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FACULTAS HISTORIAE ECCLESIASTICAE

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**THE GREAT ROLE OF JEAN-LOUIS VEY, APOSTOLIC  
VICAR OF SIAM (1875-1909), IN THE CHURCH HISTORY  
OF THAILAND DURING THE REFORMATION PERIOD  
OF KING RAMA V, THE GREAT (1868-1910)**

Auctore  
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## PREFACE

This study is an expression of my attempt to write one of the most important parts of the Church history of Thailand, the part which nobody has touched before. I have chosen to concentrate on the role of an Apostolic Vicar who directed the Catholic Mission of Siam one hundred years ago. I have realized that without knowing something of the history of the country and of the Catholic Church, it would be difficult to measure the missionary role and works of this important Apostolic Vicar, Mgr. Jean-Louis Vey.

I would like to dedicate this study to all the missionaries who have worked in Siam in the past and who are working in Thailand today. I also dedicate this study to the Arch-Diocese of Bangkok.

The study is not easy. It took me one whole year to consult the different archives which preserve the necessary information, important documents of which were written mostly in French. Without the valuable help of so many kind persons, too many to be mentioned here by name, this study could have not been accomplished. I have acknowledged this precious help and support at appropriate places. I would like to pay tribute of gratitude firstly and especially to **Professor Lopez-Gay Jesus, S.J.**, who kindly accepted my request to guide me in this study and who steadily encouraged me to complete it. This work would not have been possible without his good suggestions; to him, my profound gratitude. Also, my thanks go to all the professors of the faculty of Ecclesiastical History in the Gregorian University who in these past 5 years have inspired me by their dedication and example.

A special word of thanks to all the archivists who helped me in consulting the documents. I gratefully acknowledge the precious help of **Father Vorayuth Kitbamrung, Miss Orasa Chaowchin and Miss Kingdao Chaowphraeknoi**, who searched for, and sent me various documents and books which I needed, from the archives of the Arch-Diocese of Bangkok.

Also, I would like to express particular thanks to **Mre Miriam Kitcharoen**, Mother Provincial of Soeurs de St. Paul de Chartres in Thailand, who went to Chartres and sent me photocopies of the documents I needed; to my confreres who helped me in translating the French documents; to **Father Trevor Murray and Father Ambrose Vaz** who dedicated their precious time to correct my English.

I realize how incomplete this study is, and therefore, I take upon myself all responsibility for its shortcomings and errors. Suggestions to better and deepen my knowledge in the field of this study would be gratefully appreciated, and I will make use of them in my study in the future.

Rome, February 13, 1990.

**(Surachai Chumsriphan)**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

**The Motivation and Purpose.** The motivation which stimulated me to study the great role of Mgr. Jean-Louis Vey, Apostolic Vicar of Siam, in the Church history of Thailand during the reformation-period of King Rama V, the Great, comes from the fact that more than 400 years of evangelization in Siam since the first missionaries arrived there in 1567, Siam has produced nothing spectacular in the sense of the conversion of the Siamese, compared to its population; there have been no large numbers of baptisms. The seed was planted in faith, in prayer, with yearning love and oft with tears. Sometimes the seed-time and the harvest-time seemed unduly separated. If this was the only criteria of success, the verdict must be "*failure*". Sometimes, "*having eyes we see not*", because we look for only one manner of fruitage, and fail to recognize the harvest spread before our very eyes. But as one traces the history down through the years, the impression deepens that God has been working His purposes out and that the seed sowed in faith and prayer and with repeated call for the prayer of the local churches did bear fruit, a hundred folds. An interesting history it is.

The missionaries were men of strong convictions. They came to a land of a different race, a different tongue, different customs and a different religion. By the depth of their sympathy and by the genuineness and sincerity of their affection for the people of the land of their adoption, they were able to establish contact with the needy and also with those in highest places of power. Siam, proud in its independence, strong in its position as Defender of Buddhism, reached out and welcomed into its very heart the earnest disciples of another faith.

Siam has changed greatly in the hundred years just past. From an almost hermit nation without modern civilization it has developed into a land definitely trying to work out its own course of development from the time of king Rama IV and king Rama V. Siam has developed into a unique unit in the family of nations. Many asides from the missionary have shared in the development of Siam, particular mention must be made of the important role of Mgr. Vey, who was directing the Catholic Mission of Siam during this remarkable period.

From these points of view, I hope that this study would be a study of faith, a study of courage and determination of the rarest type; it is the story of great triumph over discouragements of, at times, an almost overwhelming nature. It is the story of prayer, the sort that "*removes mountains*"; it is the story of the sower who went forth to sow.

**The Limitation of The Study.** The limits of this study will arrive unto the period of King Rama V's reign or in other words the period of Mgr. Vey's episcopate since they were living in the same period. This means that the heart of this study will begin from the year of the arrival in Siam of Mgr. Vey in 1865 and end in the year 1909, the year of his death. However the scope of the study will not be the biographical of Mgr. Vey, but his role in the Church history of Thailand; so his missionary projects, his directions, his methodology and his personal virtues will be presented and reflected.

For the historical study, it is also necessary to understand some important facts of Siam or Thailand and its history. The situation and relations with the foreign countries in its history are also indispensable. And in order to understand better the role of Mgr. Vey, a short summarized history of the Catholic church in Thailand has to be presented, particularly for the sake of foreigner readers. So I divide this study into 4 chapters.

In the first chapter, an overall picture of the kingdom of Siam and its people from the beginning up to the end of Thonburi period will be given. The second chapter will describe the history and situation of Christianity in Siam from the beginning up to the same period mentioned above. The situation of Siam will be divided into 2 parts in the third chapter. The first part will describe the general and situation of the country from the beginning of Bangkok period to the end of king Rama IV's reign, during which the modernization of the country had begun.

The second part will focus on the specific situation and development of the country during the reign of King Rama V. In the fourth chapter, the Church history of Siam will be continued until the arrival of Mgr. Vey and then his role, his missionary methods, the obstacles, the reflexion of his missionary life will be looked at. It is useful to notice that I try to avoid the repetition of the contents as much as possible, laying out the situation and circumstances of the country before going on to the real topic.

**The Methodology.** Regards to my methodology, I try to follow the historical methodology as much as I can. The manuscript letter-correspondence between Siam and France, which are conserved in the archives of the Archdiocese of Bangkok and of Missions Etrangères de Paris where I myself went to consult them, will be my principal sources of this study. It's all the same for the archives of Propaganda Fide. For the concerned topics in this study, the unpublished sources from the other archives will be utilized. The study is also based on published as well as contemporary sources in English and French as far as they are available to me.

The quotation of the sources will be done in original languages as far as possible, since it is better and useful for interested readers to arrive at the real sources. As far as the Siamese or the Thai language will be concerned, the citation will be made by (in Thai). Since some Thai authors have their own rank and titles which they always use in their works, I have to explain also the system of the classification.

Modern Thai royalty is governed by a rule of declining descent, by the terms of which each successive generation diminishes one degree in status, until members of the sixth generation are commoners. The children and grandchildren of kings, termed *Chao Fa* or *Phra Ong Chao*, and *Mom Chao*, are usually referred to as Princes and Princesses. The next two generations are not. They are *Mom Ratchawong* (*M.R.W.* or *M.R.*) and *Mom Luang* (*M.L.*).

Rank and titles were conferred on the bureaucratic and military nobility until the end of the absolute monarchy in 1932, a rank and title usually being associated with an office. The *Chaophraya* were highest on the list, the equivalents of cabinet ministers, generals, and the governors of the most important provincial cities. On a descending scale came *Phraya, Phra, Luang, and Khun*. So the given name was written after the title to distinguish him from others. In this study, these titles will be cited where they are of concern, for example, V. MATRA, Khun; C. CHAKRABONGSE, H.R.H. Prince.

I will use the name Siam for the country as it was so universally accepted, until I come to the time when it was officially changed to Thailand, as accepted by the United Nations and all the countries with which Thailand has diplomatic relations.

The past is past, but in a wonderful measure the past reveals the future. So we who have shared in this effort of bringing together the story of the past century, hope that the reading of this study may bring to the hearts of the readers as it has to me, new courage to carry on the work left us by the missionaries, a new appreciation of the worth of the missionary enterprise and a new joy at the realization that we are entered into labors of those who have gone on before. *"One sows and another reaps, but God alone gives the increase"* ( Cf. 1 Co. 3, 6-7 ).

## ABBREVIATIONS

AAB	Archives of the Archdiocese of Bangkok
Acta CP	Acta Sacred Congregationis Congregationi Particolari
AME	Archives of Missions Etrangères de Paris
A.P.F.	Annales de L'Association de la Propagation de la Foi
ARSI	Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu
ASCPF	Archives of Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide
Atti CP	Atti Congregationi Particolari
B.A.C.	Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos
B.O.P.	Bulletin de L'Oeuvre des Partants
Bull. Pat. Portug.	Bullarium Patronatus Portugalliae
Bull. Rom.	Bullarium Romanum
C.O.	Colonial Office
F.O.	Foreign Office
H.R.H., Prince	His Royal Highness, Prince
JSS	The Journal of The Siam Society
M.C.	Missions Catholiques. Bulletin hebdomadaire illustré de L'Oeuvre de la Propagation de la Foi.
M.E.P.	Missions Etrangères de Paris
Mgr.	Monseigneur



MHSI	Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu
M.R.	Mom Ratchawong ( see Explanation in Introduction )
NCE	New Catholic Encyclopedia
SCPF	Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide
SOCP	Scritture Originali della Congregazioni Particolari
SRCP	Scritture Referite Congregazioni Particolari
SRCP Ind. Or.	Scritture Referite Congregazioni Particolari Indiarum Orientalium

## CHAPTER I

### Siam and Her History up to The Beginning of The Bangkok Period

#### 1. From The Beginning to The Ayutthaya Period

##### 1.1 The Name of the Country, Siam: Thailand

Simon de La Loubère, in his *"A New Historical Relation of the Kingdom of Siam"*, points out that

The name of Siam is unknown to the Siamese. It is one of those words which the Portuguese of the Indies do use, and of which it is very difficult to discover the original... The Siamese give to themselves the name of Thai or Free, as the word now signifies in their language: and thus flatter themselves with bearing the name of Franks, which our ancestors assumed when they resolved to deliver the Gauls from the Roman Power.<sup>1</sup>

According to H. E. Smith, in his *"Historical and Cultural Dictionary of Thailand"*,

The name Siam was first used by Sir James Lancaster in 1592. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Siam was generally used as the country's name among Europeans.<sup>2</sup>

Rong Syamananda confirms the fact when he says:

The word Siam was used by Sir James Lancaster in his first voyage to the Far East in 1592 and by the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Siam became the generally accepted name of the country among the Europeans, as witnessed by De La Loubère's book on Siam (French version) which was printed at Paris in 1691 and its English version which was issued at London in 1693.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>S. DE LA LOUBERE, *A New Historical Relation of the Kingdom of Siam*, Vol. I, done out of French by A.P. Gen. R. SS., London: Printed by F.L. for Tho. Horne at the Royal Exchange, Francis Saunders at the New Exchange, and Tho. Bennet at the Half-Moon in St. Pauls Church-Yard, 1693, pp. 6-7; Monsieur De La Loubère was the Extraordinary Envoy from the French king to the king of Siam in the years 1687 and 1688.

<sup>2</sup>H.E. SMITH, *Historical and Cultural Dictionary of Thailand*, New Jersey: the Scare Crow Press Inc., 1976, p. 164.

<sup>3</sup>R. SYAMANANDA, *A History of Thailand*, Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich 1981<sup>4</sup>, p. 4.

However, as will be mentioned again in chapter 2, St. Francis Xavier mentioned the name "*Siam*" in his correspondence of October 1552 from Sancian to his friends in Malacca. That means the name Siam has been used before the year 1592. Historically, the Thai people did not call their country Siam, but referred to themselves as "*Muang Thai*". The word "*Muang*" corresponds to "*Land*" or "*City*" and "*Thai*" signifies "*Free*". The name Siam in the Thai language did not appeal to the Thais who preferred to call their country by the official name of the current capital, for example: the country was known as the kingdom of Sukhothai from 1238-1378, the kingdom of Ayutthaya from 1350-1767. At the beginning of the Bangkok period, it was known as "*Muang Thai*" or "*Krung Thai*" (Thai State), as witnessed in the Burney Treaty of 1826. Siam became the official name of the country only in the reign of the fourth monarch of the Chakri Dynasty, King Mongkut or Rama IV (1851-1868). Anyway, when he signed the treaty with Great Britain on April 18, 1855, Muang Thai was still used, but in the ratification of the said "*Bowring Treaty*" on April 5, 1856, Siam was substituted for Muang Thai for the first time and continued to be used till June 24, 1939.<sup>4</sup>

After the revolution of 1932, the new government became increasingly nationalistic-minded. When Prime Minister Phibun Songkram took office at the end of 1938, he began on a programme of national reconstruction. With regard to the name, Prades Thai was adopted in place of Siam and its equivalent in English was the name Thailand.

This change was clearly stated in the State Convention Number One, which was issued by the Thai government on June 24, 1939.<sup>5</sup> The reason given was that the new name conformed to the racial origins and the popular practice of the Thai people.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, the British and the French continued to cling to the name of Siam. After the Pearl Harbor attack on December 8, 1941, the Japanese troops passed through the country, and as a result of the alliance made with Japan, Thailand declared war on the U.S.A. and Great Britain on January 25, 1942. Luckily for the Thai people, Mr. James Byrnes (who was the American State Secretary) in August 1945, announced the Thai declaration of war null and void, since it was against their will. The Allied troops, then moved into Bangkok in order to disarm and repatriate the Japanese soldiers. The Thai government deemed it a necessity to please the Allies, and therefore reverted to the old name of Siam towards the end of 1945.

After the Coup d'état of November 8, 1947, Field Marshal Phibun Songkram became Prime Minister again and on May 11, 1949, he announced that the official name of the country would be Thailand. It is right and proper that this should be so, since it is the correct translation of "*Muang Thai*", and the Thai people are generally pleased with this and still use this name up to the present day. We will use either Siam or Thailand as the case may be throughout this text.

## 1.2 The Beginnings of The Thai History

Firstly, in attempting to trace the beginnings of the Thai history, we have primarily to be concerned with the question: where did the Thais actually originate?, and secondly with the fact that the course of Thai history is complex because the historical experience of the Thais has taken place over and through a series of changing environments.

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<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*; see also SMITH, *op. cit.*, pp. 164-165.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. *Siam*, in *Dictionary Catalog of the Missionary Research Library*, Vol. 14, New York: G.K. Hall and Com., 1968, p. 312. The word Siam, as a matter of fact, means firstly swarthy and secondly it means gold. If the word is applied to people, the meaning will be swarthy people, if applied to the country, it will be a gold bearing one. There are some different opinions about the meaning of the word, still in discussion. Some hold that "*Siam*" is a Cambodian word meaning "*brown*". Others claim that it comes from a Pali word meaning "*black*". Some propose that the word is a Burmese word meaning "*free*".

Syamananda, a Thai historian, mentions many theories and opinions concerning the origin of the Thais. In view of these theories and opinions, which are based on Chinese records, it may be summarized with a degree of certainty that the Thais originated in western or north-western Szechuan 4,500 or 5,000 years ago. A history of Thailand, approved by the Thai Ministry of Education for use as a school text-book, says that originally the Thais were the great race which also had its own language and separated themselves from the Mongols in the same way as the Chinese had. Their original home was in what is now the northwestern part of Szechuan, more than 4,000 years ago.<sup>6</sup>

The Thais then spread out, according to their inclination, in a fan-like manner along the Yangtze-Kiang valley in order to seek a better livelihood. When they came into contact with the Chinese, they were already a great old race, but they did not unite themselves into a nation. They were divided into tribes or groups, each tribe or group having its own prince or chieftain.

W.A.R. Wood says that the Chinese claimed to possess the provinces of the so-called barbarians lying south of the great river Yangtze-Kiang. Doubtless many and various tribes were included among them, but most of them were Thai people, the ancestors of the Siamese, Laos and Shans of today.<sup>7</sup> The constant pressure which the Chinese exercised on the Thais caused them to emigrate towards the South for their safety. Some Thais had to submit to the Chinese rule and were eventually absorbed by them, while others made attempts to preserve their independence. In order to obtain their objective, they started their southward migrations gradually and intermittently, as they could collect their people who were prepared to face hardships and danger. They came to call themselves Thai during their migrations which occurred at the beginning of the Christian era.

Thus, many groups of the Thais migrated towards the Indo-Chinese peninsula. In the words of Louis Finot, who was at one time the director of the "*L'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient*", mentioned by Syamananda as follows:

The march of this strange race, being supple and fluid like water, insinuating itself with the same force, taking the colour of all the skies and the form of all the river banks, but keeping the essential identity of its character and language under different aspects, has spread out like an immense sheet from south China, Tonkin, Laos, Siam to Burma and Assam.<sup>8</sup>

Then, the Thais separated and located themselves in different parts of the peninsula. We can summarize their locations in this way:

1. The western group of the Thais descended along the Salween river where they became Shans or Great Thais.
2. Some of these Shans had proceeded west and set up the Ahom kingdom in eastern Assam.
3. Choosing the Mekong valley as their home, the eastern group of the Thais spread its ramifications or branches to Tonkin, the ancestors of the Black, White and Red Thais.
4. The middle group emigrated into the Menam or Chaophya valley.

These last two groups were at one time referred to as the Little Thais.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Cf. SYAMANANDA, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>7</sup>Cf. W.A.R. WOOD, *A History of Siam: From the Earliest Times to the Year A.D. 1781*, Bangkok: Chalermit Press, 1924, p. 31.

<sup>8</sup>SYAMANANDA, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

<sup>9</sup>Cf. *Ibid.*; see also D.K. WYATT, *Thailand: A Short History*, Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich, 1984, pp. 11-12.

As we have said above, not all the Thais moved to the Indo-Chinese peninsula, some Thais had to submit to Chinese rule and were absorbed by them. In A.D. 69, a Thai Prince, named Liu Mao, submitted to the Chinese Emperor Mingti of the Han Dynasty, but in A.D. 78, the Thais rebelled against China and their Prince Lei Lao was defeated in the great battle, as a result of which many of his people emigrated to the region now known as the northern Shan states. In A.D. 225 during the temporary division of China into three empires, the Thais were attacked by the Chinese General Kong Beng and forced to submit to the emperor of Szechuan. By A.D. 650 the Thais were again independent and had formed themselves into a powerful kingdom, known as Nanchao or Yunnan.

During the period of the kingdom of Nanchao (650-1253), the kings of Nanchao had made the peace-treaty between Nanchao and China, but wars also occurred between them during the course of history. Anyway the kingdom of Nanchao still remained independent until the year 1253, when Nanchao was conquered by Kublai Khan, the Great Emperor of the Mongols. This, finally, put an end to the Thai kingdom, and resulted in a wholesale emigration of the inhabitants southward, which had important effects for the history of Siam.

Wood describes how the Chinese annals from the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. onwards contain many references to the "*barbarians*" south of the Yangtze-Kiang, who were the Thais. These events in the annals, chronicled with some detail by Chinese historians, clearly show us that Nanchao was a powerful state, holding its own against the Chinese Emperors for many hundreds of years.<sup>10</sup>

Concerning the origin of the Thai people, I would like to take into consideration the other interesting opinion of a long held belief that the Thai people migrated from China. Recently a number of archaeologists have undertaken a new study of the origin of the Thai people. This position becomes doubtful, since the discovery of the civilization of "*Ban Chieng*", a community established around 4,000 B.C. As C.F. Keyes describes:

Southeast Asian prehistory has recently become an extremely exciting field. In the past few years, discoveries, primarily in northeastern Thailand, have led to radical reassessments about the beginnings of agriculture, especially rice cultivation, the dating of pottery traditions, the origin of bronze manufacture, and the development of town life in mainland Southeast Asia. Although these reassessments have not yet been fully completed, it has become clear that the long-standing view of Southeast Asian cultures as little more than receptacles for influences emanating from India and China can no longer be sustained.<sup>11</sup>

Moreover, in regard to Ban Chieng, the more recent comment by the archaeologists also confirms this trend of thinking,

The world's oldest civilization was flourishing in Thailand at least 5,600 years ago... From archaeological evidence, it has been surmised that Ban Chieng hosted an agrarian society whose knowledge of metallurgy was so advanced it produced bronze artifacts six centuries before anyone else... and married bronze and iron to fashion bimetallic tools and utensils hundred of years before the Chinese.<sup>12</sup>

The discovery of Ban Chieng ware should be very useful in determining the origin of the Thai people. However the opinions these days concerning the Thai origin become divided into two major groups. The first group still hold that the Thais originated in China and migrated southward.

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<sup>10</sup>Cf. WOOD, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-35.

<sup>11</sup>C.F. KEYES, *The Golden Peninsula*, New York: Macmillian Publishing Co., Inc., 1977, p. 13.

<sup>12</sup>Office of the Prime Minister, *Thailand in the 80's*, Bangkok: Rung Ruang Ratana Printing, 1984, p. 11.

The actual background of the Thai people themselves is a subject of academic dispute. One theory holds that...the Thais, had for centuries engaged principally in rice farming and silk textile manufacture. In 651 A.D. they united their tribes and lived together in the independent kingdom of Nanchao in the southern most Chinese province of Yunnan. Mainly an agrarian kingdom, Nanchao's relationship with China lurched from crisis to crisis, from extreme amity to equally extreme enmity. Cherishing personal independence, and seeking to escape the Chinese yoke, compact groups of Thais had migrated southward and settled in northern Thailand centuries before Kublai Khan's 1253 conquest of Nanchao.<sup>13</sup>

The second group, however, holds that they originated right there in Thailand.

The counter-theory holds that the Thais originated in Thailand and were driven northward by numerically superior Khmers and Mons. There, in Yunnan, the Thais developed their own distinctive culture. Later, under pressure from China's 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century Mongolian conquerors, the Thais moved steadily southward again...Certainly by the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Thais, in the fourth and final major immigration tide into Thailand, had successfully established themselves among the Khmers and Mons and had a firm foot-hold in the North.<sup>14</sup>

Regardless of the uncertainty concerning the origin of the Thai people, both theories seem to agree that after the fall of Nanchao, the Thais moved southward in a much larger number than before, thus increasing their own people in the Menam valley in particular and also in the other part of the Indo-Chinese peninsula.

Then appeared the Mons, the Khmers and the Lawas who were non-Thai peoples and were ethnologically akin to one another. There is a belief that the Mons came from the mountains of south China and the Khmers were a branch of the Mons, of which the Lawas formed a group of the Mons-Khmers. These people made their home in the peninsula before the Thais came into contact with them. The Mons set themselves up by the Salween river where they extended themselves to the South of the Irrawady river. The Khmers, whose direct descendants are the Cambodians built up their homeland in the lower part of the Mekong river which is now Cambodia. The Lawas, on the other hand, flanked by the Mons on one side and by the Khmers on the other, spread lengthwise from the North to the South of the Menam valley. All of them adopted the Indian culture and religions. The Indian emigration must have started in the third century B.C.<sup>15</sup>

Regarding the political division of the Indo-Chinese peninsula, the Mon kingdom was called Haripunjaya which was founded in 654. Funan was founded in 550 and was the first state which came into existence in the first century of the Christian era. Funan was overthrown by a feudatory state, Chenla, which was the predecessor of the Khmer empire. King Yasovarman I (889-900) founded the first city of Angkor in the Khmer empire which had been in control of the Mekong valley up to the borders of China and the Menam valley.

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Cf. SYAMANANDA, *op. cit.*, p. 14; see also M. XUMSAI, *History of Thailand and Cambodia*, Bangkok: Chalermnit Press, 1987, p. 13.

During the reign of Suryavarman II (1113-1150), the Khmer empire expanded westward at the expense of the Mons of Davaravati and then also at the expense of the Thais who had come into the basins of the Menam and Mekong rivers in great numbers. He was the most powerful king of Khmer. His fame spread far and wide as a warrior and as a builder, since he conducted his campaigns against Champa and Annam as well as against the Mons and the Thais.<sup>16</sup>

Under the reign of King Jayavarman VII (1162-1201), the extent of the Khmer empire at this time reached beyond Sukhothai.<sup>17</sup> The Khmers chose Sukhothai as the governor's seat of the northern region, while the governor of the southern region of the Menam valley lived at Lavo.

The Thais who migrated from south China and reached the North of the Menam valley formed themselves into separate principalities which subsequently developed into kingdoms such as the kingdom of Chieng Saen with its boundaries adjoining Nanchao in the North and Haripunjaya in the South. Prince Singhanavati led his followers to find a suitable site for his new city which he founded in 568. It is a matter of regret that Chieng Saen became an easy prey to the Khmer incursion, due to a series of weak kings who ruled over it and it capitulated, paying tribute to the Khmers. Prince Prohm, a son of Puncaraj who was the 43<sup>rd</sup> king of Chieng Saen, was born in 1098 and grew up to be an exceptionally brave and capable leader. He planned to declare independence against the Khmers, so he urged his father to stop the payment of tribute to them.

The Khmers, in response, sent an army to crush Chieng Saen. Prince Prohm, with his army whom he could trust, routed the Khmer forces and conquered their territory down to Jalieng. Having extended his power as far as Lannatai, Luong Prabang, Wiengchan and Lanchang, he founded the city of Fang for himself to rule and named it Jaiprakarn. In the year 1117, at the request of his son, Puncaraj moved out of his place, Chieng Saen, and continued to rule Jaiburi. Prohm should truly be praised as the first Thai king who deserved the title "*The Great*".<sup>18</sup>

Prohm died at the age of 79 in 1177. His son, Jaisiri, was confronted by a large Mon army which invaded his city. Unable to resist it, he avoided the impending danger by moving his people out and leading them towards the South, at first to Kampaeng Phet, then to Traitruongs and finally to Nakhon Pathom which was then designated as Nakhon Chaisi.<sup>19</sup>

Jaiburi met with the same fate as Jaiprakarn at the hands of the Mons. The Prince was forced to lead his people towards the South where they built the city of Nakhon Thai in the eastern part of the present province of Phitsanulok.

Other Thai principalities, such as Ngoenyang, Payao, Rad and Bangyang, realized their limited resources of men, money and military supplies and therefore they yielded to the Khmers who then imposed on them an obligation to provide them with a tribute. In fact, some of the Thai princes such as Khun Bang Klang Tao of Bangyang and Khun Pa Muang of Rad, who wielded considerable power, were already showing signs of independence towards the Khmers.

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<sup>16</sup>For a more detailed study on the history of the kingdom of Davaravati, of Champa and also of the Khmer, see XUMSAI, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-19; see also A. LECLERE, *Histoire du Cambodge: Depuis le 1<sup>er</sup> Siècle de Notre Ère, D'Après les Inscriptions Lapidaires, Les Annales Chinoises et Annamites et les Documents Européens des Derniers Siècles*, Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1914, pp. 11, 93-94. We are not going to details on the matter because it is not necessary for our purpose. However we present enough to underline or stress the uniqueness of the history of the Thais.

<sup>17</sup>Cf. LECLERE, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

<sup>18</sup>Cf. S. WONGSAWAN, *History of Thai Government: From the Beginning to Democracy 1932* (in Thai), Bangkok: Bamrungsan, 1984, p. 33.

<sup>19</sup>One of the descendants of Chaisiri married a daughter of Prince of Utong, and later established the city of Ayutthaya. Thus a descendant of the Prince of Chieng Saen became the king of Ayutthaya through marriage. Cf. M. JUMSAI, *Popular History of Thailand*, Bangkok: Chalermnit Press, 1979, p. 16.

### 1.3 The Rise of the Kingdom of Sukhothai

As we have mentioned above, the Khmers chose Sukhothai as the governor's seat of the northern region. At that time Sukhothai was under another Thai leader, Khun Srinaonamthom, but under the supervision of the Khmer resident, Samart Khlom Lamphong.<sup>20</sup>

Khun Bang Klang Tao of Bangyang, near Sukhothai, and Khun Pa Muang of Rad, near Uttaradit, who were under the Khmer vassalage, joined their forces together and planned to overthrow the Khmer rule. In the execution of their plan, they refused to send any further tributes to the Khmers and this was interpreted as a defiance by the Khmer authority.

Moreover in 1238, they attacked and defeated the Khmer commander at Sukhothai, the administrative centre for the northern part of the Khmer empire. Then, Khun Pa Muang presented his conquest to his ally, Khun Bang Klang Tao, together with his own title and sword, and he presided over the new Sri Inratit's coronation as king of Sukhothai. There should be some reasons which motivated Khun Pa Muang to do so. Wyatt gives his hypothesis as follows:

Perhaps because he had violated his sacred oath of allegiance to Angkor, or perhaps because he recognized Khun Bang Klang Tao's superior power or seniority.<sup>21</sup>

But Syamananda gives the other one as follows:

Because he was closely related to the Khmers, his wife, Sikhara, being a daughter of the Cambodian king.<sup>22</sup>

However, the victory of Sri Inratit over the Khmers at Sukhothai was an event of far-reaching importance, because it created a profound impression among the Thai people, who credited him with extraordinary ability and heroism. They humbly gave him the name of Phra Ruang meaning "*Glorious Prince*". The dynasty that ruled Sukhothai is thus known as the Phra Ruang Dynasty, which should be counted as the first historical Thai dynasty.

The kingdom of Sukhothai, at that time, covered a small area, with its capital with the same name situated near the Yom river. Lying to the North were the kingdoms of Haripunjaya and Lannatai and the principality of Payao, and to the West was the principality of Chot. Sri Inratit spent his time in consolidating his kingdom.

It can be said that the rise of Sukhothai happened by the right person, in the right time and in the right place as we can see from the factors which supported this event of Sukhothai.

1. In the first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Khmer kingdom was at a decline. The kings of Khmer had weakened themselves in trying to carry out a vast building programme and to subjugate Champa. All these activities drained the Khmer empire of men and money and the kings who succeeded Jayavarman VII were not of his calibre. Jayavarman VIII (1243-1295) was definitely a weak king. He could not intercept the expansion of the Thai dominion, the extent of which covered the Menam valley and later the Malay peninsula. And although Khmer power was paramount, it was because of the distance of Sukhothai from Angkor far from absolute.

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<sup>20</sup>Cf. XUMSAI, *Popular History of Thailand*, p. 90.

<sup>21</sup>WYATT, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

<sup>22</sup>SYAMANANDA, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

2. During the reign of Sri Intratit, Siam received a tremendous wave of Thai immigrants, who fled from Yunnan after Kublai Khan's conquest of the Nanchao kingdom as we have already mentioned above. Doubtless it is due to this fact that Sukhothai was able to deal so successfully with the Khmers; she had a constant supply of Thai recruits from the North.

#### 1.4 Phra Ruang Dynasty.

**Sri Intratit** was the first king of the kingdom of Sukhothai from 1238 and therefore he was the founder of Phra Ruang Dynasty. Since we have to mention the names of the kings and also their period of reign, we will present here the list of the kings of this dynasty. Unfortunately the number of the kings of Sukhothai is still under discussion among historians. Recently however, the history professors of Srinakrintharaviroj University in Bangkok, after re-examining the stone inscriptions and the chronicles, propose that there were 9 kings:

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Period of reign</b>
1.	Sri Intratit	1238-unknown
2.	Ban Muang	unknown-1278
3.	Ramkamhaeng, the Great	1278-1299
4.	Loethai	unknown-unknown
5.	Nguanamthom	unknown-circa 1347
6.	Tammaraja I Lithai	1347-between 1368-1374
7.	Tammaraja II	between 1368-1374-1399
8.	Tammaraja III	1399-1419
9.	Tammaraja IV	1419-1438 <sup>23</sup>

#### 1.5 Social, Religious and Political Situation

The Sukhothai period is probably the most significant period of all in shaping the kingdom because during this period the Phra Ruang Dynasty began and ruled the independent people of Thailand. William Warren writes:

An independent kingdom they called Sukhothai,... means "*the dawn of happiness*". The name was prophetic. Sukhothai still stammers as an ideal kingdom in the collective memory of the Thai, a golden time where according to a celebrated stone-inscription that is still memorized by school children: in the water there are fish. In the fields there is rice. The king does not levy a rate on his people. Who wants to trade in elephants, trades. Who wants to trade in horses, trades. Who wants to trade in gold and silver, trades. The faces of the people shine bright.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>History Professors of Sri Nakrintharaviroj University, Thai History: prehistorical Period to the End of Ayutthaya (in Thai), Bangkok: Saengrung Press, 1979<sup>2</sup>, p. 81; see also WONGSAWAN, Op. Cit., p. 25. For the other details about the kings of Sukhothai see P. na NAKORN, Purification of Sukhothai History (in Thai), Bangkok: Akson Samai 1971, p. 39; T. AMATAYAKUL, Sukhothai History (in Thai), lecture for the seminar of Sukhothai Archaeology 1960, Bangkok: Fine Arts Department 1964, p. 182.

<sup>24</sup>W. WARREN, Images of Thailand, Hong Kong: Hong Kong Publishing Co., 1985<sup>3</sup>, p. 37.



The third king of the Phra Ruang Dynasty, Ramkamhaeng the Great, managed to unite the Mengrai dynasty, the northern power, under his control. Sukhothai then became relatively powerful and expanded its border southward to the Malay peninsula. Practically speaking, one may say that the Thais' organized civilization really began during the reign of Ramkamhaeng because of his invention of the Thai alphabet. Realizing the importance of the national language as a unifying force for his people, as well as a symbol of their independence, he created in 1283 the first Thai alphabet, using as its basis the Mon and Khmer scripts which had, in turn, been derived from a south Indian script.

He employed for the first time the new script in his stone inscription of 1292 at Sukhothai.<sup>25</sup> Many of the great events of king Ramkamhaeng's reign are known to us partly from Chinese sources and partly from the stone inscriptions which have been discovered. As for the kingdom of Sukhothai, no written history of it, if such ever existed, has been preserved but many facts connected with it can be gleaned from various carved stone-inscriptions.

Ramkamhaeng governed his own people with justice and virtue as well as people of other nationalities who lived in his kingdom, so that they would enjoy peace and happiness in consonance with the name of Sukhothai. In short, his rule had the characteristics of a paternal government and his people were happy. Whenever they wished to submit a complaint to him, they rang the bell which he had hung at the palace gate. He would then grant them an audience so as to afford him an opportunity to find out for himself the causes of the complaint, and judged it according to its merit. Most of the people engaged in agriculture and cultivated rice chiefly, while others carried on trade, which was greatly facilitated because no rates or tax were collected from those who engaged on it. In fact he allowed free trade to spread throughout the land.

Sukhothai's major economic base was agriculture, namely rice farming and fruit growing... The capital flourished as a trading centre. Besides pottery exports to Java, Sumatra, Pegu and the Philippines, Sukhothai developed commerce with Indian, Chinese, Burmese, Ceylonese and Persian traders... coinage came to assume increasing importance.<sup>26</sup>

Though famed as a brave warrior, he was also sensitive to cultural matters, bringing in Chinese potters to teach the art of making fine porcelains, and building temples of lasting beauty in honor of Buddhism.

Outstanding achievements in the realm of culture which have endured to the present day are his invention of the Thai alphabet in 1283 and the adoption of Buddhism from Ceylon.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>The stone-inscriptions of king Ramkamhaeng were discovered by Prince Mongkut (later King Rama IV) in 1833, now they are kept in the national library. Later the other stone-inscriptions have been also discovered. For the more details see GRISWOLD and PRASERT, *The Inscription of King Ram Gamhn of Sukhothai (1292 A.D.): Epigraphic and Historical Studies*, No. 9, in JSS, Vol. LIX, part. 2 (July 1971) 205-208.

<sup>26</sup>Office of Prime Minister, *Thailand into the 80's*, Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich Press, 1979, p. 19.

<sup>27</sup>*Thailand in Transition: The Church in a Buddhist Country*, in *Pro Mundi Vita*, 48(1973) 7.

In fact, the Thais had already embraced Buddhism by the time they settled down at Sukhothai.<sup>28</sup> As we have already known, the Indian emigration must have started before the third century B.C. and continued until the first few centuries of the Christian era. Besides Buddhism, Brahmanism was introduced by the Indians into Indo-Chinese peninsula, but it did not thrive as well as Buddhism. Anyway, Wood observes that

Buddhism and Brahmanism continued to exist side by side, but it is probable that neither of them really superseded the old animistic beliefs of the Khmer and Lawa inhabitants, or the Thai immigrants.<sup>29</sup>

As time went on, we may suppose that among the Khmers, the religion of the people consisted of a jumble of Buddhism and Brahmanism. Most of the kings of Khmers were Brahmins, not Buddhists and their temples were dedicated to the worship of Indian deities.

When the Thais emigrated into this peninsula, they came into contact with the people who practised Hinayan Buddhism or "*small vehicle*", the so-called Theravada which uses the Pali language, and Brahmanism. They became deeply devoted to the Hinayan sect, but they also took up the Brahmanic religion. And when they established the kingdom of Sukhothai, Buddhism was at the time flourishing in Ceylon and there were learned Buddhist monks coming to Nakhon Sritammarat.

In the course of his tour of the Malay peninsula, King Ramkamhaeng visited Nakhon Sritammarat, where he came to believe in the purified teachings of the Ceylonese school. He had a learned Ceylonese invited from this city to Sukhothai to teach his people, and later with his support, a group of the monks travelled to Sukhothai. His stone-inscription reads:

Ramkamhaeng, the king of Sukhothai, the royal family, the children of all the mandarins, man and women, and the people, all are devoted in Buddhism.<sup>30</sup>

Buddhism reached its zenith during the reign of King Lithai who was the great scholar and patron of Buddhism. Throughout his reign, he devoted himself to the advancement of this religion. He himself set an example to his people by becoming a monk for a time. He also wrote a treatise on Buddhist cosmology called the Tribhumikatha meaning the three worlds, heaven, earth and hell, a spectacular eschatology of heaven, hell and hungry ghosts. It is generally believed that this is the second oldest book of Thai literature, the first one being Ramkamhaeng's stone-inscriptions of 1292. But we can say also that it was the first Thai-authored Buddhist treatise. He spent both time and money in building temples and monasteries, Buddha images and roads. The art of making Buddha images, both large and small, may be said to have reached perfection in his reign. The ruins of the temples and monasteries which still remain today can make us realize that there were a lot of them all over Sukhothai.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>The history of the traditional religion of the Thais can be traced back as far as almost 300 years B.C. During the reign of Emperor Asoka of India (273-232 B.C.). Buddhism reached its peak because the Emperor himself was converted and was very much devoted to the religion. During his lifetime he sent out Buddhist missionaries to various countries to preach Buddhism: South India, Ceylon, Syria, Egypt and to a country in southeast Asia called Suvannaphum or the land of gold. Two missionaries were sent to Suvannaphum, where was thought to be the present site of Nakhon Pathom. Their names were Sona and Uttara. There is a Buddhist pagoda having been built which is supposed to be the most ancient one in this country. However the present pagoda is not the same as the old one, for it must have tumbled down and was put up again several times, the last time being in the reign of king Mongkut of Rama IV when he discovered it and rebuilt it during 1851-1868. Cf. M. XUMSAI, Understanding Thai Buddhism, Bangkok: Chalermnit Press, 1971, pp. 7-8; see also C. HUMPHREYS, Buddhism: An Introduction and Guide, New York: Viking Penguin Inc., 1985, p. 46. Emperor Asoka was one of the most famous kings of India. His experience of the horrors of war made him turn to Buddhism. Because of his zeal and dedication to promote religion, he became monk and required his officials to impart moral teachings to his subjects.

<sup>29</sup>WOOD, op. cit., p. 47.

<sup>30</sup>History Professors of Sri Nakrintharaviroj University, op. cit., p. 100.

<sup>31</sup>For the more detailed study about the Buddhism and Brahmanism in Thailand, see S. KAMVANSA, Influences of Indian Culture in Southeast Asia (in Thai), Bangkok: Akson Charoentat, 1984<sup>2</sup>, Chapters 6,9,10,11,13.

The political situation of Sukhothai was absolutely dependent upon the kings who were governing. During the reign of Sri Inratit, as we know from the stone-inscription, he entered upon a war with the Prince of Chot who had tried to capture the town of Tak.

In this war, Prince Ramkamhaeng who was only 19 years old proved himself to be a brave warrior. He greatly distinguished himself by engaging in single combat with the Prince of Chot; both the combatants were mounted on elephants, this being the first fight on the elephants recorded in Thai history. Ramkamhaeng utterly defeated his opponent and forced him to flee with all his army. Apart from this petty war, nothing happened to disturb the peace of Sukhothai under its first two kings.

King Ramkamhaeng was a valiant warrior, a wise states man, a far-sight scholar and a brilliant diplomat. He had been busily enlarging his dominions and during his reign, Sukhothai received a tremendous wave of Thai immigrants who had fled from Yunnan. It was an extensive kingdom, bordering in the North on the kingdom of Lannatai at Lampang, including in the northeast Phrae, Nan and Luang Prabang, and in the east Wiengchan and covering in the South the towns in the Malay peninsula and in the west Tenasserim, Tavoy, Martaban and Pegu (Hangsawadi) up to the bay of Bengal. These cities, towns and districts were either directly subject to or tributary to him. He was also able to deal successfully with the Khmers.

He proved his worth as a diplomat in cultivating cordial relations with King Mengrai of Lannatai, and Khun Gnam Muang, Prince of Payao, so that he could concentrate his attention on the Khmers who might at any moment be hostile to Sukhothai. He also opened direct political relations with China so that he could secure his northern borders. Sukhothai's role as a regional counter-force to the Khmers had full Chinese approval and the Thai's friendly relations with China undoubtedly inhibited ambitious Khmer commanders from unleashing invasion forces into the Thai heartland.

It was due to Ramkamhaeng's untiring efforts that Sukhothai reached its zenith, but it entered on a period of decline after his reign. His son, Loetai succeeded him. During his reign most of the vassal states such as Nan, Luang Prabang and Nakhon Sritammarat took the opportunity to get rid of the Thai yoke and declare themselves independent. The king of Pegu attacked and captured Tavoy and Tenasserim. King Tammaraja I Lithai, during his reign he was fully aware of the strength of his kingdom and so made no attempts to subdue his former vassals. Recent research appearing in "*A Declaration of Independence and its Consequences*", an article by A.B. Griswold and Prasert na Nagara in the Journal of the Siam Society, has brought out the fact that

Lithai was an able states man and a competent soldier. By attracting a number of the vassals who had broken away, and by subduing others, he recovered a territory stretching from above, Uttaradit in the North to Nakhon Sawan in the South, from the valley of the Ping in the West to that of the Sak in the East. If his gains were modest compared with those of Ramkamhaeng, they were nevertheless impressive, for he was faced with a limiting factor which did not exist in Ramkamhaeng's time: the territory south of Nakhon Sawan now belonged to so powerful a ruler that Lithai had to dismiss all hope of recovering it. Instead he cultivated friendly relations with him.<sup>32</sup>

Owing to his wise policy, he was therefore able to preserve the independence of the kingdom of Sukhothai.

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<sup>32</sup>A.B. GRISWOLD and P. na NAGARA, *A Declaration of Independence and its Consequences: Epigraphic and Historical Studies, No. 1*, in JSS, Vol. LVI, part 2 (2 July 1968) 207-209.

## 1.6 The End of Phra Ruang Dynasty and the New Capital.

It is generally agreed that Ramkamhaeng was undoubtedly the second Thai king who really deserved the title of The Great. After the death of Ramkamhaeng, the decline of the kingdom began immediately. We can summarize some factors of this decline in this way:

1. Ramkamhaeng's successors were of lesser calibre and they were too weak.
2. Most of them were interested in Buddhism and did not pay enough attention to politics.
3. The new powerful Thai state in the South was growing rapidly, thus dismissing all hope by Sukhothai of recovering the vassals and territories which had broken away.

Finally Sukhothai became a vassal state of Ayutthaya in the reign of Tammaraja II (between 1368-1374 to 1399). In pursuance of his expansionist policy, King Boromaraja I of Ayutthaya attacked it in 1371, but meeting with a strong resistance of the people lasting about 6 years, he could advance only as far as Chai Nat. He then made one more attempt to conquer Sukhothai in 1378 by sending an army to seize the town of Jakungrao. Watching the Ayutthaya troops in action, Tammaraja II came to the conclusion that it would be hopeless to fight the enemy, so he surrendered the town and made submission to Boromaraja I in that year. Thus Sukhothai lost its 140 years old independence. Boromaraja I split up his new vassal state into the northern territory and the southern territory with a view to reducing Tammaraja II's power. However Tammaraja II was not deposed, but was assigned to rule the northern territory. For the sake of the administrative convenience of this territory, he moved his capital from Sukhothai to Phitsanulok and consequently the city of Sukhothai itself was neglected.

Tammaraja II was succeeded by Tammaraja III (1399-1419) and Tammaraja IV (1419-1438) whose name was Phya Ban Muang, and who had fought for the throne since Tammaraja III died without a legal heir. This fact brought about confrontation between his two half-brothers, Phya Ban Muang and Phya Ram. Through the intervention of King Intaraja of Ayutthaya, Phya Ban Muang won the crown, while Phya Ram received the governorship of Kampeng Phet. In fact during the reign of Tammaraja III, Sukhothai indeed had recovered its strength and soon struck back. In what has been called his "*Declaration of Independence*". Tammaraja III seized Nakhon Sawan from Ayutthaya, extending his authority in the principalities of Nan and Phrae. However King Intaraja of Ayutthaya, finally, came and reduced him to the status of a vassal ruler again.<sup>33</sup>

After Tammaraja IV's death, king Boromaraja II realized that Sukhothai had been a vassal for 60 years and the people were also Thais. Moreover Sukhothai was a very important city, confronting the kingdom in the North but Sukhothai was already weakened so it should have been invaded easily by the other kingdom. He came to the conclusion that it was the time to incorporate Sukhothai into the kingdom of Ayutthaya

So he installed his son, Ramesuan, as ruler of the northern provinces with his seat of office at Phitsanulok. This event marked the extinction of the Phra Ruang Dynasty. Sukhothai became part and parcel of the kingdom of Ayutthaya.

## 1.7 The Rise of Ayutthaya, the New Capital of the Thais.

The principal difficulty in studying the origin of Ayutthaya, its founder, etc., is the almost entire absence of reliable native chronicles, since the official records and annals of the kings of Ayutthaya were all destroyed when the Burmese captured the city in 1767, the story of which we will see later.

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<sup>33</sup>Cf. WYATT, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-69.

Fortunately, the collected chronicles and history which the Thai kings and the Thai historians have tried to collect, are still in existence and could give us much important information about the Ayutthaya period, even though there are contradictions from one to the other. Anyway, among the historians it is generally agreed that the founder of Ayutthaya was Prince of Utong who, together with his people, escaped from the cholera and moved to build a new city. After three years of building, the city was finished in the year 1350.<sup>34</sup>

Professor Srisakara Vallipodom, in fact, has recently reexamined the sources and evidence, and came to the conclusion that

For a long time before the 14<sup>th</sup> century, there had been the Thais who lived in the Chaophya valley and divided themselves into various small principalities... Ayutthaya was their capital.<sup>35</sup>

That's why the Prince of Utong could have strengthened his forces and Ayutthaya could have become the powerful kingdom. Anna Leonowens in her sketch of Siamese history writes:

In the year 712 of the Siamese, and 1350 of the Christian era, Phya Otong founded, near the river Menam, about sixty miles from the gulf of Siam, the city of Ayudia or Ayuthia (the Abodes of the Gods); at the same time he assumed the title of Phra Ramatibodi.<sup>36</sup>

Ayutthaya, also called Yothia, Othia, Juthia or Ayuthia by foreigners, was already a trading centre where the people congregated. It was situated on an island, at the confluence of three rivers, the Chao Phya, the Lopburi and the Pasak; it became an important centre of trade and communications, being approximately 70 miles or 110 kilometres from the sea.

Nothing definite is known about the Prince of Utong's ancestry or even his personal name. It is believed that he married a daughter of the preceding Prince of Utong and became himself the ruler of Utong on the death of his father-in-law. Despite the fact that wells had been dug, there was a scarcity of water and this caused an outbreak of an epidemic, believed to be cholera which decimated the people. If he lived on there, he saw no possibility of the city becoming a progressive one. He had also been seeking a town which was centrally located, so that he could control his expanding principality more effectively. For these reasons, he abandoned Utong and moved his capital to Ayutthaya which was a growing town.

## **2. Ayutthaya and the Beginning of the New Dynasties**

Ayutthaya was the capital of Siam from 1350 to its end in 1767, being destroyed by the Burmese army after having been the Thai capital for 417 years. In all, 33 kings from 5 Dynasties ruled Ayutthaya during its 4 glorious centuries.

Since we have to mention the names of the kings and their period of reign in the text, for better understanding I will present here the lists of the kings of Ayutthaya. The government of Siam was the absolute monarchy which was divided into 5 Dynasties as follows:

1. Utong Dynasty
2. Suphannaphum Dynasty
3. Mahatammaraja Dynasty

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<sup>34</sup>Cf. D. RAJANUBHAP, H.R.H., Prince, *Description of Siam Chronicles* (in Thai), Bangkok: Kurusapa, 1924, p. 30.

<sup>35</sup>S. VALLIPODOM, *The Contradictions in Thai History* (in Thai), Bangkok: Muang Boran Press, 1981, pp. 52-53.

<sup>36</sup>A. LEONOWENS, *Anna and the King of Siam: From the English Government at the Siamese Court*, London: Trübner and Co., 1870, p. 26.

4. Prasattong Dynasty
5. Ban Plu Luang Dynasty

Prince Damrong Rajanubhap has made the order of the kings of Ayutthaya as follows:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Dynasty</b>	<b>Period of Reign</b>
1. Ramatibodi Utong	Utong	1350-1369
2. Ramesuan	"	1369-1370
3. Boromaraja I	Suphannaphum	1370-1388
4. Tonglun	"	1388 (7 days)
Ramesuan (second time)	Utong	1388-1395
5. Ramraja	"	1395-1409
6. Intaraja	Suphannaphum	1409-1424
7. Boromaraja II	"	1424-1448
8. Boromtrailokanat	"	1448-1488
9. Boromaraja III	"	1488-1491
10. Ramatibodi II	"	1491-1529
11. Boromaraja IV	"	1529-1533
12. Ratsadatirakumar	"	1533-1534
13. Prajairaja	"	1534-1546
14. Pra Yod Fa	"	1546-1548
Vorawongsa (Sri Sin)	"	1548
15. Mahachakrapat	"	1548-1569
16. Mahin	"	1569
17. Mahatammaraja	Mahatammaraja	1569-1590
18. Naresuan	"	1590-1605
19. Ekatotsarot	"	1605-1610
20. Srisaowapak	"	1610
21. Songtham	"	1610-1628
22. Jettatirat	"	1628-1629
23. Atityawong	"	1629
24. Prasattong	Prasattong	1630-1655
25. Chao Fa Jai	"	1655-1656
26. Srisutammaraja	"	1656
27. Narai	"	1656-1688
28. Phra Petraja	Ban Plu Luang	1688-1703
29. Phrachao Sua	"	1703-1709
30. Tai Sra	"	1709-1733
31. Boromakot	"	1733-1758
32. Utumporn	"	1758
33. Ekatat	"	1758-1767 <sup>37</sup>

## 2.1 General Situation

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<sup>37</sup>D. RAJANUBHAP, H.R.H., Prince, *Collected Chronicles*, Part IV, Bangkok: Suksapan, 1963, pp. 133-138.

