

Figure 4.1 1903 Map of Bangkok. Source: NAT.



Figure 4.2 King Rama V with the Duke of Genoa in Venice, May 15, 1897. Source : NAT.



Figure 4.3 King Rama V with Tsar Nicholas II, St. Petersburg, July 5, 1897. Source : NAT.



Figure 4.4 King Rama V on Eiffel Tower. Source: Krairoek Nana.



Figure 4.5 King Rama V entered the temporary triumphal arch at the royal landing, Stockholm, July 13, 1897. Source: NAT.

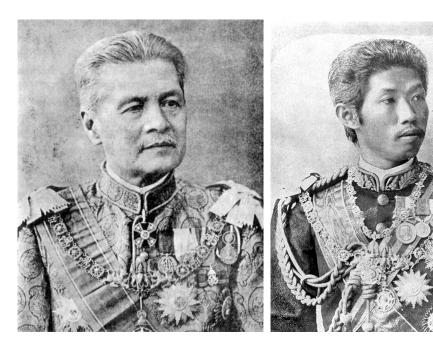


Figure 4.6 Phraya Thewetwongwiwat (MR Lan Kunchorn), the director of the Sanitary Department, 1897 – 1907. Source: NAT.

Figure 4.7 Prince Sonabundit, the minister of Public Works, 1893-1898. Source : NAT.



Figure 4.8 Mario Tamagno. Source: Muang Boran 24:2.

Figure 4.9 Emilio Giovanni Gollo. Source : *Wang Thewawet*, (Bangkok : Amarin, 2004).



Figure 4.10 Group portrait of Italian and Siamese staff of the Technical Office, Public Works Department, at Wat Phrachetuphon, early 1900s. Source: *Muang Boran* 24:2.



Figure 4.11 Ambara Villa. Source: Palaces of Bangkok, (Bangkok: River Books, 2003).



Figure 4.12 Abhisekdusit Hall. Source : $Palaces\ of\ Bangkok$, (Bangkok : River Books, 2003).



Figure 4.13 Wat Benchamabophit. Source: NAT.

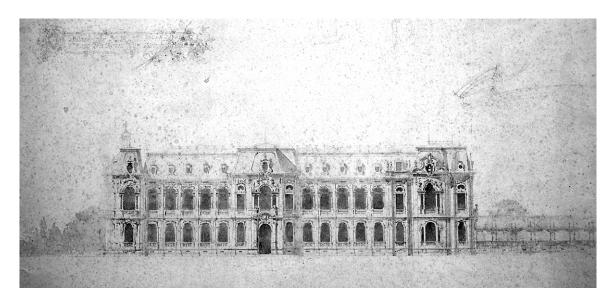


Figure 4.14 Mario Tamagno's drawing of the east elevation, Bangkhunphrom Palace. Source: *Muang Boran* 24:2.



Figure 4.15 Parusakawan Palace. Source: NAT.





Figure 4.16 Prince Urubhongs's Villa. Source : *Palaces of Bangkok*, (Bangkok : River Books, 2003).

Figure 4.17 Phraya Suriyanuwat's Residence. Source: ASA.





Figure 4.18 Wat Rachathiwat. Source : ASA.

Figure 4.19 Suan Kulap Palace. Source: ASA.

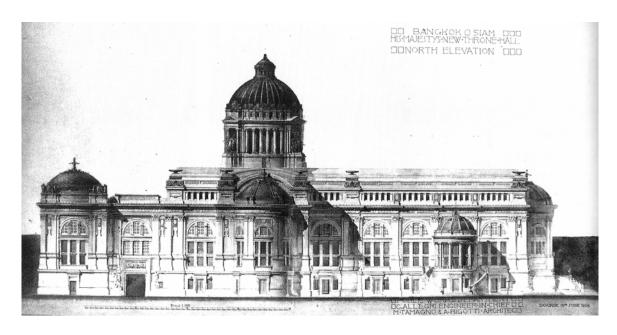


Figure 4.20 Anantasamakhom Hall. North façade. Source : Mario Tamagno Archives.



Figure 4.21 Anantasamakhom Hall, viewed from southeast. Source : Galileo Chini Archives.

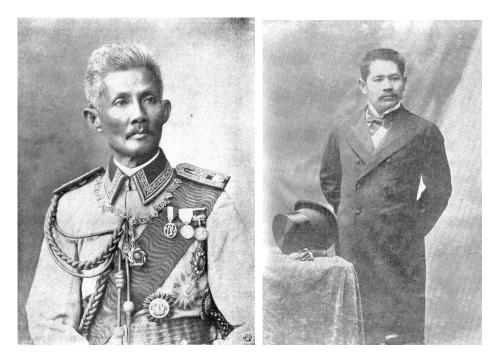


Figure 4.22 Prince Chumbala. Source: NAT.

Figure 4.23 Phraya Suriyanuwat (Koed Bunnag). Source: Cremation volume, 1937.

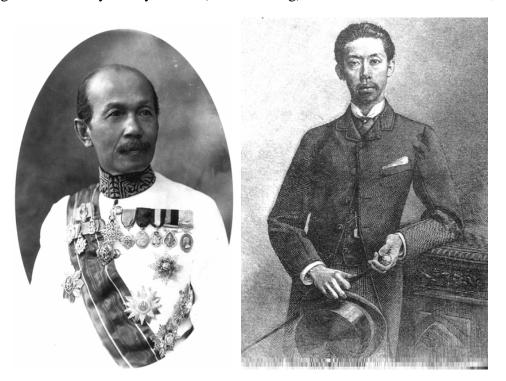


Figure 4.24 Chaophraya Yommarat (Pan Sukhum). Source: NAT.

Figure 4.25 Prince Nares. Source: NAT.



Figure 4.26 Detail from c.1899 Map of Bangkok, showing Dusit Park area and its vicinity. Source: National Library of Thailand.

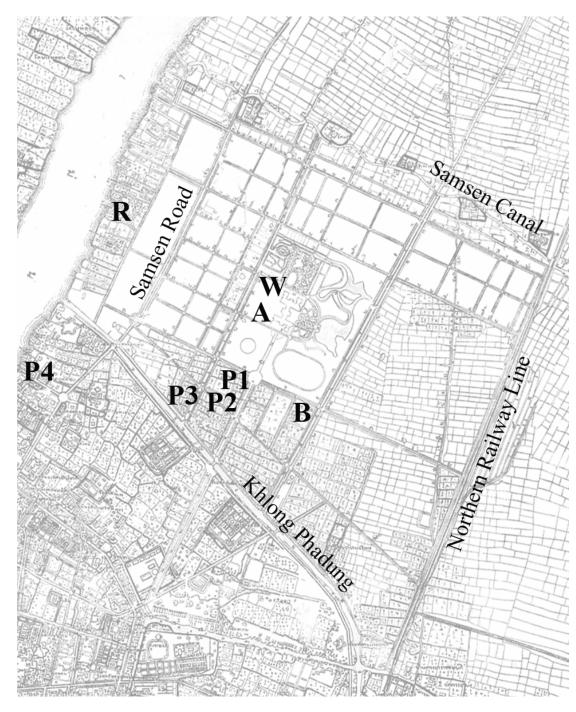


Figure 4.27 Components of Dusit Park: Wimanmek Mansion (W), Ambara Villa (A), Wat Benchamabophit (B), Chitrlada Palace (P1), Paruskawan Palace (P2), Ladawan Palace (P3), Bangkhunphrom Palace (P4).

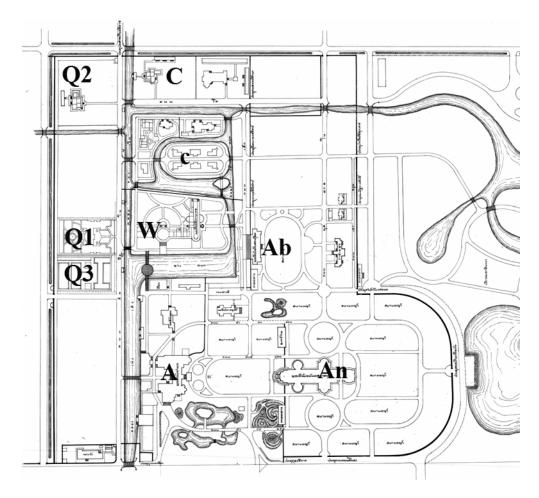


Figure 4.28 Components of Dusit Park Palace: Ambara Villa (A), Anantasamakhom Hall (An); Wimanmek Mansion (W), Abhisekdusit Throne Hall (Ab), Queen Saowabha's Residence (Q1), Queen Sawang Watthana's Residence (Q2), Queen Sukhumal's Residence (Q3), Consort's Residence (C), concubines' residences (c).



Figure 4.29 Wimanmek Mansion. Source: NAT.



Figure 3.30 Victorian-style bungalow, Dusit Park Palace. Source: NAT.

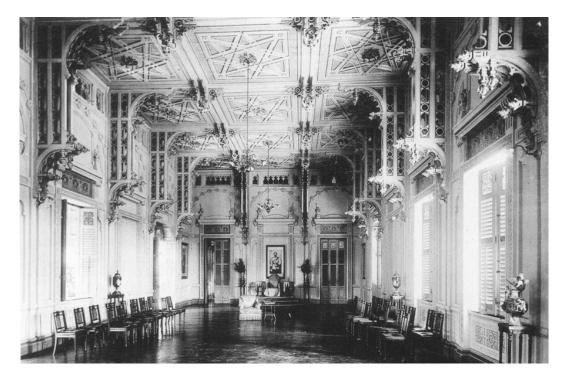


Figure 4.31 Interior view of Abhisekdusit Hall, Dusit Pak Palace. Source: NAT.

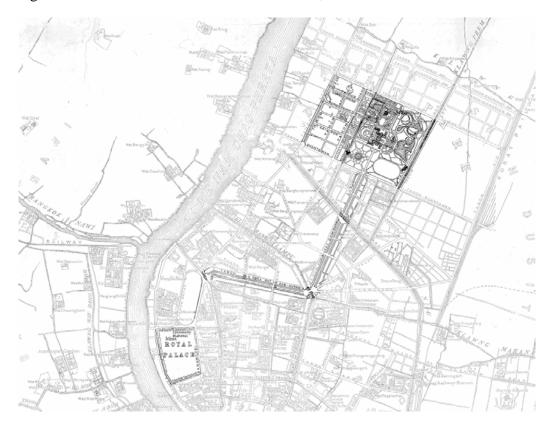


Figure 4.32 Grand Palace, Ratchadamnoen Avenue, and Dusit Park.

