformation*.²⁶ From the perspective of modernization theory, the establishment in late nineteenth-century Siam of a centralized administration, educational system, and transportation and communication infrastructures was an index of progress and, indeed, of nation-building. The Fifth Reign as therefore seen as a period of momentous change, with King Chulalongkorn (Rama V, r. 1868-1910) as a Prometheus-like figure who bestowed the

²⁵ Tamara Loos, *Subject Siam: Family, Law, and Colonial Modernity in Thailand* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 2006); and Tamara Loos, "Competitive Colonialisms: Siam and the Malay Muslim South," 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), 75.

²⁶ Chakri Reformation entailed the centralization of government, taxation and military draft, and the establishment of a western-styled ministerial cabinet, bureaucracy, Buddhist clergy, and educational system, according to Peleggi, "Purveyors of Modernity? Europeans Artists and Architects in Turn-of-the-Century Siam," 1.

gift of modernity on Thai society.²⁷ By promoting such reforms, the ruling dynasty seemed to act as a counterpart to the region's colonial governments. However, they were "colonizing" the kingdom from within administratively and economically, while also avowedly pursuing their own "civilizing mission."²⁸ As they embraced *farang* ways, the royal elites came to consider themselves as "civilizing agents," who were responsible for establishing lasting social norms, tastes, and consciousness in Siam/Thailand.²⁹

Discussing elite power and its hold on the construction of culture, Thanet argues that "[W]estern knowledge and science were adopted mainly by the royal elites together with a small group of high-ranking nobles, the choices and growth of modern ideas and practices were curtailed to suit the purposes of the elite and did not intentionally expand to those of the wider populace." His following remark is worth writing in full:

"[F]or the elite, western borrowings were intended as an adornment of its existing status and served as powerful symbols in the Siamese mind. Once they were sure of their political power, the elite exercised their liberty and authority in selecting that which they linked from the West, while rejecting that about which they felt self-confident and wanted therefore to preserve, in opposition to the West. The modern practices that were later imitated in fragmented form and content by the common people troubled the royal elite because of what they perceived as a lack of taste and as the 'un-Thainess' of such behaviors."³⁰

²⁷ Referring to Koompong Noobanjong's argument, the colonial collaborative process in Siam did not run smoothly. Bangkok's centralized bureaucracy was challenged by many internal revolts during the 19th century, especially in the northeast and southern regions. To defuse them, King Chulalongkorn (Rama V, r. 1868-1910), aside from initiating the reformation program, had to abolish the traditional slavery system. Not only did he deny the West a chance to cooperate with the mass of oppressed people that would eventually lead to his overthrow; but made a large pool of laborers available to international capitalism; and thereby reduced the manpower available for any possible coup staged against him. See Koompong Noobanjong, "Power, Identity, and the Rise of Modern Architecture: from Siam to Thailand" (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Colorado at Denver, 2003), 104; and Peleggi, *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image*, 4.

²⁸ Peleggi, "Purveyors of Modernity? Europeans Artists and Architects in Turn-of-the-Century Siam," 91; Chattip Nartsupha and Suthi Prasartset, eds., *Socio-Economic Institutions and Cultural Change in Siam, 1851-1910: A Documentary Survey* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1977); and Thongchai, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-body of a Nation*, n.p..

²⁹ Peleggi, *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image*, 10.

³⁰ The authors mentioned Thanet Arpornsuwan's quote in Rachel V. Harrison and Peter A. Jackson, "Introduction: Siam's/Thailand's Constructions of Modernity Under the Influence of the Colonial West," *South East Asia Research* 17, no. 3 (2009): 325-360.

Thus, as other classes began to claim *siwilai* for their own uses, the elite lost their total control over the symbolism.³¹ As a result, in the outward gaze, the Siamese monarchy occupied a subordinate position relative to the West, while in the inward gaze, the monarchy was the dominant power over the local, subordinated population, by connecting to the sources of civilization. *Farang* and westernization mark the patterns of autonomy and subordination, as well as crypto-colonialism in the Thai political and economic landscape.

3.3 Western Education was a Means to Secure “Autonomy”

3.3.1 The Foundation of Architectural Schools and the Rise of Social Distinction

As a number of scholars have argued, the foundation of architectural schools in Siam/Thailand—particularly the birth of the architectural profession—supported the rise of social distinction in Siamese/Thai history. The diplomas and degrees awarded by these newly established Thai architectural schools, rooted in western epistemology, became a form of cultural capital, allowing Siamese/Thai architects to secure their status in traditional society. As was also the case in Japan and China, these schools run by the elite were not intended to spread the processes of westernization and modernization to the rest of the society.³² In order for the Siamese/Thai ruling elite to preserve their dignity in the face of western colonial encroachment, they needed to control all nationalist discourse surrounding Thai-ness, protecting it from any challenge that could diminish their power as specifically Siamese/Thai rulers, while still retaining their connection to the new world order. Subsequently, these elites played the role of

³¹ For further examination, please see Somrak, *Rotsaniyom: Phasa nai Sangkhom Thau Yuk Boriphokeniyom* [Taste: Language in Thai Society in the Era of Consumerism], n.p..

³² Based on Pierre Bourdieu’s definition, *Cultural Capital* is defined as the “high culture” or “familiarity with the legitimate culture within a society.” It comprises the social assets of a person such as education, intellect, style of speech, style of dress, etc. that promote social mobility in a stratified society. Pierre Bourdieu, “The School as a Conservative Force: Scholastic and Cultural Inequalities,” in *Contemporary Research in the Sociology of Education*, ed. John Eggleston (London: Methuen, 1974), 32-46.

mediators, assisting the kings in selecting, adapting, and applying western culture to Siamese/Thai society.³³ The results are visible in cultural artifacts such as the many examples of Western-Thai hybrid architecture. From the mid-nineteenth century on, Thai architecture was designed through a selective process to merge the identity of traditional Thai craftsmanship with modern western knowledge. This conserved the authority of Thai-ness while meeting the demands of *siwilai*.³⁴

3.3.2 The Settlement of Western Architecture in Siam

In the second half of the nineteenth century, new diplomatic and trade relations with western countries led to an immense expansion of the expatriate community in Bangkok. This influx brought a number of western artists and architects, who expanded the range of architectural expression and introduced new construction techniques. Many building designs composed from the reign of King Mongkut (Rama IV, r. 1851-1868) onward were done in a western style intermixed with Siamese decorative elements. Examples of this include the throne hall *Abhinaoniwes*, built in 1854 (Figure 3-1), and *Phra Nakhonkhiri*, a provincial palace in Petchaburi (Figure 3-2). Another throne hall in the following reign was commissioned in the same hybrid style to mark the centennial of the Chakri dynasty. The *Chakri Maha Prasat* throne hall was designed by John Clunish, a Singapore-based British architect, blending mid-Victorian neoclassical and Italianate styles and topped with a Thai spire roof (*prasat*) (Figure 3-3). The last feature is often referenced as an example of compromise the pro-westernization group, led by King Chulalongkorn, and those with conservative values, led by Somdej Chaophraya

³³ Koompong, "Power, Identity, and the Rise of Modern Architecture: from Siam to Thailand," 103.

³⁴ Chatri Prakitnonthakan, "Architect, Knowledges, and Architecture Schools," *Najua: History of Architecture and Thai Architecture* 13 (2007): 77-78.

Borommaha Sri Suriyavongse (Chuang Bunnag, 1803-1883), who served as regent until 1873 when the young king came of age.³⁵ This hybridization is not only a sign of the elite “civilizing pedigree,” but also countered claims of western superiority.³⁶ More western-style buildings were erected during the following decade, both in the Grand Palace’s outer court and just outside of the palace walls, housing ministerial offices, the army academy, and the city library.³⁷

3.3.3 The Superiority of Foreign PWD over Thai Designers

At the end of the 1880s, prior to the establishment of the Siamese Public Works Department (PWD) in 1892, royal and governmental projects were mostly carried out by western contractors. Italians in particular knew the latest architectural styles and construction techniques, which meshed with Siamese aristocrats’ desire to consume modern technology and building materials.³⁸ In no time, western building techniques, equipment, and vocabulary became widely understood in the Siamese construction arena. While Euro-centric works were celebrated, those in the Siamese tradition were relegated to “inferior” status. Traditional Siamese craftsmen faced a challenge from the increasing need for western contractors and experts, which led to the decline of traditional Siamese craftsmanship schools. Western contractors were at the top of the hierarchy, followed by Siamese craftsmen who had some western knowledge, then by Siamese

³⁵ Pinai Sirikiattikul, “The Reconstruction of Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall’s Roof Spires, 1926-1932,” in *AHMT Domestic Architecture in Siam: The Reformation Period*, ed. Den Wasiksiri (Bangkok: Faculty of Architecture, Silpakorn University Press, 2019), 67.

³⁶ Koompong, “Power, Identity, and the Rise of Modern Architecture: from Siam to Thailand,” 111-113 and 144; and Peleggi, “Purveyors of Modernity Europeans, Artists, and Architects in Turn-of-the-Century Siam,” 2.

³⁷ Peleggi, “Purveyors of Modernity Europeans, Artists, and Architects in Turn-of-the-Century Siam,” 6-7.

³⁸ The Siamese Public Works Department or PWD was changed from a department to a ministry in 1892, but very little changed within the Architectural and Engineering sections responsible for the Siamese aristocrats’ architecture and urban design. The westerners were still the heads and led both teams: Carlo Allegri (1862-1938; act. in Siam from 1890-1915) continued to be the chief engineer, while Carl Sandreczki (act. in Siam from 1887-1910) remained the chief architect. See Pirasri, “Building *Sivilai*: Transformation of Architecture and Architectural Practice in Siam during the Reign of Rama V, 1868-1910,” 173-174, 181; and Peleggi, “Purveyors of Modernity Europeans, Artists, and Architects in Turn-of-the-Century Siam,” 7.

artisans who only knew traditional techniques. Siamese craftsmen associated with the royal families received more opportunities to work with foreign contractors—which allowed them to absorb more western culture and elevate their status.³⁹ Siamese artisans with no connection either to the royal families or to westerners needed to work harder to compete in the new hierarchical system. They eventually had to adapt themselves, submitting to a new educational system called *Poh Chang* (artisan training) to modernize their knowledge.⁴⁰

As previously mentioned, all buildings commissioned according to King Chulalongkorn's vision—which by the turn of the twentieth century amounted to a remaking of Bangkok—were primarily led by western architects, especially Italians.⁴¹ The Siamese aristocrats were also

³⁹ Since the Ayutthaya period, Siamese artisans were close-knit groups of specialized practitioners. They could be categorized into three groups according to their professional affiliations: *chang chaloisak* or the private master builders, *chang phra* or the monk master builders, and *chang luang* or the royal master builders. Their works and clients were also separated following their affiliation's name: the private master builders could be commissioned by anyone; the monk builders mainly practiced monastery construction and maintenance; and the royal master builders only served the state, which included the king, the princes, and the aristocrats. Through centuries, the royal master builders were scattered among the various *krom* (departments under the ministry). Each *krom* often became the domain of a family, as building crafts were passed on through generations of building practice. A son of a master builder usually began his service as a *mahatlek* (a royal page) as a confirmation of allegiance from his noble father. After they learned the affairs of the court, the king would send these young men to their fathers' respective department, where they learned the building crafts through hands-on operation, a system of total immersion in the arts and crafts of architecture. Architectural texts and manuals were scarce and were accordingly closely guarded within the families. Familial ties were crucial in the advancement of a royal master builder's career. For more information, see chapter 2 of Pirasri, "Building *Siwilai*: Transformation of Architecture and Architectural Practice in Siam during the Reign of Rama V, 1868-1910," 25-102.

⁴⁰ *Poh Chang* vocational school was established as a woodcraft division (*khong*) during King Chulalongkorn's reign (Rama V) and became a craftsmanship association (*samosorn chang*) in 1905. Five years later, the Ministry of Education saw the possibility in expansion; they hired Edward Healey, a British national who was trained as an art teacher from the Royal College of Art, as principal of the association. As western building technique started to become popular in Siam, the association had to adapt its curriculum by providing the western technical courses that could supply the skills the engineers and architects needed in order to acquaint themselves with the modern buildings. Henceforth, subjects like freehand drawing, geometrical drawing, and model making became part of the curriculum in 1912. Chatri, "Architect, Knowledges, and Architecture Schools," 83; Koompong, "Power, Identity, and the Rise of Modern Architecture: from Siam to Thailand," 111-113 and 144; Peleggi, "Purveyors of Modernity Europeans, Artists, and Architects in Turn-of-the-Century Siam," 248; and Chomchon, "Modernisation of Building: The Transplantation of the Concept of Architecture from Europe to Thailand, 1930s-1950s," 363-365.

⁴¹ The reason behind Italian domination of the PWD Technical Office can be partly attributed to the first generation of the Italian building contractors like Joachim Grassi and Stefano Cardu. After dominating the construction businesses in 1870s Siam, they brought the second generation of European architects and engineers, such as Carlo Allegri and Carl Sandreczki, who in turn became the original members of the PWD by the late 1880s, and brought the third generation, such as Mario Tamagno, Emilio Giovanni Gollo, and Annibale Rigotti. Rama V's appreciation of Italian arts and craftsmanship was of course another reason for the Italian dominance over the PWD.

involved in the projects as both bosses and assistants, which made them more familiar with western practices. However, the collaboration was by no means smooth, as reports of dissatisfaction and complaints came from both the Siamese and Italian sides.⁴² English was the main language used in communications, which was problematic when Siamese courtiers who could not speak English were involved. Everything required translation between English and Thai, causing delays. Despite these challenges, the king was satisfied with the PWD Italians' designs, although he was disappointed with their slow and temperamental working process, their misunderstanding of the local context, and their unwillingness to compromise their designs to the king's wishes.⁴³ These problems persisted for decades until the royal government realized by 1913 that they needed to send Siamese natives abroad to study the brand-new building styles and techniques—particularly for public buildings—and to resolve communication problems.⁴⁴ Between the 1900s and the 1930s, six Siamese natives were sent to pursue architectural degrees in Europe with the aim of producing native practitioners to design and serve in the construction of future public buildings.

3.3.4 Tracing the History: How Thai Architects were Sent to Study Abroad

The first students sent to study in France and England were three descendants from the royal families in the rank of *Mom Chao* (HSH Prince, such as grandchildren of the king): Mom Chao Itthitthesan Kridakorn (1890-1934), Mom Chao Samaichaloem Kridakorn (1895-1967),

For more information, see Pirasri, "Building *Siwilai*: Transformation of Architecture and Architectural Practice in Siam during the reign of Rama V, 1868-1910," 122-135 and 180-188.

⁴² Ibid., 186.

⁴³ Ibid., 187.

⁴⁴ In fact, Siamese natives, both descendants of the royal families and commoners, were sent to study in Europe as early as in the 1860s. They were expected to become experts in education, military affairs, law, and forestry, to come back to work alongside with foreign expatriates with the eventual hope of replacing the foreigners. Chomchon, "Modernisation of Building: The Transplantation of the Concept of Architecture from Europe to Thailand, 1930s-1950s," 222.

and Mom Chao Vodhayakara Varavan (1900-1981). There were also three commoners: Sarot Sukkhayang (1895-1950), Nat Phothiprasat (1901-1954), and Jitsen (Mew) Aphaiwong (1905-1963).⁴⁵ Returning after graduation, they found the country in a state of considerable internal turmoil and revolt arising from the transformation from an absolute monarchy to a modern democratic nation, which took place in 1932.⁴⁶ However, one ideology unchanged in Siamese society was the quest for *siwilai*. The built environment of the country was still seen by the rulers of the new regime as a tool to build the Thai nation.⁴⁷ The rise of nationalism and the kingdom's financial difficulties led the new government to lay off western advisors in all bureaucratic agencies and rapidly replace them with these Siamese architects returned from abroad.⁴⁸ These architects, whose foreign education was combined with advantages derived from their family backgrounds, gradually took key positions in most of the government offices.⁴⁹

3.3.5 Elite Background plus Western Education are a Pass to Enjoy Privilege.

In “Modern Architecture of Pioneer Thai Architects, B.E. 2459-2508 (1916-1965),”

⁴⁵ The two descendants of Kridakorn family and Jitsen (Mew) Aphaiwong, a son of a prominent nobleman, went to study at Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts in France on their family private funding; meanwhile Mom Chao Vodhayakara Varavan was supported by the King's Scholarship to go to University of Cambridge, England; and Sarot Sukkhayang and Nat Phothiprasat received the Royal Government Scholarships to study at the University of Liverpool in England. For more information, see chapter 2 of Jairak Junsin, “Modern Architecture of Pioneer Thai Architects, B.E. 2459-2508 [1916-1965]” (Master's Thesis, Silpakorn University, 2006), 11-35; and Chomchon, “Modernisation of Building: The Transplantation of the Concept of Architecture from Europe to Thailand, 1930s-1950s,” 221.

⁴⁶ The 1932 Revolution ended more than a thousand years of *Devaraja* absolutism in Siam. It also ended royal and state patronage of western architects, along with western historical-style architecture. It did not affect the elite regard for modernism. Koompong, “Power, Identity, and the Rise of Modern Architecture: from Siam to Thailand,” 111-113, 144, and 237; and Peleggi, “Purveyors of Modernity Europeans, Artists, and Architects in Turn-of-the-Century Siam,” 247.

⁴⁷ The country's name was changed from Siam to Thailand in 1939, to signify a modern democratic nation.

⁴⁸ In the midst of the mass layoff of westerners during the early years of King Prajadhipok's reign (Rama VII, r. 1925-1935), some foreign experts were still needed in particular fields, and some switched to work in private-sector foreign construction firms instead. For more details, please see Peleggi, “Purveyors of Modernity Europeans, Artists, and Architects in Turn-of-the-Century Siam,” 248.

⁴⁹ Chomchon, “Modernisation of Building: The Transplantation of the Concept of Architecture from Europe to Thailand, 1930s-1950s,” 315.

Jairak Junsin examines the careers of these six Siamese architects, noting that five out of six were from the aristocrat class. They were either from the royal family, a well-to-do family, or a political family. The only exception was Nat Phothiprasat, whose family were commoners. Before the Siamese revolution of 1932, royal-born architects like the Kridakorn brothers often received significant architectural commissions, and Jitsen (Mew) Aphaiwong—whose brother was part of the *Khana Ratsadon* (Peoples' Party) that transformed the country's political system and later became the country's prime minister—obtained large public-building projects after the change of regime.⁵⁰ The most vivid evidence of western education as a tool for differentiating social classes among Thai architectural professions was the Thai government's decision to terminate Charles Beguelin as chief master builder in the Division of Architecture at the Department of Municipal Works on March 31, 1935. He was to be replaced with a Thai official.⁵¹ The question then arose as to which Thai architect should take over Beguelin's urban planning job. One candidate was Sarot Sukkhayang, who took a civic design course as an additional subject at the University of Liverpool, where he already held a director position of an Architecture Division in the Fine Arts Department. A second candidate was Luang

⁵⁰ The brother of Jitsen (Mew) Aphaiwong is Khuang Aphaiwong, three-time prime minister of Thailand and a founder of the conservative Democrat Party. His three terms in office were from August 1944 to 1945, from January to March 1946, and from November 1947 to April 1948. See Jairak, "Modern Architecture of Pioneer Thai Architects, B.E. 2459-2508 [1916-1965]," 225.

After the 1932 Revolution, the title "ruling elite" was no longer reserved exclusively for the monarchy and the aristocrats. It expanded to include persons of humble origins, notably the bureaucrats and merchants, who came from middle class and the lower socio-economic echelon. These persons of humble origins took turns rising to positions of power, which was possible due to King Chulalongkorn's (Rama V) reformation process, particularly through the path of westernization and modernization. For further details, see Koompong, "Power, Identity, and the Rise of Modern Architecture: from Siam to Thailand," 238.

⁵¹ Charles Beguelin was a French-Swiss architect. He arrived Siam in April 1919 as part of a French political initiative. He was subsequently hired by a Division of Engineering to work under the Department of Public Health as *Nai Chang Yai* (a chief master builder, though the term was written in English as a chief engineer). As the Public Health Department oversaw public healthcare services, the nature of Beguelin's work thus leaned towards functional and hygienic aspects, such as the designs of hospitals, healthcare stations (*Sukkhasalā*), prisons, and other urban planning and engineering works mostly located in the provinces and occasionally in Bangkok. Later, his work was transferred to a Division of Architecture under the Department of Municipal Works (*Krom Yotha Thetsaban*). Chomchon, "Modernisation of Building: The Transplantation of the Concept of Architecture from Europe to Thailand, 1930s-1950s," 286.

Burakamkowitz, who learned his town planning expertise through reading and assisting Beguelin in the Department of Municipal Works. A major concern was raised regarding Luang Burakamkowitz, as he had neither held any professional degree nor received any education abroad.⁵²

As Chomchon shows, achieving a degree abroad was an important issue for the Thai government in making a hiring decision, no matter whether it was in the old or new political regime. In Thai architectural society, the Thais who obtained their degrees abroad always held more prestigious status.⁵³ The Thai government still gave the highest priority to the westerners, who they believed to have more expertise than the locals. To resolve the hiring issue, the Thai government decided to employ another westerner with experience in urban planning, who was able to accept a “reasonable” salary. Subsequently, a new Division of Urban Planning was set up under the Department of Municipal Works in August, 1935, sent out a call for foreign applications for the new head-of-division position.⁵⁴ Luang Burakamkowitz was the only Thai town planner assigned to work in the division, before the office could actually acquire the western expert. It was not until 1937 that the division officially hired Francis Ruy, a former town planner from Paris, to be in charge.⁵⁵ Thus, despite the fact that the Thai government clearly intended to prioritize natives over foreigners, they preferred an “original” and “professional” candidate with real expertise and experience, who in this case was a *farang*. No matter the angle from which the discourse of Thai-ness discourse is viewed, *farang* influences were simply

⁵² Ibid., 312.

⁵³ Ibid., 313.

⁵⁴ National Archives of Thailand, [Call for Applications from Foreign Planners], S R 0201.19/38 (Bangkok: National Archives of Thailand, n.d.).

⁵⁵ Ibid.

inevitable, and the contemporary forms of Thai-ness are incomplete without the link to western modernization—reflecting the allure of *farang*-ness.⁵⁶

3.3.6 The Establishment of the Thai Architectural Schools in Siam/Thailand

A return to tracing the history of the first group of western-educated Siamese architects shows other ways in which western education influenced Thai architecture. Nat Phothiprasat, the only commoner in the group, chose to pursue an academic career instead of professional practice. Nat returned to Siam in 1930 and started his career at the *Poh Chang* vocational school as a second-ranked lecturer.⁵⁷ At *Poh Chang*, he used materials from his education at the University of Liverpool to modify the architectural courses. Just a few years later, in 1932, the Department of Architecture at *Poh Chang* was transferred to the management of the Faculty of Engineering at Chulalongkorn University, although it still offered a Diploma in Architecture.⁵⁸ The new arrangement prompted Mom Chao Itthitthesan Kridakorn, who graduated from Ecole des Beaux-Arts, to complain that the training of architectural students under the Engineering Faculty would produce no real architects, but only civil engineers were equipped with some types of basic architectural knowledge. He suggested that architectural students should be trained among the other arts, allowing them to balance their skill-sets with sculpting, carving, and engineering.⁵⁹ Finally, in 1939, Chulalongkorn University established the Faculty of Architecture, offering a five-year professional degree program. Its Bachelor of Architecture program produced its first

⁵⁶ Pattana, “An Ambiguous Intimacy: Farang as Siamese Occidentalism,” 73.

⁵⁷ Jairak, “Modern Architecture of Pioneer Thai Architects, B.E. 2459-2508 [1916-1965],” 27.

⁵⁸ Vimolsiddhi and el at., *Pattanakan Naewkhwamkit lae Roopbaeb khong Ngansatapattayagum* [Development of Concepts, and Architectural Patterns: Past, Present, and Future], 41.

⁵⁹ Mom Chao Itthitthesan Kridakorn, *Rueng Kiewkab Satapattayagam* [Stories of Architecture] (Bangkok: Department of Public Instruction, 1890), 20.

five graduates in 1941.⁶⁰ Setting up the new department was intended to give more prestige to the architectural profession, placing them at the pinnacle of the construction team and differentiating them completely from craftsmen, builders, and engineers.⁶¹ In this respect, this action was concerned with the privilege of the architectural profession over the others.

In conclusion, the overall history of western architectural education transplanted to Thailand, especially during the early period from the 1900s to the 1930s, reveals that the establishment of architectural schools in Siam/Thailand had changed the perception of the profession in the public eye and among the building-related professions. A general perception upon completing an architectural degree was that the awarded degree was proof that the awardee was qualified to pursue an architectural career. The awarded degree became cultural capital—a personal asset in competing with others seeking a commission.⁶² The concept of awarding architectural degrees in Thailand was thus closely tied to western epistemology. Education was intended to narrow gaps between social classes and create more equality. Instead, it created another kind of elite class—the educated class—and cemented inequality as a norm, giving elites the right to define the terms of autonomy.⁶³ The western educational system introduced with western-educated architects replaced the traditional Thai feudal belief system. Where status had been defined by family relations and religious *bun/barami*, status was then defined by education, and those who held the knowledge held the power. A Thai architect who received a degree

⁶⁰ The Department of Architecture of *Poh Chang* was a 3-year training program that only granted the certificate. After the program was settled and developed to be a bachelor's degree under Chulalongkorn University, those students who were in the 3-year program in the 1939 were added up another 2 years, thus received a bachelor's degree in 1941. See Wikipedia, s.v. “คณะสถาปัตยกรรมศาสตร์ จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย,” last modified September 8th, 2021, 2:56 (UTC), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/คณะสถาปัตยกรรมศาสตร์_จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
Koompong, “Power, Identity, and the Rise of Modern Architecture: from Siam to Thailand,” 111-113, 144, and 237.

⁶¹ Andrew Saint. *Architect and Engineer: A Study in Sibling Rivalry* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 467.

⁶² Chatri, “Architect, Knowledges, and Architecture Schools,” 82-83.

⁶³ Bourdieu, “The School as a Conservative Force: Scholastic and Cultural Inequalities,” 32-46.

abroad possessed a higher social status than one with a domestic degree or no degree at all. Nonetheless, regardless of status, all of them surrendered to the original sources of *siwilai*—the westerners.

3.4 Case Studies of “Autonomy” revealing through the Emerging of Western-styled Modern Architecture in Thailand

The investigation of autonomy during the Cold War era begins with background research on how western modern architecture settled in Thailand, and is then followed with supporting case studies and analyses to demonstrate how Thai educated elites employed that architecture to establish new forms of control over the local population, securing their political autonomy in a western-dominated world order. As these educated elites looked anxiously at encroaching western powers, they also looked to their own population to do the work of enacting Thai “civilization” (*siwilai*), which was a central element in the effort to secure their superior position.

3.4.1 The Transplantation of Modern Architecture in Siam/Thailand

When Modern architecture was gaining popularity in Europe and the United States, Thailand was still in the era of an absolute monarchy, under Kings Chulalongkorn (Rama V, r. 1868-1910) and Vajiravudh (Rama VI, r. 1910-1925). During this time, “modernization” was the main concern of the royal Siamese government, who were interested in moving the country forward. The national advancements were undertaken partly with an eye to catch up with *farang* principles, as evidenced by the construction of western-styled buildings. All of them were designed by royal-hired western architects, although some of the buildings reflected hybridized forms of western and Thai styles. While there were a few overseas-educated Thai architects

returning to the kingdom, this group did not play any significant role in changing the architectural style of the period. In the following era of King Prajadhipok (Rama VII, r. 1925-1935), Thailand was hit hard by the world economic recession in the aftermath of the first World War. The government had to cut back on most projects, which included the construction of buildings. The second wave of western-educated Thai architects returned to the country and began to play a more vital role, replacing the foreign architects. The influence of Modern architecture became more visible in Thailand after the country shifted its political regime from absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy in 1932. It can be said that the transplantation of western Modern architecture in Thailand led to the transmission of western concepts and technology via western-educated Thai architects, and the change of its political system to a more democratic scheme.⁶⁴

Thai architecture began its full dialogue with the idioms of Modernity in the late 1960s. According to an analysis by Thailand Creative and Design Center (TCDC), the movement was catalyzed by three main forces: the advent of modern urban lifestyles; new construction technologies; and the return of overseas-educated Thai architects, influenced by western Modernist principles.⁶⁵

With regard to the “modern” lifestyle, the economic recession after World War II forced Sarit’s government to reform the national economic plan to be in line with global market forces. Together with the rise of international capital, the number of foreigners in the country, and the need for a new type of architecture, a dramatic increase in construction took place, particularly in

⁶⁴ Yongtanit Pimonsathean, “Preservation of Modern Architecture: The Neglected Heritage of Modern Architecture, and Why It Needs to Be Preserved,” in *Keeping Up Modern Thai Architecture, 1967-1987*, ed. Thailand Creative and Design Center (Bangkok: Thailand Creative and Design Center, 2008), 80-81.

⁶⁵ Thailand Creative and Design Center, “Modern Thai Architecture, 1967-1987,” in *Keeping Up Modern Thai Architecture, 1967-1987*, ed. Thailand Creative and Design Center (Bangkok: Thailand Creative and Design Center, 2008), 59.

metropolitan areas. Modern Thai architecture thus reflected this movement, as it tried to accommodate the social changes in Bangkok that were increasingly driven by capitalist consumerism. Aside from developing the country's basic infrastructure based on the slogan "[R]unning water, brightening lights, building good roads, creating ample jobs, and maintaining hygiene," the nation quickly moved forward to open up opportunities for foreign and local private sector investments. The rush to institute educational and public utilities was occurring in tandem with the emergence of a changing urban-elite lifestyle that set up new values and consumption patterns for society. Private-sector jobs were as sought-after and desirable as the civil-service positions. Banks started to expand their businesses, establishing branches all over the country. Cinemas and shopping malls quickly replaced the temple arcades as places for weekend recreation. Meanwhile the budding tourist industry saw the construction of many new hotels, restaurants, and entertainment venues.

New types of architecture also brought the country new technological advancement. In the late 1960s, as Thailand grappled with early industrialization, Thai architecture students returned from western universities. This group of architects was equipped with the concepts of Modern architecture, rooted in a post-industrialized Europe. There was an experimental mindset that came along with a concern for new technologies, which incorporated innovations such as prefabrication, new structural systems, and new materials. However, implementing these technologies was a challenge, as Thailand often lacked necessary materials and equipment found in the West. Moreover, in order to execute the knowledge, it required more collaborative efforts among Thai architects, engineers, and building contractors.⁶⁶ During this period, new

⁶⁶ Pornpas Siricururatana, "Inventory of Modern Building in Bangkok - History of Modern Architecture in Bangkok" (presentation, The 7th mASEANa International Conference on The Future of the Past: Materiality and Resilience of Modern Architecture in Southeast Asia, Bangkok, Thailand, February 16, 2019).

geometrical structures and a fashionable preference for concrete had replaced traditional brick-and-mortar constructions. Reinforced concrete gave greater flexibility to spatial planning, while its unfinished surfaces expressed Modernist ideals of material integrity. In this same period, Regionalism was a trend with widespread appeal across the globe. New concerns for regional climate and energy saving were expressed through the design development of a building's shading devices, an alternative option to replace the traditional eaves. Modernist architects in Thailand also absorbed this architectural trend through attempts to deal with a tropical climate and local materials. The outcome can be seen in work from both foreign and Thai architects, as they sought to balance the predominant taste for western-styled Modern architecture against the tropical constraints of the Thai climate.

When Thailand turned toward Modern architecture, the changes did not happen overnight. The style altered gradually, from the reign of King Chulalongkorn onward. According to Professor Chaiboon Sirithanawat, an architecture-major professor at Chulalongkorn University, as King Chulalongkorn sought to reach the standard of the western powers, he began to modernize the country by sending the descendants of government officials to further their studies in western countries in many different fields, including medicine, engineering, fine arts, and architecture—the aim being to adjust the entire bureaucratic system.⁶⁷ Some Thai students, mostly members of royal houses, were sent to study in architecture schools with the goal of establishing architectural education in Thailand.⁶⁸ During the early twentieth century in Europe, there were two major forms of architectural curricula. The first was the traditional Beaux-Arts

⁶⁷ Thailand Creative and Design Center, “When Thailand Turned Towards Modern Architecture (Conversation with TCDC: Chaiboon Sirithanawat, Faculty of Architecture, Chulalongkorn University),” in *Keeping Up Modern Thai Architecture, 1967-1987*, ed. Thailand Creative and Design Center (Bangkok: Thailand Creative and Design Center, 2008), 66-69.

⁶⁸ For more details, please see chapter 2 of this dissertation.

curriculum with a focus on western neoclassicalism. A few years later, there was a movement to reform the educational system, and the study of Modern art and architecture became popular in Europe and the United States. A group of Thai students were exposed to these modern practices and explored them through Thai architectural works when they returned home in the late 1920s. In 1934, this western-educated group founded the Association of Siamese Architects (ASA), as Thailand's first professional organization for architecture. Five years later, several of them helped establish the Faculty of Architecture at Chulalongkorn University, which developed the former three-year professional program to be a five-year bachelor's degree program following to western curricula. The first Thai Bachelor-of-Architecture degree produced its first five graduates, all of whom had already finished the three-year program, in 1941.⁶⁹

Architecture schools in Thailand began to be on firm enough footing to produce a solid supply of Thai architects around the mid-1960s.⁷⁰ In 1967, there were two groups of Thai architectural professionals: the first group received a western education and returned home, such as Sumet Jumsai na Ayudhya (Figure 3-4); and the other group graduated from a Thai university. These two groups were responsible for inaugurating Modern architecture in Thailand from 1967 to 1987, as both groups had pursued a mainstream Modernism derived from the West. Both believed that Modern designs were the most suitable forms for architecture, as they not only included innovative construction technologies, but also represented the popular trend happening in the West.⁷¹ This phenomenon reflects the urge of young Thai architects to keep up with a

⁶⁹ According to Koompong, Chulalongkorn's architectural curriculum, modeled after the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, consisted of major and minor course studies. The major courses were architectural design and architecture history. The design classes included design studio, presentation, architectural composition, building construction, and thesis; while the history classes focused on the development of western architecture, using Sir Banister Fletcher's textbook *A History of Architecture* as the main source. Koompong, "Power, Identity, and the Rise of Modern Architecture from Siam to Thailand," 248-249.

⁷⁰ Thailand Creative and Design Center, "When Thailand Turned Towards Modern Architecture (Conversation with TCDC: Chaiboon Sirithanawat, Faculty of Architecture, Chulalongkorn University)," 66-67.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 66.

changing world, and resulted in a forest of concrete buildings with Modern aesthetics rising up incongruously amidst the open landscape of Bangkok.⁷² All of these factors contributed to the boom of Modern architecture in Thailand in the 1960s.

TCDC's analysis suggests that the rapid acceptance of Modern architecture in Thailand occurred due to the 1961 National Economic Development Plan, when a full-scale industrial expansion coincided with the breakthrough of the Thai economy. As the businesses of the Thai private sector became successful, the companies began to construct more and more commercial buildings, such as hotels, department stores, shops, and office buildings of unprecedented size. Housing developments emerged in suburban areas as a response to a massive increase of the urban population. These developments corresponded with the establishment of the first Stock Exchange in 1962, which marked a significant turning point that directly affected the architectural industry. After the Condominium Act was passed in 1979, the prosperous era of condominium development began. This led to the construction of mixed-use real-estate developments, which combined offices, residential high rises, and large shopping malls.⁷³ This construction frenzy, driven by "reckless commercialization," sprang up in Thailand within a mere two decades. All of the Thai Modern architecture was grounded in western educational and economic foundations, established since the 1920s, as they were thought to be suitable for the modern economic system.

The discourse of autonomy in Thai history during the construction-boom period between the 1960s and the 1980s demonstrates Thongchai's argument that

[T]here were two intellectual strategies to negotiate a desirable position in the scale of civilization. The first was to situate oneself at a desirable position in the comparative, cultural space of civilization. The second was to measure the great distance one had covered so far, from an uncivilized past, thus ensuring one's place towards the more

⁷² Pornpas, "Inventory of Modern Building in Bangkok - History of Modern Architecture in Bangkok."

⁷³ Ibid.

civilized end of the temporal scale. Neither strategy operated to the exclusion of the other. The major discourses of civilization in Siam/Thailand embodied both strategies
⁷⁴

Within the framework of these two representations of autonomy, architecture provides several valuable insights into the dynamism of crypto-colonialism in Thailand.

3.4.2 *Nak-rian Nork*: The Cultural Middlemen

In addition to the western architects and artists who served as cultural middlemen by bringing western techniques and technologies to Siam/Thailand, western-educated Thai students or *nak-rian nork* are among the main actors who assisted modernity-seeking rulers in transforming the local Thai cultural landscape. “*Nak-rian nork*” is an unofficial term used since the beginning of the reign of King Mongkut to define Thai students “who went to study abroad, especially in the European countries and the United States.”⁷⁵ When referring to *nak-rian nork*, students who graduated from the metropolises were always the main focus of interest while students who graduated from other countries, such as from the western colonies, were considered secondary, located at the periphery of *nak-rian nork*’s meaning.⁷⁶

King Chulalongkorn desired to defend Siam from imperial invaders and to inculcate a royally centered nationalism without substantially changing Siam’s social order. In order for the king to maintain his political and fiscal power both domestically and internationally, the installment of a modern bureaucratic apparatus and the introduction of western-style education

⁷⁴ Thongchai, “The Other Within: Travel and Ethno-Spatial Differentiation of Siamese Subjects, 1885-1910,” 53.

⁷⁵ *The Royal Thai Institute Dictionary, 1999* (Bangkok: Nanmeebooks, 2003), 568-569; Arthit Jiamrattayoo, “‘Nak-rien Philippines’ nai Tassana-vichan khong Chon Channum Thai tor Nak-rien Nork korn Maha-asia Burapha” [The Philippines-Educated Student in the Perception of the Thai Elite before the Asia-Pacific War] *Indo-China@Crossroad: Southeast Asian Review* 4, vol. 7 (2015): 559.

⁷⁶ Arthit, “‘Nak-rien Philippines’ nai Tassana-vichan khong Chon Channum Thai tor Nak-rien Nork korn Maha-asia Burapha” [The Philippines-Educated Student in the Perception of the Thai Elite before the Asia-Pacific War], 559.

was necessary. Education became a criterion for entry to this new bureaucracy, and King Chulalongkorn's fundamental and most immediate need was to train literate officials. There was also a need for foreign-language skills, for both the king and the country, recognizing that if Siam was going to be westernized, its future leaders should be able to communicate in English.⁷⁷ The king argued that "the administration needs to rely upon the models set by westerners, who have acted upon them hundreds of times. We need people with knowledge of western administration to set a model for us." The novelty of the concept of "administration" is reflected in the king's language, as he uses the Thai transliteration of the word "office."⁷⁸ The king's initial aim was to strengthen monarchical rule and to maintain the old social structure.⁷⁹ The early educational policy concentrated on turning royalty and nobility into modern bureaucrats, and quite a number of royal princes and sons of the nobles were sent to study abroad.

The basic concept underpinning the expectations and attempts made by King Chulalongkorn and his ministers to maintain their absolutist power is explained by Kullada:

[I]n the modern bureaucracy, high-ranking princes would come to occupy the top-level posts, low-ranking royalty and nobility would staff the middle level, and, as in the traditional system, literate commoners would staff the lowest levels. It was assumed that this class composition of the modern bureaucracy would guarantee social stability.⁸⁰

However, the king's initial idea was flawed. Though the royals and nobles enjoyed greater access to the new educational institutions than the commoners did, the latter showed themselves more

⁷⁷ Foreign-language skills were also needed in administrative areas such as foreign affairs, customs, and postal and telegraphic services. It was necessary for the future elite to have the English-language skills to grasp the meaning of such concepts as "finance" and "budget," let alone those concepts for which Thai culture had no equivalents, such as "government" and "nation." For further details, see Kullada Kesboonchoo Mead, "Creating a Modern Bureaucracy through Education" in *The Rise and Decline of Thai Absolutism* (New York, NY; London: Routledge Curzon, 2004), 66-92.

⁷⁸ NA, R5 M 99/8 King Chulalongkorn to Prince Damrong, April 4, 1891.

⁷⁹ Kullada, "Creating a Modern Bureaucracy through Education," 66.

⁸⁰ When comparing to the traditional system, the criterion for recruitment into the bureaucracy had been family. The customs of traditional state emphasized the king's personal relationship with the nobles, a relationship that based upon the notion that the king was the sole source of their status, prestige, and well-being. As such they should feel gratitude to him. *Ibid.*, 77.

motivated to take advantage of the new opportunities and to acquire knowledge. As a result, the non-elite classes penetrated all levels of the bureaucracy, and the attempt to maintain the old social structure was ultimately unsuccessful. In addition, the result did not change the country's political system from an absolute monarchy to a democracy. It created a new breed of bureaucrats, generated by education reforms that coalesced into a new social group called the "modern bureaucrats."⁸¹

According to traditional modernization theory, the spread of formal education, no matter whether by means of sending students abroad or establishing the new educational institutions in the country, is believed to further economic and cultural change, as it broadly benefits the public interest. However, this view is challenged by an alternative perspective that suggests that the distribution of educational resources may instead serve the narrow interests of the elite, in order to secure their autonomy. On this viewpoint, many scholars suggest that education was used to both advance the position of elite groups and to provide a means of social control of ethnic and politically conflicting groups.⁸² These means of control were employed by the nobles through their accumulation of power and privilege and the legitimation of their status and policies. For example, the development of the Third World nations is seen as gradually diffusing from the metropolis to the hinterland. This is due to the fact that the more "modern," educated people, usually concentrated in the metropolitan areas, are seen as agents and leaders in the gradual diffusion of new attitudes, values, skills, and technologies to the more "backward" provinces.⁸³ Those provinces would be expected to receive lesser resources for education; and resources are

⁸¹ Ibid., 85.

⁸² David K. Wyatt, *The Politics of Reform in Thailand* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1969), n.p.; and Bruce London, "Elites and Classes in Thai History: The Comparative Use of Power Elite and Ruling Class Analyses," *Southeast Asia Journal of Social Science* 7 (1979): 30-59.