Different from the kings of Sukhothai who were both paternal and accessible to their people, the kings of Ayutthaya embraced the Brahman concept of divine kingship to become increasingly highly structured and remote.<sup>38</sup> Apart from obligations to perform sacred ceremonies, they were free to do precisely as they wished, when they wished and how they wished. Universally viewed as being without equals and residing above the law, authentic strong-men who held the power of life and death over their subjects. Their persons were literally sacred. Commoners were forbidden to look upon them, touch them or even mention their names in public.

Ayutthaya rapidly grew in strength, and at its zenith maintained control over the central and lower Menam Chao Phya valley, parts of Burma and much of the Malay peninsula. Wars were fought for territorial reasons or to repulse invading neighbours. Victory meant greater wealth from plundered treasure and booty. It meant greater prestige, greater security.

The economy of Ayutthaya was based primarily on the cultivation of rice, the commerce on teak, salt, spices, hides and other basic commodities. Additionally external trade was conducted under royal authority or under licence, while the Crown was levying taxes. In this way the kings established widespread levy systems to finance the royal court, wars and public works such as: building temples, fortresses, roads and canals. Agriculture was free to develop without interruption. Regular rice harvests provided sufficient food for the people and, through levies, supplied the royal court. The trade with China became available. China imported Thai rice in exchange for implements and technology. Ayutthaya also imported some Chinese products.

During the 16<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of 17<sup>th</sup> century, Thomas Herbert recorded:

Siam is famous for power, wealth and many sorts of excellencies... in rich stones, as Dyamonds, Chrysolites, Onix stones, Magnets, Bezars, Benjamin, Cotton, and Mynes of Gold, Silver, Iron, Copper.<sup>39</sup>

Though the kings of Ayutthaya absorbed the influences of Brahmanism, they, like the kings of Sukhothai, were devoted in Buddhism. Many temples and monasteries were built during the course of Ayutthaya history.<sup>40</sup>

It is very significant to note that the political situation of Ayutthaya was unstable since it depended on some important factors, for instance: the succession to the throne, the war with Burma and the relation with the foreign countries.

From the beginning of his reign, King Ramatibodi launched Ayutthaya into a vigorous diplomatic and military campaign, seeking domination of the entire Menam valley including the established northern kingdoms of Sukhothai and Chiang Mai, the Khmer empire including Angkor to the East, and major principalities to the west and south. Significantly, he promulgated the first recorded Thai law system. He also established a bureaucracy to administer his kingdom by creating the equivalents of the modern Ministries of the interior, Royal Household (including Justice), Finance and Agriculture.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Cf. KAMVANSA, *op. cit.*, pp. 175-180.

<sup>39</sup>T. HERBERT, *Some Years Travels into Divers Parts of Asia and Afrique, Describing kingdoms in the Oriental India*, revised and enlarged by the author, London, 1638, pp. 316-317.

<sup>40</sup>KAMVANSA, *op. cit.*, p. 111; Ramatibodi I followed the example, set by Ramkamaeng the Great and his successors, in the support of Buddhism and this constituted a normal practice for the later kings of Ayutthaya to follow. Cf. SYAMANANDA, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

<sup>41</sup>Cf. Office of Prime Minister, *op. cit.*, p. 23; see also SYAMANANDA, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-34.

After his death, his son, Ramesuan ascended to the throne. Being unable to cope with his distinguished uncle, Boromaraja, he surrendered the throne to him and went to Lopburi as its governor. Boromaraja I (1370-1388) attacked Sukhothai and made it as a vassal state to Ayutthaya in 1378. His son, Tonglun, was the king for only 7 days, since ex-king Ramesuan immediately proceeded to Ayutthaya and seized Tonglun and had him done to death in the royal manner, that was clubbing him to death in a velvet sack with a sandalwood stick. Ramesuan, as the king, immediately attacked Chiang Mai and then in 1393 he defeated the Khmers and entered their capital, Angkor Thom, and this virtually terminated the Khmer threat to the Thai power.

The end of the Utong Dynasty arrived in the time of Ramraja, son of Ramesuan, when he abdicated in favour of Intaraja and retired to a private life. Then occurred the struggle for the throne among two sons of Intaraja but neither of them won the throne. Instead, the third son won the throne without any exertion and was proclaimed king as Boromaraja II (1424-1448). He took measures to strengthen the kingdom, having occupied the Khmer throne although only for a short time and having incorporated the two territories of Sukhothai into the kingdom. His son, Boromatrailokanat (1448-1488), achieved wide fame for his scholarship; he was well versed in the arts, jurisprudence and statecraft. Wood writes:

The king was a man of very religious tendencies. His first act, on ascending to the throne, was to convert the royal pavilions of his predecessors into a temple, and to build two new pavilions, in the same grounds, for secular use.<sup>42</sup>

Professor Sirivat confirms that

Buddhism in Ayutthaya reached its zenith during the reign of king Boromatrailokanat. He himself supported Buddhism and greatly devoted to it. Perhaps he was motivated by two reasons:

1. his mother was the princess of Phra Ruang Dynasty,
  2. he used to be the ruler of Phitsnulok in which Buddhism was evidently growing.
- He himself become the monk for 8 months and 15 days and persuaded also the mandarins and the officials to follow his example.<sup>43</sup>

Boromatrailokanat undertook a major task to strengthen the administrative institutions of the kingdom. He issued two important pieces of legislation, the law of the civil Hierarchy and the law of the military and provincial Hierarchies, that took as their chief concerns hierarchy and functional differentiation. The officials, both civil and military, received no salaries. Partly to help them to find an income and partly to regulate the system of land tenure, he issued in 1454 a law governing the Sakdi Na grades. It specified the different classes of people and amounts of land to be assigned to each.<sup>44</sup>

In 1450, he promulgated the Palace Law or Kot Montien Ban which formulated the customs, ceremonies, rules and regulations, connected with the Court and the Royal family. Malacca claimed his attention because one of the successors rebelled against Ayutthaya. Malacca had belonged to Siam since the reign of Ramkamhaeng. So in 1455, he sent an army to the South in order to crush the rebellion. It was successful but only for a short time, then it slipped out of the Siamese hands again. In 1456, he became involved in a war with Chieng Mai and again in 1463 and 1473. Realizing the uselessness of the struggle, both kings made overtures for peace.

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<sup>42</sup>It was the custom, on the death of each king, to convert into a temple, or chapel, the pavillion in which he had resided. WOOD, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

<sup>43</sup>KAMVANSAN, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

<sup>44</sup>The land was not hereditary, and on the degradation of his title of nobility of his death, it reverted to the king. One of the reforms, effected by king Rama V (1868-1910), was the payment of salaries in cash to government officials instead of land. Cf. SYAMANANDA, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-38.



Special mention must be made of the cultural aspect of his reign. He gave a strong impetus to the arts and literature. At his command, many works of literature were written.

Then came King Ramatibodi II (1491-1529) who succeeded king Boromaraja III (1488-1491). His reign is most memorable for the opening of relations between Siam and Europe, much of the credit for this going to the Portuguese. They were the first Europeans who arrived at Ayutthaya. King Boromaraja IV succeeded him. He was stricken with smallpox and passed away in 1533, leaving the throne to his son, Prince Ratsadatirakumar, a child of four. After occupying the throne for five months, the boy king was got rid of by Prajairaja. Thus history repeated itself in the case of Prajairaja's usurpation of the throne which was similar to that of king Ramesuan, who had king Tonglun put to death.

## **2.2 The Thai-Burmese War and the First Burmese Occupation of Ayutthaya.**

During the reign of king Boromaraja IV of Siam, Burma was divided into 4 kingdoms, namely 1. the remnants of the original kingdom with the capital at Ava 2. Prome 3. Pegu 4. Tongu. In 1530 the king of Tongu died and was succeeded by his son, Tabeng Sheve Ti. This monarch was a man of insatiable ambition and determined to subjugate the dominions of all his neighbours.

In 1530 he conquered Prome and in 1534 he proceeded to attack Pegu which he finally subdued in 1540, he established his capital at Hanthawadi in the same year. During his war against Pegu, he came into conflict with Siam. In 1538 he occupied Chiengkran which was then subjected to Siam. The Thai army, assisted by 120 Portuguese mercenaries who rendered a signal service to Pra Jairaja in the first war with Burma, defeated the Burmese and drove them out of the dominions. This success against Burma proved in the end a disaster for Siam. It was the original cause of the bitter enmity between the two countries which later led to long and sanguinary wars. Prince Damrong Rajanubhap writes that

During Ayutthaya period, the wars between Siam and Burma had been occurred 24 times and during Thonburi and Bangkok period, the other 20 times.<sup>45</sup>

After the death of Pra Jairaja, his wife, Tao Srisudachan, got the absolute power in the affairs of the country, since her two sons were too young and Prince Tienraja, the Regent, resigned the Regency for his safety. She promoted her new lover, Khun Worawongsatirat, to be the Regent who later murdered the young king Pra Yod Fa. Prince Sri Sin, the second son of 7 years old, became king. Doubtless a strong reaction arose against the new Regent. Tao Srisudachan, then, deposed her own son, Sri Sin, and publicly proclaimed Khun Worawongsatirat as king in November 1548. The officials, having seen the disorder of the Court, finally killed Tao Srisudachan and the new king, then promoted Prince Tienraja, the ex Regent, as King Mahachakrapat in 1548. Khun Worawongsatirat had occupied the throne for only 42 days, and being a usurper, he has not been counted as one of the kings of Ayutthaya.

During the reign of king Mahachakrapat, Burma invaded Siam in 1549 and in 1563 with the intention of occupying Ayutthaya, however without success. In October 1568, king Burengnong of Burma departed from Pegu with a much larger army than the previous one, for Ayutthaya. In January 1569, Mahachakrapat died at the age of 56 and Prince Mahin ascended the throne. During that time, the Thai soldiers were showing extraordinary bravery in defending Ayutthaya.

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<sup>45</sup>D. RAJANUBHAP, H.R.H., Prince, *The Collected Chronicles* (in Thai), Part VI, Book 5, Bangkok: Kurusapa, 1963, p. 1.

Unfortunately with the treason of Phya Chakri, the incompetence of king Mahin and the disloyalty of Maha Tammaraja,<sup>46</sup> at Phya Chakri's signal, the Burmese attacked Ayutthaya in full force from all sides and captured it on August 30, 1569. King Mahin, most of the member of the Royal family, government officials, a vast number of prisoners and tremendous amounts of booty, were removed to Burma, leaving only 10,000 inhabitants in the city. King Mahin died of fever on the way to Burma.

Before his departure for Hanthawadi, Burengnong crowned Maha Tammaraja as King of Siam under the vassalage of Burma. Thus began the Dynasty of Mahatammaraja.

### **2.3 King Naresuan, the Great (1590-1605), and the Thai Independence.**

K. Wyatt relates Ayutthaya and the character of Naresuan as follows:

It is difficult to imagine that the history of Ayutthaya would have been the same without king Naresuan, for he is one of those rare figures in Siamese history who, by virtue of dynamic leadership, personal courage and decisive character, succeeded in Herculean tasks that have daunted others before him. The difference Naresuan made emerges all the more sharply because it was so long before he burst suddenly upon the scene of a discouraged Ayutthaya that by then had suffered more than a decade of defeat and humiliation.<sup>47</sup>

Naresuan, born in 1555, was the son of king Maha Tammaraja by his chief queen, who was the daughter of king Mahachakrapat. To make certain of the complete loyalty of king Maha Tammaraja, Burengnong took Prince Naresuan along to Burma as a hostage. The Burmese official explanation was that he had been adopted and brought up by Burengnong. Prince Chula Chakrabongse insists that

The exile of Naresuan as a hostage in Burma turned out to be a blessing in disguise. He followed the best of Burmese military training which was then probably the best in Southeast Asia. He was conscientious in studying the art of war at which the Burmese were supreme... Besides being gifted in military prowess, Naresuan, who was highly intelligent, gained a great deal of general knowledge of the times. Living in the Burmese Court and being at the centre of affairs, he was able to size up the strength and weakness of the Burmese. He had certainly absorbed a good deal of such knowledge by the time he was permitted to return home in 1571.<sup>48</sup>

Upon the fall of Ayutthaya in 1569, the Khmers repeatedly took advantage of this situation and invaded Siam 6 times in the next two decades, 1570, 1575, 1578, 1582, and 1587. The Siamese dealt with these raids only with great difficulty. In addition, the Burmese had razed many of their fortifications. The depredations they suffered at the hands of the Khmers, however, did assist the Siamese in making a case to the Burmese for being allowed to improve their army and fortifications. In 1580 the walls of Ayutthaya were dismantled yet again and rebuilt stronger than before.

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<sup>46</sup>Phya Chakri had been removed as a hostage to Burma after the 1563 war. He entered Ayutthaya as the Burmese spy, hoping to be in the high position. Death was the reward for him. Maha Tammaraja, the Thai Prince of Phitsanulok, caused by his successive selfishness and finding a way to reduce Ayutthaya to submission, joined his forces with the Burmese army.

<sup>47</sup>WYATT, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

<sup>48</sup>C. CHAKRABONGSE, H.R.H., Prince, *Lords of Life*, London: Alvin Redman Limited, 1960, p. 43; He was taken to Burma as a virtual hostage after the second war in 1564. His six years's residence in Burma proved to be a blessing in disguise. Cf. SYAMANANDA, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-54.

Naresuan raised his own army. He organized northern Thai defenses and blocked sporadic Khmer raids from the East. Burengnong died in 1581 and Nandabureng peacefully succeeded him. Having known that the new king of Burma was not by any means of the same calibre as his father, and that the Burmese planned to ambush and kill him, Naresuan called a meeting of all his generals and the Mon officials who had very recently transferred their allegiance to him and, with his father's full consent, he proclaimed the independence of Siam at the town of Krang, the very border of Burma, on May 3, 1584, thus terminating the Burmese vassalage of fifteen years.

As was expected, the Burmese made several attempts to resubjugate Siam, but all were in vain. In 1590, king Maha Tammaraja died and Naresuan succeeded him, ruthlessly stopping five full-scale Burmese invasions during the subsequent 3 years. During the 1592 invasion, Naresuan fought and killed the Burmese Crown Prince in single handed combat on elephants. He, then, consolidated the Thai kingdom, guaranteeing it vital security. Moreover in 1599, Naresuan invaded Burma with the intention of reducing it to vassalage, but was forced to relent when revolt broke out in the newly conquered Peguan provinces. For his many exploits Naresuan has earned a high place in Siamese history and is the most celebrated of heroes and warriors as the liberator of his people from the Burmese. On May 16, 1605, he passed away at the age of fifty.<sup>49</sup> Ekatotsarot duly succeeded him, as the second king with all kingly distinctions.

## **2.4 The Succession to the Throne up to King Narai, the Great.**

Following Naresuan's death, the history of Ayutthaya in the 17<sup>th</sup> century seems to be marked by two notable qualities: uneven institutional development aggravated by increasing relations with the western European powers, and the so-called Glorious Revolution of 1688. It is not a little remarkable also that virtually all successions to the throne of Ayutthaya in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries were, at the least, irregular, and in many cases either disguised or real usurpations.

Ekatotsarot's succession to Naresuan posed no problem, for he and his brother had ruled jointly for 15 years in perfect harmony. His reign was brief. Although there are some disagreement concerning the period of his reign which we can see from many sources mentioned by Rong Syamananda, having carefully considered the evidence from these sources, those submitted by Mr. Kachorn Sukhabanij, a member of the committee for the revision of Thai National History, one is inclined to accept Ekatotsarot's reign as having been 5 years (1605-1610).<sup>50</sup> Ekatotsarot concentrated mainly on the development of his kingdom. According to Wood,

During his short reign of five years, the White king, as he was called by the European writers, devoted his time more to the reorganization of the finances of Siam than to warlike pursuits.<sup>51</sup>

Manit Xumsai also confirms that

Ekatotsarot was a peaceful man. His country was in peace so he was able to promote foreign relations and trade, so that his country become once more prosperous.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Naresuan was one of the very few Thai monarchs to have no children at all, and it is not definitely known that he ever had a wife. Might it be possible that during his exile in Burma he fell in love with a Burmese Princess, and knowing that enmity between the two royal families was unavoidable, he sacrificed his love and personal happiness for his country. Cf. CHAKRABONGSE, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-51.

<sup>50</sup>Cf. SYAMANANDA, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

<sup>51</sup>WOOD, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

<sup>52</sup>XUMSAI, *Popular History of Thailand*, pp. 233, 237.

Then, the kingdom was reigned by his son, Sri Saowapak, who a year and two months later was executed by the monk Phra Phimontham, who reigned as king Songtham (1611-1628).<sup>53</sup> The next succession crisis came at the end of Songtham's long reign. He apparently never appointed an heir-apparent, but his young brother, Sri Sin, was generally regarded as his successor.

However Songtham's cousin, Phya Sri Worawong, promoted the candidacy of Songtham's eldest son, Chetta. The machinations of Sri Worawong brought Chetta to the throne on December 13, 1628. Sri Sin and other potential claimants to the throne were eliminated by Sri Worawong who took over the Kalahom ministry which controlled all the military powers. Soon Sri Worawong disposed of both king Chettatirat in August 1629 and Chettatirat's younger brother, Atitayawong, in September who had succeeded him. Atitayawong was executed in 1637, because of his involvement in a rebellion.

Sri Worawong became King Prasattong (1630-1655), thus began the Prasattong Dynasty. He was really a usurper, as he had no hereditary claim to the throne. His position as Kalahom, the ministry of military affairs enabled him to undertake such a struggle for the throne. Yet another struggle followed the death of Prasattong. Three kings ascended the throne in little more than two months. First was Prasattong's eldest son, Chao Fa Jai "*with armed-men seized the court and ascended the throne*".<sup>54</sup> Then after a very short reign, king Chao Fa Jai fell victim to a conspiracy, engineered by his uncle, Prince Sri Suthammaraja, and his younger brother, Prince Narai. He was captured and was put to death in the royal manner. Prince Narai placed Sri Suthammaraja on the throne. King Srisuthammaraja, being an amorous man, he showed improper attention to his own niece, Princess Kalayani, who was Narai's younger sister.

She strongly resented the king's conduct and after an escape from the palace by hiding herself in a Buddhist book case, she made a complaint to her brother about the whole incident.<sup>55</sup>

Using that as an excuse and the unpopularity of the uncle as a further pretext, Narai, who was by now well versed in the art of conspiracy and had many followers, attacked the king's palace. Nicholas Gervaise insisted that few sovereigns of the East had as many foreign friends as he did.<sup>56</sup>

George Vinal Smith notes that Narai had asked the Dutch for assistance as early as August, but they politely refused, and then Smith states that

In October Narai made his move with the aid of his supporters and of the Japanese-Siamese, Pattani, Malays and perhaps Persian Muslims.<sup>57</sup>

Finally the king fled out but he was captured and executed. After winning the throne in 1656, Narai crowned himself as king of Siam (1656-1688). This is perhaps one of the most eventful reigns of Siamese history. His reign has been one of the most glorious.

This period is also very well documented and well-known from the European visitors who came to Ayutthaya during this period and wrote about the countries and their contacts with the king and the people. There are, therefore, many descriptions of the country during this period written by various authors still alive today. It is generally agreed that king Narai deserved the title "*The Great*". Many factors contributed to the formation of this title:

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<sup>53</sup>Phra Phimontham was the son of Ekatotsarot by a concubine and some foreign visitors in Ayutthaya said he succeeded his father directly without mentioning Sri Saowapak. Cf. WYATT, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

<sup>54</sup>Report from the Council at Batavia (Jakarta) to the Dutch East India Company, Jan. 21, 1657., in *Records of the Relations between Siam and Foreign Countries in the XVIIth Century*, Vol. II, Bangkok, 1916, p. 20.

<sup>55</sup>SYAMANANDA, *op. cit.*, p. 71; see also CHAKRABONGSE, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

<sup>56</sup>Cf. N. GERVAISE, *Histoire Naturelle et Politique du Royaume de Siam*, Paris, 1688, p. 312.

<sup>57</sup>G.V. SMITH, *The Dutch in Seventeenth Century: Thailand*, Vol. III, Dehalb, 1977, p. 35.

1. Chieng Mai and Burma claimed Narai's attention four years after his accession. Later after the second attempt, Narai reunited Chieng Mai with Siam. He invaded Burma in 1664 but did not benefit Siam, anyway he helped to show that Siam was still powerful to reckon with.
2. In his foreign relations, Narai became the most talked about of Siamese monarchs, since he adopted a friendly policy towards foreigners, especially the Europeans, and Ayutthaya was a metropolis where peoples from many lands congregated. Turpin insisted the fact, saying:

The welcome that Narai extended to foreigners, drew them from all parts of the world in the hopes of gaining wealth.<sup>58</sup>

De Bourges also confirmed that

Le Royaume de Siam étant riche de tant de biens que l'Auteur de la nature luy a donné, il invite les Marchands étrangers à le venir visiter pour leur faire part de ses richesses. Il y a peu de villes dans tout l'Orient où l'on voye assemblées plus de Nations différentes qu'à Siam, on y parle plus de vingt langues différentes.<sup>59</sup>

By the way among the Europeans with whom Narai came into contact, the Dutch and the English caused him great disappointment. So King Narai had turned to the French in the hope of using them to counteract the Dutch influence in Siam. It was a wise step in the beginning, since the Dutch and the French were enemies in Europe and fought the Franco-Dutch war of 1672-1678, the war of the league of Augsburg 1689-1697.<sup>60</sup>

3. Not only King Narai's reign was well-known in Europe, but it also saw a revival of Siamese literature. Under his constant patronage, his Court became the centre where poets congregated to compose verses and poems. The first text book of the Thai language was issued by his command in order to counterbalance the French cultural influence.

## 2.5 Relation with the European Countries.

Europeans first entered Siam in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, but not until the 17<sup>th</sup> century did European powers assume any importance in the country's affair. At first the Siamese received the foreigners in friendship. Dutch, Portuguese, English and French traders, mercenaries and missionaries entered the realm and pursued their various aims.

This early era of good will disappeared, however, when certain elements within the Siamese aristocracy began to fear that western influence was growing too strong. The result was the revolution of the aristocracy in 1688. As in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Europeans began to pursue not only commercial but also political and religious ends.<sup>61</sup>

### 2.5.1 Relation with Portugal

Of 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 to obtain permission to trade. Thereafter a large number of the Portuguese followed and settled in Ayutthaya.

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<sup>58</sup>F.H. TURPIN, *History of the Kingdom of Siam and of the Revolutions that have caused the Overthrow of the Empire up to A.D. 1770*, Original French and translated by B.O. CARTWRIGHT, Bangkok: American Presby Mission Press, 1908, p. 31.

<sup>59</sup>J.de BOURGES, *Relation du Voyage de Monseigneur L'Evêque de Béryte Vicaire Apostolique du Royaume de la Cochinchine, par La Turquie, La Perse, Les Indes etc. jusqu'au Royaume de Siam et autres Lieux*, Paris, 1668<sup>2</sup>, pp. 144-145.

<sup>60</sup>Cf. H.A.L. FISHER, *A History of Europe: From the Earliest Times to 1713*, Vol. I, Glasgow: Fontana/Collins, 1986<sup>20</sup>, pp. 679-688.

<sup>61</sup>Cf. W. BLANCHARD, *Thailand: Its People, Its Society, Its culture*, New Haven, 1957, p. 232.

In 1511, d'Albuquerque, the second Portuguese Viceroy, stormed and occupied Malacca which at that time governed by Malay Sultan. Having learnt that the Siamese king claimed some rights over Malacca, d'Albuquerque decided to enter into relations with him in order to avoid trouble with the Siamese. In that year, he despatched Duarte Fernandez to Ayutthaya with a report which had led to the capture of Malacca by the Portuguese.<sup>62</sup>

Duarte Fernandez returned to Malacca with a Siamese ambassador, who took a letter from the king to the king of Portugal as well as some presents. Manuel Teixeira wrote:

Albuquerque was pleased with these offerings, he sent with the Siamese ambassador Antonio de Miranda, de Azevedo and Duarte Coelho with a party and many presents to tell the king of Siam how he had conquered Malacca and to express the desire to open trade between this place and Siam.<sup>63</sup>

However, there is no record about the missionaries, who probably would have accompanied the Portuguese ambassador to Siam.<sup>64</sup> About thirty years later, war broke out between Siam and Burma, and about a hundred Portuguese volunteered to serve in the Siamese army. After the war, in which the Siamese army was victorious, the king of Siam rewarded the Portuguese volunteers by giving them land on the west bank of the river below Ayutthaya to make their residence and to build the church. Thus the first European community and the Christian religion came to settle in Siam in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>65</sup> Syamananda observes that

It is interesting to point out that the Portuguese met with no difficulty in opening relations with Ayutthaya and also enjoyed religious freedom, a rare concession to them, simply because suffering from no prejudices the Siamese adopted a liberal attitude towards foreigners.<sup>66</sup>

Duarte Coelho in 1516 had made a treaty between Siam and Portugal, which was the first one between Siam and a western state. According to the terms of the treaty, the Portuguese agreed to supply Siam with guns and ammunition and in return gained the right to reside and trade at Ayutthaya, Ligor, Pattani, Tenasserim and Mergui. During the five years between the first visit of Fernandez to Ayutthaya and the signature of the treaty in 1516, the Siamese had time to observe that the Portuguese policy in the East aimed at the development of trade rather than the acquisition of territory. Indeed foreign trade was needed by an agricultural country like Siam, as it would contribute to the progress of the country. For these reasons, the Portuguese were accorded a warm welcome.

We should point out here the coming of the Spaniards. Rajanubhap mentioned them as follows:

The Spaniards came in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, but as they backed the Cambodians who were sometimes at war with Siam, they were not particularly welcome and had no permanent establishment here.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>SYAMANANDA, *op. cit.*, p. 42; see also J. de CAMPOS, *Early Portuguese Accounts of Thailand*, in JSS, Vol XXXII, part 1 (1940) 3-4.

<sup>63</sup>M. TEIXEIRA, *The Portuguese Missions in Malacca and Singapore (1511-1958): Malacca*, Vol. I, Macau: Instituto Cultural de Macau, 1986, p. 55.

<sup>64</sup>Cf. *History of the Universal Church and the Church in Thailand* (in Thai), Bangkok: Sarasat Press, 1967<sup>2</sup>, p. 195.

<sup>65</sup>Cf. D. RAJANUBHAP, H.R.H., Prince, *The Introduction of Western Culture in Siam*, in JSS, Vol. XX, part 2 (1926) 1.

<sup>66</sup>SYAMANANDA, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>67</sup>RAJANUBHAP, *The Introduction of Western Culture in Siam*, p. 2.

## 2.5.2 The Dutch's Coming and the Reaction of the Portuguese

At the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the other European nations began to come to Siam. During the reign of king Ekatotsarot, the Dutch came and enjoyed the friendship of the king who concentrated mainly on the development of his kingdom. Van Vliet wrote:

King Ekatotsarot is said to have been greatly inclined towards strangers and foreign nations and to have taken a special interest in enriching his treasury by introducing new taxes.<sup>68</sup>

This aim of the king was so clear when Syamananda confirms that

He levied a tax on shops and markets and a ten percent tax on goods, and permitted the payment of dues in cash instead of manual labour.<sup>69</sup>

In addition as foreign trade would greatly benefit the country, he showed his friendship to the Dutch. The Portuguese also enjoyed his favour. It was economic considerations rather than political ones from the part of the king. The Dutch arrival at Ayutthaya in 1604 was marked by an audience which Naresuan gave to their chief, Cornelius Specx. In fact in 1601, the Dutch reached Pattani as Blankwaardt recorded:

Jacob van Neck sailed for Pattani where he arrived with his vessels "*Amsterdam*" and "*Gouda*" on the 7<sup>th</sup> November 1601. And 3 days later, he concluded a favourable contract with the Queen of Pattani, who was tributary to the king of Siam, holding permission to build a factory and giving facilities for the pepper trade.<sup>70</sup>

The Dutch considered Pattani as the door to China and Japan. Knowing that the king of Siam was doing a lively trade with China, in 1603, the manager of Pattani, van der Leck, made a tour of investigation to Ayutthaya. The next year 1604, Admiral van Warwyck himself went there to seek the king's assistance. Being aware of the favourable results which Holland had obtained in her war against Spain, the king promised assistance.<sup>71</sup> In 1608, the first Dutch trading station was established in Ayutthaya. The Siamese were eager to transact business with the Dutch, as they took the cotton goods in exchange for hides and pepper. In the same year, by command of king Ekatotsarot, a Siamese embassy travelled by a Dutch ship which took 7 months to reach Holland where it was accorded a cordial reception at the Haque and was received by the Stadtholder, Prince Maurice of Orange Nassau on September 10, 1608.

This mission, composed of 20 Siamese, arrived on the 9<sup>th</sup> December 1607, whence it left on the fleet of Cornelis Metalief de Jonge for Holland, where it was received at the Haque by the Prince of Orange (Maurice) on September 10-11, 1608.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>68</sup>J. Van VLIET, *The Short History of the Kings of Siam*, Original Dutch and translated into English by L. ANDAYA, Bangkok, 1975, p. 61.

<sup>69</sup>SYAMANANDA, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

<sup>70</sup>W. BLANKWAARDT, *Notes upon the Relations between Holland and Siam*, in JSS: *Collected Articles: Relationship with Portugal, Holland and the Vatican*, VII (1959) 16.

<sup>71</sup>Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 18.

In the reign of king Songtham, on June 12, 1617, the Dutch signed their first treaty with Siam, obtaining definite terms for the purchase of hides. Certainly the Portuguese, seeing this relation, were not so pleased. Manit Xumsai relates that:

The Dutch and the Portuguese were then at war, and the Portuguese told the Siamese that the Dutch were just sea-rovers with no country of their own. The Dutch had just invented the telescope and showed the Siamese that the Dutch were far too superior above other countries.<sup>73</sup>

Blankwaardt points out to us an interesting letter:

There exists in Portuguese records a letter on the subject dated Lisbon, January 4, 1608, written by the king of Portugal to his viceroy in India. The viceroy is therein recommended to make a fortress in Martavan in the kingdom of Pegu, with the object of keeping the king of Siam in check and to prevent him making a league and friendship with the "rebels" (in casu the Dutch). Great fear is expressed in the said document that the rebels may teach the Siamese the exercise of war and artillery, and thereby do irreparable evil.<sup>74</sup>

For a time, king Songtham even urged the Dutch to fortify Mergui and thus ally themselves with Ayutthaya against the Portuguese, but the Dutch were more interested in using Ayutthaya and Pattani as doorways into trading relations with China and Japan.<sup>75</sup>

### 2.5.3 The Arrival of The English and the Reaction of the Dutch

At the beginning of the reign of king Songtham came the English, who began to take interest in Ayutthaya after the founding of the English East India Company on December 31, 1600. The Company ordered Captain Antony Hippon to take one ship "*the Globe*" for a visit to Siam.

On August 15, 1612, the *Globe* arrived at Ayutthaya and the English were well received. One of these English merchants, Lucas Antheuniss, had an audience with the King on September 17, 1612, when he presented to him a letter from King James I (1603-1625) of the Stuart Dynasty.<sup>76</sup> The King was much pleased. He not only allowed them to trade at Ayutthaya, but also allotted them a plot of land to build their factory on the east side of the Chao Phya river between the Dutch and the Japanese settlements.

Having successfully weathered the storms which were threatened by the Portuguese, the Dutch found themselves up against the English.

In a letter dated September 2, 1612, van Nijenroode remarks that it will not be possible to prevent the English trade, as the king, who tried to attract every nation to his country, was much pleased that another had arrived.<sup>77</sup>

So the first visit of English merchants caused already friction between them and the Dutch, and that was to remain so in the years to come. Unfortunately the English factories at Ayutthaya and at Pattani did not make any profit. On the contrary, they suffered considerable losses because:

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<sup>73</sup>XUMSAI, *Popular History of Thailand*, pp. 238-239.

<sup>74</sup>BLANKWAARDT, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>75</sup>Cf. WYATT, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

<sup>76</sup>Cf. A. CAPPELLI, *Cronologia, Cronografia e Calendario Perpetuo*, Milano: Ulrico Hoepli, 1983<sup>5</sup>, p. 539.

<sup>77</sup>BLANKWAARDT, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20.



1. English ships did not visit Siam frequently.
2. The Agent of the Company did not seem to carry on his work in a proper manner.
3. The Portuguese and the Dutch did all they could to hamper the English trade. There is a story of Benjamin Fairlie being poisoned to death.<sup>78</sup>

Because of these unfavourable trading conditions, the trade between Siam and the English East India Company ceased in 1625, not to resume again until the 1660. In general, the whole of the reign of King Prasattong was marked by considerable Dutch involvement in Ayutthaya; the relationship with the Dutch had its ups and downs. Conditions changed during the reign of King Narai because of three reasons:

1. Following the death of Prasattong, Narai asked unsuccessfully for Dutch aid in making his bid for the throne. So after his ascension to the throne, he wanted to diminish the Dutch influence.
2. The coming of the French, who could please King Narai, encouraged him to accomplish his desire.
3. Late in 1662, in order to finance many wars in his reign, the king imposed a royal monopoly on all trade which meant that goods destined for export had first to be sold to the king, despite the Dutch monopoly on hides.<sup>79</sup>

In 1661, the English reopened their trading station at Ayutthaya, they resumed their relations with Siam in King Narai's reign, thus causing displeasure to the Dutch, since they were afraid that the English might take away part of their trade. Siam hoped to benefit from the trade with the English and to play them off against the Dutch whose considerable influence was felt at Ayutthaya. Since the beginning of King Charles II's reign (1660-1685), England went to war once with Holland.<sup>80</sup>

#### **2.5.4 The Arrival of the French and the Religious Situation**

King Narai had turned to the French in the hope of using them to counteract the Dutch influence in Siam. The relation between Siam and France was begun by the French Catholic missionaries. So the aim of the French's coming was different from the Dutch, the English, the Portuguese, who wanted to trade, but the French's main aim was to propagate Roman Catholicism. The Pope, Alexander VII (1655-1667), recognized the mission in 1659 and consecrated three members of the mission; Pallu became Bishop of Heliopolis, Lambert de la Motte was Bishop of Berytus and Cotollendi was Bishop of Metellopolis.

#### **The French Settlement**

The first three missionaries set sail from Marseilles on November 27, 1660. The party consisted of Lambert de la Motte, Bishop of Berytus and Apostolic Vicar for Cochinchine and five provinces of China, and Fathers J. de Bourges and Francis Deydier. They reached Mergui in April 1662 and continued the journey to Ayutthaya. Later de Bourges wrote that the original intention was to reach Burma and make the way into China but this plan was rendered impracticable by the incursion of Chinese troops into Burma.<sup>81</sup> The final stage of journey to Cochinchina had to be abandoned because of the unrest in Cambodia. Thus their settlement in Siam was by no means calculated...

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<sup>78</sup>Cf. SYAMANANDA, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

<sup>79</sup>WYATT, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

<sup>80</sup>Cf. CAPPELLI, *op. cit.*, p. 539; see also FISHER, *op. cit.*, pp. 677-683.

<sup>81</sup>Cf. De BOURGES, *op. cit.*, p. 139; E.W. HUTCHINSON, *The French Foreign Mission in Siam During the XVIIth Century*, in *JSS: Relationship with France, England and Denmark*, VIII (1959) 25.

The other factor which brought Siam into relation with France was Constantine Phalkon, who wielded considerable influence with king Narai and aimed at promoting friendly relations and fostering trade with France. He was by then a Catholic and was intimate with the Jesuits who were also French.<sup>82</sup>

### 2.5.5 King Narai's Attitude towards the French Missionaries

In his reign, Narai opened the country to foreigners, including their religions. De Bourges who came to Siam with Lambert related that

Je ne crois pas qu'il y ait pays au monde où il se trouve plus de Religions et dont l'exercice soit plus permis que dans Siam. Les Gentiles, les Chrétiens et les Mahometans, qui tous se partagent en différentes Sectes, ont toute liberté pour suivre tel culte qui leur semblera le meilleur.<sup>83</sup>

Sometimes De Bourges used to ask the question why the king was so kind as to permit the different religions to practise so freely in his country. The answer was as follows:

C'étoit par une autre maxime de politique que ce Prince en use de la sort: car comme il tire un grand profit du séjour que les étrangers sont dans ses Etats, soit pour les arts, soit pour le debit des marchandises du pays, soit pour l'abord de celles de dehors, il les invite par cette liberté qu'il accorde à tous, à s'établir chez luy et à y continuer leur commerce. Il y a encore une autre raison de cette conduite, c'est l'opinion qui regne parmy les Siamois que toute Religion est bonne.<sup>84</sup>

That's why as soon as the King heard about the coming of the missionaries, he gave them the special audience. As Launay wrote:

Cependant le Roi Phra Narai, qui avait entendu parler des missionnaires, exprima le désir de les voir; ceux-ci se rendirent à Louvo, résidence royale située à quelques kilomètres de Juthia, et dont le prince goûtait le séjour. Phra Narai reçut Lambert de la Motte et ses prêtres avec distinction. Cette visite n'était pas officielle.<sup>85</sup>

We can summarize the ways which King Narai expressed his openness to French missionaries as follows:

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<sup>82</sup>Constantine Phalkon was known to his English contemporaries as Constant Falcon. French writers of his period generally called him Monsieur Constance. His family name was Gerakis or Jerakis, which word in modern Greek means "Falcon", and is a common name in that language. The Eleftheroudakis Encyclopedia (Athens) contains the following account of him (vol. III, p. 810) as follows:

"*Jerakis, Constantine*".-A Cephalonian merchant who rose to the highest official position in Siam. Born 1647. Dead 1688. Jerakis, while still a boy, left Cephalonia in the year 1660 in an English ship on which he took service. Later he found a post with the English India Company and studied the language and habits of Eastern people. Having resigned his post with the Company, he entered commerce, but during one of his sea voyages he was wrecked and lost all his fortune. Among his fellow-passengers was an Envoy of the king of Siam returning from Persia, who greatly esteemed Jerakis's cleverness and energy and persuaded him to follow him to Siam, where he entered the financial service of the country. He was so successful in this service that he was rapidly promoted and become the Prime Minister, and in real fact the master of the country. Cf. E.W. HUTCHINSON, *Adventurers in Siam in the Seventeenth Century*, London: The Royal Asiatic Society, 1940, p. X-XI. For the further detailed study upon the life and role of Constantine Phalkon, see also E.W. HUTCHINSON, *1688 Revolution in Siam: The Memoir of Father de Bèze, S.J.*, Original French, Hong Kong: University Press, 1968; F.H. TURPIN, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-39.

<sup>83</sup>De BOURGES, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

<sup>84</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 165-166

<sup>85</sup>LAUNAY, *Histoire de la Mission de Siam*, p. 12.

1. The audience with the king in 1665 to Lambert and his followers. They took the opportunity to expound to him the principles of Christianity.

Le Roi posa plusieurs questions sur l'étendue de la France, sur son commerce, ses richesses et ses armées. L'Evêque lui expliqua les principales vérités du Christiansme.<sup>86</sup>

The second official audience was given to Lambert again in 1667, in which the King had posed many questions about Catholicism, which had made Lambert think that may be God's grace might have been working in the heart of the king of Siam. The third audience took place on October 18, 1673. This time it was a solemn audience since:

Audience solennelle du roi de Siam aux Evêques. Inform que les évêques français avaient à lui remettre des lettres et des présents du roi Louis XIV et du Pape Clément IX, Phra Narai, dont cette nouvelle flatta l'amour-propre et éveilla la curiosité, résolut de leur donner une audience solennelle. La réception eut lieu le 18 Octobre 1673.<sup>87</sup>

2. King Narai gave the French missionaries land and houses as well as facilities to build the churches and the freedom to preach Christianity. Obviously the King was pleased to hear the Bishop's discourse on Christianity. His gifts helped to embellish the seminary. The King built the church at his own expense. The people were free to choose their religion.<sup>88</sup> Above all, King Narai was attracted by the French Jesuit missionaries, since they were the architects, the astronomers. They had been introduced to him by Constantine Phalkon, the Prime Minister.

King Narai became interested in the French mission when he learned about the reputation of Fr. Thomas Valguanera, a Jesuit, as a skilful architect and engineer. The king ordered new forts to be built at Bangkok, Nonthaburi, Ayutthaya and other towns for the defence of the kingdom. Fr. Thomas was in charge of the construction of these forts.<sup>89</sup>

This is also repeated by Wyatt when he says:

French Jesuit missionaries, established in Ayutthaya since 1662, had made themselves useful to the Court by rendering technical assistance in such matters as the design and construction of fortifications and palaces.<sup>90</sup>

3. Siamese embassies to France. In 1681, king Narai decided to send an embassy to France with a view of securing a true understanding with France and a friendship that would withstand the passage of time. Unfortunately the ship "*Soleil d'Orient*" was wrecked by violent storms at the east bank of Madacadkar. Launay wrote that

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<sup>86</sup>Ibid., pp. 12-13

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>88</sup>Cf. TURPIN, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

<sup>89</sup>SYAMANANDA, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

<sup>90</sup>WYATT, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

Enfin, le Soleil d'Orient les prit à son bord à la fin du mois d'août, afin de faire route vers Madagascar. C'est ce qu'annonçait Gayme dans une lettre du 25 juillet 1681, la dernière que nous possédions de lui. Pris par la tempête sur la côte orientale de la grande île africaine, le navire périt corps et biens.<sup>91</sup>

On January 25, 1684, the second embassy left Ayutthaya and 6 months later reached Europe, the Siamese embassy was accompanied by Fr. Vachet and Pascot, taking copies of King Narai's letters to France. They achieved the desired result. In 1686 July, the third embassy reached Paris headed by Kosa Pan or known as Okphra Visutti Sunthorn in French records.

This time Siam and France made a treaty. The ones who played the very important role for this mission were Fr. Guy Tachard (a Jesuit), and Phalkon.<sup>92</sup> The fourth embassy of Siam led by Fr. Tachard went to France in 1688 to make the new treaty. Fr. Tachard also led three Siamese mandarins to Rome and had an audience of the Pope Innocent XI. He gave also the letter and Memorandum on the state of the mission in Indo-China written by Constantine Phalkon to the Pope.<sup>93</sup>

## 2.6 Phra Phetracha and The Revolution of 1688

Finally there was the famous Ayutthaya revolution of 1688, which followed the death of king Narai.<sup>94</sup> The revolution was led by Phra Phetracha, who was the commander of the elephantry.

The fact of the king's being in poor health and of his having no heirs, was advantageous to the ambitious designs of Phra Phetracha. Some factors which led to the revolution are as follows:

1. The major thrust of the conspiracy that placed Phra Phetracha on the throne was directed against Constantine Phalkon, who had become Prime Minister under the Siamese title "*Chao Phya Wichayen*" and was based in that sector of the bureaucracy least directly concerned with foreigners, foreign trade and the outside world. Phra Phetracha assembled a crowd on the morrow and made announcement to them thus:

The sick king has consigned the conduct of state business to Phra Phetracha and has relieved Chao Phya Wichayen of office, the king finds guilty of betraying the realm into the power of foreigners.<sup>95</sup>

2. The Siamese officials were also very afraid that Phalkon might achieve the king's conversion into Christianity in order to serve the French purpose and that the country might be brought under French domination, as a large French garrison was already stationed in the kingdom. In fact Phra Narai pretended to have decided learning towards Christianity. The Buddhist temples were closed and those who disobeyed this order were severely punished.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>91</sup>LAUNAY, *Histoire de la Mission de Siam*, p. 52.

<sup>92</sup>Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 63-65.

<sup>93</sup>Cf. Vat. Biblioteca Carpinea, Cogregatione 32, cited by HUTCHINSON, *The French Foreign Mission in Siam*, pp.63-83.

<sup>94</sup>His death was narrated differently, see XUMSAI, *op. cit.*, p. 276; see also TURPIN, *op. cit.*, p. 87; A. LAUNAY, *Siam et Les Missionnaires Français*, Tours: Alfred Mame et Fils, 1896, p. 122.

<sup>95</sup>HUTCHINSON, *1688 Revolution in Siam*, pp. 87-88.

<sup>96</sup>Cf. TURPIN, *op. cit.*, p. 41. There are some documents which show that Louis XIV wanted that king Narai would convert to Christianity. Phalkon with the French Jesuits affirmed that Narai was much attracted to Christianity, while the French missionaries did not agree with them. According to the French missionaries, it was very unusual for the king who confessed a different religion to favour them like that. Bishop Laneau (1674-1688) said with prudence that "il serait bien difficile de pénétrer le motif de cette conduite". Cf. LAUNAY, *Histoire de la Mission de Siam*, p. 29. In the letter to king Narai, Louis XIV expressed his hope, saying:

So Phetracha took advantage of the popular discontent as a basis on which to rear the fabric of his fortune. At first he sheltered his aims under the cloak of religion. A hypocritical zealot in religious matters, he gained the confidence of the monks and people, who regarded him as the protector of their temples and of their ancestral form of worship. Phetracha arrested Phalkon on a charge of treason and condemned him to death. All his property being confiscated.

About June 5, 1688, he was beheaded. After the death of Phalkon, Phetracha sent for and arrested the king's two brothers who lived in Ayutthaya. They were also killed later. King Narai died on July 11, 1688, and Phra Phetracha mounted the throne without difficulty. Thus began the Ban Plu Luang Dynasty. Christianity was persecuted. The French garrison was seized and the French people were driven away. The missionaries and the Christians suffered for many years. Bishop Laneau was imprisoned and tortured. Launay related how much the Christians had suffered, adding that

De 1687 à 1693, aucun missionnaire n'est venu remplacer ceux que la maladie a abattus, que la mort a enlevés ou les circonstances éloignés du Siam.<sup>97</sup>

## **2.7 The Invasion of Burma and the Destruction of Ayutthaya.**

Although Phetracha had already expelled the French troop from the country, the missionaries were permitted to continue their work. Meanwhile the Dutch had assisted Phetracha in getting rid of Phalkon and expelling the French from the country, and so Phetracha showed favour to the Dutch. On November 14, 1688, a new treaty with the Dutch was signed. The Dutch went about their business until the fall of Ayutthaya to the Burmese in 1767.

Phetracha's reign of 15 years was by no means a peaceful one. Four small rebellions broke out, but he suppressed them without great difficulty. When he was seriously ill, Luang Sorasak, who was the Maha Uparat, killed his son, who was also his heir for the throne, and after his death, Luang Sorasak assumed the name of king Prachao Sua (1703-1709). His son, king Taisra (1709-1733), succeeded him. The peaceful 24 year reign was interrupted in 1717 by an intervention in the internal affairs of Cambodia in order to maintain his overlordship. He spent his time in improving the internal water communication and the foreign trade. His reign is noteworthy for the renewal of Spanish intercourse with Siam. His reign ended in the same terrible manner as that of king Prasattong, that being a struggle between an uncle and two nephews.

Prince Porn, the brother of king Taisra, put his two sons to death in the royal manner after a struggle for the throne which had developed into a civil war. He then won the throne, taking the title of king Boromakot (1733-1758). Under his rule of 25 years, the country enjoyed peace and tranquillity, literature with the arts and crafts flourished. (It was in the second year of his reign that a half Chinese boy called Sin was born. This boy was one day going to join the royal service and became an outstanding cavalry officer. In the same reign four years later, 1737, another boy by the name of Tong Duang was born. He too was to grow up to be a great soldier and finally the founder of the Chakri Dynasty of Bangkok). His son, Prince Utumporn, succeeded him in 1758, but in order to avoid any incident which might cause him trouble, he handed over the crown to his brother, Prince Ekatat, and retired to the monastery after a reign of more than one month only.

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Que vous continuez votre protection aux Evêques et aux missionnaires Apostoliques, qui travaillent à l'instruction de vos ujets dans la Religion Chrétien; et nôtre estime particulière pour vous, nous fait désirer ardemment, que vous voulez bien vous-même les écouter et apprendre d'eux les véritables maximes et les mystères sacrez d'une si sainte Loy, dans laquelle on a la connoissance du vray Dieu, qui seul peut, après vous avoir fait regner long-tems et glorieusement sur vous sujets, vous combler d'un bonheur ternal. G. TACHARD, S.J., *Voyage de Siam des Péres Jesuits. Envoyez par le Roy aux Indes et à La Chine*, Paris: Arnould Seneuze, 686, p. 241.

<sup>97</sup>LAUNAY, *Histoire de la Mission de Siam*, p. 87.

The accession of King Ekatat (1758-1767) was a catastrophe for Siam. Burma under King Alaunpaya (1752-1760) was united and strong, and as always a united and strong Burma meant an attack against a weak and divided Ayutthaya. The main reason for this Burmese aggression was that Alaunpaya was aspiring to receive the glories of Burennonng's reign. In 1758, he utilized the Thai refusal to hand to him the Mon rebels who had taken refuge in Siam as a pretext for an attack on the country. His army laid siege to Ayutthaya in April 1760. King Ekatat, who was a very weak king and extremely incompetent, sent for the ex-King Utumporn. So Utumporn reassumed absolute power and by organizing the defences of Ayutthaya inflicted a severe defeat on the enemy. Alaunpaya himself was wounded by cannon fire. With their king unable to direct command, the Burmese withdrew to their country and Alaunpaya died during the retreat in May 1760.

The King's reward for Utumporn was to receive him while having an un-sheathed sword sitting in his own lap. Utumporn took the hint and returned to his monastery. Having learnt a bitter lesson, he refused to assume the role of the defender when the Burmese pounded the walls of Ayutthaya again six years later.

King Mangra of Burma (1763-1776) succeeded his brother, Manglok (1760-1763). Under his leadership, the Burmese besieged Ayutthaya once more by February 1766. This siege caused terrible hardship to the defenders, as it lasted one year and two months. Even with the poor leadership shown by the King and his generals, the Thais could still defend their city for a long time.