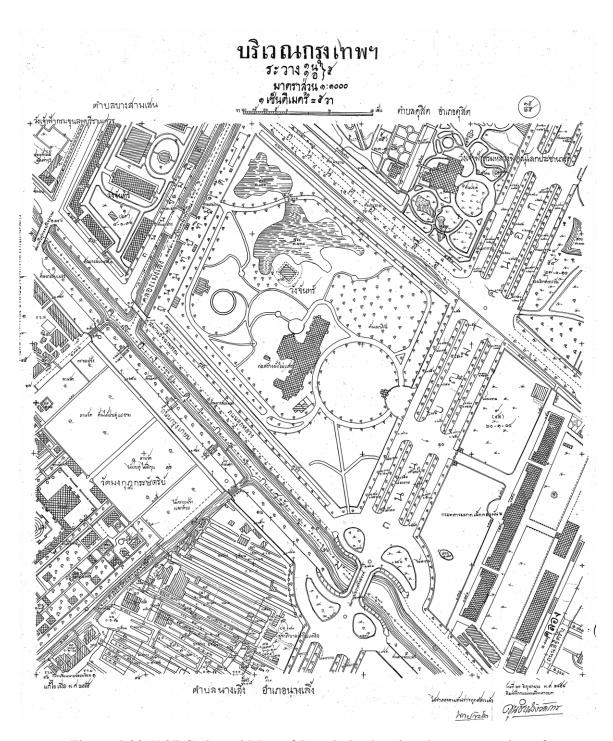


Figure 4.33 1907 Cadastral Map of Bangkok, showing the outer section of Ratchadamnoen Avenue in Dusit Park. Source: Land Department.

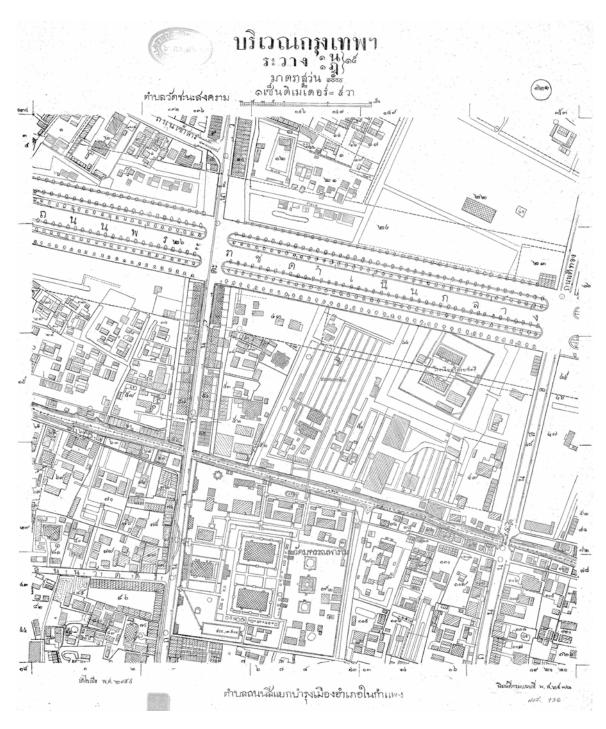


Figure 4.34 1907 Cadastral Map of Bangkok, showing the central section of Ratchadamnoen Avenue, within the city wall. Source: Land Department.

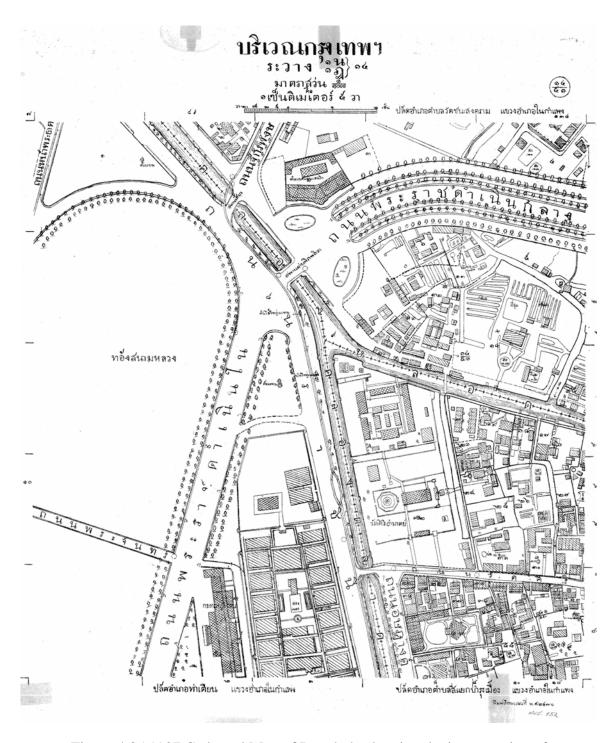


Figure 4.35 1907 Cadastral Map of Bangkok, showing the inner section of Ratchadamnoen Avenue. Source: Land Department.

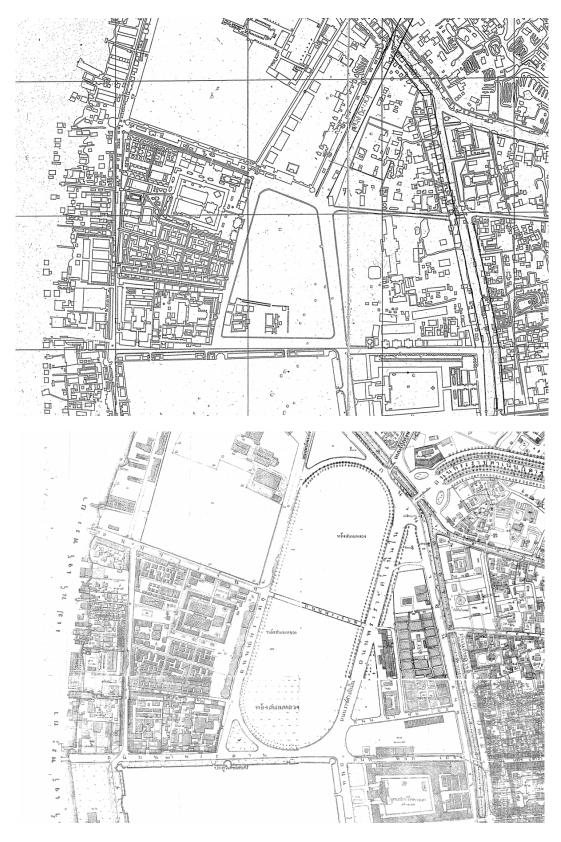


Figure 4.36 The expansion and regularization of Sanam Luang : 1889 Map (top), and 1907 Map (bottom).

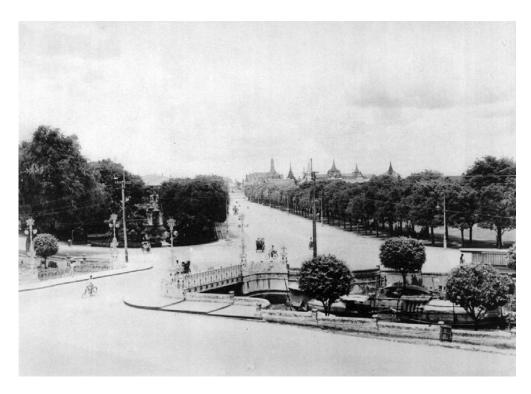


Figure 4.37 View of the tree-lined inner section of Ratchadamnoen Avenue, looking south toward the Grand Palace. Sanam Luang was at right. To the left was Phanphiphoplila Bridge, which crossed over the first ring of city moat. Source: NAT.



Figure 4.38 Entering Dusit Park : Ratchadamnoen avenue, looking north over Makkhawan Rangsan Bridge. Source : NAT.

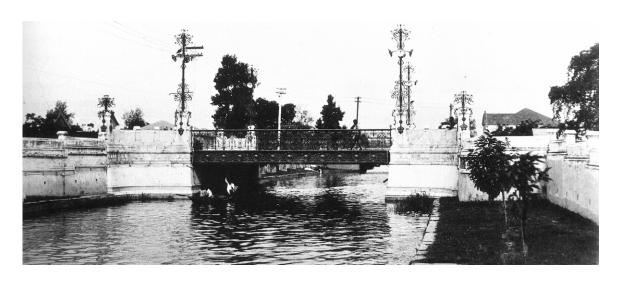


Figure 4.39 Phanphiphop Lila Bridge. Source: NAT.

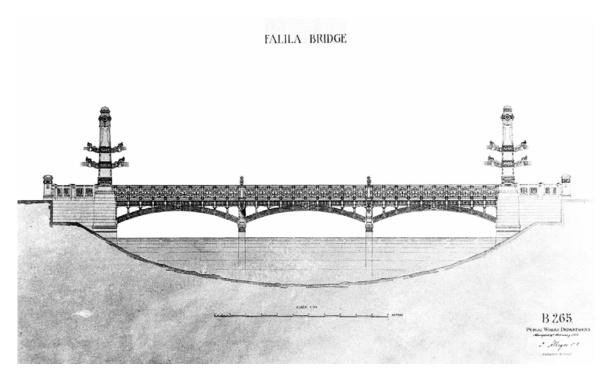


Figure 4.40 PWD design for Phanfa Lilat Bridge. Source : NAT.

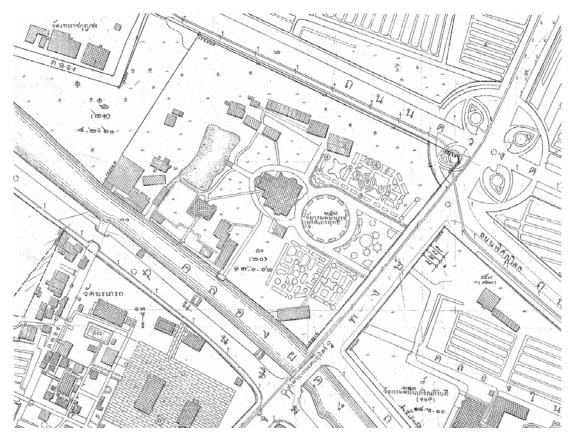


Figure 4.41 Prince Rabhi's Palace layout. Source : Land Department Archives.