⁸³ Kristine L. Anderson and London Bruce, "Modernization, Elites, and the Distribution of Educational Resources in Thailand," *Social Forces* 63, no. 3 (1985): 775-777.

also seen as being distributed roughly according to their development needs. Moreover, the elite groups in the developing nations can include government officials, other professionals and administrators, and entrepreneurial elite active in the trade of goods and services.⁸⁴ The effects of the new bureaucratic policies in Siam followed this pattern, underscoring the importance of education in the perpetuation of structured inequality.

3.4.3 Western Architectural Education is a Means to Advance the Position of Elite Groups

Education was thus a tool to “prepare elites for high-status and leadership positions and to incorporate non-elites into the lower strata of the social system.”⁸⁵ This was done through the elite’s control of educational resources and access to high-status occupational positions. The latter is illustrated by the way in which each western-graduated Thai architect, working during the 1960s to the 1980s, had different possibilities of acquiring architectural commissions, based in their different class strata and educational profiles. For instance, the *Casa* architecture firm, owned by Krisda Arunvongse na Ayudhaya, who was born into one of the royal houses as a son of Mom Luang Arun Arunvongse, was given a disproportionate chance of obtaining architectural projects, because certain types of commissions were only circulated among noble society (Figure 3-5).⁸⁶ As a metric of the privilege he enjoyed, Krisda mentions in an interview with Pussadee

⁸⁴ Ibid., 777.

⁸⁵ Thomas Labelle and Robert Verhine, “Nonformal Education and Occupational Stratification: Implications for Latin America,” *Harvard Educational Review* 56 (1975): 191-210.

⁸⁶ Professor Emeritus Captain Krisda Arunvongse na Ayudhya was an architect who had an important role in the development of Modern architecture in Thailand, both in the position of teaching faculty, which he served as the fourth Dean of the Faculty of Architecture at Chulalongkorn University from 1974 till 1978, and as an architect, who founded the *Casa* Company, designing several prominent buildings throughout Bangkok including the headquarters of Thai Airways International. He was also a politician, serving as the Deputy Governor of Bangkok for public works from 1990 until 1992, and was then elected as the Governor of Bangkok from April 19, 1992, until April 18, 1996.

Krisda received both his bachelor’s degree and his master’s degree in architecture from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In 1960, the government of France awarded him a scholarship to study at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts for six months in 1960. In his later life, he was honored as a National Artist of Thailand for his work in Visual Arts (Contemporary Architecture) in 2007. Krisda passed away in 2010, at the age of 78, due to coronary

Tiptus that clients came to him, rather than him approaching them first, to the extent that he was often overloaded beyond the capability of his office's manpower.⁸⁷

In comparison, the newly-graduated Rangsan Torsuwan, whose family was classified as commoners, found it very difficult to establish his own firm and acquire clients and projects (Figure 3-6).⁸⁸ In considering this challenge, Krisda states:

[I]n order to establish a new architectural firm successfully, the architect has to have a good upbringing, to be in high society, to play sport, and to associate himself with high-class society. Because once the client plans to build a million-dollar house, they will decide to hire or rely on only the person whose background they know.⁸⁹

In the same interview, Rangsan also admitted that if the architect did not belong to the elite or high-class society, there was a lower chance of getting a project commission.⁹⁰

A second example from Pussadee further illustrates this, as she stresses the importance of networking as the first priority in “how the architects could acquire the work commissions by being private firms.” One of the interviews by Pussadee with Yiam Wongvanich revealed how

artery disease. For more information, see Atthanit Kulrakampusiri, “Architectural Design Development of Professor Emeritus Captain Krisda Arunvongse na Ayudhya,” (master’s thesis, Chulalongkorn University, 2011), V; and Wikipedia, s.v. “Krisda Arunvongse na Ayudhya,” last modified November 17th, 2020, 22:07 (UTC), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Krisda_Arunvongse_na_Ayudhya

⁸⁷ Krisda did not take this privilege for granted and expressed gratitude for the chance to choose to work on projects that he loved, Pussadee, *Satapanik Siam: Puentan Botbath Pholngan lae Naewkid, B.E.2475-2537* [Siamese Architects: Fundamentals, Roles, Works, and Concepts, 1932-1994], 468-469.

⁸⁸ Rangsan Torsuwan is a Thai architect, who is well known for many of his buildings during Bangkok’s explosive economic boom period from the 1980s to the early 1990s. Rangsan graduated from the Faculty of Architecture from Chulalongkorn University and attained a master’s at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, then returning to Thailand in 1967. He initially worked under his bachelor’s professor Krisda Arunvongse, before setting up his own firm. He also pursued an academic career as an assistant professor at Chulalongkorn, until 1992.

Rangsan’s style has been recognized as “exultant post-modernism, an architectural pastiche in which styles and eras are thrown together without any sign of restraint.” Among his best-known works are the State Tower (a gigantic skyscraper, topped with a golden dome), the Amarin Plaza shopping mall, and the unfinished Sathorn Unique Tower; all of which use oversized Greek columns, pediments, and other elements to decorate the buildings’ exteriors. His work is quite controversial and often received indirect criticism from his peers in the same field. See Wikipedia, s.v. “Rangsan Torsuwan,” last modified March 14th, 2021, 14:42 (UTC), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rangsan_Torsuwan

⁸⁹ Pussadee, *Satapanik Siam: Puentan Botbath Pholngan lae Naewkid, B.E.2475-2537* [Siamese Architects: Fundamentals, Roles, Works, and Concepts, 1932-1994], 468-469.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 469.

the Office of Jane Sakoltharak, a Cornell-graduated Thai architect, received the commissions by being the first private architectural company in Thailand (Figure 3-7):

...part of the projects we received came from the connection Mister Jane had with the powerful governmental officers of this country, such as General Sarit Thanarat and Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn. Acquainting oneself with the top governmental authorities was part of the means in acquiring project commissions. The other half was due to the profile and previous accomplishments of Mister Jane and his teammates, who are considered to be the most well-equipped team of the age. The firm had around twenty full-time architects back then. ... I still could not believe how the firm could survive [financially]. ... Mister Jane went outside every day, to seek for new projects; and we had new commissions coming in every day as well, although they were all small ones.⁹¹

The larger commissions that Jane received, such as hospitals, were all acquired through the same process—via networking and the connections—that Jane formed when he was studying at Cornell University in the United States. Many doctors, with whom Jane consorted closely at Cornell, hired him either for renovation projects or to make master plans for their hospitals after they returned. Projects acquired in this way included the hospitals in Suphan Buri, Nakhon Sawan, and many in the Southern region of Thailand.⁹²

⁹¹ Yiam Wongvanich graduated from Chulalongkorn University's Faculty of Architecture in 1960 and immediately started his architectural career at the *Office of Architect Jane Sakoltharak* in 1961, the same year that the Thai Government released the first National Economic and Social Development Plan. In 1964, he went to obtain his master's degree in architecture at Iowa State University in the United States for two years. Following his return to Thailand, he co-founded an architecture firm with his peers: Pongpun Pisalsarakit and Tamsak Anusinha, naming it "Satapanik 110" or "Architects One Hundred and Ten," which is still firmly standing till today. See Prabhakorn, ed., *Kui gub Satapanik Tonbaeb* [Conversations with Architects Series vol. 6], 96; and "About," Architects One Hundred and Ten, accessed April 26, 2021, <http://www.architects110.com/about/>.

Jane Sakoltharak received his bachelor's degree from the Faculty of Architecture of Chulalongkorn University in 1947, then continued his master's degree at Cornell University in 1958. Once returning to Thailand, Jane became an architect under the Public Works Division of the Tobacco Authority of Thailand (TOAT). According to Sirichai Narumitrekhakarn, Jane is considered to be the first pioneer in the Thai architectural field who decided to quit working for the government and started his private firm as the first freelance architect in Thailand. He was also praised by the same generation of Thai architects as a devoting contributor who helped establish architectural standards and ethics for the Association of Siamese Architects. See Rerkdee Pothiwanakul, "Jane Sakoltharak, 1926-1973" Facebook (photo album), October 27, 2019, <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.830714250381076&type=3>; and Pussadee, *Satapanik Siam: Puentan Botbath Pholngan lae Naewkid, B.E.2475-2537* [Siamese Architects: Fundamentals, Roles, Works, and Concepts, 1932-1994], 465.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 466.

Jane Sakolthanarak was not alone in using his educational background to legitimate his elite position. Other *nak-rian nok* architects used a similar method to obtain commissions. For example, Prawat Mongkolsamai received a number of elite residential and financial institutional projects due to his familiarity with the Tejapaibul family, who founded Srinakhon Bank.⁹³ The privilege was not exclusive to alumni of western schools. Receiving an education from some Thai private schools or the country's prestigious universities generated the same effect.

The case studies which follow offer examples of the importance of socialization in elite society and the crucial role that personal contacts play in success.⁹⁴ Sawai Mongkolkasem (Figure 3-8),⁹⁵ an alumnus of Assumption College, was commissioned to design many buildings at Saint Gabriel's College because a top administrator of Saint Gabriel's College had been Sawai's teacher when he was studying at Assumption.⁹⁶ Another good demonstration is Duang Yotsunthorn commission's to design Chulalongkorn University's Statistics buildings and to renovate the Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy's Jaiyossompati building.⁹⁷ It was not only

⁹³ Originally, they were owners of a string of pawn shops. The family's patriarch, Udane Tejapaibul, had expanded his family businesses into whiskey production and helped found the *Sri Nakhon* or Bangkok Metropolitan Bank in 1950. In 1987, Udane's son, Vichien Tejapaibul, became a president of the bank and used loans from it to finance the family's property investments, which makes the Tejapaibul family one of the six most influential Chinese families in Thailand. See Wayne Arnold, "Monuments to the Thai Debt; Real Estate Fiascoes Rear Their Heads on Bangkok Skyline," *The New York Times*, last modified February 25, 2000, <https://www.nytimes.com/2000/02/25/business/monuments-thai-debt-real-estate-fiascoes-rear-their-heads-bangkok-skyline.html>

⁹⁴ Gerald W. Fry, "Education and Success: A Case Study of Thai Public Service," *Comparative Education Review* 24, no. 1 (1980): 24-25.

⁹⁵ Professor Emeritus Sawai Mongkolkasem graduated from a Faculty of Architecture, Chulalongkorn University. He received diplomas from the French Sorbonne University in French Language and Urban and Regional Planning. Sawai mostly dedicated his devotion in architectural academia, for instance, lecturing and revising the fundamental architectural textbooks and dictionary, of which he was awarded a Royal Scholar position by the Office of the Royal Society. His skill for designing architectural projects was also well recognized, which are the design for an assembly hall of Saint Gabriel's College, the buildings of Faculty of Education and Faculty of Law at Ramkhamhaeng University, and Siriraj Hospital's auditorium. See "Professor Emeritus Sawai Mongkolkasem (Royal Scholar)," Office of the Royal Society, accessed on April 27, 2021, https://www.orst.go.th/iwfm_table_lite.asp?i=0050002705001003%2F63EYK2508013

⁹⁶ Pussadee, *Satapanik Siam: Puentan Botbath Pholngan lae Naewkid, B.E.2475-2537* [Siamese Architects: Fundamentals, Roles, Works, and Concepts, 1932-1994], 466.

⁹⁷ According to a record in ASA journal, Duang Yotsunthorn was a former president of the Association of Siamese Architects in 1958. He was notable as a pioneer in Contemporary Thai architecture due to incorporating the

because Duang was an alumnus of *Chulalongkorn University* and had a cordial relation with Toemsakdi Krishnamra, the third dean of the Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy (1971-1975); but also he was the designer of the residence of Phraya Jaiyossompati, Toemsakdi's father, who was the first dean of the Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy (1943-1964).⁹⁸ Other significant projects given to the office of Duang, Thavisakdi, Chaiya, and Associates were mostly due to the personal connections that all the associates had with the nation's front-row elites.⁹⁹ These include the Firestone building and the Siam Commercial Bank buildings located on New Phetchaburi Road and at Ploenchit Arcade. All of these examples reveal that the private educational resources differentiated elite architects from those from the masses. However, the ruling elite were aware of the potential consequences. They realized that their power was still based on the labor force. One solution to this dilemma was carrying out an educational project

new construction technology with the meantime architecture. Duang received his education from Chulalongkorn University's Faculty of Architecture and the Advertising and Industrial Art program from Ohio. He started his career as an architect under the Division of Public Works in the Crown Property Bureau and occupied the last governmental position as the director of Design and Construction Division at the Department of Public Works and Municipality. While he was a lecturer at Chulalongkorn University, he did establish an architectural firm with his peers and named the office *Duang, Thavisakdi, Chaiya, and Associates* according to the names of its associates. The group produced many recognizable works, such as the former headquarters of Siam Commercial Bank at Chidlom, the building of Ministry of Finance, and Jongkonnee building. See Rerkdee Pothiwanaikul, "Duang, Thavisakdi, Chaiya, and Associates" Facebook (photo album), December 14, 2016,

https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1083336961785469&type=3&comment_id=1083567315095767

⁹⁸ Songkiet Chatwattananont, "Toemsakdi Krishnamra Wai Hoksip ti Young Tongkarn Tum-ngarn Ek Ha Pi" [Toemsakdi Krishnamra in His Sixty, Who Would Want to Work for Another Five More Years], last modified September 1987, <http://info.gotomanager.com/news/details.aspx?id=8078>.

⁹⁹ Thavisakdi Janwiroj was the eighth son of Bhanasit Janwiroj, a forestry tycoon from Lampang. He obtained his university-level education from Liverpool Technical College in 1950; Bachelor of Architecture from Liverpool University in 1953; Tropical Architecture program at the School of Architecture, Architectural Association in 1959; and worked with Basil Spence and Partners in Scotland, as well as A. Remondet, Architecture du Gouvernement in Paris, before his return to Thailand in 1960. See Kongsak Buapim and Thamrongsak Thamrongnawasawat, *Commemoration Cremation Book of Thavisakdi Janwiroj* (Bangkok: Chuanpim, 1977), <https://archive.org/details/212520000unse/page/4/mode/2up>

Chaiya Punsiriwong went to Assumption College for his high-school education, then received the scholarship to study an architectural degree at the University of Liverpool. Soon after he graduated a bachelor with distinction, he earned another scholarship to study at Harvard University in an Urban Planning program. Chaiya consequently returned to Thailand and took the first position as a second-level architect in the Division of Public Works until reaching the deputy director position. He later turned towards a public administration career and became a city of Chiang Mai's governor from 1980-1987. See Pairojana Chantaranimi and Khanchit Thamrongrattanarit, "Khon Sue Chue Chaiya" [An Honest Man Named Chaiya], last modified September, 1987, <http://info.gotomanager.com/news/details.aspx?id=2582>.

for the labor force in a similar vein. Another dual school system might be formed by vocational and academic tracks within the public system, as was done with the *Poh Chang* vocational school and the Faculty of Architecture at Chulalongkorn University. As a result, education in this period became a tool to segregate the classes in Thai society rather than to bring about greater national equality.¹⁰⁰

3.4.4 Western Architectural Education is a Means of Social Control

In third world nations, education is a scarce and highly valued resource, and a perceived path to upward mobility for non-elite groups. In this context, education may be interpreted as a social control mechanism, if it is distributed to subordinate groups as a means of legitimating the status quo and averting unrest. This pattern of education-distributing strategy may well be typical of Thailand.¹⁰¹ The following examples of architecture designed by western-graduated architects offer proof of how elites represented their superior status quo, while also revealing how they secured their autonomy that was accomplished by the unequal distribution of education.

Chulalongkorn University Alumni Association Building (1968)

On the 50th anniversary of Chulalongkorn University in 1968, the university unveiled a corrugated concrete building, situated on an 800-square-meter plot of land on Phayathai road which was surrounded by slum dwellings. In contrast to its physical setting, the building was designed for the university's alumni association, as a gathering spot for the recent graduated "*panya-chon*," or intellectuals. Jane Sakolthanasarak, who was a Chulalongkorn alumnus, designed

¹⁰⁰ Martin Carnoy, *Education as Cultural Imperialism* (New York, NY: D. McKay Co., 1974), n.p..

¹⁰¹ London, "Elites and Classes in Thai History: The Comparative Use of Power Elite and Ruling Class Analyses," 30-59.

the Chulalongkorn University Alumni Association Building (1968) with large, enclosed wall planes to maintain its privacy, separating it from its unpleasant surroundings.¹⁰² Natural light and ventilation were achieved by multi-layered wall planes (Figure 3-9). The corrugated concrete exterior made for an interesting interplay of light and shade on the building's facades. Inside, the design of multi-layered wall planes provided well-allocated interior spaces, including a dormitory, conference rooms, library, and spaces for an indoor-sports facility. In 2008, it was argued in *Keeping Up Modern Thai Architecture* that the building's exterior and functions were contradictory to its surrounding environment—which was a residential area of blue-collar workers. This writing emphasizes that the building was built to serve the purpose of furthering the educated elite's social values and activities.¹⁰³ This echoes Thongchai's argument that Thai notions of “civilization” (*siwilai*) were as much a performance for local audiences as an attempt to attain the material power of the countries of the West.¹⁰⁴ When viewed through the wider perspective of social and intellectual reality, the Chulalongkorn University Alumni Association Building embodied the opposite of the university's motto, “Honor of Chula is the honor of serving the public.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² The years after 1967 are considered to be the “starting period” of the establishment of private firms owned by Thai architects. Prior to this year, most major architectural commissions were done through the government corporations. The architects noted as pioneers in establishing the firms are the “Five Tigers”: Jane Sakolthanarak, Mom Luang Santhaya Israsena, Prawat Mongkolsamai, Duang Yotsunthorn, and Jira Silapakanok.

¹⁰³ Thailand Creative and Design Center, “A Corduroy Box by the Slums,” in *Keeping Up Modern Thai Architecture, 1967-1987*, ed. Thailand Creative and Design Center (Bangkok: Thailand Creative and Design Center, 2008), 61.

¹⁰⁴ Thongchai, “The Quest for ‘*Siwilai*’: A Geographical Discourse of Civilization Thinking in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Siam,” 528-549.

¹⁰⁵ Wikipedia, s.v. “Chulalongkorn University,” last modified April 14, 2021, 08:41 (UTC), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chulalongkorn_University

New Suan Amporn Pavilion (1972)

In Peleggi's study of King Chulalongkorn's period (Rama V, r. 1868-1910), he points to the Janus-faced nature of Siamese/Thai power, arguing that the "primary goals of the Chakri reformation were the establishment of the monarchy's authority over a newly bounded 'national' territory and the uplifting of its prestige in the international arena."¹⁰⁶ The same notion is found underlying the building of the New Suan Amporn Pavilion (1972) during the reign of King Bhumibol (Rama IX, r. 1946-2016) (Figure 3-10). The growth of both the economy and the population of Thailand in the 1970s led to the construction of ever-larger product fairs and festivals, creating a demand for more multi-purpose buildings to serve various city events. When the New Suan Amporn Pavilion broke ground, visitors of the 1972 Red Cross Fair were amazed at its 15-meter, column-free roof expanse (Figure 3-11). Using the latest engineering techniques, the main architect, Krisda Arunvongse na Ayudhya, was able to incorporate a folded-plate roof, creating a large span of space that was adaptable for its varied uses. Krisda added: "[D]ue to the fact that the New Suan Amporn Pavilion was composed of the two interconnected T-shaped buildings, they both supported and balanced each other. Even if we had cut them separately, they would still not fall."

Although the building's main function was for public use, the pavilion was often used to hold royal activities. It served as an occasional badminton court for King Bhumibol and as a reception hall for the Queen's state visitors (Figure 3-12). The New Suan Amporn Pavilion was built according to the order of King Bhumibol on the grounds of Royal Amporn Garden, which was managed by the Bureau of the Royal Household.¹⁰⁷ It was initially planned to hold the Red

¹⁰⁶ Peleggi, *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image*, 9.

¹⁰⁷ The programs of the building were also assigned according to the order of King Rama IX, although its total 10-million-baht cost was supported by Boon Rawd Brewery Co., Ltd.. See *Ibid.*

Cross members' annual fair, to host elite-class ballroom dancing, and to be a ceremonial place where royal members could grant diplomas to Thai university graduates.¹⁰⁸ In a stark contrast with the surrounding backdrop of the traditional Thai Amporn Palace and the colonial Ananda Samakhom Throne Halls, this modern structure was a symbol of the ambiguous relationship between the monarchy and the people.¹⁰⁹ The place represented itself as a local “imperial space” of “hierarchical ... lord/subjects” rather than truly representing the majority populace of Thailand’s constitutional democratic era.

3.4.5 Building Power/Prestige by Assimilating Modern American Architecture

Modern architecture in Thailand, driven by western-graduated Thai architects, was not only used as a mechanism for acculturation and a way of quieting demands for greater equality. It also represented a modern Siamese/Thai form of power/knowledge and power/prestige through the building of a theatrics of power. In this way, starting in the late nineteenth century, the ruling elite class started to build the reputation of Siam/Thailand as a civilized nation by the importation, promotion, and popularization of western art, architecture, urban design, costume, custom, and education.¹¹⁰ During the 1960s and 1980s, the same group of nobles were still maintaining their construction of a civilized pedigree as the main strategy that helped them wage a war of independence against foreign colonizers. While these theatrics of power were called into

¹⁰⁸ The first annual Red Cross Fair was organized in 1923. It was first called the “Membership Recruitment Campaign” and more than 13,436 members were recruited at a membership rate of 1 bath each. It was continued, expanded year by year and has traditionally become the most popular annual for the people of Bangkok and other provinces throughout the country to visit. See “Red Cross Fair,” The Red Cross Society, Fund Raising Bureau, accessed April 29, 2021, <https://www.redcrossfundraising.org/en/index.php/red-cross-fair>; and Wikipedia, s.v. “Suan Amporn,” last modified May 23, 2020, 17:42 (UTC), <https://th.wikipedia.org/wiki/สวนอัมพร>

¹⁰⁹ Thailand Creative and Design Center, “At the Red Cross Fair,” in *Keeping Up Modern Thai Architecture, 1967-1987*, ed. Thailand Creative and Design Center (Bangkok: Thailand Creative and Design Center, 2008), 63.

¹¹⁰ Koompong, “Power, Identity, and the Rise of Modern Architecture: from Siam to Thailand,” 111-113.

being to placate western demands for civilized behavior, it simultaneously realized the potential of the indigenous absolutist state, especially in the sphere of public appearances, as noted by

Jackson:

[K]ey audiences for the Siamese performance of civilization, the symbolic heart of the project of preserving national autonomy, were not only foreign; they were remote, thousands of kilometers distant in the imperial centers of Europe and North America. For the purpose of informing and entertaining metropolitan Western audiences with impressions of Siam's civilized status, a projected image was often sufficient.¹¹¹

To this day, the Thai elite have never failed to draw western interests by providing western-assimilated forms of architecture in order to be part of the global community. At the same time, they were able to serve their own pleasure, enjoying western products that helped secure their autonomy over the locals.

Chokchai International Building (1969)

Situated adjacent to Sukhumvit Road, on what were once open fields in eastern Bangkok, the Chokchai International Building was the country's first high-rise, developed by visionary businessman Chokchai Bulakul (Figure 3-13).¹¹² The office tower was built in 1969 to be rented out to the United States' Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) during the economic influx caused

¹¹¹ Jackson, "The Performative State: Semi-coloniality and the Tyranny of Images in Modern Thailand," 220.

¹¹² Chokchai Bulakul is a Thai businessman who built his fortune from livestock and real-estate developments. He was born in 1937 to Ma and Boon-khron, the owners of the department store *MBK* center. Chokchai graduated from Cornell University with a degree in Veterinary Medicine and returned to Thailand to continue his family business in 1957. He turned it into a larger construction-business development that mostly obtained government projects, such as the Takhli Airport in Nakhon Ratchasima and other regional airports. He is also recognized for Chokchai Farm, built as an expression of his admiration of American cowboy culture and a reminiscence of his impressions of western culture from his time in the United States. He bought the 40-hectare property near Pak Chong to develop into pastureland. Today, the farm has developed into an agrotourism attraction, boasting a steakhouse, 32000 hectares of land, 300 cows and a milk processing plant, run by his two sons, Choak and Chai Bulakul. See Thailand Creative and Design Center, "How I Built Bangkok's First Skyscraper (Interview with TCDC: Chokchai Buklakul)," in *Keeping Up Modern Thai Architecture, 1967-1987*, ed. Thailand Creative and Design Center (Bangkok: Thailand Creative and Design Center, 2008), 76-78; and Wikipedia, s.v. "Chokchai Bulakul," last modified January 26, 2021, 16:33 (UTC), https://th.wikipedia.org/wiki/โชคชัย_บุลกุล

by the Vietnam War (Figure 3-14). At a time when communication and transportation were still underdeveloped, Chokchai saw an opportunity to provide an office tower in which a large business or organization could house all of its departments under the same roof. In an interview with Thailand Creative and Design Center, he explained how he came up with a plan to build the first high-rise in Thailand:

[A]fter we had built the eight airports (in Takhli, Korat, Ubon, Udol, Nakhon Phanom, Sattahip in Thailand, and at Pakseh and Suwanakhet in Laos), I saw that there were American soldiers spread out in over 20 locations throughout Bangkok. I had an idea that if there was one building, where they can all come and live together; it could save a lot of expenses for them. And communication would be much easier too because in those times, it was very difficult and expensive just to get a listed phone number—one phone number cost 50,000 baht. And getting around in those days was also difficult because there were very few major streets in Bangkok back then. That is when I had the idea of building the Chokchai Building.¹¹³

In addition to having elevators, this 26-story building was fully air-conditioned and equipped with an efficient internal telephone system. Although the building featured a glass curtain wall—a fad among western architects at the time—the Thai architect, Rangsak Torsuwan, designed the building grid in response to both the western fashion and the building's tropical climate (Figure 3-15). In order to save energy, he limited the glazing panels to only the northern and southern façades.

What is interesting here is the Thai enthusiasm for western knowledge and materials, especially among the powerful Thai elite, which has never faded from the Thai mentality since the nineteenth century. The Thai elites were anxious and interested in new ideas, technologies, and western things, earning them the accusation of being “pro-western.” It is obvious in this case that technological advances made western civilization desirable enough to overcome Thai concern about the superiority of western powers. As mentioned by Thongchai, the Thai elite

¹¹³ Thailand Creative and Design Center, “How I Built Bangkok’s First Skyscraper (Interview with TCDC: Chokchai Buklakul),” 76-78.

displayed the distrust/desire, hate/love attitude held by a lesser power towards a superior one in most power relations.¹¹⁴ The idea of having a high-rise on Sukhumvit Road when there was plenty of other land to build on was controversial among Thai architects. In an interview, Chokchai explained that the idea for the building came from a conversation with a fellow Thai, a doctor who mentioned that it was “a shame that any time we, Thais, wanted to build something, we had to rely on a foreign company” to the detriment of Thai interests. The doctor complained that foreigners “came unequipped, and would need to hire Thai engineers and Thai laborers ... So, why did we not just build things ourselves? Suddenly [Chokchai said], I was inspired.”¹¹⁵

The collaboration between Chokchai and Rangsan saw immediate financial success. They also succeeded in terms of persuading the Americans to rent the whole building, as Chokchai later recalled his strategy: ... I told them (the Americans) to think about how traffic would improve by living in one building—they would be traveling mostly in elevators. I told them they would save on many expenses, that they could work faster and more efficiently. Eventually, they saw things in the same way, and they rented out the entire building except for the two floors we used.¹¹⁶

The success of Thai *siwilai* and Thai architects was thus understood in terms of maintaining Thai autonomy from foreign designers. However, western influence in architecture was rarely maintained without powerful local agencies.¹¹⁷ The transplantation of western Modern architecture thus could not be achieved without the allowance of the Thai elites.

¹¹⁴ Thongchai, “Siam’s Colonial Conditions and the Birth of Thai History,” 25.

¹¹⁵ Thailand Creative and Design Center, “How I Built Bangkok’s First Skyscraper (Interview with TCDC: Chokchai Buklakul),” 76-78.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ann Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), n.p..

Thai Farmers Bank Head Office, Phaholyothin (1981)

During the mid-1980s, the sudden growth of Thailand's economy began to slow, causing many construction projects to be suspended. It was not until 1987 that an economic boom resounded throughout the country. With this, a new class of Thai-Chinese business tycoons arose, bringing with them a corporate vision that would transform the cityscape. Spurred on by financial liquidity, owners of local enterprises and conglomerates began focusing on corporate image, one aspect of which was architectural design. The appearance of a corporation's headquarters emerged as a new competitive factor for businesses. Large financial institutions-built projects such as the 33-floor Bangkok Bank Building (Figure 3-16), and the 19-floor Thai Farmers Bank Building (now known as the Kasikorn Bank, Figure 3-17).¹¹⁸ This latter project was initiated following a business trip to the United States by the president of Thai Farmers Bank, Bancha Lamsam.¹¹⁹ Bancha returned to Thailand with the idea of building a glass-box building, an immensely popular style in major American cities during the beginning of the 1980s. It was part of his mission to create an international look for the bank's new headquarters, located on Phaholyothin Road. Like many stylish American corporate headquarters of the period, the Thai Farmers Bank Building was designed by Rangsan Torsuwan to be a modern steel-and-glass skyscraper, with an open plaza fronted by a dramatic piece of contemporary sculpture. The architectural outcome embodied the bank's progressive vision and innovative management

¹¹⁸ These two high-rises represented two conflicting Modern architectural deliverables, even though they were both designed with the International Style. The Bangkok Bank Head Office featured concrete horizontal fins, while the Thai Farmers Bank Building was using a glass curtain-wall system. Their differences informed an ongoing debate on which technologies are most apt for the hot and humid climate of Thailand.

¹¹⁹ The Lamsam family is a Thai family of Chinese descent. Notable as the founders of Kasikorn Bank or Thai Farmers Bank, the extended family owns businesses in the banking and insurance industries, such as Phatra Insurance, Muang Thai Insurance, and Muang Thai Life Assurance. The current head of the family is Bantoon Lamsam, who is a son of Bancha, who together with his family is listed by Forbes as the 27th richest in Thailand in 2017. See Wikipedia, s.v. "Lamsam family," last modified May 23, 2020, 17:42 (UTC), https://th.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lamsam_family

system.

Though Rangsan Torsuwan encountered significant resistance due to his employment of a curtain-wall system, as its glazing design reflected light and heat on the neighbors, he was still praised as a pioneer for daring to clad an entire building with a glass curtain wall. At that time, modern technologies and construction materials, such as structural frames and caulking, were not common. The glass and related material composites were insufficient to accomplish heat reduction and energy conservation. As a result, the cost of Thai Farmers Bank Building was far higher than the other contemporary buildings in Bangkok. The Bangkok Bank Building, for instance, was built with concrete-fin technology because the glass-clad buildings were more expensive when it came to an average cost per square meter.

These projects show that the *siwilai* rationale persisted in the Thai nature, as Thai elites did not want to be seen as inferior and did not want to be left behind in comparison to western nations. To build up confidence in one's own *siwilai*, the evaluation scheme must be a self-fulfilling one, by which the Thai elites could prove their *siwilai* to themselves, no matter what others might think.¹²⁰ Though the cost of making glass-cladding buildings was significantly higher than concrete buildings, and there was no proof of heat reduction in the former one, the Thais still chose to construct the glass-cladding buildings out of a genuine desire to avoid the disgrace of inferiority arising from being "less civilized." Chaiboon Sirithanawat, a professor of Chulalongkorn University's Faculty of Architecture, explained that "glass is beautiful, and it was increasingly popular both in the West and in Asian countries," with the additional benefits of rapid construction, ease of maintenance, and convenience.¹²¹

¹²⁰ Thongchai, "The Quest for 'Siwilai: A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam," 546.

¹²¹ Thailand Creative and Design Center, "Tropical High-Rise Debates (Conversation with TCDC: Chaiboon Sirithanawat, Faculty of Architecture, Chulalongkorn University)," in *Keeping Up Modern Thai*

However, Chaiboon notes that glass curtain-walls are better suited to more temperate climates than Thailand's, particularly since "at that point of time, there was only a little development on the glass qualities regarding light adjustment or heat reflection." This meant that the glass walls were counterproductive in terms of energy efficiency, which was not yet a significant part of the materials research.¹²²

The debate over the suitability of glass also occurred with Krisda Arunvongse's earlier projects, whose designs developed concrete horizontal fins to filter sunlight and heat and avoid using glass panels (Figure 3-18). Later, however, he had to bow to client and investor pressures, as the majority wanted curtain-wall exteriors for glass-sided buildings that were sleek and beautiful like the skyscrapers in the United States.¹²³

Panabhandhu School's Building Nine (1969)

The desire to be civilized like the West reached the stage of direct assimilation in the case of Panabhandhu School's Building Nine (Figure 3-19). This was designed by Ong-ard Satrabhandhu, a Thai architect educated entirely in the United States (Figure 3-20).¹²⁴ After

Architecture, 1967-1987, ed. Thailand Creative and Design Center (Bangkok: Thailand Creative and Design Center, 2008), 78-79.

¹²² In Chaiboon's wording, he explained that "... in a colder climate, heat transference through glass windows is much less a problem; but of course, it is a much bigger problem in Thailand's climate. Also, at that point of time, there was only little development on the glass qualities regarding light adjustment or heat reflection. Thus, the curtain-wall system was actually going against the ventilation flow for most of the time. This had not yet involved finding ways to conserve energy."¹²² See *Ibid.*

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ Born in Bangkok, Thailand, in 1944, Ong-ard Satrabhandhu received his bachelor's degree in architecture at Cornell University in 1965 and a master's degree from Yale University in 1968. While Ong-ard was pursuing his architectural degree at Yale, Charles Moore, who served as dean of the Yale School of Architecture, aroused major influences in Ong-ard's works. One of Moore's lectures on "the historical knowledge of all things" becomes a significant influence on Ong-ard. The Thai architect believed that every architectural idea and pattern had already been taken and built. Only architects with a deep understanding of their subject matter could see beyond its shell and find a real essence of that matter, then be able to apply it to their works. In his opinion, general audiences do not always realize that recently built architecture is deeply bound with historical roots. Therefore, the works of Ong-ard always reflect the history of the subject matter and are also always influenced by western academia. See Supasai Vongkulbhisal, "Crypto-Colonialism and Culture in Modern Thai Architecture: The Works of Ong-ard

returning to Thailand in 1969, Ong-ard was commissioned by his own family to design Building Nine, the main building of Panabhandhu Elementary School in Bangkok. The Thai architect chose to refer directly to the work of Le Corbusier, the master of Modern architecture. According to his interview with the Association of Siamese Architects (ASA) in 1999, Ong-ard started to absorb Le Corbusier's work while he was pursuing his undergraduate degree at Cornell University. He became passionate about Le Corbusier after listening to Colin Rowe's analyses of Le Corbusier's projects.¹²⁵ As Le Corbusier once said, "I know only one master—the past of architecture." Ong-ard later elaborated on his interpretation of this statement when giving a lecture on classical architecture, explaining that the influences exchanged between classical and contemporary architecture "indicate a continuity of apprehending the same architectural concept. Originality, therefore, means nothing and we should not mind it. Learning from good architecture is all that matters to lead to a resolution to solve our current societal problems."¹²⁶ Ong-ard also further stressed that "an architect should neither compete in the war of images, nor be concerned with absolute originality."¹²⁷

As an example of his design philosophy, the architectural design for Building Nine strongly resembles Le Corbusier's unbuilt French Embassy for Brasilia (1963) (Figure 3-21). According to Ong-ard, he chose the cylinder shape from Le Corbusier's French Embassy for the triangular site of the elementary school, as he thought it would fit perfectly within the limitation

Satrabhandhu" (presentation, 2020 ENITS and ENITAS Research Scholarship Presentation, Bangkok, Thailand, August 27, 2020).

¹²⁵ Colin Rowe is a British-born American architectural historian, critic, theorist, and teacher. He is acknowledged as a major intellectual influence on world architecture and urbanism in the second half of the twentieth century and beyond. In particular, his unorthodox and non-chronological view of history made him possible to develop his famous essay "The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa" (1947) in which he theorized that there were compositional "rules" in Palladio's villas that could be demonstrated to correspond to similar "rules" in Le Corbusier's villas at Poissy and Garches. For further information, see Wikipedia, s.v. "Colin Rowe," last modified March 30, 2020, 17:02 (UTC), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colin_Rowe.

¹²⁶ Ong-ard Satrabhandhu, *Ong Ard architects: 1966-1992* (Bangkok: The Key Publisher, 1992), 10.

¹²⁷ Non, "A Sudden Appearance of Modernism in Thailand," 70.

of the triangle shape. He was unable to assimilate Le Corbusier's 1929 Salvation Army Refuge in this project due to the shape of the land, and instead reconfigured the French Embassy's office programs to meet the needs of the elementary school.¹²⁸ Here, Ong-ard replaced the original L-shaped-office spaces with the double-loaded corridors, as they were more suitable for the classrooms and dormitory. The designer also placed the school's administrative office on the upper levels, similar to where Le Corbusier planned to locate the French Ambassador's office. Besides these main architectural features from Le Corbusier's French Embassy, Ong-ard modified design elements from Le Corbusier's other masterpieces in this building—for instance, the sculptural water tank located on the rooftop of *Unite d'Habitation* in Marseille, France (1952); the mushroom columns of Chandigarh's Assembly Hall in Chandigarh, India (1953); and the curved ramp of the Carpenter Center of the Visual Arts at Harvard University (1962) (Figure 3-22).¹²⁹

Although later in his career, Ong-ard Satrabhandhu admitted that his building “owed a lot to Le Corbusier.” Building Nine not only incorporated the ideas of one Modern master, but also referenced architectural features from other renowned western Modern masters.¹³⁰ These references included the brick circular cutaway, which resembled Louis I. Kahn's arches at the Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad, India (1962–1974); and the oddly juxtaposed and incongruous auditorium, borrowed from James Stirling's expressively sloped auditorium at the Engineering Building at the University of Leicester (1963).¹³¹ Despite the excessive transplantation of the French Embassy design, Ong-ard did at least adapt some other design

¹²⁸ Ibid., 70-72.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ong-ard Satrabhandhu, “Ong-ard Satrabhandhu,” interview by Paphop Kerdsup and Wichit Horyingsawad, *ArtAd* 261 (2018): 32.

¹³¹ John Hoskin, *Bangkok* (Singapore: Times Editions, 1986), 119.

elements that reflected his own sensitivity to Modernism and Regionalism, as he saw this as pertinent to Thailand's hot and humid climate. He filled in the intermediate space of Building Nine, between the outer circular building's shell and the inner rectangular spaces, with *Brise-Soleil*—Le Corbusier's architectonic technique for controlling sunlight. The only architectural component of his building that later proved to be distinguishable from Le Corbusier's original designs is an addition of an exterior fire escape to the building's east-sided façade, in order to satisfy the local building code.¹³²

In 2009, almost half a century after the completion of Building Nine, Ong-ard Satrabhandhu was recognized as a Thai national artist in the field of contemporary architecture; and Building Nine is his most recognizable work. While many in the West decried his obvious borrowing, Building Nine was admired by the Thai public and incorporated into the Thai architectural tradition without any reluctance. As Non Arkaraprasertkul observes, in the Thai context, "Building Nine was perceived as a socio-cultural phenomenon, a conjunction of Modern architecture in a local context." Because it not only represented but was created by a graduate of the finest primary educational academy in Thailand, "it attained recognition as an appropriation of the West to the local culture of Bangkok" through a process of assimilation which "paralleled that of Thai colonialism," situating Building Nine in the ongoing discourse of *siwilai*.¹³³

Thai culture seemed to accept this radical new architecture because of its distinctive appearance, indicating a progressive western perspective. It was a self-confirmation that the Thais were civilized, particularly according to the elite class. Even though Building Nine was not a political building, its association with the elites was the factor that reinforced an

¹³² Non Arkaraprasertkul and Reilly P. Rabitaille, "Differences, Originality and Assimilation: Building Nine at Panabhandhu School," *Threshold* 35 (2009): 8.

¹³³ Non, "A Sudden Appearance of Modernism in Thailand," 72.

unquestionably positive social reception en bloc. Its exemplary history reflected the socio-cultural values of the Thai society and its desire for progress—*siwilai*—derived from westernization.

Figures

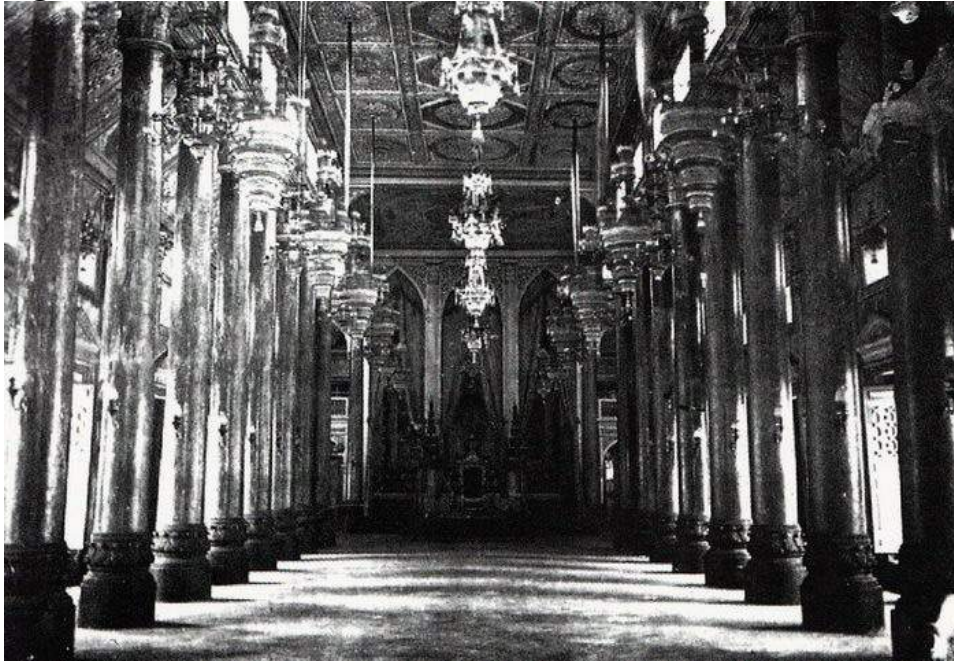


Figure 3-1 - *Abhinaoniwes* Throne Hall (1854), a new throne hall built by King Rama IV (Mongkut) decorated with a colonnade porch, internal naves, and crystal chandeliers, Photograph, in Pirasri Povatong, “Building Siwilai: Transformation of Architecture and Architectural Practice in Siam during the Reign of Rama V, 1868-1910” (Ph.D. Diss., (University of Michigan, 2011), 71.



