

Royal and Imperial Connections: Japanese Influence at the Court of Bangkok and on the Siamese/Thai Monarchy

David M. MALITZ*

This article investigates Japanese cultural and political influence in the Kingdom of Siam, renamed Thailand in 1939. Early exchanges in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries saw the consumption of Japanese products in the Southeast Asian kingdom as status symbols. Japanese swords in particular were cherished and have become dynastic heirlooms since then. From the late nineteenth century onward, Imperial Japan was seen as a role model of successful modernization in Bangkok and Japanese advisors and instructors were hired by the court. Critics of the absolute monarchy meanwhile stressed that Imperial Japan had become a great power as a constitutional monarchy.

Keywords: Siam, Thailand, King Chulalongkorn, modern monarchy, Meiji Constitution

Introduction

As ritual institutions, monarchies are mosaics of diverse practices, symbols, and beliefs. As individual elements of the institution are continuously replaced, remade, or added over time, the apparent symbols of continuity in an ever-changing world reveal themselves to be rather dynamic institutions upon closer inspection. The nineteenth century was one especially active phase of reinventing monarchies around the globe. At risk of being swept away by the modern political and economic revolutions, monarchies were recast to serve as beacons of stability for new social orders in a world of nation-states, parliamentary governments, and the primacy of capital. This occurred in a truly transnational setting, in which new national practices and symbols were rapidly diffused across borders, creating internationally recognizable modern monarchies of royal nations.¹ This process was not limited to Europe, as other monarchs borrowed freely from European practices, habits, and ideas to present themselves simultaneously as equals of their royal peers and betters of their

* Senior Research Fellow, German Institute for Japanese Studies

1 Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Traditions*, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 1–14; Charlotte Backerra, Milinda Banerjee, and Cathleen Sarti, "The Royal Nation in Global Perspective," in *Transnational Histories of the "Royal Nation,"* M. Banerjee, C. Backerra, and C. Sarti, eds., Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, pp. 1–17.

subjects. They meant to become much more similar to European royalty than ever before while remaining distinctively authentic to their respective national audiences, even though the latter involved a considerable degree of invention and reinterpretation. Takashi Fujitani and Maurizio Peleggi have shown this for the modern Japanese and Siamese monarchies respectively in their seminal studies.²

It is well known that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries across the colonial and semi-colonial world, Meiji Japan became an inspiration and role model. Anticolonial nationalists and political reformers studied the East Asian Empire through publications as well as by visiting Japan or acquiring an education there. By the end of the Meiji period, Japan had gained full sovereignty through the renegotiation of the unequal treaties signed with the colonial powers. The Anglo-Japanese Alliance signed in 1902 further demonstrated that Japan had become recognized as a great military power. And through the acquisition of Taiwan and Korea after the First Sino-Japanese and the Russo-Japanese War respectively, Japan had become a colonial power in its own right. What made the Japanese exemplar so attractive was that Japan's ascent to a great power had undeniably proven that progress and power were not limited to the "White" and Christian West. But the Japanese exemplar also demonstrated that self-government and constitutionalism were possible outside Europe and North America. What has received much less recognition is that the modern Japanese monarchy created after the Meiji Restoration became a role model in its own right, as will be shown here for the case of Siam. It exemplified the overall success of Imperial Japan to borrow selectively from Europe to become modern without losing its apparent national authenticity. At the same time, the imperial institution of Japan was seen as a crucial force behind Japanese social progress. By successfully tying together state and nation, it allowed for the harvesting and channeling of the people's collective energies for the pursuit of "progress" and military victories. This article traces the Japanese influence at the court of Bangkok and on the modern monarchy of Siam, renamed Thailand in 1939, from the sixteenth century onward, and examines its lasting influence in the Southeast Asian kingdom.

Early Japanese-Siamese Relations and Court Culture

Modern Japanese-Thai relations can be traced to the Declaration of Amity and Commerce between Japan and Siam of 1887. Direct exchanges between the Kingdom of Siam with its former capital of Ayutthaya and the Japanese islands can however be traced to the sixteenth century, when improvements in shipbuilding and navigation allowed merchants to outfit ships for the journey between East and Southeast Asia.³ These exchanges would influence Siamese court culture until the nineteenth century.

The Portuguese were the first to document the arrival of a Siamese junk in Japan in 1563,

2 Takashi Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan*, University of California Press, 1998; Maurizio Peleggi, *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image*, University of Hawai'i Press, 2002.

3 Iwao Sei'ichi 岩生成一, *Nanyō Nihon machi no kenkyū* 南洋日本町の研究, Nan'a Bunka Kenkyūjo, 1940, pp. 118–119.

likely not the first one.⁴ A Japanese ship traveling to Ayutthaya was first recorded by the Spanish in the Philippines. In the summer of 1589, the vessel was blown off course and arrived in Manila, where the Spanish bought its cargo of swords, guns, and other weapons.⁵ Four years later, the Siamese chronicles report five hundred Japanese mercenaries fighting for King Naresuan (1555/6–1605, r. 1590–1605), who was battling Burmese invaders.⁶ The Siamese king is said to have used a Japanese sword during his campaigns, which has since become one of the so-called eight weapons of sovereignty of which the king takes possession during coronation ceremonies.⁷ The current sword is, however, likely a replica. In the early seventeenth century, letters were exchanged between the courts of Ayutthaya and Edo and several Siamese missions visited Japan.⁸ This diplomatic intercourse ceded in the 1630s. But trade relations resumed in 1661 and flourished during the next decades.⁹ French missionaries and envoys visiting the kingdom towards the end of the century wrote about a royal warehouse filled with “beautiful Japanese sabers,” which were gifted by the king to officers as signs of royal favor.¹⁰

The royal capital of Ayutthaya was destroyed by Burmese invaders in 1767. A new kingdom with its capital in Bangkok was established in 1782 by the founder of the reigning Chakri dynasty. One of the most important royal temples in the capital is Wat Phra Chetuphon near the old palace. It was extensively renovated in the early nineteenth century. At that time, murals of various peoples of the world described in poems were added. The description of the Japanese mentions their beautiful swords.¹¹ It was not much later, in the reign of King Mongkut (1804–1868, r. 1851–1868), that Siam began to sign the unequal treaties reducing its sovereignty.¹² The king himself gifted John Bowring (1792–1872), the British envoy who negotiated the Bowring Treaty (1855), a Japanese-style sword.¹³ A high-ranking noble meanwhile asked the envoy to buy a sword for him

4 Luis Frois, *Die Geschichte Japans (1549–1578): Nach der Handschrift der Ajudabibliothek in Lissabon. Übersetzt und kommentiert von G. Schurhammer und E. A. Voretzsch*, Verlag der Asia Major, 1926, p. 190.

5 Gaspar de Ayala, Letter from Gaspar de Ayala to Felipe II (July 15, 1589), in *The Philippine Islands, 1493–1898, Volume 7: 1588–1591*, E. H. Blair and J. A. A. Robertson, eds., Arthur H. Clark Company, 1903, p. 126.