Figure 4.42 Main residence, Prince Rabhi's Palace. Source: NAT.



Figure 4.43 Layouts of the *chaofa*-level princely palaces: Prince Maha Wachirawut's Chitrlada Palace (top, at the corner of the roundabout), and Prince Chakrabongse's Parusakawan Palace (below). Source: Land Department Archives.



Figure 4.44 Parusakawan Palace. Source: The Army Survey Department Archives.



Figure 4.45 Prince Yugala's Ladawan Palace. Source : CPB.



Figure 4.46 Prince Paribatra's Bangkhunphrom Palace. Source : Mario Tamagno Archives.



Figure 4.47 Dusit Park residence of Phraya Prasertsupphakit (Nop Krairoek), Rama V's butler. Source : ASA.



Figure 4.48 Dusit Park residence of Phraya Suriyanuwat (Koed Bunnag) Source : ASA.

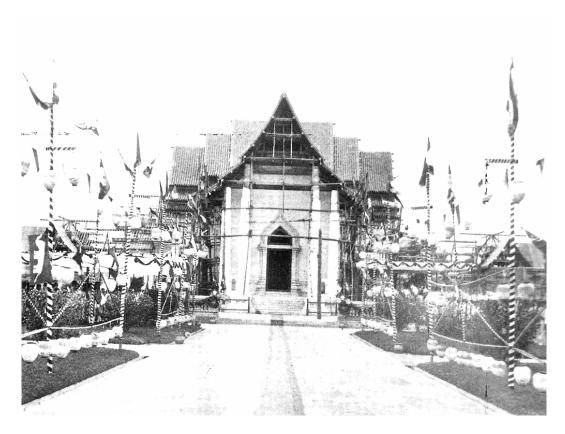


Figure 4.49 Wat Benchamabophit under construction. Source: NAT.



Figure 4.50 Wat Rachathiwat, before complete restoration by Rama V. Source: NAT.

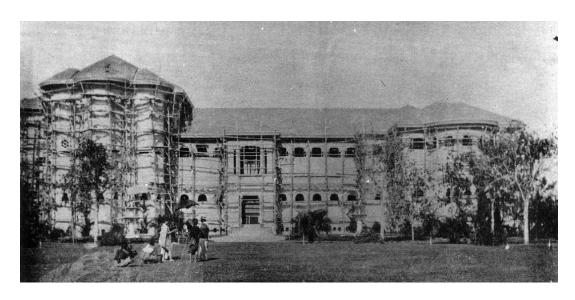


Figure 4.51 Ambara Villa under construction. Source: NAT.

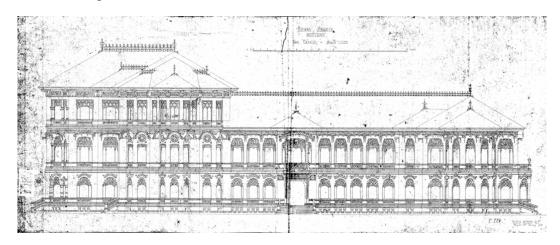


Figure 4.52 PWD drawing for the east elevation of Ambara Villa. Source : NAT.

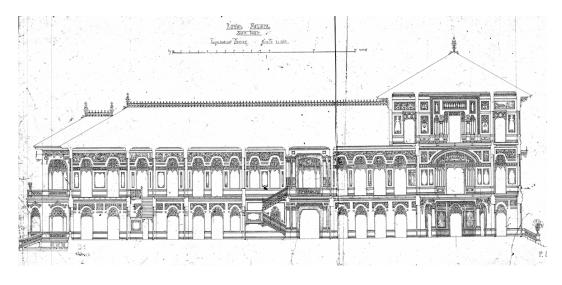


Figure 4.53 PWD drawing for the north-south section of Ambara Villa. Source: NAT.



Figure 4.54 Smoking Room, Ambara Villa. Source: Malakul Family Album.



Figure 4.55 His Majesty's Bedroom, Ambara Villa. Source : Malakul Family Album.



Figure 4.56 Egyptian Room, Ambara Villa. Source: Malakul Family Album.

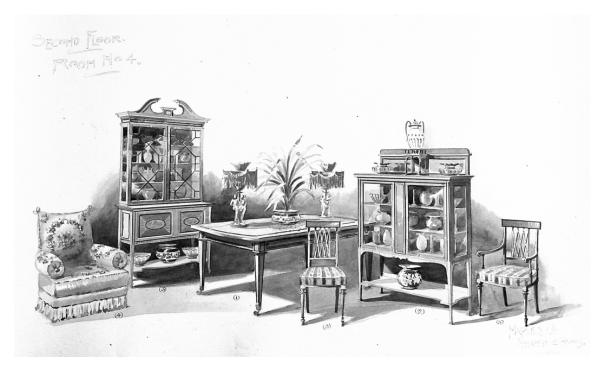


Figure 4.57 Maple & Co.'s furniture installation manual, Ambara Villa. Source: NLT.

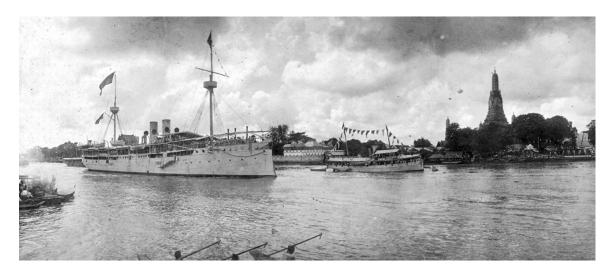


Figure 4.58 The king's return from the 1907 trip to Europe; the royal yacht Maha Chakri entering the city of Bangkok. Source: Malakul Family Album.



Figure 4.59 King Rama V progressed through the Army Department's Arch, Ratchadamnoen Avenue. Source: Malakul Family Album.

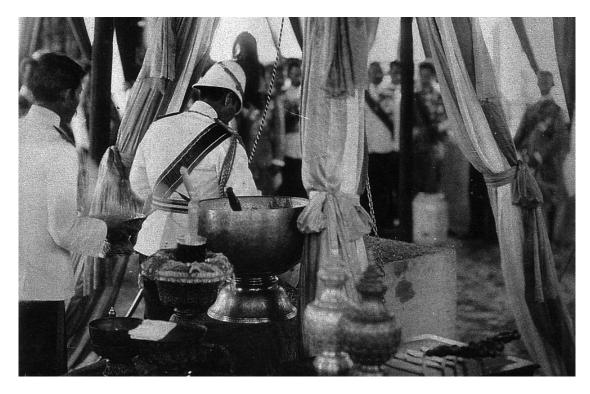


Figure 4.60 Rama V laying the foundation stone of Anantasamakhom Hall. Source : NAT.



Figure 4.61 The inauguration of Rama V's equestrian statue (at right). Source: NAT.

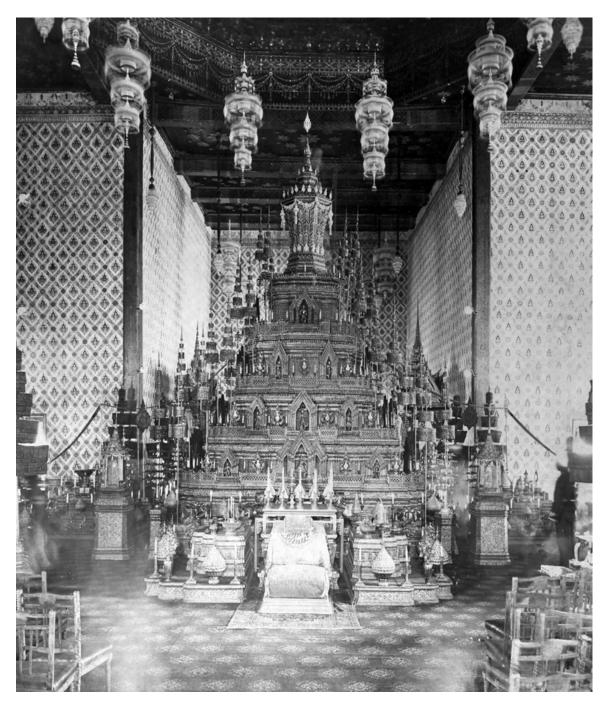


Figure 4.62 The body of Rama V laid in state at Dusit Throne Hall, Grand Palace. Source : Malakul Family Album.



Figure 4.63 The phra meru, temporary funerary structure, for the cremation of King Rama V in 1911. Source : Malakul Family Album.

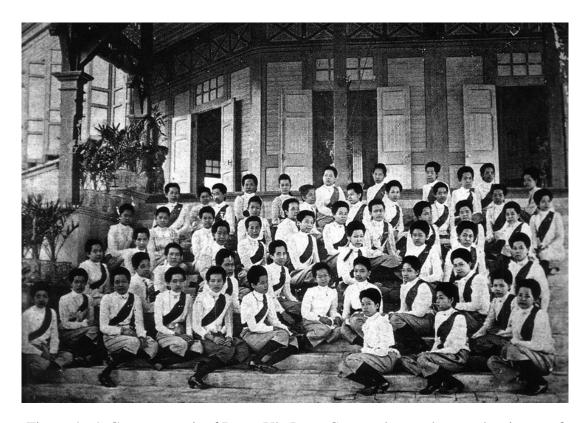


Figure 4.64 Group portrait of Rama V's Inner Court, taken at the grand staircase of Wimanmek Mansion, Dusit Park. Queen Saowabha sat at the top, by the column, flanked by Queen Sawangwatthana and Queen Sukhumalmarasi. Source: NAT.