Figure 3-2 - *Phra Nakhon Khiri*, one of King Rama IV’s provincial palaces, were assigned to assimilate western style intermixed with Chinese and Siamese architectural elements, Photograph, in Pirasri Povatong, “Building Siwilai: Transformation of Architecture and Architectural Practice in Siam during the Reign of Rama V, 1868-1910” (Ph.D. Diss., University of Michigan, 2011), n.p..



Figure 3-3 - *Chakri* Throne Hall, located in the Grand Palace, Bangkok, was built with the western floor plan, although topped with traditional Thai spike roof (1882), Photograph, in Pirasri Povatong, “Building Siwilai: Transformation of Architecture and Architectural Practice in Siam during the Reign of Rama V, 1868-1910” (Ph.D. Diss., University of Michigan, 2011), 72.



Figure 3-4 (Left) - Sumet Jumsai na Ayudhaya received bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degrees from St.John’s College, University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom, Photograph, “Sumet Jumsai” *Wikipedia*, accessed March 14, 2022. www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sumet_Jumsai

Figure 3-5 (Right) - Krisda Arunvongse na Ayudhaya graduated with bachelor’s (1955) and master’s degrees (1956) from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), and a doctoral degree from Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, France, in 1960, Photograph, “Baan Klang Mueng khon Phu-wa Kor Tor Mor” [A House in the Middle of the City of Bangkok’s Mayor], *Home Digest Magazine* (October, 1992): 40-41.

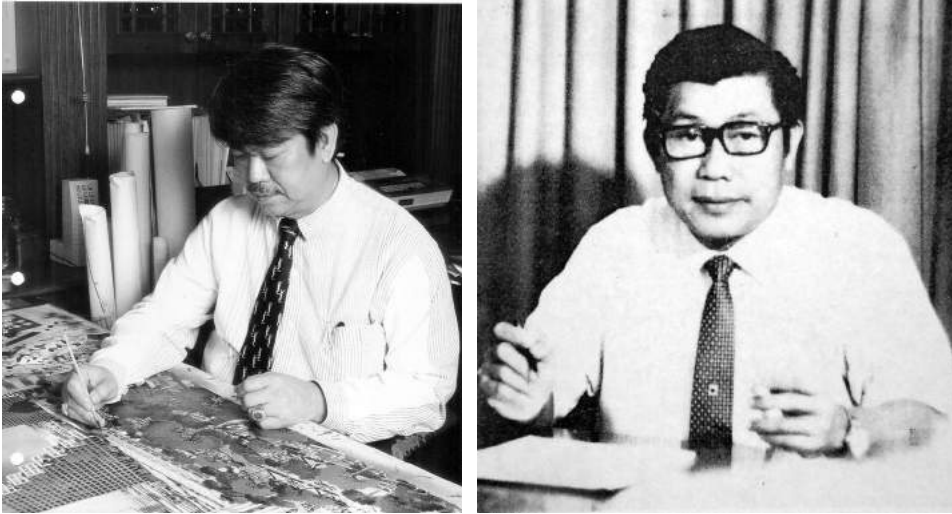


Figure 3-6 (Left) - Rangsang Torsuwan obtained a bachelor's degree from Chulalongkorn (1962), and a master's degree from MIT (1964), which he was studying under Eduardo Catalano who was also a student of Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer, Photograph, in Rerkdee Pothiwanaikul, "Rangsang Torsuwan Architect" *Facebook* (photo album), May 12, 2019, <https://web.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1251735434945620&type=3>

Figure 3-7 (Right) - Jane Sakolthanasarak graduated a bachelor's degree from Chulalongkorn and continued his master's degree at Cornell in the United States, Photograph, in Pussadee Tiptus. *Satapanik Siam: Puentan Botbath Pholngan lae Naewkid, B.E.2475-2537* [Siamese Architects: Fundamentals, Roles, Works, and Concepts, 1932-1994] (Bangkok: ASA, 1996), n.p..



Figure 3-8 - Lining from left to right in the front, Prasong Iamananta, Ruengsak Kantabutr, Sawai Mongkolkasem, Luang Visarnsilpagum, Somphop Pirom, Mom Rajawongse Thongyai Thongyai, Truengjai Buranasomphop, Intira Yommanart, and Sumet Jumsai, Photograph, in Rerkdee Pothiwanaikul, "Sawai Mongkolkasem: Paris (BE 2500, 2520, 2532)" *Facebook* (photo album), January 21, 2018, <https://web.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1251735434945620&type=3>



Figure 3-9 - Chulalongkorn University Alumni Association building (completed in 1968), located as a part of Chulalongkorn University in Pathum Wan District. The building was designed by Jane Sakoltharak, following the trend of western corduroy-box building, Photograph, in Thailand Creative and Design Center, *Keeping Up Modern Thailand* (Bangkok: Thailand Creative and Design Center, 2008), 24.



Figure 3-10 - New Suan Amporn *Pavilion*, designed by Krisda Arunvongse and completed in 1972, for the purpose of serving the annual Red Cross Fair, Photograph, in Thailand Creative and Design Center, *Keeping Up Modern Thailand* (Bangkok: Thailand Creative and Design Center, 2008), 36.

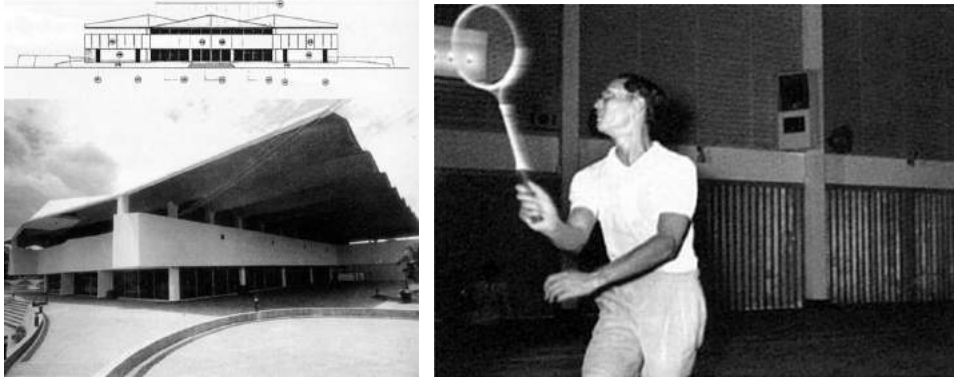


Figure 3-11 (Left) - New Suan Amporn Pavilion amazed the people with its gigantic 15-meter, column-free roof expanse, which was the new technology derived from the western country, Photograph, in Thailand Creative and Design Center, *Keeping Up Modern Thailand* (Bangkok: Thailand Creative and Design Center, 2008), 36.



Figure 3-12 (Right) - King Rama IX (Bhumibol) was playing badminton in the hall of New Suan Amporn Pavilion, Photograph, in Thailand Creative and Design Center, *Keeping Up Modern Thailand* (Bangkok: Thailand Creative and Design Center, 2008), 36.



Figure 3-13 - The first Thai investor in high-rise building, Chokchai Bulakul, stood in the middle of the construction site of Chokchai International building (1969), Photograph, in Thailand Creative and Design Center, *Keeping Up Modern Thailand* (Bangkok: Thailand Creative and Design Center, 2008), 42.



Figure 3-14 (Left) - Chokchai International building, designed by Rangsak Torsuwan, was standing out on Sukhumvit Road in 1960s, Photograph, in Rerkdee Pothiwanakul, “Rangsak Torsuwan Architect” *Facebook* (photo album), June 12, 2017, <https://web.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1251735434945620&type=3>

Figure 3-15 (Right) - Chokchai International building was the tallest high-rise in Thailand back in the late 1960s. It was built with reinforced concrete technology together with curtain wall, Photograph, in Rerkdee Pothiwanakul, “Rangsak Torsuwan Architect” *Facebook* (photo album), June 12, 2017, <https://web.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1251735434945620&type=3>

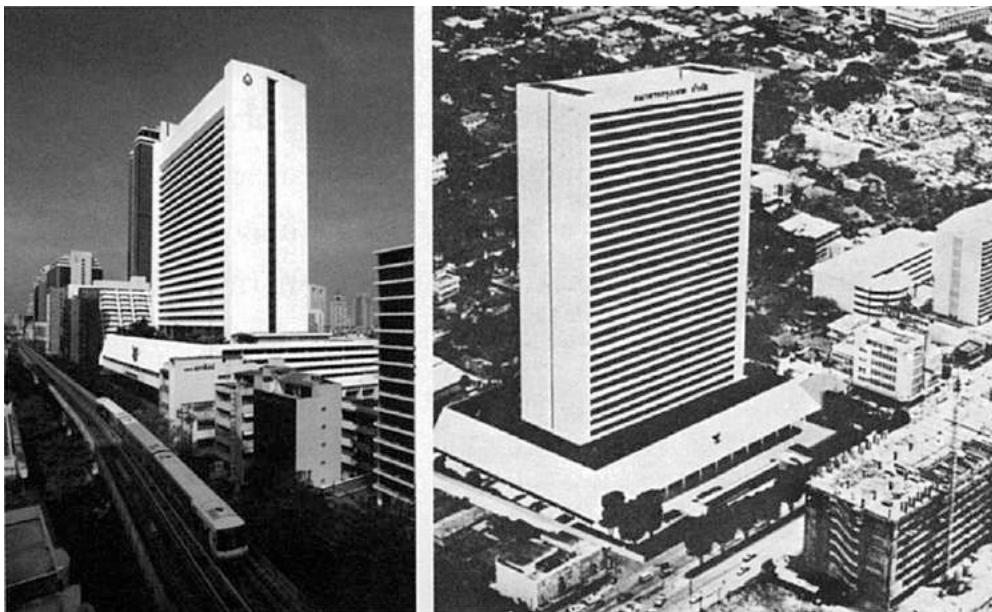


Figure 3-16 - Bangkok Bank building (1981), designed by Krisda Arungvongse na Ayudhya, is still located on Silom Road till today, representing the Central Business District of Bangkok, Photograph, in Thailand Creative and Design Center, *Keeping Up Modern Thailand* (Bangkok: Thailand Creative and Design Center, 2008), 46.

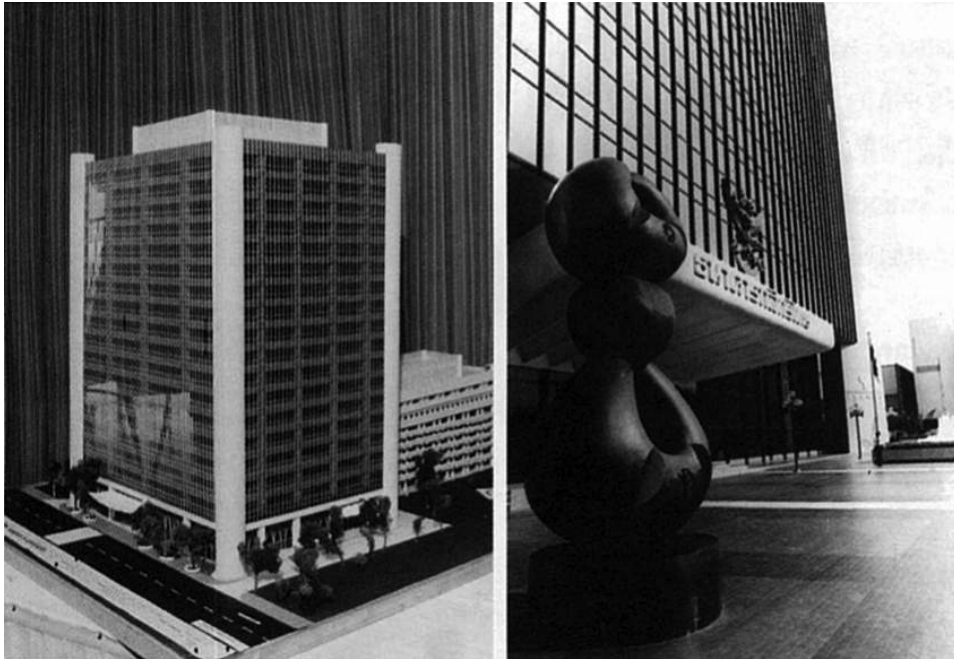


Figure 3-17 - Kasikorn Bank building, designed by Rangsarn Torsuwan, is recognized as the American-inspired office building that employed curtain wall and large plaza venue similarly to the office-building trend in the United States, Photograph, in Thailand Creative and Design Center, *Keeping Up Modern Thailand* (Bangkok: TCDC, 2008), 46.



Figure 3-18 - Krisda Arunvongse's concrete-fin brise-soleil technique that was used with the American University Alumni building, Photograph by Beer Singnoi, "100 Amazing Architecture with SCG 100th Year Anniversary" *SCG Experience*, accessed March 15, 2022.

<https://www.pinterest.com/scgexperience/100-amazing-architectures-with-scg-100th-year-anni/>



Figure 3-19 - The Modernism of *Building Nine* of the Panabhandhu School, designed by Ong-ard Satrabhandhu, was standing amidst the suburban context of Bangkok in 1966, Photograph, in *Contemporary Architect in Thailand: an individual study report of 3rd-year students* (Bangkok: Faculty of Architecture, Silpakorn University, 1982).



Figure 3-20 - Ong-ard Satrabhadhu studied architecture at Cornell University under Colin Rowe (degree awarded in 1965) and acquired the Master of Architecture at Yale University, which he studied under Charles Moore, in 1967. (Source: Richard H. Driehaus Prize, University of Notre Dame), Photograph, “Ong-ard Satrabhadhu” *Wikipedia*, accessed March 15, 2022. www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ong-ard_Satrabhadhu

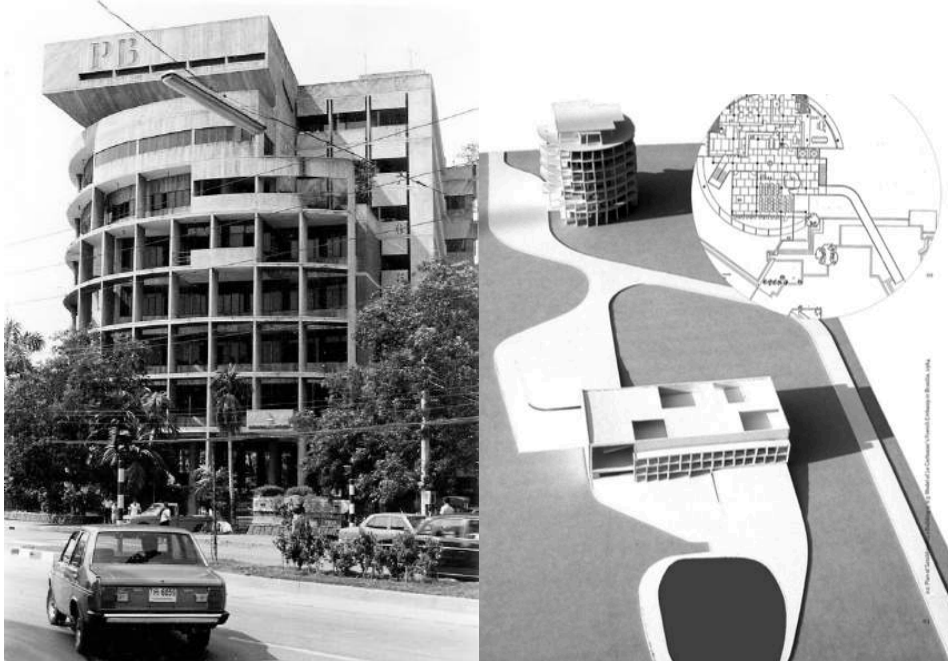


Figure 3-21 - The comparison between Building Nine of the Panabhandhu School in Bangkok and a physical model of Le Corbusier's French Embassy in Brasilia, Brazil, in 1964.

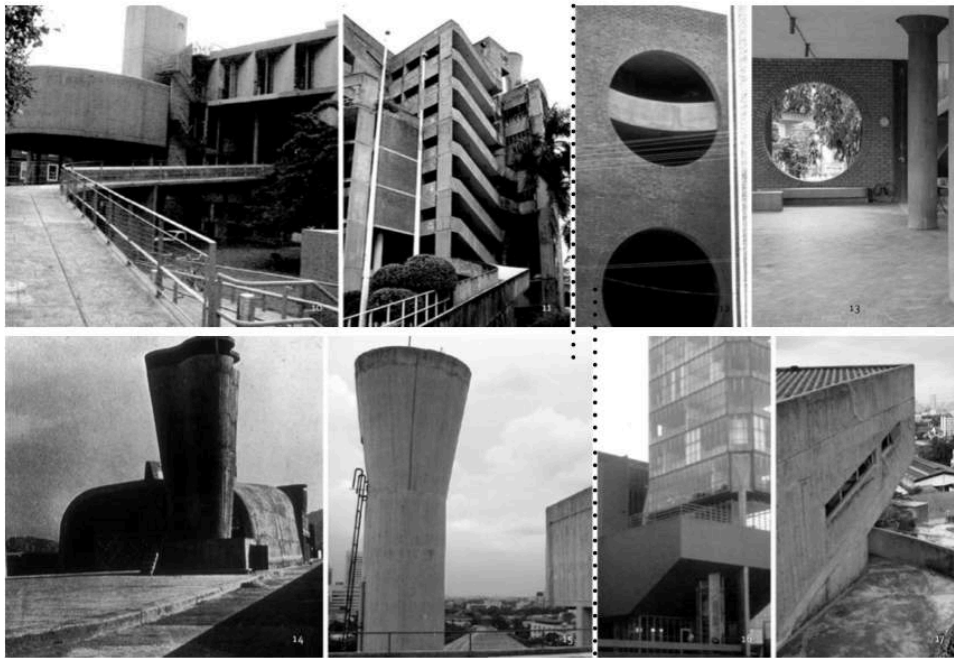


Figure 3-22 (Top) - Entrance ramp at Le Corbusier's Carpenter Center of Visual Arts at Harvard University (2005) comparing with entrance ramp at Satabhandhu's Building Nine.

Figure 3-23 (Bottom) - Brick circular cutaway at Louis Kahn's Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad (1988) comparing with Satabhandhu's Building Nine, Photograph, in Non Arkaraprasertkul and Reilly P. Rabitaille, "Differences, Originality and Assimilation: Building Nine at Panabhandhu School," *Threshold* 35 (2009): 8-15.

Chapter 4

“Ambiguity” in Modern Thai Architecture

“... all cultures are involved in one another; none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated, and un-monolithic”—Said’s observation in *Culture and Imperialism*.¹

In the common discourse of colonialism, Siam/Thailand is often not discussed, because of its supposedly “unique” status as Southeast Asia’s one and only “non-colony.” However, though the country may never have been colonized, Siam/Thailand was not free from western colonial influences.² Like many other countries in Southeast Asia, Siam engaged first the British- and subsequently the American-dominated world orders, as a politically independent but economically and culturally subordinated society led by elites who used their associations with the new metropolitan powers to bolster domestic rule over ethnically diverse populations.³ In this sense, analyses of western influences in Siam/Thailand have shown a diverse range of outcomes, from dramatic westernization to the persistence of Thai culture and identity.

Many scholars have attempted to understand the patterns or logic of Siam/Thailand’s cultural encounter with the West through the lens of postcolonial studies. Postcolonial Studies has become a popular theoretical framework of encountering-the-West investigations because this form of critical postcolonial discourse has grappled directly with the questions of how western dominance has impacted culture, identity, and knowledge in geopolitically subordinated

¹ Said, Edward W., *Culture and Imperialism* (New York, NY: Knopf, 1993), xxix.

² Nopphorn Prachukul, “Roland Barthes kap Sanyasat Wannakam (Roland Barthes and Literary Semiotics),” In *Mayakhati, San-niphon jak ‘Mythologies’ khong Roland Barthes Plae jak Phasa-farangset doi Wanphimon Angkhasirisap* [Mythologies, Selected Writings from Mythologies by Roland Barthes], trans. from the French by Wanphimon Angkhasirisap (Bangkok: Kobfai, 2001), 156.

³ Peter A. Jackson, “Afterword: Postcolonial Theories and Thai Semicolonial Hybridities,” in *The Ambiguous Allure of the West: Traces of the Colonial in Thailand*, eds. Rachel V. Harrison and Peter A. Jackson (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 2010), 192.

societies.⁴ However, the growing body of historical scholarly research on Thailand using the postcolonial lens remains vague and ambiguous in the Thai case.

According to Peter A. Jackson, a professor of Thai History, one of several reasons for this vagueness is that Thai nationalist historiography is based on the premise that the country was never a western colony. Within this conservative discourse, the notion of a postcolonial analysis of “never-colonized” Siam is a *non sequitur*.⁵ This uniqueness has made it difficult for critical studies of Thai colonial discourse to engage explicitly in a dialogue with mainstream postcolonial theory. On the same point, Craig Reynolds, Thongchai Winichakul, and Michael Herzfeld argue that this is because the “colonized” versus “colonizer” model that underpins postcolonial studies does not fully capture the complexity of the Thai situation.⁶ The idea of colonialism in Thailand highlights the need for critical approaches that can capture the specificity of a society that remained politically independent of the West, while imposing subordinating neo-colonial relations on its own population. Thai Studies thus requires a justification of the need for any form of theory that can place Siam/Thailand in a comparative relation with formerly colonized societies.

An undeniable fact is that although Siam/Thailand lacks a colonial history, Thai society was also subjected to forces of change that were similar, if not comparable, to the rest of

⁴ Jackson, “The Ambiguities of Semicolonial Power in Thailand,” 37.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 37-38.

⁶ In Jackson, “The Ambiguities of Semicolonial Power in Thailand,” 38, Jackson refers to Craig Reynolds, Thongchai Winichakul, and Michael Herzfeld’s statements. Their references are listed as follows: Reynolds, “On the Gendering of Nationalist and Postnationalist Selves in Twentieth Century Thailand,” 252-269; Thongchai, “The Other Within: Travel and Ethno-Spatial Differentiation of Siamese Subjects, 1885-1910,” 38-62; Thongchai, “The Quest for ‘Siwilai’: A Geographical Discourse of Civilization Thinking in Late Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Siam,” 528-549; and Herzfeld, “The Absent Presence: Discourses of Crypto-Colonialism,” 899-926.

Similarly, Craig Reynolds points to the complex reasons why revisionist critical theories do not flourish in Thai language studies, “having to do with the peculiar characteristics of Thailand’s political culture, the way the Thai language filters certain conceptual categories from European languages, and the insistence of educated Thais that their country, unlike any other in Southeast Asia, avoided direct colonization.” For further details, see Reynolds. “On the Gendering of Nationalist and Postnationalist Selves in Twentieth Century Thailand,” 264.

colonized Southeast Asia.⁷ Therefore, in the context of previous dominant western ways of seeing things, the signature postcolonial concepts mentioned by Peter Hallward, a political philosopher, offer an especially fruitful way to examine Thai Modern architecture, which include “the hybrid, the interstitial, the intercultural, the in-between, the indeterminate, the counter-hegemonic, the contingent.”⁸ All of these concepts are reflected in the use of the prefix “semi-” to qualify notions of “colonialism,” “imperialism,” or “modernity” in relation to Siam/Thailand; and by apprehending these discourses, it is possible to position Siam in between the very binaries--tradition/modernity, colony/empire--that critical scholarship seeks to dismantle.⁹ In this light, Reynolds also suggests that, “[T]he notion of hybridity may also prove useful in articulating what is happening to the current Thai social formation. In turn, the insights gained may be fed back through the historical record to facilitate contrast with other colonized and semi-colonized societies.”¹⁰ Pattana Kitiarsa, professor in Southeast Asian Studies, adds that the notion of hybridity provides a “conceptual tool to make sense of the changing landscape of contemporary Thai religion.”¹¹ Jackson summarizes:

[T]hese studies show that there has been no single Thai response to western dominance, but rather a multiplicity of “appropriations, accommodations, and resistances” by diverse royal, elite, middle class and subaltern groups and individuals. Yet amidst this diversity, certain patterns are nonetheless apparent.¹²

Therefore, this chapter plans to examine the characteristics of Thai-Western relations through an approach of the postcolonial cultural hybridity, particularly that of Homi Bhabha and

⁷ Reynolds, “On the Gendering of Nationalist and Postnationalist Selves in Twentieth Century Thailand,” 265.

⁸ Peter Hallward, *Absolute Postcolonial: Writing Between the Singular and the Specific* (Manchester and New York, NY: Manchester University Press, 2001), xi.

⁹ Loos. *Subject Siam: Family, Law, and Colonial Modernity in Thailand*, 17.

¹⁰ Reynolds. “On the Gendering of Nationalist and Postnationalist Selves in Twentieth Century Thailand,” 266.

¹¹ Pattana Kitiarsa, “Beyond Syncretism: Hybridization of Popular Religion in Contemporary Thailand,” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 36, no. 3 (2005): 466.

¹² Jackson, “Afterword: Postcolonial Theories and Thai Semicolonial Hybridities,” 195.

Nestor Garcia Canclini, to discuss the ambivalences and multiplicities (duality and ambiguity) of Thai engagements with the West via the formation of Modern Thai architecture. Both approaches to hybridity have value in understanding the patterns of Thai-Western blending because each theory provides tools to critically assess one of the dimensions of the double foreign and local burdens of Thai crypto-colonialism. Further, their theories still respond to the limitations of the binary colonizer/colonized model underpinning earlier postcolonial accounts, allowing us to explore the autonomy/subordination dialectic and a reinvigorated theory of crypto-colonialism, which may bring Siamese/Thai agency into greater focus.¹³ Thus, the different local/autonomous and international/subordinate dimensions of power in crypto-colonial Siam/Thailand can be understood through cultural-hybridity theory.

4.2 “Hybridity” Discourse in Siamese/Thai society

4.2.1 Homi Bhabha’s “Hybridity” Theory

Among the streams of postcolonial analysis,¹⁴ one of the most influential theories of cultural hybridity was presented by Homi Bhabha, an Indian-English scholar. Bhabha’s *hybridity* theory is often used by Thai Studies critics to read the richly hybridized popular culture of Siamese ruling elites as a form of resistance to and engagement with a dominating power, particularly as a resistance to *siwilai*, a discourse that bolsters the internal colonization of Siam by Bangkok’s ruling class. Principally, hybridity is a useful tool for studying the particularities of sociocultural interaction between different groups in circumstances of colonialism and

¹³ Ibid., 189-190.

¹⁴According to Jackson, other branches of postcolonial analysis that help to capture Siamese/Thai cultural hybridity include Garcia Canclini’s patterns of cultural hybridity in a postcolonial setting of relative political autonomy, Edouard Glissant’s notions of *creolite* and *creolization* in studies of multi-ethnic Caribbean societies, Mary Louise Pratt’s idea of “transculturation” as a form of agency within the asymmetrical power relations of colonialism, and Partha Chatterjee’s work on elite versus subaltern forms of cultural hybridity in South Asia.

contemporary globalization. Felipe Hernandez, a professor in Latin American architectural history and theory, summarizes it:

[R]ather than simply the straight mixture of two or more elements which form a new one; in postcolonial theory, *hybridity* has multiple connotations. It refers to the site of cultural productivity that emerges on the margins of culture, between cultures. As such, it is a space where cultural elements are continually rearticulated and reconstituted. Hybridity also expresses the process of rearticulation of culture, hybridization, a process in which cultural elements change in relation to themselves and to one another; they continue to hybridize. Hence, rather than disappearing in a merger, process of cultural hybridization perpetuate difference and, indeed, multiply it.¹⁵

Thus, when applying Bhabha's theory to colonial actualities, the colonial outcome needs to be considered as a complex intersection of multiple subject positions and historical temporalities, not simply as a straightforward relationship between two assumed homogeneous constructs: colonized and colonizer.¹⁶ Not only does Bhabha's account of hybridity draw on deconstructionist ideas of mutually defining West/non-West interactions emphasizing the "mutualities and negotiations across the colonial divide," but also his work is associated with poststructuralism because it advocates the dismantling of binary systems of social antagonism, employing concepts ranging from hybridity and the Third Space, to cultural difference.¹⁷

To understand how Bhabha's hybridity is one of the most critical ways to examine *siwilai*, one must first understand the purpose of the so-called "civilizing mission," the means by which the savage could be enlightened and turned into a copy, or double, of the European. This western-led mission started when colonized subjects, their cultures, and their cultural products were considered inferior (*a priori*) and backward (as they are "behind" from the point of view of western linear history). The Europeans felt that their superiority gave them the responsibility of

¹⁵ Felipe Hernandez, *Bhabha for Architects* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 58.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 61.

¹⁷ Marwan M. Kraidy, *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalization* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2005), 165; and Hernandez, *Bhabha for Architects*, 10.

bringing development to the savage in the form of “civilization.” Framing the process in this way, of course, occludes the damage done to the colonized culture. Not only does it conceal the physical damage of conquest and colonization but, more importantly, it obscures the destruction of one culture through the imposition of another.¹⁸ As a consequence, the colonized peoples were remade in a European image by means of language, religion, and education.

On this stage, the idea of the “enlightened” savage becomes a threat to the colonizer. It undermines the duality of savage/civilized which had initially allowed the colonizer to claim cultural authority and to govern the colonized. Moreover, it presents two unsettling possibilities: either the colonized subjects may acquire the same cultural status as the colonizer, even though they are sited remotely; or their new education in the rhetoric of freedom might lead to uprising. Hence, in order to counteract the anxiety caused by the colonizer’s potential loss of authority, the newly created colonized doubles must be rejected as inferior copies. Only then can the colonizer be sure of maintaining authority. In this sense, the intent of the civilizing mission is split between its narcissistic desire and the fear of its realization.¹⁹

This outcome brought Bhabha to further his argument regarding the purpose and procedures of the civilizing mission through the concept of *mimicry*. According to Bhabha, colonial mimicry is “the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite.”²⁰ His definition of mimicry embodies the concept of hybridity in the way that it represents cultural designations, such as a class of people, whose position within the binary structure of colonial representation is imprecise; their difference prevents exact identification or classification within any prior culture (or system of signification).²¹ Bhabha

¹⁸ Hernandez, *Bhabha for Architects*, 61.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 63.

²⁰ Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 1994), 86.

²¹ Hernandez, *Bhabha for Architects*, 63.

contends that the mimicry involved in the appropriation of the language and culture of the colonizer is not a capitulation, but rather a means of evading colonial control.²² The key point of his argument is that the difference or the means used to differentiate the “inappropriate” turns against the rational structures that grant authority to the colonizer’s “appropriate” culture, their normalized knowledges, and disciplinary powers.²³ Bhabha’s thesis holds that because colonial culture can never faithfully reproduce itself in its own image, each replication (act of mimesis) necessarily involves a slippage or gap wherein the colonial subject inevitably produces a hybridized version of the “original.” In other words, hybridity is intrinsic to colonial discourse itself, and consequently colonial discourse potentially undoes itself.²⁴ Therefore, if the concept of mimicry refers to the process of doubling, which is the purpose of the civilizing mission, then hybridity represents the cultural product of such an imbalanced and contradictory (ambivalent) process.²⁵

In this way, “ambivalence” becomes the most incisive point in his critique of colonialism. Colonized subjects are constructed through an ambivalent process of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion, placing them in an intermediate position between the colonized and the colonizer.²⁶

An expert in Modern Thai architecture Chomchon Fusinpaiboon likewise notes that

there definitely has been hybridity and ambiguity in the encountering-differences process. However, they are not in the sense of $A+B = (A+B)$ as the conservative Thai scholars like to promote, but rather are $A+B = C$. In other words, the process that the foreign “B” was

²² In Bhabha’s words, he defines mimicry as “the sign of the inappropriate ... a difference or recalcitrance which coheres the dominant strategic function of colonial power, intensifies surveillance and poses an imminent threat to both ‘normalized’ knowledges and disciplinary powers.” See Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 86.

²³ Hernandez, *Bhabha for Architects*, 64.

²⁴ Avtar Brah and Annie E. Coombes, “Introduction: The Conundrum of ‘Mixing’,” in *Hybridity and its Discontents: Politics, Science, Culture*, ed. Avtar Brah and Annie E. Coombes (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2000), 11.

²⁵ Hernandez, *Bhabha for Architects*, 64.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

adapted to suit the so-called Thai “A” had created the reinvention and reinterpretation of both cultures, resulting “C” which was something new.²⁷

Homi Bhabha’s theory of hybridity and its result—the hybridized C—is an ideal framework within which to investigate Thai society and its architectural products, ranging from the American-encounter era onwards.

4.2.2 Nestor Garcia Canclini’s “*Mestizaje*” Theory

Another cultural hybridity discourse that sharply outlines some of the main forms of Siamese/Thai responses to the West is Nestor Garcia Canclini’s *mestizaje* theory. While Bhabha has studied forms of hybridity in contexts of actual colonial subordination to the West, Garcia Canclini, an Argentine-born academic and anthropologist, has distilled the patterns of cultural hybridity in a setting of relative postcolonial political autonomy.²⁸ Both frameworks are relevant to the situation of Siam/Thailand, as different local/autonomous and international/subordinate dimensions of power in crypto-colonial Siam/Thailand are reflected in different responses to the West. Australian scholar Peter A. Jackson has proposed that the Siamese/Thai situation requires a double-pronged critical method to bring about a double decolonization of both the foreign Euro-American and local loyal-centric forms of hegemony that imperialism imposed on the country. He elaborates that

[A]t the local level of autonomous royal and elite power, one should compare Garcia Canclini’s account of the hybrid *mestizaje* discourse of Latin American Hispanic elites as a mode of hegemonic rule to the nineteenth-century Siamese elite discourse of *siwilai* (“civilized”). In contrast, at international level in which Siam’s rulers were subordinate to the West, one should draw on Bhabha to read *siwilai* as a hybrid discourse manifesting Thai elites’ subaltern resistance to western imperialism.²⁹

²⁷ Chomchon, “Modernisation of Building: The Transplantation of the Concept of Architecture from Europe to Thailand, 1930s-1950s,” 30.

²⁸ Jackson, “Afterword: Postcolonial Theories and Thai Semicolonial Hybridities,” 188.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

Generally, Canclini's discourse of *mestizaje* is primarily recognized as a mode of Hispanic elite hegemony over the indigenous and Black populations of postcolonial Latin America. It is an approach that reflects Latin American modernity as "a belated and deficient echo of the countries of the center."³⁰ John Krasniauskas, a professor of Latin American Studies, adds that in this account, the dynamic of Latin American cultural hybridity results from the fact that the "modern" has not replaced the "traditional," but rather has "tended to reproduce and rearticulate 'tradition.'"³¹ Another professor in Latin-American Literature and Culture Alberto Moreiras observes that for Garcia Canclini, self-conscious modernizing hybridity is the "means by which the elites take charge of the intersection of different historical temporalities and try to elaborate a global project with them,' ... [H]ybridity thus abandons its heuristic specificity as a mere concept to become an entire political program."³² Ultimately,

[B]y displacing mixture from race to culture and selectively appropriating native traditions, Latin American ideologists of *mestizaje* integrated precolonial cultures in the dominant society. This process allowed nonthreatening arts, crafts, and rituals but imposed the Spanish language, the Catholic faith, and colonial political and social organization. As a discourse that recognizes, even celebrates, cultural difference, *mestizaje* in effect is a tool for "bleaching" all but the most benign practices that gave pre-Hispanic natives their identities. In the name of cultural mixture within the emerging nation-states, the pre-Hispanic life world was reordered by the descendants of the Conquistadores according to a residual colonial logic.³³

Canclini's theory provides concepts for understanding the way that western imperialism strengthened rather than undermined the domestic power of Siam's ruling elites, as it captures

³⁰ Nestor Garcia Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*, trans. Christopher L. Chiappari and Silvia L. Lopez (London and Minneapolis, MN: University of Minneapolis Press, 1995), 44. (The book was originally published in Spanish in Mexico in 1990 under the title *Culturas Híbridas: Estrategias para Entrar y Salir de la Modernidad*.)

³¹ John Krasniauskas, "Hybridity in a Transnational Frame: Latin-Americanist and Post-colonial Perspectives on Cultural Studies," in *Hybridity and its Discontents: Politics, Science, Culture*, ed. Avtar Brah and Annie E. Coombes (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2000), 247.

³² Garcia Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*, 46; and Alberto Moreiras, "Hybridity and Double Consciousness," *Cultural Studies* 13, no. 3 (1999): 375.

³³ Kraidy, *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalization*, 67.

the similar notions and ideological rules used by the Siamese ruling elites in ways that parallel the *mestizaje* of the Latin American Hispanic elites.

Siamese/Thai crypto-colonialism involves an interrelated system of powers in which the connecting node is the Thai state. One dimension of power is at the international level and defines Siam's subordinate relations to western imperial powers. According to Jackson, this subordination is most visible in the domains of international economics and law, where the country looks most like a colony. At this level, Siamese-Western relations closely reflect the ambivalences, described in Bhabha's postcolonial analyses of cultural hybridity. The second dimension of semicolonial power is at the local level and is defined by the intensification of state power over the local population that accompanied Siam's inscription within the western-dominated world order.³⁴ Bhabha's and Garcia Canclini's discourses separately capture different moments of the multivalent processes of cultural mixing in the intersecting autonomous and subordinate dimensions of semicolonial power in Siam/Thailand; their local histories of cultural hybridity in South Asia and Latin American, respectively, are the closest postcolonial disciplines *needed* to understand the complex cultural impact of crypto-colonialism in the country. In the following section, I examine the historical patterns of cultural hybridization in Siam/Thailand based on both Bhabha and Canclini's discourses of hybridity, as I argue that Garcia Canclini provides a framework to study aspects of elite responses to the West, while Bhabha provides theories for interpreting subaltern responses to both the West and to Siam/Thailand's own self-colonizing elites.

³⁴ Jackson, "Autonomy and Subordination in Thai History: The Case for Semicolonial Analysis," 324.

4.2.3 Borrowing is a Civilizing Technique

As in Latin American countries during the era of high imperialism, historical patterns of cultural hybridization in Siam relate closely to changes in the geopolitical status of the various great powers across Southeast Asia. They also correspond to shifts in the place of these powers in the imagination of the country's ruling elites.³⁵ Great premodern powers such as India and China abhorred outside influences as polluting and barbaric, because their status permitted them to imagine themselves as originating centers of universal cultures, even when those cultures were constituted from diverse (but representationally suppressed) foreign influences.³⁶ Contradictorily, Siam's middle-power status and its geographical location positioned the country as external to the great powers of the day. Therefore, in the imagination of the Siamese nobility, an aura of modern-world foreignness could help bolster local power and validate Thai identity.³⁷ Hence, Siam's self-modernizing absolute monarchs intended to refashion themselves in the images of the powers that geographically encircled them (India, China, Europe, USA), resulting in constant borrowing of the techniques and technologies of imperial rule.³⁸ In this fashion, *hybridity* becomes a defining feature of Siamese cultural history and of the contemporary Thai experience, both elite and popular, because this ideological pattern of legitimating rule symbolizes the appropriation of the geopolitically powerful and prestigious Others.

³⁵ Jackson, "Afterword: Postcolonial Theories and Thai Semicolonial Hybridities," 194

³⁶ Richard A. O'Connor previously observed that, "[F]oreignness validates and is an integral part of the construction of Thai identity ... [W]here India abhorred the outside as polluting and China disdained it as barbaric, Southeast Asia appropriated foreign borrowings as the idiom of urban rule." See Richard A. O'Connor, "Indigenous Urbanism: Class, City, and Society in Southeast Asia," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 26, no. 1 (1995): 35.

³⁷ Jackson, "Afterword: Postcolonial Theories and Thai Semicolonial Hybridities," 193

³⁸ Loos, "Competitive Colonialisms: Siam and the Malay Muslim South," 75-92.

4.2.4 Hybridity is a Part of Civilizing Process

However, the civilizing process in Siam/Thailand was never simply an imposition or imitation, despite its nature as an appropriation of the prestige of the great powers of the day. Siamese/Thai adaptation is a process of reinvention and reinterpretation.³⁹ The pattern of hybridity in Siam/Thailand is not one of subaltern resistance to foreign domination, but rather an elite strategy of self-empowerment by means of cultural borrowing. Recorded histories of the cultural assimilation pattern have been a major theme in Thai and Southeast Asian historiography and anthropology, predating postcolonial accounts. A Thai-Studies independent scholar David Streckfuss quotes Leon de Rosny, a scholar whose focus is Indo-Chinese ethnography, describing Thai culture as “the result of every sort of hybridity.”⁴⁰ French orientalist Georges Coedes wrote prior to World War II that

[T]he Thai have always been remarkable assimilators: they have never hesitated to appropriate for themselves whatever in the civilization of their neighbors and masters might place them in a position to fight victoriously against them.⁴¹

In the imagination of the Siamese/Thai ruling elites, the cultural signifiers obtained from foreign greatness have always enhanced rather than diminished local power.

This gives an insight into the political project that has historically underpinned the so-called Thai “genius” for appropriation and the “miracle of tolerance.” In Pattana's words,

[I]n mainland Southeast Asia during the “Age of Commerce,” cultural and religious hybridities were made possible by what Anthony Reid calls the “miracle of tolerance,

³⁹ According to Linda Hutcheon's argument, “adaptation is an act of appropriating or salvaging, and this is always a double process of interpreting and then creating something new.” See Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2006), 20.

⁴⁰ The original statement was literally written in French as “le resultat de toutes sortes de metissages.” However, it was cited and translated by David Streckfuss. See David Streckfuss, “The Mixed Colonial Legacy in Siam: Origins of Thai Racialist Thought,” in *Autonomous Histories, Particular Truths: Essays in Honor of John R.W. Smail*, ed. Laurie Sears (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin-Madison, Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Monograph Series, No. 11, 1993), 127.