Finally Ayutthaya fell into the enemy's hands on the night of April 7, 1767. Showing no mercy, the Burmese put Ayutthaya to the fire and sword. Prince Chula Chakrabongse narrated that

The unfortunate monarch escaped to the precincts of a monastery outside the city walls, but he was caught by some Burmese troops... The princes, including the Priest-Prince Utumporn, the nobility and the people who had survived the massacre, were driven off to Burma as prisoners... After the sack of Ayutthaya, a great city of over a million people was left in ruins with barely a population of 10,000. The history, literature, arts and history of the Thais seemed lost forever.<sup>98</sup>

Damrong Rajanubhap gave us some more details: the Burmese arrested 30,000 Thai people, collected all the gold and treasures, having spent 9 to 10 days in Ayutthaya. The Burmese troop of 3,000 soldiers stayed in the city. They found king Ekatat in a very weak condition and soon afterwards he died of exhaustion and starvation.<sup>99</sup>

## **2.8 King Taksin and the Restoration of Independence**

It cannot be denied that King Ekatat bore the brunt of responsibility for the fall of Ayutthaya. However Wood once wrote:

We see them humbled to the dust again and again by a more powerful neighbour, yet always rising up and regaining their freedom... Those who believe in the survival of the fittest will admit that the Siamese, whatever their faults, must possess some qualities which have marked them out to maintain this unique position.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup>CHAKRABONGSE, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

<sup>99</sup>Cf. D. RAJANUBHAP, H.R.H., Prince, *Collected Chronicles* (in Thai), Part VI, Bangkok: Kurusapa, 1963, pp. 136-139.

<sup>100</sup>WOOD, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8.

Since Burma recently had gone to war with China in the extreme north, the Burmese soon withdrew from Siam, leaving only small garrisons behind. A young man named Sin, who was born in 1734, the son of a Chinese father and a Siamese mother, and had been adopted by a noble family and raised in the capital, was a very unassuming person. By the time of the Burmese invasions, he was serving as governor of the province of Tak, and to distinguished him from previous governors, he was referred to as Taksin. With his troops, he had withdrawn from Tak to aid in the defence of the capital, but seeing the hopelessness of the situation, he fled the city when the Burmese encircled it and, with a following of troops, made his way to the Southeast, to Chantaburi, which he captured in June 1767. In October 1767, having mustered 5,000 troops and all in fine spirits. Taksin sailed up the Menam and seized Thonburi (which is opposite present day Bangkok), executing the Thai governor, Tong-In, whom the Burmese had placed on this position. He followed up his victory by quickly and boldly attacking the main Burmese camp at Posanton near Ayutthaya. The Burmese under the command of Suki were utterly defeated, and Taksin won back Ayutthaya from the enemy within 7 months from its holocaust by the end of 1768. Taking into consideration the two important factors:

1. the vast destruction of Ayutthaya which had strained the resources.
2. the Burmese were quite familiar with the various routes leading to Ayutthaya,

he decided not to re-establish Ayutthaya as the capital. Instead, he established Thonburi as his capital, nearer to the sea than Ayutthaya. King Mangra of Burma never abandoned his plan to force Siam to become vassalage. He commanded the governors of Tavoy to subjugate him and his army advanced to the district of Bangkung in the province of Samut Songkram, but it was routed by Taksin himself. The next attempt of Burma was in 1774, but all in vain.

In October 1775, the greatest Burmese invasion which occurred in the Thonburi period was under the command of General Azaewunky. Azaewunky besieged Phitsanulok which was defended by the brother Generals, Chakri and Surasih,<sup>101</sup> who defeated his troops.

He asked for a personal meeting with the much younger Thai General, Chakri, then 39, saying that the days were over when the Burmese could conquer the Thais. He also prophesied that Chakri had high qualities which would one day lead him to his becoming king. The important fact is that after this campaign the Burmese did not invade Siam again for the rest of King Taksin's reign.

During his reign, Taksin worked hard to reunite the kingdom. Having obtain full sovereignty over Chieng Mai, the Laotian principalities in the north and northeast and Sri Tammarat, he was determined to get Cambodia to become his vassal as she had previously been to the Kings of Ayutthaya. In 1781, Taksin sent Chakri accompanied by his son with a strong force to quell the rebellion in Cambodia. It was while he was in the middle of this campaign that General Chakri heard that a serious revolt against the King had broken out in the capital.

It was alleged that the strain of seven years' campaigning and eight years as the absolute ruler of a large country had driven King Taksin insane. Prince Chula Chakrabongse mentioned that

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<sup>101</sup> Among the young men who flocked to join Taksin were two brothers, sons of an official of the old regime, Phra Akson Sundorn, who married a beautiful daughter of a Chinese richest family. Phra Akson himself had the personal name of Tong Dee. The elder son called Tong Duang was born in 1737, and the younger Boonma in 1743. Tong Duang joined the royal service until he was promoted as Phya Chakri. Boonma came to join Taksin during the confusion of the siege and fall of Ayutthaya. He was so brave and able that soon became a favorite of his chief. In the frequent inquiries of Taksin, Boonma or Phya Surasih told him that he had an elder brother superior to himself in every noble quality, brave, bold and wise. Cf. J. BOWRING, Sir, *The Kingdom and People of Siam*, Vol. I, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1977<sup>4</sup>, pp. 65-67. Soon both brothers were in Taksin's service and they fought by his side in almost every campaign until Taksin had himself proclaimed king of Siam. Cf. J. BOWRING, *The Kingdom and People of Siam*, Vol. II, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1977<sup>4</sup>, p. 354. In the first seven years of his reign, king Taksin himself went on campaign with his troops, accompanied always by Chakri and Surasih. But after seven years, he must have found the strain too great, and he decided to remain in Thonburi and rule his kingdom. Thus from 1775, General Chakri always had independent command, usually supported by his brother in charge of the forward elements.

He was said to have indulged in several instances of cruelty, including flogging monks who refused to make obeisance to him when he claimed to be an incarnation of Buddha.<sup>102</sup>

Some French missionaries, who lived in Siam during this period, had written letters to inform their directors in Paris of their work. M. Coudé wrote in 1780 as follows:

Jusqu'au mois de juillet 1779, nous avons été assez tranquilles à Siam; le roi cependant se fâchait de temps en temps contre nous, mais cela était passager. Depuis plus d'un an, il ne nous appelait plus à son audience, et il passait tout son temps à prier, jeûner et méditer, pour pouvoir par ce moyen s'envoler dans les airs.<sup>103</sup>

M. Descrouvrières wrote on December 21, 1782, eight months after the revolt was over, as follows:

Cette dernière année, les vexations de ce roi, plus qu'à demi fou, furent encore plus fréquentes et plus cruelles qu'auparavant; il faisait emprisonner, mettre aux fers, rouer de coups, suivant son caprice, tantôt sa femme, tantôt son fils héritier présomptif, tantôt ses premiers officiers.<sup>104</sup>

A revolt against Taksin broke out at Ayutthaya and was led by a General called Phya San who was so successful in his venture, which had met no real resistance, that he held the King and the senior princes in captivity. When Phya Chakri arrived outside the city walls in April 1782, it was obvious that he had the army behind him. Phya San and all the officers of state went to meet him and pay homage. Immediately Phya Chakri consulted all the principal officials as to what to do with the mad ex-King, Taksin. To let Taksin enter a monastery was no guarantee for the future as Buddhist monks could leave the order at any time, and in Ayutthaya two princes had done so to mount the throne. Exile would be no better as the dethroned king could become a useful pawn in the hands of hostile neighbours. Their unanimous counsel was to put him to death.

King Taksin was executed as a prince, being hit on the back of the neck by a club of sandal wood as decreed by king Boromatrailokanat in 1450.<sup>105</sup>

It was a tragic end to the man who inspired so many to help him expel the Burmese from the country. Chao Phya Dibakarawongse noted that

Thus perished at the age of 49 one of the most remarkable men who ever wore the crown of Siam.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>102</sup>CKAKRABONGSE, *op. cit.*, pp. 76-77.

<sup>103</sup>AME, Siam, Vol. 891, p. 1187. Cf. A. LAUNAY, *Histoire de la Mission de Siam: Documents Historiques*, Vol. II, Paris, 1920, p. 301.

<sup>104</sup>AME, Siam, Vol. 891, pp. 1239, 1245. Cf. LAUNAY, *Documents Historiques*, Vol. II, p. 309.

<sup>105</sup>CHAKRABONGSE, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

<sup>106</sup>Chao Phya DIBAKARAWONGSE, *History of the First Reign* (in Thai), edited by Prince D. RAJANUBHAP, Bangkok, 1935<sup>3</sup>, p. 77.



The rebellious Phya San and his chief collaborators suffered the same fate. For the peace and tranquillity of the kingdom, they humbly offered the Crown to Phya Chakri who thereupon ascended the throne as King Ramatibodi or Rama I at the age of forty-five. Thus he inaugurated the Chakri Dynasty. One of the earliest ideas in King Rama I's mind was that Thonburi was not a suitable capital because it was on the west bank of the Menam and open to the traditional enemy from the West, the Burmese. He, therefore, moved the capital to the east bank with the name of Bangkok on April 21, 1782. Thus he also inaugurated the Bangkok period.

## CHAPTER II

### Christianity in Siam

#### 1. Historical Background

##### 1.1 "*Padroado*" and The Establishment of Portuguese Bishops in Asia.

Since all the missionaries who came to Siam in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century were the religious coming from Malacca, Goa, Macao and Manila, they were also under the jurisdiction of "*Padroado*". It is very interesting to examine some significant aspects of this system of *Padroado*, the inconveniences of which became so apparent after some time. It tended to confuse missionary activity with colonialism. A remedy had to be found for this ill in order to ensure better organization of missionary activity and also to extend this activity to those parts of the world which had not been affected by the Patronage Powers.

##### 1.1.1 The Meaning and Origin of "*Padroado*"

*Padroado* or *Patronage* is not only a form of ecclesiastical benefice and Royal patronage but also a contract between the Church and the State, a form of Church-State relationship in which the State played an active role in the administration and support of the Church; it developed extensively in the colonial empires of Portugal and Spain. Papal grants were its foundation but it was extended through the centuries by the unilateral action of the State, since this Patronage was vigorously defended by Portugal and Spain.<sup>107</sup>

Two kinds of rights were assigned to the patron namely:

1. *Jus Praesentandi* which entitled him to appoint someone to the ecclesiastical benefice, whether as Bishop, parish priest or abbot, etc.
2. *Jus Honorifica*

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<sup>107</sup>The primary and studied sources on the Patronage are well-summarized by G. MARTINA, S.J., *Pio IX (1851-1866)*, in *iscellanea Historiae Pontificiae*, Vol. 51, Roma: Editrice Pontificia Universit à Gregoriana, 1986, pp. 376-378; Cf. A.R. Da SILVA, *Patronato Real*, in *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (hereafter we will cite only NCE), Vol. X, Washington D.C., Mcgraw-Hill Company, 1967, pp. 1113-1115; see also W.M. PORRAS, *Patronato of Spain*, in NCE, Vol. X, pp. 1115-1116.

Rights and duties of the patron were summarized in the following Latin verses: *Patrono debetur honos, onus, emolumentum, praesentet, praesit, defendat, alatur egenus*.<sup>108</sup> Christianity throughout Europe developed by means of this system of patronage. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Portuguese patronage was extended overseas by the Popes, as the building of churches and the formation and maintenance of missionaries entailed enormous expenses. It was the "*Order of Christ*", established in Portugal in 1319<sup>109</sup>, that received this right of patronage. As the administrators of the "*Order of Christ*" were members of the Royal family, the overseas patronage became known as the Royal patronage. The one who played an important role in the destiny of Portugal was Henry, the Navigator, one of the sons of John I, king of Portugal (1385-1433), born at Porto on March 4, 1394. In 1415, Henry took the city of Ceuta, on the North-African coast, and this marked the beginning of a new era of Portuguese exploits in maritime discovery. Henry worked out a grand strategy to take western Christendom to the Indian ocean.

Pope Martin V (1417-1431) started a long list of graces and privileges granted by the Church to the Portuguese overseas patronage, in his Bull **Sane Charissimus** of April 4, 1418. In view of his work for the cause of the faith, which included the conversion of African Negroes, Pope Nicholas V (1447-1455) with the Bull **Romanus Pontifex** of January 8, 1455, and Pope Callistus III (1455-1458) with the Bull **Inter Caetera** of March 13, 1456,<sup>110</sup> bestowed on Henry special privileges.

The Portuguese Crown gave him handsome grants and all the necessary facilities to support him in carrying out his designs. After Henry's death in 1460, a few other explorations were undertaken but they were of minor importance. Pope Sixtus IV (1471-1484) in a letter to the Archbishop of Lisbon and the Bishop of Lamego, established the right of patronage to found dioceses, to build the churches and to provide for the necessary personnel, etc., based on the Bull **Clara Devotionis** of August 21, 1472.<sup>111</sup>

It was King John II (1481-1495) who, after the death of Henry, took up the work again, with great zeal. But at this period, Spain contemporaneously emerged as a strong Catholic political power and allied itself with the papacy very intimately. It is significant that Rome used the term *Catholicissimus* (most Catholic) to address the king of Spain. Upon the return of Christopher Columbus from his first trip to America, Ferdinand and Isabella immediately asked Pope Alexander VI (1492-1503) for documents affirming their right to the recently discovered territory and investing them with the extent of jurisdiction similar to that formerly conferred on the kings of Portugal.<sup>112</sup> It was an opinion, as ancient perhaps as the crusades, that the Pope, as Vicar of Christ, had competent authority to dispose of all countries inhabited by heathen nations, in favor of Christian potentates or Christian kings. In their application to the Holy See, they were careful to represent their own discoveries as in no way interfering with the rights formerly conceded by it to their neighbours. They proposed wider services on their part for the propagation of the faith, which they affirmed to be the principal motive of their present operations.

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<sup>108</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 1114; H.A. SANTOS, S.J., *Las Misiones Bajo el Patronato Portugues*, Vol. I, Madrid: EAPSA, 1977, p. 7.

<sup>109</sup>The military Order of Christ was instituted by Pope John XXII on 15<sup>th</sup> march 1319. Cf. **Bullarium Patronatus Portugalliae** (hereafter we will cite only Bull. Pat. Portug.), Tome I, pp. 2-6, 20.

<sup>110</sup>For the Bull **Sane Charissimus** and the Bull **Romanus Pontifex**, see Bull. Pat. Portug., I, pp. 9-10, 31-34; see also C.M. De WITTE, *Les Bulles Pontificales et L'Expansion Portugaise au XV siècle*, in *Revue d'Histoire Ecclesiastique*, 51 (1956) 434 ff. For the Bull **Inter Caetera**, see Bull. Pat. Portug., I, pp. 36-37; see also De WITTE, *op. cit.*, p. 830 ff.

<sup>111</sup>Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.

<sup>112</sup>Cf. W.H. PRESCOTT, *History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella the Catholic*, Vol. II, Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1872, pp. 170-171.

On May 3, 1493, Alexander VI published a Bull **Inter Caetera** in which he, of his own and with certain knowledge and his plenitude of Apostolic power, confirmed these rights for them in the possession of all lands discovered, or thereafter to be discovered by them, in the western ocean, comprehending the same extensive rights of jurisdiction formerly conceded to the kings of Portugal. To avoid rivalry between the powers and to avoid any misunderstanding with the Portuguese, the Pope drew a line of demarcation between Spanish and Portuguese zones of exploration in the new world, a hundred leagues west of the Azores and Cape de Verd Islands. This imaginary line was drawn from pole to pole, as stated in the Bull of His Holiness:

Ad insulas et terras firmas inventas et inveniendas, detectas et detegendas, versus occidentem et meridiem, fabricando et constituendo lineam a Polo Arctico ad Polum Antarcticum.<sup>113</sup>

That which lay to the West was to belong to Spain, and that which lay to the East to Portugal. Other Bulls followed: **Piis Fidelium** of June 25, 1493, granting vicarial power to appoint the missionaries who were to go to the Indies, and various privileges to these and to the natives of the lands discovered, **Inter Caetera** of June 28, 1493, broader than the Bull of the same name, with some variations but with the same intent, **Eximiae Devotionis** of July 2, 1493, granting *Pleno Jure* all the privileges that the Portuguese enjoyed, and **Dudum Siquidem** of September 25, 1493, which annulled the previous concessions and made a new general grant, unconditional and unlimited and broader so as to include India.<sup>114</sup>

Since the papal line of demarcation cooped up their enterprises within two narrow limits and favored Spain, the Portuguese complained and contended that the line should be removed three hundred and seventy leagues west of the Cape de Verd Islands instead of just one hundred. By the treaty of Tordesillas on June 7, 1494, the line was moved 370 leagues to the west and thus Brazil.

At length, Pope Alexander VI by the Brief **Cum Sicut Magestas** of March 26, 1500, again confirmed and decreed that the Apostolic commissar for the newly discovered lands would be appointed by the Portuguese king.<sup>115</sup> Since the rights acquired by the king over the territories of the Indies were not clarified, the grant of general patronage was issued again during the papacy of Julius II (1503-1513), the Bull **Universalis Ecclesiae** of July 28, 1508, gave the rulers of Castile and Léon the right in perpetuity to grant permission for the construction of churches and to propose persons for the offices and benefices of the cathedrals, collegiate churches, monasteries and other institutions for religious services... It stipulated that presentations for benefices decreed in consistory were to be made to the Pope and to the rest of the Bishops.<sup>116</sup>

Pope Leo X (1513-1521) issued the Bull **Dum Fidei Constantiam** of June 7, 1514, restoring all jurisdiction to the "Order of Christ"; at the same time, the Pope, by another Bull **Pro Excellentia Praeemanentia** of June 12, 1514, erected the diocese of Funchal in the Madeira Islands and to this were attached India and Brazil. Moreover, Leo X confirmed the rights of patronage in different documents, especially in **Praecelsae Devotionis** of November 3, 1514, which confirmed all the privileges conceded by Nicholas V and by Sixtus IV. These privileges were extended to the unknown lands.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>113</sup>Bullarium Romanum: Bullarum Diplomatum et Privilegiorum Sanctorum Romanorum Pontificum, Tom. V, Taurinensis Editio, 1857-1872, pp. 361-364.

<sup>114</sup>Cf. PORRAS, *op. cit.*, p. 1116.

<sup>115</sup>Cf. Bull. Pat. Portug., I, p. 59.

<sup>116</sup>Cf. PORRAS, *op. cit.*, p. 1116.

<sup>117</sup>See the Bulls in Bull. Pat. Portug., I, pp. 98-99, 100-101, 106-107.

Pope Paul III (1534-1549) by the Bull **Aequum Reputamus** of November 3, 1534, erected the diocese of Goa, the patronage of which was given to the Portuguese Crown. In this Bull we find a clear definition of the Portuguese patronage or "*Padroado*". According to this definition, the right of presenting to the Pope a suitable candidate for the Bishopric, as well as the right of presenting to the Bishop candidates for the four dignities, canonicates and benefices, was given to the king. The king on his part was bound to provide for the necessities of the diocese: payment of the ecclesiastical officials, building and repairing of churches, chapels and monasteries and providing them with necessary articles for divine worship.<sup>118</sup>

It is interesting to note that these two nations, Spain and Portugal, were still continuing, more or less, in the spirit of the Middle Ages, instead of the period of transition from the Middle Ages to the new epoch through which they were passing. With their strong attachment to the papacy and to the idea of the universal Christian republic, they became the instruments for the expansion of the Church in the newly discovered countries.<sup>119</sup>

Externally, during this time, the Church was also threatened with annihilation by the conquering Muslim power under the new banner of the Turks, who were now encircling Europe from east and the South, from the gates of Vienna through the Balkans, along large stretches of the Mediterranean coast and along the northern coasts of Africa and south Spain, up to Gibraltar. After the fall of Constantinople, on May 29, 1453, the main responsibility of resisting the Muslim challenge devolved on the Christians of Europe.

The fight against the powers of Islam, in general, was quite understandable from the point of view of the crusades by Christian Europe and from that of the committed policies of Spain and Portugal. So the foundation of the patronage by the papal grants favored the Church in this way, and by means of the explorations of Spain and Portugal, the Church could convert the non-Christians to the faith.

In 1580, Portugal fell under the Spanish Crown and remained thus up to 1640, when a national revolution reestablished a Portuguese dynasty on the throne. In this period (1580-1640) something new had happened within the Church organization. The congregation for the propagation of the faith was established in 1622, taking command of all mission work, having ordered the missionaries by "*the instructions*" to evangelize the lands other than those already under "*Padroado*". In 1640, after the victory of the Portuguese revolution, relations between the two missionary bodies were seriously undermined.

### **1.1.2 The Establishment of Portuguese Bishops in Asia**

The Portuguese had come to the East as a torch bearer, to bring the light of faith to million of heathens. Goa, Malacca and Macao thus became the three great centres of irradiation in Asia.

#### **A. Goa, the First Diocese of the East**

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<sup>118</sup>Cf. *Ibid.*, 148-152.

<sup>119</sup>The Middle Ages characterized by universalism and clericalism were now yielding place to the modern tendencies of nationalism, subjectivism and laicalism. Cf. J. LORTZ, *Geschichte der Kirche*, Vol. II, Münster, 1964, pp. 189-190.

Goa is one of those regions in India today where there are a large number of Christians. It has been sometimes called *Rome of the East*; there, Christianity in its western form has made an impact on the life of the people. This is chiefly because Goa was a Portuguese colony from 1510 to 1961. In the history of Christianity in Asia, Goa and its Christians deserve a special place.<sup>120</sup> Historians agree that the primary aim of the Portuguese expeditions to the East was not to establish a colonial empire, but to gain control over profitable trade. In order to safeguard their trade interests, they found it necessary to bring under the sovereign rule of their king certain key positions. In a particular way, the second governor, Albuquerque (1509-1515) was quite convinced of this necessity.

So, he deliberately set out to capture certain strategic places, in India and elsewhere. Hence the conquest of Goa in 1510, Malacca in 1511, Ormuz in 1515 and later on, of Chaul, Daman, Diu, etc. Only Goa, in the course of time, grew into a comparatively large and important possession of the Portuguese in the East.

Pope Clement VII created Goa as a diocese, in the consistory of January 31, 1533, but the Bull was not issued until November 3, 1534,<sup>121</sup> during the papacy of Paul III because Clement VII died in September of the same year. Anyway, a Bishop was appointed only in 1538. He began to reside there in the following year. Before that Bishops were sent out to the East in order to confer the sacraments reserved to them, but with no authority to rule. The diocese of Goa was in the position of *In perpetuum* to the king of Portugal and to his successors. Actually, all the Portuguese territories and centres in and east of Africa formed the diocese of Funchal, instituted by Pope Leo X on June 12, 1514, by the Bull **Pro Excellentia Praeinentia**.<sup>122</sup> The new diocese of Goa stretched from the cape of Good Hope to China and the king, as administrator and patron of the "*Order of Christ*", received the same rights and obligations in its regard as he had for Funchal. On February 4, 1557, the Apostolic Constitution **Etsi Sancta et Immaculata** raised the diocese of Goa to the rank of Archdiocese metropolitan with the Bull **Pro Excellentia Praeinentia** of the same date in accordance with the request of Queen Dona Catherine and of Cardinal D. Henrique.<sup>123</sup> At the same time, they asked the Pope to found the new dioceses of Cochin and Malacca making them suffragans of Goa. Pope Paul IV agreed and all three were founded by the same Bull.

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<sup>120</sup>Cf. A.M. MUNDADAN, *History of Christianity in India*, Vol. I, Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 1984, p. 429.

<sup>121</sup>The Bull **Aequum Reputamus**, see *Bull. Pat. Portug.*, I, pp. 148-152.

<sup>122</sup>Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 100

<sup>123</sup>Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 191-192, 193-195. The Bull **Pro Excellentia Praeinentia** bears the date: Darum romae apud Sanctum Petrum anno incarnationis Dominicae millesimo quingentesimo septimo, pridie nonas Februarii, Pontificatus nostri anno tertio. Given at Rome in St. Peter in the year 1557 of our Lord's Incarnation, 4<sup>th</sup> February, at the third year of our Pontificate. The date followed the Florentine style, according to which the year began, not on January 1, but on March 25, the day of the Incarnation. Therefore according to the usual way of calculating, the date should be February 4, 1558. This is confirmed by the words of the Bull, which referred to the king of Portugal D. Sebastião, but he was only proclaimed king on June 11, 1557. So on February 4, 1557, he was not yet the king. Cited by M. TEIXEIRA, *The Portuguese Mission in Malacca and Singapore (1511-1958): Malacca*, Vol. I, Macau: Instituto Cultural de Macau, 1986, pp. 108-109.

## B. Malacca

Soon after Albuquerque conquered Malacca in 1511, he built a fortress, naming it *A Famosa* (the Famous) and a church at the foot of St. Paul's hill, which was consecrated to Nossa Senhora da Anunciada (Our Lady of the Annunciation), symbolic respectively of the spirit of the Portuguese empire and of the Catholic Church. This church, later, was renamed the church of Our Lady of the Assumption. After the erection of the diocese, the church was raised to the rank of Cathedral. The jurisdiction of the diocese extended over the kingdom of Malaya, Siam, Tonkin, Cochinchina, Cambodia, Ciampa and the Islands of Acheh, Macassar, Solor and Timor with the Moluccas and other neighbouring islands.<sup>124</sup> The same Bull is brought about the foundation of the diocese of Cochin and it conceded the same advantages, rights and privileges. Malacca, by this time, had become the centre of the Apostolate in the East and through the members of the religious orders resident there, the faith was spread to Cambodia, Siam, Indochina, Indonesia, Moluccas, Solor, Timor, China and Japan. The diocese of Malacca ceased to exist as such by the Brief **Multa Praeclare** of August 24, 1838, issued by the Pope Gregory XVI (1831-1846). On September 10, 1841, an Apostolic Vicariate was erected in Malaya and entrusted to the Society of the Foreign Mission of Paris. The diocese of Malacca was reestablished by Pope Leo XIII on August 10, 1888, and on September 30, 1953, the diocese became an Archdiocese. On February 25, 1955, Malaya was divided into 3 dioceses, the Archdiocese of Malacca-Singapore, the diocese of Kuala Lumpur and the diocese of Penang.

## C. Macao

The diocese of Macao was founded by the Bull **Super Specula** of February 23, 1576, issued by Pope Gregory XIII. The diocese must have served the Christians of China and Japan. Macao lies on a small peninsula connected to the main land of China by a narrow strip of land. It has had extraordinary importance as the gateway of Christianity to China. Missionaries destined for China, Cochinchina and Japan all arrived at Macao and stayed there until their entry into one of these countries could

be arranged. It is very interesting to note here that during 1583-1632, there were only Jesuit missionaries working in China and Japan, with their college in Macao. This was because Pope Gregory XIII by the Brief **Expastorali Officio** of January 28, 1585, conceded the exclusive privilege of the evangelization of China and Japan to the Jesuits.<sup>125</sup> But on December 12, 1600, Pope Clement VIII recalled this privilege by the Constitution **Onerosa Pastoralis**.<sup>126</sup> During this period, there were also some Franciscans who came to work in this part of the world but without permission.

## 1.2 Propaganda Fide and the Sending of the Apostolic Vicars

The setting up of the Sacred Congregation *De Propaganda Fide* was certainly an event of major importance in the history of the Church and specially in the history of the mission. Pope Gregory XV called the new congregation into existence on January 6, 1622. The very first page of the *Acta Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide* fixes this event in history with these words:

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<sup>124</sup>By the Brief **Cum Sicut** of June 4, 1669, and **Speculatores** of September 13, 1669, Siam became an Apostolic Vicariate and independent of the diocese of Malacca. Cf. TEIXEIRA, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

<sup>125</sup>Cf. Archivo Ibero-Americano, an. VI, 1919, Vol. XI, pp. 411-412 cited by L. MAGNINO, *Pontificia Nipponica: Le Relazioni tra La Santa Sede e Il Giappone attraverso i Documenti Pontifici*, Prima Parte (sec. XVI-XVIII), Romae: Officium Libri Catholici, 1947, pp. 24-27.

<sup>126</sup>Cf. MAGNINO, *Ibid.*, pp. 62-67; P.M. D'ELIA, S.J., *Sunto Storico dell'Attività della Chiesa Cattolica in Cina dalle Origini ai Giorni Nostri*, Scianghai, 1934, p. 40. For the Bull **Super Specula** see *Bull. Pat. Portug.*, I, pp. 243-245. The diocese of Macao belonged to the Portuguese patronage. Cf. A.R. Da SILVA, *Le Patronage Portugais de L'Orient: Aperçu Historique*, Lisboa: Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1957, p. 20.

In Christi nomine, Amen. Anno ab ejusdem Nativitate 1622, die 6. Januarii. Acta Sacrae Congregationis Cardinalium de Propaganda Fide. Sub Gregorio XV Pontifice Maximo.<sup>127</sup>

But the Bull of erection was given only on June 22, 1622, entitled **Constitutio** and begins with the words **Inscrutabili Divinae Providentiae Arcano**.<sup>128</sup> The tasks assigned to the new congregation consisted in doing nothing less than everything that could help in spreading the Catholic faith.

Its field of activity was the whole world. The congregation was to bring the two most important events of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, namely, the expansion of the world through geographical discoveries, and the Protestant Reform, into new relation with the Church. It was also to lead to contacts with the Eastern Church that had by then already been separated from the Roman Church for half a millennium. In later documents, this threefold task is repeatedly spoken of in this way: *to help souls that are off the true path of salvation because of Schism, heresy or finally infidelity*.<sup>129</sup>

The word "mission" was used by the congregation in the beginning in its original, proper and literal sense of "sending out". The congregation sent the Apostolic Vicars and also the missionaries to fulfill the tasks.

### 1.2.1 The Purpose of Sending the Apostolic Vicars

Some inconveniences in the missionary work came from the system of Patronage which had many rights and privileges granted by the Popes. By the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Portuguese Empire, in the East, was in full decline. Most of the dominions had been lost to the Dutch and the British. Many of the regions conquered by the Portuguese had by then recovered their independence and since it was practically impossible for Portugal to exercise an effective patronage in the occupied territories, Propaganda Fide devised the principle of limited patronage; by this, Propaganda Fide firmly refused to acknowledge the right of Patronage:

- a. in lands which had never been conquered by the Portuguese.
- b. in lands which had recovered their independence and were under their native rulers, and
- c. in territories occupied by the Dutch and the British.<sup>130</sup>

A specific application of this principle is the case of China, where Propaganda Fide never admitted the extension of the diocese of Macao over the Chinese Empire as the Portuguese Crown had claimed. Pope Innocent XII took a very decisive stand on this issue and supported Propaganda Fide's policy with his personal approval.

The other issue which was keenly debated between the Portuguese Crown and Propaganda Fide was the institution of Apostolic Vicars in the Far East. During the long period of Portugal's uncertain political situation, in order to provide for the spiritual needs of the Christians and the evangelization of the pagans, Propaganda sent to China and Indochina prelates endowed with the episcopal character and consecrated to the title of a diocese *In partibus infidelium* (Titular Bishops). These Apostolic Vicars were, whenever possible, chosen from diocesan priests or from those who were more independent of the Patronage and the authority of religious superiors. Propaganda Fide also bid all missionaries to follow all the directives given by Rome. So, in this way, the direction of missionary activity returned to the hands of the Supreme Pontiff.

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<sup>127</sup>Acta Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide, Vol. 3 (1622-1625), f. 1.; cited also by J. METZLER, Foundation of the Congregation "de Propaganda Fide" by Gregory XV, in Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide Memoria Rerum. 350 years in the Service of the Missions 1622-1972 (hereafter we will cite only Memoria Rerum), Vol. I/1 1622-1700, Rom-Freiburg-Wien: Herder, 1971, p. 86. This Volume 3 of Acta in fact the first volume of the Acta. Volume 1 and 2 are duplicates. Cf. N. KOWALSKY, OMI and J. METZLER, OMI, Inventory of the Historical Archives of Propaganda Fide, Rome: Urbaniana University Press, 1983<sup>2</sup>, pp. 21-22.

<sup>128</sup>Ibid., f. 23<sup>r</sup>. Cited also by METZLER, op. cit., p. 93; see also Collectanea S. Congregationis de Propaganda Fide, Vol. I, pp. 2-4.

<sup>129</sup>Cf. Circular letter to all the Bishops of February 18, 1623. Lettere, Vol. 2 (1622-1623), f. 57-58, cited by METZLER, op. cit., p. 95.

<sup>130</sup>Cf. Ignacio TING PONG LEE, La Actitud de la Sagrada Congregacion frente al Regio Patronato, in Memoria Rerum, Vol. I/1, pp. 375-435.

Certainly the king of Portugal claimed that the appointment of Apostolic Vicars was an evident violation of the privileges of the Patronage. In 1680, Propaganda Fide with the supreme approval of the Pope issued an official statement to the king declaring that institution of Apostolic Vicars neither violated the privileges of the Portuguese Patronage nor curtailed the jurisdiction of the Bishops of those sees subject to the Patronage, because the Apostolic Vicars were not appointed to territories under the actual dominion of the Portuguese. Nevertheless, Propaganda Fide made it known that the institution of Apostolic Vicars was, by its very nature, provisional; that the Patronage retained all the privileges granted by the Popes.<sup>131</sup>

Besides, it is also interesting to note that towards the end of 16th century and the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, other problems arose: rivalry among the missionary orders, neglect in preparing a native clergy and lack of missionary adaptation. Propaganda Fide tried always to unite and coordinate all missionary activities, by promoting a peaceful collaboration amongst the different orders. Many programmes and plans were to have been prepared in order not only to solve the problems but also to advance the progress of missionary activities. As a matter of fact, however, the conflicts of rites and also the Jansenist theory still existed in the Church. This made the attempt of Propaganda Fide futile, perhaps because Propaganda Fide as well, did not seriously and faithfully follow the instructions, which were given to the missionaries.<sup>132</sup>

### 1.2.2 Instruction of Propaganda Fide to the Apostolic Vicars

Propaganda Fide saw that its first duty was to acquire a general idea of the Church in the mission territories entrusted to it by Gregory XV and to request the Nuncios, Bishops, General Superiors and other competent persons for their advice with regard to the best methods for spreading the faith. Ingoli (1622-1649), the Secretary of Propaganda Fide, proceeded to use the vast amount of documentation to compose 3 memorandums on the difficulties encountered by the missionaries in the Far East and the West Indies. He examined the causes of the rather disturbing condition the missions were in, at that time and suggested likely remedies to the Congregation. From this work emerged Ingoli's great missionary idea: the formation of a native clergy and the establishment of a native hierarchy.<sup>133</sup>

The programme of Propaganda Fide as contained in its Decrees and in the numerous instructions of those early years as well as in the writings of Ingoli was gradually worked out on the basis of the directives given by Gregory XV and the experience and reflections of Ingoli.<sup>134</sup> A typical document for examination is the instruction of 1659 to Apostolic Vicars of Indochina, entitled *Instructio vicariorum Apostolicorum ad regna Sinarum Tonchini et Cocincinae proficiscentium* 1659, given by Propaganda Fide to François Pallu, the Bishop of Héliopolis, Pierre Lambert de la Motte, the Bishop of Bérythe and Ignatius Cotolendi, the Bishop of Métellopolis.<sup>135</sup> This famous instruction of 1659 could be divided into 3 parts as follows:

#### 1) **Antequam discedant** (before setting out)

There were two important points in this part, which were:

- a. The qualifications of the men and the manner in which the Apostolic Vicars were to choose and invite them to the mission were
  1. their religious zeal and piety were to be from God Himself;

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<sup>131</sup>Cf. *Acta CP*, Vol. 1b, ff. 133-135; *SOCP*, Vol. 5, ff. 155-157, cited by TING PONG LEE, *op. cit.*, p. 434.

<sup>132</sup>Cf. J. DELUMEAU, *Il Cattolicesimo dal XVI al XVII Secolo*, ed. Italiana a cura di M. BENDISCIOLI, Milano: Mursia, 1983, pp. 139-147.

<sup>133</sup>Cf. J. METZLER, *Orientation, Programme et Premières Decisions*, in *Memoriam Rerum*, Vol. I/1, pp. 146-196.

<sup>134</sup>There are 3 volumes of *Decreta, Resolutiones et Instructiones Sacrarum Congregationum* in the Archives of Propaganda Fide.

<sup>135</sup>Cf. *Collectanea S. Congregationis de Propaganda Fide*, Vol. I, pp. 42-43; see also H. CHAPPOULIE, *Rome et les Missions d'Indochine au XVII Siècle*, Vol. I, Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1943, pp. 392-402.



2. after considering with great diligence, they were to select from amongst many candidates, men of an age and physical health likely to support the hardships.
  3. to give the list of names, ages and qualities of the men having been chosen, to the Apostolic Nuntio at Paris, so that the Nuntio could include them in the letter granting the Apostolic Vicars the faculties.
- b. The communication between the Apostolic Vicars and Propaganda Fide and the Nuntio should be made more secure, both in the means employed and by trustworthy men who would accept this responsibility and send the letters as safely as possible.

At the end of this part, Propaganda Fide ordered them to set out as quickly and secretly as possible after receiving these instructions from the Apostolic Nuntio.

### **2) In ipso itinere** (on the journey itself)

In order to avoid Portuguese regions and places, the direction and route which they were to take was the one through Syria and Mesopotamia (not the one through the Atlantic Ocean and the Cape of Good Hope), and therefore, through Persia and the Mongol kingdoms. During the journey, they would have to make a brief description of the journey and of the regions they traversed and to observe also those things that might be pertinent to the propagation of faith and to promoting the salvation of souls and the glory of God; they were to observe too, the state of Christianity, the missions and the missionaries. They were to write all this down in the description and send it to Propaganda Fide.

### **3) In ipsa missione**

The important points of this part could be summed up as follows:

- a. A native clergy must be formed and this was to be the principal reason for this setting out.
- b. The missionaries were forbidden to become involved in politics and also to trade. They were instructed to keep their distance from political and business matters and not to undertake the administration of civil affairs. Propaganda Fide had always seriously and strictly prohibited such involvement and would continue to prohibit it. And if there was someone who had slipped into foolishness of this kind, he was to be dismissed without delay from the mission and even expelled in order that nothing could be considered likely to bring about ruin, and be more harmful to God's work.
- c. Adaptation had to be made to the culture and customs of the people. Concerning this point, the instruction said that privately and publicly they were not to criticize the actions or the practices of the people, and were not to argue harshly, nor reprehend anything in them, but to instruct them only in the faith which despises and attacks the rites and customs of no nation because it is the nature of man to love and value their own things and particularly their own nation. They were to try to translate the books of the Fathers of the Church and others of this kind into the native language.
- d. Spiritual and scientific education had to be set up. Schools were to be set up everywhere with greatest care and diligence for the youth of those regions, free of charge to teach the Latin language and Christian doctrine in order that no Catholic handed his sons to the other kind of education. At the same time, the missionaries were to find those with religious vocation among the young men if the latter had a pious mind and generous spirit.

Certainly the Apostolic Vicars followed this famous Instruction of 1659, but they could not avoid the conflicts with the Portuguese Patronage in those regions.<sup>136</sup>

## 2. The early Missionaries of Padroado in Siam

During the period of the maritime discoveries which opened up new European enterprises, the Jesuits also began their missionary task in many countries, including the Far East. From the time that their greatest missionary, Francis Xavier, landed in Goa in 1542, their progress towards both east and west was very steady, for instance: in 1546 they reached the Moluccas; in 1549 they made their appearance in Japan; in 1557 they entered Ethiopia; in 1560 they penetrated into East Africa up to the Monomotapa; in 1583 they settled in the interior of China; in 1598 they worked among the people of Pegu; in 1615 they made the way into Cochinchina; in 1616 they passed into Cambodia; in 1626 they spread into Tonkin and in 1642 they visited Laos.<sup>137</sup>

In the Far East, Macao was the centre of the Jesuits because it was an important port-city and the gateway to China and Japan. In the Far East alone, groups of Francis Xavier's followers sailed for the missionary work, 14 in 1581, 13 in 1583, 12 in 1585, 15 in 1592, 20 in 1599, 24 in 1609. These groups were typical of this steady flow to the Indies. Usually Jesuits of other nations made up part of these expeditions. During the first fifteen years of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, more than 130 Jesuits left for lands within Portugal's sphere of influence.<sup>138</sup>

The first Jesuit who mentioned Siam during his missionary task was St. Francis Xavier himself. He mentioned Siam in his 4 letters, but his real purpose was to go to China. In a letter to his friend Diego Pereira at Malacca written from Sancian or Sanchon on October 22, 1552, he said:

En caso de que este ano no fuere a China, no sé si iré a Siam con Diego Vaz de Aragón, en un junco suyo que aqui compró, para de Siam ir con la embajada al rey de China. Si fuere a Siam por Manuel de Chaves escribiré a v.m., para que, si por alguna vía me pudiere escribir a Siam, me escriba lo que para el ano que viene determina hacer, y si iré con la embajada, o no, para que en Comai o en algun otro puerto de Canton nos encontremos.<sup>139</sup>

One month later, he expressed the same intention in his letter written from Sancian to Francisco Pérez at Malacca on November 12, 1552, and on the same day, he also wrote to Diego Pereira repeating his idea. His last letter, having mentioned Siam, was written to Francisco Pérez at Malacca and Gaspar Barzeo at Goa from Sancian on November 13, 1552, saying:

Si acaso este ano no entraé en Canton, iré, como arriba deje, a Siam. Y si de Siam para el ano próximo no fuere para China, iré a la India, aunque mucha esperanza tengo de ir a China.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>136</sup>Mgr. François Pallu, the Bishop of Heliopolis *In partibus infidelium* and Apostolic Vicar of Tonkin with the administration of the Provinces of Yunnan, Kouy-Tsheou, Hou-Kang, Koung-Si, Se-Tchouen in China and also Laos, nominated by the Bull **Super cathedram principis Apostolorum** of July 29, 1658, cf. Bull. Pat. Portug., Vol. II, pp. 95-96; Appendix ad Bullarium Pontificium Sac. Congre., Vol. I, pp. 259-261. (Pope Alexander VII). Mgr. Lambert de la Motte, the Bishop of Beryte *In partibus infidelium* and Apostolic Vicar of Cochinchina with the administration of the Provinces of Tche-Kiang, Fo-Kien, Koung-Tong, Kiang-Si, the island of Hay-Nan, nominated by the Bull **Onerosa Pastoralis Officii** of August 17, 1658, cf. Appendix ad Bullarium Pontificium Sac. Congre., Vol. I, pp. 277-279. Ignatius Cotelendi, nominated the Apostolic Vicar of Nan-Kin on September 20, 1660, with the administration of the Provinces of Pekin, Chon-Si, Chen-Si, Chan-Tong and Tartarie in China. by the Bull **E Sublimi Sedis Apostolicae**, cf. Appendix ad Bullarium Pontificium Sac. Congre., Vol. I, pp. 279-283.

<sup>137</sup>Cf. J.G. AFONSO, S.J., *Jesuit Letters and Indian History 1542-1773*, Bombay, London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1969<sup>2</sup>, p. 139.

<sup>138</sup>Cf. W.V. BANGERT, S.J., *A History of the Society of Jesus*, Missouri: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1986<sup>2</sup>, p. 149; see also CHAPPOULIE, *op. cit.*, p. 4. On the mission of the Jesuits in Extreme-East at the 17<sup>th</sup> century, see J. BRUCKER, *La Compagnie de Jesus: Esquisse de Son Institut et de Son Histoire (1521-1773)*, Paris, 1919, pp. 299-393.

<sup>139</sup>P.F. ZUBILLAGA, S.J., *Cartas y Escritos de San Francisco Javier*, Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos (B.A.C.), 1953, p. 534.

<sup>140</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 546.

Sir John Bowring said that the honour of being the first teacher of Christianity in Siam is claimed by St. Francis Xavier, who undoubtedly preached both in Malacca and Singapore, which were at that time dependent upon the Siamese king.<sup>141</sup> However St. Francis Xavier did not go either to China or to Siam because he died on December 3, 1552, at Sancian. On March 22, 1553, his incorrupted body reached Malacca and on December 11, 1553, it was taken to Goa where it lies in the Basilica of Bom Jesus.<sup>142</sup>

Nevertheless the Jesuits were not the first ones who brought Christianity to Siam. Professor Boonyok Tamtai gives us interesting information, saying:

There is a historical event written by the foreigner stating that in 1544, Antonio de Paiva, a Portuguese had travelled to Ayutthaya in the time of Phra Jairaja and had been bestowed the audience and conversation about the religion by him. The king believed and got the baptism, being given the Portuguese name Dom Joao. This is the most special event.<sup>143</sup>

In Documenta Indica, I, this is written about in this way:

Los cuatro muchachos que Antonio de Paiva, el capitán, habia traído de Macasar, reavivaban el entusiasmo producido por la conversión de los reyes de Supa y Sian, don Luis y don Juan.<sup>144</sup>

Then Documenta Indica, II, gives us some more details, saying:

El rey de Sian se llamaba don Juan, era cristiano como muchos de sus súbditos. Heredó su reino un hermano gentil, pero prometia hacerse cristiano, como su difunto hermano, si le enviaban sacerdotes y portugueses... Era muy amigo de los portugueses.<sup>145</sup>

In fact, at the time of King Phra Jairaja's accession, the number of the Portuguese in Siam had greatly increased, and in 1538 the king engaged 120 of them to form a kind of bodyguard and to instruct the Siamese in musketry. They assisted the king in the war with Burma and did such good service that they were rewarded with various commercial and residential privileges.<sup>146</sup>

Nobody and nothing can confirm this claim. Indeed it was possible that the king was baptized but even if so, this event did not change anything about Christianity in Siam. The king was poisoned to death, which could suggest displeasure of some over his baptism.

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<sup>141</sup>Cf. J. BOWRING, Sir, *The Kingdom and People of Siam*, Vol. I, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1977<sup>4</sup>, p. 346.

<sup>142</sup>Cf. TEIXEIRA, *op. cit.*, pp. 354-355.

<sup>143</sup>B. TAMTAI, *Portuguese, the First Farang contacting with Thai: 470 years of Friendship between Siam and Portugal* (in Thai), in *Silapa Watanatham* (Art and culture monthly Magazine), Vol. V, 9 (July 1984) 88.

<sup>144</sup>Documenta Indica, I, p. 138. Also cited by Jose Maria RECONDO, S.J., *San Francisco Javier: Vida y Obra*, Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1988, p. 606.

<sup>145</sup>Documenta Indica, II, p. 421. See also G. SCHURHAMMER, S.J., *Die Zeitgenössischen Quellen zur Geschichte Portugiesisch-Asiens und seiner Nachbarländer ( Ostafrika, Abessinien, Arabien, Persien, Vorder und Hinterindien, Malaischer, Philippinen, China und Japan ) zur Zeit des H. Franz Xavier (1538-1552) 6080 Regesten und 30 Tafeln*, Leipzig, 1932, p. 1754.

<sup>146</sup>The ruins of the houses and the church given by the king Phra Jairaja to the Portuguese can still be seen at Ayutthaya. Cf. W.A.R. WOOD, *A history of Siam: From the Earliest Times to the Year A.D. 1781*, Bangkok: Chalermnit Press, 1924, pp. 102-103.

The recent studies on the Christian communities in South East and North East Asia give us new evidence which is the work of Syriac and Arabic scholars, that is, historians studying the early trade routes linking west Asia and east Asia by land or sea.

The earliest (apparently) eyewitness account of Christian communities in Southeast Asia remains that of Cosmas Indicoplustes (an Egyptian monk). His report of those he discovered in the year 520-525 A.D. includes not only Socotra, along with south-west and central India, but also Taprobane (Sri Lanka), Pegu (Southern Burma), Cochinchina (Southern Vietnam), Siam and Tonkin (Northern Vietnam).<sup>147</sup>

Ludovico di Varthima, a Bolognese, travelled in Southeast Asia in 1503 or 1504 and tells of meeting in Bengal, Nestorian merchants from Ayutthaya (Siam). We know from other source that there were west Asians in Tenasserim from as early as the 4<sup>th</sup> century, in Champa and Tonkin in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and in Siam in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the evidence points to Christians being among them. Varthima's Christian companions from "*Sarnau*" have been identified as coming from Lopburi or Shangshiu further north of Ayutthaya.<sup>148</sup>

## 2.1 The Dominicans

The first Catholic missionaries who came to Siam were probably the chaplains of the Portuguese ships in the 16<sup>th</sup> century which were sent to Ayutthaya bringing the officers of Portugal to enter into relations with Siam, but there are no documents to confirm this hypothesis.<sup>149</sup>

The names of the first two missionaries who came to Siam were Friar Jéronimo da Cruz and Sebastião da Canto, both Dominicans. They were sent to Siam by their superior, Friar Fernando di S. Maria who was also the General Vicar at Malacca. From a letter of Friar Fernando di S. Maria addressed to the General of the Order, Fr. Vincente Justiano, dated on December 26, 1569, we can know that the two missionaries made a journey of two months and arrived at Ayutthaya in 1567. The letter also tells us about the activity of the 2 missionaries, the subsequent fate of one of them, plus the situation of Siam at that time.<sup>150</sup> In the book *Historia Fratrum Praedicatorum*, we find confirmation of the date of the letter:

In regno Siam ubi ab 1567 praedicabant et baptizabant, primis missionariis nostris Hieronimo de Cruce et Sebastiano de Canto 1569, pp. Mota et Fonseca 1600 interfectis, annis 1601/19 Francisco ab Annuntiatione, stabili modo laborare contigit.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>147</sup>J.C. ENGLAND, *The Earliest Christian Communities in South East and North East Asia: An Outline of the Evidence Available in Seven Countries before 1500 A.D.*, in *East Asian Pastoral Review*, Vol. XXV, 2 (1988) 145.

<sup>148</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 146-147; see also B.C. COLLESS, *The Trades of the Pearl: The mercantile and Missionary Activities of Persian and Armenian Christians in South East Asia*, in *Abr. Nahrain*, XIII (1973) 118 ff., 125-129, cited by ENGLAND, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

<sup>149</sup>Cf. *History of the Universal Church and the Church in Thailand* (in Thai), Bangkok: Sarasat Press, 1967<sup>2</sup>, p. 195.

<sup>150</sup>Cf. *Monumenta Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum Historica*, Tomo X, *Acta Capitulum Generalium*, Vol. V, Rome, 1901, pp. 149-153. See also B. BIERMANN, *Die Missionen der Portugiesischen Dominikaner in Hinerindie*, in *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft*, Münster, XXI (1931) 305-327; A.R. Da SILVA, *Documentação para a Historia das Missoes do Padroado Português do Oriente: India*, Vol. VII, Lisboa, 1952, p. 458; R.J. LEOTILO, C.S.S., *The First Catholic Missionary Endeavour in Thailand*, in *Saengtham Parithat Review*, 1 (1977) 90.

<sup>151</sup>A. WALZ, O.P., *Compendium Historiae Ordinis Praedicatorum*, Romae: Altera recognita et Aucta, 1948<sup>2</sup>, p. 497.