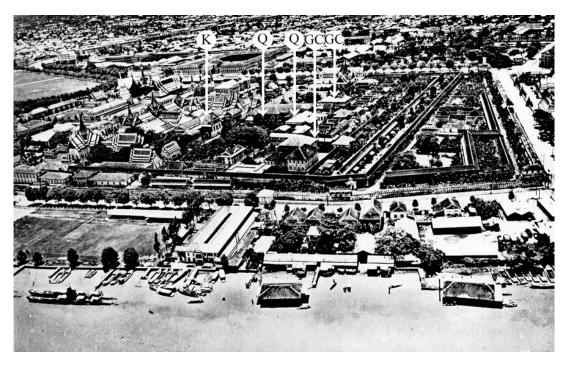


Figure 4.65 Topography of polygyny at the Grand Palace : the King's bedchamber (K), the Queens' (Q), and the Grand Consorts' (GC).

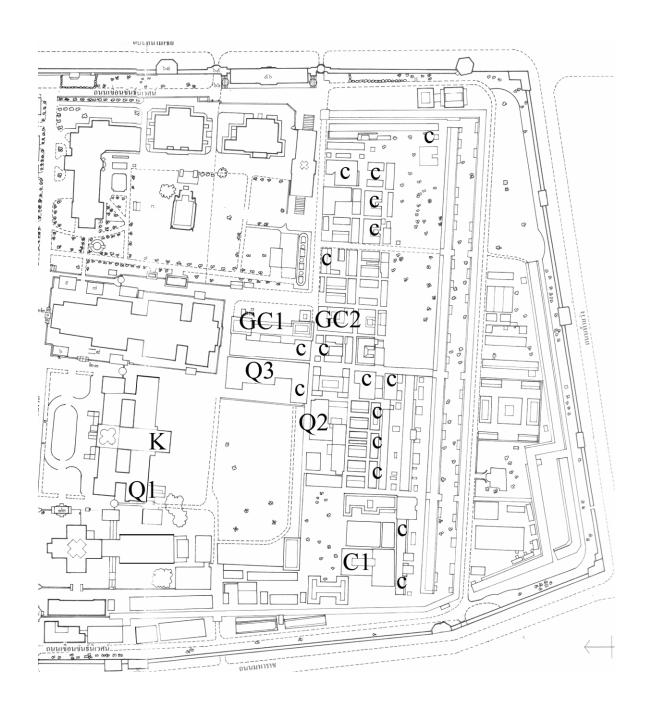


Figure 4.66 Plan of the Grand Palace, showing the locations of residences of members of Rama V's Inner Court, in relation to the king's bedchamber (K): the Queens (Q), the Consorts (C), the Grand Concubines (GC), and the concubines (c).

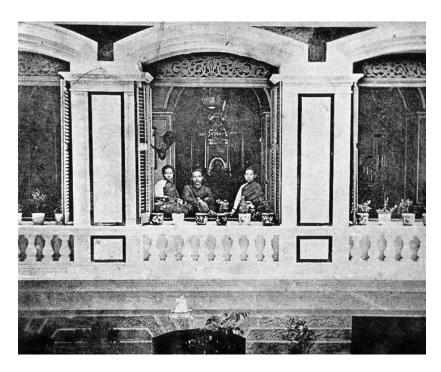


Figure 4.67 Group portrait of King Rama V (center), Queen Sawangwatthana (left), and Queen Saowabha (right), taken at the king's bedchamber, Chakri Throne Hall, Grand Palace. Source: NAT.



Figure 4.68 Group portrait of Queen Saowabha, Grand Concubine Chum Krairoek, and a European lady, taken during the 1896 trip to Dtch Java. Source: NAT.



Figure 4.69 Eduardo Gelli, *King Rama V, Queen Saowabha, and the Royal Princes* (1898). Oil on canvas. Source : The Royal Household Bureau.



Figure 4.70 Aerial view of Bang Pa-In Palace, showing the king's residences surrounded by small bungalows and villas of the Inner Court. Source: NAT.

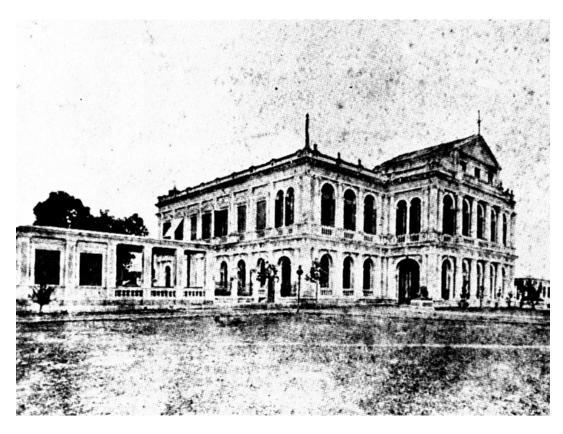


Figure 4.71 Buraphaphirom Palace, the public façade. Source: NAT.

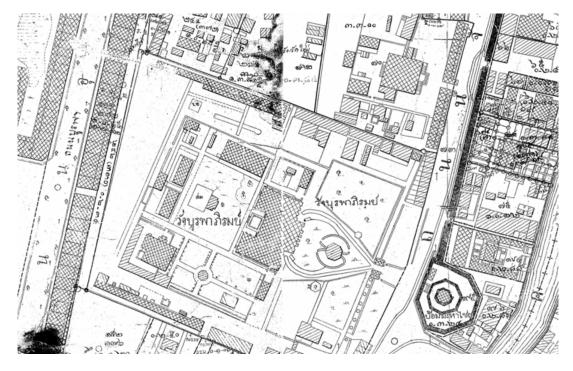


Figure 4.72 A map showing the entire compound of Buraphaphirom Palace, including the female section, unseen from the public side. Source : Land Department.

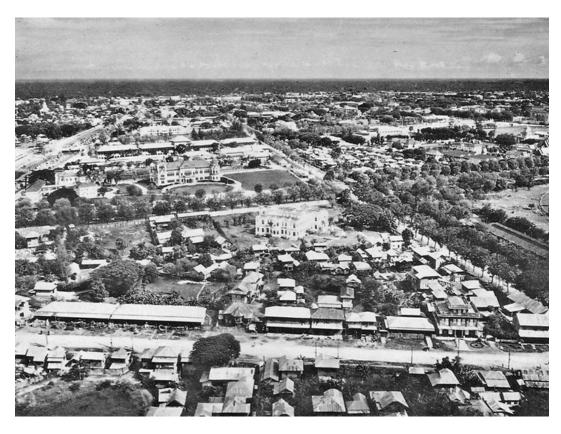


Figure 4.73 Aerial view of Prince Abhakara's Palace. The prince's residence occupied a corner of the triangular-shaped site, surrounded by fifteen houses for his wives. Source: NAT.

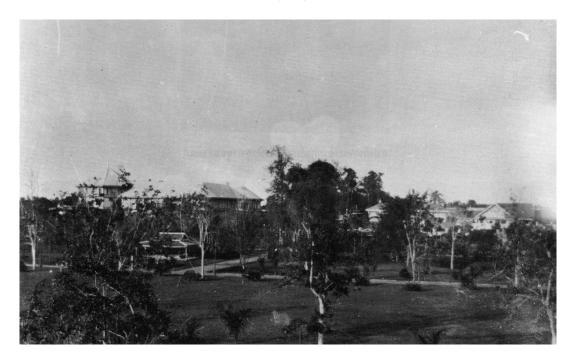


Figure 4.74 General view of Dusit Park royal residence, with Wimanmek Mansion (left), and the Queens' bungalows (right). Source: NAT.

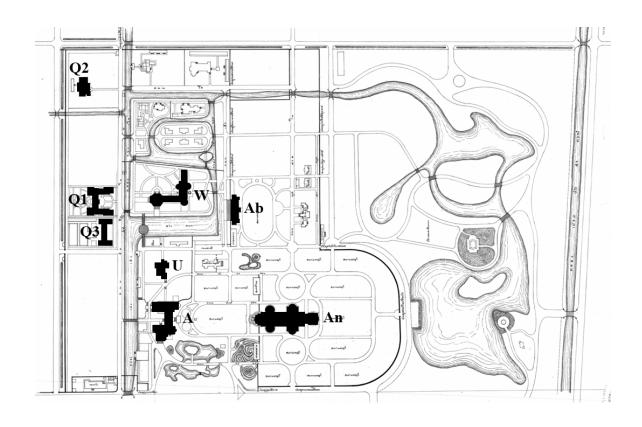


Figure 4.75 Layout of Dusit Park royal residence : Ambara Villa (A), Anantasamakhom Hall (An), Udonphak Hall (U), Wimanmek Mansion (W), Abhisekdusit Throne Hall (Ab), Queen Saowabha's Residence (Q1), Queen Sawang Watthana's Residence (Q2), Queen Sukhumal's Residence (Q3)

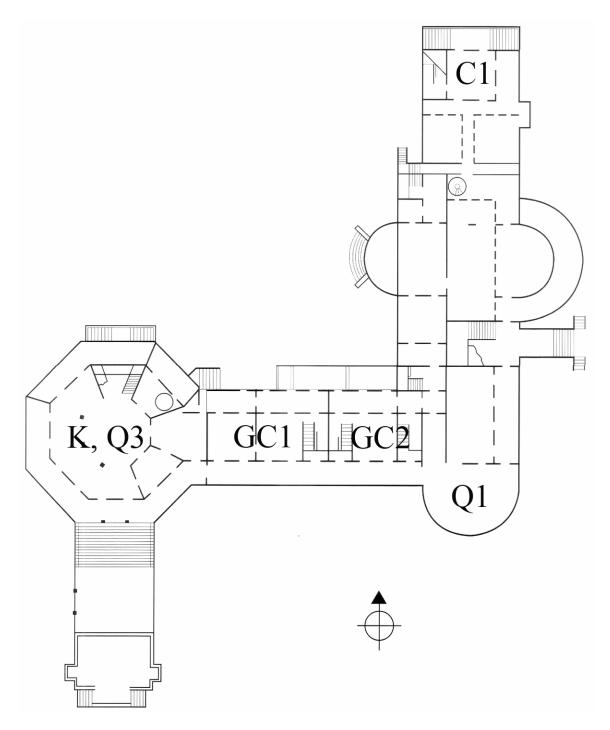


Figure 4.76 Wimanmek Mansion, first floor plan, showing the king's bedchamber (K), in relation to the living quarters of Queen Sukhumal (Q3), Grand Concubines of the Bunnag family (CG1), Grand Concubine Chum (GC2), Queen Saowabha (Q1), and Princess Consort Saisaowaliphirom (C1).