6 Richard D. Cushman, *The Royal Chronicles of Ayutthaya*, Siam Society, 2000, p. 128.

7 Horace Geoffrey Quaritch Wales, *Siamese State Ceremonies: Their History and Function*, Bernard Quaritch Limited, 1931, pp. 106–107.

8 Ernest Mason Satow, “Notes on the Intercourse between Japan and Siam in the Seventeenth Century,” *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, vol. 13, no. 2, 1885, pp. 139–210.

9 Iwao Seiichi, “Reopening of the Diplomatic and Commercial Relations between Japan and Siam during the Tokugawa Period,” in *Acta Asiatica*, vol. 4, 1963, pp. 1–31.

10 Nicholas Gervaise, *Histoire naturelle et politique du Royaume de Siam*, Pierre le Mercier, 1688, p. 295; François-Timoléon de Choisy, *Journal du voyage de Siam fait en M. DC. LXXXV. et M. DC. LXXXV*, Sebastien Mabre-Cramoisy, 1687, p. 276.

11 Prince Dhani Nivat, “The Inscriptions of Wat Phra Jetubon,” *Journal of the Siam Society*, vol. 26, no. 2, 1933, pp. 143–170.

12 For the concept of semi-coloniality, see Jürgen Osterhammel, “Semi-Colonialism and Informal Empire in Twentieth Century-China: Towards a Framework of Analysis,” in *Imperialism and After Continuities and Discontinuities*, W. J. Mommsen, ed., Allen & Unwin, 1986, pp. 290–314.

13 King Mongkut, *The Writings of King Monkut to Sir John Bowring (A.D. 1855–1868)*, W. Pongsripijan and T. Nuchipan, eds., The Historical Commission of the Prime Minister’s Secretariat, 1994, p. 33.

in Japan when he learned that the British were to sail there.¹⁴

With the modernization of the Siamese military under King Mongkut's son and successor King Chulalongkorn (Rama V, 1853–1910, r. 1868–1910), Japanese swords lost their appeal. In photos and paintings, the king is either shown with the Khmer-style Sword of Victory (Phra saeng khan chaiyasi พระแสงขรรค์ชัยศรี) or a European court sword. But the king also identified a Japanese sword favored by the dynasty's founder that had been passed down to him as a dynastic treasure.¹⁵ Both King Vajiravudh (Rama VI, 1881–1925, r. 1910–1925) and King Prajadhipok (Rama VII, 1893–1941, r. 1925–1935) were photographed with a Japanese sword, possibly this dynastic heirloom.¹⁶ The sword played a role in the coronation ceremonies of King Chulalongkorn's successors Prajadhipok and the present ruler, King Vajiralongkorn (Rama X, b. 1952, r. since 2019).¹⁷

The Siamese court's appreciation of Japanese craftsmanship was not limited to weapons. Indeed, the abovementioned temple mural refers to the Japanese as excellent craftsmen.¹⁸ Japanese porcelain, furniture, silk, and items made from gold or silver were noted by the French visitors to the court in the late seventeenth century and often gifted to them as presents.¹⁹ European visitors in the nineteenth century still observed that the Siamese aristocracy appreciated Japanese lacquer and China ware.²⁰ Japanese food was also already appreciated at the court at the time of the French missions to the court of Ayutthaya in the late seventeenth century.²¹ As late as the early nineteenth century, a poem attributed to King Phraphutthaloetra Naphalai (Rama II, 1768–1824, r. 1809–1824) praised “Japanese fish sauce,” possibly soy sauce.²²

From the mid-nineteenth century onward, European goods and consumption practices became the new standard of refinement at the Siamese court. But as a memoir shows, the arrival of a new shipment of Japanese tableware in a Bangkok store still caused excitement among the

14 Sir John Bowring, *The Kingdom of and People of Siam*, John W. Parker and Sons, 1857, p. 332.

15 Naruemon Buntaeng นฤมล บุญแต่ง, “Phrasaeng dap fak thong kliang” พระแสงดาบฝักทองเกลี้ยง, *Daily News*, January 17, 2017, <https://d.dailynews.co.th/crime/16450/> (accessed April 30, 2022).

16 Saimai Chopkonsuek สายไหม จบกมลศึก et al., eds., *Phraratchaphithi Boromratchaphisek พระราชพิธีบรมราชาภิเษก*, Ministry of Culture, 2017, p. 102.

17 Ibid, pp. 93, 94. Saimai Chopkonsuek สายไหม จบกมลศึก et al., eds., *Phraratchaphithi Boromratchaphisek พระราชพิธีบรมราชาภิเษก*, Ministry of Culture, 2017, pp. 92–95; “Maikamnotkan sadetphraratchadamnoen liap phranakhon doi khabuan phayu-yattra thang chonmak nueangnai phraratchaphithi boromratchaphisek P. S. 2562” หมายกำหนดการเสด็จพระราชดำเนินเลียบพระนครโดยขบวนพยุหยาตราทางชลมารคเนื่องในพระราชพิธีบรมราชาภิเษกพุทธศักราช ๒๕๖๒, *Royal Gazette*, vol. 137, no. 3, 3kh, January 16, 2019, 33/2562 ราชกิจจานุเบกษา เล่ม ๑๓๗ ตอนที่ ๓ ข ๑๖ มกราคม ๒๕๖๓, ที่ ๓๓/๒๕๖๒.

18 Prince Dhani Nivat, “The Inscriptions of Wat Phra Jetubon.”

19 François-Timoléon de Choisy, *Journal du voyage de Siam*, pp. 192, 224, 226, 250, 256, 274, 276, 286, 287, 298.

20 Graf Friedrich Albrecht zu Eulenberg, *Ost-Asien 1860–1862 in Briefen des Grafen Fritz zu Eulenburg*, Graf Philipp zu Eulenburg-Hertefeld, ed., Mittler, 1900, p. 349.

21 François-Timoléon de Choisy, *Journal du voyage de Siam*, pp. 221, 227.

22 Chomnard Setisarn ชมนาด ศีตีสาร์ and Voravudhi Chirasombutti วรุฒิ จิราสมบัติ, *Wiwatthanakan aban Yipun nai prathet Thai* วัฒนธรรมอาหารญี่ปุ่นในประเทศไทย, Department of East Asian Languages, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University, 2005, p. 27.

women of the palace in the early twentieth century.²³ The highest-ranking queen of King Chulalongkorn, Queen Saovabha Phongsri (1878–1919), was especially fond of Japan and wished to visit in 1910. The travel plans had already advanced when they were aborted after the death of Emperor Meiji.²⁴ According to her British physician, she had a “small paper-built Japanese house” erected in her Bangkok palace.²⁵

Japanese Lessons for the Absolute Monarchy

When King Chulalongkorn (1853–1910) ascended the throne in 1868, the Kingdom of Siam found itself already between British and French colonial possessions and its sovereignty limited by unequal treaties. The independence of a rump kingdom in the Chao Phraya River basin was only guaranteed in 1896 with the Declaration between Great Britain and France with Regard to the Kingdom of Siam. But to regain jurisdiction over colonial protégées, King Chulalongkorn was forced to make territorial concessions to the colonial powers until 1909. The kingdom would only gain full sovereignty in 1938 after the constitutional revolution of 1932.