According to the letter, Friar Fernando di S. Maria told the General that the two missionaries were given a befitting residence in one of the best locations of the city. Wonderfully they learnt the Siamese language in a very short time and were thus able to converse and have social contact with the people. Many pagans came to visit them, some women and also some Buddhist monks.

Ad eos multi gentiliū viri nobiles et nonnullae matronae et ipsi idolorum sacerdotes doctrinae novae audiendae gratia decurrebant.<sup>152</sup>

But the Muslims, the enemies of the Christians and the Portuguese, were jealous and feared that their influence was waning. They could not openly attack the missionaries who were well-respected and well-loved, for then they would risk trouble from the Siamese authorities. But finally, the Muslims killed Fr. Jérónimo by piercing him with a lance and Fr. Sebastião was severely wounded by the stone throwing of the rioters. Fr. Sebastião asked the king not to punish the killer because he desired no more bloodshed. The king admired him and showed even greater affection and friendship for the Friar.

Ex tunc rex maiori amore patri afficiebatur petiitque ab eo, ne a suo regno discederet, et, emisso edicto ad proconsulem, sanguinis effusione positus est terminus.<sup>153</sup>

Friar Sebastião also asked the king for permission to go to Malacca to request for and return with more missionaries. Two other priests were given for this task of evangelization, but their names are unknown to us. When the missionaries returned to Ayutthaya, they began to preach the Gospel openly, as before. They, firstly, worked among their own countrymen, the Portuguese, and then among the Siamese. In spite of the good will and interest shown by the people and despite the many conversations about the religion, which were organized by the missionaries, the people did not dare to embrace the Christian faith without the permission of the king.<sup>154</sup>

During the war with Burma in 1569 which was to culminate in the fall of Ayutthaya, the Burmese found three missionaries praying in the church and they beheaded them on February 11, 1569, because they had preached the Gospel in Siam.<sup>155</sup> So, the pioneer missionaries were murdered in 1569. Later the same thing happened to Frs. Mota and Fonseca. Finally Fr. Francisco da Anunciação succeeded in establishing himself from 1601-1619 and their mission continued, with some interruptions, till 1783.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>152</sup>Monumenta Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum Historica, p. 150.

<sup>153</sup>Ibid., p. 151.

<sup>154</sup>Cf. LEOTILO, op. cit., 2 (1977) 129. See also M. TEIXEIRA, Portugal na Tailândia, Macau: Imprensa nacional de Macau, 1983, pp. 279-282.

<sup>155</sup>Cf. Da SILVA, Documentação para a História das Missoes do Padroado Português do Oriente, pp. 460-461; see also TEIXEIRA, Portugal na Tailândia, p. 281.

<sup>156</sup>Cf. J. SCHMIDLIN, D.D., Catholic Mission History, Illinois: Mission Press, S.V.D., 1933, p. 310; TEIXEIRA, Portugal na Tailândia, pp. 337-343.

## 2.2 The Franciscans

The Franciscans also opened a mission in Siam. Fr. Antonio da Madalena was sent to Siam in 1585 and stayed there till 1588. Later Fr. Grogorio Ruiz was sent there in 1593 but he left for Spain in 1603. The other three Franciscans were Fr. André do Espírito Santo (1606-1611), Fr. André de Santa Maria (1610-1616) and Fr. Luis da Madre de Deos (1673-1689). We meet the Franciscans again in 1755 with the arrival of Agostinho de S. Mónica and Francisco de S. Bonaventura.<sup>157</sup> After the fall of Ayutthaya in 1767, they departed from the scene. Their missionary works in Siam are still unknown to us.

## 2.3 The Jesuits

### 2.3.1 The First Jesuit in Siam

All authors agree on the name of the first Jesuit who came to Siam, Fr. Balthasar Sequeira. The more recent works mention the year 1606 as the year of his arrival. J. Burnay, after he re-examined all the sources, insists that it is very clear to him that in September 1606, Balthasar Sequeira left San Tome and that around December or January he arrived at Mergui-Tenasserim; so, he arrived at Ayutthaya or Odia during the Holy Week of the year 1607, which means between 19 and 26 of March 1607.<sup>158</sup> It should be right if we say that Balthasar Sequeira arrived in Siam in 1606, since at that time Mergui and Tenasserim belonged to Siam. Samuel Purchas also confirmed the idea of Burnay in his first published *Relations of the World* in London 1613, saying that

In the year 1606, Balthasar Sequerius a Jesuit landing at Tenassary, passed from thence partly by goodly Rivers, partly over cragged and rough hills and Forests, ... unto Odia.<sup>159</sup>

He left Lisbon on March 24, 1578, with the annual fleet to India and he said his first mass on March 12, 1579, at San Roque together with his 13 companions, one of them was the famous Matteo Ricci.<sup>160</sup>

During the reign of King Ekatotsarot, a Siamese embassy was sent to the Portuguese Viceroy at Goa in order to renew the friendship with India. The ambassador carried not only official letters to the Viceroy, but also private letters to some Portuguese who had been in Siam and who were known to the king; one of them was Tistavo Golayo. Golayo, at that time, was in San Tomé and used to have a special friendship with the king when he was still the Prince. He decided to go back to Siam in order to get more favors from the king. Since he was also a good friend of the Jesuits in India and since Father Provincial of the Society of Jesus happened to be there, he asked the Provincial, Fr. Gaspar Fernandes, to send some Jesuits to Siam with him in order to learn the character and the customs of the people there. The Provincial was full of zeal for the glory of God. Seeing the importance of the occasion to open a new mission, he sent Balthasar Sequeira for this mission.

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<sup>157</sup>Cf. TEIXEIRA, *Portugal na Tailandia*, pp. 344-351; Jacinto De DEOS, *Vergel de Plantes e Flores da Provincia da Madre de Deos, Dos Capuchos Reformados*, Lisboa, 1690, p. 294.

<sup>158</sup>Cf. J. BURNAY, S.J., *Notes Chronologiques sur Les Missions Jesuits du Siam au XVII Siècle*, in *Archivum Historicum Societatis Jesu*, XXII (1953) 171.

<sup>159</sup>S. PURCHAS, *Relations of the World: Asia (the Fifth Book)*, London, 1617<sup>3</sup>, p. 556.

<sup>160</sup>Cf. ARSI, *Goa 24, I. Goana Catalogi Breves et Triennial 1552-1594*, f. 122; see also F. RODRIGUES, S.J., *Historia da Companhia de Jesus na Assistência de Portugal*, TÔMO II, Vol. II, Pôrto: Livraria Apostolado da Imprensa, 1938, p. 459, n. 1; G.H. DUNNE, S.J., *Generation of Giants. The Story of the Jesuits in China in the Last Decades of the Ming Dynasty*, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1962, p. 24.

We don't know what he did during his two and a half year stay in Siam. He was quite old and had already been in India for 30 years, but he was the only Jesuit available at that time. At the end of 1609, he became sick and wanted to go back to Goa or Cochin. However he died on the way in the city of Piple.

Decembri 1610. Vita functi: P. Balthazar de Siqueira in itinere veniens e regno Siam ad portum Tanasarim, mense novembris anno 1609.<sup>161</sup>

The missionary who followed him and came to Siam was a Franciscan, Fr. André Pereira. We hardly know anything about his missionary work there. Marini related:

Dopo alcuni anni vi andò un padre della Serafica famiglia di S. Francesco, per nome, fra Andrea, ma messo in sospetto al Re, fu mandato fuori del Regno.<sup>162</sup>

### 2.3.2 The First Jesuit Residence and Its End (1626-1632)

Then came the other Jesuits, Fr. Pedro Morejon, a Spaniard 63 years of age, Fr. António Francisco Cardim, a Portuguese, and Fr. Romão Nixi, a Japanese Jesuit. They left Macao on December 13, 1625, and after a short stay in Manila, they left in February 1626 and arrived at Ayutthaya in March. Fr. Cardim passed through Siam in order to go for the mission of Laos. Whereas Fr. Morejon's arrival in Siam had a slightly more complicated background.

Morejon was the nephew of the Archbishop of Toledo. In the year 1625, while making his way to Japan, though he was the Viceroy's confessor, he went to Malacca from where he decided to go to Siam, waiting for an opportunity to go to Japan.<sup>163</sup> He arrived at Ligor and was informed by António Gonçálves Cavalleiro, a Portuguese, who was a great friend of the Society, about the possibilities of the mission in Siam. He also told him about some recent serious trouble between Spaniards from Philippines and the Siamese. The "Sargento Mayor", D. Fernando de Silva had taken hold of a Dutch ship, in the Menam river and the Siamese king then gave orders to arrest him and his men. D. Fernando fought to death, some Spaniards were killed and about thirty of them were still in prison.

Having heard the story Morejon changed his plan and finally went back to Macao, still trying to go to Japan. The governor of Philippines wrote a letter to his superior in Macao and his superior agreed to the mission of Morejon, such as founding the mission in Siam and removing the Spaniards who were in prison there. He had worked for a long time in Japan and so had a long experience with the Japanese. The Japanese guardians were very powerful in Siam at that time and played an important part in the fight against the Sargento Mayor and his men.<sup>164</sup>

His mission on behalf of the Spaniards was successful and he returned to Manila again with the released prisoners.

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<sup>161</sup>ARSI, Goa 29, Malabarica, Catalogi 1604-1752, f. 5. Cf. G.F. De MARINI, S.J., *Delle Missioni dei Padri della Compagnia di Gesù. Nella Provincia del Giappone e particolarmente di Tunkino, Alla Santità di N.S. Alessandro PP. Settimo*, Roma, 1663, p. 410. For the other details of Sequeira see Pierre Du JARRIC, *Histoire des Choses plus Mémorables Advenues*, Bordeaux, 1614, pp. 888-889. The third chapter was entitled "*Le Père Balthasar Sequeira est envoyé au Royaume de Siam, et ce qu'il fit pour le salut des ames*"

<sup>162</sup>De MARINI, *op. cit.*, p. 410.

<sup>163</sup>Cf. A.F. CARDIM, S.J., *Batalhas da Companhia de Jesus na Sua Gloriosa Provincia do Japao*, Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1894, p. 259; De MARINI, *op. cit.*, p. 410.

<sup>164</sup>Cf. D.RAJANUBHAP, H.R.H., Prince, *The Collected Chronicles*, Part 6, Bangkok: Kurusapa, 1963, pp. 239-244; see also D. RAJANUBHAP, *The Introduction of Western Culture in Siam*, in JSS (The Selected Articles), VII (1959) 2.

Andassimo a Manila e di là a Siam, e cominciammo a trattare la libertà dei Castigliani, e l'ottennimo. Il Padre Pietro se ne ritornò con i Castigliani.<sup>165</sup>

Marini recorded that Morejon and Cardim had built the first residence in Siam, most probably in the Japanese settlement at Ayutthaya. Cardim also mentioned this residence when he said that Fr. Nixi took care of the Japanese in the beautiful church they had built.<sup>166</sup>

After the departure of Morejon for Manila, Fr. Giulio Cesare Margico, an Italian, was sent to Ayutthaya as the new superior. He arrived in August 1627 and brought with him a letter from the governor of the Philippines to the king of Siam, expressing satisfaction at the happy solution of the Spaniard incident. But, in the beginning of 1628, the Spaniards started a new war of piracy against Siamese trade, capturing and burning a few of the Siamese ships and spreading terror of the Spanish name. This caused the Siamese to be angry with Margico, thinking him to be a part of the deceit of the Spaniards. They even threatened to burn him alive, at least Cardim believed so. But King Songtham set him free. However the hostility of the people forced them to tone down their activities.

Alcuni mesi dopo morì il Re, che fu all'13 di Dicembre dell'anno 1629, io mi ammalai gravamente, in maniera che il nuovo Re diede licenza, ch'io mi partissi.<sup>167</sup>

So Cardim left Siam for Manila. Frs. Margico and Nixi were betrayed by a bad Christian and were arrested and imprisoned. The Japanese were able to set Nixi free, but not Margico. Margico died in prison in 1630, poisoned by that bad Christian. Finally Nixi went to Macao and then to Cambodia where he died in 1640. The Society of Jesus then had no more residence in Siam.<sup>168</sup>

### 2.3.3 The Second Jesuit Residence and College (1655-1709)

Fr. João Maria Leria arrived in 1639, but his real destination was Laos, so he left Siam in 1641. Giovanni Filippo de Marini arrived for the first time on February 15, 1642. He, too, was destined for Japan, so he left Siam in 1643. Fr. Thomas Valguarnera, a Sicilian, arrived from Macao and was to remain in Siam till 1670. He was then appointed the visitor of the Japanese and Chinese Province, but he returned to Siam again on March 23, 1675, and died there on January 19, 1677.<sup>169</sup>

Fr. Valguarnera had come to Siam, accompanied by Fr. Francisco Rivas who wanted to pass through Siam for Cochinchina. The Japanese Christians in Siam had urgently requested to have one or two Jesuits to take care of their souls, as Marini related:

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<sup>165</sup>A.F. CARDIM, S.J., *Relatione della Provincia del Giappone. Alla Santità di N.S. Papa Innocentio X*, Roma, 1645, p. 150. Cardim left Europe in 1618, finished his studies at Goa and said his first mass in February 1621. He was in Malacca in 1623, cf. ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 48, ff. 26-28. He and Alexander de Rhodes left Malacca and arrived at Macao on May 29, 1623, cf. De RHODES, S.J., *Voyages et Missions du Pre De Rhodes en la Chine et Autres Royaumes de L'Orient*, Paris, 1854, p. 41.

<sup>166</sup>Cf. De MARINI, *op. cit.*, p. 410; CARDIM *Batalhas da Companhia de Jesus na Sua Gloriosa Provincia do Japao*, pp. 287-288.

<sup>167</sup>CARDIM, *Relatione della Provincia del Giappone*, p. 155.

<sup>168</sup>Cf. CARDIM, *Batalhas da Companhia de Jesus na Sua Gloriosa Provincia do Japao*, p. 288-289.

<sup>169</sup>Cf. F. RODRIGUES, S.J., *A Companhia de Jesus em Portugale nas Missoes*, Porto: Apostolado da Imprensa, 1935<sup>2</sup>, p. 45; C. SOMMERVOGEL, S.J., *Bibliothèque de La Compagnie de Jesus*, Vol. VIII, Bruxelles: Oscar Schepens Société de Librairie, 1898, p. 402, De MARINI, *op. cit.*, p. 410



Onde essendo molti Cristiani nella città, de quali la maggior parte erano Giapponesi... tutti erano radunati a nome publico, mandaron lettera a Macao al nostro Padre Visitatore, pregandolo a grande istanze, che volesse consolarli di alcun Padre, che avesse cura delle loro anime... chiesero due Padri, uno di essi fu il Padre Tomaso Valguarnera Siciliano.<sup>170</sup>

A Portuguese pilot, Sebastião Andrés, arrived at Ayutthaya about the same time as Valguarnera and asked to be admitted in the Society as a Coadjutor Brother. He died only seven months later, leaving his property valued at 14,000 Scudi Romani to the Society for the foundation of a college.

Valguarnera built a residence and a church in the Portuguese settlement, just across the river from the Japanese settlement, and in 1656 he was nominated the first superior. We know that in 1666, they had a school in their house.

Questi Padri tengono una scuola in casa loro, pagano uno che in essa insegna e ne tiene cura.<sup>171</sup>

The college, which was to be constructed according to the will of Sebastião Andrés, was built after the residence was built and was also constructed by Valguarnera. It was named the college of San Salvador.<sup>172</sup>

Besides the construction of new forts in different towns, king Narai also ordered him to build the new Royal residence at Lopburi. Valguarnera so pleased the king that when the Jesuit church was burnt by the fire-accident in 1658, King Narai gave him the new church which was better than the old one.<sup>173</sup> The king also permitted him to perform his missionary action with all freedom and liberty, among all the people in Siam. Usually the king never permitted foreigners to accompany him; however, only Valguarnera could be at his side.<sup>174</sup>

Giovanni Gnolfo in his *Un Missionario Assorino: Tommaso dei Conti Valguarnera S.J. [1609-1677]* describes that the method of the Jesuits in Asia was one of inculturation, as Matteo Ricci (+1610) had done in China, De Nobile in India (and this method has become in reality after Vatican Council II). Valguarnera had followed the same method both in Goa and Macao as now he was also doing in Siam. He wrote some religious writings in the Siamese language.

In questo suo apostolato della penna, l'opera più importante è il "*Dizionario Siamese*". Ne parla un missionario contemporaneo: Marini.<sup>175</sup>

From 1655-1709, there were about 30 Jesuits who passed through the residence, 19 of them were Portuguese, one Belgian, one Pole, one Japanese, four French. About 16 of them were just passing through on their way to China or after having been expelled from nearby missions. The actual members of the residence were rarely more than four. Usually there were only two. At the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, there remained only Fr. Gaspar da Costa and when he died in 1709, there was a period of one or two years during which no Jesuit stayed in the residence.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>170</sup>De MARINI, *op. cit.*, p. 410.

<sup>171</sup>AME, Siam, Vol. 851, p. 313; see also RODRIGUES, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

<sup>172</sup>Cf. SOMMERVOGEL, *op. cit.*, p. 402; BURNAY, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

<sup>173</sup>Cf. CHAPPOULIE, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 135.

<sup>174</sup>Cf. ARSI, *Jap. Sin.*, 162, f. 67.

<sup>175</sup>G. GNOLFO, *Un Missionario Assorino: Tommaso dei Conti Valguarnera S.J.*, Catania: Sicilgraf, 1974, p. 19; see also De MARINI, *op. cit.*, p. 405; SOMMERVOGEL, *op. cit.*, Vol. VIII, p. 402; R. STREIT, OMI, *Asiatische Missionliteratur*, Vol. V, Aachen, 1922, p. 679.

<sup>176</sup>Cf. BURNAY, *op. cit.*, pp. 190-191, 197-202; For the more detailed study on the mission of the Jesuits in Siam see Hubert CIESLIK, S.J., *Die Erste Jesuitenmission in Siam 1626-1630*, in *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionwissenschaft*, Vol. XXVI, 4 (1970) 114-295.

## 2.4 The Conflicts between "Padroado" and Apostolic Vicars

The Jesuit mission of Siam was part of the province of Japan and hence depended on the Provincial who was residing at Macao. The influence of "*Padroado*" extended over this part of the world, with jurisdiction of the diocese of Goa, Malacca and Macao. However it is well known also that instead of supporting the missions, the Padroado system had become a hindrance. Missionaries of other countries, members of various religious Orders were allowed to work only under the conditions of "*Padroado*" and also in limited numbers.

After the Council of Trent, the Holy See became more and more conscious of its duty to direct missionary work instead of leaving it to the Spanish and Portuguese Padroado. In 1622 the Congregation of Propaganda Fide was established and in 1658 through the initiative of a Jesuit, Fr. Alexander de Rhodes, the institute of the *Missions Etrangères de Paris (M.E.P.)* was founded. Jean de Bourges said that there were three important factors which could make all the priests of M.E.P. be sure of this religious reform:

La première furent les nouvelles assurées que l'on reçut l'an 1656 du progrès de la Foy dans le Tonquin et du peril où se trouvoient les Eglises qui estoient menacées d'une rude persecution par le bannissement de tous les Jesuites, qui seuls y prêchoient la Foy. La 2. fut la promotion au Pontificat de N.S.P. Alexandre VII. du zèle duquel ils se promirent toute la faveur nécessaire pour un dessein qui ne tendoit qu'à augmenter la Religion. La 3. fut l'instance qui leur fut faite de la part des mêmes personnes qui y avoient pris plus de part du temps du P. de Rhodes, d'en proposer tout de nouveau le projet.<sup>177</sup>

De Bourges also related that Mgr. Lambert de la Motte, himself and Fr. Deydier left Marseilles on November 27, 1660, for Cochinchina but in order not to pass the mission lands under the Padroado, as the instruction of Propaganda Fide had said, they took the route passing Persia. They arrived at Tenasserim on May 19, 1662. Here Mgr. Lambert met Fr. Cardoso, a Portuguese Jesuit who was in charge of two parishes there, who treated them with great hospitality. Fr. Cardoso invited the Bishop to celebrate the sacrament of confirmation for the Christians in his parish. They left Tenasserim on June 30, 1662, and arrived at Ayutthaya on August 22, 1662; initially they stayed in the Portuguese settlement.<sup>178</sup>

The news of the arrival of the Bishop spread throughout the Portuguese settlement and most of the Catholics came to greet and congratulate him with joy according to the custom of the country. However it was very difficult not to admit his rights to superiority. Soon, the Bishop could notice the poor spiritual condition of the place and this made them decide to stay on their own. Moreover the situation was rather bad, as Launay describes:

Mais ce prélat zélé ayant pris la liberté de les avertir de quelques défauts, les Pres se crurent offensées, et d'un commun accord prirent la résolution de lui faire une querelle. Il se répandit peu à peu un bruit parmi les chrétiens qu'on doutait que M. de Bértythe fût évêque.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>177</sup>J. de BOURGES, *Relation du Voyage de Monseigneur L'Evêque de Bryte Vicaire Apostolique du Royaume de la Cochinchine, par La Turquie, La Perse, Les Indes etc. Jusq'au Royaume de Siam et autres Lieux*, Paris, 1668<sup>2</sup>, p. 10.

<sup>178</sup>Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 127-128, 139.

<sup>179</sup>LAUNAY, *Documents Historiques*, Vol. I, pp. 31, 5, 15.

In fact, after 2 or 3 weeks of their arrival, Fr. Fragoso, a Dominican and an official of the inquisition of Goa, called the Bishop to be present in the procession at the tribunal, but he did not go. The Archbishop of Goa also called him to Goa but he did not go as well, since the Apostolic Vicar was not under the Portuguese Padroado.

Le P. Fragoso, Domenicain, commissaire de l'inquisition de Goa, le cita à son tribunal, il ne s'y rendit pas. Un grand vicaire de l'archevêché de Goa se heurta au même refus.<sup>180</sup>

The cause of the violent opposition that was to develop between the missionaries of the Padroado and the Apostolic Vicar did not arise because of nationality. Among the Jesuits and other religious groups, there were already a mixture of nationalities in addition to the Portuguese, and many of those of various nationalities occupied important positions. Rather the cause was the fact that the French missionaries had been sent by Propaganda Fide to break the monopoly of the mission in this part of the world, that came under the Portuguese Padroado.

The first victim of this opposition was Fr. Alexandre de Rhodes because he was the one who had initiated the foundation of M.E.P. When he wanted to go back to the missions, his Jesuit Superior did not dare let him go back to any of the missions depending on the Padroado. At the age of 64, he was sent to Persia, in 1654, where 4 years later he died, having worked so successfully that the Shah attended in his funeral.<sup>181</sup>

In fact the Padroado meant that there was no distinction between Church and State. The Archbishop of Goa, as well as any missionary, even non-Portuguese but depending on the Padroado, looked on the newcomers as intruders and usurpers of the legitimate religious authority.

On January 27, 1664, the other Apostolic Vicar, François Pallu, arrived at Ayutthaya together with Fr. Laneau, Fr. Hainques, Fr. Brindeau and a lay assistant De Chameson-Foissy. Lambert and Pallu had the same opinion that Siam with its policy of religious tolerance was the most convenient base for their persecuted missions of Cochinchina, Tonkin and China. So, they asked Rome for jurisdiction over Siam. After a long consideration of this request, Rome approved it in 1669, by the Brief Cum Sicut of June 4, 1669, and Speculatores of September 13, 1669, insisting only that the peace they enjoyed in Siam should not let them forget their more important missions. On March 25, 1674, Fr. Laneau was nominated the Bishop of Metellopolis and Apostolic Vicar of Siam and was consecrated by Lambert and Pallu.<sup>182</sup>

The transferred jurisdiction of the Siam mission from the head of the Malacca diocese to the Apostolic Vicar did not stop the opposition by the "*Padroado*". On the contrary, it grew even more embittered. Notwithstanding all the orders coming from Rome between 1673-1674 (three Bulls and four other Constitutions were issued to support the authority of the Apostolic Vicar), the Padroado declared them null and void, since they contradicted the privileges of the Padroado.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>180</sup>A. LAUNAY, *Histoire de la Mission de Siam (1662-1811)*, Paris, 1920, p. 4.

<sup>181</sup>Cf. Elesban de GUILHERMY, S.J., *Mnologue de la Compagnie de Jésus. Assistance de France*, Tomo II, Paris: Typographie M. Schneider, 1892, pp. 468-471; see also CARDIM, *Relatione della Provincia del Giappone*, p. 106.

<sup>182</sup>Cf. LAUNAY, *Documents Historiques*, Vol. I, pp. 38-42.

<sup>183</sup>Cf. LAUNAY, *Histoire de la Mission de Siam*, p. 33; E.W. HUTCHINSON, *1688 Revolution in Siam: The Memoir of Father de Bze, S.J.* (hereafter we will cite only *The Memoir of Father de Bze*), Original French, Hong Kong: University Press, 1968, p. 42.

According to Launay, the ones who created the most serious opposition against Lambert were Fr. Bartolomeo da Costa and Fr. Joao de Abreu, both Jesuits. It seemed that there was a sign of reconciliation when the Portuguese and the Jesuits accepted the French missionaries' invitation to support them at the first annual festival of the mission on St. Joseph's day, but the reconciliation was not permanent. On the third and last visit to Siam in 1682, Bishop Pallu brought with him the text of the famous oath which the Pope ordered his Vicars to administer to every priest in their diocese, acknowledging the sole right of Rome to despatch Missions, and requiring all priests to obtain the Vicar's sanction before officiating. This order placed the Portuguese and the Jesuits in Siam definitely under the control of the French Bishop in Ayutthaya and so it was not gladly accepted.

The priests under the Padroado in Siam protested to the Apostolic Vicar that they were ready to submit to the orders of Rome as soon as the Jesuits, who were the most important group of Padroado missionaries, had made their submission, since the Apostolic Vicar exerted pressure and threatened to excommunicate them if they did not submit.<sup>184</sup>

They also added that it was right and proper for the Jesuits to lead the way by reason of the influence they enjoyed both in Court circles and over the masses, as this influence rendered them better able both to gain approval for those who took the oath and to obtain remission of the threatened sanctions. So the Jesuits in Siam were responsible for the insubordination of others. Propaganda Fide began to exert pressure on the Jesuits, hence the series of Papal fulminations and other hard treatment inflicted upon the Society in Rome.<sup>185</sup> The Jesuit General in Rome found himself between the anvil of Padroado and the hammer of Propaganda Fide. If he were to force the Jesuits in Siam, Tonkin and Cochinchina to submit to the Apostolic Vicars, he would provoke a reaction of the Portuguese government which would affect all the other Jesuit missions depending on the Padroado.

The General of the Society of Jesus delayed until 1674 before issuing orders that all the Jesuits should submit themselves to the Apostolic Vicars. At last on October 10, 1681, by the order of the General, the Jesuits in Siam made their submission to the Apostolic Vicar.<sup>186</sup>

Among the Jesuits in Siam, the one who made his submission most sincerely was Fr. J. B. Maldonado. He arrived at Siam for the first time in 1673 and had stayed there for 11 years. On July 21, 1684, he sailed for Macao, being in charge of a mystery mission of the king of Siam. He was absent for 3 years. In 1687 he came back to Siam again and left Siam for Europe in 1691.<sup>187</sup>

At first he was very opposed to the Apostolic Vicars, but after he had observed the policy of the Popes about the mission and authority of the Apostolic Vicars, he submitted to them together with his companion, Manuel Soares. Bishop Laneau wrote in his letter dated June 17, 1691, that Manuel Soares entirely agreed with Maldonado, even though he was a Portuguese.<sup>188</sup>

It was noteworthy that during the persecution of 1688-1691, the French church and college were destroyed and the French missionaries were put in prison which mostly did not really make the Portuguese sad. Only the Jesuits showed sincere sympathy for them, trying to help them in various possible ways. Launay reported that:

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<sup>184</sup>Cf. HUTCHINSON, *The Memoir of Father de Bze*, pp. 42-43.

<sup>185</sup>Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>186</sup>See the extract of the submission-letter of the Jesuits in Siam to Mgr. Laneau, the Apostolic Vicar, written originally in Latin in H. BOSMANS, *Correspondance de J.B. Maldonado de Mons. Missionnaire Belge au Siam et en Chine au XVII<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, in *Analectes pour Servir à L'Histoire Ecclésiastique de la Belgique*, Louvain, XXXVI (1910) 45.

<sup>187</sup>Cf. BURNAY, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

<sup>188</sup>Cf. AME, *Siam*, Vol. 880, p. 597.

Il n'y a que les seuls Pères Jésuites portugais de ce royaume qui ont toujours gardé la bonne correspondance, recevant et enterrant chez eux les corps des Français qui mouraient dans les prisons, quoiqu'il y eut des Portugais assez cruels pour crier qu'il fallait les jeter dans la rivière.<sup>189</sup>

In Goa the submission of the Jesuits was considered by the religious authorities there as treason and so they used all their influence on the Jesuit Superior in Macao to have the traitors removed.

In 1691, the Jesuit Visitor, Fr. Aleixo Coelho, arrived at Ayutthaya from Macao and appointed Fr. António Dias as the new Superior and ordered Fr. Maldonado to go back to Macao. In 1696, Fr. Maldonado was sent to Cambodia and died there in 1699.<sup>190</sup>

## 2.5 The Controversy between the Jesuits and the Apostolic Vicars

The background of this controversy is as follows: on February 22, 1633, Pope Urban VIII in his Apostolic letter **Ex debito pastoralis officii** prohibited, under grave penalty, all the missionaries of the East Indies to deal in business and commerce.<sup>191</sup>

According to the instruction of 1659, the missionaries were also forbidden to trade under the penalty of expulsion from the missionary work. In 1663, Mgr. Pallu arrived at Tenasserim on his way to Siam. He met a Jesuit, John Cardoso, and open-mindedly discussed with him the matter regarding commerce. Cardoso knew very well about this subject because he had been for 3 years in the procure of the province of Japan at Macao; he said:

Cette province négociait et qu'il était impossible qu'elle subsistat par autre voie, qu'elle était en dette de plus de 20,000 pataques et qu'il y avait un privilège exprès pour cet effet.<sup>192</sup>

Pallu was so pleased by this discussion that he wrote in his letter to P. Bagot, dated December 26, 1663, saying

Ce n'est pas ce qui donne lieu de parler contre la compagnie; ce sont quelques particuliers qui, comme partout ailleurs, se meslent de trop d'affaires et donnent sujet de scandale. Vous auriez joye à voir la bonne intelligence qu'il y a entre le P Joan Cardoso, vicaire de Tenasserim, et moy, de l'ouverture avec laquelle nous parlons de toutes choses. Il m'a donné de très bons avis.<sup>193</sup>

Certainly Lambert and Pallu used to know and hear about the commerce of the missionaries, especially of the Jesuits, and they were scandalized. For them, it was so clear that the Jesuits were breaking the Pontifical rule.

In 1665, Joseph Tissanier, a Jesuit, wrote in Siam a theological dissertation under the title of *Religiosus Negotiator* after he had consulted with Lambert, Pallu and another Jesuit, Fr. Albier, at Ayutthaya. He believed that not only the secular priests but also the Jesuits were dealing in commerce.

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<sup>189</sup>LAUNAY, *Documents Historiques*, Vol. I, p. 239.

<sup>190</sup>Cf. BURNAY, *op. cit.*, pp. 193-195. Life and activities of Fr. Maldonado see BOSMANS, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-227.

<sup>191</sup>Cf. *Codicis Juris Canonici Fontes. Concilia Generalia. Romani Pontifices usque ad Annum 1745. N. 1-364*, Vol. I, Cura Emi Petri Card. Gasparri editi, Romae, 1926, pp. 399-401; see also *Bull. Rom.*, Tomo VI, Vol. I, pp. 338-341.

<sup>192</sup>CHAPPOULIE, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 156.

<sup>193</sup>A. LAUNAY, *Lettres de Monseigneur Pallu*, Vol. II, Paris: Coquomard, s.a., p. 23.

Quamvis in Europa religiosi Societatis Iesu juxta laudabiles instituti sui leges in solam animarum salutem incumbant, in aliquibus tamen Indiarum privinciis disciplina religionis ita jam pridem elanguit, ut non solum inter clericos saeculares sed etiam inter ipsos Societatis Iesu religiosos inveniantur qui sorbido quaestu turpique negotiatione ecclesiam Dei prophanent.<sup>194</sup>

In the first part of the dissertation, Tissanier established that all the rules of the Society of Jesus made a formal interdiction to all the members who involved themselves in commerce, and that meant that the Jesuits were forbidden to trade, from the very beginning. In the second part, he showed that there should be no excuse to trade or to deal in business and reconfirmed the Apostolic rule imposed by Pope Urban VIII.

It seemed that the declaration of war between the Apostolic Vicars and the Portuguese in Siam, including the Jesuits came with the order from Portugal to Goa to arrest the Apostolic Vicars in case they passed through the territories of Portugal. A result of this conflict was the publication of a pastoral letter of Lambert de la Motte, dated on October 15, 1667, in which the Jesuits in the East Indies were officially accused by him of being involved in commerce and of causing the missionary work to be destroyed. He wrote:

In super ex adversa navigatione feliciter contigit ut ad plenum resciverimus quanta sitmissionariorum in hiisce orientalibus partibus corruptela, maxime vero Jesuitarum qui uni fere in missionum nostrarum locis existunt, ea porro tanta est ut fidem superet.<sup>195</sup>

His pastoral letter attacked and strongly blamed the Jesuits, accusing them of enjoying their dealings in commerce and he described how they did it. He also accused them of not obeying the order of Pope Urban VIII, and so they were causing the missionary work to perish:

Vel etiam cum praecepta Ecclesiae populo denunciare juxta Summorum Pontificum mandata neglexerunt, tota res Christiana misere deperiit.<sup>196</sup>

The Society of Jesus did not accept the imputations of Lambert in silence. Fr. Jacques Le Faure, a Jesuit missionary in China since 1659, after having exchanged many letters with Lambert himself, wrote a letter dated on November 22, 1670, in response to that pastoral letter of Lambert, defending the right position of the Jesuits and he addressed it to Fr. Jacques de Machault, a French Jesuit in Paris who was in charge of publishing the news which the Jesuit missionaries sent him. This letter was originally written in French but was translated into Latin.

Le Faure, in his letter, absolutely did not agree with the violent accusation of Lambert. He affirmed the poverty of the Society with many examples, appealing also to the testimony of the French missionaries, Fr. Deydier and De Bourges who arrived at Siam together with Lambert. He insisted that it would be easy to prove that there was no more trade and commerce between Macao and Indochina conducted by the Jesuits.

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<sup>194</sup>J. TISSANIER, *Religiosus Negotiator*, in H. CHAPPOULIE, *Une Controverse entre Missionnaires à Siam au XVII<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, Paris, 1943, p. 3. The copy is kept in the archives of Propaganda Fide, SRCP a. 1677, Vol. D, ff. 66-79.

<sup>195</sup>CHAPPOULIE, *Une Controverse entre Missionnaires à Siam au XVII<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, pp. 32-33; AME, Siam, Vol. 876, pp. 475-477; ASCPF, Atti CP 1673-1674, ff. 254-255. For the order from Portugal to Goa to arrest the Apostolic Vicars see LAUNAY, *Documents Historiques*, Vol. I, p. 30; AME, Siam, Vol. 121, p. 635.

<sup>196</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.

Quid ad haec dicturi sunt D.D. Deydier et de Bourges, quos constat in his regionibus ad telonium sedere, aut, si mavis, cum mercibus stare in officina omnibus patenti, quo facilius securiusque, ut aiunt, animarum saluti possint consulere.<sup>197</sup>

Fr. Valguarnera also reacted to the pastoral letter of Lambert. He sent to the Cardinals of Propaganda Fide a moderate and sincere report written on October 10, 1673, of trade dealings practiced by the Jesuits in Macao. He did not deny absolutely the existence of at least some trade, but he explained the reason for it and of his own case, since he was criticized as being a merchant instead of a priest.

He explained that a rich Portuguese merchant, Sebastião Andres, had left to the Society his heritage, which consisted entirely of merchandise in order that the Society could build a college, but how was the Society to realize this heritage's aim without selling these merchandise?

Harum mercium exactionum, seu collectionem, et venditionem (neque enim collegium fundatur mercibus, sed pecunia ex illis profecta) mercaturum vocat Illstrissimus Berytensis.<sup>198</sup>

He also confirmed in his report that Fr. Manuel Rodrigues, the Provincial of Japan, had examined the accusation of commerce on the part of the Jesuits, but found that nothing was true.

We do not know exactly when the controversy between the Apostolic Vicars and the Jesuits on the problem of commerce ceased to exist. For Lambert and Pallu, at that time, the most important thing was the submission of the missionaries to them. On June 17, 1669, Pope Clement IX issued the Constitution **Sollicitudo pastoralis** in which there were 7 important explanations on the prohibition of commerce for missionaries. Pallu got this constitution from Rome by himself. Clement IX also confided to the Apostolic Vicars the charge to apply the disposition of the Bull and ordered the religious missionaries to give their submission. Thus, the right of the Apostolic Vicar was passed in clear terms which did not pretend anymore to any ambiguity.<sup>199</sup> It seems to me that the tension between them gradually diminished after the submission to the authority of the Apostolic Vicars, and also because the presence of the Jesuits in Siam in the 17<sup>th</sup> century was not continuous.

### **3. Successfulness and Obstacles of Missionary Works**

#### **3.1 The Growth of the Missionary Works**

Undoubtedly, the growth of the mission of Siam was very evident during the reign of King Narai, who opened the country to the foreigners and gave all the liberty to the missionaries to preach the Gospel. At the same time the French influence in this part of the world strengthened the role of the missionaries and the progress of evangelization. When Marini wrote about Valguarnera, he said:

Nel 1657 otto si offersero al battesimo nativi della città...Vénero pure una trentina di Cocincinesi, scappati dall'ultima guerra, a prendere in Siam il santo battesimo.

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<sup>197</sup>J. Le FAURE, *Réponse a la Lettre Pastorale de Lambert de la Motte*, in CHAPPOULIE, *Une Controverse entre Missionnaires à Siam au XVII<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, p. 48.

<sup>198</sup>CHAPPOULIE, *Une Controverse entre Missionnaires à Siam au XVII<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, p. 60. The report of Valguarnera is kept in the archives of Propaganda Fide, SRCP, Ind. Or. 1679, f. 274-277. In the archives of M.E.P., 851, pp. 305-317, it exists a manuscript written in Italian entitled *Relatione di Siam* but without the name of the author, neither the date and was sent to Propaganda Fide. The unknown author related the foundation of the Jesuit residence and gave some information about Sebastiao Andres.

<sup>199</sup>Cf. *Codicis Juris Canonici Fontes*, Vol. I, p. 465 sq.

In tanto il Padre Superiore non perdonando a fatica...visita liberamente le carceri, va a Conventi di Talapoi, ove si mettono discorsi della legge Cristiana, non senza profitto, concilia gli animi disuniti.<sup>200</sup>

Marini added that Valguarnera had also tried in every way to convert some Talapoins (Buddhist monks). The conversion of Talapoins was very important and was a deep influence over the others. Launay tells us M. Laneau's reason and his success in converting Talapoins:

On comprend les entraves que cette formation met au changement de religion; mais combien plus fortes encore ne sont-elles pas, quand il s'agit de la conversion des prêtres eux-mêmes, arrivés jusqu'à l'âge d'homme en vivant de ces idées, de ces habitudes qu'ils avaient reçues, et qu'à leur tour ils ont transmises! La grâce de Dieu, l'énergie et l'intelligence du néophyte de M. Laneau triomphèrent néanmoins de ces difficultés. Le talapoin reçut le baptême, et dès lors devint apôtre; par son exemple et ses prédications ardentes, il gagna au catholicisme plusieurs centaines de ses compatriotes.<sup>201</sup>

When the French missionaries arrived at Ayutthaya, they were welcomed by 10 Portuguese priests and one Spanish priest whom they found serving a Christian community estimated at 2,000 souls. The eleven priests included 4 Jesuits, 2 Dominicans, 2 Franciscans and 3 secular priests. According to the French missionaries, the situation of mission was quite poor.

Le nombre des catholiques, la plupart occidentaux ou métis, s'élevait à environ 2,000. L'état spirituel de cette petite Eglise fut jugé "*très pauvre*" par les nouveaux arrivants. Celui des païens était plus mauvais encore et ne semblait pas près de s'améliorer.<sup>202</sup>

With the arrival of Pallu, 2 Bishops, 5 priests and one lay assistant organized an assembly, so-called the Synod of 1664 at Ayutthaya. Their names were Mgr. Lambert de la Motte, Mgr. Pallu, M. Deydier, M. Chevreuil, M. Hainques, M. Brindeau, M. Laneau and M. de Chameson. The synod was dominated by Mgr. Lambert and the sessions can be summarized as follows:

1. Apostolic spirituality: They were scandalized by the behavior of the missionaries whom they met in Ayutthaya, since these missionaries, according to them, did not follow the principles of the mission or of their vocation.

Selon lui (Lambert), à vocation extraordinaire devait correspondre un genre de vie extraordinaire. Et Lambert, au cours du synode, d'écrire au provincial pour lui demander des religieux qui seraient les modèles des missionnaires.<sup>203</sup>

They planned also to institute an apostolic congregation composed of three orders: firstly, the Bishops, priests and lay assistants; secondly, the women, and thirdly the people who lived in the world, in Europe or in Asia.

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<sup>200</sup>MARINI, *op. cit.*, pp. 411, 418.

<sup>201</sup>A. LAUNAY, *Siam et Les Missionnaires Français*, Tours: Alfred Mame et Fils, 1846, p. 75.

<sup>202</sup>LAUNAY, *Histoire de la Mission de Siam*, p. 3.

<sup>203</sup>J. GUENNOU, *Missions Etrangères de Paris*, Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1986, pp. 122-123.



Cette société nouvelle serait nommée Congrégation des Amateurs de la Croix de Jésus-Christ.<sup>204</sup>

2. The instructions to the missionaries: They decided to publish "*The Instructions to the Apostolic Vicars*" given by Propaganda Fide. For the reason of practicality, they issued "*The Instructions to the Missionaries*" consisting of 10 chapters, which instructed on all the roles of the missionaries.<sup>205</sup>
3. The erection of a seminary:

Parmi les conclusions du synode figuraient encore un chapitre consacré à l'érection d'un séminaire à Ayuthaya et la solution de plusieurs problèmes de pastorale missionnaire qui avaient été examinés en commun.<sup>206</sup>

Lambert had made the programme come true when he founded the seminary in 1665.

Cependant l'évêque voulut mettre à profit les bonnes dispositions extérieures du souverain, et demanda la concession d'un terrain pour la mission, par une requête du 29 mai 1665... A cette supplique, inspirée par l'esprit de foi et dictée par la connaissance des habitudes siamoises, Phra-naraï répondit en accordant un propriété dans le village de Mahapram, à une lieue de Juthia, et tous les matériaux nécessaires à la construction d'une église et d'un séminaire.<sup>207</sup>

This first establishment in the Far East was placed under the protection of St. Joseph. They received the young people who seemed to have the qualities and virtues required for the priesthood. This was the first office indicated by Rome. Moreover, many families of the Court sent their children to learn the European language and sciences, and the king paid for the children of the mandarins. Pascal M. d'Elia recorded that:

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<sup>204</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 123.

<sup>205</sup>Pallu retrancha ces pages dont le caractère lui parut trop lié à des circonstances particulières. Le livre qu'il mit au point est, de tous les ouvrages de missiologie publiées à ce jour, celui qui a connu le plus grand succès: douze éditions, dont deux en français. The three first editions are with the title: *Instructiones ad Munera apostolica rite obeunda perutiles*, Rome 1669; Paris 1807. From the fourth edition, the title became: *Monita ad Missionarios*, Rome 1840, 1853, 1874, 1880, 1883, 1886; Hong Kong 1893. The French translation entitled: *Instructions aux Missionnaires* has been published in Bruxelles in 1920-1921, then in Louvain in 1928. Cited by GUENNOU, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

<sup>206</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 124.

<sup>207</sup>LAUNAY, *Siam et Les Missionnaires Français*, pp. 71-72.

On account of the small number of the missionaries and of persecutions, the first assembly of Bishops and missionaries of the Society decided in 1664, that a general seminary should be opened for all oriental youths of good hope. These latter might come from the different kingdoms of the Far East, such as India, China, Annam, Tonkin, Cambodia, Cochinchina and Japan. The first general seminary for mission lands was opened in Ayutthaya. Two years after the first ordination of some native priests in Ayutthaya, which took place in 1669, Cardinal Barberini, Prefect of Propaganda Fide, thus congratulated De la Motte "*What your grace wrote to us, about the ordination of native priests, their normal qualities, their zeal and works, had filled us with joy, therefore we exhort you in the Lord to make all possible efforts to increase the number of good natives worthy of being ordained priests*". (Revue illustrée de l'Exposition Vaticane, Rome 1925, p. 99.).<sup>208</sup>

During the year 1682, 39 seminarists were trained there: 11 from Tonkin, 8 from Cochinchina, 3 from Manila, 1 from Bengal, 3 from Siam, 1 from China. Others were of Portuguese, Peguan or Japanese descent. In 1686, by the intervention of Constantine Phalkon, the college was moved to Ayutthaya. Phalkon, with the consent of Mgr. Laneau, paid for all the expenses of construction, but later it was moved to Mahapram again. The college continued to exist until the fall of Ayutthaya in 1767. It was founded again at Hondat in Cambodia, then at Virampatnam in India until 1808, and then at Penang. Then in 1670, after Lambert had visited Tonkin during the absence of Pallu, he came back to Ayutthaya and founded the female congregation which he had intended, according to the programme. In fact, he had already founded this kind of congregation in Tonkin; thus, he named the congregation similarly: *Amantes de la Croix*.

En Octobre 1667, il exprima son désir de fonder les Amantes de la Croix, ignorant encore le rejet par Rome de la branche masculine à laquelle il songeait... Prendre soin des femmes et des filles malades, instruire les jeunes filles, baptiser autant que possible les petits enfants en danger de mort... Cette congrégation purement autochtone s'est implantée modestement au Siam.<sup>209</sup>

In 1669, the first hospital was also founded by Lambert and was supervised by M. Laneau who had learnt enough on how to use the medicine to be able to work in this charitable activity.

Besides Ayutthaya, the missionaries preached the Gospel in other places such as Phitsanulok, Lopburi, Samkhok (Pathumthani) and Bangkok. In the year 1674, there were about 600 Siamese Catholics. In fact from this period until the fall of Ayutthaya in 1767, the missionaries had been working, but the fruit of their evangelization was indeed very small.

### **3.2 The Obstacles to Evangelization**

We can summarize the obstacles to the process of evangelization as follows:

1. The great difficulty was the conversion of the Siamese, as Launay observes:

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<sup>208</sup>P.M. D'ELIA, S.J., *Catholic Native Episcopacy in China*, Schanghai: T'uswei Printing Press, 1927, p. 39. The history of the general college was narrated in detail by P. Paul DESTOMBES, *Le Collège Général de la Société des Missions Etrangères*, Hong Kong, 1934.

<sup>209</sup>GUENNOU, *op. cit.*, p. 148; see also LAUNAY, *Histoire de la Mission de Siam*, pp. 18-19.

Les conversions rencontrent partout des obstacles. Le grand obstacle à la conversion des Siamois est, avec leur apathie naturelle, leur éducation. Tout jeune gafon siamois doit passer plusieurs années dans une pagode, au milieu des prêtres des idoles, recevoir leurs enseignements, suivre leurs exemples; dans cette atmosphère, il imprègne nécessairement son intelligence, son coeur, sa conscience, de l'essence même du paganisme.<sup>210</sup>

According to the Siamese, the purpose and aim of the foreigners, who came to Siam, was to make profit, to derive the benefits of trading and perhaps to colonize Siam as part of their empire. So the foreigners were not trusted by the Siamese and this attitude was generalized and extended also towards the missionaries. Moreover, according to Fr. Le Faure, there was no hope of the conversion of Siam and Cambodia, so they turned their aim to Tonkin, Cochinchina and China.

2. With the arrival of Lambert and Pallu, there occurred conflicts between Padroado and the Apostolic Vicars in Siam, having been followed by the controversy between the Jesuits and the Apostolic Vicars. Certainly evangelization was, in some ways at least, affected by these scandals.
3. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Siam was opening itself to the western countries. All foreigners were welcome by the King, Narai. This policy of the king was to counterbalance the influence of these countries because the period of the maritime discovery was also the period of colonization. Also during this period, Siam was at war with Burma, Chiang Mai and Cambodia; so, the relationship with the foreign countries could guarantee the security of the country. This attitude of Narai, to the foreigners, made Constantine Phalkon, Guy Tachard and even Louis XIV misunderstand that there was the hope of converting to Christianity both the king and the whole country.

It is well known that His Majesty of France took a lively interest in the opportunity to contribute a share himself in the conversion of the king of Siam... First to be noted is the embarrassment felt by Constantine when Ambassador (Chaumont) insisted that the object for which he had been commissioned was to obtain the conversion of the king; that the king of France ardently desired it.<sup>211</sup>

Phalkon himself realized that the conversion of the king could not be obtained immediately because it would cause the rebellion in the country and Mgr. Laneau himself considered the demand for the king's conversion to be premature.<sup>212</sup> Fr. Guy Tachard was nevertheless anxious to establish the Catholic religion in Siam. He would have had little difficulty in persuading Phalkon that the Jesuits were the very people to give effect to this very purpose owing to the supremacy of their influence at that period over Louis XIV.<sup>213</sup>

In fact, the king never thought of himself being converted. Launay observes that:

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<sup>210</sup>LAUNAY, *Siam et Les Missionnaires Français*, pp. 72-75.

<sup>211</sup>HUTCHINSON, *The Memoir of F. De Bèze*, pp. 35, 29, 33.

<sup>212</sup>Cf. E.W. HUTCHINSON, *The French Foreign Mission in Siam during the XVII<sup>th</sup> Century*, in *JSS: Relationship with France, England and Denmark* (The selected Articles), VIII (1959) 44.

<sup>213</sup>Cf. E.W. HUTCHINSON, *Adventurers in Siam in the Seventeenth Century*, London: The Royal Asiatic Society, 1940, p. 111.

Si on n'avait connu la profonde politique de ce prince, dit Mgr. Pallegoix, on se serait persuadé qu'il était déterminé à embrasser la religion chrétienne. Il en était bien éloigné, et sa défense d'aller aux pagodes ne fut qu'une de ces paroles qu'il prononçait volontiers, mais dont ses sujets, sachant ce qu'il en fallait penser, ne tenaient compte que selon leur volonté.<sup>214</sup>

It is clear that what King Narai had done for the foreigners and specially for the missionaries came from the political situation and political reasons. Anyway, this fact led the missionary activities to the disaster when the famous revolution in 1688 occurred.