⁴¹ George Coedes, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*, ed. W. F. Vella and trans. S. B. Cowing. (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 1968 [1944]), 191.

whereby people found it was ‘natural that different peoples should have different beliefs.’⁴²

Jackson rejects the term in *The Ambiguous Allure of the West*:

[T]his tolerance was not a “miracle,” but reflected the strategy of power outlined above. Thai “syncretism” and “tolerance” are cultural expressions of a premodern project of political power, and self-conscious assimilation of the foreign became a defining element of modern Thai national identity because of its centrality to historical strategies of elite rule.⁴³

All in all, the hybridity discourse not only affirms that foreigners have historically provided Siam/Thailand the idiom of rule and that selective westernization helped reinforce the established status hierarchy during the colonial era, but also permits us to see the Siamese/Thai strategy as one instance of a widespread international pattern through history. Thus, the best way to summarize the Siamese/Thai pattern of autonomy and subordination in the previous chapters is to base the following analyses on Marwan M. Kraidy’s assertion that “discourses of cultural mixture [in Thailand] have historically reserved ideologies of integration and control—not pluralism and empowerment.”⁴⁴

4.2.5 Ruling Elites are the Civilizing Agents

For the rulers of Siam/Thailand—situated at the crossroads of economic, political, and cultural influences, emanating from older and larger regional powers—selective cultural assimilation proved to be an effective long-term strategy of local political domination. Power relations are always a factor of the equation in their eyes. Particularly during the era of the absolute monarchy, the ruling elites’ strategy of rule has been made over in the image of the

⁴² Antony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450-1680, vol. 2: Expansion and Crisis* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1993), 193.

⁴³ Jackson, “Afterword: Postcolonial Theories and Thai Semicolonial Hybridities,” 193

⁴⁴ Kraidy. *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalization*, vii.

West, most notably in the refashioning of the public image of the Siamese monarchy as a modern, civilized, and civilizing institution. At the heart of processing western civilization into Thai *siwilai* is a self-consciousness of the cultural borrowing, shown in the valorization of “assimilation” (*kleun-klai*—lit. “to swallow” and “change [into oneself]”) as a defining feature of Thai cultural identity.⁴⁵ As a Thai professor of political science Kasian Tejapira notes, King Chulalongkorn’s half-brother Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, in a much-cited 1927 lecture, “listed as virtues in the disposition of the Thai nation: ‘love of national independence, toleration, and power of assimilation.’”⁴⁶ In this direction, the prince’s linking of national independence with the assimilation of foreign cultural forms and tolerance of ethno-cultural diversity affirms the centrality of hybridity to the Siamese elite’s strategy of preserving their political autonomy in a western-dominated world. Following the evidence in the early twentieth century, the connection between assimilation and national independence was also an explicit theme in Siamese self-representations to the West. *The Kingdom of Siam*, part of the Siamese exhibition at the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exhibition in St. Louis, claimed that the Siamese “alone have assimilated western civilization and maintained an independent position among the nations of the world.”⁴⁷

The finely tuned management of *siwilai* provides a model for the forms of control that Siam’s nineteenth century elites exercised over the entire project of constructing hybridized Thai-Western images of “civilization.” The discourse gave the Siamese elites an instrument to create images of prestigious power for local as well as foreign consumption because its performances resonated as much with local Thai sensibilities as with foreign western aesthetics.

⁴⁵ Jackson, “Afterword: Postcolonial Theories and Thai Semicolonial Hybridities,” 196-197.

⁴⁶ Kasian Tejapira, *Commodifying Marxism: The Formation of Modern Thai Radical Culture, 1927-1958* (Kyoto: Kyoto University Press, 2001), 23-24.

⁴⁷ Streckfuss, “The Mixed Colonial Legacy in Siam: Origins of Thai Racialist Thought,” 143.

Thongchai points out that the historical pattern of legitimating rule by appropriating a foreign idiom of power permitted Siam's elites to rapidly "recapitalize" their symbolic authority in a western form with little local disruption:

Siamese rulers seemed to find minimal difficulty in looking outward, as a strategy for surviving and prospering in the modern world ... When the centers of the traditional [Siamese] universe, namely China and India, fell to the West, and thereby lost their hold on Thai mentality, Siamese rulers were quick to abandon them ...⁴⁸

The Siamese/Thai discourse of civilization henceforth fulfilled the dual role of making Siam's rulers both similar to yet also different from the West. On the latter point, the ambivalences of *siwilai* can be further understood in terms of Bhabha's account of mimesis, in which the colonial reproduction of imperial culture always differs from the western original, with the difference between metropolitan and colonial forms creating a "third space" for the expression of colonial agency.⁴⁹ Therefore, by contemplating themselves in new clothes, new domestic settings, and new urban spaces, the Siamese/Thai rulers ended up convincing themselves, above all, of being modern.

4.3 Story of "Ambiguity" in Thai Architecture

4.3.1 Architectural Hybridization during King Rama I to III Reigns

Historical patterns of architectural hybridization in Siam/Thailand relate closely to changes in the geopolitical status of different great powers in Southeast Asia and correspond to shifts in the place of these powers in the imagination of the country's ruling elites. During the premodern Thai state, power and legitimacy of the Siamese kingdom were recorded and manifested through cultural representations, such as art and architecture, that reflected Indic

⁴⁸ Thongchai, "The Other Within: Travel and Ethno-Spatial Differentiation of Siamese Subjects, 1885-1910," 53.

⁴⁹ Jackson, "Afterword: Postcolonial Theories and Thai Semicolonial Hybridities," 198-200.

cosmology. Though European traders, missionaries, and ambassadors had been present in Siam since the sixteenth century, the symbolic orientation toward India and China remained largely unchanged during the first two centuries of contact with the West. Peleggi notes that this was reflected in patterns of elite consumption of luxury goods. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Chinese luxury goods such as silk, silverware, and goldware were sought after avidly by successive kings of Ayutthaya, (Figure 4-1) while at that time, “western luxury goods ... apparently aroused no great interest at the Siamese court.”⁵⁰ This indicates that mere contact with the West does not necessarily lead to cultural borrowing of western cultural forms. As mentioned by Jackson, power relations are the key factor of the equation, and it was only with Europe’s rise as an imperial power that western cultural items began to be sought after, first to augment and later to supplant Chinese luxury goods.⁵¹

Along these lines, toward the end of King Nangklao’s reign in 1833 (Rama III), the traditional Siamese belief system was challenged by a group of western missionaries led by John Taylor Jones.⁵² Jones and his group arrived in Siam with a foreign-formed world map and a theory proving the earth is round, intending to replace the local religious ideology. This

⁵⁰ The Ayutthaya Kingdom was a Siamese kingdom that existed in Southeast Asia from 1350 to 1767, centered around the city of Ayutthaya, in present-day Thailand. See Peleggi, *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy’s Modern Image*, 21.

⁵¹ Jackson, “Afterword: Postcolonial Theories and Thai Semicolonial Hybridities,” 195.

⁵² Prior to the 1830s, the Siamese did not take much interest in European affairs or cultural accounts. This was reflected in what early-nineteenth-century western visitors referred to as the “vanity” or sense of cultural superiority of the Siamese. Charles Gutzlaff, a British-funded missionary in Bangkok in the late 1820s and early 1830s, complained bitterly of the lack of respect shown to Europeans:

Europeans have always been treated there [Siam] with distrust, and even insolence, where it could be done with impunity. They have been liable to every sort of petty annoyance, which would weary-out the most patient spirit; and have been subjected to the most unheard-of pression ... [W]hen works for their benefit were accomplished, their value was depreciated, in order to dispense with the necessity of rewarding European industry, and thereby of acknowledging the superiority of European genius.

See Charles Gutzlaff, *Journal of Three Voyages along the Coast of China in 1831, 1832, & 1833, with Notices of Siam, Corea, & The Loo-Choo Islands* (London: Thomas Ward and Co., 1835), 70. For further explanation regarding the “vanity” or sense of cultural superiority, please see Edmund Roberts, *Embassy to the Eastern Courts of Cochin-China, Siam and Muscat: in the US Sloop-of-War Peacock, David Geisinger, Commander, during the Years 1832-3-4* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1972), 248.

coincided with an increase in regional trade with China, India, and the Arab world. Both incidents imbued Thai society with a new belief in western sciences, rationalism, realism, and humanism. These concepts were surprisingly easily accepted, transformed, and localized by the Siamese rulers, as they could harmonize them with the old belief in the *Axis Mundi*.⁵³ For example, the western-perspective drawing method was included as one of the techniques in the mural paintings commissioned during the reign of King Nangklao (Rama III, r. 1824-1851). In detail, these paintings were developed to be more humanistic and three dimensional, when compared to the former traditional two-dimensional drawings (Figure 4-2).

Another defining moment in re-orientating Siamese interests toward the West was the signing of the 1855 Bowring Treaty with Great Britain, followed by similar trade and diplomatic treaties with France, the United States, and other western powers as well as Japan. Peleggi notes that “[T]ributary missions to China were discontinued in the mid-1850s concurrently with the establishment of regular trade relations with Europe.”⁵⁴ The end of tributary missions to Peking in 1853 and the formalization of trade with Britain just two years later reflect a major intellectual as well as political and economic re-orientation.⁵⁵ Thongchai argues that this re-orientation was not brought about by any direct threat to Siamese autonomy, but resulted from the fact that European colonial encroachments to the west and north had destabilized the politico-religious-cultural ideology by which Siam’s rulers had historically justified their rule. With the British colonial takeover of India and diverse European encroachments into China, these two domains

⁵³ *Axis Mundi*, in certain beliefs and philosophies, is the world center, or the connection between Heaven and Earth. As the celestial pole and geographic pole, it expresses a point of connection between sky and earth where the four compass directions meet.

⁵⁴ Peleggi, *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy’s Modern Image*, 23.

⁵⁵ Jackson, “Afterword: Postcolonial Theories and Thai Semicolonial Hybridities,” 195.

could no longer be imagined as sites of geopolitical power and cultural authority, forcing Siam's rulers to seek a new vision to justify rule over their own domain.⁵⁶

4.3.2 Architectural Hybridization during King Rama IV to V Reigns

The re-orientation toward the West developed further in the following reign of King Mongkut (Rama IV, r. 1851-1868), who was best known for embracing western innovations and initiating the modernization of Siam, both in technology and culture. King Mongkut and his heirs were the first to lead the dramatic changes in patterns of cultural borrowing among the Siamese elites (Figure 4-3). It was not easy to reconcile the traditional Buddhist philosophy with new western scientific methodology. The king, who represented himself as an upholder of all religions, had to merge the new western ontology, while at the same time reforming Buddhism, which resulted in a new Buddhist branch called *Dhammayuttika Nikaya*. This replacement of the old *Axis Mundi* with western scientific cosmology urged the elite in Siam to mutually look forward to a shared idea of utopia—to become “*siwilai*.”

On the architectural front, Siamese architecture from King Rama IV's era onward began to conform to contemporary European norms of civilization.⁵⁷ A key example of the emergence of the new mode of court expenditure on western-oriented prestige projects was the hybrid Thai-western architecture of the Chakri Throne Hall (Chakri Maha Prasat) built by King Chulalongkorn (Rama V), the heir of King Rama IV, between 1876 and 1880 (Figure 4-4). The shift from the Sino-Thai aesthetic of the Rama III period to the Thai-Western aesthetic of the

⁵⁶ Thongchai, “The Other Within: Travel and Ethno-Spatial Differentiation of Siamese Subjects, 1885-1910,” n.p.; and Thongchai, “The Quest for ‘Siwilai’: A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Siam,” 529.

⁵⁷ Pirasri, “Building Siwilai: Transformation of Architecture and Architectural Practice in Siam during the Reign of Rama V, 1968-1910,” 1.

Rama V era not only marked the rise of western power, but also the emergence of a new symbolic economy in which local prestige and authority were demonstrated by the conspicuous consumption of western rather than Chinese cultural items.

The quest for *siwilai* even prompted King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) to send his sons to be educated in Europe, to make several overseas trips to European colonies in Asia (Singapore, Java, Colombo, and India), and to travel to Europe twice at the end of his reign (Figure 4-5).⁵⁸ These trips shifted the perspective of the ruling elite. They found Siam was not the center of the universe as they had previously believed, in accordance with the old Indic cosmology. They urged the king to return to the country with a new vision: “to turn his kingdom into a miniature European colony, without the Europeans, making it a modernized ‘civilized’ Asian state”⁵⁹ (Figure 4-6).

Architecture became one of the explicit tools used to upgrade Siam, as new buildings were constructed on western patterns. Beginning in the era of King Chulalongkorn (Rama V), new buildings ranging from residential housing to royal palaces were built following the western neoclassical style. New construction included the Ministry of Defense building, Ananda Samakhom Throne Hall, Amphorn Satharn Villa, and Bang Khunphrom Palace (Figure 4-7 and 4-8). A significant new development was the importation of foreign architects and engineers, who designed the new buildings to accurately resemble western patterns, rather than following a Thai self-imagination of westernness, as was done in the former reign. Foreign architects and engineers who served during this period included John Clunice from England, Joachim Grassi

⁵⁸ Peleggi, *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image*, 93.

⁵⁹ David K. Wyatt, “King Chulalongkorn the Great: Founder of Modern Thailand,” in *Studies in Thai History* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1994a (1976)), 279.

and Mario Tamagno from Italy, and Karl Dohring from Germany.⁶⁰ A decision to make Siam on par with the West by employing western colonial architecture might seem to lessen the essence and value of traditional Thai architecture and to imply that the original tradition was uncivilized. However, the transformation can also be perceived as having helped to eliminate or modernize an outdated architecture.

The Siamese quest for *siwilai*, firmly rooted in the country beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, was not simply a reaction to the colonial threat. It was also an attempt by various groups among the Siamese elites, including urban intellectuals, to attain and confirm their own relative superiority over the local population and among the nations within the region.⁶¹ Given its origins in a premodern ideology of legitimating rule by symbolic reference to remote great powers, *siwilai* was more a project of constructing occidentalized images of Siamese prestige than a program of materially transforming the country into a western-style polity. According to Jackson, a key feature of this project was the linking of phenomena labelled as *siwilai* with prestige, authority, and the perception of a “legitimate” exercise of power.⁶² While drawing from European models, Siamese *siwilai* was never intended to replicate every feature of western “civilization.”⁶³ In fact, for Siamese rulers, the quest for *siwilai* was only a transcultural process in which ideas and practices brought from Europe, via colonialism, were transferred, localized, and hybridized in the Thai setting. In order to impress both domestic and international audiences, *siwilai* needed to possess a multi-sided character that borrowed enough from western resources to create a performative “effect” of modern “civilization” in the eyes of

⁶⁰ Chatri Prakitnonthakan, “Sangkom Lae Kanmueng Nai Satapattayakum Jak Siam Kao Su Thai Mai, Po So 2394-2490” [Society and Politics in Architecture from Old Siam to New Siam, 1851-1947], 47.

⁶¹ Thongchai, “The Quest for ‘Siwilai’: A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Siam,” 529.

⁶² Peter A. Jackson, “The Thai Regime of Images,” *Sojourn: Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 19, no. 2 (2004): 181-218.

⁶³ Jackson, “Afterword: Postcolonial Theories and Thai Semicolonial Hybridities,” 198.

foreign observers, while also drawing sufficiently from indigenous paradigms to make it recognizable to the Siamese populace as a local form of power linked symbolically with the country's past.⁶⁴

To fulfill the dual role of making Siam's rulers both similar to yet also different from the original sources, "the West" and "western technology" became an important signifier in the discourse of *siwilai*, referring to a distant land that was an imagined model for progress and desirable change. To attain *siwilai*, the Thais interpreted "imitating and consuming" western culture as a modern method of obtaining and gaining access to the new world order. Edward Said has defined the term *Orientalism* as referring to the way in which westerners stereotype the Orient or the Eastern world as inherently inferior, if exotic. Siamese Occidentalism, then, is not simply a reversal of western orientalist logic and power/knowledge relations. It is an historically and culturally rooted system of epistemological tactics, employed by Siamese elites to convert *farang* (western) otherness into the ambiguous object of the elite's desire: to be modern and "civilized."⁶⁵ Thus, since the reign of King Mongkut (Rama IV), the image of "western culture" has been a metric for gauging the nation's level of civilization and progress.

As they sought to retain their political strength, the Siamese ruling class became highly conscious of its image and the position of Siam in the eyes of the world. Incorporation of the western model has been expressed culturally through the consumption of European goods by the Thai elite as part of their "civilizing" and nation-building project. As mentioned in Peleggi's

Lord of Things:

Siam's last three absolute monarchs—Chulalongkorn (King Rama V, r. 1868–1910), Vajiravudh (King Rama VI, r. 1910–1925), and Prajadhipok (King Rama VII, r. 1925–1935)—continued Mongkut's (King Rama IV, r. 1851–1868) initiative to break with Siamese tradition and pursue *farang*-modeled civilization and modernization, and during

⁶⁴ Ibid., 198-199.

⁶⁵ Pattana, "An Ambiguous Intimacy: Farang as Siamese Occidentalism," 58.

their reigns the royal elite occupied a privileged position as agents of introducing *farang* models. In the eyes of these monarchs, *farang* were sources of and methods for achieving the *siwilai* status among the “civilized” countries.⁶⁶

By embracing of *farang* ways, the royal elite became responsible for establishing a social norm, taste, and the widespread belief in Siam that “*farang* things are superior or highly valued, while the native ones are inferior, lowly valued, or to be looked down upon.”⁶⁷

4.3.3 Architectural Hybridization during King Rama VI to 1932

During the reign of King Vajiravudh (Rama VI), a “New Siam” architectural pattern was altered to be a “New Thai,” due to many critiques about preserving Thai national cultural identity. As they hurried to catch up with western civilization, members of the Siamese nobility realized that the change could only come at the expense of old customs and cultural traditions. The specter of this loss caused reluctance within Thai society. Since then, Siamese elites have sought to manage the extent of borrowing from the West, and the forms of *siwilai* have been marked by a desire for a limited amount of the foreign, but no more. Citizens throughout the nation felt culturally uprooted and feared that the adoption of western culture was replacing their traditional Thai identity with western norms. The constative local/foreign split within *siwilai* has incited an ongoing debate about “how much” borrowed foreignness constitutes “too much.”⁶⁸

Ironically, the critique of excessive westernization was voiced by Siam’s first western-educated king, King Vajiravudh, in response to the success of his father Chulalongkorn’s policy of mass-westernization via *siwilai* (Figure 4-9).⁶⁹ Vajiravudh’s nationalist vision led him to be

⁶⁶ Peleggi, *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy’s Modern Image*, 93.

⁶⁷ Wright, “Farang Lang Tawan-tok” [The Postwestern Westerner], 110.

⁶⁸ Jackson, “Afterword: Postcolonial Theories and Thai Semicolonial Hybridities,” 200.

⁶⁹ King Vajiravudh or Rama VI (r. 1910-1925) was the first Thai king to be educated in a western country, spending years in England as a student of the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, and Christ Church, Oxford. See *Ibid.*

cautious of westerners and their foreign influences. He warned the nation against imitating the West through his criticism of what he called the “cult of imitation” (*latthi ao yang*) of the West, reflecting the fact that by the early twentieth century the state policy of *siwilai* was so successful that it had spawned a popular craze for western culture that escaped the control of its royal authors.⁷⁰ The king, therefore, decided to institute a nationalist program focusing on Buddhist morality, believing the nation could thus be uplifted. In order to resolve the nation’s ambivalent feelings about western influence and instill a nationalist attitude among the Thai people, he determined the nation must establish some concrete “national symbol” that encouraged an awareness of being united and conserved aspects of Thai culture. The king thus directed his craftsmen to create a new architectural pattern called “Applied Thai” traditional architecture, which overlaid traditional Thai ornaments on western architectural floor plans. Coexisting with the English Arts and Crafts period, examples of this nostalgic appreciation of traditional architectural patterns can be seen in the Vajiramongkut Academic Building at the Vajiravudh College, the Administrative Building of Chulalongkorn University, and Niphanopphadol Building of Debsirin school (Figure 4-10).

King Vajiravudh here plays on the dual sense of the term *thai* as meaning “free” and as an ethno-maker for the Thai-speaking inhabitants of the central region of Siam. However, his invective against western influences had minimal impact in restraining popular fascination with the West. Such elite critiques of “excessive” popular borrowings of western culture do not so much reflect a genuine anti-westernness as a loss of control over the extent of westernization resulting from plebeian challenges to the style dictates of the ruling classes. In this class struggle for control of the process of westernization, we see yet another dimension of hybridity in modern

⁷⁰ Ibid.

Thailand, namely, subaltern cultural assimilation of the foreign as resistance to internal colonialism.

4.3.4 Architectural Hybridization from 1932 onward

The resistance of the subaltern rose and went further. In 1932, a political revolution led by the *Khana Ratsadon* (People's Party) (Figure 4-11) ended the 150-year absolute rule of the Chakri dynasty and Dharmaraja regime, a governing system ruled by the king according to the Buddhist laws of righteousness, and replaced the old command with a new constitutional system. This revolution resulted in great alterations in Thai collective ideas, social values, beliefs, and world view. Chatri Prakitnonthakan, a professor at Faculty of Architecture, Silpakorn University, emphasized its impacts in his writing on the art and architecture of the People's Party, arguing that the change of Thai collective ideas regarding utopia affected Thai architecture in two ways: first, it constituted an awareness of "equality" in Thai democratic society; second, it brought forward an anti-elite movement.⁷¹ As a consequence, the physical appearance of Thai architecture after the 1932 was adjusted along with the new governmental regime, producing two new Thai architectural styles: Modern Thai architecture and traditional Thai concrete-structured architecture.⁷² Modern Thai architecture was similar to general patterns of Modern architecture that spread around the world. Its dominant characteristics were simplicity, clarity of forms, and the elimination of unnecessary details. The Ministry of Justice building, Klang Hospital building, and academic buildings of Chulalongkorn University are examples of this style (Figure 4-12). On

⁷¹ Chatri, "Sangkom Lae Kanmueng Nai Satapattayakum Jak Siam Kao Su Thai Mai, Po So 2394-2490" [Society and Politics in Architecture from Old Siam to New Siam, 1851-1947], 58.

⁷² Ibid.

the other hand, the traditional concrete-structured style based itself on traditional Thai architectural ornaments, although its structure was built with concrete (Figure 4-13).

By examining these two new styles, it is undeniable that all the major changes in Thai architecture were influenced by occidentalist viewpoints and the elite's understanding of their influential positions, using the apprehension of *farang* models. This statement is affirmed by Pattana's analysis that "the elite, whether royalist before 1932 or commoners after 1932, was colonized in consciousness."⁷³ The next section of this chapter will provide a few case studies and evidence to illustrate the hybridization of western ideology in Thai architecture, particularly through the Modern Thai architecture that emerged after 1932. In a brief summary, this fourth chapter aims to reveal a new colonial dimension through an investigation of one of the categories of crypto-colonialism, the formation of western architecture in Thailand.

4.4 Case Studies of "Ambiguity" revealing through Thai-Western Hybridized Architecture

As mentioned earlier, hybridity has been embedded in all dimensions of Thai ruling strategies from cultural, technological, to governmental. It demonstrates the crypto-colonial power, among both rulers and ruled, but declares itself via various forms in different contexts. For example, Homi Bhabha's theory of hybridity provides a framework for studying a subaltern resistance to imperialism, while Nestor Garcia Canclini's theory of *mestizaje* reveals an ideology that supports the dominance of one ethnic group over others in multi-ethnic, multi-cultural societies.⁷⁴ We must be clear that Bhabha's and Garcia Canclini's separate accounts are not contradictory, but rather reveal different moments of the complex matrix of international and

⁷³ Pattana, "An Ambiguous Intimacy: Farang as Siamese Occidentalism," 67.

⁷⁴ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*; n.p.; and Garcia Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*, n.p..

domestic powers that have structured modern Thailand's semicolonial political and cultural history. Each architectural case study will be examined using these two discourses equally, in the hope of making a contribution to the current body of knowledge.

In the local, autonomous dimension of Siam/Thailand where crypto-coloniality is exemplified by the discourse of *siwilai*, the architectural case study of the Privy Council Chamber demonstrates the discourse of hybridity in its western form, bolstering elite power over the local citizens, in ways that mirror Garcia Canclini's account of *mestizaje*. On the other hand, in the subordinate, colony-like dimension of Siam/Thailand, Thai architecture may hybridize as a form of resistance to or evasion of western domination. Therefore, these case studies should be examined following Bhabha's approach to postcolonial analysis. Jackson provides a third, related framework in his discussion of the "subordinate dimension" of Siam/Thailand's position. He notes that the mass of Thai peoples are "subject to a double domination, by western cultural influences internationally and by the ... ideology of *siwilai* domestically."⁷⁵ In order to understand the "subordinated" hybridized culture imposed by the Siamese/Thai elites, two more case studies will be analyzed using Jackson's subcategories of "subordination." To explore this Thai semicolonial dual character, the U-Thong Nai Assembly Hall will be studied as a facet of international subordination, and the new national assembly *Sappaya-Sapasathan* will be examined as an expression of local resistance through ruling-class hegemony.

The Privy Council Chambers (2004)

The Office of the Privy Council is a revered Thai institution, established by royal decree on May 8, 1874, by King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) (Figure 4-14). The king, who was educated

⁷⁵ Jackson, "Afterword: Postcolonial Theories and Thai Semicolonial Hybridities," 198.

by westerners, was keen on replicating European system of absolute monarchy. Throughout the long history of the Office of the Privy Council, the Chakri dynasty kings held the highest power, with the right to change the number and positions of their advisors. King Rama V established a new position, Clerk of Councilors, in the Privy Councilor of Siam Act, as documented in the Royal Gazette during his reign. The Clerk of Councilors was a personal advisor to the King, creating a list of all other advisors, registering their movements, and preparing the meeting invitations. During the same era, the king established two more advisory councils: the Privy Council of Siam, which included 49 members; and the Council of State, which had 12 members (the name was later changed to Council of Ministers).⁷⁶ The former council was founded in order to deal with royal legislative affairs, while the latter became an early version of the country's cabinet.

Chulalongkorn was succeeded by his son, King Vajiravudh (Rama VI) in 1910, who at the beginning of his reign appointed a 40-member Privy Council of State.⁷⁷ Throughout the fifteen years that King Rama VI was on the throne, he continued to add new members on every Thai New Year's Day, resulting in a privy council of 233 members by the time of his death in 1925. King Prajadhipok (Rama VII), who succeeded his brother later in the same year, completely refurbished the system and created instead three councils: the Supreme Council of State of Siam, composed of five senior princes, equivalent to the former Council of State; the Council of Secretaries, formerly the Council of Ministers; and the Privy Council of State.⁷⁸ The

⁷⁶ Wikipedia, s.v. "Privy Council of Thailand," last modified May 6, 2021, 11:50 UTC, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Privy_Council_of_Thailand

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

role of the Privy Council was, therefore, relegated to minor legislative affairs, while the Supreme Council became King Rama VII's main body of advisors.⁷⁹

On June 24, 1932, a group of civic leaders calling themselves *Khana Ratsadon* (or People's Party), together with the military, seized the country's administrative power in Bangkok. The group eradicated the royal system's absolute monarchy, changing Siam into a parliamentary constitutional. Subsequently, King Prajadhipok granted them a "temporary" constitution in the same month, and a permanent one in December. Once in power, *Khana Ratsadon* abolished the Supreme Council and the Privy Council, and replaced the Council of Secretaries with the People's Committee of Siam.⁸⁰

It was not until fifteen years later that the 1947 constitution of Thailand reestablished the Privy Council under King Bhumibol Adulyadej (King Rama IX), changing the name to Supreme Council of State (which existed from 1947-1949). During this reign, the Constitution of 1949, section 13, stipulated that "the king can select and appoint a suitable individual as the President of the Privy Council and no more than eight others as members. The Privy Council is responsible for offering advice to the king if solicited, and other duties as specified in the Constitution."⁸¹ Undoubtedly, the Privy Council is a strongly-tied, integral part of the monarchy. As King Bhumibol embarked on a lifelong project to transform a near-extinct monarchy to the country's

⁷⁹ In 1927, King Prajadhipok (Rama VII, r. 1925-1935) issued the Privy Council Act to replace the Privy Council of Siam Act. Section 10 stipulated that "the King would appoint an official of the office of His Majesty's Principal Private Secretary to the post of Secretary-General of the Privy Council as a permanent position, responsible for the Privy Council registrar and to act as secretary for the Privy Council of State sessions." The Privy Council Secretariat, a division within the Office of HM Principal Private Secretary, took care of the Privy Council prior to the revolution of 1932. However, when the Privy Council Act 1927 was annulled, the position of Privy Councilor was abolished, as well as the entire Privy Council Secretariat. See "History of the Office of the Privy Council," *Royal Office*, accessed September 15, 2021, <https://www.royaloffice.th/en/about-royal-office/office-of-his-majesty-privy-council/>

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

most powerful institution, the Privy Council's position was also elevated.⁸² As a result, the 1949 Constitution was the first Thai Constitution requiring a reference to the Privy Council and its responsibilities. The Office of King Bhumibol's Principal Private Secretary was divided into six divisions, with the Privy Council Secretariat as a newly founded division. Two years later, under the same 1949 Constitution of Thailand, the council was renamed to be the Privy Council of Thailand.

Today, the institution is a private agency of the King, set up following the Royal Service Administrative Act of 2017, and is responsible for supporting the Privy Council in their duties towards the Crown, or as instructed by the king. The Secretary-General of the Office of the Privy Council, who is appointed by the king, supervises the work of the office of the Privy Council.⁸³ The councilors' main duties are to meet regularly to deliberate on a variety of the King's issues, to represent His Majesty at functions, and to welcome both state dignitaries and foreign ambassadors. The Chambers, therefore, must accommodate private offices, a secretariat, meeting rooms, reception areas, and dining rooms. The royal secretary who liaises with the Privy Council also has offices and a secretariat in the same building.

In terms of its architectural planning and layout, the building's principal elevation, which is its western façade, faces the royal Grand Palace. Proceeding clockwise, the northern side of the building faces Saranrom Palace, a nineteenth-century palace built in the Neo-classical style; the eastern side, which is the rear of the building, abuts onto an old temple named Wat Ratchapradit Sathitmahasimaram, built following traditional Thai principles; and its southern elevation merges into Saranrom Palace Park, a public park full of mature trees. (Figure 4-15)

⁸² Pavin Chachavalpongpun, "Beware the Thailand King's New Power Play," *The Diplomat*, October 12, 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/10/beware-the-thailand-kings-new-power-play/>

⁸³ Ibid.

The Privy Council Chambers is a three-floor edifice with a basement parking lot. Sumet Jumsai, the building's royally-descended designer, laid the building out in a U-shaped format, wrapping around an existing clump of trees. To prevent trespassers, a lotus pond was placed surrounding three sides of the structure (Figure 4-16). This penetrates part of the facade, to make the building appear as if it is standing in water.

The architectural agenda of this building is multi-faceted. Not only must the building reflect its institutional character, blending in with both the traditional Thai and Neo-classical buildings nearby; it also must reflect the spirit of time and place. Consequently, its austere front on the west side is intended to be reminiscent of the colonnade design strategy applicable to both Thai temple and European classical architecture (Figure 4-17). At the same time, naked I-beams forming triangular frames, perched atop the colonnade, invoke traditional roof gables (Figure 4-18). These I-beam triangles are recognizable and become more marked as the building is viewed clockwise, while the elevation responds increasingly to the trees at the back and the adjacent park on the south side. In effect, the Privy Council Chambers goes through a metamorphosis, becoming arboreal in tandem with its environment.

By its nature, the Privy Council is an advisory and implementing body serving the king. At a deeper level, it represents a dominant power function in politics, evident since its establishment in 1874 to break the power of Chaophraya Si Suriyawongse. Therefore, traditionally, the Privy Council represents the power of the monarchy, and its significant notably increased during the reign of the late King Bhumibol (Rama IX).⁸⁴ The privy councilors coordinated legislative matters between the Crown and the government, Parliament, Courts of Justice, private organizations, and citizens. They also advised the monarch on draft laws,

⁸⁴ Ibid.

petitions for pardon, demands for justice, and requests for Royal assistance, among other things.⁸⁵ As Paul M. Handley argued in his influential book on the Thai monarchy, “[T]he Privy Council in the modern era is more of a Royal Interests Section, which not only collects information for the King, but also works actively to defend the monarchy or propagate its message.”⁸⁶

With the support of the king, the Privy Council has emerged as an authoritative entity, working outside the constitutional framework to compete with other elite groups for administrative and political power. It is, however, important to recognize that the Privy Council is not monolithic. Factions within the Privy Council have constructed different relationships with other nodes of power outside their own networks. Pavin Chachavalpongpun, a Thai scholar and former diplomat, explains:

[S]uccessive coups have over the years strengthened the partnership between the Privy Council and the military. The Privy Council played its part in endorsing past coups, including the most recent one in May 2021. Prem, in the aftermath of the coup, openly praised the coup makers for being a force that moved Thailand forward. This underlined the quintessential role of the Privy Council as an engine behind the Thai politics.⁸⁷

Prem, as an ex-general, could establish direct contact with the military. For once, the interests of the Privy Council and the military were aligned in the protection of royal power and prerogative, neglecting the protection of general citizens.

⁸⁵ “New Privy Councillor in Spotlight Over Past Role in Disbanding Political Parties,” *ThaiPBS World’s Political Desk*, May 9, 2020. <https://www.thaipbsworld.com/new-privy-councillor-in-spotlight-over-past-role-in-disbanding-political-parties/>

⁸⁶ Paul M. Handley, *The King Never Smiles: A Biography of Thailand’s Bhumibol Adulyadej* (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 2006), n.p., quoted in Pavin Chachavalpongpun, “Beware the Thailand King’s New Power Play.”

⁸⁷ General Prem Tinsulanonda is a former army chief, long-time prime minister (1980-1988), and head of the palace’s Privy Council. Prem played a major role in the re-ascendance of the Thai monarchy’s power, and also created a template of an unelected but relatively effective prime minister during his long time on the job in the 1980s, due to his special relationship with King Bhumibol (Rama IX) which had shaped Thai politics for decades. See Pavin Chachavalpongpun, and Joshua Kurlantzick, “Prem Tinsulanonda’s Legacy--and the Failures of Thai Politics Today,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, May 28, 2019, <https://www.cfr.org/blog/prem-tinsulanondas-legacy-and-failures-thai-politics-today>; and Pavin, “Beware the Thailand King’s New Power Play.”

To architecturally analyze, the hybrid plan of the Privy Council Chamber conveys a message of *siwilai* discourse, leaning towards a self-imposed foreignness rather than the Thai tradition. However, it also reveals how the Siamese/Thai monarchy employs *mestizaje*, ruling in ways that parallel the strategy of Latin American Hispanic elites—by bleaching all.

In terms of hybridity, the incorporation of western Modernism has employed *siwilai* more to construct occidentalized images of Siamese/Thai prestige than for the purpose of materially transforming the country into a western-styled polity. Here, Modernism serves to link phenomena labelled as *siwilai* with prestige, authority, and the perception of the “legitimate” exercise of power. Given the Thai elites’ need to create images of prestigious power for local as well as foreign consumption, *than-samai* design (modern design) must resonate as much with local Thai sensibilities as with foreign western aesthetics. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak identifies this type of ambivalence as defining postcolonial hybridity: “[T]his is the condition of possibility of mimicry: to be different yet the same. This is the description of the hybrid: a mixture of difference and sameness.”⁸⁸

A case study of the Privy Council Chamber through Garcia Canclini’s lens of *mestizaje* reveals that Siamese/Thai ruling elites did employ western Modern culture to strengthen their own domestic power, rather than being undermined by western imperialism. Both the architecture and the nature of the Privy Council Chambers serve as the means for the Siamese/Thai ruling class to control the country’s political system and its locals, through a process of cultural borrowing.

⁸⁸ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Deconstruction and Cultural Studies: Arguments for a Deconstructive Cultural Studies,” in *Deconstructions: A User’s Guide*, ed. Nicholas Royle (New York, NY: Palgrave, 2000), 18.

U-Thong Nai Assembly Hall (The Second Parliament House of Thailand, 1970)

The National Assembly of Thailand⁸⁹ (Figure 4-19) was established in 1932 immediately following the adoption of the country's first constitution, which transformed the nation from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy. Prior to 1932, the Kingdom of Siam had never had any legislature, as all legislative powers were exclusively vested in the hands of the Siamese monarchs. This had been the case since the foundation of the Sukhothai Kingdom in the 12th century. The king was seen as a “Dharmaraja” or “king who rules in accordance with Dharma” (the Buddhist law of righteousness).⁹⁰ On June 24, 1932, when *Khana Ratsadon* (People’s Party) carried out the bloodless revolution that ended 150 years of absolute rule of the House of Chakri, the old governing system was replaced by a constitutional monarchy. The monarch could exercise his authority only within the boundaries of a written constitution. An elected legislature was established. Thus, the “Draft Constitution” signed by King Prajadhipok (Rama VII) (Figure 4-20) in 1932 became Thailand’s first legislative document, which subsequently led to the formation of People’s Assembly with 70 appointed initial members. On June 28, 1932, four days after the constitution was signed, the assembly met for the first time in the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall (Figure 4-21).⁹¹ At first, the *Khana Ratsadon* decided that Thai people were not yet ready for an elected assembly, due to the sudden change of the country’s governance and a lack of understanding of the new system. However, they later reversed that decision, and Thailand’s

⁸⁹ The National Assembly of Thailand is the bicameral legislative branch of the government of Thailand, composed of a Senate and a House of Representatives. As of 2021, the combined Assembly has 750 members: 500 of which were elected directly through a general election (500 members of parliament in the lower house), and others are all 250 members of the Senate, being appointed by the military. The majority of elections in Thailand follow the “first-past-the-post” system, which is used in the elections for the 375 members of the House of Representatives. The remaining 125 members of the House are elected by “party list” proportional representation. For updated information, see Wikipedia, s.v. “Elections in Thailand.” Last modified May 11, 2021, 12:52 UTC, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elections_in_Thailand

⁹⁰ Wikipedia, s.v. “National Assembly of Thailand.” Last modified September 5, 2021, 01:24 UTC, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Assembly_of_Thailand

⁹¹ Ibid.

first elections were scheduled for November 15, 1933. The “permanent” constitution was finally implemented in December of the same year.

After the first elections to the National Assembly in 1933, King Prajadhipok (Rama VII) pushed for the legislature to meet in the royal Throne Hall, Ananta Samakhom. As the composition of the Assembly increased through the years due to the growing Thai population, the Throne Hall became too small to accommodate all the legislators and their secretariat. The government and members of Parliament agreed upon the necessity of building a new House of Parliament. Three attempts were made to accomplish this governmental building commission. Each failed because the government in power was terminated before the budget could be appropriated. The fourth attempt, during the height of Thanom-Praphas military regime in 1966, was finally successful.

General Thanom and Field Marshal Praphas (Figure 4-22), both military strongmen, realized the power they could garner by associating themselves with the construction an historic national edifice like a new Throne Hall. Such a building would be widely recognized by the Thais as a symbol of regal authority.⁹² The proposal to build the new House of Parliament was approved partially because the Italian-Renaissance style of the old Ananta Samakhom could not accommodate the functions and requirements of the new National Assembly. A further issue was that the symbolic and iconographic representations of Ananta Samakhom, which was designed in

⁹² In 1957, Praphas Charusathien assisted Prime Minister Sarit Thanarat as Minister of the Interior, a position in which he continued to serve even after Sarit’s death in 1963. The succeeding Prime Minister was Thanom Kittikachorn, whose son married Praphas’ daughter. Thus, from 1963 to 1973, Praphas received additional positions as Deputy Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Thai Army. During this time, Praphas was the strong man in the background who pulled the strings in the Thanom government. According to Leifer and Baker, he was known for obscure financial transactions and political intrigues, while sitting on the boards of 44 companies. See Joseph Liow and Michael Leifer, “Praphas Charusathien,” *Dictionary of the Modern Politics of Southeast Asia* (London: Routledge, 1996), 134; and Baker and Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand*, 170; and Koompong, *The Aesthetics of Power: Architecture, Modernity, and Identity from Siam to Thailand*, 208.

the Neo-classical style, was unsuitable for a modern nation-state with a new democracy.⁹³ As a result, the National Assembly and House of Parliament buildings were approved for construction in 1969. However, for the junta to maintain a good relationship with the Chakri monarch, it was necessary to continue to maintain and legitimate Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall as the nation's main Assembly Hall, although the building was only used occasionally for state ceremonies.

After considering many potential locations in Bangkok and searching for a site for three years, King Bhumibol (Rama IX) finally appropriated a 7.9-acre plot of royal land for the new parliament complex, immediately north of Ananta Samakhom, east of Dusit Palace, and adjacent to Rajavithi road (Figure 4-23).⁹⁴ The House of Parliament was put under the responsibility of the Public Works Department (PWD), led by the architect Pon Chulasawek (Figure 4-24), and the Secretariat of the Parliament, who was in charge of supervising the entire construction. The team finalized its final-design book in 1970, after extensive studies and visits to numerous parliament houses and capitols in Western Europe, the United States, and Japan. The construction, carried out by the Pranakorn Construction Company, began on November 5, 1970 and lasted for 850 days, with a budget of 51,027,360 baht. The first meeting of Parliament took

⁹³ The commission for Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall, to be built in Italian Renaissance and Neoclassical style, was first given to the Prussian C. Sandreczki. Later, two Italian architects, Mario Tamagno and Annibale Rigotti took over much of the work, with engineering work by Carlo Allegri and G.E. Gollo. It is marked as one of the symbols representing the change of the Thai governing system and served the National Assembly for a total of 42 years. For further information, see “Du Satithi Na Jodjum Um-la 44 Pi Rattasapa U-thong-nai: Sattapattayagum Rub Chai Leuk-tang Lak-tung” [Counting Memorable Statistics and Saying Goodbye to the 44-year U-thong-nai Assembly Hall: Architecture that Served Thai Electoral and Forcible Votes], *Voice Online*, December 7, 2018, https://www.matichon.co.th/politics/news_1262764; Wikipedia, s.v. “Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall.” Last modified May 30, 2021, 05:47 UTC, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ananta_Samakhom_Throne_Hall; and Koompong, *The Aesthetics of Power: Architecture, Modernity, and Identity from Siam to Thailand*, 208.