Against this background, King Chulalongkorn began to assert his authority over the loosely integrated realm and its entrenched nobility, while simultaneously working to prevent further colonial encroachment. To do so, the king and his collaborators built a modern, centralized bureaucracy, a modern army, and embarked on instilling a sense of nationhood coupled with loyalty to the Buddhist monarchy in his multiethnic subjects. Princes were sent to Europe to acquire the necessary knowledge for these reforms, while the administration of surrounding colonial states were studied as concrete case studies. The kingdom’s reading public meanwhile learned through the circulation of the colonial press as well as the first Siamese newspapers that in Japan similar reforms as in Siam were taking place, alas at a faster pace.²⁶

According to the diary of the medical missionary Dan Beach Bradley (1804–1873), Imperial Japan was first referred to as a role model for Siam as early as 1873. In that year, the Siamese minister of foreign affairs mentioned to him that “some thorough system of education in Siam after the example of Japan” had to be established.²⁷ Three years later, King Chulalongkorn met the first Japanese envoys to Siam and briefly chatted with them about the difficulties of administrative reforms.²⁸ King Chulalongkorn acted for the first time upon the notion that Siam could learn from Japan shortly after the signing of the Declaration of Amity and Commerce between both countries in 1887, which today marks the beginning of modern, formal diplomatic relations. In the spring

23 Momluang Nueang Ninrat ม.ล. เนื่อง นิลรัตน์, *Chivit nai wang* ชีวิตในวัง, Jamsai, 1994, p. 85.

24 Thai National Archives GT 7.4/5, Somdet Phrarachini phanpi luang cha praphat Yipun (1911–1912) กต.๗.๔/๕ สมเด็จพระราชินีพันปีหลวงจะประพาสญี่ปุ่น (พ.ศ. ๒๔๕๔-๒๔๕๕).

25 Malcolm Smith, *A Physician at the Court of Siam*, Oxford University Press, 1982, p. 106.

26 David M. Malitz, “‘What Is Good about the Japanese System of Governance?’ — The Reception of Imperial Japanese Parliamentarism in Siamese/Thai Political Thought (1880s–1940s),” *The International History Review*, 2022, pp. 2–3, doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2022.2113552.

27 Dan B. Bradley, *Abstract of the Journal of Rev. Dan Beach Bradley, M.D., Medical Missionary in Siam, 1835–1873*, Multigraph Dept. of the Pilgrim Church, 1936, p. 305.

28 Ōtori Keisuke 大鳥圭介, *Shamu kikō* 暹羅紀行, Kōbushō, 1875, pp. 43–46.

of 1888, an official from the Department of Education was dispatched to Japan, where he was to prepare a detailed study of the country's system of education. His report, as well as a second report dated 1903, do not appear to have had a discernable impact, however.²⁹

What is clear is that while King Chulalongkorn was interested in learning about specific institutional reform in Imperial Japan, he did not consider the country as offering a general blueprint for reform to take place in Siam. In 1885 he rejected a memorandum written by princes and nobles serving as diplomats or studying in Europe, which proposed the promulgation of a constitution. Japan, where a constitution had been promised in 1881, was explicitly mentioned as a role model in the text. Yet, for King Chulalongkorn, constitutional government was unsuitable for his kingdom, at least for the time being.³⁰

A decade later, Japan's victory over Qing China and the renegotiation of the unequal treaties deepened interest in the country at the Bangkok court. In April 1895 the courtly magazine *Wachirayan* published a long article about the Japanese monarchy, which was described as an absolute monarchy. This was factually incorrect given the proclamation of the Meiji Constitution in 1889. The article discussed the emperor, his family, the Imperial Household Ministry, the court's budget, but also the creation of the modern Japanese peerage system.³¹ The next year, the magazine published an analysis of the Japanese victory over Qing China, which had not been expected. The author argued that the emperor had personally led the military efforts from his headquarters that had been moved to Hiroshima, closer to the actual fighting. Furthermore, what differentiated the Japanese from the Chinese emperor was that he was of the same nationality as his subjects, resulting in a close relationship.³² In essence, Emperor Meiji was interpreted in these articles in a way that justified the Siamese royal project to build a national dynasty and an absolute monarchy around King Chulalongkorn.

It was in the context of the Japanese military victory that what is likely the first concrete adaptation of a Japanese practice by the Bangkok court occurred. Army chief Prince Bhanurangsi (1859–1928) had observed the graduation ceremony of the Japanese military academy, in which the emperor personally handed the certificates to the new officers, when visiting Japan in 1890. This was adopted in Siam in 1896 as the academy's "annual festival" to foster a direct bond between the king and his officers. The annual festival with the graduation ceremony still continues. Since the reign of King Prajadhipok, however, the new officers receive a sword from their monarch.³³ Prince Bhanurangsi visited Japan again in 1906. There he observed celebrations of the Japanese victory over Russia and greatly cherished the officers' loyalty towards the emperor. Chinese cadets

29 David K. Wyatt, *The Politics of Reform in Thailand: Education in the Reign of King Chulalongkorn*, Yale University Press, 1969, pp. 137, 160, 331, 342.

30 Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand*, Cambridge University Press, 2014, pp. 75–76.

31 Chaomuen Sisonrak เจ้าหมื่นศรีสรรักษ์, "Lamdap wong khong phrachao phaendin lae ratchatrakun nai prathet krung Yipun lamdap wong khong phrachao phaendin lae ratchatrakun nai prathet krung Yipun" ลำดับวงศ์ของพระเจ้าแผ่นดินแลราชตระกูลในประเทศไทยกรุงยี่ปุ่น, *Wachirayan* วชิรญาณ, April 1895, pp. 680–690.

32 Phraongchao Rachani Chaemcharat พระองค์เจ้ารัชนี้แจ่มจรัส, "Tham mai Chin chueng phae Yipun" ทำไมจีนจึงแพ้ยี่ปุ่น, *Wachirayan*, no. 15, January 1896, pp. 1511–1525.

33 Thep Buntanon เทพ บุญตานนท์, *Thaban khong phraracha kap kan sang sammuek haeng sattha lae phakdi* ทหารของพระราชากับการสร้างสำนักแห่งศรัทธาและภักดี, Matichon, 2022, pp. 49, 142.

in contrast did not exemplify this virtue, which, for him, was a crucial characteristic of military officers.³⁴ After the war King Chulalongkorn bought torpedo boats and destroyers in Japan and had a small number of cadets trained in the country.³⁵

In 1898 both countries concluded the Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation, which set the stage for the opening of embassies in the two capitals. It also granted Japan consular jurisdiction in Siam, despite Japan having just overcome this limitation of its sovereignty itself very recently. Also negotiated was that consular jurisdiction would lapse with the conclusion of the codification of Siamese law, and that this process was to be supported by a Japanese legal adviser.³⁶ The *Penal Code of the Kingdom of Siam* of 1908 would then also explicitly mention the role model of Japan in its introduction.³⁷

Towards the end of his reign, King Chulalongkorn revisited the need for a modern and universal system of education. In this context, he ordered the drafting of a royal declaration modeled after the Japanese Imperial Rescript on Education to convince the public of the necessity of public schools, the introduction of fees for them, but likely also to shore up support for the absolute monarchy at a time when criticism of the slow pace of political reforms had become more frequent. The resulting Royal Edict on Siamese Education was promulgated on August 23, 1910.³⁸

Since the end of King Chulalongkorn's reign, political reforms on the municipal level were discussed in Siam. Japan was seen as a model in this regard, and so King Prajadhipok ordered a translation of the Japanese law on municipal organization. However, no concrete proposal had been developed at the time of the Siamese revolution of 1932.³⁹

34 Thai National Archives, R.5/98 *Raingan Krommuen Nakhon Chaisi sadet truatkan thahan prathet Chin lae Yipun (July 25, 1906 – February 6, 1907)* ร.๕/๙๘ รายงานกรมหมื่นนครไชยศรีเสด็จตรวจการทหารประเทศจีนแลญี่ปุ่น (๒๕ กค – ๖ กพ ๑๒๕).