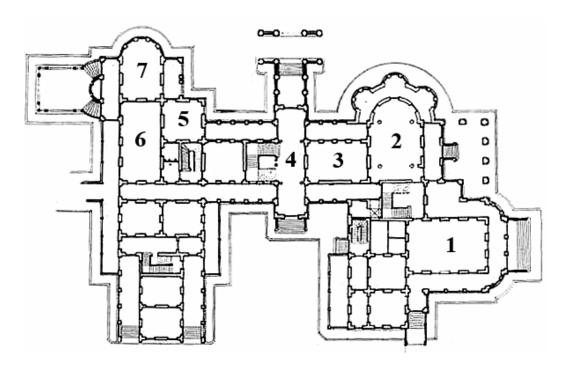


Figure 4.77 Ground floor plan, Ambara Villa: Reception Room (1), Drawing Room (2), Waiting Room (3), Foyer (4), Egyptian Room 95), Luncheon Room (6), Smoking Room (7). Source: NAT.

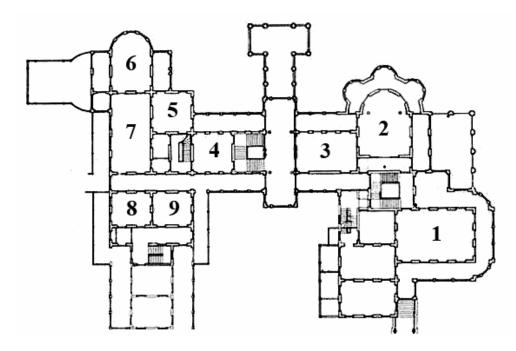


Figure 4.78 First floor plan, Ambara Villa: Dining Room (1), Smoking Room 92), Council Chamber (3), Waiting Room (4), Dressing Room (5), Conjugal Bedchamber (6), Sitting Room (7), Bedrooms (8-9). Source: NAT.

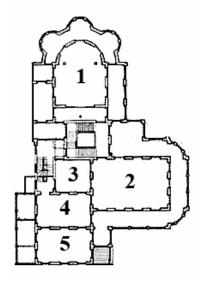


Figure 4.79 Second floor plan, Ambara Villa: His Majesty's Bedchamber (1), Library (2), Dressing Room (3), Private Sitting Room (4), Chapel (5). Source: NAT.



Figure 4.80 Smoking Room, Ground Floor, Ambara Villa. Source : Malakul Family Album.



Figure 4.81 Luncheon Room, Ground Floor, Ambara Villa. Source : Malakul Family Album.



Figure 4.82 Council Chamber, Second Floor, Ambara Villa. Source : Malakul Family Album.



Figure 4.83 His Majesty's Bedroom, Third Floor, Ambara Villa. Source : Malakul Family Album.



Figure 4.84 His Majesty's Chapel, Third Floor, Ambara Villa. Source : Malakul Family Album.



Figure 4.85 The Conjugal Bedroom, Second Floor, Ambara Villa. Source : Malakul Family Album.



Figure 4.86 Queen Saowabha's portrait in mosaic. Grand staircase, Ambara Villa. Source : The Bureau of the Royal Household.



Figure 4.87 Wat Ratchbophit. Source : Karl Doehring, $Buddhistische\ Tempelanlagen\ in\ Siam.$

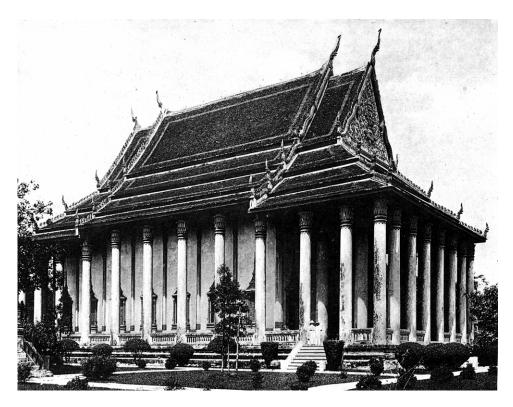
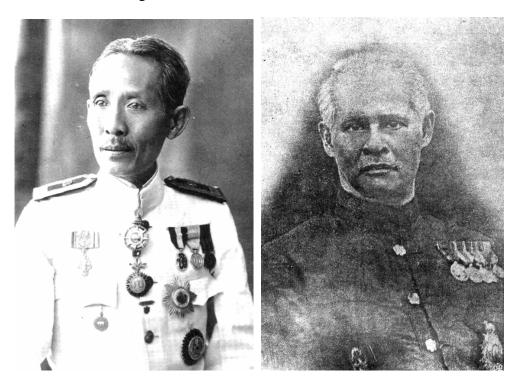


Figure 4.88 Wat Thepsirin. Source : Karl Doehring, *Buddhistische Tempelanlagen in Siam*.



Figure 4.89 Prince Naris. Source: NAT.



 $Figure\ 4.90\ Phraya\ Ratchasongkhram\ (Kon\ Hongsakul).\ Source: NAT.$

Figure 4.91 Prince Chaloemlaksanawong. Source : NAT.

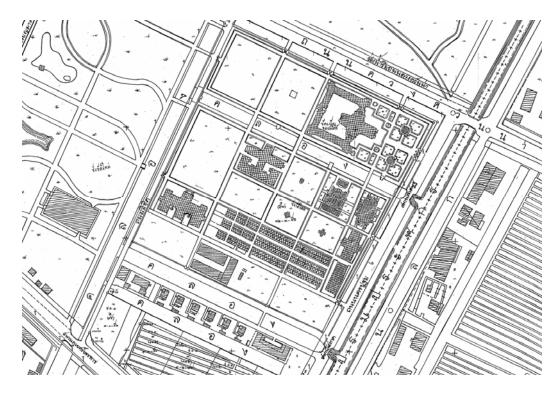


Figure 4.92 Plan of Wat Benchamabophit. Source: Land Department.

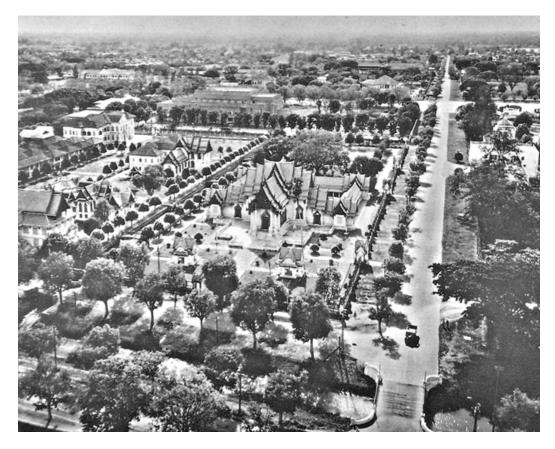


Figure 4.93 General view of Wat Benchamabophit, looking west. Source : NAT.

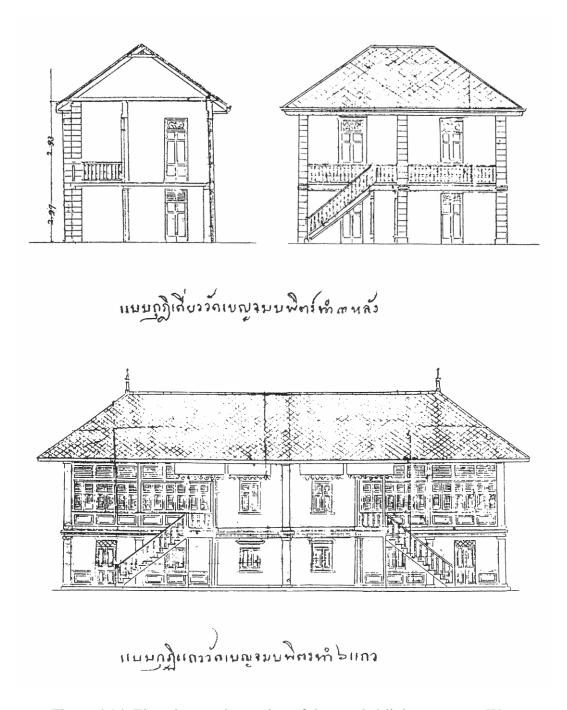


Figure 4.94 Elevations and a section of the monks' living quarters, Wat Benchamabophit. Source: NAT.

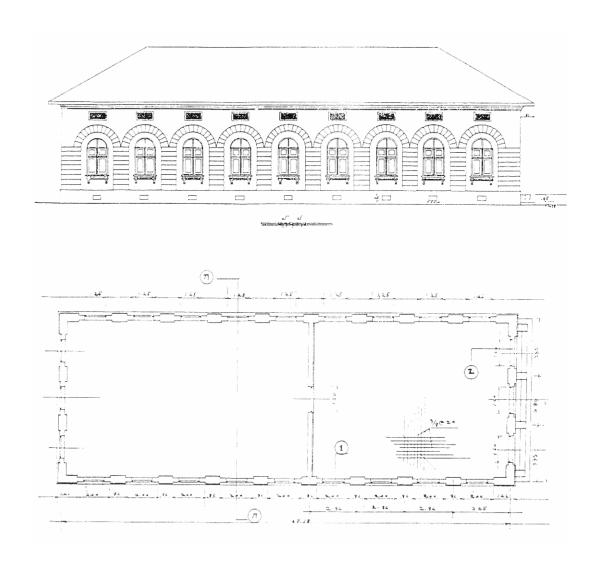


Figure 4.95 Plan and elevation of the monks' storage space, Wat Benchamabophit. Source : NAT.