⁹⁴ According to ASA journal, part of the reasons why Thai government decided to locate the new Parliament on U-Thong Nai road was because “the government could save up more than hundred million baht,” as the land was granted by the king without any cost. Moreover, it was close to the former Throne Hall, which would ease the commuting time of all the officers. See The Association of Siamese Architects, “Sam-nak-ngan Lekha-tikan Rattasapa” [The National Assembly Secretariat Office], *ASA Journal* 3, no. 3 (1972): 19-22; and Secretariat of the Parliament, *The Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall*, ed. Thongtong Chandransu (Bangkok: Aksorn Samphan Printing, 1988), 27-29.

place in the new facility on September 19, 1974, followed by the demise of the military government.⁹⁵ Since then, the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall has been designated a national historic building, and was returned to the king as part of Dusit Palace, and the Parliament House became the primary building used for the National Assembly.

Pon Chulasawek, the lead designer who ranked as the senior architect in the PWD at the time, explained that the design team tried to connect the centerline of Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall, the Equestrian Statue of King Rama V, and Ratchadamnoen Nok road, creating an imaginary axis and locating the new National Assembly perpendicular to this axis.⁹⁶ In reality, the compound's obscure location made the entire site visually hidden from the main Ratchadamnoen Avenue.⁹⁷ The ambiguity of Thai sovereign becomes apparent here. Though the *Khana Ratsadon* wrested absolute power from the monarchy, governments in later decades were still quite willing to receive land granted by the monarchy as a part of Thailand's historic-democratic complex. Koompong Noobanjong, an architecture professor at King Mongkut's Institute of Technology, finds that

the obscure location of the assembly and parliamentary compound revealed the sad-but-true state of democracy in Thailand: the “powerlessness” of the national legislative branch of government and the parliamentary system. [In reality] Getting squeezed behind the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall and facing Dusit Zoo, no part of the parliamentary compound had visual contact with Ratchadamnoen Avenue. The National Assembly was located on land belonging to Dusit Palace. It sat slightly off axis from Ananta Samakhom,

⁹⁵ Office of the Prime Minister, “The Cabinet’s Approval for the Construction of the New House of Parliament,” Office of the Prime Minister (Bangkok) August 11th, 1968; Secretariat of the Parliament, *Forty-second Anniversary of the Thai Parliament (1932-1974)*, ed. Prasart Pattamasukond (Bangkok: Library of the Parliament, 1974) 676, 677, 952, 968, 1025-26; and Wikipedia, s.v. “National Assembly of Thailand.” Last modified September 5, 2021, 01:24 UTC, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Assembly_of_Thailand

⁹⁶ The Association of Siamese Architects, “Sam-nak-ngan Lekha-ti-kan Rattasapa” [The National Assembly Secretariat Office], 19-22.

⁹⁷ Ratchadamnoen Avenue consists of three segments, named Ratchadamnoen Nai, Ratchadamnoen Klang, and Ratchadamnoen Nok (Inner, Middle, and Outer Ratchadamnoen, respectively). It links the Grand Palace to Dusit Palace in the new royal district, terminating at the Royal Plaza in front of the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall. See Koompong Noobanjong, “The National Assembly: An Empty Promise to Democracy,” *Journal of Architectural/Planning Research and Studies* 4, no. 2 (2006): 77-99

but instead of enjoying a theatrical location, as did the throne hall, the assembly was situated on a relatively minor street facing a zoo.⁹⁸

In order to reach the House of Parliament, one must travel along a circuitous road, almost circumnavigating the Throne Hall. The National Assembly's modern-looking thin shell did not truly contribute to the building's impressive silhouette, and thus it failed to register on the cityscape (Figure 4-25).

Although today the site of U-Thong Nai parliament building has been returned to its previous owner, the Bureau of the Royal Household, which began demolishing the remaining buildings and merging the site with the area of Dusit Palace, its design was extensively documented by many architectural scholars and the Thai press.⁹⁹ The U-Thong Nai House of Parliament compound was initially composed of three main structures. The first building, or the Parliament House, had three stories covering an area of approximately 11,000 sq. m. (or 118,400 sq. ft.), containing the meeting chamber for the National Assembly. The chamber was shared between the Senate and the House. It also contained the offices of the President and Vice President of the National Assembly and other deputy presiding officers. The second building was a seven-story building comprised of the offices of the National Assembly, their secretariat, and the printing press. The third structure was the Parliament Club, a two-story building used as a reception hall, with other facilities for Assembly members.¹⁰⁰ As described by the main architect, the functional layout was intended to be as simple as possible, with the circular-shaped chamber

⁹⁸ Koompong, *The Aesthetics of Power: Architecture, Modernity, and Identity from Siam to Thailand*, 218.

⁹⁹ Wikipedia, s.v. "National Assembly of Thailand." Last modified September 5, 2021, 01:24 UTC. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Assembly_of_Thailand

¹⁰⁰ Later, three more government buildings were added as a part of the complex, which are: complex-administrative building, meeting hall with parking garage, and security-and-juristic-person office building. See "Yon Tumnan 44 Pi Rattasapa Nub Toy Lung su Sappaya Sapasatan" [Tracing the 44-year Legend of U-thong-nai Assembly Hall and Counting Down for Sappaya-Sapasatan], *Matichon Online*, December 7, 2018, https://www.matichon.co.th/politics/news_1262764

in the middle of the floorplan surrounded by office rooms (Figure 4-26).¹⁰¹ Some of these components were also connected by bridges. Significantly, in front of the complex was a statue of King Prajadhipok (Rama VII), situated on the highest point of the stepped terraces, located in front of the drop-off point of the National Assembly's main entrance (Figure 4-27).

The most outstanding element of Thailand's Parliament House was its 31-meter-long curved roof. This set it apart a product of the Modern Thai architecture era and demonstrated the cultural transition in the economic, social, and political life of the Thais between the 1930s and the 1970s.¹⁰² The architecture team designed this signature element by employing a thin-shell roof structure atop the chamber hall and using the reinforced-concrete post-and-beam structure for the rest of the complex. At that time, this thin-shell roof was considered to be the largest thin-shell structure in Thailand, unsupported by any columns.¹⁰³ In terms of material selection, Pon Chulasawek utilized white-gray marble as a finishing material for both interior and exterior of the National Assembly, earning the building its nickname—the Marble Parliament—in the Thai press. The usage of this white marble was part of an attempt to make a symbolic connection with the white Italian Carrara-marble cladding on the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall.¹⁰⁴ The other edifices in the compound were painted similarly in white.

On the interior, the layout of the seat arrangement in the National Assembly was more like a lecture hall than an amphitheater. Disparate levels situated members of the cabinet in an

¹⁰¹ The Association of Siamese Architects, "Sam-nak-ngan Lekha-ti-kan Rattasapa" [The National Assembly Secretariat Office], 19-22.

¹⁰² "The Parliament House of Thailand." *Plenum, Places of Power: A Wiki on National Parliament Buildings Worldwide*. Accessed September 21, 202. <https://www.places-of-power.org/wiki/index.php?title=Thailand>

¹⁰³ Additionally, the designer mentioned several problems, which they found accordingly when the building got built, that the architect finished the designing process six years prior to the construction actually got started; therefore, as the officers was increasing by time, the prepared rooms were enough to accommodate the latest numbers of the officer as such. See The Association of Siamese Architects, "Sam-nak-ngan Lekha-ti-kan Rattasapa" [The National Assembly Secretariat Office], 19-22.

¹⁰⁴ Koompong, *The Aesthetics of Power: Architecture, Modernity, and Identity from Siam to Thailand*, 210.

authoritative position higher on the podium stage, whereas other members of Parliament were relegated to the lower position of an “audience.” Rather than choosing to reflect the ideals of democracy through the form of the original Athenian amphitheater, where speakers stand below in the middle of a bowl-shaped space visible to everyone in the hall, the Thai Parliament was subjected to a seating arrangement indicative of the top-down, authoritarian nature of the military regime. In such a regime, both the House of Representatives and the Senate act merely to rubber-stamp, with their weak legislative institution functioning under directives from the administrative branch of government. The seating arrangement in the National Assembly thus reflects the betrayal of the checks-and-balances principle of a democratic government.¹⁰⁵

The only feature of the National Assembly which lives up to the democratic purpose of the building is the audience observation deck. From this area, common people and the press can assume the role of concerned citizens by watching their politicians in action. Aside from the provided space, there is also a closed-circuit television system that broadcasts the events taking place inside the hall throughout the House of Parliament complex and on national television. Nonetheless, public participation in national politics by means of observation at the National Assembly building is ephemeral indeed. The Thai constitution has always included a provision for the House of Representatives and the Senate to convene in secret. On numerous occasions, the people and the press are forced to be excluded from the Assembly Hall, and the closed-circuit television has often been suspended.

One of the criticisms circulating in Thai architectural society in the meantime regarded the design of the compound’s main structure--the National Assembly building: it strongly

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 221.

resembles Le Corbusier's Palace of Assembly (1963) and Oscar Niemeyer's National Congress (1960).

The formal composition and façade design of the Thai National Assembly appear heavily influenced by Le Corbusier's Palace of Assembly building in Chandigarh, India.¹⁰⁶ Chandigarh's Assembly is founded on an octagonal plan with a flat square roof on top. At the center, Le Corbusier placed a hyperbolic tower with the circular-shaped general assembly hall underneath (Figure 4-28). As the Modern master believed that "architecture is (built of) circulation," the Palace of Assembly was designed to encourage the movement of people and ideas. His statement was also manifested through the design of high ceilings and narrow columns, creating a lavish feeling for the space; and ramps replaced stairs, providing fluid transitions between each level. The circular form of General Assembly not only expresses Le Corbusier's belief literally, it is also located off-center, challenging the intensely organization-focused Neoclassical architecture of the previous era.¹⁰⁷

In the case of the Parliament House of Thailand, the design component that vividly recalls Le Corbusier's design is the curved parapet wrapping around the building. Not only that, the vertical concrete piers that support the parapets and create rhythm throughout the facades coincide startlingly with the front and back facades of the Chandigarh Assembly (Figure 4-29). The only element totally distinguishing the Thai Assembly from Chandigarh's is the location of the general assembly hall, which in the Thai version was placed in the center of the building.

¹⁰⁶ The Palace of Assembly is part of the Capitol Complex, located in Chandigarh in Punjab, India. In addition to this building, the complex also includes the Legislative Assembly, Secretariat, and High court. The building was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2016. See Khushboo Sandhu, "Capitol Complex, as Le Corbusier Wanted it, Remains Incomplete," *Indian Express*, last modified June 19, 2010, <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/chandigarh/capitol-complex-as-le-corbusier-wanted-it-remains-incomplete/>; and Igor Fracalossi, "AD Classics: Palace of Assembly / Le Corbusier," *ArchDaily*, last modified August 10, 2011, <https://www.archdaily.com/155922/ad-classics-ad-classics-palace-of-the-assembly-le-corbusier>.

¹⁰⁷ Deborah Gans, *The Le Corbusier Guide* (New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 1987), 171.

Both architects also incorporated reflecting pools into their buildings, which generate the same effect of lightness in both buildings' massive structures.¹⁰⁸

Another controversy among Thai architects regarded the interior planning of Thai Parliament House, which was quite similar to the interior design of Oscar Niemeyer's *National Congress* in Brasilia, Brazil. In Niemeyer's design, two "cupolas," rising above the flat roof, indicate the Brazilian assembly's bicameral legislature (Figure 4-30). One cupola over the Senate chamber takes the shape of a shallow parabolic dome, while for the larger Chamber of Deputies, Niemeyer inverted the symbolic dome to create a bowl shape.¹⁰⁹ Comparing the two buildings' floorplans, Thailand's National Assembly seemed to duplicate Brasilia's Chamber of Deputies, both in terms of proportion and layout (Figure 4-31 and 4-32). The Thai version only neglected the inverted, mirroring aspect of the other chamber. Amidst the contention surrounding these resemblances, Pon, the Thai architect, stepped up to explain his design inspiration in an interview with ASA Journal:

[F]or the building elevations, the original attempt is to design with simplicity. Only minor decorating architectural elements were added in order to disrupt the building's boldness and to put some aesthetic details for the building. The decorative elements wrapping around the rooftop were actually derived from the traditional Thai flower garland. These are often seen as part of the decorative elements of the *Jumsai Throne*, (Figure 4-33) which His Majesty the king often uses in inspecting the Thai armed forces parade. The design did not intend to copy the work of Oscar Niemeyer in Brasilia, as people [have claimed].¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Koompong, *The Aesthetics of Power: Architecture, Modernity, and Identity from Siam to Thailand*, 210.

¹⁰⁹ David Douglass-James, "AD Classics: National Congress / Oscar Niemeyer," *ArchDaily*, last modified September 21, 2015, <https://www.archdaily.com/773568/ad-classics-national-congress-oscar-niemeyer>.

¹¹⁰ *Jumsai Throne* is a term that employed to call the royal temporarily movable Throne. It is built in rectangular-shaped form with four poles support at each corner. Its roof is covered with clean white sheet with three-layer ornamental fringe, decorating with artificial flower garlands. The throne is often brought to use in the royal outdoor ceremonies. Regarding Pon's explanation, please see The Association of Siamese Architects, "Sam-nakngan Lekha-ti-kan Rattasapa" [The National Assembly Secretariat Office], 19-22.

Quite apart from the controversy surrounding possible plagiarism, some also noted a similarity between the new parliament house and the design of the massage parlors and hotels that became very popular in the 1960s.¹¹¹

The entire House of Parliament, especially the Assembly Hall, is a synthesis of many contemporary architectural movements of its time. Besides the aforementioned Corbusian influence from Chandigarh, traces of other architectural styles can also be seen in this complex. For instance, the piers and vertical concrete elements in the facades, such as sunshades and screens, which serve as an environment-controlled device, were architectural features derived environmentalist design principles. The complex geometry and the abstract, powerful formal composition of the assembly also reminded the audience of the new style of Brutalism. The hyperbolic dome on top of the roof, together with its folding-umbrella interior, resembles Oscar Niemeyer and Lucio Costa's Brazilian style, which was an International-Style variation.¹¹²

Chatri Prakitnonthakan, a professor of Thai architectural history, has explained the rationale that led the designers to adopt the contemporary western International Style:

it was because this architecture (the U-Thong Nai Assembly Hall) was built during the 1970s, when General Thanom Kittikachorn ranked a Prime Minister position. The surrounding circumstances, such as the country's need to ally with the United States and to join the Free-World camp against Communism, had forced Thailand and Thai architects to deliberately display the national image as anti-communist via the uses of Modern representation. However, an ambiguity also occurred here, which confused a lot of audiences, because Thailand was under a military-led regime, directed by a coup, but at the same, presenting itself as a Free-World supporting country.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture: A Critical History* (New York, NY: Thames and Hudson, 1992), 254-257.

¹¹³ Rungrit Petchratana, Rungrawin Sangsigha, and Anuchit Nimalung, "Sappaya-sapa-sathan: Rattasapa hang Mai lae Kwam-mai ti Soon-hai khong Prachachon" [Sappaya-sapa-sathan: People's New National Assembly Hall and its Loss of Meaning], *Way Magazine*, May 22, 2019, <https://waymagazine.org/interview-chatri-prakitnonthakan-sappayasaphasathan/>.

The case study of the U-Thong Nai Assembly Hall, therefore, becomes a vivid example affirming Homi Bhabha's theory of hybridity. That Thailand is a crypto-colonial country, subordinated to the West is clear from the national Assembly Hall's architectural characteristics and in its self-assessment in the geopolitical order.

***Sappaya-Sapasathan* (The Third Parliament House of Thailand, 2013-present)**

Prior to the decision made to construct the third House of Parliament in 2002, Thailand had already relocated its national assembly hall twice, from the first location at the *Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall*, where the National People's Assembly of Siam was first convened in 1932, to the second *U-Thong Nai Assembly Hall*, located opposite to a Dusit Zoo, which was a part of the royal Dusit Palace. A rapid increase in membership of the Parliament House quickly rendered the U-Thong Nai Assembly Hall obsolete.¹¹⁴ The building could not accommodate the number of new members, and the location on Ratchadamnoen Avenue could not be expanded further. Thus, in 2002, the cabinet under Thaksin Shinawatra's premiership hired consultants to find a new potential site for yet a third House of Parliament. The initial motive for building a new parliament was purely utilitarian.¹¹⁵

The site-selection process for the new House of Parliament took more than a decade. The search began in 2002 when Thaksin Shinawatra's government proposed that the new building should be constructed in a public park, a 53.6-acre plot of land in Chatuchak District in Bangkok,

¹¹⁴ Dusit Zoo was popularly known as *Khao Din Wana*. It was the oldest zoo in Thailand, built by King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) as his private garden, adjacent to the royal palace. During the reign of King Vajiralongkorn (Rama X) in August 2018, the Zoological Park Organization announced that the zoo would be closed and relocate to a new site in Thanyaburi District, Pathum Thani Province. See "Tiew Songtai Pi ti 'Suansad Dusit' korn Pid Tumnan Suansad Klang Krung" [End-of-the-Year Trip at the Legendary 'Dusit Zoo,' Before this Midst-of-the-City's Zoo Is Closed Down Forever], *Prachachat*, December 26, 2017, <https://www.prachachat.net/blogger-square/travel/news-92947>.

¹¹⁵ Koompong, *The Aesthetics of Power: Architecture, Modernity, and Identity from Siam to Thailand*, 265.

called the Railway Park.¹¹⁶ The cabinet felt that the site was appropriate because of its proximity to major government offices which had already been moved to the north of the city.¹¹⁷ The relocation announcement immediately received copious negative feedback, as the project would minimize the already limited green spaces in Bangkok while exacerbating the city's terrible traffic conditions. In keeping with former Prime Minister Thaksin's objectives, the suggestion of the Railway Park was with the idea that the area would soon become a major transportation hub for Bangkok, with trains, elevated trains, subways, and bus routes, intersecting at one node, the Chatuchak Park. The new location was also convenient to Don Muang Airport, which stood approximately 8 miles (13 km) away to the north. Further, the Chatuchak location fit the premier's desire to attend parliamentary meetings without having to leave the city.¹¹⁸ But tremendous public criticism overwhelmed this plan, and it was not executed.

In late 2005, the Thaksin administration again proposed a site for the new House of Parliament, a plot of land occupied by a defunct textile factory in Rangsit, almost 20 miles (30 km) north of Bangkok. The rationale behind this plan was the cost-effectiveness of the land acquisition, since the property had already been nationalized following the factory's collapse in the 1997 economic crisis.¹¹⁹ This proposal also failed, this time because Thaksin's government was overthrown by a coup d'etat in 2006. In June of the following year, the junta-appointed National Legislative Assembly (NLA) disclosed a plan to erect the new House of Parliament complex on a golf course belonging to the Irrigation Department in Nonthaburi Province, and the

¹¹⁶ Railway Park was subsequently renamed to be *Wachirabenchathat Park* by King Vajiralongkorn (Rama X), when he was ranking the Crown Prince.

¹¹⁷ Koompong, *The Aesthetics of Power: Architecture, Modernity, and Identity from Siam to Thailand*, 265.

¹¹⁸ "Another Backlash against Academics," *Nation* (Bangkok), January 9, 2003; and "PM Confronting the Media Again," *Nation* (Bangkok), February 21, 2003.

¹¹⁹ Koompong, *The Aesthetics of Power: Architecture, Modernity, and Identity from Siam to Thailand*, 267-271.

next one on part of the Defense Ministry's land in Nonthaburi.¹²⁰ These two plans were again subjected to public criticism, due to the lack of public participation transparency in the site-selection process.¹²¹ Finally, in 2008, an elected government led by a civilian, Samak Sundaravej, reversed the NLA's verdict and opted for a location on the left bank of the Chao Phraya River in the Kiakkai neighborhood of the Dusit District.¹²²

This final decision was made concordant with a comprehensive urban study, conducted in 1999 by two leading architectural academic institutions, the Faculty of Architecture of Chulalongkorn and Silpakorn Universities. Scholars from both universities recommended the plot in the Kiakkai neighborhood as the most suitable location, due to its historical significance and urban symbolism. It won out over five other potential sites in the Bangkok metropolitan area, Nan Leang, Sanam Pao, the Railway Park in Chatuchak District, and Klong Prem and Pakkred in Nonthaburi.¹²³ The study primarily suggested that Ratchadamnoen Avenue offered a pre-existing historical, cultural, and political foundation for Thai city planning, and that the new House of Parliament should respond to this existing national symbol. The Thai architecture scholars recommended extending the prominence of the Parisian-inspired Ratchadamnoen road northward to meet the Kiakkai site. This would connect the new parliamentary complex with the

¹²⁰ "New Parliament Proposal Faces Protest," *Bangkok Post* (Bangkok), June 26, 2007.

¹²¹ Koompong, *The Aesthetics of Power: Architecture, Modernity, and Identity from Siam to Thailand*, 267-271.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 271; and Wikipedia, s.v. "สี่ปายะสภาสถาน," last modified August 30, 2021, 11:10 UTC, <https://th.wikipedia.org/wiki/สี่ปายะสภาสถาน>

¹²³ Besides the five Bangkok locations proposed, there were two further locations situated in the nearby provinces: Chachoengsao (to the east) and Nakhon Nayok (to the northeast) approximately 30 miles (50 km) from Bangkok. See Koompong, *The Aesthetics of Power: Architecture, Modernity, and Identity from Siam to Thailand*, 268.

However, during the site searching under the Samak Sundaravej administration, only three locations passed to the final round: the Kiakkai location, which is part of the royal army barracks; the fuel-depot site in Klong Toey District; and land that is part of the Arsenal Division Military Ordnance Department, located in Nonthaburi. See Wikipedia, s.v. "สี่ปายะสภาสถาน," last modified August 30, 2021, 11:10 UTC, <https://th.wikipedia.org/wiki/สี่ปายะสภาสถาน>

pre-existing nationally symbolic buildings situated on Ratchadamnoen Avenue—the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall (built in 1908), the Dusit Palace Plaza (built in 1907), the Democracy Monument (built in 1939), the Royal Field (built in the time of King Rama I, r. 1782-1809), and the Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall (the Grand Palace, built in 1782) (Figure 4-34).¹²⁴ By extending this urban axis, laid out since King Chulalongkorn’s era (Rama V), the new Parliament would unify buildings in the space-time continuum by weaving the past, present, and future of Thai generations together.¹²⁵ As the Kiakkai site was adjacent to Chao Phraya river, the waterfront connection would provide physical and psychological ties to the water-based origins of Thai culture, while also representing the cosmological symbolism of water in the Thai belief system.¹²⁶

In reality, the rationale behind the selection of the Kiakkai site was based not on any historical or cultural symbolism, but mainly on the low cost of the land. The Thai army owned most of the 119.6-rai (approximately 19 ha) plot. The designated property housed not only the Army Transportation Department’s building compound, but also some areas owned by civilians and a public school. In August 2008, the government, now under the premiership of Samak Sundaravej, finally signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the construction of the new Parliament complex, ending a sixteen-year search for an appropriate location. Throughout

¹²⁴ Faculty of Architecture, Chulalongkorn University, *A Study on Site Selection for the Construction of the New House of Parliament* (Bangkok: Secretariat of the Parliament, 1999), n.p.; and Faculty of Architecture, Silpakorn University, *A Study on Site Selection for the Construction of the New House of Parliament* (Bangkok: Secretariat of the Parliament, 1999), n.p., cited in The Association of Siamese Architects, “Kan-suksa Wikro geawgub Sathantee Korsang Arkan Ratthasapa haeng Mai” [The Studies and Analyses of the New House of Parliament’s Proposed Construction Sites], *ASA Journal* September (1999): 56-67.

¹²⁵ Koompong, *The Aesthetics of Power: Architecture, Modernity, and Identity from Siam to Thailand*, 270.

¹²⁶ Sumet Jumsai, *Naga: Cultural Origins in Siam and the West Pacific* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1988), 86-87, 167, 170-171.

the long process, there had been no public hearing on the matter. Instead, there was an outcry from the students of Yothinburana school, located on the expropriated land.¹²⁷

During the first decade of the twenty-first century, the political administration of Thailand was legitimately unstable. Almost all the selected prime ministers were targeted frequently by their opponents, with the result that no prime minister could complete an election term and assemblies were regularly dissolved. In 2009, the Thai government, led by Abhisit Vejjajiva from the Democrat Party, together with the Association of Siamese Architects (ASA) and the Architect Council of Thailand (ACT) jointly arranged a design competition for the new National Assembly and Parliament complex, to cover an area around 300,000 sq.m., working with a budget of 12 billion baht.¹²⁸

Out of the one hundred and thirty design teams who submitted entries, a team entitled *Sa-ngop 1051 (Peace 1051)*, led by Theerapol Niyom, a director of the Arsomsilp Institute of Art (Figure 4-35), won the parliament-building competition.¹²⁹ The lead architect explained the project's name, *Sappaya-Sapasathan*:

¹²⁷ “Panel Select New Parliament Model,” *Bangkok Post* (Bangkok), November 11, 2009.

¹²⁸ As of October 2021, parts of Thailand’s Parliament complex are still under construction. However, when completed, the National Assembly building, Sappaya-sapa-sathan, will be counted as the world’s largest national assembly hall, replacing Romania’s *Palace of the Parliament* that occupies 365,000-sq.m. building area, and ranked as the second largest building behind the 600,000-sq.m. area of the United States’ Pentagon. See “Laung Sathiti ‘Mahakap’ Rattasapa Mai ‘Sappaya-sapa-sathan’” [Drawing Out the Statistics of the New Legendary National Assembly Hall of Thailand, “Sappaya-sapa-sathan”], *Voice TV*, March 26, 2018, https://voicetv.co.th/read/SkUIH_85M

Oddly, according to Koompong’s *The Aesthetics of Power*, published in 2013, the first given competition criteria of the Thai House of Parliament only covered the designed area of 300,000 sq.m. with a budget of 12 billion baht. Although the construction cost went up twice to be 23 billion baht, along with the increase of the floor space to be 424,000 sq.m. in 2021. See Koompong, *The Aesthetics of Power: Architecture, Modernity, and Identity from Siam to Thailand*, 272; and “Environmental Impact Assessment (Summary Version of the Executives),” *The Secretariat of the House of Representatives*, April, 2011, <https://resolution.soc.go.th/>.

¹²⁹ Deputy Senate Speaker Nikhom Wairachpanich, who chaired the competition committee, stated that the reason that the *Sa-ngop 1051* team won was due to the design's practicality, which allows the legislators the fastest access to the assembly room. “It would take only approximately two minutes for the members of the Parliament to enter the meeting room from the parking lot,” Nikhom said. “In terms of other architectural designs such as characteristics and aesthetics, the winning-team submission was on the same par with others.” Nikhom’s comments reveal that the main focus of the design-competition committee was the building’s utilitarian approach, rather than

it was named according to Buddhist belief. As *sappaya* means “comfortable in dharma,” the title is meant to translate as “a place for doing good deeds or good karma.” The building’s concept was also inspired by the classic Thai Buddhist folk tale *Trai Bhum Phra Ruang*, which led the building design to resemble a Thai temple, as a reminder to officials of “Thainess” and morality (Figure 4-36). All these analogies would make the architecture truly become a *Sappaya-Sapasathan* or a “peaceful parliament.”¹³⁰

In keeping with the program requirement, the new parliament building needed to accommodate more than 5,000 people and provide parking for 2,000 cars. Its design features a balanced composition between traditional and contemporary Thai architectural styles, represented by a stepped pyramid, surmounted by a golden pagoda-like structure (Figure 4-37). Interestingly, the initial design of the entire complex does not include security fencing or an arcade wall on its premises, demonstrating that the parliament is open to all.¹³¹ On the interior, the complex is mainly comprised of a Hall of the Sun, or *Suriyan Hall*, for the House of Representatives, and *Chantra Hall* or Hall of the Moon, to house the Senate (Figure 4-38). 5,018 teak trees were used, as the team claimed that they represent the “DNA of Thailand.”¹³² Besides these main functions, the complex also houses museums, a convention center, a seminar room, a banquet hall, and offices.¹³³

After the winner was announced, the *Sa-ngop* team’s chief architect, Teeraphon, revealed the design’s main concept was a spatial organization intended to represent *Khao Phra Sumeru*

how the architecture expressed Thainess or Thai democracy. See “MoU for New House Signed,” *Bangkok Post* (Bangkok), August 16, 2008.

¹³⁰ *Sappaya-sapa-sathan* is a combination of several words: *sappaya*, or the seven of Sappaya, meaning “comfortable,” “conducive conditions,” “supportive,” and the “right thing;” *sapa*, translated as a “council;” and *sathan*, signifying “place.” Thus, the total meaning gives a description of the “peaceful council.” See “A ‘Symbol of Thainess:’ Thousands of Teak Trees to be Cut Down for Thailand’s New Parliament Building,” *Asian Correspondent*, July 26, 2016; and Phra Brahmaganabhorn (P. A. Payutto), “Kwam-mai khong Sappaya” [The Meaning of Sappaya], in *Dictionary of Buddhism* (Bangkok: Mahachulalongkorn Press, 2016), 286.

¹³¹ Koompong, *The Aesthetics of Power: Architecture, Modernity, and Identity from Siam to Thailand*, 272.

¹³² Sasiwan Mokkalas, “No, 2,000 Teak Trees Won’t Be Cut for New Parliament—More Like 5,000,” *Khaosod English* (Bangkok), July 25, 2016.

¹³³ Wikipedia, s.v. “Sappaya-Sapasathan,” last modified September 6, 2021, 18:39 UTC, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sappaya-Sapasathan>

(Mount Meru) and its allusion of the sacred *Traibhum*.¹³⁴ This was intended to serve an ethical purpose. The architect explained that if politicians had to ascend Mount Meru every day on their way to the office, it might discourage them from giving in to the temptations of corruption and special interests. He explained that the core idea of this work was to elaborate the principles of *Traibhum*, consisting of three major realms: heaven, hell, and the human earth, to remind the Thais not to indulge in misdeeds.¹³⁵ This *Traibhum* concept was demonstrated using the traditional Thai pagoda form, linking each realm vertically. By locating the golden tower meant to resemble Mount Meru, the center of the entire complex, the designers intended to link the three essences of Thainess together: the democratic Thai citizens, the country's ruler or the king, and the national guardian deity, *Phra Siam Devadhiraj*.¹³⁶ The architect also designed the highest point of the parliament complex to resemble *Chulamanee-chediya-sathan*, a temple that only exists in the seventh heaven, the location of the guardian deity in Hindu-Buddhist belief.¹³⁷ Another subtle purpose of the pagoda was to link the newly-built architecture with traditional Thai design principles.

This jumbled concept for the new House of Parliament was immediately condemned by the Thai press and academic scholars as “the most disappointing contemporary Thai architecture of the era.”¹³⁸

¹³⁴ The word “Traibhum” or Tebhumikatha” means three realms or three worlds. These are *Kamabhumi* (the sensuous realm), *Rupabhumi* (the form realm), and *Arupabhumi* (the formless realm). There are thirty-one sub-worlds. Tebhumikatha was divided into eleven parts; the last part is *Nibbana*, the Path. See Phramaha Somdeth Tapasilo (Srila-ngad), “An Analytical Study of Development of Tebhumikatha in Thai Society,” *Mahachula Academic Journals* 6, no.1 (2019): 281.

¹³⁵ “Arkan Rattasapa hang Mai: Sappaya-sapa-sathan” [The New National Assembly Hall: Sappaya-sapa-sathan], *Arsomsilp*, June 13, 2018, <https://www.arsomsilp.ac.th/sapayasapasathan/>.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Isriya Paireepairit, “New Parliament,” *Markpeak.net* (blog), August 1, 2020, <https://markpeak.net/new-parliament/>.

¹³⁸ Rungrit, Rungrawin, and Anuchit, “Sappaya-sapa-sathan: Rattasapa hang Mai lae Kwam-mai ti Soon-hai khong Prachachon” [Sappaya-sapa-sathan: People’s New National Assembly Hall and its Loss of Meaning]; Komkrit Uitekkeng, “Phee, Praum, Putt: Phra Siam Devadhiraj Mai Kwaun Yu Bon Arkan Rattasapa” [Ghost, Brahmin, Buddhism: The Siamese Guardian Deity Should Not be Placed on the National Assembly Building],

Chattri Prakitnonthakan, a prominent historian of Thai architecture, criticized the misuse of the Buddhist concepts of *Sappaya* and *Traibhum* in an interview with *Way Magazine*:

it is very common for the *Traibhum* logic to be employed in the design of Buddhist temples. However, in the case of the national assembly hall, considered to be a public-service space, nobody has applied Buddhist philosophy to this type of buildings before, either in terms of the core principles or the architectural elements. Even back in the absolute-monarchy era during King Rama VI's reign, only the form, structure, and outer shell of traditional Thai temples were brought into use, but not the philosophical soul. For example, the exterior designs of *Vajiravudh-College* building compound and *Dhevalai Buiding* of Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University (Figure 4-10), might look the same as Buddhist temples or religious historical sites; although the profound intention of the designers was neither to incorporate the Buddhist doctrines, nor to make these buildings sacred sites. The architects of the absolute monarchy era only employed the Buddhist temples' decorative elements, but not their intrinsic religious belief. ... In my opinion, I think this type of Hindu-Buddhist philosophy should serve only in religious edifices, while public-service government buildings should employ their own principles, just like private-sector architecture. Therefore, if this civic-facing House of Parliament still seeks to employ both the ideologies and the architectural patterns of Buddhism, it surely doubles the mistakes.¹³⁹

Winyu Ardruga, an architecture professor at Thammasat University, adds:

Because the initial objective of this government building...was to claim itself as an upholder of morality, representing all Thai citizens, the competition winner decided to employ an ancient Hindu-Buddhist cosmology... However, when one closely observes a diagram of *Traibhum*, Mount Meru is positioned at the center of the whole universe, surrounded by seven rings of mountains and cosmic oceans on its horizontal alignment. Parts of these (lower) landscapes are the locations of the four earths where humans live. Meanwhile, the vertical axis of Mount Meru is where the levels of heaven are situated, placed accordingly to their power relations and sacredness (Figure 4-39). This idea of "galactic polity," radiating power outwardly from the center, subsequently became the main influencer for political and city planning of the Siamese ancient kingdom.¹⁴⁰

Matichon, Mar 10, 2021, https://www.matichonweekly.com/religion/article_407666; Winyu Ardruga, "'Mount Sumeru' and the New Thai Parliament House: The 'State of Exception' as a Paradigm of Architectural Practices," *Na Jua Architectural History and Thai Architecture* 10 (2013): 102-129; and Kid Yang Satapanik, "Arkara Maha Sathan bon Kwam Taotiam" [The Grandeur of Structure Placing over Equality], *Blockdit* (blog), May 13, 2021. <https://www.blockdit.com/posts/609cdfce76f13c0c4b820699>

¹³⁹ Rungrit, Rungrawin, and Anuchit, "Sappaya-sapa-sathan: Rattasapa hang Mai lae Kwam-mai ti Soon-hai khong Prachachon" [Sappaya-sapa-sathan: People's New National Assembly Hall and its Loss of Meaning].

¹⁴⁰ Winyu, "'Mount Sumeru' and the New Thai Parliament House: The 'State of Exception' as a Paradigm of Architectural Practices," 106-107.

As an architectural concept for a modern democratic political administration, the use of Hindu-Buddhist philosophies obviously linked to class and hegemony, the new *Sapaya-sapa-sathan* not only neglects the fact that Thai society is comprised of heterogenous cultures and religions, but also devalues the very concept of democracy and the voices of the Thai people.

The application of Hindu-Buddhist concepts to *Sapaya-sapa-sathan* disregards the country's conflicts surrounding diversity, in particular a violent eruption over religious diversity in southern Thailand which took place in 2004 but has continued to send out aftershocks.¹⁴¹ Both the designers and the competition committee acted with reckless disregard for modern Thai reality in choosing a design representing all Thai citizens through Buddhism. Winyu, a Thai Muslim, stresses that

when considering the issue of rights and equality of Thai citizens following democratic principles, “religious equality” is a part of this. ... In fact, Buddhism is not inscribed in the Thai constitution as a national religion, in contrast to what most people believe. However, with an ambiguously strong statement written in the constitution asserting that all Thai kings are Buddhists, this acclamation has resulted in Thailand occupying a dual position, both as a secular state and a religious state, despite the fact that the kings have to be multi-religious advocates. However, underneath this ambiguity, freedom and equality regarding individual rights and religious beliefs are protected in the Thai constitution.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ The incident is known across the southern part of Thailand as the “Tak Bai massacre” of the October 25th, 2004. On the day, army and police units fired on ethnic Malay Muslim protesters in the Tak Bai district of Narathiwat province, killing seven. Another 78 protestors suffocated or were crushed to death while being transported to an army camp in Pattani province. The military detained more than 1,200 people for several days without appropriate medical attention, and a number of severely injured protestors lost their limbs. In August 2013, the Supreme Court ruled that security personnel were blameless because they had only been performing their duties. In summary, the incident still remains the deadliest day in the rebellion by Malay-Muslims against rule by the Thai state, which colonized the southern provinces, bordering Malaysia over a century ago. For more details, please see “Thailand: No Justice 10 Years after Tak Bai Killings, Failure to Prosecute Officers Undermines Rights Protections in South,” *Human Rights Watch*, October 25, 2014, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/10/25/thailand-no-justice-10-years-after-tak-bai-killings#>; and “Muslims in South Thailand Mark 15 Years since ‘Tak Bai Massacre’,” *Aljazeera*, October 25, 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/10/25/muslims-in-south-thailand-mark-15-years-since-tak-bai-massacre>

¹⁴² Winyu, “‘Mount Sumeru’ and the New Thai Parliament House: The ‘State of Exception’ as a Paradigm of Architectural Practices,” 107; 110.

Winyu suggests that this elevation of Buddhism was acceptable to the competition committee because of a “state of exception” which allowed the parliament building, intended to represent the country’s equality and balance, to remain ambiguous in both logical sense and architectural form.¹⁴³

Chartri notes that the locations of the Sun and Moon Halls were subtly positioned to indicate the suppression of the voice of the Thai people:

[G]enerally, it is common to place the Assembly Hall in the middle of the parliament complex, at the focal point, to signify the importance of the people's representatives and senators. However, by carefully looking at the *Traibhum* diagram, the Sun and Moon only revolve around Mount Meru, and therefore, the Halls of the Sun and Moon are placed aside instead of at the center. This can be interpreted as putting the people's voices secondarily, rather than first. ... At the same time, many people might argue that the Australian Assembly Halls are also put aside, off center, leaving the middle space similarly to *Sapaya-sapa-sathan*. However, the central space of the Australian building, called the “Great Hall for Multifunctional Space,” is available for the people to rent out for any event from weddings to graduations. Meanwhile, the left-over middle space of Thailand’s parliament is reserved to locate the sacred *Phra Siam Devadhiraj* deity. This paraphrasing analogy of the seventh heaven through the usage of architecture only illustrates itself as a sacred site, forcing the people to bow down (to surrender).¹⁴⁴

At the end of the day, the design of the new House of Parliament destroys both the sacredness of the Buddhist philosophy and Thailand's hard-won democratic principles, so difficult to establish and maintain.

Throughout the process, there was an absence of public participation in both the site and design selections for the new House of Parliament. This underscores the chronic problems

¹⁴³ Winyu mentions the “state of exception,” proposed by Giorgio Agamben. Principally, Agamben defines a state of exception as a special condition in which the juridical order is suspended due to an emergency or a serious crisis threatening the state. In such a situation, the sovereign, i.e. the executive power, prevails over the others and the basic laws and norms can be violated by the state, while facing the crisis. See *Ibid.*, 102-129; and Davide Giordanengo, “The State of Exception,” *E-International Relations*, June 21, 2016, <https://www.e-ir.info/2016/06/21/the-state-of-exception/>

¹⁴⁴ Rungrit, Rungrawin, and Anuchit, “Sappaya-sapa-sathan: Rattasapa hang Mai lae Kwam-mai ti Soon-hai khong Prachachon” [Sappaya-sapa-sathan: People’s New National Assembly Hall and its Loss of Meaning].

involved in incorporating democratic ideology in built forms, over and above the choice to emphasize Buddhist philosophy. Koompong opines that

[I]t must also be noted that the competition was organized without any public hearing on the selection process for the finalists. To make the situation worse, the selection committee's rationale for choosing the winning design was not derived from any insight on the importance of symbolic signification for architecture of the state. ... To put it differently, owing to an uncritical reading of the urban history of Bangkok, exacerbated by the lack of wisdom about the politics of representation via architecture and urban space by both the administrative and legislative branches of government, the likelihood that the new House of Parliament would become an empty promise—an ironic reflection of Thai democracy merely, like the existing National Assembly and parliamentary complex--loomed on the horizon once again.

It seems clear that the project's patrons, the competition committee, and the architectural designers did neglect to incorporate the voices of the people, which are at the very heart of a democracy. Thus, the design of *Sappaya-Sapasathan* not only abandoned the democratic ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity, but also suppressed the sovereign power of the common citizens, who should be the true rulers of the country.