35 Phraya Hanklangsamut พระยาหาญกลางสมุทร, “Prawat (sangkhap) khong rongrian nairuea P. S. 2441 thueng 2475” ประวัติ (สังเขป) ของโรงเรียนนายเรือ พ.ศ. ๒๔๔๑ ถึง ๒๔๗๕, in *Anuson nai ngan phraratchathan phloeng sop Phonrueatri Phraya Hanklangsamut (Bunmi Phanthumanawin) na chapanasathan khong kong thap ruea Wat Khrueawanworawihan wan chan thi 1 karakadakhom 2517* อนุสรณ์ในงานพระราชทานเพลิงศพ พลเรือตรี พระยาหาญกลางสมุทร (บุญมี พันธมนาวิน) ณ ฌาปนสถานของกองทัพเรือ วัดเครือวัลย์วรวิหาร วันจันทร์ที่ ๑ กรกฎาคม ๒๕๑๗, Naval Press, 1974, pp. 27–29; Kong Prawattisat Thahan Ruea กองประวัติศาสตร์ทหารเรือ, “Prawat rueurop Thai yuk ruea konfai” ประวัติเรือรบไทยยุคเรือกลไฟ, in *Prawat sathanthi rachakan thahan ruea lae prawat rueurop thai yuk ruea konfai phim pen anuson nai ngan prachumphloeng sop nang Chanthara Phonphatphichan 15 phruetsachikayon P. S. 2509* ประวัติสถานที่ราชการทหารเรือ และประวัติเรือรบไทยยุคเรือกลไฟ พิมพ์เป็นอนุสรณ์ในงานประชุมเพลิงศพ นางจันทร์ พลภัทรพิจารณ์ ๑๕ พฤศจิกายน พ.ศ. ๒๕๐๙, Naval Press, 1966, pp. 50–54.

36 Ishii Yoneo 石井米雄 and Yoshikawa Toshiharu 吉川利治, *Nichi-Tai kōryū roppyaku-nen shi* 日・タイ交流 600 年史, Kōdansha, 1987, pp. 129–130.

37 *Kotmai laksana aya Rattanakosin Sok 127 (1908)* กฎหมายลักษณะอาญารัตนโกสินทรศก 127, Khana Nitisat Chulalongkorn Mahawithayalai, 2010, pp. 4–5.

38 King Chulalongkorn พระบาทสมเด็จพระจุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว, “Phrarachaththalekha wa duai phrarachobai kiao kap kansueksa khong chat” พระราชหัตถเลขาว่าด้วยพระราโชบายเกี่ยวกับการศึกษาของชาติ, *Warasan sinlapakon* วารสารศิลปากร, vol. 3, no. 3, 1949, pp. 10–11; David K. Wyatt, *The Politics of Reform in Thailand*, pp. 364–366.

39 Murashima Eiji 村嶋英治, *Pibūn: Dokuritsu Tai ōkoku no rikken kakumei* ปีบูน : 独立タイ王国の立憲革命, Iwanami Shoten, 1996, pp. 65–67, 80–85.

Japanese Servants of the Siamese Crown

The adviser chosen by the Japanese government to support the codification of the penal code was the Ehime-born Masao Tōkichi 政尾藤吉 (1870–1921). As a lawyer who had graduated from Yale, and former editor of the English-language *Japan Times*, he had the necessary legal and linguistic qualifications. In Bangkok, he worked closely with Minister of Justice Prince Rabi Badhanasakdi (1874–1920), and additionally served as a judge at the highest court of the kingdom. The introduction to the code explicitly referred to Japan as a role model. Masao began to work with French advisers on the Civil Code but resigned in 1913, as he disagreed with their proposal to include polygyny in the code. The year before he had received the second highest noble rank of *phraya*.⁴⁰ He briefly served as Japanese ambassador to Siam in 1920, but died after only six months in the post.⁴¹ He received a royal cremation, with King Vajiravudh personally lighting the funeral pyre.⁴²

Masao had not been the first Japanese hired by King Chulalongkorn's government. In line with the continuing appreciation for Japanese crafts, one painter and two sculptors had been hired already in 1891. In 1898, a Japanese cartographer joined them.⁴³ All of them served several years in Siam. Tsuruharu Kenzaburō from the Tokyo School of Fine Arts in contrast stayed only very briefly in Siam, where he arrived in 1910. His hiring is nevertheless noteworthy, as he was specifically appointed to gild a copy of the Buddha image Phra Buddha Chinnarat from the Northern Siamese city of Phitsanulok, one of the most famous and sacred images in the kingdom. King Chulalongkorn specifically requested a Japanese artist for the task.⁴⁴

The 1898 treaty between Japan and Siam also allowed for the establishment of embassies in Bangkok and Tokyo. Japan's first ambassador to Siam was the Hirado-born and Cambridge-educated Inagaki Manjirō 稲垣満次郎 (1861–1908). He proposed that the Siamese government promote sericulture in Eastern Siam to strengthen the country against colonial aggressions.⁴⁵ In 1901, after an initial tour by two Japanese sericulture experts, agricultural scientist Toyama Kametarō 外山亀太郎 (1867–1918) was hired. His report resulted in the official foundation of a Sericulture Department within the Ministry of Agriculture, which was headed by a son of King Chulalongkorn, Prince Phenphatthanaphong (1884–1909), who had studied agricultural science in Great Britain. His department hired not only Toyama, who remained for only two more years due to ill health, but also several Japanese instructors, the last of whom stayed until 1912. The

40 Kagawa Kōzō 香川孝三, "Masao Tōkichi den (1): Hōritsu bunya de no kokusai kyōryoku no senkusha" 政尾藤吉伝 (1): 法律分野での国際協力の先駆者, *Kokusai kyōryoku ronshū* 国際協力論集, vol. 8, no. 3, 2011, pp. 39–66; Kagawa Kōzō, "Masao Tōkichi den (2): Hōritsu bunya de no kokusai kyōryoku no senkusha," *Kokusai kyōryoku ronshū*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2001, pp. 39–68; Tamara Loos, *Subject Siam: Family, Law, and Colonial Modernity in Thailand*, Silkworm Books, 2002, p. 67.