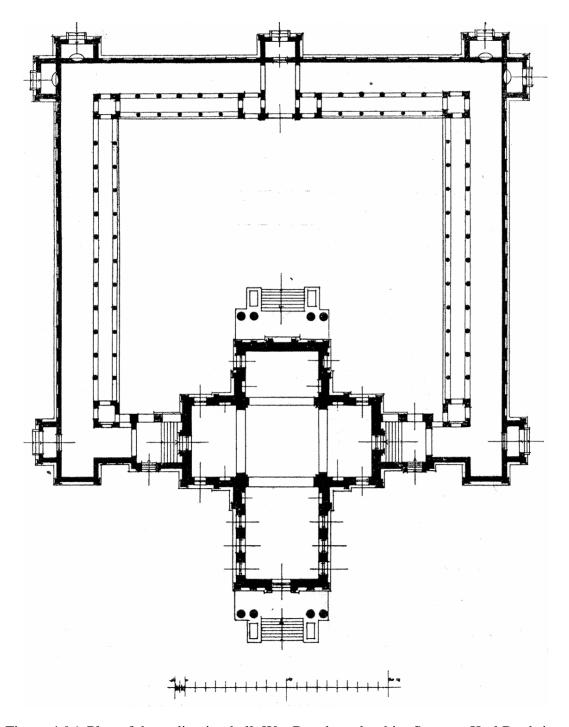


Figure 4.96 Plan of the ordination hall, Wat Benchamabophit. Source : Karl Doehring, *Buddhistische Tempelanlagen in Siam.*

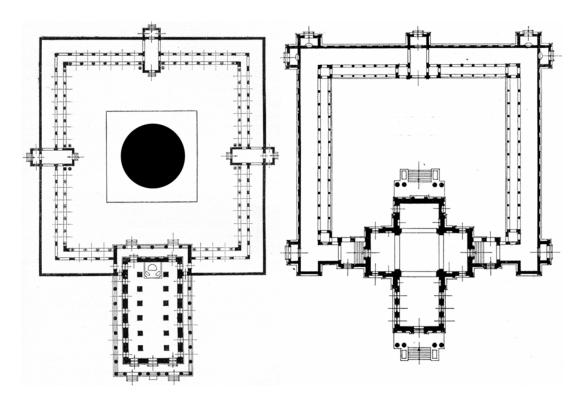


Figure 4.97 A comparison of the traditional-style ordination hall of Wat Makutkrasat (left), and the re-configuration of the traditional *parti* at Wat Benchamabophit (right). Note the transformation of the ordination hall, from oblong to cruciform, and the absence of the central pagoda.



Figure 4.98 The ordination hall, Wat Benchamabophit.

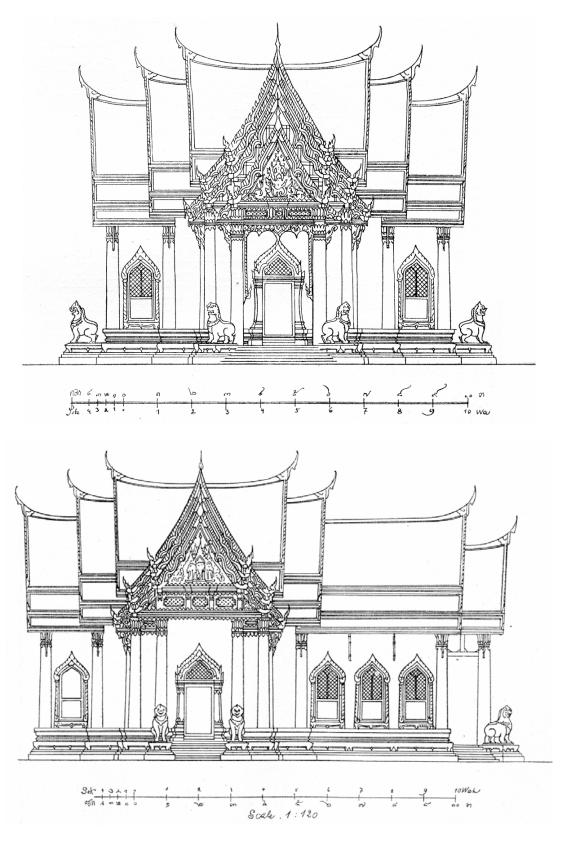


Figure 4.99 Front and side elevation, the ordination hall, Wat Benchamabophit. Source : Karl Doehring, *Buddhistische Tempelanlagen in Siam*.

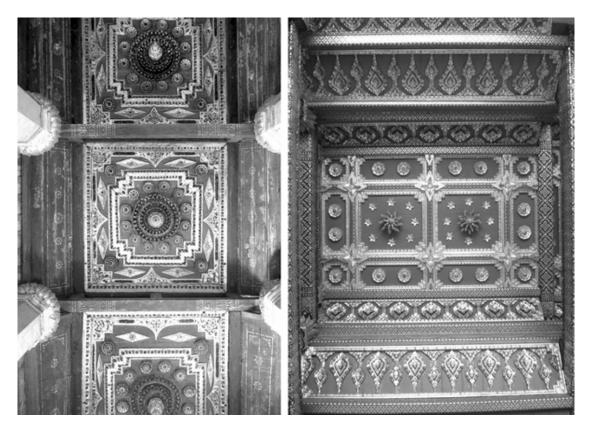


Figure 4.100 Revivalism in the carved and gilded wooden ceiling, Wat Kasattra, Ayutthaya (left), and Wat Benchamabophit (right).

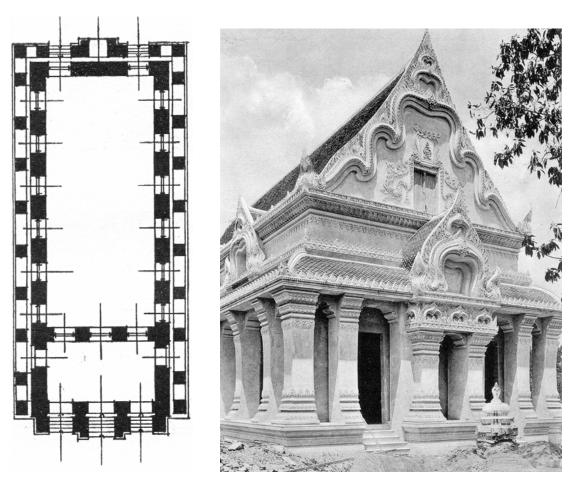


Figure 4.101 Plan of the ordination hall, Wat Rachathiwat. Note the two layers of walls, with the new concrete structure covering over the old load-bearing walls. Source: Karl Doehring, *Buddhistische Tempelanlagen in Siam*.

Figure 4.102 The ordination hall, Wat Rachathiwat. Source : Karl Doehring, Buddhistische Tempelanlagen in Siam.

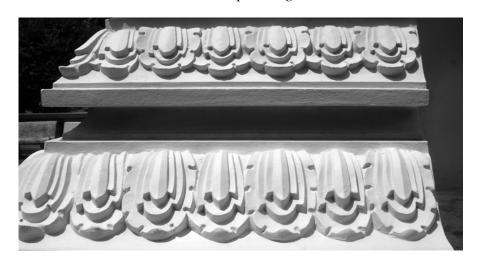


Figure 4.103 Precast-concrete detail, the ordination hall, Wat Rachathiwat.

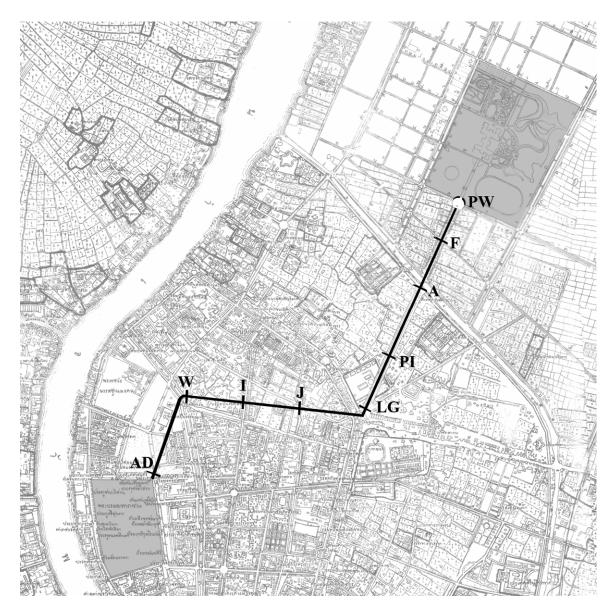


Figure 4.104 Route of King Rama V's progress on November 17, 1907, with the location of the arches along Ratchadamnoen Avenue: Army Department (AD), Ministry of War (W), Ministry of the Interior (I), Ministry of Justice (J), Ministry of Local Government (LG), Ministry of Public Instruction (PI), Ministry of Agriculture (A), Ministry of Finance (F), and Ministry of Public Works (PW).



Figure 4.105 The arch erected for Rama V at the royal landing, Stockholm, on July 13, 1897. Source: NAT.

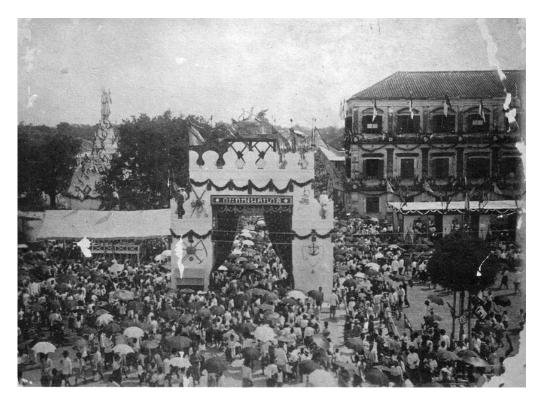


Figure 4.106 The arch erected by the Ministry of Local Government to welcome Rama V's return from the 1897 trip. Source : NAT.



Figure 4.107 Arch of the Army Department. Source : Malakul Family Album.



Figure 4.108 Arch of the Ministry of War. Source : Malakul Family Album.



Figure 4.109 Arch of the Ministry of the Interior. Source: Malakul Family Album.



Figure 4.110 Arch of the Ministry of Justice. Source : Malakul Family Album.



Figure 4.111 Arch of the Ministry of Local Government. Source : Malakul Family Album.



Figure 4.112 Arch of the Ministry of Public Instruction. Source : Malakul Family Album.



Figure 4.113 Arch of the Ministry of Agriculture. Source : Malakul Family Album.