In an interview with *Way Magazine*, Chatri was asked how he would respond to the argument that there could be nothing wrong with attempting to influence the behavior of representatives through employing religious motifs in state architecture. He responded,

the sacredness of religion is not equal the sacredness of law and order. ... There is a way to interpret and control morality in terms of democracy, which is the check-and-balance system. Therefore, there is no need to harness the guilt arising from religious symbolism to prevent corrupt intentions among politicians.¹⁴⁵

In summary, in the nineteenth century Siamese/Thai elites tried hard to employ a foreign model in order to gain control over their local population. They persistently constructed hybridized Thai-Western images of “civilization,” whether through language or architecture. This affirms the dynamic of Garcia Canclini's *mestizaje*, which reveals that the “modern” has not

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

replaced the “traditional,” but rather has “tended to reproduce and rearticulate ‘tradition.’”¹⁴⁶ As a consequence, excessive borrowing from the West worked to erase a Thai national identity, which further erased links with indigenous Thai aesthetics and traditional building arts and techniques. Consequently, by the late twentieth and the beginning of twenty-first centuries, the quest for *siwilai* have been marked by a desire for a curtailed amount of foreign influence. The local/foreign split within *siwilai* has incited an ongoing debate regarding how much borrowed foreignness constitutes too much. This is clearly shown in the design of *Sappaya-Sapasathan*, through the ambiguous characteristics trapped between western Modernism and traditional Thai style. It is important to note that elite critiques of “excessive” popular borrowings of western culture do not so much reflect a genuine anti-westernness, as a loss of control over the extent of westernization resulting from plebeian challenges to the stylistic dictates of the ruling classes.¹⁴⁷

At the same time, this case study shows yet another dimension of hybridity in modern Thailand, subaltern cultural assimilation of the foreign as resistance to internal colonialism. This is shown in the neglecting of Muslim voices in the design of *Sappaya-Sapasathan*. The Thai theatrics of power, constructing national identity through architectural representation, further affirms the ideology of *mestizaje* modernity as a discourse of hegemony over indigenous populations, as explained by Garcia Canclini:

Modernity, then, is seen as a mask. A simulacrum conjured up by the elites and the state apparatuses, above all those concerned with art and culture, but which for that very reason makes them unrepresentative and unrealistic. The liberal oligarchies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries acted as if they constituted states, but they only ordered some areas of society in order to promote a subordinate and inconsistent development; they acted as if they formed national cultures ..., leaving out enormous indigenous and peasant populations, who manifest their exclusion in ... revolts and in the migration that bringing “upheaval” to the cities.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Krasniauskas, “Hybridity in a Transnational Frame: Latin-Americanist and Post-colonial Perspectives on Cultural Studies,” 247.

¹⁴⁷ Jackson, “Afterword: Postcolonial Theories and Thai Semicolonial Hybridities,” 201.

¹⁴⁸ Garcia Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*, 7.

Figures



Figure 4-1 - (Left) Murals inside Wat Phakhininat temple and (right) inside the ordination hall of Wat Ratcha-orasaram temple, reflecting the elite consumption of Chinese luxury goods during King Rama III's reign, Photograph, in Achirat Chaiyapotpanit, "King Rama III-Period Murals and their Chinese Home Decoration Theme," *Journal of the Siam Society* 101 (2013): 37 and 44.



Figure 4-2 - Western-perspective drawing method was picked up by *Khrua In Khong*, one of the most celebrated Thai artists active in the 1850s and 1860s, in the mural of Wat Borom Niwat temple, Mural painting, "Khrua In Khong," *Wikipedia*, accessed March 15, 2022. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khrua_In_Khong



Figure 4-3 - King Mongkut (the far right) with some of his heirs in 1875, Photograph, from Jeanette Bennett, “The Real King and I,” *Wendell Howe Blogspot* (blog), March 3, 2012, <http://wendellhowe.blogspot.com/2012/03/>

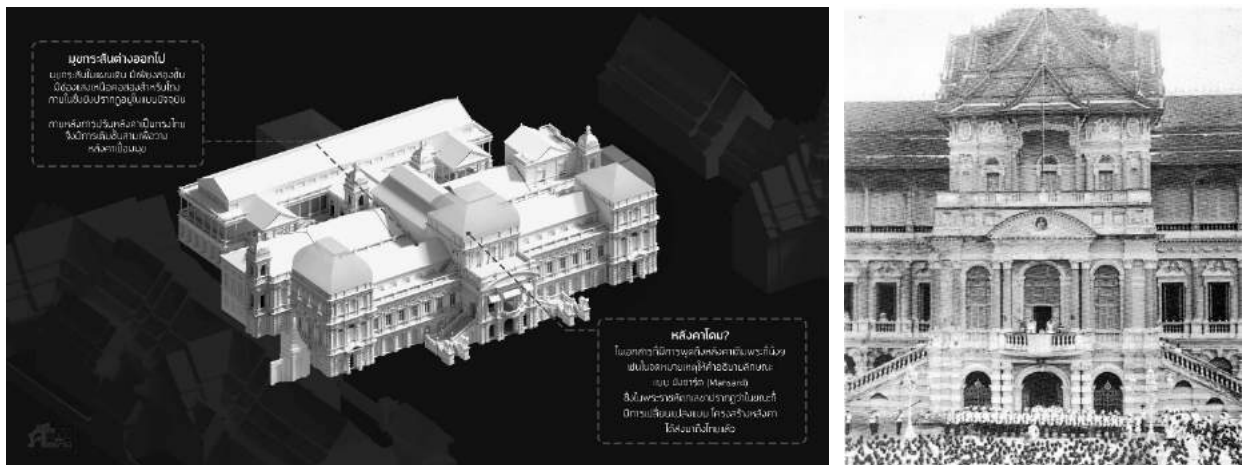


Figure 4-4 - The hybrid Thai-Western design of Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall, built during the reign of King Rama V, by overlaying the traditional-Thai spike roof over Western floor plans, Illustration, from Kid Yang Satapanik, “Sannistan Roopbab Satapattayagum Phra Tinung Chakri Maha Prasart” [Assuming the Architectural Pattern of Chakri Maha Prasart Throne Hall], *Twitter*, July 6, 2019. https://twitter.com/arch_kidyang/status/1147673774835134464

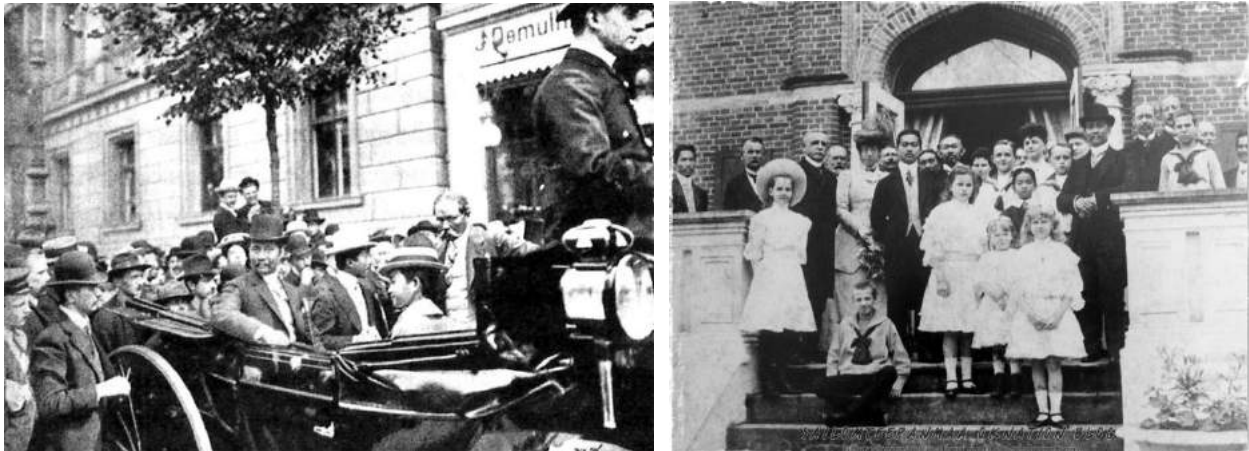


Figure 4-5 - King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) made several overseas trips to Europe and European colonies in Asia, Photograph, from Sornsakorn Chusawat, “Phra Ratchaprasong ti Taejing nai Karn Sadej Europe Krang ti Song khong Ratchakarn ti Ha” [The Original Intention of King Rama V in His Second Visit to Europe], *OK Nation*, September 6, 2012. <http://oknation.nationtv.tv/blog/alone-win/2012/09/06/entry-1>



Figure 4-6 - Ratchadamneon Avenue was built following to King Rama V’s vision to turn his kingdom into a miniature European colony, Photograph, from Nipat Thonglek, “Pap Gao Lao Tumnan: Beunglang Kwam Oh-ar Sa-nga-ngam Nam Thanon Ratchadamneon” [The Narratives of the Old Images: Behind the Extravaganza of Ratchadamneon Avenue], *Matichon*, January 22, 2018. https://www.matichon.co.th/article/news_809778

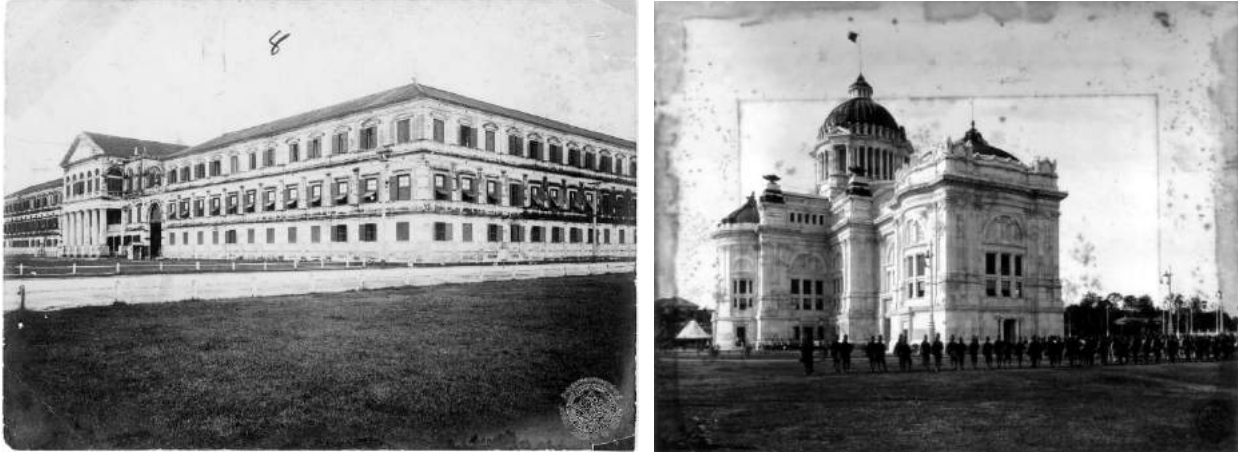


Figure 4-7 - (Left) Ministry of Defense building and (right) Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall, photograph, from Kid Yang Satapanik, “Kra-suang Kalahom” [Ministry of Defense], *Twitter*, April 9, 2020, https://twitter.com/arch_kidyang/status/1248204621589303296; and “Phra Ratchaphiti Thaleung Phraratchamontien Phra Tinung Anata Samakhom” [The Ceremony of Assumption of the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall], *Silpa Magazine*, June 1, 2020, https://www.silpa-mag.com/old-photos-tell-the-historical-story/article_11921



Figure 4-8 - (Left) Amphorn Sathan Residential Hall and (right) Bang Khunphrom Palace, Photograph, from “Amphorn Sathan Residential Hall,” *Wikimapia*, last modified October 23, 2021, <http://wikimapia.org/13674532/Amphorn-Sathan-Residential-Hall>; and “Bang Khunphrom Palace,” *Foursquare*, accessed October 23, 2021, <https://foursquare.com/v/วังบางขุนพรหม-bang-khunphrom-palace/4d175a89bb64224b2dbbf65>



Figure 4-9 - (Left) Portraits of King Vajiravudh or Rama VI while studying in England and (right) when he was wearing the uniform of a General in the British Army, Photograph, from Wikipedia; and “Vajiravudh (Rama VI), King of Siam (1881-1925) c. 1916,” *Royal Collection Trust*, accessed October 23, 2021, <https://www.rct.uk/collection/2915342/vajiravudh-rama-vi-king-of-siam-1881-1925>



Figure 4-10 - (Left) Vajiramongkut Building of Vajiravudh College and (right) the Administrative Building of Chulalongkorn University are the examples of Applied Thai architecture, Photograph, from “Vajiravudh College,” *ASA Conservation Award*, June 19, 2016; and “Chulalongkorn University,” *V Charkarn.com*, last modified June 20, 2021, <http://www.reurnthai.com/index.php?topic=4350.240>



Figure 4-13 - Examples of the architectural concrete-structured style that based itself on traditional Thai elements: (left) the main building of Phra Pratom Chedi temple and the pagoda, built from concrete, at Wat Phra Sri Mahathat Woramahawihan, Bang Khen (right), Photograph, in Vimolsiddhi Horayangkura and el at., *Pattanakan Naewkhwamkit lae Roopbaeb khong Ngansatapattayagum*, [Development of Concepts, and Architectural Patterns: Past, Present, and Future] (Bangkok: The Association of Siamese Architecture, 1993), 86 and 91.



Figure 4-14 - The Privy Council Chamber, designed by Sumet Jumsai in 2013-2014, Photograph, from “Privy Council Chamber,” *World Architecture*, July 10, 2008, <https://worldarchitecture.org/architecture-projects/hnhm/privy-council-chambers-project-pages.html>

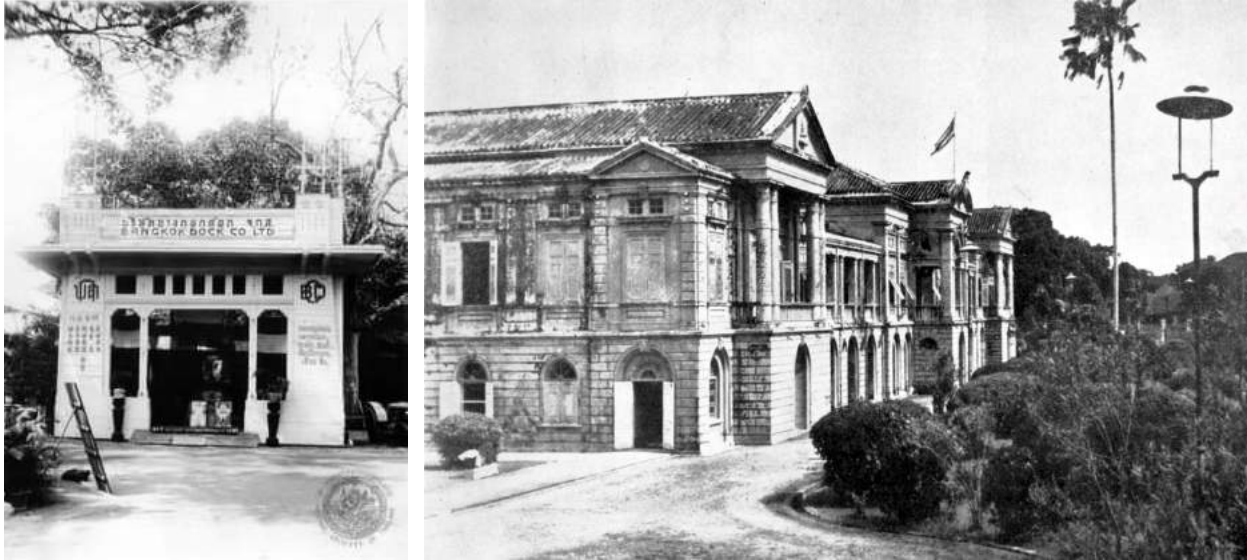


Figure 4-15 - (Left) Saranrom Park and (right) Saranrom Palace. The later was designed by Henry Alabaster, who was deputy consul general to the British Embassy and advisor to the king, in Neoclassical style in 1866, Photograph, from Sense and Scene, “Ngan Aok-ran Rer-doo Nao Suan Saranrom” [The Winter Fair and Festival at Saranrom Park], *Facebook* (photo album), October 3, 2016, <https://m.facebook.com/BaanThaTienCafe/posts/613271575517803>

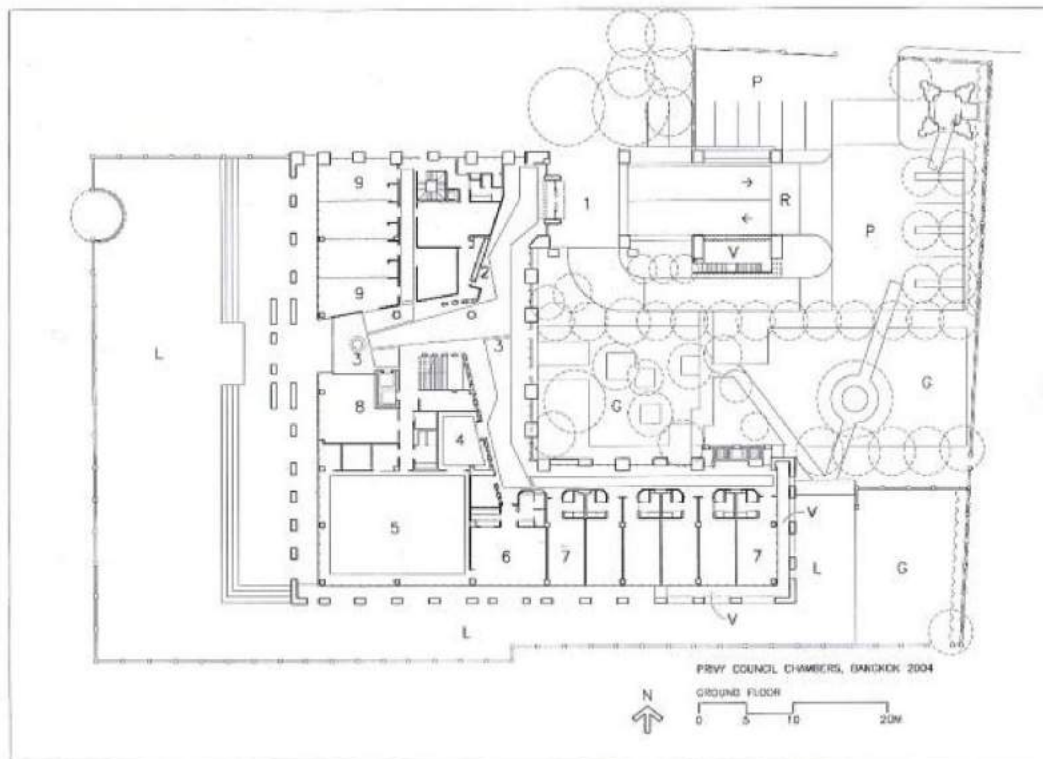


Figure 4-16 - Master plan layout of the Privy Council Chamber, Computational drawing, from “Privy Council Chamber,” *World Architecture*, July 10, 2008, <https://worldarchitecture.org/architecture-projects/hnhm/privy-council-chambers-project-pages.html>



Figure 4-17 - (Left) The colonnade design strategy of Sumet that derived from the Thai temples and European Classical architecture.

Figure 4-18 - (Right) In this façade, naked I-beams forming triangular frames, which perched atop the colonnade, invoke the traditional Thai gable roofs, Photograph, from “Privy Council Chamber,” *World Architecture*, July 10, 2008, <https://worldarchitecture.org/architecture-projects/hnhm/privy-council-chambers-project-pages.html>



Figure 4-19 - The old national assembly of Thailand, the U-Thong Nai Assembly Hall, built in 1970, Photograph, “Parliament House of Thailand,” *Wikipedia*, accessed March 15, 2022. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Assembly_\(Thailand\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Assembly_(Thailand))

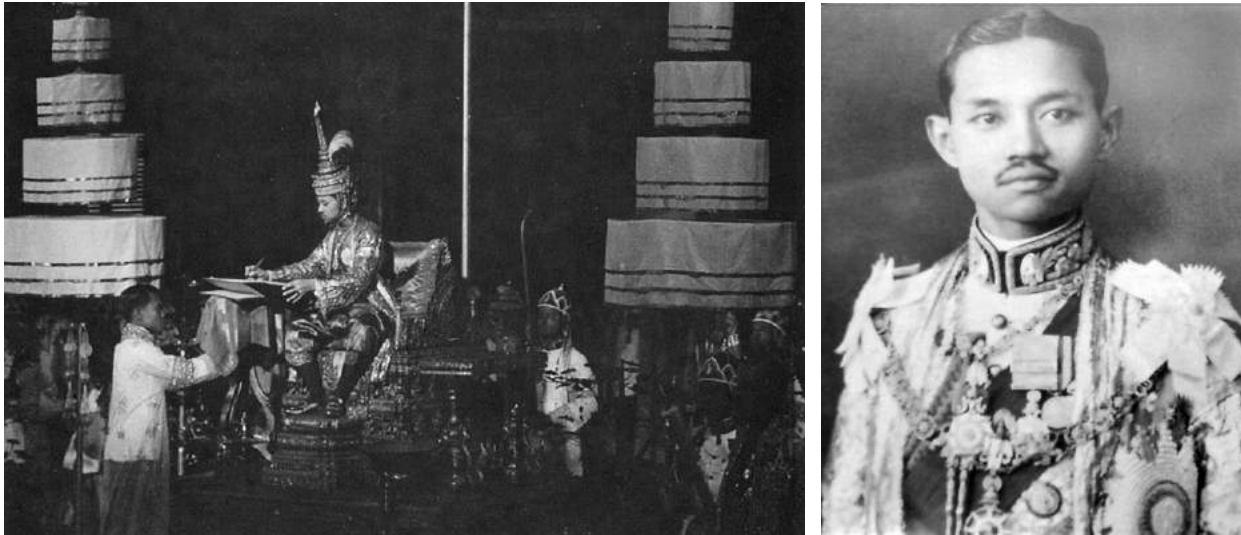


Figure 4-20 - (Left) The “Draft Constitution,” signed by (right) King Rama VII in 1932, Photograph, from “Phra Rajchahattalekha Ratchakarn ti Jed Phraratchathan Rattthammanoon Chabab Rak kae Phuongchon Chao Thai” [King Rama VII Granted the First Constitution to Thai People], *Around Online*, December 10, 2019, <https://www.aroundonline.com/constitution-day/>



Figure 4-21 - Four days after the legislature bestowed, the assembly met for the first time on June 28th in Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall, Photograph, “Rumruek Pad-sib-pad Pi Rattthammanoon Chabab Raek” [Commemorating 88 Years of the First Thai Constitution], *Voice TV*, June 26, 2020, <https://www.voicetv.co.th/read/kBbt210YC>



Figure 4-22 - (From left to right) Sarit Thanarat, Thanom Kittikachorn, and Prapas Jarusathian, Photograph, from “Si-sib-hok Pi Sib-si Tula Yon Du Khum Toorakit Si-sao Sarit-Thanom-Prapas Korn Mod Amnaj Tang Kan-mueng?” [48 Years of October 14th: Tracing Back the Businesses of the Si-sao Group: Sarit, Thanom, Prapas, Prior to their Political Downfall?], *Isra News*, October 16, 2019, <https://www.isranews.org/content-page/item/81558-isranewsss-81558.html>

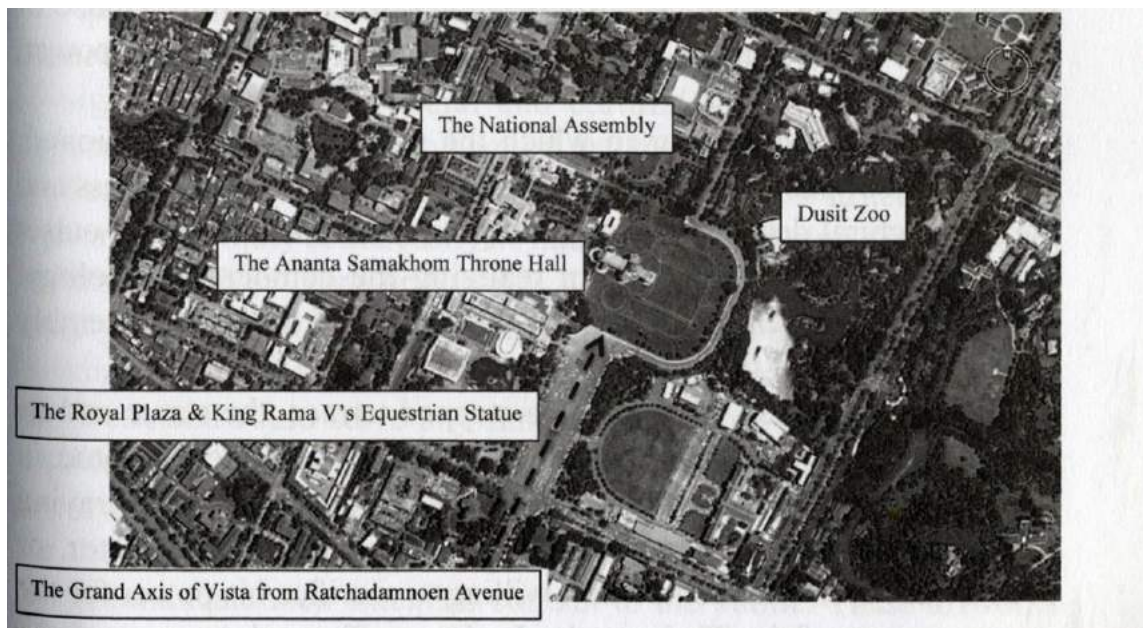


Figure 4-23 - King Rama IX granted a 7.9-acre plot of royal land, north of Ananta Samakhom, east of Dusit Palace, adjacent to Rajavithi road, to construct the new parliament complex, Photograph, in Koompong Noobanjong. *The Aesthetics of Power: Architecture, Modernity, and Identity from Siam to Thailand* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2013), n.p.



Figure 4-24 - Pon Chulasawek, the chief architect of PWD, Photograph, from “Nai Pon Chulasawek,” *Department of Public Works and Town and Country Planning*, accessed October 25, 2021, http://eservices.dpt.go.th/eservice_6/ejournal/26/26-02.pdf?journal_

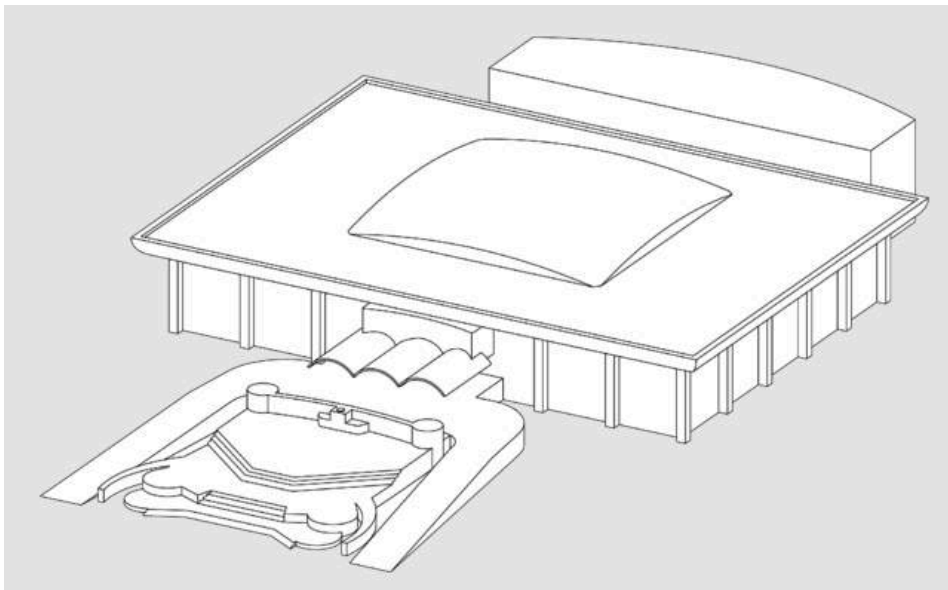


Figure 4-25 - The thin-shell roof structure over the chamber hall, Computational drawing from “The Parliament House of Thailand.” *Plenum, Places of Power: A Wiki on National Parliament Buildings Worldwide*, accessed September 21, 2021, <https://www.places-of-power.org/wiki/index.php?title=Thailand>

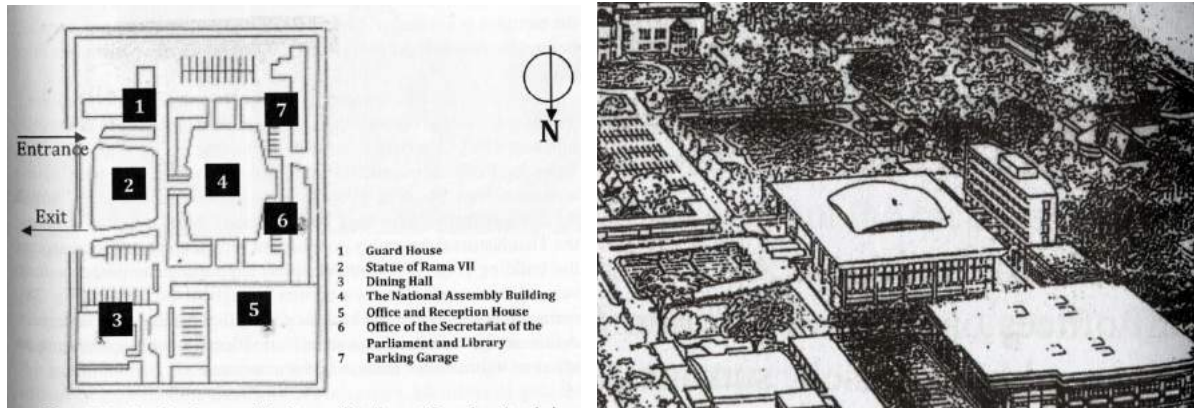


Figure 4-26 - As described by the main architect, the function layout was intended to be as simple as possible, Computational drawing, in Koompong Noobanjong. *The Aesthetics of Power: Architecture, Modernity, and Identity from Siam to Thailand* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2013), n.p.



Figure 4-27 - A statue of King Rama VII situated on the highest point in front of the drop-off point, Photograph, from “Guide to Parliament,” *Parliament.go.th*, accessed October 25, 2021, https://web.parliament.go.th/doc.php?type=file&mt=application%2Fpdf&d=parcy&url=download%2Farticle%2Farticle_20180403084734.pdf

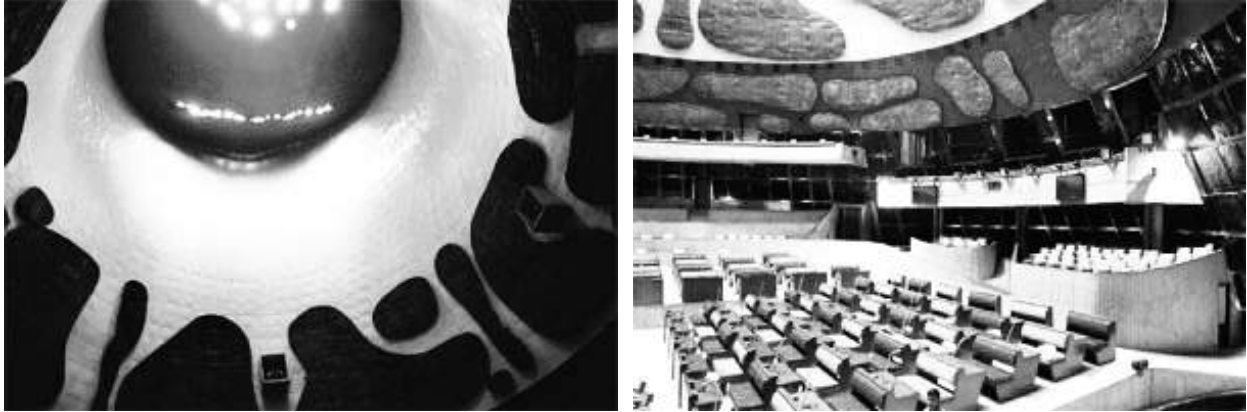


Figure 4-28 - At the center, Le Corbusier placed a hyperbolic tower with the circular-shaped general assembly hall underneath, Photograph, from Rajnish Wattas, “Colourful Enigmas of Corbusier’s Capitol,” *The Tribune India*, June 9, 2013, <https://www.tribuneindia.com/2013/20130609/spectrum/main1.htm>



Figure 4-29 - The design component that vividly recalls Le Corbusier’s design to the utmost are the curved parapet and the concrete piers that wrapped around the building, Photograph, from “Pien-pan Rattasapha Thai” [The Changes of Thai Parliament Buildings], *Parliamentmuseum.go.th*, June 28, 2021, <https://parliamentmuseum.go.th/89y/content4.html>



Figure 4-30 - In Oscar Niemeyer's design, two "cupolas," rising above the flat roof, indicate the assembly chambers of Brazil's bicameral legislature, Photograph, from David Douglass-Jaimes, "AD Classics: National Congress / Oscar Niemeyer," *ArchDaily*, September 21, 2015, <https://www.archdaily.com/773568/ad-classics-national-congress-oscar-niemeyer>.



Figure 4-31 - Thai Parliament House (left) that it was closely similar to the interior design of Oscar Niemeyer's *National Congress* in Brasilia, Brazil (right), Photograph, from Suthipat Kanitthakul, "Form of Parliament and Democracy," *The Momentum*, August 8, 2019, <https://themomentum.co/form-of-parliament-and-democracy/>

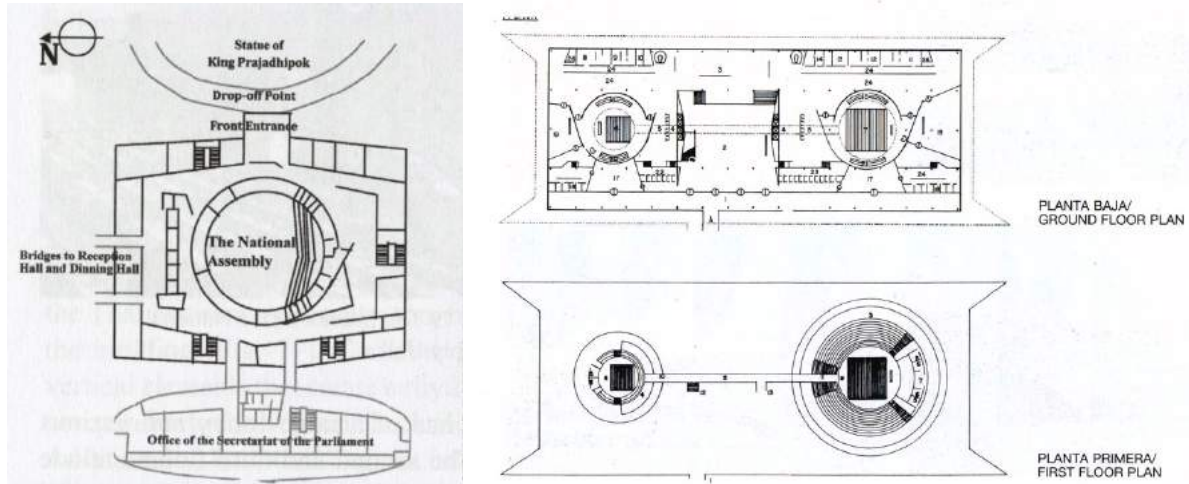


Figure 4-32 - By comparing two buildings' floorplans next to each other, Thailand's National Assembly (left) seemed to duplicate the Brasilia's Chamber of Deputies (right), both in terms of scaled proportion and layout, Photograph, in Koompong Noobanjong. *The Aesthetics of Power: Architecture, Modernity, and Identity from Siam to Thailand* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2013), n.p.



Figure 4-33 - The decorative elements that wrapping around the rooftop were derived from the *Jumsai Throne's* flower garland, Photograph, from Boon, "Nailuang-Phra Rachinee Sadej Phitee Suansanam Tawaiisat Pathiyai nai Wan Khongtap Thai" [King and Queen Join the Parade Ceremony on the Thai Armed Forces Day], *Educabla.com*, January 23, 2001, <https://educabla.com/01/ในหลวง-ราชินี-เสด็จฯ-พิธี/>

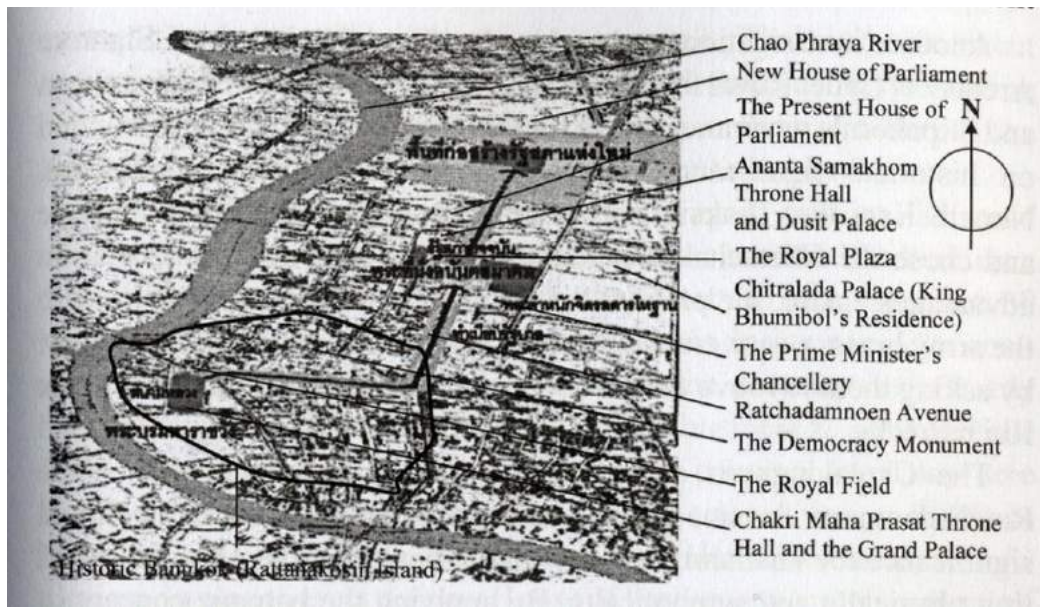


Figure 4-34 - The connection between the new parliamentary complex and all the existing national significances situated on Ratchadamnoen Avenue such as the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall, the Dusit Palace Plaza, the Democracy Monument, the Royal Field, and the Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall, Photograph, in Koompong Noobanjong. *The Aesthetics of Power: Architecture, Modernity, and Identity from Siam to Thailand* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2013), n.p..



Figure 4-35 - A director of the Arsomsilp Institute of the Arts, Theerapol Niyom, Photograph, from Arsom Silp Institute of the Arts, “Ajarn Theerapol Niyom,” *Facebook* (photo album), August 22, 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/arsomsilp/photos/a.1907702359291922/1907703015958523/?type=3>



Figure 4-36 - The classic Thai Buddhist folklore *Trai Bhum Phra Ruang*, Photograph, from “Trai Bhum Phra Ruang,” *Seksanpantu Wordpress* (blog), August 13, 2014, <https://seksanpantu.wordpress.com/2014/08/13/hell-earth-and-heaven/>

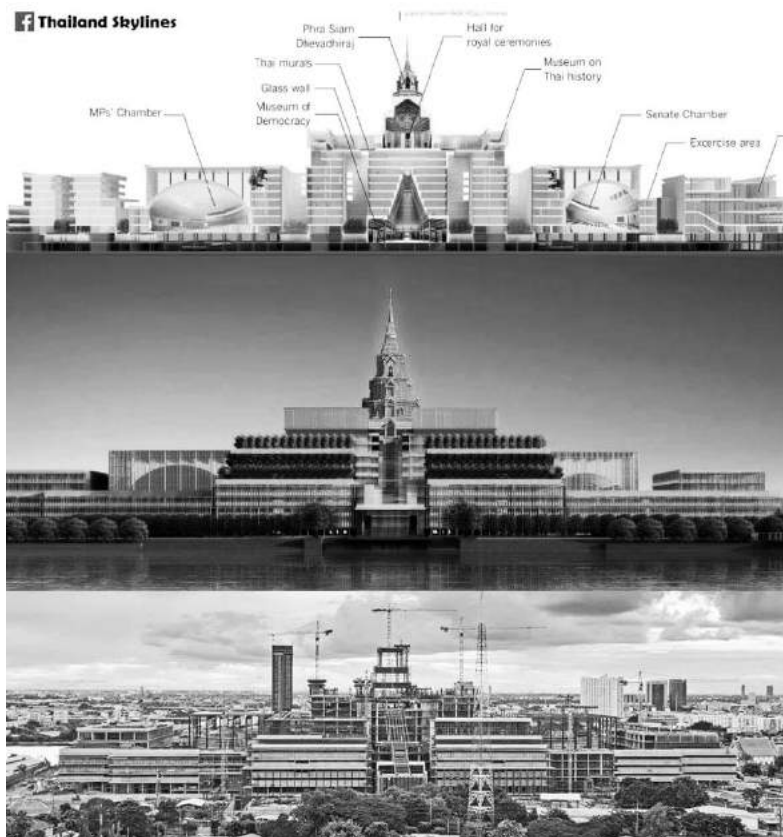


Figure 4-37 - The design of *Sappaya-sapa-sathan* is represented by a stepped pyramid, surmounted by a golden pagoda-liked structure, Computational drawing and photograph, from Southeast Asia Infrastructure, “Sapaya-Sapasathan,” *Facebook* (photo album), July 4, 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/sea.infra/photos/a.118845385458567/194388471237591/>



Figure 4-38 - Hall of the Sun or *Suriyan Hall* (left) serves as the House of Representative and *Chantra Hall* or Hall of the Moon (right) houses the Senate meetings, Photograph, from “House Meeting at New Parliament First Time,” *Voice TV*, August 7, 2019, <https://thestandard.co/house-meeting-at-new-parliament-first-time/>

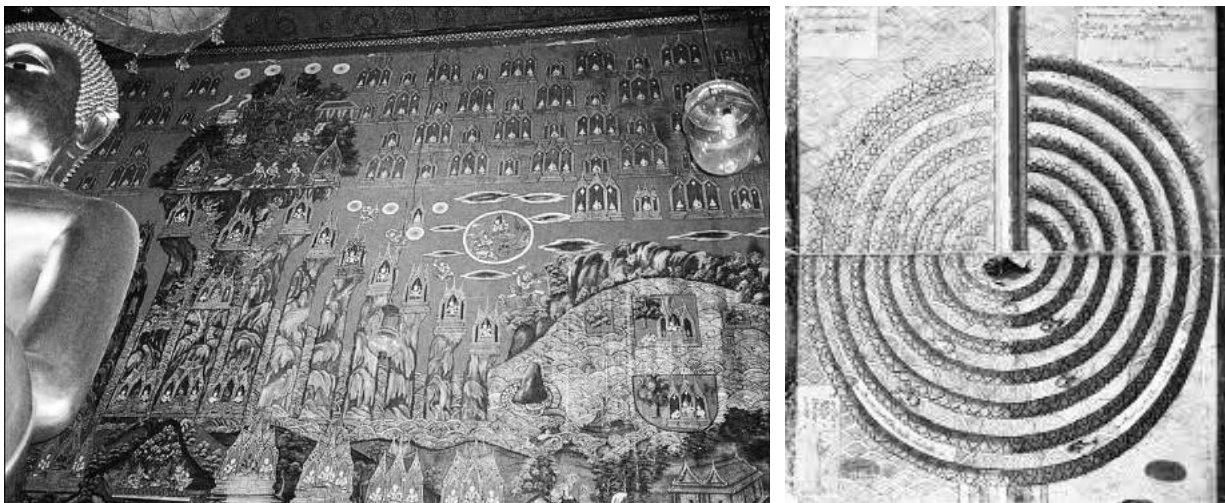


Figure 4-39 - *Traibhum* diagram, Mount Meru is thus positioned at a center of the whole universe, surrounded by seven rings of mountains and cosmic oceans on its horizontal alignment. Parts of these (lower) landscapes are the locations of the four earths where humans live, Photograph, “ไตรภูมิพระร่วง,” *Seksanpantu.wordpress.com*, accessed March 15, 2022. <https://seksanpantu.wordpress.com/2014/08/13/hell-earth-and-heaven/>

Chapter 5

Conclusion on Crypto-colonialism

“Western ... penetration of Siam was consummated directly at the economic level and indirectly at the political one. It was this that made Siam singularly different from her Southeast Asian neighbors whose doors were broken by [foreign] politico-military forces. Siam’s door was opened from inside.”¹

Since the mid-nineteenth century, the West has represented a privileged Other in the Thai imagination. Particularly from the era of European high imperialism to the rise of American power after World War II, Siam/Thailand’s economy, polity, culture, and social structure were all deeply impacted by the West in ways very similar to the impact felt by directly colonized countries. Though Siam/Thailand was never directly colonized by a western power, colonialism, made conspicuous by its absence, nonetheless has a leading role in the narrative of the nation.”² This reality has made Siam/Thailand an important site for critically assessing notions of “western influence” because it was ill-used by colonial powers in spite of never being formally incorporated into any imperial systems.³ This rationale also made Thailand fit with the conditions of crypto-colonial discourse in which the very claim of independence marks a symbolic as well as a material dependence on intrusive colonial power.⁴ A small handful of non-colonized countries including not only Thailand but Nepal, Ethiopia, and Greece are living paradoxes: they are nominally independent, but the independence comes at the price of a sometimes humiliating form of effective dependence.⁵

¹ 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), 82.