41 Ishii and Yoshikawa, *Nichi-Tai kōryū roppyaku-nen shi*, pp. 157–163.

42 "The Late Dr. Masao," *Siam Observer*, August 22, 1920, p. 4, and August 25, 1921, p. 5.

43 Ishii and Yoshikawa, *Nichi-Tai kōryū roppyaku-nen shi*, p. 151.

44 Maurizio Peleggi, *Lords of Things*, p. 189.

45 Ishii and Yoshikawa, *Nichi-Tai kōryū roppyaku-nen shi*, p. 179.

government ended its support only one year later, likely due to the lack of tangible results.⁴⁶

Among the Japanese hired by the government of King Chulalongkorn to support the reforms taking place in the kingdom, Yasui Tetsu 安井哲 (1870–1945) stands out as the only woman. Today, she is most famous as a pioneer of female education in Imperial Japan. She served as the first dean of Tokyo Women’s Christian University, which was founded in 1918. From 1923, she was the university’s second president following Nitobe Inazō 新渡戸稲造 (1862–1933). Long before that, in 1902, she was hired as the first principal of Rongrian Rachini, the Queen’s School, founded to offer a modern education for the daughters of the royal family and nobility. The idea to hire a Japanese appears to have been first advanced by Crown Prince Vajiravudh. Returning from his studies in Great Britain he had stopped over in Japan, touring the country for six weeks to visit schools and other places. His father reacted positively to this idea, apparently, because he “preferred Eastern teachers” for the ladies of the court.⁴⁷ His own Anglo-Indian teacher’s publication of a sensationalist story of her time in Bangkok, which included obvious falsehoods, might have contributed to this decision.⁴⁸ Yasui had been trained as a teacher in Japan and had then been selected by the Japanese government to further her studies in Cambridge. That she was selected for the task in Siam, however, was likely due to her conversion to Christianity in Great Britain, which displeased the Ministry of Education. Yasui was a dedicated educator, who left a lasting impression on her students and is still remembered today at the Queen’s School.⁴⁹

In 1902, Queen Savang Vadhana (1862–1955), a consort of King Chulalongkorn, founded a hospital in Sriratcha, on the coast east of Bangkok. Today, the fact that Japanese doctors were hired for the hospital is forgotten.⁵⁰ Yet at the time, they were also recognized by the foreign community in Bangkok, as the hospital became the only Siamese equivalent of a colonial “hill-station,” where one could escape the capital’s climate.⁵¹

46 Ishii and Yoshikawa, *Nichi-Tai kōryū roppyaku-nen shi*, pp. 180–191; Ian Brown, *The Élite and Economy in Siam c. 1890–1920*, Oxford University Press, 1988, pp. 158–164.

47 Aoyama Nao 青山なを, *Yasui Tetsu-den: Denki, Yasui Tetsu 安井てつ伝: 伝記・安井てつ*, Ōzorasha, 1990, p. 104.

48 Anna Harriette Leonowens, *The Romance of the Harem*, University Press of Virginia, 1991, and Anna Harriette Leonowens, *The English Governess at the Siamese Court: Being Recollections of Six Years in the Royal Palace at Bangkok*, Oxford University Press, 1988.

49 Aoyama Nao, *Yasui Tetsu-den*, p. 105; Ishii and Yoshikawa, *Nichi-Tai kōryū roppyaku-nen shi*, pp. 163–176.

50 Yaninie Phaithayawat ญาณินี ไพทยวัฒน์, “Panha nai gan prab dua su rabib ratchakan samai mai kong Khunang kharatcha ‘boriphan’ tam jarit baeb gao kong Sayam: Gorani sueksa Chaopraya Surasakmontri (P.S. 2420–2453)” ปัญหาในการปรับตัวสู่ระบบราชการสมัยใหม่ของขุนนาง ‘ข้าราชการบริพาร’ ตามจารีตแบบเก่าของสยาม: กรณีศึกษาเจ้าพระยาสุรศักดิ์มนตรี (พ.ศ. 2420–2453), *Warasan Prawatisart*, vol. 46 (2021), pp. 29–48, 45; “Shamu-koku to Fujii-shi” 暹羅国と藤井氏, *Ikai jijō 医海事情*, no. 560, March 11, 1905, p. 248; Dōjinkai 同仁会, *Dōjinkai yonjūnen-shi 同仁会四十年史*, Dōjinkai, 1943, p. 15.

51 Arnold Wright and Oliver T. Breakspear, *Twentieth Century Impressions of Siam: Its History, People, Commerce, Industries, and Resources, with Which Is Incorporated an Abridged Edition of Twentieth Century Impressions of British Malaya*, Lloyd’s Greater Britain Publishing, 1908, p. 179.

Constitutional Lessons

King Chulalongkorn had expressed his “envy” of the faster progress taking place in Japan in a letter to his Belgian general adviser Rolin-Jacquemyns in 1898.⁵² At that time, even Western diplomats raised the Japanese exemplar at the court.⁵³ The Russo-Japanese War had been followed with great interest in Siam. Even far to the north from the capital, a traveling retired German officer was quizzed by the local governor about the war.⁵⁴ Just like critics of political stagnation in other semi-colonial monarchies, the first critical publishers in Bangkok linked Japanese victories on the battlefield to the empire’s constitutional government and parliament. (Siamese journalists would continue to pursue this line of argument until the Siamese revolution of June 24, 1932, which would finally usher in a constitutional monarchy in the Southeast Asian kingdom.)⁵⁵ Even more disturbingly, conspirators planning to assassinate King Chulalongkorn’s successor, King Vajiravudh, and establish a constitutional monarchy in 1912, explicitly referred to Japan and the Japanese emperor as models for Siam.⁵⁶ King Vajiravudh, often writing under a pen name, as well as his brother and successor King Prajadhipok, would now argue that Siam should not follow the Japanese exemplar too closely, as rapid change would cause social unrest and would thus endanger the nation.⁵⁷

However, at this time, the institutions of a modern state had largely been assembled, while funding for new hires and promotions became increasingly scarce. Probably even more important for the Britain-educated kings was that after World War I, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance gave way to an Anglo-Japanese rivalry in East Asia. Economically closely integrated into the British empire, Siam naturally sided with the British rather than the Japanese Empire. There were also concerns about Japan’s imperial ambitions in Southeast Asia, especially after the acquisition of Germany’s colonial possessions in China and the Pacific.

Nevertheless, attempts to selectively borrow from Japan continued. Writing under a pen name, King Vajiravudh had credited the Japanese *genrō*, the political oligarchs of the Meiji period, who he understood as wise and loyal elder statesmen, for having been crucial to Japanese success.⁵⁸ His brother and successor King Prajadhipok then founded upon his ascension to the throne the

52 Walter E. J. Tips, *Gustave Rolin-Jacquemyns (Chao Phraya Aphai Raja) and the Belgian Advisers in Siam (1892–1902)*, White Lotus Books, 1992, p. 218.