4. The revolution in 1688 and the persecution in the time of Phra Phetraja were really not suitable and benign for evangelization. With the anti-French attitude, Phra Phetraja persecuted all the Christians as Pallegoix described:

Les Siamois se saisirent de sa personne (Mgr. Laneau), le chargèrent de tant de coups, qu'il est étonnant que ce prélat, déjà infirme, ne mourut pas entre leurs mains... Il demeura exposé aux ardeurs du soleil, aux moustiques, aux insultes... On lui arrachait la barbe, on lui crachait au visage, on vomissait contre lui les imprécations les plus horribles et les invectives les plus atroces.<sup>215</sup>

On ne se contenta pas de faire souffrir les missionnaires, les séminaristes et les Français, plusieurs chrétiens, de différentes nations, furent mis en prison, exposés à des traitements barbares, et plusieurs même payèrent de leur vie leur fidélité à la religion chrétienne. Un volume entier ne suffirait pas pour faire le détail des maux que souffrirent, dans toutes les provinces, tant de chrétiens.<sup>216</sup>

The situation of the mission was better in 1691 when Phra Phetraja gave the seminary back to Mgr. Laneau. However this did not mean that the situation had changed. After the death of Phra Phetraja in 1703, relations between Siam and France were renewed, after an interruption of 15 years.

The second persecution occurred during the reign of king Taisra (1709-1733). The missionaries were forbidden to leave the capital. They were forbidden to use the Thai and Pali language in their teaching of religion. They were forbidden to evangelize the Thai, Mon and Lao people. Debate with and criticism of the Buddhist religion in order to spread their own Christian religion were prohibited. These were the orders of the king and were recorded on a stone placed in front of St. Joseph's church in Ayutthaya.

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<sup>214</sup>LAUNAY, *Siam et Les Missionnaires Français*, p. 93.

<sup>215</sup>J. PALLEGOIX, Mgr., *Description du Royaume Thai ou Siam*, Vol. II, Paris, 1854, p. 181.

<sup>216</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 187.

Persécution en 1730. La même année, commença contre la mission une persécution sourde qui éclata en 1730... L'élévation au pouvoir d'un nouveau barcalon, et l'hostilité d'un des frères du roi contre les missionnaires et les chrétiens changèrent la situation... les Chrétiens emprisonnés étaient maltraités... C'est cette pierre que les missionnaires prirent l'habitude de désigner sous le nom de pierre de scandale.<sup>217</sup>

The end of 1743 and the beginning of 1744 saw the persecution still continuing. Moreover on January 29, 1749, Mgr. de Lolière wrote to the directors at Paris, saying "*nous souffrons actuellement une persécution*".<sup>218</sup>

5. Christianity was affected again by the invasion of Burma and the fall of Ayutthaya in 1767. Mgr. Brigot was arrested and later was brought to Burma; St. Joseph's church was entirely burnt and the seminary was ransacked. Also many Christians were brought to Burma. Later during the reign of King Taksin, the situation of the mission was better during the first period of his reign. The Catholics enjoyed a good relationship with the country and many of the king's subjects joined the Christian religion. However at the end of the Thonburi period, trouble and disturbances arose again and the Catholics met with many serious problems. Mgr. Le Bon reported as follows:

Les missionnaires à Siam, instruisant leurs Chrétiens de la pureté et de la sainteté de la religion chrétienne qui ne saurait admettre au mélange bizarre de rites idolâtriques et de cérémonies superstitieuses, leur enseignaient nommément qu'en pratiquant le serment de fidélité au roi, ils ne devaient, ni ne pouvaient en conscience, observer les cérémonies en usage parmi les Siamois et autres gentils.<sup>219</sup>

M. Coudé also wrote to Paris, saying:

22 Juillet 1779 Le roi prit alors la parole, et dit qu'il savait bien d'où venait cette opposition à ses volontés; que c'était de l'évêque et des prêtres chrétiens, et qu'il les mettrait à mort, ou les condamnerait à une prison perpétuelle, ou les chasserait de son royaume. On le porta à prendre ce dernier parti comme le plus convenable et le plus nuisible aux chrétiens.<sup>220</sup>

Eventually the Catholics were not able to enjoy the favor they had once enjoyed and all the missionaries were compelled to leave Siam. Most of them went to Malacca and came back to Siam again when the king Rama I sent for them.

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<sup>217</sup>LAUNAY, *Histoire de la Mission de Siam*, pp. 119-121; see also *The Collected Chronicles. The National Library Edition* (in Thai), Vol. IX, Bangkok: Kao Na Press, 1965, p. 217.

<sup>218</sup>Cf. LAUNAY, *Documents Historiques*, Vol. II, pp. 162, 165.

<sup>219</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 290.

<sup>220</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 301; see also AME, Siam, Vol. 891, p. 1187.

## CHAPTER III

### Siam and King Rama V, The Great

The present chapter is concerned essentially with King Rama V, the fifth king of the Chakri Dynasty and of the Bangkok period. In general, this account may be considered as a preliminary study to be followed later by a study of the roles of Mgr. Jean-Louis Vey, Apostolic Vicar of Siam (1872-1909), in the Church history of Thailand during the reformation-period of the said king Rama V. However, prior to that, it is important and interesting to know the general situation of the Bangkok period and of the Chakri Dynasty up to his reign.

The proclamation of Rama I as the king of Siam and the provisional coronation took place on June 10, 1782. One of the first deeds of the new king was to command the creation of a new capital city on the bank of Chao Phya river located opposite Thonburi, thus Bangkok. In Thai, Bangkok is made up of two words: namely "*Bang*" and "*kok*", signifying a "*district*" or "*village*" and a "*hog plum*" respectively; therefore it means the "*village of hog plum*". Usually the Thai people refer to their metropolis in its abbreviated form as Krungthep, meaning the city of gods or angels. As a matter of fact, its full name is "*Krungthep, Maha Nakorn, Amorn Ratanakosindra, Mahindrayutthaya, Mahadilokpop Noparatana Rajdhani Burirom, Udom Rajnivet Mahastan, Amorn Pimarn Avatarn Satit, Sakhatuttiya Vishnukarm Prasit*", which may be translated into English as follows:

The city of gods, the great city, the residence of the Emerald Buddha, the impregnable city of Ayutthaya of God Indra, the grand capital of the world endowed with nine precious gems, the happy city, abounding in enormous royal palaces which resemble the heavenly abode where reigns the reincarnated God, a city given by Indra and built by Vishnukarm.<sup>221</sup>

It is interesting to note that Bangkok is also called Ratanakosindra and was built in such a way as to be an exact replica of Ayutthaya, many of the old city's monuments being restored in name.

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<sup>221</sup>R. SYAMANANDA, *A History of Thailand*, Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich 1981<sup>4</sup>, p. 102.

The beginning of the Bangkok period coincided with the British expansion in India, the French revolution, the Napoleonic war and colonization on the part of the western countries. Khun Vichit Martra insisted in his book that during the Bangkok period, Siam was in great difficulties, fighting wars with Burma, consolidating the country by quelling unrest in the northern regions and southern regions, keeping the relationship with the western countries who were expanding their power to the East and who occupied some neighboring countries. However, by the merits and graces of each king of the Chakri Dynasty, Siam was able always to preserve her independence. The Bangkok period is appreciated more than before.<sup>222</sup>

The Chakri Dynasty was inaugurated by King Rama I and has continued to exist up to the present time as shown here:

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Period of Reign</b>
1.	Rama I	1782-1809
2.	Rama II	1809-1824
3.	Rama III	1824-1851
4.	Rama IV Mongkut	1851-1868
5.	Rama V Chulalongkorn	1868-1910
6.	Rama VI	1910-1925
7.	Rama VII	1925-1935
8.	Rama VIII	1935-1946
9.	Rama IX	1946-present day

Siam was ruled under a system of absolute monarchy until 1932. King Rama VII reduced absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy when he promulgated a permanent constitution on December 10, 1932. Thus, democracy in Thailand began.<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>222</sup>Cf. V. MARTRA, khun, *Lakthai* (in Thai), Bangkok: Bamrung Sahn 1975<sup>7</sup>, pp. 203-204.

<sup>223</sup>Cf. K.P. LANDON, *Siam in Transition. A Brief Survey of Cultural Trends in the Five Years since the Revolution of 1932*, Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh Ltd., 1939, pp. 27-29. For the more detailed study, see T. MOKARAPONG, *History of the Thai Revolution. A Study in Political Behavior*, Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich, 1983<sup>2</sup>. For the summarized main features of the permanent constitution of 1932, see SYAMANANDA, *op. cit.*, pp. 164-165.

## **1. The Bangkok period: From Rama I to Rama IV.**

### **1.1 The Succession to the Throne.**

The Chakri Dynasty, for the first three reigns, was handed down from father to son. The succession to the throne in Siam might be a source of confusion to those who are not familiar with the Thai Royal Family. It was not systematically regulated, as the king, being the lord of life, could alter the order of succession at his will. This was one of the causes of the struggle for the throne in the Ayutthaya period. The normal practice seemed to have been that the king appointed his brother to be Maha Uparat or the Front Palace Prince, so as to prepare him for the throne, but he could install or nominate his son as his successor. It was clear that primogeniture was not yet considered as a qualification for the succession to the throne. King Rama I nominated his only brother, formerly Boonma or Chao Phya Surasih who had been working together with him for so long, as Maha Uparat or Deputy King. Maha Uparat was colloquially known as the Wang Na or the Prince of the Front Palace, probably because in war he commanded the forward troops.

It is sad to note that relations between Rama I and Maha Uparat were often tense and were threatened by jealousy on both sides. In 1796, there were fears that an uprising of the Uparat and his troops might occur, but the king surrounded the Front Palace, the Uparat's establishment, and the princes' elder sisters managed to negotiate a reconciliation between the two. On the death of the Uparat in 1803, two of his sons and Front Palace officials plotted to overthrow Rama I, but they were discovered and beheaded. The king thus was able to live out his life and pass his crown uneventfully to his eldest son, Prince Itsarasunthorn, at his death on September 7, 1809.<sup>224</sup>

At the very beginning of the reign of king Rama II, Prince Kasatra, who was king Taksin's son, conspired against him. He and his adherents were arrested and executed. The king proceeded to fill the office of Maha Uparat with his half brother, Prince Senanurak. After the death of this Prince in 1817, this exalted position was left vacant.

When king Rama II died in 1824, he left a vacant throne with no designated heir. With the consent of the Accession Council, Prince Chesdabodin became king Rama III. He was the eldest son of king Rama II by a minor wife. Rama III created his uncle, Prince Sakdipalasep, as Maha Uparat. When the Maha Uparat died in 1832, no successor was appointed.

On his death in 1851, Rama III left a vacant throne with no designated heir. He had requested the Accession Council to choose a suitable prince for the throne. The Council offered the crown to Prince Mongkut, as he was Rama II's son of the first rank.

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<sup>224</sup>Cf. D.K. WYATT, *Thailand: A Short History*, Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich, 1984, p. 160.



King Mongkut or Rama IV ruled from 1851 to 1868. In his reign, relations with foreign countries were regulated by treaties, and commerce was encouraged. He also engaged Mrs. Anna Leonowens, an English woman who was living in Singapore at that time, to come and live in the palace as tutor to his heir, Prince Chulalongkorn, and to his other children. After his coronation, Rama IV appointed his younger brother, Prince Chuthamani, as the Maha Uparat with the exalted position of king Pinklao, the second king of Siam. Thus his reign resembled that of Naresuan the Great in that the First king was assisted by the Second king in ruling the country. Mr. Frank Vincent, Jr., in his personal narrative of travel and adventure in farther India observed that

Siam, I believe, is the only country in the world at the present day which is ruled by two kings.<sup>225</sup>

The ceremony of the coronation of the Second king took place on May 25, 1851.<sup>226</sup>

## **1.2. The General Situation**

### **1.2.1. Consolidation of the Kingdom: The Wars with Burma.**

The first three reigns of the Chakri Dynasty constituted a period of reconstruction of the glories of the traditional kingdom and the expansion of the domains of the kingdom. When Rama III died, the dominion extended over present day Thailand and in addition made claims in Kedah, Kelantan, Trengganu and several other small Malay States; in Cambodia; in most of Laos; and in the hill country west of Chiang Mai up to the banks of the Salween.<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>225</sup>F. VINCENT, Jr., The Land of the White Elephant, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1874, p. 145. See also Office of the Prime Minister, Foreign Records of the Bangkok Period up to A.D. 1932, Bangkok: Aksornsamai Press, 1982, pp. 94-95.

<sup>226</sup>Cf. TIPAORNWONG, Chao Phya, The Royal Chronicles of Ratanakosindra. The Fourth Reign (in Thai), Bangkok: Suksapan Panich, 1978<sup>2</sup>, pp. 41-45.

<sup>227</sup>Cf. A. WILSON, Politics in Thailand, New York: Cornell University Press, 1966, pp. 2-3.

Burma still loomed large as an enemy of Siam in king Rama I and Rama II's reigns. In 1785, the king Bodawpaya of Burma (1782-1819) launched a full scale invasion of Siam and his nine armies of 144,000 men crossed the Thai boundaries at five different points. King Rama I could muster only 70,000 troops, but he stood up against the enemy, relying on newly devised tactics. He did not disperse his already weaker troops in the same manner as Bodawpaya. The decision was made to attack the enemy first with all possible strength at the place which seemed most important. Finally the Thai soldiers took the Burmese camp by a direct assault, forcing Bodawpaya to escape in a great hurry. The other Burmese armies suffered a similar fate and they were compelled to withdraw. During this war, the Burmese southern armies had occupied almost the whole of southern Siam which was virtually defenseless. The victory over the Burmese invasion caused Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan and Trengganu to submit again to Siam as her vassal states.<sup>228</sup>

In 1786 and 1787, the second and the third Burmese wars took place. Rama I drove them away. It now became king Rama I's turn to take the offensive against the Burmese for the purpose of demonstrating the strength of the country. He attempted to overrun Burma in 1787 and in 1791, but due to the shortage of food supply, he had to retire. However the result of the wars caused Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai, the big provinces in the North, which had seen power change hands often in their last thirty years, to become the vassals of Siam until the status of ruling princes was suspended in the reign of king Rama VII.<sup>229</sup>

The Burmese had plans to carry out another big campaign against Chiang Mai in 1796 and in 1802, but the Maha Uparat arrived promptly on the scene and helped to drive them back across the border after they had been decisively defeated. Subsequently, in 1804, the Burmese were chased out of the eastern part of the Shan states including Chiang Rung, Lua, Khern and Sibsongpanna, which then recognized Rama I as their overlord.

The Burmese were still Siam's chief enemy in King Rama II's reign. But every attempt to occupy Siam on the part of the Burmese was in vain. Soon after, the Burmese were deeply involved in a frontier dispute with Great Britain which ruled India at that time; this led to the first Anglo-Burmese war (1824-1826). Hence the Burmese ceased to cause trouble to Siam, nor did the Thais seek to revenge themselves on them. The beginning of the war coincided with Rama III's accession to the throne, and although Siam was approached by Great Britain as a possible ally, she preferred to pursue the policy of neutrality.

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<sup>228</sup>Cf. K. WENK, *The Restoration of Thailand under Rama I, 1782-1809*, translated from the German by Ercely STAHL, Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1968, pp. 44-62.

<sup>229</sup>Cf. C. CHAKRABONGSE, H.R.H., Prince, *Lords of Life*, London: Alvin Redman Limited, 1960, p. 102.

## 1.2.2 The Subjugation of the Lao Kingdoms and of Cambodia.

Relations between Siam and the Lao Kingdoms had always been complex and had undergone many changes. The extent of Lao submission to Siam at any particular time was determined by both the power and authority of Bangkok and the competence of the Lao rulers. The regions to the West of the Mekong river were regarded as being securely integrated into Siam, even if the internal autonomy of the local rulers and principalities still had some significance. The southern Lao Kingdoms of Champasak, Atapu and Suwannaket may also be counted among the areas assimilated during the time of Rama I. Thus during his reign, only the relations between Siam and the highly important Lao kingdoms of Vientiane and Luang Phra Bang were in a state of vacillation. Siam claimed sovereignty over these also; however, within certain limits the rulers of Vientiane and Luang Phra Bang were able to decide their own policy, because of the size of their territory and the difficulty to its access, as well as its importance as a connecting link with Tongkin, Yunnan and the Shan States.

Relations between Siam and Cambodia during the time of Rama I were similar to those between Siam and the Lao states. The weaker neighbors were watched and kept under control to a greater or lesser degree depending on the magnitude of Siamese power at any one particular time. Siam also claimed Cambodia as her vassal state.<sup>230</sup>

It can thus be seen that although the vassal states were loosely governed as far as their people and internal affairs were concerned, Rama I kept tight reins on their rulers. D.G.E. Hall observed that by 1804, Rama I had made Siam more powerful than at any time in her history;<sup>231</sup> Wenk confirms the fact when he says:

The history of Thailand during the time of Rama I is the history of a total restoration... During the period of more than 27 years of his reign... Rama I was able to lead Thailand to a new strength and power and to put it once again in the same rank with its mighty and generally hostile neighbors, Burma and Vietnam. Rama I must be ranked among the most outstanding rulers of Thailand.<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>230</sup>The history of these kingdoms with all their vicissitudes is beyond the scope of this study. K. WENK, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-100 and CHAKRABONGSE, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-107. May be consulted.

<sup>231</sup>D.G.E. HALL, *A History of South-East Asia*, London: Macmillan, 1955, p. 444.

<sup>232</sup>WENK, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-123.

### 1.2.3. Relations with the Western Countries.

Rama II's reign saw the resumption of relations with the West which had lapsed after the end of Ayutthaya. Most of the European culture which had been introduced into Siam was lost with the destruction of the city. The reason why Thai intercourse with the West was not revived sooner than Rama II's reign was that the European powers were preoccupied with their own affairs. The period from the reign of king Taksin to the first few years of King Rama II's reign coincided with the British expansion in India, the American Revolution or war of American independence (1775-1783), the French Revolution of 1789-1799 and the Napoleonic War.<sup>233</sup>

In the fifth year of Rama I's reign, a Portuguese envoy arrived in a sloop and this was the only European envoy in the first Chakri reign. Rama I gave orders that the embassy was to be well received, the letter from the king of Portugal to be royally treated. Rama I received the envoy and the letter in the Amarindra Hall, and his reply was conveyed to the sloop in a procession of royal barges.<sup>234</sup>

The first envoy to come to Bangkok in the second reign was once again a Portuguese sent by the Governor of the colony of Macao, and he was Carlos Manoel Silveira. As he had not been sent by the king of Portugal, Rama II received him not as a royal envoy, but as a foreign merchant. His mission was to investigate the possibilities of trade. The Portuguese were willing to sell muskets and other armaments to the Siamese. However, no treaty was signed.<sup>235</sup>

In 1822, under King George IV (1811-1830), the British once again came fully into the Thai picture with the mission of John Crawfurd, sent by the Marquess of Hastings, who was governor-general of India.<sup>236</sup> Main aims of the Crawfurd mission were to get the duties reduced, to have the regulations against British ships modified, and to have the royal trading monopoly abolished. He had been told to get as much information about Siam as possible, and so successful was he that his report became a large book. However, there were three important obstacles which resulted in the failure of Crawfurd's mission.

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<sup>233</sup>The two dynamic imperial states of this era, France and Great Britain, expanded overseas. Many gains were made by Great Britain at the expense of France; the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars in this respect, the final round of the great colonial Anglo-French contest of the eighteenth century. As in 1714 and 1763, many of Great Britain's acquisitions at a victorious peace in 1815 were intended to reinforce her maritime strength. Cf. J.M. ROBERTS, *The Pelican History of the World*, London: Penguin Group, 1988<sup>12</sup>, pp. 747-761. For the more study on the American Independence and the Napoleonic War, see also H.A.L. FISHER, *A History of Europe. From the Beginning of the Eighteenth Century to 1935*, Vol. II, Glasgow: Fontana/Collins, 1984<sup>20</sup>, pp. 856-875, 908-933.

<sup>234</sup>Cf. D. RAJANUBHAP, Prince, *The Collected Chronicles* (in Thai), part 62, book 34, Bangkok: Kurusapa, 1969, pp. 211-221.

<sup>235</sup>Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 227-229.

<sup>236</sup>In fact, the British agent, Francis Light, on August 11, 1786, took Penang island from the Sultan of Kedah with the provisional understanding that the British East India Company would help to maintain Kedah's independence from Siam. Cf. CHAKRABONGSE, *op. cit.*, p. 108. John Crawfurd had been a physician in the Bengal Medical Service since 1803, had served under Stamford Raffles in Java, and had been British Resident at Singapore. Cf. HALL, *op. cit.*, p. 445.

Firstly, Siam did not wish to deal with the governor-general of India but preferred direct intercourse with the King of England, expressed by the question of King Rama II during a royal audience granted to the governor-general, "*Have you been sent with the knowledge of the king of England?*",<sup>237</sup> to which Crawford had to reply in the negative with the explanation that George IV was too far away.

Secondly, the great obstacle for both sides was that there were no Thais who could speak English any more than there were any English who could speak Thai. This resulted in much unfortunate misunderstanding.<sup>238</sup>

Thirdly, the Thais were clamoring for firearms, but these the British were reluctant to sell as they knew that the weapons were needed for the possible war with Burma. Britain's own war with Burma was still two years off, so Crawford had to say that Britain could not sell arms which were intended to be used against her friend.<sup>239</sup>

So the negotiations between the Thais and the British broke down. In spite of its failure, his mission resulted in increased trade between Siam and Great Britain. Crawford's mission was followed by Burney's visit to Bangkok in 1826. Captain Henry Burney was an official at Penang who spoke Thai and was well acquainted with the affairs of the Malay Peninsula. He was appointed a British envoy to Siam by the governor-general of India. On June 20, 1826, a treaty of friendship and commerce between Siam and Great Britain was signed. This treaty of 1826 increased Siam's foreign trade with the British territories. Two years after Burney's departure from Siam, an Englishman, James Hunter, settled at Bangkok as the first English resident merchant.

American intercourse with Siam was inaugurated through the missionaries and merchants. In 1828, two Protestant missionaries arrived at Bangkok with an intention to teach Christianity to the Chinese who had already formed a large community. The American Baptist mission became interested in Siam and the first batch of its missionaries travelled to Bangkok in 1833. They were soon joined by the Presbyterians among whom were Dr. Dan Beach Bradley and his wife.<sup>240</sup>

In 1833, President Andrew Jackson appointed Edmund Roberts as the first American envoy. The treaty of Amity and Commerce between the U.S.A. and Siam was concluded on March 20, 1833. On March 24, 1850, Joseph Balestier, who was commissioned by President Zachary Taylor as a special envoy to Bangkok, arrived on a warship at the mouth of the Chao Phya river, in order to secure more favorable terms through a new treaty with Siam and to establish a consulate in Bangkok. But his mission failed.

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<sup>237</sup>J. CRAWFURD, *A Journal of an Embassy from the Governor-General of India to the Courts of Siam and Cochin-China*, London: Colburn, 1830, p. 95.

<sup>238</sup>CHAKRABONGSE, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

<sup>239</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 136.

<sup>240</sup>For the more detailed study on the Protestant missionaries in Thailand, see S. CHAIWAN, *A Comparative Historical Study of Roman Catholic and Protestant Missions in Thailand (in Thai)*, Bangkok: Suriyaban, 1976, pp. 193-237. See also G.B. MC FARLAND, *Historical Sketch of Protestant Missions in Siam 1828-1928*, Bangkok: The Bangkok Times Press, 1928, pp. 1-50.

Great Britain also wanted to revise the Burney Treaty. Queen Victoria appointed Sir James Brooke as an envoy to the Thai Court. He arrived at Bangkok on August 10, 1850. The negotiations between the Thai government and Brooke were not successful, since both of them were adamant on the points of issue; furthermore, King Rama III was gravely ill, so no decision could be made about the British proposal.

#### **1.2.4. The Modernization of the Country by Rama IV (1851-1868).**

The Chakri Dynasty has provided some of Siam's most remarkable kings. Two, in particular, warrant special mention; Rama IV, better known to the West as king Mongkut, and his son, Rama V (1868-1910) otherwise known as king Chulalongkorn.

King Mongkut has become the most renowned monarch in Thai history. This is not due so much to his own great qualities and achievements, which in themselves entitle him to a full-length biography, but more to an American novel, a black and white film, and also to a musical play which was later made into a Technicolor film.<sup>241</sup>

The king was born on October 18, 1804. He was ordained as a Buddhist monk when he reached the age of twenty in 1824 and stayed in the monkhood throughout Rama III's reign of 27 years, which was a wonderful preparation for him. As a monk, Prince Mongkut enjoyed freedom of movement, since he did not have to worry about his own safety. He travelled extensively as a monk. His personal contact with the people was a humbling experience for him, seeing with his own eyes the actual conditions of the people. It made him regard himself as an ordinary human being and colored his innovative reign, which was distinguished by an open, humane attitude towards his subjects. He learned English from his American missionary friends, Dr. D. B. Bradley and Rev. J. Caswell, in which he attained such proficiency that he acted as the chief translator for Rama III and Brooke. Syamananda observes that:

He was the first Asian monarch who could understand, read and write English, which had superseded Portuguese as the lingua franca in the Far East. This probably accounts for the fact that the British gave up the idea of using force against Siam under his reign.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>241</sup>The film "*Anna and the King of Siam*" with Rex Harrison as king. The musical play "*The King and I*" and the musical film of the same name, both with Yul Brynner as the king. Chula Chakrabongse observed that all of this should perhaps be ignored by the one who seeks here to be a serious historian, but the incidents and scenes from the above have become so familiar to so many people throughout the world as to be believed as real facts. Cf. CHAKRABONGSE, *op. cit.*, p. 178. The observation of the films comes also from the Office of the Prime Minister, saying: the monarch unfaithfully maligned as a frivolous autocrat in the musical comedy, "*The King and I*". Cf. Office of the Prime Minister, Thailand into the 80's, Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich, 1979, p. 33.

<sup>242</sup>SYAMANANDA, *op. cit.*, p. 119; see also CHAKRABONGSE, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

He also studied Latin with the Roman Catholic Bishop, Pallegoix, and in turn taught him Pali, while Western science absorbed his interest, and he specialized in astronomy and astrology. In the year 1868, the King proved his aptitude as an astronomer by predicting a solar eclipse over the gulf of Siam with even greater accuracy than the expert astronomers specially sent out from France to observe it.<sup>243</sup>

His varied experiences as a monk were of incalculable advantage to him and to the country when he came to ascend the throne.<sup>244</sup> After his enthronement he inaugurated the modernization of the country along western lines. Having considered the power and influences of the western countries and the neighboring countries who were occupied by nineteenth century colonialism, he eagerly studied Western history, geography, mathematics and modern science. Latin and English gave him an important window to the outside world. His study convinced him that Siam's independence could best be secured by encouraging equally friendly relations with numerous western countries. And his imaginative diplomacy ensured that Siam alone remained independent while neighboring countries were helplessly colonized.<sup>245</sup> The events in China and elsewhere had proved one important fact, that the age old policy of isolation had completely broken down and that henceforth no Far Eastern country could shape its own policy independently, without due regard to the Western powers. Thus, we should summarize what Rama IV had done for modernizing the country and for preserving her independence, as follows:

1. The British government realized by concluding on April 18, 1855, a treaty with Siam, Sir John Bowring acting on behalf of the British government. The main purpose of his mission was to request from Siam extraterritoriality and other privileges for British subjects, that means Siam lost judicial and fiscal autonomy, since the Siamese courts ceased to exercise jurisdiction over British subjects and the Royal Warehouse Department was abolished. It marked the beginning of the humiliating events in the annals of the history of Siam with the Western Powers in the nineteenth century.

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<sup>243</sup>The solar eclipse occurred exactly according to his prediction on August 18, 1868. See the detailed story in J. BLOFELD, *King Maha Mongkut of Siam*, Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1987<sup>2</sup>, pp. 85-90.

<sup>244</sup>It is difficult to compress his full life into one chapter and it is also beyond our study. For the more detailed study, see BLOFELD, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-97; R. LINGAT, *La Vie Religieuse du Roi Mongkut*, in JSS, Vol. XX, part II (1927) 129-148.

<sup>245</sup>In 1819 the first war between Burma and Great Britain broke out. Burma was defeated and had to buy peace by ceding the province of Assam after two Anglo-Burmese wars (1824-26 and 1852) and cost it not only Assam but also Manipur, Arakan, Tenasserim and eventually Pegu. The rest of Burma fell to the British in 1885. Burma became independent in 1948. See *Burma*, in *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. 2, Chicago, 1986, p. 658. In 1824 a treaty was signed between Great Britain and the Netherlands defining their respective spheres of influence in this part of the world. The complete capitulation of China at the end of the Opium war (1840) brought her down from the height of her formerly esteemed position of a mighty Empire. French influence was growing daily in Annam, aided by internal disorder in that country, while the British were establishing their strongholds in Singapore and the province Wellusly in Malaya. Cf. S. PRAMOJ, M.R. and K. PRAMOJ, M.R., *A King of Siam Speaks*, Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1987, pp. 85-86., O. FRANKFURTER, *King Mongkut*, in JSS, I(1904) 192. For the Opium war, see J.M. ROBERTS, *op. cit.*, pp. 762-765.

In 1856, the United States of America closely followed the example of Great Britain by negotiating a new treaty with Siam, and most of the civilized and commercial Powers presently adopted the same course. Treaties almost identical with that of Great Britain were concluded by Siam as follows:

with the U.S.A.	May 29, 1856.
with France	August 15, 1856.
with Denmark	May 21, 1858.
with Portugal	February 10, 1859.
with Netherlands	December 17, 1860.
with Germany	February 7, 1862.
with Sweden and Norway	May 18, 1868.
with Belgium	August 29, 1868. <sup>246</sup>

2. He employed a handful of foreign advisers for specialized, technical work that did not infringe upon existing interests. Some served as translators and secretaries for the conduct of foreign affairs; others were drillmasters in semiprivate armies, printers, bandmasters and technical officers in the port and police administration, both of which directly served the growing European community in Bangkok. Prince Dhani observed that:

Contact with the West brought changed conditions and by this time new problems arose... Social problems, such as sanitation and education had to be looked after by the state instead of being left to the initiative of the people and the clergy. So the king exercised full legislative power.<sup>247</sup>

He issued no less than 500 acts of law and decrees, most of the laws being drafted by the king himself which helped to grace the work with his own intimate charms and personality.<sup>248</sup> In anticipation of a democracy which came nearly a hundred years after his time, he demonstrated that he was equal to any emergency, going to the extent of electing judges.

3. For the sake of communications, he promoted the construction of roads in Bangkok and the digging of canals which connected the capital with its surrounding towns.

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<sup>246</sup>Two days after his death, the treaty was made with Italy on October 3, 1868, followed in the new reign by the treaty with Austria-Hungary on May 17, 1869, with Spain on February 13, 1870, with Japan on February 25, 1898, with Russia on June 11, 1899. See L. NATHABANJA, Extra-Territoriality in Siam, Bangkok: Bangkok Daily Mail, 1924, p. 38.

<sup>247</sup>DHANI, Prince, The Old Siamese Conception of the Monarchy, in JSS, Vol. XXXVI, part 2 (December 1947) 102-103. See also D.K. WYATT, The Beginnings of Modern Education in Thailand 1868-1919, Ph. D. Thesis (unpublished), Cornell University, 1966.

<sup>248</sup>King Mongkut's public pronouncements are truly varied and voluminous. The twenty-odd laws are translated out of the 500 forming only one twenty-fifth of his entire juridical production. See S. PRAMOJ and K. PRAMOJ, op. cit., pp. 23-81.



4. For the peace and order of the kingdom, he established a police force charged with a special duty to protect the life and property of western people in Bangkok and an international court to judge their cases with the Siamese. He organized a small army on the European lines, consisting of a regiment each of Infantry, Artillery and Marines for which he introduced steamships.
5. He started the publication of a government Gazette and allowed the laws of the kingdom to be printed, that the people might be better informed. He tried to depart from some profane customs and tried also to ameliorate the condition of slaves and to allow women some choice in marriage.

These were small steps, but king Mongkut was looking ahead to the day when he or his successor might build upon them and make Siam a truly "*civilized*" country.

## **2. King Rama V, the Great (1868-1910).**

Despite his many official activities, Rama IV found time to pursue his love of astronomy. In 1868, he accurately predicted a total eclipse of the sun, but in viewing it in marshy countryside south of Bangkok, he contracted the malaria that caused his death on October 1, 1868.

King Rama V succeeded to the throne with the full consent of the Accession Council. He was born on September 20, 1853, as the eldest son of Queen Debsirindra. King Rama IV clearly hoped his son would succeed him, and to prepare him for the throne, he afforded his son, in the 1860's, the beginnings of a superb education that combined traditional Thai with modern Western elements. On ascending the throne, king Rama V consolidated Siam's independence and smoothly advanced vital modernization by introducing reforms wherever he saw fit. His long reign of 42 years was an active age of sweeping changes in the midst of political turmoil, because while the changes were going on, both England and France were expanding their colonies all around and came to clash with Siam. It was for the king and his collaborators either to bring about the change of the country into a modern state so as to better resist colonialism and survive, or to perish at the aggressive hands of overpowering imperialism.

### **2.1. The Front Palace Crisis.**

At his accession, King Rama V was a minor, as he had just entered his sixteenth year. So the Accession Council nominated Srisuriyawong the Regent who would govern the country for him for five years. Then, Srisuriyawong took the step of declaring that Prince Wichaichan, son of the late Second king Phra Pinklao, should be named heir-presumptive or the Second King, an act that always before had been the prerogative of the new King. One prince dared to rise and challenge this unprecedented move, but his action failed to elicit any support from an assembly fearful of Srisuriyawong's power, and Prince Wichaichan's appointment was pushed through.<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>249</sup>Cf. TIPAKORNWONG, Chao Phya, The Royal Chronicle of King Rama IV (in Thai), Bangkok: Kurusapa, 1978<sup>2</sup>, pp. 518-521.

During the five years of his minority, Rama V had been able to travel to Singapore, Java, India and Burma, and had learnt much about what the colonial Powers were doing to their colonies. He foresaw that big changes for his country were necessary. During the period of Regency (1868-1873), the power of the throne was at its nadir; the Regent was the most powerful person in Siam. On his coming of age in November 1873, King Rama V realized that one of the most urgent tasks confronting him as king in his own right was the consolidation of royal power. So, he held a second coronation in order to assume his absolute power and he assumed the direct rule of the kingdom immediately.

### **2.1.1 The Position of the Front Palace or Wang Na.**

Next to the Crown, the Front Palace was, before its abolition in 1885, officially the most important political institution in Siam. Upon the death of the king, the Front Palace Prince who was also known as the Wang Na, Uparat and Second King by Europeans, and appointed by the king from among his sons and brothers, usually assumed the throne.<sup>250</sup> His claim to the throne was the strongest because he had his own court establishment similar to that of the government, with officials, troops and almost unlimited access to the treasury. Xie Shunyu clearly explains this position as follows:

The tremendous power possessed by the Wang Na had resulted in tensions between the Grand Palace and the Front Palace. Their relations were often characterized by ambiguity, mutual suspicion and fear. The fear of revolt on the part of the king by an ambitious Wang Na was very real.<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>250</sup>In the history of the Front Palace, only two Wang Na, Ekatotsarot (1590-1605) and Phra Pinklao (1851-1866), were given extraordinary honors and the kingly title of Second King.

<sup>251</sup>X. SHUNYU, *Siam and the British 1874-1875: Sir Andrew Clarke and the Front Palace Crisis*, Bangkok: Thammasat University Press, 1988, pp. 2-3. See also A. RABITHADANA, *The Organization of Thai Society in the Early Bangkok Period 1782-1873*, Ithaca, New York: Southeast Asia Programme, Cornell University, Data Paper, No. 74, 1969, pp. 61-62.

The Front Palace Crisis (December 1874-February 1875) was a serious political challenge to a young and politically (as well as physically) weak king, Rama V, who had just assumed full control of the kingdom of Siam. King Rama V attempted to achieve his goal through the implementation of reforms of the traditional administration which was controlled by and benefited the established nobles. These reforms seriously threatened to undermine the interests and power of the established officials, including the Wang Na. Wichaichan linked the reforms directly to the Front Palace Crisis when he wrote to Sir Andrew Clarke, that "*some foolish men who wished to change the customs and usages of the country had turned the king against me*".<sup>252</sup> Wichaichan had inherited a Front Palace fortified by his father, and commanded the best ground troops in the country and also the navy, and his arsenal was second to none.<sup>253</sup> Wyatt notes that:

The military power of the Front Palace made it a difficult institution for the king to handle in the interest of reform, centralization, political stability, Mongkut's direct dynastic line and, perhaps, personal survival. From the part of Wichaichan, the rumor of the discontentment over the irregular appointment and its implications for the succession problem aroused his fear that there was a conspiracy to remove him.<sup>254</sup>

### 2.1.2. The Outbreak of the Crisis.

By the latter part of December 1874, the relationship between the Supreme king and the Second king had completely broken down. Mutual distrust and fear had led both Palaces to call up more troops to prepare for any eventuality.

The outbreak of a fire in a very critical and dangerous spot in the Grand Palace near the arsenal on the night of December 28, at 11:00 p.m., brought Bangkok to the brink of civil war. Troops from the Front Palace came to help fight the fire but were turned back. The Supreme king, being wary that the fire could have been a ploy to overthrow him, stepped up the security in his palace. Wichaichan feared that his life was being threatened by the King, so he fled for asylum in the British Consulate at Bangkok on January 2, 1875. The Ex-Regent was urgently recalled for consultations. Bangkok was in a state of panic and there were fears of active foreign intervention.

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<sup>252</sup>Quoted in A. CLARKE, Sir, *My Visit to Siam*, in *Contemporary Review*, 81(Feb. 1902) 226.

<sup>253</sup>Cf. C. KASETSIRI, *The Front Palace: The Office of the Heir Apparent?*, *The Emergence of Modern States, Thailand and Japan*, ed. C.A. TROCHI, Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 1976, p. 90; see also N. BATTYE, *The Military, Government and Society in Siam, 1868-1910: Politics and Military Reform during the Reign of Chulalongkorn*, Ph. D. thesis, Cornell University, 1974, p. 164.

<sup>254</sup>D.K. WYATT, *The Politics of Reform in Thailand: Education in the Reign of Chulalongkorn*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969, p.

### 2.1.3. The Solution of the Crisis.

The king attempted to persuade Wichaichan to leave the British Consulate, but to no avail. The Council of Ministers tried to defuse the crisis by sending a four-article agreement to Wichaichan who rejected it because it contained conditions extremely detrimental to his position and interest. Instead, Wichaichan drew up an agreement of ten articles and submitted it to the Council of Ministers. The ministers were prepared to accept all except the tenth article which provided for an agreement guaranteed by the British and French consuls, an encroachment on the sovereignty of the king. King Rama V bombarded Paris and London with appeals for European neutrality and worked hard to regain the support of his ministers and the older conservatives at court.

The news that the British had at least decided to step in and that Sir Andrew Clarke, the Governor of the Straits Settlements, was coming to Bangkok on the invitation of Newsman to extricate the Acting Consul-General from his dilemma, must have raised the morale of Wichaichan somewhat. What Wichaichan wanted was an agreement guaranteed by the foreign powers. Sir Andrew Clarke's intervention seemed to serve his purposes very well. In the case of the Front Palace incident, the most important person involved was the Governor of the Straits Settlements, Sir Andrew Clarke, not because of his official duties but because of Newsman's request for his guidance and instructions, King Rama V's looking to him, Clarke's own inclination to help King Rama V, and his assessment of the situation as an experienced colonial administrator.

His decisions and actions were thus decisive in the settlement of the crisis. He wrote to Rama V immediately upon his arrival on February 18, 1875, to assure him that:

Your Majesty's letters of 14 and 23 January have received my earnest attention, and having been authorized by Her Majesty's Government to visit Your Majesty's Court, I hasten to assure you that my good offices are at your disposal and that I shall be honoured by receiving Your Majesty's confidence.<sup>255</sup>

After studying the details of the crisis, Clarke prepared a draft decree and finally got the assent of both parties. In brief, the reconciliation decree provided for the re-confirmation of Wichaichan as Wang Na, with all the privileges enjoyed by that office restored. However, Wichaichan was allowed only to maintain a guard not exceeding two hundred men, who were to be restricted to his residence. All ships, arms and munitions, and also the finances of the kingdom, were confirmed to be under the authority of the Supreme king.

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<sup>255</sup>Clarke to Chulalongkorn, 18 Feb. 1875, C.O. 273/79, also in F.O. 69/63 cited by SHUNYU, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

Wichaichan had no choice, realizing that he could not get anything better and that the hospitality of the British Consulate could not be indefinitely extended, he gave his assent on February 24, 1875. A reconciliation ceremony took place on the following day. Clarke's mission had thus succeeded in settling the Front Palace Crisis.<sup>256</sup>

## **2.2. Relation with the Foreign Countries and Political Problems.**

To preserve the independence of Siam, King Rama V realized to the full, the vital necessity to continue the westernization of the country, initiated by his father, and to have a good relationship with foreign countries since the kingdom was already surrounded by the two imperialist powers, Britain and France.

His foreign travels exercised an immense influence on him, as they broadened his outlook and enabled him to learn on the spot the good and bad features of colonial rule; he toured Java again in 1896 and 1901, and visited Singapore in 1902. Credit was accorded to him for being the first Thai monarch to visit Europe on two occasions. In 1897, he made friends through personal contact with the various Heads of State such as the Emperor William II of Germany, the Tsar Nicholas II of Russia, the Prince of Wales (who was four years later crowned as king Edward VII of Great Britain), and President Loubet of France. In 1907, he renewed and strengthened the ties of friendship with the European statesmen with whom he had become intimately acquainted.<sup>257</sup>

During the reign of Rama V, Siam passed through the most pressing period of European imperialism. Both Britain and France were pushing out to protect and extend their empires. The British were on the Thai northern and western borders, in Burma, and also on the southern border, in Malaya. The French continued to press westward from Cochin-China and Tongkin into Laos and Cambodia. Professor David A. Wilson observed that:

The loss of territory over which the kingdom had claim of dominion took the form of a number of diplomatic dramas in which France, Britain, and Thailand all played important roles.<sup>258</sup>

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<sup>256</sup>See all the documentation and details of the crisis in CLARKE, *op. cit.*, pp. 221-230; SHUNYU, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-67; W.S. BRISTOWE, *Louis and the King of Siam*, London: Chatto and Windus, 1976, pp. 38-47.

<sup>257</sup>Cf. S. SUBSOPON, *The Thai History* (in Thai), Bangkok: Akson Charoentat, 1979<sup>3</sup>, pp. 367-373.

<sup>258</sup>WILSON, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

### 2.2.1. The Political Problems with France.

France had seized Saigon in 1859 and Vietnam had to recognize Cochin-China as a French colony. Using her new colony as a base, France spread her influence to Cambodia which was a vassal state of Siam. Cambodia became a French Protectorate when king Narodom of Cambodia signed a treaty on August 11, 1863, placing himself under French protection. Siam was not in a position to resist the French pressure, so Siam signed a treaty with France on July 5, 1867, recognizing the French Protectorate over Cambodia.

In 1883, the French conquered Tongkin, and in the following year Annam had to recognize French suzerainty. France now looked westward towards Laos and Siam. She put up a claim that Laos used to pay tribute to Vietnam and therefore Laos must be given back to France. Siam and France entered into negotiations to settle their dispute in 1886-1887 and Siam was forced to cede the territory of Sibsong Chuthai and Huapan Tangha Tanghok to France.

In 1890, France began to claim all territory east of the Mekong in northern Laos as rightfully part of the ancient Vietnamese domain and therefore as part of French Indochina. After a series of border incidents, France lent vigor to its demands by having a gunboat steam up the Chao Phya river to Bangkok. In order to maintain her independence, Siam yielded to the French and on October 3, 1893, she signed a treaty with France, conceding 50,000 sq. miles of territory and specific advantages for the French subjects in Siam. The French occupied Chantaburi as a guarantee, while Siam agreed to demilitarize her eastern frontier.

The French extended almost indiscriminately extraterritorial rights in Siam, not only to French subjects, Europeans and Asians, but also to all refugees from French territories and their descendants living in Siam. By this process great numbers of foreign Asians were removed from Thai jurisdiction.<sup>259</sup> These extraterritorial rights caused considerable difficulties to the Thai authorities in governing not only the capital but also the provinces. Siam embarked on a policy of attempting to regain its legal sovereignty. The policy was pursued in part by bargains over further territorial concessions. Thus in treaties signed in 1904 and 1907 with France, Siam had to cede to France two territories on the right bank of the Mekong, namely Paklai, opposite Luang Pra Bang and Champasak in 1904, and in 1907 Siam ceded Battambang, Srisophon and Siemrap to France. In return Siam gained jurisdiction over all French protégés, but the advantages were not of much significance. Relations with France were improved when a number of French jurists were appointed to the committee set up to codify Thai laws.<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>259</sup>Cf. NATHABANJA, *op. cit.*, pp. 247-250.

<sup>260</sup>For the details of Franco-Thai relations, see K. SUBAMONKALA, *La Thaïlande et Ses Relations avec La France*, Thèse pour le Doctorat, Université de Paris, Paris: Editions A. Pedone, 1940, pp. 116-194; S. TIRASASVAT, *Franco-Thai Relations 1893-1907* (in Thai), Bangkok: Saengrung Press, 1980, pp. 1-466; P. DUKE, *Foreign Affairs, Independence and Sovereignty of Thailand* (in Thai), Bangkok: Chao Phya Press, 1984, pp. 1-84; M. XUMSAI, *The History of 1893: The Documents from the Thai Embassy in Paris* (in Thai), 7 Vols., Bangkok: Chalermnit, 1976., T. NUMNON, *Thai Diplomacy during Bangkok Period* (in Thai), Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich, 1985, pp. 3-4.

### 2.2.2. The Anglo-Thai Relations.

After winning the first war with Burma, Great Britain annexed Arakan, Martaban, Tavoy and Tenasserim in 1826; she occupied Lower Burma as the result of the second war in 1854 and finally incorporated the country in the British Empire as a province of India in 1886. At the same time Great Britain meddled in the affairs of Chiang Mai in the hope of sequestering the northern region from Siam. Luckily for Siam, owing to the praiseworthy and wise administrative policy of Rama V, the British attempt failed rather quietly. In 1896, Great Britain and France made an agreement concerning their colonial expansion in Africa and the Far East and they signed an agreement concerning Siam with two main points:

1. They would not send their armies into the region between the Mekong and the Tenasserim mountains.
2. This undertaking would not stop any action which both parties agreed to take as a necessary measure for the preservation of Thai independence.

Siam had no part in the signing of the Anglo-French agreement of 1896. Although it did not guarantee Siam's independence, it would keep both Great Britain and France from violating her sovereignty.

In 1899, Siam and Great Britain signed a treaty limiting the extraterritorial rights. Since the conclusion of the Burney treaty of 1826, Great Britain had been bringing pressure on the four Malay states, Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan and Trengganu which were under Thai suzerainty. Finally Siam signed a treaty with Great Britain in 1909, whereby she ceded to Great Britain these four states, a territory of 15,000 square miles and about one million inhabitants. In return Great Britain surrendered extraterritorial rights not only for British Asian subjects, but Europeans as well, and she was the first European power to do so. This treaty marked the last concession Siam made to a European power.<sup>261</sup>

In assessing king Rama V's foreign policy, it can be said that although he had lost 90,000 square miles of territory to the French and the British, he succeeded in preserving the independence of the country and he did this, in spite of all the threats and pressure that had been brought to bear upon him, by using skillful diplomacy and by hastening to adapt and adopt the methods of the West.

### 2.3. The Country-Reformation.

Politically, however, The Front Palace Crisis and the problems with France *"had serious consequences for the cause of reform and modernization."*<sup>262</sup> King Rama V also wrote:

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<sup>261</sup>Cf. WILSON, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-8; CHAKRABONGSE, *op. cit.*, p. 252; DUKE, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-96.

<sup>262</sup>WYATT, *The Politics of Reform: Education in the Reign of King Chulalongkorn*, p. 61.

I have felt it better to defer the prosecution of further plans of reform until I shall find some demand for them among the leaders of my people. I have not relinquished them, but act according to my opportunities.<sup>263</sup>

Opportunities for reform came finally in the late 1880's when time took its toll on the old guard; the Ex-Regent died in January 1883, and the Second king, Wichaichan in August 1885; many of the officials and nobles of the regency period had also died or retired. King Rama V embarked, once again, on a programme to modernize the administration. Only some important reforms and aspects of modernization of Siam will be shown in order that we could see the general view of Siam during his period.

### **2.3.1 The Social uplifting and the Welfare of the People.**

On this point, Rama V did not by any means forget his people. We could summarize his works for the social uplifting and the welfare of the people in this way:

1. The abolition of some old-fashioned practices.

On the occasion of his second enthronement in November 1873, he dramatically announced the abolition of the practice of prostration in the royal presence.

His Majesty wishes to remove oppression and lower his status so as to allow officials to sit on chairs instead of prostrating in his presence.<sup>264</sup>

At his request, princes and officials as well as their spouses set a new fashion in dressing up in a civilized manner.

2. The Public Health.

In 1886, the king set up a committee with the task of organizing the first hospital which finally was erected in 1886-1887. The Medical School began simple instruction in 1888 and in 1889 the school was formally opened by the King and the Queen.<sup>265</sup> He established the Department of Public Health and Works. What was essential for the prevention of diseases was a supply of pure water, and the construction of the Bangkok water supply was started in 1902, but it was not completed until 1914.

3. The Siamese Education.

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<sup>263</sup>Chulalongkorn to Clarke, Nov. 27, 1876, quoted in SHUNYU, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

<sup>264</sup>The preamble to the proclamation of king Chulalongkorn concerning the Council of State, quoted in SYAMANANDA, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

<sup>265</sup>CF. The Executive Committee of the Eight Congress, *Siam: General and Medical Features*, Bangkok: The Bangkok Times Press, 1930, pp. 322-323., LANDON, *op. cit.*, pp. 117-118.