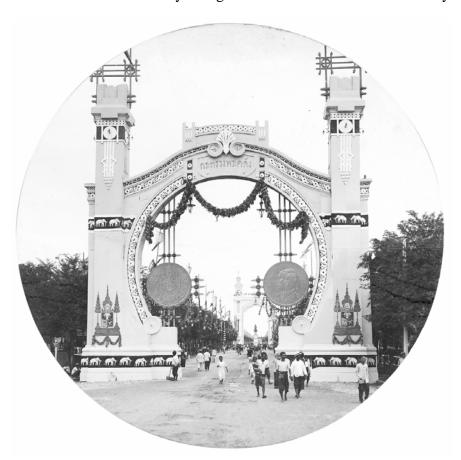


Figure 4.114 Arch of the Ministry of Finance. Source : Malakul Family Album.



Figure 4.115 Arch of the Ministry of Public Works. Source : Malakul Family Album.



Figure 4.116 The equestrian statue of Rama V. Source: NAT.

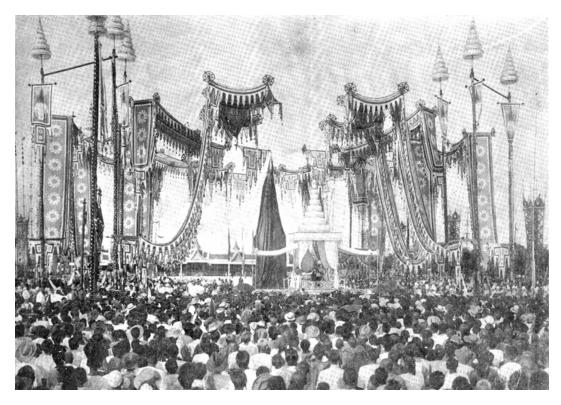


Figure 4.117 The unveiling ceremony of the equestrian statue, November 11, 1908. Source : NAT.



Figure 4.118 Float of the Department of Motorcar Registration, shaped as the miniaturized Makhawan Rangsan Bridge, the Record Reign procession, November 11, 1908. Source: NAT.

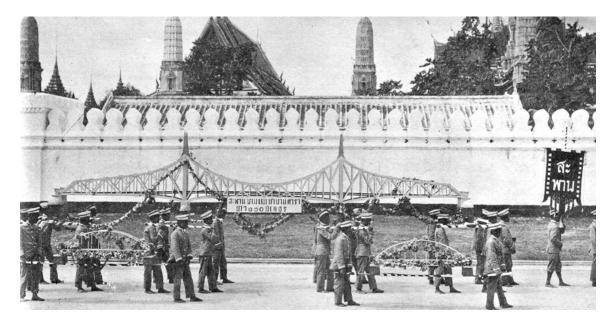


Figure 4.119 Float of the Railway Department, Ministry of Public Works, the Record Reign procession, November 11, 1908. Source: NAT.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

This dissertation has examined Siamese aristocrats' conception of civilization siwilai-in relation to parallel transformations in architecture and architectural practice in Siam, with the assumption that there was a major intellectual shift in the mid-nineteenth century. Prior to that, aristocratic status in the Siamese context was maintained in traditional symbolic, patronage, and economic systems that were open to cultural exchanges. Prior to the nineteenth century, this kind of openness was limited to the neighboring regions of South and East Asia. Siam's position between the two cultural and political spheres of India and China gave her aristocrats the ability to maintain political and social supremacy through control over the importation and localization of foreign forms of culture for local consumption. As discussed in Chapter 2, architecture and urban design was the key medium through which the Siamese aristocrats annotated their public image, sending out non-verbal messages about their relative superiority through both traditional and foreign architectural forms. The urban structure of the new capital at Bangkok, for example, was intentionally planned to resemble that of the former capital of Ayutthaya. Symbolically elaborate architectural language was revived in an attempt to proclaim the political stability of the newly-established House of Chakri.

Equally important during this period was the revived tradition of the royal master builders, whose service had been crucial to the fabrication of Siamese aristocratic architecture during the late-eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century. Through a traditional patronage system and strong familial networks, the royal master builders enjoyed a virtual monopoly over major building projects during the reigns of King Rama I through Rama IV. This virtual monopoly, however, did not mean that their work was

impervious to change. On the contrary, as their patrons expressed an openness to foreign forms of culture, royal master builders had to provide new designs to accommodate new tastes and styles. This led to the emergence of *chinoiserie* as an architectural preoccupation during the reign of Rama III (r. 1824 – 1851), and to an early phase of Europeanized architecture during the reign of Rama IV (r. 1851 – 1868).

By the mid-nineteenth century, all of this began to change after the growth of a globalized colonial network began to encircle Siam. As Siam's neighboring kingdoms successively succumbed to European imperial powers, Even though (or perhaps because) Siam was never formally colonized, Europe quickly replaced India and China as the new center of civilizational excellence, in the minds of Siamese elites. Unlike the glacial flow of cultural transfer during the pre-modern period, the pace of change under the period of high imperialism was comparatively rapid, its impact vast and forceful. As a transcultural project, Siamese aristocrats' construction of *siwilai* was unambiguously syncretic, an uneven adaptation of Western measures of civilization to existing Siamese norms.

As was examined in Chapter 3, this syncretism was particularly evident in the architecture and urban design of the early years of Rama V's reign, from 1868 to 1889. During this period, the young monarch had to prove his mettle to both local and global audiences, and architecture became a key media through which Young Siam claimed their legitimacy. The Victorian/colonial ecumene brought the king and civilizing aristocrats on journeys to see with their own eyes modernization efforts in European colonies in South and Southeast Asia; in return, it brought European builder-contractors to work for the progressive Siamese aristocrats, creating siwilai façades for the Chakri Reformation, the extensive modernization of the kingdom's bureaucracy. During this period, royal master builders initially collaborated with European builder-contractors on equal basis. However, as the progressive Siamese aristocrats' tastes became increasingly Europeanized, royal master builders began to lose control over the architectural scene. Finally, their centuries-old, prolific career was brought to its end when the Chakri Reformation took off during the late 1870s. Without the privileges that came with traditional patronage systems and close-knit familial networks, the royal master builders gradually lost their livelihood, left with only monastery renovation projects and some

quaint garden pavilions on which to practice their craft. For their part, the European builder-contractors also lost business to the Public Works Department (PWD), which since 1889 had monopolized all governmental projects in the centralized Chakri Reformation system.

Another significant development can be traced to 1897, when Rama V returned from his first journey to Europe. After his early reforms took effect, the king enjoyed unprecedented political stability. With his administrative machinations ready, the king and aristocrats intensified their efforts to fashion their vision of Siamese siwilai. As discussed in Chapter 4, this was most evident in the Dusit Park project, a major urban extension that was characterized by sweeping urban vistas, eclectic historicism in architecture, and civic pageantry of unprecedented scale. Its direction and rationale unchanged from those of the early years of Rama V's reign, the Siamese elite's quest for siwilai only intensified toward the latter part of his rule, especially after the turn of the twentieth century. Meanwhile, the syncretic character of siwilai was maintained, even magnified by the increasing disparity between European architectural forms and indigenous spatial practice, between traditional and modern institutions. As a result, there were sites of contention, of zones that were seemingly civilized but not quite, of an ambiguous syncretism that we have examined above in case studies of the princely residences, newer monastic architecture, and Rama V's spectacular civic pageantry. Indigenous and foreign architectural forms and spatial practices were juxtaposed, pastiched, and fused into new cultural forms that defied easy binaries like traditional/modern, Siamese/European, civilized/uncivilized.

In highlighting this ambiguous boundary, the mutual role that the West and the non-West played in global cultural change during the late-nineteenth century, this dissertation has sought to go beyond the usual "Westernization" hypotheses that many scholars of Thai architectural history use to explain architecture of Rama V's reign. Too often the wonderfully varied architecture of this period has been described simply as a variation of the European/Western prototype. Often, this conclusion was arrived at largely on an analysis of building façades or the external appearance of buildings. As an alternative, this dissertation inquires deeper into architectural form and spatial practice,

going beyond *siwilai* façades to elucidate the very nature of syncretism in Siamese architecture during this exciting period.

In tracing the establishment of the PWD, for example, I argue against a simple "Westernization" hypothesis to show that the very production of architecture was collaborative in nature, with Siamese project owners, administrators, and Italian architects and engineers, not unlike the collaboration between Siamese royal master builders and the European builder-contractors a generation earlier. To complicate the matter further, it is clear that European architect/builders working in Siam can be divided into three non-identical groups: the builder-contractors (Joachim Grassi, Stefano Cardu, John Clunis); the transitional figures (Carlo Allegri, Carl Sandreckzki); and the PWD Italians (Mario Tamagno, Emilio Giovanni Gollo, and Annibale Rigotti). The differences in their social backgrounds, academic training, and professional outlooks certainly contributed to the nuanced transformation in Siamese architecture they helped bring about.

For the Siamese counterparts to these Europeans, this dissertation attempts to differentiate the Hongsakul school of master builders from those of Prince Naris. By looking at the Chakri Reformation and its bureaucratic impacts on the royal master builder system, I argue that there was a break, a complete disruption even, between traditional Siamese architecture of the Hongsakuls, and the "modern" Siamese architecture of Prince Naris and his disciples. Given his early training and career at the PWD, Prince Naris was perhaps more familiar with the PWD Italians' design methodology and architectural visualization than the Hongsakuls were. To put it differently, in Prince Naris' "modern" Siamese architecture—since then highly acclaimed as the masterpieces of modern Thai architecture—we can see more vividly the imprint of the Italians than that of the Hongsakuls.

5.1 Syncretic Siwilai

In examining in particular the ambiguous, hybridized nature of *siwilai* architecture and architectural practice, this dissertation uses architecture as a platform to address the syncretic nature of modern Siam's culture and identity. The notion of hybridity has been used in explaining Siamese cultural formation since the early

Damrongrachanuphap, Rama V's younger brother. In the lecture given to the Society of Lecturers (*Samakkhayachan samakhom*), the prince identified the major characteristics of the Thai nation as the love of independence, toleration, and the power of assimilation. Indeed, the prince's acknowledgment of the extensive cultural borrowing, the adoption and adaptation of foreign cultural forms shows how syncretism had always been central to the Siamese elite's intertwined projects of national formation and the creation of aristocratic self-identity. Interestingly, the prince was vague in terms of agency: it was unclear who was responsible for "selective adaptation," for instance, and then again towards what end? Although Prince Damrong made his statement from a Siamese aristocrat's position, it was quite clear that the prince was portraying the entire Siamese populace as a single social body, cohesively moving together towards the path of *siwilai*, though perhaps with the elite at the forefront.