53 Benjamin A. Batson, “American Diplomats in Southeast Asia in the Nineteenth Century: The Case of Siam,” *Journal of the Siam Society*, vol. 64, no. 2, 1976, pp. 39–111.

54 Rudolf Bode, *Reiseerinnerungen an und Erlebnisse aus Siam 1904*, Wiener Verlag, 1906, p. 13.

55 David M. Malitz, “What Is Good about the Japanese System of Governance?,” pp. 3–6.

56 Rian Sichan เจริญ ศรีจันทร์ and Net Phunwivatthanon เนตร พูนวิวัฒน์, *Patiwat R. S. 130 ปกิวิติ ร. ศ. ๑๓๐*, Matichon, 2013, pp. 246–252.

57 Asvabahu, “Japan for Example,” in *A Siam Miscellany*, Siam Observer Printing Office, 1912, pp. 49–76; Asvabahu, “Clogs on Our Wheels,” *Siam Observer*, April 21, 1915, p. 4; King Prajadhipok, “Kham nam” คำนำ, in *Phraratchadamrat nai Phrabatsomdet Phrachulachomklao Chaoyuhua song thalaeng phraborom rachathibai kaekhai kan pokkhrong phaendin พระราชดำรัสในพระบาทสมเด็จพระจุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว ทรงแถลงพระบรมราชาธิบายแก้ไขการปกครองแผ่นดิน*, Rongphim Sophon Phiphatthanakon, 1927, pp. 1–4.

58 Asvabahu, “Japan for Example.”

Supreme Council of State. To this he appointed senior—in both rank and age—princes to advise him. This council is said to have been consciously modeled on the *genrō* of Japan.⁵⁹ The Great Depression hit export-oriented Siam hard. When it hit, Siam had already been stagnating and political reforms were not forthcoming. King Prajadhipok initiated a policy of austerity but decided to insulate his relatives from its ramifications. Junior soldiers and bureaucrats studying in Europe had already in 1927 founded the clandestine People's Party to plan for the overthrow of the absolute monarchy. Now they were able to recruit high-ranking officers, who had lost faith in the ancient regime. On June 24, 1932, the People's Party under Phraya Phahon Phonphayusena (1887–1947) took power in a bloodless coup d'état. Phahon had been educated in Imperial Germany, where he met Tōjō Hideki 東條英機 (1884–1948). But he had also been briefly seconded to the Imperial Army in 1920 for study purposes. There he was told that he looked like restoration leader Saigō Takamori 西郷隆盛 (1828–1877) and therefore was prone to likewise become a great revolutionary.⁶⁰

The leader of the civilian wing of the People's Party, French-educated jurist Pridi Banomyong (1900–1983), had drafted a constitution that King Prajadhipok promulgated after adding “provisional” to the document's title. Both the royal family and conservative members of the People's Party were unhappy with this first Siamese Constitution due to its omitting the customary honorific language for the monarch and for reducing him to a mere figurehead. As the revolutionaries were also wary of being attacked as self-serving, of an intervention by the colonial powers on behalf of the royal family, and also because they were well aware that they needed the support of senior bureaucrats to effectively govern the kingdom, the drafting of a new constitution was agreed upon.⁶¹ Siam's or Thailand's first “permanent” constitution promulgated in December 1932 was drafted following the study of several constitutions of constitutional monarchies, including the Meiji Constitution. But the constitution of the Great Japanese Empire was also discussed as an exemplar by the Siamese public. While it had been critics of the absolute monarchy who had referred to Imperial Japan before the revolution, it was now conservatives who embraced the Japanese constitution for its imperial prerogatives. A lasting heritage of the Bangkok monarchy with this engagement with Imperial Japan is the adoption of Article 3 of the Meiji Constitution, which stipulated that the emperor was “sacred and inviolable.” This became Article 3 in the December 1932 constitution stating that “The king shall be enthroned in a position of revered worship and shall not be violated.” This article was maintained in all Thai constitutions and is now Article 6 in the constitution of 2017.⁶²

The constitutions most influenced by the exemplar of the Meiji Constitution were however the two short-lived postwar constitutions of 1947 and 1949. These introduced a royally appointed upper house, a feature of the Imperial Japanese political system discussed in Thailand since July

59 Momchao Phunphitmai Disakun หม่อมเจ้าพูนพิศมัย ดิศกุล, *Sing thi khaphachao phop hen (ruam lem) สิ่งที่เขาพบเห็น (รวมเล่ม)*, Matichon, 2016, p. 31.

60 Phaibun Kanphonphibun ไพบุลย์ กาญจนพิบูลย์, *111 Pon Phonek Phraya Phahon Phonphayusena 'chet burut' 29 minakhom 2551 111 ปี ๑พจนฯ พลเอก พระยาพหลพลพยุหเสนา 'เชษฐบุรุษ' 29 มีนาคม 2551*, Sukphap Chai 2009, pp. 40–52, 445.

61 Thawatt Mokarapong, *History of the Thai Revolution: A Study of Political Behavior*, Wattana Panich, 1972, pp. 103–110.

62 David M. Malitz, “What Is Good about the Japanese System of Governance?,” pp. 7–8.

1932, and reintroduced Siamese/Thai *genrō* by reestablishing the Supreme Council of State in 1947, renamed the Privy Council in 1949.⁶³ In 1951 however the military reintroduced the 1932 constitution as they became wary of the authority the constitution granted the king. King Bhumibol (1927–2016, r. 1946–2016) returned that year from his studies in Switzerland to reside in his kingdom permanently.⁶⁴

Japan ceded to be a role model of a constitutional monarchy for the duration of his reign. Meanwhile, the postwar governments of Phibun Songkhram (1897–1964) and Sarit Thanarat (1908–1963) began to embrace the monarchy as a symbolic institution able to unite the Thai populace while fostering relations with foreign countries in the Western block, including Japan.⁶⁵ King Bhumipol's and Queen Sirikit's (b. 1932) state visit in 1963 as well as the visit to Thailand of Crown Prince Akihito (b. 1933) in the following year resulted in a lifelong friendship.⁶⁶ This relationship even had an impact on the culinary culture of Thailand. The imperial ichthyologist Akihito gifted King Bhumipol fifty Nile Tilapia fish, as he was aware of the latter's search for a cheap source of protein for his subjects. Nile Tilapia fish has since become a common and cheap food source. Today, there is even a children's book on Crown Prince (and later emperor) Akihito's role in the introduction of the fish to Thailand.⁶⁷

Rediscovering the Japanese Example

For Thais who were born and grew up during the Cold War, King Bhumipol, who reigned from 1946 to 2016, became more than their head-of-state. He visited and hosted foreign heads-of-state while leading Buddhist and Brahmin ceremonies at home, and was thus a powerful symbol of a national identity that reconciled tradition and modernity. Spending much of his time on development work throughout the country, he was seen as a virtuous role model that elected politicians and military strongmen could never emulate in the public eye. Some likened him to a bodhisattva, just as it had been claimed by monarchs of the premodern past. Having intervened in 1973 and 1992 to end the killing of protestors demanding the end of military dictatorships, King Bhumipol became a patron saint for Thai democracy for many, while his support of the quasi-fascist movement of the 1970s was forgotten. However, for the generation that had been born after the end of

63 Ibid.

64 On political developments in Thailand during and after World War II, see Sorasak Ngamcachonkulkid, *Free Thai: The New History of the Seri Thai Movement*, Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University, 2010; Daniel Fineman, *A Special Relationship: The United States and Military Government in Thailand, 1947–1958*, University of Hawai'i Press, 1997.