Fully recognizing the value of modern education, the King had, in 1871, founded the first school, in the accepted sense of the word, in the Grand Palace.<sup>266</sup> Later an English school was started, followed by the Suan Kularb school. The year 1884 is of special significance in the history of Thai education, since it marks the opening of the first state school for the people at Wat Mahan in Bangkok and the introduction of school examinations. In 1887 the Department of Education which had in due time its status raised to that of Ministry of Public instruction was created. For higher education, the king founded the Military College and the Naval College in 1887 and 1907 respectively, while the Law School opened its doors to students in 1897 and the Royal Pages' School began to train provincial administrators in 1902. Side by side with the newly founded state schools. Christian missionary schools continued to flourish, and private schools were encouraged.<sup>267</sup>

#### 4. The Communications.

For the sake of communications, the Department of Post and Telegraph was established in 1883 and in 1885 the Thai delegates attended for the first time the Universal Postal Union at Berne with a result that Siam signed the Postal Union Convention.<sup>268</sup> Then the first railway started its service, linking Bangkok with Pak Nam, in 1893. The State also selected the railway line from Bangkok to Korat as its first enterprise, which was begun in 1892 and completed in 1900. By 1910, the eastern line, the northern line and the southern line served the public. Roads and bridges were also built, so in addition to horse-drawn carriages, other vehicles appeared on the streets such as the rickshaw, the tram, the motor-car, the motor-cycle and the bicycle.

#### 5. The Abolition of Slavery.

The achievement of King Rama V which has most caught western imagination is the abolition of slavery. On his first enthronement in 1868, he issued a royal decree with the support of the Regent that all the people born in his reign would be free, since he was determined that slavery must eventually disappear from his realm.<sup>269</sup> Seven kinds of slaves were known in those days, namely:

1. slaves obtained by purchase from owner
2. children born from slave parents
3. slaves given as presents
4. people who sold themselves for money to pay fines after criminal conviction
5. people who exchanged their freedom for rice during hard times
6. prisoners of war

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<sup>266</sup>Siam's education had till then been conducted in the Buddhist monasteries which provided a narrow curriculum including Thai, some Pali and the Buddhist Scriptures.

<sup>267</sup>CHAKRABONGSE, *op. cit.*, pp. 240-241., SYAMANANDA, *op. cit.*, p. 128. See also The Executive Committee of the Eight Congress, *op. cit.*, pp. 173-181; LANDON, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

<sup>268</sup>Office of the Prime Minister, *The First Period of Post* (in Thai), Bangkok, 1980, pp. (3)-(5).

<sup>269</sup>Cf. CHAKRABONGSE, *op. cit.*, p. 245., SYAMANANDA, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

7. children given to gambling houses as payment for gambling losses.<sup>270</sup>

When the King, after reaching his majority, first informed the ministers and other noblemen of his idea, most of them were in

Disagreement and when the news of the coming abolition reached the owners, they were also against the idea. Thus, all in all, the King's initial project clashed with public opinion. The King carefully examined the existing law dealing with slavery and set up a committee to draft the new law emphasizing that progress had to be gradual and caused no undue hardship to owners or slaves. The law was drafted and enacted on October 18, 1874. He continually ameliorated the lot of the slaves. The number of slaves gradually dropped and in 1905 he issued a law for the abolition of slavery. Thus the Thai people won freedom with no struggle at all.<sup>271</sup>

### **2.3.2. The Reform of the Administration.**

King Rama V was a great statesman and realized fully that Siam could not maintain its independence, nor could its rulers retain their power, unless it adopted a modern standard of government. The task required courage, wisdom and foresight. In the reform of the administration, he appointed on May 8, 1874, the Council of State, comprising 12 members, which was his first advisory body. On August 15, 1874, the appointment of a Privy Council to give direct advice to the king was announced, consisted of 49 members. The Privy Council, probably patterned after the English Privy Council, thus was his second advisory body. On April 1, 1892, the administrative set-up was replaced by 12 ministries, each with the minister as its head and being directly responsible to the King as virtual prime minister. The provincial administration was reformed with the division of the kingdom into circle, province and district, all with officials of various ranks from Bangkok to govern them.<sup>272</sup>

### **2.3.3. The Peace of the Country.**

The reform of the army and the navy, inaugurated in the previous reign, was steadily continued by Rama V, who promulgated a conscription law in 1905. Towards the latter part of his reign, the army was further improved under the direction of his sons.

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<sup>270</sup>From the Siamese Law which indicated and described the characteristics of the slaves during the Bangkok Period, cited by A. RAPIPAT, Thai Society during the First Period of Bangkok 1782-1873 (in Thai), Bangkok: Pichanes Press, 1978, p. 212.

<sup>271</sup>Cf. SUBSOPON, op. cit., pp. 139-140.

<sup>272</sup>These 12 Ministries were 1. Interior 2. Foreign Affairs 3. Justice 4. Public Instruction 5. Finance 6. Lands and Agriculture 7. Defense 8. Royal Household 9. Local Government 10. Public Work 11. War 12. Privy Seal. Cf. The Executive Committee of the Eight Congress, op. cit., pp. 7-25., WONGSAWAN, op. cit., pp. 266-296.

His own special creation was the Royal Pages Guards Regiment. The Police Force in Bangkok was modernized and expanded to serve the whole country and was followed by prison reform. A Law on the constitution of courts of 1908 provided for the Supreme court, the Appeal court, the Criminal and the Civil courts as well as the Police court in the capital, in the provinces and international courts in any city where there was a need for them. Modern methods of collecting legal evidences were substituted for those of torture. H.R.H. Chakrabongse insisted that:

Throughout his reign, King Chulalongkorn continued the work of enlarging and improving the Army, which was necessary for internal security, and it was to be called upon more than once to put down riots of Chinese secret societies and revolts by Chinese Boxer troops who had escaped into North-Eastern Siam. It was also required to defend the Dynasty, and if need be, to enable the country to become an ally of one foreign (Farang) power against another.<sup>273</sup>

#### **2.4. Conclusion.**

On October 23, 1910, King Rama V died after a reign of 42 years in the 58<sup>th</sup> year of his age. He had suffered from a chronic kidney disease for some years and becoming critically ill on October 16, 1910. O. Frankfurter praises him that:

It will be the duty of abler pens than ours to give an account of what Siam owes to the deceased monarch in regard to the position she now fills in the rank of nations.<sup>274</sup>

David K. Wyatt adds that:

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<sup>273</sup>CHAKRABONGSE, *op. cit.*, p. 224. Concerning the Chinese in Siam, the best estimates indicate that the Chinese minority grew from about 230,000 in 1825 to 300,000 in 1850 and 792,000 in 1910. They had left the poverty and civil strife of rural south China to seek a better life in Siam. The chief characteristic of the Chinese was that it was overwhelmingly urban, and in close collaboration with Western enterprise, they dominated the modern sector of the Siamese economy. It was Chinese who built the modern sector of the economy of Siam. They dug the canals and constructed the railways and erected the fine new government offices and shop buildings and bridges of Bangkok. They developed the network of institutions and services necessary to make the rice-export economy work: the banks, the warehouses, the wholesale and retail trading concerns, the rice mill, etc. This had always been, since the earliest days of Ayutthaya, a powerful community in Siam. But they separated themselves into groups and organized the Chinese secret societies in order to keep their own nationalism. For the detailed study on the Chinese in Thailand, see W. SKINNER, Chinese Society in Thailand: An Analytical History, New York: Cornell University Press, 1957, in Thai, ed. C. KASETSIRI, Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich, 1986, pp. 30-167.

<sup>274</sup>O. FRANKFURTER, The Late King Chulalongkorn, in JSS, vol. VII, part 2 (1910) I.

If by 1910 Siam was not yet a modern nation, then at least it was a modernizing nation, and securely so. In the face of foreign threats and not of a little domestic opposition, Chulalongkorn had created a new structure for the state that possessed a dynamic of its own, an orientation toward change.<sup>275</sup>

It can be stated without exaggeration that Rama V brought vast progress to Siam. The Thai people still humbly refer to him as the "*Beloved Great*". On the anniversary of his demise, which has been declared as a government holiday in deference to his memory, homage in the form of floral tribute is paid to his Equestrian Statue in the Royal Plaza of Bangkok by the Thai people.

On the part of Catholicism in Siam during the reign of King Rama V, Mgr. Jean-Louis Vey, Apostolic Vicar of Siam, came on the scene. With his zeal and many important role and initiatives, he also inaugurated the big progress and changes in the history of the Catholic Church in Siam, corresponding to the development of the country and to the policy of the Siamese government.

## HAPTER IV

### The Great Roles of Mgr. Jean-Louis Vey, Apostolic Vicar of Siam

As I have already mentioned in the first two chapters, the situation of the Catholic Mission of Siam at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was not so favorable, since the expulsion of the missionaries took place by the order of King Taksin; M. Coudé relates the story as follows:

Il n'ignorait pas que nous ne cessions de répéter à nos chrétiens qu'ils ne pouvaient aller boire l'eau superstitieuse du serment, et que nous nous opposions à ce qu'ils participassent aux autres cérémonies de la religion siamoise. Pour nous, nous nous attendions à quelque événement fâcheux; cela est arrivé.<sup>276</sup>

Mgr. Le Bon and the missionaries left Siam on December 1, 1779, for Malacca under the supervision of some mandarins who were sent by the king to make sure of their departure. They arrived Malacca on December 16, 1779. Mgr. Le Bon, Apostolic Vicar of Siam, left for Europe on February 5, 1780, but he had to stop at Goa where he died on October 27, 1780.<sup>277</sup>

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<sup>275</sup>WYATT, *Thailand: A Short History*, p. 212.

<sup>276</sup>Coudé to Paris, AME, Siam, Vol. 891, p. 1187; A. LAUNAY, *Documents Historiques*, Vol. II, Paris, 1920, p. 301.

<sup>277</sup>Cf. *Ibid.*; see also LAUNAY, *Op. Cit.*, p. 308.

P. Garnault and P. Coudé, on the other hand, had decided to go to Pondicherry in order to go to Jongselang, the province of the Vicariate of Siam, whenever the situation should change. In the year 1782, King Rama I who became the first monarch of the Chakri Dynasty, sent for the missionaries who had been banished from Siam. He called for them because he wished to begin negotiations for an alliance with foreign countries and to promote trade with these countries as had been done before. Mgr. Coudé (1782-1785) wrote that

Le nouveau roi de Siam...voulait qu'ils rappelassent à Siam l'évêque et les missionnaires que l'ancien roi en avait chassés... le roi de Siam désire lier amitié avec tous les étrangers, et favoriser leur commerce à Siam comme autrefois.<sup>278</sup>

Consulting the documents which regard the history of the Mission of Siam in the archives of M.E.P., there exists a very interesting document written by Mgr. Garnault (1786-1811) on July 3, 1802, addressed to P. Boiret and P. Descourvières in Paris, in which he said:

Je dirai en passant que le roi ayant été baptisé dans son enfance par le médecin Sixte Ribeiro, celui-ci, se trouvant bien malade, se crut obligé de déclarer au roi son baptême; ce dernier n'en fit pas grand cas. Peu de temps après, le roi se trouvant à son tour dangereusement malade envoya prier Mgr. d'Adran de se rendre aup de lui. Monseigneur était trop occupé Le roi se voyant mourant fit son testament en deux mots. Il remettait son corps à son père nourricier, et son âme à Sixte Ribeiro.<sup>279</sup>

Launay confirmed the fact and insisted that King Rama I was baptized by Sixte Ribeiro, but it seemed to him that the King ignored the baptism "*quand plus tard, il ne parut pas en faire grand cas*".<sup>280</sup>

As soon as Mgr. Coudé arrived at Bangkok in 1784, the trouble of the Mission happened again. He found that the Catholics were divided into two parts: the Portuguese, who did not want to be dependent on the French missionaries, asking for Portuguese missionaries, and the Catholics of St. Joseph's parish who were faithful to the French missionaries. Having been informed of the conversion to Catholicism of one of his mandarins by the Portuguese, King Rama I intervened by forcing this mandarin and his family to leave Catholicism, but the mandarin accepted death instead.

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<sup>278</sup>Coudé à Jongselang on December 21, 1782, AME, Siam, Vol. 891, p. 1245. see also LAUNAY, *Op. Cit.*, p. 340.

<sup>279</sup>AME, Siam, Vol. 887, p. 320. Mgr. D'Adrian was the episcopal title of Mgr. De Behaine Pigneau, Apostolic Vicar of Cochinchina. It is interesting to note that Mgr. Garnault spoke of King Rama I when he still was the general and was gravely sick. See also B.C. CASTELLINO, *Prathetthai: Siam di Ieri Thailandia di Oggi*, Roma: LAS, 1977, p. 155. A. LAUNAY, *Op. Cit.*, p. 335.

<sup>280</sup>A. LAUNAY, *Histoire de la Mission de Siam 1662-1811*, Paris, 1920, p. 169. See also M.TEIXEIRA, *Portugal na Tailândia*, Macau: Imprensa Nacional de Macau, 1983, p. 110.

Also the other 20 Catholics under the care of the French missionaries were imprisoned because of the Portuguese's accusation. The trouble did not last very long, since the King, in an audience granted to Mgr. Coudé, asked for the compromise between the two parties and when the Portuguese had no hope of having Portuguese missionaries in Siam, they accepted, in 1808, the authority of the French missionaries. So the Mission of Siam could enjoy tranquillity in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>281</sup>

## 1. Religious Situation of Siam in the First Half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

Launay described the general situation of the Mission of Siam in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when he gave the number of the Catholics as follows:

Tel est, au commencement du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, l'état des paroisses de la mission de Siam, dont les meilleures et les plus nombreuses sont Bangkok, Chantaboun et Pinang. En 1802, le nombre total des chrétiens du Vicariat est évalué à 2500; en 1811, il approche de 3,000.<sup>282</sup>

It is obvious that during the time of Mgr. Garnault, the restoration of the Mission was begun. Mgr. Garnault believed that Penang would be the best place to begin his work, because *"lui donne grande ouverture pour les communications avec les lieux voisins, et pour la propagation de la foi dans les divers pays dont les habitants viennent commercer ici et attirent nos chrétiens chez eux"*.<sup>283</sup> In 1795 he founded a convent of *"Amantes de la Croix"* in Penang, a small seminary and a press with the phonetic Latin character to represent the letters and tones of Siamese language. He also composed and published a catechism.<sup>284</sup>

Then he came to reside in Bangkok, in 1796, where he founded also a convent of *"Amantes de la Croix"*. He began spreading the Good News to the South and to the East of Siam. The last important act of his episcopate was the approbation of the installation of the General College of M.E.P. in Penang or the General Seminary. He gave his authorization to establish the General College on June 16, 1809, having been moved from Pondicherry after some hesitations between Manila and Penang. He always held his constantly attached attention on the seminary. The General College, according to the regulation of M.E.P., was under the authority of Paris directly.<sup>285</sup>

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<sup>281</sup>Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 179-180. see also S. CHAIWAN, A Comparative Historical Study of Roman Catholic and Protestant Missions in Thailand, Bangkok: Suriyaban, 1976, p. 118.

<sup>282</sup>LAUNAY, Histoire de la Mission de Siam, pp. 179-180.

<sup>283</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 182. Penang politically belonged to Britain in 1786, but religiously it was under the jurisdiction of Apostolic Vicar of Siam.

<sup>284</sup>Cf. *Ibid.*

<sup>285</sup>Cf. LAUNAY, Histoire de la Mission de Siam, pp. 181-185. For the letter of authorization given by Mgr. Garnault for the establishment of the General College at Penang, see AME, Siam, Vol. 339, pp. 18, 21.

In 1827, during the time of Mgr. Florens (1811-1834), the decree of Pope Leo XII gave the ecclesiastical jurisdiction over Singapore, the new English colony, to the Apostolic Vicar of Siam. The Coadjutor of Siam, M. Bruguire, was sent to Singapore to administrate in 1829 but his authority was resisted by the Portuguese missionaries who refused to acknowledge the papal decree and claimed only the privileges of Padroado. The disputation between the two parties continued unto 1834, when the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide confirmed again the jurisdiction over Singapore of Apostolic Vicar of Siam on May 12, 1834.<sup>286</sup>

Because of the increasing number of the Catholics and missionaries, Mgr. Courvezzy (1834-1841) asked Rome to nominate a Coadjutor Bishop and in 1838 M. Pallegoix was nominated and consecrated Bishop on July 3, 1838. By the brief **Universi Dominici** of September 10, 1841, Rome separated the ecclesiastical region of Malaysia from the Mission of Siam, establishing the Mission of Oriental Siam comprising the kingdom of Siam and Laos, and the Mission of Occidental Siam which consisted of the Malayan Peninsula, the island of Sumatra and Southern Burma. Mgr. Pallegoix was the Apostolic Vicar of Oriental Siam and Mgr. Courvezzy, Apostolic Vicar of Occidental Siam.<sup>287</sup>

A very famous person at this time in the Mission of Siam was Mgr. Pallegoix (1841-1862). He had a brilliant mind and deep knowledge of science, mathematics and languages. He acquired a very deep knowledge of Siamese and Pali languages. He had a deep friendship with King Rama IV while he was still in his monkhood and this was a help to him in the preaching of Christianity in no small way.<sup>288</sup> However during the reign of king Rama III, he published his book "*Pudcha Wischana*" (Questions and Answers) in 1846, and sharply criticized Buddhism. In his criticism of the Buddhist religion, Mgr. Pallegoix referred to many points, for example:

1. Buddhism is not a religion in the true sense.
2. The Lord Buddha is not to be considered as a refuge to help.
3. The teaching of Buddhism regarding merit, sin, heaven, plane of loss and woe, unhappy planes, is not the truth.
4. Insulting remarks about the monkhood and sisterhood.
5. It is not possible to observe the precepts of Buddhism. The one who ordered them is like one out of his mind.<sup>289</sup>

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<sup>286</sup>Cf. ASCPF, Acta SCPF de Anno 1834, Vol. 197, pp. 96-106.

<sup>287</sup>Cf. Jus. Pon. de PF, V, p. 282 cited by A. LAUNAY, Mémorial de la Sociétés Missions Etrangères, Deuxième Partie 1658-1913, Paris, 1916, p. 159.

<sup>288</sup>Cf. A.L. MAFFAT, Mongkut, the King of Siam, New York: Cornell University Press, 1968, p. 160.

<sup>289</sup>P. MUTNKAN, Colonel, Answer to Reverend and Special Article (in Thai), Vol. XVIII, Bangkok: Klang Wittaya Press, 1974, p. 161.

This caused a serious break in the friendship between the Buddhists and the Catholics. The government ordered a halt in the distribution of the book and threatened the missionaries with detention if they did not comply.<sup>290</sup> In 1849, King Rama III banished 8 French missionaries from the country, since they gave the suggestions to Mgr. Pallegoix not to cooperate in his ceremony which, according to them, was a superstitious one. They were allowed to come back again in 1851 when King Rama IV succeeded to the throne.<sup>291</sup>

In 1856, a treaty was made with France. This treaty granted freedom to the Siamese to follow the religion of their choice, to the missionaries to preach, construct the seminary, found schools and hospitals, and with the facility to travel in the country.<sup>292</sup> This gave the missionaries a great zeal and enthusiasm to propagate Catholicism, because since the Ayutthaya period until this time, no such freedom had been granted.<sup>293</sup>

## 2. The Catholic Mission in Siam before Vey's Arrival

Having already been 25 years in Siam and acting as Apostolic Vicar in 1864, Mgr. Dupond (1865-1872) succeeded Mgr. Pallegoix and was consecrated Bishop on February 22, 1865, in Saigon. The annual report of Mgr. Dupond in 1867 gives us the general view of the situation of the Mission as follows: the number of the Christians was 8,000, baptism of the Siamese 667, baptism of the children 257.<sup>294</sup> one year later he reported that

Depuis 30 ans, que cette Mission a commenc e, nous avons eu quelques succ es; nous avons  a et l a, dispers es dans les provinces, de 12   15 stations, qui sont comme des centres de ralliement et des points de d epart pour rayonner aux environs et s'avancer peu   peu.<sup>295</sup>

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<sup>290</sup>Ibid., p. 162.

<sup>291</sup>Cf. History of the Universal Church and the Church in Thailand (in Thai), Bangkok: Sarasat Press, 1967<sup>2</sup>, pp. 412-417. Hereinafter will be cited only Church in Thailand.

<sup>292</sup>Cf. K. SUBAMONKALA, La Thaillande et Ses Relations avec la France, Th ese pour Le Doctorat (published), Paris: Editions A. PEDONE, 1940, p. 123.

<sup>293</sup>P. SREEHATAGAM, A Comparative Study of the Activity of Catholic and Protestant Churches in Relation to Thai Culture and Customs, A Thesis for the Degree of Master of Arts (unpublished), Bangkok: Mahidol University, 1986, p. 42.

<sup>294</sup>Cf. AME, Siam, Vol. 894, 1867, p. 369.

<sup>295</sup>AME, Siam, Vol. 894, 1868, p. 378, f. 1. 30 years which he mentioned should be counted from 1841 in which Rome separated the Mission into two Apostolic Vicariates.



During the 7 years of his episcopate, the number of Christians increased everywhere, especially during his first 4 years. He built 8 new churches for these new Christian communities and the ancient places were also developing quickly.<sup>296</sup> We could say that this period was the period of expansion, since he sent his missionaries to preach the Good News and open a new community wherever they could. The total number of missionaries who came to Siam during his time was 21; each missionary worked effectively. The most remarkable event of this period was the conversion of a Buddhist monk who was of the rank of an abbot. Abbot Pan, later Paul Pan, was baptized by P. Rabardelle on the Easter Day of 1864.

After him, some of his disciples and his monks, (2 monks and 3 novices), got the holy water of baptism.<sup>297</sup> Paul Pan himself hoped to be a priest, but with his 72 years of age, he arrived to be an acolyte, nominated by Mgr. Dupond. One of his nephews was ordained priest later. Above all Paul Pan founded a Christian community in his own village, which today is a very famous one, namely Wat Pleng.<sup>298</sup>

Since Mgr. Dupond was full of zeal and could speak Siamese as well as two Chinese dialects, he gave great impulsion to the Mission among the Chinese and the Siamese. During his time, a great number of Chinese and Siamese converted themselves to Catholicism. We could summarize the causes of their conversion in this way:

1. The Charity and compassion of the missionaries who liberated many slaves, not to convert them but only for their freedom.
2. The appreciation and admiration for the missionaries who dedicated their lives to serve the people charitably and fraternally.
3. The Siamese mandarins, who obstructed the Siamese, by their power, not to enter into Catholicism, encouraged the Chinese to do so because they knew that no Christian would have been a member of Chinese secret societies who were disturbing the peace of the country at that time.<sup>299</sup>

When Mgr. Dupond died on December 11, 1872, he left to the Mission of Siam 10,000 Christians, 20 European missionaries and 8 native priests.<sup>300</sup>

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<sup>296</sup>Cf. *Church in Thailand*, pp. 467-468.

<sup>297</sup>Rabardelle to Les Membres des Conseils Centraux de L'oeuvre de la Propagation de la Foi on August 15, 1873, AME, Siam, Vol. 894, p. 673.

See also Rabardelle to M. Directeur de L'oeuvre de la St. Enfance on August 12, 1873, AME, Siam, Vol. 894, p. 672.

<sup>298</sup>Cf. *Vie de Paul Pan, Acolyte de la Mission de Siam* written by P. Rabardelle on July 21, 1870, AME, Siam, Vol. 894, p. 500, ff. 1-26.

<sup>299</sup>Cf. *Church in Thailand*, pp. 468-470. see also CHAIWAN, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

<sup>300</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 473; see also Martin to Paris on Dec. 21, 1872, AME, Siam, Vol. 894, 1872, p. 622.

### 3. Jean-Louis Vey's Missionary Life

#### 3.1 His Missionary Vocation

Jean-Louis Vey was born in Araules, a small town close to Issingaux Haute-Loire, on January 6, 1840. His parents, peasants and good Christians, gave him the first education. Having manifested his great ability to study, he took his first Latin lessons from the school of the commune. His teacher found that he could study Latin with extraordinary facility. Attentive to his study, he also appreciated the games and could play so well. Unfortunately from one of the games, he lost one of his eyes in the manner that he could hardly see clearly. His corporal defect did not effect his intellectual ability. Having noticed the rapid progress of his student, his personal tutor advised his father to send him to the minor seminary of Monistrol, in the diocese of Puy. The only obstacle to this plan was his defective eye (mentioned above).

The Bishop of Puy who later visited the commune for some days to administer the sacrament of confirmation observed that the young Louis had great talents, so for this case he said: "*envoyez le vite au petit Séminaire, on verra plus tard*".<sup>301</sup> His premeditation and his decision were very praiseworthy. At the seminary of Monistrol, the masters admired him for he was a serious and brilliant student. Later the Grand Vicar of the diocese asked him to be admitted as an aspirant in the *Séminaire des Missions Etrangères de Paris*. He decided to do so and entered into M.E.P. on October 5, 1862, to the great regret of his friends and his masters who saw his departure as the loss of a good subject for the diocese. At Rue de Bac in Paris, M. Vey, dominated by his vocation, paid all of his attention to develop the necessary elements for the mission in the future. Finally he was ordained priest on June 10, 1865.<sup>302</sup>

He received his destination for the Mission of Siam. Passing to Lyon for his departure, his parents came to see him for the last time, their son whom they kindly gave for the service of God, and to encourage him for his mission.<sup>303</sup> He departed for Siam on July 14, 1865, and arrived there in September, having been welcomed by Mgr. Dupond, newly consecrated Bishop of Azoth, and the other 8 missionaries.

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<sup>301</sup>Notice biographique de Sa Grandeur Mgr. J.L. Vey written on October 20, 1909, AME, Siam, Vol. 896, p. 252, f. 1. Hereinafter will be cited only *Notice Biographique*.

<sup>302</sup>LAUNAY, *Mémorial de la Société des Missions Etrangères*, p. 625.

<sup>303</sup>*Notice Biographique*, f. 2.

P. Clémenceau, who had directed the seminary of the Mission and also administrated some Christian families at the place called Assumption for many years, died in January of the preceding year and nobody replaced him. Mgr. Dupond did not hesitate to entrust this office to the zeal of the new-coming missionary. Noticing the high qualifications of this young missionary, he entrusted to him the direction of the seminary of the Mission and of the press of the Mission which, with the residence of the Bishop, were at that time the only institutions set up in the Assumption quarters. The students of the seminary were in small number, so he took advantage of his free time to administer the Christianity of Assumption. By his good way and manners, by his persuasive talks and chats with the neighboring people of those quarters, he soon gathered round there many good souls, which formed the flock of the parish that has developed now into the Assumption church.<sup>304</sup>

He devoted his first years for learning the Siamese language. Having observed that only knowing the Siamese language was not sufficient for him to work in relation with the Buddhists, he continued to learn and deepen this language by learning Pali which could give him the root and etymology of the words. He succeeded so well in that course that after Bishop Pallegoix (who had composed "*Dictionarium Linguae Thai sive Siamensis interpretatione Latina, Gallica et Anglica*" and published in 1854 in Paris), he may be said to have been the best scholar among foreigners who have lived in Siam. The Journal of Siam Society commented on him as follows:

The Catholic Mission of Siam owes to him several good doctrinal works in Siamese, not to mention the revised Edition of Pallegoix's dictionary to which he devoted nearly two years to render it more complete and handy. He was no less quick in getting familiar with the practical knowledge of the country where he had to live, its usages, laws and regulations, the character and manners of its people.<sup>305</sup>

It was in the years 1870-1871, during the absence of Mgr. Dupond who had been summoned to Rome to attend there the Vatican Council I convoked by Pope Pio IX, that P. Vey's merits and talents became more evident. Mgr. Dupond left for Rome, having to leave the direction of the Mission to one of his missionaries. P. Pean who was in charge of the district of Petriu and was a very capable missionary had already left for Paris in 1868 to replace the office of Director. P. Vey was too young, only 4 years in the mission. So Mgr. Dupond entrusted the direction of the Mission to P. Martin, one of the old missionaries, and entitled him Superior of the Mission. However it was inevitable for P. Vey to play some important roles in this office as we could see that:

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<sup>304</sup>A Sketch of Bishop Vey's Life, in JSS, VII, part 1 (1910) 109.

<sup>305</sup>Ibid.

Mgr. Dupond confia la direction de la Mission à l'un des vieux Pères, lequel porta en effet le nom de Supérieur mais sans trop en remplir l'office; car toutes les affaires officielles et difficiles, survenues alors, il les porta au Père Vey qui bien que surchargé déjà dut se résigner à les traiter et à les expédier.<sup>306</sup>

In fact, P. Martin was too old to take into consideration the difficult affairs which the missionaries wanted him to decide, or to solve some problems they were frequently facing. The missionaries scattered in the far districts were then not without encountering difficulties and troubles in their missionary works, and how greatly surprised and satisfied they were when, on submitting them to P. Vey, he soon pointed out to them how to cope with such difficulties.<sup>307</sup>

### 3.2 The Episcopal Problem

During the Vatican Council I, Rome recommended Mgr. Dupond to initiate evangelization in Laos. Coming back to Bangkok and realizing that his health did not permit him any more to run the project, Mgr. Dupond was afraid that after his death, the election of the new Apostolic Vicar would take too much time and would cause the delay of the project, so he sent for as many missionaries as possible, asking them to vote for P. Vey, who in fact was a very suitable candidate at that time. But the things did not go as he had expected. On the contrary what Mgr. Dupond had done caused more delay of both the nomination of the new Apostolic Vicar and the evangelization of Laos, since the missionaries who were very possessive in their right of vote disagreed in this matter.<sup>308</sup> On July 22, 1872, Mgr. Dupond wrote to Paris as follows:

22 juillet je vous envoie prochainement pour vous dire que le vote unanime des missionnaires désigne le P. Vey pour mon successeur.<sup>309</sup>

P. Martin sent his observation to Paris and also signed a letter of the missionaries who protested about the election of the new Apostolic Vicar to Paris. For this, P. Martin wrote:

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<sup>306</sup>Notice Biographique, f. 5.

<sup>307</sup>Cf. A Sketch of Bishop Vey's Life, pp. 109-110; see also letters of votes of P. Chevillard, P. D'Hondt, P. Saladin, P. Fauque, AME, Siam, Vol. 894, 1872, p. 623.

<sup>308</sup>Cf. Church in Thailand, pp. 470-471.

<sup>309</sup>AME, Siam, Vol. 894, 1872, p. 584.

Je signe cette lettre en la faisant suivre de l'observation suivante quand j'ai été interrogé par Mgr. Dupond sur la choix du son successeur. J'ai donné mon sentiment d'une manière définitive pour ce qui me concerne. Mais comme beaucoup de confrères n'ont pas été interrogés, Je crois qu'on doit les interroger, je corrode leur réclamation de ma signature.<sup>310</sup>

P. Schmitt also wrote to Paris on December 26, 1872, saying that as far as he knew, Mgr. Dupond sent a letter to Paris after he had asked all the missionaries to vote for P. Vey.<sup>311</sup> It is interesting to note that the vote took place from December 1872 to February 1873. All the missionaries sent their votes to Paris, with these results: 5 out of 15 missionaries voted for P. Vey as the first candidate, 4 votes for P. Pénan, 3 for P. Schmitt, 2 for P. Martin, 1 for P. Rabardelle.<sup>312</sup> P. Vey did not give his vote, being in France for treatment for his eyes.

The comments on the method of the promotion of P. Vey by Mgr. Dupond in the letters of vote of the missionaries and in the disagreement of votes, caused the Directors of M.E.P. to feel awkward and they hesitated indefinitely to decide. They sent these votes to Propaganda Fide with their comments saying that Propaganda Fide should wait for the suitable time to give the new Apostolic Vicar to Siam.

After having investigated the story, Rome decided to wait until the temper and melancholy of the missionaries would be calmed.<sup>313</sup> P. Martin seemed to know the intention of Rome. He mentioned the second vote not long after.

Le P. Martin me disait hier qu'il serait peut-être bon, dans le cas où Rome ne nous donnerait pas d'évêque, de faire un nouveau vote, en nous efforçant de donner une majorité imposante au candidat choisi afin de pouvoir obtenir un vicaire apostolique.<sup>314</sup>

P. Vey arrived in Bangkok from France on January 1874, and was appointed the Procurer of the Mission.<sup>315</sup> Finally the decision was made by P. Martin to vote for the second time after having waited for one year and a half. He made known this decision to the missionaries in April.

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<sup>310</sup>Martin to Paris on Nov. 20, 1872, AME, Siam, Vol. 894, 1872, p. 614.

<sup>311</sup>AME, Siam, Vol. 894, 1872, p. 628.

<sup>312</sup>Cf. Votes of the missionaries, AME, Siam, Vol. 894, 1872-1873, p. 623.

<sup>313</sup>Cf. ASCPF, Acta (Ponenze) 1873, August 11, 1873, ff. 809-811. Propaganda Fide agreed with the Directors of Paris and was approved by the Pope on August 17, 1873. See also Church in Thailand, p. 472. Propaganda Fide nominated P. Martin officially the Superior of the Mission on August 17, 1873. see AAB, Vey, Letters from Abroad, 1873, No. 002/1.

<sup>314</sup>Rousseau to Paris on September 18, 1873, AME, Siam, Vol. 894, 1873, p. 687.

<sup>315</sup>Cf. Emile to Paris on January 29, 1874, AME, Siam, Vol. 895, 1874, p. 5. Vey to Paris on February 20, 1874, AME, Siam, Vol. 895, 1874, p.

From May to June 1874, 18 missionaries sent their votes to Paris, with the results as: 12 votes for P. Vey, 4 missionaries gave no vote, 2 for P. Péan. This time P. Vey got the majority. He did not give his vote.<sup>316</sup> Rome confirmed the votes of the missionaries. Pope Pio IX nominated P. Vey Apostolic Vicar of Siam, Bishop in partibus of Geraza on July 14, 1875.<sup>317</sup> The Bulletin "*Missions Catholiques*" illustrated by L'Oeuvre de la Propagation de la Foi published his nomination as follows:

Dans le consistoire du 17 septembre, le Saint Père a fait connaître la nomination au siege épiscopat de Géraza in partibus, de Mgr. Jean-Louis Vey, de la congrégation des M.E.P., député comme Vicaire Apostolique de Siam, en remplacement de Mgr. Dupond, décédé le 11 DéCembre 1872.<sup>318</sup>

The ceremony of episcopal consecration took place in Bangkok on December 5, 1875, in St. Francis Xavier church. Mgr. Colombert, Apostolic Vicar of Cochinchina, was the consecrator Bishop, assisted by P. Le Mée who had accompanied him from Saigon, and by P. Martin.<sup>319</sup> His Majesty the king was represented by His Grace, the Regent. There were present also the high mandarins, ministers of the King, the members of the diplomatic corps and the consuls. More than 6,000 people attended the ceremony, both Christians and non-Christians. The mass was sung by 50 native choirs. The two Bishops were carried back to the priest's house after the ceremony, with the band of the second king then striking up a march. During the lunch, Mgr. Vey received letters of congratulation from the two kings of Siam.<sup>320</sup>

### **3.3 Evangelization in Laos**

Studying the missionary works of Mgr. Vey, one has to agree that the masterpiece of his works was the evangelization carried out in Laos, where he had finally initiated the spreading of the Good News and accomplished this task when Rome separated the Mission of Laos as Apostolic Vicariate from the Mission of Siam in 1899.

#### **3.3.1 Origin of the Evangelization in Laos**

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<sup>316</sup>The second vote of the missionaries, AME, Siam, Vol. 895, 1874, p. 23.

<sup>317</sup>The bulls of his nomination, AAB, Vey, Document, 1875, No. 004. 004/1, 004/2, 005.

<sup>318</sup>M.C., VII (1875) 516.

<sup>319</sup>On December 4, 1875, the day before the ceremony, the king had invited Mgr. Vey and Mgr. Colombert to an audience granted to them privately, AAB, Vey, Documents: King's letters, No. 482.

<sup>320</sup>Cf. Report of P. Le Mée to Paris on December 19, 1875, in M.C., VIII (1875) 38-39. Notice Biographique, f. 3. A Sketch of Bishop Vey's Life, p. 110. For the letters of the two kings, see AAB, Vey, Documents: King's letters, No. 481, 501. see also the Appendix II, III.

The first attempt of this project was done by Mgr. Miche, Apostolic Vicar of Cambodia, who in 1858 entrusted to P. Ausoleil and P. Triaire this difficult task to bring the Good News to the Laotians. He indicated to them to found the first station at Luang Phra Bang, since he had heard about this province from the people. Luang Phra Bang was situated in the North of Laos and was such a long way from Cambodia. The missionaries had decided to go there via Bangkok. After a very long and difficult journey, they arrived at Luang Phra Bang. Unfortunately, three of their servants who had accompanied them got the terrible forest fever; two died while P. Triaire also got the same fever and died not long after. P. Ausoleil, therefore, had to come back to Bangkok.<sup>321</sup>

In 1870, during the Vatican Council I, the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda Fide proposed to Mgr. Dupond to take Laos under his jurisdiction and to evangelize it. Mgr. Dupond accepted the task. In his letter, he mentioned that:

Je vais m'occuper de prendre des renseignements sur les provinces Laociennes que la  
S<sup>te</sup>. Congrégation m'a confiées l'an dernier, et

Préparer des ouvriers pour essayer d'y pénétrer l'an prochain.<sup>322</sup>

However, he could not do what he had prepared since he died in 1872. P. Martin as the Superior of the Mission also mentioned the sending of the missionaries to Laos according to the will of Mgr. Dupond, saying that P. Vey who still was in France for the reason of his health would be the right person to make the decision for this project. The Directors of M.E.P. could ask P. Vey about the matter.<sup>323</sup>

As Apostolic Vicar, Mgr. Vey initiated the first step by charging P. Prodhomme and P. Perreaux to open the new mission in the Laotian province. P. Prodhomme wrote that:

Le Bon P. Perreaux et moi sommes chargés du fameux Laos; et les fêtes de la  
Présentation passées, je m'embarque pour le Nord; emmenant avec moi deux  
tonsurés, mes anciens élèves.<sup>324</sup>

In the same manner, P. Rousseau confirmed that:

Le P. Prodhomme est allé à Juthia: il a été envoyer avec le P. Perreaux pour que, à  
eux deux, ils ouvrent enfin le Laos. Sa Grandeur a solennellement annoncé  
l'ouverture du Laos.<sup>325</sup>

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<sup>321</sup>Cf. Vey to Paris on Nov. 30, 1899, AME, Siam, Vol. 896, 1899, p. 162.

<sup>322</sup>Dupond to Card. Barnabé on Dec. 12, 1871, AME, Siam, Vol. 894, 1871, p. 546.

<sup>323</sup>Cf. Martin to Paris on Jan. 22, 1873, AME, Siam, Vol. 894, 1873, p. 634.

<sup>324</sup>Prodhomme to Paris on Jan. 25, 1876, AME, Siam, Vol. 895, 1876, p. 107.

<sup>325</sup>Rousseau to Paris on Mar. 27, 1876, AME, Siam, Vol. 895, 1876, p. 117.

The two missionaries began their adventure, passing through the so-called "*Dong Phraya Fai*", the dangerous forest full of fever, settling down at Kaeng Khoi where the great number of Laotians were living. Their mission was going quite well, even though the enterprise of the evangelization was not without problems, such as the so-called forest fever, the shortage of material resources and the personnel. Mgr. Vey wrote to L'Oeuvre de la Propagation de la Foi, asking for the necessary supports as follows:

L'oeuvre est difficile... il n'y a plus que des pays très malsains, où règnent continuellement les fièvres des bois. Mais ce n'est pas le danger qui arrêtera le missionnaire; il lui suffit d'avoir les ressources et le personnel nécessaires pour rendre son apostolat fructueux.<sup>326</sup>

In their first year of the mission, they founded a Christian community there with 40 baptized Laotians. This pleasant result caused Mgr. Vey to be so curious that he decided to make a visit to this new community on January 1, 1877. P. Martin related that Mgr. Vey was attacked by the forest fever after he had visited this new community.<sup>327</sup> By the end of the year 1880, the zeal and perseverance of the two missionaries resulted in 250-300 Christians and catechumens. Mgr. Vey decided to continue this work, realizing that:

1. Kaeng Khoi could not be the center of the mission since it was too far from the Laotian provinces;
2. the Laotians, in fact, were living in the north-east of Siam not in the north like Kaeng Khoi, so it would be much better to send the missionaries to this part of Siam in order to survey the possibilities for the new mission;
3. the governor of Ubon, situated in the north-east of Siam, also invited the missionaries to settle down in his province.

So on January 2, 1881, Mgr. Vey officially announced that P. Prodhomme and P. Xavier Guégo were being sent to Ubon to begin the new mission in Laos. They left Bangkok on January 12, 1881, with a catechist and some assistants. After a long and difficult journey, they arrived at Ubon on Easter Sunday, April 24, 1881. It took them 102 days.<sup>328</sup>

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<sup>326</sup>Vey's letter written on August 30, 1876, in A.P.F., Vol. 49, No. 290 (Janvier 1877) 53.

<sup>327</sup>Cf. Martin to Paris on February 19, 1877, AME, Siam, Vol. 895, 1877, p. 149. see also Vey to Paris on August 31, 1876, AME, Siam, Vol. 895, 1876, p. 125.

<sup>328</sup>Cf. Prodhomme to Vey, report on the mission of Ubon, AAB, Vey, Records, Vol. II, No. 057. See also C. BAYET, Bishop, The History of Evangelization in the Northeast of Thailand and Laos (in Thai), translated by M.K. SAMERPHITAK, Bishop, Bangkok: Reon Kaew Press, 1984, pp. 26-29. Church in Thailand, pp. 492-497.



Due to the permission of the governor, they were able to possess a piece of land abandoned by the inhabitants under the pretext that it was haunted by the wicked spirits. With great curiosity, the Laotians came in number to see them, so the missionaries took advantage of the opportunity by preaching to them the Good News. The arrival of the missionaries caused dissatisfaction and anxiety among the slave-traders. They felt that the missionaries could be an obstacle to them by doing things contrary to their profession, liberating the slaves, informing the authority of Bangkok what they were doing.<sup>329</sup> The slave-traders, therefore, made a false charge that the missionaries had also come to practise this kind of trade.

This misunderstanding among the Laotians could not be sustained for a long time, since it was contrary to what they had seen of the missionaries who had accused the slave-traders before the tribunal and had liberated the slaves to freedom. The conversion began, the Christian communities were founded and grew year by year. In 1883, Mgr. Vey reported to Paris that the missionaries were planning to settle down in Laos, they had surveyed the topography up to Vientiane. He had appealed several times to the solicitude of the Councils of M.E.P., asking for the necessary help in order to sustain the evangelization in Laos as Propaganda Fide engaged him to throw all his resources for this mission.<sup>330</sup>

The number of the Christians and catechumens was growing quite rapidly. In 1885, there were 485 Christians and more than 1,500 catechumens, and 648 Christians and more than 4,500 catechumens in 1888.<sup>331</sup> P. Prodhomme reported to Paris as follows:

Le nombre des baptêmes de païens atteindra certainement le nombre de 1,000 (mille). Il aurait été de 10,000 si nous avions eu un plus grand personnel.<sup>332</sup>

In fact, Mgr. Vey did not forget these important factors for the new mission. He had to support the mission of Laos as much as he could. Every year, some missionaries from Laos had to come to Bangkok to report their mission and to bring all the necessary resources, such as foodstuffs, supplies, salaries for the catechists, financial support for the mission, and also the new missionaries, catechists to Laos. From 1881 to 1889, Mgr. Vey sent 19 missionaries and 14 catechists to Laos.<sup>333</sup> Certainly, these personnel were not sufficient for the new growing mission, but they were one of the most important factors which resulted in the success of the mission.

### **3.3.2 The Separation of the Mission of Laos**

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<sup>329</sup>These groups of people caught or kidnapped the villagers and sold them as slaves in other province of Laos or Cambodia. Cf. V. LARQUEN, *Translation of the Annual Report of the Mission of Siam from 1873 to 1907* (in Thai), Tome I, Roneo Papers, Bangkok, 1986, p. 20. Hereinafter will be cited only *Annual Report*.

<sup>330</sup>Cf. Vey to Paris on October 3, 1883, AME, Siam, Vol. 895, 1883, p. 353.

<sup>331</sup>Cf. *Annual Report*, 1885-1888, pp. 33-40.

<sup>332</sup>Prodhomme to Paris on August 8, 1890, AME, Siam, Vol. 896, 1890, p. 44.

<sup>333</sup>CF. BAYET, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 39-40.

The separation of the Mission of Laos from the Mission of Siam and the erection of the Mission of Laos to the new Vicariate had been thought of by Mgr. Vey. His idea had been motivated by some reasons as follows:

1. Mgr. Vey realized that Divine Providence was preparing the way for this purpose, since the princes who were governing the Laotian provinces were no more the enemies of the Mission and according to him this was a very important point for the new Mission.<sup>334</sup>
2. Communication between the Laotian provinces and Bangkok, the center of the Mission, was very difficult, since the Mission of Siam was vast and due to the possession of the left bank of Mekong by the French, the missionaries had to travel to Bangkok by the river Mekong which caused them more time and difficulties. Mgr. Vey thought that as the new Vicariate, the Mission of Laos could contact Paris directly via Saigon.<sup>335</sup>
3. The Mission of Siam could not sustain the new Mission because the Mission of Siam also needed more personnel and material resources for the works which were growing quite fast.<sup>336</sup>
4. The progress of the Mission of Laos could be the good reason for him to propose the creation of the new Vicariate to Rome. In fact he gave the total number of the Christians in Laos of 7,000 who lived from the region of Bassac to Nong Khai in 1896 and in 1897 he reported to Propaganda Fide that:

En 1897, des chrétientés existaient dans un bon nombre de provinces. Le chiffre total des neophytes était de 8 à 9 mille.<sup>337</sup>

He, then, proposed this matter to Paris in 1896. The Councils of M.E.P. seemed to agree with this proposal. The Directors of M.E.P. sent the letter to the Apostolic Vicars of Oriental CochinChina, Occidental CochinChina, Northern Tongking, Southern Tongking, Occidental Tongking and Cambodia, asking for their opinions on the boundary of the new Mission of Laos. All the Apostolic Vicars of these regions cooperated immediately and sent their opinions on the subject to Paris.<sup>338</sup> Mgr. Vey also proposed Propaganda Fide to erect the Mission of Laos as the Apostolic Vicariate, saying:

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<sup>334</sup>Vey to Paris on Sep. 4, 1892, AME, Siam, Vol. 896, 1892, p. 101.

<sup>335</sup>Vey to Paris on Dec. 16, 1895, AME, Siam, Vol. 896, 1895, p. 132.

<sup>336</sup>Cf. BAYET, *Op. Cit.*, p. 118.

<sup>337</sup>Vey to Propaganda Fide, ASCPF, Rubrica, No. 129, 1897, Vol. 117, p. 362. No. 129, 1903, Vol. 261, p. 435.

<sup>338</sup>Cf. The Opinions of the Apostolic Vicars, AME, Siam, Vol. 896, 1896, pp. 139-144.

Le moment était venu de demander l'erection d'un nouveau Vicariat Apostolique, car les communications avec Bangkok étaient bien longues et bien difficiles, environ 40 journées de caravane pour aller de Bangkok à Ubon demeuré le centre des relations.<sup>339</sup>

In December 1897, Paris informed Mgr. Vey that Propaganda Fide was quite ready to separate the Mission of Laos from the Mission of Siam. On January 17, 1898, the missionaries who were working in Laos were invited to vote for their first Apostolic Vicar of Laos.

### 3.3.3 Mgr. Vey's Role in the Election

All the missionaries who were working in Laos had the right to vote. Nine missionaries sent their votes to Paris in January 1898. The first candidate was P. d'Hondt, a missionary of the Mission of Siam, who got 5 votes; meanwhile the second candidate was P. Prodhomme who got 2 votes.<sup>340</sup>

Mgr. Vey's opinion on this election was different. The reason was that P. d'Hondt's nationality was Belgique. The political situation at that time in Laos was rather tense between Siam and France and the French government would be content to have the French Apostolic Vicar in this area. For the sake of the Mission of Laos, the nomination of P. d'Hondt would not be favorable.<sup>341</sup> The Directors of M.E.P. also agreed with him. In August 1898, they ordered the missionaries of Laos to vote for the second time. P. Xavier Guégo, the first missionary who came to evangelize Laos together with P. Prodhomme confirmed the fact as follows:

La lettre commune adressé par vous à tous les missionnaires du Laos pour le prévenir que la nationalité du P. d'Hondt était un obstacle à sa nomination comme Vicaire Apostolique du Laos...<sup>342</sup>

The second vote took place during July to September 1898. This time, P. Cuaz, a missionary of the Mission of Siam, got 5 votes from 10 and P. Prodhomme got 4 votes.<sup>343</sup> In his letter, P. Prodhomme noted that:

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<sup>339</sup>Vey's report to Propaganda Fide, ASCPF, Rubrica, No. 129, 1903, Vol. 261, p. 435.

<sup>340</sup>Votes of the missionaries of Laos, AME, Siam, Vol. 896, 1898, p. 149.

<sup>341</sup>Cf. Vey to Paris, AME, Siam, Vol. 896, 1898, p. 150.

<sup>342</sup>Guégo to Paris on August 15, 1898, AME, Siam, Vol. 896, 1898, p. 152.

<sup>343</sup>Cf. Votes of the Missionaries of Laos, AME, Siam, Vol. 896, 1898, p. 152.

Votre lettre, Monsieur le Supérieur, était accompagnée d'une circulaire de Mgr. Vey adressé aux mêmes missionnaires pour leur proposer de voter pour le Père Cuaz, missionnaire de Siam. La circulaire de Mgr. Vey invitait ensuite tous les missionnaires à transmettre leur vote à Sa Grandeur avant de les envoyer à Paris. Je vous avoue, Monsieur le Supérieur, que cette façon d'agir me surprit un peu.<sup>344</sup>

Paris had also asked Vey's personal opinion for the candidate of the future Apostolic Vicar of Laos. He responded that:

Je ne crois pas le P. Prodhomme digne de l'épiscopat et cela vu sa manière d'agir personnelle, vu aussi la situation faite à la Mission du Laos depuis qu'il y a à traiter avec les Français.<sup>345</sup>

He gave his personal opinion that P. Cuaz could have been the right person for episcopacy. He was full of talent, being able to speak Siamese and Vietnamese, he would find it easy to learn the Laotian language, but above all he knew how to deal in affairs with the two authorities, French and Siamese.

Finally Pope Leo XIII erected the Apostolic Vicariate of Laos on May 4, 1899, and P. Cuaz was nominated Apostolic Vicar of Laos on May 24, 1899.<sup>346</sup> In his annual report of 1899-1900, Mgr. Vey narrated the consecration of Mgr. Cuaz and that it took place on September 3, 1899, in the Rosary church in Bangkok. He was assisted by Mgr. Grosgeorge, Apostolic Vicar of Cambodia, and Mgr. Mossard, Apostolic Vicar of Occidental Cochinchina, to whom king Rama V granted his audience on the day after.<sup>347</sup>

There were 9262 Christians and 1761 catechumens, and 20 missionaries who were working there when Mgr. Cuaz arrived in Laos on November 13, 1899.