² Streckfuss, “The Mixed Colonial Legacy in Siam: Origins of Thai Racialist Thought,” 123.

³ Herzfeld, “The Conceptual Allure of the West: Dilemmas and Ambiguities of Crypto-Colonialism in Thailand,” 175.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 173.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 174.

While Siam/Thailand was occupying a colony-like position in western-dominated world order, the country was never a direct colony and hence cannot be called a post-colony. Therefore, in this dissertation, I use the term “crypto-colonialism” (variously rendered as *ananikhom amphrang* in Thai) heuristically to refer to a family of concepts that has been used to describe the qualified form of colonialism that typifies Siam/Thailand’s historical relations with the modern West. The interrelated members of this family include notions such as “indirect rule,” “informal empire,” “cultural imperialism,” “internal colonialism” (*ananikhom phai-nai*), “auto-colonialism,” and “semicolonialism” (*keung-meung-khen* and *keung-ananikhom*).⁶ Particularly, the prefix “crypto-” was selected to be included in this series of terms because they all position Thailand between the binaries of tradition/modernity and colony/empire. At the same time, it encourages new scholarship qualifying Siam/Thailand’s sovereign status to focus on the degree to which the kingdom approximates a colonized condition without emphasizing the equally important imperial aspects of Thailand’s position. Crypto-colonialism can be defined as the “special kind of political marginality” of “a nominally independent though practically tributary state” in which nationalist discourse of “independence” and “freedom” can mean, in countries such as Thailand, an actual subordination.⁷

Studying the deeply blended elite and popular cultures among the countries classified as crypto-colonial reveals that none reflects an essential “genius” or any “miracle of tolerance” which has led to their unique geopolitical position. Thai political and cultural history has equipped the nation’s society with an elite culture of rule and popular cultures of subaltern resistance, both equally open to borrowing selectively from foreign models.⁸ They emerge

⁶ Jackson, “Autonomy and Subordination in Thai History: The Case for Semicolonial Analysis,” 332.

⁷ Herzfeld, *The Body Impolitic: Artisans and Artifice in the Global Hierarchy of Value*, 321-322.

⁸ Jackson, “Afterword: Postcolonial Theories and Thai Semicolonial Hybridities,” 204.

variously as projects of power and forms of resistance to power in a distinctive geopolitical setting. Siam/Thailand's geopolitical history has equipped both its ruling elites and its subaltern masses with cultures based on the appropriation and negotiation of Otherness.⁹ On one hand, Siamese/Thai rulers have long been concerned to locate themselves in a privileged position within the foreign-determined symbolic universes in which they have found themselves. On the other hand, this process of crypto-colonial self-modernization has produced a symbolic regime that permits Thais of all social classes to imagine themselves as members of the western-dominated world order, rather than as outsiders. Thus, three characteristics—subordination, autonomy, and ambiguity—were revealed through an examination of modern architecture in order to describe the empirical character of Thai society, marked by crypto-colonial forms of power, that simultaneously reflects local elite autonomy in the context of a general subordination to western power.

5.2 “Subordination” Characteristics of Thai Society

By the early 1960s, change was already in the air in Thailand, on both the political and the economic fronts. Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram and his head of police, Phao Siyanon, had been deposed and sent into exile by General Sarit Thanarat, and Thailand was under the firm control of the military, receiving United States aid to revive and strengthen its rule. Bangkok had begun to show some signs of its extraordinary future growth, and the American presence was more obvious than it had been in the pre-war days. In order to recruit more nations into the Free World camp during the Cold War, the U.S. became Thailand's new foreign patron, having seized on the nation as an ally and a base for opposing the spread of communism in Asia. The Euro-centric colonial concept of “*khwam charoen* (progress)” and its

⁹ Ibid.

local interpretation, the cultivation of a new kind of national citizen, was thus replaced by the U.S.-derived concept of “*phattana* (development)” and its more precise focus on economic development through private enterprise.¹⁰ More and more Americans were coming to Thailand as tourists, members of groups like the Peace Corps, and military personnel, either based in the country or on rest and recreation leave from the Vietnam War. Greater numbers of young Thais were going to the U.S. for their studies, and they returned with more than simply a degree in architecture, engineering, or science and a taste for such American fashions as blue jeans.¹¹ The Thai “development” hence was boosted mainly by money flow, ideological commitment, bureaucratic infrastructure, and political links offered by U.S. patronage.

Among all the United States-funded projects, the commissions for new constructions in Thailand between the 1960s and the 1980s were one of the most evident, proving a long range of “subordination” discourse that never faded away from Thai governmentality. The Thais, no matter whether ruling elites or commoners, occupied a subordinate position relative to the West. This subordinate position is not only visible in economics and law, where so-called treaties of “free trade and friendship” such as the 1855 Bowring Treaty with Britain and the 1962 Rusk-Thanat Agreement imposed unequal trading relations and extraterritorial legal regimes on Thailand. It is also revealed in the government-commissioned construction projects assigned to American architects through the 1950s, the OICC military agreement and the 1982 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Obviously, it is in these domains of international politics and economics that Thailand’s loss of autonomy vis-à-vis the West, particularly the United States, is most visible and where the country looks most like a colony.

¹⁰ Baker and Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand*, 165.

¹¹ Warren, *Chronicles of American Business in Thailand*, 54.

The socio-political circumstances of the period between the 1960s and the 1980s certainly affirm the subordinate relations of Thailand to the West. This was particularly manifested in three ways. First, *farang* and *tawan-tok* were seen as indicators of “civilization” and became the bars of achievement of the elites’ desire to be modern and civilized. All the instances shown in Chapter 2 encompass the “westernization” of the image of the Thai ruling nobilities in linguistic and spatial terms, with the created western image serving the dual purpose of increasing Thailand's prestige in an international arena and the establishment of the government's authority over domestic territory.

The second manifestation was a direct result of the first: it became impossible to conceptualize Thai identity or Thainess separately from civilization and modernization in regard to *farang* and *tawan-tok*. This reverse orientalist—i.e. occidentalist—practice in the Thai case studies clearly reveals ways in which an auto- or crypto-colonizing elite voluntarily adopted strategies of power from the West at a time when the latter was a dominant political and cultural force in the region; there were distinct gains to be made from doing so.¹²

The third effect of this enforced self-modernization of Siam/Thailand for the purposes of appeasing the West was of benefit to the ruling Bangkok elite in terms of the increased centralization of the state which it implied. As a consequence, the institution of the Thai ruling elite shored up its strength under external imperial incentives, turning instead to an assumption of augmented “other” powers over its own selves in this imitation of colonial rule. As long as Thailand wished to play a part in the western-dominated world order, the country had no choice but to maintain its subordinate relation to the West.

¹² Harrison, “Introduction: The Allure of Ambiguity: The ‘West’ and the Making of Thai Identities,” 16.

5.3 “Autonomy” Characteristics of Thai Society

An overview of Thailand’s societal big picture since the 1960s shows that the middle class had risen in Bangkok and in a handful of provincial towns and cities across the nation. For this group, modern education at the secondary level and above was the sine qua non for status and the middle-class lifestyle—which included access to the mass media, especially to television; sufficient income to ensure quality education for one’s children; and the achievement of some sense of upward social and economic mobility.¹³ These factors increased the numbers of Thais attaining various educational levels from 1947 through 1980. The aftermath was a tenfold increase in the number of university graduates, from fewer than a hundred thousand to nearly a million. Consequently, Thailand’s middle class had achieved critical mass. The size and prosperity of the middle class made them a prime target audience of mass-market advertising and the mass media. Because of their education, experience, and lifestyle, their values and behavior set them apart from the masses of rural society; and because their numbers were far too large to be fully absorbed into the hierarchical structure of the government bureaucracy and armed forces, the Thai middle class was not an integral part of the ruling establishment either.¹⁴ Though the bureaucracy and the military were large and amorphous, they were not expanding as rapidly as the numbers of the university graduates. Thus, large numbers of young middle-class and aspiring middle-class Thais had to consider entering careers in the private sector. This led to class segregation: in a the familiar divide between higher and lower officers, between seniors and juniors, between different educational and social backgrounds.¹⁵ Underneath a high degree of social conformity seethed rivalry, dissension, and conflict.

¹³ Wyatt, *Thailand: A Short History*, 283.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 284-285.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 286.

The growing political consciousness of the middle class forced Thailand's rulers to take middle-class interests and values into account. Since the Thai ruling elite could not establish their own power, measured by the standard of the time, they found it crucial to align themselves with the world's most "civilized" rulers—the western powers. The Thai elites' quest for *siwilai* and their willingness to become *farang* were achieved by several possible means, including by adopting western architecture. Preserving the country's independence was also part of the *siwilai* process. It was extremely important to the Thai ruling elite simply because national independence was a mark of a civilized and sovereign governmentality. Any nationalistic value or anti-colonial meaning was irrelevant.¹⁶ Had there been a motive to preserve any national Thai sensibility, Thailand would not be full of directly-assimilated western architecture. While there was no foreign colonial lord in Thailand, modernity and the project of civilization in the remote provinces that served as the "hinterland" to Bangkok's metropole were carried out by the Thai elite as forcefully as any foreign colonial power might have. At the same time, the elite also tried to maintain many cultural practices, hierarchies, and their own power.¹⁷ From these processes, the dialectic of crypto-colonial power emerged. It was rooted in the Thai elite's establishment of a new form of control—a civilizing pedigree—over the local population in the process of securing their political autonomy in the western-dominated world order.¹⁸

Architectural case studies were selected with an eye to examining the autonomy of Thai ruling elite, which was expressed through western-derived architectural education, the growth of western-rooted Thai architecture schools, and exercises in western Modern architecture in

¹⁶ Thongchai, "Siam's Colonial Conditions and the Birth of Thai History," 28.

¹⁷ Thongchai, "The Quest for 'Siwilai': A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam," n.p., and Thongchai, "The Other Within: Travel and Ethno-Spatial Differentiation of Siamese Subjects, 1885-1910," n.p..

¹⁸ Jackson, "Autonomy and Subordination in Thai History: The Case for Semicolonial Analysis," 341.

Thailand, accomplished by the hands of western-educated Thai architects. All of these events, occurring in Thai society from the 1960s to the 1980s, help to confirm the foreign-derived culture imposed upon the common people by the Thai ruling aristocrats.

The establishment of architecture schools in Thailand, following western disciplines, was the genesis of a later segregation within the architectural profession. Western-rooted schools and architectural degrees became the cultural capital with which western-graduated Thai architects could earn benefits and higher status, in order to incorporate themselves into the superior classes of the modern Thai social structure.

The foundation and propagation of the ideals of western Modern architecture that these western graduates brought back to Thailand provided a means to suppress local architects and craftsmen, providing a further complication in the relationships between power/knowledge and power/prestige. Though this group of architects claimed that assimilating western Modern ideology and employing Modern cultural and architectural artifacts were necessary strategies to respond to the colonial West, they in fact served the investors' pleasure and their own advantages.

Clearly, Thailand was integrated into the colonial economic order despite its political independence.¹⁹ The Thai rulers, especially Thai architects, were active in making connections with the westerners. They did not resist or hinder the expansion of the colonial economy and culture since they too, were the beneficiaries.²⁰ This vividly shows how western materials and influence became a part of the Thai ruling elite's governing strategies in order to hold on to their autonomy.

¹⁹ Kullada, "*Creating a Modern Bureaucracy through Education*," n.p..

²⁰ Thongchai, "Siam's Colonial Conditions and the Birth of Thai History," 28.

5.4 “Ambiguity” Characteristics of Thai Society

Although the United States pulled out of Indochina in the 1970s, which eased the Cold War situation in Asia, America continued to serve as Thailand’s military patron, simply from a greater distance. Its era and influences had paved the way for Thailand's entry into the liberal market economy, partially due to the decline of socialist alternatives on the world scale. After an initial period of economic and political adjustment to U.S. departure, Thailand caught the tail of an Asia-wide economic boom, led by Japan and the East Asian “Tiger” economies. The liberalization first of trade and then of finance accelerated the pace of industrialization and urbanization, and incorporated Thailand more firmly within a global economy.²¹ As a result, the pace of economic transformation quickened over the last quarter of the 20th century. Thai society became much more complex, especially with the growth of the white-collar middle class and the ranks of shuttling urban-rural migrants. As clearly described by Bakers, the closed local societies of Thailand were pried open by roads, buses, motorcycles, televisions, and the internet. A new mass society emerged, especially in the national media. Old unitary discourses of race, nation, history, national character, and culture were fragmented by the diversity of reality.²²

When studying the overall history of Thailand even before or after the period of 1960s to 1980s, one may notice that politics lagged behind these changes. In the absence of a nationalist movement, war, or massive social crisis, the old institutions of monarchy, military, and bureaucracy had continued to dominate the state. Progress towards a more inclusive and democratic politics was occurring spasmodically. The student-worker-peasant revolts of the 1970s brought to an end the era of military rule, but were then crushed by a rising oligarchy. In the aftermath, a provincial business elite was drafted into the ruling oligarchy through a

²¹ Baker and Phongpaichit. *A History of Thailand*, 199.

²² *Ibid.*, 280-281.

parliament where admission depended heavily on money. But the bureaucracy's power was only slightly dented, while the monarchy was promoted to an expanded role as a symbol of national unity and a refuge in times of crisis, and the military continued to claim a right to political intervention, actually exercised in 1991 and constantly threatened at other times. Under these cozy arrangements, the economy boomed, the environment was ravaged, and social frictions multiplied.²³

A study of the processes at work in Thai society from the 1960s to 1980s reveals a semicolonial dialectic between autonomy and subordination, reflected in the theme of "ambiguity." This in fact has often recurred in Thai historical patterns, whether it is in Thai culture or architecture, both before and after the era on which this study focuses. The discourse of ambiguity illuminates a society marked by semicolonial forms of power, reflecting local elite autonomy in the context of a general subordination to western power.²⁴ Many scholars in Thai Studies, such as Thongchai, Pattana, Herzfeld, and Harrison, agree that the contemporary patterns of Thai-Western cultural hybridity have been marked by this "ambiguous intimacy;" along with them, I have used the architectural examples in Chapter 4 to show that some of the diverse accounts of ambiguity in Thai architecture point to the matrix of crypto-colonial-power relations.

Understanding these deeply blended cultural strains in terms of both Garcia Canclini's and Bhabha's respective theories of cultural hybridity demonstrates that none of them reflects an essential "genius" of the Thai race or any "miracle of tolerance." They emerge variously as projects of power and forms of resistances to power in a distinctive geopolitical setting. It is Siam/Thailand's geopolitical history that has equipped both its ruling elites and its subaltern

²³ Ibid., 281.

²⁴ Jackson, "The Ambiguities of Semicolonial Power in Thailand," 51.

masses with cultures based on the appropriation and negotiation of Otherness. The country's rulers have long been concerned to locate themselves in a privileged position within the foreign-determined symbolic universes in which they have found themselves. The expression of this desire through Thailand's locally moderated process of semicolonial modernization has produced a symbolic regime that permits Thais of all social strata to imagine themselves as members of the western-dominated world order, rather than as outsiders.²⁵ In conclusion, ambiguity has been a continuous theme in all dimensions of Thai society since western influences and power began to exist in the Kingdom of Thailand.

5.5 Conclusion

This study of the crypto-colonial discourse of western modern architecture in Thailand inquires beyond typical categories of architectural history, formal analysis, or discussions of "colonial" and "postcolonial" architecture. It explores the historical and political contexts in which the translated terms borrowed from the West acquire new meanings that may be different from their original message. This research project is thus timely and necessary because it decentralizes the largely Eurocentric canon that has been the focus of historical writings regarding modern architecture. These Modern Thai architectural case studies have been approached in a way that underscores their participation in a global exchange of ideas, cultures, and productions and not as isolated, exotic examples of non-western culture.

Not only does this dissertation contest the assumptions of the linear and homogenous historiography of modern architecture produced by the West and exported to peripheral countries, but also it challenges the current essentialist categories of non-western architecture as

²⁵ Jackson, "Afterword: Postcolonial Theories and Thai Semicolonial Hybridities," 204.

“static.” The notion of crypto-colonial discourse requires us, on one hand, to acknowledge the postcolonial history and theory of Thailand’s subordination to western imperial power, and on the other hand, to think through the ways that this subordination was both comparable and dissimilar to a colonial experience. The investigation of crypto-colonial architecture is important as it reflects upon western major theories, whether Marxist, poststructuralist, or postcolonial, marking the incompleteness and limitations of these theories in understanding the architecture produced in a society that was not a direct colony.

My hope is that this dissertation will contribute to developing dialogues on postcolonial identity formation which are distinct from mainstream theory, politicized architecture and urban planning policy, Southeast Asian and Thai Studies, and regionalism and globalization theories—all salient fields that will benefit from the incorporation of Thailand’s unique experiences. It may also help us to better understand the ongoing democratic transition today, as well as the rich complexity of related dialogues on western modernism, post-western modernism, and the non-west modernism, society, scholarship, and affinities that have informed Thai development.

Appendix A

Names and Chronological Reigns of Siamese/Thai Kings in the Chakri Dynasty

1. King Rama I (Putthayotfa Chulalok)	April 6, 1782 - September 7, 1809
2. King Rama II (Phutthaloetla Naphalai)	September 7, 1809 - July 21, 1824
3. King Rama III (Nangklao or Chesadabodin)	July 21, 1824 - April 3, 1851
4. King Rama IV (Mongkut)	April 3, 1851 - October 1, 1868
5. King Rama V (Chulalongkorn)	October 1, 1868 - October 23, 1910
6. King Rama VI (Vajiravudh)	October 23, 1910 - November 26, 1925
7. King Rama VII (Prajadhipok)	November 26, 1925 - March 2, 1935 (Abdicated)
8. King Rama VIII (Ananda Mahidol)	March 2, 1935 - June 9, 1946
9. King Rama XI (Bhumibol Adulyadej)	June 9, 1946 - October 13, 2016
10. King Rama X (Maha Vajiralongkorn)	October 13, 2016 - present

Appendix B

Names and Chronological Orders of Thai Prime Ministers

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 1. Manopakorn Nititada | 1 st government: June 28, 1932 - December 10, 1932
2 nd government: December 10, 1932 - April 1, 1933
3 rd government: April 1, 1933 - June 21, 1933 |
| 2. Phahonphonphayahasena | 4 th government: June 21, 1933 - December 16, 1933
5 th government: December 16, 1933 - September 22, 1934
6 th government: September 22, 1934 - August 9, 1937
7 th government: August 9, 1937 - December 21, 1937
8 th government: December 21, 1937- December 16, 1938 |
| 3. Plaek Phibunsongkhram | 9 th government: December 16, 1938 - March 7, 1942
10 th government: March 7, 1942 - August 1, 1944 |
| 4. Khuang Aphaiwong | 11 th government: August 1, 1944 - August 31, 1945 |
| 5. Thawi Bunyaket | 12 th government: August 31, 1945 - September 17, 1945 |
| 6. Seni Pramoj | 13 th government: September 17, 1945 - January 31, 1946 |
| 7. Khuang Aphaiwong | 14 th government: January 31, 1946 - March 24, 1946 |
| 8. Pridi Panomyong | 14 th government: March 24, 1946 - June 7, 1946
15 th government: June 7, 1946 - June 11, 1946
16 th government: June 11, 1946- August 23, 1946 |
| 9. Thawan Thamrongnawasawat | 17 th government: August 23, 1946 - May 30, 1947
18 th government: May 30, 1947 - November 8, 1947 |
| 10. Phin Choohavan | Coup interim: November 8, 1947 - November 9, 1947 |
| 11. Khuang Aphaiwong | 19 th government: November 10, 1947 - February 21, 1948
20 th government: February 21, 1948 - April 8, 1948 |
| 12. Plaek Phibunsongkhram | 21 st government: April 8, 1948 - June 25, 1949
22 nd government: June 25, 1949 - November 29, 1951
23 rd government: November 29, 1951 - December 6, 1951
24 th government: December 6, 1951 - March 23, 1952
25 th government: March 24, 1952 - March 21, 1957
26 th government: March 21, 1957- September 16, 1957 |
| 13. Sarit Thanarat | Coup interim: September 16, 1957 - September 21, 1963 |

14. Pote Sarasin	27 th government: September 21, 1957 - January 1, 1958
15. Thanom Kittikachon	28 th government: January 1, 1958 - October 20, 1958
16. Sarit Thanarat	29 th government: February 9, 1959 - December 8, 1963
17. Thanom Kittikachon	30 th government: December 9, 1963 - March 7, 1969 31 st government: March 7, 1969 - November 17, 1971 Coups interim: November 17, 1971 - December 18, 1972 32 nd government: December 18, 1972 - October 14, 1973
18. Sanya Dharmasakti	33 rd government: October 14, 1973 - May 22, 1974 34 th government: May 27, 1974 - February 15, 1975
19. Seni Pramoj	35 th government: February 15, 1975 - March 14, 1975
20. Kukrit Pramoj	36 th government: March 14, 1975 - April 20, 1976
21. Seni Pramoj	37 th government: April 21, 1976 - September 25, 1976
22.	38 th government: September 25, 1976 - October 6, 1976
23. Sa-ngad Chaloryu	Coups interim: October 6, 1976 - October 8, 1976
24. Thanin Kravichien	39 th government: October 8, 1976 - October 20, 1977
25. Sa-ngad Chaloryu	Coups interim: October 20, 1976 - November 11, 1977
26. Kriangsak Chamanan	40 th government: November 11, 1977 - May 12, 1979 41 st government: May 12, 1979 - March 3, 1980
27. Prem Tinsulanonda	42 nd government: March 3, 1980 - April 30, 1983 43 rd government: April 30, 1983 - August 5, 1986 44 th government: August 5, 1986 - August 4, 1988
28. Chatichai Choonhavan	45 th government: August 4, 1988 - December 9, 1990 46 th government: December 9, 1990 - February 23, 1991
29. Sunthorn Kongsompong	Coups interim: February 23, 1991 - March 2, 1991
30. Anand Panyarachun	47 th government: March 2, 1991 - April 7, 1992
31. Suchinda Kraprayoon Meechai Ruchuphan	48 th government: April 7, 1992 - May 24, 1992 former PM resigned: May 24, 1992 - June 10, 1992
32. Anand Panyarachun	49 th government: June 10, 1992 - September 23, 1992

33. Chuan Leekpai 50th government: September 23, 1992 - July 13, 1995
34. Banharn Silpa-archa 51st government: July 13, 1995 - September 25, 1996
35. Chavalit Yongchaiyudh 52nd government: November 25, 1996 - November 9, 1997
36. Chuan Leekpai 53rd government: November 9, 1997 - February 9, 2001
37. Thaksin Shinawatra 54th government: February 9, 2001 - March 11, 2005
55th government: March 11, 2005 - September 19, 2006
38. Sonthi Boonyaratglin Coup interim: September 19, 2006 - October 1, 2006
39. Surayud Chulanont 56th government: October 1, 2006 - January 29, 2008
40. Samak Sundaravej 57th government: January 29, 2008 - September 9, 2008
Somchai Wongsawat former PM resigned: September 9, 2008-September 18, 2008
41. Somchai Wongsawat 58th government: September 18, 2008 - December 2, 2008
Chavarat Charnvirakul former PM disapproval: December 3 - December 17, 2008
42. Abhisit Vejjajiva 59th government: December 17, 2008 - August 5, 2011
43. Yingluck Shinawatra 60th government: August 5, 2011 - May 7, 2014
Niwatthamrong Boonsongpaisan former PM disapproval: May 7, 2014 - May 22, 2014
44. Prayut Chan-o-cha Coup interim: May 22, 2014 - August 24, 2014
61st government: August 24, 2014 - May 9, 2016
62nd government: May 9, 2016 - present

Appendix C

The Meanings of Transliterated Words (listed in alphabetical order)

Ananikhom amphrang

Ananikhom amphrang can be translated into English as crypto-colonialism. *Ananikhom* means colony (in a political sense) and *amphrang* means to conceal, to cover up, to hide, to keep secret, to lie, to deceive. In Thai Studies, the term crypto-colonialism is often used by Michael Herzfeld, a professor at Harvard University's department of anthropology, to refer to the various ways in which Siam/Thailand's economy, polity, culture, and social structure that were deeply impacted by the West, similar to the impact on directedly colonized countries.¹ Interrelated concepts in crypto-colonial discourse include notions such as indirect rule, informal empire, cultural imperialism, internal colonialism (*ananikhom phai-nai*), auto-colonialism, and semi-colonialism (*keung-meung-khen* and *keung-ananikhom*).²

Axis Mundi

Axis Mundi, the hub or axis of the universe, is a technical term used in the study of the history of religions. The vivid images of this axis of the universe vary widely, since they depend on the particular worldview represented in a specific culture. Foremost among the images designated by the term *axis mundi* is the cosmic mountain, either a sacred place deemed to be the highest point of the universe or a point of connection where the four compass directions meet between sky and earth. Sometimes, it is used to identify the center of the world or the place where creation first began. Some well-known examples of the cosmic mountain include Mount Meru of South Asian cosmology, Haraberazaiti of Iranian tradition, and Himinbjorg of Scandinavian methodology.³

Banmuang

According to So Sethabutra's *Thai-English Dictionary*, *banmuang* means the country or the land.⁴ However, in the case of Chapter 3, *banmuang* signifies the town or the city, in order to draw a contrast with far-off lands such as the jungles or the mountains at the frontiers.

Bun and barami

Bun can be used as noun or adjective, meaning good, good deeds, virtue, merit made by offering food to priests and following religious precepts. Meanwhile, *barami* is a noun meaning prestige, influence, august presence, augustness, grandeur.⁵ Thongchai Winichakul explains that

¹ Herzfeld, "The Absent Presence: Discourse of Crypto-colonialism," 900-901.

² Jackson, "Autonomy and Subordination in Thai History: The Case for Semicolonial Analysis," 332.

³ Encyclopedia, s.v. "Axis mundi," accessed May 29, 2021, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/environment/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/axis-mundi>

⁴ So Sethabutra, *Thai-English Dictionary* (Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich Publishing, 2001).

⁵ Ibid.

[I]n the older world order, the legitimation of power of an overlord was claimed via his association with the supreme sources of power. Therefore, in the case of these two words, the overlord claimed his supremacy in a religious context relating to Buddhist power.⁶

Chaobannok

Chaobannok or rural villagers is another term indicating people who, though living within the political boundary of Siam, were identified by the Bangkok elite as primitive. In this case, ethnic difference was not the significant element of otherness; the main othering significance of the *chaobannok* came from the stereotype of an uneducated and backward peasantry.

Chaopa

Chaopa means “the jungle people” or “people of the wilderness.” The descriptions of the *chaopa* used in this dissertation generally focus on ethnic difference, unusual or strange characteristics, and on customs which would seem outlandish to authors and readers from Bangkok. The urban elite's view of the *chaopa* as uncivilized predated their own preoccupation with *siwilai*.

Chang chaloeisak, chang phra, chang luang, mahatlek, and krom

Chang means “the master builders.” Since the Ayutthaya period, Siamese artisans were close-knit groups of specialized practitioners. They were categorized into three groups according to their professional affiliations: *chang chaloeisak* or the private master builders, *chang phra* or the monk master builders, and *chang luang* or the royal master builders. Their works and clients were separated by the functions implied in the names. Private master builders could be commissioned by anyone; the monk builders mainly practiced monastery construction and maintenance; and the royal master builders only served the state, which included the king, the princes, and the aristocrats. Through centuries, the royal master builders were scattered among the various *krom* (departments under the ministry). Each *krom* often became the domain of a family, as building crafts were passed on through generations of building practice. A son of a master builder usually began his service as a *mahatlek* (a royal page) as a confirmation of allegiance from his noble father. After they learned the affairs of the court, the king would send these young men to their fathers' respective departments, where they learned the building crafts through hands-on operation, a system of total immersion in the arts and crafts of architecture. Architectural texts and manuals were scarce and were accordingly closely guarded within the families. Familial ties were crucial in the advancement of a royal master builder's career.⁷

⁶ Thongchai, “The Quest for ‘Siwilai:’ A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam,” 533.

⁷ For more information, see chapter 2 of Pirasri, “Building *Siwilai*: Transformation of Architecture and Architectural Practice in Siam during the Reign of Rama V, 1868-1910,” 25-102.

Charoen

Charoen is a term meaning approximately the same thing as *siwilai* and can be used interchangeably. Its definition is “to prosper, to wax, to grow, or to thrive.”⁸ According to Thongchai, an older sense of the meaning was “cultivating, growing, increasing, building up, or expanding until complete in a positive sense.” It is applied mostly to nonmaterial matters, such as cultivating merit and Buddhist awakening, making (someone) happier, growing up, increasing maturity, and so on. This older meaning of *charoen* began in the nineteenth century to connote secular or worldly development, material progress, and technological advances, until it became an alternative to the alien word *siwilai*.⁹

Devaraja

Devaraja was the religious order of the “god-king,” or deified monarch in medieval Southeast Asia. The *devaraja* order grew out of both Hinduism and separate local traditions, depending on the area. It taught that the king was a divine universal ruler, possessing transcendental qualities, the living god on earth. The concept is closely related to the Bharati concept of Chakravartin. In politics, it is viewed as the divine justification of a king’s rule.

The *devaraja* concept of divine right of kings was adopted by the Indianized Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms of Southeast Asia through Indian Hindu Brahmin scholars deployed in the courts. It was first adopted by Javanese kings and through them by various Malay kingdoms, then by the Khmer empire, and subsequently by the Thai monarchies. In regard to architecture, the concept was institutionalized and gained its elaborate manifestations in ancient Java and Cambodia, where monuments such as Prambanan and Angkor Wat were erected to celebrate the king’s divine rule on earth.¹⁰

Farang

The Thai term *farang* emerges from a set of a pan-Asian identification markers for the West, western peoples, and western-derived things. The term ultimately derives from *Frank*, which originally referred to a Germanic speaking people in the region of modern France, but which came to be widely used in early medieval Egypt, Greece, and other Mediterranean areas to refer to Western Europeans in general. The term *farang* refers literally to a “white person,” or Caucasian, though it emerges more broadly from “a set of pan-Asian identification markers for the West, western peoples, and western-derived things.” Glossed in *Hobson-Jobson*, the cognate word *Firinghee* is noted to have derived from the Farsi: *Farangi* or *Firingi* and the Arabic: *Al-Farani*, *Ifranji*, or *Firanji* referring to a Frank.¹¹

⁸ So Sethaputra, *Thai-English Dictionary* (Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich Publishing, 2001).

⁹ Thongchai, “The Quest for ‘Siwilai’: A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam,” 531 and 538.

¹⁰ “Devaraja,” *Google Arts and Culture*, accessed February 26, 2022, <https://artsandculture.google.com/entity/devaraja/m0glpj72?hl=en>

¹¹ Harrison, “Introduction: The Allure of Ambiguity: The ‘West’ and the Making of Thai identities,” 2.

Pathun

Pathun is a doublet—a combination of two Thai words: *pa* (a wood, a jungle, the wilds, the wilderness) and *thun* (wild, illicit). It is wide use to denote wildness, barbarous, and uncivilizability and is commonly understood to be an antonym of *siwilai*.

Phattana

So Sethabutra's *Thai-English Dictionary*, published in 1949, gives the meaning of *Phattana* as "to develop (rural areas, a country)."¹² This term became significant in Thai history as in 1947 as President Truman introduced the word "development" in his first televised presidential speech, which Prime Minister Sarit Thanarat perceived and interpreted as a key concept of the U.S. global mission. He adopted the term as a new, powerful justification for the power of the nation-state, and translated this American "progress" by coining a new Thai word, *phatthana*.¹³

Poh Chang, samosorn chang, and khong

Poh is a verb and can be defined as "to cultivate, to culture (germs), to plant, to build (body)." Therefore, *Poh Chang* in total means a school for the cultivation of masters in the art and craft of building. *Poh Chang* vocational school was established as a woodcraft division (*khong*) during King Chulalongkorn's reign (Rama V) and became a craftsmanship association (*samosorn chang*) in 1905.¹⁴

Sangha

Sangha is used to indicate the Buddhist community; it is the men, women, and children who follow the teachings of the Buddha. The term, which in Sanskrit and Pali means "collection," "assemblage," or a group of people living together for a certain purpose, has come to have two different referents. First, and most commonly, *sangha* refers to those who have "left home" and "gone into homelessness" that are monks and nuns. Under this meaning, the *sangha* is the third jewel in which a follower of the Buddha might take refuge, along with the Buddha and the Dharma. When scholars and practitioners refer to the *sangha*, they are likely to be referring specifically to this community. However, the *sangha* can have a more expansive referent as well. Pali texts refer to the "fourfold" *sangha*, which included *bhikkhus* (monks), *bhikkhunis* (nuns),

¹² Please see more information on So Sethabutra in Trinuch Ingkudanon, "Sor Sethabutra: Naktos Kabot Boworadet Phu Lob Kian Pojjananukrom nai Ruenjam [Sor Sethabutra: The Boworadet Rebellion Prisoner Who Secretly Wrote Thai-English Dictionary While in Jail]," *The People*, last modified June 18, 2020, <https://thepeople.co/so-sethaputra/>

¹³ See more information on *Phattana* in regard to Thai history in Chapter 2.

¹⁴ Chatri, "Architect, Knowledges, and Architecture Schools," 83; Koompong, "Power, Identity, and the Rise of Modern Architecture: from Siam to Thailand," 111-113 and 144; Peleggi, "Purveyors of Modernity Europeans, Artists, and Architects in Turn-of-the-Century Siam," 248; and Chomchon, "Modernisation of Building: The Transplantation of the Concept of Architecture from Europe to Thailand, 1930s-1950s," 363-365.

upasaka (laymen), and *upasika* (laywomen). In other words, the term refers to the person who follows the teachings of the Buddha.¹⁵

Siwilai

Dating from the middle of the nineteenth century, the term *siwilai* was among the earliest translated words derived from the English word “civilized.” In general, it was used as an adjective, a noun, or a verb interchangeably, both in writing and speaking, and still remains in use today. Similar to its English origin, *siwilai* connoted a wide range of meanings. On one hand, it referred to refined manners and etiquette. On the other hand, it was loaded with the ideas of “an achieved state of development” or progress.

Thai versus that

The ethnonym *Thai* is widely rendered as “free” or “independent” in Thai dictionaries and nationalist literature. The Pali-Sanskrit-derived term *that* (from *dasa*) means “slave” or “servant.” Nationalist historians often claim that the Thai, being by definition a “free” people, have never been anyone’s slave (*that*).¹⁶ The word also resulted in the country’s name—Thailand—which can be translated as “land of the free.” Interestingly, a few Thai Studies scholars relate the term to the notion of crypto-colonialism. As Chaiyan puts it, “[I]n external affairs, Bangkok (i.e. the Chakri dynasty) acted in the name of Siam; in internal affairs, it established itself as the hegemonic power in political, economic, and ideological terms.”¹⁷ This has produced an ongoing slippage in Thai historiography between the term *thai* (free i.e., the freedom of the monarchy and the state from the West) and *that* (slave i.e. the enslavement of the populace to the West and/or the absolute monarchy), an ambivalent duality that Herzfeld often mentions in his analyses.

As Herzfeld argues, crypto-colonies such as Siam responded to the emerging western-dominated world order by appearing to resist domination, “but do(ing) so at the cost of effective complicity - a model that more closely approaches that Gramscian definition of hegemony that do more recent and controversial notions of ‘resistance’.”¹⁸ In the view of the ruling class, for Siam to remain “free” (*thai*) from western domination, the Siamese populace must be “enslaved” (*that*) to that monarchy in new ways.¹⁹

Than samai

According to Thongchai, *than samai* reveals the sense of secular development and material progress more obviously.²⁰ *Than samai* also emerged in the late nineteenth century and became

¹⁵ Thomas Borchet, “Sangha,” *Oxford Bibliographies*, last modified April 24, 2012, <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195393521/obo-9780195393521-0006.xml>

¹⁶ Jackson, “Autonomy and Subordination in Thai History: The Case for Semicolonial Analysis,” 345.

¹⁷ Chaiyan, *The Rise and Fall of the Thai Absolute Monarchy: Foundations of the Modern Thai State from Feudalism to Peripheral Capitalism*, 7.

¹⁸ Herzfeld, “The Absent Presence: Discourse of Crypto-colonialism,” 903.

¹⁹ Jackson, “Autonomy and Subordination in Thai History: The Case for Semicolonial Analysis,” 341.

²⁰ Thongchai, “The Quest for ‘Siwilai’: A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam,” 531.

influential in the 1960s modernization. Literally, it means keeping up with the age or with the times. Indeed, both *siwilai* and *than samai* point to the forward and backward directions of time, rather than a recurrence in predetermined and static cosmic time as in the Hindu-Buddhist sense of the past.

Traibhum

The findings indicated that the word “*traibhum*” or “*tebhumikatha*” means three realms or three worlds, namely [1] *kamabhumi* (sensuous realm), [2] *rupabhumi* (form realm), and [3] *arupabhumi* (formless realm), it has thirty-one worlds in details. *Tebhumikatha* was divided into eleven parts; the last part refers to the Nibbana and the Path.²¹

From the past to present (Sukhothai to Rattanakosin periods), the knowledge of *Tebhumikatha* has been applied to Thai society in various dimensions from Buddhist arts, political ideas, principle of ethics and morality, to cosmological concept. Even though it is less influenced nowadays, but still occasionally appearing in the significant religious/royal Thai ceremonies such as the apprehension of Mount Meru in the design of the royal cremation’s architecture.

²¹ Phramaha Somdeth Tapasilo (Sri-la-ngad), “An Analytical Study of Development of *Tebhumikatha* in Thai Society,” 281.