65 Thep Buntanon เทพ บุญตานนท์, *Thaban khong phraracha kap kan sang sammuek haeng sattha lae phakdi tharaxongpharaxakap khabkarsrang sanikhaengsathitha and akhadi*, Matichon, 2022, pp. 239–240.

66 Inoue Makoto, "Japan's Imperial Couple Pays Tribute to Late Thai King," *Nikkei Asian Review*, March 6, 2017, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/Japan-s-imperial-couple-pays-tribute-to-late-thai-king2>.

67 Chananthorn Kamjan, "A Tale of Fish and Monarchs," *Bangkok Post*, November 5, 2016, <https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/special-reports/1127665/a-tale-of-fish-and-monarchs>; Sommai Chenkitchakan สมหมาย เจนกิจการ and Natthaphong Pankhao ณัฐพงษ์ ปานขาว, *Pla Nin ปลาไน*, Nanmee Books, 2016, pp. 8–9.

the Communist insurgency, and who grew up against the backdrop of a booming economy fueled by foreign direct investment and tourism, Cold War nationalism centered on the crown and its development projects were of little consequence. In particular, the generations too young to have any meaningful memory of King Bhumipol began to question the institution after the military coups of 2006 and 2014 that overthrew elected governments under the pretense of protecting the monarchy, resulting in authoritarian yet ineffective governments. The ascension to the throne of King Vajiralongkorn in 2016, who was seen critically even by staunch royalists, furthered this trend of a critical engagement with the monarchy. Engagement with the Japanese monarchy and postwar constitution remained limited, however, until 2019.⁶⁸ That year, the formal coronation of King Vajiralongkorn took place less than a week after the enthronement of Emperor Naruhito. Since then, critics of the political status quo in the Kingdom of Thailand have rediscovered the Japanese exemplar as evident from the press and social media postings.⁶⁹ Shortly after the coronation in Thailand, the first elections since the coup of 2014 took place. The progressive Future Forward party, critical of the military, surprised conservatives by coming in third due to the strong support of younger and especially first-time voters. Its dissolution in the spring of 2020 triggered a student movement that also gained international attention due to its explicit criticism of the Thai monarchy, its political influence, and its wealth. Student leaders called for far-reaching reforms with the

68 For example, the Thai press reported on the seventieth anniversary of the Japanese postwar constitution and attempts by the government to amend it: “70 ปี รัฐธรรมนูญสมัยใหม่ญี่ปุ่น รัฐบาล ‘อาเบะ’ จะพยายามแก้ไขเพิ่มอำนาจกองทัพหรือไม่, *Prachatai* ประชาไท, May 3, 2017, <https://prachatai.com/journal/2017/05/71310>; “Yonroi rathamnun Yipun chai ma khroprop 70 pi mai khoei kaekhai yonroi rathamnun Yipun chai ma khroprop 70 pi mai khoei kaekhai” ย้อนรอยรัฐธรรมนูญญี่ปุ่น ใช้มาครบรอบ 70 ปีไม่เคยแก้ไขย้อนรอยรัฐธรรมนูญญี่ปุ่น ใช้มาครบรอบ 70 ปีไม่เคยแก้ไข, *Manager Online* ผู้จัดการออนไลน์, May 3, 2017, <https://mgronline.com/japan/detail/9600000044538>.

69 See for example Supphanyath Aphinyan ศุภณัฐ อภิญาณ, “Chamlae rang rathathammanun kaekhai muat phramahakasat ‘chabap kabot tai kraprong’ khong ‘Piyabutr Saengkanokkul’” ข้าหลวงร่างรัฐธรรมนูญแก้ไขหมวดพระมหากษัตริย์ ‘ฉบับกบฏใต้กระโปรง’ ของ ‘ปิยบุตร แสงกนกกุล,’ *Manager Online*, August 12, 2021, <https://mgronline.com/daily/detail/9640000079362>; “Khaphachao cha patibat tam rathathammanun lok ruam thawaiphraphon phithi ratchaphisek ‘chakkraphat Yipun’” ข้าพเจ้าจะปฏิบัติตามรัฐธรรมนูญ! โลกร่วมถวายพระพร พิธีราชาภิเษก ‘จักรพรรดิญี่ปุ่น,’ *Maticchon Sutsapada* มติชนสุดสัปดาห์, October 22, 2019, https://www.maticchonweekly.com/hot-news/article_240177; “Borom ratchaongkan ‘chakkraphat Yipun’ khong banlang nai krop rathathammanun” บรมราชโองการ ‘จักรพรรดิญี่ปุ่น’ ครองบัลลังก์ในกรอบรัฐธรรมนูญ, *Prachachat Thurakit* ประชาชาติธุรกิจ, May 1, 2019, <https://www.prachachat.net/world-news/news-321652>; “Phonsamruat chi phu mi sithi lueaktang chao Yipun kueap khrueng khan ‘kae rathathammanun’ thi chai ma tangtae sinsut songkhram lok” ผลสำรวจชี้ ผู้มีสิทธิเลือกตั้งชาวญี่ปุ่นเกือบครึ่ง ค้าน ‘แก้รัฐธรรมนูญ’ ที่ใช้มาตั้งแต่สิ้นสุดสงครามโลก, *The Standard*, September 14, 2019, <https://thestandard.co/nearly-half-oppose-amending-constitution-under-abe-govt/>; “Ratchawong Yipun sathit sathaphon mae thaep rai rat sapsombat” ราชวงศ์ญี่ปุ่น สถิตสถาพร แม่แทบไร้ราชทรัพย์สมบัติ, *Voice Online*, last updated November 26, 2019, [https://tlhr2014.com/archives/24215](https://www.voicetv.co.th/read/w5RckzsY9?fbclid=IwAR0mvgeT_JnLwBAvdK9sDbqpOihQG93Lp8T4oMfxnrGWPff2h0nEFSfBpB0; Kuea Charoenrat เกื้อ เจริญราษฎร์, “Kan chamkat amnat chatkan sapsin sathaban kasat nai rathon botrian kan patirup chak Yipun thueng thai” การจำกัดอำนาจ-จัดการทรัพย์สินสถาบันกษัตริย์ใน รธน.: บทเรียนการปฏิรูปจากญี่ปุ่นถึงไทย, <i>Thai Lawyers for Human Rights</i>, December 20, 2020, <a href=).