### **3.4 The Progress of the Mission of Siam**

Under the direction of Mgr. Vey, who had governed the Mission for 34 years, the Mission of Siam progressed very much in different ways. The Annual Reports of M.E.P. give us the considerable contrast in, to see the general view of the progress. Examining the Annual Report of Mgr. Vey, one could find that he mentioned the new stations and the new churches or chapels which had been established and founded almost every year. In his annual report of 1877, he said that the success of this year had responded to the experiences of the year before and because of the newly baptized Christians who lived in Bangkok, 2 chapels were established:

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<sup>344</sup>Prodhomme to Paris on September 22, 1898, AME, Siam, Vol. 896, 1898, p. 153.

<sup>345</sup>Vey to Paris on September 22, 1898, AME, Siam, Vol. 896, 1898, p. 154.

<sup>346</sup>Bulls of the erection, AME, Siam, Vol. 896, 1899, p. 157. AAB, Vey, Letters from Abroad, No. 105. see also BAYET, *Op. Cit.*, p. 119.

<sup>347</sup>Vey to Paris on Dec. 12, 1899, AME, Siam, Vol. 896, 1899, p. 166.

Nous avons pu établir deux nouveaux postes avec chapelle où les néophytes se réunissent pour la prière et viennent assister au saint sacrifice de la messe les jours où le missionnaire va les visiter.<sup>348</sup>

At Chantabun, a new Christian community was also established in a village where some Chinese Christians were living; meanwhile the missionaries were going to found the new community at Ban Kacha, a village full of Chinese families. At Korat, a new station was also established that year as he said:

A la hauteur de Korat sur une branche orientale du fleuve Menam est établie une station où déjà une centaine de néophytes nous donnent lieu de compter sur d'heureux resultants pour l'avenir.<sup>349</sup>

In the province of Ratchaburi at Don Krabuang, a native priest who was in charge "*est parvenu a avoir un terrain et bâtir un "rong" servant d'église et de catechumenate*".

The most glorious and magnificent church of Ayutthaya was also rebuilt. During the synod of the Apostolic Vicars and the Superiors of the Missions in this part of the world which was convoked at Singapore, Mgr. Vey proposed a project which interested, in the first place, the Mission of Siam and also the whole Society of M.E.P. The project was approved by all the participants of the synod. That was the project of reconstructing the St. Joseph church of Ayutthaya. Before the destruction of Ayutthaya in 1767, the Mission of Siam possessed a strong, beautiful church dedicated to St. Joseph. The Mission of Siam was considered by all the first Mission of the Society of M.E.P. and this church was the first center.

Huit évêques vicaires apostoliques dont le premier fut Mgr. de Bérythe et trente missionnaires reposent là entre quatre murs en ruine.<sup>350</sup>

For this project Mgr. Vey asked from Paris 3,000 to 4,000 Francs to rebuild this church. He also added that:

Il s'agit de mettre à l'abri des injures de l'air les sépultures des fondateurs de nos mission et de leur rendre dans le temple même bâti par eux les honneurs dont ils étaient entourés autrefois et qui leur sont dus à tant de titres!<sup>351</sup>

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<sup>348</sup>Vey to Paris on October 28, 1877, AME, Siam, Vol. 895, 1877, p. 177.

<sup>349</sup>Ibid.

<sup>350</sup>Vey to Paris from Singapore on January 28, 1880, AME, Siam, Vol. 895, 1880, p. 255.

<sup>351</sup>Ibid.

All the other Apostolic Vicars and the Superiors of the Missions approved the project with this reason:

Nous l'approuvons et vous prions de le prendre en grande considération car l'honneur de notre société tout entière y est engagée. Nous serons heureux de voir l'Eglise de Juthia la mère de toutes nos églises se relever de ses ruines après y avoir été ensevelie pendant plus de cent ans.<sup>352</sup>

Paris approved the project and gave to Mgr. Vey 3,000 francs to rebuild St. Joseph church. Under the supervision of P. Perreaux, the church was rebuilt in 1883 and fully completed in 1891.<sup>353</sup>

In 1890, Mgr. Vey reported to Paris that 4 stations were founded in the different provinces of Siam and in 1896, he summarized the progress of the Mission of Siam to Propaganda Fide as follows:

Déjà cinq nouvelles stations exclusivement laotiennes sont fondées dans les provinces de Ratburi, Nakhon Xaisi, Juthia, Nakhon Nayok et Prachim.<sup>354</sup>

Up to the year 1907, he still mentioned some new Christian communities which were recently founded. In 1873, Mgr. Dupond left the Mission of Siam with 10,000 Christians, 22 churches and chapels, 49 seminarists, 6 native priests and 16 catechists. But in 1909, the last year of Mgr. Vey's episcopacy, the Mission of Siam possessed 23,600 Christians, 57 churches and chapels with 79 Christian communities, 59 seminarists, 44 missionaries, 21 native priests, 17 religious men, 123 religious women, 21 catechists, 3 colleges with 861 pupils, 62 schools with 2,692 pupils and 1 hospital.<sup>355</sup>

Besides the zeal and perseverance of Mgr. Vey and his missionaries, there were also some important factors from which such progress of the Mission derived. We have to take into consideration also the situation of the country, the methodology of the missionaries, the obstacles, etc.

#### **4. Missionary Methods of Mgr. Vey.**

The progress of the Mission of Siam, not without some obstacles which I will describe later, depended much on the way Mgr. Vey directed the Mission. Almost always, despite being busy in sustaining the Mission and having to resist some difficulties and problems, he never neglected to develop the work of evangelization, to create new works and institutions.

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<sup>352</sup>Ibid.

<sup>353</sup>Cf. Paris to Vey on April 12, 1880, AAB, Vey, Letters, Vol. I, 1880, No. 024. See also Church in Thailand, pp. 527-528. Annual Report, 1891, p. 52.

<sup>354</sup>ASCPF, Rubrica, No. 129, 1897, Vol. 117, p. 365.

<sup>355</sup>AME, Siam, Vol. 894, p. 702; Annual Report, Tome I, p. 3. AME, Siam, Vol. 896, p. 257.

#### 4.1 Good Relations with the Siamese Government.

Good relations between the Catholic Mission and the Siamese government doesn't mean the involvement on the part of the Catholic Mission in the political affairs of the country. But, as we have studied in the last chapter, many political events occurred in Siam and most of them were caused by the French. This would also have caused some reluctance for relations both on the part of the French missionaries as well as the Siamese.

Certainly Mgr. Vey, having considered this attitude as the important condition for the evangelization, had his own stand-point. When the Wang Na Crisis occurred, he realized that the crisis would have caused some troubles to the Mission. He related the story to Paris, informing them that he would try to prevent the Mission's involvement in internal politics since it was better not to mix the religious affairs with the political ones.<sup>356</sup> He confirmed his stand-point when he wrote that:

Je crois ce gouverneur que Je connais tout disposé à recevoir et à protéger nos confrères. Evidemment nous ne pouvons pas entrer dans considérations politiques, mais je crois qu'il est bon de profiter les moments qui paraissent plus favorables pour essayer d'étendre le règne de Dieu.<sup>357</sup>

In 1876, the Siamese government asked Mgr. Vey a favor for the sake of one important political affair. Prince Ongk Vatha, a brother of the king of Cambodia, who had lived in Bangkok for a long time, left Siam for Cambodia in order to overthrow the government of his brother. He, then, could occupy three Cambodian provinces, submitting them under his authority. The government of Cochinchina had already sent the French soldiers to Phnom Penn. The Siamese government did not know of his departure and had been too late to stop him. Moreover Ongk Vatha had received arms and munitions from one of the Siamese governors of the frontier province. This resulted in a misunderstanding between Siamese and French authorities; so the Consul of France in Bangkok asked for the explanations from the Siamese government. The Siamese government decided to send a high mandarin to Angkor to enter into relations with the representative of the Protectorate of Cambodia and with the Admiral of Saigon in order to control the political situation. For the sake of this mission, the Siamese government wished that a French missionary would accompany that mandarin as the translator and likewise did the Consul of France wish.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs asked for one missionary from Mgr. Vey, who considered this affair very important because this, perhaps, could have brought some unfortunate consequences for Siam. He, therefore, dared not give a missionary in whom he did not have the confidence.

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<sup>356</sup>Cf. Vey to Paris on January 8, 1875, AME, Siam, Vol. 895, 1875, p. 72.

<sup>357</sup>Vey to Paris on April 19, 1881, AME, Siam, Vol. 895, 1881, p. 308.

Le gouvernement m'a instamment prié de lui accorder un missionnaire qui fut l'interprète de ses envoyés et c'est le P. Rousseau que j'ai désigné pour cette tâche.<sup>358</sup>

The result of this political affair was as Mgr. Vey had hoped. P. Rousseau reported to Paris as follows:

Les affaires politiques vont très bien pour ce qui regarde Siam. On avait d'abord craint de forts orages: tout s'est calmé et Siam en sort sans une écorchure. On ne touchera pas aux provinces cambodgiennes laissés sous l'autorité du royaume de Siam. Tout se résume en de bonnes recommandations de faire veiller les gouverneurs sur leur province et en témoignage d'amitié qu'on désire cordiale, longue, durable.<sup>359</sup>

For this magnificent mission, the King of Siam conferred on P. Rousseau "*La Croix d'officiers de l'ordre de l'Eléphant blanc*". He hoped that the mission had caused some fortunate consequences also for the Catholic Mission of Siam.

Another political event moderately deepened the relation between the Catholic Mission and the government when the crisis between Siam and France took place in April 1893, following the unexplained expulsion of two French commercial agents from the middle Mekong region and the death of the French consul at Luang Phra Bang. France explicitly laid claim to all of Laos east of the Mekong by virtue of France's succession to the rights of Vietnam.

The chief figure in the events that escalated into the Franco-Siamese Crisis of 1893 was Auguste Pavie. The French sent three gunboats, namely l'Inconstant, Comte, Lutin, up the Chao Phya river to Bangkok, forcing the defenses at the mouth of the river into a short engagement. Pavie, then, delivered an ultimatum and demanded the cession to France of the whole of Laos east of the Mekong. Further demands soon were added, including the occupation of Chanthabun and Trat, 2 Siamese seaboard provinces bordering Cambodia, until the conditions of the ultimatum were complied with. In fact M. Pavie sent for Mgr. Vey and ordered him to call all the missionaries to come to the French consulate, since the French gunboats would have bombarded Bangkok on July 14, 1893, in order to force Siam to accept the conditions. Mgr. Vey went immediately to the French consulate, and firmly insisted that he would not have called all the missionaries, pleading with M. Pavie and the captains of the gunboats not to bombard Bangkok, and asking them to contact Paris in order to make the compromise with Siam peacefully. M. Pavie finally promised to do what Mgr. Vey had asked. Mgr. Vey did not go back to the residence until the following day, to make sure that they would not change their mind.<sup>360</sup>

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<sup>358</sup>Vey to Paris on July 27, 1876, AME, Siam, Vol. 895, 1876, p. 124. Rousseau to Paris on July 24, 1876, AME, Siam, Vol. 895, 1876, p. 123.

<sup>359</sup>Rousseau to Paris on February 10, 1877, AME, Siam, Vol. 895, 1877, p. 146.

<sup>360</sup>Cf. V. LARQUE', *Catholic Mission's Report on the Occasion of Bangkok Bicentennial Celebration in 1982* (in Thai), Roneo Papers, Bangkok, 1982, p. 13.



Siam was defenseless against the naval blockade. King Rama V had no choice but to accept the terms offered and to conclude a treaty with France in October 1893. During this dangerous period, Mgr. Vey wrote:

Pour le peuple, les chrétiens étaient des auxiliaires des Français: ils étaient l'ennemi. En plusieurs endroits des cris de mort faisaient entendre: le moindre incident fâcheux aurait pu devenir la cause d'irréparables désastres... les chrétiens couraient de véritables dangers au moins dans les districts éloignés de la capitale.<sup>361</sup>

By virtue of the good relation with the Siamese government and what Mgr. Vey had done for Siam. Prince Thevavong, Minister of the Foreign Affairs, gave the assurance to Mgr. Vey that:

Tout le possible serait fait afin de prévenir les molestations contre les chrétiens. Depuis longtemps en effet, dans les hautes sphères de Bangkok, on a compris que la Mission Catholique n'a pas pour but de se mêler des affaires politiques.<sup>362</sup>

Good relations with the King himself was not less importance. It was indeed the core of this relationship, since it had been an excellent advantage for the Mission. Consulting the archives of Archdiocese of Bangkok, I have found a volume of letters of correspondence between King Rama V and Mgr. Vey, including the congratulatory letters from the two Kings of Siam on the day of Mgr. Vey's episcopal consecration. On September 5, 1883, in one of his letters, King Rama V insisted to Mgr. Vey that he never thought that the religion which was not Buddhism was not good. He willingly supported and protected the other religions as far as the religions would try to teach and form the people as the good and moral people.<sup>363</sup>

This relation was moderately strengthened in 1897, when King Rama V visited Europe. He took that opportunity to visit Pope Leo XIII. The Pope, having to receive him, wanted to have "*Pro-Memoria*" in which the situation of the Catholics in Siam would have been indicated. He asked for it from Propaganda Fide, enquiring also what he should ask from the king in favor of the Catholic Mission in his conversation with him.<sup>364</sup> Propaganda Fide sent to the Pope the said-Pro Memoria and gave the suggestion for his conversation with the king of Siam as follows:

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<sup>361</sup>Vey to Paris on November 2, 1894, AME, Siam, Vol. 896, 1894, p. 130.

<sup>362</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>363</sup>Cf. Rama V to Vey on September 5, 1883, AAB, Vey, King's Letters, No. 491. see also No. 492 in which the king reconfirmed his will.

<sup>364</sup>Cf. Leo XIII to Propaganda Fide on June 1, 1897, ASCPF, Rubrica, No. 129, Vol. 117, p. 380. Luigi Tripepi, substituted Secretary of State to Mgr. Agostino Ciasca, Secretary of Propaganda Fide.

E' specialmente a loro riguarda che Sua Santità potrebbe avere una parola di raccomandazione... L'augusta parola del S. Padre presso il giovane Re del Siam potrà aspettare la completa libertà religiosa di questa popolazione.<sup>365</sup>

The audience which Pope Leo XIII accorded to king Rama V resulted in the King's excellent impression of him. In front of his court, the Princes, the mandarins, and the missionaries who were granted the special audience on the occasion of his return to Siam, King Rama V admired the Pope and encouraged the missionaries to continue their good works among his people. Mgr. Vey, in his letter to the Pope, repeated the words of the king as follows:

J'ai vu de grands rois, de puissants empereurs, mais aucun d'eux n'a rien d'égal à la Majesté, à l'affabilité, la bonté de celui qui est le Père des chrétiens du monde entier.<sup>366</sup>

## **4.2 Vey's Policy Conformable to the Country-Reformation.**

Mgr. Vey did not remain indifferent to the progress of the country and wished that the Catholic Mission participate also in the country-reformation. Well aware of the tantamount help supplied in this regard by a sound and moral education, he purposely founded educational institutions and the Assumption College for boys and Convent schools for girls were erected, not to mention the 49 schools already working in the Christian districts where boys and girls were given a first elementary and moral tuition, which highly distinguished them from children of their age who grew up without any training at all.

### **4.2.1 Education.**

The aspirations of Siam to go in the course of progress and of modern civilization made Mgr. Vey understand that the Mission should give assistance and cooperation in this course. He encouraged the missionaries to erect and multiply the elementary schools in their districts. He realized that the country-reformation should be taken into consideration by all.

Si le roi réussit à introduire dans son royaume les réformes qu'il a projetées, nul doute que le Christianisme n'en reçoive une impulsion nouvelle.<sup>367</sup>

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<sup>365</sup>ASCPF, Rubrica, No. 129, Vol. 117, p. 383.

<sup>366</sup>Vey to Leo XIII on January 15, 1903, ASCPF, Rubrica, No. 129, Vol. 261, p. 438. Cf. AAB, Vey, King's Letters, No. 507.

<sup>367</sup>Extract of Vey's Letter, in Lettre Commune du Séminaire des Missions Etrangères, No. 10 (Decembre 31, 1879) 54.

In the course of his pastoral visits, Mgr. Vey found that the more children entered the schools than before because certain parents, who had found some objections not to let their children go to school, were more reasonable. From the part of the missionaries, Mgr. Vey said:

Ils ont compris ces pauvres gens que les dangers pour la foi de leurs enfants devenant plus nombreux il fallait mettre plus de sollicitude et d'imposer plus de sacrifices pour les faire bien étudier.<sup>368</sup>

In the annual report of M.E.P. of 1884, Mgr. Vey insisted that the Catholic Mission was giving the educational services only in the Christian districts, but he had to do more than that since the European community in Bangkok was growing very fast, and the Siamese wanted to learn European languages more and more; above all, if the Catholic Mission did not cooperate in the educational reform, the Mission would have lost its good reputation.<sup>369</sup> So Mgr. Vey opened the Assumption College on February 15, 1885, where the European and native professors gave superior instruction in 3 languages: Siamese, French and English. In fact, in order to have a school teacher, he wrote a letter to St. Mary's training college in London. Mr. Graham, the director of St. Mary, agreed with him and sent Mr. Donovan to Siam. For this, Mgr. explained that:

Nous avons pris une autre décision, celle de fonder d'abord l'école sur un bon pied en mettant un bon laïque à la tête des classes anglaises. Pour les classes du français un missionnaire s'en occupera pour quelque temps.<sup>370</sup>

The Convent school for girls was also erected in 1885. He had already paved the way for this purpose. Seeing that the number of the European people was growing and also the number of the children, he consulted with his missionaries and said that:

Notre avis a été qu'il nous faudrait des Religieuses pour l'éducation et l'instruction des enfants des Européens.<sup>371</sup>

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<sup>368</sup>Vey to Paris on October 31, 1883, AME, Siam, Vol. 895, 1883, p. 353.

<sup>369</sup>Cf. Annual Report, 1884, p. 31.

<sup>370</sup>Vey to Paris on October 21, 1884, AME, Siam, Vol. 895, 1884, p. 372.

<sup>371</sup>Vey to Paris on July 8, 1884, AME, Siam, Vol. 895, 1884, p. 368.

To obtain this purpose, he had written to the Apostolic Vicar in Saigon, asking him to convey his request to the Superior of Soeurs de St. Paul de Chartres there. Soeur Benjamin, Superior, answered him that she willingly accepted his invitation, but since the war of Tongking was still taking place, he had to wait for some time. The idea of inviting the European religious to come to Siam came from Mgr. Dupond and Mgr. Vey wanted it to materialize.<sup>372</sup> He had also heard that the religious of St. Maur who were in Singapore would willingly accept to found an establishment in Siam, but they had to ask for the permission from the mother house. He also mentioned "*Les Soeurs de la Providence de Portieux*" established in Cambodia, but they had to do the same. In fact according to his plan, these three congregations would direct schools, hospital and orphanage of the Mission.<sup>373</sup>

P. Péan, one of the Directors of M.E.P., wrote to the Mother General of Soeurs de St. Paul de Chartres, saying:

Sa Grandeur voudrait établir à Bangkok; capitale du royaume, un modeste établissement de trois ou quatre religieuses seulement qui s'emploieraient d'abord à l'instruction et à l'éducation des filles d'Européens nées à Bangkok.<sup>374</sup>

However, the sisters of St. Paul de Chartres could not come to Siam for that moment, maybe because they wanted to send some of them from Saigon but the situation did not allow them to do so. The sisters of St. Maur finally arrived in Siam and were appointed to direct the Convent school in Bangkok.

The College of Assumption gave a satisfactory result to the Mission. It was necessary to have a new building to receive the boys who wanted to enter this college. The King and the queen offered a sum of money to the Mission for the construction of this building and so did the mandarins. The new building was constructed and completed in 1889.<sup>375</sup> In the report to Propaganda Fide, Mgr. Vey notified that the College of Assumption was directed by P. Colombet and 2 missionaries as assistants, together with 9 professors and 2 Siamese teachers. The College was growing very fast and in 1896 there were 390 boys from whom the missionaries baptized about 15 boys every year. The first class had already ended the study and were working in the country. The old boys wrote to P. Colombet expressing their satisfaction and achievement from their study.<sup>376</sup>

The Convent school was directed by the sisters of St. Maur, led by Mère Hélène. There were, then, 160 girls in the school, including:

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<sup>372</sup>Cf. Vey to Paris on March 7, 1884, AME, P. Rousseille, Siam, Mgr. Vey, p. 23, No. 8.

<sup>373</sup>Cf. Vey to Paris on July 8, 1884, AME, Siam, Vol. 895, 1884, p. 368.

<sup>374</sup>Péan to Chartres on September 5, 1884, Archives of Soeurs de St. Paul de Chartres, Siam, 1884, without number.

<sup>375</sup>Cf. *Church in Thailand*, p. 530.

<sup>376</sup>Cf. Vey to Propaganda Fide on December 15, 1896, ASCPF, Rubrica, No. 129, Vol. 117, p. 363.

Trois petites filles de l'ancien Régent, pendant la minorité du Roi actuel, et une fille adoptive d'un prince.<sup>377</sup>

Having considered the growth of both the Mission and the College, Mgr. Vey decided that it was time to assign the direction of the College to the religious. So he sent P. Emile Colombet to France in order to invite the St. Gabriel Brothers to take this service. P. Colombet had made the appeal to their good will and they generously answered this appeal. On October 20, 1901, 5 Brothers of St. Gabriel arrived at Bangkok and were appointed to direct the College of Assumption.<sup>378</sup>

In general, he noticed that the people wanted to send their sons and daughters to have their education in the Catholic schools. He paid much attention to the importance of education not only in Bangkok but also in the other provinces where the Catholic schools were directed by the missionaries and the native sisters and teachers. He said that the erection of the schools was necessary because of one missionary reason:

Il est difficile pour le néophyte qui ne sait pas lire de conserver dans sa mémoire le souvenir des vérités qu'il a entendues au Catholicisme. Cela est surtout vrai quand, comme il arrive si souvent, il habite loin de l'église et ne peut y aller entendre le dimanche, les instructions qui y sont donnés. S'il sait lire, ses livres de religion l'accompagne partant.<sup>379</sup>

#### 4.2.2 Hospital.

The other work which became urgent in Bangkok and seemed to correspond to the zeal of the Catholic Mission was the hospital since the sick (among them Europeans, Siamese, merchants who came to Siam), had to be accommodated in hotels, or in boats. Sometimes the missionaries were asked to admit the sick for the charitable motivations into their own house. Mgr. Vey first mentioned his project of building a hospital in his annual report of 1884, but his project could not be realized because he could not obtain sufficient subsidy.<sup>380</sup>

Having seen the necessity and importance of having one hospital in Bangkok, not only for the French soldiers, but also for the missionaries and the poor Siamese, the French consul in Bangkok offered 100,000 francs to Mgr. Vey and in Paris, the French government gave 150,000 francs to the Superior of M.E.P. for providing the necessary instruments and materials for the hospital in 1894.<sup>381</sup>

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<sup>377</sup>Ibid.

<sup>378</sup>Cf. Vey to Paris on December 12, 1900, AME, Siam, Vol. 896, 1900, p. 165. see also AAB, Vey, Religious Congregations, No. 031.

<sup>379</sup>Vey to Propaganda Fide on December 15, 1896, ASCPF, Rubrica, No. 129, Vol. 117, p. 363.

<sup>380</sup>Cf. Annual Report, 1884, p. 31.

<sup>381</sup>Cf. V. LARQUE', History of St. Louis Hospital(in Thai), Roneo Papers, Bangkok, 1985, p. 2.

Mgr. Vey bought a piece of land in 1895 and in 1896, he reported that the construction of the first building and a sister house had been begun and that later, he would build the other building for the Siamese, since they had asked him that the hospital should serve also the Siamese.<sup>382</sup> He did not, by any means, forget the welfare of the people, he said:

Plus tard, si les circonstances le permettent, la construction d'un autre grand hôpital pour les indigènes ne sera pas non plus négligée.<sup>383</sup>

It is interesting to note that in his letter dated July 8, 1884, the project of founding the hospital was agreed to by the king.

Nous avons plusieurs fois exprimé les désirs de voir fonder un hôpital pour les Européens principalement lequel serait sous notre direction. Le roi a bien voulu... d'en faire.<sup>384</sup>

According to his project, he hoped to have some religious sisters from Europe to direct the hospital. However, he asked Paris to help him have 4 sisters who would have arrived in Siam before the end of 1888, but on November 1888, he wrote:

L'affaire d'avoir des religieuses pour le petit hôpital Européen n'aboutit pas à un résultat acceptable pour nous.<sup>385</sup>

On July 18, 1895, he wrote a letter to the Superior of St. Paul de Chartres, asking for the religious sisters. This time he asked for about 7 or 8 sisters to work in the hospital and to direct some schools in Bangkok which were growing and needed some more personnel.<sup>386</sup> Finally, the sisters of St. Paul de Chartres arrived from Saigon, as we know from their "*Notice Historique*" published in 1900 as follows:

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<sup>382</sup>Cf. *Annual Report*, 1886, p. 77.

<sup>383</sup>Vey to Propaganda Fide in 1896, ASCPF, Rubrica, No. 129, Vol. 117, p. 364.

<sup>384</sup>AME, Siam, Vol. 895, 1884, p. 368.

<sup>385</sup>AME, Siam, Vol. 895, 1888, p. 469. see also p. 466.

<sup>386</sup>Cf. Vey to Chartres on July 18, 1895, Archives of St. Paul de Chartres, Siam, 1895, without number.

Enfin le 24 Avril 1898 sept religieuses de Saint Paul quittaient Saigon pour aller prendre la direction du magnifique Hôpital Saint-Louis fondé à Bangkok par les soins de Mgr. Vey, Vicaire Apostolique du Siam... Deux autres soeurs devront s'occuper de la direction des religieuses indigoènes de la mission connues en Orient sous le nom d'Amantes de la Croix et qui rendent tant de services à nos zélés missionnaires.<sup>387</sup>

Certainly this initiative of Mgr. Vey was warmly welcomed by all. St. Louis hospital was solemnly inaugurated on September 15, 1899, with the feast and ceremony prepared by the sisters and P. Romieu. The resident Europeans and the representative of the government, with their presence wanted to give a testimony of support and of encouragement to this work.<sup>388</sup>

It is interesting to observe that one of the methods of Mgr. Vey for his missionary works was the invitation of the religious congregations to come to Siam. This resulted in the growth of the Mission in certain ways, increasing the personnel of the Mission and also the conformability of the country-reformation.

### 4.3 The Printing Press and His Missionary Works

In connection with education and catechism, the printing press was also a good and necessary instrument to communicate the Good News to the people.

It is due to Mgr. Garnault that a printing press was introduced into Siam for the first time in 1796. The book "*Khamson Christang*" (Christian Catechism) was printed also in this year. It was printed in the Siamese language but with Roman characters representing Siamese sounds and tones, since Siamese typefaces were as yet not invented in that year.<sup>389</sup> This printing press was founded in the Santa Cruz church at Thonburi. But it was Mgr. Pallegoix who officially founded the Catholic Press of Assumption in 1838.<sup>390</sup>

The Assumption Press had been directed by Mgr. Vey when he arrived in Bangkok in 1865. He wrote to Mgr. Dupond who was in Rome at that moment that he was publishing "*Vie de Saints*" in the Siamese language and asked for the necessary instruments for the press in Bangkok.<sup>391</sup>

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<sup>387</sup>Communauté des Soeurs de Saint Paul de Chartres, Notice Historique, Chartres: Imprimerie Garnier, 1900, p. 20. see also AAB, Vey, Religious Congregations, No. 041.

<sup>388</sup>Cf. Vey to Paris on November 30, 1899, AME, Siam, Vol. 896, 1899, p. 162.

<sup>389</sup>Cf. A. LAUNAY, Documents Historiques, Vol II, p. 339. LAUNAY, Mémorial de la Société de la Missions Etrangères, Vol. 2, p. 266. G. DUVERDIER, La Transmission de L'imprimerie en Thaïlande: Du Catechisme de 1796 aux Impressions Bouddhiques sur Feuilles de Latanier, in Bulletin de l'école Française d'Extrême-Orient, Tome LXVIII (1980) 214-215.

<sup>390</sup>Cf. DUVERDIER, Op. Cit., p. 225. AME, Siam, Vol. 894, p. 264.

<sup>391</sup>Cf. Vey to Dupond on July 30, 1870, AME, Siam, Vol. 894, 1870, p. 506.

He always realized that the usage of the local language was very important not only to communicate with the people, but also to tell the Good News to them, to teach in the College and in schools. The press was also important for the catechism. For these purposes, Mgr. Vey composed and revised many books during his period, for catechism, education and also for the Mission. It would be beyond our study if I were to give all the names of the books he had composed and revised into the new editions and the books composed by the missionaries during his time. It would be better if I were to summarize his works from the catalogue of the works composed by the missionaries of Siam, as follows:

1. The works composed by Mgr. Vey:
  - Phra Evangelio (the Gospels) published in 1904.
  - Bot Samrat Ramphung phavana doi phra Evangelio nai thuk thuk van talot xua pi (Meditation on the Gospels for everyday of the year), 2 volumes, 2 editions, published in 1903-1904, 1905-1907.
2. The works collaborated or revised by Mgr. Vey:
  - Elementa Grammaticae Latinae published in 1903.
  - Kamnot (Regulation of the Mission) revised in 1870 and 1892.
  - Dictionnaire siamois-française-anglais revised from Dictionary of Mgr. Pallegoix, adding hundreds of new words by Mgr. Vey. The Latin was left out, leaving only French and English.
  - Latin-Siamese Dictionary.
  - English-Siamese Dictionary.
3. The works published during his time composed by the missionaries of Siam.
  - 12 books of catechism in Siamese in different editions.
  - 6 prayer books for the Christians in Siamese.
  - 4 books on life of the Saints in Siamese.
  - 1 song book in Siamese.
  - 1 French-Siamese Dictionary by Mgr. Cuaz.
  - Some text books for the usage in the schools and College.<sup>392</sup>

Having read these works which are still conserved in the library of the Assumption Press and in the archives of the Archdiocese of Bangkok, I observed that Mgr. Vey had worked very hard for the Mission, realizing the importance of this kind of mass media, encouraging the missionaries to compose some useful books to be used in their missionary works, communicating some important information to the Christians by his circular letters, etc., which render his missionary works more effective and more practical.

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<sup>392</sup>Cf. Catalogue des Ouvrages composés par les Missionnaires de Siam, AAB, Vey, Assumption Press, No. 030. see also LAUNAY, Mémorial de la Société des Missions Etrangères, p. 626.



#### 4.4 The Seminary, His Colleagues and Collaborators.

The most important element for the Mission was the collaborators, not only the missionaries themselves, but also the native clergy and the catechists who worked together in harmony in order to render the Mission of Siam more fruitful. The work of the formation of the native clergy had been entrusted to Mgr. Vey from the day of his arrival in 1865. He understood the importance of this work and he had paid his attention to it.

##### 4.4.1 The Native Clergy.

According to the short history of the seminary of the Mission of Siam, which I found in the Archives of the Archdiocese of Bangkok, Mgr. Garnault formed some children to the priesthood in Penang, in 1786. When he came to reside in Bangkok in 1792, he had one native priest, 2 seminarists and some students. He, then, opened the clerical schools, one at Chanthabun where the Cochinchinese seminarists took refuge, one at Takua Thung in the South of Siam and one at Bangkok. Definitively fixed at Bangkok in 1802, Mgr. Garnault united all the seminarists there. There were 23 seminarists. In 1841, Mgr. Pallegoix officially founded a seminary in Bangkok, namely, in the Assumption quarter. For some reasons, namely, being disturbed by the great noise of the capital and by the visits of the parents of the seminarists, the stay in Bangkok seemed not to be favorable to the proper direction of the seminary.

In February 1872, the seminary was transferred to Bangxang, where P. Rabardelle was working. The building structure of the seminary was still made of wood. From 1893 to 1903, Mgr. Vey rebuilt the seminary, and this time it was made of brick, but with great expenses.<sup>393</sup> P. Martin, as the Superior of the Mission, wrote to Cardinal Barnab as follows:

La Mission de Siam vient d'achever son Grand S minaire: c'est l a que nous ferons continuer les  tudes aux  l eves qui nous viennent de Penang et   ceux que nous fournira notre petit S minaire o u nous comptons une trentaine de latinistes.<sup>394</sup>

In his letter addressed to Cardinal Ledochiuski, Prefect of Propaganda fide, Mgr. Vey asked for financial support for the seminary, saying:

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<sup>393</sup>Cf. AAB, Vey, Seminary, No. 003. see also *Notice Biographique*, p. 252, f. 9.

<sup>394</sup>Martin to Prefect of PF on Nov. 21, 1873, AME, Siam, Vol. 894, 1873, p. 702.

Il s'agit de la construction de notre Séminaire pour le clergé indigène qu'il est absolument nécessaire de refaire; l'ancienne est en bois, elle est pourrie. Les achats des matériaux pour le nouveau séminaire (comprenant grand et petit séminaire) sont commencés.<sup>395</sup>

On April 18, 1896, Cardinal Ledochiuski responded to his letter, agreeing with him on the importance of the formation of native clergy, corresponding also to the instructions given by Propaganda Fide, saying:

Intere a ut aliquod, licet tenere, amplitudini suae auxilium praebet, summam bis mille libellarum in favorem praedictae constructionis assignavit.<sup>396</sup>

One year later, he reported to Propaganda Fide that the seminary, both major and minor seminaries, counted at that moment 65 students, from whom on four of them had been conferred the Diaconate. They were to be ordained priests at the end of the year. He also added that the number of the native priests then, would be 18 altogether.<sup>397</sup> The Mission of Siam was extended to include Laos, as we have already seen. The formation of the clergy, therefore, was to be adapted to it. Mgr. Vey informed Propaganda Fide what he was doing in the seminary, saying:

Autre ce séminaire de langue Siamoise, l'extension de la Mission nous oblige à enfonder un secours, de langue Laotienne. Le Vicariat Apostolique, en effet, comprend deux pays dont la langue populaire n'est pas la même.<sup>398</sup>

As the result, he sent 5 native priests to work in Laos. In fact P. Excoffon had established a school at Done Don to form the boys who wanted to be catechists or priests in May 1891. P. Dabin, a missionary in Laos wrote in his diary in 1891 that year they opened a seminary at Done Don, since they had recognized the necessity to have a seminary of the Mission for a long time.<sup>399</sup>

The seminary of the Mission of Siam had to receive the seminarists of the Mission of Laos according to the agreement made in 1904 between Mgr. Vey and Mgr. Cuaz.<sup>400</sup> In the report of Mgr. Cuaz to Propaganda Fide on October 23, 1904, he said that there were at the moment only 8 seminarists from whom 7 were still learning some fundamental subjects in Done Don, a minor seminary of the Mission, one was sent to Bangxang, the seminary of the Mission of Siam.<sup>401</sup>

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<sup>395</sup>ASCPF, Rubrica, No. 129, 1896, Vol. 96, p. 9.

<sup>396</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>397</sup>Cf. ASCPF, Rubrica, No. 129, 1897, Vol. 117, p. 362.

<sup>398</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>399</sup>Cf. BAYET, *Op. Cit.*, p. 111. see also ASCPF, Rubrica, No. 129, 1897, Vol. 117, p. 362.

<sup>400</sup>Cf. AAB, Vey, Seminary, No. 001.

<sup>401</sup>Cf. ASCPF, Rubrica, No. 129, 1904, Vol. 292, p. 744.

The formation of the native clergy was really the heart of the Mission. Mgr. Vey tried to improve and develop the seminary in every way. In 1906, he reported that:

En juin, le jour du Sacré-Coeur, a eu lieu la bénédiction de la nouvelle chapelle et du bâtiment. La cérémonie très solennelle était présidée par le R.P. d'Hondt; près de trois cents chrétiens.<sup>402</sup>

He also reported that there were 60 students and 10 of them were studying theology. When he died in 1909, he left the Mission of Siam with 21 native priests.

#### **4.4.2 Relation with the Missionaries.**

Besides the native clergy, the missionaries themselves were the master-key of all the missionary works. Mgr. Vey realized that the Mission would have gone so well, if the unity of the missionaries was strengthened. The pastoral visit should have been the best way not only to enter into profound relation with his colleagues, but also enter into their real lives seeing with his own eyes how the work was going on and what they needed for their tasks. Not long after his consecration, he made a pastoral visit to Chanthabun, east of Bangkok and on his way back, he stopped at Bang Pla Soi to administer confirmation.

In March 1876, he made another pastoral visit to the seminary at Bangxang. After he had solemnly opened the Mission of Laos, he himself encouraged the new Christian community by visiting them. P. Martin wrote that because of the hardship of travelling and passing through the forest, Mgr. Vey was attacked by the forest fever.<sup>403</sup>

From his letters, we could easily understand that he periodically made his pastoral visits to the Christian communities. Each pastoral visit took him about 40 days.<sup>404</sup> Certainly these visits gave him the pleasant results, seeing his colleagues working together and encouraging each other when they had encountered some difficulties. The unity of the missionaries was expressed specially on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> priesthood Jubilee of P. Ranfaing, the ceremony which had never been in the Mission of Siam for 200 years. Mgr. Vey invited the missionaries for the feast at Chanthabun, recommending them that as many as possible should come there, saying:

Afin que les actions de grâces que nous devons à la divine Providence fussent plus solennelles et plus en rapport avec notre reconnaissance à tous.<sup>405</sup>

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<sup>402</sup>Vey to Paris, AME, Siam, Vol. 896, 1906, p. 197. He could not preside the ceremony because he was sick and staying in the hospital.

<sup>403</sup>Cf. AME, Siam, Vol. 895, 1876, pp. 105-108, 118, 149, 151, 157.

<sup>404</sup>Cf. AME, Siam, Vol. 896, p. 39.

<sup>405</sup>R. PERRAUX, *Noces d'Or de M. Ranfaing. Missionnaire Apostolique au Royaume de Siam*, in *La Semaine Religieuse au Diocèse de Saint-Dié*, 18 (Mai 5, 1882) 279. see also AME, Siam, Vol. 895, p. 333.

The feast took place on January 23, 1882, and most of the missionaries participated in the feast which was organized in the most solemn manner as possible according to the will of Mgr. Vey.<sup>406</sup>

In 1890, on the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Mgr. Vey's priesthood, all the missionaries united together on June 17, 1890, saying a solemn mass, singing the Te Deum and praying for him. The ceremony was organized by the missionaries themselves, as we can see from the letter of invitation in which they said:

Nous prierons encore, tous ensemble, Notre Seigneur qu'il daigne y ajouter de nombreuses années afin que, sous la paternelle administration de Sa Grandeur, la mission puisse continuer à porter de nouveaux fruits de salut; étendre au loin de nouveaux rameaux et travailler sans cesse à la plus grande Gloire de Dieu.<sup>407</sup>

#### 4.4.3 The Importance of The Catechists.

The indispensable collaborators and assistants of the missionaries were the catechists. Mgr. Vey paid much attention also to their importance and roles, since the people listened to their voice willingly more than that of the missionaries. From the extract of a letter of Mgr. Vey to the members of the council of l'Oeuvre de la Propagation de la Foi written on August 30, 1876, he observed that:

De nombreux catéchumènes s'instruisent actuellement de notre religion. Que ne nous est-il donné de disposer de plus amples ressources! nous pourrions alors étendre notre action beaucoup plus loin, au moyen des catéchistes, auxiliaires indispensables aux missionnaires dans notre pays de Siam. Ce sont les catéchistes qui peuvent parcourir avec fruit les villages païens; leur voix est écoutée plus volontiers que celle des missionnaires étrangères et leur présence éveille moins de défiance.<sup>408</sup>

Mgr. Vey was convinced that the catechists could speak to their fellow-countrymen more easily, without a wrinkle on the false religion which they themselves had abandoned after having understood the truth of that which they were proclaiming to them. It was the catechists who had prepared the way for the missionaries, inspiring the confidence to their consideration. He also had to limit the number of the catechists because he could not afford and sustain them. He said that:

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<sup>406</sup>Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 281-283.

<sup>407</sup>AAB, Vey, Circular Letters, No. 012, p. 3.

<sup>408</sup>A.P.F., Vol. 49, No. 290 (Janvier 1877) 52.

Plusieurs fois, j'ai été dans la pénible nécessité de refuser à de pauvres pères, vivant éloignés de tout centre chrétien, le secours d'un catéchiste qu'ils demandaient pour étudier la religion... s'il s'agit d'un grand nombre de pères à convertir, combien il est encore plus douloureux de ne pas pouvoir leur accorder ce qu'ils demandent afin de les amener à Jésus-Christ!<sup>409</sup>

P. Schmitt wrote to Mgr. Vey on December 23, 1876, confirming the important roles of the catechists as follows:

Le catéchiste, homme zélé et courageux, parcourut les différentes localités; bon nombre de ces compatriotes se rendirent à ses instructions et promirent de se faire chrétiens.<sup>410</sup>

From 1881 to 1899, Mgr. Vey provided 15 catechists for the Mission of Laos and in 1909 there were 21 catechists working together side by side with the missionaries in the Mission of Siam. Without doubt, the catechists were one of the most important factors for the success of both the Mission of Siam and that of Laos.

## **5. The Obstacles of The Missionary Works.**

During Mgr. Vey's period, Siam was confronting some political problems, both internal and external. The political events and the situation of the country certainly affected the evangelization of the missionaries. The Mission of Siam had to confront these obstacles with perseverance and prudence.

### **5.1 The System of The Country.**

During the minority of king Rama V (1868-1875), Siam was governed by the Regent who was antipathic to Catholicism. The progress of the Mission was obstructed as we could see from what Mgr. Dupond wrote in his letter as follows:

Les progrès de la religion ont été un peu ralenti pendant les trois dernières années: ...nous n'avons pas de persécution ouverte, mais le gouvernement actuel ou moins ceux qui sont à la tête du pouvoir n'ayant que de l'antipathie pour la religion chrétienne.<sup>411</sup>

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<sup>409</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 52-53.

<sup>410</sup>A.P.F., Vol. 49, No. 293 (Juillet 1877) 301.

<sup>411</sup>Dupond to Cardinal Barnabò, AME, Siam, Vol. 894, 1871, p. 546.

With regard to the system of the country, there was still the classification of the people. Slaves had to submit themselves and absolutely obey the owners or their masters. Among the mandarins, there were many levels which they had to respect and obey relatively.

This system continued until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when King Rama V abolished slavery and reformed the system. The result of this system which affected the missionary works was that without the permission of the superiors, the Siamese could not be free to become Christians. Mgr. Vey wrote to P. d'Hondt who was in France, telling him that the general situation of the Mission was normal *"mais c'est toujours la lutte contre ces malheureux payens qui n'ont aucune droiture, aucune sincérité"*.<sup>412</sup> The opposition of the Siamese mandarins who had the great influence over their subjects was one of the obstacles for the evangelization. Mgr. Vey narrated that:

Le peuple de Siam demeurait à leur merci. Ils étaient opposés à la conversion de leurs subordonnés.<sup>413</sup>

Sottomessi all'ascitrio dei loro capi, essi non erano liberi di rendersi cattolici senza essersi a dure versazioni.<sup>414</sup>

Under the influence and power of these mandarins who were governing some provinces, 3 chapels were burnt by them and the other stations were also plundered. However, the situation seemed to be better with the policy of the king, as Mgr. Vey observed:

Le roi actuellement régnant, Chulalongkorn, fils de Phra Chom-khao, a marché sur les traces de son père, il s'est montré tolérant libéral. Aujourd'hui, il semble disposé à aller plus avant, le pouvoir discrétionnaire des mandarins est de beaucoup diminué.<sup>415</sup>

The diffusion of Christianity could finally gain the emancipation of the people of Siam. From this point of view, the good relation with the king and the government was really indispensable for the sake of the Mission.

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<sup>412</sup>Vey to D'Hondt on April 8, 1889, AME, Siam, Vol. 896, 1889, p. 10.

<sup>413</sup>M.C., XXVIII, No. 1438 (Décembre 25, 1896) 617.

<sup>414</sup>Pro-Memoria, PF to Pope Leo XIII, ASCPF, Rubrica, No. 129, Vol. 117, 1897, p. 383.

<sup>415</sup>M.C., XXVIII, No. 1438 (Décembre 25, 1896) 619. see also [Church in Thailand](#), pp. 479-480.

## 5.2 The Chinese Secret Societies.

As we have learnt from the last chapter, the Chinese community in Siam was growing very fast in the 19th century. The Chinese divided themselves into groups and organized the secret societies in order to keep their nationalism, culture and customs. When China was defeated by Japan in 1895, the feeling of nationalism among the Chinese in Siam increased more than before.<sup>416</sup> These Chinese secret societies protected the interest, the gain and the benefit of the Chinese in Siam. They also forced the Chinese by every mean to be their members.

The Mission of Siam was disturbed mostly by these secret societies, namely Tua Hia or Ang Ji. In order to keep their nationalism, culture, custom and above all their influence over the Chinese, becoming Christians meant becoming traitors and so they could not allow the Chinese to enter into Catholicism. From a report conserved in the archives of M.E.P., the growth of the Chinese mission in Siam was very fast. The Chinese mission began in 1840 with only 150 Chinese Christians. In 1851 after the return of the exiled missionaries, the Chinese mission accomplished already 6 places in the different provinces of Siam.

Depuis cette époque la mission chinoise a prospéré surtout depuis 1862. En dehors de Bangkok la mission chinoise compte actuellement 7 postes principaux avec résidence des missionnaires, églises, écoles, orphelinats. 9 postes secondaires avec églises sans résidence habituelle du missionnaire mais fréquemment visités et administrés. En troisième lieux 9 postes nouveaux n'ayant encore ni églises ni écoles... En plus de cette population actuelle, la mission de Siam a instruit et baptisé plus de deux mille chinois.<sup>417</sup>

P. Schmitt observed that the Chinese were active and got used to work, they conserved the feeling of good and bad. They loved the associations, discussing, reasoning and judging, so they inclined to the real truth easily.

Quand on lui développe les principes de la religion et de la morale, il reconnaît la vérité de ce qu'on lui dit; jamais, à Siam, Je n'ai rencontré un chinois niant l'existence de Dieu. S'il ne se convertit pas, ce sont des intérêts de famille ou de commerce qui font obstacle.<sup>418</sup>

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<sup>416</sup>Cf. W. SKINNER, *Chinese Society in Thailand: An Analytical History*, New York: Cornell University Press, 1957, in Thai ed. C. KASETSIRI, Bangkok: Thai Watana Panish, 1986, p. 158.

<sup>417</sup>AME, Siam, Vol. 894, 1870, p. 512.

<sup>418</sup>A.P.F., Vol. 49, No. 293 (Juillet 1877) 299.

J.B. Piolet also observed that far away from their country, disengaged of some of their secular prejudices by the relations with the people of other races, delivered from many bonds, free from the most urgent material worries by the easy situation that they conquered rapidly, the Chinese were accessible to the Christian truths.

Ce n'est pas cependant qu'il n'y eût aucune difficulté à leur conversion: l'opium, le jeu, les sociétés secrètes surtout, et également l'habitude qu'ils ont de laisser dans leur patrie leur femme légitime pour en prendre une autre dans le pays qu'ils habitent momentanément, étaient et sont encore autant d'obstacles.<sup>419</sup>

In fact, Mgr. Vey observed that there existed this obstacle for the mission in Siam when he wrote a letter to Paris in 1869 that it seemed to him that the Chinese dared not to become Christians any more, since they had a refuge in Tua Hia, saying:

Les Chinois ont un fort Thi Phung (refuge) auprès des Tua Hia, ils ne pensent plus à se faire chrétiens... D'autres fois, c'est nous Bat Luang (missionnaires) qui sommes la cause des troubles qui ont en lieu, s'il n'y eut pas en de chrétiens, il n'y aurait pas de Tua Hia. C'est pour seulement pour s'opposer aux chrétiens qu'ils de sont formés.<sup>420</sup>

The Chinese Christians were hurt by the members of these Chinese secret societies and it remained everyday a great difficulty for the conversion among them who were afraid of their influence. The problem also came from the local authority who abetted in the corruption with the Chinese secret societies and this rendered the problem more difficult to solve.<sup>421</sup>

Les sociétés Ang Ji sont toujours fortes et s'imposent par la crainte aux chinois qui ayant fait les serments d'initiation auraient la volonté de se faire chrétiens... Dans de telles conditions il ne nous était pas possible de faire une ample moisson parmi les chinois.<sup>422</sup>

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<sup>419</sup>J.B. PIOLET, S.J., Les Missions Catholiques Françaises au XIXe Siècle, Vol. II, Paris, 1900, p. 571.

<sup>420</sup>Vey to Paris, AME, Siam, Vol. 894, 1869, p. 475.

<sup>421</sup>Cf. Ibid.; Vey to Paris on October 24, 1882, AME, Siam, Vol. 895, 1882, p. 338.

<sup>422</sup>Vey to Paris on October 31, 1883, AME, Siam, Vol. 895, 1883, p. 353.



He noticed that in 1884, the Chinese secret societies continued their excess in several provinces, especially those of the East. At Petriu, P. Perbet was almost killed by them who entered into his house armed. Fortunately he was saved by one of his faithful. At Tha Kien, P. Voisin was disturbed so violently by the Chinese that he could not stay in his house for several weeks. At Bang Pla Soi, 40 to 50 Chinese attacked the faithful of P. Rousseau who was absent that moment. Also, one catechist of P. Grand at Pak Phrek was killed by the Ang Ji.<sup>423</sup>

Mgr. Vey resisted this opposition with prudence and courage. He advised the missionaries on how to react to the problems. He himself brought some cases to the tribunal, defending the missionaries and the Chinese Christians, and as far as we know he had never been defeated in the court. This was the real encouragement for the Mission of Siam.<sup>424</sup>

From time to time, the Chinese secret societies stimulated the uprisings and confusion in Bangkok against the administration of the government, for instance: in 1869, 1883, 1889 and 1895. From 1895, the Siamese government controlled these societies strictly and in 1897, the new law was issued, obliging all the societies to be registered and submit themselves under the control of the Siamese police. This resulted in the Catholic Mission being protected from their dangerous activities.<sup>425</sup>

### **5.3 Political Problems with France.**

As soon as France conquered Tong King and Annam in the years 1883-1884, Mgr. Vey realized that this political event would cause some difficulties to the Mission of Siam. He observed that:

On ne fera pas disparaître facilement l'idée que la question religieuse est intimement liée à la question politique. Tous les païens comme les chrétiens regardent l'intervention française en Annam comme devant être ou favorable ou défavorable au nom Chrétien suivant le succès ou l'insuccès des Français.<sup>426</sup>

He also noticed that the Siamese could not differentiate between the Christians and French. The political Crisis of 1893 aroused the public opinion that the Christians were the assistants of the French, so the Christians were also the enemies of the country. The effect of this political problem was as Mgr. Vey described:

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<sup>423</sup>Cf. Vey to Paris on November 8, 1884, AAB, Vey, Letters, Vol. I, No. 036.