Bibliography

- “A ‘Symbol of Thainess:’ Thousands of Teak Trees to be Cut Down for Thailand’s New Parliament Building.” *Asian Correspondent*. July 26, 2016
- “About.” *Architects One Hundred and Ten*. Accessed April 26, 2021.
<http://www.architects110.com/about/>.
- Adalet, Begum. *Hotels and Highways: The Construction of Modernization Theory in Cold War Turkey*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2018.
- “Air Service Facilities at Don Muang Airport and Bangkok” [Agreement between the Government of Siam and the Government of the United States, Bangkok, 1947], 1037-1039.
- Airports of Thailand. *19 Pi Karn Tah Argardsayarn heng Prated Thai* [19 Years of Airports of Thailand Public Company Limited]. Bangkok: Airports of Thailand, 1998.
- . *Paen Karn Pattana Tah Argardsayarn Krungthep* [Bangkok Airport Development Plan]. Bangkok: Airports of Thailand, 1991.
- . *Tah Argardsayarn tai Rom Phra Barami* [Airports of Thailand under the Patronage]. Bangkok: Airports of Thailand, 2011.
- Algie, Jim and al et.. *Americans in Thailand*. Researched by Grissarin Chungsirawat and Purnama Pawa. Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, 2014.
- “Another Backlash against Academics.” *Nation* (Bangkok), January 9, 2003.
- Anchalee Kongrut. “Unforgettable Puey Ungphakorn.” *Bangkok Post*. Last modified March 9, 2016. <https://www.bangkokpost.com/life/social-and-lifestyle/891356/unforgettable-puey-ungphakorn>.
- Anderson, Kristine L., and Bruce London. “Modernization, Elites, and the Distribution of Educational Resources in Thailand.” *Social Forces* 63, no. 3 (1985): 775-794.
- “Arkan Rattasapa hang Mai: Sappaya-sapa-sathan” [The New National Assembly Hall: Sappaya-sapa-sathan]. *Arsomsilp*. June 13, 2018. <https://www.arsomsilp.ac.th/sapayasapasathan/>.
- Arnold, Wayne. “Monuments to the Thai Debt; Real Estate Fiascoes Rear Their Heads on Bangkok Skyline.” *The New York Times*. Last modified February 25, 2000, <https://www.nytimes.com/2000/02/25/business/monuments-thai-debt-real-estate-fiascoes-rear-their-heads-bangkok-skyline.html>
- Arthit Jiamrattnayoo. “‘Nak-rien Philippines’ nai Tassana-vichan khong Chon Channum Thai tor Nak-rien Nork korn Maha-asia Burapha” [The Philippines-Educated Student in the Perception of the Thai Elite before the Asia-Pacific War] *Indo-China@Crossroad: Southeast Asian Review* 4, vol. 7 (2015): 559-573.
- Atthanit Kulrakampusiri. “Architectural Design Development of Professor Emeritus Captain Krisda Arunvongse na Ayudhya.” Master’s thesis, Chulalongkorn University, 2011.
- Baker, Chris, and Pasuk Phongpaichit. *A History of Thailand*. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- Bell, Peter F.. “*Western Conceptions of Thai Society: The Politics of American Scholarship*”

- Paper presented at the Thai-European Seminar on Social Change in Contemporary Thailand, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, May 1980.
- Bhabha, Homi K.. "Foreword: Remembering Fanon, Self, Psyche, and the Colonial Condition." In *Frantz Fanon's Black Skin, White Masks: New Interdisciplinary Essays*, vii-xxv. London: Pluto Press, 1986.
- . *The Location of Culture*. London; New York, NY: Routledge, 1994.
- Bidayalongkorn, Prince. "Phawa Yangrai no thi Riakwa Siwilai" [What is the Condition Called Civilized?]. In *Prachum Pathakatha khong Kromamun Phitthayalongkorn* [Collected lectures by Prince Bidayalongkorn]. Bangkok: Ruamsan, 1970.
- Blanchard, Wendall. *Thailand*. New Haven, CT: Human Relations Area File, 1958.
- Borchet, Thomas. "Sangha." *Oxford Bibliographies*. Last modified April 24, 2012. <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195393521/obo-9780195393521-0006.xml>
- Boughey, Robert G.. *Robert G. Boughey and Associates projects, 1973-1993*. Bangkok: The Key Publisher, 1993.
- . *Siam Commercial Bank Park Plaza*. Bangkok: The Key Publisher, 1993.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. "The School as a Conservative Force: Scholastic and Cultural Inequalities." In *Contemporary Research in the Sociology of Education*, edited by John Eggleston, 32-46. London: Methuen, 1974.
- Brah, Avtar, and Annie E. Coombes. "Introduction: The Conundrum of 'Mixing'." In *Hybridity and its Discontents: Politics, Science, Culture*, edited by Avtar Brah and Annie E. Coombes, 1-15. London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2000.
- Carnoy, Martin. *Education as Cultural Imperialism*. New York, NY: D. McKay Co., 1974.
- 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.
- Chandran Jeshurun. "The Anglo-French Declaration of January 1896 and the Independence of Siam." *Journal of the Siam Society* 28 (1970): 105-126.
- Chatichai Muksong. "Karn Judtum Pan Pattana Settakit lae Sungkom hang Chat [A Planning Process of the National Economic and Social Development Plan]." *King Prajadhipok's Institute*. Accessed October 5, 2020, <http://wiki.kpi.ac.th/index.php?title=การจัดทำแผนพัฒนาเศรษฐกิจและสังคมแห่งชาติ/>
- Chatri Prakitnonthakan. "Architect, Knowledges, and Architecture Schools," *Najua: History of Architecture and Thai Architecture* 13 (2007): 77-78.
- . "Ngan-kien Prawatsart Silapa Yuk Ton Songkram Yen: Samnak Silpakorn kab Naewkid Chatniyom Sai Klang [The Art of History of 'Silpakorn Bureau: Building the Nation and The Transformation of Thai Nationalism in The Cold War Era]." *Na Jua: Architectural History and Thai Architecture Journal* 15 (2018): 40-89.
- . *Kanmuang Lae Sangkhom Nai Sinlapa Sathapattayakam: Sayam Samai Thai Prayuk Chatniyom* [Politics and Society in The Arts of Architecture during the Nationalist Period of Siam] Bangkok: Matichon, 2004.

- . “Sangkhom Lae Kanmuang Nai Sathapattayakam Sayam Kao Su Thai Mai, Po So 2394-2490 [Society and Politics in Architecture from Old Siam to New Siam, 1851-1947].” *Na Jua: Architectural History and Thai Architecture* 4 (2006): 34-65.
- Chattip Nartsupha and Suthi Prasartset, eds. *Socio-Economic Institutions and Cultural Change in Siam, 1851-1910: A Documentary Survey*. Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1977.
- Charnvit Kasetsiri. “Siam/Civilization, Thailand/Globalization.” Unpublished paper presented at the International Association of Historians of Asia (IAHA), Bangkok, 1996.
- Chomchon Fusinpaiboon. “Modernisation of Building: The Transplantation of the Concept of Architecture from Europe to Thailand, 1930s-1950s.” Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Sheffield, 2014.
- Chua, Lawrence L.. “Building Siam: Leisure, Race, and Nationalism in Modern Thai Architecture, 1910-1973.” Ph.D. Dissertation, Cornell University, 2012.
- Coedes, George. *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*. Edited by W. F. Vella and translated by S. B. Cowing. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai’i Press, 1968 [1944].
- Cusens, Anthony R., ed.. *Proceedings of a Conference on Architecture and Structural Engineering in Relation to the Construction of Large Building*. Bangkok: SEATO Graduate School of Engineering, 1963.
- Damrong Rajanubhab, Prince. *Phrarachaphongsawadan Rachakan thi Ha* [The Royal Chronicles of the Reign of King Rama V]. Bangkok: Matichon, 2002.
- . “The Introduction of Western Culture in Siam.” Paper presented at the Rotarian dinner of the United Club, Bangkok, August 7, 1925.
- Davisakd Puaksom. *Khon Plaek-na Nana-chat khrong Krung Sayam* [Siam’s International Strangers], edited by Suchit Wongthet. Bangkok: Matichon, 2003.
- . “Chatiphan-wanna nai Jareuk Wat Phra Chetuphon: Thi Sila Mahawitthayalai [An Ethnography in the Inscriptions of Wat Phra Chetuphon: At the University in Stone].” *Sinlapa Watthanatham* 24, no. 5 (2003): 98-115.
- “Devaraja.” *Google Arts and Culture*. Accessed February 26, 2022. <https://artsandculture.google.com/entity/devaraja/m0glpj72?hl=en>
- Dixon, John Morris. “Suvarnabhumi Airport.” *Architectural Record*. Last modified August 19, 2007, <https://www.architecturalrecord.com/articles/8047-suvarnabhumi-airport>.
- Douglass-Jaimes, David. “AD Classics: National Congress / Oscar Niemeyer.” *ArchDaily*. Last modified September 21, 2015. <https://www.archdaily.com/773568/ad-classics-national-congress-oscar-niemeyer>.
- “Du Satithi Na Jodjum Um-la 44 Pi Rattasapa U-thong-nai: Sattapattayagum Rub Chai Leuktang Lak-tung” [Counting Memorable Statistics and Saying Goodbye to the 44-year U-thong-nai Assembly Hall: Architecture that Served Thai Electoral and Forcible Votes]. *Voice Online*. December 7, 2018. https://www.matichon.co.th/politics/news_1262764
- Elias, Norbert. *The Civilizing Process*, translated by Edmund Jephcott. New York, NY: Urizen Books, 1978.

- “Environmental Impact Assessment (Summary Version of the Executives).” *The Secretariat of the House of Representatives*. April, 2011. <https://resolution.soc.go.th/>
- Faculty of Architecture, Chulalongkorn University. *A Study on Site Selection for the Construction of the New House of Parliament*. Bangkok: Secretariat of the Parliament, 1999.
- Faculty of Architecture, Chulalongkorn University. *Krongkarn Keela Main Stadium Hua Mak, Ongkarn Songserm Keela heng Prated Thai* [Main Sports Stadium at Hua Mak Project, Sports Authority of Thailand]. Bangkok: Mor Por Phor, 1984.
- Faculty of Architecture, Silpakorn University. *A Study on Site Selection for the Construction of the New House of Parliament*. Bangkok: Secretariat of the Parliament, 1999.
- Fidler, David P.. “A Kinder, Gentler System of Capitulations? International Law, Structural Adjustment Policies, and the Standard of Liberal, Globalized Civilization.” *Texas International Law Journal* 35, no. 3 (2000): 388-414.
- Fineman, Daniel. *A Special Relationship: The United States and Military Government in Thailand, 1947-1958*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai’I Press, 1997.
- Fracalossi, Igor. “AD Classics: Palace of Assembly / Le Corbusier.” *ArchDaily*. Last modified August 10, 2011. <https://www.archdaily.com/155922/ad-classics-ad-classics-palace-of-the-assembly-le-corbusier>.
- Frampton, Kenneth. *Modern Architecture: A Critical History*. New York, NY: Thames and Hudson, 1992.
- Fry, Gerald W.. “Education and Success: A Case Study of Thai Public Service.” *Comparative Education Review* 24, no. 1 (1980): 21-35.
- Gans, Deborah. *The Le Corbusier Guide*. New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 1987.
- Garcia Canclini, Nestor. *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*. Translated by Christopher L. Chiappari and Silvia L. Lopez. London and Minneapolis, MN: University of Minneapolis Press, 1995.
- Giordanengo, Davide. “The State of Exception.” *E-International Relations*. June 21, 2016. <https://www.e-ir.info/2016/06/21/the-state-of-exception/>
- Golay, Frank H., and Peggy Lush. *Directory of the Cornell Southeast Asia Program, 1951-1976*. Ithaca, NY: Southeast Asia Program, Department of Asian Studies, Cornell University, 1976.
- Gong, Gerrit W.. *The Standard of “Civilization” in International Society*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984.
- Greene, Stephen. “King Wachirawut’s Policy of Nationalism.” In *In Memoriam Phya Anuman Rajadhon*, edited by Tej Bunnag and Michael Smithies, 252-259. Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1970.
- Gutzlaff, Charles. *Journal of Three Voyages along the Coast of China in 1831, 1832, & 1833, with Notices of Siam, Corea, & The Loo-Choo Islands*. London: Thomas Ward and Co., 1835.
- Hallward, Peter. *Absolute Postcolonial: Writing Between the Singular and the Specific*.

- Manchester and New York, NY: Manchester University Press, 2001.
- Handley, Paul M.. *The King Never Smiles: A Biography of Thailand's Bhumibol Adulyadej*. New Haven, CT: Yale University, 2006.
- Harrison, Rachel V.. "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*, edited by Rachel V. Harrison and Peter A. Jackson, 1-36. Ithaca, NY: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 2010.
- Harrison, Rachel V., and Peter A. Jackson. "Introduction: Siam's/Thailand's Constructions of Modernity Under the Influence of the Colonial West." *South East Asia Research* 17, no. 3 (2009): 325-360.
- Hernandez, Felipe. *Bhabha for Architects*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2010.
- Herzfeld, Michael. *The Body Impolitic: Artisans and Artifice in the Global Hierarchy of Value*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2004.
- . "The Absent Presence: Discourse of Crypto-colonialism." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 101.4 (2002): 899-926.
- . "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*, edited by Rachel V. Harrison and Peter A. Jackson, 173-186. Ithaca, NY: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 2010.
- "History of the Office of the Privy Council." *Royal Office*. Accessed September 15, 2021. <https://www.royaloffice.th/en/about-royal-office/office-of-his-majesty-privy-council/>
- Horowitz, David. "Billion Dollar Brains." *Ramparts*, May 1969.
- . "Sinews of Empire." *Ramparts*, August 1969.
- Hoskin, John. *Bangkok*. Singapore: Times Editions, 1986.
- Hutcheon, Linda. *A Theory of Adaptation*. London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2006.
- Isriya Paireepairit. "New Parliament." *Markpeak.net* (blog). August 1, 2020. <https://markpeak.net/new-parliament/>.
- Ittithepsan Kridakorn, Mom Chao. *Rueng Kiewkab Satapattayagam [Stories of Architecture]*. Bangkok: Department of Public Instruction, 1890.
- Jackson, Peter A.. "Afterword: Postcolonial Theories and Thai Semicolonial Hybridities." In *The Ambiguous Allure of the West: Traces of the Colonial in Thailand*, edited by Rachel V. Harrison and Peter A. Jackson, 187-206. Ithaca, NY: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 2010.
- . "Autonomy and Subordination in Thai History: The Case for Semicolonial Analysis." *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 8:3 (2007): 329-348.
- . "The Ambiguities of Semicolonial Power in Thailand." In *The Ambiguous Allure of the West: Traces of the Colonial in Thailand*, edited by Rachel V. Harrison and Peter A. Jackson, 37-56. Ithaca, NY: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 2010.
- . "The Performative State: Semi-coloniality and the Tyranny of Images in Modern Thailand." *Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 19, no.2 (2004): 219-253.

- . “The Thai Regime of Images,” *Sojourn: Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 19, no. 2 (2004): 181-218.
- Jairak Junsin. “Modern Architecture of Pioneer Thai Architect, B.E. 2459-2508 [1906-1965].” Master’s Thesis, Silpakorn University, 2006.
- “Jed-sip Pi Prated Thai kub Tanakarn Lok Me Arai nai Krob Kwam Ruammeu, BE 2562-2565 [Thailand’s Partnership with the World Bank, 70 Years On].” *Bangkok Life News*. Accessed October 7, 2020. <http://bangkoklifeneews.com/17132412/70-ปี-ประเทศไทย-กับ-ธนาคารโลก-มีอะไรในกรอบความร่วมมือ-2562-2565>
- Jewkes, Stanley E.. “Letter to Gardner Meade: Qualification of the Louis Berger Organization and Mr. Robert G. Boughey, Chief Architect, Bangkok Office.” Archives of United States Information Agency (USIA) and United States Information Service (USIS), National Archives and Records Administration, RG 306 Entry P36 4744833, USA, 1966.
- . “The Effect of Finances, Materials, and Environment on Architectural and Structural Design with Illustration from the New Stadia at Kuala Lumpur.” In *Proceedings of a Conference on Architecture and Structural Engineering in Relation to the Construction of Large Building*, edited by Anthony R. Cusens. Bangkok: SEATO Graduate School of Engineering, 1963.
- Karnmanee Sakcharoen. *Tah Argardsayarn Krungthep* [Bangkok Airport]. Bangkok: Rungsilp Karnpim, 1983.
- Kasian Tejapira. *Commodifying Marxism: The Formation of Modern Thai Radical Culture, 1927-1958*. Kyoto: Kyoto University Press, 2001.
- Kian, Lai Chee. *Building Merdeka: Independence Architecture in Kuala Lumpur, 1957-1966*. Kuala Lumpur: Petronas, 2007.
- Kid Yang Satapanik. “Arkara Maha Sathan bon Kwam Taotiam” [The Grandeur of Structure Placing over Equality]. *Blockdit* (blog). May 13, 2021. <https://www.blockdit.com/posts/609cdfce76f13c0c4b820699>
- Klein, Christina. “Cold War Cosmopolitanism: The Asia Foundation and 1950s Korean Cinema.” *Journal of Korean Studies* 22, no.2 (2017): 281-316
- Komkrit Uitekkeng. “Phee, Praum, Putt: Phra Siam Devadhiraj Mai Kwaun Yu Bon Arkan Rattasapa” [Ghost, Brahmin, Buddhism: The Siamese Guardian Deity Should Not be Placed on the National Assembly Building]. *Matichon*, Mar 10, 2021. https://www.matichonweekly.com/religion/article_407666
- Kongsak Buapim and Thamrongsak Thamrongnawasawat. *Commemoration Cremation Book of Thavisakdi Janwiroj*. Bangkok: Chuanpim, 1977. <https://archive.org/details/2125200000unse/page/4/mode/2up>
- Koompong Noobanjong. “Power, Identity, and the Rise of Modern Architecture from Siam to Thailand.” Ph.D. Diss., University of Colorado at Denver, 2003.
- . “The National Assembly: An Empty Promise to Democracy.” *Journal of Architectural Planning Research and Studies* 4, no. 2 (2006): 77-99.
- . *The Aesthetics of Power: Architecture, Modernity, and Identity from Siam to Thailand*.

- Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2013.
- Kraidy, Marwan M.. *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalization*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2005.
- Krasniauskas, John. "Hybridity in a Transnational Frame: Latin-Americanist and Post-colonial Perspectives on Cultural Studies." In *Hybridity and its Discontents: Politics, Science, Culture*, edited by Avtar Brah and Annie E. Coombes, 235-256. London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2000.
- K.S.R. Kulap. *Ayatiwat* [Progress]. Bangkok: Thai-Japanese Friendship Association, 1995.
- Kullada Kesboonchoo Mead. "A Revisionist History of Thai-U.S. Relations." *Asian Review* 16 (2003): 45-67.
- . "Creating a Modern Bureaucracy through Education." In *The Rise and Decline of Thai Absolutism*, 66-92. New York, NY; London: Routledge Curzon, 2004.
- Labelle, Thomas, and Robert Verhine. "Nonformal Education and Occupational Stratification: Implications for Latin America." *Harvard Educational Review* 56 (1975): 191-210.
- "Laung Sathiti 'Mahakap' Rattasapa Mai 'Sappaya-sapa-sathan'" [Drawing Out the Statistics of the New Legendary National Assembly Hall of Thailand, "Sappaya-sapa-sathan"]. *Voice TV*. March 26, 2018. https://voicetv.co.th/read/SkU1H_85M
- Likhit Dhiravegin. *The Bureaucratic Elite of Thailand: A Study of Their Sociological Attributes, Educational Backgrounds, and Career Advancement Pattern*. Bangkok: Wacharin, 1978.
- Liow Joseph, and Michael Leifer. "Praphas Charusathien." *Dictionary of the Modern Politics of Southeast Asia*. London: Routledge, 1996.
- London, Bruce. "Elites and Classes in Thai History: The Comparative Use of Power Elite and Ruling Class Analyses." *Southeast Asia Journal of Social Science* 7 (1979): 30-59.
- Loos, Tamara. "Competitive Colonialisms: Siam and the Malay Muslim South." In *The Ambiguous Allure of the West: Traces of the Colonial in Thailand*, edited by Rachel V. Harrison and Peter A. Jackson, 75-91. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010.
- . *Subject Siam: Family, Law, and Colonial Modernity in Thailand*. Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 2006.
- Manatspong Sanguanwuthirojana. "Concept and Symbolism in the Architectural Design of Sappaya Sapasathan." Master Thesis, Chulalongkorn University, 2013.
- Mongkut, King. *The Writings of King Mongkut to Sir John Bowring (A.D. 1855-1868)*. Bangkok: The Historical Commission of the Prime Minister's Secretariat, 1994.
- Moreiras, Alberto. "Hybridity and Double Consciousness." *Cultural Studies* 13, no. 3 (1999): 373-407.
- Morris, Rosalind C.. "Failures of Domestication: Speculations on Globality, Economy, and the Sex of Excess in Thailand." *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 13, no. 1 (2002): 45-76.
- . "Three Sexes and Four Sexualities: Redressing the Discourses on Gender and Sexuality in Contemporary Thailand." *Positions* 2, no.1 (1994): 15-43.
- "MoU for New House Signed." *Bangkok Post* (Bangkok), August 16, 2008.

- “Muslims in South Thailand Mark 15 Years since ‘Tak Bai Massacre’.” *Aljazeera*. October 25, 2019. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/10/25/muslims-in-south-thailand-mark-15-years-since-tak-bai-massacre>
- Naritsara Nuwattiwong, Prince, and Prince Damrong Rajanubhab. *San Somdet* 24 [Correspondence between Two Princes]. Bangkok: Khurusapha, 1962.
- National Archives of Thailand. [Call for Applications from Foreign Planners], S R 0201.19/38. Bangkok: National Archives of Thailand.
- “New Parliament Proposal Faces Protest.” *Bangkok Post* (Bangkok), June 26, 2007.
- “New Privy Councilor in Spotlight Over Past Role in Disbanding Political Parties.” *ThaiPBS World’s Political Desk*. May 9, 2020. <https://www.thaipbsworld.com/new-privy-councillor-in-spotlight-over-past-role-in-disbanding-political-parties/>
- Non Arkaraprasertkul. “A Sudden Appearance of Modernism in Thailand.” In *Keeping Up Modern Thai Architecture, 1967-1987*, edited by Thailand Creative and Design Center, 70-72. Bangkok: Thailand Creative and Design Center, 2008.
- Non Arkaraprasertkul and Reilly P. Rabitaille. “Differences, Originality and Assimilation: Building Nine at Panabhandhu School.” *Threshold* 35. (2009): 8-15.
- Nopphorn Prachukul. “Roland Barthes kap Sanyasat Wannakam (Roland Barthes and Literary Semiotics).” In *Mayakhati, San-niphon jak ‘Mythologies’ khrong Roland Barthes Plae jak Phasa-farangset doi Wanphimon Angkhasirisap* [Mythologies, Selected Writings from Mythologies by Roland Barthes], trans. from the French by Wanphimon Angkhasirisap. Bangkok: Kobfai, 2001.
- Norland, Patricia and al et.. *The Eagle and the Elephant: Thai-American Relations since 1833*. Translated by Montage Anusas-amornkul, Nawarat Liautrakul, and Pantip Jatchavala. Bangkok: United States Information Service, 1997.
- O’Connor, Richard A.. “Indigenous Urbanism: Class, City, and Society in Southeast Asia.” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 26, no. 1 (1995): 30-45.
- Office of the Prime Minister. “The Cabinet’s Approval for the Construction of the New House of Parliament.” *Office of the Prime Minister* (Bangkok) August 11th, 1968
- Ong-ard Satrabhandhu. *Ong Ard architects: 1966-1992*. Bangkok: The Key Publisher, 1992.
- . “Ong-ard Satrabhandhu.” By Paphop Kerdsup and Wichit Horyingsawad. *Art4d* 261 (2018): 30-37.
- Pairojana Chantaranimi and Khanchit Thamrongrattanarit. “Khon Sue Chue Chaiya” [An Honest Man Named Chaiya]. Last modified September, 1987. <http://info.gotomanager.com/news/details.aspx?id=2582>.
- “Panel Select New Parliament Model.” *Bangkok Post* (Bangkok), November 11, 2009.
- Pattana Kitiarsa. “An Ambiguous Intimacy: Farang as Siamese Occidentalism.” In *The Ambiguous Allure of the West: Traces of the Colonial in Thailand*, edited by Rachel V. Harrison and Peter A. Jackson, 57-74. Ithaca, NY: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 2010.
- . “Beyond Syncretism: Hybridization of Popular Religion in Contemporary Thailand.”

- Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 36, no. 3 (2005): 461-487.
- Pavin Chachavalpongpun. "Beware the Thailand King's New Power Play." *The Diplomat*. October 12, 2018. <https://thediplomat.com/2018/10/beware-the-thailand-kings-new-power-play/>
- Pavin Chachavalpongpun, and Joshua Kurlantzick. "Prem Tinsulanonda's Legacy--and the Failures of Thai Politics Today." *Council on Foreign Relations*. May 28, 2019. <https://www.cfr.org/blog/prem-tinsulanondas-legacy-and-failures-thai-politics-today>
- Peleggi, Maurizio. *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002.
- . "Purveyors of Modernity? Europeans, Artists, and Architects in Turn-of-the-Century Siam." *Asia Europe Journal* 1.1. (2003): 91-101.
- . "The Making of Siamese Monarchy's Modern Public Image." Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, The Australian National University, 1997.
- Philips, Matthew. *Thailand in the Cold War*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2016.
- Phra Brahmaganabhorn (P. A. Payutto). "Kwam-mai khong Sappaya" [The Meaning of Sappaya]. In *Dictionary of Buddhism*. Bangkok: Mahachulalongkorn Press, 2016.
- Phramaha Somdeth Tapasilo (Sri-la-ngad). "An Analytical Study of Development of Tebhumikatha in Thai Society." *Mahachula Academic Journals* 6, no.1 (2019): 281-294.
- Pinai Sirikiattikul. "The Reconstruction of Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall's Roof Spires, 1926-1932." In *AHMT Domestic Architecture in Siam: The Reformation Period*, edited by Den Wasiksiri, 66-106. Bangkok: Faculty of Architecture, Silpakorn University Press, 2019.
- Pirasri Povatong. "Building Siwilai: Transformation of Architecture and Architectural Practice in Siam during the Reign of Rama V, 1868-1910." Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Michigan, 2011.
- "PM Confronting the Media Again." *Nation* (Bangkok), February 21, 2003.
- Pornpas Siricururatana. "Inventory of Modern Building in Bangkok - History of Modern Architecture in Bangkok." Paper presented at the 7th mASEANa International Conference on The Future of the Past: Materiality and Resilience of modern Architecture in Southeast Asia, Bangkok, Thailand, February 16, 2019.
- Prabhakorn Vadanyakul, ed.. *Kui gub Satapanik Tonbaeb* [Conversations with Architects Series vol. 6]. Bangkok: Li-Zenn Publishing, 2010.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. London and New York, NY: Routledge, 1992.
- "Professor Emeritus Sawai Mongkolkasem (Royal Scholar)." *Office of the Royal Society*. Accessed on April 27, 2021. https://www.orst.go.th/iwfm_table_lite.asp?i=0050002705001003%2F63EYK2508013
- "Project on the Koh Samui Airport in Thailand." *Airport Technology*. November 12, 2007, <https://www.airport-technology.com/projects/koh-samui/>
- Pussadee Tiptus. *An Architectural Digest: from the Past to the Present*. Bangkok: The

- Association of Siamese Architects, 1992.
- . *Satapanik Siam: Puentan Botbath Pholngan lae Naewkid, B.E.2475-2537* [Siamese Architects: Fundamentals, Roles, Works, and Concepts, 1932-1994]. Bangkok: The Association of Siamese Architects, 1996.
- . *Satapok Satapattayagum* [Architects and Architecture]. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 1999.
- Pussadee Tiptus, Chaiboon Sirithanawat, and Wimolrat Issarathumnoon. *Satapattayagum lung B.E. 2540: Vikrittakarn lae Tangleuk khon Satapanik Thai* [Architecture after 1997: Crisis and Alternative Solutions for Thai Architects]. Bangkok: Ratchadaphisek Sompoj Fund, Chulalongkorn University, 2006.
- Rangsan Thanapornpan. “Setthakit lae Sungkom Thai nai Chuang Hoksip Pi Ti Pan Ma [Thai Economy and Society in the Past 60 Years].” By Buncha Thanaboonsombut. *MTEC Journal of Materials Technology* 44 (July-September, 2006): n.p..
- “Red Cross Fair.” *The Red Cross Society, Fund Raising Bureau*. Accessed April 29, 2021, <https://www.redcrossfundraising.org/en/index.php/red-cross-fair>.
- Reid, Antony. *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450-1680, vol. 2: Expansion and Crisis*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1993.
- “Revised Master Plans for Suvarnabhumi and Don Mueang International Airports, Bangkok, Thailand.” *WSP (Formerly Louis Berger)*. Accessed January 17, 2021. <https://www.louisberger.com/our-work/project/revised-master-plans-suvarnabhumi-and-don-mueang-international-airports>
- Rerkdee Pothiwanakul. “Duang, Thavisakdi, Chaiya, and Associates.” *Facebook* (photo album). December 14, 2016, https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1083336961785469&type=3&comment_id=1083567315095767
- . “Jane Sakoltharak, 1926-1973.” *Facebook* (photo album). October 27, 2019. <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.830714250381076&type=3>
- . “Rifenberg and Rirkrit Architects” *Facebook* (photo album), December 27, 2015, <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.837842756334892&type=3>
- Reynolds, Craig J.. “Globalization and Cultural Nationalism in Modern Thailand.” In *Southeast Asian Identities: Culture and the Politics of Representation in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand*, edited by Joel Khan, 115-145. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1998,
- . “On the Gendering of Nationalist and Postnationalist Selves in Twentieth Century Thailand.” In *Genders and Sexualities in Modern Thailand*, edited by Peter A. Jackson and Nerida M. Cook, n.p.. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1999.
- Rhum, Michael R.. “‘Modernity’ and ‘Tradition’ in ‘Thailand’.” *Modern Asian Studies* 30, no. 2 (1996): 325-355.
- “Robert G. Boughey: Biography.” *RGB Architect*. Last accessed March 3, 2021, <https://www.rgbarchitects.com/BIOGRAPHY/57e9e5cbb0e014010094a70d>

- Roberts, Edmund. *Embassy to the Eastern Courts of Cochin-China, Siam and Muscat: in the US Sloop-of-War Peacock, David Geisinger, Commander, during the Years 1832-3-4*. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1972.
- Ricoeur, Paul. "Universal Civilization and National Cultures." In *Architectural Regionalism: Collected Writings on Place, Identity, Modernity, and Tradition*, edited by Vincent B. Carnizaro, 43-53. New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 2006.
- Rist, Gilbert. *The History of Development: From Western Origins to Global Faith*. London: Zed Books, 2002.
- Rungrit Petchratana, Rungrawin Sangsigha, and Anuchit Nimalung. "Sappaya-sapa-sathan: Rattasapa hang Mai lae Kwam-mai ti Soon-hai khong Prachachon" [Sappaya-sapa-sathan: People's New National Assembly Hall and its Loss of Meaning]. *Way Magazine*. May 22, 2019. <https://waymagazine.org/interview-chatratri-prakitnonthakan-sappayasaphasathan/>
- Said, Edward W.. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York, NY: Knopf, 1993.
- Saint, Andrew. *Architect and Engineer: A Study in Sibling Rivalry*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008.
- Sandhu, Khushboo. "Capitol Complex, as Le Corbusier Wanted it, Remains Incomplete." *Indian Express*. Last modified June 19, 2010. <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/chandigarh/capitol-complex-as-le-corbusier-wanted-it-remains-incomplete/>
- Sasiwan Mokkaen. "No, 2,000 Teak Trees Won't Be Cut for New Parliament—More Like 5,000." *Khaosod English* (Bangkok), July 25, 2016.
- Secretariat of the Parliament. *Forty-second Anniversary of the Thai Parliament (1932-1974)*. Edited by Prasart Pattamasukond. Bangkok: Library of the Parliament, 1974.
- . *The Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall, 27-29*. Edited by Thongtong Chandransu. Bangkok: Aksorn Samphan Printing, 1988.
- Seufer, Paul E.. "Construction Program in Vietnam." *The Military Engineer* (May-June 1968). Accessed October 19, 2020, <https://sameneews.org/tme-looks-back-vietnam-construction-program-in-vietnam/>
- So Sethaputra. *Thai-English Dictionary*. Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich Publishing, 2001.
- Somrak Chaisingkananon. *Rotsaniyom: Phasa nai Sangkhom Thai Yuk Boriphokeniyom* [Taste: Language in Thai Society in the Era of Consumerism]. Bangkok: Institute of Social Research, Chulalongkorn University, 2001.
- Songkiet Chatwattananont. "Toemsakdi Krishnamra Wai Hoksip ti Young Tongkarn Tum-ngarn Eek Ha Pi" [Toemsakdi Krishnamra in His Sixty, Who Would Want to Work for Another Five More Years]. Last modified September, 1987, <http://info.gotomanager.com/news/details.aspx?id=8078>.
- "Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), 1954." *Office of the Historian, Foreign Service Institute, United States Department of State*. Accessed September 27, 2020, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/seato>.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Deconstruction and Cultural Studies: Arguments for a

- Deconstructive Cultural Studies.” In *Deconstructions: A User’s Guide*, edited by Nicholas Royle, 14-43. New York, NY: Palgrave, 2000.
- Stifel, Laurence D.. “Technocrats and Modernization in Thailand.” Paper presented at the Annual Meetings of the Association for Asian Studies, San Francisco, CA, March 1975.
- Stoler, Ann. *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002.
- Streckfuss, David. “The Mixed Colonial Legacy in Siam: Origins of Thai Racialist Thought.” In *Autonomous Histories, Particular Truths: Essays in Honor of John R.W. Smail*, edited by Laurie Sears, 123-153. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin-Madison, Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Monograph Series, No. 11, 1993.
- Sumet Jumsai. *Naga: Cultural Origins in Siam and the West Pacific*. Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Supasai Vongkulbhisal. “Crypto-Colonialism and Culture in Modern Thai Architecture: The Works of Ong-ard Satrabhandhu.” Paper presented at 2020 ENITS and ENITAS Research Scholarship Presentation, Bangkok, Thailand, August 27, 2020.
- Surasakmontri, Chaophraya. “Waduai Chaopa Chat Tangtang” [On Various Jungle Races]. In *Lathi Thamnam Tangtang 1* [Various Customs 1], 518, 534, 548, 558, 567. Bangkok: Khlangwitthaya, 1972. Originally in *Wachirayanwiset 5*, 1889).
- Taveep Thepsuthamrat. “Krongkarn Prupprung Sanam Keela Hua Mak [Hua Mak Indoor Stadium Renovation Project].” Bachelor’s thesis. Silpakorn University, 1984.
- Thailand Creative and Design Center. “A Corduroy Box by the Slums.” In *Keeping Up Modern Thai Architecture, 1967-1987*, edited by Thailand Creative and Design Center, 61. Bangkok: Thailand Creative and Design Center, 2008.
- . “At the Red Cross Fair.” In *Keeping Up Modern Thai Architecture, 1967-1987*, edited by Thailand Creative and Design Center, 63. Bangkok: Thailand Creative and Design Center, 2008.
- . “Chom Ngang Aok Rarn” [At the Red Cross Fair]. In *Keeping Up Modern Thai Architecture, 1967-1987*, edited by Thailand Creative and Design Center, 36. Bangkok: Thailand Creative and Design Center, 2008.
- . “How I Built Bangkok’s First Skyscraper (Interview with TCDC: Chokchai Buklakul).” In *Keeping Up Modern Thai Architecture, 1967-1987*, edited by Thailand Creative and Design Center, 76-78. Bangkok: Thailand Creative and Design Center, 2008.
- . “Modern Thai Architecture, 1967-1987.” In *Keeping Up Modern Thai Architecture, 1967-1987*, edited by Thailand Creative and Design Center, 59. Bangkok: Thailand Creative and Design Center, 2008.
- . “Tropical High-Rise Debates (Conversation with TCDC: Chaiboon Sirithanawat, Faculty of Architecture, Chulalongkorn University),” In *Keeping Up Modern Thai Architecture, 1967-1987*, edited by Thailand Creative and Design Center, 59. Bangkok: Thailand Creative and Design Center, 2008.
- . “When Thailand Turned Towards Modern Architecture (Conversation with TCDC:

- Chaiboon Sirithanawat, Faculty of Architecture, Chulalongkorn University).” In *Keeping Up Modern Thai Architecture, 1967-1987*, edited by Thailand Creative and Design Center, 66-67. Bangkok: Thailand Creative and Design Center, 2008.
- . *Keeping Up Modern Thai Architecture, 1976-1987*. Bangkok: Thailand Creative and Design Center, 2008.
- “Thailand Joins GATT.” *World Trade Organization*. Accessed February 18, 2021, <https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/GATT/1322.PDF>
- “Thailand: No Justice 10 Years after Tak Bai Killings, Failure to Prosecute Officers Undermines Rights Protections in South.” *Human Rights Watch*. October 25, 2014. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/10/25/thailand-no-justice-10-years-after-tak-bai-killings#>
- Thak Chaloeontiarana. *Thailand: The Politics of Despotic Paternalism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018.
- Thanu Chantruchirakorn. “Sanambin Kor Tor Mor [Bangkok Airport].” Bachelor’s thesis. Silpakorn University, 1966.
- The Association of Siamese Architects. “Indoor Stadium, Bangkok.” *ASA Journal* 2509, vol. 1 (1966): n. pag.
- . “Kan-suksa Wikro geawgub Sathantee Korsang Arkan Ratthasapa haeng Mai” [The Studies and Analyses of the New House of Parliament’s Proposed Construction Sites]. *ASA Journal* September (1999): 52-67
- . “Punha korn Don Mueang: Don Mueang or Sanambin Mai [Problems of Don Mueang: The Don Mueang District or the New Airport?].” *ASA Journal* 2520 2, vol. 1 (1977): 52-63.
- . “Rai-ngan Karn Sumrod Kwan Sia-hai Arkarn Sanam Keela Hua Mak lae Kor Sanernae Viti Karn Kaekai [A Report on the Damage of Indoor Stadium Hua Mak and Recommended Resolutions].” *ASA Journal* 2520 2, vol. 2 (1977): 8-9.
- . “Sam-nak-ngan Lekha-ti-kan Rattasapa” [The National Assembly Secretariat Office]. *ASA Journal* 3, no. 3 (1972): 19-22.
- The Comptroller General of the United States. “Report to the Congress: U.S. Construction Activities in Thailand, 1966 and 1967.” Department of Defense, Department of State, Agency for International Development, Washington DC, 1968. Accessed October 19, 2020, <https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=6wpl3cToflAC&hl=en&pg=GBS.PP1>
- The Executive Committee of the Eighth Congress, Far Eastern Association of Tropical Medicine. *Siam: General and Medical Features*. Bangkok: The Bangkok Times Press, 1930.
- “The Parliament House of Thailand.” *Plenum, Places of Power: A Wiki on National Parliament Buildings Worldwide*. Accessed September 21, 2021. <https://www.places-of-power.org/wiki/index.php?title=Thailand>
- The Siam Society. “Biographical Notes on Contributors.” *Journal of the Siam Society* 59, part 2 (1971): 298-302.
- Thongchai Winichakul. “Nationalism and the Radical Intelligentsia in Thailand.” *Third World Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (2008): 575-591.

- . “Siam’s Colonial Conditions and the Birth of Thai History.” In *Unraveling the Myths of Southeast Asian Historiography*. Edited by Volker Grabowsky, 20-43. Bangkok: River Books Press, 2011.
- . *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-body of a Nation*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai’i Press, 1994.
- . “The Other Within: Travel and Ethno-Spatial Differentiation of Siamese Subjects, 1885-1910.” In *Civility and Savagery: Social Identity in the Tai Studies*. Edited by Andrew Turton, 38-62. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2000.
- . “The Quest of ‘Siwilai’: A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 59, no. 3 (2000): 528-549.
- “Tiew Songtai Pi ti ‘Suansad Dusit’ korn Pid Tumnan Suansad Klang Krung” [End-of-the-Year Trip at the Legendary ‘Dusit Zoo,’ Before this Midst-of-the-City’s Zoo Is Closed Down Forever]. *Prachachat*. December 26, 2017. <https://www.prachachat.net/blogger-square/travel/news-92947>.
- Torphong Yommanart. *Sanam Keela* [Sport Fields]. Bangkok: Faculty of Architecture, Chulalongkorn University Press, 1986.
- Tregaskis, Richard. *Southeast Asia: Building the Bases; the History of Construction in Southeast Asia*. Superintendent of Documents, US government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 1975.
- Trinuch Ingkudanon. “Sor Sethabuttra: Naktos Kabot Boworadet Phu Lob Kian Pojjananukrom nai Ruenjam [Sor Sethabuttra: The Boworadet Rebellion Prisoner Who Secretly Wrote Thai-English Dictionary While in Jail].” *The People*. Last modified June 18, 2020. <https://thepeople.co/so-sethaputra/>
- Triwat Viriyasiri. *Stadium Design*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 2015.
- Ukrist Pathmanand. “Saharat Amerika kap noyabai sethakit Thai” [The U.S. and Thai Economic Policy]. Master’s thesis, Chulalongkorn University, 1983.
- Vella, Walter. *Chaiyo! King Vajiravudh and the Development of Thai Nationalism*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1978.
- Vimolsiddhi Horayangkura. *Hok Thatsawat Sathapatyakam Thai Samai Mai* [6 Decades of Thai Modern Architecture]. Bangkok: Association of Siamese Architecture, 1993.
- . “In Search of Fundamentals of Thai Architectural Identity: A Reflection of Contemporary Transformation.” *Athens Journal of Architecture* 3, no. 1 (2017): 21-39.
- Vimolsiddhi Horayangkura and el at.. *In Revealing Modern Thai Architectural Identity*. Bangkok: Thammasat University Press and the National Research Council of Thailand, 2017.
- . *Pattanakan Naewkhwamkit lae Roopbaeb khong Ngansatapattayagum* [Development of Concepts, and Architectural Patterns: Past, Present, and Future]. Bangkok: The Association of Siamese Architecture, 1993.
- . *The Creation of Modern Thai Architectural Identity*. Bangkok: Thammasat University

- Press and the National Research Council of Thailand, 2015.
- Vimolsiddhi Horayangkura, Bussakorn Setthavorrakit, and Vira Inpuntung. *Fundamentals of Thai Architectural Identity*. Bangkok: The National Research Council of Thailand, 2015.
- Vira Inpuntung, Vimolsiddhi Horayangkura, and Apinant Phongmethakul. *Architectural Configuration*. Bangkok: The National Research Council of Thailand, 2015.
- Viriyasiri, Triwat. *Stadium Design*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 2015.
- Warren, William. *Chronicles of American Business in Thailand*. Bangkok: American Chamber of Commerce in Thailand, 2006.
- Wharton, Annabel J.. *Building the Cold War: Hilton International Hotels and Modern Architecture*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, 2001.
- Winyu Ardruga. “‘Mount Sumeru’ and the New Thai Parliament House: The ‘State of Exception’ as a Paradigm of Architectural Practices.” *Na Jua: Architectural History and Thai Architecture* 10 (2013): 102-129.
- Wolf, Eric R., and Joseph G. Jorgensen. “Anthropology on the Warpath.” *New York Review of Books*, November 19, 1970.
- Wright, Michael. *Farang Lang-Tawan-Tok [The Postwestern Westerner]*. Bangkok: Matichon, 2004.
- Wyatt, David K.. *Thailand: A Short History*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2004.
- . “King Chulalongkorn the Great: Founder of Modern Thailand.” In *Studies in Thai History: Collected Articles*, n.p.. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1994a (1976).
- . *Thailand: A Short History*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983.
- . *The Politics of Reform in Thailand*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1969.
- “Yon Tumnan 44 Pi Rattasapa Nub Toy Lung su Sappaya Sapasatan” [Tracing the 44-year Legend of U-thong-nai Assembly Hall and Counting Down for Sappaya-Sapasatan]. *Matichon Online*. December 7, 2018.
https://www.matichon.co.th/politics/news_1262764
- Yongtanit Pimonsathean. “Preservation of Modern Architecture: The Neglected Heritage of Modern Architecture, and Why It Needs to Be Preserved.” In *Keeping Up Modern Thai Architecture, 1967-1987*, edited by Thailand Creative and Design Center, 80-85. Bangkok: Thailand Creative and Design Center, 2008.