express aim to make the de facto supra-constitutional institution a truly constitutional monarchy. On November 10, 2021, the Constitutional Court of Thailand then ruled that such calls for reform of the monarchy amounted to an attempt to overthrow it and were therefore unconstitutional.⁷⁰ Against this background, Thai publications began to discuss the Japanese postwar constitution and the role of the Japanese monarchy in the political system.⁷¹ Of particular interest in this context is an essay by one of the founders and leaders of the dissolved Future Forward party, the former law professor Piyabutr Saengkanokkul (b. 1979). His essay posted in May 2022 on the website of the Progressive Movement and on his own Facebook page discussed the postwar constitution in detail. Its title made unmistakably clear that the postwar constitution of Japan is seen by progressives as an example: “The Japanese Constitution of 1947: A Constitution solving the Problem of ‘Ultra-Royalism.’ An Interesting Example for Thailand.”⁷²

Conclusion

The history of Thailand, known as Siam until 1939, as well as of its monarchy, is much more entangled with that of Japan than is usually acknowledged. Manufactured goods from Japan were cherished from at least the early seventeenth century to the early twentieth century. Japanese swords have even become dynastic heirlooms of Thailand’s monarchs until the very present. But the high esteem in which Japanese crafts were still held in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is most evident in the hiring of Japanese craftsmen as teachers and for the task of gilding

70 Muramatsu Yohei 村松洋兵, “Tai ōshitsu kaikaku yōkyū wa ‘iken,’ gakuseira ni katsudōkinshi meirei” タイ王室改革要求は「違憲」 学生らに活動禁止命令, *Nihon keizai Shinbun* 日本経済新聞, November 10, 2021, <https://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXZQOGS10DR30Q1A111C2000000/>.

71 “Koet arai khuen kap Yipun lang phae songkhram lok khrang thi” เกิดอะไรขึ้นกับญี่ปุ่นหลังแพ้สงครามโลกครั้งที่ 2, *Silpa Wattanatham* ศิลปวัฒนธรรม, October 25, 2021, https://www.silpa-mag.com/history/article_76784; Chanya Inchaiya ชัญญา อินทร์ไชยา, “Yipun: Ratchawong suepsai suriya thep su chakkraphat phu pen sanlak prathet nai khwamkhluanwai khong ‘sathaban kasat’” ญี่ปุ่น: ราชวงศ์สืบสายสุริยเทพ สู่จักรพรรดิผู้เป็นสัญลักษณ์ประเทศในความเคลื่อนไหวของ ‘สถาบันกษัตริย์,’ *Way Magazine*, December 7, 2021, <https://waymagazine.org/emperor-of-japan/>; “Nakriannok sanoe loek 112 humkhrong sitthiseriphap pachot pokpong kiattyot sathaban” นักเรียนนอกเสนอลีก 112 คู่มครองสิทธิเสรีภาพปชช.-ปกป้องเกียรติยศสถาบันฯ, *Thai Post* ไทยโพสต์, November 4, 2021, <https://www.thaipost.net/hi-light/18351/>; Anya Tangrattanachotkun อรยา ตั้งรัตน์โชติกุล, “Mong ratthamnun thi mai khoei thuk kae thammai ratthathammanun Yipun thueng mi-ayu yaonan” มองรัฐธรรมนูญที่ไม่เคยถูกแก้: ทำไมรัฐธรรมนูญญี่ปุ่นถึงมีอายุยาวนาน, *The 101 World*, December 2, 2021, <https://www.the101.world/constitution-of-japan/>; Thamrongsak Phetloetanan อารังศักดิ์เพชรเลิศอนันต์, “An prawatisat kanmueang Thai nai kham winitchai sanrathathammanun ‘lomlang kan pokkhrong,’” อ่านประวัติศาสตร์การเมืองไทยในคำวินิจฉัยศาลรัฐธรรมนูญ ‘ล้มล้างการปกครอง,’ *Voice Online*, December 2, 2021, <https://voicetv.co.th/read/8xXBL3XUj>.

72 Piyabutr Saengkanokkul ปิยบุตร แสงกนกกุล, “Ratthamnun 1947 khong Yipun: Ratthamnun thi kaepanha saphawa ‘kasatniyom lonkoen.’ Baep thi nasonchai samrap prathet Thai” รัฐธรรมนูญ 1947 ของญี่ปุ่น: รัฐธรรมนูญที่แก้ปัญหาสถานะ ‘กษัตริย์นิยมล้นเกิน’ ตัวแบบที่น่าสนใจสำหรับประเทศไทย, Facebook post at 8:19am on 4 May 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/PiyabutrOfficial/posts/610994350386627>, and at *Progressive Movement*, May 5, 2022, <https://progressivemovement.in.th/article/7319/> (May 5, 2022). There were approximately 14,000 “likes” and 1,400 “shares” of the Facebook post as of September 30, 2022.

the copy of a famous Buddha image. Imperial Japan was embraced very early on as an exemplar of successful reforms in education and military affairs, key projects for the modernization of the Kingdom of Siam. Today's graduation ceremony of the Thai military academy, which aims to create a bond between the monarch and his officers, was initially introduced based on the Imperial Japanese example. That a royal decree on education was drafted based on the famed Imperial Rescript of Education also demonstrates that Meiji Japan was considered at the court as having mastered the creation of a direct and loyal bond between the emperor and his subjects at large. The absolute kings of Siam were, however, categorically opposed to consider their critics' proposal to promulgate a constitution and rejected the idea that political participation would foster patriotism and loyalty to the throne. Rather, they attempted to copy the role of the *genrō* as perceived by them by appointing senior princes to an advisory council. To this end, the Siamese Revolution of June 24, 1932, abolished the absolute monarchy. The Japanese influence on the kingdom's first "permanent" constitution drafted in its wake is clear. The article declaring the monarch sacrosanct is a translation of Article 3 of the Meiji Constitution and it has been incorporated in all Thai constitutions until the present. With the establishment of constitutionalism in Siam, Imperial Japan lost its attractiveness for progressives in the kingdom. It was now royalists who drew on the Japanese exemplar when drafting their short-lived constitutions with a royally appointed upper house and institutionalized Siamese *genrō*. With that, the Japanese influence on the Thai monarchy appeared to have come to an end, apart from a close personal friendship between King Bhumibol and Emperor Akihito.

This has changed, however, since the double succession of 2019, and against the backdrop of a political crisis in Thailand, where a younger generation is much less supportive of the Thai monarchy than their elders. Demanding reforms of the institution to make it a truly constitutional one, they have rediscovered the Japanese exemplar, that is, they have discovered the Japanese postwar constitution as an example of a truly democratic and constitutional monarchy.

王室と皇室のつながり

——バンコク宮廷とシャム・タイ王政に及ぼした日本の影響——

ダーヴィット・マリツ*

本稿では、シャム王国（1939年にタイと改称）における日本の文化的・政治的影響について検討する。16世紀後半から17世紀初頭にかけての初期の交流では、東南アジアの王国で日本製品がステータスシンボルとして好まれた。特に日本刀は珍重され、現代に続くまで王朝の家宝となった。19世紀後半からは、帝国日本がバンコクの近代化の手本とされ、宮廷では日本人の顧問や教官が雇われた。一方、絶対王政を批判する人々は、日本が立憲君主制

* ドイツ日本研究所 専任研究員

として大国となったことを訴えた。

キーワード：シャム、タイ王国、チュラロンコン大王、近代王室、大日本帝
国憲法