<sup>424</sup>Cf. *Church in Thailand*, p. 482.

<sup>425</sup>Cf. SKINNER, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 143-145.

<sup>426</sup>Vey to Paris on October 31, 1883, AME, Siam, Vol. 895, 1883, p. 353.

Le différend politique a déterminé immédiatement un arrêt dans un grand nombre de conversions.<sup>427</sup>

They were waiting to see the end of the quarrel. Mgr. Vey lamented that if only the French would have shown themselves suitable to the word "*Gesta Dei per Francos*", the Siamese would also have their eyes opened:

On pourrait dire: leur conduite sera sa conduite; leur Dieu sera son Dieu... Hélas, quelques uns de nos compatriotes ont déjà assumé sur eux l'irréparable responsabilité de l'irréligion et du mauvais exemple.<sup>428</sup>

P. d'Hondt wrote to Paris that the people had never been hesitant like this before because of the political events of which nobody would know the issue. Siam was in the period of transition and as long as it continued, the Mission of Siam could not do the big things.<sup>429</sup>

Siam and France confronted these political problems until 1907, in which Siam again ceded Battambang, Srisophon and Siemrap to France. This means that during almost the whole period of Mgr. Vey, he had to endure these political tensions, facing up to such situation and working among the people who looked at the missionaries as the enemies. Thanks to the good relations with the government, the Catholic Mission was possible to continue the evangelization.

#### **5.4 Missionaries' Viewpoint on Buddhism.**

When one studies and examines the history of Catholic evangelization in Siam, one can see that the missionaries also placed obstacles in the way of their own work of evangelization. Perhaps the cause of this was an understanding of the Siamese situation that was far from the true facts. In other words, an understanding and viewpoint on Buddhism, the religion of State, from the part of the missionaries became their obstacle for the Mission.<sup>430</sup>

As we have seen above, the book "*Pudcha Wischana*" (Questions and answers) of Mgr. Pallegoix attacked Buddhism in many points. Certainly this kind of insult would have caused the reaction of the Siamese, since it hurt the mind and spirit of the people.

Some examples of the viewpoint on Buddhism of the missionaries should be given here in order that we could understand the situation. P. Schmitt wrote to Mgr. Vey as follows:

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<sup>427</sup>Vey to Paris on November 2, 1894, AME, Siam, Vol. 896, 1894, p. 130. see also Annual Report, 1894, pp. 60-64.

<sup>428</sup>Ibid.

<sup>429</sup>Cf. D'Hondt to Paris on February 10, 1898, AME, P. Rousseille, Siam, P. 18, No. 10.

<sup>430</sup>Cf. SREEHATAGAM, Op. Cit., p. 43.

Le Bouddhisme a énérvé son coeur et a éteint dans son ame (le Siamois) tout élan vers Dieu. Il est égoïste. Enorgueilli par l'idée de ses propres mérites, il a la présomption de Satan: il croit qu'il sera Phra (Dieu), Bouddha; il nie l'existence de Dieu.<sup>431</sup>

Mgr. Vey himself was not excluded. He observed that in general, the Siamese did not show that they were hostile to Catholicism. They came to see the missionaries, and willingly listened to them. The principal obstacles which in their zeal encountered the missionaries, were the chiefs of the people, as Mgr. Vey said:

Ceux-ci ont tout intérêt à s'opposer aux progrès du catholicisme: Le Bouddhisme est, entre leurs mains, un moyen commode et efficace d'en imposer au peuple. Le manteau de la religion leur sert à couvrir leur tyrannie et leurs injustices.<sup>432</sup>

When Mgr. Vey wrote a letter to Pope Leo XIII, he confirmed his opinion on Buddhism as follows:

À Siam, vos fils en Dieu sont vraiment le pusillus grex au milieu d'une si grande multitude de païens soumis au joug de satan représenté par l'auteur de Bouddhisme. Nous ne recueillons pas d'abondants moissons parmi ces sectateurs du Bouddha. Malheureusement il (le roi) est le chef du Bouddhisme et il s'en glorifie. Il n'y a pas à espérer qu'il devienne jamais chrétien.<sup>433</sup>

Buddhism had not been respected by the missionaries as it should have been. Moreover, the book "*Pudcha Wischana*" was published during Mgr. Vey's period in 1894 and 1897, the years in which the public opinion on the French and Christianity was worsened by the political problems. This time, the government did not order the confiscation of the books, perhaps because the missionaries did not use them publicly, but only in Catholic society, and maybe the Siamese government did not want to worsen the situation with France. The widespread objection to the book by the followers of Buddhism did not take place until 1958 when the book was published once again by P. Perroudon. The government ordered the confiscation of the books, the closure of Assumption Press which published the book and summoned the priest responsible for this to give an account.<sup>434</sup>

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<sup>431</sup>A.P.F., Vol. 49, No. 293 (Juillet 1877) 300.

<sup>432</sup>Lettre Cummine du Séminaire des Missions Etrangères, No. 10 (Décembre 31, 1879) 54. see also AAB, Vey, Circular Letters, No. 013.

<sup>433</sup>ASCPF, Rubrica, No. 129, 1903, Vol. 261, pp. 437-438.

<sup>434</sup>Cf. SREEHATAGAM, *Op. Cit.*, p. 43. MUTUKAN, *Op. Cit.*, p. 20.

Theological and ecumenical discussion, inculturation according to the Vatican Council II on Buddhism should not be studied in this work. It is very interesting to note that having realized that Buddhism was the religion of State, that the Siamese had always shown good will to Catholics and Christianity with the best of intentions and seeing that the King himself, even though he was Buddhist, was still the constant protector of the religions, it is very difficult to understand why the missionaries did not understand the importance of Buddhism for the mind and spirit of the Siamese. Instead they placed it as the obstacle in the course of their own work of evangelization. This should be a valuable lesson for evangelization in present Thailand.

## **2. King Rama V, the Great (1868-1910).**

Despite his many official activities, Rama IV found time to pursue his love of astronomy. In 1868, he accurately predicted a total eclipse of the sun, but in viewing it in marshy countryside south of Bangkok, he contracted the malaria that caused his death on October 1, 1868.

King Rama V succeeded to the throne with the full consent of the Accession Council. He was born on September 20, 1853, as the eldest son of Queen Debsirindra. King Rama IV clearly hoped his son would succeed him, and to prepare him for the throne, he afforded his son, in the 1860's, the beginnings of a superb education that combined traditional Thai with modern Western elements. On ascending the throne, king Rama V consolidated Siam's independence and smoothly advanced vital modernization by introducing reforms wherever he saw fit. His long reign of 42 years was an active age of sweeping changes in the midst of political turmoil, because while the changes were going on, both England and France were expanding their colonies all around and came to clash with Siam. It was for the king and his collaborators either to bring about the change of the country into a modern state so as to better resist colonialism and survive, or to perish at the aggressive hands of overpowering imperialism.

### **2.1. The Front Palace Crisis.**

At his accession, King Rama V was a minor, as he had just entered his sixteenth year. So the Accession Council nominated Srisuriyawong the Regent who would govern the country for him for five years. Then, Srisuriyawong took the step of declaring that Prince Wichaichan, son of the late Second king Phra Pinklao, should be named heir-presumptive or the Second King, an act that always before had been the prerogative of the new King. One prince dared to rise and challenge this unprecedented move, but his action failed to elicit any support from an assembly fearful of Srisuriyawong's power, and Prince Wichaichan's appointment was pushed through.<sup>435</sup>

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<sup>435</sup>Cf. TIPAKORNWONG, Chao Phya, The Royal Chronicle of King Rama IV (in Thai), Bangkok: Kurusapa, 1978<sup>2</sup>, pp. 518-521.

During the five years of his minority, Rama V had been able to travel to Singapore, Java, India and Burma, and had learnt much about what the colonial Powers were doing to their colonies. He foresaw that big changes for his country were necessary. During the period of Regency (1868-1873), the power of the throne was at its nadir; the Regent was the most powerful person in Siam. On his coming of age in November 1873, King Rama V realized that one of the most urgent tasks confronting him as king in his own right was the consolidation of royal power. So, he held a second coronation in order to assume his absolute power and he assumed the direct rule of the kingdom immediately.

### **2.1.1 The Position of the Front Palace or Wang Na.**

Next to the Crown, the Front Palace was, before its abolition in 1885, officially the most important political institution in Siam. Upon the death of the king, the Front Palace Prince who was also known as the Wang Na, Uparat and Second King by Europeans, and appointed by the king from among his sons and brothers, usually assumed the throne.<sup>436</sup> His claim to the throne was the strongest because he had his own court establishment similar to that of the government, with officials, troops and almost unlimited access to the treasury. Xie Shunyu clearly explains this position as follows:

The tremendous power possessed by the Wang Na had resulted in tensions between the Grand Palace and the Front Palace. Their relations were often characterized by ambiguity, mutual suspicion and fear. The fear of revolt on the part of the king by an ambitious Wang Na was very real.<sup>437</sup>

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<sup>436</sup>In the history of the Front Palace, only two Wang Na, Ekatotsarot (1590-1605) and Phra Pinklao (1851-1866), were given extraordinary honors and the kingly title of Second King.

<sup>437</sup>X. SHUNYU, *Siam and the British 1874-1875: Sir Andrew Clarke and the Front Palace Crisis*, Bangkok: Thammasat University Press, 1988, pp. 2-3. See also A. RABITHADANA, *The Organization of Thai Society in the Early Bangkok Period 1782-1873*, Ithaca, New York: Southeast Asia Programme, Cornell University, Data Paper, No. 74, 1969, pp. 61-62.

The Front Palace Crisis (December 1874-February 1875) was a serious political challenge to a young and politically (as well as physically) weak king, Rama V, who had just assumed full control of the kingdom of Siam. King Rama V attempted to achieve his goal through the implementation of reforms of the traditional administration which was controlled by and benefited the established nobles. These reforms seriously threatened to undermine the interests and power of the established officials, including the Wang Na. Wichaichan linked the reforms directly to the Front Palace Crisis when he wrote to Sir Andrew Clarke, that "*some foolish men who wished to change the customs and usages of the country had turned the king against me*".<sup>438</sup> Wichaichan had inherited a Front Palace fortified by his father, and commanded the best ground troops in the country and also the navy, and his arsenal was second to none.<sup>439</sup> Wyatt notes that:

The military power of the Front Palace made it a difficult institution for the king to handle in the interest of reform, centralization, political stability, Mongkut's direct dynastic line and, perhaps, personal survival. From the part of Wichaichan, the rumor of the discontentment over the irregular appointment and its implications for the succession problem aroused his fear that there was a conspiracy to remove him.<sup>440</sup>

### 2.1.2. The Outbreak of the Crisis.

By the latter part of December 1874, the relationship between the Supreme king and the Second king had completely broken down. Mutual distrust and fear had led both Palaces to call up more troops to prepare for any eventuality.

The outbreak of a fire in a very critical and dangerous spot in the Grand Palace near the arsenal on the night of December 28, at 11:00 p.m., brought Bangkok to the brink of civil war. Troops from the Front Palace came to help fight the fire but were turned back. The Supreme king, being wary that the fire could have been a ploy to overthrow him, stepped up the security in his palace. Wichaichan feared that his life was being threatened by the King, so he fled for asylum in the British Consulate at Bangkok on January 2, 1875. The Ex-Regent was urgently recalled for consultations. Bangkok was in a state of panic and there were fears of active foreign intervention.

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<sup>438</sup>Quoted in A. CLARKE, Sir, *My Visit to Siam*, in *Contemporary Review*, 81(Feb. 1902) 226.

<sup>439</sup>Cf. C. KASETSIRI, *The Front Palace: The Office of the Heir Apparent?*, *The Emergence of Modern States, Thailand and Japan*, ed. C.A. TROCHI, Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 1976, p. 90; see also N. BATTYE, *The Military, Government and Society in Siam, 1868-1910: Politics and Military Reform during the Reign of Chulalongkorn*, Ph. D. thesis, Cornell University, 1974, p. 164.

<sup>440</sup>D.K. WYATT, *The Politics of Reform in Thailand: Education in the Reign of Chulalongkorn*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969, p.

### 2.1.3. The Solution of the Crisis.

The king attempted to persuade Wichaichan to leave the British Consulate, but to no avail. The Council of Ministers tried to defuse the crisis by sending a four-article agreement to Wichaichan who rejected it because it contained conditions extremely detrimental to his position and interest. Instead, Wichaichan drew up an agreement of ten articles and submitted it to the Council of Ministers. The ministers were prepared to accept all except the tenth article which provided for an agreement guaranteed by the British and French consuls, an encroachment on the sovereignty of the king. King Rama V bombarded Paris and London with appeals for European neutrality and worked hard to regain the support of his ministers and the older conservatives at court.

The news that the British had at least decided to step in and that Sir Andrew Clarke, the Governor of the Straits Settlements, was coming to Bangkok on the invitation of Newsman to extricate the Acting Consul-General from his dilemma, must have raised the morale of Wichaichan somewhat. What Wichaichan wanted was an agreement guaranteed by the foreign powers. Sir Andrew Clarke's intervention seemed to serve his purposes very well. In the case of the Front Palace incident, the most important person involved was the Governor of the Straits Settlements, Sir Andrew Clarke, not because of his official duties but because of Newsman's request for his guidance and instructions, King Rama V's looking to him, Clarke's own inclination to help King Rama V, and his assessment of the situation as an experienced colonial administrator.

His decisions and actions were thus decisive in the settlement of the crisis. He wrote to Rama V immediately upon his arrival on February 18, 1875, to assure him that:

Your Majesty's letters of 14 and 23 January have received my earnest attention, and having been authorized by Her Majesty's Government to visit Your Majesty's Court, I hasten to assure you that my good offices are at your disposal and that I shall be honoured by receiving Your Majesty's confidence.<sup>441</sup>

After studying the details of the crisis, Clarke prepared a draft decree and finally got the assent of both parties. In brief, the reconciliation decree provided for the re-confirmation of Wichaichan as Wang Na, with all the privileges enjoyed by that office restored. However, Wichaichan was allowed only to maintain a guard not exceeding two hundred men, who were to be restricted to his residence. All ships, arms and munitions, and also the finances of the kingdom, were confirmed to be under the authority of the Supreme king.

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<sup>441</sup>Clarke to Chulalongkorn, 18 Feb. 1875, C.O. 273/79, also in F.O. 69/63 cited by SHUNYU, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

Wichaichan had no choice, realizing that he could not get anything better and that the hospitality of the British Consulate could not be indefinitely extended, he gave his assent on February 24, 1875. A reconciliation ceremony took place on the following day. Clarke's mission had thus succeeded in settling the Front Palace Crisis.<sup>442</sup>

## **2.2. Relation with the Foreign Countries and Political Problems.**

To preserve the independence of Siam, King Rama V realized to the full, the vital necessity to continue the westernization of the country, initiated by his father, and to have a good relationship with foreign countries since the kingdom was already surrounded by the two imperialist powers, Britain and France.

His foreign travels exercised an immense influence on him, as they broadened his outlook and enabled him to learn on the spot the good and bad features of colonial rule; he toured Java again in 1896 and 1901, and visited Singapore in 1902. Credit was accorded to him for being the first Thai monarch to visit Europe on two occasions. In 1897, he made friends through personal contact with the various Heads of State such as the Emperor William II of Germany, the Tsar Nicholas II of Russia, the Prince of Wales (who was four years later crowned as king Edward VII of Great Britain), and President Loubet of France. In 1907, he renewed and strengthened the ties of friendship with the European statesmen with whom he had become intimately acquainted.<sup>443</sup>

During the reign of Rama V, Siam passed through the most pressing period of European imperialism. Both Britain and France were pushing out to protect and extend their empires. The British were on the Thai northern and western borders, in Burma, and also on the southern border, in Malaya. The French continued to press westward from Cochin-China and Tongkin into Laos and Cambodia. Professor David A. Wilson observed that:

The loss of territory over which the kingdom had claim of dominion took the form of a number of diplomatic dramas in which France, Britain, and Thailand all played important roles.<sup>444</sup>

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<sup>442</sup>See all the documentation and details of the crisis in CLARKE, *op. cit.*, pp. 221-230; SHUNYU, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-67; W.S. BRISTOWE, *Louis and the King of Siam*, London: Chatto and Windus, 1976, pp. 38-47.

<sup>443</sup>Cf. S. SUBSOPON, *The Thai History* (in Thai), Bangkok: Akson Charoentat, 1979<sup>3</sup>, pp. 367-373.

<sup>444</sup>WILSON, *op. cit.*, p. 7.



### 2.2.1. The Political Problems with France.

France had seized Saigon in 1859 and Vietnam had to recognize Cochin-China as a French colony. Using her new colony as a base, France spread her influence to Cambodia which was a vassal state of Siam. Cambodia became a French Protectorate when king Narodom of Cambodia signed a treaty on August 11, 1863, placing himself under French protection. Siam was not in a position to resist the French pressure, so Siam signed a treaty with France on July 5, 1867, recognizing the French Protectorate over Cambodia.

In 1883, the French conquered Tongkin, and in the following year Annam had to recognize French suzerainty. France now looked westward towards Laos and Siam. She put up a claim that Laos used to pay tribute to Vietnam and therefore Laos must be given back to France. Siam and France entered into negotiations to settle their dispute in 1886-1887 and Siam was forced to cede the territory of Sibsong Chuthai and Huapan Tangha Tanghok to France.

In 1890, France began to claim all territory east of the Mekong in northern Laos as rightfully part of the ancient Vietnamese domain and therefore as part of French Indochina. After a series of border incidents, France lent vigor to its demands by having a gunboat steam up the Chao Phya river to Bangkok. In order to maintain her independence, Siam yielded to the French and on October 3, 1893, she signed a treaty with France, conceding 50,000 sq. miles of territory and specific advantages for the French subjects in Siam. The French occupied Chantaburi as a guarantee, while Siam agreed to demilitarize her eastern frontier.

The French extended almost indiscriminately extraterritorial rights in Siam, not only to French subjects, Europeans and Asians, but also to all refugees from French territories and their descendants living in Siam. By this process great numbers of foreign Asians were removed from Thai jurisdiction.<sup>445</sup> These extraterritorial rights caused considerable difficulties to the Thai authorities in governing not only the capital but also the provinces. Siam embarked on a policy of attempting to regain its legal sovereignty. The policy was pursued in part by bargains over further territorial concessions. Thus in treaties signed in 1904 and 1907 with France, Siam had to cede to France two territories on the right bank of the Mekong, namely Paklai, opposite Luang Pra Bang and Champasak in 1904, and in 1907 Siam ceded Battambang, Srisophon and Siemrap to France. In return Siam gained jurisdiction over all French protégés, but the advantages were not of much significance. Relations with France were improved when a number of French jurists were appointed to the committee set up to codify Thai laws.<sup>446</sup>

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<sup>445</sup>Cf. NATHABANJA, *op. cit.*, pp. 247-250.

<sup>446</sup>For the details of Franco-Thai relations, see K. SUBAMONKALA, *La Thaïlande et Ses Relations avec La France*, Thèse pour le Doctorat, Université de Paris, Paris: Editions A. Pedone, 1940, pp. 116-194; S. TIRASASVAT, *Franco-Thai Relations 1893-1907* (in Thai), Bangkok: Saengrung Press, 1980, pp. 1-466; P. DUKE, *Foreign Affairs, Independence and Sovereignty of Thailand* (in Thai), Bangkok: Chao Phya Press, 1984, pp. 1-84; M. XUMSAI, *The History of 1893: The Documents from the Thai Embassy in Paris* (in Thai), 7 Vols., Bangkok: Chalermnit, 1976., T. NUMNON, *Thai Diplomacy during Bangkok Period* (in Thai), Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich, 1985, pp. 3-4.

### **2.2.2. The Anglo-Thai Relations.**

After winning the first war with Burma, Great Britain annexed Arakan, Martaban, Tavoy and Tenasserim in 1826; she occupied Lower Burma as the result of the second war in 1854 and finally incorporated the country in the British Empire as a province of India in 1886. At the same time Great Britain meddled in the affairs of Chiang Mai in the hope of sequestering the northern region from Siam. Luckily for Siam, owing to the praiseworthy and wise administrative policy of Rama V, the British attempt failed rather quietly. In 1896, Great Britain and France made an agreement concerning their colonial expansion in Africa and the Far East and they signed an agreement concerning Siam with two main points:

1. They would not send their armies into the region between the Mekong and the Tenasserim mountains.
2. This undertaking would not stop any action which both parties agreed to take as a necessary measure for the preservation of Thai independence.

Siam had no part in the signing of the Anglo-French agreement of 1896. Although it did not guarantee Siam's independence, it would keep both Great Britain and France from violating her sovereignty.

In 1899, Siam and Great Britain signed a treaty limiting the extraterritorial rights. Since the conclusion of the Burney treaty of 1826, Great Britain had been bringing pressure on the four Malay states, Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan and Trengganu which were under Thai suzerainty. Finally Siam signed a treaty with Great Britain in 1909, whereby she ceded to Great Britain these four states, a territory of 15,000 square miles and about one million inhabitants. In return Great Britain surrendered extraterritorial rights not only for British Asian subjects, but Europeans as well, and she was the first European power to do so. This treaty marked the last concession Siam made to a European power.<sup>447</sup>

In assessing king Rama V's foreign policy, it can be said that although he had lost 90,000 square miles of territory to the French and the British, he succeeded in preserving the independence of the country and he did this, in spite of all the threats and pressure that had been brought to bear upon him, by using skillful diplomacy and by hastening to adapt and adopt the methods of the West.

### **2.3. The Country-Reformation.**

Politically, however, The Front Palace Crisis and the problems with France *"had serious consequences for the cause of reform and modernization."*<sup>448</sup> King Rama V also wrote:

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<sup>447</sup>Cf. WILSON, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-8; CHAKRABONGSE, *op. cit.*, p. 252; DUKE, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-96.

<sup>448</sup>WYATT, *The Politics of Reform: Education in the Reign of King Chulalongkorn*, p. 61.

I have felt it better to defer the prosecution of further plans of reform until I shall find some demand for them among the leaders of my people. I have not relinquished them, but act according to my opportunities.<sup>449</sup>

Opportunities for reform came finally in the late 1880's when time took its toll on the old guard; the Ex-Regent died in January 1883, and the Second king, Wichaichan in August 1885; many of the officials and nobles of the regency period had also died or retired. King Rama V embarked, once again, on a programme to modernize the administration. Only some important reforms and aspects of modernization of Siam will be shown in order that we could see the general view of Siam during his period.

### **2.3.1 The Social uplifting and the Welfare of the People.**

On this point, Rama V did not by any means forget his people. We could summarize his works for the social uplifting and the welfare of the people in this way:

1. The abolition of some old-fashioned practices.

On the occasion of his second enthronement in November 1873, he dramatically announced the abolition of the practice of prostration in the royal presence.

His Majesty wishes to remove oppression and lower his status so as to allow officials to sit on chairs instead of prostrating in his presence.<sup>450</sup>

At his request, princes and officials as well as their spouses set a new fashion in dressing up in a civilized manner.

2. The Public Health.

In 1886, the king set up a committee with the task of organizing the first hospital which finally was erected in 1886-1887. The Medical School began simple instruction in 1888 and in 1889 the school was formally opened by the King and the Queen.<sup>451</sup> He established the Department of Public Health and Works. What was essential for the prevention of diseases was a supply of pure water, and the construction of the Bangkok water supply was started in 1902, but it was not completed until 1914.

3. The Siamese Education.

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<sup>449</sup>Chulalongkorn to Clarke, Nov. 27, 1876, quoted in SHUNYU, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

<sup>450</sup>The preamble to the proclamation of king Chulalongkorn concerning the Council of State, quoted in SYAMANANDA, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

<sup>451</sup>CF. The Executive Committee of the Eight Congress, *Siam: General and Medical Features*, Bangkok: The Bangkok Times Press, 1930, pp. 322-323., LANDON, *op. cit.*, pp. 117-118.

Fully recognizing the value of modern education, the King had, in 1871, founded the first school, in the accepted sense of the word, in the Grand Palace.<sup>452</sup> Later an English school was started, followed by the Suan Kularb school. The year 1884 is of special significance in the history of Thai education, since it marks the opening of the first state school for the people at Wat Mahan in Bangkok and the introduction of school examinations. In 1887 the Department of Education which had in due time its status raised to that of Ministry of Public instruction was created. For higher education, the king founded the Military College and the Naval College in 1887 and 1907 respectively, while the Law School opened its doors to students in 1897 and the Royal Pages' School began to train provincial administrators in 1902. Side by side with the newly founded state schools. Christian missionary schools continued to flourish, and private schools were encouraged.<sup>453</sup>

#### 4. The Communications.

For the sake of communications, the Department of Post and Telegraph was established in 1883 and in 1885 the Thai delegates attended for the first time the Universal Postal Union at Berne with a result that Siam signed the Postal Union Convention.<sup>454</sup> Then the first railway started its service, linking Bangkok with Pak Nam, in 1893. The State also selected the railway line from Bangkok to Korat as its first enterprise, which was begun in 1892 and completed in 1900. By 1910, the eastern line, the northern line and the southern line served the public. Roads and bridges were also built, so in addition to horse-drawn carriages, other vehicles appeared on the streets such as the rickshaw, the tram, the motor-car, the motor-cycle and the bicycle.

#### 5. The Abolition of Slavery.

The achievement of King Rama V which has most caught western imagination is the abolition of slavery. On his first enthronement in 1868, he issued a royal decree with the support of the Regent that all the people born in his reign would be free, since he was determined that slavery must eventually disappear from his realm.<sup>455</sup> Seven kinds of slaves were known in those days, namely:

1. slaves obtained by purchase from owner
2. children born from slave parents
3. slaves given as presents
4. people who sold themselves for money to pay fines after criminal conviction
5. people who exchanged their freedom for rice during hard times
6. prisoners of war

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<sup>452</sup>Siam's education had till then been conducted in the Buddhist monasteries which provided a narrow curriculum including Thai, some Pali and the Buddhist Scriptures.

<sup>453</sup>CHAKRABONGSE, *op. cit.*, pp. 240-241., SYAMANANDA, *op. cit.*, p. 128. See also The Executive Committee of the Eight Congress, *op. cit.*, pp. 173-181; LANDON, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

<sup>454</sup>Office of the Prime Minister, *The First Period of Post* (in Thai), Bangkok, 1980, pp. (3)-(5).

<sup>455</sup>Cf. CHAKRABONGSE, *op. cit.*, p. 245., SYAMANANDA, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

7. children given to gambling houses as payment for gambling losses.<sup>456</sup>

When the King, after reaching his majority, first informed the ministers and other noblemen of his idea, most of them were in

Disagreement and when the news of the coming abolition reached the owners, they were also against the idea. Thus, all in all, the King's initial project clashed with public opinion. The King carefully examined the existing law dealing with slavery and set up a committee to draft the new law emphasizing that progress had to be gradual and caused no undue hardship to owners or slaves. The law was drafted and enacted on October 18, 1874. He continually ameliorated the lot of the slaves. The number of slaves gradually dropped and in 1905 he issued a law for the abolition of slavery. Thus the Thai people won freedom with no struggle at all.<sup>457</sup>

### **2.3.2. The Reform of the Administration.**

King Rama V was a great statesman and realized fully that Siam could not maintain its independence, nor could its rulers retain their power, unless it adopted a modern standard of government. The task required courage, wisdom and foresight. In the reform of the administration, he appointed on May 8, 1874, the Council of State, comprising 12 members, which was his first advisory body. On August 15, 1874, the appointment of a Privy Council to give direct advice to the king was announced, consisted of 49 members. The Privy Council, probably patterned after the English Privy Council, thus was his second advisory body. On April 1, 1892, the administrative set-up was replaced by 12 ministries, each with the minister as its head and being directly responsible to the King as virtual prime minister. The provincial administration was reformed with the division of the kingdom into circle, province and district, all with officials of various ranks from Bangkok to govern them.<sup>458</sup>

### **2.3.3. The Peace of the Country.**

The reform of the army and the navy, inaugurated in the previous reign, was steadily continued by Rama V, who promulgated a conscription law in 1905. Towards the latter part of his reign, the army was further improved under the direction of his sons.

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<sup>456</sup>From the Siamese Law which indicated and described the characteristics of the slaves during the Bangkok Period, cited by A. RAPIPAT, Thai Society during the First Period of Bangkok 1782-1873 (in Thai), Bangkok: Pichanes Press, 1978, p. 212.

<sup>457</sup>Cf. SUBSOPON, op. cit., pp. 139-140.

<sup>458</sup>These 12 Ministries were 1. Interior 2. Foreign Affairs 3. Justice 4. Public Instruction 5. Finance 6. Lands and Agriculture 7. Defense 8. Royal Household 9. Local Government 10. Public Work 11. War 12. Privy Seal. Cf. The Executive Committee of the Eight Congress, op. cit., pp. 7-25., WONGSAWAN, op. cit., pp. 266-296.

His own special creation was the Royal Pages Guards Regiment. The Police Force in Bangkok was modernized and expanded to serve the whole country and was followed by prison reform. A Law on the constitution of courts of 1908 provided for the Supreme court, the Appeal court, the Criminal and the Civil courts as well as the Police court in the capital, in the provinces and international courts in any city where there was a need for them. Modern methods of collecting legal evidences were substituted for those of torture. H.R.H. Chakrabongse insisted that:

Throughout his reign, King Chulalongkorn continued the work of enlarging and improving the Army, which was necessary for internal security, and it was to be called upon more than once to put down riots of Chinese secret societies and revolts by Chinese Boxer troops who had escaped into North-Eastern Siam. It was also required to defend the Dynasty, and if need be, to enable the country to become an ally of one foreign (Farang) power against another.<sup>459</sup>

#### **2.4. Conclusion.**

On October 23, 1910, King Rama V died after a reign of 42 years in the 58<sup>th</sup> year of his age. He had suffered from a chronic kidney disease for some years and becoming critically ill on October 16, 1910. O. Frankfurter praises him that:

It will be the duty of abler pens than ours to give an account of what Siam owes to the deceased monarch in regard to the position she now fills in the rank of nations.<sup>460</sup>

David K. Wyatt adds that:

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<sup>459</sup>CHAKRABONGSE, *op. cit.*, p. 224. Concerning the Chinese in Siam, the best estimates indicate that the Chinese minority grew from about 230,000 in 1825 to 300,000 in 1850 and 792,000 in 1910. They had left the poverty and civil strife of rural south China to seek a better life in Siam. The chief characteristic of the Chinese was that it was overwhelmingly urban, and in close collaboration with Western enterprise, they dominated the modern sector of the Siamese economy. It was Chinese who built the modern sector of the economy of Siam. They dug the canals and constructed the railways and erected the fine new government offices and shop buildings and bridges of Bangkok. They developed the network of institutions and services necessary to make the rice-export economy work: the banks, the warehouses, the wholesale and retail trading concerns, the rice mill, etc. This had always been, since the earliest days of Ayutthaya, a powerful community in Siam. But they separated themselves into groups and organized the Chinese secret societies in order to keep their own nationalism. For the detailed study on the Chinese in Thailand, see W. SKINNER, Chinese Society in Thailand: An Analytical History, New York: Cornell University Press, 1957, in Thai, ed. C. KASETSIRI, Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich, 1986, pp. 30-167.

<sup>460</sup>O. FRANKFURTER, The Late King Chulalongkorn, in JSS, vol. VII, part 2 (1910) I.

If by 1910 Siam was not yet a modern nation, then at least it was a modernizing nation, and securely so. In the face of foreign threats and not of a little domestic opposition, Chulalongkorn had created a new structure for the state that possessed a dynamic of its own, an orientation toward change.<sup>461</sup>

It can be stated without exaggeration that Rama V brought vast progress to Siam. The Thai people still humbly refer to him as the "*Beloved Great*". On the anniversary of his demise, which has been declared as a government holiday in deference to his memory, homage in the form of floral tribute is paid to his Equestrian Statue in the Royal Plaza of Bangkok by the Thai people.

On the part of Catholicism in Siam during the reign of King Rama V, Mgr. Jean-Louis Vey, Apostolic Vicar of Siam, came on the scene. With his zeal and many important role and initiatives, he also inaugurated the big progress and changes in the history of the Catholic Church in Siam, corresponding to the development of the country and to the policy of the Siamese government.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

### 1. Mgr. Vey's Virtues and Spirituality

His special virtues were magnanimity of heart, broad-mindedness, piety, with a deep contempt of himself grounded on that spirit of faith which enlightened and enlivened his whole life. The great feature of Mgr. Vey was keenness to see all the parts of a question and power of mind to argue for them to the last, with a great readiness to conciliation as soon as invoked. These high qualifications made him a sure adviser, and greatly helped him to keep up the interests of the Mission without forfeiting its working on, and this accounts for the great loss the Mission suffered by his death.<sup>462</sup> P. Martin summarized P. Vey's personality in his comment accompanying his letter of vote to Paris, saying:

C'est un homme très prudent, vertueux ayant de la facilité pour les langues, d'une caractère aimable, bon, mais ferme etc.<sup>463</sup>

This comment was not far from the truth. While the Episcopal question still existed, P. Vey was in a difficult situation since some missionaries wrote to Paris, telling them about his ambition to the episcopate. He humbly said as follows:

La prudence chrétienne veut que je garde le silence et que je laisse tout dire et tout écrire, faux ou vrai exagéré ou mal compris ou mal interprété. J'aime la Mission de Siam parce que c'est là que la Providence m'a envoyé et je demande au bon Dieu de venir à notre aide parce que nous ne pouvons pas compter trop sur les hommes.<sup>464</sup>

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<sup>461</sup>WYATT, *Thailand: A Short History*, p. 212.

<sup>462</sup>Cf. *A Sketch of Bishop Vey's Life*, in JSS, VII, Part 1 (1910) 112.

<sup>463</sup>Martin to Paris, AME, Siam, Vol. 895, 1874, p. 23.

<sup>464</sup>Vey to Paris in August 1874, AME, Siam, Vol. 895, 1874, p. 39.

Since he could not count too much on men, from the day of his elevation to episcopacy, Mgr. Vey always thought to consecrate himself, all the missionaries, and the whole Mission with all the faithful, to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. His hope became true in 1884. This act was accomplished on the day of the Feast of the Sacred Heart, in all the churches and chapels of the Vicariate.<sup>465</sup> He always believed that missionary works did not depend on human intelligence. His hope in divine Providence, his love of God and the Mission were always his enthusiasm and impulse in his missionary mind. Two days before his Episcopal consecration, he wrote to Paris, saying:

En devenant Supérieur d'une corps particulier de notre chère Société, le seul but de mes désirs est d'accomplir fidèlement les grands devoirs que m'impose ma vocation en consacrant ma pauvre vie à procurer la Gloire du bon Dieu dans la Mission particulière.<sup>466</sup>

Examining all the letters and reports of Mgr. Vey, one will find that he mentioned and entrusted all his missionary perseverance and activities to Divine Providence. Then he admitted that the relation with the faithful was also necessary. This relation was for him consolation and happiness. In the archives of the Archdiocese of Bangkok, we could find a big volume of his circular letters addressed to the Christians all over the Mission, printed in the Siamese language with Roman characters. As far as I have examined all these circular letters, I have found only one letter which had been translated into English, perhaps to be read in the church in which the European Christians would have been present. It is interesting to notice from this letter how Mgr. Vey did talk to the Christians and what they meant for him.

On account of my advanced age and also on account of my illness, being always trouble with fever, whenever I tried to remove from my usual residence, I felt unable to call and visit you in your stations as I would like to do. But though compelled to remain here, I must have said that my affection for you never fades, but increases daily. At the altar everyday when saying Mass, it was my custom to offer you all as a sort of garland to God, begging of him to pour down upon you his copious blessings.<sup>467</sup>

Mgr. Vey was above all a man of faith; his faith dominated him so as to see and judge everything in the light of faith. He lived and moved in God and with faith which he had well-conserved when he died. He united himself to God with his prayer and this union with God was his great theme in his sermons, in his directions, recommending everyday this holy union. Besides his great charity to God and to his neighbors, everything around him indicated poverty. One could not see or find some luxurious object in his residence. The characteristic virtue of Mgr. Vey was his zeal for the Glory of God and the salvation of souls. In his heraldry, he wrote as his motto: *Massis Multa* to signify that there were a lot of things to do and he wanted to do more. Even though Mgr. Vey could not realize all his projects, he gave to the Mission of Siam a considerable extension and development.<sup>468</sup>

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<sup>465</sup>Cf. AAB, Vey, Letters, Vol. I, 1884, No. 036.

<sup>466</sup>Vey to Paris on November 3, 1875, AME, Siam, Vol. 895, 1875, p. 97.

<sup>467</sup>AAB, Vey, Circular Letters, August 1, 1904, No. 012, p. 9.

<sup>468</sup>Cf. Notice Biographique de Sa Grigneur Mgr. J.L. Vey written on October 20, 1909, AME, Siam, Vol. 896, p. 252, ff. 11-15.



## 2. The Continuity of His Missionary Directions

### 2.1 The Extension of the Mission of Siam

The evangelization of Laos was not the only mission which Mgr. Vey desired to accomplish. The other parts of the country were also in his mind and in his projects. His missionaries were sent up to the North and to the South of Siam in 1879.

Nos confrères établis près de Muang Phrom... en remontant vers le Nord.

Mr. Saladin accompagné d'un prêtre indigène et de 3 catéchistes est parti au commencement du mois d'Août afin d'aller évangéliser les populations de la Côte occidentale du Golfe du Siam... en se dirigeant vers le Sud.<sup>469</sup>

From time to time, he always mentioned the project of evangelization in the Northwest of Siam, close to Burma, since the central West possessed already several stations. However, the circumstances, the necessary resource, the required personnel for these enterprises had never been at his disposal to undertake the evangelization. During the time of Mgr. Perros (1909-1947), his successor, the spread of the Catholic Mission prospered more than his time. Missionaries were sent to fulfill his projects in the North, the Northwest in Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Lampang. They advanced also to Nakorn Ratchasima. As a result, it can now be said that the Catholic religion has spread to all parts of Siam. During the XX century, the Mission of Siam followed the slow but uninterrupted progress of the other missions. The Southwest part of the country became an independent Mission in 1930. This was the Apostolic Vicariate of Ratchaburi under the care of the Salesian priests. The Chanthabun Apostolic Vicariate was established in 1944 and assigned to the native clergy. The Apostolic Prefecture of Chiang Mai was erected in 1960.

Since the Catholic Church in Siam had increased through the zealous labor of the Bishops and missionaries and indications had shown greater growth in the future, the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide judged that the time was ripe to establish the Sacred Hierarchy in Thailand. Strong support was also given by two former Apostolic Delegates to Thailand, namely, from the Right Reverend Monsignor John Gordon and the Right Reverend Monsignor Angelo Pedroni. Therefore, on December 18, 1965, two ecclesiastical Provinces of Bangkok and Thare Nong saeng were created, giving to Thailand its first archbishops of the country.

The first was the ecclesiastical Province of Bangkok, made up of the metropolitan church of Bangkok and the following suffragan dioceses: the diocese of Ratchaburi, the diocese of Chanthaburi, the diocese of Chiang Mai. The second ecclesiastical Province was called Thare Nong saeng and the following suffragan dioceses: the diocese of Ubon Ratchathani, the diocese of Nakorn Ratchasima, the diocese of Udon Thani. Actually the diocese of Chanthaburi was created on December 18, 1944, and that of Ubon Ratchathani on June 7, 1953, and on December 18, 1965, the following dioceses were created: Nakhon Ratchasima, Udon Thani, Chiang Mai and Ratchaburi, whereas the diocese of Nakhon Sawan was created on February 26, 1967, and that of Surat Thani on June 26, 1969.<sup>470</sup>

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<sup>469</sup>Ibid., f. 13.

<sup>470</sup>Cf. *Brief History of the Catholic Church in Thailand*, in *The Catholic Directory of Thailand 1982*, Bangkok: n.p., 1982, pp. E 7-8.

## **2.2 The Coming of Religious Orders**

Mgr. Vey was the first Apostolic Vicar who invited the religious orders to come to work in Siam in order to fulfill his missionary works and projects. Each coming of these religious orders had its own purpose. After the coming of the sisters of St. Maur, of St. Gabriel Brothers, and of the sisters of St. Paul de Chartres, the other congregations were also invited to come to Siam. In order not to go so far, I will give only the congregations which came to Siam up to 1965, distinguishing them according to their purpose of coming, as follows:

### **2.2.1 For Education.**

- The Ursuline Sisters began their work in Siam in 1924. Their center was established at Mater Dei Academy and branches were opened among others at Regina Coeli school in Chiang Mai and Vasuthewi in Bangkok.
- In 1952, the Brothers of La Salle began their work, teaching in Chotirawi school in Nakhon Sawan. Later, they extended their work to schools in Chanthaburi and Bangna.
- In 1954, the Jesuit Fathers who had come for a time during the Ayutthaya era, returned and took up the work of caring for and developing student life and scholarship of Catholic university students. At the present time they have a center at the Xavier Hall in Bangkok and at Seven Fountains, in Chiang Mai.
- In 1957, the Sisters of the Infant Jesus (Dames de St. Maur) who had left Siam in 1907, returned and began their work again by teaching at Holy Redeemer school, in Bangkok, and in their own girls school, in Chon Buri.

### **2.2.2 For the Missionary Works**

- In 1927, the Salesian Fathers came to reside in the Ratchaburi Mission. The Mission was erected the Mission Sui Juris and was entrusted to the pastoral care of the Salesians in 1930 and became the Apostolic Prefecture in May 1934.
- In 1948, the Redemptorist Fathers arrived in Thailand and took up residence at first in Chang Ming. Afterwards they were given charge of the diocese of Udon Thani in 1953.
- In 1951, the priests of the Sacred Heart of Betharram were driven out of China and came to assist in the work in Chiang Mai and at the end of 1959, they were given charge of the diocese of Chiang Mai.

### **2.2.3 For Other Special Purposes.**

- The Carmelite Sisters, branching off from Vietnam came to Siam in 1925. Their cloistered convent is situated in Bangkok.
- In 1955, the order of the Servants of the Sick (Camillian) began hospital work. They operate hospitals in Bangkok, Ratchaburi and Prachin Buri.
- In 1965, the Good Shepherd Sisters came to do social work among abandoned girls, prostitutes and unmarried mothers. They also do missionary work, taking care of the Christians in the social field.<sup>471</sup>

## **3. Final Conclusion.**

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<sup>471</sup>Cf. P. SREEHATAGAM, A Comparative Study of the Activity of Catholic and Protestant Churches in Relation to Thai Culture and Customs, A thesis for the degree of master of Arts (unpublished), Bangkok: Mahidol University, 1986, pp. 45-49.

For what he was and for what he had done, Mgr. Vey was praiseworthy for the honor and prestige in front of all men. His honor was declared firstly in 1893 when he was nominated "*Officier d'Academie et d'Officier de l'instruction publiques faites à la suite du Congrès des Sociétés Savantes à la Sorbonne*".<sup>472</sup> In 1896, Mgr. Vey and Mgr. Biet, Apostolic Vicar of Thibet, were nominated "*Chevaliers de la Légion d'Honneur*" by the French government. B.O.P. recorded that:

C'est une récompense des longs services qu'ils ont rendus à la France et à la civilisation; l'autre, la grande et éternelle récompense, leur sera plus tard donnée par le bon Dieu.<sup>473</sup>

His nomination was published in the public official journal, mentioning his 28 years of service for the development of evangelization and charitable works in Siam and in Laos.<sup>474</sup>

For the reason of his health, he came to Europe in 1897 and stayed there until 1898, during which he also had occasion to meet the Pope in Rome. But his health was not much better. From 1907 to 1908, his health deteriorated and he had to stay in the hospital which he himself had erected.

He was informed of the gravity of his condition and on June 15, 1908, P. Colombet, in the presence of many missionaries and religious of the hospital, administered the last sacraments to him. His nephew, P. J. Marie Vey, a missionary of Malaysia, arrived from Singapore in time to see his beloved uncle. Mgr. Vey still suffer until February 1909. On February 18, 1909, he asked for the administration of the last sacraments again which he received with the spirit of faith, humility and devotion. His last words are precious to all of us, the words which can be his last lesson for us.

Un moment avant de mourir, je vous recommande à tous de continuer à travailler de toutes vos forces pour la plus grande Gloire de Dieu, je vous bénis tous présents et absents, je bénis tous les bienfaiteurs de la Mission... Je demande bien pardon pour tous les péchés que j'ai commis par faiblesse humaine...et par conséquent je demande au P. Colombet de m'enterrer comme on enterre les pauvres.<sup>475</sup>

He died at 4:00 a.m. on February 21, 1909, after 43 years of his apostolate and 33 years of his episcopate. His funeral ceremony took place on February 24, 1909, with the presence of the representative of king Rama V and many mandarins.

Prince Thevavong Varoprakan, Minister of Foreign Affairs, sent a letter in the name of king Rama V to P. Colombet, expressing his full regret for the death of Mgr. Vey as follows:

Nous (Sa Majesté et ses Ministers) sentons que dans Sa Grandeur, le Siam a toujours eu un ami très sincère, dont le dévouement à l'avancement moral du pays... le regretté Mgr. Vey ne fut jamais considéré comme un Étranger par Sa Majesté ni par son Gouvernement.<sup>476</sup>

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<sup>472</sup>M.C., XXV, No. 1246 (Avril 21, 1893) 185.

<sup>473</sup>B.O.P., 1897, p. 715.

<sup>474</sup>Cf. M.C., XXVIII, No. 1435 (Decembre 4, 1896) 579.

<sup>475</sup>Notice Biographique de Mgr. Vey, AME, Siam, Vol. 896, 1909, p. 252, f. 17.

<sup>476</sup>The letter was written in Siamese language, since it was published in the circular letter also with this language but with Roman character. Looking for the original of this letter without success, I have to cite this letter in French which a missionary had translated and we can find it in AME, Siam, Vol. 896, 1909, p. 252, f. 20., see also AAB, Vey, Circular Letters, No. 012, p. 14 (in Siamese language).

Another letter of Prince Thevavong was also sent to De Margerie, Ministre Plénipotentiaire de la République Française au Siam, and contained these words:

Nous sommes tous particulièrement émus à la pensée que les fructueux et si méritoires travaux de Sa Grandeur ont été contemporains de la période la plus marquante de l'histoire du peuple Siamois.<sup>477</sup>

The words have already shown the important role of Mgr. Vey not only in the history of the Catholic Church in Thailand, but also in the History of the country in certain ways. His grave was placed in the Assumption church which had been the first place of his missionary works, and the reconstruction of which he himself had initiated. It is that place which reminds us of his presence everyday, the presence which still directs us by his teachings and never ceases to encourage us by his example: *Imitatores mei estote sicut et Ego Christi.*

## APPENDIX I Mission of Siam

### Ayutthaya Period (1674-1767)

	Apostolic Vicars	Period	Kings	Period
1.	Mgr. Lambert de la Motte	1662-1673	Narai	1656-1688
2.	Mgr. Laneau	1674-1696	Petracha	1688-1703
3.	P. Ferreux	1696-1698		
4.	Mgr. de Cicé	1700-1727	Phrachao Sua	1703-1709
			Tai Sra	1709-1732
5.	Mgr. de Quéralay	1727-1736	Boromakot	1733-1758
6.	P. Lemaire	1736-1738		
7.	Mgr. de Lolière	1738-1755		
8.	Mgr. Brigot	1755-1767	Utumporn	1758
			Ekatat	1758-1767

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<sup>477</sup>The letter was written on February 24, 1909. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 252, f. 20.

### Thonburi-Bangkok Period

	Apostolic Vicars	Period	Kings	Period
9.	Mgr. Le Bon	1768-1780	Taksin	1768-1782
10.	Mgr. Coudé	1782-1785	Rama I	1782-1809
11.	Mgr. Garnault	1786-1811		
12.	Mgr. Florens	1811-1834	Rama III	1824-1851
13.	Mgr. Courvezy	1834-1841		
14.	Mgr. Pallegoix	1841-1862		
15.	Mgr. Dupond	1865-1872	Rama IV	1851-1868
			Rama V	1868-1910
16.	Mgr. Vey	1875-1909		
17.	Mgr. Perros	1909-1947		
			Rama VI	1910-1925
			Rama VII	1925-1934
			Rama VIII	1934-1946
			Rama IX	1946-
18.	Mgr. Chorin	1947-1965		
	Mgr. Nittayo (Coadjutor)	1963-1965		
19.	Mgr. Nittayo	1965		

### Archdiocese of Bangkok

	Apostolic Vicars	Period	Kings	Period
20.	Mgr. Nittayo	1965-1973	Rama IX	1946-
21.	Mgr. Michai (Cardinal Michai 1981)	1973-		

(English Translation of King Rama V's Letter)

His Majesty the King, Chulalongkorn, Phra Chom Klao, the King of Siam, would like to inform you, Your Excellency Louis, The Roman Catholic Bishop, in reply to your letter, informing me that the Pope has nominated you as Bishop to take care and further the interests of the Roman Catholic Church in Siam.

You will be consecrated today and you intend to teach the Roman Catholic faithful who are my subjects to be good and loyal to me in everything. I congratulate you on your high appointment. You will teach all to be disciplined according to civil order. I thank you. All the happiness and interests which the priests and the Roman Catholic faithful have been having, I intend to give them forever. I bless you on this your very blessed day.

May the Almighty one of the Universe manifest His power in protecting you and give you happiness forever.

Given at the Sommut Thevaracha Upabat Palace

(The name of the Royal Palace)

On December 5, 1875

Chulalongkorn

(The King's Signature)

(English Translation of The Second King's Letter)

To Bishop Louis, The Bishop of Gerazen: Receiving the letter, I am fully aware of the Pope appointing you as Bishop to administrate the Roman Catholic faithful in Siam. I am very glad. I will love your priests and faithful in your religious ministry. Today is your blessed day. I ask the Greatest one, the President of the Universe to manifest his power in protecting you, giving you happiness, long life and great intelligence in your religious ministry.

Given on December 5, 1875.

K.P.R. Pawar Sthan Mongol

Second King of Siam

Vidimus et approbamus ad normam Statutorum Universitatis  
*Romae, ex Pontificia Universitate Gregoriana*  
*die 6 mensis aprilis anni 1990*

R.P. Prof. Jesús López-Gay S.J.

R.P. Prof. Giacomo Martina S.J.

N.B.- Haec formula approbationis Universitatis semper

latine scribatur.

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