As has been argued in recent research by the scholars Thongchai Winichakul, Maurizio Peleggi, Tamara Loos, and Peter A. Jackson, and Penny van Esterik, among others, there was no such thing as a socially cohesive vision of *siwilai*. Thongchai is quick to point out that *siwilai* as an elite project was aimed at both local and global consumption, which necessarily led to the syncretic, imprecise nature of the whole undertaking. It was the elite who put together indigenous and foreign elements to create cultural artifacts that could be rendered as "civilized" by both European and Siamese audiences.² In his study of the Siamese rulers' manipulation of material culture to fashion a modern public image, Peleggi begins to question the success of the whole attempt. By highlighting the negative accounts of unsympathetic European visitors to the court of Bangkok, Peleggi goes beyond the "success story" of selective adaptation often found in standard, state-endorsed historical narratives.³ This dissertation seeks to follow the same line of inquiry by trying to listen as much as possible to contemporary feedback—including travelers' accounts and newspaper editorials—on the Siamese elite's

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¹ Prince Damrongrachanuphap, *Laksana kanpokkhrong Prathet Sayam tae boran [The Ancient Administration of Siam]* (Bangkok: Rongphim sophonphiphatthanakon, 1930), 4.

² Thongchai Winichakul, "The Quest for '*Siwilai'*: A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late 19th and Early 20th Century Siam," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 59, no. 3 (2000): 528-49.

³ Maurizio Peleggi, *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002).

building projects, positive and negative alike. Admittedly, in this dissertation one still does not hear much of the voice of the local populace, perhaps largely due to the elitecentered nature of the archival materials. The space of local agency is a particularly rich site for future research. In her study of the Siamese Government's legal organization of the Malay Muslim states in the South, Tamara Loos correctly points out the Siamese elite's role as colonizers, as Siam at that time sat at the nexus of colonialism and imperialism. Internal colonization, Loos argues, was one of the major causes of the restive, politically volatile nature of present-day South, and her role as a historian has been to uncover the genealogy and evolution of internal colonization by interviewing locals, since archival materials are still inaccessible to researchers due to the longstanding sensitivity regarding Bangkok's role in the area. In his study of the rise of popular culture in early-twentieth century Bangkok, Scot Barmé interestingly focuses on the role of commoners as the harbingers of political and social change, initiating and implementing their own ideas about siwilai. According to Barmé, the overthrow of the absolutist monarchy in 1932 was predicated on the growing urban middle class' increasing political discontent with the ruling aristocrats, since by then both social groups had equal access to Western forms of culture to fuel their syncretized modernity.

Although this dissertation primarily examines the Siamese elite's representative architecture of palaces and temples, their self-civilizing mission went well beyond the palace walls and touched upon the domains of the local populace. The dissertation begins to address the possible dialogue between the rulers and the ruled in urban spaces like Saranrom Gardens, Ratchadamnoen Avenue, or the civic pageants towards the end of Rama V's reign; but of course the Siamese aristocrats' attempts to "civilize" their own people went far and wide, in the establishment of sanitary systems and regulations, the construction of new streets lined with two-storey shophouses, the establishment of new hospitals, department stores, crematoria, housing, and other building types. How did the local populace respond to the Siamese elite's *siwilai* projects as they transformed their

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⁴ Tamara Loos, *Subject Siam : Family, Law, and Colonial Modernity in Thailand* (Ithaca : Cornell University Press, 2006), 4.

⁵ Scot Barmé, *Woman, Man, Bangkok: Love, Sex, and Popular Culture in Thailand* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 3.

daily lives? This is one of the least explored topics in Thai historiography, and is unfortunately beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Apart from the question of agency, another problematic notion in Prince Damrong's idea of selective adaptation is the degree to which the siwilai projects rendered lasting effects. By some accounts, the Siamese elite's self-civilizing mission was designed merely create a performative effect, a façade of modern "civilization." For others, the Chakri Reformation left a significant impact, the repercussions of which still resonate today. In the case of Siamese architecture, this dissertation suggests that changes occurred simultaneously on two levels. On one hand, transformation occurred at the relatively superficial level of architectural style and fashion; on the other hand, there were also major changes in Siamese architecture during the nineteenth century, such as the decline of traditional building crafts, the introduction and use of European-style furniture, and the weakening of traditional belief in vertical hierarchical order of space, among other things. This dissertation does not seek to measure Siamese architectural modernity against any Eurocentric model in terms of degrees of resemblance; instead, it has explored the complex and multifaceted syncretism that was the key feature in its architecture. By looking at the ambiguous, syncretic nature of the sites and scenes of siwilai, I support a model of unstable and fluid transfer underlaying cultural identities.

5.2 Semicolonial Hybridity

By looking at the historical contexts that gave shape to Siamese aristocrats' hybrid *siwilai* building projects, this dissertation is a part of a growing body of literature that questions Siam's "unique" ability–among non-Western nations–to maintain independence during the nineteenth century. Since the 1950s, Thai Marxist historians have argued that Siam was actually a semicolony, its ruling class merely agents of the European imperialists who thrived on the surplus of import and export trade dominated by colonial economic network. In 1978 Benedict Anderson put the issue into focus in a

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⁶ Maurizio Peleggi, *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image*, 3. See also Peter A. Jackson, "The Performative State: Semi-Coloniality and the Tyranny of Images in Modern Thailand," *SOJOURN: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia*, 19:2 (October 2004): 219-235.

⁷ Tamara Loos, Subject Siam: Family, Law, and Colonial Modernity in Thailand, 13.

⁸ Ibid., 14.

seminal article, where he asked whether the "fact" that Siam was not colonized was, in fact, an unqualified blessing. In other words, perhaps it was unfortunate that Siam was not colonized, as its alleged uniqueness left its history uncritically written.⁹ In Thai historiography this revisionist perspective was diametrically opposed to a statesponsored, national historical narrative that glorifies the monarchy as the central force that maintained the kingdom's sovereignty through the centuries. After Anderson, scholars have productively inquire into the Siam's status as a semicolony. During the 1980s, economic historians pointed out that Siam's economy had always been dependent on foreign powers, and especially so during the colonial period in Southeast Asian history. 10 More recently, Thongchai Winichakul's work reveals how Siam's ruling class had always used the threat of foreign invaders to justify their local consolidation of power. Through his study of Siamese elite's geographical consciousness, Thongchai argues that colonialism engendered, rather than endangered, modern Siam as a "geobody," thereby destabilizing the core rationale of the state-sponsored, national historical narrative. 11 In a subsequent study, Thongchai has examined the ways that Bangkok elites organized their subjects along a scale of "civilization" through the borrowed colonial techniques of ethnography. 12

Other scholars have questioned the term *semi* in "semicolonial," moreover, as the term continues to foreground a eurocentric notion of modernity, one that places Siam at the half-way point between the colony and the metropole. Michael Herzfeld, for example, argues for the use of the term "crypto-colonialism," to attend to the complex and multiple power hierarchies at play in his comparative study of Greece and Thailand.¹³ According to Herzfeld, crypto-colonialism defines "the curious alchemy whereby certain

⁹ Benedict Anderson, "Studies of the Thai State: the State of Thai Studies," in Eliezar B. Ayal, ed., *The Study of Thailand: Analyses of Knowledge, Approaches and Prospects in Anthropology, Art History, Economics, History, and Political Science* (Athens: Ohio University, Center for International Studies, 1979), 193-247.

 $^{^{10}}$ Ian Brown, *The Elite and the Economy in Siam, 1890 – 1920* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1988).

¹¹ Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994).

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

¹³ Michael Herzfeld, "The Absence Presence: Discourses of Crypto-Colonialism," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101:4 (Fall 2002), 899-926.

countries, buffer zones between the colonized lands and those yet untamed, were compelled to acquire their political independence at the cost of massive economic dependence."¹⁴

Herzfeld's model resonates with my own findings, especially in relation to the fabrication of "civilized" Siamese architecture, a construction that catered to both global and local consumption. It was exactly the paradoxical syncretism, the mixed messages sent through either a single building or the entire building program, that invoked both traditional Siamese and "European" architectural elements. In this respect, this dissertation is also indebted to postcolonial theoretical perspectives on colonial hybridity, especially the work of Homi Bhabha and Néstor García Canclini. For Bhabha, hybridity was a form of subaltern resistance, a creative interaction between the colonies and the imperial powers. For García Canclini, it was the means by which the non-Western elites inpostcolonial historical contexts define their contemporary position through selective appropriations of indigenous and Spanish cultural forms. ¹⁵ Both theoretical perspectives contribute to the construction of Siam's revisionist history: Bhabha's notion of hybridity provides a way to evade Eurocentric intellectual traps, while García Canclini's mestizaje, with its contemporary, postcolonial theoretical context, provides a framework through which one can re-examine Siam's royal-centric forms of hegemony and internal colonization. In the end, the assumption that "selective appropriation" or cultural syncretism is exclusively unique to the case of Thai history is proven false, as Benedict Anderson had predicted. The ideological technique of legitimization through symbolic appropriation was common across Southeast Asia, from premodern times to the present.¹⁶

The dynamics of cultural syncretism and semicolonialism outlined in this dissertation reveal a richly textured experience of "modernity" and "civilization" in Siam during the reign of Rama V, with significant repercussions for the present situation. The dissertation is but an initial inquiry, one that begins to interrogate the state-sponsored, national historical narrative, and especially its assumptions about Siamese essentialism

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¹⁴ Michael Herzfeld, "The Absence Presence: Discourses of Crypto-Colonialism," 900.

¹⁵ Néstor García Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures : Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity* (Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press, 1995).

¹⁶ Peter A. Jackson, "The Performative State: Semi-Coloniality and the Tyranny of Images in Modern Thailand," *SOJOURN: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia*, 19:2 (October 2004): 219-235.

and royal-centrism. By demonstrating that Siamese architecture during the reign of Rama V was not merely a hybrid, but a hybrid cultural product with specific historical and hegemonic contexts that were at the nexus of colonialism and imperialism, this dissertation provides an alternative narrative of modernity that is attentive to both the global phenomenon and local specificity.

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